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Socio-economic study of fish farmers of Kishanganj district of Bihar

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Abstract

Formulating schemes and policies for the economic benefit of fish farmers, the prerequisite is to know the base line (socio-economic) data of fish farmers of area under consideration. Considering this, the present study was conducted in the Kishanganj district of Bihar. Pre-structured interview schedule was used to collect the data and four blocks namely Bahadurganj, Kochadhaman, Pothia and Thakurganj were purposively selected. 45 respondents from each block, altogether 180 respondents from all four selected blocks were selected by using simple random sampling. Study revealed that more than 59 percent of the respondents were under the productive age group, majority of the respondents belonged to Hindu religion, and literacy rate of the respondents was very poor and almost 70.56% of the respondents were illiterate to functionally literate. Study revealed that family members, neighbours and friends were the most oftenly used source of information. Majority of the responds had mobile phone which can be used for the dissemination of information. The income form fish culture was not up to the mark and almost all respondents had low income from fisheries activity and only 2.78 per cent respondents had income of 1 to 2 lakh from activities related to fisheries.

Keywords: Kishanganj, Bihar, socio-economic, income, occupation, fisheries

Introduction

Kishanganj is an old and important subdivision of Purnia division. This district came into existence on 14 January 1990 and has an area of 1,884 square kilometres. Kishanganj district lies between 25.20 and 26.30 north latitudes, and 87.7 and 88.19 east latitudes (District Census Handbook Kishanganj, 2011) [2]. Kishanganj district is bounded by Araria district on the west, Purnea district on the southwest, Uttar Dinajpur district of West Bengal on the east and Darjeeling district of West Bengal and Nepal on the north. The major rivers flowing through the district are Mahanand, Kankai, Mechi, Donak, Ratua and Ramzan Sudhani (Brief Industrial Survey, MSME,).These rivers offer great diversity in fisheries and the livelihood of fishermen is dependent on these rivers. Fish culture and Makhana culture is the main source of income of fish farmers of Kishanganj district, despite this there is very less documentation about the socio-economic status of fish farmers of Kishanganj district. Further for social and economic upliftment of fish farmers, the prerequisite is to know the socio-economic status of fish farmers of area under consideration. Considering this, the present study was conducted to assess the socio-economic status of fish farmers of Kishanganj (Bihar).

Materials and Methods

Kishanganj has seven blocks namely Bahadurganj, Dighalbank, Kishanganj, Kochadhaman, Pothia, Terhagachh and Thakurganj. Out of these seven blocks four blocks namely Thakurganj, Pothia, Bahadurganj and Kochadhaman were purposively selected keeping in view the highest number of fish farmers available. Further 45 respondents from each block and altogether 180 respondents were selected by using simple random sampling. Socio economic data of fish farmers was collected by using pre structured interview schedule.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic profile of fish farmers: The socio-economic profile of the respondents was analyzed taking various independent variables like age education, occupation, extension participation mass media participation and income. The result obtained is presented in Table 1.

Age

The study reviled that 32.22 per cent of the respondent were up-to 35 years age group followed by 27.22 percent were between 35-to-45-year age group and 40.56 percent of the respondents were above 45 years age group, further it could be concluded that about 59 percent of the respondents were under the productive age group, which could play an important role in the development of fishery sector in the state. The similar trend was observed by Bhutti *et al*., 2022 [1]; in his research on "Studies on the socio-economic condition of fish farmer in Sabarkantha district of Gujarat state".

Table1: Socio-economic profile of fish farmers (N=180)

Variables		No.	Percentage
Age	Upto 35	58	32.22
	35 to 45	49	27.22
	Above 45	73	40.56
Religion	Hindu	145	80.56
	Muslim	35	19.44
Caste	General	31	17.22
	EBC	19	10.56
	OBC	125	69.44
	SC	1	0.56
	ST	4	2.22
Education	Illiterate	64	35.56
	Functionally literate	63	35.00
	Up to Middle School	32	17.78
	Up to High school	6	3.33
	Up to Inter	7	3.89
	College	8	4.44
Pond ownership	Ownership of Pond	107	59.44
	Rental	41	22.78
	No Pond	32	17.78
Occupation	Primary Agriculture	74	41.11
	Primary Fishery	91	50.56
	Labour	15	8.33
Training	Yes	42	23.33
	No	138	76.67

Religion

As per the census 2011 [2] the district is dominated by Muslim population (67.98 %) followed by Hindu population (31.43%), the study showed that in the sample area 81 percent Hindu respondents and only 19 per cent Muslim respondents were engaged in the fishery activity, the result is in line with the finding of Bhutti *et al*. 2022 [1].

Caste

Most (69.44%) of the respondents were engaged in the fishery belonged to OBC category followed by 17.22 per cent general category and 10.56 percent belonged to EBC category, the representation of other caste like SC and ST was negligible who were engaged in fishery activity. Similar result was found by Rout *et al*., 2016 [4] in his study on "A Study on Socio-Economic Profile of Fisher Community of Madhubani District in Bihar, India

Education

Education plays a major role in the overall development of personal and social attributes of a person, in the survey the result was disappointing as majority (70.56%) of the respondents were either illiterate (35.56%) to functionally literate (35.00%) and only 17.78 per cent of the respondents were educate upto middle level and only 11.66 per cent of the respondents were educated upto high school and above. The same trend was also observed by Rout el. all, 2016 [4] in his study on "A Study on Socio-Economic Profile of Fisher Community of Madhubani District in Bihar, India" for the variable caste and education.

Pond ownership

As pond is one of the limiting factors for fish farming, the survey revealed that more than half (59.44%) of the respondents were the owner of the pond followed by 22.78 per cent had pond on rent and 17.78 per cent of the respondents did not had pond ownership or on rental. Primary Occupation of Fish Farmers in Kishanganj district: As per the data collected, more than half (51%) of the respondent's primary occupation was fishery and followed by 41 per cent respondents primary occupation was agriculture and rest (8%) of the respondents were labour.

Training Participation

Training plays crucial role in the upliftment of skill. The data indicated that majority (77%) of the respondents did not get any training regarding fish culture and only 23 per cent of the respondents got the training on fish culture either within the state or out side of the state.

Source of Information

Study revealed that family members were most oftenly consulted source of information for 60.56 per cent of respondents followed by 51.67 per cent of respondent's oftenly consult with neighbour and 47.22 per cent of respondents oftenly consult with friends and relatives. From the study it is clear that still personal localite channel of communication is widely used in the rural areas. Fisheries Extension Officers/Fisheries Development Officers, District Fisheries Officers were used sometimes by 33.89 per cent of the respondents for getting the information.

Material Possession

The data collected showed that majority of the respondents (93.89%) were using mobile phones. Govt of Bihar has the facility to inform the agriculture farmers about the upcoming weather condition, through which farmers plan their culture practice, this facility can be used for fish farmers also to inform them about the new culture practices and schemes of govt.

Annual income form Fish Culture

The study showsa large variation (₹ 1000/- to 1 lakh) in the annual income from fish culture. Majority (96.11%) of the respondents had low annual income from fish culture ranging from ₹ 1000/- to 90,00/- and only 1.11 per cent had income ranging from ₹ 91,000/- to 1 lakh and 2.78 per cent had income of more than 1 lakh. One of the reasons behind the low income from fish culture may be that most of the respondents did not get any training of scientific fish culture and still practicing fish culture in traditional way.

Conclusion

The study is of preliminary in its nature. Socio-economic study is very important to know the actual status of fishing community and fish farmers. The study in the Kishanganj district of Bihar revealed that there is a large scope to work to improve the socio-economic condition of fishermen and fish farmers. The possible ways for this could be to provide the training on scientific fish culture practices and timely availability of information and inputs for fish culture. Further the study will help the policy makers to formulate the policies keeping in mind the need of the local fish famers.

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