

Impact of Fisheries Co-Operative Societies on the Livelihood Activities of Marine Fisherfolk-A Study with Special Reference to Port Fishing Village in Kollam District, Kerala

Neethu M Mathews

Lecturer (Economics), Department of Economics, FMN College (Autonomous), Kollam, Kerala, India

Abstract: - This paper discusses about the condition of fisher folk on the basis of the programmes and schemes introduced by the fisheries co-operative societies. Fisheries co-operative societies (Matsyafed) play an important role in changing the standard of living of the fishermen through their different development activities, welfare activities, employment generation activities, commercial activities, women empowerment programmes, motivational programmes and extension and mass communication programmes. The Fisherfolk are contributing largely to the sectors of the state economy. But the fishermen, at the same time are not coming up to the main stream. Even though the Government is providing them with aid and assistance they could not even maintain a fair standard of living. So in order to analyze the programme and policies with respect to the fisherfolk condition in the port fishing village the study has been conducted. Both the primary and secondary data are used for receiving the information. It is evident that matsyafed is implementing schemes for the upliftment of the marginalized community.

Key Words: Matsyafed, Fisherfolk, Fisheries Co-operative Societies, Port fishing village

I. INTRODUCTION

Matsyafed is an Apex Federation of 666 primary level Fishermen Development Welfare Co-operative Societies of which 341 members are in marine sector, 192 numbers are in inland water and 133 women co-operative societies. The administrations and management of Matsyafed is vested with the Administrator. The Chief Executive is the Managing Director. Matsyafed has a District Office in each of the nine maritime districts and one in the Inland district of Kottayam, headed by a District Manager for administrative convenience. The District Managers with a team of supporting staff co-ordinate and supervise all the activities in the district. of the 653 primary societies 334 are in the marine sector, 186 in the Inland sector and 133 women co-operatives. The total membership in these societies is more than three lakhs. The primary societies are clubbed into 60 clusters for administrative convenience based on geographical area. The number of primary co-operatives varies from 4-8 in a cluster.

The total membership in these societies has been more than 3 lakhs. Matsyafed have organized more than 13794 SHGs, with 162693 members. The eleventh plan outlay envisaged for the sector was Rs.113 crores Government extend financial assistance to the activities by way of share capital contribution, grant, loan and subsidy.

Kerala, the southernmost state of India, facing the Arabian Sea has a coastal line of 590 km length. Though this coastal line in less than 10% of the country's total coastal line, its water front contributes about 25% of the country's fish catch. It provides a livelihood to the state's fishing community numbering more than a million. There are approximately 1.3 lakh fishermen families in the state. Economically, the fish caught by around two lakh active fishermen contribute to the tune of about 1.86% of the state's Net Domestic Product (Sankaran 2010). The south - west comprising Kerala, Karnataka, and Goa are the highest contributor among regions and Tamil Nadu among states (21%) followed by Kerala (20%). The anticipated natural growth rate of the XI plan period in 8.5% against the current growth rate of 7% fisheries and aquaculture contribute 1.2% to the national GDP and 5.3% to agriculture and allied activities. In Kerala, fishing Industry occupies an important position in its economy. Kerala's share in the national marine fish production is about 20-25%. The estimated fisher folk of Kerala during 2010-11 is about 11,52 lakh (Economic survey, 2011). Kollam is an important maritime district of the state with a coast line of 37.3 kms. Fishing has a prominent place in the economy of the district. Neendakara and Sakthikulangara villages thrive in fishing. An estimated number of 23,000 persons are engaged in fishing and allied activities. The coastal belt of Kollam comprises 27 fishing villages. There are 24 inland fishing villages also. One third of the state's fish catch is from Kollam. Marine fisheries throughout the world are passing through a drastic phase due to the present rate of biodiversity loss and fishing practices. Indian marine fisheries sector is also passing through a state of crisis due to its over capacity and open accessibility. Kerala occupies the 2nd position in marine fish production. The fish production in Kerala during 2010-11 was 6.81 lakhs tones. District wise marine fish

production shows that Alappuzha contributed the highest (23.08%) followed by Kollam (20.35%) and Kozhikode (14.95%). The states share in all India exports has been declining in recent years. Fishing community is one of the most vulnerable sections of the society of Kerala. A vast majority of them who make out their living by fishing inland sector or in the sea have been in debt trap.

The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) area of 147,740sq.km adorns unique positions and states among the Indian States for its fishery potential, disable fishermen population, dynamic fishing practices, rich nutrition supply and export earnings. The state has an estimated marine fishermen population of 827,953 (2.53% of the total share population) (Thaddeus Koriya, 2005) The fishing community used to be the only group in this state engaged in fishing from time immemorial. They caught fish for their own use as well as for catering the needs of the society. They depend on the traditional technology of fishing and hence the fishing was limited to the near shore waters. Because of loss catch their earning was limited. This made the life of the marine fishing community very miserable socially and economically and they remained backward in the society (Sankaran, 2010). Infact Government of Kerala introduced measures and programmes through fishermen co-operative Societies like Matsyafed. Matsyafed is a registered society for encouraging and strengthening the locally organized social organization among fishermen community in coastal areas.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Even though the fisherfolk is contributing to the nation's foreign exchange they have been living in miserable conditions due to low income, illiteracy, poor health and indebtedness. The Government of Kerala has undertaken so many fishermen welfare schemes and implemented large number of fishermen Cooperative societies. Fisheries Co-operative Societies like Matsyafed aims at the upliftment of the standard of living of the fisherfolk However, the fishermen in this area is still remaining backward in the society. In this context, the present study investigates the impact of Fishermen Co-operative Societies like Matsyafed with respect to credit finance on the port fishing village in Kollam District.

Hypothesis

The welfare oriented measures adopted by the Government in Port fishing village in Kollam in the form of Matsyafed (Co-operative Societies) plays a major role in the upliftment of marine fisherfolk.

Objectives

1. To assess the awareness of marine fishing community regarding the various social security measures implemented by the government for improving their socio-economic level.

2. To evaluate the impact of various Government schemes to improve the socio - economic status of marine fisherfolk.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study is both descriptive and analytical in nature. The impact of Government sponsored programmes like Matsyafed forms the descriptive part of the study. Primary data collected from port fishing villages forms the analytical part of the study in order to reach inferences. The primary data has been collected with the help of a structured interview schedule. The secondary data includes articles from Journals, magazines, newspapers and information from the websites. The marine fisherfolk who avails financial assistance from Matsyafed forms the respondent group. The respondents have been chosen with the help of simple random technique.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS ON THE IMPACT OF MATSYAFED IN PORT FISHING VILLAGE

Empirical evidence relating to the impact of Matsyafed on the marine fisher folk in port fishing village is discussed.

Educational Status

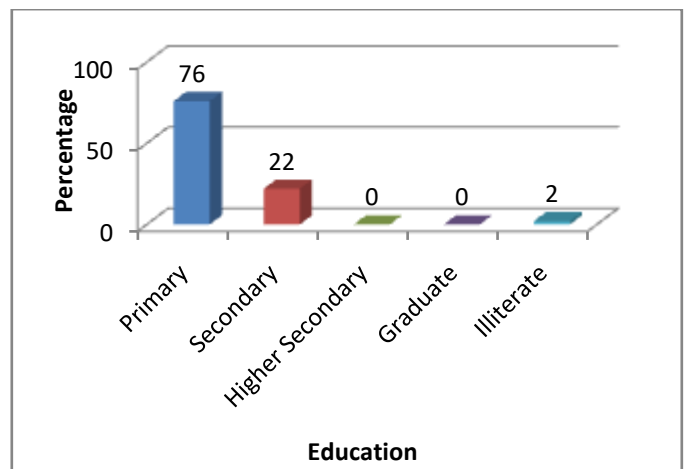
Education status currently available in proximity to the coastal fisherfolk. Even though they have less educational qualification fishermen considers knowledge as an essential factor for getting status in the society.

Table 4.1 Educational Status

Level of education	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Primary	38	76
Secondary	11	22
Higher Secondary	0	0
Graduate	0	0
Illiterate	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.1



Housing Details

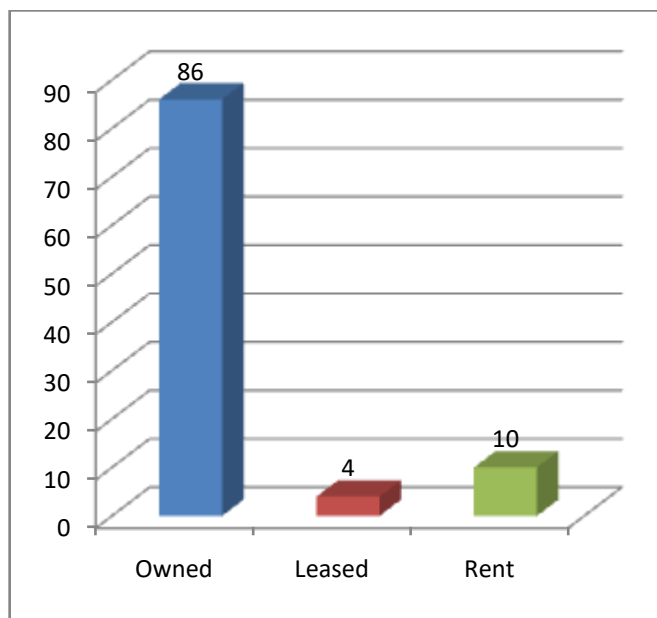
The fisherfolk considers the shelter as an important factor. Even though they give priority to other factors it is the house which gives them status in the society.

Table 4.2 Housing Status

Housing Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Owned	43	86
Leased	2	4
Rent	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.2



Occupational Details

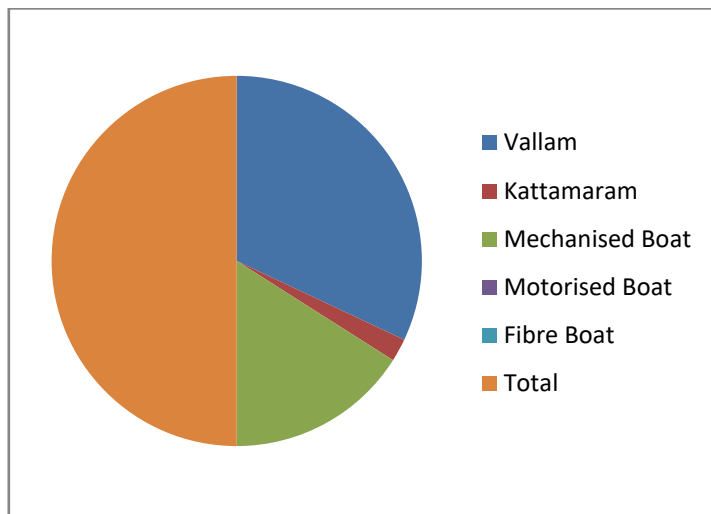
There are many fishing crafts, which are older even up to 20 years, operating along the coasts which provide them with fish catch

Table 4.3 Occupational Details

Type of Craft	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Vallam	32	64
Kattamaram	2	4
Mechanised Boat	16	32
Motorised Boat	0	0
Fibre Boat	0	0
Total	50	100

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.3



Institutional Membership of Fisherfolk

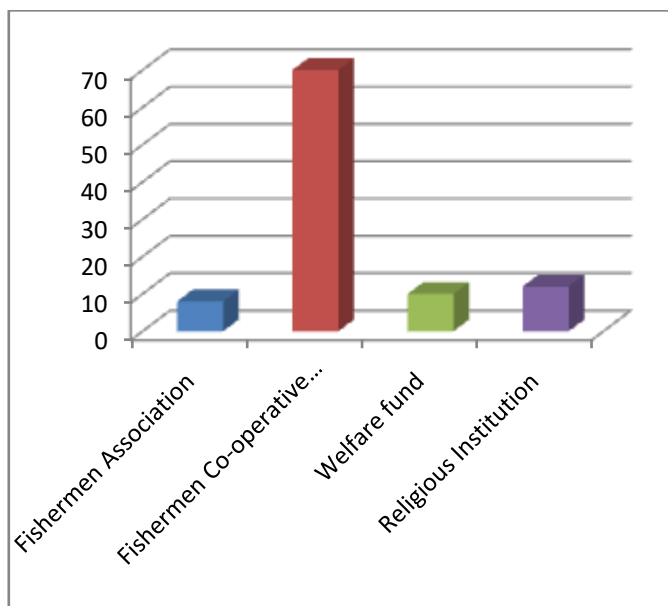
The fisherfolk are members of any government or private organizations. They need help in order to improve the standard of living. Marine fisheries required more capital in order to get high yield, so the institutions play a major role.

Table 4.4 Institutional Membership of Fisher folk

Type	No. of respondents	Percentage
(a) Fishermen Association	4	8
(b) Fishermen Co-operative society	35	70
(c) Welfare fund	5	10
(d) Religious Institution	6	12
Total	50	100

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.4



Average catch per month

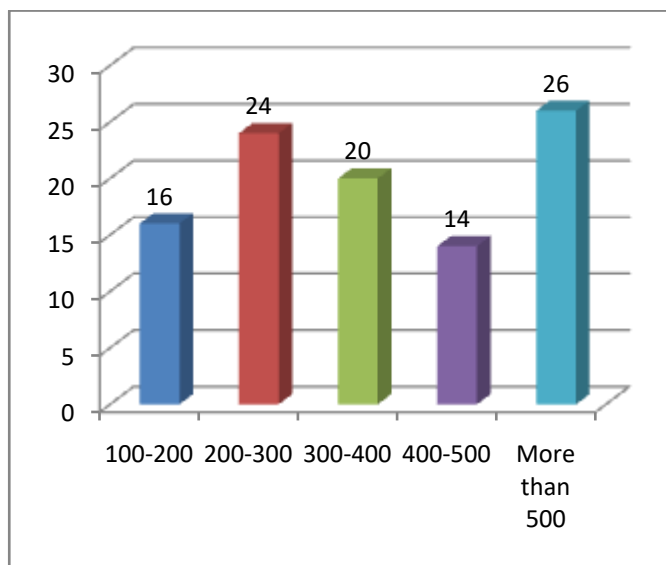
Due to the increase in technology and capital to an extent the fishers are getting good fish catch. But at the same time due to seasonal variation their catch showed some decline. The daily earning for the fishermen depends on the fish catch.

Table 4.5 Average catch per month

Range of Fish catch(Kg)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
100-200	8	16
200-300	12	24
300-400	10	20
400-500	7	14
More than 500	13	26
Total	50	100

Source : Surveyed Data

Figure 4.5



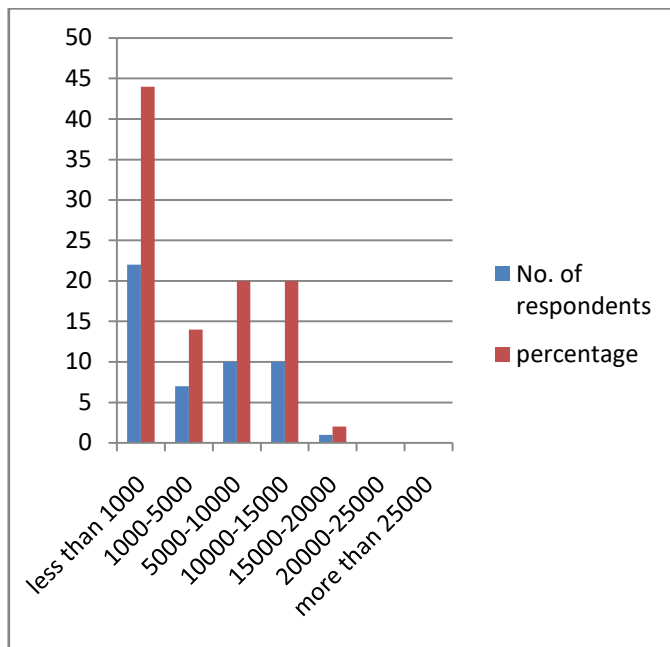
Average Income per month (Rs)

Revenue from the fish catches in the main source of income for their daily life. Income depends on the average fish catch and all the other expenses were made through the income received by the fishermen.

Table 4.6 Average Income per month (Rs)

Income Range(Rs)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 1000	22	44
1000-5000	7	14
5000-10000	10	20
10,000-15,000	10	20
15,000-20,000	1	2
20,000 - 25,000	0	0
More than 25,000	0	0
Total	50	100

Figure 4.6



Average Operating cost per month

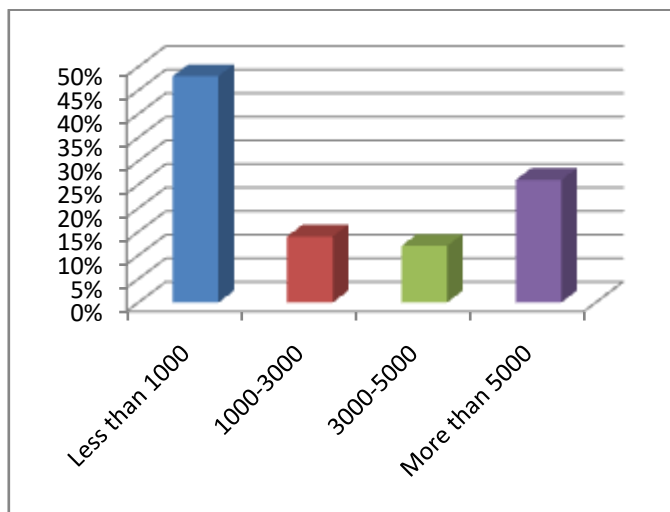
The fisherfolk in order to get high income they have to keep some money for their operating cost. If the operating cost is high they receive only less income.

Table 4.7 Average Operating cost per month

Operating cost(Rs)	No of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 1000	24	48%
1000-3000	7	14%
3000-5000	6	12%
More than 5000	13	26%
Total	50	100%

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.7



Average Operating Profit

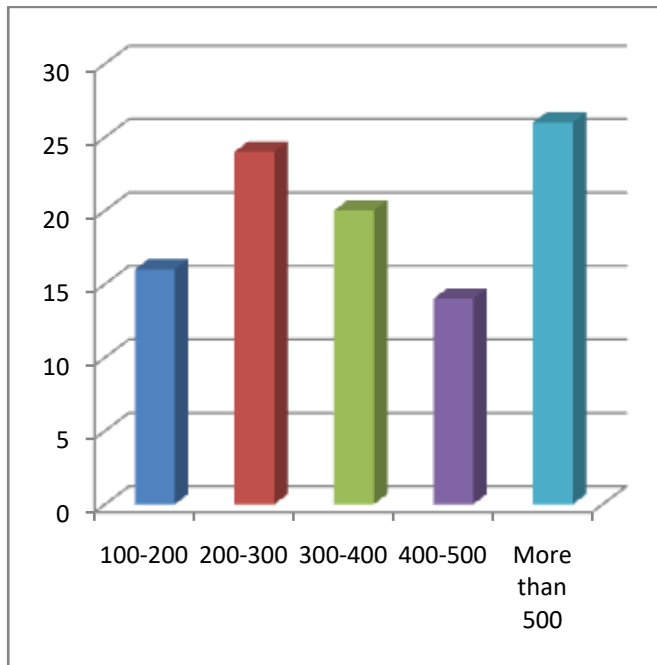
Profit means revenue minus cost. If the operating profit is less they will not interested to make more investment. The investment depends on the profit.

Table 4.8 Average Operating Profit

Range of fish catch(Rs)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
100-200	8	16
200-300	12	24
300-400	10	20
400-500	7	14
More than 500	13	26
Total	50	100

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.8



Income status

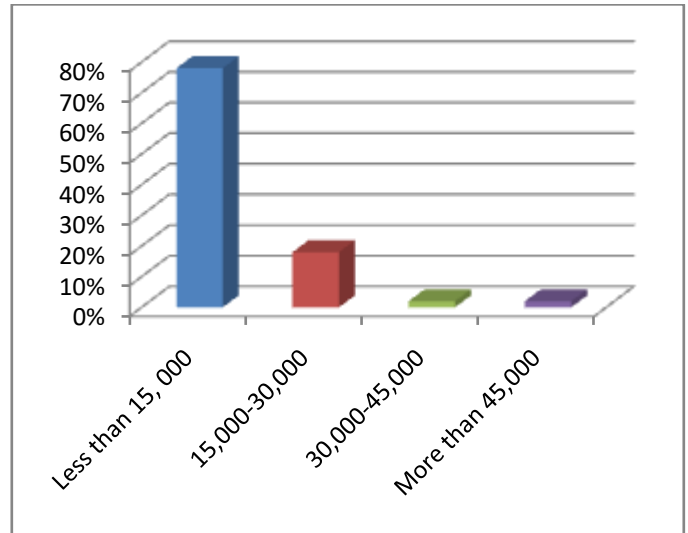
Income plays an important role which lead to the changes in the life style of the fisherfolk. The changes in the basic amenities of life depend on the income. It also depends on the seasonal variation.

Table 4.9 Income status

Total annual income(Rs)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 15, 000	39	78%
15,000-30,000	9	18%
30,000-45,000	1	2%
More than 45,000	1	2%
Total	50	100%

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.9



Expenditure patterns

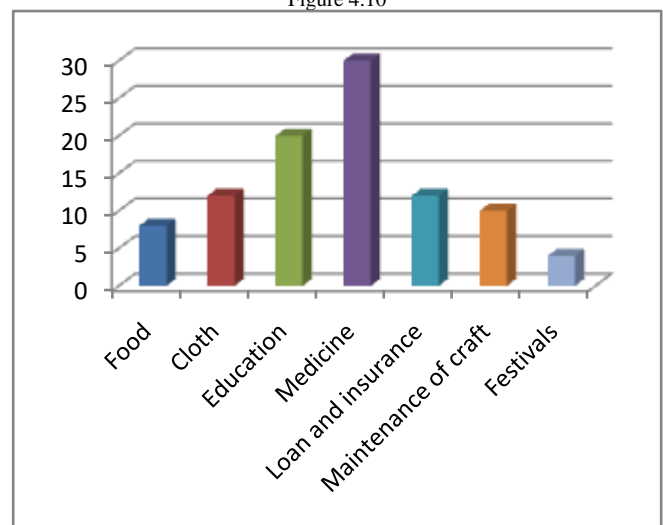
Expenditure depends on the income they receive as profit. The fisherfolk used minimum amount to maintain their standard of living. They have different activities to be made with the income.

Table 4.10 Expenditure patterns

Items	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Food	4	8
Cloth	6	12
Education	10	20
Medicine	15	30
Loan and insurance	6	12
Maintenance of craft	5	10
Festivals	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.10



Awareness of Monetary Aid

The government or other agencies provide financial assistance to the fisher folk. The assistance they receive was mainly in the form of money and subsidies which can improved the quality of life that depends on the income.

Table 4.11

Awareness of the Monetary Aid from Government/ Agencies

Total No of Respondent	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
50	36	72	14	28
50	36	72	14	28

Source: Surveyed Data

Monetary Aid from Government / Agencies

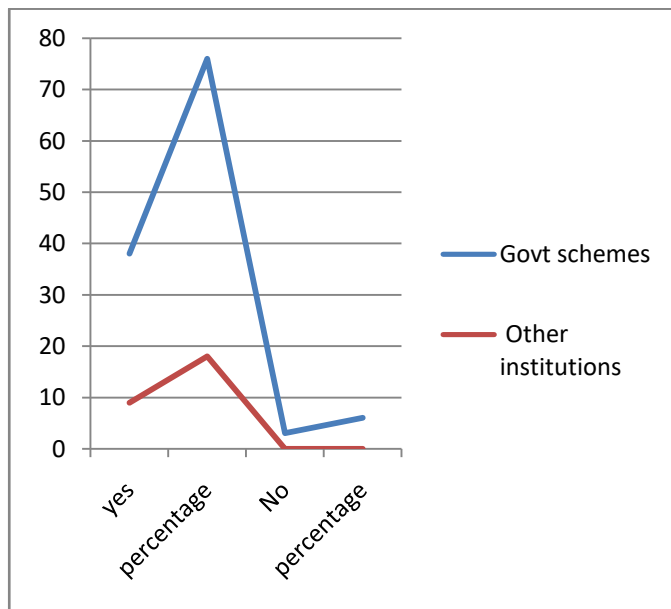
The fisher folk are maintaining a minimum standard of living from their low income. They can increase their income only through the aid given by the government or agencies.

Table 4.12 Monetary Aid from Government / Agencies

Monetary aid	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
Government schemes	38	76	3	6
Other Institutions	9	18	0	0
Total			50	100

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.12



New Schemes and programmes introduced by the Government for fisherfolk

Today the government is introducing different schemes and programmes for the development of the fisherfolk. The

government made changes on the basis of the need of the hour.

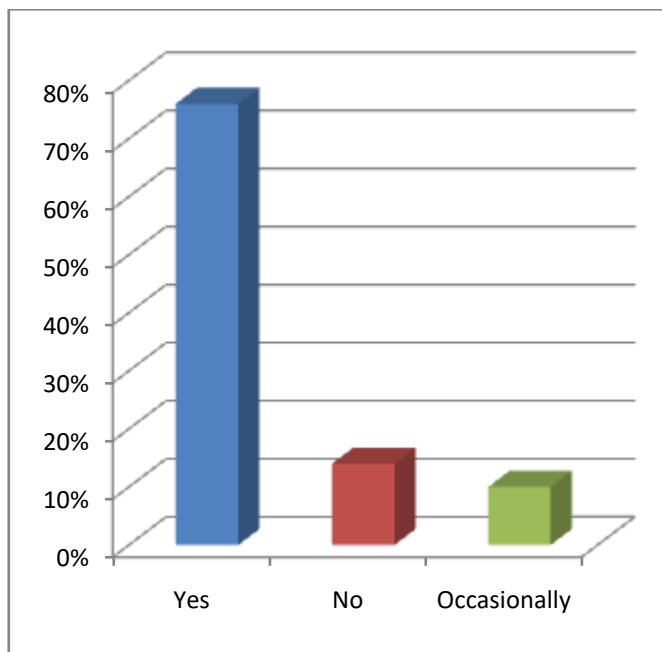
Table 4.13

New Schemes and programmes introduced by the Government for fisherfolk

Items	Yes	Percentage
Yes	38	76%
No	7	14%
Occasionally	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.13



Details about the accessories before or after taking assistance from Matsyafed

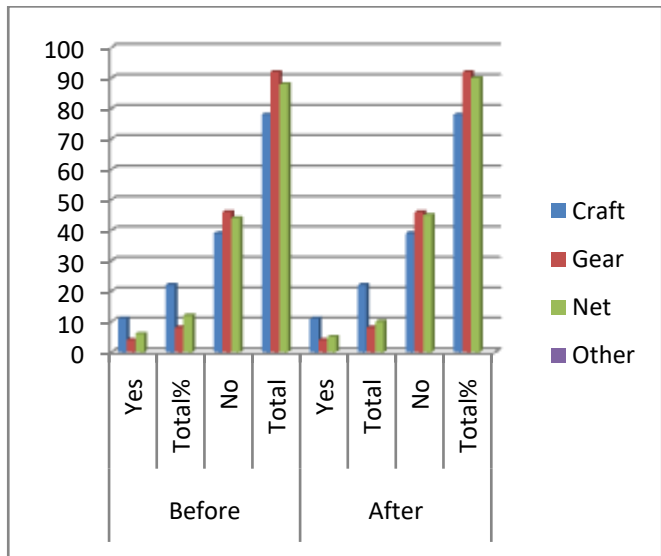
Inorder to get good yield to the fisher folk they have to maintain better accessibilities. The government also providing aid to buy accessories. Many fisher folk are utilizing the help provided by the government.

Table 4.14 Assistance from Matsyafed

Items	Before				After			
	Yes	Total %	No	Total	Yes	Total	No	Total %
Craft	11	22	39	78	11	22	39	78
Gear	4	8	46	92	4	8	46	92
Net	6	12	44	88	5	10	45	90
Other								
Total	50						50	

Source : Surveyed Data

Figure 4.14



Details regarding assistance with fund for repair and maintenance of gear or craft

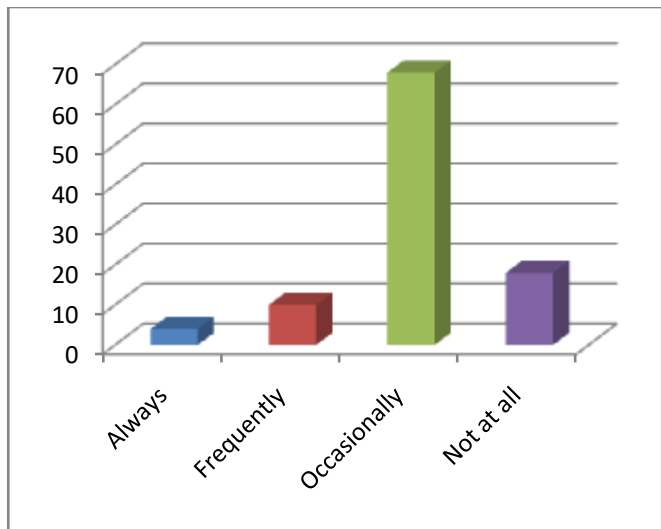
The government providing help to the fisherfolk in different ways. One such was the assistance with fund for repair and maintenance of gear and craft.

Table 4.15 Assistance with fund for repair and maintenance of gear or craft

Items	Yes	Percentage
Always	2	4
Frequently	5	10
Occasionally	34	68
Not at all	9	18
Total	50	100

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.15



Preference of Matsyafed for requirements

Matsyafed the apex institution provided help in different ways. One such was the loans provided by them. Loans provided security to the fishermen which are different from the other banking system.

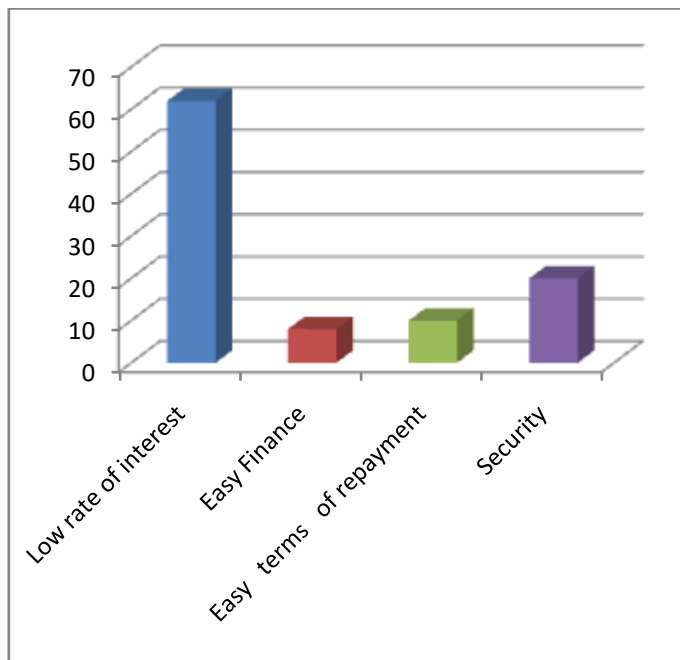
Table 4.16

Preference of Matsyafed for requirements

Reasons for choosing Matsyafed	Yes	Percentage
Low rate of interest	31	62
Easy Finance	4	8
Easy terms of repayment	5	10
Security	10	20
Total	50	100

Source : Surveyed Data

Figure 4.16



Information about getting Matsyafed help to pay back debt

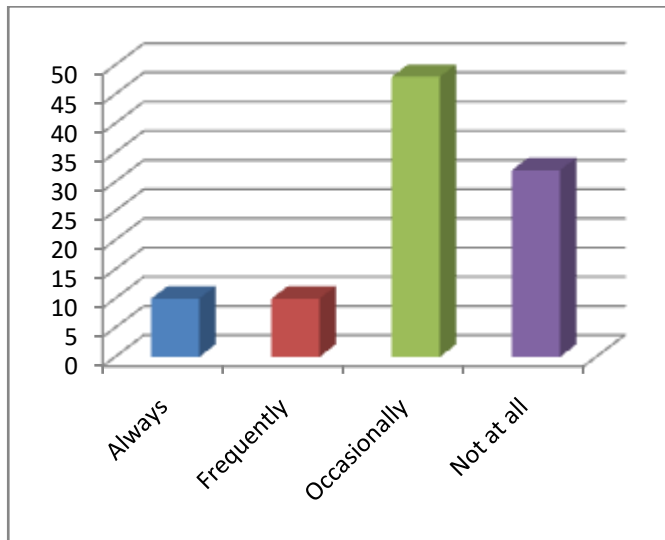
Matsyafed is providing help in the form of money to pay back the debt of the fisherfolk. It will lead to the improvement in the living conditions of fisherfolk.

Table: 4.17 Information about getting Matsyafed help to pay back debt

Assistance for repaying debts	Yes	Percentage
Always	5	10
Frequently	5	10
Occasionally	24	48
Not at all	16	32
Total	50	100

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.17



Details about the requirements for gas/ diesel, Kerosene/ engine oil is met through Matsyafed

A major portion of the income of the fisher folk is used to by gas/ diesel and Kerosene for their craft. Matsyafed provide these with subsidized rate which decrease the fishermen's losses.

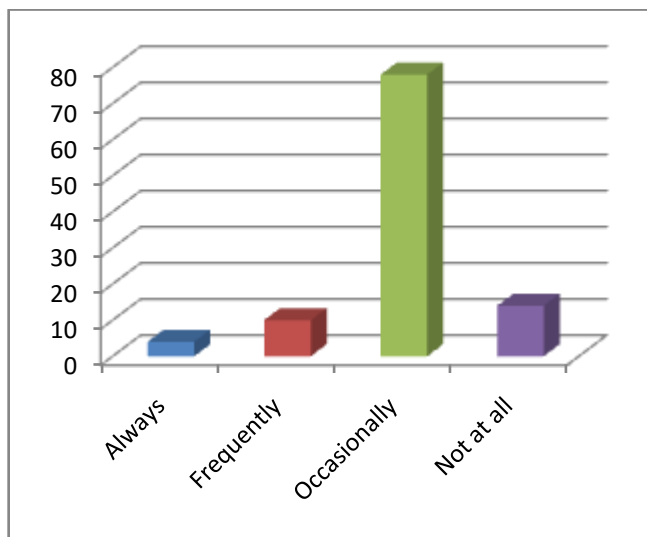
Table 4.18

Requirements for gas/ diesel. Kerosene/ engine oil is met through Matsyafed

Items	Yes	Percentage
Always	2	4
Frequently	5	10
Occasionally	39	78
Not at all	7	14
Total	50	100

Source : Surveyed Data

Figure 4.18



Regarding the reduction in cost of production because of the subsidized rate of fuel produced by Matsyafed

Due to the subsidized fuel by Matsyafed the fisherfolk is having a less expenditure on purchasing fuel.

Table 4.19

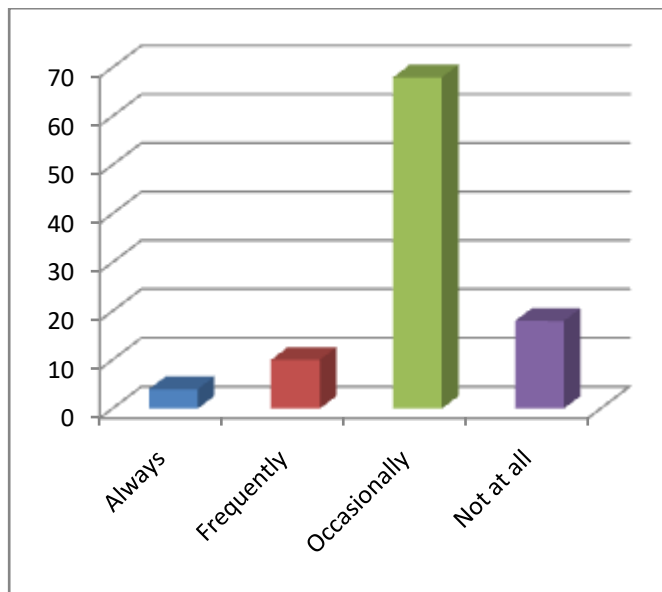
Reduction in cost of production because of the subsidized rate of fuel

Produced by Matsyafed

Items	Yes	Percentage
Always	1	4
Frequently	5	10
Occasionally	34	68
Not at all	9	18
Total	50	100

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.19



Details regarding getting value for catch

The fishermen's main source of income comes from the fish catch. It depends on the seasonal variation. Matsyafed provides income by beach level auction of the fish catch. So at the time of loss they will be maintained with minimum income.

Table 4.20 Average Catch Value

Items	Yes	Percentage
Always	4	8
Frequently	4	8
Occasionally	26	52
Not at all	16	32
Total	50	100

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.20

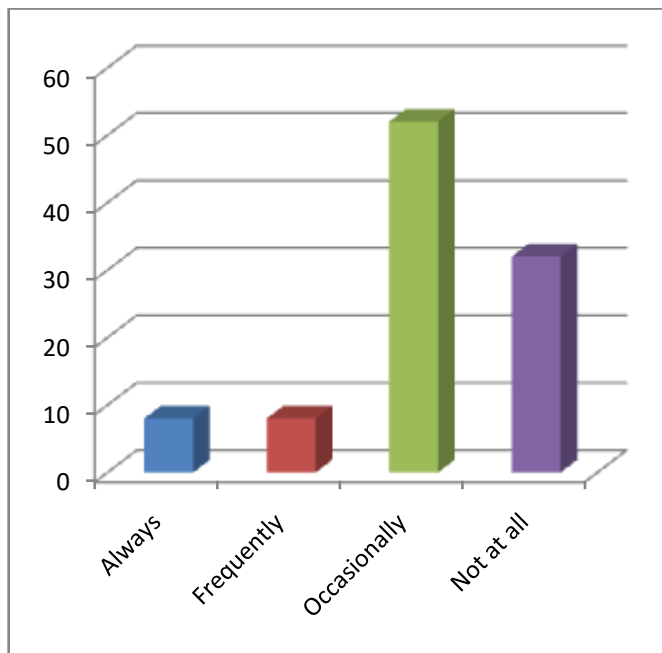
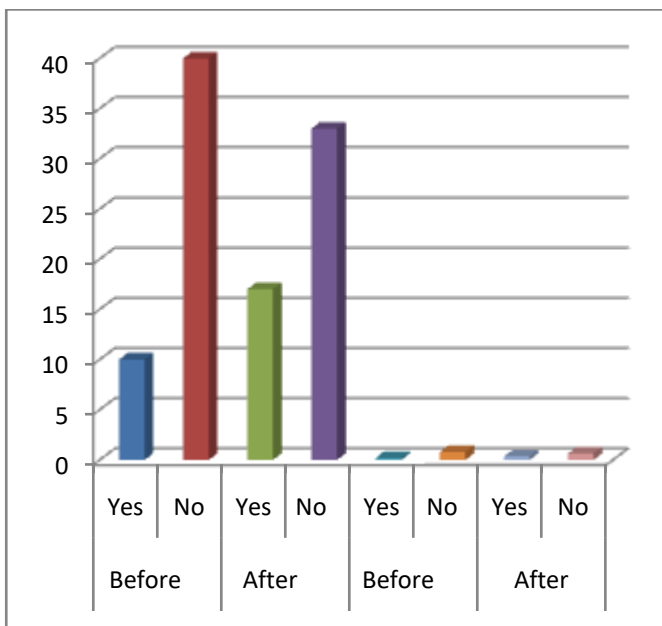


Table 4.21 (a)

Condition before and after receiving assistance from Government /Agencies

Item	Land							
	Before		After		Before		After	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Land	10	40	17	33	20%	80%	34%	66%
Total	50		50		100%		100%	

Figure 4.21(a)



Details regarding the type of construction of their house

By the government aid their standard of living had changed. The most importance was the shelter which was considered to be given preference by the fisherfolk.

Table 4.21(b)

Type of construction of their house

Items	No of respondents	Percentage
Thatched	9	18
Tiled	21	42
Concrete	20	40
Total	50	100

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.21(b)

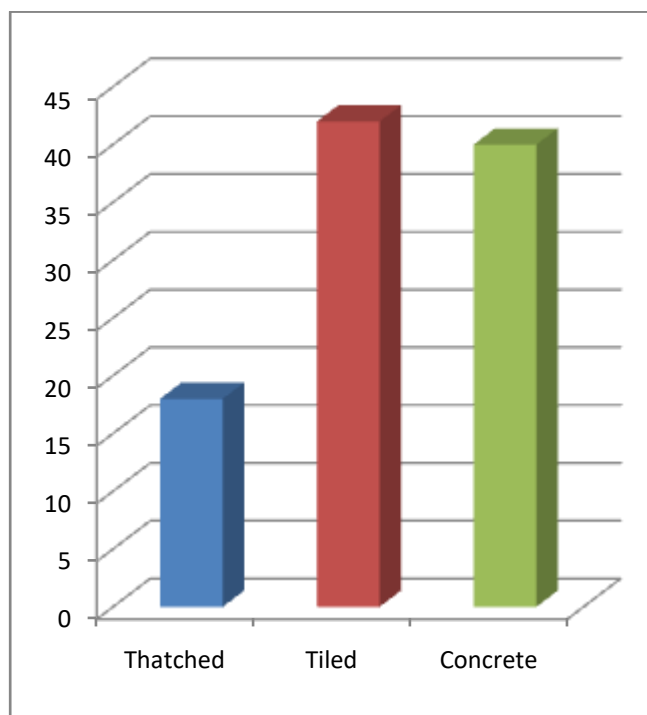


Table 4.21(c)

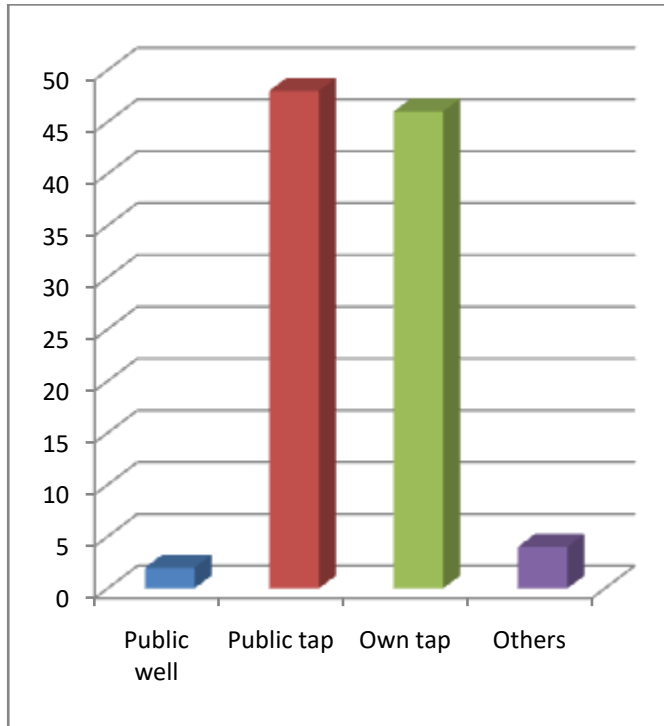
Details regarding drinking water

Facility of drinking water

Items	No of respondents	Percentage
Public well	1	2
Public tap	24	48
Own tap	23	46
Others	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: Surveyed Data

Figure 4.21(c)



V. MAJOR FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

Major Findings

From the analysis it is evident that the fisheries sector is playing an important role in the development of the port village in Kollam. The major findings of the study are as follows .

- The educational status among the fishermen is low. Many of them, about 76% have the primary education and 22% have the secondary education. But after the medicine (30%) they are spending 20% of their income on the education of their children and remaining is spent for other activities. They are receiving aid in the form of grant for the education of their children.
- While considering the housing details majority of them have their own house with the basic facilities for their living. Before getting the aid from the government by agencies only 20% had their own land .80% of the did not have their own land. At the same time after receiving the aid 34% variation can be observed. This change is due to the efficient working of fisheries co-operative societies.
- From the analysis it is evident that majority of 70% of the fishermen are members of the fisheries co-operative societies are receiving aid on the basis of their requirement.

- It is clear from the details regarding the average operating cost per month 48% of them are having less than 1000 of operating cost due to the financial aid given by the matsyafed.
- From the income they get only 8% is used for their consumption purpose. 12% in giving for loans and insurance and remaining for miscellaneous activities.
- From the respondents it is evident that 72% of the fishermen are receiving aid from Government or agencies. 52% of them are getting the aid from the Government schemes and remaining from other institutions and both. It is helping them to withstand some of their livelihood activities.
- Even though the fishermen are not much educated they are aware of the schemes and aid provided by the government only 14% and 10% of them are occasionally or not getting information regarding the new schemes.
- Occasionally some of the fishermen are getting the requirements for gas, diesel, Kerosene, engine oil through Matsyafed at subsidized rate.
- To some extent or occasionally they receive better catch value due to beach auction by the Matsyafed.
- Matsyafed is providing welfare to the fisherfolk to a great extent. They are working as a lubricating device for them. The spark made by the fisheries co-operative societies had changed the livelihood activities of fisherfolk.
- The owners of the craft like vallam and Mechanized boat are provided with assistance from the schemes. But employees in the craft are getting less aid compared with the owners. At the same time both of them are provided with assistance.
- The assistance provided by the Matsyafed is to an extent is helpful to the fishermen to withstand the problems in their daily life.

Recommendations

Even though the Fisheries co-operative societies are providing with aid in all the phases. There are some cases which need more help for them. At the time of certain liberalization, assistance should be provided by the Matsyafed.

1. The authority should make a keen observation on the assistance because there are cases which the aid was not directly received by the fishermen.
2. They should be given information about the new aid or schemes introduced the Government through the matsyafed to upliftment the quality of life of the people
3. The fishermen should provide information to the Matsyafed regarding the type of assistance which they need more.
4. Different aid should be given to the different type of craft.

5. The fishermen students are provided with grants but it should be given not at the later stage. It should be provided at the beginning stage.
6. In order to maintain the craft the fisherfolk should be provide with aid in the fisheries co-operative societies because sometimes without getting proper aid they fall in debt. But after selling the craft they are getting the aid.
7. The pension given to the fisherfolk was increased. It will be very helpful for them.
8. The fishermen community needs more money for medicine. In addition to the existing aid or schemes it is very helpful for them if they provide with an additional aid especially for the old fishermen for medicinal purposes.
9. The fishermen should be provided with the information regarding the revenue and cost because it will be urge for them to do activities as a part of the sector included in the economy as a whole.
10. During the export and import the fishermen should be provided with sufficient information to avoid loss for them.
11. In order to maintain the craft the fisherfolk should be provided with aid in the fisheries co-operative societies because sometimes without getting proper aid they fall in debt. But after selling the craft they are getting the aid.

Conclusion

It is evident from the data analysed that the fishermen are utilizing the assistance whatever they get through the fisheries co-operation societies. To a great extent have changed the livelihood activities of the fisherfolk of port fishing village. If people get an encouragement while doing anything that will lead to the improvement of the activity. Likewise the fisheries cooperative societies or Matsyafed is playing an important role in the social security of the Fishermen. They are giving assistance to the fisherfolk at the necessary conditions. If the fishermen has a will the fisheries co-operative societies will provide them with a way of security. The fishermen are aware of the new schemes of the Government it was a great success from the part of the government. The fisherfolk try to get maximum benefit through the schemes which will have an impact upon the daily activity or case changed in our livelihood pattern.

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