

# FISHERMEN COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES FOR FISHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Dr. Kunal D. Jadhav**

*Associate Professor, Department of Lifelong Learning and Extension,  
University of Mumbai, Vidyapeeth Vidyarthi Bhavan, "B" Road, Churchgate,  
Mumbai - 400 020, India.  
Email: jdkunal@yahoo.com*

**Abstract:** *Fishing is one of the traditional activities of Maharashtra, India which has the coastal regions of the sea water of Arabian sea. Maharashtra has the largest production as compared to other states. The fish production of Maharashtra is declined over the past two decades due to variety of reasons. This fishing occupation is maintained by Fisherman Cooperative Societies. In the present study an attempt has been made to study fisheries cooperatives from economic point of view. Besides that; membership, capital structure, economic transactions of cooperatives for members, transactions of members with cooperative, turn-over of cooperatives, impact of cooperative businesses on their members and social, economic, educational and political relation of members and their cooperatives are also studied.*

**Keywords:** Fisheries, Fishermen, Fishing, Cooperative Society, Ratnagiri.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Fishing in India is traditional profession as half of the Indian coastal region is surrounded by the sea water of Arabian sea and Bay of Bengal. The states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Orissa and West Bengal have larger coastal regions where the livelihood of population is depended on fishing. Fishing is one of the traditional activities of Maharashtra. Besides this, the population at Andaman Nicobar islands is also involved in fishing and its related products where varieties of fish produced in these states. It included pomphrets, karli, surmai (King Fish), shark, ribbon fish, shrimps, prawns, mackerel and cattle fish are the main fish production of Maharashtra. In the fish production, Maharashtra has the largest production as compared to other states. Since fish production of Maharashtra is declined over the past two decades due to variety of reasons, there is a sharp decline too in total marine fish production of India. The various changes like modernized methods of fishing, mechanical fishing, changes in water temperature, monsoon effects and accumulation of waste oil released by the sub marines during water transport etc. the production of these natural resources are at stake. The adverse effects of this phenomenon reduced the fish stock. In addition, foreign vessels from other states are interfering with their illegal presence in Maharashtra coastal regions which is more than 720 kms covering Mumbai, Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts. Though the efforts are being made to sustain various species of fish in Indian sea, the illegal entry of ships from other countries nearby from western regions, and south regions are putting pressures by conducting illegal fishing. The Government of India has been trying to maintain boundaries for fishing but their efforts are not enough as sufficient manpower and financial resources are marginal to maintain international fishing policy.

The Government of Maharashtra has supported Fishermen Development Cooperative Societies in Ratnagiri. Till the end of 2017, the district had 104 Fishermen

Cooperative Societies in 8 Talukas. The Government is motivating and making efforts to sustain the trade and fishing occupation by various ways such as providing ships, apparatus and other related material for rural people depended on fishing profession. Even the State Government with the help of Department of Fisheries and University affiliated colleges are conducting various courses and training programs to create awareness about the fish production, fish management, safety regulations, food and nutrition security, water culture and strengthening aquarium management. The Universities have also introduced subjects related to fishing to generate interest and educate people about modern techniques of fish production and preservation and marketing and business opportunities. It is very important since the innovative measures are being implemented to strengthen the fishing in every part of the country. The advance fish culture and innovative practices are adopted in this area to increase the fish production. The education has shown a positive impact to hope expected results in fishing to all the districts on coastal regions of Maharashtra.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Review of related literature was conducted by the Researcher. Here are some highlights from selected literature:

(i) **Devulkar (2014), Fish and Mankind by Akshar Prakashan, Malvan, Sindhudurg**

In this book (Devulkar, 2014) the author included the details about the fishing and preservation methods, fishing net, the information about types of fish and environment in the sea and speculations of the fishermen below the sea water in Maharashtra coastal regions. This book is one of the best reference material for the research. It is devoted to all related professions of fisheries.

(ii) **Gavankar (2014), Memories from Cooperative Movements, Ratnagiri.**

This book (Gavankar, 2014) spoke upon the cooperative movements in India, their history and nature. It also gives details about the international level cooperative movements, its act and journey towards every sector of the society. It included the opportunities for the progress, the relevant amendments in the constitution, the autonomous nature, professional management, urban credit societies etc. It highlights the role of urban banks and the reforms caused by cooperative movement and compared the reforms between western parts of Maharashtra.

(iii) **Dr. Nandinin Deshmukh, Sea Wealth in Maharashtra (Marathi)**

This is another very important literature (Deshmkukh, 1993) refereed by the Researcher titled 'Maharashtratil Saagari Matsya Sampatti' This book provides information about the Fisheries as profession in Maharashtra, its development and progress, details about the species of fish, their body structure, preservative methods, useful products from fish, importance of fish as food, major sea fish, boats and net to seize fish, cooperative societies and fishermen in Maharashtra, sea water pollution and regulation of fisheries etc. This book is also proved useful to the Researcher.

(iv) **Department of Fisheries, State of Maharashtra (1998), Growth of Fishing in Konkan Regions (Marathi)**

This is a Souvenir (Department of Fisheries, 1998) 'Koknatil Matsya Vyavsayachi Vatchal' where the details about progress of fisheries in Maharashtra were included step by step. It also focused on fisheries, mechanisms of boats, its development, support to engines, protection to fish species, transportation and sales, diesel boats, education and training of fisheries, Fishery Protection and Regulation Act 1981, prohibition of fisheries during rainy season, cooperative movements of fisheries, major species of fish, their nomenclature in local and international styles etc. this book also proved very useful to the researcher for the purpose.

(v) **A. R. Raitelkar and Ashok Dange (2015), Principles of Cooperative Movements and Dealings (Marathi): Sahkar Tatva Aani Vyavhar**

This book (Dange, 2015) is written in three units. The first unit contains principles of cooperation, the second highlights cooperative movement whereas the third included the cooperative movements in international level. This book was reviewed and it proved useful to the researcher.

(vi) **Dr. Gangadhar V. Kayande-Patil, (2014), Cooperative Movement (Marathi)**

This book (Kayande-Patil, 2014) included the details about Rural Financial structure, economic failure and relation between cooperation and rural economy. It has also focused on various and changing principles of cooperative movements and their structure. It contains the information about rural cooperative management, its types and comparison with other similar societies in the field.

(vii) **Fishing Profession in Sindhudurg District (Marathi): Sindhudurg Jilhyatil Matsya Vyavsay:**

This book (Department of Fisheries, Fishing Profession in Sindhudurg District, 2018) included the statistical information of fisheries in Sindhudurg districts in detail. The information about sea fishery, semi salty fisheries, pure water fisheries, boats for fisheries, their types, income from fisheries, and information about 27 new schemes of Government of Maharashtra for the development of fisheries and its implementation are given in detail.

The review of related literature revealed that many studies are available in the field of Fishermen Cooperative societies. But very few researchers concentrated on marketing and finance in the country by fishing as a business. Though many of the researchers have touched upon various subjects and concepts in productivity in marine related aspects, very few researchers conducted their studies on different marketing policies for fishermen industries. Some of the researchers concentrated and studied the problems of fishermen and their production in various districts. Others concentrated on attitude and efforts of fishermen in the marine management. But this topic of 'The role of Fishermen Societies in Ratnagiri District' not studied so far. The present study is an attempt in this direction to conduct evaluative study of Fishermen Societies in Ratnagiri District'.

### **3. NEED OF THE STUDY:**

Ratnagiri district has been considered as underdeveloped region in Konkan zone in terms of fishing. Though it has a rich fishery sources, they are not yet totally developed. Due to lack of sufficient fish preservation facilities with cold storages, poor transport facilities, traditional fishing methods, lack of training and guidance, fishery activity is not developed. The fishermen are involved and concentrating on traditional methods of fishing only. This resulted in low production of quality fish species. It is estimated that this fishing cooperative societies provided employment or job opportunities to roughly all nearby villages to coastal areas of Ratnagiri. The development in fishing as a business and employment is totally dependent on the role of fishermen cooperative societies in Ratnagiri. The problems related to fisheries will be solved with the collective efforts of Fishermen Cooperative Societies. Hence the researcher wished to study the role of Fishermen Cooperative Societies in Ratnagiri district.

### **4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH:**

The present investigation will provide feedback to the Government and other related agencies so as to conduct fishing related activities for the welfare of Ratnagiri district as per the policy and keeping in mind the beneficial aspects of the fishermen society. It will also provide feedback to the University about the extent of importance of training and other academic opportunities in fishing profession and opportunities in international markets to be

offered to the youth of the district. The result of the present study projected that training facilities related to preservation of fish production, finding level locations in the deep sea for maximum production, fish catching methods, survival techniques in the sea during disasters are needed as per the needs of the local community. The study also showed that various factors are responsible for fishing business development of the district.

The study will be helpful to University Academic officers to suggest various new courses as per the need of local community for rural development. Study will also help the curriculum planers to plan the curriculum keeping in mind the factors responsible maximize fish catch and marketing skills of sell proceedings at national and international level. The teachers and the students will be motivated to take part in training offered by the University or other academic institutes.

## **5. STATEMENT OF A PROBLEM:**

‘The Role of Fishermen Cooperative Societies in Ratnagiri District.’

## **6. AIM OF THE RESEARCH:**

The aim of present research is to study role of Fishermen Societies in Ratnagiri district.

## **7. OBJECTIVES:**

- To study the status of cooperative societies in Ratnagiri District.
- To analyze the changes in the lifestyle of fishermen due to cooperative societies.
- To study the correlation between socio-economic factors in fishermen of Ratnagiri district.
- To study the problems of fishermen cooperative societies of Ratnagiri district.
- To evaluate the government and cooperative mechanisms for growth and development of fishermen in Ratnagiri District
- To offer recommendations to solve the problems of members of fisheries cooperative societies of Ratnagiri district.

## **8. ASSUMPTIONS:**

- Cooperative movement is the key for rural development.
- Government policies had positive impact on fisheries business development.
- Fisheries development is affected by globalization.
- The fisheries cooperatives and professional management agencies had important role in development of fisheries sector in Ratnagiri.
- Fisheries cooperatives had major role for the development of fishermen and poor people in the society.
- The fisheries sector of Ratnagiri district partially gets affected due to natural calamities.
- The fishermen still do not have detail knowledge of fish preservation.
- The Government schemes did not reach to all the fishermen.

## **9. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH:**

The researcher has chosen 14 fisheries cooperative societies of Ratnagiri district, hence, the study is restricted to geographical environment of Ratnagiri district.

- For the present study, researcher has collected statistical information of fisheries cooperative societies of Ratnagiri for the period of five years i.e. 2006 – 2010.

- In the present study an attempt has been made to study fisheries cooperatives from economic point of view. Besides that; membership, capital structure, economic transactions of cooperatives for members, transactions of members with cooperative, turn-over of cooperatives, impact of cooperative businesses on their members and social, economic, educational and political relation of members and their cooperatives are also studied.

#### **Limitations for research**

- The present study is limited to Ratnagiri district. This research elaborates the fisheries business and problems thereof, government schemes, cooperative action and development factors in detail, which is only applicable to Ratnagiri district and not to other districts of Maharashtra.
- This study is related to procedures of fisheries cooperative societies of Ratnagiri district and not related to study of fisheries activities undertaken by the fishermen of Ratnagiri district.
- The sampled cooperatives may not have the same social and economical status.

#### **10. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The researcher used Quantitative and Qualitative Data with ethnographical research approach was used for his research which has been followed on the scientific background. It was also supported by the data provided by various sources such Government reports, publications etc. The important points to be considered in selection of methodology are:

- To choose the correct problem.
- Selection of proper tools and techniques for data collection.
- Analysis of collected data on the basis of hypothesis set.

#### **11. SAMPLE:**

If the sample size is large enough, it is quite difficult to go for census survey. In this situation, 20% samples among the total samples are selected as representative samples which gave true picture of population. Following this, 14 fishermen cooperative societies from Ratnagiri district are chosen for this ethnographical study.

#### **12. DATA COLLECTION:**

In this present study, data collected by secondary sources and truthfulness of collected data checked by subsequent primary data.

#### **Primary Information**

- Interview – Qualitative and Quantitative data is collected through questionnaire and interview schedule, which has great importance in social science research. In the present study, primary information is collected from cooperative office bearers, share holders, officials of cooperative department.
- Observation and Discussion- Observation is an important aspect in human life which has base of science especially for primary data collection, Observation plays an important role in research, to set and judge the concepts. The researcher observed various operations of Fisheries Co-operative Societies by personally visiting Co-operative Societies and attending the meetings of cooperative societies and the discussion was held with the stakeholders in the fisheries.

#### **Secondary Information**

Secondary information is collected from following resources.

- Annual reports of fisheries cooperative societies of Ratnagiri district.
- The information about various schemes implemented by Government for fisheries development.
- Record of government offices
  - Assistant Fisheries Director office, Ratnagiri

- Assistant Registrar (Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries), Ratnagiri
- The cooperative sector developed by government for implementation of government schemes.

### 13. PLAN OF WORK:

The study of 'The Role of the Fishermen Cooperative Societies in Ratnagiri District' was with the help of resources available in the Government offices of Ratnagiri District such as published reports, articles, and publications of the Government officers. The sequential and systematic study of these documents was conducted. The interview schedule, discussion and observation technique was used to test the opinion of the office bearers, Government officers and the local community as per requirement of the research. For the purpose, personal visits to the locality of many villages in Ratnagiri Districts were conducted. The schedule was made by the investigator keeping in mind the objective of the study. Questionnaire based on research was prepared by the investigator and validated by the experts was used as research tool of the study. The research was conducted within the stipulated period of 3 years.

### 14. MAJOR FINDINGS:

- The fishermen cooperative societies are maintaining ownership rights of the fishermen and providing the administrative support to maintain the records. They are also providing production information and details of fishing locations to fishermen. All the safety measures are observed by these societies.
- The fishermen are the members of the society. Through various programs of awareness conducted by the societies, it can be seen that the socio-economic status of fishermen families is improved. They are motivated and guided time to time for smooth functioning of fishing and related activities. It resulted in the improvement in their behavioral and ethical skills that benefitted them to co-operate each other and concentrate on fishing and conduct business jointly with support of each other. It caused to development in cooperative attitude among them where the first hypothesis is successfully achieved by the researcher.
- The efforts of cooperative societies brought the sweet fruits to them. They are made aware of their duties and responsibilities and constitutional rights. The cooperative societies were helpful them to provide carrier boat or motor-ship services for fish catch. They could even avail the facilities like to get the fish boxes, ice plates, landing shed on rental. Wherever possible they could avail the refrigerated or insulated storing places for their fish catch in urgency. This resulted into maximize the profit and development of support and cooperative nature.
- The continuous support of cooperative societies helped to strengthen the membership. It was found that there was 16% increase in the membership in previous five years. This proved that the fishermen are eager to become the members of these societies as their earlier fear or anxiety is extracted by the societies with their positive support to fishermen wherever necessary.
- The Researcher has placed the hypothesis that the globalization has a negative impact on the functioning of cooperative society. He stated that fisheries development is affected by the globalization. To sustain in global marketing demand, the cooperative societies has provided various facilities such as provision of drying racks, packaging and salting facilities, storing facilities for processed products or freezing points in a marginalized rates. These facilities are coming under the taxes to be paid to the Government. So the charges are doubled by the taxes like VAT and now currently GST. It impacted in a way that the facilities became highly expensive that increased the rates of the product. This was a clear impact of globalization.
- The Researcher has studied 14 Cooperative societies in which 2 societies are coming under 'A' grade, 5 societies as 'B' grade and 6 societies with 'C' grade. It shows that



the financial transactions of all the studied societies are up to date. That proved that the Cooperative Societies in Ratnagiri district have impacted fishing profession positively.

- The Mirkarwada Mahila Fishermen Cooperative society and Sakhari Nate Society are reserved for Women which stressed on the fish selling rather than actual fishing. It proved that these societies help poor and needy and especially women empowerment and marginalized groups. They are providing sales facilities and transport facilities in chilled / frozen state in marginalized rates for these people.
- It was also found that the fishermen cooperative societies are providing financial support to fishermen during the period of disaster or natural calamities under its disaster management schemes. The beneficiaries are provided boats or engines, nets, spare parts etc. free of cost to resume their business. The societies also help the fishermen to improve their business skills time to time.
- Harne Paaj Fishing Trading Company at Pandhari has used refrigeration Techniques to preserve fish production. Other 13 societies are still backward in the use of refrigeration facilities. It indicated that the fishermen societies need training and financial support for learning these skills. It clearly settled the hypothesis stated by the Researcher that the fishermen are ignorant about preservation techniques.
- This Harne Paaj Fishing Trading Company at Pandhari has been using their own transportation facilities in spite of earning lower profits in the fish sales. In fact they believe in 'No Profit No Loss' principle of business and eager to cooperate fishermen members of the society though they spent much on maintenance of boats and engines, their spare parts, fuel and use of ice for refrigeration of the products.
- The Researcher has studied 14 Fishermen Cooperative Societies where it is found that 7 societies have successfully handled buying and selling proceedings on financial support from organizations. It benefitted to repay the loans for the fishing business for boat building and repairing, net making and fish box construction etc.
- It is found that since the inception of the societies, the investments of fishermen in cooperative societies were increasing but gradually during the last 3 years the investments are decreased. This affected the performance of the cooperative societies due to unavailability of sufficient funds to work for the benefits of other fishermen.
- The loans are provided to the fishermen in a minimum rate of interest which drained the deposits available to the societies. It also affected the performance of the cooperative societies and economic conditions of the members in turn.
- Since the productive changes were made in the Board of Directors and they took sturdy decision and concentrated on immediate recovery of loans provided to the fishermen, the economic conditions of some societies are improved. In the year 2007-2008 the recovery reached to 192% and continuously increasing in later stages.
- The decisions taken by Board of Directors impacted the earlier recovery leads to lower the expected funds.
- The fishermen cooperative societies focused on purchase of food grains and other consumer goods on a big scale that benefitted to fishermen. They also focused to provide first aid, pharmacy and other medical services.
- It was found that that out of 14 cooperative societies 2 fishermen cooperative societies have distributed profits among the fishermen but 1 society has donated these profit funds to Sadabhau Pawaskar Kharvi Dnyatibandhav Society. In this way the members followed the principle of welfare ('*Bahujan Hitay Bahujan Sukhay*').
- It was found that out of 14 societies, 2 fishermen societies have spent some funds for education purpose. The training includes general literacy and vocational training for members and their children. They tend to provide recreational facilities like canteen, sports facilities, place for discussion and meeting and changing room etc. Other societies did not perform such activities.
- Some societies accumulate their profits and deposit it whereas other are facing loss and some of them are serving on non profitable basis. Hence they did not sound financial strong. But still they are working very hard for their members. They provide the insurance schemes for boats, gear, catch and life and health insurance.

- Though the researcher concentrated on marine fisheries, he even focused on pure water fishing. In spite of many rivers are existed in Ratnagiri district, in comparison, it is found that marine fish production is very high in the district.
- The researcher found that the fishermen took loans to build up their boats for marine fisheries. They are not enough self-reliant to build up their own without financial assistance from the societies.
- The State Government has conducted direct action program to provide basic amenities and facilities for fishermen. It has established total 28 fish catch landing centres at district level.
- It is found that that there are number of fishermen did not use modern techniques of fish catching. They use traditional methods due to which expected fish catch is not collected. It impacted overall fish occupation which remained backward.
- The State Government is making efforts to provide training about the advance methods of fishing, provision of boats and related equipments in minimum rates, provision of preservatives, refrigerating facilities and loans from banks in lower interest rates etc. still fishermen are not responding as expected.
- It is found that those who are financial sound are using Purse Seiners boats for fishing. These are specially used in Ratnagiri, Jaigad and Sakhari Nate ports.

### **Bibliography**

- *Dange, A. R., Proinciples of Cooperative Movement and Dealings (Marathi): Sahkar Tatva Aani Vyavhar. Ratnagiri. (2015).*
- *Department of Fisheries,. Fishing Profession in Sindhudurg District. Malvan: Department of Fisheries, Government of Maharashtra. (2018).*
- *Department of Fisheries, Growth of Fishing in Konkan Regions (Marathi), Koknatil Matsya Vyavsayachi Vatchal. Mumbai: Department of Fisheries, Government of Maharashtra. (1998).*
- *Deshmkukh, D. N.,. Sea Wealth in Maharashtra (Marathi) Maharashtrail Sagri Matsya Sampatti. Ratnagiri. (1993).*
- *Devulkar, D., Fish and Mankind, (Marathi) Maansatla Manus. Malvan, Maharashtra: Akshar Prakashan, Sindhudurg. (2014.)*
- *Gavankar, S., Memories from Cooperative Movement. Ratnagiri. (2014).*
- *Kayande-Patil, D. G., Cooperative Movement. Nashik: Chaitanya Prakashan. (2014).*