

Understanding the value of information in the everyday life of a small-scale marine fishing community in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to identify the factors that influence the perceived value of information in a small-scale marine fishing community in Bangladesh. It investigates the use of information by the community and its function in different purposes of everyday life, such as making decisions for livelihood security, fostering social cohesion and well-being and facilitating access to social benefits.

Design/methodology/approach – This research utilised an interpretative phenomenological approach. Ethnographic fieldwork was used to conduct focus groups and interviews with community members. Participants were asked about their various information needs, the sources they rely on and their interactions with these sources in daily life. The analysis centred on identifying themes that shape their use of information.

Findings – The study found that in the daily lives of this fishing community, the perceived value of information is influenced by key factors, including reliable access through formal institutions, accuracy, affordability and ease of access, the capacity to reduce uncertainty and clarify outcomes, societal acceptance, shared benefits and educational relevance. These elements play a pivotal role in shaping the perceived value of information within the community.

Originality/value – This research is the first to investigate the perceived value of information within a marginalised community in a developing nation. It highlights that information solutions tailored to the unique needs and preferences of such communities can offer sustainable empowerment, providing benefits that extend beyond conventional material-focused interventions.

Keywords Value, Information, Everyday life, Marginalised community, Developing country, Information solution

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Information scholars have examined everyday life from the perspective of information seeking and information behaviour within the framework of the Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS) model. Several studies have employed the ELIS model either as a conceptual framework or as a reference guide for their information-seeking research (Weiler, 2005; Caidi *et al.*, 2010; Williamson *et al.*, 2012; Rafiq *et al.*, 2021; Kim and Oh, 2023; Zhang and Gao, 2024). Despite extensive research on ELIS and how people seek, use, and share information,

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there remains a lack of data on how they perceive the value accorded to information that motivates them to engage with information in everyday life. Moreover, no study has comprehensively examined how marginalised communities perceive the value of information, particularly in contexts where occupational identity plays a defining role in shaping communal structures and poor socioeconomic conditions influence the information practices. These communities navigate information in their daily lives to secure livelihoods, uphold social rights, and foster communal harmony, highlighting the critical need for a nuanced understanding of their information practices. This research focuses on a marginalised community, specifically small-scale marine fishermen in Bangladesh, who need to engage with information daily for various purposes, reflecting the practical manifestation of their activities. Understanding the factors that influence people's perception towards information is essential, as these factors provide insights into the motivations behind their engagement with information and the challenges they face in accessing the information needed to improve their circumstances. This research aims to explore the influences that shape the *value* of information among individuals within a small-scale marine fishermen community in Bangladesh when they engage with information to achieve various purposes in their everyday lives.

Everyday life profoundly shapes our understanding of reality, influencing both our information behaviour and the meanings we attribute to information (Berger and Luckmann, 2016). Hartel (2003) underscores the importance of extending research on everyday life beyond traditional domains of information behaviour, such as work and serious leisure and including the mundane and routine aspects of daily existence. This paper adopts an everyday life perspective to investigate the value of information in the daily lives of a small-scale marine fishing community in Bangladesh. By examining the information needs of individuals across work, leisure, and family life and the sources they utilise, the study seeks to understand how they perceive and prioritise the value of information within their lived experiences, ultimately influencing their decision to utilise it.

This research begins by exploring the perceived information needs of fishermen, focusing on the diverse types of information required across various aspects of their everyday lives. It identifies the specific categories of information considered essential by the research participants and examines the sources they rely on to access this information. Subsequently, the study analyses the factors that shape the perceived value of this information, emphasising its relevance to the daily activities of individuals in this community. By adopting this approach, the research offers a nuanced understanding of how information is valued, utilised, and prioritised within the community. It further highlights the complex interplay between information needs, sources, and values across different situations, such as work, leisure, and family life, in their societal context.

Definition of everyday life

Everyday life requires a great deal of effort to manage the multiple activities that comprise livelihood, family care, household maintenance, health management, leisure, education, social life, and community or religious involvement (McKenzie, 2020). French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre described the everyday world as the totality of lived experience, encompassing all human activities such as work, leisure, family time, and self-care (Lefebvre, 2014). Savolainen (2022) added that the familiarity, ordinariness, and routine nature of everyday life define the structural conditions of individual actions, such as the continuous recurrence of work and leisure. In studying information behaviour, Savolainen introduced the concept of everyday life information seeking (ELIS) in non-work contexts such as consumption, health, and leisure, defining it as the acquisition of various informational elements people use to orient themselves in daily life or to solve problems not directly connected with occupational tasks (Savolainen, 1995).

However, Savolainen (2022) also mentioned that everyday life should be interpreted more holistically, as it is no longer limited to non-work phenomena because work-related and free-

time activities have become entangled. Despite the common perception of work and non-work as distinct spheres, [Burkitt \(2004\)](#) points out that these areas are, in fact, permeable and interact in evolving ways. Supporting this view, [Højholt and Schraube \(2016\)](#) argue that everyday life encompasses all human activities across various contexts, including home, work, educational institutions, shopping venues, recreational areas, and digital spaces. [Ocepek \(2018\)](#) added that work-related and non-work elements are not separate entities but overlap, mutually permeating each other in daily life. In this context, a holistic research approach holds promise for bridging the division between work-related and non-work aspects of everyday life. However, empirical evidence from ethnographic studies remains relatively scarce ([Savolainen, 2022](#)).

To address this gap, this study focused on a marginalised community – a small-scale marine fishing community – where the people’s livelihood options, namely fishing, are entwined with other everyday activities, blurring the lines between work and non-work activities. The purpose of the research is to investigate what influences people’s understanding of the value accorded to information in everyday lives, focusing on their associated role within the community. The research focused on a small-scale marine community because the livelihood settings of individuals within this community are intrinsically linked to their daily lives. Despite limited or no information and digital literacies, their extensive use of mobile technologies and open communication at social gathering sites for entertainment blurs the boundaries between work and personal activities. This open interaction highlights how boundaries between different domains of everyday life are socially constructed and negotiated. Different people – and even the same person at different times – may adjust these boundaries as their life circumstances change ([McKenzie, 2020](#)). Given the flexible work arrangements made possible by information and communication technologies, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the overlap between the work and non-work domains even more apparent ([Gardner et al., 2021](#)).

Individuals in the fishing community must achieve numerous goals in their everyday lives based on their multiple roles, such as fishermen, father, mother, wife, and husband in the community, necessitating engagement with relevant information. [Bruce et al. \(2014\)](#) refer to this complex, multidimensional engagement with information as “information experience,” a process examining how people derive meaning from and interact with information in daily life and work. [Gorichanaz \(2020\)](#) suggested that the challenge of distinguishing between work- and non-work-related contextual components could be handled by viewing “everyday life” as the world of lived experience, that is, an individual’s life world. Building on this understanding, recognising daily goals and the use of information to achieve the goals is crucial for comprehending the value of information, which influences individuals to engage with information in their everyday lives. The value of information in everyday life comes from its ability to meet specific goals, reflecting an instrumental need and motivating engagement with that information to achieve those goals.

Everyday life and the permeability of work and non-work domains

The Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS) model, originally focused on non-work-related information needs, has been expanded to highlight the overlapping nature of work and non-work contexts in information behaviours ([Savolainen, 2022](#)). Empirical studies highlight how personal, academic, and professional domains intersect, influencing information practices. For instance, [Given’s \(2002\)](#) qualitative research demonstrated that mature students integrate aspects of home life, employment, and parenting into their academic information behaviours, thereby reflecting the intertwined nature of everyday and academic contexts. Similarly, [Lee and Ocepek \(2018\)](#) illustrated how professional training influences recurring information-seeking patterns across diverse domains, further reinforcing the fluid boundaries between work and non-work activities. [Frings-Hessami et al. \(2020\)](#) examined the documentation of everyday life information in a marginalised community in Bangladesh, highlighting it as a strategy for preserving information considered useful by individuals and ensuring its long-term accessibility. Their study demonstrates that such documentation practices frequently intersect with both work and non-work domains.

The concept of boundary management has further enriched our understanding of the permeability between the work and non-work domains. [Kreiner et al. \(2009\)](#) identified strategies that individuals use to navigate work and home life demands, highlighting the significance of personal preferences for integration or separation in managing these boundaries. Building on this, [McKenzie \(2020\)](#) explored how tools such as household calendars facilitate the integration of non-work tasks with professional routines, demonstrating the complexities of overlapping domains.

[Dalmer and McKenzie \(2019\)](#) challenged the conventional dichotomy between “everyday” and “workplace” information practices by examining caregiving roles, which involve invisible yet essential information work. Their findings underscore the multidimensional nature of information practices that transcend traditional definitions of work. Similarly, studies by [Du Toit et al. \(2022\)](#) and [McKenzie and Davies \(2022\)](#) highlighted how home and academic environments, along with everyday documentation, reflect the functional and social roles of individuals across contexts, further blurring the boundaries between domains.

While those studies provide valuable insights into the interconnectedness of work and non-work contexts, they predominantly focus on literate people from developed country perspectives on structured settings like academia and caregiving. However, this article’s findings focus on a marginalised community in Bangladesh, a developing country in the Global South, where most community members cannot read or write but possess some basic information literacy (IL) skills. To illustrate the nature of IL in similar contexts, [Anwar et al. \(2022\)](#) identified the collective nature of IL in another marginalised community in Bangladesh, where members were aware of their information needs and knew where to seek relevant information. Their study also highlighted the influence of social factors, such as family structures and religious practices, on IL, which was similarly observed in the present study and is discussed in the findings section. Overall, this study investigates the types of information needed by community members and the role that information plays in their everyday lives. Employing ethnographic methods and a phenomenological perspective, this study examines how the roles and everyday activities within the community influence perceptions of information value.

Value accorded to information

Value can be understood in multiple ways. According to the [Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries \(n.d.\)](#), the term refers both to “the worth of something in relation to the price paid or asked for it” and to “the regard in which something is held based on its importance, worth, or usefulness.” Additionally, value encompasses beliefs about what is right or wrong and what is considered significant in life. From these definitions, three distinct dimensions of the value of information emerge: the “exchange value” of information, the “use value” of information, and the beliefs held by individuals or communities regarding what is important in life. [Schwartz \(2012\)](#) further elaborated on the concept of values by identifying six main features of values: values are beliefs, they transcend specific situations, they function as standards or criteria, they are ordered by importance, and the relative importance of multiple values influences action. These features highlight how values serve as guiding principles for both individual and collective behaviour. They help explain how values, particularly those related to information, shape decision-making processes by providing a framework through which people assess the worth and utility of information.

Moreover, values and beliefs, including faith and emotions, function as a bridge between culture and society ([Hayden, 1988](#)). They establish shared standards for evaluating behaviour and encourage the development of values-based practices that guide both individual and group actions ([Atkin, 1996](#)). This dynamic interaction plays a crucial role in shaping the social fabric, influencing roles, responsibilities, and collective attitudes within a society. Ultimately, values inform societal norms and contribute to the construction of a shared sense of purpose and direction.

The value of information has been a central theme across diverse domains, with research exploring its significance in various contexts. For instance, [Chatman \(1999\)](#) investigated how localised or “small world” communities interpret and assign meaning to information, revealing the contextual nature of its perceived value. [Sheriff \(2000\)](#) explored the value of information in organisational environments, emphasising its relevance in supporting decision-making and institutional functioning. [Burnett et al. \(2001, 2008\)](#) examined how social norms and community attitudes shape the valuation and use of information by analysing various aspects of information access within specific social worlds. [Eppler \(2006\)](#) addressed the importance of information quality, highlighting how clarity, accuracy, and relevance contribute to its perceived usefulness. [Grant et al. \(2007\)](#) focused on online consumer behaviour, investigating how individuals evaluate, prioritise, and utilise digital information. [Angeletos and Pavan \(2007\)](#) explored the broader social value of information by analysing the efficient use of information and classifying economies based on the presence and degree of inefficiencies in the equilibrium use of information.

More recently, [Brown and Duguid \(2017\)](#) discussed the social life of information, arguing that understanding information requires looking beyond its content to the social contexts in which it is created, shared, and interpreted, [Foster and Clough \(2018\)](#) revisited the conceptual underpinnings of information, and [Chen et al. \(2024\)](#) examined the value of information in cross-border trading. Recent research has expanded to include information value co-creation within online communities ([Pee et al., 2020](#)), assessing the perceived value of information in an information-immersive world ([Raban and Ahituv, 2024](#)), and behavioural and social factors influencing information use ([Glynn et al., 2022](#)). Additionally, research on information cultures has contributed significantly to the understanding of the value of information, examining how values, attitudes, and beliefs shape individual engagement with information ([Oliver, 2003](#); [Curry and Moore, 2003](#); [Choo et al., 2006](#); [Oliver and Foscarini, 2014](#)). Despite this extensive body of research, little is known about how communities, particularly marginalised ones in developing countries, perceive the value of information in the context of their everyday lives.

The inter-connectedness of needs and value of information in everyday life

The concept of information need has been a topic of extensive scholarly debate, with various terms such as want, demand, requirement, and question used to explore its dimensions ([Afzal, 2017](#)). [Given et al. \(2023\)](#) observed that information demand has been frequently employed in research, primarily due to the availability of data and its ease of measurement. However, information needs are multifaceted and emerge from dynamic interactions between individuals and their environments. For instance, members of a community may require information related to income generation, social activities, responsibilities, or entertainment. [Ikoja-Odongo and Mostert \(2006\)](#) defined an information need as a fundamental requirement that compels individuals to seek information. [Sundin and Johannisson \(2005\)](#) further highlighted the role of social structures in shaping human behaviour, offering a collectivist perspective that views information needs as objective phenomena influenced by broader societal contexts.

Context plays a critical role in shaping information needs, as it determines both the type of information sought and the underlying motivations for seeking it ([Fisher and Julien, 2009](#)). For example, the social environment and livelihoods of individuals in a community significantly influence their information needs, which are often driven by practical requirements related to their occupation and social relationships. [Savolainen \(2012\)](#) highlighted three key contextual factors that shape information needs: situations of action, task performance, and dialogue. In everyday life, individuals require diverse types of information across various contexts to achieve specific goals. The value of information is realised when it effectively addresses these needs and contributes to personal or community objectives.

The concept of the information use situation (IUS), introduced by [Hemingway and Gough \(1998\)](#), provides a framework for understanding the value of information in specific contexts.

This concept highlights the role of individuals and small workgroups in utilising information within functional or organisational settings. Building on this, [Sheriff \(2000\)](#) explored the relationship between IUS and the notion of value-in-use, focusing on how context shapes the perceived value of information in achieving objectives. [Taylor \(1986\)](#) further asserted that the value of information lies not in its inherent properties but in how it is applied within a particular context. These perspectives underscore the importance of understanding information use as a situational and contextual phenomenon.

This study applies the concept of use value to examine how small-scale marine fishermen on a southeastern coastal island in Bangladesh perceive the value of information within their unique information environment. Adopting a phenomenological approach, the research investigates how fishermen interact with and utilise information to address their specific needs and challenges. The study is guided by three key questions:

- (1) What types of information do small-scale marine fishermen identify as necessary, and for what purposes?
- (2) What sources of information do they rely on to fulfil their needs?
- (3) What factors influence their perception of the value of information within their community?

By focusing on the everyday lives of the fishermen, this research analyses how they perceive the value of information in various contexts. It identifies the types of information they need, the sources they depend on, and how this information fulfils their needs. Information is vital for addressing a wide range of human needs, from economic activities to education and healthcare. In this context, the practical value of information becomes evident as it contributes to solving specific problems and achieving broader objectives ([Zagzebski, 2003](#)). This study, therefore, provides a nuanced understanding of how information needs and values are shaped by situational and contextual factors within a marginalised fishing community.

Methodology

To explore the lived experiences of individuals within a specific context, this study adopts an interpretative phenomenological research approach. Phenomenology focuses on examining the structure of experiences – such as perception, memory, imagination, and social interactions – by analysing how these experiences are shaped from a first-person perspective ([Gorichanaz, 2019](#)). In alignment with this framework, the research targeted individuals from the small-scale marine fishing community of an island in the Southeastern part of Bangladesh to provide an in-depth investigation into their interaction with information in their everyday lives. Ethnographic methods were employed to collect primary data from the field, providing a nuanced understanding of the community's information practices. This article documents the perceived value of information by examining the community's information needs, the sources they use, and the outcomes of accessing and using information.

Data collection

The primary data for this study were collected from four distinct villages of the Island, each situated within a different Union council (the smallest rural administrative and local government unit in Bangladesh). The male participants have typically been involved in fishing since childhood, having inherited the profession from previous generations. Marine fishing in the studied community does not require formal training or certification; rather, it follows an informal learning-by-doing approach. Young fishermen typically begin their training in their teenage years by working as Nayar (crew members) under the mentorship of a Majhi (boat captain). Through repeated participation in fishing expeditions, they gradually develop and refine their fishing skills and techniques. This is partly due to the fact that individuals who attempt to take up

fishing at a later age frequently experience seasickness, which can manifest as headaches and nausea from the shakiness of the boat at sea. Additionally, the poor socioeconomic conditions of fishermen's families compel them to involve male children in income-generating activities from an early age. The male participants included in this study come from three specific groups: Nayar, Majhi, and boat owners. Boat owners may also serve as Majhis while investing in fishing trips. The female participants were the wives of fishermen and, in accordance with prevailing societal norms on the island, do not engage in direct fishing activities.

The research employed ethnographic methods to collect primary data and utilised multiple data collection techniques, including focus groups held separately for male and female participants and interviews. To ensure the anonymity of all villages and participants, focus groups are referred to as MFG1 (Male Focus Group 1), MFG2, MFG3 and FMFG (Female Focus Group), while individual interviewees are labelled MI1-MI8 (Male Interviewee) and FI1-FI2 (Female Interviewee) throughout this paper. Participants were selected using non-probability sampling, in line with the requirements of interpretivist research, which prioritises small, purposive samples.

The first author, who conducted data collection, spent almost a month residing on the island. They employed an inductive approach to acquire a thorough understanding of the community's beliefs, values, and attitudes in their interactions with information. A total of 35 participants attended the focus groups, with 8–9 participants in each focus group. Ten interviews were conducted with 8 male and 2 female participants. Primary data were collected in a local dialect of Bangla, the native language spoken by the participants. The first author, who is originally from the same district as the study site and fluent in the local dialect, conducted the data collection. This linguistic and cultural familiarity facilitated effective communication and helped establish rapport during interviews and discussions. With participants' informed consent, obtained in written form before the data collection, all conversations were audio-recorded using the first author's mobile phone. Following data collection, the first author transcribed the recordings into Bangla by carefully listening to the audio files. These transcripts were then translated into English and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis, as outlined by [Braun and Clarke \(2019\)](#).

Findings

Information for successful fishing

Data gathered from four villages on the island confirmed that marine fishing serves as the primary source of income for all families in the community. The information required for successful fishing plays a critical role in ensuring a productive expedition, which generates sufficient income to meet essential family needs such as food, shelter, and other necessities. Conversely, a poor catch adversely affects their livelihoods, often forcing fishermen to borrow money from relatives, neighbours, or local NGOs offering microcredit programs. Regarding this, MI5 said –

A good catch offers enormous happiness because it equates to increased revenue. However, a good catch is determined by a variety of variables. As a result, access to thorough information is critical for assuring successful and safe fishing techniques.

Marine fishermen must make extensive preparations before heading out to catch fish, as inadequate preparation might lower fishing success and threaten their lives. In addition to accessing essential information, fishermen also need to document critical information, such as the total expenditure on supplies purchased before the expedition and the income earned from selling fish, enabling them to effectively evaluate profit and loss. The following section discusses the different types of important information identified by the participants that ensure good preparation for successful fishing.

Information to prepare for a fishing trip. While preparing for fishing expeditions, fishermen require critical information about local market availability and pricing of oil, ice supplies,

essential medicines, and the availability of fishing crews. Each fishing trawler requires a large amount of oil, which costs between 30 and 50 thousand Bangladeshi Taka (300–500 USD) depending on the boat size and trip duration. As a result, the fishermen must determine where to obtain this oil and at what cost. Ice is also required to preserve marine seafood during the journey, prompting the need to identify reliable sources for its purchase.

Due to the physically demanding nature of fishing and prolonged exposure to varying weather conditions, fishermen often suffer from health issues such as fever and diarrhea, commonly caused by saline water exposure. To manage these frequent ailments, they carry medicines with them on every fishing trip, making it essential for them to know the prices of these medications. In addition to health concerns, fishermen must also ensure they have an adequate crew, referred to locally as “Nayar.” Depending on the size of the trawler and the duration of the trip, between 4 and 8 Nayar are typically required. Therefore, fishermen must be aware of who is available within the village to join their expeditions.

Rules and regulations regarding safe fishing. In all three male focus groups, awareness of regulations – such as fishing bans, the legality of nets, and environmental compliance – emerged as a critical theme. This information is critical for fishermen, as it helps them avoid legal penalties and potential harassment from enforcement organisations. Beyond compliance, this regulatory awareness is firmly embedded in fishermen’s sense of identity and self. The discussions during the focus groups revealed that fishermen on this island strictly adhere to the fishing ban period because of their fear of legal penalties. The availability of modern, legally compliant fishing nets is a critical factor in ensuring both regulatory compliance and the sustainability of the fishing industry. These nets, which adhere to national legal standards, facilitate compliance with regulations and offer significant economic and environmental advantages. Frequent breakdowns of fishing nets impose a considerable financial burden on fishermen due to the need for regular repairs or replacements. The use of durable, high-quality nets mitigates these costs, thereby enhancing the economic viability of fishing operations. Access to accurate and clear information regarding fishing restrictions, legal requirements, and sustainable practices is fundamental for ensuring regulatory compliance while addressing the broader socio-economic challenges faced by the fishing community and ultimately fostering a more resilient and sustainable fishing industry.

Weather updates. Early warning messages regarding cyclones are crucial for fishermen on the Island, as low-pressure systems at sea pose significant risks to their safety, boats, and nets. All three male focus groups emphasised the importance of these early warning messages. Prior to embarking on a fishing trip, fishermen carefully monitor weather forecasts to assess conditions. If forecasts indicate unfavourable weather, they are compelled to cancel their trips. Participants from the MFG1 described a traumatic incident in which a boat from their community failed to return one month after the recent occurrence of Cyclone Michaung, attributing this to delayed access to cyclone information. Unfortunately, a large number of fishermen drown in the Bay of Bengal each year, and because their bodies are rarely discovered, their families remain in a state of uncertainty, hoping that their loved ones would return someday. During an interview, FI2 shared her personal experience –

Following a storm, the seaside becomes our home as we wait with tears in our eyes, hoping that our husband or son will return. Having shed many tears for them over the years, the tears have dried up.

Information about firing training of the Navy. Information regarding the firing training conducted by the Navy is particularly significant for the marine fishermen of the Island. The importance of this information arises from the fact that the Bangladesh Navy conducts firing exercises in the coastal areas where these fishermen operate. To ensure public safety and prevent accidents, access to these fishing zones is prohibited during training sessions. Consequently, the fishermen face an additional fishing ban each year, typically lasting one to two weeks, on top of the regular national fishing bans. Information about this temporary fishing ban is essential for fishermen to safely plan their activities. Timely access to such information enables them to adjust their schedules, avoid restricted areas, and ensure their

safety while minimising disruptions to their livelihoods. In relation to this, one participant from the MFG2 stated that –

Each fishing trip requires a significant investment and we spend a lot of money. Nevertheless, it would be a huge loss for us if, after investing much money and purchasing numerous commodities for a fishing expedition and sea fishing, we discover that we are unable to fish due to the restriction from the Navy. This is because we are unable to get a refund for the perishable goods we purchased prior to the fishing trip.

Identifying the best possible fishing locations for a successful catch. A successful catch depends on knowing the precise location of the fish because it optimises fishing expedition time and resource utilisation, thus saving money and effort. The growing population of small-scale marine fishermen and fishing vessels, coupled with state-mandated fishing bans designed to protect marine species during breeding seasons, have intensified the competition to meet expected catch targets. When the bans end, all fishermen resume fishing simultaneously, which increases competition and may lead to the adoption of illegal fishing practices, such as using illegal fishing nets. This heightened competition places additional pressure on already depleted fish stocks. In such circumstances, having accurate information about fish locations allows fishers to strategically position themselves closer to their targets, helping them to reduce their operational costs and secure an attractive catch.

Information for livelihood development and accessing social benefits

The dependence on a single source of income in the community has sparked a collective demand for strategies to improve financial stability. This includes advocating for either diversifying income streams or adopting advanced fishing techniques to maximize efficiency and profitability. Female participants, in particular, expressed a strong desire for alternative income-generating opportunities, given their lack of involvement in direct economic activities. Furthermore, participants emphasised significant disparities in their access to social benefits under the country's social protection scheme. This issue is particularly concerning for marine fishermen, as they are frequently affected by fishing bans implemented to prevent the overexploitation of marine resources. These bans, while essential for ecological sustainability, exacerbate the financial vulnerabilities of fishermen who rely solely on fishing for their livelihood. This section explores required information identified by participants as necessary for securing financial stability, which in turn helps fulfil their basic physiological needs.

Information on modern fish processing techniques and alternate income-generating activities. Many fishermen on the island engage in the preparation of dried fish alongside catching fresh seafood, with dried fish being a popular culinary product both domestically and internationally. However, despite its demand, fishermen face significant challenges in generating income from this trade due to several factors. These include limited advanced skills and knowledge regarding the health and safety regulations required by different countries for export, as well as a lack of capacity to manage their own export businesses. Additionally, the extended monsoon season, characterised by limited sunlight, makes it difficult to effectively dry fish, further complicating their efforts. Consequently, fishermen have expressed a strong interest in acquiring new fish processing techniques to enhance their earnings. Moreover, inadequate information on fish preservation during fishing expeditions often results in declining fish quality, leading to lower market prices and increased post-harvest losses.

Both male and female participants expressed a desire to diversify their income sources beyond fishing, exploring opportunities such as raising livestock, engaging in handicrafts, tailoring, and homestead gardening. However, despite living in an area vulnerable to climate change-related risks like flash floods and soil salinity, participants lack knowledge about growing climate-resilient vegetables. Many families residing on government-owned land or embankments due to limited access to land and proper housing are keen to cultivate land collectively for vegetable production but are unfamiliar with climate-resilient seeds and farming practices. Female participants, in particular, expressed a strong interest in generating income

through tailoring or handicrafts. However, they face significant barriers, including social stigma attached to women participating in these activities and a lack of access to information and training that aligns with societal norms. Male participants, on the other hand, seek alternative employment opportunities during fishing bans, such as operating rickshaws, selling seasonal fruits, or working as day labourers in nearby towns like Chittagong or in Dhaka. As a result, they are interested in receiving timely information about potential employment opportunities to facilitate their job search during off-seasons in the fishing industry.

Information on accessing social benefits. The significance of obtaining accurate information about the social benefits available to marine fishermen was strongly emphasised by participants in two focus groups. For instance, during fishing ban periods, the government provides rice to support fishermen's families. However, many participants expressed confusion and frustration over perceived disparities in the distribution, as they lacked precise information about the quantity of rice allocated to support their families. To ensure equitable access to such support, the government issues fishermen identity cards annually. As a result, fishermen expressed a need for timely information regarding the issuance of these cards and the broader range of benefits they may be eligible for under the social protection plan for marginalised groups.

Male participants specifically highlighted inequities in the distribution of fishermen identity cards. They expressed concern that some genuine fishermen did not receive the identity card and, consequently, were excluded from receiving rice during the ban period. In contrast, some non-fishermen were reportedly issued the card and received benefits despite not being engaged in fishing. Participants emphasised the importance of having clear communication channels with the Department of Fisheries officers to address these grievances and ensure the proper distribution of benefits. Establishing a direct line of communication, they argued, would help address issues of access and fairness, allowing fishermen to raise complaints and seek justice more efficiently.

Information for combating social challenges

The fishing communities on the island face significant social challenges, including rape, child marriage, domestic violence, and false accusations of criminal offences. These issues are compounded by low levels of education within the community, which exacerbate social vulnerabilities and contribute to widespread concern among households. All the focus groups revealed a collective recognition of the gravity of these problems and their impact on the community's well-being. The discussions revealed a collective recognition of the crucial role information plays in tackling these challenges. Hence, community members expressed a strong demand for awareness-raising campaigns aimed at educating the public and fostering shifts in societal attitudes, especially concerning child marriage and false criminal accusations. Additionally, they emphasised the need for clear and actionable guidance on how to access government support and legal resources in response to incidents of rape and domestic violence. These findings reflect the community's wish for a proactive approach in seeking solutions to these issues, highlighting their desire for justice, enhanced social protection, and long-term changes in societal attitudes to improve overall well-being.

Information for maintaining physical and mental wellness

During the focus groups, participants emphasised the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, shedding light on prevalent health concerns within the fishing community. These cover a wide range of illnesses, including fever, colds, flu, arthritis, diarrhoea, heart and kidney problems, gastrointestinal disorders, skin conditions, diseases of babies and children, vaccination, and difficulties arising from pregnancy. Given the physically demanding nature of their work, arthritis has emerged as a common ailment among fishermen. However, participants expressed limited awareness of physiotherapy as a treatment option for managing arthritis and a lack of information on where such services are available and the associated costs. In addition, there appears to be a

significant lack of knowledge about mental health, as demonstrated by a participant who related a traumatic story of a friend who attempted suicide after his girlfriend rejected him for marriage. This emphasises the broader importance of accessing information and services to address both physical and mental health concerns. Participants also expressed a strong desire to access information about specialised doctors, as they currently lack reliable sources of information regarding appropriate doctors for specific ailments.

Information about children's education

Participants expressed deep concerns about the education and future prospects of their children. Almost all the participants in the MFG2 overwhelmingly expressed that they do not want to see their children following in their profession. Instead, they aspire to provide their children with higher education opportunities, particularly in colleges located in nearby cities. Seeking to streamline this process, they express a desire for detailed information on admission procedures and recommendations for reputable teachers or coaching centres in order to provide their children with a high-quality education in preparation for their future employment in other occupations. Moreover, they are eager to investigate prospective job pathways for their children after graduation, hoping for opportunities for stable employment and discouraging them from going into the risky fishing profession. The value of education, as perceived by the fishing families, was clearly articulated by a female participant during the FMFG, and she said -

I told my son if you had studied well in school when I supported you by working in other people's houses, then you would not have chosen this profession, and I would not need to cry for your safety when you go fishing, and any accident happens due to a cyclone.

Information about entertainment

Fishing is a physically demanding occupation, so fishermen like to explore recreational activities while on land. Notably, their preferences tend to focus on entertainment options available within the island rather than moving beyond its borders. During fishing ban periods, when their usual work is paused, various musical and religious events are organised across the island to meet their entertainment needs. As a result, there is a clear demand for information about these recreational opportunities. In contrast, female participants expressed having limited opportunities for entertainment outside the home. When asked about their leisure activities, all the women collectively stated that they did not engage in any specific forms of entertainment. This shared response underscores a prevailing social norm that deems entertainment for women as inappropriate or unethical.

Information regarding authentic land records

The fishing community on the Island faces significant challenges related to land records, primarily due to widespread fraudulent practices, such as selling the same piece of land to multiple buyers or one owner selling jointly-owned land without the consent of the other co-owners. As a result, community members place a high priority on obtaining accurate information about the authenticity of land documents when purchasing property. Verified records are essential for reducing the likelihood of disputes stemming from fraudulent transactions. Ensuring legitimate ownership of the land by the seller is a primary concern, as many individuals have already experienced land-related conflicts. Accurate and reliable information about land ownership is crucial for buying land from an original owner. This ensures transparency and minimises the risk of future disputes over ownership claims.

Information to verify the authenticity of products purchased online

Fishermen who use smartphones and social media platforms sometimes encounter advertisements for herbal medicine, locally known as Yunani medicine, as well as other

commodities like honey from the Sunderban forest. These promotions often motivate them to consider purchasing the products. However, fishermen often feel the need to validate the authenticity of these companies and ensure that online orders will be delivered with genuine products. They are particularly concerned about verifying the quality of the goods and the reliability of the businesses to avoid fraud. Access to such information can confirm the quality and authenticity of the products, which is crucial for saving money.

Sources of information

Participants in this research use different sources to access the previously mentioned information to achieve their relevant objectives. It was found that they relied mostly on informal sources rather than formal sources. Formal sources include local government institutions such as local fisheries offices, agriculture and livestock offices, Union councils, and so forth. Informal sources normally originate from their communities and are essentially oral in nature. This research indicates that fishermen primarily access essential information for successful fishing expeditions from other fishermen within their community, as they catch similar types of marine fish, including fishing techniques. Regulatory information, such as fishing bans, is accessed directly from local authorities, including the fisheries department, the Upazila (an administrative division in Bangladesh, functioning as a sub-unit of a district) administration, and the Coast Guard.

Regarding the weather forecasts, a few of them who have some skills in using smartphones use their phones to access weather updates. Male participants who use smartphones primarily engage with them for entertainment purposes, often watching weather updates from local television channels available on YouTube. Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) is a widely popular medium on the island, and many fishermen follow live news broadcasts on YouTube, where they view live telecasts as trustworthy sources of information. Due to their inability to read and write, fishermen depend on voice commands to access information on YouTube. However, their limited understanding of how to evaluate source authenticity or effectively use voice search functions often leads to the passive consumption of large volumes of information, much of which is irrelevant to their original intent. Consequently, instead of actively seeking targeted content, they tend to engage with material that is algorithmically recommended or presented sequentially by the platform. The reliance on automated content delivery has resulted in significant challenges, notably the consumption of outdated or inaccurate news. This issue became especially evident during Cyclone Michaung in December 2023, when the forecasts from the channels regularly followed by the fishermen failed to align with the actual timing of the storm. These discrepancies highlight the risks associated with relying on information sources that they lack the necessary skills to access and awareness to critically assess. Fishermen also highlighted that while they occasionally access regulatory information using smartphones, their primary reliance is on government institutions, as they perceive information from these sources as more trustworthy. When encountering regulations on social media, they tend to look for the presence of a government logo, which they regard as a marker of credibility.

Fishermen also frequently discuss regulatory information among themselves, often within small groups or during spontaneous conversations at neighbourhood tea stalls. These tea stalls, which serve as central social hubs within the community, are popular gathering places where fishermen relax, socialise, and share information. These gatherings occur multiple times daily, except during times when the fishermen are fishing in the sea. Each stall is equipped with a high-quality television, typically with satellite channel connections provided by the owners to entertain customers. Given that many families in the fishing community do not own televisions, these tea stalls play a critical role in both entertainment and information dissemination. The informal interactions that occur at these locations offer fishermen valuable insights into a variety of topics, including effective fishing practices, physical and mental health, entertainment, and access to social benefits. When visiting these tea stalls, fishermen

may sometimes intentionally seek out specific information by engaging in purposeful conversations with others. At the same time, they often acquire crucial information incidentally by overhearing ongoing discussions among other fishermen. This social sharing of information at tea stalls thus contributes significantly to the information ecosystem of the fishing community.

In addressing physical well-being concerns, fishermen adopt a multilayered strategy that reflects both their reliance on local knowledge and their gradual engagement with more formal medical services. They first turn to other fishing households for guidance and support, drawing upon the collective experience and knowledge within the community. However, their preferred sources of consultation are neighbourhood pharmacies or local practitioners who lack official medical training. This reliance on local pharmacies and practitioners stems from their immediate availability and close connection with the fishing families. When these informal solutions fail to resolve health issues, fishermen turn to private doctors with medical degrees, for instance, at the Upazila health complex or specialised hospitals outside the island. Fishing families who rear livestock follow similar information practices when addressing livestock health challenges. They prefer consulting with local practitioners and nearby pharmacies for advice despite the practitioners' lack of formal veterinary training. If the advice does not alleviate the issue, fishing families resort to taking their cattle to the Upazila Veterinary Hospital.

When attempting to address social conflicts and crises, participants go to reliable community members for guidance. Fishermen initially attempt to resolve these issues through discussions or by seeking assistance from the senior fisherman, who is the boat captain. If the problem persists, they go to the *Sardar*. Each village has a *Sardar*, a knowledgeable leader who tries to solve issues with his wisdom. The fishers also respect him for his leadership role in the village. If the *Sardar* cannot provide a solution, they approach the chairman or a member of the Union Parishad of the village. If the problem persists despite these efforts, they seek assistance from the police station. By discussing with these distinguished people, participants gain important insights and get the confidence to address social conflicts. *Sardar* and other senior individuals in the community are trusted and legitimate because of their strong community integration and shared values, which makes them trustworthy resources for guidance and assistance in addressing social conflicts. On the other hand, the Chairman or member of the Union Parishad and police are valued for their role as government officers, and fishermen trust all kinds of government-provided information.

When purchasing products online, fishermen consult local representatives affiliated with local herbal companies. These representatives, usually local residents, store products like medicines and honey in their homes. This arrangement allows community members to purchase items directly or consult the representatives to validate the product quality and company authenticity before placing orders online.

Discussion

The workplace dynamics within the small-scale marine fishing community are inherently unstructured, with work occurring in uncontrolled environments, unlike regulated professions such as teaching or medicine. Fishermen must engage with a wide range of fishing-related information on a daily basis to improve the likelihood of a successful catch. Notably, their pursuit of fishing-related information often occurs with seeking information for other domains of life, including health, alternative livelihood opportunities, access to social benefits, and children's education, which are equally vital for navigating the ongoing challenges faced by the community. Information needs within this context are dynamic and evolve across the multiple roles individuals occupy within the community, underscoring the interconnected and overlapping nature of these domains. This overlap between work-related and non-work-related information needs aligns with Savolainen's (2022) discussion of ELIS, which was further supported by Burkitt (2004), Højholt and Schraube (2016), and Ocepek (2018). This

research reveals that information needs in this community are often interlinked, with one need influencing or generating others. For instance, acquiring information critical for successful fishing contributes to financial stability, enabling households to purchase land in safer areas of the island, away from cyclone-prone zones. This, in turn, creates a demand for reliable information about land records. Similarly, increased income facilitates access to specialised medical treatments and quality education for children, highlighting additional information needs related to competent physicians and educational resources. In his study of the daily information needs of homeless parents, [Hersberger \(2001\)](#) discovered similar patterns, where information related to one problem is linked to solving other issues, such as financial problems tied to employment and education needs.

[Given \(2002\)](#) noted that everyday experiences can spark new information needs. For example, male participants in this study primarily use smartphones for entertainment purposes. However, these devices occasionally expose them to incidental information, such as updates on fishing bans or weather conditions. Additionally, their engagement with social media platforms often leads to further information needs, such as verifying the credibility of herbal products promoted online. These patterns underscore the fluid and interconnected nature of information needs within this fishing community, illustrating how one domain of information often overlaps with and influences another.

Reliability and accuracy of the sources of information

Participants across all focus groups and interviews consistently expressed a high level of trust in government institutions, relying on them as their primary source of information for various important information in specific, critical situations encountered in their everyday lives. They emphasised the usefulness of government-provided information, particularly in relation to fishing ban periods, Bangladesh Navy firing schedules, access to social benefits during the ban period, acquisition of fishermen's identity cards, valid land ownership documents for property transactions, and guidance on resolving social conflicts. The perceived accuracy of information from government institutions was a key reason for this trust. While some of this information is available from other sources, participants strongly preferred to access it in person from official government offices, viewing these as the most trustworthy and authoritative source. This trust also extended to digital platforms. When seeking information on social media, fishermen deliberately looked for official government logos, which they interpreted as indicators of authenticity and reliability. As noted by [Sheriff \(2000\)](#) and [Schwartz \(2012\)](#), the situation in which information is used significantly contributes to its value. In the case of this fishing community, the critical nature of these situations, where immediate action based on accurate information is required, further amplifies the importance of trustworthy sources.

Easy accessibility and cost

Time and cost-saving are two crucial factors that shape the perceived value of information among fishing families. While they generally trust government institutions for reliable information, in some cases, they tend to avoid these formal sources due to the associated time and financial costs. For example, community members often visit neighbourhood pharmacies in the local market for quick and cost-free advice on livestock health. This practice is preferred over seeking assistance from government veterinary hospitals due to the travel costs involved and the limited availability of services beyond regular hospital hours. Similarly, for their personal health concerns, fishing families rely on information obtained from local pharmacies, as it allows them to quickly access medication without incurring the higher costs associated with visiting a specialised hospital, where doctors' fees can often be too expensive. When the suggestion is not effective, they go to nearby physicians who have some training but do not hold official MBBS degrees. These physicians are valued for their reasonable fees and availability, demonstrating the community's preference for information sources that are both

time-efficient and affordable. Such preferences are shaped by the community's disadvantaged socioeconomic background, leading fishermen to prioritise information sources that are both easily accessible and low-cost. [Glynn et al. \(2022\)](#) highlights that social and behavioural factors play a critical role in determining how individuals value and use information. In particular, the *timeliness* and *convenience* of access are key determinants of the perceived value of information. Similarly, [Sundin and Johannisson \(2005\)](#) further emphasise the influence of social structures on shaping such behaviours.

Uncertainty reduction and social interaction

Information that clarifies outcomes is highly valued among small-scale marine fishermen, as it significantly reduces uncertainty in decision-making across various aspects of everyday life. In the context of fishing, such information is critical for preparing expeditions and increasing the likelihood of a safe expedition and a successful catch. Access to reliable information about optimal fishing locations, techniques, safety measures, and logistical requirements to prepare for the fishing expedition is a foundational aspect of their livelihoods and survival for their families. To enhance the clarity and reliability of this information, fishermen routinely engage in ongoing dialogue across multiple sites and social networks. These interactions take place aboard fishing vessels, between boats at sea, with experienced boat captains, and with investors in the fishing sector. They also occur on land in informal settings such as tea stalls and marketplaces.

These dialogues, however, are not always sufficient to resolve informational uncertainty. Fishermen often draw upon personal experience to validate the information shared within their networks, creating a dynamic interplay between collective dialogue and individual reflection. This multi-layered approach allows them to move from uncertainty to confidence in their decisions. Local tea stalls, in particular, function as vital social hubs for multidirectional information exchange. Far more than casual social spaces, they serve as critical venues for the circulation of information related to work, family, and leisure. As noted by [Burkitt \(2004\)](#), [Højholt and Schraube \(2016\)](#), [Ocepek \(2018\)](#), and [Savolainen \(2022\)](#), everyday life is not comprised of isolated domains; rather, work, family, and leisure are interwoven spheres that influence one another in complex ways. This integrated perspective is especially evident within the fishing community studied, where the everyday conversations occurring across different social spaces reflect the profound entanglement of work and non-work activities.

Moreover, these informal interactions foster emotional bonds and a shared sense of identity, transforming information exchange into a socially meaningful and practical activity. Shared experiences and overlapping informational needs – shaped by common socioeconomic conditions – make these exchanges especially valuable for actionable decision-making, such as selecting fishing sites, identifying trustworthy suppliers, or hiring skilled Nayars. The reciprocal nature of these conversations enhances both the social cohesion and the perceived clarity of information.

Uncertainty reduction in information use is primarily driven by the goal of task performance, which in this case is achieving a good catch, which necessitates ongoing dialogue. Engaging in multiple conversations across various locations allows community members to co-construct an understanding of the factors that contribute to a successful catch. This process increases both the clarity and perceived reliability of information, thereby encouraging its use within the community. To explain the relationship between information need and uncertainty, [Savolainen \(2012\)](#) identified task performance and dialogue as two key contextual factors that trigger or drive information seeking. These factors play a crucial role in satisfying information needs that are linked to specific goals – an observation that resonates with the practices of the fishing community in this study.

Social proofing and cultural alignment

Social proofing, as described by [Cialdini and Goldstein \(2004\)](#), refers to the trust and prioritised attention a group of people places on information provided by its members or leaders,

amplifying its perceived value. In closely connected communities, information becomes more valuable when endorsed by respected leaders or groups (Glynn *et al.*, 2022). In the case of fishermen, they rely on the guidance of the local leader, known as the “Sardar,” to address issues such as social conflicts or domestic violence. The information shared by the Sardar is valued and acted upon, as the fishermen regard it as both credible and useful for conflict resolution within their community context.

Moral value of information

The older generation of fishermen is deeply concerned about the shifting attitudes and behaviours of younger community members, which they perceive as a significant divergence from established societal norms and beliefs. These changes are perceived as a potential threat to societal cohesion, raising fears that the erosion of shared values might disrupt the harmony that underpins the fishing community. The older generation emphasises the importance of promoting information that upholds socially acceptable behaviours and reinforces cohesion within the fishing community. Information about societal values and norms carries significant moral value, helping younger generations understand and respect the social structures that sustain their community.

Information related to societal values and norms plays a significant role in shaping ethical behaviour and reinforcing moral standards in the everyday lives of fishing communities. As Schwartz (2012) notes, values function as beliefs that serve as standards or criteria for action. In this context, fishermen express a strong desire for these values to be communicated to younger generations to guide their behaviour in alignment with community expectations. This transmission is seen as essential for preserving traditions and fostering a harmonious and ethically grounded society.

Older fishermen articulate a vision of youth who embody values such as empathy – sensitivity to the suffering of others, coupled with a willingness to help and respect for all members of the community. They emphasise the importance of reliability, moral discernment, and understanding others’ circumstances and emotions. Additional virtues they advocate include forgiveness, diligence, strong familial bonds, politeness, emotional composure, and a principled commitment to doing what is right for its own sake.

Conservative gender norms also shape the community’s moral landscape. Male members uphold strict boundaries for women, limiting their mobility and social interactions outside the family. Any deviation from these norms is viewed as a threat to both social order and family honour. These values and beliefs, deeply embedded in the emotional and cultural fabric of the community, play a key role in sustaining its moral framework. Such shared values and emotions are foundational to the construction of a society’s cultural identity (Hayden, 1988). Everyday life within this cultural context shapes the meanings individuals attribute to information (Berger and Luckmann, 2016).

Social value of information

Individuals in the small-scale fishing community play an important role as information sources for one another, which is a necessity due to their shared livelihood requirements. For instance, fishermen rely on one another for guidance on locating optimal fishing locations, assessing the costs of supplies such as oil and ice needed for trips, staying informed about weather conditions, accessing social benefits, and even exploring entertainment options. This interpersonal interaction not only facilitates individual and collective decision-making but also highlights the collective benefits that enhance the social value of information. In this context, information is regarded as a social good that enriches the social, political, and cultural dimensions of citizens’ lives. Angeletos and Pavan (2007), in their discussion of the social value of information, argue that the efficient use of information lies in its ability to align the choices of individuals within a society, thereby enhancing collective outcomes. This perspective resonates with Brown and Duguid’s (2017) concept of the social life of information, which emphasises that the value of

information is deeply embedded in the social contexts through which it is created and shared. Their work demonstrates how informal interactions, particularly in workplace environments, can significantly support task completion, underscoring the importance of social connections in facilitating the exchange of practical and contextually relevant information. This understanding is evident in the studied fishing community, where information related to successful fishing expeditions – including techniques for securing a good catch and accessing social benefits during fishing ban periods – plays a central role in ensuring social and economic stability. Consequently, fishermen in this community tend to adopt similar practices for using such information effectively, reflecting a shared approach that supports collective well-being and reinforces the social value of information.

Social norms

The reliance on social networks for accessing information among fishermen can be understood as normative behaviour, as described by [Burnett et al. \(2001, 2008\)](#). They argue that within specific social contexts, information behaviours, like other everyday activities, are shaped by social norms. According to this perspective, the value of information is deeply embedded in the norms and attitudes of a particular social group. As a distinct social group, the small-scale marine fishermen in this research have established their own small world, as characterised by [Chatman \(1999\)](#), where the opinions, concerns, and values of the community are collectively shaped and expressed by its members. Within each small world, everyday activities are often perceived as “the way things are,” reflecting a sense of normalcy and routine that is assumed to be standard across all similar small worlds, even when this is not the case ([Burnett et al., 2008](#)). In the small world of fishermen, their social norms identify the Sardar as a central figure whose guidance and resources are trusted and readily accepted in addressing social challenges. [Chatman’s \(1999\)](#) theory of life in the round reinforces this notion by introducing the concept of social types – individuals within a community who exhibit distinct traits or roles that set them apart from others. In the fishing community, the Sardar embodies such a social type, serving as a key resource and authoritative figure whose contributions align with the community’s normative expectations. This interplay between social norms and trusted individuals indicates the collective attitudes of this fishing community toward accessing information from Sardar and determining the perceived value of information within this context.

Social norms play a pivotal role in establishing standards of “rightness” and “wrongness” within a community, influencing perceptions of appropriate social behaviour ([Burnett et al., 2001](#)). These norms act as boundaries that distinguish a small world from the external environment. Normative theory suggests that information originating outside a small world, which conflicts with its entrenched societal norms, is often perceived as incompatible or wrong by its members. This dynamic is evident among fishermen who, despite utilising smartphones and social media platforms, express concerns about the potential impact of content accessed through platforms like YouTube on their societal culture ([Bhowmik et al., 2025](#)). They perceive such information as a threat to traditional norms and values, particularly in shaping the attitudes and behaviour of the younger generation, which they fear could lead to a gradual erosion of their cultural identity. Participants within this fishing community are also concerned about the behaviour of the younger generation and whether it is inconsistent with their social norms. They expect the younger generation to possess the same information about acceptable behaviour that is consistent with societal norms and beliefs, which will contribute to preventing social conflicts.

Evidential value

Fishermen need to responsibly manage some information about their expenses and income, especially when planning fishing expeditions. This includes information on the cost of essential items such as oil, ice, and medicine, as well as the cash generated from selling fish. In some instances, payments from fish sales are not received immediately, requiring documentation of

overdue amounts. Fishermen who can write a little record this information themselves, using a pen and the white portion of a cigarette packet cover, while those who cannot read or write seek help from fellow fishermen. Some fishermen also use pocket notebooks for more comprehensive documentation. Such information is crucial since it allows them to determine the whole cost of a fishing expedition and assess their profits, allowing for better financial planning. This documented information carries evidential value. As [Buckland \(2017\)](#) notes, documentation serves as evidence that aids individuals in making sense of their situations and evaluating their options. For fishermen, documenting sales and expenditure information provides tangible evidence of real-world transactions and experiences. Similarly, [Frings-Hessami et al. \(2020\)](#) found that women in marginalised communities in Bangladesh use simple pen and paper to document information that meets their short and longer-term needs.

Conclusion

This ethnographic study investigated how a marginalised community with low socioeconomic status, limited or no education, and limited access to digital technologies perceive the value of information in their everyday life. The study demonstrates that the boundaries between work, leisure, and family life are permeable in this small-scale marine fishing community, with sociocultural factors significantly shaping the flow of information. The research reveals that the value of information is determined by its relevance to particular circumstances of individuals in the community, underscoring its distinct function as a resource. While some fishermen use smartphones and social media platforms to access information, the widespread lack of digital literacy within the community limits the accessibility and practicality of these technologies compared to in-person information access. This underscores the idea that the value of information is not inherently tied to the technology used to access it but rather to the social norms, societal structures, social roles, social interactions, and cultural traditions within the community.

Understanding the value that communities attribute to information is essential for researchers seeking to design need- and preference-based information solutions that address critical community challenges and foster empowerment. Focusing on a marginalised small-scale marine fishing community, this study reveals that while fishermen experience a wide range of information needs in their everyday lives, they primarily rely on interpersonal communication to meet these needs. In such contexts, trust in information is deeply embedded in sociocultural factors, shaping how individuals assess its usefulness. However, fishermen also expressed a clear need for formal information centres similar to government institutions run by individuals with formal education, as these are perceived to enhance the accuracy and reliability of information. Localised information solutions grounded in community values have the potential for long-term impact by equipping individuals with the necessary information to respond effectively to ongoing challenges. The findings of this research aim to inform the development of value-based, culturally sensitive information services that enhance agency and resilience in marginalised communities. Information professionals and researchers are encouraged to engage in action research to co-design community-based information centres. These centres should be value-centric and culturally sensitive, ensuring that information is accurate, reliable, and readily accessible, ultimately reducing uncertainty and providing necessary resources at low or no cost.

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