In-depth Interviews

According to Carolyn Boyce and Palene Neale, (2006), in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme or situation. Furthermore, an in-depth interview helps the researcher to understand the current situation of a particular concern. This knowledge also helps the researcher to establish opinions, beliefs and values of the people which survey techniques cannot uncover. The in-depth interviews are a guided discussion. They encourage personal thought, respondent’s attentiveness to questions, and opportunity for interviewer to sense non-verbal feedback (Sokolow 1985).

In this research we have taken in-depth interviews with 10 professionals who are actively involved in various corporate sectors in Tamil Nadu. As social and new media networking sites have helped people’s behaviour like never before this chapter on in-depth interviews will enable the research not only to know and understand the current practical situation of the media industry in relation to fishing industry but also to verify with the hypothesis of the research. Therefore this in-depth interview will further enable the researcher to delve deeply and qualitatively for an objective analysis.

1. Do you think the Indian Media; particularly in Tamil Nadu give enough coverage towards the welfare of the people in general?

To the above mentioned question different experts from various fields have expressed their opinions based on their background and field experiences. According to Dr. Vinod the media help the people from different walks of life with its variety and timely programs. Mr. NaguveerPrakash is of the opinion that though very few media have allotted columns/space for people’s welfare, yet their contribution is remarkable, they can still focus on the welfare of the rural people. Dr. Nammalwar vividly narrates the commendable work done by media particularly in Tamil Nadu on various aspects of the welfare of the people. Smt. S. Rukmani reiterates the same
view from a different perspective. She opines that, no one can deny the fact that
media gives a good deal of programs for the welfare of the people. This not only
helps the people to know the current status but also enables the government to enact
specific laws to reach out to the common people. Mr. AtulChandran strongly agrees
that the media is attempting to cover enough and more issues on the common
welfare of the people despite commercialization of media today. However, Dr.V.
Selvakumar, and Mr. S. Karthikeyan say that whether it is print media or electronic
media there are no regular columns or programs dedicated to the welfare of the
people. They point out that most of the media coverage, probably 70% is related to
politics, 20% related to cinema, violent and sensational events and hardly 5% of the
coverage is focused on the welfare of the people. They strongly believe that the
private television channels work mostly for commercial purposes only. Their only
aim is profit and profit alone. Mr. D’Cruz is of the opinion that if at all some media
comes out with relevant and powerful welfare programs it is for publicity or for
political reasons. But the programs on welfare of the people are not created with care
in comparison to other entertainment programs. Ms. Roja and Mr. Selvam say that
the media today do not pay desired attention to the coverage on the welfare of the
people. According to them the main reason is undue commercialization of the
program in both print and electronic media.

2. Do you see whether there is any connection between the portrayal of the
common people in general and their overall development in particular by the
media?

According to Mr.NaguveerPrakash, the portrayal of people in general in
connection to their development in particular is limited as far as the agenda of the
media house is concerned, and sadly, the link between portrayal and reality of the
issues of the people is a missing phenomenon in the media. Smt.S. Rukmani goes
along with the same line of thought by pointing out that the media most of the time
are either subjective or biased. We can say that it is hardly concerned about the
development of the people in particular. Mr. S. Karthekeyan goes so far as to say
that though media attempt to bring connection between people and development in
general, yet a lot of disconnection is there due to the devastating control of the
political parties and middle men over the media market. Mr. D’Cruz states that
though the media tries its best other factors such as commercialization and modern cinema play down the role of media in this issue. He further laments that no one wants to learn, take the trouble to read and explore new things in life except to get addicted to a world of imagination in the world of ‘smart-phones’. Mr. Selvakumar is very articulate in his view saying that media is powerful but not in the field of bringing or connecting the development and the role of many agencies or even in the matter of environmental awareness.

On the other hand Dr. P.Nammalwar, feels that media connect the people and their problems very clearly and powerfully. In the same line Mr. AtulChandan reports that there is always a connection between the portrayal of the life of the people and their challenges in the modern world. While Dr. V. Selvam feels people are generally portrayed as poor, wrong doers and cheats in the social media but in reality there is considerable progress in poverty alleviation and only a limited number of people are involved in cheating and wrong doing. Ms. Roja comes closer to the same opinion by saying that though media is portraying the realistic situation of the people from different perspectives, it very often fails to project the problems faced by them in this highly competitive world. Dr Vinod feels that media can play a significant role to connect the people and their development, which should be their prime agenda.

3. Explain how the media in Tamil Nadu takes into consideration the welfare of the fishing community?

According to Dr.Nammalwar the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Department regularly announces the seasonal welfare schemes for the fishing community. Many newspapers and television channels bring out appropriate programs to make the fishing community benefit from the on-going governmental schemes. Dr. Vinod states that the issues related to the welfare of the fishermen get good coverage by the media in the state. Taking into consideration the perennial problems faced by India with regard to Sri Lanka along the seacoast, Smt. S. Rukmani states that all media and the political parties seriously take up this issue as a cause of concern and broadcast or publish regularly so as to help the fishermen avoid pitfalls or to save
themselves from the future misadventures. Media plays a very powerful role in this regard.

Dr. Selvam strongly condemns media in this aspect. According to him the media not only makes use of the problems of the people of the coastal areas to become popular, but also fails to be supportive in times of challenging situations. Mr. Naguver Prakesh explains that fishing community is a marginalized group in general and media space for their welfare is not given priority. Fishing community could be considered as a backward community when compared with the larger population in Tamil Nadu. However the media’s role in addressing the developmental issues is pathetic. Mr. Atul Chandran wishes that media and government take serious steps to develop the fishing community through education and relevant projects. Mr. Selvakumar states that a lot of work can be done by the media for the welfare and development of the fishing community. Ms. Roja and Mr. S. Karthikeyan underline the fact that the contribution of the media towards the upliftment of the fishing community is very minimum. They further state that a good number of activities have to be undertaken by the media to bring awareness to the people of Tamil Nadu. Dr. Vinod in particular is not happy with the role of media in portraying the welfare of the fishing community especially during natural calamities. He adds that the government despite its initiatives fails to accompany the people in times of natural calamities for which the media must stand by. The government must be more empathetic to the fishing community as they are a small group. He also proposes various methods such as media’s direct involvement with the women of fishing community for the ongoing development of the fishing community who are at the mercy of nature!

4. Do you think the media in Tamil Nadu concentrate or portray on the welfare, and empowerment of the women in the fishing communities in Tamil Nadu?

Dr. Nammalwar states that the media in Tamil Nadu systematically bring out and pay more attention to the welfare schemes of the NGOs and the government through Tamil newspapers and television channels. According to him the national television channel allots reasonable amount of time to empower the fishing community. He goes so far as to say that women are given more importance in the
programmes by promoting the importance of Self Help Groups. He also mentions out a few programmes that are anchored by the fishing women from coastal areas to highlight his stand. He further underlines these facts by stating how the marine products exports authorities (NPEDA- Ministry of commerce and industries, Govt. of India) publicize various schemes to improve the business/trade for the livelihood of fisherwomen. Smt. S. Rukmani says that wide publicity is given by the media to empower the women related to fishing, however, she is not sure whether the programmes are reaching out to the ordinary fisherwomen related to fishing for they do not have access to the media very often. Ms. Roja is of the opinion that hardly any women related to fishing know of the benefits of media in relation to fishing trade. She is very sad to note the low status of women in regard to media and its welfare programs. She believes that the media must reach out to the downtrodden women folk and educate them regularly through informal education. In fact, as she says, the media can change the status of women related to fishing to a greater level only if it makes its programs women-friendly.

Mr. Karthekeyan and Mr. Atul Chandran out rightly condemn the one-sided approach of the media with regard to women and fishing trade. They are of the opinion that most of the time, fishing trade is spoken of only in relation to men and their role without giving due importance to women. Dr. Selvam states that though the media try to project certain pertinent issues to highlight the role played by women in the fishing industry, sadly it is very negligible. Mr. D'Cruz says that maybe a few NGOs who project them as guardians of fisher folk publish some articles occasionally. Dr. Vinod goes one step further to suggest that there should be regular empowerment programs for women in the television, radio and newspapers so that the women are informed of their work. Mr. Selvakumar is disappointed with the role played by the media with regard to women. He is of the opinion that film stars and sports personalities hog the lime light in at least 70 per cent of the media programs, whereas, rural women do not even have access to these media. He goes on to the extent of questioning the motives and ambition of the media in their broadcasting or publications. He says there are still women who are illiterate and have hardly any access to television or radio these days! Naguver Prakash insists that the issue of women related to fishing is very vital and needs to be addressed.
squarely in order to bring transformation and betterment in the fishing society. He further adds that after the Tsunami in 2004 there were a few publications and informal programs addressing the sad plight of women related to fishing but most of the programs were only media hype and not much was done to the women related to fishing.

5. Do you think that the main reason for the slow growth and under-development of fishing community is due to the media’s negligence or failure to portray the dangers and of fishing hazards?

According to Dr. Nammalwar the main stream media announce the fishery related benefits to fisher women through media such as publishing the benefits (not hazards / difficulties) in Tamil newspapers. Dr. Vinod and Mr. Karthikeyan do not agree that media is the only reason or cause for under-development of the fishing community. He along with Mr. AtulChandran go to the extent of saying that though the media plays a significant role in helping the development of the fishing community during natural catastrophe yet the fishing community does not listen to the warnings by the media. Dr. Selvam and Mr. Selvakumar say that media through its forecast of the natural calamities help people to cope with the dangers to a certain extent. However, these announcements become just a routine and many times many lives are lost in the bargain. People do not take the media very seriously during the catastrophe for its unpredictable weather forecast and useless warnings! They further state that there is regular coverage on the life and plight of fishing community but many times it goes unnoticed and unheard. Ms. Roja is not happy with the role played by the media in warning people during the times of natural disasters. She says if the media could reach the people on time with the proper warning it could have saved many lives and also the fishing trade could have developed like many other countries. She proposes a system that takes into consideration the constant use of community radio and distribution of newspaper to the common fishing community. However, she is not happy with the media and its role in helping the people during the natural calamity. Mr. NaguveerPrakesh says that fishing community is backward in general and the lives of the fisherwomen remain pathetic when social issues like education, right to decision making, managing varied income, seasonality of livelihoods, poor hygiene, need for balanced food intake,
awareness on health, social security are not addressed with the support of mainstream media. Smt. S. Rukmani partially agrees that media is negligent in portraying the hazards of the fishing trade in many ways results in underdevelopment. Mr. D’Cruz goes a step further to propose that there needs to be a strong Fishers’ Association for Women and that should not be politically motivated.

6. How do you see the mainstream media as negligent in caring for fisherwomen by avoiding to highlight their social, economical, political, cultural and educational concerns?

Dr. Nammalwar states that the mainstream media pays attention only to some issues about the fisher women’s social, economical, political, cultural and educational well-being. Media has built up a new tradition for women related to fishing. This industry has survived several years due to its flexibility and has involved more women in its main stream for which the media has helped tremendously. Dr. Vinod says that media has built up a brand identity for the fishing women by involving them in the main stream of the marketing society. He further added saying that globalization gives new opportunities for innovation in the fish market. Now the new media should involve more women to ensure that it moves on into the future. Smt. S Rukmani goes so far as to say that the main media give greater amount of preferences for the latest news of political leaders and sensational events; such as robbery, gang-rape or murders while they fail to highlight the social responsibility of educating the populace with the current problems of women related to fishing. Ms. Roja is very sad to note that the fishing industry is shrinking fast, and many men and women are taking up other jobs, and many fishing styles maybe lost to us, as fishing communities are moving away from the fishing profession. In this alarming situation women play a vital role in saving the disappearing tradition of fishing. Media has to save this situation. The government needs to empower the women fisher folk in all walks of life, besides creating an awareness among them. As for as Dr. Selvam is concerned the main stream media has done a very unfair job, for most of the media, fishing women mean women selling head load of fish and dry fish. Role of these women in social and economical development of fishing community never got highlighted in media. Most importantly, the problems faced by
these women and girl children in fishing are never reported in media. Educational status among fishing women is of real concern. Mr.NaguveerPrakesh explains that the mainstream media allots prime slot only when a fisherman gets killed but does not bother about the social issues of the community. Mr. Karthikeyan and Mr. AtulChandran say that the fishing industry has survived for several years but the social, economic, and educational status of this community remains the same. Many women and girls are still uneducated and not aware of the world around. Hence, the new media should re-conceptualize fishing trade as a social technology and empower women regularly. Mr. D’Cruz says that the media has done hardly any outreach program for the women related to fishing. Women also must organize themselves and work together as one united group. According to Mr. Selvakummar fishing industry is one of the most important industries in India that brings a lot of revenue to the government, and women play a significant role in this trade. Unfortunately, unlike farmers, there is no response to the needs of fishermen and women as they are very traditional and conservative in their religious and cultural belief system and the media has not done any breakthrough either to educate them or to empower them.

7. Do you think that the media help women related to fishing by highlighting government policies and schemes related to their industry?

Dr.Nammalwar has been very clear and consistent in saying that media help fisherwomen by announcing the government schemes, polices, and new technologies or innovations and it is not fair to say that it avoids any such schemes of the government. He further adds that it is imperative to examine ways to carry on the fishing legacy with the strong support of the media. Only the media can do this. Dr.Vinod also says that the media does not deliberately avoid any women related programs and states that the media helps the fisherwomen and also help the women in rural areas to expand the trade as sustainable socio-technology. Smt. S. Rukmani is positive and says that media play a vital role in helping fisherwomen by highlighting government policies and schemes related to their business. She would like to see more media programs involving women in this process.
Ms. Roja opines that media has been very calculative to highlight any women related programs for creative and innovative issues and in this sense the media have done very little to highlight the government policies and schemes related to fishing women. She questions the authenticity and the morale of media these days. Media are concerned in highlighting and popularizing women as objects of beauty and sex-symbols in beauty contests. This is only exploitation. Mr. NaguveerPrakesh says that media play a limited role in highlighting the government policies. It is the least of their concerns as it is not lucrative. Mr. Karthykeyan would go far as to say that the main concern of the media today is not educative but to make money. Hence it avoids the issues of minorities such as fishing women. It may be true that a very few media would take steps to highlight the government schemes only if they get the sponsorship from the government or from any NGO. Mr. Selvakumar would say that though the media is not interested in highlighting the schemes and policies of the government or the NGO the fishing women must take initiatives to find them all. Mr. AtulChandran says that the media would hardly take any steps to highlight government policies and schemes related to women in the fishing industry. Mr. D'Cruz states that there are a few good schemes at the State and central government levels but no one is bothered to make use of them. Many are unaware of the many schemes of the government and unfortunately most of the schemes are enjoyed by those communities who are tactically supported by the political parties. Only education and awareness can change the situation. Both Mr. D'Cruz and Mr. Atul in the same vein remark that young women from the fishing community are gradually moving away from the trade in pursuit of upmarket professions. But many of them do come back to their own communities. If the media recognizes the social constraints of fisherwomen and builds support systems and systematic interventions that can tide them over in times of need, we can sustain the women involved in fishing industry. To save the fishing industry we have to save the fisherwomen. Dr. Selvam agrees that the main media do not highlight the government schemes and policies for fisherwomen as it is not their vote -bank.
8. Do you think the government schemes, policies, and new technologies or innovations are reaching the women related to fishing through media? Explain.

Dr. Nammalwar is very positive where he says that the periodic potential fishing zone advisory disseminated by Indian National center for Ocean Information services (INCOIS), Ministry of Earth Science, Government of India through awareness program through TV and Electric Digital Board is reaching the fishing community since we receive feed-back from the community about the benefits achieved (Two or Three times more catch of fish when compared to traditional fishing). Mr. NaguveerPrakash in many ways would go along with Dr. Nammalwar in agreeing that the media does take an interest in reaching out to the women related to fishing, but the women must make use of these programs.

Smt. S. Rukmani says that only once in a while the media takes initiative to bring out the latest government policies, schemes, and technological know-hows. She is sad to note even in this technologically advanced world the media keeps away the interest and the rights of women who are not in the mainstream. Ms. Roja flatly says that no media takes any interest to educate and empower the fisherwomen. Women are very much affected by the financial crises, such as when they are affected by the natural calamities like as cyclones and Tsunami more so, when they have to finance their daughters’ wedding, recovery from illness of family members and college education of their children. Likewise when fish prices fluctuate, fishing women do not normally move to another trade. This is the time the media should step in and introduce the schemes and policies of the government in order to release them from the clutches of middle-men and money lenders. Dr. Selvam is very disappointed with the media and its role played in informing fisherwomen of the government schemes and policies. He joins Mr. Karthikeyan in saying that media is very much commercialized and not integrating fishing industry into the widespread contemporary design ethics that could allow fishers tap into larger markets and earn enough from fishing trade. This process, will keep alive India’s incredible legacy of fishing. He is worried that not much is done by the media in this respect. Mr. AtulChandran says media cannot project its target population alone. Media has equal role in effecting social change of the deprived. Mr. D’Cruz states that the media does not worry about the government schemes related to women in particular.
Maybe the community radio programs at times help them to know of this issue. He proposes that the fishing communities should unite and raise a single voice to reach the concerned authorities. Unfortunately there are many self-made leaders in our country who want to maintain the status quo in order to enjoy petty benefits. Dr. Vinod states that the media should play a vital role in this globalized world. He further adds that the fishing industry should be in the focus for many years as a sustainable socio-economy activity, and as an embedded knowledge for sustainable societies. He bases his comments on his experience with the coastal people of South India. Mr. Selvakumar adds that media is not very much in line with the thinking of the fishing community and hardly connects them with the policies made by the government. He is sad to note that the media highlights only the freebies of the government but not the long-term schemes and policies.

9. Do you believe that media provide more programmes on agriculture sector than the fishing industry?

Dr. Nammalwar is of the view that the media gives equal coverage to both agriculture and fishing sectors. He proves this statement with the works of Marine Products Exports Authorities (MPEDA) - under the ministry of commerce and industries, Govt. of India for fishing community. According to him organizations such as these give news and information about the fish products, export-values, and other market related information on fisheries to the fishing communities so as to pave the way for enhancing the catch. Mr. NaguveerPrakash is of the opinion that it does not make sense to compare agricultural sector with fishing industry in terms of media coverage as fishing industry can never match agriculture in productivity and speed. However, the media needs to create more space for the fishing industry and it is a global industry with thousands of people involved in it. Smt. S. Rukmani says that for agriculture, a separate and specific Television program is being telecast almost every day, whereas no such importance is given to any other industry say, fishing industry. Dr. Selvam agrees saying that both print media and electronic media are concerned with the globalization of agricultural products and its economic boom and doom, but fishing industry is never given priority in many of the main media. Ms. Roja underlines the fact that many watch regularly in the media some news or information during extreme weather conditions such as cyclone or when
there is a problem with Sri Lankan navy in the sea. The media does not cover much about the new innovation or the development of fishing community or the industry. Mr. Karthikeyan says in India we only consume fresh fish, the fish products procurement agencies are few in number have a monopolistic environment as they need no promotion locally since they aim at exports. However the scope for competitive environment is missing and if addressed through media there could be positive results. Mr. AtulChandran remarks that when agriculture sector attracts more advertisement obviously it takes more coverage in the media. There are assigned times in All India Radio and National Television (Doordarshan) for promotion of agricultural products and the welfare of farmers. Even the latest and the potential seeds are being promoted in the media. Well, in this area the fishing industry ranks too low. Mr. D’Cruz states that media gives more prime time to agriculture as it is the backbone of the country, but not to the fishing industry. Only during the natural calamities the fishing industry is given more coverage. He expects that the NGOs must take an active role in giving important roles and status to the fishing community. Dr. Vinod and Mr. Selvakumar are of the opinion that the media needs to build an identity for the fishing community that will elevate them to be respected for the revenue they bring to the country. This focus will prompt young fishermen to take pride in their work and persist with fishing.

10. How can the media play a significant role in the overall development and empowerment of women related to fishing through media?

Mr. Nammalwar says that NETFISH - (Network for Fish Quality Management and Sustainable Fishing) can continue to conduct series of participatory programs in the major fish landing centers for marine biodiversity conservation for sustainable fishing and hygienic methods of handling fish catch thereby enhancing the value of fish products. Dr. Selvam suggested that media should reach fishing women and fishing community regularly. The image of the fishing community and women among public is distorted. It is a generally held opinion that they are uneducated, hostile, care -free and indifferent. In fact, they are not like this but are very sensitive and independent. The role played by fishermen and fishing women in economic development needs to be highlighted. Programs and news that would enhance social, economic status of fishers and fishing women...
should be published and broadcast regularly. Mr. Naguveer Prakash says that like a regular column/program space for agriculture, regular separate spaces are to be given for fishing related works that could help improve their social transformation.

Smt. S. Rukmani proposes that first of all, there must be regular programs on Television and in other media explaining various welfare schemes for the fishermen community by the respective Departments, and this must be regularly telecast at a convenient time for the concerned people to watch and benefit from. Secondly, local Tamil daily Newspapers also should give coverage of such information at least once a week. Thirdly, even weekly Tamil magazines should publish articles of success stories of both men and women in the field. Finally, more number of TV serials and cinemas should be released depicting the problems of the fishing community and the rectifying measures undertaken by the government and banks. (Examples: films like Padagotti, and Kadal).

Ms. Roja suggests that first of all, fishing being one of the important sectors of revenue for the government, efforts must be taken by the media to empower the fishing community taking into consideration the various emerging trends in globalization and modern innovations in fishing technology. Secondly, the government and the NGOs must reach out to the fisherwomen to form Self-Help-Groups. Thirdly, more women must be employed in the village community centers for organizing and for informal education.

Mr. Karthikeyan invites voluntary associations to collaborate with the fishing communities in order to educate them on the importance of fishing and measures to cope with natural calamities. Mr. Atul Chandran suggests that media must employ or involve more women in their programs and make policies to run the centers by women only. Media also can give reports of the aftermath of the natural catastrophe like tsunami and cyclones. Tsunami Anniversary Day commemorating the dead could be observed.

According to Mr. D’Cruz there must be constant connection between the media and the women related to fishing. There should be community colleges for girls and women. As men are off shore most of the time women can run the affairs of home and be a guiding force of their communities. For this they must be armed
with the knowledge of the media. Dr. Vinod suggests the government and NGOs must promote social and community development centers for fishery related works. The media must read the signs of the times along with the world to empower the fisherwomen. Dr. Selvakumar suggests that the fishing community must come forward for training in media and must instal their own media net-work. Periodical workshops and empowerment programs must be visualized for women related to fishing. There must be step-by-step planning, implementation and review process for change in the fishing sector and many women must be encouraged to be educated in the industry. Government must set up relevant and attainable policies that can be understood and achieved at all levels by the fishing community. He is very particular in saying that the media should focus on work stations in urban and rural areas where women are employed. He cites the examples of women from Ramnad District in Tamil Nadu where the women face a lot of problems from the Forest and Coastal Guards in the name of security and conservation of endangered species. In fact, as he says these are local people and must be given enough freedom to move around the areas. The government and NGOs must come forward to protect the fishing community who fight endlessly against natural elements and forces and yet bring a good measure of revenue to the country and comfort to society through their product—the fish.
List of Publications

*Impact of Globalization and New Media among the Fishing Communities: a case study of Pondicherry coastal villages* in Indian Journal of Applied Research, Vol.3, issue, 8 August 2013, ISSN – 2249-555X, **Impact Factor 0.8215**.

*Community Radio – a voice to the voiceless: a case study of Nagapattinam Coastal area, Tamil Nadu*, in Global Research Analysis, Vol. 2 issue, 12 December 2013, ISSN – 2277-8160, **Impact Factor 0.2714**.

*Empowerment of Muslim women through information and communication technologies among the fishing community of Tamil Nadu*, Vol. 32, Issue, July 2011, ISSN – 0970- 5384.


Paper Presentations

*Community Radio: Voice To The Voiceless A Case- Study of Nagapatinam Costal Area, Tamil Nadu*, paper presented in the national conference on community radio: prospects and challenges, organized by Department of communication Manonmanion Sundranar University, 16 -17, March, 2012.


*Reach Access And Utilization of mobile phone communication among the fishing community*, paper presented in the International conference organized by Sri Sai Ram Engineering college on 22-23 September 2011.


*Media for voices not for noises media ethics at cross-roads*, Paper presented in the International conference on Bounds of ethics in a globalized world organized by Christ University held on 6 to 9 January, 2014.