

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF FISHING OPERATIONS IN RUDRASAGAR LAKE OF TRIPURA

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ABSTRACT

In rural areas of Tripura, fishing is one of the important economic activities supporting the livelihood of 73,264 fishermen population (Anon., 2002). This study is aimed at examining the socio-economic conditions of fishermen of Rudrasagar Lake of Tripura and analysing the economic viability of fishing operations. The Rudrasagar Lake of West Tripura district was purposively selected as it is a big water body covering 365.61 ha water area with annual fish production of 41,683 kg (2006-07). From 15 fishermen villages, which are mainly dependent on fishing in Rudrasagar Lake, 5 villages were randomly selected. Then altogether 119 fishermen were randomly chosen from these sampled villages for interview. A linear regression model was used to find out the relationship between average catch per day and investment on fishing gears and crafts. The results obtained showed that the fishing is a primary occupation of fishermen of the study area. However they are also dependent on agriculture or daily wages for off-season employment and income. The fishing community of Tripura has low level of education (70 per cent below matriculation) which has kept the fishermen's children to remain in fishing business. In the peak season fishermen do fishing in groups by pooling their fishing resources such as fishing gears and crafts and share the catch accordingly. After deduction of non-recurring and recurring costs, a fisherman family earned about Rs 14,481 per annum. The output-capital ratio was found to be 1.87 which indicates that present fishing operations in the study area are feasible. A direct relationship was observed between average daily catch and investment on fishing gears and crafts. It is interesting to note that 60 per cent fishermen families have savings, though in small amounts with different financial agencies. However, the credit requirements of fishermen were mainly met by money lenders, fish traders or SHGs. The high interest rate 2-5 per cent on monthly basis charged by money lenders or high commission charged (10 per cent) by fish traders are clear indication of exploitation of fishermen. It brings out that despite fishing being economically viable and fishermen getting good returns on investment in fishing gears and craft, they are still unable to have access to institutional loan.