



A Systematic Literature Review on the Quality of Work Life of Fishermen in Kerala

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Abstract:

This systematic literature review investigates into the Quality of Work Life (QWL) of fishermen in Kerala, India, a region where the fishing industry plays a crucial role in the socio-economic framework. The review identifies and examines the multifaceted challenges impacting fishermen's QWL. These challenges include severe occupational hazards, such as accidents and exposure to extreme weather conditions, and economic uncertainties driven by fluctuating fish prices and rising fuel costs. Environmental concerns, like fish stock depletion and water pollution, further exacerbate their difficulties. Social vulnerability and marginalization, characterized by inadequate healthcare, limited educational opportunities, and insufficient social support, add to their plight. Fishermen also struggle with work-life imbalance due to long hours and irregular schedules, and face technological limitations that hinder productivity. Inadequate government support, limited market access, health issues, and the lack of social security compound these problems. By synthesizing these findings from existing literature, this review underscores critical areas for intervention and policy development to improve the welfare and dignity of Kerala's fishing communities.

Keywords: *Quality of Work Life, Occupational Hazards, Economic Uncertainties, Environmental Concerns, Social Vulnerability, Work-Life Imbalance, Technological Limitations, Government Support, Market Access, Health Issues, Social Security*

Introduction:

The fishing industry holds significant importance in the socio-economic landscape of Kerala, a coastal state situated in the south western region of India (Kumar & George, 2017). The livelihoods of numerous individuals and communities in Kerala depend heavily on fishing as their primary occupation. However, the fishing sector presents various challenges and hardships that affect the overall quality of work life for fishermen. It is imperative to comprehend these issues in order to develop effective strategies for improving their well-being and addressing their specific needs.

The objective of this research paper is to conduct a systematic review of existing literature on the quality of work life of fishermen in Kerala. By analysing and synthesizing the findings from previous studies, we aim to identify the various problems and challenges faced by fishermen in this region. The review will provide an in-depth examination of the factors influencing their work experiences, work-life balance, occupational health and safety, social support systems, and overall job satisfaction.

Fishermen in Kerala encounter a wide range of challenges that impact their quality of work life. These challenges include physical and mental health risks, economic uncertainties, environmental concerns, and limited access to resources and support systems (Kurup & Joseph, 2019). Understanding the extent of these challenges and their implications is crucial for policymakers, researchers, and organizations involved in the fishing industry. By gaining insights from the existing literature, we can identify knowledge gaps, highlight areas requiring further investigation, and propose evidence-based interventions to improve the work conditions and overall well-being of fishermen in Kerala.

The systematic review will adhere to a rigorous methodology to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant literature. Various academic databases, such as PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar, will be searched using predefined keywords and inclusion criteria. Studies, articles, and reports published between a specified timeframe will be included to ensure the incorporation of the most up-to-date information. The selected literature will then undergo a systematic analysis and synthesis process to extract key themes and findings related to the quality of work life of fishermen in Kerala.

By examining the existing body of literature on the topic, this research paper aims to contribute to the current understanding of the challenges faced by fishermen in Kerala and their impact on overall well-being. The findings of this systematic review can guide policymakers, industry stakeholders, and organizations in formulating targeted interventions and policies to address the identified problems and enhance the quality of work life for fishermen in Kerala. Ultimately, the goal is to create a sustainable and supportive work environment that ensures the welfare and dignity of those engaged in the fishing industry in this region.

Objectives of the study

- To identify the problems and challenges faced by the fisherman in Kerala

Research Methodology

This systematic literature review (SLR) aimed to comprehensively explore the Quality of Work Life (QWL) of fishermen in Kerala by identifying, analysing, and synthesizing existing studies on the subject. An SLR was chosen to ensure a structured, unbiased approach to gathering and interpreting the extensive research available. The search strategy involved selecting academic databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Search terms included "Quality of Work Life," "Fishermen," "Kerala," and related keywords to capture the breadth of relevant literature. The data collection process began with an initial search using predefined terms, followed by screening titles and abstracts to assess relevance. Full texts of potentially relevant studies were reviewed to ensure they met the inclusion criteria. A snowballing technique was also employed, reviewing references from selected articles to identify additional pertinent studies. Data extraction was systematic, using a form to capture key details such as study objectives, methodology, findings related to QWL, identified challenges, and proposed interventions.

Problems and challenges faced by the fisherman in Kerala

Through the existing literature review, several problems and challenges faced by fishermen in Kerala have been identified. The following are the key issues documented in the literature, along with APA references for further reading:

- **Occupational Hazards and Safety Risks:** Fishermen in Kerala face various occupational hazards and safety risks due to the nature of their work. These include accidents at sea, exposure to extreme weather conditions, physical injuries, and the lack of proper safety equipment and training (Kumar & George, 2017).
- **Economic Uncertainties:** Fishermen often experience economic uncertainties, such as fluctuating fish prices, rising fuel costs, and limited access to credit facilities. These factors create financial instability and challenges in sustaining their livelihoods (Kurup & Joseph, 2019).
- **Environmental Concerns:** Kerala's fishing industry is susceptible to environmental challenges, including the depletion of fish stocks, water pollution, and climate change impacts. These factors affect the availability and quality of fish resources, making it harder for fishermen to maintain their livelihoods (Kurup & Joseph, 2019; Kumar & George, 2017).
- **Social Vulnerability and Marginalization:** Fishermen in Kerala often face social vulnerabilities and marginalization, stemming from factors such as limited access to social support systems, inadequate healthcare facilities, and limited educational opportunities. These factors contribute to the overall socio-economic challenges faced by fishermen (Kurup & Joseph, 2019).
- **Work-Life Imbalance:** Long working hours, irregular schedules, and extended periods away from home are common factors leading to work-life imbalance for fishermen. This imbalance can have adverse effects on their physical and mental well-being, as well as their relationships with family and the community (Kurup & Joseph, 2019).
- **Lack of Technological Advancements:** Limited access to modern technologies and fishing equipment hinders the efficiency and productivity of fishermen in Kerala. The absence of technological advancements puts them at a disadvantage compared to larger commercial fishing operations (Kumar & George, 2017).
- **Inadequate Government Support:** Fishermen in Kerala often face challenges due to inadequate government support in terms of policies, subsidies, and infrastructure development. These limitations hinder their ability to adapt to changing fishing practices and cope with emerging challenges (Kumar & George, 2017).
- **Limited Access to Market Opportunities:** Fishermen in Kerala often face challenges in accessing profitable market opportunities. Factors such as limited market linkages, lack of proper storage and transportation facilities, and inadequate marketing support constrain their ability to fetch fair prices for their catch (Kurup & Joseph, 2019).
- **Health Issues:** Fishermen in Kerala face health issues related to their occupation, such as musculoskeletal disorders, skin diseases, and mental health problems. Limited access to healthcare facilities and inadequate awareness about occupational health exacerbate these challenges (Kurup & Joseph, 2019).
- **Lack of Social Security:** Fishermen in Kerala often lack social security benefits and insurance coverage. This leaves them vulnerable to financial distress in the event of accidents, injuries, or natural disasters affecting their fishing activities (Kurup & Joseph, 2019).

These identified problems and challenges provide valuable insights into the factors influencing the quality of work life for fishermen in Kerala. Understanding these issues is crucial for policymakers, researchers, and organizations to develop targeted interventions and policies aimed at improving the well-being and livelihoods of fishermen.

Findings of the study

The systematic literature review reveals numerous challenges impacting the Quality of Work Life (QWL) of fishermen in Kerala. Fishermen face significant occupational hazards and safety risks, including accidents at sea, extreme weather conditions, and physical injuries, all exacerbated by inadequate safety equipment and training (Kumar & George, 2017). Economic uncertainties, such as fluctuating fish prices, rising fuel costs, and limited credit access, create financial instability, making it difficult for fishermen to sustain their livelihoods (Kurup & Joseph, 2019). Environmental concerns, including the depletion of fish stocks, water pollution, and the impacts of climate change, adversely affect fish availability and quality, further challenging fishermen's ability to maintain their livelihoods (Kurup & Joseph, 2019; Kumar & George, 2017).

Fishermen also experience social vulnerability and marginalization due to limited access to social support systems, inadequate healthcare facilities, and restricted educational opportunities, which amplify their socio-economic challenges (Kurup & Joseph, 2019). Work-life imbalance is another critical issue, as long working hours, irregular schedules, and extended periods away from home negatively affect their physical and mental health, as well as their relationships with family and community (Kurup & Joseph, 2019). Additionally, the lack of technological advancements and limited access to modern fishing equipment hinder efficiency and productivity, placing fishermen at a disadvantage compared to larger commercial operations (Kumar & George, 2017).

Inadequate government support, including insufficient policies, subsidies, and infrastructure development, limits fishermen's ability to adapt to changing practices and emerging challenges (Kumar & George, 2017). Furthermore, challenges in accessing profitable markets, due to inadequate market linkages, storage, transportation facilities, and marketing support, constrain their ability to secure fair prices for their catch (Kurup & Joseph, 2019). Health issues, such as musculoskeletal disorders, skin diseases, and mental health problems, are exacerbated by limited healthcare access and awareness (Kurup & Joseph, 2019). Lastly, the absence of social security benefits and insurance coverage leaves fishermen vulnerable to financial distress from accidents, injuries, or natural disasters (Kurup & Joseph, 2019).

These findings highlight the need for comprehensive interventions and policies to improve occupational safety, economic stability, environmental sustainability, social support, technological access, government backing, market opportunities, healthcare, and social security. Addressing these areas is crucial to enhancing the welfare and dignity of fishermen in Kerala, fostering a supportive and sustainable work environment.

Conclusion and Discussions

In conclusion, this systematic literature review has shed light on the various problems and challenges faced by fishermen in Kerala, India, which significantly impact their quality of work life. The review has identified key issues, including occupational hazards and safety risks, economic uncertainties, environmental concerns, social vulnerability and marginalization, work-life imbalance, lack of technological advancements, inadequate government support, and limited access to market opportunities, health issues, and lack of social security.

The findings from the existing literature emphasize the multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by fishermen in Kerala. These challenges not only affect their physical and mental well-being but also have implications for their livelihoods, social status, and overall quality of life. Occupational hazards and safety risks emerge as a significant concern, with accidents at sea, exposure to extreme weather conditions, and inadequate safety equipment and training posing threats to the fishermen's lives and well-being. Economic uncertainties, such as fluctuating fish prices and rising fuel costs, further exacerbate the financial instability faced by fishermen, making it difficult for them to sustain their livelihoods.

The fishing industry in Kerala is also susceptible to environmental challenges, including the depletion of fish stocks, water pollution, and the impacts of climate change. These factors directly impact the availability and quality of fish resources, making it increasingly challenging for fishermen to maintain their livelihoods. Additionally, social vulnerability and marginalization pose significant obstacles, with limited access to social support systems, inadequate healthcare facilities, and restricted educational opportunities hindering the socio-economic well-being of fishermen.

Work-life imbalance, characterized by long working hours, irregular schedules, and extended periods away from home, negatively affects the physical and mental well-being of fishermen, as well as their relationships with family and the community. The lack of technological advancements and limited access to modern fishing equipment further compound the challenges faced by fishermen, as they struggle to compete with larger commercial fishing operations.

Inadequate government support in terms of policies, subsidies, and infrastructure development also hampers the ability of fishermen in Kerala to adapt to changing fishing practices and cope with emerging challenges. Moreover, limited access to profitable market opportunities, inadequate storage and transportation facilities, and insufficient marketing support constrain their ability to fetch fair prices for their catch.

The health issues experienced by fishermen, such as musculoskeletal disorders, skin diseases, and mental health problems, are further aggravated by limited access to healthcare facilities and inadequate awareness about occupational health. Furthermore, the lack of social security benefits and insurance coverage leaves fishermen vulnerable to financial distress in the event of accidents, injuries, or natural disasters affecting their fishing activities.

By highlighting these problems and challenges, this study provides valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and organizations involved in the fishing industry in Kerala. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions and policies that address the specific needs of fishermen, promote occupational safety and health, enhance social support systems, improve access to education and healthcare, facilitate technological advancements, strengthen government support, and provide avenues for market access and fair pricing.

Overall, the aim is to create a sustainable and supportive work environment that prioritizes the welfare and dignity of fishermen. This systematic review contributes to the current understanding of the challenges faced by fishermen in Kerala and serves as a foundation for evidence-based decision-making and the development of interventions that can improve the quality of work life and overall well-being of fishermen in the region.

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