

**A MICRO LEVEL STUDY ON THE VULNERABILITY OF WOMEN
ENTREPRENEURS IN THE FISH VALUE CHAIN**

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Abstract

The Fishing is the main occupation which increases the importance in our economy .The people of Thoothukudi earns a major share of income from Fishing. They are almost dependant over the occupation. Women participate in the fish trading activities to establish themselves as Entrepreneurs. This research paper is an attempt to study and to discuss about the vulnerabilities they are exposed while progressing as entrepreneurs. A sample of 75 women entrepreneurs were taken for the study .The main object was to study the external threats women face at their initial stage and during the progression .

Keywords

Vulnerability , Seafood, Women Entrepreneurs, Fish Value Chain

Introduction

Thoothukudi projects itself as a leading district both in culture and has emerged as a developing exporter of marine products. The treasure of Thoothukudi lies in its rich diversity of natural habitats such as coral reefs, flats, beaches, continental shelf areas, marsh lands, rocky shores. The coast of thoothukudi is straight and narrow without many indentations. The coast is blessed with number of estuaries, lagoons, deltas, creeks, salt marshes etc. The skill and the courage of fisherman who sail in the terrific seas in a small boat is admirable. Fishing is the only sector that offers cheap and good animal protein to the people. It is considered as the predominant

food for the people living in Thoothukudi. Many people especially women are actively engaged in the distribution of sea foods in and around Thoothukudi. She is involved in many other activities such as selling fishes ,working in sea food processing units. But Majority of Female fish entrepreneur involves herself in a fish vending business.

Women entrepreneurs those who engage themselves in under developed or subsistence markets are subjected to more threats when compared to those operating in affluent markets. The research studies about the various threats and the way how women manages to survive in the huge fish value market

Fish Value Chain

A fish value chain is the linkages of process involved with the product right from its originality to the final product. It can also be described as the series of activities that involves for a product or service to reach the final consumer from its producer. These activities includes design, production, marketing, distribution and other services. Value chains may extend from local markets to international borders. Fish value chain activities include fishing ,sea foods processing and whole sale and retail fish distribution.

Objectives of the study

1. To study about the external threats that are faced by women fish entrepreneurs at the initial stage of business.
2. To study about the threats to which women fish entrepreneurs are exposed vulnerably at different levels stage of fish value chain.

Methodology

In this research, both primary and secondary data has been used. In order to perform the study a sample of 75 women fish traders were selected from Thoothukudi, Tharavaikulam and Punnaikayal was selected as the area for the study. A sample of 63 women fisher women were taken for the study. Primary data was assessed by adopting an interview method by using convenient sample method.

The limitations of the study were

- The accuracy and the reliability of the data depends on the respondents.
- Some respondents were hesitant to answer due to their nature of behavior.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table showing the difficulties in initial stage of business

Nature of the threats	Percent	Rank
Lesser Investment	14	V
Low Income	24	I
Ignorant of the current trend	17	III
High rate of interest to be paid	21	II
Regulations and Restrictions	8	VI
Male dominance	16	IV
Total	100	

The above table points out the ranks of the external threats faced by the women fish traders at their initial stage of entry to the fish markets. 24% of the women are affected by low income. 21% of them are under exposure of exorbitant interest rates. 16 % are affected by male dominance in the fish markets. 17 % of the entrepreneurs are ignorant of the current trends that are in practice. 14 % of the fish traders are finding it difficult for the initial investment for the business

Major Findings of the Study

- Majority of 35.72 percent of the women fish traders that they faced gender based differences in their occupation during the initial stage in their business.
- 82.15 percent of women are married.
- Around 63.50 percent of the women fish entrepreneurs are of the age above 45 years.
- 41 percent of women fish entrepreneurs are exposed to occupational illness.

- Gender differentiation plays a dominant role in the fishing industry.
- Women entrepreneurs are considered as a weaker section in the contribution of the economic standards and the productivity .

Conclusion

Women entrepreneurs make a significant contribution to the income of the fishing industry. They have their own struggles and competencies within the market. They can survive with employability only when has a participative nature . It is clearer with the study that they are more capable to earn the productivity and profitability in the fish trading business.. Even when a women are not possessed with good education ,they can meet the ends with their skill. Their participation level is also highly appreciable .But despite various significances they are still considered to be the weaker section in the fish trading industry. The practice of Male dominance should be reduced considerably in order to enhance high degree of participation in the distribution of the Hence the Pearl City is rich for its major occupation –Fishing. Since the majority of people in the city are engaged in this occupation, keen and acute steps should be taken to enhance betterment of Women Entrepreneurship in fish industry.

Reference

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