



Food Security And Fisheries Sector: A Pillar Of The Indian Economy

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Abstract:

This research article explores the pivotal role played by the fisheries sector in ensuring food security and contributing significantly to the Indian economy. With a growing population and increasing demand for protein-rich food, the fisheries sector emerges as a critical player in providing nutritional security to the nation. This article delves into the multifaceted contributions of the fisheries sector, encompassing economic, social, and environmental dimensions, highlighting its importance in the broader context of sustainable development.

Keywords: Fisheries; Food Security; Indian Economy and Population.

Introduction:

The fisheries sector in India has evolved into a dynamic and integral component of the national economy. Beyond its traditional role of supplying fish for human consumption, this sector has far-reaching implications for food security, livelihoods, and economic growth. This article aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between the fisheries sector and food security in the Indian context. As a key source of animal protein, fish is an essential component of the Indian diet. The article explores how the fisheries sector contributes to enhancing food security by meeting the protein needs of a diverse and growing population. Additionally, it examines the nutritional value of fish and its role in addressing malnutrition and promoting public health.

The lowest segment of the population included small-scale fishermen when India gained its independence in 1947. Fish was the least expensive source of protein at the moment. Even now, almost 85 years later, fishermen' earnings remain among the lowest in society, despite the fact that protein derived from fishery goods is the most expensive in India. When fish became a pricey food item, they benefited nothing. In addition, the livelihood of fishermen has been jeopardized as India has grown into a significant exporter of marine items. Since outsiders joined the lucrative market, fishing businesses and indigenous fishermen have been engaged in a bitter battle that has lasted for more than 50 years. India has about a million workers in the fishing industry.

There are about 450,000 active fishermen, the majority of whom operate conventional fishing vessels; the other fishermen either work as fish merchants or as employees of fish processing facilities. There have been several developments in the fishing industry. Fish landings surged fivefold, and in 1998, India accounted for around 4.2 percent of global fish landings, or over 2 percent of the country's GDP.

An estimated three to four percent of India's foreign exchange revenues came from the export of fisheries goods. India was the world's largest prawn grower in the 1970s. It has been surpassed by Indonesia and China. Prawns, lobsters, and cuttlefish are sent to Japan and the United States, accounting for over 90% of the export revenue from marine goods.

Their profit increases as they use the resource more extensively. They may readily turn their focus to other fisheries or take up a whole other occupation when the supplies run out. Originally intended to boost local people' access to protein, the initiative also benefited large corporations that supplied to global markets and aided India's government by generating foreign cash. When some modern fishing vessels began to fish species that artisanal fishermen were catching, the difficulties grew. Once thought regarded as the poor man's fish, sardines, anchovies, and mackerels may be highly profitable when marketed as poultry feed when they are captured in large quantities by contemporary boats.

In many coastal regions today, the atmosphere is quite explosive. Every day, violent conflicts result in the loss of life. "I see this as a consequence of failing to address development issues, rather than a law and order problem," stated John Kurien, vice head of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Research in India. This is going to blow up in our faces if we don't stop it. Everyone in Kerala is on edge. There is tension among the politicians, bureaucrats, and fishermen. However, because the matter is so politically charged, no one wants to come together and discuss it. Modern fishing techniques include some of the most hazardous gear. The seabed and its ecosystem are destroyed by bottom-trawl nets, which act as a plow.

The trawl net's mesh size is so small that it catches young fish and prawns, which hinders the capacity of the species to reproduce. Furthermore, sizable portions of the fish that are caught are thrown as garbage since they are not commercially significant. This by-catch makes up as much as 85–95 percent of the catch in the Bay of Bengal that might be fed to the underprivileged.

These factors led to the long-standing prohibition on bottom trawling in many affluent nations. Prawn fishing is a successful but hazardous fishing method that takes place during the monsoon season, when the shrimp approach the coast to spawn. By reducing the juvenile population, fishing during the monsoon season destroys the future stock.

More than 75 years after Kerala began to modernize, the fishermen still make up a large portion of the state's impoverished population. Over 80% of them are impoverished, which means they don't even eat a sufficient and well-balanced diet. A person in 1956 subsisted on around 14.5 kilogram annually. This decreased to 8.4 kg in 1992. Fish was one of Kerala's cheapest foods in 1953. It was the priciest by the middle of the 1990s. Nearly half of the sardines harvested in 1956 were sold locally. This percentage dropped to less than 25% by the end of 1990.

Renowned social scientist Johan Galtung, who has spent more than 40 years researching peace and conflict, provides an overview of his interactions with the Indo-Norwegian Project in Kerala. "In my opinion, there is a complete scandal not just a partial one and the INP project was unsuccessful in four areas: As India's Fisheries Modernized, less protein was available. India's government has worked hard to modernize the fishing industry ever since the country gained its freedom. The construction of docks, landing zones, and maintenance facilities, as well as the provision of fuel for the fishing fleet, were all necessary steps in the modernization of the fisheries. Modernizing the infrastructure for fish processing and marketing was another significant adjustment.

Millions of fishermen in India depend on the fishing industry for their living, which is important to the country's economy. India is third globally in terms of fish production and second globally in terms of aquaculture production. The significance of the fishing and aquaculture industries was highlighted by India's Blue Revolution. The Indian government has taken a comprehensive strategy to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order to enhance the standard of living and economic prosperity of people living in rural regions and to generate additional chances for livelihood.

In honor of our brave liberation warriors, sailors, and fishermen, "SagarParikrama" is an evolving voyage that is envisioned in the water across the coastal belt, displaying unity with all fisher folk, fish growers, and concerned stakeholders. It is part of the 75th Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebration. It is a government of India project that seeks to address the concerns of fishermen and other stakeholders and enable their economic advancement via the implementation of several fisheries schemes and programs, including PMMSY and KCC.

On March 5, 2022, at Mandvi, Gujarat, the "Sagar Parikrama" trip commenced with the theme "KRANTI se SHANTI" and covered three locations: Mandavi, Okha-Dwarka, and Porbandar. Then, seven places from Mangrol, Veraval, Diu, Jafraabad, Surat, Daman, and Valsad were covered by the Phase-II program. Later, Phase-III "SagarParikrama" encompassed five coastal sites in northern Maharashtra: Sasson Dock, Vasai, Versova, New Ferry Wharf (BhauchaDhakka), and Satpati (District Palghar), as well as other parts of Mumbai. The primary areas of Uttar Kannada, Dakshina Kannada, and Udupi were covered by Phase IV of the Sagar Parikrama in Karnataka. A total of 30,000 individuals watched the event live on social media, in addition to the 50,000 attendees who were there in person. Sagar Parikrama, which included 19 places in Gujarat, Damen and Diu, Maharashtra, was successfully completed in four phases.

The SagarParikrama Phase-V expedition will continue, visiting six locations: Vasco, Maorugoa, and Canacona in Goa; and Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg Districts in Maharashtra.

Maharashtra comprises five coastal districts: Thane, Raigad, Greater Mumbai, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg. The state has 720 kilometers of coastline and a continental shelf area of 111512 sq km. With a 5% share of the nation's fish output, Maharashtra state is in seventh place and hasn't yet reached its full potential. For Maharashtra, marine fisheries have always accounted for a larger portion (now 82%) than inland fisheries (currently 18%).

Goa has 104 kilometers of coastline that is home to several bays and headlands. Goa's 10,000 km² continental shelf reaches a depth of around 100 fathoms. The current estimates for the average yearly output of fish are 3669 tonnes for inland fish and 86,027 tonnes for marine fish. particularly than 90% of Goans eat fish every day, and it is particularly significant to the state of Goa since it is an essential component of Goan culture and way of life. In Goa, the average yearly per capita fish intake is 15–17 kg. A considerable portion of the Goan population depends on the marine fishing industry for their livelihood.

The Union's Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Dairy Minister of State for Fisheries, Dairy, and Animal Husbandry and Dairy, Shri. Parshottam Rupala, Minister of State for Fisheries, Dairy, Animal Husbandry, and Dairy & Information and Broadcasting is Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Balyan. Dr. L. Murugan, Minister of Forests, Cultural Affairs, and Fisheries; Shri. Sudhir Mungantiwar The Indian government's Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, OSD Dr. Atul Patne, the state of Maharashtra's I/C Secretary and Commissioner of Fisheries, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Legislative Council, and Member of Parliament; Dr. J. Balaji, Joint Secretary, Fisheries, Government of India; and senior officials of the Department of Fisheries, Government of India, National Fisheries Development Board, Director of Fisheries, Government of Maharashtra, and Government of Goa, Senior officials from Indian Coast Guard, Fishery Survey of India, Maharashtra Maritime Board and fishermen representatives shall take part in the event. State Fisheries authorities, fishermen's representatives, fish farmers, entrepreneurs, stakeholders, professionals, bureaucrats, and scientists from around the country will be traveling with them.

The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada plan, the KCC and State scheme, as well as other progressive fishing initiatives will be recognized and honored during the occasion. This includes young fishery entrepreneurs, coastal fishermen, fishers and fish farmers, and others. For widespread scheme exposure, literature on the PMMSY scheme, State schemes,

e-shram, FIDF, KCC, and other programs will be popularized through print, electronic, and video media as well as digital campaigns using jingles among fishermen. A Marathi song on Sagar Parikrama will also be released.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the fisheries sector stands as a cornerstone of the Indian economy, addressing both economic and nutritional dimensions. This research article underscores the need for a holistic approach that considers the economic, social, and environmental aspects of the fisheries sector to achieve sustainable and inclusive development in India. This would make it possible for the government to create stronger policies aimed at raising the standard of living and financial security of the nation's coastal residents, particularly the marine fishermen. In order to bridge the gap between coastal fisher communities' expectations and the nation's food security, the Sagar Parikrama journey will prioritize a sustainable balance between the preservation of marine ecosystems, the development of fishing villages, and the construction and upkeep of infrastructure like fish landing centers and harbors. This will ensure sustainable and responsible development using an ecosystem approach.

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