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CONSTRAINTS OF OUTMIGRANT FISHERMEN DIASPORA IN KANYAKUMARI

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Abstract: In country fishermen diaspora in Kanyakumari is getting a wide spread attention now a days, for Tamil fisherfolk in the coastal belt of Kanyakumari is very famous for shark hunting. It is a vital livelihood strategy for all migrants especially for coastal people in Kanyakumari. Migration trend in the coastal belt of Kanyakumari has taken a great boost due to the bad effect of tsunami.

Keyword: Constraints , Diaspora , Outmigrant , Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

The tendency of shifting from place to place or from one occupation to another can be due to many reasons viz geographic, demographic and climatic, differences in knowledge and skills, availability of fish stock, local clashes, employment opportunity, high income, future prospect and market orientation. The incountry fishermen in Kanyakumari faces lot of hardships in their destination. They often fare discriminations and exploitation from middle men.

OBJECTIVES

The in country coastal Tamil migrant fisher folk encounter many problems in their destinations. The present study focuses on the major constraints encountered by the shark hunting fisher folk of Thoothoor, Colachel, Chinnathurai and Vallavilai in Kanyakumari.

METHODOLOGY

The constraints of in country diaspora of Tamil fisher folk have received wide attention. The population of this study consisted of the shark hunting coastal migrants of Thoothoor, Colachel, Chinnathurai and Vallavilai in Kanyakumari anchored in the landing centers of Kollam, Neendakara, Kochi, Kozhikode, Kannur, Kasargod and Malappa. Though Tamil fisherfolk are residing in the fish landing centers of Kollam, Kochi, Kozhikode and Kannur, Kochi is the one locality with the largest concentration of this group. Kochi was, therefore, selected for intensive study. The sample consisted of 50 Tamil shark hunters (10 each from Thoothoor, Colachel, Chinnathurai, Eravi Puthenthurai and Vallavilai) residing in Kochi, drawn on a systematic random sampling basis. In addition to interview schedule, participant observation was also used for collecting data on various problems encountered by Tamil shark hunters.

The development pattern infavour of mechanised sectors with increased capital investment have made a great boost of active fishermen. Actually this has resulted to the mergence of spatially mobile fishermen group, which could be termed as migrant fisherfolk. They can be either temporary or permanent settlers. One of such important fisherfolk who are fishing off Kerala, Karnataka, Maharastra and Gujarat coasts is Kanyakumari fisherfolk.

Most of the migrants belong to the fishing villages of Thoothoor, Chinnathurai, Vallavilai, Neerodi, Muttom and Kodimunai. These fishers go for multi-day fishing during the season and anchor any of the landing centres of Kerala, Karnataka, Gujarat and Maharastra coast. The diasporic pattern of shark fishers in Thoothoor, Colachel, Chinnathurai and Vallavilai regions in Kanyakumari showed that 30 percent were local fishers and 70 percent were migrants. Among the incountry diaspora shark fishers 95 percent relocate to coasts of Vizhinjam, Kollam, Cochin, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod in Kerala state; Malappa, Karvar Mangalore and Gangoli in Karnataka state; Ratnagiri, worli and Bombay in Maharastra state; Veravel, Porbantar and Okka in Gujarat state; Goa and Pondicherry.

Technological advancement has facilitated fish finding devices like Global Positioning, System (GPS), Eco-sounder, mobile, wireless and laptop to boost fish stock. Incomparison to non diasporic units, the capital investment in migration units has increased considerably due to increase in size of vessel with storage capacity and use of electronic and communication devices. The average investment among incountry migrants for multi-day mechanical boats varies from Rs.25 lakh to 50 lakh.

FINDINGS

The prospects of coastal migration are attracting more and more fishermen but there are inherent constraints related to in country diaspora. The common problems encountered by the shark hunters of Thoothoor, Colachel, Chinnathurai, Eravi Puthenthurai and Vallavilai in Kanyakumari District are the following.

- Out of 50, 49 respondents said they are frequently caught by Indian as well as foreign custom officers and are physically tortured by them.
- III - treatment of custom officers by labeling migrants as terrorists was felt by 95% of outmigrants.
- 30 out of 50 respondents said they are forced to pay

bribe, because custom officers say that they are holding improper documents.

- The exploitation of middlemen and fish traders due to ignorance of language in the place of destination was felt by 75% of respondents.
- 42 out of 50 respondents told they are bound to forced sales at lower prices due to advance money received from fish merchants before the voyage.
- Just below half of the respondents (47%) agreed that they are having health problems like Malaria, hepatitis scratching on body due to over heat and cold during long fishing trip without adequate protective measures.
- Majority of respondents (80%) supported frequent capturing of boats and fishermen by Srilankan and Pakistan coast guards due to crossing of maritime borders.
- 36 out of 50 outmigrants responded missing of fishing boats and fishermen occurred frequently in migratory fishing and negligence from government in tracing them.
- Frequent clashes with locals and middle men of landing centres in the destination was experienced by 50% of respondents.
- Majority of the opinion that they face ridiculing, illtreatment harassment, and discrimination by the locals in the destination.
- Price discrimination in purchasing fishing requisites and other materials in different states are felt by 55% of the respondents.
- Above half of respondents (72%) admitted that they faced accommodation problem at the place of destination.
- Major portion of the respondents (92%) admitted that they spend nearly two lakh for one voyage in terms of petrol, food and other items and returning without any fish stock and without seeing their loved ones at home after a long fishing trip of one month or more.
- A larger portion of the respondents (75%) revealed that the modernisation of boats enhanced the economic burden of boat owners consequently polarisation of fishermen to owners and works has taken place.

CONCLUSION

The above observations thus clearly indicates that the problems encountered by the shark hunters of Kanyakumari fisher folk face psychological disturbances like stress, anxiety, frustration, and economic losses due to the exploitation and unnecessary intervention of fish merchants, money lenders, mediators, local people and even custom officials. Frequent missing and capturing of fishing vessels and fishermen also create added tension and heavy economic burden not only to fishermen but also to their families. Therefore it is to be suggested that ongoing campaign, advocacy efforts and intervention of local civil authorities, NOGs and social workers are to ensure that the right and dignity of the coastal Tamil migrants had to be protected against exploitation and these have to be made an integral part of migration polices and programmes. Formation of deep sea fishermen sangams, supporting and fostering the spirit of solidarity among encountering migrant group is very much needed to curb the constraints of migrant fisher folk. They have to unite and fight together against the problems faced by them.

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