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Functioning of fisheries co-operative societies: A special reference to Uttara Kannada District, Karnataka State

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Abstract

In this paper, it was detailed on Structural and functional aspects of Fisheries cooperative societies by locating brief organizational aspects area and its membership, awareness on Fisheries cooperative societies, fundamental issues of awareness, reasons for joining cooperative societies, managerial aspects, facilities and services of cooperative societies, membership aspects, relations between the production and cooperative societies, sale and payments under cooperative societies, nature of activity in Fisheries co-operative society, credit assistance, employment and livelihoods in co-operatives, infrastructural facilities for fish marketing and other institutional aspects. In fact, Fisheries cooperatives have emerged from the philosophical foundations, as it was discussed in previous chapters, of communist ideological frameworks though these societies have been promoted by the government under the Department of Fisheries which took up the matter with great importance for the socio-economic development of Fisheries along with the scheme for the mechanization of fishing boats.

Keywords: Fishermen, Structural, Fisheries Cooperative Societies

Introduction

The successive governments have encouraged the organizational based primary village cooperatives with the promotion of incentives such as the provision of mechanized boats, long-term loans and grants in inland fishing areas. Moreover, governments have made it clear that the high-subsidy mechanized boats would be given only to Fisheries cooperatives. But in dry land and semi-land areas like Karnataka state, the government's proposal cannot be applied as these societies function purely on seasonal mode since the tanks largely dependent on rainy season and to some extent canal irrigation. Nonetheless, the canal system has its intrinsic relation with rainy seasons. Hence, rain water is the significant factor in this study's tanks and societies' areas.

It was not clear in the field areas even that whether the government support was through the cooperatives or through individuals, but it was clear observed individual approach in the study locations in terms of receiving government support. However, government recognition was observed in all the societies and they have registered under the fishery societies. Though some of the institutional issues such as statutory targets, names on muster rolls, share capital of society, registration, cooperative committees, regular meetings, managerial aspects, procedures in employment and livelihoods 'promotion, distribution of the resources were largely observed. In early 50s in Karnataka state, the fisheries resources of Uttara Kannada, Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts were thoroughly surveyed during the first plan period. Rare types of fish have been imported from outside the state and introduced in state tanks. Further, for extensive fishery activities, community based societies were formed to improve the conditions of Fisheries and fishing techniques as well. Thus, 54 cooperative societies were formed in Uttara Kannada, Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts and conferred the leasing rights of fresh water fisheries resources (Rao, N.S. 1986: 123-124). Thus, the district of Uttara Kannada has long history in functioning cooperatives of fisheries since the beginning of plans. Hence, it is significant to locate the present focus on Uttara Kannada district. To begin with, awareness on the Fisheries societies was analyzed and further it was extended to its institutional aspects.

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Awareness of Fisheries Cooperative Societies

This research was conducted in order to assess the role of cooperatives in Fisheries community development in Uttara Kannada district. The data for this research were obtained by sampling the opinion of about 150 respondents all of which are members of different cooperatives in the study area using simple random sampling technique. The research instrument used was questionnaire administration and the data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages). The standard strength of selected villages is 15 and its total membership is 150 in fisheries cooperative societies (Table 1).

Table 1: Members' Awareness

S. No.	Awareness	In No. S	Frequency (%)
1.	Fisheries Cooperative Societies	150	100
2.	Awareness through Friends and relatives	150	100

Source: Field Survey

The study showed that 100 percent of the respondents were aware of Fisheries cooperative societies. Further, the study was tried to understand the source of awareness as there were huge responses reflected positively on awareness of societies. The major source of getting awareness on the societies is largely emerged as friends and relatives (Table 1).

Membership Status

Table 2: Membership Strength

S. No.	Strength of Membership	Societies	Frequency
1	500	26	34.15
2	800	11	12.2
3	1500	27	39.02
4	2000	7	14.63
5	Total	71	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Membership in societies is also an important aspect as the societies have diverse nature in terms of social unity and sharing benefits in general and sharing benefits of fishing and profitable marketing of fish products in fishery societies in specific. Keeping in view of this, the study attempted to analyze the membership pattern in this specific study context. The societies' membership is different from one society another ranging from 500 to 2000 and largely divided into four classifications in terms of membership: 500, 800, 1500 and 2000. However, 26 societies have its membership 500 – Sanikatta, Gokarna, Bada, Kagal, Yellapur, Sirasi, Malagi, Pala, Mundagod, Dandeli, Banavasi, Siddapur, Kathgal and Heghade and so on. The membership of 800 category of societies are found only in 11 societies – Manjaguni, Dubbanashashi, Chendia, Horti and Manki apart from other five, however the strength of 1500 was seen in the following societies – Majali, Sadashivagad, Kajubhag, Shunker, Amadahalli, Araga, Keni, Alvedande, Ankola, Shirali, Kaikini, Kumata and soon. To end with membership of societies, the strength of membership about 2000 members was observed in Bhaithkol, Belekeri, Tadri, Gangavali, Mavinakurve and Honnavar and Alvekodi village (Table 2).

Enquiries conducted among the Fisheries of the area. The views reveal that the benefits of these cooperatives were

given to only active members as profits usually come at the expense of the firm and its shareholders' serious efforts – Fisheries community or members. Ordinary Fisheries can also have the share of membership in the cooperative societies. The share amount, including profits, membership fee, was probably advanced by the society but it was viewed by the member that the profits were distributed only when significant profit deposited in the society. Sometimes societies were function merely to avail schemes of government and in such conditions some of the societies registered with a view to avail the assistance offered by the Government.

But, in this specific context, the majority of the Fisheries, including those who have membership in the societies have not received assistance from governments. Though some of individual benefits are observed, majority viewed that the cooperative movement has not brought about any tangible benefits to the Fisheries in the study areas either in their exploitation of the fishery wealth or in their redemption from the exploitation of the middlemen. The society is governed by its committee, which is chaired by the society's president, according to a set of statutes and standing procedures laid down by the members themselves. The members of committee and the president are elected from and by its fellows, the basic members of the society, who are themselves elected by existing fellows.

Reasons to be Member of Co-operative Society

Generally cooperatives are an autonomous or independent association of persons who voluntarily cooperate for their mutual economic, social, and cultural benefits. There are different kinds of cooperatives including non-profit community organizations and businesses that are owned and managed by the people who use its services either a consumer cooperative or the people who work there (a worker cooperative) or by the people who live there (a housing cooperative). Cooperatives are typically based on the cooperative values of "self-help, self-responsibility, democracy and equality, equity and solidarity" and "the seven cooperative principles" (International Cooperative Alliance, 2012). Based on these fundamental conceptual understandings, the study attempted to map the reasons to be part of the cooperatives by an individual.

Table 3: Reasons to be member in the society

S. No	Reasons	Frequency	%
1.	To get more production	40	26.67
2.	To get adequate price for production	99	66.00
3.	To get more profit on sale	11	7.33
4.	Total	150	100.00

Source: Field Study

The data represents that majority i.e., 66 per cent of them reasoned to get adequate price for their production followed by to get more production (26.67 per cent) and to get more profits (7.33 per cent). The conceptual understandings also substantiate that cooperatives help people in maximizing mutual economic, social, and cultural benefits. Further it was understood that whether the co-operate societies are helping the members to improve the wages, income and working conditions, it was absolutely observed in the study that the societies facilitate them (members) in better working and income conditions. Apart from the

membership, of the total 150 sampled respondents, 75 per cent members have hold different positions in respective societies and only 25 percent haven't hold the positions. All the societies or cooperatives selected in this study are registered or recognized by the government. Moreover, it was seen that all the members have paid some amount of fees towards their (individual) membership. The membership fee, according to the members, is an instrument through which unity, responsibility and accountability can be built among the members.

Nature of Society

The nature of activity of Fisheries cooperative society is largely seen in two ways - Providing credit, Marketing (30.33 per cent); and Marketing, Processing (69.67 per cent) of the total 150 responses. It may be noted that marketing and processing of fish products is emerged as major activity of the society. The members of society generally depends up on providing credit to meet individual demands rather professional demands in terms of buying nets or boats, however marketing services largely useful when the bulk of fish products available. It was observed that marketing and processing services largely limited to very few of them as it possible to the Fisheries those who have capacity to catch the fish products and halve it into different market dimensions.

Forms of Assistance of the society

A purposive sampling was used in selecting 60 respondents all of whom were members of different cooperative societies. Thirty villages were selected from the district. These villages formed the societies under the societies act. Twenty respondents were randomly selected from each village. Therefore a total of 60 respondents were used to generate the survey data. As part of it the data was focused on "if you are getting any credit assistance from the society, please specify the purpose". The below table represents the various kinds of purposes as these were established based on the open views expressed by the respondents.

Table 4: Assistance of Societies

S. No	Forms of Assistance	Frequency	%
1	For buying Fishing Boat	55	36.67
2	For buying Fishing Boat, For running process centers	3	2.00
3	For Marketing activities	5	3.33
4	For purchasing net and other instruments	85	56.67
5	For purchasing net, other instruments, and marketing activities	2	1.33
6	Total	150	100.00

Source: Field Study

However, majority were viewed that the assistance was taken to purchase net and other instruments (56.67 per cent) followed by buying Fishing Boat (36.67 per cent) apart from these two major assistance under the society, other purposes were emerged such as running process centers, marketing activities, purchasing net and other instruments, for marketing activities.

Society's Functional Aspect

The following section deals with society's institutional aspects including its operational activities. Initially it begins

with institutional affiliation further extends wide ranging issues of its internal operations. All the societies are registered with the department. There are three types of names of cooperative societies were found in the selected field areas - Menugarara Sahakari Sanga, Olanadu Menugarara Sahakari Sanga and Mahila Menugarara Sahakari Sanga. However, 42 of the total 71 societies have been functioning under the name of Menugarara Sahakari Sanga such as Majali, Kodibhag, Devbhag, Sadhashivgad, Sunkheri and Nandangadda, Kajubag, Bhaithkol, Karwar Wada, Amdalli, Todur, Avarsha, Kodoor, Keni, Belekeri, Gangavali, Manjaguni, Dubbanashashi, Kagal, Bada, Chittakula and Alvedande and so on, whereas 25 societies are under the Olanadu Menugarara Sahakari Sanga such as Yellapur, Sirasi, Mundagod, Pala, Banavasi, Dandeli, Haliyal, Malagi, Siddapur, Manchikeri, Bandal, and so on and 4 societies are under the Mahila Menugarara Sahakari Sanga such as Ankola, Tadri, Honnavar and Kumata. However, it was observed based on the interaction with the Fisheries community that there is an approach of 'quantum oriented policy' which resulted in a phenomenal increase in the number of cooperative societies. It means that the government's policy initiative have stimulated to emerge or increase the number of Fisheries societies. They were registered with formal verification though procedural issues were involved in the registration process to ensure that they were genuine Fisheries organizations and not just fictitious names in a registration book.

Table 5: Membership Positions in the Society

S. No.	Positions Held	Frequency	%
1	Yes	113	75.3
2	No	37	24.7
3	Total	150	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Initially the question was asked the respondents - 'do you hold any post your co-operative society?' The responses summarized based on the data (table - 5) and it reveals that majority (75.3 per cent) of respondents viewed they hold some position and remaining were not in any kind of positions except membership.

Table 6: Society in Integrated Services

S. No.	Society (N=150)	Frequency	%
1.	Society registered/recognized	150	100.00
2.	Satisfactory facilities /services by the societies	150	100.00
3.	Membership fee paid	150	100.00
4.	Providing vehicles for transporting fish catch	150	100.00
5.	Vehicles insulated	150	100.00
6.	Providing cold storages facilities	150	100.00
7.	Working regularly	150	100.00
8.	Providing updated price information	150	100.00
9.	helping the Fisheries to market their excess catch	150	100.00

Source: Field Survey

The above table gives information about satisfaction of the respondents about services rendered by cooperative societies. The services are of two categories one is granting loans another one providing appliances, to respondents such as caste nets ice boxes, and two-wheeler vehicles. The loans taken by respondents are used for purchasing fish seed, repairing and purchasing caste nets etc. It was also seen that the vehicles provided by the society to them are insulated as the data revealed from the question – ‘whether the vehicle are insulated or not’. Further, the society is also providing vehicles for transporting fish from landing centers to the market area and providing cold storages facilities at major collection centers as almost all viewed positively in this aspect. Further the study tried to understand whether they are working regularly, it was observed that all members (selected) were viewed positively. Further, whether the society is providing updated price information system to people through various media and helping the Fisheries to market their excess catch that they could not market on their own, it was seen that all the responses answered in optimistic.

In response to the helping the Fisheries to market their excess catch that they could not market on their own, there are two different ways of serving were emerged in the study - Marketing Dry fish (46.00 per cent) and Providing Cold Storage (54.00 per cent) though later one relatively more in terms of acceptance by the selected respondents.

Table 7: Society’s helping in Marketing the Excess Catch

S. No.	Serving	Frequency	%
1	Marketing Dry fish	69	46.00
2	Providing Cold Storage	81	54.00
3	Total	150	100.00

Source: Field Study

In continuation with previous statement, it was tried to map the society’s role in directly purchasing fish and converting it is a value added items. However, about 73 per cent supported views emerged as it has direct role in its value added items though one-fourth of the total respondents disallowed.

Table 8: Society’s direct role in purchasing

S. No	Responses	Frequency	%
1	Yes	144	96.00
2	No	6	4.00
3	Total	150	100.00

Source: Field Study

Functioning of Fisheries Co-operative Societies

As it was previously revealed, the field survey was conducted to evaluate the role of Fisheries cooperative in the development of fisheries resources and improved incomes in Uttara Kannada district. The study was conducted with aid of questionnaires administered in selected fishing villages on whether these societies are supportive and economically viable; the results revealed that 47.33 per cent of the respondents were acknowledged societies are socially supportive and 35.33 per cent indicated these are economically viable whereas 17.33 per cent viewed formal support they have. It clearly points out that the societies must further improve its supportive nature and economical viability.

Table 9: Opinion on Functional Aspects

S. No	Opinion	Frequency	%
1	Socially Supportive	71	47.33
2	Economically Viable	53	35.33
3	Formal Support	26	17.33
4	Total	150	100.00

Source: Field Study

However, the above table indicates considerable satisfaction on Fisheries co-operative societies as they are functioning up to the mark and helping the people timely when they are in need by extending all sorts of cooperation by purchasing fishes, preserving fishes auctioneering the fishes and by providing loans for purchasing vehicles and material etc.

Support of Cooperate Society

As India is mainly an agrarian society with more than half of its population still depending upon rural economy, cooperative societies are playing significant role in rural economy. Cooperatives cover more than 97 per cent of Indian villages, whether some of them registered or some of them are not, some run by its members and some by the government. Cooperatives are playing remarkably in rural economy. For instance, Gujarat’s Dairy co-operative and Maharashtra’s sugar co-operative proved its significance. Main intention of the cooperative was to get the poor and indebted farmers out of poverty and out from the clutches of money lenders. In 1951 there were 1,81,000 cooperatives of all kinds in India and this number increased to manifold within short span of time. During 2007-08 there were 1,50,000 primary credit cooperatives and some 2,60,000 non-credit primary societies of all types. In India there are four major types of cooperatives – The Primary agricultural credit or service societies, Agricultural non-credit societies, Agricultural co-operative marketing societies and Co-operative farming societies. However, the following data presents how cooperatives are involved in developing the communities. As the data shows, majority responded that the fisheries cooperatives involved in providing infrastructure facilities and about 28 per cent viewed they have supported in improving working condition and wages. It may be understood that the cooperatives have capacity to facilitate better avenues to improve fishing communities (See table - 10).

Table 10: Support of Cooperate Society

S. No	Support of Cooperate Society	Frequency	%
1.	Better infrastructure facilities	107	71.33
2.	Wages/income, Working conditions	43	28.67
3.	Total	150	100.00

Source: Field Study

Nature of Cooperative society

The nature of cooperative society largely was providing credit, marketing and processing however in terms of data which abstracted from the field reflects two different and interchangeable with minute variations - Marketing, Processing (30.67 per cent) and Providing credit, Marketing (69.33 per cent).

Table 11: Payment through Cooperative Society

S. No	Opinion	Frequency	%
1	Marketing, Processing	46	30.67
2	Providing credit, Marketing	104	69.33
3	Total	150	100.00

Source: Field Study

Marketing

The data presented on the question – ‘state whether the marketing assistance is being provided for members’. As it reflects, 95.33 per cent respondents positively accepted with a view of society’s marketing assistance to the members of respective societies.

Table 12: Marketing Assistance

S. No	Opinion	Frequency	%
1	Yes	143	95.33
2	No	7	4.67
3	Total	150	100.00

Source: Field Study

However, the following research questions - is there any provision in the society to extract oil from fish, what type of fishes are being used for extracting oil, state how the society is marketing the extracted oil product, is there any provision in the society to make fish meal, if the answer is yes, whether it is running regularly, where is the society selling their produced fish meal, is there any provision in the society to make fish sauce, if the answer is yes, whether it is running regularly, is there any provision in the society to make fish emulsion, what is the method of marketing of the fish emulsion product, is there any provision in the society to provide packed fish or loose packing/bottled, if the answer is yes, what form of package /canned fish or loose packing / bottled, is there any provision in the society to manufacture fish glue, if the answer is yes, which is fish mainly used for manufacturing fish glue, is there any provision in the society to make health care capsules using fish as raw material, if the answer is yes, which type or part fish used for this purpose, if the answer is yes, please state the mode of marketing of these products, is there any provision in the society to process tuna fish/exclusive tuna processing unit, if the answer is yes, what variety of tuna fishes, whether the society is running any unit to produce export oriented items like boneless fish etc., if the answer is yes, what variety of products are being manufactured, manufactured products are being exported to which countries, whether the society is running any institution to teach the preparation of value added items, if the answer is yes, what special trainings are they getting, is there any provision in your society for processing fish waste to run a manufacturing units are invalid in this context.

Nonetheless, since the technological instrument were not available with these societies, the society is selling fish waste in local and outside markets though this produced manure has rich economic value. Thus the questions probed in this aspect are valid and need to be looking them at in policy perspectives. Due to lack of such infrastructural facilities, rich and significant amount of profits and livelihoods or employment opportunities have been missing as another provision is to cultivate and market ornamental fish in the society is missing.

Problems of Processing and Marketing of Fish

Apart from all issues which dealt in previous sections, focus was put on mapping the problems which are emerged in processing and marketing of fish manufacturing and value added fish products. The major problems within this specific are - Lack of adequate infrastructural facilities, Absence of adequate Marketing Knowledge, Lack of modern communication facilities, Lack of adequate financial credit, Absence of any government help and guidance, Lack of training on the preparation of value added products, Involvement of private parties, Lack of support from the members identified.

Table 13: Problems in Processing and Marketing of fish manufacturing

S. No	Problems (N=150)	Frequency	%
1	Lack of adequate infrastructural facilities	1	0.67
2	Absence of adequate Marketing Knowledge	95	63.33
3	Lack of modern communication facilities	1	0.67
4	Lack of adequate financial credit	1	0.67
5	Absence of any government help and guidance	5	3.33
6	Lack of training on the preparation of value added products	1	0.67
7	Involvement of private parties	10	6.67
8	Lack of support from the members	25	16.67

Source: Field Study

The data reveals that majority of respondents viewed that the problem of Absence of adequate Marketing Knowledge (63.33 per cent) is ranked as prominent problem among others followed by Involvement of private parties (6.67 per cent), Absence of any government help and guidance (3.33 percent) whereas Lack of adequate infrastructural facilities, Lack of modern communication facilities, Lack of adequate financial credit and Lack of training on the preparation of value added products are represent equally with very limited responses (only 0.67 per cent). The data clears that absence of adequate marketing knowledge, to some extent involvement of private parties and absence of government help and guidance are predominantly dominating in processing and marketing of fish manufacturing and value added fish products. Though the problems emerged in this specific point of matter, majority respondents viewed that there are specific schemes exclusively for Fisheries these are largely extended by successive governments and specific welfare measures are available to them apart from provision for insurance or old age pension for Fisheries.

Conclusion

In order to promote fishery development in the rural areas of the state, apart from community initiations, governments have to set up proper decentralized development agency in each district head quarter so as to take up decentralized development planning for the fishery in all districts. These agencies have to help the interested groups, cooperatives and individuals to get the proper productivity, markets, and involve in rejuvenation of water bodies and financial support through institutional mechanism. Important

activities such as soil testing and water quality testing are essential so as to estimate the production and income pattern. Though there are various activities initiated through NREGA and watershed programme for developing water harvesting structures in the state, still the capacity of water bodies are remaining constant. This must be addressed in rapid development phase as there are immense chances that water bodies are more exists but it must also take into account that there is pressure on land for housing and other purposes in rural areas and urban areas which has possibility of sinking the areas of water bodies. In order to sustain its boundaries, activities must take place for the protection of water spread areas, effective water spread areas and cultural water bodies and about to abandoned water bodies, seasonal water bodies and also perennial water bodies since these bodies have potential for fish production. The priority must be given to common village ponds through local Fisheries cooperatives, for operational activity and ensuring poverty would be rooted out through its line of activity.

Another important issue is quality of seeds. It is a quite essential for promotion of fishery. There must be a focus on all varieties instead of limited. In this context Fishery Development Corporation has to develop fish seeds in institutional hatcheries so as to provide seeds timely to get adequate production. But there emphasis is given more on hatcheries promoted by the private sectors through promoting small and mini hatcheries but there must be role of Fisheries cooperatives as a result employment opportunities among these communities will be enhanced.

In these selected locations marketing of fish is less organized in most of the villages and pockets of the study area. Societies have limited scope to its own marketing and there must be expanded role for promotion by the department. However, government department has to initiate to release the market from the clutches of brokers and middlemen as it was seen in some of the locations though empirical data was not in the form of quantitative form. In this regard there must be special markets to take up marketing challenges of Fisheries cooperatives and communities. Besides, with departmental support and regulated committees, scope must be given for selling fish through shops and kiosks. In these efforts channels must be developed between cooperatives and urban bodies to have supported market avenues apart form available avenues like the vendors and hawkers who are provided with cycles and iceboxes.

Further the government has to give efforts for maintaining the cold chain and provisions for storage of the produces which are highly perishable in nature to improve changing economic situations as there are inadequate cold storage facilities in these areas for preservation of fish for a longer period. Marketing of fish depend upon the local traders where middlemen earn more profit with less margins for the people those are producing the same but the situation must be changed. The demand is much higher in comparison to the production within this area, thus, it understood that depend upon outside produces is not healthy rather meeting such demand from local markets help local Fisheries communities directly and cooperatives indirectly.

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