

Impact of motorization on standard of living of fisher folk in Tamil Nadu

C. PRABAKAR AND K.R. SUNDARAVARADARAJAN

See end of the article for
authors' affiliations
.....

Correspondence to:
C. PRABAKAR
Department of Agricultural
Economics, Faculty of
Agriculture, Annamalai
University,
ANNAMALAINAGAR
(T.N.) INDIA

Accepted : April, 2008
.....

ABSTRACT

The overall objective of this paper is to compare the standard of living of motorized and non-motorized fishing households of Tamil Nadu state (India) by analyzing the consumption pattern and socio-economic living conditions of the respective groups. An economic analysis of average expenditure shares and income elasticity of expenditure of different commodity groups, viz., basic food items, nutritive food items, education, health, fuel and lighting, recreation and festivals revealed that the expenditure pattern of motorized fishing households were more stable, confirming a better standard of living than the non-motorized fishing households. The estimated composite indices of standard of living revealed that there were remarkable improvements in the economic aspect of living standards of fishing households due to motorization, where as the improvements in social aspects were less than proportionate to the improvements in economic aspects because of lack of developments in village level common civic amenities, which ever that could not be addressed by individuals. It is suggested that motorization technology may also be extended to all other non-motorized fishing families and their living conditions may be enhanced by providing all needed village level civic amenities of higher standards.

Key words : Consumption pattern, Income elasticity of expenditure, Standard of living.

The Indian export of marine fish and fish products has jumped from a mere sum of four crore rupees in 1960-61 to about 6,647 crore rupees in 2004-05, out of which 2,068 crores (31 per cent) was contributed by Tamil Nadu, which is one among the prominent maritime states of India. The total fish production of Tamil Nadu for the year 2004-05 was 3,07,693 tonnes, contributed by various types of mechanized, motorized and non-motorized fishing crafts. Out of 47,497 fishing crafts operated by Tamil Nadu 11 per cent are mechanized, 39 per cent are motorized and 50 per cent are non-motorized fishermen, (Anonymous, 2005). The motorized and non-motorized crafts together constitute the small scale fishery sector.

Introduction of outboard motors in the mid eighties for propulsion was one of the significant technological changes which was considered as a boon for fishermen of all the states including Tamil Nadu. Craft with technology (outboard motor) has higher economic and labour efficiencies and more profitable than crafts without technology. But a very close observation would reveal that although motorization of traditional crafts was lauded to be an highly appreciable technology both technically and economically and Government of Tamil Nadu by policy is encouraging motorization but still 50 per cent of fisher folk of Tamil Nadu have not motorized their crafts. The reason behind this lag is needed to be addressed since motorization is the easiest and fairest option available to enhance the standard of living of nearly 24,000 fishermen

families of Tamil Nadu who are economically and socially backward for generations together. The socio-economic condition of the traditional fishermen (non-motorized) was found far from the satisfactory level (Siddiqui, 1996). Under this back ground, the study was undertaken with the objective to analyse and compare the standard of living of motorized and non-motorized fishing households, presently in Tamil Nadu.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling design:

A multistage stratified random sampling technique was adopted for selecting the respondents with Tamil Nadu state as the universe, the coastal districts of Tamil Nadu as the first stage unit, fishing villages in the coastal district as the second stage unit and individual fisherman household as the third and ultimate unit of sampling.

The thirteen coastal districts were arranged in descending order of magnitude based on the total number of small scale fishing crafts which includes both motorized and non-motorized fishing crafts operating in the district. The top five districts in the order possessing comparatively more number of small scale fishing crafts, viz., Kanyakumari, Ramanathapuram, Nagapattinam, Kanchipuram and Tuticorin were selected.

As the second stage of sampling, from each of the sample districts, one fishing village was selected purposively by arranging the fishing villages possessing a minimum of 60 crafts in each category, viz. motorized and non-motorized, in descending order. The fishing village which came first was taken as the sample village from