

STUDY PROJECT

On

Women Workers in Aqua Processing Industry: A Status Study in West Godavari District 2018-19

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STUDENT STUDY PROJECT

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Introduction

Aquaculture is one of the focused sectors in India. Apart from its contribution through farming, the role of its linkages in boosting the economy is recognized everywhere. Among the forward linkages, the aqua processing industry offers great employment opportunities for the rural women, besides men. Large scale units offer employment to around 500 to 1000 employees, whereas smaller units employ 200 to 500 employees. On the whole, this industry provides employment for lakhs of people in the country. The major portion of these employees comprises semi-skilled women working in the core operations of segregating, grading, counting, weighing, peeling, deveining, de-heading and icing. The women are trained in the concerned work before they are entrusted with it. Thus, these women who were once engaged in season-wise agricultural operations, get employment throughout the year today. As concerns the district, Bhimavaram is the center of activities in processing industry sector. According to the data from MPEDA website, there are 18 fish handling centers, 44 pre-processing plants, and 43 processing plants registered in the district.

In the light of its contribution to women in terms of employment, it is felt relevant to study the status of the women workers in the processing industry. As a part of the study, the primary data is collected from the women workers on aspects like educational status, work timings, experience in the field, pay details, health problems, provision of other benefits, and involvement in Government welfare schemes.

Review of Literature

A few of the previous studies on the same issue have been reviewed in this section. Dhanya (2013) studied the status of women workers in preprocessing aqua units of Alapuzha, Kerala. He involved 100 women workers in the study. He collected inputs through structured questionnaires. The study found out that the work places in the aqua industry have no industrial hygiene or surveillance programs to evaluate the effects of exposure to seafood and work in a cold environment. Women workers are facing a number of problems which remain unaddressed for various social and economic considerations. It is recommended through the study that epidemiological studies need to focus on quantifying the disease burden attributed to seafood

exposure and identify specific risk factors for allergic sensitization to occupational seafood allergens.

On the same lines, Nishchith also made a study on the role and status of women workers in seafood processing units by taking a sample of 240 from Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu. The findings show that women dominate the industry with a male to female ratio of 3:10 and women were over worked and under paid. Further the study observed a conspicuous disparity between men and women in terms of wages and benefits.

Objectives

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

- To survey the working conditions of women workers in aqua processing industry;
- To find out the problems faced by the workers at work place; and
- To suggest measures for improving their working conditions.

Methodology

The data was collected from a sample of seventy women workers who are employed on regular basis in the processing industries such as Anand, Liberty, Khadar, and Jagadish Marines, tabulated, computed, analyzed, and discussed in the light of the above objectives. The respondents were selected through a random sampling method. They all belong to four villages from four mandals in West Godavari District. The villages are: Kesavaram, Yandagandi, Garagaparru, and Rayalam.

Profiles of the Sample Villages

Table 1: Kesavaram

Census Parameter	Census Data
Total Population	4875
Total No of Houses	1544
Female Population %	50.3 % (2454)
Total Literacy rate %	64.1 % (3124)
Female Literacy rate	30.0 % (1463)
Scheduled Tribes Population %	1.6 % (78)
Scheduled Caste Population %	16.1 % (785)
Working Population %	51.9 %
Child(0 -6) Population by 2011	412
Girl Child(0 -6) Population % by 2011	49.0 % (202)

Table 2: Yandagandi

Census Parameter	Census Data
Total Population	5892
Total No of Houses	1726
Female Population %	50.4 % (2968)
Total Literacy rate %	64.7 % (3814)
Female Literacy rate	31.1 % (1833)
Scheduled Tribes Population %	0.6 % (35)
Scheduled Caste Population %	19.0 % (1117)
Working Population %	47.9 %
Child(0 -6) Population by 2011	505
Girl Child(0 -6) Population % by 2011	49.9 % (252)

Table 3: Garagaparru

Census Parameter	Census Data
Total Population	5092
Total No of Houses	1477
Female Population %	50.1 % (2549)
Total Literacy rate %	66.9 % (3406)
Female Literacy rate	32.1 % (1637)
Scheduled Tribes Population %	0.8 % (42)
Scheduled Caste Population %	16.7 % (852)
Working Population %	49.8 %
Child(0 -6) Population by 2011	462
Girl Child(0 -6) Population % by 2011	49.8 % (230)

Table 4: Rayalam

Particulars	Total	Male	Female
Total No. of Houses	1,648	-	-
Population	5,863	2,956	2,907
Child (0-6)	569	292	277
Schedule Caste	794	414	380
Schedule Tribe	14	7	7
Literacy	80.77 %	83.41 %	78.10 %
Total Workers	2,485	1,838	647
Main Worker	2,331	-	-
Marginal Worker	154	26	128

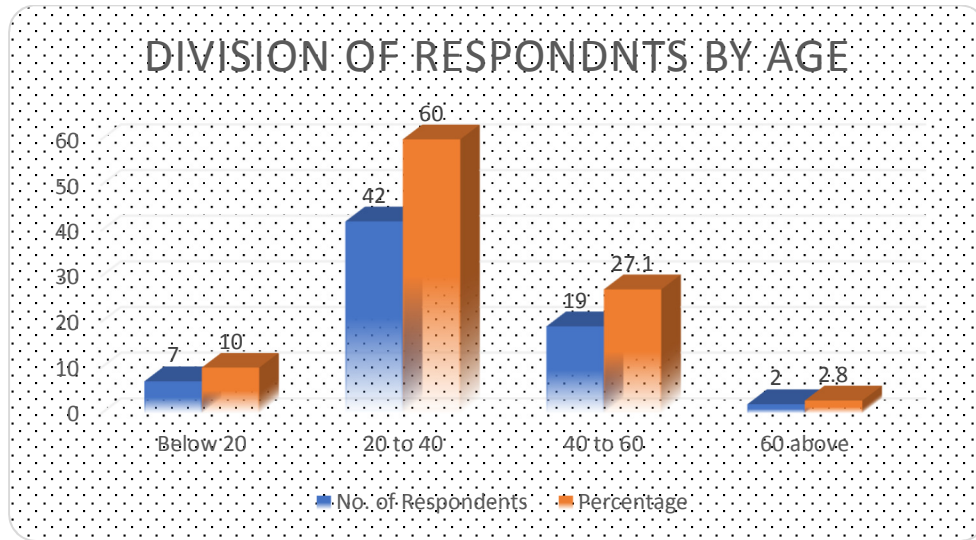
Table 5: Division of Respondents by Village

Sl. No.	Name of the Village	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Kesavaram	22	31.4
2	Yandagandi	30	42.8
3	Garagaparru	11	15.7
4	Rayalam	7	10

Majority of the respondents (42.8 %) belong to Yandagandi village, followed by Kesavaram with 31.4 %. Only a limited percentage of the respondents come from Rayalam which forms a part of the Bhimavaram sub-urban area. Above fifteen per cent of the respondents reside in Garagaparru. These villages are near by processing industries, distance ranges from 5 to 15 kilometers.

Table 6: Division of Respondents by Age

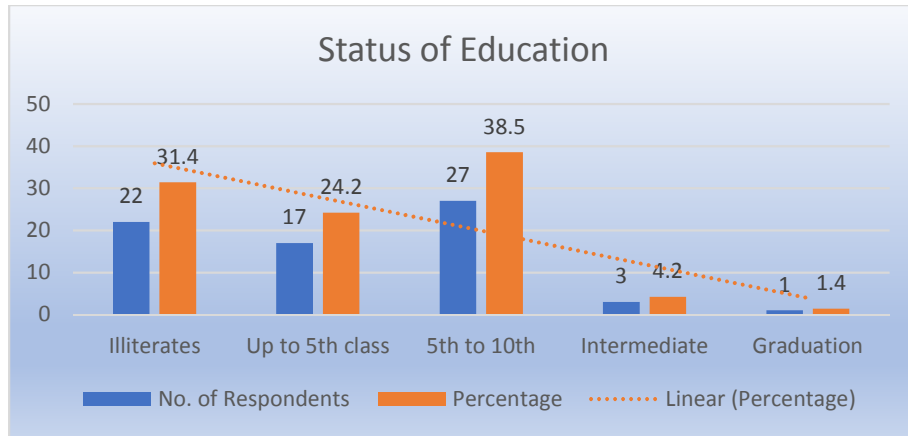
Sl. No.	Age-group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 20	7	10
2	20 to 40	42	60
3	40 to 60	19	27.1
4	60 above	2	2.8



The statistics shows that, three fifth of the sample respondents belongs to the age group of 20-40 which is more productive followed by 40-60 age group (27.1%). The sample respondents who is below 20 years age is 10 per cent and only 2.8 per cent are above sixty years. As the nature of works done by women in the aqua processing industry is physically tough compared to other agricultural and non-agricultural works, 20-40 age-group women are found more in number.

Table 7: Division of Respondents by Education

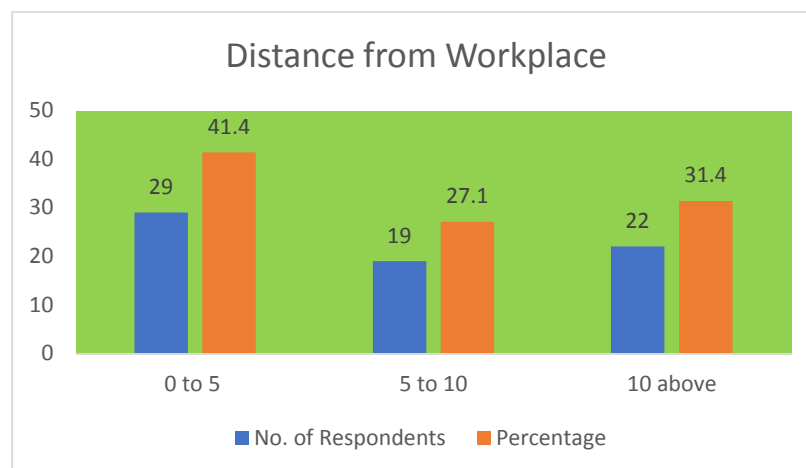
Sl. No.	Education	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Illiterates	22	31.4
2	Up to 5 th class	17	24.2
3	5 th to 10 th	27	38.5
4	Intermediate	3	4.2
5	Graduation	1	1.4



Education details of the sample respondents presented in table no. 3. The data shows that 31.4 per cent of sample women workers are illiterates. The schooling years of 24.2 per cent respondents are below 5 and 38.5 per cent 5 to 10 years. Only 1.4 per cent of respondents are graduates. As the works in aqua processing industry are semi-skilled and unskilled, workers do not need to have specific educational qualification. Then it is clear that, aqua processing industries are contributing to rural, under educated, semi and unskilled labor in terms of employment.

Table 8: Distance from working place

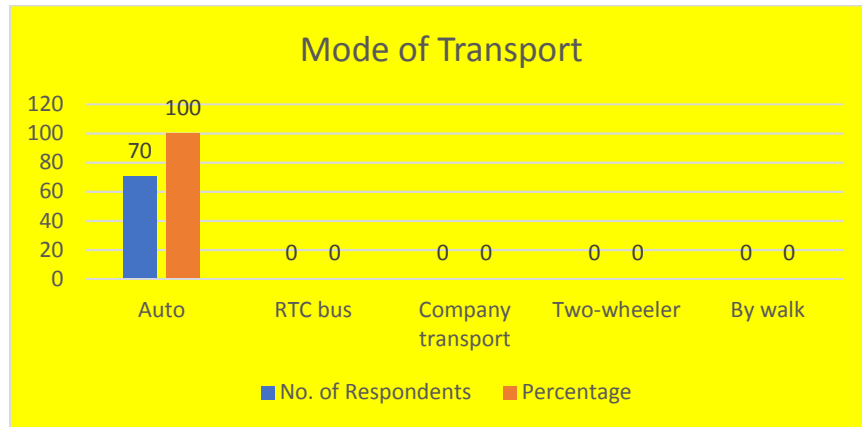
Sl. No.	Distance (in kilometers)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	0 to 5	29	41.4
2	5 to 10	19	27.1
3	10 above	22	31.4



The statistics shows that about one third of the sample women workers need to travel above ten kilometers daily to reach the work place. Daily travelling is a very big physical and psychological constraint for working women in general. And the villages like kesavaram (31.4% sample respondents belong to this village) which has no access to public transport, it is very tough to workers to travel regularly in private transport involves high expenses. The daily travel has a negative effect on the mental health of women, a study has found. The reason could be that women have more responsibility for day-to-day household tasks, such as childcare and domestic chores.

Table 9: Mode of transport

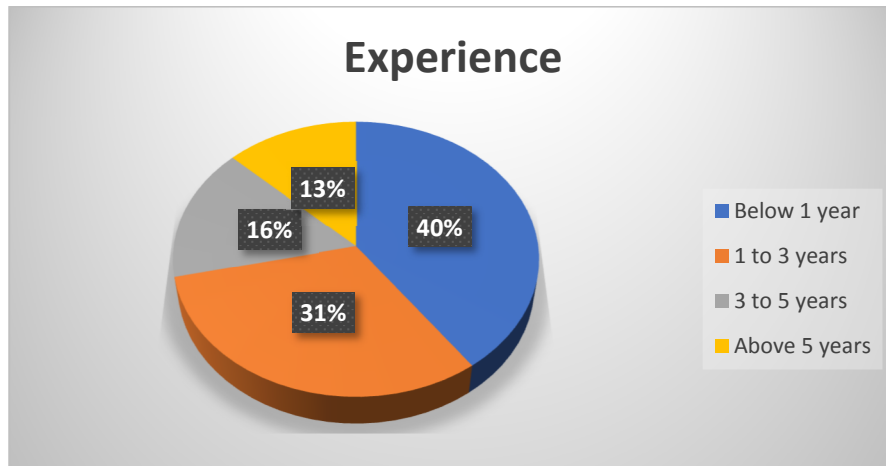
Sl. No.	Transport	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Auto	70	100
2	RTC bus	0	0
3	Company transport	0	0
4	Two-wheeler	0	0
5	By walk	0	0



All the sample respondents depend on auto for their daily travel to work place which involves high risk of accidents. Time constraints, access to public transport, travel with colleagues are the major reasons to this.

Table 10: Division of Respondents by Experience

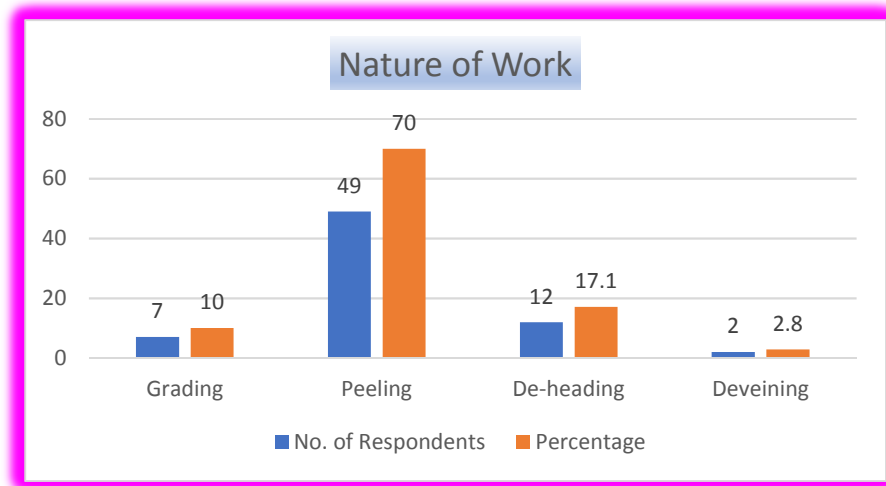
Sl. No.	Experience	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 1 year	28	40
2	1 to 3 years	22	31.4
3	3 to 5 years	11	15.7
4	Above 5 years	09	12.8



Shifting land from agriculture to aquaculture in vigorous in the study area recent times than before. It causes the reduction in common agricultural works on which rural uneducated depend upon for their livelihood. Then, unskilled and under educated women in the study area gradually shifting to non-farm employment particularly aqua processing industry which attracts with job outlook in place of daily wage earner. The figures presented in table no. 6 reveals that 40 per cent of the sample respondents having experience of below one year shows new joining in the industry.

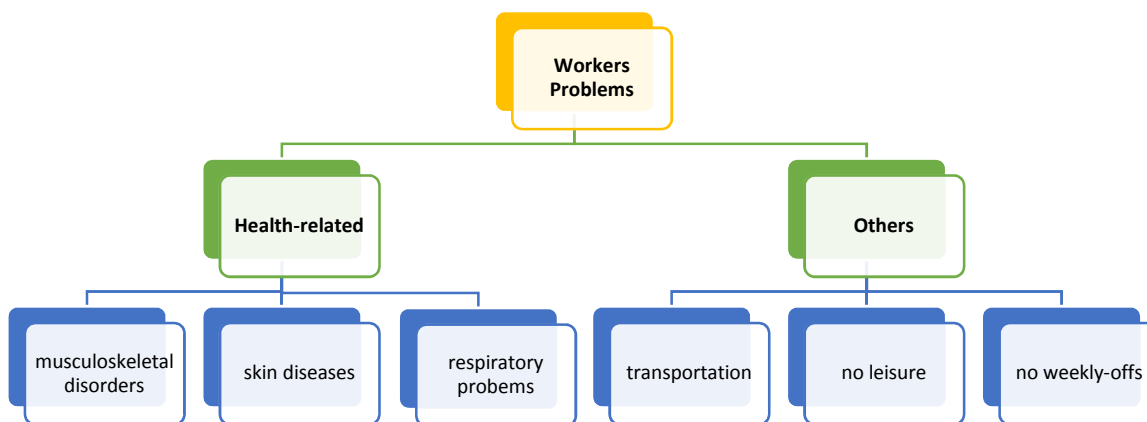
Table 11: Division of Respondents by Nature of work

Sl. No.	Nature of work	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Grading	7	10
2	Peeling	49	70
3	De-heading	12	17.1
4	Deveining	2	2.8



Peeling off the shell is basic work in aqua processing particularly in case of prawn and shrimp processing. The work needs more time than other works. This is the reason for the greatest number of workers (70 % of the sample respondents) involved in peeling than grading, de-heading and deveining. Grading is an easy task and needs few time, de-heading done by demand basis and deveining done for exports only.

Common Problems Faced by Workers



Women play an important role in fisheries development in the country and this study underscores the fact that the women laborer working in the aqua processing industry contribute significantly to the seafood export industry in Andhra Pradesh, which is largest shrimp exporter in India. Usually, majority of the operations in aqua processing industry are done by women like grading, peeling, De- heading, deveining etc. in which worker has to be exposed to different

chemicals, smells and ice. Like other labor-intensive export-oriented sectors, there is a distinct preference for young, unmarried women in this industry. The average age of sample respondents is 36 in the processing firms and 70 per cent of the respondents are below 40 years age. In this juncture, the study revealed that, women workers facing some health problems like musculoskeletal disorders, skin diseases, respiratory problems and some other problems like transportation, no leisure time in between working hours, no weekly offs etc.

Major Findings

- Sixty per cent of respondents belongs to the age group of 20-40 as the nature of work is very tough in physical terms which is not easy for aged people.
- Majority of respondents have low education (Illiterates 31%, up to SSC 62.7%) and only 5.6 per cent of the respondents are above SSC as the nature of work is semi-skilled and unskilled in aqua processing industry which needs any specific educational qualification. Here, it is cleared that, aqua processing industry provides livelihood opportunities for uneducated and unskilled women.
- All the sample workers using auto for daily travel to work place.
- All the sample respondents working in regular shifts that is usually from 9AM to 6 PM. Some of the respondents said that they will do overtime sometimes on excess payment.
- Majority of the respondents go for other works like usual agricultural works, works provided by government through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) etc. in between.
- All the respondents registered in MGNREGS scheme.
- The wage for women workers in aqua processing industry ranges from Rs.260 to 300 per day which is based on work performance.
- All the respondents satisfied with their wage.
- 81.4 per cent respondents are registered for Chandranna Beema Yojana which aimed to provide minimum insurance who are working in Unorganized sector.
- 78.5 per cent of the respondents are members in self-help groups.
- Respondents get yearly bonus and it is depending upon experience, regularity.
- All the respondents would like to continue with the present job, because of unemployment and nearness to home. Low education status also makes them to continue in the current job.

- The respondents have no job security even after putting in several years of service in the same processing firm.
- It is worth mentioning that the wage has no correlation with experience, age or period of service.

Suggestions

- ❖ It is suggested to aqua processing firms to provide transportation facility.
- ❖ It is suggested to give afternoon break for an hour.
- ❖ It is suggested to organize the employment in terms of wage fixation, weekly off, basic insurance facility, regularization of work etc. as the industry has a very good scope to sustain for long run in the study area.
- ❖ It is suggested to follow the government guidelines in fixation of wage. (recently Andhra Pradesh state government fixed the minimum wage at 380 rupees per day)
- ❖ It is suggested to provide the facilities like health care center, rest room for women, separate place for food, toilets with hand wash.

Limitations

- ✚ The study confined to workers from four villages
- ✚ The study is limited to the sample of 70 women workers.
- ✚ The study was undertaken by final year BA students who is no much experience in collection of inputs.

References:

- Dhanya, G. (2013). Status of women employed in seafood pre-processing units of Alapuzha, Kerala. *Fishing Chimes* 33(7). Pp 41-45.
- Nishchith, V. D. Role and status of women employed in seafood processing units in India. Retrieved from <http://pubs.iclarm.net/Pubs/Wif/wifasia/N4-11-Nishchith.pdf>
