

A Study on the Occupational Hazards among Fishermen in Tuticorin District

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Abstract

Tuticorin district is a coastal area where majority of occupants belong to fishing. Fishermen face various perils at sea due to unpredictable weather patterns like storms, high winds, rough sea, tornado, hurricane, hail and rainfall. Due to rough weather capsizing, sinking, and collisions with other boats are feasible. They risk their lives for a living as fishing is mostly done during late hours. They face health hazards, stress and economic instability. This research study aims to examine the occupational hazards undergone by fishermen in Tuticorin district.

Keywords: *Livelihood, occupational hazards, health hazards, dangers.*

Introduction

Tuticorin is known as “pearl city” is famous for its pearl fishing along coastal belt and is a key hub for marine and brackish water fishing. Fishing is a key occupation in Tuticorin district, contributing significantly to the state’s economy through export, food security and livelihoods. The fisherman experience skin diseases due to prolonged sun and cold exposure, along with musculoskeletal disorders, from their physically demanding work. Their lives are vulnerable to unexpected events like drowning and accidents caused by weather conditions. Mishandling of fishing equipments will result in grave repercussions. Economically they receive low payments for their catch as sellers and private companies buy it for export, making it a tragic situation where they risk their lives for meagre earnings. On top of that their lives are highly vulnerable to financial strains, health risks and stress. This study aim to explore the occupational hazards faced by fishermen in Tuticorin district.

Objectives

1. To know the socio-demographic details of the respondents.

2. To study the nature of work and problems faced by the respondents.
3. To analyse the occupational hazards undergone by fishermen.
4. To study the working conditions and dangers faced by fishermen.

Methodology

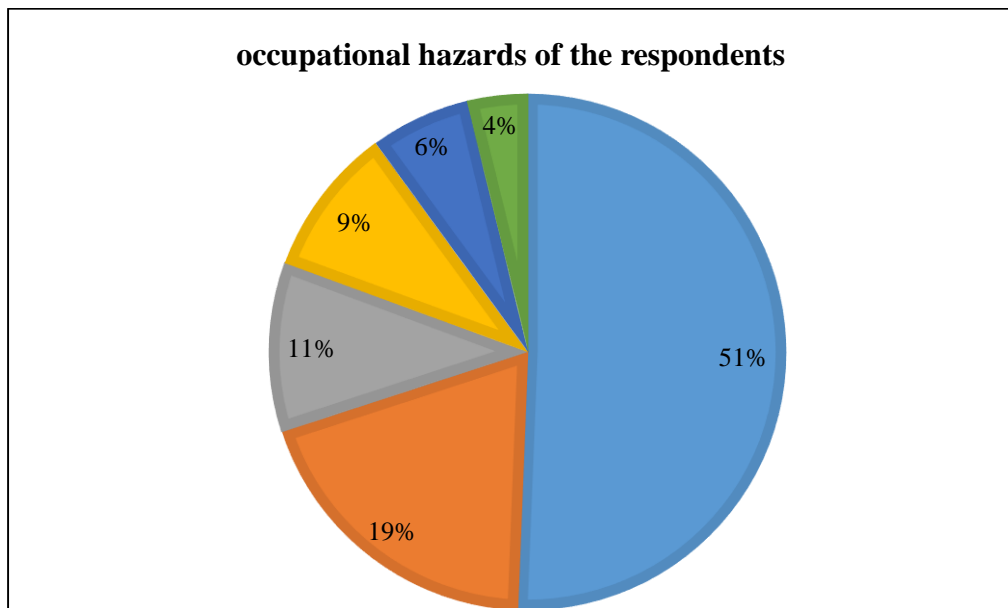
The present study was carried out in Tuticorin district. The data for this study was gathered from a sample of fishermen in coastal belts of Tuticorin district. A sample of 50 workers were selected through convenient sampling method. The primary data was collected through structured questionnaires and personal interviews with fishermen in Tuticorin district. This study helped to obtain a clear picture of working conditions and occupational hazards encountered by fishermen in Tuticorin district.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic profile of the respondents					Total
Age	Below 30	30-40	40-50	50-60	100
	24%	28%	34%	14%	
Education	illiterate	Primary	Higher secondary	Graduate	100
	77%	15%	8%	-	
Marital Status	Married	Unmarried			100
	89%	11%			
Community	BC	MBC	SC	Other	100
	12%	79%	7%	2%	
Monthly income	Below 10,000	Rs.10,000 -Rs.20,000	Above 20,000		100
	48%	39%	13%		

Source: Primary data

From the above table it is inferred that 34% of the respondents belongs to the age group of 40-50, majority 77% of the respondent are illiterate, vast majority 89% of the respondents are married, 79% of the respondents belongs to MBC community, and nearly half 48% of the respondent's monthly income is below 10,000.

Diagram 1

- Extreme weather conditions- 51%
- Accidents caused by dangerous equipment (fishing hooks, lines, nets)-19%
- Boat capsizing- 11%
- Collision with boats-9%
- Drowning-6%
- Toxic and chemical contaminants-4%

Table 2. Health Hazards of the Respondents

Health Hazards	No of respondents	Percentage
Musculoskeletal disorder	16	32
Respiratory problem	8	16
Heat stroke	12	24
Water borne disease	4	8
Skin disease	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table depicts that 32% of the respondents are affected by musculoskeletal disorder, 16% of the respondents have respiratory problem, 24% of the respondents are affected by heat stroke, 8% of the respondents are affected by waterborne diseases, and 20% of the respondents have skin disease.

Table 3. Working conditions of the respondents

Working conditions of the respondents				Total
Safety Risks	High	Moderate	Low	100
	79%	21%	-	
Psychological Stress	High	Moderate	Low	100
	64%	22%	14%	
Work Load	Heavy	Moderate	Low	100
	86%	14%	-	
Working hours	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	100
	32%	2%	66%	
Medical Facilities	Yes	No		100
	-	100%		
Financial Burden	High	Moderate	Low	100
	73%	27%	-	

Source: Primary Data

The above table depicts that majority 79% of the respondents has stated that safety risks are high in their occupation, 64% of the respondents has stated that the psychological stress they undergo is high, Vast majority 86% of the respondents has stated that their work load is heavy, 66% of the respondents have dissatisfaction towards their working hours, and all the respondents 100% has stated that there is no medical facilities for them during emergency, Majority 73% of the respondents has stated that they have high financial burdens.

Suggestions:

1. The government shall provide more technical devices like fish finder which will enable the fishermen to catch more fish.
2. The government shall provide fishing equipment to the fishermen at subsidized costs.
3. Fuel station shall be located near seashore areas to ensure that fishermen can easily access the fuel needed for their boats.
4. The government shall set up cold storage and freezing facilities to cater the needs of fishermen.
5. The government shall deploy walkie-talkies and coastal guards at accessible locations to assist in the rescue of fishermen.

6. The government shall offer adequate subsidies to ensure the protection of fishermen livelihoods.
7. The government shall extend financial support to fishermen at low interest rates.
8. The government shall establish healthcare facilities near the seashore area to ensure the health and well-being of fishermen and provide emergency treatment when needed.

Conclusion

Fishing serves as the major occupation in Tuticorin district, providing a livelihood for many people. Fishermen are vulnerable to accidents such as drowning, capsizing, handling hazardous equipment and facing unpredictable weather conditions. Fishermen face significant risks and numerous occupational and health hazards. Therefore the government should offer subsidies and medical support to ensure their well-being. Such incentives would not only improve the quality of life for fishermen but also help sustain this vital industry, which provides food and livelihood for millions of people around the world.

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