

FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT: POTENTIAL AREA TO COMBAT POVERTY IN COSTAL BELT OF BALOCHISTAN

Economy

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ABSTRACT

Balochistan, the largest province of Pakistan area wise and the smallest population wise is gifted with many natural resources. It is not only endowed with mineral resources but also provided with rich marine life by the nature. Out of 1481 km of the coastal belt of Pakistan the share of Balochistan coast comprises of 1129 kms, which is 76.2% of the total coastal belt. The remaining coast of Pakistan falls in Sindh province which is 23.7%.

There are about 350 species of fish in the country. The province contributes 16 to 17 percent of the value added towards natural fisheries and its share in the world fisheries exports is only 0.5 percent. Balochistan marine fish production is 128000 metric tons per annum compared to Sindh province, which is 275000 metric tons during the year 2006 which is more than double the production against having a coastal belt of 76.2 percent of the total. This low share does not depict her lack of potential but portray the low priority of the Government to this important sector. Fishermen had facing problem due to rising oil prices and ban imposed by European Union on seafood export to 27 countries of the European Union. Balochistan share of export has declined or stayed stagnant whereas the import of the developed countries has increased by four percent annually. Declining shrimp production has resulted in decline in the value of export. Since all exporters of fish are Karachi based, therefore, the problems of fishing sector is eclipsed in Balochistan. Besides Pakistan export is of low value added biomass mostly consists of frozen fish and shrimp whereas, fresh fish and shrimp accounts for very low percentage of the total value.

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Coastal inhabitants having the only option of fisheries to rely on except the nominal agriculture occupation are involved in the profession of fishing and this profession is centuries old. It is their mainstay and they are entirely dependent on Marine Fisheries. The majority of the population is poor except the few rich. They have a very poor standard of living.

OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY:

The main objective of this article is to find ways and means of raising the living standard of the people and alleviating poverty in coastal belt of the Province. The past neglect not only has affected the GDP growth but deprived the country of precious foreign exchange which could have been earned through fish export. Besides, to recommend measures to fill the gap between potential and actual fish catch.

This article is based on secondary data obtained from fisheries Department Government of Balochistan. No primary data had been collected as it was waste of time, resources and energy, since the data was available with the fisheries Department.

POTENTIAL AND FISH CATCH:

Annual catch of fish is 121400 metric tons per annum out of maximum sustainable yield of 300,000 metric tons. This includes the poaching of Karachi based fishing. The registered number of fishermen at Gaddani is 4649, Damb 6163, Omara 4989, Pasni 8910, Surbandar 3877, Gawadar 8023, Pishukan 3612 and Jewani 4537 respectively during the year 2008.. Thus there are about 44760 fishermen working along the coast.

Table-I
FISHERMEN POPULATION ON BALOCHISTAN COAST FOR THE YEAR 2006

CATEGOR IES	Jiwani	Pishukan	Gwadar	Sur Bandar	Pasni	Ormara	Damb	Gaddani	Total
<i>Full time fishermen</i>	3301	2360	5170	2501	5450	3298	3628	3105	28813
<i>Part time fishermen</i>	736	812	1991	1041	2463	1176	1634	1020	10873
<i>Occasional fishermen</i>	500	440	862	335	997	515	901	524	5074
<i>Total fishermen:-</i>	4537	3612	8023	3877	8910	4989	6163	4649	44760

Source: - (Directorate of Fisheries Balochistan)

Table-I shows the important coastal development along the coast. Wherever the topographic features and safe operation of fishing craft were favourable coastal settlement have developed. About two and half hundred thousand people livelihood depends upon this industry. Besides this about two hundred thousand people are involved in the ancillary activities such as loading, unloading, marketing, processing and working as shopkeepers.

The potential of excess catch skill require investment in the fishing craft with modern equipments which will facilitate the additional catch. A program of participatory involvement with the local resident could be started for the expansion of fleet.

**TOTAL FISH LANDING AND ITS VALUE ON BALOCHISTAN
COAST
FOR THE YEAR 2006**

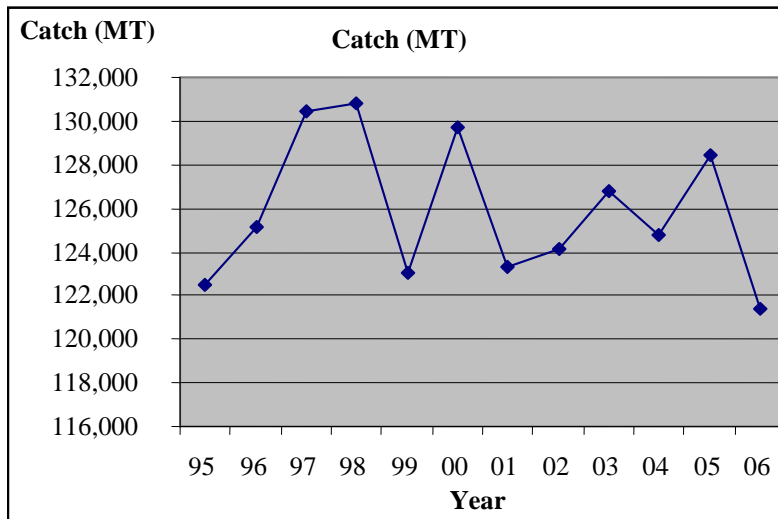
S. No	COMMERCIAL FISH	QUANTIT Y (m. tons)	Rs.(ml)
1	Flat Fish	1355	155
2	Sardinals	18614	164
3	Clupieform	7576	151
4	L.Makeral	3157	601
5	S.Makeral	2056	205
6	Tuna	9951	545
7	Seacat Fish	7606	283
8	Eels	1603	967
9	Baracuda	2050	164
10	Hreadfin Fish	1210	39
11	I. Grouper	1109	105
12	S.Grouper	2278	117
13	Cobias	1974	108
14	Scad	1872	70
15	Indian Makral	16560	794
16	Queen Fish	3936	394
17	Travely	2688	319
18	Dolphin Fish	2200	135
19	Grunts	2894	347
20	L.Croaker	2259	303
21	S.Croaker	3611	180
22	Emperar	2420	229
23	Pomfrets	3587	1004
24	Hairtail	9756	670

25	Sharks	1256	167
26	Rays	1078	17
27	Kiddi	1442	173
28	Other	13426	842
	Total:-	121442	8661

Source:- (Directorate of Fisheries Balochistan)

The socio-economic development of the coastal areas is entirely dependent on the development of marine fisheries sector. Small fishing communities living along the coast need to be equipped with modern equipment and implements of fish catch to raise their living standards. This could also increase the productivity of GDP of the country. Value added fisheries product could also enhance their income and standard of living. By providing market facilities and opening of direct market outlets could be another window for increased productivity. Establishment of seafood processing plants will enhance the value added and income of the fishermen and will reduce the post harvest losses. About fourteen processing plants had been established, eight of them during the last three years. About 43589 metric tons of chilled fish 4772 (M .T) of frozen fish and 10212 Cured Fish is produced.

FIG- I
FISH CATCH FROM BALOCHISTAN (1995-2006)



Source:- (Directorate of Fisheries Balochistan)

The figure depicts a Fluctuating trend in the catch of marine fisheries.

The growth of fish catch was steady from the year 1995 to 1998. A sudden decline in fish catch is noticed in the year 1999 and subsequently in the year 2001. Again the increase is only limited up to the year 2003. Catch decline once again in the year 2004 and 2005. But the increase in the year 2006 is less than the increase in the year 2000. The reasons for their fluctuation during all these years are poor harbour infrastructure, inefficient catch, lack of modern vessels, lack of modern packaging and preservation technique, use of harmful nets by foreign trawler and poor hygiene and other facilities.

Fish production in the province could be increased manifold as two third of the coastline lies in Balochistan whereas the production is only one third of the national marine catch. Fishing sector if developed on modern lines would certainly prove a source of prosperity in the area. It may not only reduce poverty but also raise the standards of living of the people through improvement in fish catch, modernisation of vessels and construction of fishing infrastructure. Income could also be increased through more export as only one fourth of country's catch is exported at present. Fish is a highly perishable commodity. Therefore, it requires better preservation, improved packing technique, better hygienic arrangements and improved environmental conditions.

LOW PRIORITY BY THE GOVERNMENT:

The low share of the province in the production of fisheries is not due to the lack of potential but shows the low priority of the Government to this important sector. A detailed plan may be prepared by the Government for the development of fishing and its downstream industries. The fisheries resources of the province are underutilized at present, steps should be taken to exploit the vast resources of Balochistan. Maximum sustainable catch is 300,000 metric tons against the present catch 121400 metric tons per annum. By taking proper measure for the development of fisheries sub sector, the production could be increased to another 178600 metric tons per annum.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

The strategy for development should be sustainable in nature in order to achieve the objective of poverty reduction. In this connection, capacity and infrastructure development, reduction in the post harvest losses, fish processing and facilitation of market and institutional strengthening are the steps to be taken at war footing. Above all, as the meagre resources at the disposal of Provincial Government has been the main obstacle in the growth

of this sector, the availability of funds by the Federal Government is the need of the hour otherwise these measures will be hard to achieve in the presence of the financial crunch.

Through adoption of proper strategy following objectives could be achieved:

- Fish and shrimp hatcheries could be formed in suitable places.
- Improvement and facilitation of marketing fish and fish products.
- Establishment of ice factories and refrigeration unit along the coast.
- Encouragement of private sector and joint ventures with the private sector for investment in fishing sector.
- Commissioning of ferry service between the coastal town and Karachi.
- Start of community development programme, literacy and vocational training in the fishing communities.
- Establishment of capacity Building Institutions and awareness raising.
- Introduction of integrated programme through Coastal Development Authority.
- Feasibility study be carried out for direct export of fish through export to potential importing countries.
- Replacement of small boats by modern fishing vessels through private public partnership, availability of easy loan and formation of cooperatives.
- Encouragement of investment in production, transport, processing, preservation, packing and marketing by providing incentive for investment.
- Formation of rules and regulations for prohibition of plastic net, which are environmentally harmful for juvenile shrimp and fish.
- Public sector investment for providing fishing infrastructure like harbour, jetties and link road.
- Improvement of hygienic facilities and environmental conditions at international standards.

FUTURE PLAN:

There is a dire need to chalk out proper plan which mainly includes; the construction of infrastructures, capacity building and skill development of fishermen, improvements in marketing facilities, and provision of modern equipments & fishing vessels to fishermen.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION:

Technical assistance may be requested from donor countries especially European Union for implementation of the aforementioned plan.

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