

# Impact of COVID 19 on marine fish marketing in Andhra Pradesh

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The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the livelihoods of farmers, fisherfolk through a primary survey of fish supply chain operators in Andhra Pradesh was carried out during July and August 2021. Fifty sample respondents comprising, fishermen (6), retailers (31), wholesalers (11) and distributors (2) were selected from Srikakulam (Bandarivanipeta), Vizianagaram (Chintapalli), Visakhapatnam (Poodimadaka, Visakhapatnam Fisheries Harbour, and Pedda Jalaripeta), East Godavari (Amalapuram, Bhairavapalem, and Kakinada), and Krishna (Gilakaladindi) districts.

Most of the respondents (76%) were in the age group between 30-40 and 40-50. Literacy status of the respondents indicated that, 42 % were illiterate, while 26 % have completed higher secondary education (Table 1).

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Age distribution (Years)		Educational Status (%)	
Age range	Years	Grade	Frequency
30-40	18 (36)	Illiterate	21 (42)
41-50	20 (40)	Primary	9 (18)
51-60	7 (14)	Secondary	13 (26)
More than 60	5 (10)	Graduate	7 (14)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percent to total

The impact of covid-19 on several aspects of business affected by the COVID 19 pandemic were obtained from the respondents. This included information on production, demand, transportation, and trade, among other things. A major drop in fish business as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic was reported by 40% of the respondents. The COVID 19 pandemic, according to

76% of respondents, has resulted in a significant drop in demand for their products. Due to a significant drop in the price of their fish items, 52 % of respondents were affected (Table 2). The major reason for the reduction in demand for fish could be attributed to the initial inertia and fear among the consumers for fish consumption during the initial stages of the spread of the pandemic. More than 70% of respondents believed that due to the COVID 19 pandemic selling their products has become more difficult.

Furthermore, 84% of respondents have temporarily halted their fish business owing to a lack of ice and transportation to neighboring states. Fish trading was permanently closed for 8% of the respondents, 4% of respondents have ceased selling domestically, and 4% have stopped selling overseas as well. Fish trading, particularly export was badly affected due to lack of transportation facilities, difficulties in sending export documents due to non-functioning of postal/ courier services, and difficulties in clearing containers in the ports of importing countries.

During the pandemic, 76 % of respondents felt it is more difficult to market their products, while 24% felt

Table 2. Opinion of respondents on effect of fish business due to COVID 19

Category	Demand for fish	Fish Prices
Large decline	38 (76)	8 (16)
Slight decline	10 (20)	1 (2)
No change	0 (0)	26 (52)
Slight increase	1 (2)	15 (30)
Large increase	1 (2)	0 (0)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percent to total

Table 3. Opinions of fishermen regarding regulations implemented by Government as a result of pandemic

Fish processing / distribution (%)			Fish harvest (%)			Support (%)		
More	Less	No	Enhanced	Reduced	No change	Finance	In Kind (or) provisions	No support
16	46	38	20	2	78	0	48	52

it is more difficult to obtain inputs / goods. Despite the obstacles that fish traders face, such as access to markets, ice availability, labour, and transportation, it was discovered that an alternative and non-traditional marketing channel, Whatsapp group-based online marketing, has evolved in the retail sector. Due to the pandemic, 16% of respondents said that laws have been tightened, particularly on Sundays and public holidays. In contrast, 46% of respondents believe COVID has made regulations less restrictive. There has been no change in government restrictions for fish processing or distribution, according to 38 % of respondents. 20% of respondents believe that new government laws will help them harvest more during a pandemic. According to 78 % of respondents, government rules have had little effect on fish production (Table 3).

Regarding the level of government assistance received by respondents as a result of the pandemic. 52% of the respondents said they had received no help from the government. Other than cash assistance, 48% of respondents received mentioned support from state/ central governments in the form of rice and pulses (Table 3).In conclusion the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent limitations had a negative influence on fish marketing operations in north Andhra Pradesh. Furthermore, skilled workers, migrant workers, and labourers being compelled to stay at home, affected all aspects of the marine fishery sector as well as their lives. Further financial relief to the sector and steps to reduce supply chain disruptions to avoid detrimental impact on the marine fishery sector of Andhra Pradesh is needed.