Work Life Balance among Fishermen:

Catamaran and the Mechanised Sector in Kanniyakumari District

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Abstract

Fishing is probably the most known livelihood and the most valuable too. Fish is considered to be the globally traded primary commodity. It serves as a substitute for animal food and brings considerable foreign exchange earnings for the country. After through study, it is found that, yet there is no systematic research study on the work-life balance of the Cataramaram fishermen and mechanised fishermen. The present research is an attempt made to analyse the work and their life conditions of the fishermen in Kanniyakumari district. The major objective of the study is to assess the socio-economic conditions of the fishermen in cataramaram sector and mechanised boat sector. The study area includes the coastal villages of Kanniyakumari district. The samples has been chosen from 140 fishermen belonging to coastal villages of Kanniyakumari district. From the collected data it is found that 98.6% of fishermen were feeling happy for their profession. On the other hand 97.1% of fishermen had no alternative job beyond fishing. As fishery department earns considerable income to the government, they must provide alternative job offers for the fishermen during slack season through cooperative fishing society. The conclusion of the research with respect to the fishermen of Kanniyakumari district. Moreover due to high risk in the occupation, majority of fishermen can able to manage work and life. The reason behind it is indicates that they feel happy for their profession.

Keywords: Fishermen community, Job satisfaction, Economic condition, Work Environment
Introduction

Fish has been the most important and supporting factor for the people around the world. It is predominantly true in the case of inland fisheries communities. Fish is a chief industry for many people in the rural areas. It is an industry providing the raw material for many businesses - the manufacture of fishmeal for a fowl and the production of oils of various kinds.

Fishing is one of the major supportto economic activities of the fishing community. It occupies a very vital place in the socio-economic development of many developed and developing countries in the world. Fisheries have different types of possessions like oil exploration, fishing, methyl hydrates; sea salt etc. fish is one of the products in the fishery division. The sea provides a abundant harvest of marine plants for satisfying the coastal communities around the world. Human requirement on marine and coastal resources is increasing. So the growth and development of this industry is vital to the upgrade of the livelihood of the fishing community.

Fisheries Development involves the extension of fishing effort without affecting the sustainability of fishery actions. It may be defined more broadly, in addition to fish production, transportation, marketing and facility of infrastructural and other related facilities. Inland fisheries consist of rivers, lakes, reservoirs and ponds.

Fisheries

Since the earliest days of olden times men have fished for their food in seas, lakes and rivers. Today the catch of the fishermen seems on the dining tables of every country in the world.

The term “Fishery” means an area which supplies abundant fish for commercial purposes. Inland fisheries include lake, rivers and fish farms. Most of the world’s fish-catch comes from sea fisheries. The greater part of the industry, however, is concerned with the taking of true fish for food.

Fishery is a major industry all over the world and fishing is one of the oldest occupations of man. Fish is a major source of animal protein for which there is no substitute. It has been estimated that fish either directly or indirectly accounts for nearly one tenth of the world’s protein supply. Fishing provides sustenance directly without much time lag between
the effort and its effects. In the case of agricultural production, the effects are obtained after some time interval.

Fishing is described as the activity of hunting fish. The term fishing is also applied to hunting of other aquatic animals such as various types of shellfish as well as squid, octopus, turtles, frogs and some edible marine invertebrates. Fishery sector is regarded as a powerful income and employment generator as it stimulates the growth of a number of subsidiary industries.

**Blue Revolution**

Fishing is an important occupation of the people living in coastal regions. To help the fishermen to increase their catch, the Government has implemented many schemes. Fishermen are given monetary assistance for buying mechanised fishing boats and modern fishing nets. Further, inland fisheries have been developed with government help. All the measures have led to huge increase in the fish catch. This is called Blue Revolution.

Sea fisheries, also known as marine fisheries, are located in the deep seas. Deep sea fishing in India is carried on by the fishermen of Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

**Meaning and definition of Work-life balance**

Work-life balance is the lack of conflict between work and other life roles. It is the state of stability in which strains of personal life, professional life and family life are equal. Work-life balance comprises of, but it is not limited to, flexible work activities that allow employees to carry out other life programs and practices. The term ‘Work-life balance’ is current in origin, as it was first used in UK and US in the late 1970s and 1980s respectively. Work-life balance is a term normally used to describe the balance that a working individual desires between time allocated for work and other aspects of life.

**Causes of work – life imbalance**

There are three mediators that are interrelated with work – life imbalance; gender, time spent at work and family characteristics.

Gender differences could lead to a work – life imbalance due to the dissimilar perception of character identity. It has been revealed that men select their work duties over
their family duties to offer financial support for their families, whereas women select their family life.

Spending lengthy hours at work owing to “inflexibility, fluctuating in work requirements, overtime or evening work duties” could lead to an imbalance between work and family duties. Working long hours affect the family duties, but on the other side, there are financial benefits that complement this action which deny the effect on family duties.

Family characteristics comprise single employers, married or cohabiting employers, parent employers and dual – earning parents. Parents who are working experience reduced family satisfaction due to their family duties or necessities. This is due to the fact that they are unable to effectively complete these family duties.

**Review of literature**

*Selvasmily C (2007)* attempted to compare the welfare conditions of the fishermen of catamaram sector and mechanised sector in Kanniyakumari district. The analysis revealed that the fisher folk in Kanniyakumari district deprived of power to enjoy their basic rights. The study further indicated that fuel cost and maintenance cost on craft and gears were the major occupational expenditure in the mechanised sector. A gradual increase in trend was found in the fish catch under mechanised sector.

The study made by *Ganesh Keremene B. and Naik B.K (2001)* entitled “SWOT Analysis – Indian Fishing Industry” reveals that the fishing industry has generated and strengthened a large number of ancillary industries and it will continue to strengthen them. The fishing industry of India has made several strides in the commercial sector, and will continue to move forward in the coming decades.

*Holly S and Mohnen A (2012)* in the paper titled “Impact of working hours on work-life balance” connected working hours and satisfaction with desirable work-life balance. This balance is precise to each person and relates to satisfaction with a job and all other parts in life, particularly family life and free time. Therefore, a moral work-life balance results in high satisfaction. Their results show miscellaneous perceptions and impacts of job conditions on employees.

*Singh S (2013)* stated role stress theory in his paper titled “Work-life balance : A Literature Review” wherein the adverse side of the work – family interaction has been put
under the spotlight. In recent times, the importance has shifted towards the examination of the optimistic interaction between work and family role as well as roles outside work and family lives, and researcher have taking place to deliberate on the essence of work-life balance.

**Shalini and Bhawna (2012)** stated in their study, “Quality of work life balance” is being used by the organization as a strategic tool to fascinate and retain the employees and more importantly to help them to maintain work life balance with equal consideration on performance and commitment at work.

**Statement of the problem**

Fishing is one of the major occupations of Kanniyakumari district. The district consist of 42 fishing villages covering 72 km coastal belt. Totally 30465 fishermen families in the district, out of that nearly 5294 registered catamaram and 511 registered mechanised boats are engaged in fishing.

Despite the increasing fishing intensity in the district and the falling catch per unit effort, no one has casually linked the problems to resource limitations. Until recently, Kanniyakumari fishers and the government of Tamil Nadu were not ready to accept the fact that the resource limits had been touched. Infact, subsidy schemes for the purchase of craft, engine and gear are still in place. Modernisation of vessels and gears is still regarded as a solution, although all signs suggest the contrary. Due to the lack of balance between work and life they use to shift over the job.

After through study, it is found that, yet there is no systematic research study on the work-life balance of the Catamaram fishermen and mechanised fishermen. The present research is an attempt made to analyse the work and their life conditions of the fishermen in Kanniyakumari district and to find out suitable methods and suggestions to improve the work-life of all the fishermen population in the district.

**Objectives**

The overall objective of the study is to compare the work-life of the fishermen of the catamaram sector and mechanised sector in Kanniyakumari district. The specific objectives are:

i. To assess the socio-economic conditions of the fishermen in catamaram sector and mechanised boat sector.
ii. To analyse the factor influencing work and life of the catamaram and mechanised fishermen.

iii. To focus attention on the welfare schemes (protective and promotional) with their impact on the standard of living of the fishermen.

Methodology

The study is conduct using both logical and expressive types of method. The study first and leading depends on primary and secondary data.

Study area:

The study area includes the coastal villages of Kanniyakumari district. The district produces major fishery outputs. The structure of fishermen population, their educational status and occupational structure, fishing assets, housing conditions, general economic infrastructure and the marine fishery infrastructure are the main reasons for the selection of area for study. These factors directly or indirectly contribute the growth of marine fishery sector and uplift the social and economic status of marine fishing villages in Kanniyakumari district.

Sampling size and design:

Descriptive methodology is to be adopted for this study. The primary data has been collected after pilot study by providing questionnaire. Stratified Random sampling method is used to select the respondent. From the collected information the secondary data has been collected through journals, magazines. The samples has been chosen from the various fishermen belonging to coastal villages of Kanniyakumari district. From various respondents 140 respondents were selected.

Data analysis and interpretation

Age of the respondent:

Age is an important factor for studying work-life balance. Many studies have proved that age has the significant influence over the pattern of the work-life balance in the present research. The researcher categorized five important age group classification namely less than 18 years, 18 to 25 years, 25 to 35 years, 35 to 50 years and above 50 years.
From the above table it is found that the sample unit comprises a maximum of 46.4% of fishermen are in the age group of 35 to 50 years, followed by 27.1% of the fishermen in the age group of greater than 50 years, 20.7% of fishermen are in the age group of 25 to 35 years, 4.3% of the fishermen in the age group of 18 to 25 years and 1.4% of fishermen are in the age group of less than 18 years.

**Time to spend with family of the respondent:**

To study the work-life balance of fishermen it is essential to know their spending of time with their family. It is an important factor to study the work-life balance. Thus the researcher categorised the time duration into five categories namely very often, often, sometimes, rarely and never.

From the above table it is found that the sample unit comprises a maximum of 50.7% of fishermen very often spent their time with their family, followed by 36.4% of fishermen often spent their time with their family, 5.7% of them sometimes spent their time with family,
4.3% of fishermen rarely spent their time with family and a minimum of 2.9% of fishermen never had enough time to spent with their family.

Ability to balance work and family of the respondent

The ability to balance the work and family of the respondent plays a vital role in the research. The fishermen has to do heavy work during fishing. Hence this factor helps to analyse their balancing ability. Thus the researcher undergoes the research by considering their educational qualification into five categories namely SSLC, HSC, degree, professional and others with their balancing ability as strongly agree, agree, indifferent, disagree and strongly disagree.

Cross tab analysis for balancing ability of a respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.no</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SSLC</td>
<td>13 (54.1%)</td>
<td>9 (37.5%)</td>
<td>1 (4.2%)</td>
<td>1 (4.2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>9 (56.2%)</td>
<td>7 (43.8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>2 (28.6%)</td>
<td>5 (71.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>76 (83.5%)</td>
<td>11 (12.1%)</td>
<td>2 (2.2%)</td>
<td>2 (2.2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>91 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>101 (72.2%)</td>
<td>33 (23.6%)</td>
<td>3 (2.1%)</td>
<td>3 (2.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>140 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data

From the above table it is found that the fishermen under SSLC qualification responds about 54.1%, 37.5%, 4.2% and 4.2% for the category of strongly agree, agree, indifferent and disagree respectively. The next category of fishermen with HSC qualification responds about 56.2% and 43.8% under strongly agree and agree categories respectively. The fishermen who were degree holders responds to 28.6% and 71.4% under the category of strongly agree and agree respectively. The professional candidates who involved in fishing responds about 50% under both strongly agree and agree categories mutually. The fishermen who were illiterates
responds about 83.5%, 12.1%, 2.2% and 2.2% under the category of strongly agree, agree, indifferent and disagree respectively.

**Chi-square analysis:**

**Age * Normally work more than 6 days in a week**

Hypothesis test:

**H₀: Null hypothesis**

There is no significant difference between age of the fishermen and the working days.

**H₁: Alternative hypothesis**

There is significant difference between age of the fishermen and the working days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. no</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Respondent working days in a week</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Less than 18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>2 (33.3%)</td>
<td>3 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>12 (41.4%)</td>
<td>10 (34.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>35-50</td>
<td>26 (40%)</td>
<td>17 (26.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Greater than 50</td>
<td>6 (15.8%)</td>
<td>12 (31.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46 (32.9%)</td>
<td>42 (30%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data

From the above table it is found that cent percent of fishermen who were in the age group of less than 18 years sometimes work more than 6 days in a week. The fishermen in the age group of 18 to 25 years who work always include 33.3%, 50% of them work often and 16.7% of them rarely work for more than 6 days in a week. The fishermen of 25 to 35 years include 41.4% of the respondents who always work more than 6 days in a week, 34.5% of them who often works and 24.1% of them sometimes work more than 6 days in a week. The fishermen who were in the age group of 35 to 50 years includes 40% of fishermen always work more than 6 days followed by 26.2% of them often works, 30.8% of them sometimes work, 1.5% of them rarely works while 1.5% of fishermen never work more than 6 days in a week.
week. The fishermen in the age group of greater than 50 years who always work more than 6 days include 15.8%, 31.6% of them often work and 52.6% of them sometimes work more than 6 days in a week.

**Chi - square analysis age of the fishermen who work more than 6 days in a week**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>28.720</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>26.203</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>2.144</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above Chi-square hypothesis it is found that the table value for 5% is 3.94 and the calculated value is 0.026. Hence the Null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore there is no significant difference between age of the fishermen and the working days.

**Findings**

From the collected data it is obvious that 65% of fishermen were illiterate and about 11.4% of fishermen had completed their higher secondary. Based on their occupation it is found that 98.6% of fishermen were feeling happy for their profession. On the other hand 97.1% of fishermen had no alternative job beyond fishing. In the point of family 25% of fishermen were in joint family and 75% of fishermen were in nuclear family. About 50.7% of fishermen have enough time to spent with their family members and 72.1% of fishermen were able to balance their work and family. 88.6% of fishermen think about their work when they are actually not at work. Since fishing is the most challenging occupation, about 82.1% of fishermen had never suffered from any stress due to work.

**Suggestion**

The following suggestions were given to improve their work-life balance:

- As fishery department earns considerable income to the government, they must provide alternative job offers for the fishermen during slack season through cooperative fishing society.
The fuel rate is another main drawback for the fishermen. The government can supply the required quantity of fuel and other lubricants through cooperative societies at concessional rate.

To help the fishermen from being low rate fixation for fish, the Fishermen Cooperative Societies can directly involve in rate fixation and marketing the fish to improve the standard of living for the fishermen.

**Conclusion**

This research has been carried out by considering the factors like age, education, marital status, income level, problems faced, stress handling etc. The experienced fishermen were able to balance their work and family compared to the younger generation. Moreover due to high risk in the occupation, majority of fishermen can able to balance work-life. The reason behind this indicates that they feel happy for their profession.

**Bibliography**


