

**Information Seeking Behaviour of Fisherwomen  
Community in Coastal Area of South 24  
Parganas District: An analytical study**

**Synopsis of the thesis submitted for the  
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## **Introduction**

Fishing is an important sector in most of the developed and developing countries of the world from the standpoint of income and employment generation. The growth of the fishing sector stimulates the development and employment in related industries which contribute significantly to the total economic growth of the country. Besides, the fishing industry is also an income generator as it supports canneries, processing establishments, gear and equipment manufacturers, boat yards, refrigeration and ice making plants, and transport services in addition to those working in governmental and private fisher based institutions. Fisheries play an important role in food supply and raising nutritional levels of the population. Besides it also supplies protein rich food, several by- products such as fish oil, fish meal, fish manure, fish leather, fish glue and isinglass etc. Fisheries can be broadly divided in to two groups- marine and inland which can be categorized as capture fisheries and culture fisheries. The inland fishery resources comprises two types of waters namely the fresh water and the brackish. The fresh water including river systems, an extensive network of irrigation canals, reservoirs, lakes, tanks, ponds etc. and the brackish water includes lakes, the vast areas of mangrove swamps containing tidal waters.

In spite of the development of the fisheries sector, the fishing community occupies a low status in the society. Several factors such as low social status, poor economic conditions, illiteracy, leaning on middlemen, traditional fishing equipments and methods of fishing, low production rate and income influence the socio-economic conditions of fishermen. Therefore, socio-economic advancement of fishermen is essential for the proper development of the fishing industry in India. Fish farming and fishing differ in many aspects. Fishing is type of hunting activity, whereas aquaculture is agriculture including cultivation of fish. Fish, like cattle or sheep, have to be fed and

cared for. Fishing entails only in harvesting, the rest are taken care of by nature itself. The present study concentrates on information need and information seeking behaviours of fishers only.

Women play an active role in fishing. The basic goal of women in fisheries development is to make them equal partners and productive and self-reliant participants in the process of improving their own and their families, nutritional and living standards. The economy of coastal regions of the state primarily depends upon fisheries. Women play a major role in post-harvest fisheries activities mainly in the marketing of fresh fish and processing.

## **Review of literature**

**Sengupta, Chinta Haran (1992)** tries to explore the factors, psychological, social and environmental, associated with success in inland fish farming which, in its turn, assesses the success in decision making of the respective lessee. **S.K. Pramanik (1993)** stated socio-economic life of the fishermen community of West Bengal. In addition to a lucid and wide-ranging discussion of their family life, relationship with kin and other networks, life-cycle ceremonies, rites and rituals, technology, economy of fishing etc., it reveals how the interrelations of the fishermen. Some specific questions concerning the social life of the community have been examined. The penetrating analysis and the fairly intimate account of the richness and complexities of the life of the community have made the study one of the best specimens. **Ikoja-Odongo, R., & Ocholla, D.N. (2003)** examines the information needs information-seeking behavior, and impact of information use on artisan fisher folk and extension agents at 3 major lakes in Uganda. The findings reveal that fisher folk require different kinds of information to carry out fishing activities effectively. The study recommends what

could be done to provide information to this group of people. **Njoku, I. F. (2004)** investigated the information needs and information seeking behaviour of fishermen in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study examines information needs, sources and information seeking behaviour as well as problems encountered by the fishermen in a bid to obtain information. Results show that the information needs of fishermen in Lagos state are mostly occupation directed. Their chief sources of information include colleagues, friends, neighbours and relatives. Lack of awareness about where to obtain information on modern fishing technology is the most common problem of the fishermen in their attempt to seek information. **Beegum, S Suja (2006)** shows Socio-economic condition of Inland fishermen of Kerala state is considered. The coastal sea is one of the most productive areas as far as fishing is concerned. There are 113 fishing villages in the inland sector, where fishing and related activities provide livelihood for a vast majority of the population. According to **Saha, Pranab (2006)** study, marine fishing is no doubt an important sector for the socio-economic development of the Sundarban of the Sundarban area of West Bangal. This area is not sufficiently explored, especially to have an insight into the scope of marine fishing and the problems faced by the fishermen. **Menendez, A., & Paillet, G. (2008)** shows generic image learning system, CogniSight, is being used for the inspection of fishes before filleting offshore. More than 30 systems have been deployed on seven fishing vessels in Norway and Iceland over the past three years. Fishers can reinforce the learning anytime when needed. **Otolo, P.U. (2009)** also shows women's involvement in fish farming in Isoko riverine areas of Delta State, Nigeria. The study covered 54 fisher folk's women selected through purposive sampling technique. Analysed data showed that women involved in fish farming need wide range of information in fish processing, storage and preservation, loan and credit facilities and modern fishing equipment. The finding also

revealed that lack of visitation of extension officers. According to **Chauvin, C., Morel, G., & Tirilly, G. (2010)** study, the advent of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has profoundly altered relations between vessels and the shore. This article describes the use of ICTs aboard offshore fishing vessels. It points to the prevalence of vessel-to-vessel interchange, and to a frequent use of ICTs to seek out and locate fish. It defines the way in which fishermen are organized in cognition-sharing networks. **Antony, Mary (2011)** deals with the ICT technologies in providing multiple benefits to the marine fisher folk who belong to the marginalized section in the society, has been quite phenomenal. Their lives, their working habits, their economic advantage due to increased production, their socio-political relationship, thus their whole lifestyle has been beneficially affected for their own good and their community. **Jakati Dadapir Moulasab (2011)** confined investigation deals with the geographical perspective of Development of Marketing of Fishery Resources of Goa. Fish assumes scientific significance to the people of Goa, as it forms one of the important items of daily food of more than 90 percent of Goa's population. About 60 percent of the total active fishermen are engaged in marine fishing, while the remaining 40 percent in inland fishing activities. **Sreekumar, T. T. (2011)** studies that go beyond the ICT4D (Information and Communication Technologies for Development) Framework emphasize the social and cultural dimensions of mobile phones. The present article explores how the fishers community in Kerala, India, use mobile phones in culturally enhancing and ecologically oriented ways that improve their working and living conditions. **Barman, Madhab (2014)** stated the problems stimulating the present investigation primarily arose from personal experience of the researcher who being a fisherman himself, has intimate knowledge of the industry. It was further crystallized and nurtured after extensive literature survey and discussion with officials of Fishery

Dept., Fishery scientists, academicians and , of course, the leading fishermen. **Ujjanaja, D (2015)** study intends to assess the information seeking behaviour of fishermen in the fishing community in Kanyakumari and Thoothukudi district and to evaluate their information access pattern. The study on information needs and information seeking behaviour of fisher folk in general and the fishermen in particular are necessitated due to social and economical implication on their social life. Fisher community needs information to meet their day-to-day information such as health information, climatic information, type of vessels, type of fish net, fishing, education needs of their children, marketing information and so on.

### **Statement of the problem**

The present study intends to access the information seeking behavior of fisherwomen in the Coastal area in South 24 Parganas district and to evaluate their information access pattern. Hence, the problem for the study is entitled as **“Information Seeking Behaviour of Fisherwomen in the Coastal area of South 24 pgs District in West Bengal: an analytical study”**.

### **Objectives of this study**

The main objectives of the present study were to find out

1. To analyse the characteristic of the fisherwomen as well as their social conditions, social status, religion, education, health and housing, family planning and the standard of living of fisherwomen in coastal area of South 24 pgs. district in West Bengal;
2. To identify the particular information need of the fisherwomen community and the information sources used by them;

3. To identify the purposes in acquiring the information and suggestion as perceived by the fisherwomen; and
4. To study the information-seeking behavior pattern of fisherwomen;
5. To identify their technical knowledge regarding fishing and to suggest appropriate policies for the upliftment of their socio-economic conditions.

### **Scope and limitation of this study**

From the title of the present research it is obvious that the study is confined to the area of South 24 pgs district in the state of West Bengal in India. There are 29 blocks in this particular district. Among them only 14 blocks (Basanti, Canning 1, Canning 2, Diamond Harbour 1, Diamond Harbour 2, Falta, Gosaba, Kakdwip, Kulpi, Kultali, Namkhana, Pathar Pratima and Sagar) have coastal area. The survey of this study is confined these particular 14 blocks of this district. The scope of the study is limited to the fisher women of this particular district. This study deals with the information seeking behaviour of the fisher women. Total emphasis is given on the fisher women rather than the other.

### **Significance of this study**

The studies on the fisherwomen community's information-seeking behavior add general knowledge to the field of information-seeking behavior. This study may also influence the information centres of that region to upgrade its information resources. This study will also assist in arranging information literacy programs for the respondents. It also focuses on information choice and recognizes the resources used by a particular community and the policy of searching information by this community.

## **Research Methodology**

In order to investigate the problem of the proposed research and to achieve the objectives of the study stated earlier, it has been needed the method of assessment study. Document research will be applied for making related and relevant literature review. Another type of assessment study namely trend research will be conducted for ascertaining the future of the fishermen and this profession in this district.

For the collection of the data *stratified accidental random sample method* was used for the selection of respondents those who were found during the survey period. For the opinion study, the opinion of the whole respondents will be considered. The method of survey has been chosen using questionnaire followed by interview as a tool to collect the required data.

In the survey, various tools are used to obtain the objectives of the research.

Such as

- i) Questionnaires
- ii) Interview
- iii) Case studies
- iv) Systematic observations based on regular visits

## **Chapters**

The present study would comprise the following six chapters.

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

It deals with the scope, concept of the study, definitions, terms, need and significance of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, limitations of the study, and chapterization of the study.



## **Chapter II: Profile of the Study Area**

The chapter 'area profile' consists geographical location of South 24 parganas district and facilities available to the fishermen and to the characteristic of fishing community and services available to them, usage of ICT in information meant for them are presented.

## **Chapter III: Review of Related literature**

The third chapter encompasses the related literature of the study. Studies relevant to the present study are presented under various subheadings.

## **Chapter IV: Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter emphasizes the research design and methodology used for the study including sampling design, population of the study, samples, the tools used for the study and statistical techniques used.

## **Chapter V: Analysis and Interpretation of the Data.**

Detailed analysis of the study is presented in this chapter and tenability of hypothesis also presented.

## **Chapter VI: Findings, Suggestions Conclusions**

This chapter covers the major findings of the study, suggestions, conclusions and suggestion for further research. It is followed by references, appendices sample questionnaire both in English and Bengali. The APA (American Psychological Association) style manual has been used for the citations and references.

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