

Influence of Socio-Economic Status of Education and Employment Among the Youth Fisherman Community : The Study of Thiruvotriyur Kuppam, Chennai

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Abstract

In the world, India is the second most populous country with 1.27 billion people. 65 percent of them are doing agriculture and its related work and it's considered their livelihood and income source. Next to agriculture, the fishery plays a significant role in developing the Indian economy. But those who are involved in the fishing profession their economic status is very poor and mostly they do as a small scale industry since they lack knowledge of fishing and services available in the department to develop themselves. This situation directly attacks the development of youth especially from the age group of 15 to 25 years. These youth populations have not given any inputs by their parents and from other stakeholders. Even the Government & NGOs are not taking any initiatives to make them aware of their policy & program which is focussing on the development of education & employment opportunities. Fishermen have long hours of continuous work, which leads to the increase of drug consumption also. Hence, this study tries to understand the influences of social-economic status on the empowerment of youth specific to educational and employment empowerment and how it influences the psychological health of the individual.

Key words: Fisherman community, Socio - economic conditions, Education & economic Problems.

INTRODUCTION

At present the fishery sector is considered as a profitable profession and increases the employment opportunity also. Therefore the government

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has taken a lot of initiatives to address complex problems of the fishers, such as economic, cultural, institutional problems along with that they concentrated to bring new policies and training programmes which focus on primary development.

The government is quite confident with regard to the capacities of the Indian youth since the government has a greatest suitable potential that can facilitate the growth for the country but both the government should analyse that whether the youth are correctly developed or not, is the youth getting the sufficient opportunities and facilitates from their sides? According to the surveys and demographic statistics; Indian youth constitutes of more than 50% who are under 25 years, 30% are from 10-25 years and apparently 40% who are of the age 16-30 years thus, with having such a high magnitude the participation of the youth just cannot be neglected in the course of development of India.

Mainly in the Indian scenario the youth can be divided into two big groups of individuals or categories: 1. Educated and Developed group of Youth, 2. Illiterate and Undeveloped group of Youth. Our society and country at large are stressed from various social, political and economic issues which are directly affecting the conditions of the Indian youth massively. If we believe that the development of the country is in the hands of the youth then we cannot ignore their own problems, ignoring the issues of the youth is just like giving increase to other problems instead of minimizing them. And also we cannot neglect the undeveloped section of the youth and make the developed section the same; solely responsible for the progress of the country. Therefore, focussing upon both of the sections of the youth is must and, see the irony that not even a single but both of the sections of the young generations are facing various problems in the present time which hinder their own growth, progress and upgrading.

Statement of the problem and need for the study

Tamil Nadu is also one of the important coastal states of India. Even then the socio-economic conditions of the fishermen are very poor. They have been facing educational and housing problems till date. Generally they live in very crowded, congested and unhygienic places which are contributing to a lot of health problems and lead to an increase of drug abusers also. Owing to the poor income of the family, the members of the family were forced to borrow credits to satisfy the basic needs of them. These poor Economic conditions of the fisherman community would be hindrances to their children's growth in educational and employment aspects. The fishers work for a long time, they become addicts for drugs. And they don't have time to sit with their children to discuss their needs and problems. Because of this reason, the majority from the age group of 15 to 35 are not continuing their

education. This is the most potential age to develop to their educational needs and employment needs rather they develop behavioural problems.

Methodology

The descriptive research design was adopted to conduct the research and used both primary and secondary data was collected to understand the problem. To collect data from 205 respondents out of 2010 population random sampling method was used. The present research was conducted among the youth population from the age group of 15-35 years fisherman community at Thiruvotriyur Kuppam, Chennai. The detail of questionnaire contains the personal questions to understand the social status, educational and employment status, Kuppuswami's socio-economic scale was applied to analyse the level of economic status of the respondents. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were applied to conduct the study.

DATA ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

Table 1 distribution of the respondent's personal details

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	60	29.3
Male	145	70.7
Total	205	100
Religion		
Christian	14	6.8
Hindu	190	92.7
Muslim	1	0.5
Total	205	100
Community		
SC	29	14.1
ST	11	5.4
MBC	156	76.11
BC	9	4.4
Total	205	100

Major observation from table 1: The study covered Majority (70.7%) male population, a vast majority from Hindu religion and from that a majority (76.11%) were from the MBC group. This finding supports the census of Tamil Nadu. The statistical data of Tamil Nadu also reveals that most of the fisherman community are from Hindu religion and belong to the MBC category.

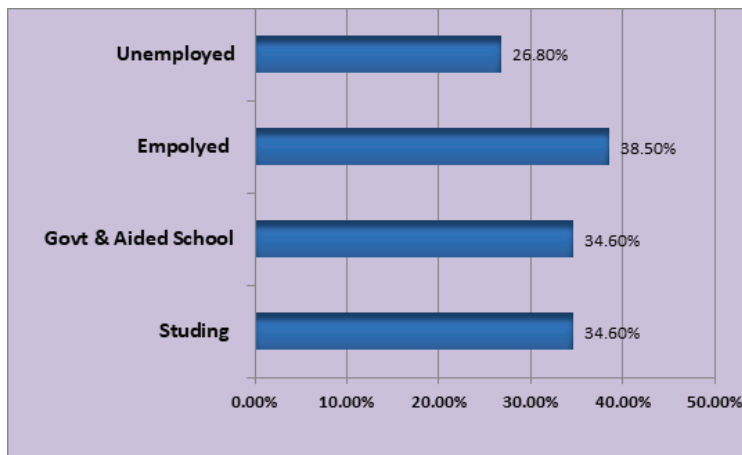


Figure 1: Status of the fisherman youth at ThiruvotriyurKuppam

Major Observation from the figure : 34.5 percent of the respondents were alone studying and 38.5 percent of them were working in the blue colour type of job and remaining 26.8 percent of them not employed. Those who are studying, they were all getting education from the government and government aided stream programme. The respondents were revealed during the FGD session, that they were not much motivated by school teachers and the respondents were denied that training conducted to develop the personality of the individual. Therefore they were not performing well in school. And they were also not oriented about the policies and programs available to support their education and employment development of the fisherman community.

Table 2: respondents' aim

Respondents' Aim	Frequency	Percentage
Professional	57	32.2
Pursue Higher Education	66	29.8
Fishing	39	24
Dont Know	39	24

Inference : 32 2% of them want to become a professional , 29.8% of them aim to pursue higher education and the equal (24%) number of respondents were not aware about what they want to become in their life and want to continue their own fishing job. Even the literature also says many youth want to continue their family profession. Most pathetic condition of this finding is that few had no idea about what they want to become in life.

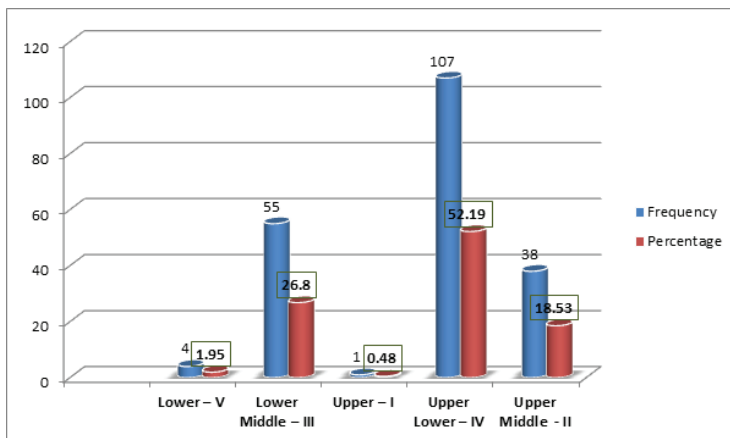


Figure 2: level of economic status of the respondents

Major finding from the above figure : 52.19 percent of the respondents belonged to the **upper lower IV status**, 26.8 percent of the respondents belonged to the lower middle III status, 18.53 percent of the respondents belong to the upper middle II status, 1.95% of them belong to the lower V status and 0.48 percent of the respondents belong to the upper status. This finding is supporting the finding of **Jaya Das & Sourav Das (2021)**

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF THE QUALITATIVE DATA:

The study conducted case studies and focused group discussions to analyse the education, employment & problem related to behaviour of the youth. These methods were used to gather data from the participant and the women in the community as well. Two focus group discussions (FDG) were conducted in March 2023 with 30 respondents to explore their views on youth problems existing in their communities and also to explore participation of the local government and NGOs to solve the problems prevailing in the community. The respondents were divided into two based on gender. The women group had a separate and men group had separate focussed group discussions. The qualitative data collected from age 40 to 70 years old.

Key findings of the Focussed Group Discussion

The main findings from data generated in the focus group discussions are summarized below:

School Dropouts

A lot of school dropouts and college dropouts are present not just in the community even in the participant group. School college dropout is a

common issue due to poor economic background and the breadwinners are the dropouts. Consequently they are not able to continue their education even if they find a way to continue. Majority of people drop out of college during the first year due to their inability to pay the fee of the college for the second and third years respectively. As far as observed a lot of young adults in the community are ambitious and have goals. Owing to lack of family support and economical conditions they were not allowed to aim high and to achieve also.

Alcohol addict

The majority of the group members who attended the Focus group discussion seem to have no smoking or drinking habits as they practise sports culture. The participants highlighted that the adults of the community mostly aged above 40 have the habit of drinking, especially the ones sold illegally. Most of the family heads identified have the habit of drinking yet community members do not appreciate smoking as much. Due to drinking problems most fishermen die at an early age and because of that many women are widowed at an early age. One of the participants expressed that a 30 years old fisherman was dead on the boat due to excessive drinking right in the middle of the sea.

There are instances in the community in which a lot of men have also been paralyzed and died due to drinking problems.

Drug Addiction

One major problem in the community is drug addiction also locally known as Ganja is sold in an illegal way. Reportedly a lot of the youngsters are addicted to it. One of the participants also highlighted a Ganja wholesale supplier who lives in the neighbouring community and also bribes the police when they come to question about it. The major reason behind this drug addiction is known to be unemployment, family issues and distress. It is to be noted that drug addiction is growing among the community. When asked about the group's views on how to control the same, they suggested that developing the sportsmanship spirit can restrict the youngsters from entering this path. Also, when enquired on why the community hasn't been reporting regarding this, and it's informed that those who are selling might also be a relation or they did not want to bring troubles for them.

Mental Health Status

A lot of young adults face depression due to unemployment, poor economic conditions, family issues and personal reasons. Due to this many number of people are pushed into the verge of suicide and some people also express violence in the ambit of depression. Some hit their wives while some hit each

other and made a ruckus in the community. Alcoholism and drug addiction are major consequences of mental instability of the youth in the community.

Generational Occupation

More than 55 percent of the community youth population undertake generational occupation which is fishing. Due to this many fishermen have a hard time in capturing fishes and have to go into a greater length and depth of the ocean. Also fishermen who did not possess a boat earlier have now started taking loans and are buying a boat on their own. This causes more economical problems in the family due to stress of loans and also more competition which is not healthy. Some educated youth of the community prefer the generational occupation just for the privilege. Yet still some educated populations adopt technological innovations in fishing.

Recommendations given by the members for the betterment of the community

Career Guidance

The group jointly suggested that they don't have any knowledge about the existing career paths. As most of them were youngsters they had requested to have a career guidance session periodically. As they were not aware of the existing courses, they tend to take a common course which was taken by someone they already know.

Skill Training

Major suggestion of the group was regarding creation of the tuition centre and the coaching centre for government examinations, coast guard training and other such opportunities. A lot of talented young sportsmen are present in the community who can achieve great miles with little bit of training. The participants also registered that none of them are in Government Fisheries department or any other Government Jobs from the community and also felt that it is a main reason for the poor development of the community. Also, they were informed that there wasn't any training and awareness for the same.

Support for Sports

Lack of education and proper skills most young men of the community chose sports as their career and are not able to move forward due to existing corruption and dominance by other communities. Participants highlighted the need for support from the government as well as private sectors for enhancing the career in sports. It was also acknowledged by one of the educated participants that encouraging sports culture will also be a dramatic step taken in the prevention of youth falling into the drug trap.

Conclusion

The participants of the group addressed these major issues and highlighted the major recommendations. The youth of the community are deprived of their chances and opportunities because of their economic status. They have to be uplifted in terms of economic conditions and skills in order for their better future. Proper guidance and support is required for the youth population to channelize them into becoming empowered citizens of the country.

KEY FINDINGS OD CASE STUDY REPORTS

Framework in programmatic context

This section presents a brief overview of the findings of the case study which illustrates specific features of the youth problem. Each case study offers a short summary of the youth environment, basic needs for educational & employment. It then elaborates on some of the most poignant information points for each location with regards to the life satisfaction of the respondents. However, each case study highlights a few dimensions that were emphasised by participants in this study as particularly important.

Summary of the case studies

The study conducted 10 case studies. Most of the people belong to lower economic status. This finding supports the finding of SkNazibar Rahaman&etl (2022). Their study was conducted in Bihar and used the Kuppuswami socio-economic scale and found that the majority (93%) of the respondents were from lower economic status. Majority of the youth group are facing more challenges to get the right type of job despite completing their educational qualification. It was interrogated and found that they lack employability skills such as spokenEnglish soft skill knowledge to get the right job.Lack of Basic English proficiency leads to unemployment among the youth population it demotivates the other younger children to get education and those kids are dropping their school. Those who are dropping their education from the age group of 10 – 15 year’s they are becoming drug addicts. This finding supports the finding of VeenaPriya S K. Sreeranganadhan.

These children never obey their parents. Most of them were not aware about the schemes for the fishermen which are given by the government. If someone tries to clarify the ill effects of it or health problems, they are saying that “Eppanalumsagathanevenum” (English translate: one or other day all are going to die)” so no problem this is the statement made by the youth.Girls are getting marriage at early ages because of lower economic

status. They don't have enough support from parents to pursue their higher education. Statement of one girl "For me, I can still think about future plans for myself. I know marriage makes a lot of changes in my life and adds a lot of responsibility. Sometimes I am worried about my child also because of this kind of environment so I am very cautious"

FINDING OF THE CASE STUDY

1. Drug abuse and alcohol addict is a major problem.
2. Career awareness is very low.
3. Many youth are having more interest in sports activities but sports developmental activities not taken place in the community.
4. Awareness on government schemes is very low.
5. English literacy need to be improved for better placement based on their qualification.

Social Work Intervention for Education & Employment Development:

Awareness & Outreach: generate awareness about the significance of education within the community. Organize workshops, seminars, and community meetings to highlight the long-term benefits of education. Make use of local leaders, influencers, and role models to advocate for education and support parents to prioritize their children's education.

Set up Early Childhood Education: it focuses on providing foundational skills to young children. This can help to build a strong educational base for their future schooling

Scholarships and Financial Support: Recommend scholarships, grants, or financial incentives to families who prioritize education. This can help offset the financial burden of sending children to school instead of involving them in fishing activities.

Vocational Training: Integrate vocational training programs that line up with the fishing industry. This way, youth can acquire both formal education and practical skills associated with their community's livelihood.

Community-Based Learning Centers: Establish community-based learning centers to give tutoring, homework assistance, and additional support to complement their school education.

Parental Involvement: Employ parents and guardians in the education process. Hold workshops that educate parents how they can support their children's education at home.

Identify and address specific barriers that put off youth from pursuing education, such as gender disparities, lack of transportation, and inadequate infrastructure.

Collaboration with NGOs and Government Agencies: Associate with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local governments, and other pertinent stakeholders to develop inclusive programs that address educational gaps within the fishing community.

Social Work Intervention for Drug Free Community:

Education and Awareness: Give education about the risks and consequences of drug abuse. Arrange workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns tailored to the fishing community's specific challenges. Emphasize the impact of drug abuse on health, livelihoods, and overall community well-being.

Addressing Socioeconomic Factors: Concentrate underlying socioeconomic challenges that might contribute to drug abuse. Creating opportunities for skill development and employment can reduce vulnerability.

Parental Involvement: Instruct parents about the signs of drug abuse and engage them in preventive efforts. Strengthening family bonds can contribute to a helpful environment for youth.

Teamwork with Healthcare Providers: Social Workers should work with local healthcare team to carry out health awareness sessions that emphasize the ill-effects of drug abuse on physical and mental well-being.

Mentorship and Role Models: Recognize positive role models within the community who have successfully avoided drug abuse. Their stories and guidance can inspire and guide the youth.

Community Engagement: Involve the community in addressing the issue. Create platforms for open consultation, where concerns related to drug abuse can be raised and solutions can be collectively developed.

Alternative Activities: Provide substitute recreational and creative activities that engage youth and keep them away from drugs. This could comprise sports, cultural events, vocational training, and community development projects.

Collaboration with Law Enforcement: it's needed to collaborate with law enforcement agencies to address the drugs related issues in the community. This can help reduce the supply and accessibility of drugs.

Peer Education: Empower elder youth who have resisted drug abuse to educate their peers about the risks. Peer-led initiatives can be principally effective in relaying relevant information.

Long-Term Support: Recognize that drug abuse is an ongoing process. Preserve support systems and follow-up mechanisms to ensure that positive changes are sustained.

Conclusion & Suggestion

It can be concluded that the government and non-governmental organizations have to take huge responsibility & a lot of initiatives to improve their economic condition. The study also found that the respondents had a great interest towards pursuing education in the initial stage of education but after some period of time they lost their concentration towards education because of being unable to cope up with other students in terms of knowledge gathering. Since their parents are not much educated they were all not in a position to train their children. These people while joining higher education mingle with other students and feel inferior with others and that reflects on their performance. Slowly become drug addicts in the community and lead to suicide incidence in the community. Especially to deal with drug abuse issues, the government should appoint school social workers to address the problems of the children from the beginning stage itself.

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