

**SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC  
CHANGE MONOGRAPHS**

**62**

**Traders in  
Food Value Chain:  
Fisheries Sector in India**

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ECONOMIC CHANGE**

**Bangalore**

**(ISEC is an ICSSR Research Institute,  
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## Foreword

The fisheries sector, often referred to as the sunrise sector due to its recent resurgence, assumes significance in the Indian economy in several respects. The most important amongst them is the provision of nutritional security and employment to more than 14 million people within the country. The growth potential of the sector can be identified from the fact that it has registered an eleven-fold increase in production over the past five decades, with the total production being 7 MMT in 2017-18. In recent years, the sector has also contributed immensely to international trade, with the export sector growing at around 10 per cent over the years generating a revenue of Rs 45,1068.9 million in 2017-18. Along with the supply side growth of the sector, there has been an increasing consumer demand for diversified food products, including fish, as a result of post globalization leading to higher purchasing power of a large section of people.

Since fresh fish is the most dominant form of sea food consumed, supply chains gain importance in order to ensure that the produce does not deteriorate from the point of catch to the retail center. An efficient supply chain helps move the fisheries product to the final consumer in a hygienic manner that retains its health benefits. While supply chains are usually considered to be a linear process from production to consumption, modern supply chains are complex networks of players who produce, separate, grade, transport, store, pack and sell the goods. However, the greater the number of players, the longer the supply chain, which may increase the cost of the product, which then will become inaccessible to many people within the country. Due to this it has become increasingly important to map out the supply chain and identify the players who either contribute or hinder the efficiency of the chain, which this monograph attempts to do.

Along with the supply chain, the study also focuses on retail channels that help in the marketing of fish. Marketing channels are also gaining importance today in the context of minimizing post harvest losses, enhance employment opportunities and offer greater standards of hygiene and food safety. Despite this increasing need to study the supply chain and marketing channels, not many studies have been conducted in the Indian context. This monograph fills this gap.

The study brings to the fore that despite improvements in supply chains there still remain problems. One of the many problems is the exploitation of the fishermen in the chain. Due to overfishing, there is a depletion of produce near the shore. Due to this, fishermen are forced to

venture into deeper waters requiring mechanised boats. The lack of capital to purchase these boats make them labourer in the large mechanised boats owned by capitalists. Consequently, fishermen get a very low share in the consumers rupee. These capitalists who are either financier to the boat owners or are themselves boat owners have the first right on the fish and also the price makers. This aspect highlights the need for establishing fishermen cooperatives which will provide them institutional credit enabling them to buy their own fishing vessels in order to prevent their exploitation.

In the marketing of fish, the entry of organized retail channels have filled the gap of convenience, variety and hygiene left by the unorganized channels. However, this has resulted in traditional retailers such as head loaders and cycle vendors from losing their livelihood. Therefore, alternative sources of livelihood must be provided or measures must be taken to integrate them into the modern retail revolution. The significance of this study lies in providing a holistic picture of the entire supply chain of fisheries from the producer to the consumer along with highlighting the different retail channels which can be very insightful for further research and policy making. I hope this monograph will be a useful document for the policy makers and researchers working in this area.

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*Bengaluru*

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