

Challenges Facing the Fishing Industry in Homalime and Kendu Bay Zones of Lake Victoria in Homabay County, Kenya

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Abstract

Fishing has been an important source of livelihood for many Kenyans for many years. It is one of the oldest occupations of mankind. In Kenya, both gender have been involved in this industry while performing different roles such as fish production by the male and fish processing and marketing by the female. The roles ultimately complemented each other. The objective of the study was to establish the challenges the fisher folk have faced in the fishing industry in reference to Homalime landing bay and Kendu Bay County of Kenya. The study focused on the factors that have hindered the fishers from executing their roles as expected. Sampling was conducted in Homalime “Doho Beach” and at “Kotieno” in Kendu Bay. This took place between May 2013 and the month of August 2013. Data was obtained using a cross-sectional survey research design, quantitative and descriptive research designs. Information was collected through interviews using open-ended questions and questionnaire guides. The population of the study consisted of 1,804 registered fisher folk in Homalime and Kendu Bay by the year 2013. A number of fisher folk never registered because of various reasons although they participated fully. 586 of the fisher folk were registered in Kendu Bay while 498 were from Homalime. The fishers in both bays perceived that their challenges in the fishing industry were due to the decline of the Kenyan economy. The fisher folk could not be sustained by the income they realised from fishing activities since the daily expenses increased. Fish prices shot up lowering protein consumption among the fishing communities hence vulnerability to all kinds of diseases including diarrhea, amoeba, typhoid, cholera, malaria and HIV/AIDS. Results indicated the challenges in groups of major factors and individual factors that have hindered equitable economic growth of the fishing industry in the regions discussed in the study.

Keywords: Challenges, Fisheries, Gender, Landing bays

1. INTRODUCTION

Lake Victoria is the second largest fresh water lake in the world covering 68,800 km squared¹. In Kenya, the Lake Victoria waters mainly lie within Nyanza Province whose occupants are mainly of the Luo ethnic group. Presently the Lake shores are invaded by fishers from all communities in Kenya. A report by one of the Beach Management units officer indicated that historically upto 1900, the fishery in Lake Victoria was not recognised by the government of Kenya therefore no attention was given to it. As a resource, it was not utilised as one of the foreign exchange earners.

In Kenya, fisheries resource management has been based on the top-down centralised approach since the colonial days². The fishers have not been involved in decision making concerning management. The government has tended to own and manage the fisheries resources amidst various challenges. The management system has lacked adequate staff, technology and facilitation, the cost of monitoring the stock, the capacity to enforce regulations among others.

Although the population of the fisher folk was considerably low and fishing activity was also low in the pre colonial 1900's, different species of fish were plenty. As a result of that, people had enough for subsistence hence food security then. People used “orindi” canoes to move into the water, they did not travel far-deep because fish was plenty near the shore. Fishing methods such as trapping and spearing were used too.

During the pre colonial period, only men did actual fishing since women were considered a weaker sex. Women waited at the landing bays to meet their husbands to carry fish home to prepare and cook for their families. The men as heads of the family had the opportunity to own both fishing boats and fishing gears. Women were believed to be poor in economic management therefore were not allowed to play any role apart from cooking. A few women were allowed to keep the cash from fishing activity but could not use the money without their men's consent. During this era, more advanced methods of fishing were used. They included gill nets, hook lines, beach seines (Rimba) among others. Apart from Canoes, boats were introduced to transport

¹ R.S. Herring, (1979). The influence of climate on the migrations of the Central and Southern Luo in B.A. Ogot, Hadith 7, B.A. Ogot, History of the Southern Luo. Vol. 1, Migrations and Settlement (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967).

² C. Lwenya and R.O. Abila, Co-Management in the Lake Victoria Fishery, realities, Constraints and opportunities in Kenya. Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute Kisumu, Kenya.

fishers to distant waters. This is when a few women joined the fishing industry. Their major roles were processing and preserving fish. They did this by airing, smoking, drying and frying. Secondly, the women traded on fish which they carried to local and to distant markets which were limited both by the distance the traders could walk and the perishability of the products.

In the colonial era, hut taxes and poll taxes were introduced by the colonial government in 1900 and 1910 respectively. These necessitated the generation of additional cash incomes by all indigenous Kenyans. With new production technology and expansion of markets, fishing developed rapidly. The numbers of fishermen entering the fishery rose steadily, notably after the second world war, as many Luo service men returning from the war sought incomes from fishing, in the absence of other employment opportunities¹.

According to Greboval, the Nile Perch first appeared in Kenyan catch as recently as 1973 at 200 tones but increased gradually to 4,300 tones in 1980².

In the same year, the new system of catching herring fish “dagga” or “omena” was introduced. It involved the use of pressure lamps. The fishing community realised economic growth which drastically influenced both men and women into great trade. The Nile Perch introduced International Commercialisation. The Government opened foreign markets for fish and its products. Some of the markets included Europe, Israel and Dubai among others. Factories to process the fish were established. In them, many women and men found employment.

In the year 2004, the government introduced a Beach Management Unit System (BMU). This involved both men and women in the management of the resources and finances. Due to better management by the BMU's, currently both men and women own boats and fishing gears. They both can do actual fishing, trade on fish and are involved in the leadership and management in this industry.

There has always been high demand for fish products yet requirements for entering the fishery are few. Lack of experience is not a barrier to employment. Once the boat owner has provided a fishing licence which is the main requirement, he or she has to provide accommodation in the form of ‘abila’ or rooms rented by the fishing employees. Currently fishing activities are done by all interested parties and is no longer a preserve of only the fishing sub-clans. Fishing has casual employment opportunities. Boat and gear owners employ workers such as minimum crew size of four per boat. Normally, when catches decline in an area, casuals migrate to another. While fishing is mainly a male activity, fish trading is common amongst the women.

In the past, the poor women only processed the fish. They were mainly wives of the fishermen. Presently, most of the fish, particularly Nile Perch, is transported directly to the factories where it is filleted and frozen. Only the juvenile Nile Perch rejected by the factories is processed by the processors. Tilapia is mostly sold fresh. The great commercialisation of fish and its products has disadvantaged the traditional small scale fish mongers who have lost their jobs to the processing factories. Although the filleting factories employ both men and women, many traditional fishers have lost their jobs compared to the small number employed.

After filleting of the Nile perch by the factories, pieces of meat remain on the skeleton. These have always been smoked and oil-fried for sale hence employment for processors. The skeletal remains have always been termed “poor man’s food” yet the fish has become more expensive and cannot be purchased by the poor. Lately, the skeletons are grinded for feeds and meals. Many have been rendered jobless and therefore have turned to motorcycle riding as business while the women have turned to businesses like frying of chips, *mandazis* among others. The exportation of fish is a big threat to both the male and female in terms of employment and food security for the poor people in Homa Bay specifically at Kendu Bay and Homalime.

2.0. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To establish the challenges faced by the fisherfolk in the fishing industry in Homa Bay County.

2.1. Specific Objectives

- (i) Discuss a history of fishing
- (ii) Establish factors affecting proper business in the fishing industry.

3.0. METHODOLOGY

Data collection was carried out between May and August, 2013 covering Homa Bay County. The study focused on two specific beaches, Homalime which represented the rural beaches and Kendu Bay which represented urban beaches. Data was obtained using structured survey questionnaires, interviews, focus Group Discussions and Secondary Data. A number of sampling techniques such as stratified sampling, purposive sampling and random sampling were used. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics of means and

¹ Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Report on Kenya Fisheries 1960. Nairobi, Government Printer, 1961.

² D. Greboval and D. Fryd, Inland Fisheries of Eastern, Central/Southern Africa. Basic Fisheries Statistics. (FAO/UNDP(Bunjumbura), Ref: RAF/87/099 – td/52/93(En.) Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome, 1993.

percentages on the other hand, qualitative data was analyzed using thematic method.

The study was conducted in Homabay County. It specifically captured the two landing bays of Homalime and Kendu bay. Homalime represented rural beaches while Kendu bay represented the urban. The County registered many fishers as follows; Kendu bay had 586 while Homalime had 498 members. Other members participated in fishing activities although were not registered. The study selected a sample of 322 fishers.

3.1. Challenges facing fisherfolk in Lake Victoria Homalime and Kendu Bay Zones

In the study involving the fisherfolk around Homalime and Kendu Bay of HomaBay County (Kenya), the respondents gave reasons and factors that prevented them from doing business as they should. The study identified eleven (11) individual factors which were grouped into four main categories. The percentages column indicates the number of respondents per area.

Major Factors	Individual Factors	Percentages
Personal	i. Sex for Fish	86.3%
	ii. Prostitution	79.8%
Cultural	i. Bereavement	100%
	ii. Man's Job	100%
	iii. Menstruation	92.3%
	iv. Pregnancy	88.4%
Infrastructure	i. Storage facilities	84.1%
	ii. Road networks	74.8%
Financial	i. Credit facilities	89.5%
	ii. Coop societies	74.6%
	iii. Banking services	54.8%

The table shows that one of the major challenges facing the fisherfolk are personal factors. These include sex for fish (86.3%) and prostitution (79.8%).

The trend at the beaches is migration, whenever it is off season and fishing activities are under control, the male move from beach to beach in search of fish. The female fish traders however remain on one beach permanently. Most women fish traders are widowed, single or divorced. They join fisheries as a means of survival. Due to poverty, more women migrate to the beaches. With the industrialisation and commercialisation of the fishing sector, fish trading has become a nightmare for women. Due to more demand for fish, the women fish traders began to engage in sex for fish. They had sexual relationships with the fishermen in order to be sure of their daily catch. A fisherman called "Jaboya" supplies one or more women traders with fish daily on condition that sexual relations are maintained. According to G. Angienda¹, these relationships first developed on unconscious and unofficial basis but became institutionalised within beach communities in 2001. One slogan on the beaches is 'no sex, no fish'. The practice due to poverty has encouraged immorality. Apart from sex for fish, there is fornication/adultery and prostitution which have led to infectious diseases such as gonorrhoea, syphilis, HIV/AIDS.

As indicated by 79.8% of the respondents, prostitution is one of the major obstacles the fishing business. Most of the fisherfolk live from hand to mouth because of the money they get easily each day. They spend the money in drinking and prostitution. The situation is similar to what CIRDAP² found among the rural women in fishing communities in Naga. With fishermen migrating from beach to beach and having sexual relations with multiple women, HIV/AIDS is rampant at the beaches. This has caused a dangerous cycle of HIV infection. Many fisherfolk remain weak while the rate of death is high. Many children remain orphaned. Do not get educated due to poverty hence lack of proper employment, proper health facilities and the cycle continues. Tarzan, Karanja and Ng'weshemi³ had supported this fact according to their study in Jinja which corroborates the finding. Although the idea may not be supported by the women folk, they have no alternative since it is the way they can be assured of getting fish and surviving in the business.

Under the cultural factors are bereavement (100%), fishing a man's job (100%), menstruation (99.3%) and pregnancy (88.4%). These aspects under cultural factors limit the fishing activities especially by females. There are cultural beliefs and practices associated with bereavement that bind women and keep them closed to

¹ G. Angienda, "Study on the Gender Dimensions of poverty in Communities Around the Lake Victoria" Lake Victoria Centre for Research Development, Dunga Beach, Kisumu. OSIENALA. Friends of Lake Victoria. July – August, 2014.

² CIRDAP's Action Program (April, 1989) Rural Women in Fishing Communities, Naga, The ICLARM Quarterly, pp. 10 – 12.

³ N. Tarzan, D. Karanja and J. Ng'weshemi, Challenges of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases among fishing communities. In the state of the fisheries Resources of Lake Victoria and their Management, Proceedings of the Regional Stakeholders Conference. (2009) Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization Secretariat, Jinja.

the outside world for long periods. For example, a woman should not go to the lake or greet a fisherman by hand if her husband has died. It is believed that her husband's spirit will follow her to the lake and cause her to drown or hinder proper catch of fish. The boat could also capsize. Until cleansing ceremonies are done, the woman is barred from roles in the fishing business.

The attitudinal view that fishing is a man's job is still very strong. Culturally, women are supposed to be housekeepers taking care of children. Naturally, women fear the lake and fishing is mostly done at night which is hard for women. Men can row boats but women are culturally prohibited. The general cultural view is that women have bad omen in fishing. A lot of questions arise from the fact that women engage in fishing activities.

The cultural wonder is; Women used not to fish from old times, why now? Women should only trade in fish but why go for actual fishing? Don't women increase competition in a job meant for men? Men are hardworking while women are weak. That men should not meet women on the way to the lake as it leads to no catch and brings bad omen. Culturally, women may make fish disappear particularly when in their menstrual periods. All these are divergent but interesting perspectives as regards cultural beliefs.

Currently some women have ventured into actual fishing. They own boats but hire men to fish using their boats. The business has no transparency since the women cannot supervise what the men do with their boats. Dowling¹ in 'Just' A fisherman's wife;- argues that women contribution, knowledge and other aspects that are necessary for sustainability of the fishing business and for elimination of crises work just as men also do.

92.3% of respondents indicated that women are not supposed to go to the Lake during menstruation. It is believed that it would make the boat disappear. This keeps the women away from the business for upto seven days each month. The idea affects them psychologically. One beach leader argued that if such women got into the water, the boat would capsize. During pregnancy, culturally the women cannot go fishing as was indicated by 88.4% of the respondents. This forces a woman to be off active fishing for a period of nine months. The period being long, affects the women psychologically and economically. During such times, most women have no alternative businesses to supplement the earlier. Other cultural taboos include; - no whistling while fishing, no sex while going to fish, no pointing at anything in the Lake and incase one dies in the lake, no fishing goes on until the body is recovered and cleansing is done.

The third cluster of challenges faced by the fisherfolk is infrastructure which is composed of storage facilities as indicated by (84.1%) of the respondents and road network as identified by 74.8% of the respondents. The findings here concur with the views of Geheb² who argued that there are significant relationships between the people, the environment and small scale fishery in the Kenyan sector of Lake Victoria. As concluded by Garrod³, in "The History of the Fishing Industry of Lake Victoria, East Africa, there is a relation between marketing facilities and fishing success. Both asserted that infrastructure is a serious obstacle to fishing in Lake Victoria. Unless well preserved, fish is a highly perishable commodity. In the absence of adequate storage facilities, the fisher folk incur great loses. Without proper roads from the lakeshores, reaching market places becomes a great challenge. In cases where fish is exported fresh, efficient cold storage facilities are required. Most times big lorries with cold rooms collect the fish and transport where processing and packing is done. Such trucks are few hindering proper business.

The cooperative societies should be formed to save fisher's money. Their other roles are to provide facilities for fish marketing such as fish shade and weighing scales. The fishers at Homalime and Kendu Bay felt that the cooperative society was not serving them as they had expected. They needed enough money informs of loan to guarantee their business.

The fishers of Homalime and Kendu bay always felt powerless in executing their fishing roles. They normally suffered whenever drought, famine and floods strike and lacked ways of survival. Previously they received government and in form of relief food but felt the distributing agents were exploiting them. The fishers felt powerless whenever fishing season got low.

54.8% of respondents indicated that lack of banking facilities hindered them from saving money. Most banks were situated in towns for example, Homabay, Kisii and Kisumu which were far from the time fishing areas. Reaching the banks meant spending money for transportation to the towns.

Finally the last cluster included financial factors such as credit facilities (89.5%) cooperative societies (74.6%) and banking services (54.8%). Credit facilities should be availed at affordable rates to enable the fishers acquire credit and loan facilities to expand and manage their businesses. Most of the respondents pointed out the fact that lack of capital hindered growth of their businesses. The available cooperative societies were few. They

¹ Dowling 'Just; fisherman's wife; A post structural Feminist expose of Australian Commercial Fishing women's 'Contributions' and 'Knowledge', sustainability and crisis. Cambridge; Scholars, 2006.

² K. Geheb, Exploring people – Environment relationships. The changing nature of the smaller scale fishery in the Kenyan sector of Lake Victoria. John Wiley & Sons Ltd. Chichester, UK. 1995.

³ D.J. Garrod. The History of the Fishing Industry of Lake Victoria, East Africa, in relation to the Expansion of Marketing Facilities East African Agricultural and Forestry Journal, 272 (1961).

were local and poorly managed. The fisher folk needed well established cooperative societies of equivalence to those of teachers and other professionals. As mentioned earlier that the fisher folk ate from hand to mouth.

In order to cope with the challenges in the region, the women having been ripped off the lucrative trade of the Nile Perch by the factories, resorted to trading in other fish species. They smoked tilapia and traded in 'dagaa' omena. Apart from fishing activities they also did farming to supplement. Although climatic conditions around the lake region were unpredictable they had poor soils, lacked farming equipments and rainfall was low. They were able to get food for subsistence though not adequate. The male fishers equally continued in fisheries but engaged in alternative businesses such as transportation. They rode motorbikes and some had joined farming activities.

To cope with the constraints of commercial fishing both the male and female had formed groups (financial) where borrowing could be done. Other methods employed were where pooling of resources was done and lastly abandonment of the fishing business as indicated by the men who resorted to casual labour or transport using bicycles and motorbikes. The fisher folk after forming financial groups known as self help groups were able to manage their business.

Members of the group borrowed money traded with it and returned it with profit. Table banking was practiced whereby members were given loans to do business for a whole month. The loan had to be returned with profit on each table banking day according to their rules. The fishers were unable to save for future use. Most of their children dropped out of school. Their promiscuous lives led them into spending money carelessly. They lost all and waited to earn more the following day depending on the catch.

As indicated by Omwenga, Abila and Lwenya¹, fishers of Lake Victoria were isolated from most facilities that were found in the urban centres. Results showed that 55.3% of fishers lived in homes situated near markets or beaches. They could not access vital knowledge and communication. The standard of living by most fishers around Homalime and Kendu Bay was very low.

They cared about food and shelter as the preferred basic needs. They lived in poor temporary housing structures with inadequate social amenities and inadequate food supply. Their houses were mostly built of mud and grass thatch. A few fishers owned no houses. Fish prices having increased and fish being scarce, most local fishing communities had their lives threatened by food insecurity. The lack of food had caused malnutrition along the sampled beaches. The fishers mostly depended on earnings from fish in order to buy food that was not readily available. They ate unbalanced diets. Although the fishermen who toiled to bring in the catch were directly involved in fishing, after the export which earned the country millions of shillings a year, they (The fishermen) remained so poor that they could not afford to eat the fish.

The fishing communities around Lake Victoria were always vulnerable to diseases and many risks because they lacked health and medical facilities. They were ignorant, continued some baseless cultural practices and lived in poverty. The hospital and dispensaries available at the beaches normally lacked medical facilities and enough qualified doctors.

The diseases commonly found affecting the fishing communities included malaria, typhoid, amoeba, cholera, water borne diseases and HIV/Aids. HIV/AIDS was prevalent among the lake communities due to adultery of cultural practices such as wife inheritance. Poor sanitation and unclean drinking water prevented the fishers from living healthy. In case of sickness, private clinics and health centres were preferred although serious cases were referred to District or Provincial Hospitals where were far away and very expensive.

Population growth rate among the fishing communities had put pressure on the Lake and had led to declining catches. Low incomes had resulted into increasing theft. The fishers therefore tended to increase their fishing effort by expanding their territory on the lake in order to improve catches. The fishers currently take longer hours fishing unlike the five hours spent in the early eighties. Consequently theft has increased. Initially nets could be on the Lake and checked daily yet fishermen now sleep in third boats next to their nets to prevent thieves from seizing their nets.

The serious exploitation of fish had destroyed even breeding points of fish. This had interfered with the juvenile fish which were unable to grow. The result of this was the extinction of certain species of fish. Lack of adequate resources on the part of the government had hindered monitoring of the fishing activities and enactment of the laws and regulations. Lack of personnel, means of transportation had left a big loophole hence the uncontrollable conditions affecting the fisheries.

Although currently Kenya offers Free Primary Education (FPE), certain communities still disregard the offer. Studies done in 1999 by SEDA Wog revealed that literacy level amongst fishers was higher where 60.9% of fishers had attained primary level of education, 38% secondary level, 0.6% had attained university level while 0.6% had not gone to school. Many factors led to fisher family members not attaining required or higher educational levels.

¹ R.N. Omwenga, R. Abila and C. Lwenya, Fishing and Poverty Levels around Lake Victoria (Kenya) Kenya Marine and Research Institute, Kisumu (Kenya).

Most fishers dwelling in remote areas with few educational facilities had little access to proper knowledge and information. In the villages where fishers lived were few good schools. They lacked teachers and modern equipment such as computers, and equipped laboratories. Many schools in the localities where fishing activities took place experienced a lot of students dropping out. They were influenced by benefits from fishing. They argued that you could not be wealthy without education. Unfortunately, the few good schools were very far from their residences. Concerning higher education, most families lacked school fees. Others failed to get education due to death. They were orphaned and left in custody of their elder siblings. Young girls were lured out of school by the fishermen due to prostitution. There were pregnancies and early marriages.

A lot of challenges arose from lack of education. Concerning employment in most sectors, currently the lowest qualification is graded D or an 'O' level Certificate. Without which one may not be considered for any job be it house keeping, office messenger or even clerical jobs. Managerial positions are not to be mentioned. Organising family finances from fishing was impossible without literacy.

Exploitation of fisherfolk in the fishing industry by their leaders was pathetic. The purchasers of fish paid less. They dominated the trade together with the locally based agents of fish processing factories. The purchasers acted as middlemen who exploited fishers on fish prices. Since boat owners hired their crew members, they exploited the crew members on daily wages. They were paid less wages and delayed payment at times. Sometimes bribes were demanded by government officials who also confiscated their fishing gears.

4.0. CONCLUSION

The study set out to establish the challenges faced by the fisherfolk in the two landing bays of Kendu Bay and Homalime which are situated in Homabay county of Kenya, it discussed a history of fishing briefly and established the factors affecting proper business in the fishing industry. Fishing activities have taken place from as early as the appearance of mankind. From the pre-colonial era through the colonial period to the present, several developments have been realized. The changes have included challenges that cut across all the factors concerning fishing and fisheries. The challenges have interfered with the flow of business hence lack of economic power and poverty among the fishing communities dwelling along the shores of Lake Victoria with reference to the two landing bays or beaches. The challenges were however grouped into four major factors as follows; Personal, cultural, infrastructure and financial as discussed in the following sections.

The personal factors included challenges such as sex for fish 86.3% and prostitution under cultural factors are bereavement, fishing as a man's job, menstruation and pregnancy. Another challenge the fishers faced under infrastructure was storage facilities and road networks. Financial constraints too interfered with the fishers. The study dealt with financial facilities, cooperative societies and banking services. Other challenges included lack of proper education, health issues, including drinking water and poor sanitation. All the challenges the fisherfolk around Lake Victoria faced explained why Lake Victoria as a resource earned the country millions yet the fishers have remained in poverty. The fishers have not been involved in decision making about the management of the fisheries. Fisheries resources were regarded as government owned and required adequate resources to manage. Co-workers such as fisher folk on the ground needed to co-manage the industry. A lot of transformation in the fishing industry experienced over the years for example the introduction of the Nile Perch, the shift from small-scale, artisanal fishing to large scale export fishing, the introduction of processing plants, among others brought hardships to the lives of the local fisherfolk particularly marginalizing the women-folk. Culture and traditions of the ethnic groups of people living around the lake shore affected the development within the Lakes communities.

4.1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Lake Victoria is a key resource to the fishing communities and the Nation at Large. As discussed in the study, commercialization, industrialization and liberalization have caused massive transformation in the management of the fishing industry. The changes as pointed out have driven the Lake region into poverty. The lake as a resource is under the management of the state. The government should involve the fishers in matters of policy and decisions so that they complement one another in implementing the policies.

The following are the solutions recommended to transform the fishing industry. As indicated by 86.3% and 79.8% of informants concerning sex for fish and prostitution respectively, workshops and seminars should be conducted to the Lake or fishing communities to sensitize them on the dangers of immoral acts which lead to sexually transmitted diseases such as gonorrhoea and syphilis. Prostitution may lead to HIV/AIDS which is rampant at the lake shore. They need to use protection and to practice abstinence. Most fishing women are either divorced or widowed, orphans are all over. With proper guidance and teaching, the menace can be curbed down.

Cultural practices such as wife inheritance among the Luo community need to be controlled. The economy is interfered with where cultural beliefs such as :- No going to the Lake during bereavement, menstruation and pregnancy are applied. Many breaks including 9 months of pregnancy, a week of menstruation, hinder the women from duty. As they wait, the businesses are closed. The fishers need to be educated where

there are no scientific proofs and attachment to the facts. Some of the beliefs are baseless for example menstruation has no relationship with fish catch or trade.

Beliefs that fishing was totally a man's job barred the female from participating. They could have been hindered by fishing being done at night and their fear of going to the deep waters however, currently women do fishing in certain countries. They own boats and gears which they hire men to manage as they earn the profits. The women-folk have proved to be good managers at beach management units. More women should venture into the business.

According to 84.1% of informants, storage facilities are inadequate. Due to perishability of fish and the long distances between the landing bays and the local and international markets, the government should help the fishers acquire storage facilities and cold rooms be built at least in every bay where fish is collected. Roads leading to the collection centres need to be improved so that the trucks and lorries transporting fresh fish to distant markets move within the stipulated time to avoid wastage. Enough lorries should be provided to cover all areas.

The fishing communities need to save their profits for future use. They need to be educated on credit facilities, cooperative societies and banking systems in order to be able to borrow for capital and to save for their family needs. Since such facilities are few and not in the remote areas, many fisher folk spend money in bars and prostitution. Banks and cooperative societies need to be brought to the rural areas. The government should assist the fishers in developing at least one in adjacent places.

'Sex for fish' is a normal practice by the fishing women and men. Women need to form income generating groups such as women groups and table banking. These self help groups may empower them since they will borrow and service their loans. The fishing industry should provide enough personnel to supervise and monitor the lake use to ensure rules and regulations are followed to the letter. This will curb down the exploitation of fish since seasons for fishing will be observed.

The Beach Management unit employees need to do their work diligently and corruption of any manner be punished. The fishers need to practice modern methods of farming such as irrigation in order to be food secure in times of famine, drought and floods. The government could supplement by supplying relief food to the needy areas. Other businesses should be ventured into by the fisher folk for example farming, transport and other trades. There would be a flow of income without necessarily waiting for fishing season.

The fishers need to build good residential houses, boil water for drinking and take care of their health. The sanitation of the areas be done properly and feed the families well on balanced diet. Health workers need to educate the lake shore communities and to ensure the same is practiced. The officials could inspect and monitor the dwelling and trading places regularly.

The government should control the prices of fish as the middlemen purchase from the fisher-folk. This would enable the consumers to feed on the fish other than have it all exported and the left overs unaffordable. The fishers need to go for quality education in order to diversify their employment opportunities in other sectors. They need sensitization on the importance of education. The Beach Management units should link with country administration to ensure underage persons do not roam or board any fishing boat during school days.

The challenges have made the fishers poor yet most of them with proper education, sensitization, monitoring and enactment of rules and regulations can be eradicated and the quality of life and economy of the fishers improved.

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