

Study of socio-economic condition of fisherman community of North Bihar

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ABSTRACT

Between September 2020 and March 2021, the current study was conducted to evaluate the livelihood status of the traditional fishing community along the Koshi River in the neighboring Saharsa District. Data were gathered from villages and char adjacent to the Koshi River using a well-structured questionnaire survey. 100 fishermen in total were chosen at random for interviews. The study's findings revealed some fascinating information, including the fact that most fishermen (65%) are Hindus and are between the ages of 22 and 45. The local doctor (87%) provided the majority of the fishermen's medical care, and about 67% of them were illiterate. The majority of them (82%) borrow money from samiti to help them deal with difficult circumstances (Asha). Different Statistical analysis was used to analyze the data, which indicated that there was a significant relationship between the fishing income and the contentment of the fishermen, their children's education, their willingness to take risks at work, access to electricity, and access to healthcare.

Key Words - Fisherman, Koshi River, Socio economic, Occupation

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INTRODUCTION

One of the potential subsectors of India's agricultural industry is the fishing industry. The fishing industry is acknowledged as a significant source of income and employment for the nation's rural poor and as a catalyst for the growth of several ancillary industries. In addition, it provides the nation with cheap, calorie-dense food and a source of foreign exchange. With 14.49 million people depending on the fishing industry for their living, it makes a considerable contribution to the Indian economy (Emaldarani & Kanmani, 2019). India is the world's second-largest producer of fish. India is second in the world for fish production after China and contributes significantly to the aquaculture of fish. 18.06 million tonnes (MT) of fish were produced in India in 2016-17, of which

7.071 metric tonnes came from the inland sector and 4.59 metric tonnes from the marine sector (Emaldarani & Kanmani, 2019). The industry of inland fisheries produces around 62% of all the fish in India. Fishery plays an important role in Indian economy, but the economic conditions of the fishermen are very poor (Nayak & Mishra, 2008). There is a distinct settlement for the fisherman. They belong to one of India's underdeveloped communities. Due to the uncertainty of their future financial prospects, they are perpetually poor (Nandi & Parmanik 1994). They lack an education-based culture and live in substandard dwellings. In India, fisherman typically live in a small area that is overcrowded and lacking in basic sanitation facilities, which causes health problems. Due to the

family's low income, they do not have enough basic amenities in their homes and must maintain a large number of family members, which forces the fisherman to take out loans in order to meet their fundamental necessities. Bihar is the one of the major states of India. The socio-economic condition of fishermen in Bihar is not different from these. Traditional fish workers' social and economic conditions are quite poor in north Bihar. They are a member of one of the state's socioeconomic classes that is the most depressed. Their condition of living, level of income, and ownership of land are all pitiful. Hindus and Muslims make up the majority of the two religious' groupings among fish workers in north Bihar. The three religious sects' social lives and lifestyles are quite similar. Their way of life is governed by the fishing seasons, which also establish their daily routine.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The primary and secondary data are the foundation of the current investigation. The primary data is gathered through a field study and questionnaire interviews with the fishermen of North Bihar. Secondary data is gathered from both internal and external sources; the primary internal sources for secondary data are organizational websites, papers, annual reports, and documents; for external secondary sources, we had to rely on published documents like books, magazines, journals, papers, blogs, etc.

The data collection process has been carried out using a sample survey with the fishermen using a questionnaire (drafted primarily in Bihar for the benefit of the beneficiaries) prepared with the assistance of experts in this field; the survey is conducted primarily on the grounds of family strength, education of fishermen and family, decision-making abilities in family, society, and panchayat or gram sabha, and fishing income.

A representative sample of 100 fishermen of fishing community along the Koshi river (neighbouring Saharsa district) was randomly chosen. In order to gain insight into the socioeconomic circumstances of fishermen in that area.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The following data were obtained after survey.

Variables	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Age		
22 to 30 Years	31	31
31 to 40 Years	42	42
41 to 45 Years	27	27
Gender		
Male	87	87
Female	13	13
Religion		
Hindu	65	65
Muslim	34	34
Others	1	1
Marital status		
Married	45	45
Unmarried	55	55
Educational Qualification		
Illiterate	67	67
Below High School	14	14
Higher Secondary	12	12
Graduate	05	05
Post Graduate	00	00
Diploma	02	02
Monthly income		
Below 10000	43	43
10000-15000	47	47
15000-20000	6	6
20000-30000	3	3
Above 30000	1	1
Savings		
Bank	66	66
Post office	02	02
Insurance	09	09
Chit Fund	37	37
Gramin Samiti	82	82
Health Care		
Primary Govt. Health Centre	08	08
Private Hospital	00	00
Govt. Hospital	05	05
Local Practitioner	87	87

According to the aforementioned table, 42% of fishermen were in the age bracket of 31 to 40 years. 31% were between 22 to 30 years old. The

overwhelming majority (87%) of respondents were male, with only 13% of respondents being female. Majority of fisherman (55%) were unmarried and remaining 45 per cent of the respondents were unmarried. 67% of the respondents were illiterate, 47 percent were Rs. 10000 to 15000 of monthly income, more than one third (37 percent) of the respondents were saved in chit fund. The majority of fisherman (82%) borrow money from samiti to help them deal with difficult circumstances (Asha). Among 100 fishermen all were full time fisherman although some were also involved in some part time work for economical support but their chief source of income was fishing. The post-fish harvest marketing operations involve the fisherwomen very actively as well. Nearly all of the families who are fishermen live in poverty. Their primary sources of income are fishing, the sale of dried fish, and the disposal of trash. The exploitation by the middlemen, mafias and government negligence towards the mechanised fishing operations and marketing of fish products have added to their problems. Among dried fishes, prawns give them a good income. Very small fishes like shrimps are seen dried in whole) These dried fish are sent to merchants in our nation for sale (Sujata 1999).

The Hindu social structure is a part of the community of fishermen. Marriage is seen as a holy union between men and women in their society. They have a typical wedding. They continue to pursue early nuptials. The number of kids per family indicates that family planning fails in this area. There has not yet been a divorce reported. Zero divorce indicates that the community believes in tradition and customs and divorce as a matter of fact is discouraged (Tripathy 1999).

The primary indicator of someone's standing in a family or community is their health. The government establishes health facilities such Primary Health Centers (PHC), Additional Health Centers, and dispensaries to provide healthcare to residents of fisherman communities. Additionally, paramedical professionals and other social organisations occasionally offer health assistance.

Despite of this a big part of community preferred local practitioner for health assistant. Saha and Banerjee (1991) have studied the health status of rural fishermen and recommended for extending better facilities to them.

The socioeconomic profiles of the respondents are crucial for determining and illuminating potential correlations between various socioeconomic variables. Personal and socioeconomic characteristics, such as family size and age, caste, social participation, educational attainment, experience with fish farming, and income-expenditure patterns, are represented by these traits. The socioeconomic standing of fishermen and fish growers has a significant impact on the sector's ability to produce. Fish productivity is influenced by socioeconomic factors such family size, age distribution, education, social involvement, income, aquaculture experience, and the size and kind of pond ownership. To safeguard the interests of fishermen participating in international fishing, an international forum should be established; The regional organisations working on the welfare of fishermen should step forward and provide their combined support to the cause of the industry's lowest-paid workers; Similar to other international associations, governing rules and regulations must be established to protect the employees in various function-related units, and particular legislation must be implemented to protect fisherman; The staff of embassies should assist the mistreated fishermen with ongoing issues.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion it can be said that, even if they weren't entirely committed to their fishing businesses, the fishermen's financial situation was too dire. The greatest number of fishermen were unable to meet their minimal needs. The majority of fishermen have no knowledge of contemporary capture fishing tactics. The fact that men dominated the catch fishery industry in this area is a significant result.

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