

## **FUNCTIONING OF FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN VISAKHAPATNAM DISTRICT**

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### **Abstract**

*Fisheries in India has high potential for monetary development, nourishing security and financial turn of events. This nation is offered with different fishery assets. Generally, the fishery exercises have been performed by anglers through ages in this nation and for aggregate creation and better administration of fishery exercises, cooperatives have been shaped. The requirement for reasonable arrangement suggestions for feasible administration of cooperatives in coinciding with the cutting-edge mechanical advancement in the field of fisheries, ecological contamination and environmental change have been referenced.*

### **Introduction**

The Cooperative movement in India has a long historical legacy even though it was formally initiated with the promulgation of Cooperative Societies Act in 1904. The Cooperatives in India are seen to be functioning in different sectors with diverse activities. Since Indian agriculture and its allied sectors were largely traditionally structured the absence of supportive mechanism in many complex conditions led to the emergence of cooperatives in India primarily to support diverse agricultural conditions through appropriate institutional arrangements for financing and managing the sector efficiently. In terms of its legal framework, the Cooperatives is a state subject under the Constitution of India and the State cooperative laws and their implementation mechanism have vastly differed. In fact, the fishermen's cooperatives have emerged from the philosophical foundations of communist ideological frameworks though these societies have been promoted by the government coming under the purview of the Department of Fisheries which took up the matter with great interest and importance for fostering the socio- economic development of fishermen community in general along with the introduction of the scheme for the mechanization of fishing boats. The successive governments have encouraged the organizational based primary village cooperatives with the grant of liberal incentives such as the provision of mechanized boats, long-term loans and allocation of specific grants in inland fishing areas. However, governments have abundantly made it clear that the high-subsidy related to purchase of mechanized boats would be given only to fishermen's cooperatives and not to individuals. But in dry-land and semi-arid land areas like those in Andhra Pradesh state, the government's proposal cannot be applied as these societies function purely on seasonal mode since the tanks are largely dependent on rainy season and to some extent on canal irrigation. Nonetheless, the canal system has its intrinsic relation with rainy seasons. Hence, rain water and its dependency in fishing activities is considered as the significant factor in this study.

Fisher Women Co-operative Societies emerged as a boon to the suffering fisher folk. The Government of India and the Government of Andhra Pradesh stressed the need for having FWCSs in each fishermen village. The fisher women also realized that only by

becoming a member of a FWCS, they would be able to get benefits from the government. The FWCSs have direct contact with the members of the society and the members who get loan and subsidy from the societies. The FWCSs have been recognised as an organisation for the upliftment of the fisher women. The fisherfolk concentrate more on fishing and fishing allied activities. K. Kotapadu, Katapalem, Munugupaka, Chodavaram, Anakapally, Achutapuram.

### **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 to wide ranging issues of its internal operations. It was not clear in the areas covered under the study whether the government

support was extended through the cooperatives or directly to individuals, but however it was observed that all the societies surveyed are found to be registered with the department of fisheries as per the data revealed which is based on the views of sample respondents' co-operative committee members.

**TABLE -DETAILS PERTAINING TO REGISTRATION OF FISHERWOMENCO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES AND RECOGNITION BY THE GOVERNMENT**

<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Government Recognized Registered Societies</b>	<b>Number of societies</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	Yes	72	100
2	No	00	00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Study

The Andhra Pradesh State Fisherwomen Co-Operative Societies Federation Limited (AFCOF) is an apex society registered under A.P.C.S. Act 1964 established with a view to help the fisherwomen co-operative societies in the state. The main objectives of the AFCOF are to undertake procurement and distribution of fishery requisites to primary fisherwomen cooperative societies(PFCS) arrange for supply of fish seed to PFCSs, set up fuel deposits in coastal areas for use of mechanized fishing boats and arrange for supply of fuel and other lubricants to the fisherwomen. It also undertakes procurement of fish for marketing and set ups fish stalls for sale of fish to the consumers at reasonable rates. The PFCS are members of AFCOF and primary fisherwomen co-operative societies are affiliated to the AFCOF. Hence the societies in the following villages are in AFCOF through their PFCSs.

It was observed based on the interaction with the fisherwomen community that there is an approach of quantum oriented policy; which resulted in a phenomenal increase in the number of fisherwomen cooperative societies, this is short means that the government's policy initiatives have had

a stimulating effect on the fisherwomen community in order to increase the number of fisherwomen societies in the study area. They were registered with formal verification though the normal procedural process involved in the registration process to ensure that they were genuine fisherwomen's organizations and not just fictitious ones as name sake in the registration book. Further the study tried to probe and understand the nature of the type of functioning of the chosen fisherwomen societies. It was observed that all the sample

fisherwomen societies have been dependent on inland water sources like lakes and tanks for their fishing activities.

**TABLE - DETAILS OF THE SAMPLE FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES DEPENDING ON THE KINDS OF FISHERIES ACTIVITY**

Sl. No.	Types of fisheries	Total	Percentage
1	Wild stocks	00	00
2	Marine	00	00
3	Inland	72	100
4	Recreational	00	00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Study

In India, there are four kinds of fisheries, namely Wild stocks, Marine, Inland and Recreational fisheries. The production pattern of fisheries on wild stocks depends up on the natural reproduction and fertility so as to continue in most of the larger rivers and lakes of the world. This sort of fishery generally exceeds the limits of sustainable yield. Inland Fisheries mainly centralized in smaller water bodies and it has the possibility to increase or raise its productivity with selected species above the natural levels. Though this type of fishing management is spreading quite significantly and the technologies are being increasingly administered in larger numbers of water bodies. The \_recreational fisheries\_ in western context is used to denote \_angling with rod and line and this fishing activity is a mere pleasure activity in the sense where

the capture may be secondary in India, such activity is somewhat negligible as in most developing countries to the developed ones. In contrast to recreational fishing, popular fishery or family-oriented fishing is quite common in India as it refers to a popular participation in fishing activity by family as unit. Thus, popular fishing is a common phenomenon as it is construed on a general observation and also from empirical evidence witnessed in the study area. It was observed all the sample fisherwomen societies have been dependent on water source likes lakes and tanks for their fishing activity.

### **STRENGTH OF THE FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

The strength of the fisherwomen co-operative societies can be very well understood through its membership capacity. There are 72 FWCS in 6 mandals with a total of 18337 members. The details of which are as follows Mandal wise FWCS-wise: K.Kotapadu (2852), Rambilli (3628), Munagapaka (3158), Chodavaram (2855), Anakapally (2554), Achutapuram (3290) representing five societies in each mandal totaling to 72 societies in all.

**TABLE - DETAILS DEPICTING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF REGISTERED MEMBERS**

Sl. No	F W C S mandals	Total	Percentage
1	K. Kotapadu	2750	14.99

2	Rambilli	3943	21.50
3	Munagapaka	2995	16.33
4	Chodavaram	2642	14.40
5	Anakapally	2869	13.92
6	Achutapuram	3453	18.83
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18337</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Study

From the Table it is observed that Rambilli mandal has the highest membership 21.50 percent followed by Achutapuram and Munagapaka with 18.83 and 16.33 percent respectively and the remaining mandals collectively had a meagre representation of less than 15 percent. The reasons for the more numbers of fisherwomen as members in the societies located at the mandals of higher membership representation can be attributable to the higher concentration of fisherwomen community in these mandals as compared to other mandals covered in the study.

**DETAILS PERTAINING TO MEMBERSHIP FEE PAID BY THE MEMBERS OF SAMPLE FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

The details pertaining to membership fee paid by the members of sample Fisherwomen Cooperative Societies reveals that the societies membership fee varies from a very minimal amount of Rs 50 to a maximum of above Rs 500. It can be noticed that majority 60.33 percent of members paid less than Rs 150 as membership fee while the remaining 39.67 percent have remitted membership fee ranging from more than Rs 150 to a maximum of above Rs 500. A significant aspect that can be observed here is that about 42 percent of societies have collected only nominal fees from its members towards membership fee. However, for new membership in most of these societies an amount ranging from Rs 100 to 200 and above the nominal fee of the society’s membership fee was being collected.

**TABLE - DETAILS OF MEMBERSHIP FEE PAID BY THE MEMBERS OF SAMPLE FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

Sl. No.	Membership fee (in Rs)	Members	Percentage
1	Up to 50	1706	9.30
2	51-100	4058	22.13
3	101-150	3150	17.17
4	151-200	2146	11.70
5	201-250	1910	10.41
6	251-300	1692	9.22
7	301-350	1130	6.16
8	351-400	902	4.91
9	401-450	809	4.41
10	451-500	422	2.30
11	Above 500	110	0.59
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18337</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Study

### **AWARENESS OF THE FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES BY THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS**

The study shows that cent percent of the sample respondents were aware of the benefits of fisherwomen cooperative societies. It was hence intended to understand the source of such awareness of the sample respondents as there was such huge responses from them reflecting the high positivity on the aspect of awareness of societies. From Table 5.5 it can be observed that the major source of awareness on the societies has emerged as friends (45 per cent) followed by Newspapers (29.33 per cent) and Relatives (25.66 per cent). It is interesting to know that newspapers were one of the key sources of awareness for the fisherwomen about co-operative societies. This could be so perhaps the societies achievements were highlighted in the news items or government schemes, subsidies to fisherwomen societies notified there in might have acted as an instrumental factor for the members to join the co-operatives. However, it cannot be denied that a sizable number of majorities of the sample respondents have been influenced by the friends, relatives. In such cases the factor of success story narration by the relative kith and kin and known acquaintances could have influenced them in joining the co-operative societies.

**TABLE - SOURCE OF AWARENESS ON FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

Sl. No.	Awareness	Total	Percentage
1	Friends	135	45
2	News papers	88	29.33
3	Relatives	77	25.66
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Study

**TABLE - REASONS FOR FISHERWOMEN JOINING CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

Sl. No.	Reasons	Total	Percentage
1	To increase production	102	34.00
2	To get adequate price for production	73	24.34
3	To earn more profit on sale	125	41.66
4	To raise family income	00	0.00
5	To solve individual grievances	00	0.00
6	Any other	00	0.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Study

The picture in Table 5.6 represents that the major reason for the sample respondents joining the fisherwomen society is that to get more profit on their sale of production (41.66 per cent) followed by the aspects of to increase production (34 per cent) and earn adequate

price for their fish production (24.34 per cent). From the above it can be inferred that in line with the conceptual understandings which substantiates that cooperatives help people in maximizing mutual economic, social, and cultural benefits, the sample respondent's reasons for joining the co-operative more than amply testify the sole object of earning increased profits for their produce to achieve the goal of improving their overall welfare. Further it was desired to understand that whether the fisherwomen co-operate societies are helping its members to improve their wages and income and other related working conditions, it was wholly observed from the responses of the sample respondents in the study that the societies are helping its members to better their wages and income and working conditions. The present study also clearly pinpoints to show that profit maximization, increase in productivity levels are the major motivating factors for the sample respondent's entry as member to the fisherwomen co-operative societies.

### **LOCATION OF PLACES OF SUPPLY OF FISH SEEDS TO FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

Fish seed is one of the essential inputs for fish farm production (FAO, nd). The availability of quality and reliable fish seeds prospers the dependent communities and at the end, quality of fish seeds and labour investment during the whole period of developing fish products in inland water sources determines the economic conditions and overall wellbeing of the fishing communities. Thus, knowledge of availability of fish seeds is also a very important aspect in fish rearing. Therefore, a brief review of the places of fish seeds availability is essential. In this context, the mandal-wise details of places of procurement of fish seeds' is shown in Table 5.7. The table reveals that each mandal covers 6 sample FWCS. The major places of fish seeds

procurement for these 6 mandals are –Anakapally, Atchuthapuram, Mungapaka, Chodavaram, Rambilli and K.Kotapadu. It was noticed from the responses given by the selected sample fishing co-operative societies that fish seeds are being brought from within the district and outside the district. They have further stated that when they purchase the fish seeds from far off places like Achutapuram, Anakapally, Chodavaram, the overall quality of such fish seeds are better than those available within the district from places like K.Kotapadu, Rambilli, Munugupaka. Most of the societies were importing fish seeds from places outside the district in spite of the higher transportation cost involved which is normally being borne by the, respective importing societies. The remaining societies had to depend on their fish seeds requirement at places available within the district since they could not bear the higher transportation cost involved in importing fish seeds from outside the district. Here it should be noted that the societies importing seeds from outside the district have reaped the benefits of better quality of fish with higher productive yield and thereby by increased profits as compared to their fellow societies who depended on local fish seeds. Here it is suggested that government should ensure to devise appropriate means for producing better quality fish seeds locally on par with those available outside the district for the benefit of all the societies or at least make arrangements to provide them with good fish seeds on a cost-effective manner for achieving the object of improving and bettering the fishing community as a whole and in particular those dwelling in the study area.

### **TABLE - DETAILS OF MANDAL WISE PLACES OF SUPPLY OF FISH SEEDS**

S. No	Mandals	Place of fish seeds	No. of FWCs
1	K. Kotapadu	Kaikaluru, Rajamundry,	12
2	Rambilli	Kaikaluru, Rajamundry,	12
3	Munagapaka	Koilsagar , Pillalamarri, Chandrasagar	12
4	Chodavaram	Kaikaluru, Koilsagar, Rajamundry	12
5	Anakapally	Kaikaluru, Dindy, Chandrasagar, Koilsagar,	12
6	Achutapuram	Kaikaluru, Rajamundry, Dwarakapudi,	12

Source: Field Study

**DETAILS OF SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDSVARIETIES FOR FISHES**

It is well known in the study area application of manures and other fertilizers, as well as the excess use of feeds may reduce the overall quality of pond water. In the case of pond culture of common carp, the combined use of natural fish food and supplementary or/and balanced feeds is a technique which promotes both a good pond environment and improved fish nutrition (FAO, nd). In fact, ponds generally have some contents of wide range of natural food but feeding supplementary feeds in the form of common carp feeds is essential as there is heavy pressure on fish farming. With this background in mind the study attempted to understand the various types of supplementary feeds used in respective areas covered through this study. In general, grains and by-products including compounded farm-made or commercial feeds are the supplementary feed even with this, consumption of natural feed in certain proportions is still needed otherwise fish will not grow properly. The following table illustrates locally available variety of supplementary feeds being used in the chosen sample areas (Table5.8). Further, the data reveals that frequency of feeding supplementary feed to pond or inland fishes. The societies, as the data presents in Table 5.8, offer supplementary feed once in 2-3 months (55.55 per cent) however in some of the societies feed was once in a month (44.44 per cent). It may be noted that in small lakes and ponds supplementary feed is provided once in 2-3 months while in big lakes and ponds it was once in a month. Thus, frequency of feeding supplementary feed is depending upon the size of water resources. Thus, it is found that offering supplementary feed is also on essential ingredient for producing increased quantity of quality fish production.

**TABLE - FREQUENCY OF PROVIDING SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDIN THE SAMPLE FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

Sl. No.	Days of food	Total	Percentage
1	Daily	00	00
2	Weekly	00	00
3	Monthly	32	44.44
4	2,3 months	40	55.55
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Study

Generally, the supplementary fish feed consists of broken rice, paddy, husk, cow

dung, ground nutcake, sugar cane waste, waste oil, ginning waste, etc., It was informed by the respondents that fish supplementary feed is available locally and hence societies purchase the same locally. In case of some water borne diseases out break the fisherwomen mix lime and turmeric and add it to the water to prevent any infection due to such diseases to the fish or fishing's.

## EXPORT

**TABLE - DETAILS OF THE PLACE OF EXPORT OF FISH PRODUCTION BY FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN THE STUDY AREA**

Sl. No	Place of export	No of FWCS	Percentage
1.	Hyderabad	38	53.00
2.	Bengaluru	22	30.00
3.	Mumbai	12	17.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Study

Table Highlights the places of exports of fish catches by FCS in the study area. To examine whether the societies are marketing their fish catches within the local area or places outside the district the FWCS committee members were probed. From their responses it was evident that the major areas of exports of fishery catches are mainly to Hyderabad, and to a limited extent to Bangalore and Bombay by the fishing co-operative societies located in the study area. In general, exports may include merchandise of both domestic and foreign origin. Since the fish catches are from inland water bodies, it may be limited to these major cities. For statistical purposes the domestic exports were largely dominated by Hyderabad (70 per cent) followed by Bangalore (20 per cent) and Mumbai (10 per cent). The data clearly indicates that apart from local marketing, there is a greater viability of marketing of fish catches in other metro cities. This may pave way to enhance employability avenues in areas of inland fishing activity and at the same time also help in generating higher income opportunities of the fishing co-operative societies through increased production of fish catches and better marketing avenues which in turn can have a trickle-down effect in boosting the overall welfare of the fishermen in the study area in particular and the fishing community in general through increased income earning and economic wellbeing.

## EMPLOYMENT PATTERN

**TABLE - DETAILS OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN SAMPLE FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

Sl. No.	No of societies	Employment	Percentage
1	K.Kotapadu	1	3.33
2	Rambilli	1	3.33
3	Munagapaka	1	3.33
4	Chodavaram	1	3.33
5	Anakapally	1	3.33
6	Achutapuram	1	3.33



	<b>Total</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>20</b>
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**Source:** Field Study

The data obtained reveals that in majority of the societies employment situation in addition to the direct fish catching activities among the fishing community as is observed through the field study is negligible since most of the activities are being carried out only with the members of the fisherwomen families. The management and maintenance of records of the fishing co-operative societies are being manned mostly by the educated members of the fisherwomen families without the involvement of any outsider. Only in case of few societies (6) i.e. 20 percent for maintaining society records driving four wheelers, watchman they have appointed outside persons paying them monthly wages. This aspect may be considered a major drawback in this family-oriented avocation since the scope for generating additional direct employment opportunities being very limited. However it cannot be denied there is a possibility of indirect employment opportunity in areas like marketing, exports, transport segments, fish feed preparation, office maintenance etc. It is suggested that the fisherwomen cooperative can ponder upon in this direction for reaping long term benefits for the fishermen community.

**TABLE - DETAILS OF COLD STORAGE FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN THE SAMPLE FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

Sl. No.	Cold storage items	No.of items	No.of FWCS
1	Ice boxes	19	06
2	Refrigerator	00	00
3	Deep freezer	00	00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>06</b>

**Source:** Field Study

Providing cold storage facility is also an important infrastructure facility one among other elements as once fish is frozen, it must be stored at a constant temperature of  $-23^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-10^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) or below in order to maintain a long shelf life and ensure quality (NABARD, and). Hence to understand whether there are cold storage centers available to FWCS was examined. The data reveals that few of the selected societies provided cold storage facilities at the collection centers at respective places. Further, it was observed that there are different cold storage facilities such as providing Ice Boxes deepfreezes and refrigerators. The deep freezers and refrigerators are found to be not available in all most all fishing centers whereas the providing of ice boxes are found to be available in six centers. It may be noted that the ice boxes are being provided by government to co-operative fishing societies and only 6 societies in the study area were provided with 19 ice boxes. Here it can be seen that in most of the fishing co-operative societies there is no cold storage facilities at all. Even among the societies extending such facilities only ice boxes are being provided with no provision for deep freezer and refrigerators. The absence of cold storage facilities at the fisherwomen co-operative societies can be construed as a serious impediment and a greatest drawback for the very survival of the fishing venture since it is more risk prone due to high element of perishability involved in the fish catches especially when the catches are not sold out due so

unforeseen circumstances.

**TABLE - DETAILS OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT FACILITIES PROVIDED BY GOVERNMENT**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No of items	No. of FWCS	Subsidy
1	Two-wheeler	24	06	75%
2	Four-wheeler	03	04	75%
3	Gill nets	03	01	75%

**Source:** Field Study

Reveals the infrastructural and transport facilities provided by the government in the form of subsidy to the fisherwomen co-operative societies. The data reflected in the table shows that 24 two wheelers were being provided to six societies, four four-wheelers for four societies and one gill net to one co-operative society. The government provides 75 percent subsidy for the purchase of two-wheelers, four-wheelers and gillnet. It may be noted here that the society members are collectively using the subsidized four-wheelers and gillnet while in case of two wheelers they are generally owned by individual members of the fishermen co-operative societies. From the Table it can be inferred that though the government is providing a hefty subsidy to the tune of 75 percent surprisingly only 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of sample fisherwomen co-operative societies are found to be availing the benefit of subsidy on the purchase of two wheelers, four-wheelers and gillnet. This could be either for reasons of non-affordability of 25 percent down payment or non-requirement of the same or due to lack of awareness of such benefits. Further, it was noticed during the field visit that after availing subsidy, members have sold scooters for private parties. Such acts of the members can defeat the very purpose of extending subsidy for betterment of fisherwomen community in general and specifically of the respondents surveyed. Therefore, it is suggested that the government should take all precautions to ensure that there should be no mis-use of subsidy extended to targeted beneficiaries by imposing stringent punishment like withdrawal of subsidy extended to fisherwomen co-

operative societies in addition to any other deterrence or punitive actions to discourage such misuses.

**TABLE - DETAILS OF THE QUANTITY OF FISH CATCH**

Sl. No.	Fish catch in kgs	Total	Percentage
1	Below 5	159	53.00
2	06-10	57	19.00
3	Above 11	84	28.00
4	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Field Study

Fishing activity itself being a seasonal phenomenon, the fish catch however depends much on the nature and quality practices being adhered in fish rearing endeavours and to a certain extension the experience of fisherwomen. The data in the table reveals that more than 53 per cent of fisherwomen the fish catch fish is below 5 kgs while 19 per cent and 28 per

cent of the case it was between 6-10 kgs and above 10 kgs respectively. It is disturbing to note that in more than half of the sample respondents their fish catch is lower than 5 kgs and upto 6 kgs indicating a lesser productivity in their fishing venture in comparison to their other counter parts who are harvesting fish catch to the tune of 6 to 10 kgs and above. It is therefore very essential that the low yielding fisherwomen should catch up with the productive ones to reap the full potential of their fishing activity.

**TABLE - DETAILS OF MEANS OF COMMUNICATION FORTHE DISPOSINGOF FISH CATCH**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No.of FWCS	Percentage
1.	Media	00	00
2.	Mobile	72	100.00
3.	News paper	00	00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Field Study

To ascertain the mode of communication used by fisherwomen co-operative societies for the disposal of fish catch it can be noticed from the above table that all the fisherwomen co-operative societies were using mobile as the sole means of communication for the disposal of fish catch. None of the societies have availed other modes of communication like media or newspapers with regard to fish catch as it may be understood that any type of publicity involving the public domain isquite uncommon among the fishing co-operative societies. This could be perhaps because of the high publicity cost and non-affordability involved in such means of communication. Inspite of they having greater and wider chances of attracting better customers for disposing off the fish catch, so as to reap higher remunerative prices for the fish being sold. It is therefore highly essential for the fishing co-operatives to analyse the reason for not using this vital area of communication for fish catch disposal in order to rectify the lapse if any on its part in the larger interest of its members.

**NATURE OF ACTIVITY CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

**TABLE – DETAILS OF THE NATURE OF ACTIVITY OF FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No.of FWCS		Percentage
1	Fish cultivation	72		100.00
2	Direct Marketing	24	Middlemen 06	100
3	Providing credit	06		20.00

**Source:** Field Study

Projects the nature of activities undertaken by fisherwomen co-operative societies in the study area. From the table it is evident that main activities of fisherwomen co-operative societies were namely fish cultivation, marketing of fish and providing credit to the society’s members. All the societies surveyed were found to be totally involved in fish cultivation which distinctly throws light on the fact that the societies were responsible for thepurchase of fish seeds and its cultivation. Apart from fish cultivation activity 24

fisherwomen co-operative societies were also marketing their fish catch without the help of middlemen whereas six societies i.e., 1/5 of societies were dependent on middlemen services for marketing of fish catch. This may be due to the lack of awareness of the members managing the societies to the right channel for direct marketing of fish catches and hence they were forced to rely on middlemen for their marketing needs. Such dependency on others can have a direct impact on the erosion of profitability and exploitation of fisherwomen community. Further it can be observed that only six societies were lending credit to their members from the reserve fund of the societies. Lending of such credit facilities to its members is a healthy practice since most of them are from poor background with low means of personal resources. Other fishing societies should also emulate such positive practices to all its members in conjunction with banks and other lending institutions. This will go a long way in augmenting fishing operations and thereby help the fishing community to reap the benefits extended. From the analysis it is clear that the main activities of the societies were mainly fish cultivation i.e., the type of fish to be produced and its marketing. It was also observed that the fish cultivation varied between societies depending on the sources of water resources availability.

**TABLE - DETAILS OF UTILIZATION OF FACILITIES THROUGH CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

Sl. No.	Facilities available	Respondents	Percentage
1	Traditional crafts	163	54.33
2	Health package	00	00.00
3	Supply of fish crafts and gears	85	28.33
4	Group insurance scheme	00	00.00
5	Fisheries training and extension	52	17.33
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Field Study

The success of the fisherwomen co-operatives ultimately depends on the efficiency, efforts, commitment and involvement of the fisherwomen in their activity. The fisherwomen co-operatives carry out and monitor the fishing activity of the member fisherwomen so as to maximize production and profitability to strengthen the financial base of the members and the co-operatives. The progress and prosperity of the fisherwomen co-operatives very much depend on the efficiency of fisherwomen. In view of the importance of fisherwomen's contribution to progress they should be encouraged and provided with all requisites covering financial, physical, technical and scientific support inputs etc., so as maximize production and profitability to strengthen the financial base and business acumen of the fisherwomen community and their co-operative societies.

In order to ascertain the facilities provided to fisherwomen through fisherwomen co-operative societies a thorough analysis would be essential of the facilities available. From the table it is evident that majority of the societies 54.33 per cent were providing support in traditional crafts, while 28.33 per cent were supplying fish crafts and gears. It was also noticed that 52 societies are

instrumental in providing training and extension services to its members. Such provision of training and extension services to its members by the fisherwomen co-operative societies is a welcome feature to boost the overall efficiency of the fisherwomen involved in fishing activities. It is also disheartening to note none of the societies had any group insurance scheme or health packages for its members. The absence of any such schemes shall be highly detrimental to the fisherwomen involved in fishing ventures in view of the risky nature of fishing activities and because of uncertainties involved in such activity it should be made mandatory since these individuals should be healthy and be able to tide over any risks of natural calamity involved in their activity by providing group insurance scheme for the benefit of these fisherwomen and fishing community in general.

### **PROBLEMS IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CO-OPERATIVES SOCIETIES**

An attempt is made in this part to identify the problems faced by the fisherwomen co-operative societies, which have hindered their growth and development, despite the efforts of the government to promote this sector by way of liberal policy measures and extending other sector specific facilities yet, these co-operative societies have not been able to free themselves from problems.

The fisherwomen co-operatives face many problems in their organization, which have hindered the growth and development of their business. As one of the principal purpose of this study is to enquire into the problems of fisherwomen co-operatives in the area of financial, production, and marketing, simple ranking method was adopted, based on the responses obtained during the field study and the fisherwomen co-operatives societies were asked to rank the reasons cited by them as most important, important, somewhat important and unimportant. Most important was given a scale value of 5, important 4, somewhat important 3, and unimportant 2, In order to study the relative importance given to the reasons, for each reason, the scale values were multiplied by the corresponding frequencies (number of societies) and summed up in the district.

**TABLE - PROBLEMS FACED BY THE SAMPLE FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

<b>Problems</b>	<b>Most important</b>	<b>important</b>	<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>Un important</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Production	10	14	8	6	38	1
Marketing	7	6	4	-	17	3
Finance	5	5	3	1	12	2
Miscellaneous	-	3	2	-	5	4
<b>Total</b>					<b>72</b>	

**Source:** Field study

Shows that among the problems specified by the fisherwomen co-operatives, the problem of production is ranked first by thirteen co-operatives while the financial and marketing problems occupying the second and third place respectively. Apart from these two societies were found facing miscellaneous problems in view of disunity among members of

these societies and group clashes prevailing among them.

It is interesting to note that among the fisherwomen co-operatives in Visakhapatnam district only a few fisherwomen co-operative societies are seen to be facing the problem of marketing due to lack of awareness and proper means to market their fish catches on their own. Hence these societies are dependent on as the Andhra Pradesh fisherwomen co-operative societies (AFCOF) which is expected to purchase their entire produce. It is reported by the co-operatives that the AFCOF is not only purchasing their entire produce of fish catches of the co-operatives regularly but were also not delaying the payment for the fish sold to it.

**TABLE - PROBLEMS OF PRODUCTION FACED BY THE SAMPLE FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

Reasons	Most important	Important	Somewhat important	Unimportant	Total	Rank
Non-availability of quality seeds	3	2	1	1	07	1
Low quality of feed	2	1	1	-	04	2
Lack of technical knowledge	1	1	-	-	02	3
Floods and cyclones	-	-	-	-	-	4
<b>Total</b>					<b>13</b>	

**Source:** Field study

Reveals that as one of the main purpose of this study is to enquire into the problems of fisherwomen co-operatives in the specific area of production pertaining to the study is being analyzed with respect to the aspects of non-availability of quality seeds, low quality of feed, lack of technical knowledge and floods and cyclones. Simple ranking method was adopted. During the field study the sample fisherwomen co-operatives societies were asked to rank the reasons on the above score as most important, important, somewhat important, and unimportant. Most important was given a scale value of 4, important 3, somewhat important 2, and unimportant 1, in order to examine the relative importance given to the reasons, for each of the reason; the scale values were multiplied by the corresponding frequencies (number of societies) and summed up in the district. It may be observed from the above table that among the problems non availability of quality seed is ranked first, the problem of low quality of feed and lack of technical knowledge are ranked as second and third. Respectively. There has been no problem pertaining to Floods and cyclones in this study area as the sample respondents were commonly using traditional crafts and gears and that too they were confined only to inland fishing the problems cited are an obstacle to the co-operatives to improve the quantum of fish production of the co-operatives. From the above it is quite clear that the major problems in FWCS's are no availability of quality seed, low quality of feed and lack of technical knowledge which are responsible for the decrease in production of fish cultivation in Visakhapatnam district. It is therefore suggested that the government should ensure supply of reliable fish seeds and quality fish feed to the

fisherwomen co-operative societies in the study area in order to enhance their overall fish production and for ensuing its sustainability.

**TABLE - FINANCIAL PROBLEMS FACED BY THE SAMPLE FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

Sl. No.	Reasons	Particulars of fisherwomen co-operative societies	Percentage
1.	Non- availability of required finance	04	50.00
2.	Lack of financial support from commercial and co-operative banks	02	25.00
3.	Lack of direct finance from government	--	00
4.	Shortage own funds	02	25.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Field study

Examine the financial problems of fisherwomen co- operatives in the study area with respect to non-availability of required finance, lack of financial support from commercial and co-operative banks, lack of direct finance from government and shortage of the required own funds information was elicited from the sample fishermen co-operative societies. From the responses obtained it was evident. That the main sources of finance for the sample fisherwomen co-operatives were their own funds, government contribution and finances provided by banks. As the involvement of fisherwomen in the co-operatives is also not much encouraging, funds by way of share capital are highly limited and negligible. The government financial contribution to these societies is also limited leaving the co-operatives to depend on their own funds. Further obtaining loan from banks is also not that very much helpful to them, as the banks often insist that the fisherwomen co- operatives submit the details of their financial strength. Unfortunately, the fisherwomen co-operatives have not been able to do so because their financial soundness is questionable. Hence as long as the co-operatives do not have financial soundness, it is not possible to raise funds from commercial banks. From the table it is evident that 8 societies are seen to be facing financial problems due to lack of financial support from banks, government or their own

funds and these have been hindering the development of these fisherwomen co-operative societies in Visakhapatnam district. Until and unless the government as a matter of policy extends liberal finance to them, these co- operatives cannot flourish and be able to reap the benefits of profitability and sustainability in their fishing endeavours.

**TABLE - MARKETING PROBLEMS FACED BY THE SAMPLE FISHERWOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES**

Sl. No	Market particulars	No. of FWCS	Percentage
1	Lack of adequate transport facilities	03	50.00
2	Problem of storage facilities	02	33.33

3	Price instability	01	16.66
4	Lack of demand	--	--
	<b>Total</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field study

It is evident that six societies were facing mainly problems related to marketing. Of these inadequate transport facilities account for 3(50) percent and storage facilities 2(33.33) percent and price instability 1 (16.66) percent. It is of interest to note that though there is no lack of demand for fish yet the societies are facing the problem to dispose their catch at a reasonable price. This is basically due to lack of storage facilities and fish being a perishable product had to be disposed off in a compelling manner at the going price in the market which is often at a lower price than the normal price range so also sometimes due to excess fish catch supply being greater than demand the fisherwomen are forced to sell their catch at a lower price. Hence it is suggested that the societies should take initiatives or the government should take necessary policy initiatives for providing cold storage and transportation facilities so as to enable the fisherwomen to market their fish catches at a fairly good price range and thereby earn a better income. From the foregoing analysis for themselves it can be clearly inferred that the main problems faced by Fisherwomen Co-Operative Societies in the study area are namely, production, financial and marketing. It should also be noted that societies sometimes might face multiple problems but in this analysis the societies were specifically asked to report the main problems faced by them so as to identify the specific reasons related to their problems and suggest suitable remedial measures to mitigate or minimize such problems that come in the way of reaping higher profits.

**TABLE - ROBLEMS OFSAMPLE RESPONDENTS IN FISHING AVOCATION**

Sl. No.	Difficulties	FWCS	Percentage
1.	Non- availability quality seed	95	31.66
2.	Lack of information on market prices	57	19.00
3.	Scanty financial resources	35	11.66
4.	Lack of required and timely help from the governments and banks	25	8.33
5.	Inefficient management of co-operatives	9	3.00
6.	Lack of marketing facilities	26	8.66
7.	Lack of modern crafts	31	10.33
8.	Dependence on traditional fishing crafts	10	3.33
9.	Lack of infrastructure	12	4.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Field study

Exhibits the problems envisaged by the sample respondents of Fisherwomen Co-operative Societies in fish cultivation. From the table it is evident that 31.66 percent i.e., nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of respondents viewed that lack of quality fish seeds as a major problem while lack of information on market prices and marketing has emerged as other significant problems being stated by 27.66 percent of the sample respondents and further scanty



financial resources 11.66 percent lack of modern crafts and required and timely help from government and banks were also reported by 10.33 percent and 8.33 percent of the respondents respectively, while less than five percent each have stated other problems like lack of infrastructure, traditional fishing crafts and inefficient management of fisherwomen co-operatives.

From the foregoing analysis it is clear that the major problems confronting the fishing co-operatives and there by the fisherwomen are namely poor quality of fish seeds and marketing. Added to this as the data also shows nearly 12 percent of the sample respondents have stated that they are facing some financial problems in maintaining or managing fish raising activities. Further in such activities of fishing ventures there is a greater probability of disease and pollution which can create problems like the accumulation of pollutants and uneaten food beneath the tank areas which can degrade the very quality of the surrounding water. This needs a kind of medicinal and cleansing support and such act involves good amount of financial requirement. Once the fish farming process get affected, it is difficult to control such damage which could deplete the production level of such fishing ventures. This could be more so because of lack of required and timely financial support and help from the governments and banks 8.33 percent and also due to inefficient management of co-operatives 3.00 percent. Here it is suggested that society members should take special notice of these problems by procuring quality fish seed, ensuring proper maintenance and upkeep of the tanks and ponds for improving fish production and also adopting better marketing techniques and explore new avenues for enhancing the sales of fish production and there by accomplishing better income and economic status for the fisherwomen community in the sample area.

### **Conclusion**

Some of the important considerations and recommendations for the development of the fisheries sector in a region are summarised as the following the key points:**Decentralized Development Agencies, Production and Income Estimation, Water Harvesting Infrastructure, Common Village Ponds, Seed Quality, Fish Marketing, Cold Chain and Storage, Reducing Dependence on Outside Products**, Overall, the document emphasizes the need for comprehensive planning, infrastructure development, and support mechanisms to boost the fisheries sector in rural areas while ensuring that local communities benefit from the sector's growth.

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