



FISH MARKET AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES OF FISH TRADERS: PRESENT STATUS AND CONSTRAINS

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ABSTRACT

Socio-economic status of fish traders as well as market infrastructure is important factor for successful fish marketing. Considering their importance, a survey was carried out to observe the socio-economic profile of fish traders with the infrastructure information of fish market in Dinajpur district of Bangladesh from July 2014 to June 2015. Among different fish markets of Dinajpur district, three (Rail bazar, Bahadur bazar, Farm hut) markets were selected purposively. A total of 55 fish retailers and 20 *aratdars* were interviewed through semi structure questionnaire survey for obtaining the pertinent data. From the findings, it was observed that 60% *aratdars* and 40% retailer of 50-60 years old were found to involve in fish trading who had more than 10 years of experience. More than 50% of *aratdars* and retailers represented nuclear type family. Retailer from Bahadur bazar (450 BDT/day) earned the higher income compare to Rail bazar and Farm hut (400 BDT/day and 300 BDT/day respectively). On the other hand, income of *aratdars* from Rail bazar and Bahadur bazar was ranges from 350-600 BDT/day. Marketing infrastructure was not in good condition and fish traders were found to face several problems including hygiene facility, storage facility, price fluctuation etc.

Key words: *Aratdar*, fish market, retailer

INTRODUCTION

The fish market in Bangladesh is virtually a cluster of disorganized activities and always remains in the control of influential persons of the surroundings area. The marketing system and structure is one of the main circumstances of socio-economic condition of the local people and production system of any area (Alam *et al.* 2010). It also depends on a wide range of social, economic and political factors (Rashid 2006). In Bangladesh, fish marketing is almost exclusively maintained by the privet sector. Four distinct tires viz. primary, secondary, higher secondary and consumer market of marketing systems are observed in the process of fish distribution in Bangladesh (Ahmed 1983). With intra-linkage and inter-linkage from production sector to consumer sector, it is a chain of various systems involved in marketing. As fish and fishery products are highly traded commodities, fish production is a necessary part of the marketing process to make a whole complete. In our country fishermen and intermediaries faced a number of problems such as poor transformation, lower price of fish, lack of storage facilities, lack of weighing system, lack of assessment of market tools, lack of marketing facilities as well as political instability (Khan 1995). Communication among the traders in different markets takes place with mobile phone, telephone, which keeps wholesale prices in line throughout the country. The least informed party is the fishermen, because of their physical isolation from the markets (Rahman 1997).

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Dinajpur district enriched by several rivers, ponds, beels etc. accounts about 3444.3 sq. km. which make it as aquatic resource for freshwater fish. A number of fish markets are situated around the Dinajpur district such as Bahadur bazaar, Rail bazaar, Chalk bazaar, Pulhat bazaar, Sikder bazaar, Khanpur bazaar etc. Fishes from different localities are regularly transported to these markets through different transport systems. Various studies have been conducted in different region of Bangladesh on various aspects of market and marketing system of fish. However, few works have been done on the socio-economic status of the fish traders and fish marketing condition in Dinajpur district so far. Therefore, the main objectives of the present study were to understand the socio-economic condition of the *aratdars* and retailers and to observe the marketing infrastructure of three fish markets in Dinajpur district of Bangladesh.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area and period: Three fish markets of Dinajpur district named Bahadur Bazar, Rail Bazar and Farm hut were selected purposively for the study. Data were collected from July 2014 to June 2015.

Selection of target group and sample size: The target group was fishermen who were involved in selling fish permanently (as the primary income source) and partially (as the secondary income source) for their livelihood. As farm hut is primary category market so 20 *aratdar* were selected from Bahadur bazar and Rail bazar and 55 retailer were selected from the three fish markets.

Data collection: Physically market visits and questionnaire based interview methods were used for data collection. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Face to face interview was followed during data collection from *aratdar* and retailer. Various books, reports, journals, bulletins, thesis paper were also used as secondary source for collecting data.

Data analysis: The collected data were presented in textual, tabular and graphical form and analyze the data by using simple statistical tools such as mean, percentage by using Microsoft excel 2007.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Age of the *aratdar* and retailer: *Aratdars* were categorized into five different age groups. It was found that in both Bahadur bazar and Rail bazar fish market most of the fish *aratdars* were 50 to 60 years old, only 20% were 30 to 39 and 40 to 49 years old in Bahadur bazar. On the other hand, in Rail Bazaar, 30% of the fish *aratdars* were between 30 to 39 years old and 40 to 49 years old (Figure 1). The knowledge about age structure of the fish retailers is important to estimate potential human resources. In Bahadur bazar and Rail bazar most of the fish retailers (35% and 40% respectively) were with 40-49 age groups while in farm hut 20% of the fish retailers were 30-39 years, rest of them were 40-49 and 50-60 year old (Figure 2). Study revealed that most of the *aratdars* within 50-60 age groups and retailers 40-49. Whereas, Rahman (2003) noted that in Gazipur district of Bangladesh the highest percentage of fish traders up to 30 age groups.

Education level of the *aratdar* and retailer: *Aratdars* in Bahadur Bazar were more educated than in Rail Bazar. About 40% of *aratdars* from Bahadur Bazaar had secondary level of education whereas, 30% resulted from Rail Bazaar market (Figure 3). Similar to *aratdars*, most of the retailers (35%) were found with secondary level of education in Bahadur Bazar and 40% of the fish retailers were primary level passed in Farm hut Fish market (Figure 4). It has been reported by Mia (1996) that in Mymensingh district fish traders had secondary level

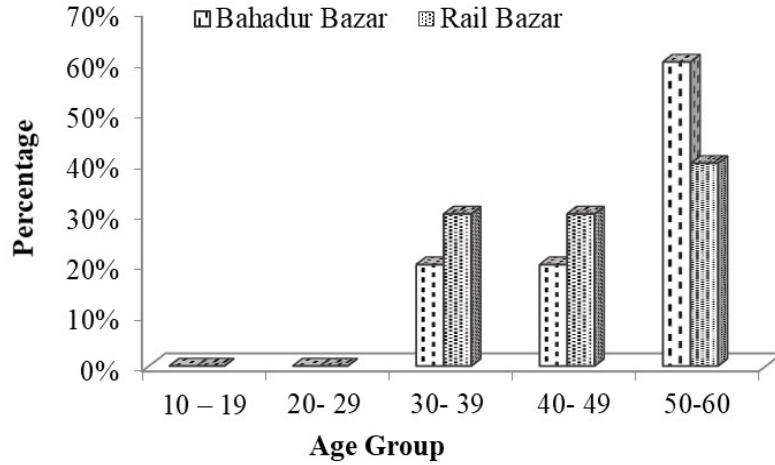


Figure 1. Age group of fish aratdar

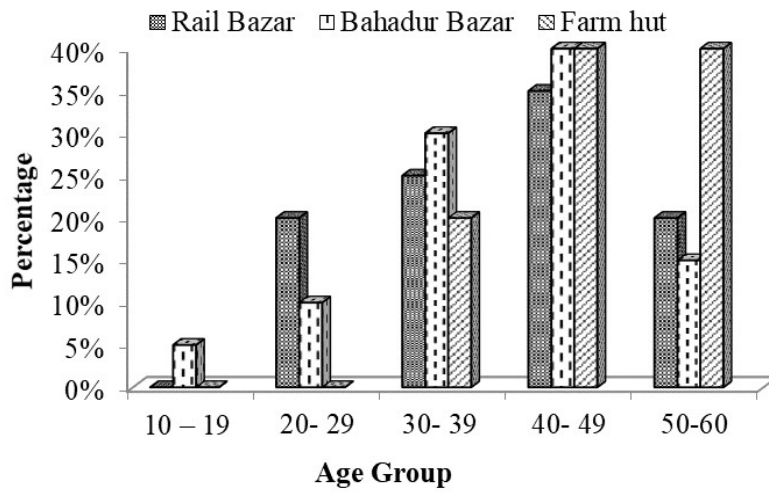


Figure 2. Age group of the fish retailer

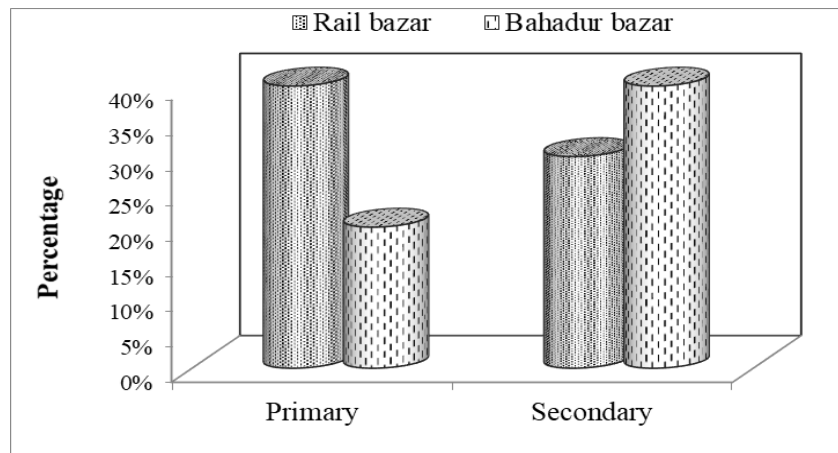


Figure 3. Education status of the fish aratdar

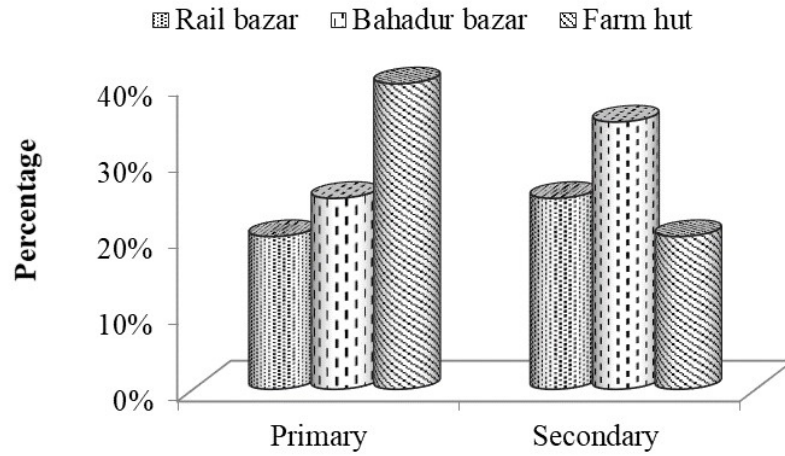


Figure 4. Education status of the fish retailers

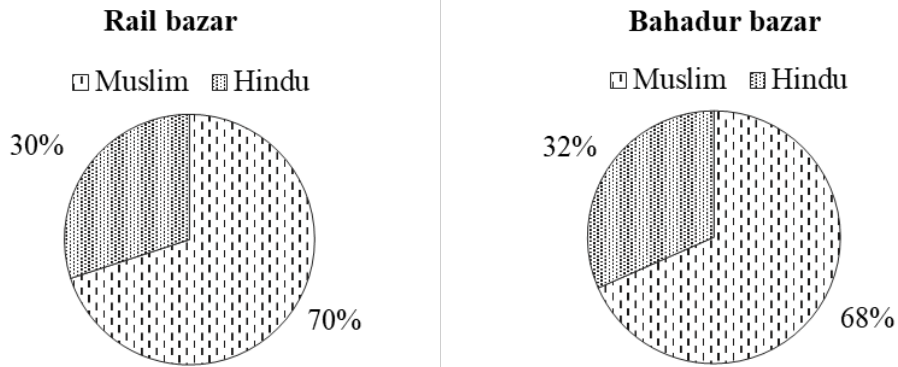


Figure 5. Religion of the fish aratdar

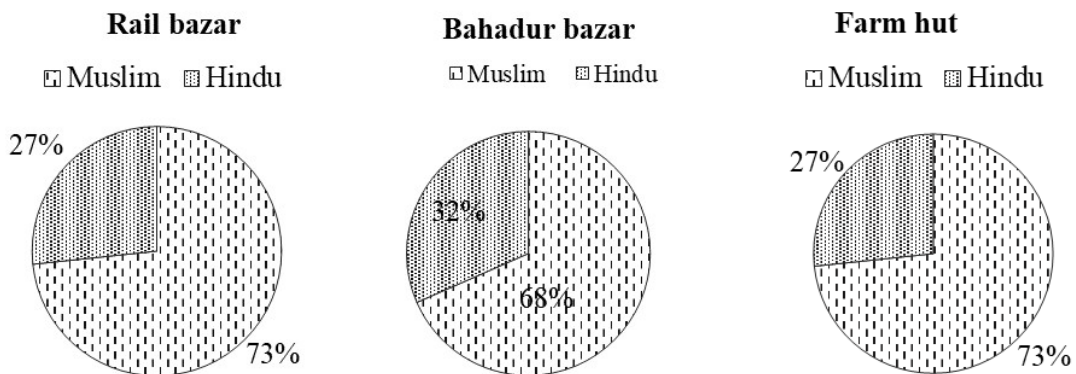


Figure 6. Religion of the fish retailer

of education while Dasgupta (2004) reported fish traders had primary level of education in Fulpur Upazila, Mymensingh.

Religion status of *Aratdar* and retailer: Religion can play an important role in the socio-cultural environmental life of people. During survey only Muslim and Hindus were found to involve in fish trading. In this study, it was found that most of the *aratdars* were Muslims in both Rail Bazar and Bahadur Bazaar about 70% and 68% respectively (Figure 5). In case of retailer, it was revealed that in Bahadur Bazaar, 68% of the fish retailers were Muslims and 32% of the fish retailer were Hindu. In Rail Bazaar, 73% of the fish traders were Muslims and rest of them were Hindu. In Farm hut, 73% of the fish traders were Muslims and 27% fish retailers were Hindu (Figure 6). The highest percentage of the fish traders were Muslim which is correlated with our national religious percentage. Siddique (2001) also found that Muslim fish traders were predominant in the market of Mymensingh.

Family type of *aratdar* and retailers in selected fish market: In rural Bangladesh, families were classified into two types: i) nuclear family; married couples with children, and ii) joint family; group of people related by blood and/or law. In this study, it was found that in both fish market majority of *aratdar* have nuclear family (Table 1). In Bahadur bazar 55% retailers have nuclear family and 45% have joint family. Similarly, in Rail bazar 60% retailers have nuclear family whereas 40% of retailer have joint family. The family type of retailer of Farm hut was similar to Rail bazar. (Table 2). Nuclear family type was predominant in the fish traders due to globalization and family member not more than 6.

Family size of *aratdar* and retailers: Family size is defined as the number of persons, either working or not, belonging to the same family. Family size was categorized as small family (member 0 to 3), medium family (member 4 to 6) and large family (member above 6). During the period of the investigation, in Bahadur bazar fish market, half of the *aratdars* were with large family members and only 20% were constituted small family. On the other hand, in Rail Bazar, about 50% of families were medium size (Table 3).

In three fish markets, the family member of retailer was within 4-6. Among them, highest percentage with medium size family was found in farm hut about 53.33% (Table 4).

Experience level of *aratdar* and retailers: Most of the *aratdar* and retailers from selected fish market were experienced enough. Most of them had more than 10 years' experience in this field except retailers from farm hut where about 47% retailers were engaged in fish trading for the period ranging from 6 to 10 years (Table 5 and 6).

Income of *aratdar* and retailer: The *aratdars* are influential persons in the fish markets and they have a strong relationship with other intermediaries. *Aratdars* were engaged themselves a short period (2 to 3 hours) for fish selling as middlemen and earn a considerable amount of money in comparison with retailers. They earned about BDT 350 to 600 per day. Retailers engaged themselves a long time in marketing activities and that the average income of fish retailers was found in Bahadur bazaar was BDT 450 per day, BDT 400 per day in Rail bazaar, BDT 300 per day in Farm hut (Table 7). Siddique (2001) reported that the average income of fish retailers in Nutun Bazar, Mymensingh was BDT 540 per day

Market infrastructure: Market infrastructure is one of the important parts of fish market. Without well-developed infrastructure, fish market environment is not suitable for profitable business. Proper market infrastructure is essential for every fish market. During the survey period it was observed that the selected fish markets lacked in basic infrastructure for fish handling, transporting and marketing.

The total area of Bahadur bazar is 1.96 acre and fish market area is 0.1 acre approximately. Total number of retailer was 70-80 and 30-40 peoples were act as *aratdar* in here. The

retailers were involving in marketing activities throughout the day started from 7 am and continued till 11 pm. On the other hand, *aratdars* were involved from 6-10 am. The market was tin shaded with cemented floor where all auctions were performed. The hygienic and storage facilities were very poor. Mostly block ice was used in this fish market. Drainage system was not properly connected with the fish market.

The total area of Rail Bazaar is 3.82 acre and fish market area is 0.15 acre approximately. A better facility that favors the fish traders for running a smooth fish business was not available here. In this market, total number of retailer is 30-40 and 20-30 peoples are act as *aratdar*. This market was performed only for a few hours in the early morning where retailers were involved in fish trading from 8 am to 7 pm. But on hut day it continues from morning to evening. There are some open place and some stall for fish trading which covered with tin. Narrow drainage system connected with the fish market. Mainly block ice was used in this fish market. Especially at peak season, there was clearly a deficiency of ice.

Total area of Farm hut market is about 1.71 acre in which the fish market covers only 0.08 acre of the total area. Total number of retailer is 20-25. Fish traders were found to involve in

Table 1. Family type of *Aratdar* in two fish markets

Family type	<i>Aratdar</i>	
	Bahadur Bazar	Rail Bazar
Nuclear	60%	70%
Joint	40%	30%
Total	100%	100%

Table 2. Family type of Retailer in three fish market

Family type	Retailer		
	Bahadur Bazaar	Rail Bazaar	Farm hut
Nuclear	55%	60%	60%
Joint	45%	40%	40%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 3. Family size of *aratdar* of three fish markets

Family size	<i>Aratdar</i>	
	Bahadur Bazar	Rail Bazar
Small family (0-3 member)	20%	20%
Medium family (4-6 member)	30%	50%
Large family (Above 6 member)	50%	30%
Total	100%	100%

Table 4. Family size of retailer of three fish markets

Family size (member)	Retailer		
	Bahadur Bazaar	Rail bazaar	Farm hut
Small family (0-3)	10%	15%	13.33%
Medium family (4-6)	45%	45%	53.33%
Large family (Above 6)	35%	40%	33.33%
Total	100%	100%	100%)

Table 5. Experience of *Aratdar* of two fish markets

Level of experience (years)	Bahadur Bazar		Rail Bazaar	
Up to 5	30%		20%	
6 to 10	20%		40%	
Above 10	50%		40%	
Total	100%		100%	

Table 6. Experience level of Retailer of three fish markets

Level of experience (years)	Retailer		
	Bahadur Bazar	Rail Bazar	Farm hut
Up to 5	30%	20%	20%
6 to 10	30%	25%	46.67%
Above 10	40%	55%	33.33%
Total	100	100	100

Table 7. Income of the *aratdar* and retailer from three fish market

Market name	<i>Aratdar</i> (BDT/day)	Retailer (BDT/day)
Bahadur Bazar	350-600	350-600
Rail Bazar	350-600	400
Farm hut	-	300

Table 8. Problems faced by the *aratdar* and retailer of fish market Bahadur Bazar, Rail Bazar and Farm Hut

Problems	<i>Aratdar</i>	Retailer
Price fluctuation and low price	30%	27%
Poor hygienic condition and sanitation	25%	29%
Lack of physical facility	15%	11%
Inadequate storage facility	-	11%
Entry of new fish traders	10%	7%
Tips and donation	10%	6%
Political unrest	10%	9%
Total	100%	100

business in every afternoon from 3 pm to 6 pm. in an open place. Electricity, preservation, freezing, drainage facility as well as well infrastructure were unavailable in this fish market.

Communication between *aratdars* and fish farmers generally takes place by mobile phone. *Aratdar* helps in auctioning and get 3 to 5% commission of the auction price. The present findings are in agreement with the result of Quddus (1991), Rahman (2003), Mia (1996) who identified several types of marketing status in Netrokona, Mymensingh and Gazipur district respectively. Active participation of *aratdars* act as a strong link in the existing marketing system.

The infrastructure of *aratdar* and retail fish markets were not adequate with regarding to storage facilities, sanitation, water supply, drainage, cleaning, washing and maintenance and repairs except very few. Hussain and Uddin (1997) also reported the same constrains and infrastructural status of the fish market in different area of Bangladesh.

Constraints: Fish market and marketing environment were found to be manifested with a large number of constraints which enlisted in Table 8. The major marketing constraints faced by *aratdars* and retailers were the price fluctuation and low price (30% and 27% respectively). Hygienic condition of Bahadur bazaar, Farm hut and Rail bazaar fish market was found very poor or unsatisfactory. Sanitation found to receive low priority at all stages of marketing in three markets including cleaning and washing of fish and containers (to carry fish), using of chemicals (bleaching powder, chlorine etc.) to sterilize surfaces etc. Moreover, about 15% *aratdar* and 11% retailer were reported lacks of different physical facilities such as inadequate space and storage facilities, insufficient water and electricity supply etc. They also mentioned that sometime traders become bound to sell their fishes at a cheap price, and even they fail to earn any return for decomposition of fish due to political unrest situation. The above problems regarding fish marketing were also reported by a number of authors (Rokeya *et al.* 1997); Rahman 2003; Dasgupta 2004; Paul 2006) in different region of Bangladesh.

CONCLUSION

The fish traders doing their business besides some constrains. So the authority should give attention to improve structure and facility of fish market so that their business as well as socioeconomic status can improve.

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