

Fish market is a place where fish and fish products of commercial importance are subjected to sale. Regulation of fish production and consumption through sale is known as fish marketing which is integrated part of fish industry. The new marketing techniques have been adopted so as to sell more fish not only in local areas but also in distant and interior markets.

The potential demand of fish in the markets changes according to the taste and needs of consumers. Therefore traders have to care fore maximum production, best possible quality, packing, brand name pricing the product of their lively supply to consumers to get better result on investment. Constant advertising has to be done for the awareness of new products so as to gain highest amount of output. Thus fish market is important not only as a source of food but it is directly associated with the economy of country, it earns foreign exchange also by selling the commodities in international market.

Market infrastructure includes wholesale markets, retail markets and fish retail outlets. Fish passes through different intermediaries like auctioner, wholesaler, retailer and vendor from landing centre or fish pond to the consumers. Fish markets are bridges between producers and consumers. The functions of the fish market are to collect the fishes from producers or middlemen or private traders to sell the fishes to consumers

and to explore the possibilities of export and import thereby to help the country to earn more foreign exchange and cooperate in international trade.

India is the third largest fish producing country in the world and ranks second in inland fish production. The 8118 km coastline, 52.66 lakh ha of reservoirs, tanks and ponds and 14.37 lakh ha of brackish water are India's vast potential resources of fish production. It is recorded as 76.16 lakh mt during the year 2008-2009 in India. Gujarat has 1600 km coastline constituting 20% of Indian coastline. Reservoirs, tanks and ponds covers 3.82 lakh ha and brackish water covers 3.76 lakh ha area. Fish production is recorded as 7.66 lakh mt during the year 2008-2009 in Gujarat, while 1.04 lakh mt during the year 2008-2009 in South Gujarat. South Gujarat contributes 14% of total Gujarat's fish production. South Gujarat has lots of potential in fisheries which is a sunrise sector and contributes to economic growth and human welfare. In spite of these, fishermen's status is not up to the mark due to lack of education, knowledge about latest technology, credit facilities and poverty. Also because of unawareness regarding various government subsidies and cooperatives, they are unable to avail the facilities. Fish markets are unorganized as these are handled by middlemen and private traders with a large number of intermediaries between producers and consumers which reduces fishermen's share.

Fish is a rich source of protein, carbohydrate, vitamins, iron, calcium and other minerals for human diet. But due to inadequate facilities such as ice, preservation, storage, transportation, improper handling and poor hygienic conditions fishes get easily spoiled. Spoilage caused by nonpathogenic and pathogenic microorganisms. Nonpathogenic microorganisms cause only spoilage to fish but pathogenic microorganisms such as *Escherichia coli*, *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Vibrio cholerae* and *Salmonella typhi* cause food poisoning and diseases. They also deteriorates quality of fish, so fishes fetch low price and it effects the income of the fisherfolks. In India, study of fish marketing and fish quality has been done in Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, West Bengal and Maharashtra. But systematic information and reports are not available on fish marketing scenario and fish quality particularly in South Gujarat. Therefore attempts were made to study the status of fish marketing and fish quality in and around Surat city.

Surat has different talukas such as Choryasi, Olpad, Palsana, Bardoli, Mahuva, Valod, Songadh and Mandvi. From these Choryasi taluka and Surat district were selected for survey on status of fish marketing along with socio-economic status of fisherfolks and fish merchants involved in fish marketing. Microbiological analysis for human pathogens were also done from fishes sold in the markets of study area.

Random sampling method and focus group methodology were used for survey work. Data were collected on information about fisherfolks and fish merchants using questionnaires through personal interviews. Information were collected from respondents on education, income, culture and capture fishing, preservation facilities, hygienic conditions of fish markets, etc.

Under microbiological analysis, fish samples were collected from different fish markets of Choryasi taluka and Surat district. Quantitative as well as qualitative analysis for human pathogens were carried out from skin surface of fish. Fish samples were analyzed using standard methods for total plate count, total coliform count, fecal streptococci, *Pseudomonas*, *Salmonella*, *Vibrio* and *Escherichia coli*. Enumeration of bacterial load was done using standard plate count. Qualitative analysis was carried out by hanging drop technique, Gram's staining technique, selective media and biochemical media.

Findings of present study revealed that fish markets were not well organized because due to lack of facilities and were controlled by middlemen with a large number of intermediaries between producers and consumers. Human pathogens such as *Escherichia coli* and *Klebsiella pneumoniae* were also detected from some fish samples.

Results obtained from present work would be helpful to improve the status of fish marketing in South Gujarat in general and Surat and its vicinity in particular. It would also helps the fisherfolks for better earning through proper preservation and management of fishes for sale. Detailed results of the present study would be highlighted in the thesis.

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