

LIFE AND WORK OF FISH VENDING WOMEN IN SOUTH KERALA

CHANGES AND CHALLENGES DURING THE PAST 35 YEARS



Dr. J Mary John and Aji Diwakar



Kerala Institute of Labour and Employment

Government of Kerala

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Dr. J Mary John
Principal Investigator

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study titled 'Life and work of Fish vending women in South Kerala: Changes and Challenges during the past 35 years' sought to find out to what extent the life and work of fish vending women in south Kerala have changed in terms of their personal life, family life, occupation and political participation.

The inquiry was done in three fishing areas in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Alappuzha Districts in south Kerala, using primary data collected using simple random method from 150 households. Examination of secondary data, Focus Group Discussions, personal interviews, field visits and observations were the other major methods employed.

The study found that Major problems identified are low income and low asset base, indebtedness, too small business, lack of time for children, alcoholism of their husbands, too much spending for household affairs, lack of savings for future, lack of entrepreneurial skills, lack of sufficient capital, lack of sufficient transportation facilities, and lack of sufficient types and numbers of vessels. Low income is reflected in the very low asset base, lack of house and lack of land for some. Very low level of engagements with society and little participation in local body governance processes.

FVW live under stress and strain for a long term of time. They are not able to scale up their business and improve their lives. Working conditions are bad. Income is low. However, they are not able to address the problems and come up in life. The reasons behind this situation are the lack of support to them as a special category. They are considered as par with fishermen in the delivery of benefits. Very few schemes are available targeted to FVW alone. Since they are not organized, they do not get their rightful share of benefits. Most of them are not engaged in civil society activities. Very few participate in GS meetings. Managerial and entrepreneurial skills are low. They are far from many of requirements for a successful entrepreneur. Low economic status puts them down in social parlance.

While comparing the current situation of fish vending women with the situation 25-35 years ago, it is found that the number of women engaged in fish vending from marine coastal

areas has increased manifold. Social stigma has decreased. Income has become more or less sufficient to make both ends meet. Formerly, the income was miserably low. Transportation facilities have increased. FVW are supported by a series of stakeholders like head load workers, drivers, family members and sales persons. In former times, there was not much support from such players. The Government support has increased in terms of easy loans, transportation facilities and other incentives. Their status as fish vending women has positively improved during the past decades.

Gender equations are not affected positively or negatively due to their occupation. They also face discriminations as any other women face in their environment.

The study therefore recommends that fish vending women be taken separately from the fishermen while planning development schemes for the fish workers so that fish vending women get their proportionate share of rights and benefits. Their need to be trained in their work and work related aspects is emphasized to enhance their profits and in family budgeting and thrift to reduce their expenditure. The vulnerabilities in the areas of domestic violence, harassments in the market places and abuses during travel are to be addressed in particular. The space occupied by FVW in politics is to be enlarged by promoting political awareness among them.

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A B B R E V I A T I O N S

BPL	:	Below Poverty Line
CMFRI	:	Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute
CBO	:	Community Based Organization
CSO	:	Civil Society Organization
CADAL	:	Coastal Area Development Agency for Liberation
EDP	:	Entrepreneurship Development Program
EPF	:	Employees Provident Fund
FGD	:	Focus Group Discussion
FWW	:	Fish Vending Women
GO	:	Government Organization
GP	:	Grama Panchayat
GS	:	Grama Sabha
HSS	:	Higher Secondary School
KFWC	:	Kerala Fisheries Welfare Corporation
KFC	:	Kerala Fisheries Corporation
KRLCC	:	Kerala Region Latin Catholic Council
LC	:	Latin Catholic
LDF	:	Left Democratic Front
NBCFDC	:	National Backward Classes Financial Development Corporation
NCDC	:	National Credit Development Corporation
NMDFC	:	National Minorities Development Financial Corporation
NGO	:	Non Governmental Organization
OBC	:	Other Backward Communities
OBM	:	Out Board Machine

PHC	:	Primary Health Center
SEWA	:	Self Employed Women's Association
SWOT	:	Strength Weakness Opportunities Threats
SHG	:	Self Help Group
TEAP	:	Tsunami Emergency Assistance Program
TSSS	:	Trivandrum Social Service Society
TRP	:	Tsunami Rehabilitation Program
UDF	:	United Democratic Front
UP	:	Upper Primary
QSSS	:	Quilon Social Service Society

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This introductory section discusses the research question selected for the study, justification for selection, the relevance and importance of the issue.

1.1. Research Problem

The present study focuses on the life and work of fish vending women living in marine coastal villages in south Kerala covering the three districts of Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Alappuzha, having in mind the changes over time in the situation during a period of 35 years from 1998-81 to 2012-13 (35 years) and the challenges fish vending women have been facing to cope with.

Fishing in marine waters has been a source of livelihood from time immemorial. Fishermen and fishing communities have presumably been doing economic activity through which they sold, in olden times, their fish caught from the sea in return for other consumer goods by a kind of barter system and in recent times for cash which they use to purchase food, clothing, shelter, health care, education and other familial and personal needs. Fishing and transactions with fish have been supporting a large section of people who have been living along the shores to ensure their livelihood.

In this economic activity, in all likelihood, males alone were involved as buyers and sellers for a long time. Available literature does not give any clue that women were doing fish vending activity before a century ago.

However, there are secondary sources of information, which indicate, for certain, that women in south Kerala were doing fish vending activity in the late 70s and early 80s and thereafter. This period coincides with the beginning of the fifth Five Year Plan period (1977-82) and the beginning of the 12th Five Year Plan period (2012-17). These 35 to 40 years have

been a period of economic growth and tremendous social development of the people of Kerala in particular. This period also include the period of globalization, privatization and liberalization in India.

Present indications estimate 5000 women in active fish vending in Trivandrum, and a similar number in Kollam and Alappuzha Districts, making an estimated number of 15000 women. These women form part of the workers in the unorganized sectors as well as women workers in the unorganized sectors. While workers and women workers in many of the unorganized sectors such as construction, automobile, shops and other establishments, garment making and sales, agriculture, domestic work and fish processing get their wages according to local market rates, women and some times men fish vendors are categorized as those who fetch irregular income or loss.

The nature of their work is attached to (bad) smell of the fish and unhygienic ambience of the markets. It is not possible for them to keep their dress always clean and tidy. They are exposed to hard sun light and heavy rain during sales in most of the market places. While most of them have very low education ranging from illiteracy to primary school, their language and behavior comes under attack even by most polished people who come in contact with them in the market places, not to mention the horrible encounters with local 'goondas', social miscreants and other vested interests. Back home, they meet with routine household work and harassments, especially from drunken husbands. Many of them are widows and do not have alternative support of their husbands and relatives for raising their families. They struggle to construct a home for their families and to send their female children in marriage. Most of them take loans from various sources for doing their business on higher than normal interest rates. Almost all of them spend their earnings for the families mainly for food and other consumer items. At the end of the day, they do not have even a small amount for tomorrow, to use when they become old and unable to work and when they are deserted by their family members. Many of them live in huts or very small houses or live with relatives or married siblings. Most of them do not have any substantial assets of value.

It is noted that during the period as mentioned as covered in this study, the Central and State Governments have initiated and implemented several development projects and welfare

schemes for members and families of fishermen communities. Kerala ranks first in the country to introduce and implement more or less successfully several welfare programs especially for the weaker communities and social groups. Studies have confirmed this unprecedented introduction of welfare schemes for fishing communities, including marine fishermen during the post-struggle period of fishermen for their fishing rights in the States.

It is in this context that this study is concerned with the present socio-economic and political status of fish vending women, and based on the findings, with changes and challenges encountered by them along the marine coastal villages in South Kerala during the last 35 years from 1978-2013.

The researcher is challenged by the problem whether the changes that have happened in the State of Kerala and in their societies have made any significant impact on the life, work and working conditions of one of the presently conspicuous social groups, that is, fish vending women. The study also seeks to find whether fish vending women in south Kerala have come up at par with other occupational categories within their communities, in the case of standard of living, as indicated by their possession of land, house and other basic amenities such as home appliances.

If changes have really happened in their life and work in proportion to the changes outside, it is then necessary to ascertain the extent of that change. It is again important to investigate if these changes were digressive or progressive in terms of socio-economic development of the category and in the context of the discourse on inclusive growth.

If it is found that the social group under study has not undergone any substantial changes towards improving their overall situation and status, it is necessary to ponder why it is so, in a democratic milieu. If positive changes have happened, then their context and content deserve further exploration.

During this research, therefore, several issues are raised to understand and compare the realities of the lives and works of fish vending women, in the recent past and in the present situation. Are they happy doing the fish vending works? Are there compulsions from within and outside to continue or to withdraw? Do they have a voice and role in the family, society

and local governance? What functions do they carry out in the family and in the village? Do they have aspirations and goals in their life and for their family, and if yes, what are they? What are the current working conditions of fish vending women in south Kerala where the density of FVW is much higher than that in other parts of the State? How do they benefit out of it? How does the society look at them? How do they themselves look at them? How secure and regular are their work? How do their families contribute to their work and share the familial responsibilities? What are the problems they face in their job? How do they cope with them? Do they face sex discrimination in work sites? Are there frequent sexual harassments and abuses against them? How do they participate in the social, cultural and political life of their village, Gram Panchayat, caste and religious platforms? Are they included or excluded from such participation and from its benefits due to their avocation? How do they themselves perceive their participation/ non-participation in such environments?

Why do the fish vending women continue to work as fish venders in spite of the fact that the job itself is very arduous, their conditions of work very poor, their income very irregular and their social status comparatively low? Have they moved ahead or went backward compared to their situations 35 years back? Do they have anything to do with the culture in which they are born and brought up? Is there any apparent impact of the globalization on fish vending women's life and work? As citizens of a free nation, in a democracy, do they have a role, beyond that of a voter, in local governance? Do they participate in any manner in any local events in religion, culture, politics and development?

The questions asked above, in sum, are mutually and closely related to (1) the personal, familial, socio-economic, cultural and political profile of the fish vending women in South Kerala; (2) their work, working conditions, regularity of income and social status; (3) factors that contribute to their current situation; (4) their contributions to their own lives, family, society, economy, culture and politics and (5) their problems and challenges.

1.2. Justification of the study

The present study is justified by the need to address the above questions in the context of democratic and inclusive growth. The present situation of fish vending women demands this

investigation to gauge the changes or stagnation, find out the reasons for change/stagnation and to suggest some recommendations for the improvement of their life and work.

Many fish vending women sell fish taking it on head load from door to door in the city and rural areas. They are the immediate connecting link for the households to get fish for their daily food. They are the last link in the net of middle players between the fishermen who catch fish and the consumers. Since majority of Keralites are regular fish eaters, service of fish vending women is a necessary service to the society. More over, fish vending done by women in the market and in the households is an economic activity and indirectly contributes to strengthening the finances of the local bodies and Government through taxes and tariffs. Several families survive by this self- employment by fish vending women.

However, their plight and place in the mainstream social fabric is not yet studied seriously. Though several studies and researches have been conducted on the unorganized sector as a whole, and fisheries in particular, only few attempts have been made to study the conditions and problems of fish vending women in Kerala. Even women in the unorganized sector have come up as subjects for discourse in the national and state levels, fish vending women have been rare subjects for discussion and researches.

In the absence of this, they are found excluded from being the target of support services meant for the fishermen communities in general. Consequently, there is no policy to promote the welfare and sustainable livelihood of the families of the fish vending women. The present study aims to fill these gaps.

A State policy on fish vending women shall address the need for proportional change of quality of their lives by improving the working conditions, living conditions, family and personal relations, social relations, contributions towards local body governance processes and political processes, as well as their financial conditions. It shall address the need for social security measures to protect the group in their old age, including land, housing, pensions, health and life insurance, education of their children, marriage support for their children, and cultural integration processes with other communities and other layers of their own communities. The present effort is aimed at providing insights and materials to develop favourable policies.

1.3. Importance of the Study

Fish vending women, who sell fish from door to door of the households in interior areas, local markets and way sides, form one of the conspicuous social and occupational groups in south Kerala. They are categorized as workers in the unorganized sector and form part of the 93% of the work force in India and 81% of the workforce in Kerala.

Though statistics on their demography is not available to the desirable precision, their presence in the socio-economic, cultural and political scenario is now recognized by the Government of Kerala and society. Though their living and working conditions have been full of difficulties and challenges beyond their own ability to address, their services and contributions are valuable to the society. The economic activities they are engaged in attend, in a great extent, to their personal and family needs, society's need for fresh fish for daily consumption and to the economics of the village. In a democratic country, it is also important to know what they receive from the society and the State, in turn, for their services in very difficult situations.

An understanding and analysis of the personal, familial, socio-economic, cultural and political profile of fish vending women in the changed and changing circumstances is expected to answer these concerns. That is the relevance of the study.

This short introductory chapter has summarized the research questions, the socio-economic context of the issue and relevance of the study.

Chapter Two

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction

Having placed the research problem, its relevance and importance in the proper context in the last chapter, the objectives and methodology of the study are outlined in this chapter.

2.2. Objectives

- To examine the personal, familial, socio-economic, cultural and political status of fish vending women in south Kerala
- To understand their work, working conditions, income and expenditure pattern
- To analyze the factors that contribute to their current situation
- To understand and analyze their contributions to themselves, family, society, economy, culture and politics of their environment
- To identify the problems and challenges of fish vending women in south Kerala
- To compare their present situation with the situation of fish vending women in the recent past.
- To recommend appropriate measures which will accelerate the process of inclusion of fish vending women in the development dynamics

2.3. Methodology

2.3.1. The universe of the study

The universe of the study comprises of the fish vending women and their families hailing from coastal villages in South Kerala.

2.3.2. Units of the study

Units of the study are fish vending women and their families in the selected three areas in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Alappuzha districts.

2.3.4. Data base

Data base consists of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are the key personnel around fish vending activity, such as the female fish-venders, male fish-venders, big fish merchants and fish exporters who purchase fish from the landing centers, local sales men (auctioneers) who play a major role in selling fish to various purchasers at the landing centers, money lenders who provide soft loans on higher interest to the fish vending women, drivers and helpers in vehicles which transport fish vending women from the villages to the markets, consumers who buy fish from fish vending women either from the market or at their door steps, leaders in the local communities who are regularly in contact with fish vending women, elected representatives of local bodies who are expected to support the women fish venders, leaders of community-based organizations (CBOs) in the locality, experts and researchers on the subject area, social activists and NGOs working with fish workers.

Secondary sources of data required for the study are books, periodicals, journals, study reports, survey reports, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) documents, surveys and studies done by Department of Fisheries, Government of Kerala, articles and features in news papers and web resources.

2.3.5. Pilot Study

In preparation of the study and data collection, a pilot study visit was conducted to all the three study areas in which Principal Investigator, Co-Principle Investigator, field investigators and Photographer joined in the month of may 2013. During the visit, the team witnessed the fishing and fish vending activities, fish landing centers, fish vending women in their activities, auctioneers, middlemen, merchants, loading and unloading labourers, drivers of the vehicles transporting fish to the markets, social workers and some customers. Market places, women selling fish on the road sides and men selling fish on two-wheelers, were also visited

during the trip. Notes and photographs were taken for future use. Strengthened by the first hand information and feedback, the process of construction of tools of data collection was initiated.

2.3.6. Tools of Primary Data Collection

Tools of primary data collection employed in this study consist of (a) Interview Schedule to collect data from the fish vending women and their family members by way of collateral interviews of the family involving husbands, children and in-laws, (b) Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide to collect data and perspectives from the Community-based organizations (CBOs), village leaders, social activists and NGOs. (c) Personal interview guide to collect data from the key personnel around fish vending activity, experts and researchers was also used for the study.

2.3.7. Pre-testing

A pretesting exercise was conducted at Mariyanadu area using the draft Interview Schedule applied to 10 respondents. Based on the pre-test, a series of changes were introduced in the Schedule. Some questions were deleted, while some other questions were added. Constructions of some questions were changed to suit the level of the respondents. At this stage, a statistician, Dr. Biju Abraham, was consulted to understand the scope of statistical analysis of the data. His comments and suggestions were also used to finalize the Schedule. Sufficient copies of the final Schedule were printed and used for data collection.

2.3.8. Sampling Plan

The sampling plan for conducting survey using interview schedule was made in such a way that one fishing area each was selected from each of the three districts. A total of 150 fish vending women/ their families were identified at 50 families from each area from among the total fish vending women in the selected areas using simple random sampling method in Marianadu and convenient sampling method in other two areas.

In the simple random method, the researcher made a list of all fish vending women in the area and identified 50 samples from the list of 175 fish vending women.

2.3.9. Training of Field Investigators

Training was conducted for the four field investigators separately at three venues before pre-testing. In the training, general orientation on data collection and specific practical tips on all the questions listed in the Schedule were given to them. Potential problems in data collection and the methods to address them were also discussed.

2.3.10. Data Collection

The four field investigators – two from Mariyanadu and one each from Sakthikulangara-Neendakara area in Kollam and Beach Ward in Alappuzha- were local women who knew the study area. They were given training in data collection.

Data were collected through a door-to-door survey of the identified samples using the Schedule of questions during the month of June 2013 from the three areas of study. There were 78 main questions, with 24 sub-questions, categorized under identification details, education, health status, family details, economic factors, occupational details and political aspects.

In each of the household, FVW were targeted and in their absence, their spouse or adult children were interviewed. It took around one month to complete the data collection using interview schedule. The Principal investigator and the Co-investigator guided and took part in the data collection process.

2.3.11. Data Processing

Data gathered through Interview Schedule, after minimizing the anomalies found, were entered into excel format and processed with the help of computer tools and then tabulated.

2.3.12. Data Interpretation and Analysis

Subsequently, data were interpreted and analyzed with reference to the objectives of the study. This was done very often in consultation with experts in the field and those experienced in similar studies. Findings were marked in the course of these processes.

2.3.13. Focus Group Discussions

Three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) meant to explore some of the problems in depth were conducted one each at Mariyanadu, Sakthikulangara and Beach Ward, based on predesigned FGD Guide. On an average 10 FVW participated actively in the discussions and opened up on the problems and their solutions.

Principal Investigator was the moderator of the discussions and the Co-Investigator was the reporter for the three FGDs. After facilitating self-introduction of the participants, the stage was set for discussion through informal and personal interactions. Then the questions were placed one after another for discussion. The reporter noted down the responses with their names. After the discussions which took about 2 hours, the summary of the process and contents of discussions were briefed for the participants. After a vote of thanks for their cooperation, the FGDs were concluded.

Schedule of the Focus Group Discussions

Sl. No	Date	Venue	Number of participants	Points discussed
1	02.10.2013	Mariyanadu Fish landing center	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the problems you face in your business/occupation?
2	22.09.2013	Sakthikulangara	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the reasons for the problems?• What are the effects of the problems on your life and work?
3	23.09.2013	<i>Neendakara</i>	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you face your problems?• Can you suggest better ways of addressing those problems?

2.3.14. Personal Interviews

A number of personal interviews were conducted at the study areas and outside with a verity of stakeholders. These interviews were used to elicit experiential information on all stages and steps in fish vending, the processes taking place in the landing centers, markets, purchase, price, competition, profit, loss, problems, benefits and the like. Personal interviews were conducted with fish vending women, auctioneers, middlemen, loading and unloading labourers, fishermen, boat owners and customers at the markets and landing centers. These interviews were conducted using a predesigned guide.

2.3.15. Observation

During the pilot visits and other repeated visits to the study areas, data collection, FGDs and personal interviews, a number of points were observed such as the the meaning of their body language, expressions, words, physical settings of households and villages, fishing equipments, the dynamics taking place at the auction centers, cleanliness in the markets and landing centers, furniture and other assets in the households of FVW, type of house and manner of dressing at home and during the vending activity. These were informal conversations to bring out the real opinions and approaches of the stakeholders. Notes and photographs were taken.

Data gathered using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), personal interviews and direct observations were integrated into the responses from fish vending women in order to validate and qualify the findings.

2.4. Chapters

The entire report arranged in 8 Chapters is suffixed to the preliminary pages including acknowledgements, table of contents, titles of data tables and titles of charts and a short abstract. The first Chapter of introduction records the research problem, its importance and relevance and justification of the study. This was followed by the second Chapter in objectives and methodology was explained in detail. The third Chapter describes the findings in the literature review with researchers' comments and positions. The fourth Chapter contains the setting of the study, mentioning the geographical, demographical, socio-economic and political situations

prevailing in the study areas in general. Fifth Chapter presents the data with analysis. Findings and conclusions are given in the sixth Chapter. The last Chapter presents the summary and recommendations. Some of the selected photo graphs taken during the field visits are inserted within the report. After the main report, some of the supporting documents and tools are given as Annexure. Annexure includes Interview Schedule, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide, Personal Interview Guide and a chronological outline of the processes undergone. The complete tables referred in the Report are also annexed as one document at the end of the report to make it easier for the readers to refer and keep the main report shorter and smarter.

2.5. Conclusion

The methodology was finalized based on the objectives, nature of the study, coverage areas, resources available and time allotted for the study, after referring some important authors in research methodology¹ and consulting experts in methodology. In addition, practical problems in contacting the actual samples during the day time when the respondents go for their job, forced the researchers to shift from the systematic sampling method to simple sampling and convenient sampling methods.

¹ Singleton, Jr., Royce and Bruce C. Straits (2005): Approaches to Social Research, Oxford University Press, Oxford. See also Foster, Jeremy J. (2001): Data Analysis, Sage Publications, New Delhi., Kothari, C.R. (1998): Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques, Wishwa Prakashan, New Delhi.

Chapter Three

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the theoretical background of the dynamics of retail fish vending is discussed in view of the existing public understanding and past experiences and exposures gathered from available literature: books, reports and research studies. Though considerable literature is available on fish workers in general, women fish vendors and their life and work have not yet become a subject for wide discussions. The reasons may be the small size of population of women fish vendors in Kerala and elsewhere².

3.2. Fish vending

Fish vending is generally understood as an economic activity of selling fish to household consumers and small hotels and eateries. It is retail selling to buyers. It is distinguished from the economic activities undertaken by middle men and big merchants, dealing with fish business. Fish vending as understood here is a daily economic activity done by small business persons as their occupation and source of income for livelihood, secured through selling fish. It is outside the purview of export and import transactions in fish.

3.4. Fish vendors in Kerala

In Kerala, there are men and women doing this activity. In the northern Kerala more male fish vendors are found, while in southern Kerala, more female fish vendors are seen. Most of the fish vendors, both men and women, hail from fishing communities.

² Annual Reports of Matsyafed mention that there are 40000 women fish vendors in Kerala. Refer Annual Reports from 2004- 2011.

3.5. Women fish vendors

While reference of women fish vendors is found in some studies and reports, their size was very small in earlier times. Due to reasons of social and economic nature, many were reluctant to take up this job, though the general social-economic conditions of their communities were more backward three decades ago than that at present. There are evidences to show that in early 1980s, fish vending was considered as one of the jobs ‘generally unskilled, low paid and physically exhausting’³. Fish vending was also seen as one of ‘the extremely low status occupations’.⁴ The number of women taking up this occupation is steadily increasing during the recent years. The dropout rate among women fish vendors is also very small.

3.6. Contributions of fish vendors

Fish vending women contribute their mite to their own families, communities, society and economy. Almost all the past studies have indicated that their income is the backbone of the family survival and sustenance. Women as a rule used to enter the job due to family needs for income. While many among women fish vendors are widows, husbands of many fish vendors are sick, lazy, alcoholics or occasional drinkers who cause to drain considerable portion of family income, the families almost fully depend on the income of the FVW.

As members of the family - mothers, wives and sisters- FVW do not depend on other members for their personal needs. Rather, they spend substantial amount of money to help not only their family members like husbands and children, but also their grand children. They purchase on a daily basis and voluntarily some snacks and sweets to others at home.

Women Fish vendors contribute to their own communities, as payers of dues as anyone else to community functions, social events and religious festivals. The money they spend on these and similar items beneficial to their communities are made from fish vending in all instances. They usually have no other source of income.

³ Leela Gulati, Women in the unorganized sector with reference to Kerala, CDS, p.14

⁴ Leela Gulati, The role of women from fishing House households: Case Study of a Kerala fishing Village, CDS, p.11.

Society also receives the benefit of women fish vendors to some extent. It is important to make fish available to the households in Kerala, because majority of the population is found eating fish on a daily basis. Retailers and household consumers mostly depend on women small scale fish vendors to buy fish for daily consumption.

As contributors to economy, women fish vendors pay market tax to local bodies for the space and facilities used in the market. Their contributions to the economy are as important as any other business persons because they are self-employed women providing employment at least to themselves. In some cases, they create additional employment to one or two persons.

3.7. Types of Fish vending

Women's fish vending activities can be categorized into many types based on their place of purchase, place of vending, social affiliation and marital status.

3.7.1. Based on the place of purchase

Based on the place of purchase, there are mainly four categories. Firstly, some women purchase their fish from near their own place of residence like their village, fish landing center near their village or the sea shore. Some others travel a longer distance by bus or auto to buy fish from other places. A third category goes to the nearby or distant markets to buy fish for sales. The fourth category travels to fishing harbors to make use of the advantage of better facilities and higher availability of fish.

3.7.2. Based on the place of vending

According to the place of vending, women fish vendors are categorized into four.

3.7.2.1. *Conventional Markets*

The first category consists of women selling fish in conventional and established markets, normally owned by local bodies. They take fish straight from the place of purchase to the market and remain there until they sell the whole fish with them. There are some who sell

their fish in more than one market intermittently and alternatively, depending on the market conditions.

3.7.2.2. House-to-house vending

The second category includes fish vending women who sell their fish house-to-house, generally taking fish by head load. They have a fixed time to arrive at a usual area where they go to their customers' houses, on a daily basis. They build up a stronger relationship with their customers and ensure reasonable price for their fish. The customers also benefit from this category by saving time, capitalizing from the trust built up between the buyers and sellers in terms of price and quality.

3.7.2.3. Road side Vending

A third category finds some road side to do business. Their number is smaller. This category is found more useful to those who do not want to go to the market place or landing centers due to distance. There is less chances of selection in this so-called market place. Aged women choose such places, as a rule. Others find such places as markets when they are unable to sell their fish in their usual markets. They come to these places and try to sell the remaining fish.

3.7.2.4. Vending at Harbours/fish landing centers

A fourth category finds the fish landing center or harbor as their market. They sell fish to household consumers and hotel owners. Though they face some resistance due to crowded economic activities taking place in such venues, their labour is less hard and their expenses are lower than others.

3.8. Fish vending as an employment

Fish vending is considered as a job done to get some remuneration. It is an occupation to raise income. It involves hard labour and various stages between purchase and utilization of income for household purposes.

3.9. Fish vending as a business

Fish vending is also a micro-enterprise done to make some profit through managing the various functions involved. Women fish vendors are self-employed entrepreneurs. They invest money, labour and skills of managing the venture. Almost all important management functions are also involved in their fish vending business. They deserve remuneration for their labour and profit for their financial investment.

3.10. Fish vending included as work in the unorganized sector

Unorganized workers are generally distinguished as workers without regular employment. Their employment is not secular. They depend on works available for a short period of time of part time and so have no claim for labour rights. These sections generally face several problems such as unhealthy working conditions and low payments for their labour. Fish vending is considered as an employment in the unorganized sector. Unorganized workers or sector is understood differently by different sources. For our understanding, the definition suggested by National Commission for enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS) and International Conference on Labour Statistics (ICLS). NCEUS reads,

“The terms “unorganized” and “informal” sectors are often used interchangeably. The informal sector may be broadly characterized as consisting of units engaged in the production of goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes to the persons concerned (15 ICLS, ILO, 1993). These units typically operate at a low level of organization, with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production and on a small scale. Labour relations -where they exist -are based mostly on casual employment, kinship or personal and social relations rather than contractual arrangements with formal guarantees.”⁵

3.11. Fish vendors’ personal and family life

Fish vending activity influences the personal lives of women in many ways. They have

⁵ See Report of the Committee on Unorganized Sector, p.10 in www.mospi.nic.in

to live their lives depending on the time, place and manner of their occupation/business. Since most of them conduct their activities in odd conditions very often, their married life is affected. Their lives are substantially affected by the situations where their children do not get proper care and husbands do not care for them. They are seen making sacrifices voluntarily without complaints.

3.12. Fish Vendors' Social Status

Social status of women fish vendors, as a special social group, is considered in terms of their health, education, religion and community.

3.13. Health Status

Due to their business environment, health of women fish vendors is considered vulnerable. They are exposed to sun and rain. They conduct their business very often in unhealthy and unhygienic conditions. Eating and drinking are irregular and what they eat is not always qualitative and clean. Drinking water is not always available at markets or on their way to markets and back. Physical activities related to the venture are becoming less and less and this also makes them vulnerable to illnesses.

3.14. Education Status

Most of the women fish vendors are either illiterate or with very low level of education. This situation affects their business and work in terms of selling skills, customer relations, use of language, way of dressing, public etiquette and other mannerisms and behavior. These aspects are connected with the social status they create for themselves and their category as fish vendors. Opportunities are less for them to make use of the social education processes taking place in their villages, since they are not present there.

3.15. Religious and Caste status

In Kerala, most of the women fish vendors belong to Latin Catholic Christian community (Mukkuvars) or Dheevara or Araya Hindu Communities. Women from Hindu

Araya and Christian Mukkuvar Communities have been engaged in buying and selling of fish in the markets and that woman from Muslim Mappila communities were not in the activities of fish vending (Kurien 2000, Ram 1992).

3.16. Fish Vendors' Economic Status

Generally belonging to the lower strata within their own communities, fish vending women hail from the bottom of the economic standard. Generally, fish vending is the only economic activity they have to support their families. They are not exposed to any other business or other occupations. Their land assets are negligible. Housing situation raises concerns. Their movable asset base also is bad. Most of them continue to struggle for the repayment of debts incurred for building a small house, purchasing a piece of land and sending girl children in marriage.

3.17. Fish Vendors' Social Capital

Social capital defined as trust, networks and shared norms which can be translated into social, economic and political assets are found in a nominal way among the women fish vendors. They are not able to associate meaningfully and regularly in social organizations where social capital is generated. Social capital strengthens people's social support system and economic and political capitals.

3.18. Fish vendors' political participation

As citizens of the country, fish vending women also participate in the political processes, but negligibly, by casting their votes during elections. Though the Kerala Panchayati Raj Act 1993 provides greater opportunities to women, the share of fish vending women who constitute 40000 in Kerala is too small to be mentioned.

3.19. Stakeholders of fish vending

There are several stakeholders' interested and influencing fish vending activities. The primary stakeholders are women and men doing the fish vending business at a small scale,

fishermen from whom they buy fish, sales men or auctioneers who play an important role in purchase of fish by FVW, head load workers who help them to take the fish to the vehicles, drivers of their vehicles, market owners who levy tax and who are supposed to provide facilities, middlemen who very often influence the prices, money lenders who provide capital on interest and boat owners who control prices at fish landing centers. Other stakeholders are social workers, civil society organizations, religious units, political party units and trade unions.

3.20. Social Security Measures and Fish vending women

Major support system consists of some projects and schemes implemented by the Fisheries Department of Kerala through its various institutional mechanisms like Matsyafed (Kerala State Cooperative Fisheries Development Federation Limited No.F (T) 738), Matsya Board (Fishermen Welfare Fund Board).

Matsyafed is a major institution under the Department of Fisheries, which implements projects and schemes meant to help fishing community as a whole and fish workers in particular.

An analysis of the social security measures instituted by the State Government Department of Fisheries and sister organizations⁶ reveal that most of the schemes implemented for the fisheries sector are aimed at the development assistance (technological up-gradation of harvesting facilities, infrastructural development and marketing assistance. Mechanization was the focus during the initial period. Kurien et al (2001) classified the period from 1964 to 1998 into two. Period one comprised years from 1964 to 1985 and period two comprised years from 1986 to 1998. The first period was further categorized into two (1964-1980 and 1981 to 1985). The major schemes of assistance during these periods are listed below:

⁶ Kerala State Cooperative Federation for Fisheries Development (Matsyafed), Fishermen Welfare Fund Board (Matsya Board)

Sl. No.	Period One		Period Two
	1964-1980 Years of Promotional Social Security Provision	1981-1985 Years of Greater Institutionalization of Social Security	1986-1998
1	Compensation of loss of life of fishermen	Kerala Fishermen Welfare Corporation (KFWC)	Matsyafed came into existence amalgamating KFWC, Kerala Fisheries Corporation (KFC) and Kerala Inland Fisheries Development Corporation
2	Compensation for accidents	Housing and rehabilitation	Matsyaboard, 1986.
3	Compensation of loss of fishing equipments	Scholarships to the selected students from the fishing community (lump sum grant, stipend and pocket money)	Alternative employment training for youth
4	Housing schemes	Sanitation and health benefits	Housing and rehabilitation housing scheme
5	Educational benefits for formal education of the children of fishermen	Marketing assistance	Education Cash Award for best students
6	Professional training of fishermen youth in modern fishing techniques	Life insurance	Training
7	Nutrition program	Equipment Insurance	Sanitation and health benefits
8			Accidents insurance
10			Personal accident insurance
11			Women Fish vendors Bus service
12			Community Peeling centers
13			Women Vendors' subsidy scheme

It is noted from the above analysis that schemes specifically made for fish vending women during 1964-1998 are limited to loans for working capital and bus for marketing. Fish vending women could also benefit from schemes aimed at fisher women in general. Major portions of the funds were allotted to target men and their activities, though substantial percentage is meant fisher women also. Their special needs were not taken into consideration during the past.

Major projects implemented during the last 10 years are listed below:

1. Financial Assistance to Renew and Repair country boats at Rs.10000/- per unit.
2. Financial Assistance to purchase accessories for fishing nets at Rs.6000/- per unit
3. Financial Assistance to purchase deep sea boats at 25% of the actual cost
4. Subsidy to bank loans for the purchase of fishing equipments at 25% of the total cost.
5. Integrated Fisheries Development Project sponsored by National Cooperative Development Corporation (N.C.D.C.) to purchase fishing equipments, to provide loans for working capital to fish vending women, providing financial assistance for working capital, construction of building and setting up other facilities for the Cooperatives and providing share capital
6. Insurance plan for fishing equipments
7. Fishermen Accident Insurance project
8. Swarnajayanthi Grama Swaraj Yojana (S.G.S.Y) project for employment generation through production and marketing of value added products from raw fish categories and skill training in value added products making
9. Tsunami Emergency Assistance project (TEAP) and Tsunami Rehabilitation Project (TRP) which has components such as reimbursement of loss incurred due to damages to fishing equipments, working capital for revolving fund, vehicle facility (women's bus) for fish vending women, fish kiosk projects with technical training, management training, sea food kitchen projects, gas kits to Out-Board Machine (OBMs), cage fishing program and training in group dynamics and hygiene in processing of fish.
10. Strengthening Primary Cooperative Societies through workshops for the delegates of primary societies, workshops for Women Societies workshops on Schemes on marketing and leadership and other training programs.

11. Employment Generation Projects supported by National Backward Classes Financial Development Corporation (N.B.C.F.D.C.) and National Minorities Development Financial Corporation (N.M.D.F.C.) through providing loans at lower rates of interest to purchase fishing equipments, vehicles, to provide education loans for children of fish workers, micro-finance and providing interest free loans.
12. Formation and strengthening of SHGs by training in SHG management and providing financial support to carry on its functions.
13. Skill training in making value added products and their marketing
14. Matsyafed education awards to the children of the members of primary societies
15. Training for community motivators and officers-in-charge in connection with scheme for interest free loans
16. Exposure visits to various offices useful for the target groups for building linkages
17. Participation in exhibitions Vocational skill training in deep sea fishing , ornamental fish culture, book binding and in value added products and their marketing
18. Entrepreneurship Development Programs (EDPs) Awareness training programs on schemes of Matsyafed
19. Future Makers – a training program for fish workers’ children in attitude change, excellence in studies and goal setting
20. Farm tourism
21. Housing schemes kerosene distribution
22. Ornamental Fisheries Development Project

As listed above, there are plenty of schemes in force for fish workers for a long time. Most of these schemes are oriented to benefit male fish workers and women fish workers in general. It is noted that there are very few schemes tailor-made for women fish vendors who are the most deserving category among women in fishing communities and women in unorganized sectors.

However, there are more schemes and projects meant both for male and female fish workers. Fish vending women who are members of Matsyafed Societies can also avail. Training programs, awareness programs, workshops, seminars, EDPs and exposure visits are meant both men and women. Loans are available to all members irrespective of sex. Many projects are

designed under TEAP and TRP are open to women and fish vending women. However, a close analysis reveals that projects and schemes meant for fish vending women are not yet proportional to their numbers and socio-economic situation. Due to gender related social mindset, common schemes are mainly utilized by male fish workers.

Major schemes meant for women fish vendors are loans for working capital and women bus project.

Commercial Institutions promoted by Matsyafed to benefit the fish workers and fish vending women in several ways. They are listed below (2010-11).

1. Net Factory, Ernakulam
2. Net Factory, Kannur
3. Matsyafed Ice & Freezing Plant
4. Citosan Plant, Neendakara (Kollam)
5. Fish meal plant, Azheekode
6. Fish meal plant, Kozhikode
7. Fish meal plant, Arattupuzha, Alappuzha
8. Glucosamin plant, Arattupuzha
9. O.B.M.Division, Kochi
10. Matsyaneethi stores
11. Community Peeling centers Neendakara, Sakthikulangara and Ambalapuzha

Aquaculture Projects:

- 1) Thrumullavaram Seed production Center, Kollam
- 2) Kaippamangalam Seed production Center, Thrissur
- 3) Valiyamcod Seed production Center, Malappuram
- 4) Mappila Bay, Seed Production Center, Kannur
- 5) Njarackal fish farm, Ernakulam
- 6) Malippuram fish farm, Ernakulam
- 7) Palaykam fish farm, Kottayam
- 8) Thenmala Aquarium

It is noted that more schemes are being introduced year after year based on the understanding of problems and issues in the sector.

3.21. Projects and Programs by Non-Governmental Organizations

Major Non-Governmental Players in the study area are:

- Trivandrum Social Service Society (TSSS), Trivandrum
- Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)
- Sakhi Women Resource Centre
- Kerala Swathantra Matsyathozhilali Federation
- Quilon Social Service Society (QSSS), Kollam
- Alappuzha Diocesan Social Service Society, Alappuzha
- Dheevera Sabha

There is a strong organization for Fish vending women promoted by TSSS along the coastal belt of Trivandrum district – Fish Vending Women's Forum. Forum has been facilitating thrift and credit operations to promote savings and provide credit to fish vending women as working capital. It also organizes struggles and agitations against the injustices done against fish vending women. It represents the needs and problems of the group before the Government and the public. The forum is supporting the FVW in managing their income, families and for better involvement in social organizations. However, the Forum has not become successful in enrolling all the active fish vending women.

NGOs and Community organizations are running minor projects for the progress of the FVW in many ways such as providing social education, right-based orientation, soft loans and other financial assistance linkages.

3.22. Insufficient Attention on FVW

However, non-governmental players and stakeholders are of the view that the schemes so far implemented for the fisher communities are insufficient to bring in sustainable

development. Even they, while designing projects and programs for the fishing communities, are sidelining fish vending women by claiming for piecemeal and small scale improvement.

In a document titled '*Integrated Development Programme for Kerala's Fisheries Sector: An Approach paper and a special package proposal for the 12th Five year Plan*' (CADAL 2012) submitted by Coastal Area Development Agency for Liberation (CADAL), an organization promoted by one of the key stakeholders, Kerala Region Latin Catholic Council (KRLCC), to the Government of Kerala and Government of India in 2012 asking for a special package of development for fisher communities and fisheries sector, there is hardly any mention of the problems faced by the fish vending women, except that of the lack of proper transportation. *Human Development Report of the Fisher Folk in Kerala* (Kerala State Planning Board 2009), though deals elaborately with important indicators of human development of fisher folk in Kerala such as education, health and income, does not speak anything particularly about the fish vending women and their education, health and income.

3.23. Discourse on FVW

The focus of discourse on fish vending women 35 years ago, that is, during the 1980s, centered around issues and subjects such as working women in low income occupations, working women's own perceptions of themselves, society's perceptions about working women, the reasons why women took to work in very difficult and challenging circumstances, economic problems of women unorganized workers, dual responsibilities of working women, stability of marriages among them, their aspirations about their children and family, problems in work and work as problem, lack of time for women for self-reflection, their religiosity, regularity of job and sex discrimination in food distribution at home and wages in the work site.

3.24. Modern Economic Reforms and Women Fish Vendors

Later on, activists and NGOs who worked among fisher men and women took to themselves a different set of concerns of fish vending women. These concerns include impact of globalization and the new development initiatives on the livelihood conditions of fisherwomen, shifts of roles as fisherwomen become the bread earner, types of vulnerabilities faced by fisherwomen, various forms of denial of rights, impact of market on fish workers'

community, the injustices and atrocities in the markets by the contractors, their goondas, middlemen and money lenders, mobility factor in connection with labour, health and family relationships, anti-fish worker and anti-gender government policies and sexual abuses on fisherwomen and their girl children. It can be noted from the list that though some of the old issues continued to be discussed, new issues and areas have evolved during the last 35 years.

3.25. The invisible and excluded existence

The fact that fish vending women have been left out of attention in the discourse not only by the policy makers, planners, researchers and authors, but also by the so-called key stakeholders deserves mention here. Gulati notes in 1981 when the number of fish vending women were less than nominal that very little was known about women in fish vending households, not to mention about fish vending women (p.2). The researcher tries to find out the reasons behind this lack of attention to and focus in this section.

“Part of the reason for this omission could be due to the fact that women do not go out for fishing. Compared to the dangerous, adventurous activities that men undertake during fishing in the open sea, women’s activities which are shore-based are certainly less dramatic. Therefore what happens before and after the expeditions does not seem as important as what happens during the expedition.”

The author adds another factor to be borne in mind for the neglect of fisherwomen “that all the fish-related activities that women participate in bring such low direct returns that they are hardly considered work in the sense of gainful occupation” (p2).

However, this situation is gradually changing. The job of fish vending women is getting recognition in Government and non-governmental circles and in the public parlance.

3.26. Four-Dimensional Exclusions

Fish vending women and their problems have not yet come into the forefront due to this exclusion. While it is confirmed by many other studies that marine as well as inland fisher communities are one of the marginalized groups in Kerala society, fish vending women

continue to face four dimensional discrimination from the mainstream society as fish vendors, as women, as those hailing from fishing communities and those hailing from the already excluded communities of Latin Catholics and Dheevera community. They are excluded from mainstream social groups as they are members of fishing community; they are excluded by fishing communities because they are engaged in fish vending as their source of livelihood; they also share the discrimination as women in a male dominated community.

3.27. Work Participation of women from Fishing Households

A quick review of literature available on fish vending women in South Kerala, at the outset, leads us to the consistent works of eminent researcher, Leela Gulati in the 1980s. In her working paper on *'The Role of Women from Fishing Households: Case Study of a Kerala Fishing Village'*, Gulati draws a picture of women in the fishing communities during the period from 1953 to 1978, based on two surveys conducted in 1953 and 1978 (Leela Gulati 1981). In this paper, meant to fill the gap that existed with respect to knowledge of fisherwomen's work participation, the major points of discussion are sex ratio, absolute health status, work participation, work participation of women from fishing households, not specifically of women fish vendors.

In general, she notes, the work participation of women from fishing households improved substantially in 1978 from that of 1953. In 1953, only 26 women (4%) were found self-earning out of the total female respondent population of 643 in the sample village of Puthenthura in Kollam district. This 4% is against the male work participation of 50% at that time. In 1978, out of 1330 in 464 fishing households, 582 women were workers (44% work participation of women, not specifically of women in fish vending, and for men it was 61%.

A simple analysis of the occupational participation of women self-earners in 1953 and 1978 reveals that the percentage of self-earning women in fish trade by head load vending steeped down from 19% (4 fish vending women out of 21 self-earners) in 1953 to 0.68% (4 out of 582) in 1978. Their presence was negligible. At this time, more women did earn their living from other sectors such as coir making, net making and peeling of shrimp fish. It was concluded that women did not take up fish vending as main occupation 35 years ago because it

was one of the 'extremely low status occupations'. It was 'low paying, unpleasant and strenuous'. It was also noted that fisherwomen and their work before and after fishing expeditions did not attract anyone's attention compared to fishermen, due to nominal or no apparent returns.

3.28. Less respectful and less profitable occupation for women

Leela Gulati's *Profiles in Female Poverty: A Study of Five Poor Working Women in Kerala* (Leela Gulati 1981a) is an interesting account of five women engaged in five different occupations. Among the five women studied, one was a fish vending woman, whose life and work were minutely examined and analyzed to bring out the 'conditions and consequences' of working in the unorganized sectors. Based on these profiles, the researcher continued to discuss and brought out several dimensions of life and work of women working in the unorganized sector, giving due importance to fish vending woman. In a case study made in 1978, of Puthenthura fishing village in Quilon District (Gulati 1981b), it was observed that fish business (head load fish vending) was taken up only by 3 (0.57%) women out of 582 working women in Puthenthura. Gulati hints that fish vending was considered at that time as less respectful and less profitable occupation for women. Though there were women carrying fish on head load used to sell fish from house to house in the neighbouring habitations, major occupations which attracted women in 1978-1981 consisted of net making (69%) and peeling work for wages (24%).

3.29. A very low social status of fish vending women even among fishermen

Women and Technological Change: A Case Study of Three Fishing Villages (Gulati), which depended on several earlier surveys since 1953 when the Indo-Norwegian Project commenced to accelerate modernization process in fishing, freezing and distribution stages, tries to answer the question if modernization project affected women from fishing households in the three project villages of Sakthikulangara, Neendakara and Puthenthura in Kollam District. The real concern was the change in work participation of women due to the impact of the said project. In this paper, the author speaks about the women in traditional fishing households. It also examines the role of women in fishing households.

Since fishing was a low earning activity where only men were engaged, the income of men alone was not sufficient to support fishing families. The author says that in the situation of low income for the family, the women also started working. It was reported that the major income earning activity of women from fishing households was head load fish vending, the other female occupations being coconut husk de-fibring, fish drying and net making. These activities were ‘rather arduous and brought in very meager returns’. These occupations had a very low social status even among fishermen. The author also finds that the earlier consensus and surveys had not taken care of income earning aspect of women in fishing households. In one of the villages studied, namely, Neendakara, fish vending was the most common activity of women. However, it was noted that the work participation of women was extremely low in the three villages.

3.30. Global Changes and inclusive growth

We observe that during the period under study, many changes have happened in the society locally and nationally. The country has moved from the mixed economy to market economy since 1990-91. The policies of liberalization, privatization and globalization have taken root in the country influencing the nook and corner of the nation. Kerala State has been highly influenced by these trends in society.

At the same time, the polity and Government have proactively engaged themselves in interventions and discourses focusing on the need for an inclusive growth. There have been launched several schemes for the development and welfare of fishermen and women (not particularly fish vending women) by the governments. There are several mechanisms instituted by the fisheries Department of Government of Kerala to address some of the issues of fisher folk.

Similarly, it was during the 80s, the fishermen struggle for sustainable livelihood came to the forefront of socio-political dialogue. It even took the form of a political struggle of fishermen, which turned out successful to a large extent, bringing several entitlements to the members of the fishing community in the form of several social security measures (Kurien et al 2001; CADAL 2012). It was as a result of this struggle that ban on trawling was enforced

during the months of June to August. Kerala Fishermen's Welfare Fund Act, 1986 was passed to constitute Fishermen Welfare Fund Board to plan and implement social security measures for fish workers.

3.31. Legal Framework in the fisheries sector

Many new laws were made for the promotion of fisheries and fish workers during this period.

- i. The Kerala Monsoon Fishery (Pelagic) Protection Act, 2007
- ii. The Kerala Fishermen Debt Relief Commission Act, 2008
- iii. Kerala Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1980
- iv. The Kerala Fishermen's Welfare Fund Act, 1985
- v. The Kerala Fishermen's and Allied Worker's Welfare Cess Act, 2007

Human Development Report of the Fisher Folk in Kerala (Kerala State Planning Board, 2009), concludes that the fishing community in Kerala as a whole has to go a long way to achieve the desired levels of human development. The Report does not have anything to say about fish vending women.

3.32. Working conditions of fish vending women

A very recent sample study of women fish vendors jointly done by Sakhi Women's Resource Center and Trivandrum Social Service Society (TSSS) in 2012 is a land mark in terms of the subjects included and the study area covered. The published study report titled '*Status of Women Fish Vendors*' (Sakhi/TSSS 2012) covered 42 fishing villages along the coastal belt of 85 kms in Trivandrum and Kanyakumari Districts from Eraymenthurai to Neerodi in Kanyakumari District and from Pozhiyoor to Mampally in Trivandrum District, involving 483 respondent fisherwomen conveniently identified. 100 fishermen were also surveyed to include their perspectives on women in general and fish vending women in particular. The objectives of the study consisted of examination of the working conditions and role of fish vending women and of various problems of the fish vending women.

The report describes with the help of tables and charts a bundle of subjects in the life and work of fish vending women with a gender focus. These subjects included age composition, marital status, size of households of fish vending women, sex composition, sex ratio, housing pattern, occupational pattern, age at which fish vending women started working, marital status at the time of commencement of the work, type of fish vending areas, place of purchase of fish for vending, market tax, facilities at the markets, condition of toilets in the markets, awareness about trade unions among fish vendors, general environment in the market, income, savings, investments, debts, financial contributions of husbands in the household management, literacy and education status, dropout status, marriage, health and reproductive issues, drinking water, sexuality, religion, politics, leadership roles, domestic violence and legal mechanisms to address them.

The findings of the study revealed important realities. The overall average family size of the families of the respondent fish vending women was 6.4. The sex ratio was in favour of males with 709 females for 1000 males. Children from only 54 % of the households attended schools. 71% of the fish vending women lived in their own houses implying that 29% did not have own houses. 33% of fish vending women had started work before marriage between the ages of 15- 26 years. While 73% sold fish in the markets, 37% did door-to-door selling and only 9% along the road side. 20% went for fish vending more than once daily. Only 20% reported that there was drinking water in the markets; 66% informed that there were toilet facilities in the markets; 42% said that there was a shed for selling fish in the markets. However, 72% noted that toilets in the markets were not useable.

Trade union membership among the fish vending women was negligible with 3%. 57% received husbands' contribution towards household expenditure, while a large section did not. 85% depended on loans for capital for their business from various sources such as private financiers (66%), SHGs (65%) and banks (26%). The responsibility of repayment mostly fell on women (81%).

Among the respondent fish vending women, 62% were literates. 76% had only less than 8 years of formal schooling. Formal education was not available to 38% due to poverty. Other reasons for the lack of formal education included responsibility vested with elder children to

look after the younger ones, when their mothers went for fish vending, lack of parental interest, health problems, lack of self-interest and inability to study.

Marriages have taken place at an age between 13-33 years. 19% got married before the age of 18 years. 91% had to give dowry in the form of money, gold, house and fishing equipments. 12% of the respondents were harassed for money by husbands' families.

11% did not have access to drinking water. 23% of the households did not have toilets. Household waste was generally thrown into the sea or lake. Health problems faced by the respondents were related to orthopedic, respiratory issues, blood pressure, diabetics, urinary infections and various kinds of fever and skin related. 77% depended on government health services and facilities. 76% did not have information regarding menstruation before menarche. Only 8% used sanitary pads. 21% got sex-related information before marriage. 95% of them underwent tubectomy. 76% did it between the ages of 21-30 years. 94% of respondents had normal delivery. Around 10% had undergone hysterectomy.

44% had membership in religious organizations, but the leadership roles taken by them remained lower; 44% had membership in trade unions. Only 5% of the respondents had political affiliation. 50% of the respondents participated in Grama Sabhas. 64% experienced domestic violence. 15% had experienced sexual violence. 39% had experience of violence during pregnancy. 38% believed that their husbands had rights to beat their wives.

In this backdrop of findings, the report further points out that family size is bigger than the general picture. Sex ratio was in favour of males, which implies that there is a gender bias against females in the communities. Sex ratio was much lower in comparison with the State of Kerala. Lack of houses, water and toilet facilities, facilities for collection of waste and disposal of waste water, various diseases, sex-related and sex education related issues, lack of formal education due to poverty, markets and their poor facilities, dependence and spending on alcohol, low age at marriage, domestic violence, lack of leadership roles in religious organizations and trade unions and low mobility of women were pointed out as areas pushing fish vending women and their families to positions very distant from the mainstream processes and results.

The report refers to the situation in the most recent times and covers only Trivandrum district and may not reflect the realities in other places of interest to this present study. None of the existing literature thinks about the evolution of the present situation from the past. There is a vast gap in literature wherein after the beginning of 80s, fish vending women are found in literature around 2010-11. After Leela Gulati's case study of fisherwomen as a fisher woman in the unorganized sector, the recent efforts were mostly limited to socio-economic surveys.

3.33. Concluding remarks

The present study attempts to find out the life and work situations of fish vending women in South Kerala 35 years ago from the writings of Leela Gulati and recent situation from the sample survey, FGDs, personal interviews done with various stakeholders and direct observation conducted as part of this study. However, a full picture is not available about the subject in the past, though the current situation is reflected in the present study to a great extent.

Chapter Four

SETTINGS OF THE STUDY

SETTINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1. Introduction

This chapter places on record the findings on the geographical, demographical and socio-economic background and major problems in general with regard to the three areas in three districts covered by the study.

Demographical profile consists of the size of the population in the districts, density of population and sex ratio. Social mapping consists of education, marital status, health, religions, castes, social groups, civil society organizations. Data on Trivandrum coastal regions are available to a great extent; those on Kollam and Alappuzha are not so available sufficiently.

Economic background includes descriptions on the occupations, business, income sources and spending patterns of the people.

4.2. Geography of the area of study

These geographical notes include the borders of each selected area of study, its locality in local bodies, its place in Assembly and Parliament Constituencies, Community Development Blocks and Grama Panchayats and Taluks. The geographical area of the present study covers three southern coastal districts in Kerala, namely, Trivandrum, Kollam and Allappuzha, out of the nine districts having marine coastal borders.

The particular areas selected for the study are (1) Mariyanadu village which forms part of Ward No.XIX and Ward No.XX of Kadinamkulam Grama Panchayat in Pothencode Block in Trivandrum district, (2) Sakthikulangara-Neendakara area falling within the Kollam Municipality and Harbour Ward of Neendakara Grama Panchayat in Kollam District and (3) Beach Ward in Alappuzha Municipality in Alappuzha district.

4.2.1. Trivandrum

Trivandrum district with a total area of 2192 square kilometers has a coastline of 78 kilometers. It has four Taluks (Trivandrum, Nedumangad, Chiryinkeezhu and Neyyattinkara), 116 revenue villages, one Municipal corporation (Trivandrum), 4 Municipalities (Varkala, Attingal, Nedumangad and Neyyattinkara), 11 Block Panchayats and 73 Grama Panchayats. As per the National Census 2011 (Provisional), the district has 33, 07, 284 persons with 15, 84, 200 males and 17, 23, 084 females. Sex ratio in the district is 1088/1000. The density of population is 1509 per square kilometer. The literacy rate is 92.66%. Annual per capita income is Rs.60, 945. The district is bordered by Western Ghats (Sahyadri) in the east and Arabian Sea in the west, Kollam District in the north and Kanyakumari District in the south. Trivandrum has 14 Assembly constituencies, two Parliament constituencies.

Area Profiles

Sl. No.	Basic information	Trivandrum	Kollam	Alapuzha
1	Area in sq. kms.	2192	2491	1414
2	Coast lime in kms.	78		
3	Total population (2011)	33, 07, 284	26,29,703	21,21,943
4	Males	15, 84, 200	12,44,815	10,10,252
5	Females	17, 23, 084	13,84,888	11,11,691
6	Density of population in sq. kms	1509	1056	1501
7	Sex ratio	1088/1000	1113/1000	1100/1000
8	Literacy rate	92.66%.	93.77%	96.26%
9	Number of municipal Corporations	1	1	0
10	Number of municipalities	4	3	5
11	Number of Taluks	4	5	6
12	Number of Blocks	11	11	12
13	Number of Grama Panchayats	73	70	73
14	Number of revenue villages	116	104	91
15	Assembly constituencies	14	11	9

Mariyanadu in Kadinamkulam Grama Panchayat

Mariyanadu falls within Trivandrum Taluk. Mariyanadu coastal village is bordered by Santhipuram coastal village in the south and Puthukurichy coastal village in the north, Arabian Sea in the west and Puthuval Ward of Kadinamkulam Grama Panchayat in the east. It is a typical fishermen village in Trivandrum District.

Mariyanadu is the most thickly populated village⁷ among the 10 coastal villages between Thumba and Puthukurichy in the Kadinamkulam Grama Panchayat. 5466 persons in 1359 families are living within less than a square kilometer. There are 2876 males (52.62%) and 2590 females (47.38%) in the village. The sex ratio is 900/1000 against the sex ratio of 1088/1000 in the district. Family size in the village is 4. The age wise categorization of the population of Mariyanadu reveals that the younger ones outnumber the elders and seniors. While three fourth of the population is below 40 years, only one fourth is above 40 years.

In the village, 67.14% (914) of the families have own houses, while 20.60% (280) are homeless. 3.53% (48) of the families live in rented houses. The homeless families live either with their relatives or married children facing obvious difficulties. 100% of the population belongs to Mukkuvar caste and Latin Catholic religion. Out of those who live in houses, the largest section lives in concrete houses (28.92%), while a sizeable section (14.42%) has thatched houses. Only a smaller section lives in huts (3.90%). While 73.80% of the families possess their own land, 11.77% are landless. Others have possession of land noted as tenancy, *puramboke*, church land or *Otti* (lease). However, majority of the families who reportedly have land of their own have very small pieces of land below 5 cents (54.53%). It is noted that larger families have registered their land in the name of males (38.26%), while a smaller section has it in the name of the females (13.47%). However, a substantial percentage of families have their land registered jointly in the names of husbands and wives (19.57%). A large majority of the families are listed as APL (73.95%), while 11.82% are BPL in the village. The rest of the families do not have even the ration cards.

⁷ The statistical data regarding Mariyanadu is sourced from the report of most recent socio-economic survey conducted by Trivandrum Social Service Society (2013).

With regard to sanitation facilities, in Mariyanadu, a vast majority of the families (84.77%) has sanitary latrines, while 6.33% use public toilets. 1.40% families still go to open air. Some of the families have not opened up the fact about the place of defecation. It is likely that these families are also deprived of proper sanitary latrines and use open space.

Source of water for domestic purpose is one of the important indicators of well being and progress. In Mariyanadu, it is found that majority of the families depend on public taps (53.50%) and the next largest section of families take drinking water from bore well (23.80%). Only a small section has own wells (2.59%) and a larger section depends on public wells for water (15.79%).

The domestic drainage system of the households in the village deserves mention here. 22.60% has no system for disposing waste water generated from household activities. While only a small percentage of families dispose their domestic waste into their own land (12.83%), a majority (59.32%) dumps them into water sources like sea and lake.

A large number of households (43.84%) do not have any of the study facilities for students such as table and chair. However, there exists some kind of community support programs for the promotion of education such as financial support, study facilities, monitoring and guidance extended to students in the village. Total students in the village in 2011 are 9.16% of the total population, while dropouts are 9.71% including people of all age groups. The state of unemployment is nominal and those employed in Government jobs are also very small.

There are 551 illiterates with 300 males and 251 females in Mariyanad. There are 257 persons who are mere literates who just know to read or write Malayalam language. The largest section of the population (1215) is found educated up to Upper Primary (UP) with more males (635) than females (580). There are 57 graduates with more females than males and 54 post graduates with more females than males. There are 38 persons in the village who have completed M.Phil and or Ph.D level of education. There are 18 professionals with 10 females and 8 males.

There are several people engaged in self-employment activities. All those who are working in the fisheries sector including fishermen and fish vending women, loading employees

and drivers (1392) are considered self employed. Very few people are in Government jobs. Some people are employed in Gulf countries and other European countries, while a few are working in other states of India. Total number of fish vending women in Mariyanadu is 123, according to the latest available data.

Major diseases found in the village are bone damages, varicose vein, rheumatic, diabetes and heart problems. However, a larger section of the population in the village is free from diseases. Though majority of the population has a habit of alcohol consumption, available data show that the percentage of alcoholic addicts is small. Other bad habit among the population is betel leaf chewing.

Except fish and ice, all other consumable items are bought to the village from outside. Here and there, some coconut trees are found and a few families get some coconuts for their own use. The economics of the village is highly influenced by the fisheries and allied activities.

4.3. SWOT Analysis

From the observations, acquaintance and available recent secondary data about the village, the researcher identifies certain strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in the areas related to socio-economic development of the village.

4.3.1. Strengths

Major strengths of this fishing village constitutes of their quantity of human resource (5464 person living within less than a square kilometer). Majority of the population fall on the sections of productive age groups and youngsters are predominantly higher than the elders. Vast majority of the male population is engaged in fishing and allied jobs and live within the village, enjoying family life and taking care of the children. Mariayanad is the major fish landing center for the neighboring several villages. There are two ice factories to support the fishery jobs. Normal transport facilities are there with a PWD road connecting the village to the Capital, the nearest small towns of Kaniyapuram and Kazhakuttom. KSRTC Buses are operated from Thambanoor Central bus Station and Kaniyapuram sub depot. Two wheelers, cycles, autorickshaws, taxis and private tempo services are the major means of transportation.

Majority of the families live in their own houses, of which largest section has concrete roofs. Majority of the families have their own land. Vast majority of the families possess ration cards which ensure several entitlements to them as citizens of the country. Large majority of the households are registered as APL families. A vast majority of the households has sanitary latrines attached to their homes.

In the matter of education, there is a trend to educate the children with more focus on technical and professional education, though their percentage is very small. There are a few families trying for better jobs and careers for their younger educated members.

Economically, when the income of the fishermen and people engaged in allied jobs are considered, the size is normally handsome, though it is irregular and insecure.

Major sections of people are reasonably healthy without serious diseases affecting them.

4.3.2. Weaknesses

Almost 20-25% of the total number of families and population are deprived of own houses and land pieces. Among those who have land, vast majority has very small pieces of land just enough to construct small houses, as many of them do. The overall level of education is very low and the community's participation in higher gainful employments is pitifully low. Their share in Government jobs is still lower. There are sizeable sections still living under the poverty line, according to official records. Asset base is very low and large sections of families do not possess even movable assets like home appliances, vehicles and fishing equipments. There are still families without sanitary latrines, waste disposal system and proper drainage facilities. Several families throw their waste materials to the sea and lake polluting them with severe consequences to the public hygiene, coastal eco-system and regeneration of fish species. These have a critical impact on the livelihood of the people.

Life style diseases are on the increase among the elders. Vast majorities take the medical care from allopathic system and succumb to side effects and loss of immunity.

4.3.3. Opportunities

There are enough support services from Government departments and schemes which most of them do not make use of to support their lives and livelihood. The Mariayanadu Parish of the Latin Catholic Archdiocese of Trivandrum is at their disposal to make use of their services in almost all sectors of development, which is not reasonably tapped by the population. There are Government PHCs to provide health services, which are not fully utilized. Income is reasonably good, though it is not managed well and not used for judiciously planned purposes. Banks are there with credit facilities, but most of the families do not build up their credit-worthiness through carefully planned thrift and credit programs.

There are ample numbers of socially oriented young people, whose energy is not properly utilized. There are organizations, clubs, NGOs, SHGs, etc working in the area. But, their potentials are not tapped properly.

4.3.4. Threats

Increasing depletion of fish in the marine coast upon which all the fishermen and fish vending women depend for their livelihood. This is a broad and complex problem which the community is not able to address in the short time. Even in the long time basis, the problem gets aggravated year by year, in spite of the trolling ban from June to August on an annual basis. Pollution of the marine eco-system, negligence of the existing laws and carelessness of the people in dealing with the waste together with the global problem of climate change are behind the threat.

In short, this general analysis of the socio-economic situations and problems reveal that there is a future for the fishing communities, if the available resources, facilities, motivation, leadership and support are properly made use of.

4.4. Political Scenario

The study area, as any other village in Kerala, is politically active with the strong presence of UDF and LDF. During elections, each and every member of the community, men

and women, take part in the discussions and propaganda. Almost all voters cast their votes in all the Panchayat, Assembly and Parliament elections. However, very small percentage go to the meetings of the Grama Sabhas or working committees or take interest to get involved in the local governance as citizens. Only active political workers, who constitute a minor section take part in these meetings.

4.4.1. Kadinamkulam Grama Panchayat in Trivandrum

Kadinamkulam Grama Panchayat is now governed by the Panchayat Samithy with a majority for UDF. There are 23 Grama Sabha constituencies. Area of the GP is 17.68 sq.kms. Total population of the GP is 40406 (2001) with 19751 males and 20655 females. Density of population is 2285. Sex ratio is 1046/1000. Literacy rate is 81.54% with male literacy is 85.29% and female literacy is 78.02% with a difference of 5.27 percentage points.

Kadinamkulam Grama Panchayat		
	:	
Area	:	17.68 sq.kms
Number of Wards	:	23
	:	
Population	:	40406
Males	:	19751
Females	:	20655
Density of Population	:	2285
Sex Ratio	:	1046
Total literacy rate	:	81.54
Literacy (Males)	:	85.29
Literacy (Females)	:	78.02
Source : Census data 2001		

4.4.2. Harbour Ward in Neendakara in Kollam

Kollam district has an area of 2491 square kilometers and 26,29,703 persons with 12,44,815 males and 13,84,888 females. It has got a long coastal belt. The district has 5 taluks (Kollam, Kottarakkara, Patthanapuram, Karunagappally and Kunnathur) and 104 revenue villages, three Municipalities (Punalur, Paravur and Karunagappally), 11 Block Panchayats and 70 Grama Panchayats. Kollam district has 11 Assembly constituencies. The density of population in the district is 1056 per square kilometer and the sex ratio is 1131/1000. Per capita income is Rs. 53,595/-. Literacy rate in the district is 93.77%. The borders of the district are Western Ghats in the east, Arabian Sea in the west, Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta Districts in the north and Trivandrum District in the south. It is located at 71 kilo meters from the State Capital. The region is known for cashew processing and coir manufacturing.

4.4.3. Harbour Ward in Neendakara Grama Panchayat

Sakthikulangara-Neendakara region forming part of the Kollam Corporation and Neendakara Grama Panchayat is the area selected by the researchers for the present study. The region having a Fishing Harbour and two fish landing centers is a vibrant location for fishing and fish vending. Respondents for this study are identified from this locality.

Neendakara, the Ward No.7 of Neendakara GP, is located at 9 km north of Kollam city in Kerala. It is Kollam district's intermediate fishing port. When Portuguese traders settled in Kollam (then Quilon) in the early 16th century, their ships passed through the Neendakara bar, now the site of Neendakara Bridge, part of National Highway 47, which connects the village to Sakthikulangara across Ashtamudi Lake.

Neendakara Grama Panchayat is one of the constituents of Chavara Block and Karunagappally Taluk. Revenue Village is named as Neendakara. The Grama Panchayat has an area of 10.19 square kilometers and is bordered by Chavara Lake in the North, Ashtamudi Lake in the east and the south and Arabian Sea in the west.

Basic Information of the Neendakara GP

Area	:	10.19 square kilometers
Number of Wards	:	13
Population	:	15424
Male	:	7727
Female	:	7697
Density	:	1514
Sex Ratio	:	996
Total literacy	:	89.57
Literacy (Male)	:	92.01
Literacy Female	:	87.14
Source : Census data 2001		

Sakthikulangara area falls within the Kollam Corporation which has 52 Wards. Each Ward has an average population of 7000.

Most of the families in the region depend on fisheries and coir sectors. Though there was paddy cultivation in earlier times, there are no agricultural activities. Coconut trees are the major crops and fisheries is the major livelihood of people of the areas. Banana and some tuber crops are found here and there in the location.

There are 7 Scheduled caste colonies in the Grama Panchayat.

The headquarters of the Indo-Norwegian Fisheries Community project, established in 1953, was based in Neendakara until 1961, when the site was handed over to the Government of Kerala.

It is a strategic small port located in the East-West International Sea route. Also Neendakara is famous for its Fishing Harbour and related Marine export oriented businesses.

Majority of the citizens of Sakthikulangara-Neendakara region are Christians, followed by Hindus and a very minor population of Muslims.

While most of the families are engaged in fishery related jobs, an increasing percentage of people from the region are working in the Gulf countries and other European countries.

Though fisheries are the major source of income, the economy of the village is highly influenced by the expatriates working outside.

Educational standard of the elder generation is very low, with most of them having primary or lower primary education. With the increase in income in the families, most of them are now trying to provide higher, professional and technical education to their children. Though this trend may result in future gains of higher employment, the current situation is less than desirable. Family budget management is a grey area, which had a potential to direct the entire economy of the location.

Agriculture is nominal. Other alternative employments are in the area of automobile mechanism, driving, electrician and plumbing in which many of the school dropout youth are engaged.

4.4.4. Beach Ward in Alappuzha

Alappuzha district has an area of 1414 square kilometers, bordered by Vembanattu Lake, Kottayam and Patthanamthitta districts in the east, Arabian Sea in the west, Ernakulam District in the north and Kollam district in the south. The population of the district is 21, 21,943 persons with 10, 10,252 males and 11, 11,691 females. Density of population in the district is 1501 per square kilometer and the sex ratio is 1100/1000. The literacy rate is 96.26%. Per capita income is Rs.57, 298/-. In Alappuzha district, there are 9 Assembly constituencies, 6 Taluks (Cherthala, Ambalappuzha, Kuttanadu, Karthikappally, Chengannur, and Mavelikkara), 91 revenue villages, 5 Municipalities (Cherthala, Alappuzha, Kayamkulam, Chengannur and Mavelikkara), 12 Block Panchayats, and 73 Grama Panchayats.

The area selected from Alappuzha District is the Beach Ward of Alappuzha Municipality which has 52 Wards. As per provisional reports of Census India, population of Alappuzha in 2011 is 174,164; of which male and female are 83,888 and 90,276 respectively. Although Alappuzha city has a population of 174,164, its urban / metropolitan population is 241,072 of which 116,401 are males and 124,671 are females.

With regard to literary, the total literates in Alappuzha city are 153,269 of which 74,454 are males while 78,815 are females. Average literacy rate of Alappuzha city is 96.56% of which male and female literacy was 98.03 and 95.21 percent respectively.

The sex ratio of Alappuzha city is 1076 per 1000 males. Child sex ratio is 945 girls per 1000 boys.

The city demographic profile of Alapuzha Municipality

Particulars	Total	Males	Females
Population	174,164	83,888	90,276
Literates	153,269	74,454	78,815
Children (0-6)	15,434	7,934	7,500
Average Literacy (%)	96.56	98.03	95.21
Sex ratio	1076		
Child Sex ratio	945		

4.5. Conclusion

Out of the three areas of study in the three southern districts in Kerala, Mariyanadu is fully included in the Kadinamkulam Grama Panchayat; Sakthikulangara-Neendakara area belongs partly to Kollam Municipality and Neendakara Grama Panchayat. The third area is partly in Alappuzha Municipality and partly in Ambalapuzha Grama Panchayat. The fishermen in the three areas use almost the same craft and gear for fishing, that is, fiber boats motored by outboard engines and nets according to seasonal variations. They are mostly traditional fishermen. The traditional type of *kattamarans* is not found in any of the three areas. Two of the three areas have a fish landing center (Mariyanadu and Neendakara), while Beach area in Alappuzha does not have a landing center. They depend on the nearby landing center, Punnapra, 5 kilometers away.

While in Mariyanadu fishing village, the entire population belongs to Latin Catholics, in Sakthikulangara-Neendakara region, though majority belongs to Latin Catholics, there is a sizeable presence of Hindus.⁸

In this chapter, we have examined the geographical, demographic, socio-economic and political situations in the study areas and the problems existing in these locations, in general. The study is done in this background.

⁸ Data regarding the socio-economic situations at the micro-level below Grama Panchayat level is generally not available with regard to Sakthikulangara- Neendakara area in Kollam and Beach Ward in Alappuzha. Such data are available to a great extent regarding Mariyanadu, since it is one of the areas covered by the Socio-Economic Survey conducted by Trivandrum Social Service Society (TSSS). The report of the survey is published in 2013 in 9 Volumes and is the most recent one. The researcher had depended on this Report for details on Mariyanadu.

Chapter Five

LIFE AND WORK OF FISH VENDING WOMEN

Chapter Five

LIFE AND WORK OF FISH VENDING WOMEN

5.1. Introduction

In the backdrop of the objectives of the study and general socio-economic situations in the study areas, it is pertinent now to understand how the fish vending women, as one of the most marginalized sections in Kerala Society, work and live. This chapter examines specifically the personal, familial, socio-economic and political situations of fish vending women today, since these factors constitute major elements of their lives and works.

5.2. Geographical Setting of the Study

The information presented in this chapter is based on the data collected in a survey covering 150 respondents from three fishing areas in three Districts bordering Arabian Sea in South Kerala, namely, Mariyanadu forming part of Kadinamkulam Grama Panchayat in Trivandrum district, Sakthikulangara and Neendakara region forming part of Kollam Municipality and Neendakara Grama Panchayat respectively and Beach Ward and Vadackal ward in Alappuzha Municipality. (See **Table No.1**)

Table No.1

Summary of Geographical Coverage for the Study area

Sl.No	District	Revenue Taluk	Revenue Village	Block Panchayat	Grama Panchayat	Ward No. and Name
1	Trivandrum	Trivandrum	Kadinamkulam	Pothenkode	Kadinamkulam	XIX: Mariya Nadu South XX: Mariyanadu North
2	Kollam			Chavara	Neendakara	Sakthikulangara Neendakara
3	Alappuzha	Ambalapuzha Taluk	Alappuzha West	Ambalapuzha	Alappuzha Municipality	Beach Vadackal

5.3. Personal information

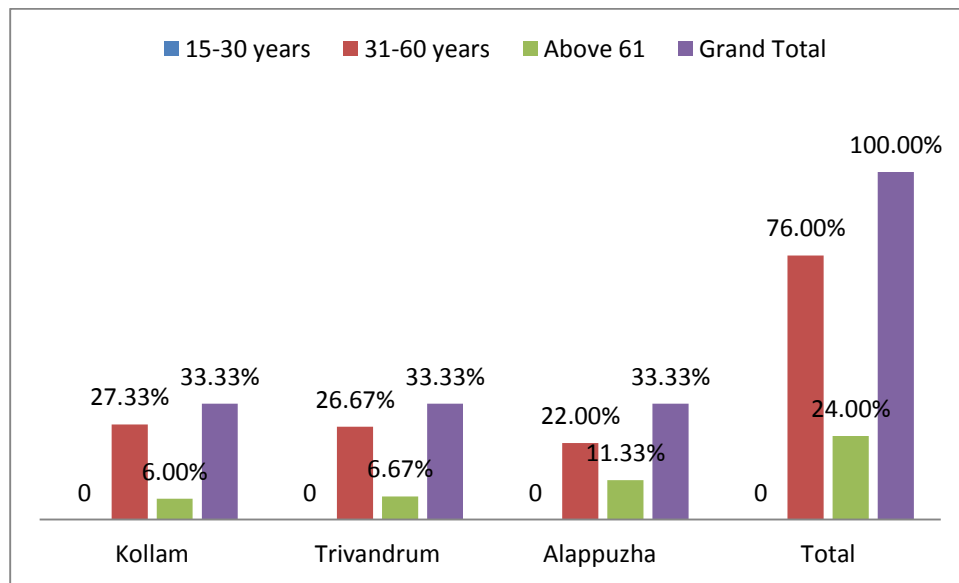
Personal information is limited by recording their name and address, domicile details, age, marital status, caste and religion.

5.3.1. Age Composition of Respondents

50 fish vending women (FVW) each above the age of 18 years were randomly identified for interviews from each of the three study areas, thus constituting a total number of 150 FVW providing their information and participating in the study. A large majority of them (76%) belonged to the age group of 31-60 years constituting the most productive age group. While remaining 24% of FVW were found in the age group above 61 years, there was no respondent below 30 years, engaged in fish vending.

Figure No.1

Age Composition of Respondents



Across the districts, the age groups between 31-60 years were dominating the other group in all the three districts. In Alappuzha, senior FVW were comparatively more (11.33%) than those in other two districts (6% in Kollam and 6.67% in Trivandrum). (See **Figure No.1 and Table No.2**)

The above picture, according to this survey, gives an impression that women above 30 years are found more than other categories in the occupation along the southern coast of Kerala. However, there are reports recording that women below the age of 30 years have been doing this job in Trivandrum district, though their percentage is very small, up to 2%⁹.

The fact that women of productive age groups as well as senior citizens are engaged in fish vending implies that (1) the so-called stigma is not strong enough to prevent them from this job; (1) there may be, as will be reported latter in this document, some favourable circumstances motivating them to do or continue the activity; (3) Presumably almost all the FVW are married and their families do not effectively object to their wives/mothers/sisters doing the job of fish vending. Rather, they provide promotional atmosphere for their work.

Even seniors in fish vending job are found doing this activity without break for the last 30 to 25 years. Most of them are old, but highly active in the job, with a high level of experience and motivation, both internal and external.

5.3.2. Marital Status

As mentioned above, out of 150 FVW, only two FVW were unmarried and 148 (98.67%) were married (**Table No.3**). Of the married FVW, a sizeable section (31.33%- 47) constituted widows, while a large majority (67.33%-101) was married and living with their husbands. Only one is found deserted by her husband. (See **Table No.4**)

⁹ TSSS/Sakhi (2012): Status Study of Women Fish Vendors, Trivandrum Social Service Society, Trivandrum, p.13. Also See: TSSS (2013): Post Project Status of Fish Vending Women, 2013, to be published soon.

Table No. 4
Specific Status of the married FVW

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Widow	11	7.33%	18	12.00%	18	12.00%	47	31.33%
Deserted		0.00%	1	0.67%		0.00%	1	0.67%
Divorced	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Second marriage	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Living together without marriage	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None of the above	38	14.00%	31	0.00%	31	5.33%	29	19.33%
Not applicable	1	12.00%		20.67%	1	16.00%	73	48.67%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Looking at the regions, Kollam has the minimum percentage of widows (7.33%) with Trivandrum and Alappuzha having the same proportion of 12% each. Members of the middle category (30-60 years) are found more in Kollam than in other districts under study.

The data indicates that more women live with their husbands in a normal marital life and lower numbers of widows are engaged in fish vending activity and that there was only one among them as deserted by her husband, none divorced legally, none in second marriage and none living with men outside marriage. Other studies report the presence of deserted, divorced and those living together among FVW¹⁰. However, their percentage is nominal.

¹⁰ Ibid. p.14

Fish vending has come out of stigma so far attached to the occupation. It has become a respectable area of economic activity. It can not be forgotten that a sizeable percentage of FVW are widows who are solely responsible for the maintenance of their families. It implies that the economics of fish vending is attractive.

The fact that most of the active FVW are living with their husbands means that fisher women have come of age to understand that they need to work and earn money to support their families, live without depending on their husbands for personal expenses and to spend independently for what they think necessary.

In certain cases, women are forced to enter or continue this occupation, forced by their circumstances such as husbands becoming sick, alcoholic and or lazy. Other circumstances include the responsibility to repay the family loans closely related to the marriage of their girl children or purchase of a house or land or both.

During the Focus Group discussions (FGDs)¹¹ conducted as part of this study and personal interviews¹² with FVW, it is further confirmed that the social stigma is a non-existent issue especially within the villages they live in.

In all likelihood, it can be inferred that the increasing need for income overcomes the overt nature of stigma, if any, attached to the job.

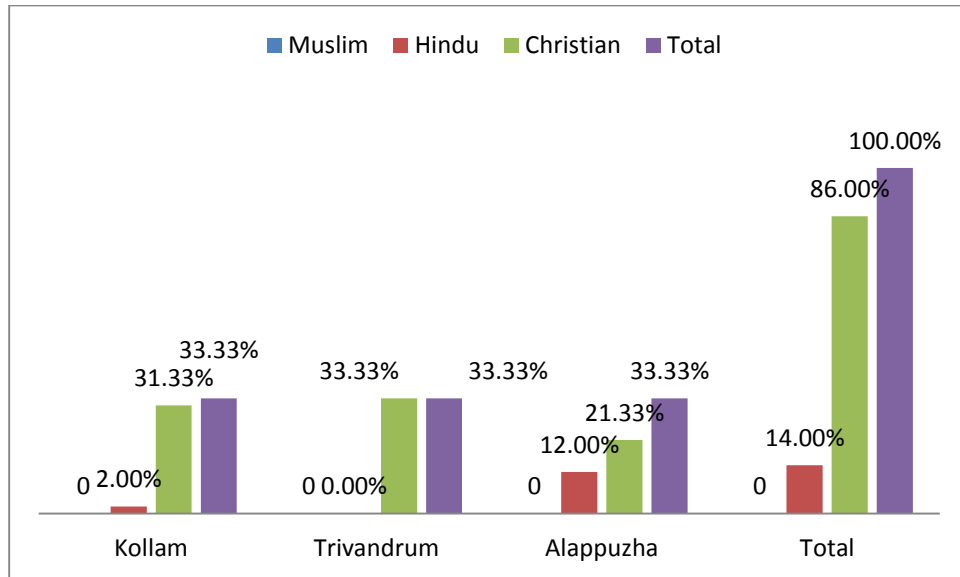
5.3.3. Religious composition of the respondents

In the study areas and among the respondents, a vast majority of FVW are Christians (86%), while the rest are Hindus (14%). In the sample as well as in the total scenario, there is no Muslim woman found doing this activity. (See **Figure No.2** and **Table No.5**)

¹¹ Please see Methodology Chapter for details of FGDs and personal interviews. P.

¹²

Figure No. 2
Religious composition of the respondents



Across the areas, it is found that there are only Latin Catholic Christians, while in Sakthikulangara-Neendakara area, only a small percentage (2%) are Hindus, while Latin Catholic Christians doing this job constitute a major portion (31.33%). In Beach Ward of Alappuzha, there are more Hindu women doing fish vending. Christian fishermen by caste are ‘*Mukkuvars*’ and Hindus by caste are ‘*Arayas*’.

The findings reflect the overall scenario in South Kerala where L C Christians dominate the fishing and fish vending activities. No Muslim fish vending woman is found among the sample because there is no Muslim women fish vendors in the region.

5.3.4. Caste composition of the respondents

Almost all the FVW belong to Other Backward Castes (OBC) (98.67%) with a minute presence of FVW belonging to general or SC/ST in Alappuzha. The person found in the general category belongs to Nair community (Table No.6). Among OBCs, three FVW belong to Dhevara Sabha . (See **Table No. 6**)

Table No. 6
Caste composition of the respondents

Row Labels	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	value	%
General	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	1	0.67%
OBC	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	48	32.00%	148	98.67%
SC/ST	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	1	0.67%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

5.3.5. Domicile of Respondents

Majority of the FWW live in Grama Panchayats (66%), while one third of them reside in Municipality area (34%). Only 11% live in Corporation area. (See **Table No.7**)

Table No. 7

Domicile of respondents

	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total Value	Total % 9_2
Field	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%		
Grama Panchayat	39	26.00%	49	32.67%	11	7.33%	99	66.00%
Municipality	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	39	25.33%	39	26.00%
Corporation	11	7.33%		0.00%	0	0.00%	11	7.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Mariyanadu in Trivandrum district is fully in Grama Panchayat, while Sakthikulangara in Kollam District belongs to Kollam Corporation and Neendakara belongs to Neendakara Grama Panchayat area. In Alappuzha, the majority of the respondents is in the Municipality area (38), while the rest are found in Grama Panchayat area (11).

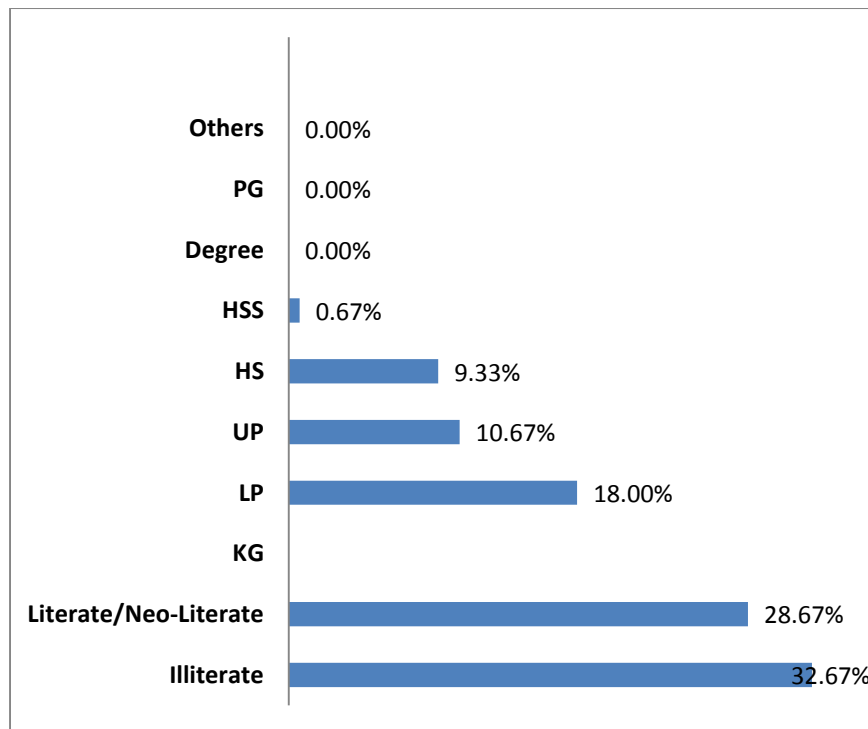
5.4. Education Status

The study looks at the basic education level of the FVW in the study area in order to understand the relationship between their education and income from fish vending, utilization of income, health, bad habits, time plan followed, attention to children's education and character formation, involvement in civil society organizations, voting pattern, membership in trade unions, attitude to fish vending, relationship with husband, children, other relatives, loss, participation in decision making in the family and house ownership.

5.4.1. Level of Education

According to the data gathered from this sample survey, the largest section of the respondent FVW are illiterate (32.67%), closely followed by the literate/neo-literate (28.67%), those who completed Lower Primary (18%), Upper Primary (10.67%), High School (9.33%) and Higher Secondary (0.67%).(See **Figure No.3**)

Figure No. 3
Level of Education



The data indicates that the literacy rate of the social and occupational category of FVW is far behind (67.33%) compared to Kerala rate of literacy of women (91.98%) and general population in the Districts (93.91%). In Mariyanadu, there are 84% literates among the respondent FVW, followed by 88.67% in Beach Ward of Alappuzha and 94.33% in Shaktikulangara-Neendakara area in Kollam. 28.67% of them are able to read and/or write in a small way. (See **Table No.8**)

While only 9.33% of the FVW has HS level of education in the study area. There was only one having HSS level of education. FVW are found at the bottom level of educational qualifications which are not sufficient to secure any gainful regular decent occupation. This seems to be the major reason why we find women with low level of education in this occupation, which does not necessarily require any educational qualifications.

More than the skills and knowledge normally gained through formal education, FVW has sufficient business skills and knowledge gathered from long experience and exposure to the business. They have been managing the job for several years. These strengths keep them going successfully with the occupation with reasonable success.

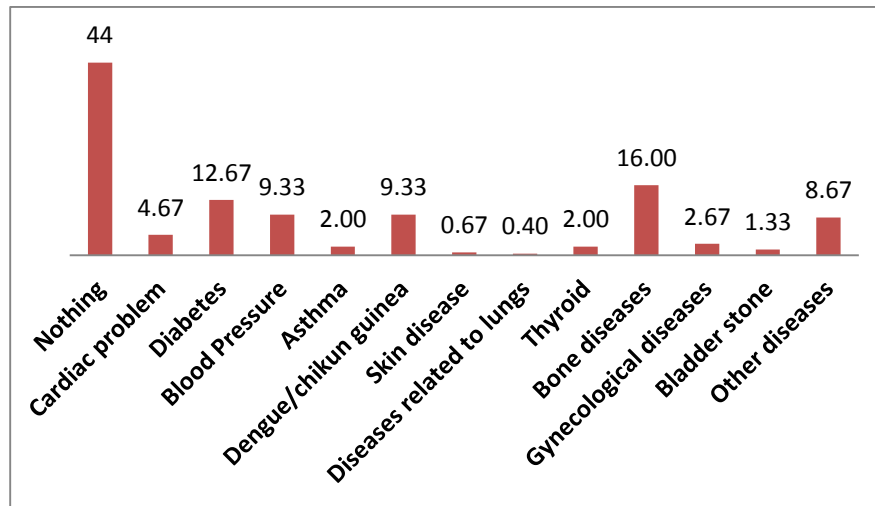
5.5. Health

In this sector, the survey seek information regarding the diseases, bad habits, utilization of time and eating place/time while at job. This information is utilized to examine if there is a relationship between health, work and other aspects of FVW's life.

5.5.1.Diseases

A large majority of FVW (66%) has one or the other or many of the illnesses such as cardiac problems, diabetes, cancer, blood pressure, Malaria, Asthma, Dengue/chickengunea, T.B., respiratory illnesses, skin diseases, thyroid, bone diseases, gynecological problems, urinary problems and other health problems. Of them, the largest section has bone diseases (16%), followed by those having diabetes (12.67%), dengue/chicken gunea and blood pressure (9.33% each), cardiac problems (4.67%) and gynecological problems (2.67%). (See **Figure No.4** and **Table No.8**)

Figure No. 4
Diseases found among FVW (%)

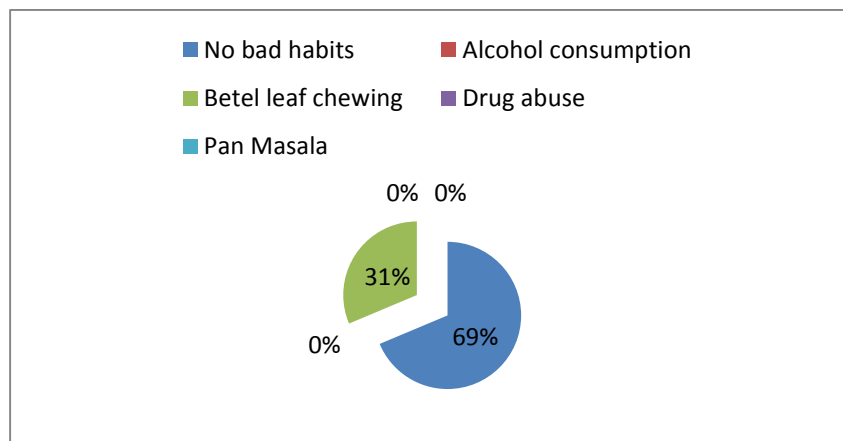


Most of prevalent illnesses are life style diseases which have some relation with their life and work. At present, the FVW generally do not have to do much manual work and physical movements. From the landing centre, they buy fish through participating in auction and the fish is transported after sorting and icing to the main road with the help of head load workers. From the main road to the market or market area, fish and FVW are transported by autorickshaws or some other vehicle. At the market, head load workers help them to unload the fish from the vehicle and take it inside the market. Once fish is brought inside the market, FVW sit and sell fish to retailers. This sitting prolongs very often hours and hours at a stretch. Rarely, they stand for some water or a cup of tea from the nearby hotels. Once the business is done for the day, they go home by some vehicle, autorickshaw or bus. During this process, there is no space for physical exercise and movement. Many of them do not get time and space for proper urination even in the urban market places. Water intake is low and irregular. They normally carry on with their illnesses. Only when the situation is serious, they go to the doctor. The physical environment in the markets is not always properly hygienic. All these factors contribute towards the illnesses of FVW. Many of the FVW regularly take medicines for diabetes and blood pressure.

5.6. Bad Habits

The data shows that FVW has only one bad habit, that is, betel leaf chewing (31%) and that the remaining 69% have no bad habits such as alcohol consumption, pan masala use and drug abuse. Betel leaf chewing may cause health problems on the teeth and mouth. Cancer is found one of the more prevalent illnesses among them. (See **Figure No.5**)

Figure No. 5
Bad Habits

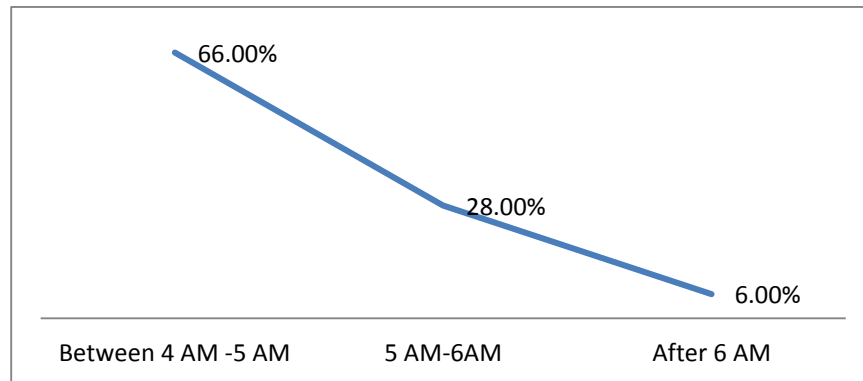


Respondents from Kollam report that they have none of the bad habits. Betel leaf chewers are mainly in Trivandrum and Alappuzha. (See **Table No.10**)

5.7. Time of waking up

It is interesting to understand the daily routine of FVW, since this has close connection with their life and work. Time to wake up, time to sleep, things done when at home and eating place. Most of the FVW wake up early morning between 4 A M and 5 AM (66%), followed by those who rise between 5 AM and 6 AM (28%) and those who rise up after 6 A M (6%). This is normal for Kerala's working class. (See **Figure No.6** and (See **Table No.11**)

Figure No. 6
Time of waking up

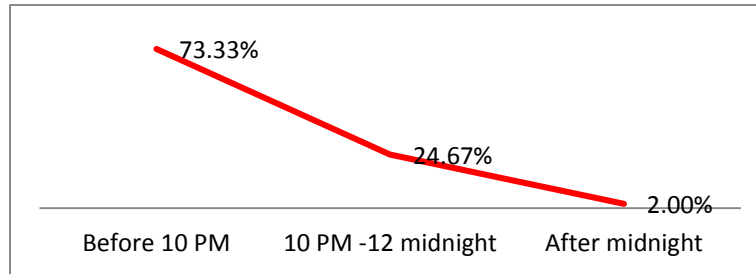


They start their job immediately after waking up. Most of them go to the landing centers for buying fish. Very often they have to wait, until the boats arrive after fishing from the sea. FVW observe the availability of fish with very accurate and shrewd sense of intuition and wait until they feel that the price of the fish is reasonable so that they get a profit. Hours they spend waiting some days. At the end, they may or may not buy fish. There are some days when there is no work and business for them and so no income.

5.8. Time to sleep

While a large majority (73.33%) goes to bed before 10 PM, many of them go to bed between 10 PM and midnight. Only a small percentage (2%) goes to sleep after midnight. (See **Figure No.7**) Those who sleep before 10 PM are those who get up early, start work earlier and come back home before evening. Their life is comparatively comfortable as far as time plan is concerned. They get some time to look after household affairs and children. Many of those who sleep late are those who go to the market in the after noon or finish their work late in the evening. These women do not get sufficient time to rest or relax. They are rarely involved in household work. They are the ones helped by their in-laws or children to do the cooking and related jobs. (See **Table No.12**)

Figure No. 7
Time to sleep

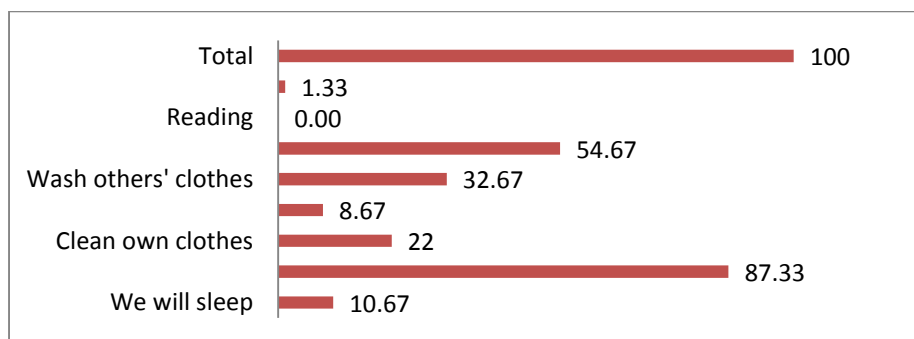


A substantial section of the FVW wakes up early morning and goes to bed late night. This section normally has the responsibility to look after their household affairs in the absence of others to support them. Those who wake up after 6 AM and go to bed before 10 PM constitute a sizeable section that has someone to take care of their household work.

5.9. Activities of FVW when on leave from fish vending

It is important to understand the type of activities FVW are engaged when they do not go for fish vending due to various reasons other than health problems. A vast majority of them (87.33%), as informed by them, get involved in kitchen work and cooking, may be together with other activities, while another category takes up cleaning activities within the household premises (54.67%). Many others use the time to wash others' clothes (32.67%) and /or clean their own clothes (22%). A few of them take out some time to watch serials in the television and some sleep well (10.67%). (See **Figure No.8**)

Figure No. 8
Activities of FVW when on leave from fish vending (%)



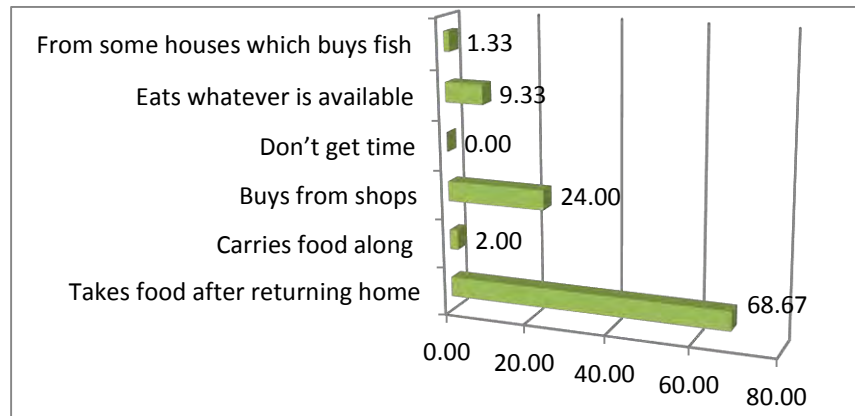
Across the regions, Kollam stands up as the highest group to do kitchen work with 100%, followed by Trivandrum and Alappuzha. None of them from Kollam spend time watching serials, while 18% of the Trivandrum group do it (9), followed by a few from Alappuzha (4). There is no one in Kollam group who sleep during the day even when they do not go for fish vending, while some of them in Trivandrum and Alappuzha do take some time to sleep. More FVW in Trivandrum clean their own clothes than those from Kollam. No one from Alappuzha cleans one's clothes. Someone else might be helping them to do the washing. Except those in Alappuzha, FVW in Trivandrum and Kollam help to wash others' clothes. More percentage of Kollam group members does cleaning of household premises, while a few of those from Trivandrum and Alappuzha does it. (See **Table No.13**)

Except a few, most of the FVW have to take care with regard to household management, when they are free from their work.

5.10. Eating while on work

While considering the life and work of FVW, one specific inevitable item to be considered is about the place where they find time and space to eat, while on work, away from home. This aspect tells upon their quality of life. Most of them (68.67%) do not eat anything during the travel to and from the markets, but eat after returning home. Some of them (24%) buy food from some shops on the way and eat. While a few of them eat if something is available at their convenience, a small section takes food from home (2%) and fewer ones eat from the customers house, though very rarely (1.33%). (See **Figure No.9**)

Figure No. 9
Eating while on work (%)



Among those who take food after returning home, Trivandrum (82%) stands first, followed by Alappuzha (70%) and Kollam (54%). In the case of those who buy food from shops, Kollam (42%) is followed by Alappuzha (16%) and Trivandrum (14%).(See **Table No.14**)

It was found from the personal interviews and related discussions that those who eat after returning home finish their work by early afternoon, since they start early morning. Those who buy food from shops on the way are generally those who do the business the whole day.

It implies that eating and drinking depends on their time of work and that they are more serious about their work than about their comfort.

5.11. Family Matters

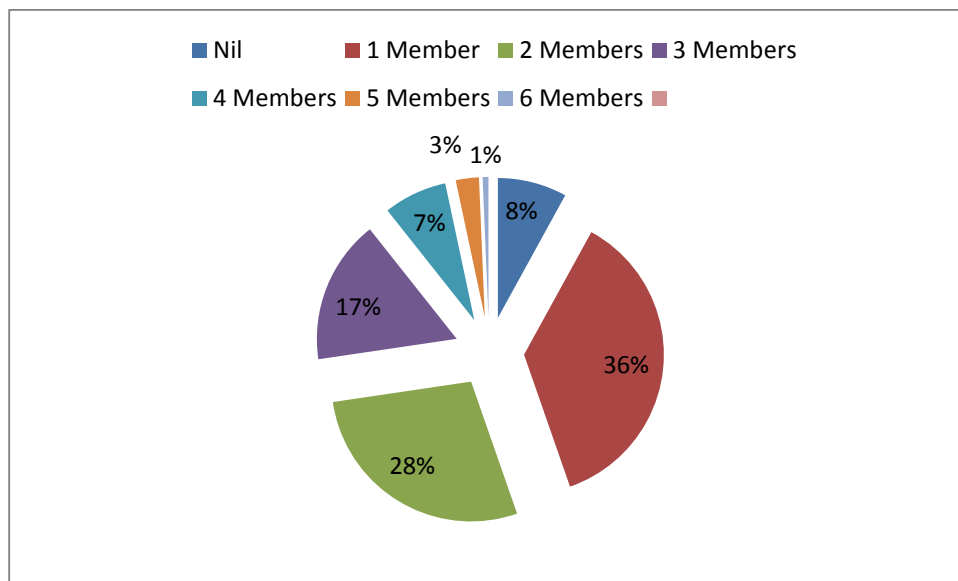
In this section the first concern is to understand the demographic features of the families. Family is one of the most important spaces related to one's life and work. The study examines the number of total members, males and females, married and unmarried members and students and non-students in the families. More importantly, it examines the relationships of husbands, children and other family members of FVW. Their attitude and approach towards fish vending job is examined with reference to this relationships. FVW's responsibilities towards their

families, husband's alcoholism and support to children's education and character formation are also enquired in this section. Family life influences occupation to a great extent.

5.12. Family Members

The largest number of families have only one member (36%) in addition to FVW, followed by those with 2 members (28%), three members (17%) and 4 members (7%). There are 8% of families in which there is only one member, that is, the FVW herself. (See **Figure No.10**). This section seems to include FVW who are widows, young and old. The second section with 2 members might be elders living with their aged husbands. The third category of families with 3 to 5 members might be younger people living with their children.

Figure No. 10
Family Members



Across the three regions, the largest number of families of FVW has only one member. In Kollam, that section is followed by those having 2 members and 3 members. There is no family in the region bigger than this. Trivandrum and Alappuzha keep this order in general, with the exception that there is no family in Alappuzha with 6 members.

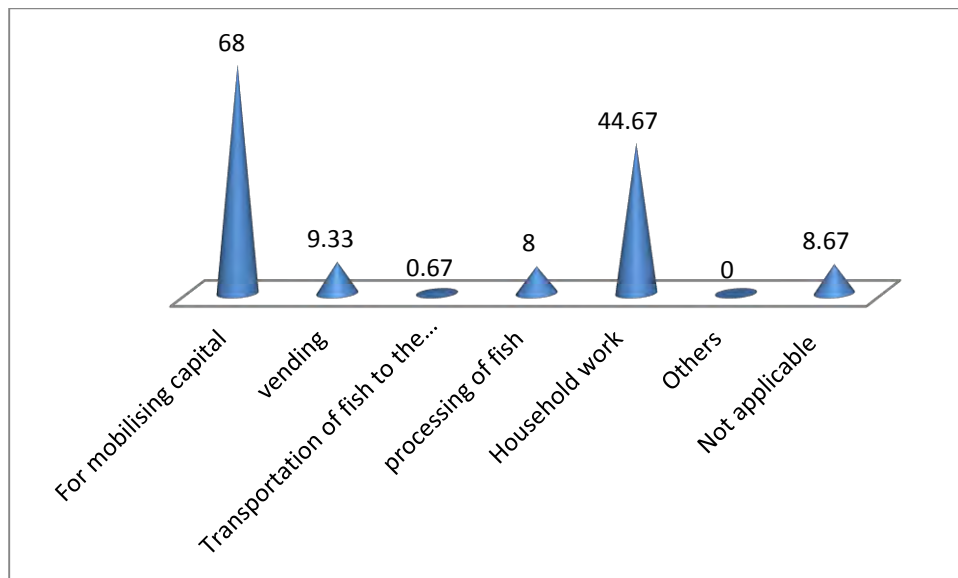
The total population of the respondent families of FVW is 673. The family size is calculated as 4.4.

5.13. Attitude of the family members of FVW towards fish vending

The attitude of the respondent fish vending women is found to be very favourable (100%) to fish vending job. A vast majority of the family members (87.33%) help FVW in their job, while 10% do not help them and only 2.67% help them sometimes. (See **Table No.15** and **Table No.16**)

There are several ways in which the family members help FVW in their job. (27A). A large majority of them supports FVW in mobilizing capital for the business (68%), followed by those who help them in doing household work (44.67%) while FVW are away with their job. Some of them support them in the real act of vending fish (9.33%), while a few are there to help them in cleaning (processing) fish and transporting the fish to market places and in cleaning and related works. (See **Figure No.11** and **Table No.17**)

Figure No. 11
Ways of helping (%)



Setting aside Trivandrum (14%), in Kollam ((2%) and Alappuzha (98%) a very vast majority of FVW are supported by the family members to mobilize capital for work. In Trivandrum, majority of the FVW are supported with help in household work as well as those from Kollam. Support of Alappuzha families to their FVW is limited only to the capital mobilization.

This is another favourable situation FVW enjoy in their job. Family members help them because these women substantially contribute to the economics of the families. There is no specific reason for FVW’s family members not to support them in some way or other.

5.14. Relationship with Husbands

FVW maintain a fair relationship with their husbands. While one fourth of them have very good relationship with their husbands (25.33%), half of them maintain good relationship (50%). Those who have some problems with their husbands are very few. (See **Figure No.12**)

Figure No. 12
Relationship with Husbands



Many of the FVW in Kollam (24%) maintain ‘very good’ relationship with their husbands compared to others. Largest sections of the Trivandrum and Alappuzha FVW keep ‘good’ relationship with their husbands (26.67%). **Table No.18**)

Relationship with husbands is an important indicator of wellbeing as far as any woman is concerned. For the FVW, this relationship is very important, in the context of her being away from the village and home. This relationship implies for her not only conjugal trust, but sharing her household responsibilities, responsibilities towards children, vouching for her in her

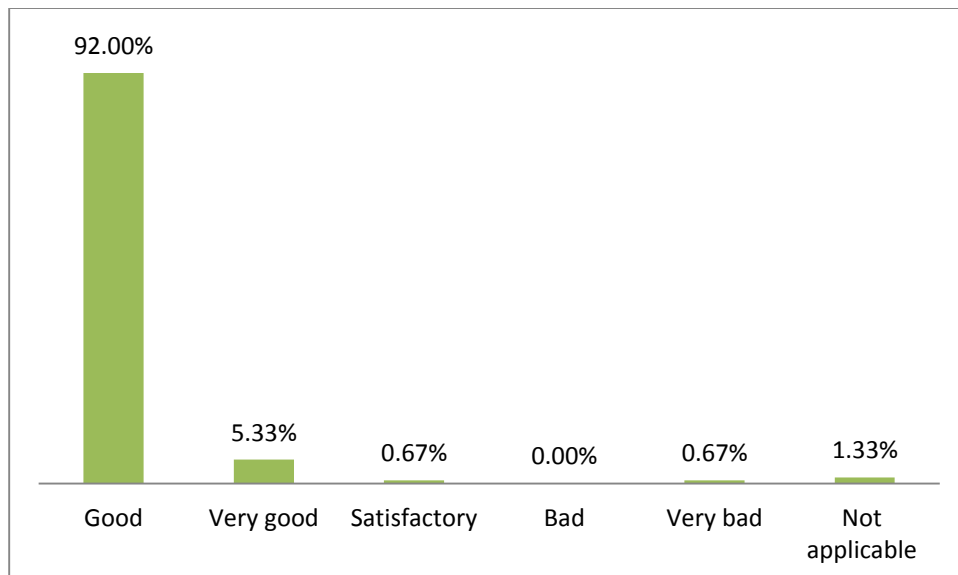
absence in all matters concerning their family. A good relationship with the husband contributes much towards her sustaining in the employment.

5.15. FVW's relationship with children

A very vast majority of the FVW keep 'good' relationship with their children (92%), while a smaller section maintains 'very good' relationship (5.33%). No instance of bad relationship with children is reported. (See **Figure No.13**)

Figure No. 13

FVW's relationship with children



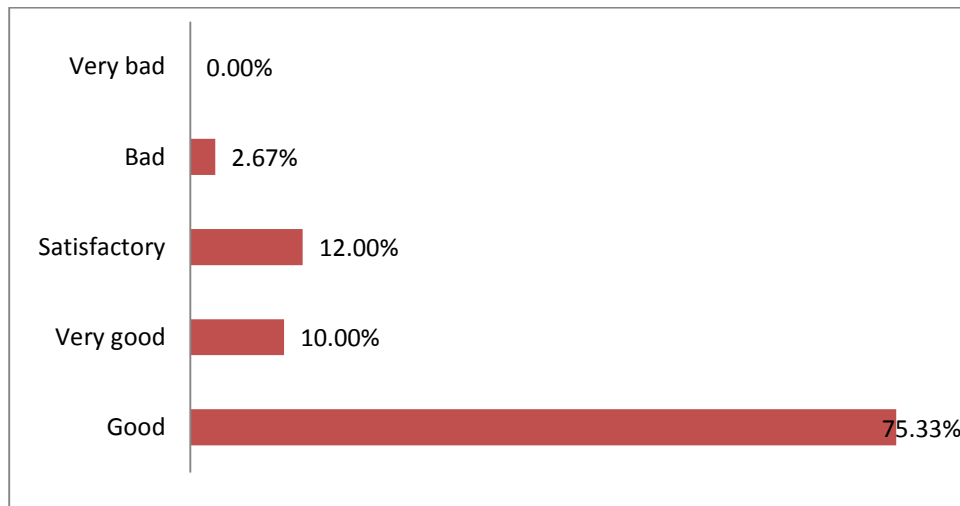
Region-wise analysis shows that FVW from the three regions maintain good relationship with their children, too. **Table No.19**)

The finding implies that FVW enjoy good and healthy relationship not only with their husbands, but also with their children. During personal interviews with many of them this fact was confirmed. The fact that they continue to go for the job is a sure indication that their job and related aspects are accepted well by the family.

5.16. FVW's Relationship with their relatives

Three fourth of the FVW keep good relationship with their relatives (75.33%), while 10% has very good relationship and the relationship of 12% of the FVW is satisfactory. No one has indicated bad relationship with their relatives. (See **Figure No.14**)

Figure No. 14
FVW's Relationship with their relatives



Alappuzha stands first in the case of good relationship (32%) of FVW with their relatives, followed by Kollam (28.67%) and Trivandrum (14.67%). In the matter of very good relationship, Trivandrum stands higher than the other regions. **Table No.20**)

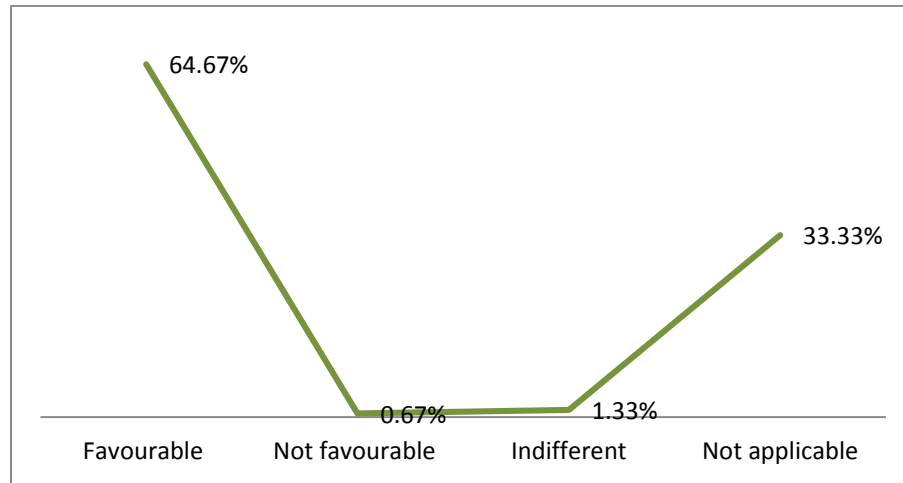
Further, FVW enjoy good rapport with their people. This once again confirms that they enjoy fairly good social support as FVW.

5.17. Husband's Attitude to Fish Vending

For FVW, husbands' attitude towards the job they do for the family is very important. Majority of the FVW (64.67%) report that their husbands' attitude towards their job is favourable, while only one is indifferent and another one is not favourable. The remaining one third of them (33.33%) seems to be widows (Not applicable). (See **Figure No.15**)

Figure No. 15

Husband's Attitude to Fish Vending



In the case of favourable attitude to FVW, Kollam (25.33%) stands first, followed by Alappuzha (20.67%) and Trivandrum (18.67%). **Table No.21**

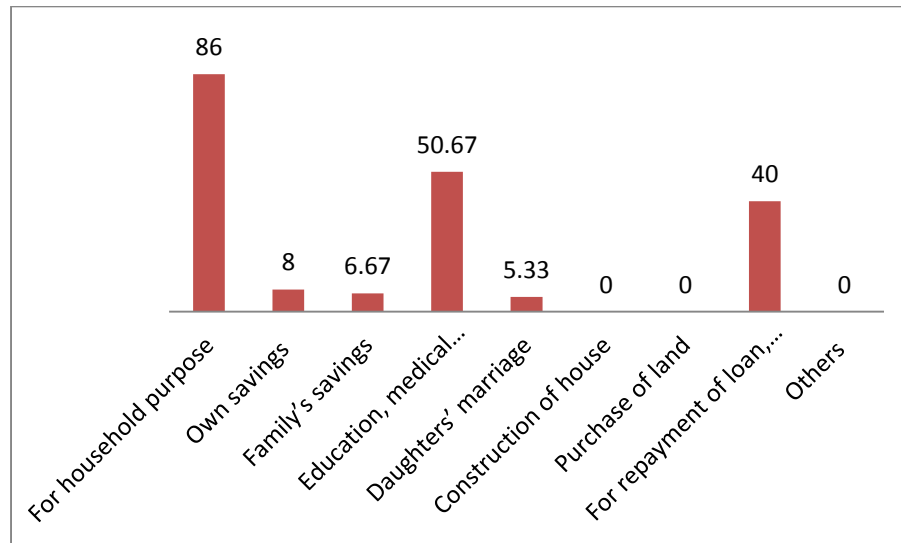
This is another indicator that things are improving with regard to people's attitude to the fish vending job. Husbands reflect the social mind. They are not only happy about the FVW but also happy about their work.

5.18. The Spending pattern of FVW's income

Very high percentage of the FVW (86%) reports that they spend their income for household purposes, while 50.67% spend for the educational and medical expenses of the family and the 40% do it for the repayment of loans taken for the business and for the family. Only a small percentage of FVW (6.67%) save some thing for the family, while a higher percentage of them (8%) save also for themselves. (See **Figure No.16**)

Figure No. 16

The Spending pattern of FVW's income (%)



FVW in the regions spend more for household purposes. However, FVW in Kollam do not save for them, while Alappuzha (16%) and Trivandrum (8%) do save for themselves. At the same time, FVW in Kollam save some thing for the family (16%), while what they save for themselves is simply negligent. Largest percentage of FVW in Kollam (94%) saves for the educational and medical expenses, followed by those in Trivandrum (46%) and Alappuzha (12%). While some people save for their daughter's marriage, with Trivandrum on the top (14%). Many people from three regions save for the repayment of loans with the largest percentage from Kollam (86%), followed by Trivandrum (20%) and Alappuzha (14%). **(Table No.22)**

The findings imply that most of the FVW spend substantially for two purposes, namely for household purposes which include food and other consumables and repayment of loans. Normally, the balance is very often nominal or nil to save for purposes like purchase of land or building. Most of the FVW borrow for the marriage of the girl children. This loan is generally on the shoulders of the FVW who repay it gradually from their income, taking long periods of time.

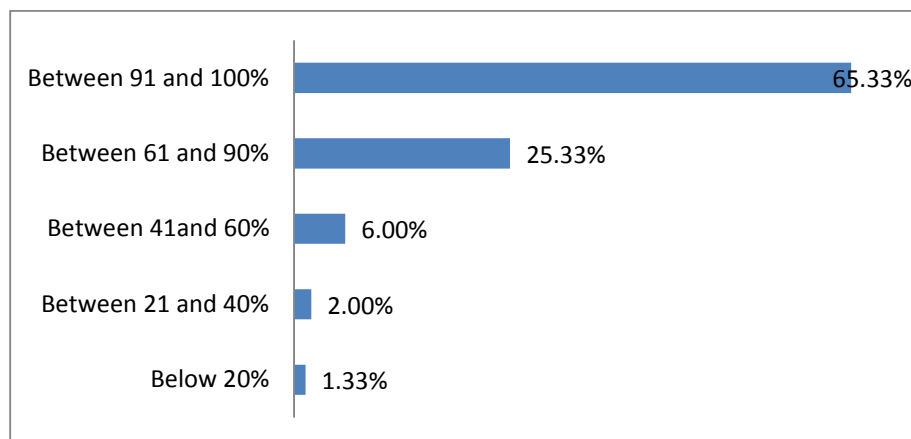
This further implies that FVW are in many of the cases responsible for looking after the household affairs financially. They are again placed by circumstances to take the responsibility of repayment of loans taken for their marriage expenses of their girl children.

5.19. The amount of money spent by the FVW

It is important to know how much money they spend for the above said purposes. Majority of the FVW (65.33%) reports that they spend for various purposes, mainly for the family household expenses, between 91% and 100%. While some (25.33%) spend between 61% and 90%, others spend smaller portion of their income for the family. (See **Figure No.17**)

Figure No. 17

The percentage of money spent by the FVW



More FVW from Trivandrum (32%) spend between 91% and 100% than those from Kollam (28.67%) and Alappuzha (4.67%). **Table No.23**

Working to spend for the family is a noble cause, especially when this is faithfully done by women. But, it remains to be proved if they do it willingly or due to circumstantial compulsions. Normally, in the present situation of fishing communities, men work and take the burden of the families. But, here, we find women taking it for life. The reasons become clearer when we look at the profile of most of the husbands of FVW in the upcoming analysis.

5.20. Loss in Fish Vending

Another aspect of enquiry was the factor of loss in fish vending business done by FVW. While 96% of them affirm that sometimes they incur loss, only 4% inform that they do not meet with loss. The 6 FVW (4%) who never meet with loss in their business are from Trivandrum. (See **Table No.24**)

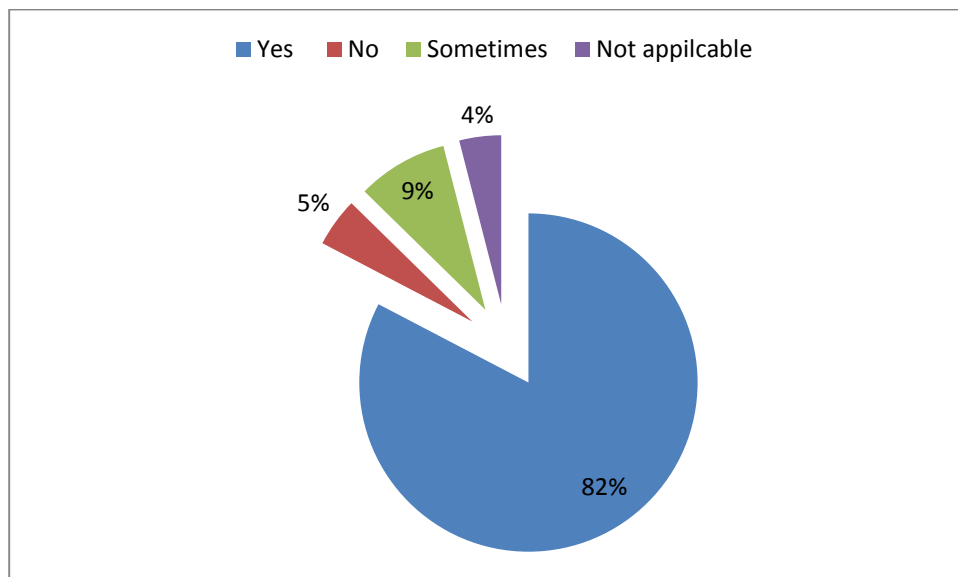
It implies that fish vending is generally profitable and rarely loosing. During the FGDs and personal interviews, this aspect was clarified with fish vending women and they confirmed the researchers' position.

5.21. Support of the family when FVW incur loss

A very vast majority (82%) say that they always receive help from their family for meeting with the loss, whenever it happens. Only a small portion never gets that type of support (5%), while 9% get it sometimes. (See **Figure No.18**)

Figure No. 18

Support of the family when FVW incur loss



More FVW from Kollam and Alappuzha (32% each) always get such support than those from Trivandrum (18.67%). (See **Table No.25**)

This finding goes along with the earlier ones that the families are with them not only in good times but also in bad times.

5.22. FVW’s Participation in Decision making in the family

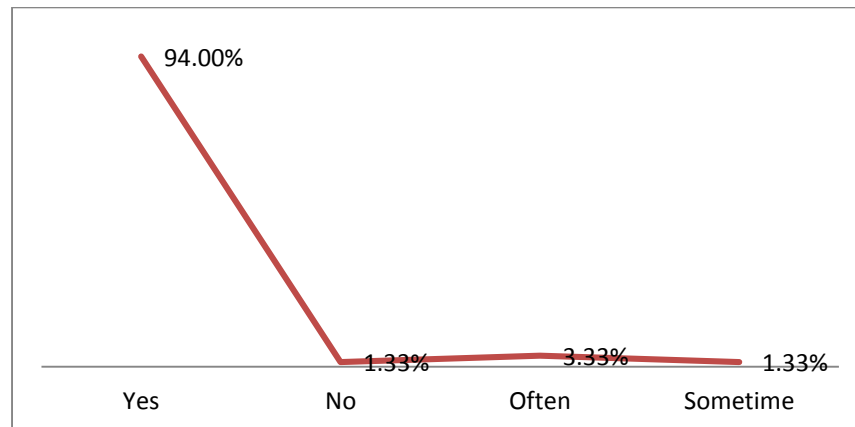
Decision making in the family through consultations among all the members, including parents and children, is the desired option to ensure full participation in and ownership of such decisions by everyone in the family. This does not happen always in all families where men only take such decisions without even consulting women and children especially girl children, FVW are asked if they are consulted on important subjects such as marriage of children, purchase of land and higher education.

5.23. FVW consulted on important family matters

Contrary to the general perception, a vast majority of the FVW (94%) inform that they are always consulted on matters such as marriage of children, purchase of land and higher education. (See **Figure No.19**) (See **Table No.26**)

Figure No. 19

FVW consulted on important family matters



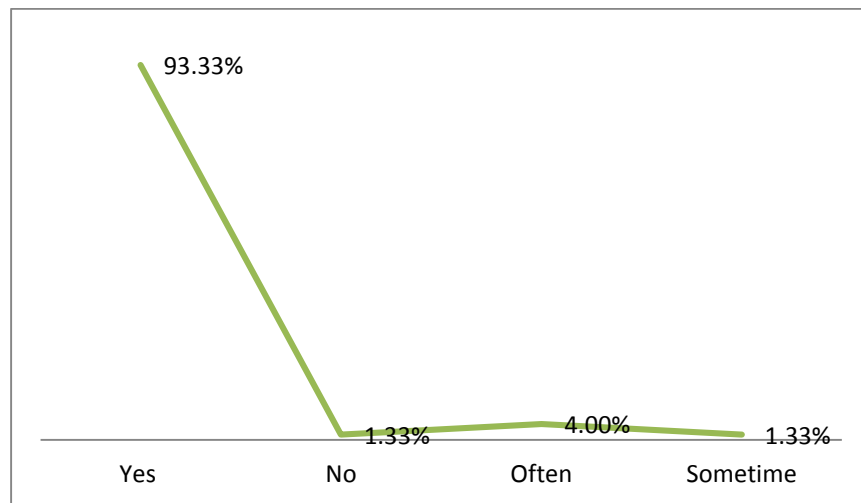
It implies that among the families of FVW the gender equations are better. This can be further ascertained by the other factors contributing to FVW's role in the family and their relationship with their own families and communities and the general attitude towards them.

5.24. Consultations on less important matters

With regard to the less important matters of day-to-day activities in the family, the same enquiry was done. The responses were almost the same as the above. 93.33% of them inform that they are consulted and their opinions form a crucial part in decision-making. (See **Figure No.20**)

Figure No. 20

Consultations on less important matters



This is the case in all the three regions. This is again another instance of affirming the above said position of FVW in decision making. (See **Table No.27**)

5.25. Attitude of the Relatives towards FVW

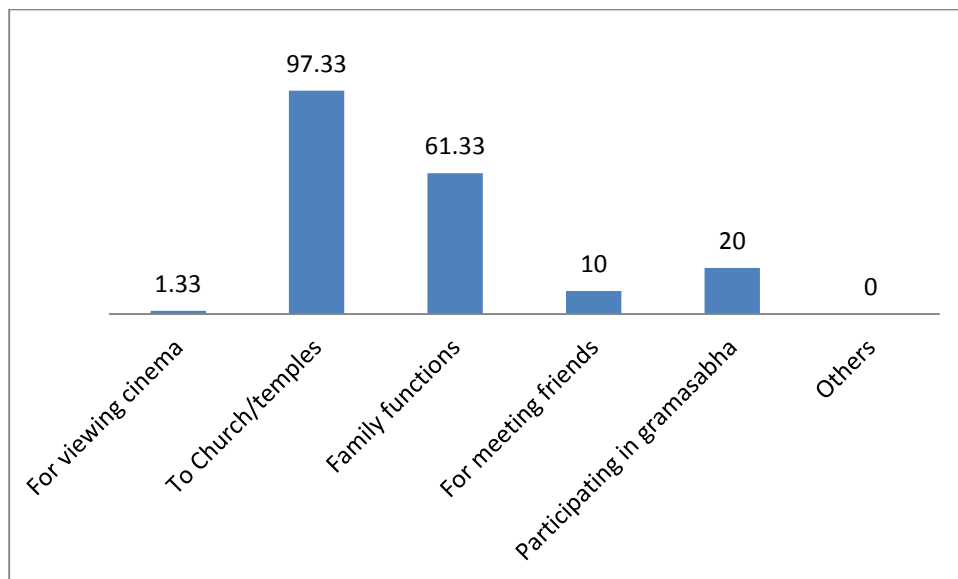
The data show clearly that almost all of the FVW receive a supportive (91.62%) or sympathetic (6.58%) attitude from the relatives. This is the case in all the three regions. (See **Table No.28**)

5.26. Instances of FVW going out with their family for recreation

In order to understand more deeply if the FVW have a chance to relax and recreate with their family members, questions regarding their opportunities were asked. A very vast majority confirm that they go out to church or temple (97.33%) with their family members and family functions such as marriage or funeral functions (61.33%). While 20% attend Grama Sabhas/ Nagara Sabhas, only 10% go to meet friends. They usually do not go for cinemas or other related functions. Their life is revolving round their household, markets and churches or temples. (See **Figure No.21**)

Figure No. 21

Instances of FVW going out with their family for recreation (%)



While in the matter of going to church/temples, all the three regions keep the same pattern, in the case of participation in family functions, FVW from Kollam and Trivandrum frequent more, while very few from Alappuzha attend such functions. (See **Table No.29**)

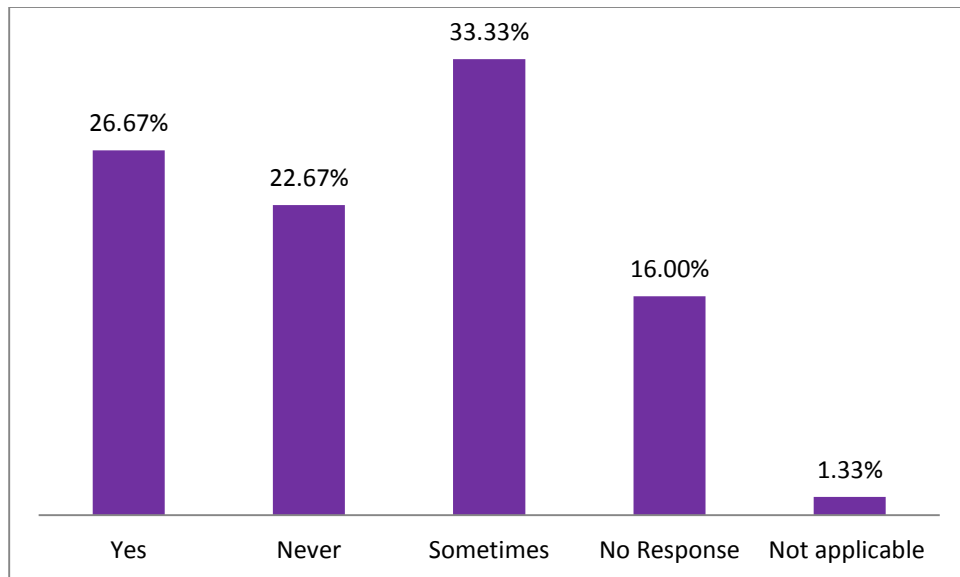
Presumably, the lack of time may be the reason behind their lack of wider exposure beyond their villages.

5.27. Habit of Alcohol Consumption of the Husbands

A distinction is to be made here between Alcoholic addicts and social or occasional drinkers. The data show that 26.67% of the husbands of FVW habitually or regularly consume alcohol, while 22.67% never take it. A higher percentage (33.33%) constitutes occasional drinkers. A substantial section does not want to respond to this question (16%). (See **Figure No.22**)

Figure No. 22

Habit of Alcohol Consumption of the Husbands



Of the 26.67% of regular drinkers, 24% are from Trivandrum. There are more occasional drinkers in Kollam. In Alappuzha, there are more men who never drink alcohol. (See **Table No.30**)

The habit of alcohol consumption is one of the sources of family expenditure. Where the husband does not earn by himself, the money is drawn from the FVW who by habit and precedence is forced to give money to her husband almost regularly. This matter was placed for FGDs. FVW seemed to follow the safer way to avoid disputes and resistance from their husbands putting impediments to their job. Also, FVW do not take the husband's drinking habit

a very serious matter at all. The society along the coast had somehow taken this as granted. Rather, many of them feel that it is their duty to give money to non-earning husbands, even if the latter spend the hard earned money for alcohol.

Where this manner of managing husbands is not successful, there are problems affecting even conjugal relations, job, harmony in the family, children's education and character formation and many other things. FVW who do not give money to their non-working husbands for alcohol and other personal expenses are very often physically assaulted and brutally subjugated.

It is also noted that even in instances where the FVW provide everything including money to their husbands; they are beaten up and harassed.

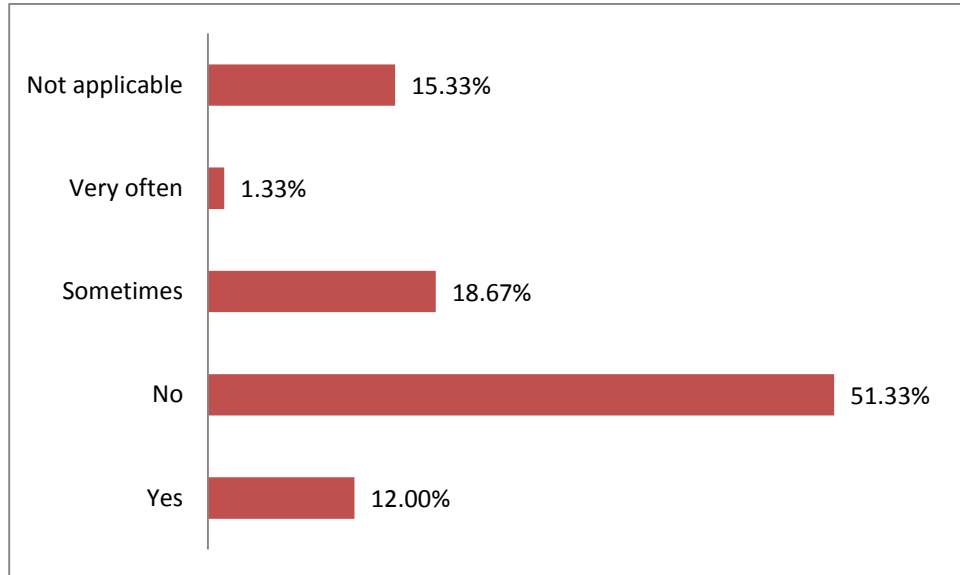
5.28. Harassment from Husbands

Harassments¹³ from husbands against wives are regularly reported in the media with reference to all classes of people in Kerala as well as India. It is relevant in this context to know if FVW experience such harassments from their husbands within the framework of domestic violence. It is revealing to note that majority experience no harassments from their husbands (51.33%), while only 12% has such experience. 18.67% inform that they are occasionally harassed by their husbands. Almost one third of the respondents face the problem from their husbands either regularly or occasionally. (See **Figure No.23**)

¹³ Harassment covers a wide range of behaviours of an offensive nature. It is commonly understood as behaviour intended to disturb or upset, and it is characteristically repetitive. In the legal sense, it is intentional behaviour which is found threatening or disturbing. Sexual harassment refers to persistent and unwanted sexual advances, typically in the workplace, where the consequences of refusing are potentially very disadvantageous to the victim.

Figure No. 23

Harassment from Husbands



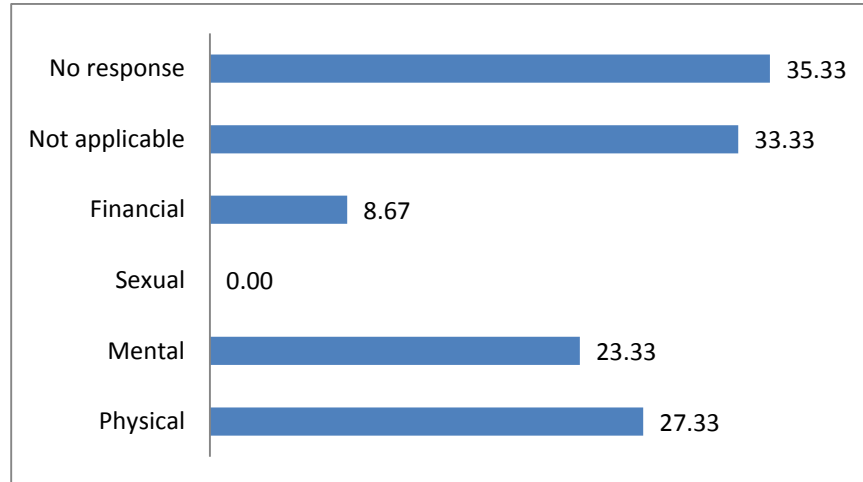
It is observed that FVW from Trivandrum only report that their husbands harass them. In the case of ‘no harassment’, Alappuzha stands first (21.33%), followed by Trivandrum (18%) and Kollam (12%). (See **Table No.31**)

5.29. Type of Harassments

A substantial section inform that they are physically (27.33%) harassed by their husbands, while a smaller proportion meet with mental harassment (23.33%) and only 8.67% meet with financial harassment. A large section did not respond to this question (35.33%) may be due to the social context. Many women in Kerala society feel that it is not appropriate to speak about the negative aspects of their husbands. The silence of 35.33% of FVW can be interpreted in this background. (See **Figure No.24**). It is specially noted that no FVW feels that their husbands sexually harass them. This situation points to the understanding about sexual harassment by husbands.

Figure No. 24

Type of Harassments (%)



Trivandrum stands highest in the case of physical harassment (46%), followed by Kollam (32%) and Alappuzha (4%). In the case of mental harassment, Kollam stands first (34%), followed by Trivandrum (32%) and Alappuzha (4%). There is no financial harassment in Kollam and Alappuzha (2%). But, financial harassment is there in Trivandrum to a higher extent (24%). (See **Table No.32**)

Considering everything mentioned above with regard to harassments, it is important to understand that women along the coastal belt under study including FVW do not often take the physical, mental and financial assaults beyond their families, though there are several legal instruments and mechanisms to defend their positions and protect themselves from harassments. However, some of them make use of the social platforms like the Church and community organizations to mediate and settle.

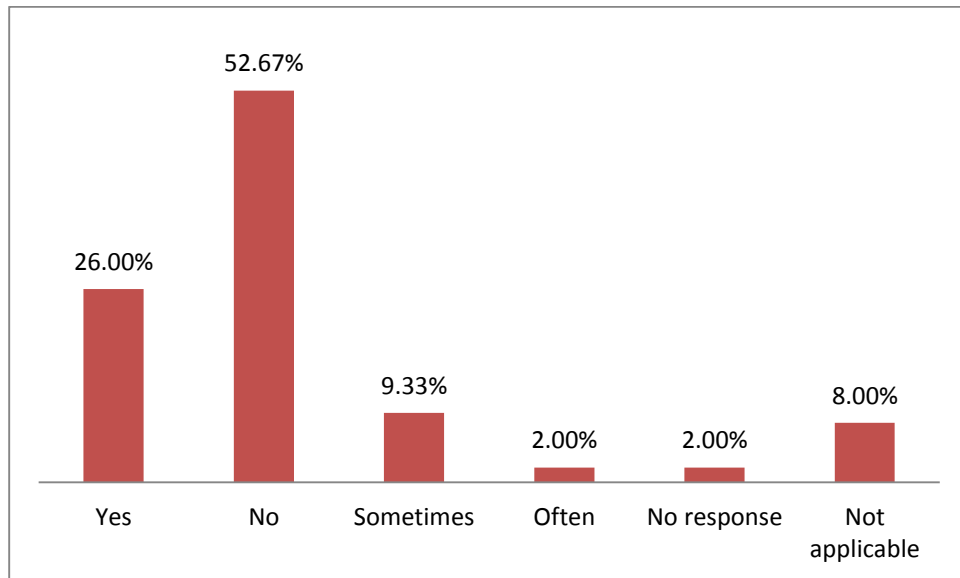
5.30. Time for looking after children’s education and character formation

As a parent, FVW have the responsibility of looking after children’s education and character formation. It is important to know how they manage their occupation with this responsibility. Majority (52.67%) does not get time to attend to children’s education and

character formation. While one third of them always get time, 9.33% get it sometimes. (See **Figure No.25**)

Figure No. 25

Time for looking after children’s education and character formation



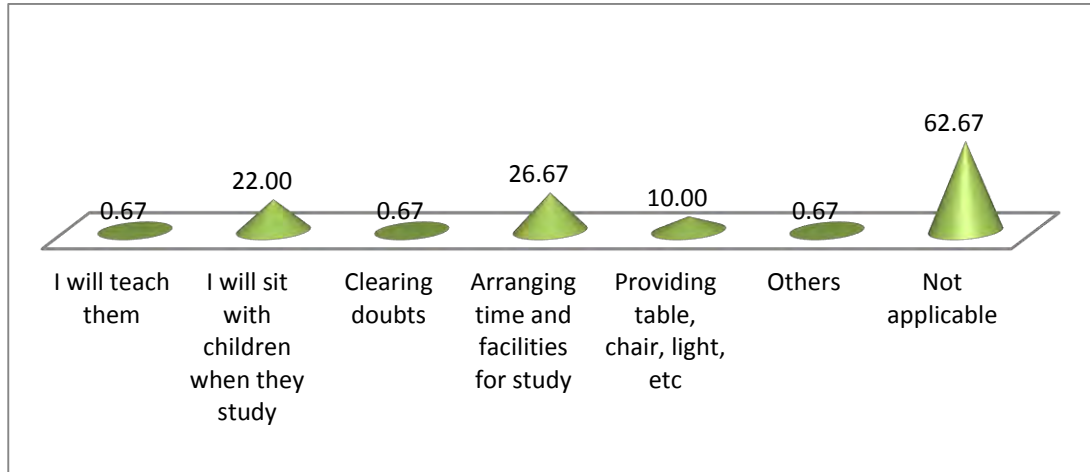
In the case of FVW who do not get time to look after children’s education and character formation, Trivandrum tops with 20.67%, followed by Kollam (16.67%) and Alappuzha (15.33%). In the matter of children’s education and their character formation, Alappuzha stands first (12.67%), followed by Trivandrum (8%) and Kollam (5.33%).(See **Table No.33**)

5.31. Manner of support to children in education and character formation

Most of the FVW being with very low level of education and illiterate can not teach their children nor clear children’s doubts in subjects, arrange time and facilities for their study (26.67%) or merely sit with them when they study (22%). 62.67% seem to have no children who are studying, at the time of data collection. (See **Figure No.26** and See **Table No.34**)

Figure No. 26

Manner of support to children in education (%)

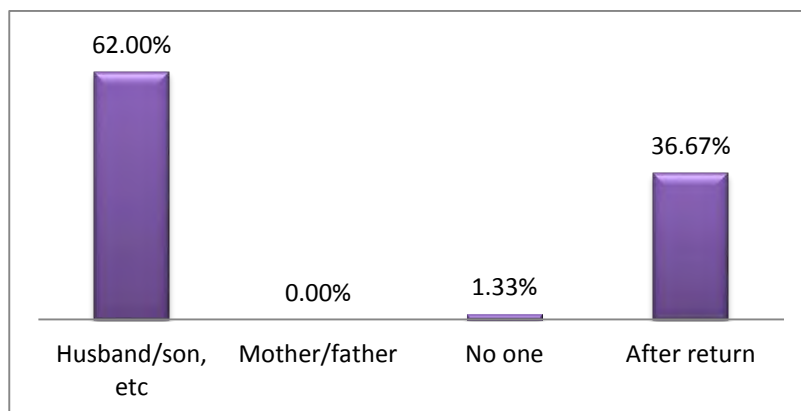


5.32. Management of Household Affairs when FVW are out for fish vending

In a context where women are responsible for household management on a day-to-day basis, it is important to know who takes up the responsibility when FVW are on their job outside the village. Majority of the FVW (62%) reports that their husband/ son/ daughter/ son-in-law/ daughter-in-law take care of the matter. A sizeable section (36.67%) does cooking and related household works only after returning from the markets. (See **Figure No.26**)

Figure No. 27

Management of Household Affairs when FVW are out for fish vending



This is the same pattern followed in all the study areas. (See **Table No.35**)

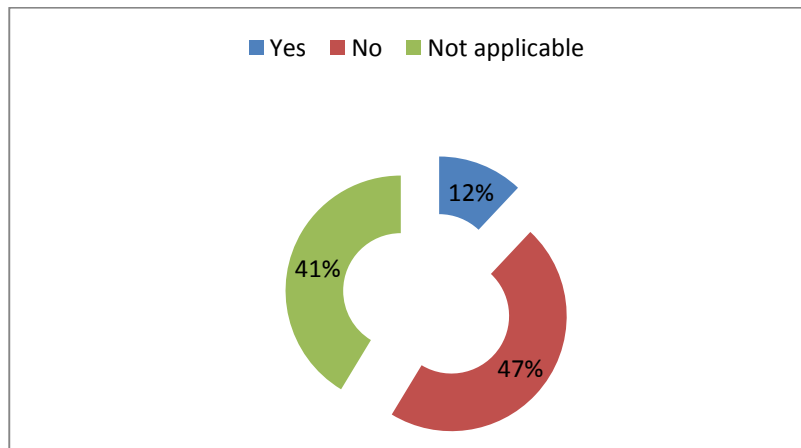
Life is hard for those who do household work and cooking after returning home from fish vending. They are tired and hungry after a day's hard work very often exposed to heavy sun or rain or unhygienic circumstances in the market places.

5.33. Husband's Family's Knowledge about the Pre-marriage situation of FVW

35 to 15 years ago, the society did not have the same attitude towards fish vending and FVW. Presumably, it was different and negative. The marriage of the FVW happened sometime ago. Therefore, it is thought to be necessary to enquire if before marriage, their husbands' families knew that these women were doing fish vending job.

Figure No. 28

Husband's Family's Knowledge about the Pre-marriage situation of FVW



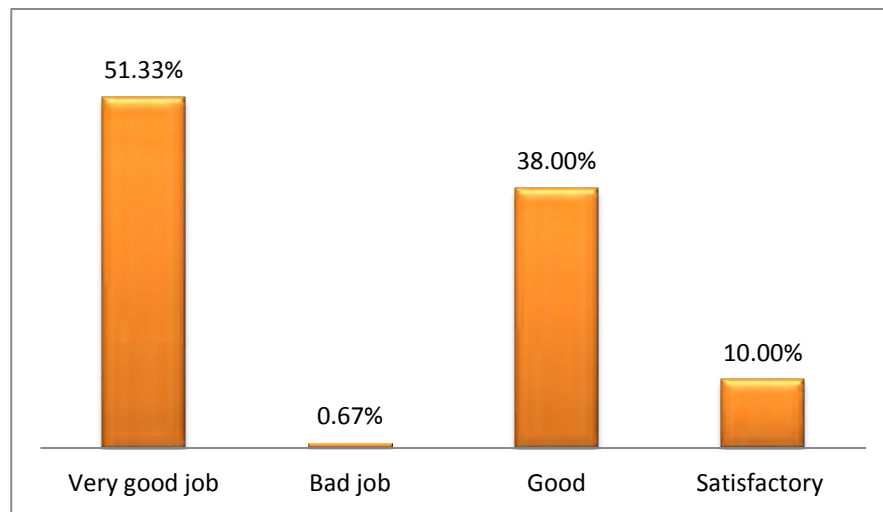
Out of 59% who were doing fish vending before marriage, only 12% responded positively that their husband and his family knew about her job and 47% did not know about it. (See **Figure No.28**). May be, it was not a concern at that time, since normally women were supposed to be obeying their husband after marriage about continuing with the same job or not. (See **Table No.36**)

5.34. FVW's own experience and attitude towards fish vending

It is all the more important to understand how FVW themselves look at the job. Majority are favourable with 'very good' opinion about it (51.33%) and for the next largest section, it is 'good' (38%). Only for a negligible portion, it is bad (0.67%), while 10% say it is satisfactory. (See **Figure No.29**)

Figure No. 29

FVW's own experience and attitude towards fish vending



Except one, all the respondents in Kollam say that it is very good. That is the largest section (32.67 %%), followed by Trivandrum (14%) and Alappuzha (4.67%). Sizeable section of Trivandrum and Alappuzha feel it is a 'good' job. (See **Table No.37**)

Except one, no one else in the groups of respondents sees anything in the situation to make them feel that it is a bad job. This may be the overall reason for their continuing the work.

5.35. Social Life

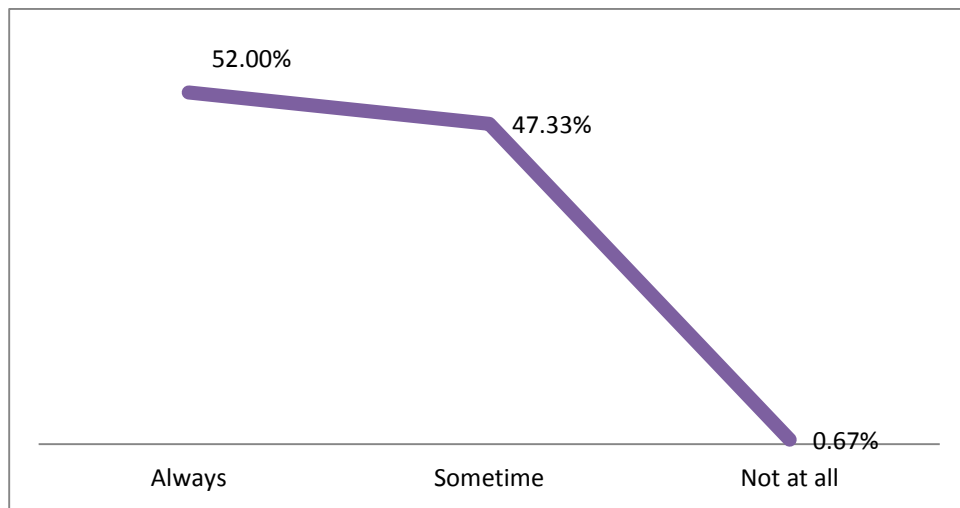
Life and work of FVW in society is a crucial point in the study. It is particularly examined if at all they socialize and how they cope with the need for socialization in the midst of dual compulsions of job and household responsibilities.

5.36. Maintaining good relationship with friends, locals and neighbours

Social relationships are very important for a meaningful and contented life of human beings. This applies to FVW. It is therefore necessary to record how they socialize with others. Majority (52%) always maintain such relationship with friends, locals and neighbours, while 47.33% does it sometimes. (See **Figure No.30**)

Figure No. 30

Maintaining good relationship with friends, locals and neighbours



All of them participate in marriages and funeral functions of relatives and local acquaintance, whenever necessary. FVW however do not feel the need to extend their social relationships beyond this level. (See **Table No.38**)

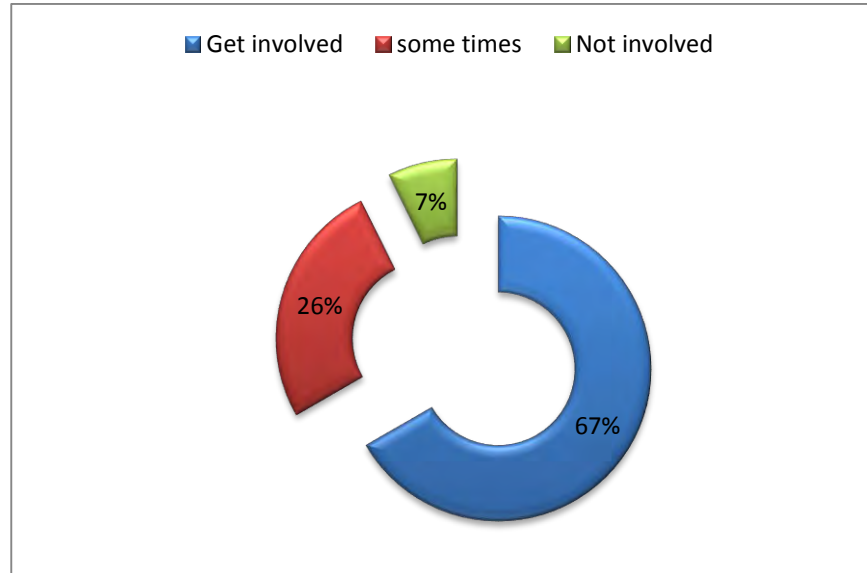
5.37. Membership in Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

Their membership and association with civil society organizations such as SHGs, NGOs, residence associations, community- or caste-based organizations, pious organizations, clubs and women’s organizations have many things to add to their life by way of socialization.

Majority of the FVW (67%) more frequently make use of the CSOs to socialize, while 26% occasionally associate with such organizations and 7% never does it. (See **Figure No.31**)

Figure No. 31

Membership in CSOs



In the case of associating more frequently with CSOs, Trivandrum stand at the top (28.67%), followed by Alappuzha (24.67%) and Kollam (13.33%). Those who are not associating with CSOs have reasons for the same such as lack of time, lack of interest and inhibition. (See **Table No.41 and 42**)

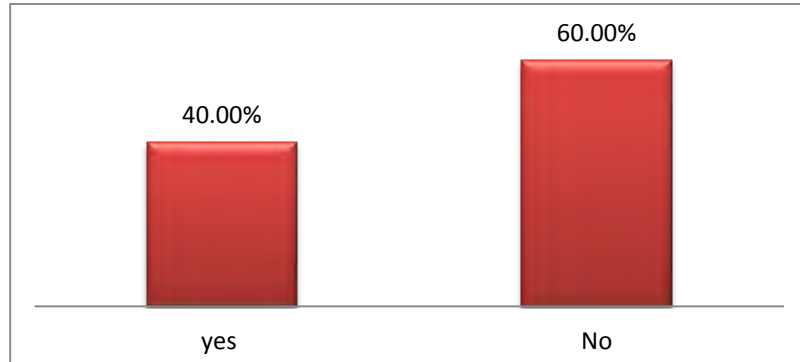
It is to be noted that these FVW related with CSOs very closer to them.

5.38. Membership in Fish Vending Women’s Organizations

It is surprising to note that majority (60%) of FVW does not have membership in Fish Vending Women’s Organizations and only 40% has it. More FVW in Kollam have membership than those in Trivandrum (16%) and Alappuzha (0.67%).(See **Figure No.32**)

Figure No. 32

Membership in Fish Vending Women's Organizations



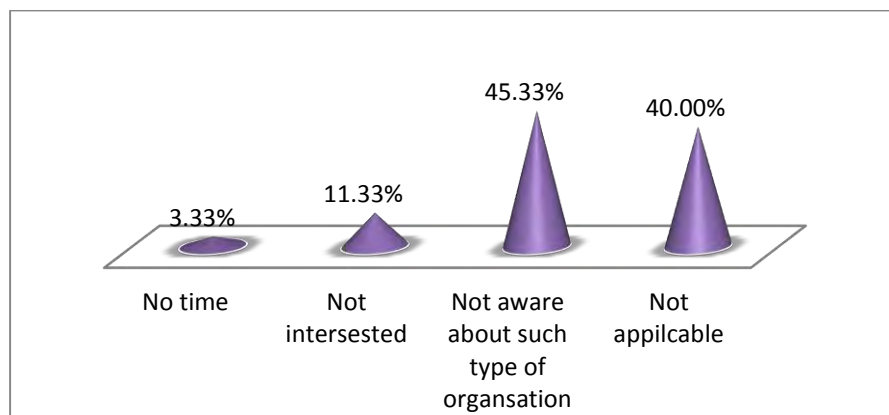
Forty percentages (40%) is not a small portion. However, there are several people who do not have membership in an organization functioning exclusively for supporting them. (See Table No.43)

5.39. Reasons for lack of membership

The largest section (45.33%) informs that they are not aware of organizations exclusively for fish vending women, 11.33% say that they are not interested in such organizations. Only 3.33% says that they have no time. (See Figure No.33)

Figure No. 33

Reasons for lack of membership



Though it is found that in the study area, there are organizations functioning exclusively for fish vending women and their welfare and development, many of them are not members and many do not know about such an organization. This may be also because these organizations are not effective. (See **Table No.44**)

5.40. Economic Factors

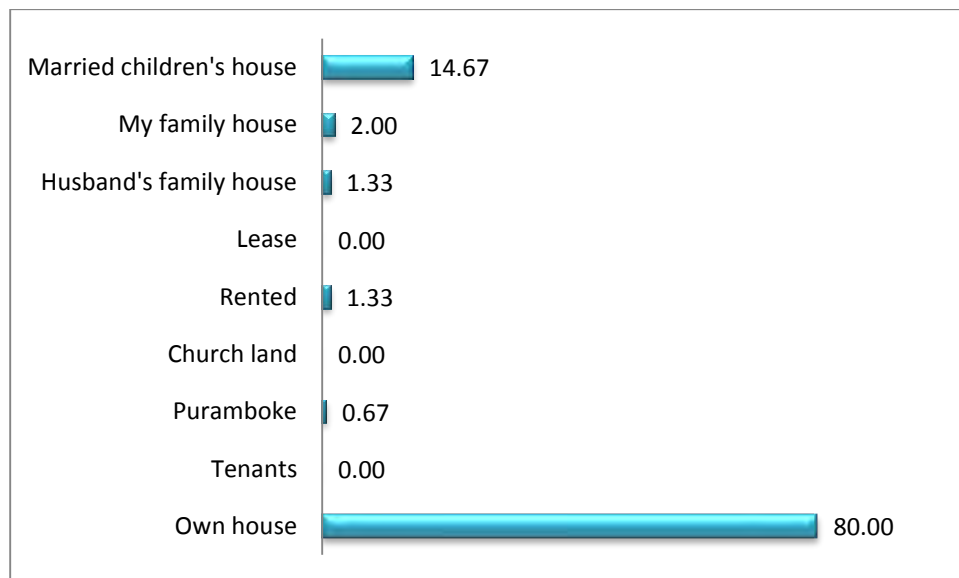
In this sub-section, three most important indicators of the economic standard of a family are considered such as ownership and type of house, ownership and possession rights of land are dealt with in order to assess the economic standard of the families of FVW.

5.40.1. Ownership of House

Ownership of a house is an important indicator for the economic level of a family. Data show that vast majority (80%) has own house to live, while a smaller section lives with married children (14.67%). (See **Figure No.34**)

Figure No. 34

Ownership of House (%)



Alappuzha is on the top of the house owning FVW (80%), jointly followed by Kollam and Trivandrum (72% each). Those FVW who live with their married children are found more in Kollam (22%) and Trivandrum (20%).(See **Table No.45**)

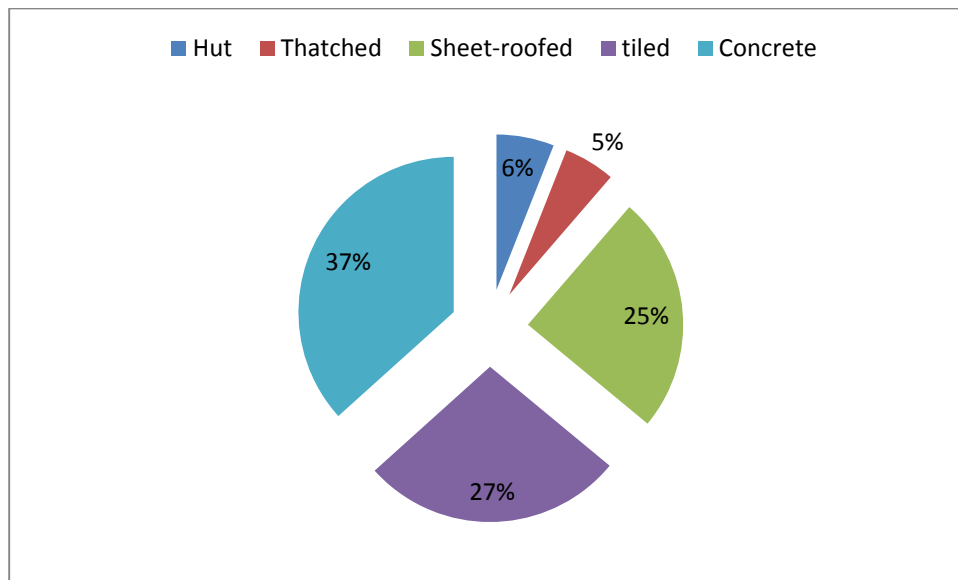
It is found that the number of families of FVW having house is almost the same as those with houses in their wider community. Almost one fifth of the families do not possess their own house.

5.40.2. Type of House

Houses are categorized according to five categories as found in Kerala. The largest section of FVW live in concrete houses (37%) followed by tiled houses (27%), sheet-roofed houses (25%), huts (6%) and thatched houses (5%). (See **Figure No.35**)

Figure No. 35

Type of House



Among the FVW, concrete house owners are found more in Kollam (14.67%), followed by Trivandrum (12%) and Alappuzha (10%). In the case of huts, Trivandrum tops. There is no respondent living in huts in Kollam. (See **Table No.46**)

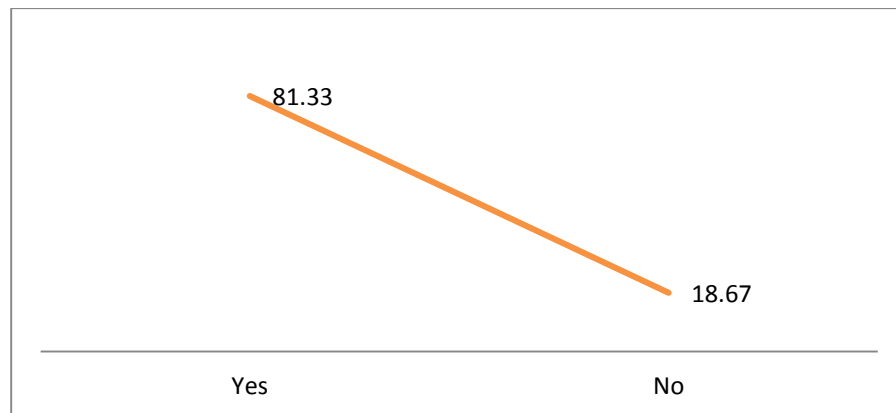
In the case of type of houses, fish vending women reach up to the general community standard except in the case of huts, where it is found that more percentage of FVW live in huts (6%) than that of the community (2.03%)¹⁴.

5.40.3. Land Ownership

A vast majority of the FVW has own land (81.33%) and only 18.67% does not own a piece of land. (See **Figure No.36**)

Figure No. 36

Land Ownership (%)



When ownership of land is considered, more FVW's families possess land than those who possess own houses. (See **Table No.47**)

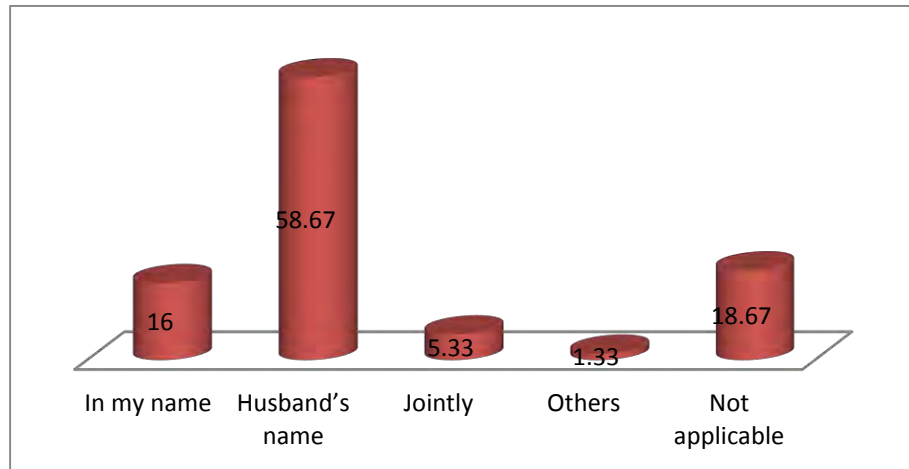
5.40.4. Registration of land

When the family owns a piece of land, it is important to know the real owner of the land. As it is obvious in a male dominated society, majority of the families has registered their land in the name of the husbands (58.67%) and a smaller section has it in the name of FVW (16%). 5.33% registered it jointly in the name of the husband and wife. (See **Figure No.37**)

¹⁴ TSSS, op.cit.,27

Figure No. 37

Registration of land (%)



More families in Alappuzha (80%) have registered the land in the name of the husbands than those in Kollam (56%) Trivandrum (40%). Comparatively, more families in Trivandrum have the land in the name of the wife. Joint registrations are also found more in Trivandrum. (See **Table No.48**)

It is now found that the economic level of families of FVW is almost in par with others in their communities with regard to ownership of house and land.

5.40.5. Labour and Employment

This section deals with the situation of labour and employment of fish vending women. The study is concerned with the reasons and contextual factors of choosing fish vending as an occupation.

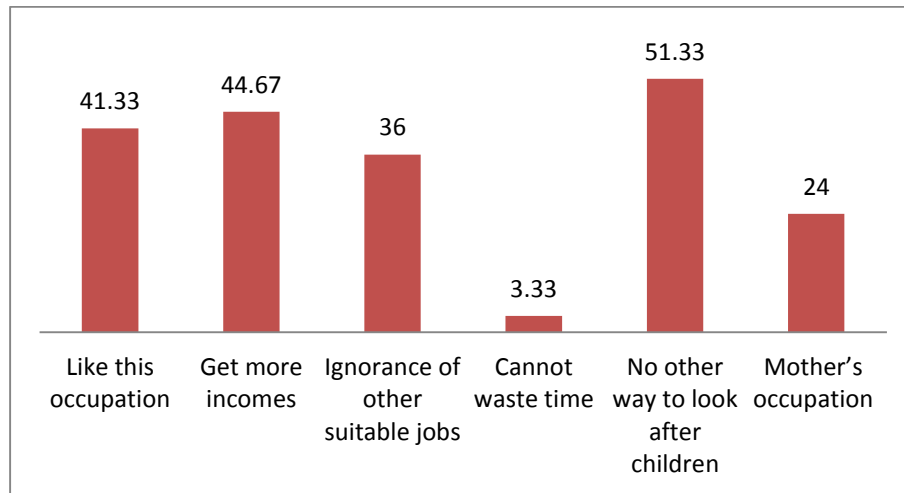
5.40.6. Reasons for choosing fish vending as job

Majority of the FVW chose it as there was no other way before them to bring up their children (51.33%), while the next largest section (44.67%) chose it in order to earn more income, followed by those who liked this occupation (41.33%), those who did not know any

other job (36%) and those who followed their mothers (24%) and those who thought that they should not idle away their time (3.33%). (See **Figure No.38**)

Figure No. 38

Reasons for choosing fish vending as job (%)



FVW from Alappuzha (86%) stand higher in the case of those who have no other way to bring up their children than those in Trivandrum (36%) and Kollam (32%). There are more in Kollam who like this occupation than those in Trivandrum and Alappuzha. In Kollam, we find more FVW who are interested in the occupation to earn some income than those in Trivandrum and Alappuzha. In Kollam, 44% do this occupation following their mothers who

5.40.7. The time of starting fish vending by FVW

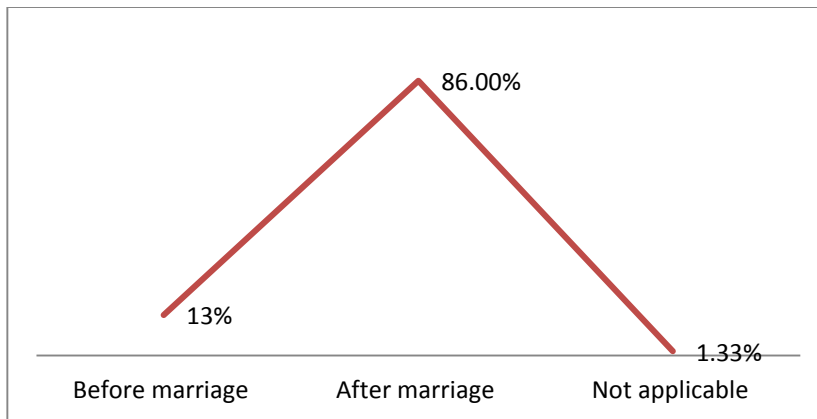
It is very relevant to generate information on when FVW women had started their occupation. The study examines whether it was before or after their marriage; whether it was at the age span between 15-30 years, or 31- 60 years or after 60 years of their age; whether it was within the last 5 years or the last 6 to 15 years or 16 to 30 years.

5.40.7.1. Before or After Marriage

Only a few FVW started the job before marriage (13%) and a vast majority started after marriage (86%). Trivandrum is on the top of those who went for fish vending before marriage (24%), followed by Alappuzha (8%) and Kollam (6%). But, Alappuzha (92%) stands first among those who started it after marriage, followed by Kollam (90) and Trivandrum (76%).(See **Figure No.39** and **Table No.50**)

Figure No. 39

Fish vending before or after marriage



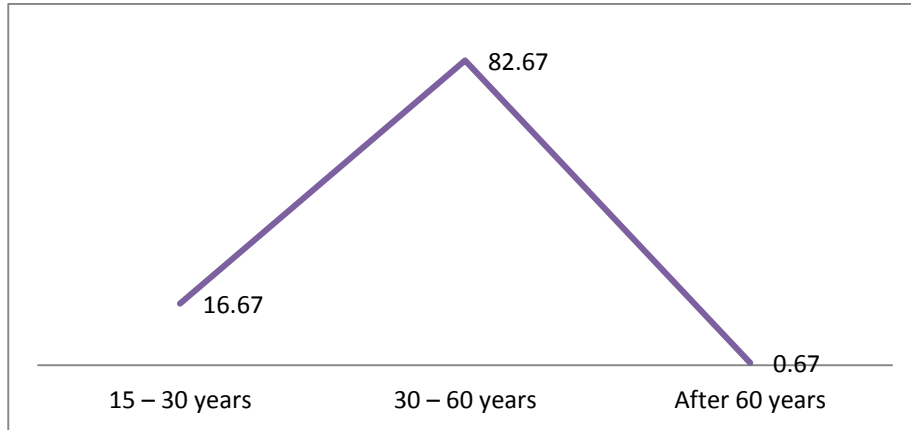
Young ladies going to fish vending before their marriage is rare even now due to social concerns. Most of them start fish vending after marriage because they find it necessary to support their families either because the husbands do not earn or because husband's income is not sufficient to meet the household expenses.

5.40.7.2. Age at which they started fish vending

A vast majority of FVW (82.67%) started doing fish vending job at an age between 30 and 60 years, presumably in their 30s. A smaller section went for the job at an age between 15 years and 30 years. Only one woman among the 150 respondents started after 60 years old. (See **Figure No.40** and See **Table No.51**)

Figure No.40

Age at which they started fish vending (%)

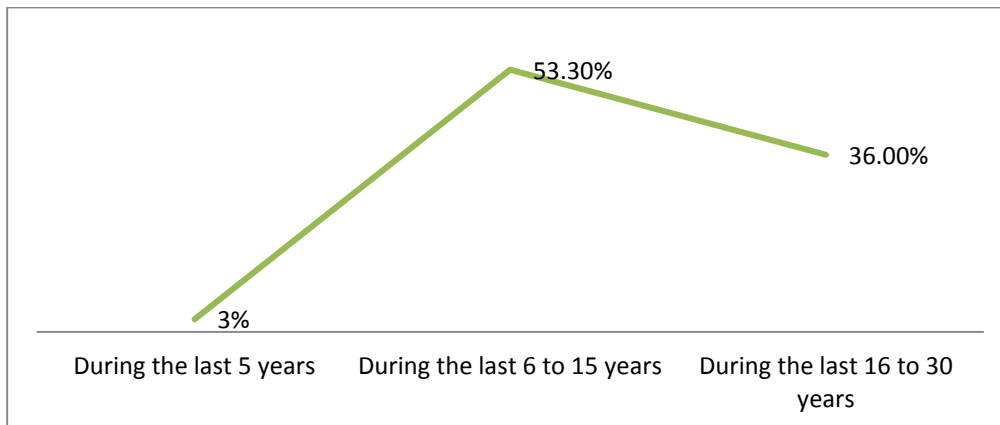


5.40.7.3. *Period of entering into fish vending*

Majority started fish vending job during the last 6 to 15 years (53.30%) ago, while 36% of them started the job during the last 15 to 30 years and only 3% during the last 5 years. (See Figure No.41)

Figure No. 41

Period of entering into fish vending



It is now clear that most of the FVW started their job after marriage, at an age between 30-60 years and during the last 15 to 30 years. Presumably, they have started the job after having

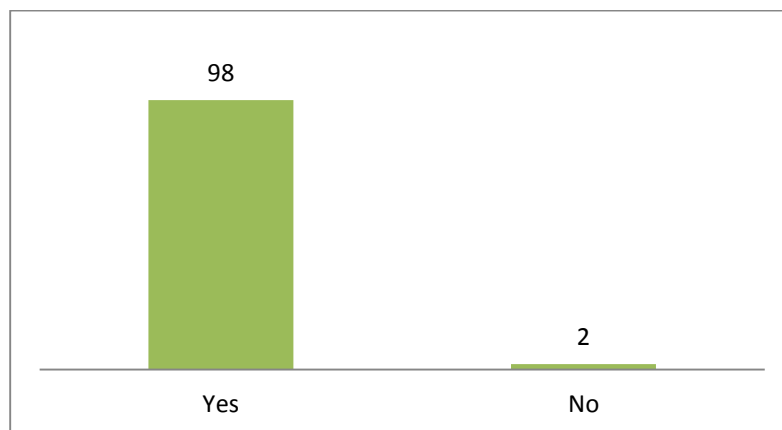
one or two children who might have joined schools, when they felt somewhat free to go for work. Age or social factor might not have become a concern for widows, who had to start the job immediately after the death of their husbands. (See **Table No.52**)

5.40.8. Interest to continue and its reasons

Almost all the respondents are interested to continue with the job (98%). Only 3 persons who do not want to continue with it have reasons like children's resistance, ill health and difficult nature of the job. (See **Figure No.42**)

Figure No. 42

Interest to continue in fish vending and its reasons (%)



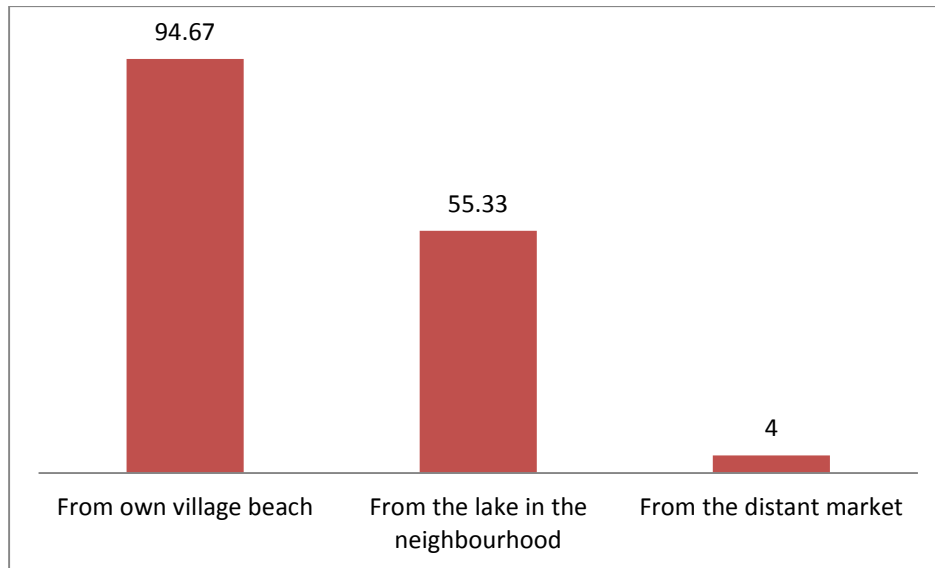
Reasons for continuing with the job are presumably that FVW know only this job; do not know any other job; there is no other income for the family. Over and above all these, the most important reason may be a reasonable income from the job. (See **Table No.53 and 54**)

5.40.9. Venue of purchase of fish

A vast majority of the FVW purchases fish for sales from the landing centers near their own areas (94.67%), while some of them, 55.33%, purchase it from the nearby lake and only 4% buy fish from distant markets. (See **Figure No.43**)

Figure No. 43

Venue of purchase of fish (%)



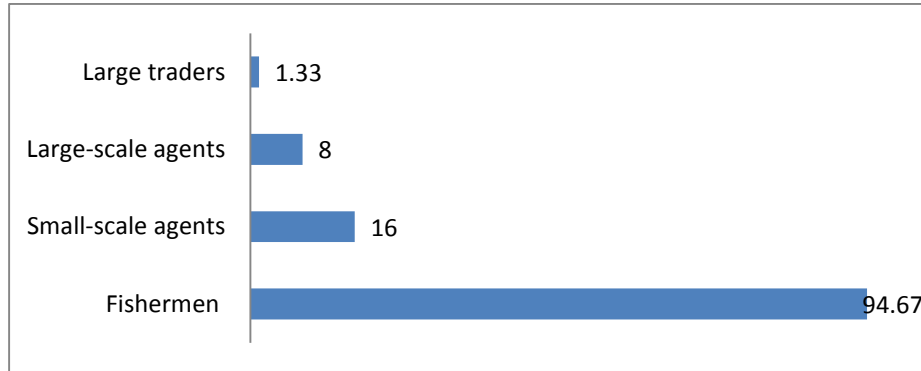
FVW do comparatively small scale business and are very often limited to a small geographical area. They are not competitors of big merchants or middlemen with operate with vehicle support. In most of the cases, there is no need for FVW to go long distances to purchase fish. However, there are some FVW who travel every day from Trivandrum to Neendakara harbour. The researchers have found an instance of a FVW traveling every day from Alappuzha to Muttom in Kanyakumari district in her goods lorry with the support of a driver. (See **Table No.55**)

5.40.10. From whom do you purchase fish?

Vast majority of the FVW (94.67%) purchase fish directly from fishermen, from their own place, while 16% purchase from small scale agents and 8% from large scale agents. The sources of fish for purchase are not exclusive. (See **Figure No.44**)

Figure No. 44

From whom is fish purchased for vending (%)



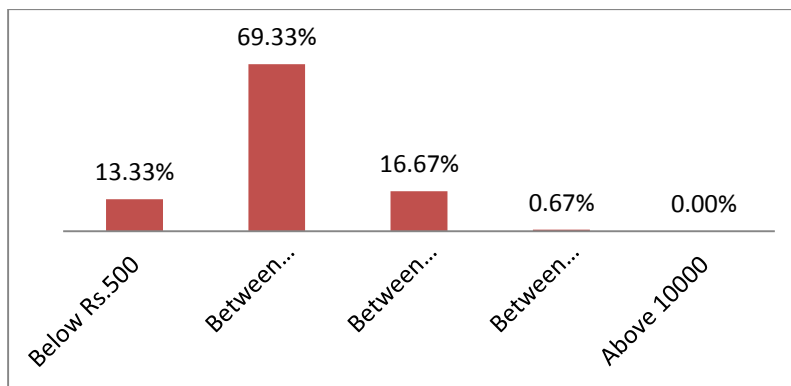
Most of the business is centered on FVW’s living areas especially because there are fish landing centers near their habitats. (See Table No.56)

5.40.11. Quantity of fish purchased in rupees

Majority of the FVW purchase fish for business for an amount between Rs.501 and Rs.1000/- (69.33%), followed by those who purchase fish for an amount between Rs. 1001- Rs.5000 (16.67%) and those who purchase fish for an amount below Rs.500/- (13.33). (See Figure No.45)

Figure No. 45

Quantity of fish purchased in rupees



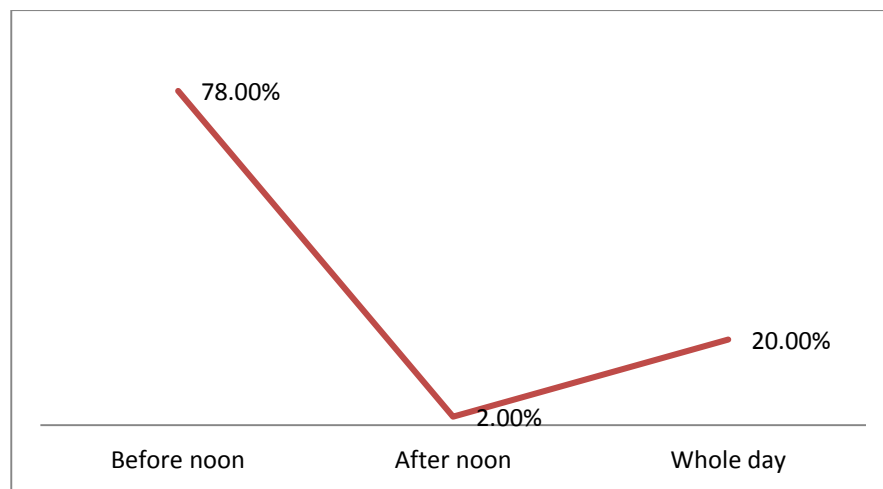
Most of them do small scale business and a few do a larger size of business. (See **Table No.57**)

5.40.12. Time of fish vending

Majority of FVW go for fish vending before noon (78%), while 20 % of them spend the whole day in the business and one or two women go in the afternoon only. (See **Figure No.46**)

Figure No. 46

Time of fish vending



Fish vending women from Kollam who go for the business before noon (32%) outnumber others from Alappuzha (30.67%) and Trivandrum (15.33%). (See **Table No.58**).

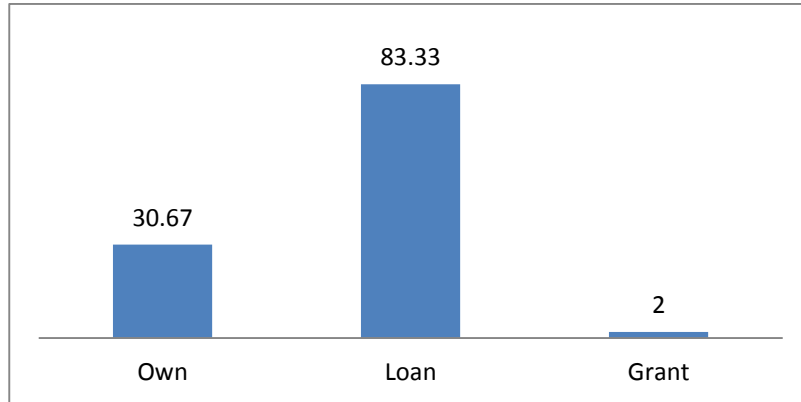
This arrangement is deliberately done considering the personal and market conditions. This timing helps them to come back home and attend to household responsibilities and care for children. Customers generally buy fish in the morning rather than in the evening.

5.40.13. Mobilization of Capital for business

Major section of FVW (83.33%) takes loans for doing their business. While 30.67% of them use their own money, only 2% also makes use of some grants as benefits from some schemes. (See **Figure No.47** and See **Table No.59**)

Figure No. 47

Mobilization of Capital for business (%)

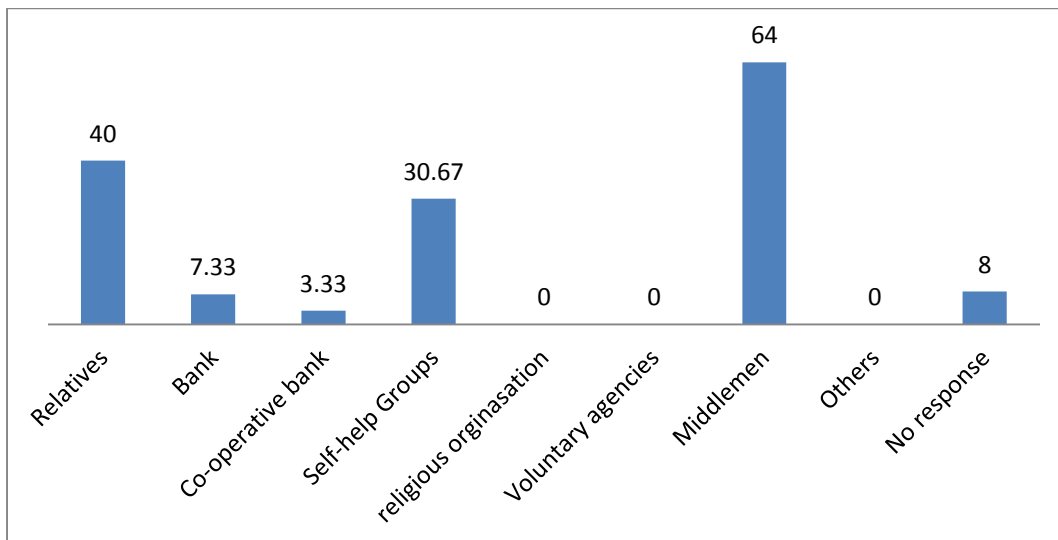


5.40.14. Source of Capital for Fish Vending

Majority of those who take loans from outside receive it from middlemen (64%), while 40% get it from their relatives and a smaller percentage take it from SHGs (30.67%). Some 10% take loan from banks or cooperative societies. No one takes loans from religious or voluntary organizations. (See Figure No.48)

Figure No. 48

Source of Capital for business (%)



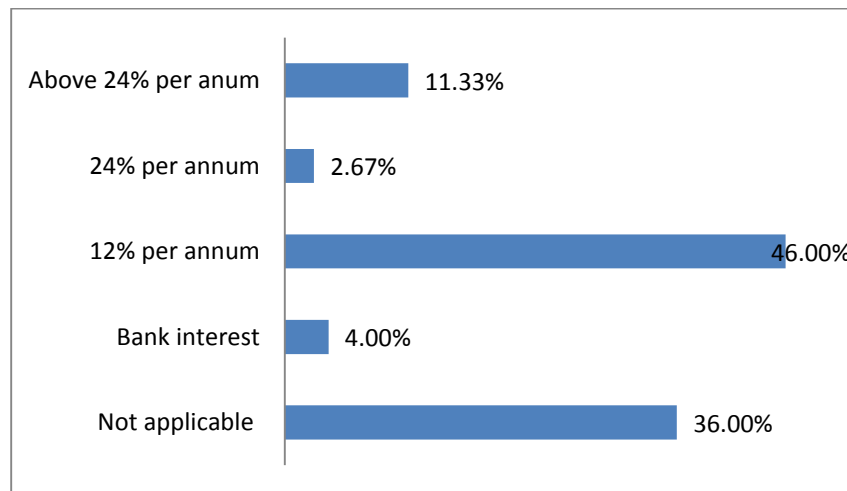
FVW in Kollam (92%) are found going for loans more than others in Alappuzha (84%) and Trivandrum (74%).(See **Table No.60**)

5.40.15. Rate of interest

The largest section (46%) access loans at 12% per annum. A small section gets it at bank interest rates which fluctuate from 12% to 10% per annum. A sizeable section (11.33%) takes loans at a rate above 24% or at 24% per annum, may be from middlemen or money lenders. (See **Figure No.49**)

Figure No. 49

Rate of interest



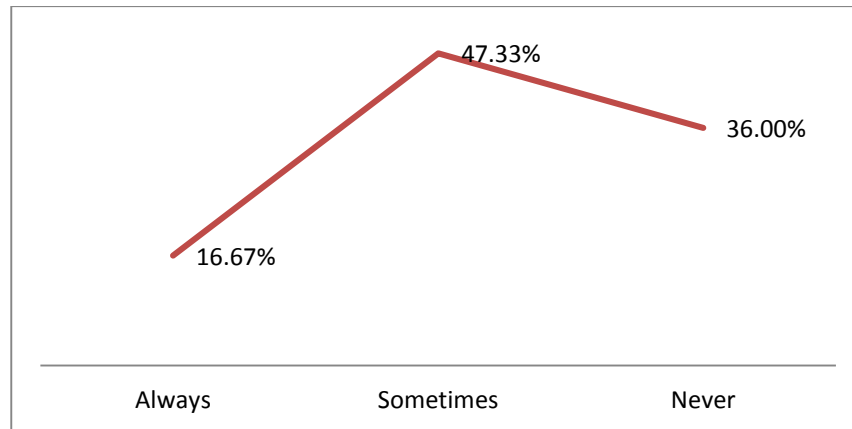
Out of 17 FVW (11.33%) who take loans at a rate above 24% per annum, 14 are from Trivandrum. They take loans from local sources or from money lenders at these higher rates. FVW from other districts depend more on banks and other sources. (See **Table No.61**)

5.40.16. Repayment of Loans

A substantial section of FVW is found unable to repay the loans regularly (36%), while a larger proportion repays it at unplanned intervals (47.33%). However, 16.67% are able to repay their loans regularly. (See **Figure No.50**)

Figure No. 50

Repayment of Loans



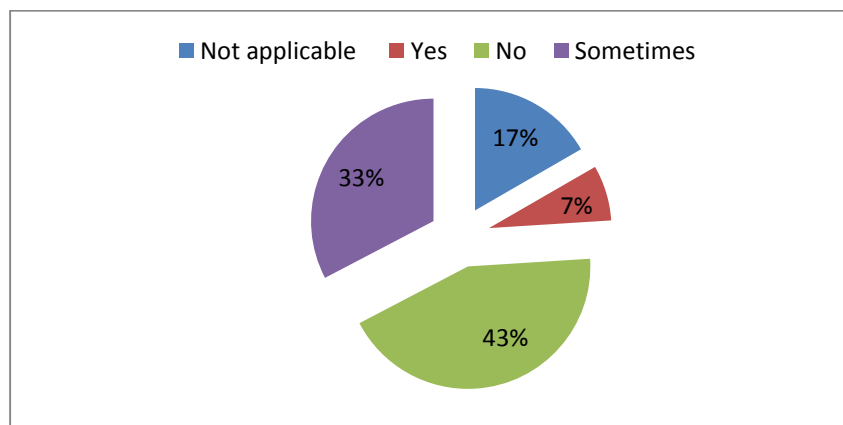
FVW who are capable of regular repayment are found more in Trivandrum, while those who repay loans irregularly are found more in Alappuzha and those who never repay loans are seen more in Kollam. (See **Table No.62**)

5.40.17. Problems in connection with repayment

The largest section does not face any problem regularly (43%). Only a small section of FVW regularly faces problems in this regard (7%). One third of the FVW (33%) face the problems on and off. (See **Figure No.51**)

Figure No. 51

Problems in connection with repayment



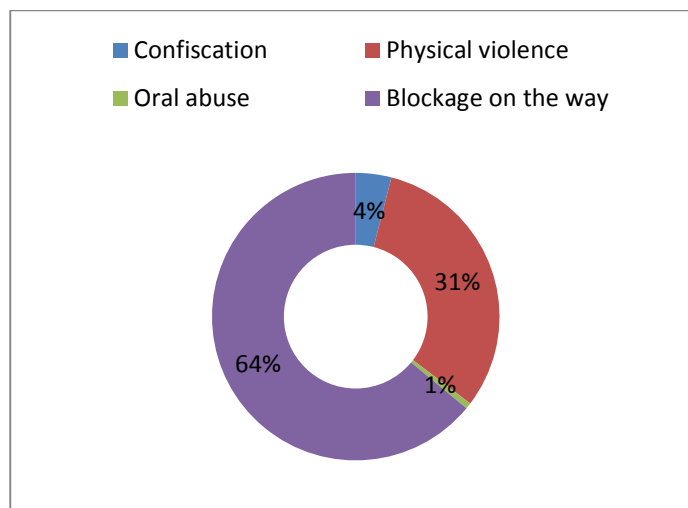
FVW who regularly have problems in connection with repayment of loans are found in Alappuzha and Trivandrum. Though many people in Kollam find it difficult to repay loans, the problems are absent among them. Those who do not face regular problems are found at a higher proportion (23.33%) in Alappuzha than in Trivandrum (16.67%) and Kollam (3.33%).(See **Table No.63**)

5.41. Type of Problems

Women in fish vending face various types of problems in connection with repayment of loans such as confiscation of their properties, physical violence, oral abuse, blockage on the way and other unspecified ways. Majority of FVW encounter blockage on the way (64%) followed by those who face physical violence (31%), confiscation (4%) and oral abuse (1%). (See **Figure No.52**)

Figure No. 52

Type of Problems



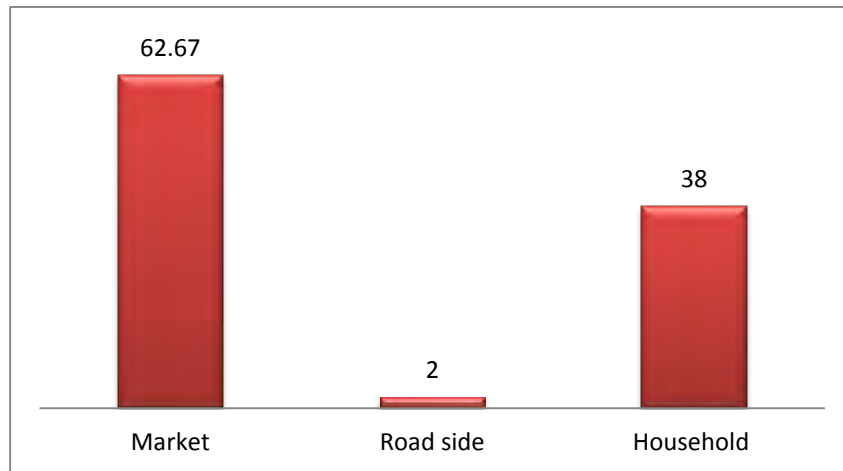
FVW who meet with blockage on the way are found proportionally more in Alappuzha (28%) than in Trivandrum (24.67%) and Kollam (11.33%). In this connection, physical violence is found proportionately more in Kollam (19.33%) than in Trivandrum (6.67%) and Alappuzha (5.33%). (See **Table No.64**)

5.41. Place of Fish Vending (Market)

There are mainly three places where FVW generally sell their fish and conduct business such as markets, house-to-house and road side. Among the respondents, majority (62.67%) sell fish in any one of the market places ('*Chanthakal*'), a sizeable section does house-to-house vending (38%) and a very small section does their job on the way side. (See **Figure No.53**)

Figure No. 53

Place of Fish Vending (Market) (%)



Majority of the FVW in Trivandrum (82%) and Alappuzha (68%) choose markets for selling their fish on a regular basis. In Kollam, too, the largest section goes to markets for sales. Door-to-door sellers are found proportionately more in Kollam (64%) than in Alappuzha (34%) and Trivandrum (16%). Way side vendors are found only in Trivandrum among the respondents. (See **Table No.65**)

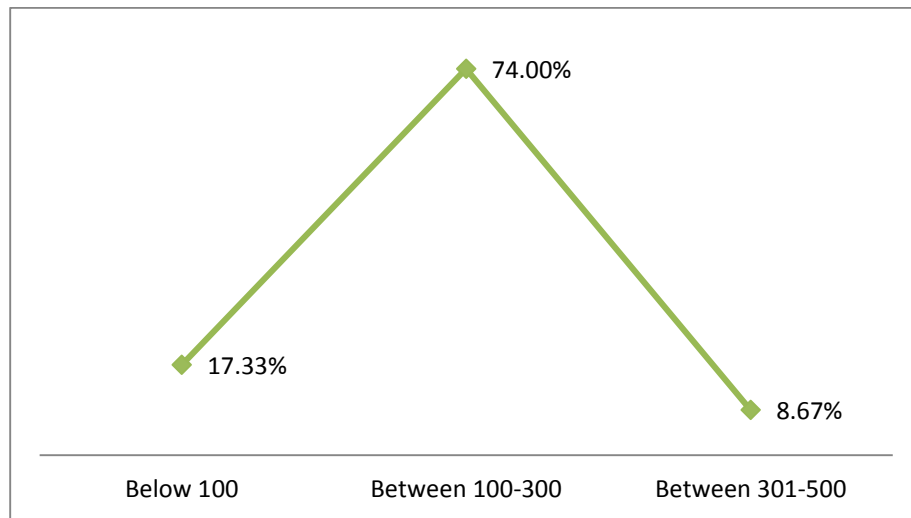
5.42. Profit from Fish Vending

While understanding the work of the FVW, it is important to know the profits or earning they make out of it. In general, the information gathered on income through surveys is not fully dependable since the respondents usually report only a reduced amount than they actually get. Here, the researcher takes account of this information in this perspective.

Majority of the FVW (74%) reports that they earn on an average between Rupees 100 and 300 per day, a smaller section has below Rs.100 and a few (8.67%) makes between Rs.301-500. (See **Figure No.54**).

Figure No. 54

Profit from Fish Vending



Trivandrum stands first among those who make between Rupees 100 and 300 per day (28.67%), followed by Kollam (24.67%) and Alappuzha (20.67%). (See **Table No.66**)

For those who do a business of Rs.500-Rs.1000/-, a profit of Rs.300/-, that is 30%, seems reasonable and for those who buy for below Rs.500/-, Rs.100/- per day is not bad, that is 20%. For those who buy for more than Rs.1001 – 5000, the range of profit of Rs.301-500 may also be regular. However, the question is whether the reported figures correspond to the gross income or net profit. It is not possible to generate this information from FVW since none of them keep a proper account of receipts and payments. The reported figures are estimation only. There is no record to verify these figures.

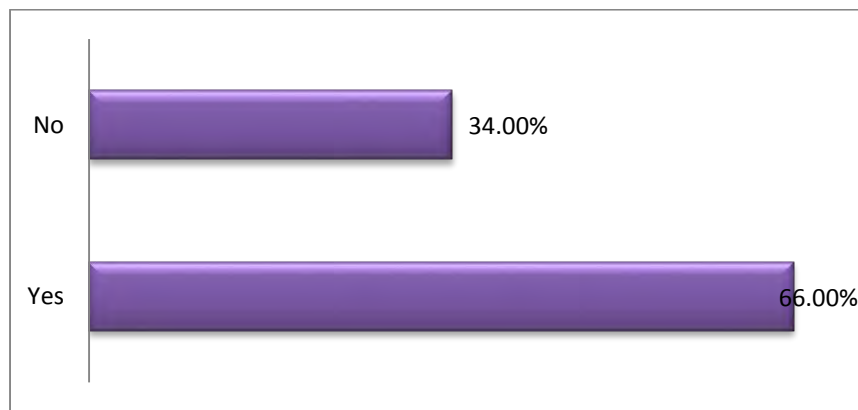
However, it can be inferred from the given facts and figures that FVW do a very small business, which is not be enough to support their life and family.

5.43. Returning Fish from the markets

Fish is a product which can not be kept for long in good condition in the absence of further processing, if FVW fail to sell all the fish within the planned time. So, it is in place to know what they do with the fish thus returned home from market.

Figure No. 55

Returning Fish from the markets



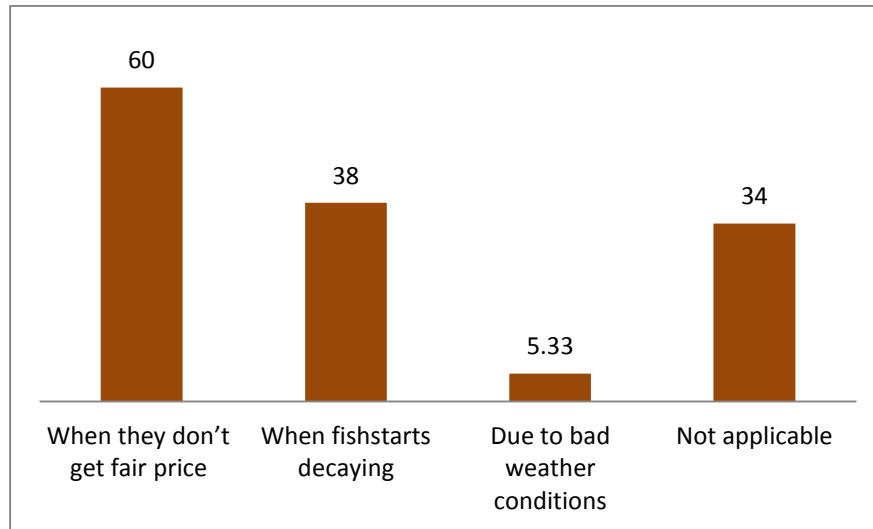
Majority of FVW (66%) report that there are occasions when they have to bring back the balance of fish after sales. The rest of the respondents do not have this experience (34%). (See **Figure No.55** and See **Table No.67**)

5.44. Circumstances in which fish is taken back home

Usually, FVW bring back their fish only when they have no other practical way to dispose it off. There are occasions when they do not get fair price, when fish starts decaying, when they can not sell it due to bad weather or other local disturbances. Majority of the FVW forced to take their balance fish back home does it when they do not get right price (60%), while 38% take it back home when fish starts decaying (38%) and a small section does it due to bad weather. 34% do not take it back at any circumstances. They dispose it off at any cost. (See **Figure No.56** and See **Table No.68**)

Figure No. 56

Circumstances in which fish is taken back home (%)



5.45. Processing Returned Fish

In general, the returned fish is salted or kept in ice. Some of them dry it and sell latter when there is not much fresh fish in the market. Some very magnanimous women give it to the neighbours at a nominal cost or no cost before it is too late. (See **Table No.69**)

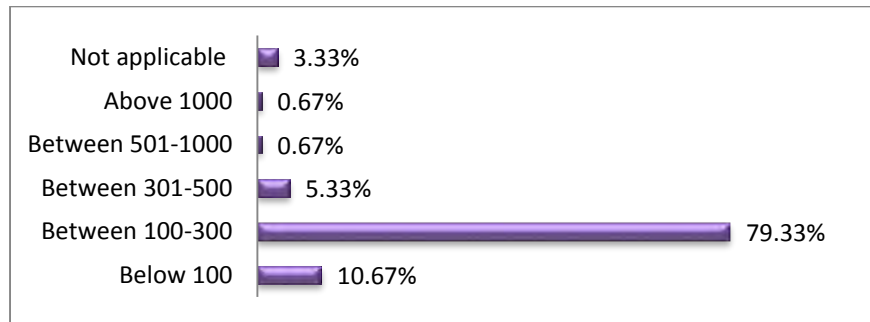
5.46. Loss

Occasionally, FVW incur loss in the business due to various reasons such as unexpected arrival of more fish in the market, bad weather preventing customers from the market, local disturbances like *hartal* and strikes as well as when fish becoming decayed. The loss ranges from below Rs.100 to above Rs.1000 per day. It is to be noted here that when people speak of losses in such surveys, they make higher than what they incur.

A large majority of FVW (79.33%) incurs loss between Rs.100-Rs.300 per day on an average, when they make loss. Some of them meet with a loss of below Rs.100 (10.67%). A few have the experience of loss in the range of Rs.301-Rs.500 (5.33%).(See **Figure No.57** and See **Table No.70**)

Figure No. 57

Loss



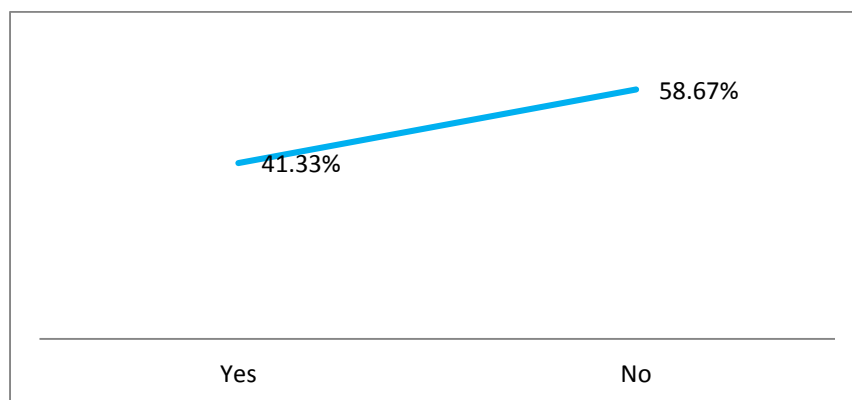
5.47. Support from Government and other Organizations

As one of the marginalized sections, FVW deserve support from Government organization (GOs) or Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs). These organizations do have programs and projects. The question is to know if the target groups of their schemes benefit from them.

A major portion of the respondents (58.67%) do not get any support from these organizations, while 41.33% agree that they get it currently or got it in the past. (See Figure No.58)

Figure No. 58

Support from Government and Other Organizations



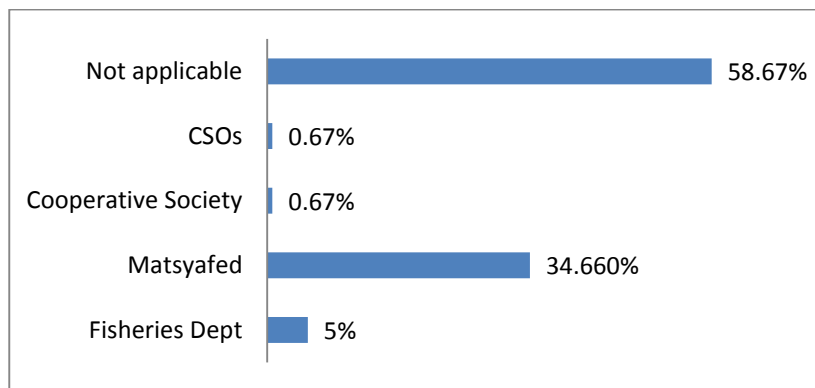
Among those who get the support, Alappuzha tops (30.67%) followed by Trivandrum (9.33%) and Kollam (1.33%), implying that Kollam and Trivandrum lags behind in accessing external support in their business. (See **Table No.71**)

5.48. Type of supporting organizations

While 58.67% do not get any support, 34.66% get it from Matsyafed and 5% from Fisheries Department directly. Only negligible number of FVW receives help from CSOs including NGOs. (See **Figure No.59**)

Figure No. 59

Type of supporting organizations



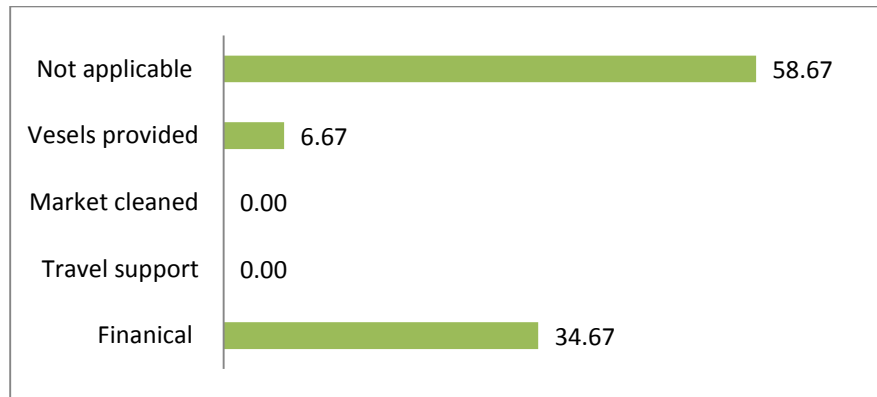
Matsyafed seems to be the major support system to FVW, as they are part of the fishing communities for whom Matsyafed has several programs. Secondary data show that Matsyafed and other Government schemes are mainly for the fishing community and not specifically for the FVW who deserve special or tailor made programs for their welfare and progress in business. (See **Table No.72**)

5.49. Type of Support

While a major portion does not get any support, 34.67% receive financial support from one or the other of the sources mentioned above. The other support mentioned here is the provision of vessels to some FVW (6.67%). (See **Figure No.60**)

Figure No. 60

Type of Support (%)



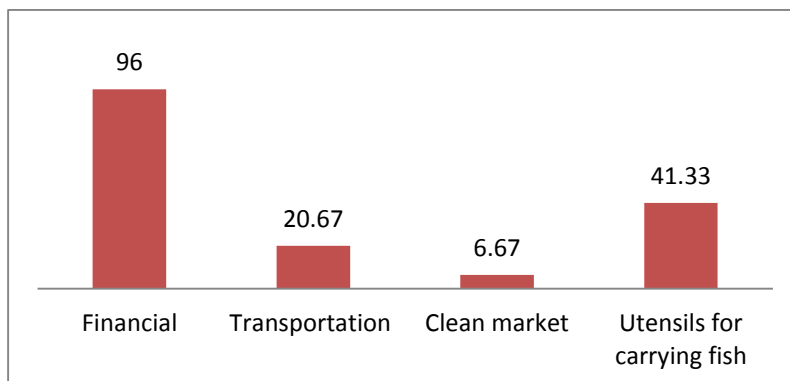
Piecemeal supports are in place for the FVW which are not fully used by the majority because, it appears, the support is not substantial and FVW are not in the know of things in full. (See Table No.73)

5.50. Demand for support

All of them need some kind of support to improve their business and work. A vast majority (96%) need financial support, while others need transportation support (20.67%), clean market (6.67%) and vessels and other utensils for carrying fish to markets (41.33%). (See Figure No.61) (See Table No.74)

Figure No. 61

Demand for support (%)



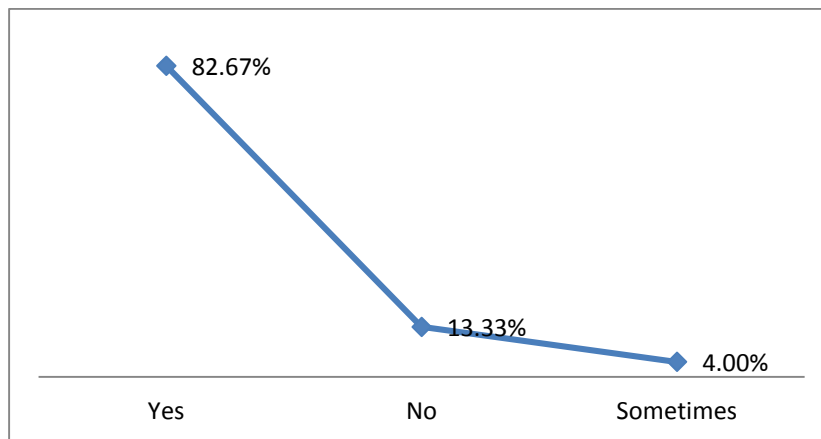
During the personal interviews, it became clear that most of the FVW do not know their rights for support and help through the existing schemes and new schemes for their future wellbeing.

5.51. Competition in the market

Competition is expected in any business, small or big. Large majority of FVW report that there is competition always or regularly (82.67%). While 13.33% does not face any competition, 4% of them face it occasionally. (See **Figure No.62**)

Figure No. 62

Competition in the market



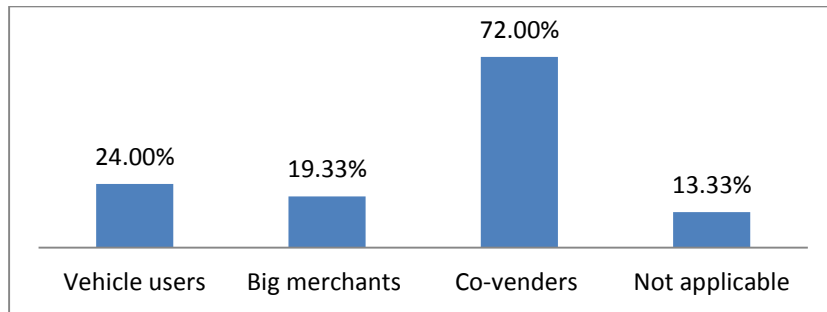
Competition is higher in Kollam (32%) followed by Alappuzha and Trivandrum (30% each). (See **Table No.75**)

5.52. Type of competition

The competition FVW face in the business is mainly from the male vehicle users who reach the market faster, big merchants who win in auctions and co-vendors who block customers in the markets. Available data show that majority of the FVW face competition from the co-vendors (72%). The other competitors are vehicle users (24%) and big merchants (19.33%). (See **Figure No.63**)

Figure No. 63

Type of competition



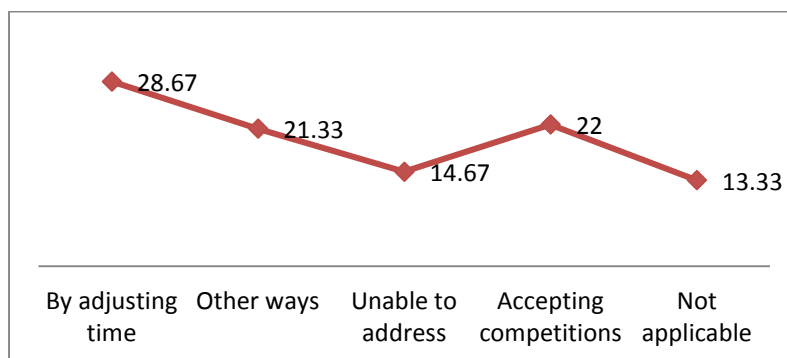
In the matter of competition from co-vendors, Alappuzha stands highest (96%), followed by Kollam (64%) and Trivandrum (56%). There is no competition in Alappuzha between vehicle users and big merchants. Vehicle users are more in Kollam (56%) than in Trivandrum (16%). (See **Table No.76**)

5.53. The manner of addressing competition

Largest section of FVW who face competition encounter their competitors by adjusting time to reach the market (28.67%), followed by those who accept helplessly the competition and its effects on their business (22%) and those adopt other strategies (21.33%). There are a few who can not address the competition and feel frustrated (14.67%). (See **Figure No.64**) (See **Table No.77**)

Figure No. 64

The manner of addressing competition (%)



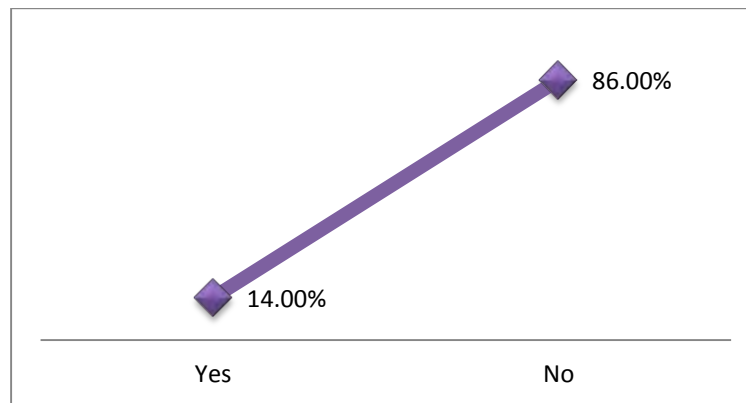
5.54. Political Participation of FVW

Indian citizens have a right to participate in the political processes taking place in the country in all possible ways. FVW above the age of 18 years are eligible to participate in political functions, share responsibilities and access power. This participation, in their context, can be through membership in a recognized political party and through voting in elections. Since this study aims to understand this aspect of FVW's life, political participation forms part of this report.

In a state where the politicization is one of the highest in India, vast majority of FVW (86%) are found having no membership in political parties, though they may have a favourable or unfavourable approach to one or the other party. (See **Figure No.65**) (See **Table No.78**)

Chart No. 65

Membership in political parties

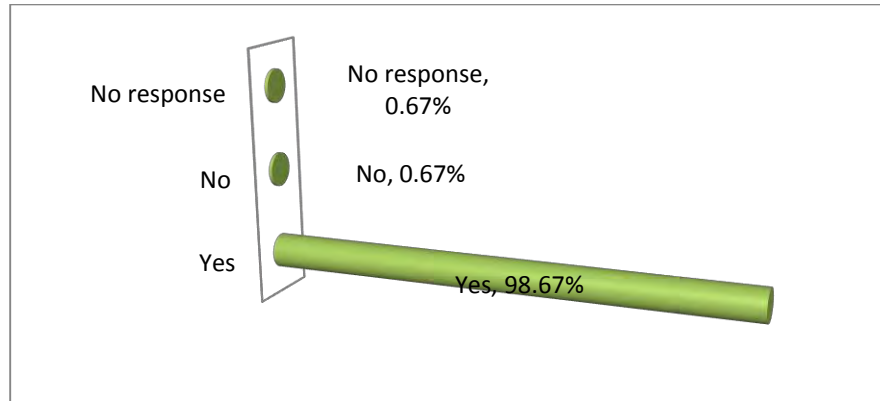


5.54.1. Voting in the last Elections

Except two persons, all the other respondents answered positively, confirming that they have voted in the last Panchayat elections (98.67%). 100% of the FVW reported that they had voted in the last Assembly elections, and all except one had voted in the Parliament Elections. (See **Figure No.66**) See (See **Table No.79, 80 and 81**)

Figure No. 66

Voting in the last Elections (%)

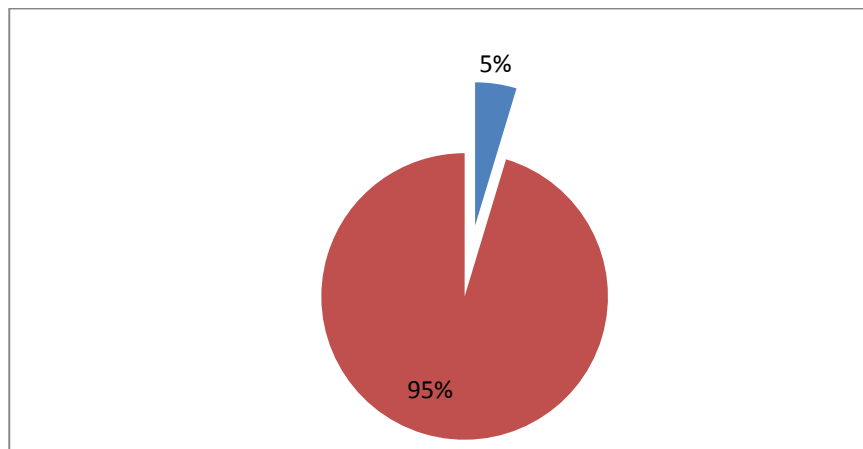


5.54.2. Membership in Trade Unions

It is found that a very vast section of the FVW do not have membership in trade unions (95%). Only 5% has membership in them. (See **Figure No.67**) (See **Table No.83**)

Figure No. 67

Membership in Trade Unions



Political participation of FVW is limited to voting in the elections once in five years. Subsequently, vast majority of them has nothing to do with local governance at least. At a time when local governments offer big opportunities to socially minded citizens, FVW are nowhere near to it. Their challenges may be lack of time, lack of interest and lack of knowledge about

the opportunities in local self government institutions. Though there is a need for articulating the demands of FVW in a collective way, there seems to have taken place any initiative in an effective manner in this regard.

5.55. Case Studies

Four cases are presented here to highlight some of the important categories among fish vending women. The first case comes from Kollam. It is the story of a typical women fish vendor who tactfully manage the job with considerable returns and savings. The second one is about a group of fish vending women who go to Neendakara fishing harbor to buy fish and sell them in Trivandrum. The third case is of a fish landing center from where women from the beach ward of Alappuzha buy fish and sell it in the city market. The last case presented here is of Mrs. Daisy Eugin who undergone an experience of abuse in the market, a story of a few exceptions.

5.55.1. Self-confidence through hard work: The Case of Prakasi Rapheal, Kollam

Mrs. Prakasi, 62 years, wife of Mr. Raphel, is a fish vending woman living about 500 meters away from Neendakara Fishing Harbour site, in Kollam District¹⁵. When we met her, she was drying fish on a day with intermittent rain and sun, in front of her house where she lives with her husband, Mr. Rapheal and her son and son's family. She had studied in school up to 4th class. She hailed from the nearby fishing village of Sakthikulangara. Her husband, now about 65 years old, is considered 'sick' and is not doing any job at the moment. She has four children. Jessy, the eldest, 40 years old, is a fish vending woman now and her husband is a fisherman working in a boat attached to the Neendakara harbour. Second daughter, married to a fisherman, is a house wife. Prakasi's son, Joy, is in the Middle East engaged there in fishing. The last one, Micheal, with a driving licence, lives with Prakasi working as the driver of her goods auto.

¹⁵ (Information gathered directly from Parkasi Rapheal on 19th September 2013 at her residence in Neendakara, Kollam)

Prakasi started fish vending 30 years ago, at the age of 32, after marriage, and at a time her eldest son was only two years old. She has been doing this activity for the last 30 years with a break of 8 years when she went for work in a hospital in the Middle East.

Prakasi is a door-to-door seller to households in and around Chettikulangara, 30 kilometers away from her residence. She gets up at 3 AM and sets out for Sakthikulangara Fishing Harbour to buy fish for sales for the day. After purchase, she is back at home by 5.30 AM to take breakfast and to make household arrangements for the day. By about 5.45 AM, she leaves for Chettikulangara to reach there by 7 AM.

From 7 AM to 12.30 PM, she sells fish at door steps of her regular customers. Almost all the households who buy fish from her are regular buyers. Some pay for the fish on the spot, while some others make payments once in a month. She is comfortable with both ways. There has been no dispute about payment. She has already made a good relationship with the families, or at least with the women who get in touch with her during sales.

While she started sales on head load and continued as such for initial years, at the moment, she has a carriage auto (petty auto) for the purpose of doing the business. The vehicle is useful to reach the harbour on time for purchase of fish and Chettikulangara for sales by about 7.30 AM. She carries larger quantity of fish, which would not have been possible on head load or through bus travel. She had to be on time at the door steps before her customers leave home for their jobs. Thus, the vehicle is useful for her in many ways. She carries fish for about 10000 to 15000 rupees a day on an average. This would not have been possible on head load. In this way, she does a business of Rs.10000/- Rs.15000/- per day on an average. She is simultaneously the owner of the business and its sole labourer. She manages the micro business and does all the work involved in the process.

For capital, in the past, she depended on money lenders who charged Rs.30/- per day for a loan of Rs.1000/-. This is an interest rate of 90% per month and 1080% per annum.

After some years, alternatively, there was a kind of chit through which she got Rs.10000/- and repaid Rs.100/- each per day for 110 days. For Rs.10000/-, the interest for 3 months, is Rs.1100/- (48%). However, presently, she does not borrow money for exorbitant interest rates, but, depends on her relatives, Self Help Groups and her own savings, whatever is available.

Reportedly, she makes a profit of Rs.1600/- per day, after her expenses of diesel, oil, driver's daily remuneration, repayment of the loan taken for capital for the business, etc. Maintenance of the vehicles is a considerable expense now and then. Sometimes, she had to bring back home fish after sales. At those occasions, she dries it and sells later as dried fish to the same households. This happens when there is no fresh fish available for sales. Rs. 1600/- includes her profits and labour. Now we know that she does her job almost every day for nine hours, without any break for food and rest, except on Sundays. After sales, she returns home by about 3 PM and eats her lunch. She does not eat from shops on the way. Her concern is to sell her fish as early as possible and return home. She plans her time according to the convenience of her regular customers.

She looked happy and contented to talk to us about all these things. She has bought a piece of land, constructed a small house, sent her daughters in marriage and supported the family with all necessities for a very long time. She is the major contributor towards the family expenses even now.

She is a member of the Fish Workers Welfare Fund Board under the Department of Fisheries, Government of Kerala and gets benefited from it. She pays Rs.600/- per year at Rs.75/- per month for eight months and receives a total of Rs.1800/- per year. She has applied for fishermen's pension; but, the application is under process. She is hopeful of getting pension. She does not get any other benefits from the Government schemes.

She does not feel that she is facing some problems in connection with her job/business. However, she narrated a past experience which she overcame by sheer boldness. Once, one of the men who were engaged in fish sales door-to-door at Chettikulangara tried to

block her on the way and prevented her from continuing the job. But, she managed to continue with the help of some of the local people who knew her doing the business there for several years. She told us, "I will continue to work as long as I have health". She looked healthy and bold enough.

She has improved the quality of her work. Formerly, she used to go for sales on head load; now she has a vehicle. Formerly, it was small business and nominal returns; now, it is a sizeable business unit and the profit is not bad. Now that she has carved out her own sure market, which has become very friendly through credible dealings, good behavior with the customers, provision of better quality of fish fresh from the shore within two hours to the kitchen, reasonable prices, reliable time table and credit possibility.

She has managed the economics of the family and continues to do that. She even supports her married sons and daughters. She takes care of some of the needs of her grand children, even. She exhibited high level of confidence, without complaints.

5.55.2. The case of Fish vending women from Trivandrum district purchasing fish from Neendakara Fishing Harbour, Kollam

We have seen during our field visit some fish vending women waiting in the Neendakara fishing harbour. When asked they informed us that they were not participating in auctions that day so far because the price of the fish was not affordable to them and feared to make loss if they bought it at that time. They were hopefully waiting for more boats to land with more fish in the hope of decline in price when the supply increases. If the supply continues to be low, they may or may not buy fish that day at that price. If they buy, there is likely to meet with loss. If they do not buy, they may return home without fish or business for the day. No job and no income for the day; but, expenses remain the same.

We met these waiting women in a group (Celin, 77 years and Agnes, 58 years from Vettucaud, Jessy, 56 years, from Thumbra, Mariam, 58 years and Lucy, 57 years from Veli) and had a long time for interaction with them, as they had nothing else to do at

that time. During the discussions, we came to know that they were part of the two sections of women who started at 8 AM from Trivandrum (Sanghumugom, Vettucaud, Veli, Thumba) by a vehicle provided by Malsyafed to reach Harbour by 10.30AM. From the harbour, they buy fish and return about 2 PM by the same vehicle and are dropped at various markets arround 4 PM. They sell their fish at Kazhakuttom and Trivandrum city markets. After the sales, we were told, they reach home by about 10 PM. Back home, they take bath, sometimes view TV serials, pray and sleep, to get up before 6 AM the next day.

These women are at work from 8 AM to 10 PM – 14 hours a day. They take their food at hand from their homes and find time to eat during travel. They have been doing this mode of business for several years and are used to this time table. Many of them have someone at home – daughter-in-law or daughter - to cook food for the household and to manage other household works. Since fish vending women are regular supporters of their families, the system works well normally.

They make reasonable income with their experience and skills in purchase and sales. It is on an average 20-25% and more profits that they make a day of 14 hours. It is hard work. It is routine work. It is difficult work at difficult situations. They are forced to fight with local buyers who ditch them with unreasonably low price offers. Since local fish availability is shrinking faster, their role in supplying fish from distant habours has been important in providing fish to the household purchasers.

Most of them sell their fish in the same market for several years ranging from 10-45 years. They pay their tax in the markets, currently at Rs.20/- per day, per entry. They reportedly try to sell their fish at a gross profit margin of around 20-25%. Some days, they get better profit and some days they get lower profits. Most of them truthfully told us that usually there is no loss for those who sell fish in retail. However, there are times, when loss happens, when there is unexpectedly extraordinary larger supply, or when fish comes to the market from various landing centers in bulk quantities. Still, in general, they are seen with extraordinary skills to sell their fish at profits.

On an average, they invest Rs.10000/- to Rs.20000/- per day. It is estimated that each one is able to make an average gross profit of Rs.2500/- to 5000/-. They have to meet expenses for travel, loading and unloading, cost of ice, etc.

Women in Trivandrum and Kollam who do fish vending in marine fishes are mostly Latin Catholic Mukkuvars. There are reportedly a few from other communities who do fish vending business at interior local markets, especially in the suburbs of Trivandrum city.

Most of them have life style diseases like diabetes, blood pressure, vericos vein, heart problems and rheumatics. These diseases may have affected them due to lack of physical activity and unhealthy eating habits before they became sick. Once they become sick, they are more careful, as anyone else. Their usual position is sitting – sitting on their vessels waiting for fish at landing centers, sitting inside the vehicles for long hours, sitting while selling fish for longer hours, sitting at home while watching TV serials and sitting while they pray. There is not much scope in this life style for physical movement and exercises.

As a result, they are sick and spend large amount of money for medicines and treatments. Very often, these women spend for their health services from their own savings, if any. Usually others in the family need not care for them in financial terms.

These women are found having deep faith in God. Any challenge or risk in front of them is addressed with an extraordinary hope that God will take care of them. Be it loss, accidents on the way, violence in the markets and many other daily difficulties, they take them easy, without much complaints.

Most of them do the job by their own decisions. No one else forces them to continue. However, in the beginning, it was found that the circumstances forced them to take up this work. Once they started, it seems, they enjoy the work, though it is difficult. This is the only source of livelihood. Any one can start at any age. Illiterate persons can do this, as wage labourers in farming, construction and wage employments.

This job is comparatively more independent. There is no boss. There is no staff to manage, normally. It is their decision to do or not to do the business. This independence seems to be the strongest factor encouraging them to continue in the job until they become completely bedridden. We have seen very old women, say, some above 80 years, venturing into direct purchase and direct sales in the markets. They have developed a kind of higher level of resilience.

Most of them, around 60 who come daily except on Sundays, in two vehicles, from Trivandrum to Neendakara, had more or less the same routine time table, movement, business practices, investments, profit ranges, loan sources, age, food consumption, payment for supporters and vehicles, religion, caste, health issues, assertiveness and boldness, faith in God, but variety of personal experiences with a homogeneous life.

5.55.3. A Scene from Punnapra Fish landing Center

It was a broad sea shore without a harbour. Hundreds of boats were seen landing with their fish. Fish unloaded by loading labourers. Auctions are done at various places in the shore. Netholi is the major catch. Huge crowds are seen at the auction site, which is not far from the landing spot. After the auction, boxes of fish were taken near the vehicles kept at a distance of 100 meters. There ice is applied and fish is arranged in boxes to take them to markets. In Punnapra, several intermediaries were seen with vehicles. They buy fish and reach them to local markets. Women buy and sell there or at door steps in various venues. Almost the same process was observed there also.

One difference we observed in Punnapra was that women fish vendors were not found at 9AM when we went there. We were told that women fish vendors come and purchase fish from Punnapra by about 6 AM so that they could reach various markets before it is late. They also participated in auctions and bought fish. But, these women were not from Punnapra, but from neighboring places like vadickal.

5.55.4. Abuse is not common but a reality: Story of Mrs.Daisy Eugene, Thumba, Trivandrum

Daisy Eugin (50) has been in the occupation of fish vending for the last 15 years. Her husband is a hard working fisherman. They have three children, two of them are girls now given in marriage and the last one is a boy now employed in one of the Gulf countries. She goes to the market in the forenoon with fish bought from her own village, Thumba, or from Mariyanadu or from Valiyaveli. Her market is Kazhakuttom. When fish is not available in any one of the three locations, she goes to the market and buys fish from middle level merchants.

Daisy says, "I started fish vending at a time when there was not many women doing this work in this village. Initially, I used to carry the fish brought from the sea by my husband and his team of fishermen. This gave me an idea of the potential profits from the business. Learning that fish vending is a profitable occupation, I continued it. I will continue it as long as I am healthy." To the question whether she incur loss, she replied, "You will never get me for that. I will somehow make income from my job."

However, Daisy had a very bad experience in the market. There are some goondas in Kazhakuttom market where Daisy and many other fish vending women sell their fish. These women used to take water for cleaning their vessels and some related purposes from the water pipe installed inside the market for the use of these women and other users of market. One day, when Daisy took water from the pipe, one of the goondas made problems for her. He loudly and ferociously shouted at her using very nasty words. He was not heeding to her response and continued to do that for some time. He stopped only when one the social activists, Mrs. Jenet who happened to witness this abusing scene, intervened strongly by questioning the man.

Daisy did not seem to take this incident very seriously because, she said, this happened almost every day, not to me, buy to many others. She, however, did not want to share this incident to us, because, as she explained, "I have to go to the same market every

day. This job gives me a good income daily. Please do not make problems to me by giving publicity to this mentioning my name.”

5.56. Concluding remarks

In this chapter, the researchers have presented the facts and figures gathered from the compilation of survey results and the results of analysis by way of consolidation, categorization and comparison. A few case studies are presented at the end of the chapter to give a real on-the-spot detailed description of some of the typical FVW and situations. In this process, an effort is deliberately taken to analyze and bring out the regional variations in the findings. Further, related observations and inferences have also been made then and there.

Chapter Six

Findings and Conclusions

Findings and Conclusions

6.1. Introduction

This chapter is devoted to draw important findings and conclusions. These are presented under various sections based on the objectives so that closely and mutually related information is at hand for the readers at a glance. Conclusions follow the findings related to each subsection. The study examined the personal, familial, social, economic and political aspects of fish vending women against the backdrop of their main occupation, that is, fish vending. Based on the findings drawn from the analysis of the data gathered from secondary and primary sources, it is now possible to arrive at conclusions.

6.2. Personal Information

6.2.1. Age, domicile, caste, religion and marital status

The survey findings give an indication that fish vending women above 30 years are found more than other categories in the occupation along the southern coast of Kerala. However, there are reports recording that women below the age of 30 years have been doing this job in Trivandrum district, though their percentage is very small, up to 2%. Even seniors in fish vending job are found doing this activity without break for the past 25 to 30 years. Most of them are old, but active in the job, with long experience and motivation, both internal and external.

Women who have started the job in their late thirties continue to do it actively in their late sixties and beyond. There are senior women doing fish vending at their seventies. They have devoted the most productive time of their life in this occupation. They have been sharing the plight of women elsewhere who are pressurized by the dual responsibilities of the job and

their families. They deserve the citizen benefits entitled to any other category of workers, since their contributions to the society and nation are as important as those of any other category.

98.67% of the FVW were married women. Of the married FVW, a sizeable section (31.33%) constituted widows. None of them belonged to the categories of women divorced, women in second marriage and women living together with men without a proper marriage. For widows who have very low level of education and employable skills, fish vending is a natural occupation to follow to support themselves and their siblings. They follow others doing the job in their village or area.

Most of the FVW live with their husbands in normal married life. This is an indication that fish vending as an occupation has come out of rigid social stigma attached to it for a long time. At the same time, the FVW has come of age to rise to the opportunity to offer their share of income to the families, by doing a gainful occupation.

It is further confirmed that the social stigma is a non-apparent issue especially within the villages they live in. In all likelihood, it can be inferred that the increasing need for income overcomes the overt nature of stigma, if any, attached to the job.

In the study areas comprising the marine coastal areas of Trivandrum, Kollam and Alappuzha, no women hailing from Muslim religion is found doing the occupation of fish vending. Majority belongs to Latin Catholic Christians, while there is a minority of Hindus in the job, with their percentage more in Alappuzha.

Setting apart two persons, all the others covered in the survey (98%) belonged to Other Backward Communities (OBCs).

The samples were identified from Grama Panchayat areas (Trivandrum and Kollam and Alappuzha), Municipality areas (Alappuzha) and City Corporation areas (Kollam).

6.2.2. Education

The data indicates that the literacy rate of the social and occupational category of FVW is far behind (67.33%) compared to Kerala rate of literacy of women (91.98%) and general population in the State (93.91%).

FVW are found at the bottom level of educational qualifications which are not sufficient to secure any better, more gainful, more regular and more decent occupation than fish vending. This seems to be the major reason why we find women with low level of education in the occupation of fish vending, which does not necessarily require any educational qualifications.

However, it is found in this study that education of fish vending women has a significant correlation with health, family life and occupational status.

6.2.3. Health

Several FVW have life style diseases like diabetes, blood pressure, rheumatics and heart problems. This is causally related to the nature of their occupation and eating time. Unlike in former times, physical mobility is reduced to the minimum and this is the major cause of the diseases found among them. Most of them do not eat anything on the way for hours. This long duration of time without food and water may have caused health problems. The major bad habit found among some of them is betel leaf chewing. This may have led to mouth cancer and related illnesses among a few of them.

Most of the FVW get up early in the morning and go to bed by 10 PM. These women after their work are engaged in household work. The time to rest is limited and this also causes some stress and strain in their life and work. This situation demands psychological counseling to address their stress and strain in life and work.

Statistical analysis of available primary data shows that there was significant correlation between health and family life and occupational factors among FVW in south Kerala.

6.3. Family Matters

6.3.1. Respondent Population, family size, attitude of family members towards fish vending and fish vending women

The total population of the 150 respondent families of FVW is 673. The family size is calculated as 4.4. Attitude of the family members towards fish vending is highly favourable. This is substantiated by the fact that they are supported by the family members in mobilizing capital for their business and in doing household work in their absence. FVW and their husbands maintain good relationship in life. According to the response of majority of the FVW, they also keep very good relationship with their children and other relatives.

Moreover, husbands of FVW look at fish vending job in a favourable and positive way. This is another indicator that things are improving with regard to people's attitude to the fish vending job. Husbands reflect the social mind. They are not only happy about FVW but also happy about their work. The change in the attitude is visible.

Statistical analysis shows that there is significant correlation between family life and economic status, labour status and political participation.

6.4. Spending Pattern

Major portion of the income of fish vending women is mostly spent on regular household purposes. Other areas of spending are repayment of loans taken in connection with girl children's marriage, education of their children and medical expenses. Very few FVW save some thing for future. Whatever they get from the work is spent on a day-to-day basis and on consumer goods.

6.5. Loss

Most of them reportedly incur loss rarely and not regularly. In fact, through interaction with them personally and in FGDs, loss is an exception. It implies that fish vending activity as an economic venture is generally rewarding and rarely loosing.

The situation of regular income and rare loss carries an opportunity. They are in a business which has very low chance of failure; but, their income is low. When FVW incur loss, their families support them.

6.6. Participation in Decision making

94% of FVW are always consulted on important matters such as marriage of children, purchase of land and higher education. They have carved out a place and voice in their families. This is a favourable situation for further empowerment of FVW. Similarly, their opinions are generally taken into account at home in less important things in the day to day life. Attitude of the relatives is generally supportive to the work of FVW.

6.7. Social Engagements

97.33% go out to church or temple with their family members for family functions such as marriage or funeral functions (61.33%), Grama Sabhas/ Nagara Sabhas (20%) and meeting friends (10%). They usually do not go for cinemas or other related functions. Their life is revolving round their households, markets and churches/temples. They do not get time to attend to more diverse functions or social programs.

6.8. Drinking habit among husbands of FVW

26.67% of the husbands of FVW habitually or regularly consume alcohol. A higher percentage (33.33%) constitutes occasional drinkers. 22.67% never take it. A considerable amount of money flows out of the family for the purpose of alcohol consumption of the husbands of FVW.

It is revealing to note that one third of the husbands of FVW either regularly or occasionally harass them. 27.33% are physically harassed by their husbands, while a smaller proportion meet with mental harassment (23.33%) and only 8.67% meet with financial harassment. None is reportedly harassed sexually by their husbands.

This finding needs to be further probed to find out the reality. As one of the husbands of FVW have drinking habit, it is likely that their women are sexually harassed. Women are very careful to reveal such matters even to those who can help them address their problems. Most of them share the male dominated social mind that husbands have all rights to behave as they like. This is true of sexual matters. Activists share that even sexual intercourse take place without the consent of women, when men are drunk.

6.9. Time to look after children's education

Two thirds of the FVW do not get time to look after their children's education. Only one third of them find some time for this important responsibility. This leads to the non-performance of children of FVW. It was found during the discussions with them that their children dropout in schools and end up in fishing occupation or drop out or wait for marriage. Many of them turn to fish vending after their marriage. An uneducated girl is likely to get a low profile fishing youth as husband who may eventually, due to circumstances, fall prey to alcohol consumption. The women are forced to enter into fish vending in this situation.

6.10. Support from Family members

While two third of the FVW are helped by their husbands and others in the family for doing daily household works like cooking and cleaning, almost one third of them do it after returning home after their work.

Life is hard for those who do household work and cooking after returning home from fish vending. They are tired and hungry after a day's hard work, very often exposed to heavy sun or rain or unhygienic circumstances in the market places.

Some years ago, it is learned, FVW's occupation was not a matter of concern during the time of marriage. Only some people bothered to know about it and for others it was not an important aspect for taking a decision about marriage.

6.11. Self-Assessment of fish vending as an occupation

For a vast majority of FVW, the job is ‘very good’ and for to others, it is ‘good’. They like to do it and continue to do it as long as they are healthy. Except one, no one else in the groups of respondents sees anything in the situation to make one feel that it is a bad job. This may be the overall reason for their continuing the work.

6.12. Social involvements

Almost all the FVW maintain good relationship with their friends, locals and neighbours. They participate in social functions like marriages and funerals.

It is found that most of the FVW associate with civil society organizations at the local level either regularly or occasionally.

However, 60% of FVW do not have membership in fish vending women’s organizations. Many of them are not aware of the existence of such organizations, while others are not interested or do not have time.

6.13. Economic Factors

6.13.1. Land and Housing

Around 20% of the FVW do not own a house. They either live with their relatives or with their married children. Majority of them lives in either concrete houses or tiled houses. Only a few live in thatched houses or in huts.

Similarly, an equal number and percentage of families do not possess a piece of land. Those who possess land have very small area of land. Majority of the families of FVW has registered their land in the name of the husband, while a few have done it in the name of the FVW or jointly.

When compared to the general population of their communities, the status is not very different.

6.14. Labour and Employment

6.14.1. Reasons for choosing the job

Majority of the fish vending women chose the job because they had no other way than this. They do not have any other employable skills or education to search for other jobs. This job does not require any of the higher skills or education. For many of them, the responsibility of caring for their family is on their shoulders. Some are widows. Many are married women living with their husbands who are either alcoholics, or occasional drinkers, lazy or sick. Some are following their mothers who had done this job earlier. All except two women like to continue the job (98%).

6.14.2. Time of commencement of fish vending as an occupation

86% of the FVW started selling fish as an occupation after their marriage. Young ladies going to fish vending before their marriage is rare even now due to social concerns. Most of them start fish vending after marriage because they find it necessary to support their families either because the husbands do not earn or because husband's income is not sufficient to meet the household expenses or because husband is sick, lazy or alcoholic.

Majority of the FVW started the job at an age between 30 and 60 years. More than one third of them started doing the job 15-30 years ago. We find many aged women actively doing the job.

In all likelihood, they have started the job after having one or two children who might have joined schools, when they felt somewhat free to go for work. Age or social factor might not have become a concern for widows, who had to start the job immediately after the death of their husbands.

6.14.3. Place of Purchase

94.67% of FVW purchase fish for sales from the landing centers near their village. FVW do comparatively small scale business and are very often limited to a small geographical area.

They are not competitors of big merchants or middlemen who operate with vehicle support. In most of the cases, there is no need for FVW to go long distances to purchase fish.

6.14.4. Source, amount and time of fish purchase

94.67% of FVW purchase fish directly from fishermen, avoiding middlemen and big merchants. Most of them purchase fish for an amount between Rs. 500/- to Rs.5000/-. This is a small scale venture in terms of investment. 78% of FVW go for fish vending before noon, while others go in the afternoon. These timings allow them to attend to their household and family responsibilities.

6.14.5. Source of capital

83.33% of them depend on loans for capital for their business together with other sources. While majority of them take loans from money lenders, others use their own money or borrow from their relatives.

Many of the FVW get loans at 12% interest per annum, while some take loans at a higher rate of interest ranging up to above 24% per annum.

More than one third of the FVW find it difficult to repay loans regularly, while others repay the loans either regularly or with some breaks. Many of them do not face any problems in connection with repayment of loans. However, some who have problems face them on the way as blockage or rarely as physical assault.

6.14.6. Markets, Door-to-door and way side as place of selling

62.67% of FVW use markets as a place for selling fish, while many others are doing door-to-door vending and a few do it on the way side.

Since many of the FVW do small scale ventures, their income ranges from Rs.100/- to Rs.500/- per day of work. 74% of them reportedly get between Rs.100/- Rs.300/- per day of work on an average. FVW do a very small business, which is not enough to support their life and family.

More than two thirds of the FVW have to return fish from market at times. Usually, this happens when they do not get their right price. Other instances include those when fish gets decaying. They very often salt or ice the returned fish or sometimes give it to the neighbours at a lower price.

79.33% at times incur loss of an amount between Rs.100/- and Rs.300/-.

6.14.7. Support to FVW

58.67% of the FVW have not received any support from GOs or NGOs or CSOs. However, there are many who received some kind of support from these organizations. Matsyafed is the major organization supporting FVW with schemes. Financial assistance as grant and loan is one form of support. Provision of vessels and transportation are other types of support.

96% of the FVW need financial support. Other supports requested are transportation, vessels and clean markets.

6.14.8. Competition

For 82.67% of FVW, there is some kind of competition more or less frequently. Majority of them face it from co-vendors by blocking customers. Other competitors are vehicle users and big merchants. FVW address competition by adjusting their time, by accepting the reality or by resisting it.

6.15. Political Participation of FVW

6.15.1. Membership in Political parties and trade unions

Though 86% of FVW are not members of any of the political parties, vast majority of them cast their votes in Panchayat, Assembly and Parliament elections.

95% of the FVW are not members of any trade unions.

6.16. Changes and challenges during the past 35 years

Based on the findings of this study which depended mainly on the secondary data to understand the past and on primary data to understand the present, the changes and challenges that have been encountered during the last 35 years in the life and work of FVW are analyzed. The researchers have arrived at the following position:

6.16.1. Decreasing stigma

While social stigma was a major issue attached to fish vending in the past decades, the scenario is fast changing in recent times. This change seems due not solely to the internal efforts from the category of fish vending women, but due to the overall changes taking place in the society at large. Stigma attached to fish vending is not expressly visible in the villages and areas from where the FVW hail. They are equally respected in their communities as any other women. Moreover, they attract more respect and empathy from their own people, husbands, children and relatives, as income earning women. FVW also like their job and continue to do it until they become unhealthy or aged. They are open to all kinds of local civil society organizations, though most of them do not have time to associate with such organizations. The reduction of stigma can also be attributed to the assertiveness of the FVW and some organizations motivating them to stand strong against unjust dealings against them.

However, it cannot be unsaid that the external society has a stigmatic attitude towards FVW not only due to the nature of the job, but also due to the mannerisms and behaviours FVW exhibit in the markets and while travelling.

6.16.2. Increasing number of women entering into the job

The current trend is an increase in the number of women who start fish vending as an occupation and business for income generation. They are not only widows but also married women who have their husbands and adult income earning children. More or less regular income, decreasing social stigma, increasing facilities like availability of vehicles, inherent support system like landing centers, head-load male workers, public auctions, communication facilities and support from the families are the motivating background for more women to come

to take up this job. The job which does not need prior education and experience attract illiterate and uneducated women. Another fact is that it is feasible to do the business in and around their own habitations. Since fish vending as defined by this study and in which most of the women are involved remains as a very small business, even poor women start it without greater risk.

Not only very poor women but also women from middle class families take up this venture, unlike in the past. Earlier, only very poor women used to go for fish vending as a job. Income is the prime motivator at present, rather than weak socio-economic position of the family.

6.16.3. Increasing Government interventions

It is noted that from 1964 onwards, the Government of Kerala has been implementing several promotional and protective programs to assist fishing communities. Though many of such schemes were not utilized by FVW even now, there has been increasing number of schemes aimed at them, especially since 2000.

6.16.4. Increase in income from fish vending

Many of the FVW reported that the percentage of income from fish vending is higher in recent times than that of the earlier times. Many FVW manage to repay the debts incurred by the family for the purchase of land, house and home appliances, from their income. The families depend on the income of such women to undertake major items of expenditure for the family like purchase of fishing equipments.

6.17. Challenges

- Financial and managerial compulsions against scaling up the business: Though in recent times, the availability of credit for micro enterprises like fish vending is available from several sources than in earlier times, the size of that credit remains small even now. This does not allow the enterprising FVW to scale up their economic activity.
- Dual responsibilities attached to their job, household affairs and child rearing
- Alcoholic husbands and drain of income

- Lack of social and political education keeping them isolated from the local social involvements and local governance
- Lack of political participation drains them of their negotiating power
- Market situations are bad and unhealthy in many cases
- Lack of proper and frequent transportation facilities is a huge challenge
- Rare opportunities and space for social education of FVW
- Lack of people skills such as proper communication, socialization, customer relations, selling skills, etc are major challenges for enhancing profits
- Lack of time to look after the education of their children
- Huge dowry requirements for their children's marriage. Most of the time, it is the FVW who takes up the responsibility to repay the loans taken to give dowry.

6.18. Conclusion

In this chapter, most relevant findings and conclusions based on the information gathered through this study are narrated in brief to understand the life and work of fish vending women in the three districts of Trivandrum, Kollam and Alappuzha. At the end of the narrative, a summary list of changes and challenges are identified. The next chapter carries a summary of the whole study and researchers' recommendations to enhance the strengths identified, to address the weaknesses, to make use of and strengthen the opportunities. Though several strengths, weaknesses and opportunities are identified, no major threats are found in the life and work of FVW. In other words, committed and deliberate attempts to improve the life and work of FVW are most likely to find success in the long term.

Chapter Seven

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Introduction

This last chapter has two sections. The first one summarizes the whole processes, findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The second section elaborates on the recommendations for future planning and action.

7.2. Summary

A study titled ‘Fish Vending Women in South Kerala: Changes and Challenges in their life and work during the past 35 years’ was taken up by the researchers with the financial and technical support of Kerala Institute of Labour and Employment’ during the financial year 2013-14. The objectives of study are (i) to examine the personal, familial, socio-economic, cultural and political profile of fish vending women in south Kerala; (ii) to understand the work, working conditions, regularity of income and social status of fish vending women in south Kerala; (iii) to understand and analyze their contributions to themselves, family, society, economy, culture and politics of their environment; (iv) to identify the problems and challenges of fish vending women in south Kerala; (v) to analyze the factors that contribute to their current situation; (vi) to compare their situation now with their situation 35 years ago and (vii) to recommend appropriate measures which will accelerate the process of inclusion of fish vending women in the development dynamics.

FVW and their families, fishermen, middlemen and merchants from whom they purchase fish, salesmen and auctioneers, head-load workers, drivers of vehicles transporting fish to the markets, social workers in the areas, Co-operative societies, customers of fish and market functionaries were met on and off to collect data applying four major methods using corresponding tools. Major methods used were (i) Sample Survey of 150 FVW from the three study areas using interview schedule; (ii) Focus Group Discussions; (iii) Personal interviews

with various stakeholders and (iv) Observation. Having done the data processing, interpretation and analysis, the findings and conclusions were arrived at.

Most of the FVW started work during their 30s and continue up to their 70s. Married women living with their husbands as well as widows are found among them. Muslim women in south Kerala are not engaged in fish vending. The study area comprised of Grama Panchayats, Municipality and City Corporation. Majority of them belongs to Latin Catholic Christian section, while others to Hindu Dheevera community. Education status of the FVW is found very low with many illiterates. Many of them suffer from the effects of life style diseases. Family size of the surveyed families is 4.4. Attitude of the family members of FVW towards fish vending job is positive and supportive. They help in doing the business and managing household affairs. Major portion of the income of FVW is spent on daily consumer goods. Savings are nominal. Loss rarely happens. Income is low. But, families support them in meeting with loss. FVW are generally consulted by the husbands and children in both important and not so important matters. They have some kind of social engagements like participation in marriages and funerals, the intensity is very shallow. Majority of husbands of FVW have the habit of alcohol consumption. Some are addicts, but majority is occasional drinkers. Family income is drained through the habit of drinking. Most of the FVW do not get time to look after their children's education and character formation. FVW like their job and they want to continue it. About 20% of the families of FVW are deprived of land and housing. They have chosen the job long years ago because they had no other way than this. They did not have any other employable skills or education to search for other jobs. This job does not require any of the higher skills or education. Vast majority of them started their job after their marriage, 6 -15 years ago, during their 30s. Majority of them does the economic activity in and around their own village and area. They purchase fish from the nearest landing center and from the fishermen directly. They take their fish to the market by auto rickshaw. They do small business for Rs.500/- to Rs.5000/-. Majority of them finish their work by noon. Some do it till late at night. Most of them take loans from money lenders at an interest ranging from 12% to 24% and above. Majority does the business selling fish in the markets, while some sell their fish door-to-door. Very few do the business along the way side. Government and Non-Governmental support is not large. Matsyafed is the major supporter in terms of financial assistance, vehicles for

transportation and provision of vessels. Competition is there, but not high. Political participation is limited to casting votes. They do not go to GS meetings. They are not members of any trade unions.

FVW's contributions to their family are great in terms of spending money for household purposes, pocket money to their husbands who do not go to work, spending for the education of their children, spending for the health needs of the family members, repayment of loans borrowed for the girl children's marriage, housing loan repayment and the debts incurred due to land purchase or house construction. In return, family members help FVW in doing their job, doing household works like cooking in their absence, finding capital for the business, taking the responsibility of payment of debts and caring for them when they are sick. FVW serve the society by making available one of the widely eaten food to the market and door steps.

Major problems identified are low income and low asset base, indebtedness, too small business, lack of time for children, alcoholism of their husbands, too much spending for household affairs, lack of savings for future, lack of entrepreneurial skills, lack of sufficient capital, lack of sufficient transportation facilities, and lack of sufficient types and numbers of vessels. Low income is reflected in the very low asset base, lack of house and lack of land for some. Very low level of engagements with society and little participation in local body governance processes.

FVW live under stress and strain for a long term of time. They are not able to scale up their business and improve their lives. Working conditions are bad. Income is low. However, they are not able to address the problems and come up in life. The reasons behind this situation are the lack of support to them as a special category. They are considered as par with fishermen in the delivery of benefits. Very few schemes are available targeted to FVW alone. Since they are not organized, they do not get their rightful share of benefits. Most of them are not engaged in civil society activities. Very few participate in GS meetings. Managerial and entrepreneurial skills are low. They are far from many of requirements for a successful entrepreneur. Low economic status puts them down in social parlance.

While comparing the current situation of fish vending women with the situation 25-35 years ago, it is found that the number of women engaged in fish vending from marine coastal areas has increased manifold. Social stigma has decreased. Income has become more or less sufficient to make both ends meet. Formerly, the income was miserably low. Transportation facilities have increased. FVW are supported by a series of stakeholders like head load workers, drivers, family members and sales persons. In former times, there was not much support from such players. The Government support has increased in terms of easy loans, transportation facilities and other incentives. Their status as fish vending women has positively improved during the past decades.

Gender equations are not affected positively or negatively due to their occupation. They also face discriminations as any other women face in their environment.

7.3. Recommendations

7.3.1. Specific

- i. Considering fish vending women as a separate occupational category, it is recommended to increase the overall benefits to them like pensions, EPF, ESI, festival allowances, medical reimbursements, insurance, housing support, land purchase allowance, accident benefits, etc.
- ii. Among the FVW, the more marginalized section is the category of widows. Others live with their husbands. Widows undergo more difficult challenges compared to others. Therefore, it is recommended that this section needs to be specially considered when support programs are designed. It is necessary to provide them frequent counseling to enable them to cope with their particular situation.
- iii. Married FVW who spend most of their working time outside home, away from their husbands and children, are also responsible, together with their husbands, to care for their children's education and character formation. They too deserve counseling and orientation in marital and family responsibilities as parents and partners in marriage.
- iv. Available evidences show that the stigma attached to fish vending is decreasing in the society and in their nearest environment. It is now time to enhance the self-confidence

and self-esteem of FVW so that they consider their job as a decent one. This self-esteem will help them to conduct themselves and their occupation in a socially acceptable manner and build up the occupation to a respectable position. This process will be instrumental to make changes in their behaviour, dressing, habits, conversations, customer relations, negotiations, financial interactions and in the overall management of their economic activities and social interactions.

- v. Since indications are visible to the overt nature of stigma, it is also highly recommended that the community need to be sensitized so as to provide social, psychological and economic support to FVW.
- vi. Since the concentration of OBCs around the occupation has historical reasons related to the menace of caste system and related marginalization based on occupations, it is important to lead them to the mainstream socio-political processes and involvement in power sharing in governance and nation building. The society has a responsibility and commitment to delink the occupation from the caste and community identities, in this modern world of equality and freedom.
- vii. Though fish vending does not necessarily require high educational qualifications, it is important to provide FVW literacy up-gradation, numerical skills, exposure to external environment, social education, exposure to skills of marketing, accounting, customer relations, human-citizen-women's rights for the promotion of their occupation and speedier integration to the mainstream.
- viii. It is also recommended that unemployed educated persons may be promoted to the occupation, which will further enhance the status of the job.
- ix. Since many FVW are affected by life style diseases and spend substantial amount of their income for medical treatment on a regular basis, it is necessary to provide them health education, support for treatment and better working conditions. Life style includes eating and resting habits. Such sessions shall focus on the symptoms, causes and effects of diseases and ways and means to cure or control them.
- x. It is also recommended that they be provided with some mechanism through which they are able to do regular physical exercises. Currently, their job does not allow them to have required physical mobility.

- xi. While FVW have a good rapport and relationship with their husbands, children, relatives and communities, the situation may be considered as an opportunity to improve their life and work to the next stage of prosperity. This opportunity shall be used to make a better plan of savings, asset building, financial discipline, education of their children and social integration.
- xii. Since FVW and their family spend whatever they earn on daily expenses on consumer goods, it is recommended that FVW and their families may be provided with periodical practical training in family budgeting to enable them to spend their income in a more appropriate manner so as to benefit their families today and tomorrow.
- xiii. As it is learned that fish vending is an economic venture which brings in income regularly to a great extent and rarely incurs loss, it is recommended that FVW be provided with entrepreneurship development training to enhance their marketing skills, customer relationship building skills, accounting skills and socializing skills so as to enhance their income from a low range to a higher range.
- xiv. Since the study found that FVW have a place and voice in the decision-making process in the family, they need to be specially oriented to make use of the opportunity to facilitate more useful and sustainable decisions for the overall progress and prosperity of their families.
- xv. Since FVW associate with the local Churches or temples in a more frequent style, these platforms need to be sensitized to integrate FVW and their concerns in the overall plan of such CSOs. As the current engagements are at a lower pace and passive way, it is necessary to make them more active and involved in platforms such as Grama Sabhas. Grama Panchayats may be directed to organize their GS meetings considering also the convenience of the FVW. It is also required to create awareness about the existing platforms like Fish Vending Women's Forum which shall function as a negotiating platform in favour of FVW.
- xvi. Since the prevalence of consumption of alcohol is considerably high among the husbands of the FVW and since this is a social issue altogether, it is recommended that the communities and fishing regions are sensitized against the use of alcohol and narcotic substances. During the process, the families of FVW where the husbands are addicts to alcohol need to be supported with financial assistance for undergoing de-

addiction treatment, including special job allowance to the by-stander, psychological support to the families affected and special care to the young and adolescent children of such families. This issue needs to be taken up urgently with more seriousness, as it is one of the most complex social problems affecting the marginalized groups, including FVW.

- xvii. As many of the FVW do not get sufficient time to look after the education and character formation of their children, it is important to guide them to use their time judiciously. They need periodical and continuous orientation on time management, keeping in view their special situation and working and living conditions.
- xviii. There shall be appropriate mechanisms for the promotion of education of the children of FVW at the local community level.
- xix. Though many of the FVW are helped by their family members to manage household affairs on a regular basis, there are a large section of them who do the household work after coming from the markets. Such women encounter more stress and strain affecting their life and work. They need to be provided with regular counseling.
- xx. 98% of the FVW like to do the job and continue it in the future because, as reported by them, in FGDs and personal interviews, there is no social problem attached to the job, there is reasonable income and there are only manageable difficulties and compulsions of circumstances. This is a favourable situation to help them to step up and scale up their economic ventures so as to generate more income. In this context, as mentioned above, it is necessary to enhance their skills to manage larger businesses.
- xxi. Since about 20% of the FVW are homeless and landless at the time of the sample survey, there is a need to support them to possess a home of their own on a piece of land of their own. It may not be possible in their life time to have such assets with their income alone. It may be possible by streamlining the existing schemes for land purchase and house construction in favour of FVW as a special category.
- xxii. Since FVW started the job understanding their own situations, skills and conditions, both positive and challenging and since they like to do the job in future, now it is time to help them with more orientation and training, benefits and support to upgrade their capacities and scale up their venture to generate more income and social status.

Though most of them do the business around their own locality, they need cheaper and more comfortable transportation facilities in view of reducing their cost, making available more time for the family, reducing the drudgery of travelling in uncomfortable vehicles, reaching the market place and reaching the home back in time.

Since a vast majority of the FVW depends on loans on higher rate of interest for doing their business, it is recommended that the scheme of Matsyafed for the provision of interest-free loans be extended to more FVW with higher amount of money.

As the price of fish is controlled by market forces of supply and demand, there is a likelihood of returning fish home due to low prices at some times. This is a cause for loss. Considering this situation, all FVW may be provided with an insulated ice box to be kept at home to preserve fish at similar situations.

Since it has come to understand that there is a need for scaling up the ventures of FVW, the support system in place need to be scaled up with suitable schemes to reach all deserving women. Though the Government has been implementing several schemes for fishermen in general, most of them are not fully accessed by FVW due to their own circumstances of work or not aware of them. Schemes are not of sufficient scale to support them substantially.

Though almost all of the FVW cast their votes in all elections from the Panchayat level to Parliament, there is no evidence to show that they are politically involved in other ways. Most of them do not participate in GS meetings. Therefore, they are very often kept out of local governance and its benefits. It is recommended that FVW may be promoted to participate in GS meetings and get involved in the discussions and decision-making processes.

7.3.2. General Recommendations

- Since the National Census does not specifically note fish vending women as a special category, and since there is no other census survey so far undertaken on the life and work of FVW, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive socio-economic survey of fish vending women in Kerala. On the basis of the findings, it is pertinent to design tailor-made programs for the sustainability of the families of fish vending women.

- It is necessary to support FVW to scale up their business and labour to make their life and work sustainable. FVW need proper training to manage their business, when it is scaled up.
- It is important to create decent infrastructure in markets for FVW to sell their fish without affecting their health and wellbeing. Water and cleaning facilities are essentials in the markets.
- Society and stakeholders shall be sensitized towards honoring FVW as contributors to the society as any other occupation and business.

Concluding Remarks

The general and specific recommendations presented here need to be subjected to further discussions in relevant platforms. The positive trend visible through the study is that the social stigma has been substantially reduced through the last few decades. The general understanding about human labour, equal status due to all sections in society, free thinking and individual rights of the citizens may have been the reasons behind this.

APPENDICES

1. Bibliography
2. Interview Schedule
3. Guide for Focus Group Discussion (FGD)
4. Guide for Personal Interview
5. Guide for Observation
6. Tables

Appendix - 1

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Appendix - 2

Appendix - 3

Guide for Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Nature of Participants: Participants may be the representatives of the important and key stakeholders of fish vending activity and of fish vendors as community members. They may include fish leaders of the organizations of fish vendors, auctioneers, social activists, NGO leaders, community leaders, etc.

Number of participants: Optimum number of participants may be 10-15 with men and women

Venue: Any convenient place suitable for discussion

Duration: FGD may take 1 to 2 hours maximum.

Moderator: Researcher may act as an independent moderator for the discussion

Reporter: There shall be a reporter

Process: Prior invitation shall be given to prospective participants, following a list prepared with due concern for proper representation. Participants may be registered by signing on the list. They may be seated as a semi-circle facing the moderator. The organizer welcomes the participants and places before them the objectives of the FGD and the time it may take and the tentative process of the discussions and invites all of them to participate actively and contribute their views. When these settings are comfortably made, the facilitator gives the group pre-planned questions or points for discussion.

Every response is noted against the name of the respondent and every point during the interaction is also noted with the name of the persons involved. This is the job of the reporter. Once the discussion is over, the reporter prepares the document and submits it to the researcher. The researcher then classifies and categorizes the responses according to the logic of issues placed for discussion. The findings are suitably included in the research paper.

When it is felt that all the important issues are discussed and sufficient responses are generated, the moderator can summarize the core of the discussion and thank the participants for their cooperation.

Points for FGD

Problems and their causes

1. According to your opinion, what are the present problems faced by women fish vendors?

2. What were the problems faced by women fish vendors, say, before 35 years (1975-85)?
3. According to your opinion, why do they face these problems?
4. Do you feel that women fish vendors in Trivandrum District/Kerala are victims of domestic violence, only because they are fish vendors?
5. Do FVW face more than ordinary harassments and atrocities against women? Do FVW face discrimination against them in the market places? If yes, on what basis?
6. If they continuously face atrocities and discriminations, why do they continue the job even as very old and not-so-poor women are found engaging in this job?
7. What are the factors which force them to continue in the market place until late night?

Changes in life and work

8. Accordingly to your opinion, do you think that substantial and proportionate changes have happened in the life and working conditions of FVW during the last 35 years? If yes, what are they? If no, how do you substantiate your view?

Social Status

9. Do you think that they are an excluded section from their communities? Do they enjoy the same social status as any other woman in the fishing communities?

Solutions to the problems, if any

1. Do you think that the FVW are aware of their problems? If yes, what are their initiatives to address them? Have they become successful? Or, are the problems beyond their capabilities?
2. If you believe that FVW face problems, what are your suggestions to address them?

Appendix - 4

Personal Interview Guide

Date of Interview :
Place of Interview :
Name and address of the Interviewee :
Age :
Sex :
Field of Activity :
Organization :
Designation :

Questions

1. According to your opinion, what are the present problems faced by women fish vendors?
2. What were the problems faced by women fish vendors, say, before 35 years (1975-85)?
3. According to your opinion, why do they face these problems?
4. Do you feel that women fish vendors in Trivandrum District/Kerala are victims of domestic violence, only because they are fish vendors?
5. Do FVW face more than ordinary harassments and atrocities against women? Do FVW face discrimination against them in the market places? If yes, on what basis?
6. If they continuously face atrocities and discriminations, why do they continue the job even as very old and not-so-poor women are found engaging in this job?
7. What are the factors which force them to continue in the market place until late night?
8. Accordingly to your opinion, do you think that substantial and proportionate changes have happened in the life and working conditions of FVW during the last 35 years? If yes, what are they? If no, how do you substantiate your view?
9. If you believe that FVW face problems, what are your suggestions to address them?

10. Do you think that the FVW are aware of their problems? If yes, what are their initiatives to address them? Have they become successful? Or, are the problems beyond their capabilities?
11. Do you think that they are an excluded section from their communities? Do they enjoy the same social status as any other woman in the fishing communities?
12. Can you suggest any differences and similarities in the following aspects of the life and work of FVW?

Sl No	Particulars	Increased	Decreased	Same
1	Number of FVW			
2	Income level			
3	Level of debts and liabilities			
4	Competition while purchasing fish for sales			
5	Competition during sales			
6	Social status within their communities			
7	Social status in the markets			
8	Problems			
9	Government Schemes			
10	Quality of life			

Name and Signature of the Interviewer:

Appendix - 5

Observation Guide

The Researcher shall be prepared for conducting an observation tour to the study area with writing materials, camera and a list of matters to be noted during the process.

Matters to be observed:

- Type of house
- Household premises
- Utensils and other furniture, equipments, kitchen and cooking facilities, books, study facilities, work areas, general facilities inside the home
- Major visible assets kept in the house
- Outside premises and its cleanliness, environment, distance from the next houses
- Dressing of the FVW and family members
- Tools and vessels used for fish vending and the place and manner they are kept
- Path for access to road or vehicle to go to the market

Purchase for sales:

- Fish landing centers
- Fishermen bringing fish to the sales spot
- Auctions
- Transportation

Markets including road side:

- General hygiene and cleanliness
- Dress worn by FVW in the market
- Toilet facilities and general sanitation
- Sitting places and space for transactions
- Pictures of actual selling
- Sales wind up
- Eating space and nature
- Socializing with others in the market
- The mode of return trip to home

Back Home

- Dress
- Face and Reactions

Appendix - 6

Table No.1: Summary of the Geographical coverage of the study

Sl. No	District	Revenue Taluk	Revenue Village	Block Panchayat	Grama Panchayat	Ward No. and Name
1	Trivandrum	Trivandrum	Kadinamkulam	Pothenkode	Kadinamkulam	XIX: Mariya Nadu South
						XX: Mariya nadu North
2	Kollam			Chavara	Neendakara	Sakthikulangara
						Neendakara
3	Alappuzha	Ambalapuzha Taluk	Alappuzha West	Ambalapuzha	Alappuzha Municipality	Beach
						Vadackal

Table No. : 2. Age of the Respondents

Age Groups	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
15-30 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
31-60 years	41	27.33%	40	26.67%	33	22.00%	114	76.00%
Above 61	9	6.00%	10	6.67%	17	11.33%	36	24.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 3.Marital Status

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Married	49	32.67%	50	33.33%	49	32.67%	148	98.67%
Unmarried	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	2	1.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 4. If married, specific status

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Widow	11	7.33%	18	12.00%	18	12.00%	47	31.33%
Deserted	0	0.00%	1	0.67%		0.00%	1	0.67%
Divorced	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Second marriage	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Living together without marriage	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None of the above	38	14.00%	31	0.00%	31	5.33%	29	19.33%
Not applicable	1	12.00%		20.67%	1	16.00%	73	48.67%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 5. Religion

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	value	%
Muslim	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hindu	3	2.00%	0	0.00%	18	12.00%	21	14.00%
Christian	47	31.33%	50	33.33%	32	21.33%	129	86.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 6. Caste

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	value	%
General	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	1	0.67%
OBC	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	48	32.00%	148	98.67%
SC/ST	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	1	0.67%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. 7: Domicile of respondents

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	value	%
GP	39	26.00%	50	33.33%	11	7.33%	100	66.00%
Municipality	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	39	26.00%	39	26.00%
Corporation	11	7.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	11	7.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. 8: Education

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	value	%	value	%
Illiterate	8	5.33%	24	16.00%	17	11.33%	49	32.67%
Literate/Neo-Literate	16	10.67%	6	4.00%	21	14.00%	43	28.67%
KG	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
LP	2	1.33%	15	10.00%	10	6.67%	27	18.00%
UP	12	8.00%	3	2.00%	1	0.67%	16	10.67%
HS	12	8.00%	2	1.33%	0	0.00%	14	9.33%
HSS	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	1	0.67%
Degree	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
PG	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Others	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. 9: Diseases

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alapuzha		Total	
	Value	% of 50	Value	% of 50	Value	% of 50	Value	% of 150
Nothing	20	40	18	36	28	56	66	44
Cardiac problem	1	2	0	0	6	12	7	4.67
Diabetes	12	24	7	14	0	0	19	12.67
Blood Pressure	0	0	8	16	6	12	14	9.33
Asthma	1	2	2	4	0	0	3	2
Dengue/chikun guinea	13	26	4	8	0	0	17	11.33
Skin disease	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0.67
Diseases related to lungs	2	4	0	0	4	8	6	4
Thyroid	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	2
Bone diseases	10	20	2	4	12	24	24	16
Gynecological diseases	4	8	0	0	0	0	4	2.67
Bladder stone	2	4	0	0	0	0	2	1.33
Other diseases	0	0	13	26	0	0	13	8.67

Table No. 10: Bad habits

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
No bad habits	50	33.33%	30	20.00%	23	15.33%	103	68.67%
Alcohol consumption	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Betel leaf chewing	0	0.00%	20	13.33%	27	18.00%	47	31.33%
Drug abuse	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Pan Masala	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 11. When do you wake up?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Between 4 AM -5 AM	50	33.33%	38	25.33%	11	7.33%	99	66.00%
5 AM-6AM	0	0.00%	12	8.00%	30	20.00%	42	28.00%
After 6 AM	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	9	6.00%	9	6.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 12. Time to sleep

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	Value	%	value	%	value	%
Before 10 PM	32	21.33%	41	27.33%	37	24.67%	110	73.33%
10 PM -12 midnight	17	11.33%	9	6.00%	11	7.33%	37	24.67%
After midnight	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	2	1.33%	3	2.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 13. What do you do when you do not go to fish vending?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	% of 50	Value	% of 50	Value	% of 50	value	% of 150
We will sleep	0	0	10	20	6	16	16	10.67
Kitchen work	50	100	44	88	37	131	131	87.33
Clean own clothes	12	24	21	42	0	33	33	22
Wach serials	0	0	9	18	4	13	13	8.67
Wash others' clothes	32	64	17	34	0	49	49	32.67
clean household premises	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Reading	42	84	26	52	14	82	82	54.67
Others	0	0	2	4	0	2	2	1.33

Table No. : 14. Where do you eat when you go for fish vending?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Takes food after returning to home	27	54	41	82	35	70	103	68.67
Carries food along with her from home	0	0	3	6	0	0	3	2.00
Buys from shops	21	42	7	14	8	16	36	24.00
Don't get time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Eats whatever is available	2	4	3	6	9	18	14	9.33
From some house which buys fish	0	0	1	2	1	2	2	1.33

Table No. : 15. What is the attitude of the family members towards your job?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Very favourable	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 16. Do your family members help you in your job?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	46	30.67%	36	24.00%	49	32.67%	131	87.33%
No	2	1.33%	12	8.00%	1	0.67%	15	10.00%
Sometimes	2	1.33%	2	1.33%		0.00%	4	2.67%
Very Often	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 17. How do your families help you?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
For mobilising capital	46	92	7	14	49	98	102	68
vending	0	0	14	28	0	0	14	9.33
Transportation of fish to the market	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0.67
processing of fish	1	2	11	22	0	0	12	8
Household work	40	80	27	54	0	0	67	44.67
Others	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Not applicable	1	2	11	22	1	2	13	8.67
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100.00

Table No. : 18. How is your relationship with your husband?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Good	4	2.67%	40	26.67%	31	20.67%	75	50.00%
Very good	36	24.00%	2	1.33%	0	0.00%	38	25.33%
Satisfactory		0.00%	2	1.33%	1	0.67%	3	2.00%
Bad		0.00%	6	4.00%		0.00%	6	4.00%
Very bad	3	2.00%		0.00%		0.00%	3	2.00%
Not applicable	7	4.67%		0.00%	18	12.00%	25	16.67%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 19. How is your relationship with your children?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Good	45	30.00%	46	30.67%	47	31.33%	138	92.00%
Very good	4	2.67%	2	1.33%	2	1.33%	8	5.33%
Satisfactory	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%
Bad	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Very bad	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%
Not applicable	1	0.67%		0.00%	1	0.67%	2	1.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 20. How is your relationship with your relatives?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Good	43	28.67%	22	14.67%	48	32.00%	113	75.33%
Very good	5	3.33%	9	6.00%	1	0.67%	15	10.00%
Satisfactory	1	0.67%	16	10.67%	1	0.67%	18	12.00%
Bad	1	0.67%	3	2.00%		0.00%	4	2.67%
Very bad	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 21. How is your husband's mentality about fish vending?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Favourable	38	25.33%	28	18.67%	31	20.67%	97	64.67%
Not favourable	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%
Indifferent	0	0.00%	2	1.33%	0	0.00%	2	1.33%
Not applicable	12	8.00%	19	12.67%	19	12.67%	50	33.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 22. How do you spend the money from the fish vending?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alapuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
For household purpose	44	88	41	82	44	88	129	86
Own savings	0	0	4	8	8	16	12	8
Family's savings	8	16	1	2	1	2	10	6.67
Education, medical treatment, clothes, etc	47	94	23	46	6	12	76	50.67
Daughters' marriage	1	2	7	14	0	0	8	5.33
Construction of house	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Purchase of land						0	0	0
For repayment of loan, interest etc	43	86	10	20	7	14	60	40
Others						0	0	0
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100

Table No. : 23. What percentage of your income do you spend from your income?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Below 20%	2	1.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	1.33%
Between 21 to 40%	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	2	1.33%	3	2.00%
Between 41 to 60%	0	0.00%		0.00%	9	6.00%	9	6.00%
Between 61 to 90%	4	2.67%	2	1.33%	32	21.33%	38	25.33%
Between 91 to 100%	43	28.67%	48	32.00%	7	4.67%	98	65.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 24. Do you have loss?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	50	33.33%	44	29.33%	50	33.33%	144	96.00%
No		0.00%	6	4.00%		0.00%	6	4.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 25.Does your family support you when you incur loss?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	48	32.00%	28	18.67%	48	32.00%	124	82.67%
No		0.00%	5	3.33%	2	1.33%	7	4.67%
Sometimes	1	0.67%	12	8.00%		0.00%	13	8.67%
Not applicable	1	0.67%	5	3.33%		0.00%	6	4.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 26. Does your husband ask your opinion about the number of children, their marriage, education, purchase of land, etc?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	48	32.00%	45	30.00%	48	32.00%	141	94.00%
No	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	1.33%	2	1.33%
Often	1	0.67%	4	2.67%	0	0.00%	5	3.33%
Sometime	1	0.67%	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	2	1.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 27.Does the family ask your opinion about day-to-day activities?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	48	32.00%	44	29.33%	48	32.00%	140	93.33%
No	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	1.33%	2	1.33%
Often	1	0.67%	5	3.33%	0	0.00%	6	4.00%
Sometime	1	0.67%	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	2	1.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 28.Relatives' attitude?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Humiliating	0	0.00%	1	0.09%	0	0.00%	1	0.09%
Ignoring	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0		0	0.00%
Hostile	0	0.00%	1	0.26%	0	0.00%	1	0.26%
Opposition	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Negligence	0	0.00%	1	0.43%	0	0.00%	1	0.43%
Indifference	0	0.00%	2	1.03%	0	0.00%	2	1.03%
Sympathy	1	0.60%	8	4.79%	2	1.20%	11	6.58%
Supportive	49	33.50%	37	25.30%	48	32.82%	134	91.62%
Others	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Grand Total	50	34.10%	50	31.88%	50	34.02%	150	100.00%

Table No. 29: .1.Do you go out with your family members?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	value	%
No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
For viewing cinema	0	0	2	4	0	0	2	1.33
To Church/temples	49	98	48	96	49	98	146	97.33
Family functions	47	94	44	44	1	2	92	61.33
For meeting friends	1	2	14	28	0	0	15	10
Participating in gramasabha	3	6	27	54	0	0	30	20
Others						0	0	0
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	

Table No. : 30. Does your husband drink alcohol?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	1	0.67%	36	24.00%	3	2.00%	40	26.67%
Never	9	6.00%	8	5.33%	17	11.33%	34	22.67%
Sometimes	32	21.33%	6	4.00%	12	8.00%	50	33.33%
No Response	7	4.67%	0	0.00%	17	11.33%	24	16.00%
Not applicable	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	2	1.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 31.Does your husband harrass you in any manner?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	0	0.00%	18	12.00%	0	0.00%	18	12.00%
No	18	12.00%	27	18.00%	32	21.33%	77	51.33%
Sometimes	24	16.00%	4	2.67%		0.00%	28	18.67%
Very often	2	1.33%	1	0.67%	1	0.67%	2	1.33%
Not applicable	6	4.00%	0	0.00%	17	11.33%	23	15.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 32.If he harasses you, how?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Physical	16	32	23	46	2	4	41	27.33
Mental	17	34	16	32	2	4	35	23.33
Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Financial	0	0	12	24	1	2	13	8.67
Not applicable	12	24	19	38	19	38	50	33.33
No response	15	30	8	16	30	60	53	35.33
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100.00

Table No. : 33. Do you get time for attending to the education and character formation of your children?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	0%	value	%	value	%
Yes	8	5.33%	12	8.00%	19	12.67%	39	26.00%
No	25	16.67%	31	20.67%	23	15.33%	79	52.67%
Sometimes	5	3.33%	5	3.33%	4	2.67%	14	9.33%
Often	0	0.00%	2	1.33%	1	0.67%	3	2.00%
No response	3	2.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	3	2.00%
Not applicable	9	6.00%	0	0.00%	3	2.00%	12	8.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 34. If yes, how do you help your children?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
I will teach them	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0.67
I will sit with children when they study	9	18	6	12	18	36	33	22.00
Clearing doubts	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0.67
Arranging time and facilities for study	11	22	18	36	11	22	40	26.67
Providing table, chair, light, etc	8	16	5	10	2	4	15	10.00
Others	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0.67
Not applicable	37	74	31	62	26	52	94	62.67
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100.00

Table No. : 35. Who looks after household when you go for fish vending?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Husband/son, etc	24	16.00%	39	26.00%	30	20.00%	93	62.00%
Mother/father	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
No one	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	1	0.67%	2	1.33%
After return	26	17.33%	10	6.67%	19	12.67%	55	36.67%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 36. Did your husband's family know about your fish vending business before your marriage?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	3	2.00%	10	6.67%	5	3.33%	18	12.00%
No	2	1.33%	40	26.67%	28	18.67%	70	46.67%
Not applicable	45	30.00%		0.00%	17	11.33%	62	41.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 37. What is your opinion about fish vending?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Very good job	49	32.67%	21	14.00%	7	4.67%	77	51.33%
Bad job	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%
Good	1	0.67%	27	18.00%	29	19.33%	57	38.00%
Satisfactory	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	14	9.33%	15	10.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 38. If you participate in religious functions, do you maintain relationship with your friends, locals and neighbours?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Always	10	6.67%	22	14.67%	46	30.67%	78	52.00%
Sometime	40	26.67%	27	18.00%	4	2.67%	71	47.33%
Not at all	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 39. If never, why?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
No time	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%
Not interested	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Get avoided	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Due to anxiety	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Not applicable	50	33.33%	49	32.67%	50	33.33%	149	99.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 40. Do you attend marriage and funeral functions?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
When necessary	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 41. As a member or other wise, do you have any association with NGOs, Residential associations, SHGs, Clubs, community-based organisation, social organisations?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Get involved	20	13.33%	43	28.67%	37	24.67%	100	66.67%
some times	29	19.33%	1	0.67%	9	6.00%	39	26.00%
Not involved	1	0.67%	6	4.00%	4	2.67%	11	7.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 42. If not associating, why?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	5	value	%
No time	0	0.00%	2	1.33%	1	0.67%	3	2.00%
Not interested	1	0.67%	3	2.00%	2	1.33%	6	4.00%
Inhibition	0	0.00%	1	0.67%		0.00%	1	0.67%
Not applicable	49	32.67%	44	29.33%	47	31.33%	140	93.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 43. Do you have membership in fish vending women's organisations?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
yes	35	23.33%	24	16.00%	1	0.67%	60	40.00%
No	15	10.00%	26	17.33%	49	32.67%	90	60.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 44. If not, why?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
No time	1	0.67%	4	2.67%	0	0.00%	5	3.33%
Not interested	1	0.67%	15	10.00%	1	0.67%	17	11.33%
Not aware about such type of organisation	13	8.67%	7	4.67%	48	32.00%	68	45.33%
Not applicable	35	23.33%	24	16.00%	1	0.67%	60	40.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 45. Ownership of present residence

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Own house	36	72	36	72	48	96	120	80.00
Tenants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Puramboke	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0.67
Church land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Rented	2	4		0		0	2	1.33
Lease	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Husband's family house	0	0	1	2	1	2	2	1.33
My family house	1	2	2	4		0	3	2.00
Married children's house	11	22	10	20	1	2	22	14.67
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
No house	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Grand Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100.00

Table No. : 46.Type of present residence

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	Value	%	Value	%	value	%
Hut	0	0.00%	7	4.67%	2	1.33%	9	6.00%
Thatched	1	0.67%	6	4.00%	1	0.67%	8	5.33%
Sheet-roofed	14	9.33%	18	12.00%	5	3.33%	37	24.67%
tiled	13	8.67%	1	0.67%	27	18.00%	41	27.33%
Concrete	22	14.67%	18	12.00%	15	10.00%	55	36.67%
Other								
Not applicable								
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 47. Ownership of land

Row Labels	Value	%
Yes	122	81.33
No	28	18.67

Table No. : 48. If yes, in whose name it is registered?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
In my name	7	14	9	18	8	16	24	16
Husband's name	28	56	20	40	40	80	88	58.67
Jointly	2	4	5	10	1	2	8	5.33
Others	0	0	2	4	0	0	2	1.33
Not applicable	13	26	14	28	1	2	28	18.67
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100

Table No. : 49 Why did you choose fish vending as a job?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Like this occupation	40	80	21	42	1	2	62	41.33
Get more incomes	37	74	24	48	6	12	67	44.67
Ignorance of other suitable jobs	32	64	16	32	6	12	54	36
Cannot waste time	1	2	4	8	0	0	5	3.33
No other way to look after children	16	32	18	36	43	86	77	51.33
Mother's occupation	22	44	12	24	2	4	36	24
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	50	50	50	100	50	100	150	100

Table No. : 50. Before or after marriage?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Before marriage	4	8	12	24	3	6	19	13%
After marriage	45	90	38	76	46	92	129	86.00%
Not applicable	1	2	0	0	1	2	2	1.33%
Grand Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100.00%

Table No. : 51. At what age did you choose fish vending as a job?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
15 – 30 years	3	6	13	26	9	18	25	16.67
30 – 60 years	46	92	37	74	41	82	124	82.67
After 60 years	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0.67
Grand Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100

Table No. : 52. At what time span did you choose fish vending as a job?

Row Labels	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
During the last 5 years	1	2	2	4	1	2	4	3%
During the last 6 to 15 years	30	60	33	66	17	34	80	53.30%
During the last 16 to 30 years	18	36	10	20	26	52	54	36.00%
	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100.00%

Table No. : 53. Are you interested to continue this job?

	Value	%
Yes	147	98
No	3	2

Table No. : 54. If not, why?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Very difficult	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	2	1	0.67
It is not profitable	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00
Humiliation	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00
Children do not allow	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	0	0	1	0.67
I am very old	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00
I am not healthy	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	0	0	1	0.67
Others	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00
Not applicable	50	33.33%	48	32.00%	49	98	147	98.00
Total	50	33.33%	50	33.34%	50	100	150	100.00

Table No. : 55. Where do you purchase fish for vending?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
From own village beach	48	96	44	88	50	100	142	94.67
From the lake in the neighbourhood	33	66	0	0	50	100	83	55.33
From the distant market	0	0	6	12	0	0	6	4
From the fish landing center	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table No. : 56. From whom do you purchase fish?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Fishermen	50	100	44	88	48	96	142	94.67
Small-scale agents	0	0	24	48	0	0	24	16
Large-scale agents	0	0	12	24	0	0	12	8
Large traders	0	0	0	0	2	4	2	1.33
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100

Table No. : 57. How much fish do you purchase a day on an average in rupees?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Below Rs.500	8	5.33%	6	4.00%	6	4.00%	20	13.33%
Between Rs.501-1000	38	25.33%	33	22.00%	33	22.00%	104	69.33%
Between Rs.1001-5000	4	2.67%	11	7.33%	10	6.67%	25	16.67%
Between Rs.5000-10000	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	1	0.67%
Above 10000	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No.: 58. When do you go for fish vending?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Before noon	48	32.00%	23	15.33%	46	30.67%	117	78.00%
After noon	1	0.67%	2	1.33%		0.00%	3	2.00%
Whole day	1	0.67%	25	16.67%	4	2.67%	30	20.00%
Evening	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
More than once	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 59. How do you mobilize your capital for fish vending?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Own	3	6	27	54	16	32	46	30.67
Loan	46	92	37	74	42	84	125	83.33
Grant	2	4	1	2	0	0	3	2

Table No. : 60. If it is from loan, from where?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Relatives	43	93.4	11	29.7	6	14.29	60	40
Bank	1	2.1	8	21.6	2	4.76	11	7.33
Co-operative bank	0	0	3	8.1	2	4.76	5	3.33
Self-help Groups	4	8.6	18	48.6	24	57.14	46	30.67
religious organisation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Voluntary agencies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Middlemen	42	91.3	35	94.5	19	45.24	96	64
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No response	4	0	0	0	8	19.05	12	8
Total	46	100	50	100	42	100	150	100

Table No. : 61. If it is from the middle men, what is the interest rate for the loan

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Not applicable	8	5.33%	15	10.00%	31	20.67%	54	36.00%
Bank interest	1	0.67%		0.00%	5	3.33%	6	4.00%
12% per annum	40	26.67%	18	12.00%	11	7.33%	69	46.00%
24% per annum	0	0.00%	3	2.00%	1	0.67%	4	2.67%
Above 24% per annum	1	0.67%	14	9.33%	2	1.33%	17	11.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 62. Is it possible for you to repay regularly?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Always	4	2.67%	13	8.67%	8	5.33%	25	16.67%
Sometimes	4	2.67%	31	20.67%	36	24.00%	71	47.33%
Never	42	28.00%	6	4.00%	6	4.00%	54	36.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 63. Do you encounter any problems in connection with repayment of loans to middlemen?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Not applicable	4	2.67%	13	8.67%	8	5.33%	25	16.67%
Yes	0	0.00%	5	3.33%	6	4.00%	11	7.33%
No	5	3.33%	25	16.67%	35	23.33%	65	43.33%
Sometimes	41	27.33%	7	4.67%	1	0.67%	49	32.67%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 64. If you encounter problems in connection with repayment of loans to middlemen, in what ways?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Confiscation	4	2.67%	2	1.33%	0	0.00%	6	4.00%
Physical violence	29	19.33%	10	6.67%	8	5.33%	47	31.33%
Oral abuse	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%
Blockage on the way	17	11.33%	37	24.67%	42	28.00%	96	64.00%
Others								
Not applicable								
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 65. Where do you sell your fish?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Market	19	38	41	82	34	68	94	62.67
Road side	0	0	3	6	0	0	3	2
Household	32	64	8	16	17	34	57	38
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100

Table No. : 66. What is the daily profit on an average in rupees?

Rupees	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Below 100	9	6.00%	1	0.67%	16	10.67%	26	17.33%
Between 100-300	37	24.67%	43	28.67%	31	20.67%	111	74.00%
Between 301-500	4	2.67%	6	4.00%	3	2.00%	13	8.67%
Between 501-1000								
Above 1000								
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 67. Are there occasions when you return home with fish when it is not possible to sell it the same day?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	48	32.00%	36	24.00%	15	10.00%	99	66.00%
No	2	1.33%	14	9.33%	35	23.33%	51	34.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 68. Circumstances in which fish is taken back?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
When they don't get fair price	48	96	35	70	7	14	90	60
When fish starts decaying	46	92	1	2	10	20	57	38
Due to bad weather conditions	3	6	5	10	0	0	8	5.33
Not applicable	2	4	14	28	35	70	51	34
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100

Table No. : 69. What do you do with the fish which is taken back home?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Put in salt	48	96	32	64	2	4	144	96.00
Put in ice	46	92	14	28	2	4	88	58.67
Dried	49	98	30	60	12	24	139	92.67
Sold to neighbours	1	2	2	4	3	6	7	4.67
Not applicable	2	4	14	28	35	70	44	29.33
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100		

Table No. : 70. When loss occurs, what is the average loss per day in rupees?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Below 100	6	4.00%	3	2.00%	7	4.67%	16	10.67%
Between 100-300	42	28.00%	40	26.67%	37	24.67%	119	79.33%
Between 301-500	1	0.67%	3	2.00%	4	2.67%	8	5.33%
Between 501-1000		0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	1	0.67%
Above 1000	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	1	0.67%
Not applicable	1	0.67%	4	2.67%		0.00%	5	3.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 71. Did you get support from any organization or Government?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	2	1.33%	14	9.33%	46	30.67%	62	41.33%
No	48	32.00%	36	24.00%	4	2.67%	88	58.67%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. :72. If yes, whose support?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Fisheries Dept	2	1.33%	6	4.00%	0	0.00%	8	5.33%
Matsyafed	0	0.00%	6	4.00%	48	32.00%	54	36.00%
Cooperative Society	0	0.00%	2	1.33%		0.00%	2	1.33%
NGO								
Religious/community CSOs		0.00%	2	1.33%		0.00%	2	1.33%
Others	48	32.00%	33	22.00%	2	1.33%	83	55.33%
Not applicable	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 73. Type of support

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Financial	2	4	4	8	46	92	52	34.67
Travel support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Market cleaned	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Vesels provided	0	0	10	20	0	0	10	6.67
Not applicable	48	96	36	72	4	8	88	58.67
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100.00

Table No. : 74. What support do you require further in connection with fish vending?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	Value	Value	%
Don't want any help	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Financial	50	100	44	88	50	100	144	96
Transportation	23	46	8	16	0	0	31	20.67
Clean market	8	16	1	2	1	2	10	6.67
Utensils for carrying fish	47	94	15	30	0	0	62	41.33
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	

Table No. : 75. Do you face any competition?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	49	32.67%	30	20.00%	45	30.00%	124	82.67%
No	0	0.00%	18	12.00%	2	1.33%	20	13.33%
Sometimes	1	0.67%	2	1.33%	3	2.00%	6	4.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 76. If there is competition, in what manner?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Vehicle users	28	56	8	16	0	0	36	24.00%
Big merchants	21	42	8	16	0	0	29	19.33%
Co-venders	32	64	28	56	48	96	108	72.00%
Not applicable	0	0	18	36	2	4	20	13.33%
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	

Table No. : 77. How do you face such competition?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	value	%
By adjusting time	19	38	7	14	17	34	43	28.67
Other ways	29	58	2	4	1	2	32	21.33
Unable to address	0	0	9	18	13	26	22	14.67
Accepting competitions	2	4	14	28	17	34	33	22
Not applicable	0	0	18	36	2	4	20	13.33
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100

Table No. : 78. Are you a member of any political party?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes		0.00%	3	2.00%	18	12.00%	21	14.00%
No	50	33.33%	47	31.33%	32	21.33%	129	86.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 79. Did you vote in the last Panchayat elections?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	50	33.33%	49	32.67%	49	32.67%	148	98.67%
No	0	0.00%	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%
No response	0	0.00%		0.00%	1	0.67%	1	0.67%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 80. Did you vote in the last Assembly elections?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total Value 75	Total % 75_2
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 81. Did you vote in the last Parliament elections?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	49	32.67%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	149	99.33%
No	1	0.67%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.67%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 82. Do you have membership in trade unions?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
Yes	0	0.00%	5	3.33%	2	1.33%	7	4.67%
No	50	33.33%	45	30.00%	48	32.00%	143	95.33%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

Table No. : 83. If you have not voted in the above-mentioned elections, why?

Field	Kollam		Trivandrum		Alappuzha		Total	
	value	%	value	%	value	%	value	%
0	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%
Grand Total	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	50	33.33%	150	100.00%

FROM THEIR LIVES



Punnapra Fish Landing Centre, Alaphuzha



**Marianadu Fish Landing Centre,
Thiruvananthapuram**



Women at sales, Neendakara, Kollam



**Conversations with
Mrs. Prakasi Raphael, Kollam**