

Perceived Stress, Life Satisfaction and Mental Well-Being of Fishermen in Kerala

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Abstract

Fishermen in Indian coastal areas are at a high risk of stress with its consequences on both physical and mental health. The present study aimed to assess stress, life satisfaction and mental well-being among married and unmarried fishermen of the Calicut district in Kerala. The sample involved a representative sample of 120 fishermen (60 married and 60 unmarried), between the ages 20-50 years. The mean age was 35.5 years. All participants were males and had regular activity for at least 5 years. The fishermen responded to multiple assessments including Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Warwick-Edinburg Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWB) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). Correlation Analyses indicated that there was a significant negative correlation between perceived stress and life satisfaction, perceived stress and mental well-being and a significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and mental well-being. There were significant differences between married and unmarried fishermen on the three mentioned dimensions. There is a significant association between perceived stress, life satisfaction and mental well-being among married and unmarried fishermen population. The implications and suggestions of the study include improving the living conditions, income and insurance policies, and safety and awareness campaigns for the fishermen.

Keywords: stress; life satisfaction; mental health; well-being; fishermen

Introduction

A fisherman or fisher is a person who catches fish and other creatures from a water body. Fishing is considered as a traditional profession by many, all around the world. It has existed as a method of sustenance and survival since the Mesolithic period. Fishing in India is a noteworthy industry and is considered one of the most important occupations among the villagers living along the coastal areas. It is an important sector as it provides employment to millions of people and contributes to food security of the country. In India, the coastline stretches over 8,000 km and there are extensive freshwater resources which support the fisheries in the country. The fisheries and aquaculture contribute to 1.07 per cent to the national GDP of India. The total marine fisher folk population was about 4 million and nearly 61% fishermen families were under BPL category (Census, 2010). The state of Kerala is abundantly rich with marine and freshwater resources. The coast of Kerala constitutes approximately 10 percent of India's total coastline. The state has a geographical area of 38,863 sq.km. Kerala has tremendous potential resources and occupies one of the foremost positions in aquatic biodiversity. The fishermen population in Kerala is about 12 lakhs, which includes both marine sector and inland sector. Kerala fisheries, developed over the years stand great scope for further expansion by way of more rational and fuller utilization

of the resources. The long coastline and the extensive inland waters of the State have brought people belonging to different ethnic groups in contact with fishing. Fishing in Indian villages is viewed as one of the significant occupations for the villagers. Extended periods of time, extraordinary climate and working with substantial hardware add to a high death rate in fisherman. Regardless of a long standing affirmation of the risks and mortality related with fishing, there has been little research in this field. fishermen are at higher danger of suffocating and business related horrible wounds, suffocation, skin sensitivities, gastric, skin and esophageal malignancies and sores (sun, climate boundaries) conditions are additionally seen to be wellbeing worries for fishermen. Segregated working conditions, long moves without adequate rest, unfriendly climate, absence of formal wellbeing preparing, deficient individual defensive hardware, and business related pressure have been ascribed to the expansion hazard related with fishing. The working environment condition of fisherman is minimal safe among the various occupations and the more risky the physical condition is the more the fisherman is in danger of stress. A comparative study was directed in Great Britain by the Department of Public Health of Oxford University to explore the most unsafe occupation among all. Review measurements of mortality were

thought about for the period from 1976-1995. The study revealed that fishing is a perilous occupation and numerous troublesome working conditions were recognized. Deakin University conducted a study about fishermen haunted by depression and stress. Stress and fears about what is to come are adding to depression amounts of gloom among the country's fishermen who are not as exceptionally esteemed as ranchers, says a college scientist. A cross-nation study of the fishing business demonstrates more noteworthy psychological stress and practically twofold the rate of discouragement than the national normal. A field study directed with the participation of specialists from the fisheries area has highlighted the poor living states of the fisherman living on the Beypore-Elathur stretch of the Kozhikode coast. The study conducted by Malabar Coastal Institute for Training, Research and Action (MCITRA), found that more than 500 fisherman families were yet to get houses and almost 30 percent of the all-out family units lived with poor toilet facilities. Of the all-out populace, 20 percent were absolutely uneducated and fended off themselves from all proficiency programs. A noteworthy concern raised by the examination was 'poor people street Access' to fisherman settlements, which could hamper salvage tasks amid cataclysms. Fishermen from Beypore, Kappakkal, Puthiyappa, and Elathur were presently cut off from the city's fundamental focuses including the Civil Station and Kozhikode Medical College Hospital because of absence of associating transport administrations. The need to set up better strong waste treatment offices, social insurance focuses, little scale modern units, and learning focuses too was worried in the report, arranged as a feature of execution of another groundbreaking strategy for Kozhikode's advancement.

The fishing business is risky for fishermen. Numerous fishermen, while tolerating that fishing is risky, staunchly guard their freedom. Many proposed laws and extra guidelines to build security have been vanquished in light of the fact that fishermen restrict them. There has been limited research carried out related to perceived stress, mental wellbeing and life satisfaction. Perceived stress has a detrimental effect on personal and professional life. No combined study has been done on fishermen of Kerala, Calicut and variables (perceived stress, mental well-being and life satisfaction). The objectives of the study are to examine the relationship between perceived stress, mental well-being and life satisfaction among married and unmarried fishermen in Calicut, Kerala.

The hypotheses of the study are as follows:

1. There will be significant relationship between perceived stress, mental wellbeing, life satisfaction in fishermen
2. There will be a significant difference between married and unmarried fishermen in Calicut Kerala on life satisfaction.
3. There will be a significant difference between married and unmarried fishermen in Calicut Kerala on perceived stress.
4. There will be a significant difference between married and unmarried fishermen in Calicut Kerala on mental well-being.

Method

Participants

For the purpose of the present study, a sample of 120 fishermen was considered, out of which 60 were married and 60 were unmarried. They were of the age group between 20-50 years. The mean age was 35.5 years. All participants were males and had regular activity for at least 5 years.

Ethical Consideration

Before the data collection, an informed consent was obtained from all the research participants. The participants were personally ensured that the data given by them shall be kept anonymous and for research purposes only. The participants were given an opportunity to withdraw as and when they want.

Materials

The data was collected on three different variables, perceived stress, mental well-being and life satisfaction. For this purpose, three scales were used.

Perceived Stress. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen, 1994) is the used widely for measuring the perception of stress. It measures the degree to which certain situations in life are perceived as stressful. The items measured how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives. The scale also includes a number of direct queries about current levels of experienced stress. PSS scores were obtained by reversing responses (e.g., 0 = 4, 1 = 3, 2 = 2, 3 = 1 & 4 = 0) to the four positively stated items (items 4, 5, 7, & 8) and then summing across all scale items.

Mental Well-Being. Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS, 2007) was created by scientists at the Universities of Warwick and Edinburgh, with financing given by NHS Health Scotland, to empower the estimation of mental prosperity of grown-ups in the UK. The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale was developed to monitor the mental well-being in the general population. The scale was scored by summing the items on a 1 to 5 Likert scale. The base scale score is 14 and the greatest is 70.

Life Satisfaction. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985) was used to assess satisfaction with life as a whole. It doesn't include financial and health aspects, rather allows respondents to integrate all the domains in life which provide them satisfaction. It includes 5 items on a 7-point scale that ranges from 7 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

Procedure

A sample of 120 fishermen will randomly select from different villages in Calicut. A rapport was established with all the fishermen and they were made feel at ease before participating in the study. The objectives and purpose of the research was explained to them in order to seek the informed consent from them before proceeding further. They were assured that their responses would be kept confidential. After ensuring the cooperation from all the participants, they were instructed to record their responses on questionnaires given to them.

Results

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--------------|---------|---------|---|
| LS Total (1) | | | |
| PS Total (2) | -.547** | | |
| MW Total (3) | .565** | -.591** | |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1: Correlational Analysis between Life Satisfaction (LS), Perceived Stress (PS) and Mental Well-being (MW)

| Variables | LS Total | | PS Total | | MW Total | |
|-----------|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| | Married (n=60) | Unmarried (n=60) | Married (n=60) | Unmarried (n=60) | Married (n=60) | Unmarried (n=60) |
| Mean | 22.233 | 25.666 | 20.383 | 20.383 | 44.683 | 44.683 |
| SD | 5.764 | 4.609 | 7.061 | 7.061 | 9.426 | 9.426 |
| t-value | -3.603 | | 2.576 | | -2.551 | |
| P value | 0.000 | | 0.011 | | 0.012 | |

Table 2: t-test for independent sample on Life Satisfaction (LS), Perceived Stress (PS) and Mental Well-Being (MW)

Pearson correlation coefficient of each variable with other variables among fishermen is represented in a tabular form in Table 1. As shown in the table 1 life satisfaction has significant negative correlation with perceived stress and significant positive correlation with mental well-being, perceived stress has significant negative correlation with life satisfaction and mental wellbeing and mental wellbeing has significant positive correlation with life satisfaction and negative correlation with perceived stress. From Table 2, the mean score of the married and unmarried fisherman in life satisfaction is 22.233 and 25.666 respectively. The standard deviation of the married fisherman is 5.764. The standard deviation of the unmarried fisherman is 4.609. The t-value and p-value are -3.609 and 0.00 respectively. P-value is less than 0.05 level; it shows that the hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant difference between married and unmarried fishermen on life satisfaction. The mean score of the married and unmarried fisherman in Perceived stress is 20.383 and 17.416 respectively. The standard deviation of the married fisherman is 7.061. The standard deviation of the unmarried fisherman is 5.450. The t-value and p-value are 2.576, 0.011 respectively. P-value is less than 0.05 level; it shows that the hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant difference between married and unmarried fishermen on perceived stress.

The mean score of the married and unmarried fisherman in life satisfaction is 44.683, 48.783 respectively. The standard deviation of the married fisherman is 9.426. The standard deviation of the unmarried fisherman is 8.132. The t-value and p-value are -2.551, 0.012 respectively. P-value is less than 0.05 level; it shows that the hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant difference between married and unmarried fishermen on mental well-being.

Discussion

The present study aimed at Life Satisfaction, Perceived Stress and Mental Well-Being among married and unmarried fishermen. Mental health is characterized as a condition of prosperity in which each individual understands his or her very own potential, can adapt to the typical worries of life, can work profitably and productively, and can make a commitment to her or his locale. In Psychology, stress is a sentiment of strain and weight. Stress is a sort of mental torment. Little measures of pressure might be wanted, valuable, and even solid. Positive pressure improves athletic execution. It additionally plays a factor in inspiration, adjustment, and response to nature. Extreme measures of pressure, be that as it may, may prompt real damage. Stress can build the danger of strokes, heart assaults, ulcers, and dysfunctional behaviors, for example, dejection. Life satisfaction (LS) is the manner by which individuals demonstrate their feelings, sentiments (states of mind) and how they feel about their bearings and choices for what's to come. It is a proportion of prosperity evaluated as far as state of mind, fulfillment with connections, accomplished objectives, self-ideas, and self-saw capacity to adapt to one's everyday life. For the purpose of study three scales one on each dimension namely Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen, 1994) and Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS, 2007) were used. A questionnaire was prepared combining all the scales. Then the data was collected from 120 fishermen out of which 60 are married and 60 are

unmarried. The data obtained based on the administration of tools was compiled and analyzed in the light of purpose of the study. For this purpose, t-test for independent samples was computed for each variable. Pearson correlation was used to find the strength of relationship between three variables. Detailed description of the present study was given by means of central tendency (means) and dispersion (standard deviation) for life satisfaction, perceived stress and mental well-being.

The result obtained after the analysis of the data is discussed below:

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant relationship between perceived stress, mental wellbeing, life satisfaction in fishermen.

The hypotheses tested from Pearson correlation coefficient summary table. As reflected in table 1, each variable with another variable among fishermen is represented in a tabular form. Life satisfaction has significant negative correlation with perceived stress and significant positive correlation with perceived stress, perceived stress has significant negative correlation with life satisfaction and mental wellbeing and mental wellbeing has significant positive correlation with life satisfaction and negative correlation with perceived stress. The current findings can be supported from a study conducted by Hayes and Weathington (2010) on Optimism, Stress, Life Satisfaction, and Job Burnout in Restaurant Managers. The results of the study indicated that the stress and job burnout were significantly related and stress was significantly related to decreased life satisfaction. Fishermen in India are burdened with a wider job profile which greatly affects their work schedules and gives them least time for leisure and recreation. There is no organized structure of the fishing industry hence no reinforcements, rewards, promotion or increments are given for their efforts. Due to the interference of personal life, especially if the fishermen are married, there is more stress and low mental well-being among fishermen, hence leading to low life satisfaction. Bhondve et. al (2013) found significant association between job satisfaction and job stress, marital status, depth of sea fishing, socio-economic status and type of job.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant difference between married and unmarried fishermen in Calicut, Kerala on life satisfaction.

The hypothesis was tested from t-test as given in Table 2; the mean score of the married and unmarried fisherman in life satisfaction is 22.233 and 25.666 respectively. The standard deviation of the married fisherman is 5.764. The standard deviation of the unmarried fisherman is 4.609. The t-value and p-value are -3.609, 0.00 respectively. P-value is less than 0.05 level; it shows that the hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant difference between married and unmarried fishermen on life satisfaction. The mean score shows that unmarried fishermen are higher in life satisfaction than married fishermen.

Mikucka (2016) examined the life satisfaction of married and unmarried people and found that life satisfaction of being married decreased for men both in developed and developing countries and the average life satisfaction of unmarried men increased over the past three decades. Hence, supporting our hypothesis of life satisfaction being greater among unmarried fishermen than married fishermen.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant difference between married and unmarried fishermen in Calicut, Kerala on perceived stress.

The hypothesis was tested from t-test as given in Table 2; the mean score of the married and unmarried fisherman in Perceived Stress is 20.383 and 17.416 respectively. The standard deviation of the married fisherman is 7.061. The standard deviation of the unmarried fisherman is 5.450. The t-value and p-value are 2.576, 0.011 respectively. P-value is less than 0.05 level; it shows that the hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant difference between married and unmarried fisherman on Perceived stress. The mean score shows that married fishermen are higher in perceived stress than unmarried fishermen.

There could be a number of reasons why married fishermen feel more stressed than their unmarried counterparts. Fishermen, in general, are exposed to a number of occupational stressors, hence experiencing greater stress. To add to the job stressors, there are finances, work commitments, and family commitments, which contribute to greater stress among married fishermen than unmarried fishermen.

Hypothesis 4: There will be a significant difference between married and unmarried fishermen in Calicut Kerala on mental wellbeing.

The hypothesis was tested from t-test as given in table 2; the mean score of the married and unmarried fisherman in life satisfaction is 44.683 and 48.783 respectively. The standard deviation of the married fisherman is 9.426. The standard deviation of the unmarried fisherman is 8.132. The t-value and p-value are -2.551 and 0.012 respectively. P-value is less than 0.05 level; it shows that the hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant difference between married and unmarried fishermen on mental wellbeing. The mean score shows that unmarried fishermen are higher in mental wellbeing than married fishermen.

Orthner (2009) examined the relationship between well-being and travel and work-related separation demands in certain occupations including fishing industry. The results indicated poor mental well-being among individuals who experience more frequent work-related separations.

The fishing business demands manual and psychological labour. It is considered a health hazard due to fatalities and major injuries caused due to the harsh conditions. There is no proper and organized structure of the fishing industry. The fishermen risk their own lives without any proper security and safety provisions. The fishermen blame the ineffective governance and largely failed institutions for their decreased life satisfaction and mental well-being and increased stress.

The fishing industry must focus on the fishermen's physical and psychological health. For the organizational growth, the employers should make fishermen's health the top priority. Certain factors like revenue, job security, reinforcements and increments must be provided by the employers and policy makers. The government and other institutions must provide and implement better schemes for the welfare of the fishermen as well as their family members.

Although all possible efforts were made to control extraneous variables in the research design, certain limitations still existed which were unavoidable in this context. The present investigation has the following limitations due to lack of time and also resource constraints. The present study collected data only from one of the districts in Kerala; hence it can't be generalized among other districts. The present study is restricted in terms of the location as the sample drawn from the population which is

confined to Calicut district only. Data collected for this study was obtained from self-report scales; one can only trust that the individuals were reporting events from their lives honestly and without exaggeration. All of the data collected in this study were obtained from self-reports scales. Therefore the results may be limited by participants' lack of openness.

Others variables such as age, course, gender, socio economic status etc. - might have influenced the variables under study. The research conducted is confined to quantitative analyses, which may not provide subtle reasons for the observations made.

Future research should aim to work upon the limitations identified above. A larger sample drawn from a more geographically spread area should be included. Participants should be taken from different districts from Kerala and other parts of the country. Steps should be taken to collect data using measures besides self-report measures to avoid response biases. The influences of other variables on the variables also have to be explored.

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