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**ABSTRACT**

Maldives, An archipelago of 1192 islands sharing boundary with India, Sri Lanka and Mauritius. The fishing industry in the Maldives is the island's second main industry after tourism. Cooperative Societies are developed for the all over benefit of its members.. Cooperative members are voluntarily interested in starting and keeping the cooperative business and achieve their goals through working together. Cooperative bodies giving different services for the benefit of the members like Seminars, workshops, up to date information about market, demand, price etc and Marketing and Selling Support etc. This study's main objective is the different value added services given by the fishermen cooperative bodies and its result on fishing industries. The study was conducted in the different members of the Fishermen Cooperative societies in the AlifAlif Atoll, Maldives. The respondents were 246 fishermen who were active in cooperative societies..According to the result, there is a positive relationship between VAS and member's participation

**KEYWORDS:** Participation, value added services, cooperative bodies, Members, Fisheries.

**JEL CLASSIFICATION CODES :** L31, Q13, Q22,

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Maldives, an archipelago consisting 1192 is-lands sharing boundary with India, Sri lanka, Mauritius. Average population of Maldives is around 4,50,000 people. Fishing industry is the second main income source of Maldives after Tourism. It contains 26 atolls and AlifAlif is one of the atoll containing 33 islands( 8 are inhabited islands) .This 298 square kilometre area country's GDP is \$ 7.4 Billion and per capita income is \$ 20,400. Maldives currency is rufia and they are following fixed foreign exchange rate system.

Different services offered by fishermen cooperative society helps the fishermen to update their knowledge and talents and encourage them in the fishing. Continues development in the services helps them to know all the updated knowledge in the fishing industry. It helps the fishermen to feel a sense of belongings and sincerity towards their respective societies. The VAS is created and moduled by the Atoll Centers, but its working and success based upon the cooperative societies , their activities for its success. The services Provided by Cooperative bodies will help the island peoples to earn more and to catch fish in more effective way without harming the environment or fish bank . The study is also aimed to helping the cooperative society members for getting good price for their fish even in the off market time and to take them in an organized talented group for their economic as well as all over growth. It may again encourage and make more power full the tiny boat fishermen(Gindi) for asking the good price for their fish, negotiating and it will help to decrease the dependency on the agent . This kind of activities will help and encourage the members to show more sense of loyalty towards AFS and it will help to lower the absenteeism of members in the programs and non cooperation of membership from the societies. It will helps in making more strategic plans to improve the members participation and in giving more productive services in AlifAlif Fishermen Society (AFS).

**2. SERVICES AND MEMBERS PARTICIPATION**

Fisher men are under the exploitation of middlemen until the cooperative societies are created, they are unaware about the benefits of cooperative societies and value added services. Later they understood that cooperative societies is helping them to earn more income, better working conditions and various benefits. They expected to

get appropriate value added services like Seminars, workshops, up to date information, marketing and sales support etc which related to their job field. Cooperative society members are individuals, cooperative societies giving membership and holding it in an organized style. Member should participate for the successful functioning of the cooperative societies. Members participating in cooperative societies is based on how much benefits they will get. These cooperative societies are comparing with other market forces so the benefits and other well beings getting from this society is highly important for the energetic involvement of the members.

#### Objectives:

- To find out the gratification level of the people on value added services given by the AlifAlif Fishermen society and its members involvement.
- To find out the empirical relationship between literacy and augmented services providing by government or cooperative society among the fishermen in Maldives.
- To analyse the Income distribution of fishermen in AlifAlif Atoll, Maldives.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Data Collection

Primary data were collected from 246 fisher men of different Bokura or Dingi who are living in different islands in AlifAlif Atoll and members of AlifAlif cooperative society through a pre-tested questionnaire. This questionnaire contains the questions related general things about fishermen, their educational qualification, average earnings per year, age, and different services offered to them by cooperative society etc. I collected the Information through meet them personally and questionnaires were issued to them with the help of a translator who translates English to Divehi and collected the answered questionnaire immediately. For the purpose of the study, only AlifAlif Fishermen Society selected because it's the only registered society under Maldives fishing Industry. I analysed their problems and prospects. Maldives is having 43 registered fishermen cooperative societies getting aids from Government of Maldives which is scattered in 33 atolls, in all parts of nation. A total of 22 Cooperative societies working more than twelve years successfully. I selected from 8 islands from AlifAlif Atoll namely Rasdhoo, Ukulhas, Mathiveri, Bodufoludhoo, Feridhoo, Himandhoo, Malhoos, Thodoo study and random sampling technique were used. These fishermen society are directly purchasing the fish from the fisher men and selling it to the marketing bodies or to the wholesalers or Veliferu Company.

#### Hypothesis:

##### Hypothesis-1

H<sub>0</sub>: The respondent's gratification about marketing support is Poor

##### Hypothesis – 2

H<sub>0</sub> : The respondent's gratification about up to date information is Poor

##### Hypothesis -3

H<sub>0</sub>: The respondent's gratification about workshops and Seminars is Poor

#### Analysis

In this study, tried to made analyse the gratification level of the members towards these services and facilities offered by fishermen cooperative society. Distributed questionnaires containing a set of three questions each in the five point Likert scale regarding the different services provided by the AlifAlif Fishermen society. The following table gives the Mean Percentage Score, SD, Mean, and Z value of the variables.

#### Basic Socio - demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable		Frequency	Percent
Age	Less than 25	20	8



	26-40	74	30
	41-50	108	44
	Above 50	44	18
Qualification	Upto O level	166	67.5
	O level	48	19.5
	A level	24	9.75
	Diploma	2	0.8
	Graduation and above	6	2.45
Income	Upto 10,000	104	42.3
	10,000-15,000	65	26.4
	20,000-25,000	50	20.3
	25,000-30,000	25	10.2
	Above 30,000	2	0.8
Area of fishing usually go	Upto 30 km from island	108	43.9
	30km- 50 km	68	27.6
	50km-70 km	52	21.2
	Above 70 km	18	7.3

Most of the respondents are in the category of 41-50 that is around 44% of the total respondents. Around 30 % of the members belong to the age group of 26-40 and 18% of the members come in the category of above 15. Only 8 % of respondents are belongs to the youngest age of 0-25. Here we can understand that young fishermen are not that much interested to continue with society. It is not only because of they are not interested in fishing but also get the jobs are available in islands for that kind age group, especially in tourism sector like scuba diving, tourist guides, snorkelling expert. They are getting more money from it with in short



period of time. While considering the member's educational qualifications, out of the sample selected, 67.5% got basic education or just to know how to read and write in Dhivehi, that's all. The rest of the sample respondents had passed O level-19.5%, A level 9.75%, and the rest 3.25% belongs to others category which includes degree, post - graduation and technical schools. It indicates that most of the fishermen got less education or they didn't tried to pass O level (as IGCSE O level examination is little bit difficult, the average pass percentage of O level in Maldives is 27% only). From the qualifications, we can get one more data, it is when the people getting more and more educational qualification, they don't need to go for fishing because lot of job opportunities are available in Maldives in Government sector it self for the educated persons.

When studying the income they are earning, majority of the sample respondents around 43 percentage replied that their income is below ten thousand rufia ( one rufia = 4.52INR) facility while nearly 1/4th of the respondents' belong to the income category of 10001- 15000rufia .Only around 1% of the respondents belong to the income group of above 30000 rufia . It is clear from the table that most of the fishermen interested to trade with the co-operative societies belong to low income family. In order to find out whether the dingi or bokura or Dhoni owned by the members is fully utilized for fishing purpose or not ( lazy people was there ), data are collected from the members regarding their area of fishing . With regard to size of Boat they are using ( gindi- small one, Bokura- Medium one, Dhoni- Bigger one) , based on the study, its assumed that around 44 percent of member respondents they will go for fishing upto 30 km inside the sea from island 27.6 % of potential fishermen will go upto 50 km inside the sea from island. Only 7.3 percent members going beyond 70 km for fishing because there is only one Dhoni registered under AlifAlif Fishermen Society .

*Table 2: Mean, SD, Mean % score and z value for Value added services*

Value added Services	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Mean%Score	CV	Z	P value
Marketing Support	246	3.34	1.38	66.87%	41.40	-6.513	<0.001
Timely Information	246	3.16	1.29	63.29%	40.73	-10.074	<0.001
Workshop and seminar	246	1.99	1.22	39.72%	39.72	-32.074	<0.001

The mean percentage score for gratification about Marketing support is 67%, gratification regarding the up-to-date Information is 64% and that of work shop and seminar is 40% which shows that the respondents have average gratification about the Marketing support and up to date information and about Workshop and seminar respondents opinion is not good.

The  $CV = \text{Standard deviation} * 100 / \text{Mean}$  shows that this score is not stable because the value is greater than 20%. To understand whether the sample information that we observe exists in the population or to verify that the respondent's gratification level about the different services is high or average, here made the hypothesis

#### *Hypothesis- 1*

H0: The respondent's gratification about marketing support is poor

H1: The respondent's gratification about Marketing support is Medium

#### *Hypothesis – 2*

H0: The respondent's gratification about up to date information is poor

H1: The respondent's gratification about up to date Information is medium.





*Hypothesis -3*

H0: The respondent's gratification about workshops and Seminars is poor.

H1: The respondent's gratification about workshops and Seminars is poor.

Here we used one sample Z test to test this hypothesis. The calculated value of Z are -6.513 for seminar, -10.074 for Timely Information and -32.074 for work shop which is less than the tabled value of -1.645 indicates that the test is significant. Based on the result we can assume that the respondents have average gratification about the marketing and selling support and up to date information and have bad opinion about seminars and workshops.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The hypothesis was evaluated by examining the regression coefficients of and if the regression coefficient has value more than 0.4 it is treated as significant impact on dependent variable. Here in this study, we can understand that different value added Service offered by AlifAlif Fishermen Society has important part in members job and have significant impact on their Participation. It is also proved that when we consider the total services they offered, are expected to influence them highly on the working of cooperative Bodies, among the three namely, the Seminars and workshops, marketing and selling support, up to date information – marketing and selling support, timely information is moderate and workshop and seminar is poor (may be because of the lack of education of fishermen) here we can conclude that the cooperative bodies have to consider more ideas and actions to enhance the gratification level of different value added services because it is the major thing which effect the members participation in Cooperative society . When the value added services will be effective only when the members realized and properly educated about the benefits and services and they actively participating in their society's businesses. This will lead to sense of loyalty and sense of belongingness with the AlifAlif Fishermen society.

