



Participation of Marine Fisheries Cooperative Societies in Social Development of Fisher Community

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Abstract: Fisheries cooperative societies are viewed as organizations, helping the fisher community to improve their social, welfare and economic status. As per the preliminary report of Department of Fisheries, Government of Maharashtra (2012) there is 304 registered marine fisheries cooperative societies, among these 266 (87.5%) are functioning in Maharashtra. These societies are involved in a number of social development activities. A study was conducted in the fisheries cooperative societies in Maharashtra among six coastal districts viz. Mumbai suburban, Mumbai, Thane, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga with an objective to analyze the role of marine cooperative societies in the social development process of fisher members. Ten most important social development variables were selected by analyzing the variables using orthogonal rotation (varimax). The responses were measured on three point scale from "High participation" to "Low participation" as responded by key informants. The correlation matrix was used to determine the relationship among selected social development variables. Discrimination among these variables on the basis of mean values was done using "Optimal scaling" technique. The significance level was tested among correlated variables and Chi-square test was used by cross-tabulating the variables against selected districts to show regional variation. It was found that cooperative societies of Maharashtra are performing well with reference to social development activities such as appreciation for educational activities, financial assistance to affected fishers, establishing a cooperative store, donation for religious activities, organizing health camps, etc. Correlation matrix showed no correlation among the variables, indicating each and every variable was not associated with each other. The majority of social development variable showed significance difference ($P < 0.05$) at 5% significance level. Health camp organized by cooperative societies showed highest means among discriminated variables. Almost 85% of social development variables showed a significant difference ($P < 0.05$) when cross tabulated on a regional basis. The result strengthens the hypotheses that, each and every activity is independent of each other. Cooperative can have a participatory discussion with members so as to find the needs and then design social development programmes according to needs of members.

Keywords: Fisheries, Cooperative, Social, Development