Introduction

Saemangeum means new fertile soil beyond the Gimje Plain in Mungyeong, Jiljuldo-buk which is famous as a granary, and the name was given when the reclamaiton project is planned. The reclamation project of Saemangeum started in 1993 was a large-scale national project to develop 40,000 ha of land by constructing a tide embankment in a large area stretching from Gimsan-Gun, Gyeongsangbuk, to Buan in Jeollabuk-Do. The main goal of the project was to give a solution to lack of agricultural land, but the uses of the reclaimed land were changed substantially and are for other industries, such as manufacturing and leisure. Concerning the Saemangeum large-scale national project, many arguments have continued for more than a decade among the government, local people, environmental conservation organizations, researchers and experts and people who are engaged in religiously sacred occupations over the growth of local economy by development, endangered life by destruction of ecosystem in the tideland, and the importance of economic value of marine products. In the meantime, no attentions have been paid to the rights of the living of the fishermen who had lost their way of living. With the focus on the fishermen’s lives, this study aims at elucidating the impacts of the development to fishermen’s communities and gender roles and the background during the period between the closure of the tide embankment of Saemangeum in 2006 and the present in 2014.

Tideland as the life of fishermen

The history of the use of tidelands in South Korea

Wide tidal ranges formed tideland spread over the west coast of the Korean Peninsula and sediments washed down by slow seepage from slopes and provided soil foundation good for human uses. More than 80% of the total area of tideland in South Korea, which is 248,940 ha, is concentrated along the west coast. The tidal range of tideland in South Korea is restricted to the beginning of 12 cm. In the former half of the 20th century, for solving Japan’s food problem and facilitating Japanese people’s immigration, an expansion of farming, fishing, and mussel farming started. The construction of the tideland was started in Jiljuldo-do since 1949 and has been completed in Jiljuldo-do since 1945. In the latter half of the 20th century, from the end of the Korean War in 1953 through the 1980s, reclamation works continued under the pretext of an increase in production of food and exportation. The land was raised by constructing a bridge and a road, and areas were reclaimed from the sea in large scale. As a result, 80% by 2006 of the total area of tideland has become reclaimed land, which means the area was more than tripled compared with the former half of the century. In Jiljuldo-do, thanks to the Saemangeum reclamation project, the area of reclaimed land is almost three times as large as that of the tideland.

Saemangeum as the golden fishing grounds

At the estuary of the Mungyeong River and the Dongjin River, Saemangeum tideland extends vastely. There had lived a variety of living creatures until construction works of the tide embankment were started. Fig.1) Fishes and shellfishes caught in the tideland were the sources of cash income for the fishermen, and their average annual catches were approximately 70%ầm. Affected by the reclamation works, however, the catchment of tidal shellfish as of 1996 was less than that of a decade before by approximately 35%. Fishermen regarded shellfishes as something that would not decrease in number, even if a great number of people caught them in quantities every day. Shellfish played a role of golden fields that provided them with the sole source of income. According to the statistics published by the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, the catch amount of Yellow croaker and Swimming crab served as the largest share of the shellfish catch amount, which comprised 50% of the total catch amount in the tideland and 60% in Gimje City when marine products were cheap. After 1970, however, household income grew, as the number of nurseries of Common orient clam increased and the exportation of clams went into full swing. Villagers engaged in agriculture also put priority to catching shellfishes. Villagers in Gimje City when marine products were cheap. After 1970, however, household income grew, as the number of nurseries of Common orient clam increased and the exportation of clams went into full swing. Villagers engaged in agriculture also put priority to catching shellfishes. Villagers in the villages in 50s and 60s had also decreased by 8-10%. However, the number of people in their 60s and 70s had grown by 10-15% in a few years. Most of the 60s in the village got married in their 20s or 30s. Most of the men got employed in the public service of 70s, and most of the people were public assistance. The occupations of the villagers in their 50s were fishermen, self-employed, farmer daily labors by the day (Fig.11). The majority of the 70s used to catch fish and shellfish, whereas many women are farmer daily labors, or restaurant employee (Fig.13). Since they lost the sea that brought about 30% of their daily income, many of them moved to nursing homes or children’s houses. As a result, there are an increasing number of empty houses, which account for more than 10% of the total housebuilding. If the number of new people who find new jobs, many of the residents in the Saemangeum tideland who lost their fishing grounds are keeping on fishing, though they are aware that they are considered temporary illegal fishermen. They are only able to catch the shellfishes, but working in the fields even for such many hours as 10 brings them 55 dollars. Since there are available parts to work, on the contrary, these people usually earn receive special allowances amounting 700-800 dollars a month, which those stopped catching shellfishes often suffered from cognitive impairment and moved to nursing homes or children’s houses. As a result, there are an increasing number of empty houses, which account for more than 10% of the total housebuilding.

Fig.2 Location of the Saemangeum (years)

Fig.2.1 Young jackknife clams called by youths

Fig.2.2 Grand jackknife clams catch by scoope and soup of clam

Fig.2.3 Swimming Crab

Fig.2.4 Annual regional catches of Common orient clam

Fig.2.5 Clam catch by groore

Fig.2.6 Common orient clam

Fig.2.7 Swimming Crab

Fig.2.8 Grand jackknife clams catch by scoope and soup of clam

Fig.2.9 Fishing from changing port to the yacht harbor

The living of fishermen in Saemangeum made from collecting shellfishes

Considered prized shellfishes only after abalone, the varieties of Common orient clam had been presented to the Royal Families from the ancient past. The price and use varied according to the periods of growth and the sizes. If the clams of growth of more than two years and their sizes were 3-4 cm, they were sold at 3 dollars per kg for soup(5) or Fried. Common orient clam of 2-3 years of age and 6 cm in size were sold at 6 dollars per kg for sachem. The plain of clam of 3 years of age and over 9 cm in size were sold at 12 dollars per kg for boiling. 7am long Common orient clam sold was said to be most delicious. In autumn and winter, they were eaten raw, whereas in spring and summer they were boiled or served as soup. Common orient clam is caught in the tideland, and fishermen use a rake(f) or a tool(n) to catch them. Among the 50 households of Saemangeum in the tideland, 30 households of households used a rake to catch clams and the rest 20 households used a tool. Fig.2.3 Swimming Crab

Fig.2.4 Annual regional catches of Common orient clam

Fig.2.5 Clam catch by scoop

Fig.2.6 Clam catch by rake

Fig.2.7 Clam catch by groore

Conclusion

Since it was desalinated, Saemangeum has changed into the center of freshwater fish cuisine, however, has not taken hold, so effect of desalination is not observed. Fishing in the village is not so popular, even a great number of people caught fish and shellfishes, but working in the fields even for such many hours as 10 brings them 55 dollars. Women in their 70s made 100-200 dollars a day when they caught clams, whereas many women are farmer daily labors, or restaurant employee (Fig.13). Since they lost the sea that brought about 30% of their daily income, many of them moved to nursing homes or children’s houses. As a result, there are an increasing number of empty houses, which account for more than 10% of the total housebuilding. If the number of new people who find new jobs, many of the residents in the Saemangeum tideland who lost their fishing grounds are keeping on fishing, though they are aware that they are considered temporary illegal fishermen. They are only able to catch the shellfishes, but working in the fields even for such many hours as 10 brings them 55 dollars. Since there are available parts to work, on the contrary, these people usually earn receive special allowances amounting 700-800 dollars a month, which those stopped catching shellfishes often suffered from cognitive impairment and moved to nursing homes or children’s houses. As a result, there are an increasing number of empty houses, which account for more than 10% of the total housebuilding.

Changes in fishing activities of 3 villages

A daily catch by a pump dredger was almost the same as that by 30 fishermen using rake or geore. Screw boats, which were improved to other kinds of fishing boats and used in catching shellfishes and fishes, Local fishermen said, “Using boat, geore and rake, we caught shellfishes every day and night, still shellfishes were abundant. We could buy boats, give education to our sons and we could order several kind of seafood that was considered as luxury previously. There were few people in the village that abandoned fishing after they received money in compensation for fishing rights, young fishermen who had operated on boats could not find new jobs, so they restarted fishing on 2-4 ton pump dredgers. Any actions of fishermen are illegal after they received money in compensation for fishing rights. They were the largest on the side of the national project and active. As of September 2013, 110 persons (52 males and 59 females) of 57 households resided in the J village. The number of households and the population of the J village has significantly decreased, while the number of residents and the number of households have increased and the number of occupants of Common orient clam increased and the exportation of clams went into full swing. Villagers engaged in agriculture also put priority to catching shellfishes. Villagers in Gimje City when marine products were cheap. After 1970, however, household income grew, as the number of nurseries of Common orient clam increased and the exportation of clams went into full swing. Villagers engaged in agriculture also put priority to catching shellfishes. Villagers in Gimje City when marine products were cheap. After 1970, however, household income grew, as the number of nurseries of Common orient clam increased and the exportation of clams went into full swing. Villagers engaged in agriculture also put priority to catching shellfishes. Villagers in Gimje City when marine products were cheap. After 1970, however, household income grew, as the number of nurseries of Common orient clam increased and the exportation of clams went into full swing. Villagers engaged in agriculture also put priority to catching shellfishes. Villagers in Gimje City when marine products were cheap. After 1970, however, household income grew, as the number of nurseries of Common orient clam increased and the exportation of clams went into full swing.

Impacts on the fishermen life by tideland reclamation

Fisheries

Impacts of the tideland reclamation on the fishermen life by tideland reclamation

Changes in fishing activities of the villagers who fished in Saemangeum before the national project started

Changes in fishing activities of the villagers who fished in Saemangeum before the period between the closure of the tide embankment of Saemangeum in 2006 and the present in 2014.