



Research Article

EXAMINING THE UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN INDIAN SEAFOOD SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT BASED ON PERCEPTION

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 13th February, 2024

Received in revised form 27th February, 2024

Accepted 16th March, 2024

Published online 28th April, 2024

Key words:

Seafood supply chain, India, supply chain management, challenges, opportunities, transparency, Efficiency.

ABSTRACT

Background: This research investigates a perception-based examination of the supply chain within the Indian seafood sector, aiming to shed light on the intricate dynamics and challenges that characterize this vital industry. The Indian seafood sector holds significant importance both within the domestic and international contexts, with the country being one of the largest global exporters of seafood products. By adopting a perception-based approach, this study aims to uncover the views, experiences, and assessments of various stakeholders, including fishermen, seafood processors, exporters, regulators, and consumers, concerning the Indian seafood supply chain. **Method:** A survey approach was employed, consisting of approximately 150 key who were asked Likert scale questions, providing a comprehensive view of participants' perceptions and opinions regarding the supply chain. **Findings:** The study revealed that a majority of participants are familiar with the seafood supply chain processes, although opinions regarding its efficiency are divided. Importantly, most respondents expressed satisfaction with the transparency of information flow within the supply chain.

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INTRODUCTION

India holds the top position in seafood exports, significantly contributing to the global seafood trade, which is predominantly dominated by Asia. This export activity, spanning over 50 years, involves a diverse range of seafood products distributed to more than 100 countries. The global seafood market is expansive, projected to reach \$194 billion by 2026, with fish and seafood being one of the most widely traded food commodities, accounting for 38% of total fish output (Tiwari, K., & Khan, M. S. 2019).

In India, seafood is a vital source of nutrition, with over 60% of the population consuming it. The country is the world's second-largest fish producer, contributing 6% to the global fish supply. This sector has seen remarkable growth over the past two decades, driven by freshwater aquaculture, benefiting the economy, and creating jobs in coastal communities. India exports various marine products, with frozen seafood, including fin fish and shrimp, making up a significant portion. Indian seafood exports reach 106 countries, with shrimp being a major export to Europe, the United States, and Japan. The total value of fisheries exports exceeded \$6.67 billion in the last fiscal year, although the industry faced a 10.88% decline in export volume due to the pandemic's effects in the fiscal year 2020-21 (Raymond, A., & Ramachandran, A. 2017). The seafood sector encompasses activities such as harvesting, preservation, processing, and distribution. The research is attempted to understand the supply chain process of seafood in India.

Objectives

To assess and analyse the perceptions and perspectives of stakeholders within the Indian seafood supply chain,

Literature Review

In a unique compilation of studies, (Sasikumar B. 2016) delved into the challenges and opportunities faced by fisher folk in Ramanathapuram district. Despite India's impressive GDP growth in recent decades, the study revealed that the living standards of the fisher folk have not seen significant improvement. The call to action is clear: measures must be taken to enhance their income and reduce expenses, thus promoting a more balanced socio-economic society. The study highlights the critical need for empowering fisher folk with appropriate education, enabling them to budget effectively and uplift their livelihoods.

(Priya Veena. and K. Sreeranganadhan 2016) stressed the essential role of education as a fundamental human need and a solution to various challenges. The study spotlighted the marginalized status of the fishing community and the prejudice they face from other groups. A key factor contributing to their backwardness is their limited access to education. This applied paper focuses on the social and economic obstacles confronting fishermen in Kerala, underscoring how these challenges act as barriers to their educational progress.

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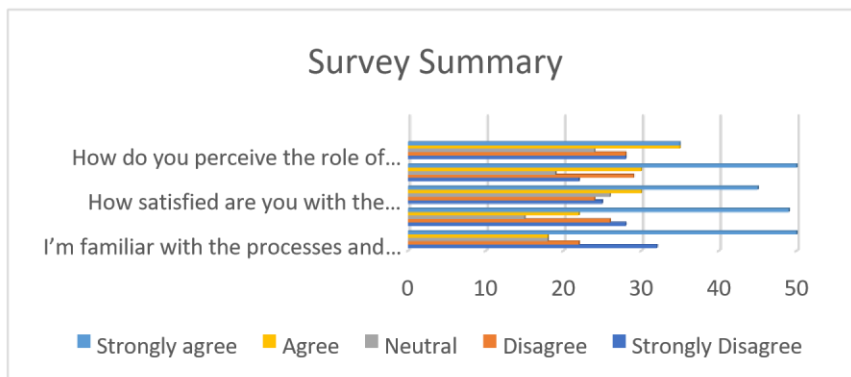
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(Kotni V.V. Devi Prasad. 2017) conducted empirical research in the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh, examining the marine fisheries value chain. Interviews with exporters in coastal Andhra Pradesh exposed a range of challenges facing the emerging seafood sector. These obstacles encompassed infrastructure deficiencies, export barriers, environmental concerns, and various economic, financial, marketing, technological, research, and service-related issues. The study revealed that a handful of influential players, primarily traders and exporters, wield significant control over the entire supply chain.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Given the intricate nature of the seafood supply chain in India, researcher selected a sample size of approximately 150 key stakeholders, including fishermen, farmers, processors, and others, to ensure data saturation. The participant selection strategy involved the use of stratified random sampling. This method categorized the seafood supply chain into specific groups, such as fishermen, processors, and distributors, based on defined criteria. These surveys, distributed to seafood industry professionals, researchers, and government officials actively participating in the supply chain, incorporated a questionnaire featuring a combination of closed-ended and Likert-scale questions.

Data Analysis



Sr No.	Questions	Frequenecy				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I'm familiar with the processes and stages of the seafood supply chain in India.	32	22	18	18	50
2	To what extent do you believe the current seafood supply chain management in India is	28	26	15	22	49

The study's findings offer valuable insights into participants' perspectives on seafood supply chain management in India and its impact on the seafood sector.

1. **Familiarity with the Seafood Supply Chain:** A majority of participants (68%) demonstrated a strong grasp of the processes and stages within India's seafood supply chain. This informed workforce is essential for efficient supply chain operations,

indicating that key stakeholders, including fishermen, farmers, and processors, possess a solid understanding of the seafood supply chain. However, the 18% in the 'Neutral' category should be targeted for further training and education.

2. **Efficiency of Supply Chain Management:** Participant responses were divided regarding the efficiency of seafood supply chain management. While half (50%) considered it efficient and streamlined, a substantial portion (54%) held the opposite view. This divergence suggests a need for improvements in supply chain efficiency, emphasizing the importance of investigating underlying reasons and areas for enhancement.
3. **Transparency of Information Flow:** A positive outcome is that a significant majority (60%) of participants expressed satisfaction with the transparency of information flow within the seafood supply chain. Transparency is a crucial component of supply chain management, ensuring accountability and trust among stakeholders.
4. Nevertheless, the 26% in the 'Neutral' category implies the need for ongoing efforts to maintain and further enhance transparency.

5. **Impact of Supply Chain Management on Challenges:** The data revealed that around 63% of respondents believe supply chain management significantly influences the challenges encountered by the seafood sector in India. This consensus underscores the pivotal role of supply chain management in addressing and mitigating industry challenges, suggesting that participants see improved supply chain practices as a potential solution to sector issues.

6. **Role of Supply Chain Management in Creating Opportunities:** A corresponding 63% of participants also perceive supply chain management as a significant driver of growth and sustainability opportunities within India's seafood sector. This finding aligns with the previous one, indicating that participants believe supply chain management can both mitigate challenges and enable opportunities. This comprehensive view underscores the potential of supply chain management as a strategic catalyst for the development of the seafood industry.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to analyze the current seafood supply chain management in India and evaluate its influence on the seafood sector, particularly in terms of challenges and opportunities. One significant finding is that a substantial majority of participants are familiar with the processes and stages of the seafood supply chain in India. This indicates a relatively well-informed workforce, which is vital for the efficient operation of the supply chain. However, there is room for improvement in the supply chain's efficiency, as opinions are divided in this regard. Efforts should be made to address the concerns of those who believe the supply chain is inefficient and to understand the reasons behind their skepticism. The positive perception of the transparency of information flow within the seafood supply chain is another encouraging finding. Transparency is essential for accountability and trust among stakeholders. However, there is still a portion of respondents who remain neutral, signaling a need for continued efforts to maintain and enhance transparency.

The most prominent consensus among participants lies in their belief regarding the significant influence of supply chain management on challenges and opportunities within the seafood sector. A majority views supply chain management as a pivotal factor in addressing industry challenges and fostering growth and sustainability. This comprehensive perspective emphasizes the potential of supply chain management as a strategic catalyst for advancing the seafood industry.

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How to cite this article:

Benzily. A and Vipul Jain. (2024). Examining the Unprecedented Challenges and Opportunities in Indian Seafood Supply Chain Management based on Perception. *International Journal of Current Advanced Research*.13 (04), pp.3074-3076.
