

Socio Economic Condition of Fishermen of Mainsha of Chilika Lagoon, Orissa

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ABSTRACT

Orissa has a coast line of 480 km and offers ample scope for its fishing community along the coast for the development of marine fisheries. Chilika, the largest brackish water lagoon, is situated in Orissa. Chilika stretches over three districts namely Puri, Ganjam and Khurda. Puri has the highest coast line of Orissa having 155km. Ganjam is having only 60km coast line . There are about 132 villages in and around Chilika Lagoon. Mainsha is among them having 178 household with 1036 total population. Out of them 530 are male and 506 are female. There are 301 married male and 301 married female. 244 are unmarried male and 197 are unmarried female. There are 8 numbers of widows. There is no divorce case at all. The literacy rate is 100% up to Upper Primary Standard. Among them 43 numbers are service holders. Annual income varies from Rs.21,000 to 24,000 only. Boat is the only way of communication to this village. There are 5 numbers of Government bore-wells to provide drinking water to them. One Government Homeopathy Dispensary is available for their medical facilities. But there is no Primary Health Center in the village. People are not availing loans from any Nationalized or Co-operative Banks. Alcoholic drink is strictly prohibited in the village. No electricity is available to this village, but work is in progress for supply of electricity. Two solar energy tubes have been supplied by Chilika Development Authority (CDA).

INTRODUCTION

World fisheries production has increased in the last decades and has roughly crossed 1,68,429,00 Metric Tones during 2005-06. India ranks 3rd among the fish producing countries of the world. Fishery production has an important place in Indian economy. Contribution of fishery sector to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India is about 1.38 percentage (Swain, 2007). India has also exhibited an increase in fish production in both marine and freshwater. The fish export from India is also rising. In India, Orissa ranks 6th in the inland fish production where as it ranks 8th in marine fish production. Indian fishery folk are lagging behind in terms of fish production and export of fish due to lack of finance and technical knowledge. Over the last few years Orissa's chance to compete with other state for fish production has been decreased due to lack of mechanized fishing and socio-economic condition and technically know how among the fishermen. The fishermen community responsible for exploiting the fishery resources is still a neglected community and 85% of the total population is Below Poverty Line (BPL) (Sahu, 2000).

Fisher folk are one of the most backward societies in the country like India. Data and information on the socio-economic profile of different fishing communities form a good base for effective regulation of the living condition of this economically backward sector with proper policies and plans (Sharma & Bose, 2008). They are exposed to poverty line not only in Orissa but also in every state of India. The fisher folk are generally divided into two groups depending on their sources of fishing i.e. "Nolia" and "Kaibarta". Nolia group generally depend upon the marine fishing and Kaibarta group generally depends upon fresh water fishing (Nayak & Mishra, 2008). There are about 132 villages in and around Chilika Lagoon. Mainsha is one of the village inside the Chilika.

The village Mainsha comes under Krushnaprasad block of Puri district. The village is located at the outer channel of Chilika lagoon. Generally the fisher folk of Mainsha belong to Kaibarta group sub caste Deewar. For fishing they depend upon Chilika as well as on the sea. People of this community lead a miserable life and struggle hard for existence.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The study is generally based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected through a questionnaire envisaging marital status, educational status, main occupation, types of houses, sources of drinking water, monthly income, sources of fuel, health care facilities available etc. The secondary data were collected from block office and other offices. These data were collected during January 2008 to May 2008 visiting to the village Mainsha which is about 120 kms from Berhampur University. Among the 132 village, the village Mainsha comes under Grama Panchayat Berhampura under Krushnaprasad block, Puri district located at the outer channel of Chilika lagoon. The calculations were made for percentage of male and female population, marital status and educational status.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The total fishermen population of 132 villages in and around the Chilika lagoon is 1,04,040 (Year Book 2003). Among these population active fishermen families are 12,363 and active fishermen are 27,200. The total household of the village is 178 with population of 1036 people out of which, 872 are Schedule Caste (SC) and 164 are other caste. The population consists of 530 male and 506 female (Table-1). There are 103 BPL and 75 APL families. The village is inhabited by different communities of people like fishers, brahmins, bariks and milkmen.

Males are the chief of the families because they earn for the family. In few fishermen families, the female and old age people add the income to the family. The age group 15-45 makes certain contribution to the family income as they go for fishing and allied activities. Children below 14 years age used to go to school and they don't play any role in fishing activities (Nayak et al, 2006).

Table 1 : Distribution of fishermen population by age and sex of Mainsha during 2008

Sl. No.	Age Group	Male		Female		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	0-14	172	55.25	135	44.75	307	30.80
2	15-30	143	49.48	146	50.51	289	27.47
3	30-50	159	50.79	154	49.21	313	29.75
4	above 50	56	43.65	71	56.34	125	11.98
5	Total	530	50.95	506	49.05	1036	100%

The main occupation of the village is fishing and agriculture. There are more than three hundred acres of agricultural land and 60 acres of fish/ crab ponds. Besides fishing, the main production of the village is rice, groundnut and coconut with varieties of fruit bearing trees located commonly in the backward of the households. The female group engaged themselves in the income activities by helping in dry fish preparation and marketing.

MONTHLY INCOME

The fishermen of Mainsha are exposed to hazards and uncertain prospects of income (Nandi and Pramanik, 1994). The average monthly income of the villagers are Rs.1800- 2000/-. Their expenditure is some times more than their income (Table-2). They have to depend upon local mahajans for money lending, when they are going for the marriage of their sons and daughters. Rarely they may go for saving. The exploitation of middlemen, mafias, local mahajans and government negligence are the main cause of their poverty. Selling of dry fish is also another source of their income among the fishermen community. These dried fishes are supplied to the merchants for sale in our country (Sujata, 1999). The average number of members in a family has been considered as five, because two children of below 10 years age are equivalent to be one adult person as far as the food consumption is concerned. The highest amount of expenditure was observed on food which was 51 % and the lowest amount of expenditure was observed in case of maintenance which is about 4 % of the total expenditure. It is a good habit of people of Mainsha that they are not using any alcoholic drink which is contradictory to the result of Ganjam district observed by Nayak and Mishra (2008).

MARITAL STATUS

The village is inhabited by Fishers, Brahmins, Bariks and Milkmen community. Fishermen communities generally dominate in the village. The fishers belong to the sub cast Deewar in the Hindu social system. In their community they treat marriage as a sacred bond between a man and his wife. Among the 530 male and 506 female, 301 are

Table 2 : Monthly income and expenditure of people of Mainsha.

Sl.No.	Sources	Amount in Rupees	%
1	Food	990	55
2	Health	72	4
3	Education	90	5
4	Maintenance	216	12
5	Social Customs	90	5
6	Repair of Boats & Nets	270	15
7	Others	72	4
	Total	1800	100

married males and 301 are married females (Table-3). 234 are unmarried males and 192 are unmarried females. There are 8 no. of widows in the village. No divorce case is found in the village as they consider marriage as a sacred bond.

FAMILY STRUCTURE

The family is defined as the total number of personals sharing meals from one kitchen. The dependent includes spouse, children, mother, father, brother, sister and

Table 3 : Marital Status of fishermen of Mainsha village during 2008

Sl. No.	Marital status	Male	Female	Total	%
1	Unmarried	234	192	426	41.1
2	Married	301	301	602	58.1
3	Widow		8	8	0.8
4	Divorced	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Total	536	516	1052	100

others living under same roof. The average family size is 5 members. The males are considered to be the chief of the family. They earn for the family, some times the fisherwomen help in selling the fish and fish byproducts to add the income of the family.

HOUSING

Average families in this village have kutcha and semi-pucca houses. The housing pattern of this village is a witness to the socio-economic reality of the people. Some families have pucca houses. Some Pucca houses are under construction. Among total households 15 numbers are pucca, 30 numbers are semi-pucca and remaining are kutcha houses. The standard of living of people of Mainsha is definitely very low.

They don't enjoy most of the basic needs of life like nutrition, clothing, safe drinking water education, medical care etc.

EDUCATIONAL STATUS

Literacy and education has been emphasized by the government which play an important role in economic and social development of any society. 100% literacy has been observed in the present village Mainsha, (Table-4). There is one Primary School and one Middle English School in the village. It shows that the people of this village are interested in education. The education is compulsory for all, in the village. Despite the lack of communication, they are preferring for higher education. They are going to the near by village Satapada for their higher education. Literacy among the female is low as compared to male. Two fishermen have obtained Post graduation in Arts and thirty six have obtained Graduation degree from different universities and colleges respectively. 43 numbers are service holders from this village.

SOURCES OF DRINKING WATER

In the village Mainsha, there is acute problem of clean drinking water. Government

Table 4 : Educational Status of fishermen of Mainsha village during 2008

Sl.No.	Educational level	Male		Female		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Primary and Upper Primary	220	21.23	301	29.05	521	50.28
2	Secondary	214	20.65	192	18.53	406	39.18
3	Intermediate	62	5.98	10	1.15	72	6.94
4	Graduate & above	35	3.37	03	0.28	38	3.60
5	Illiterate	Nil	-	-	-	-	-
6	Total	530		506		1036	100

has provided bore wells for drinking water. Five numbers of bore-wells have been provided by Government for pure and safe drinking water. Two open wells are there in the village. Villagers have privately dug sixty bore-wells. They have invested their own money to dig the bore-well at the backyard of their houses. Among the five numbers of bore-wells provided by Government, all are not working. The two open wells in the village are not in working condition due to mud and garbage dumped into it. Presence of mild salinity in water has caused several problems in shape of diseases. Supply of clean drinking water in the village is still a major problem.

SOURCES OF FUEL

Fuel is the most important component of the house. People of Mainsha use the fire-wood as their fuel for cooking. Casurina trees and Acacia are planted in the field and later on used as fuel. Some house holds have LPG as fuel. They bring the lpg from Satapada. Beside these, few people use dry cow dung as their fuel.

HEALTH AND SANITATION

Health status is the basic factor to judge one's status in a family or in the community. Saha & Banerjee (1991) have studied the health status of rural fishermen and recommended for providing better facilities to them. There is one Government Homeopathy dispensary in the village. People of the village are consulting the doctor in the homeopathy dispensary for their problem. This homeopathy dispensary is not sufficient for the people of Mainsha. Government should establish one Public Health Centre (PHC) to meet the requirement of the peoples. Fishermen are below poverty line. They do not have capacity to construct a low cost latrine. Therefore, they use the open field as their toilet. There is every possibility of vulnerable to the skin diseases, bacterial infection, viral infection and protozoan infection due to open discharge of night soil. So government and NGOs should supply low cost latrine to every family of Mainsha village.

COMMUNICATION

Mainsha being an island in Chilika lagoon, there is no road connection to this village. Boats are the only means of communication for the people here to reach their destination. For their daily articles, they have to go to Satapada or Balugaon by boat. However some peoples have mobile phones and few people have Wireless phones in their houses. This facilitates the fishermen for marketing of fish & fishery product and also helps at the time of emergency to call the doctor.

MARKETING

The major occupation of the village is fishing and agriculture. There is 300 acres of agricultural land and 60 acres of fish/ crab ponds consists of 50 ponds. The main production of the village is rice, groundnut, coconut and kitchen garden with varieties of fruit bearing trees at the backyard of the household. From the trading of fish, dry fish, crabs, groundnuts, paddy and rice they earn their monthly income. They sell their products in the local market i.e. Balugaon which is 46 km from the village.

PRESERVATION AND STORAGES

There is no facility for preservation and storage house for fishes in the village. There is one Ice plant at Balugaon which is about 46 kms from Mainsha. Lack of warehousing and storage facilities compel the fisherman to sell their product locally or to the middle-men at a lower price. There are two Primary Fisheries Cooperative Societies (PFCS) named Mainsha PFCS and Balisahi PFCS. These two societies have failed

miserably in providing new and better avenues of marketing. If the government can allow them low-cost co-operative storage facilities. Then they can exchange upon the export potentialities available to them.

CRAFTS AND GEARS

Craft and gear play an important role in fishing activities in Chilika lagoon in general and Mainsha village in particular. There are 554 numbers of mechanized crafts, 5271 number of non mechanized crafts and 21,190 numbers of gears in Chilika lagoon. There are 19 numbers of jetties in Chilika lagoon for fish landing. There is one jetty in Mainsha for fish landing as well as for communication. There are 45 mechanized and 85 non-mechanized crafts in operation for fishing activities in Mainsha (Table-5). They are using Gill net, Khanda Jal and Hook & Line to capture fish and crabs.

CONCLUSION

The fishing sector plays a crucial role in development of economy of the country

Table 5 : Fisheries infrastructure available in the village Mainsha during 2008.

Nos of Boats	Mechanized	45
	Non Mechanized	85
Jetties	Nos in Village	1
	Distance(km) to nearest jetty	
Fish landing centre	Nos in Village	1
	Distance(km) to nearest landing centre	
Fish market	Nos in Village	1
	Distance(km) to nearest market	
Godowns	Nos in Village	1
	Distance(km) to nearest Godown	
Ice plants	Nos in Village	Nil
	Distance(km) to nearest Ice plants	

by way of providing proteinaceous food to people, providing employment opportunities to the larger section of the community and contributing to the foreign exchange. Proper steps should be taken to provide alternative income sources to the fishermen during closed season of the fishing so that their economic standard will be improved. The Irrwaddy Dolphins are observed along the outer channel up to Satapada, Mainsha and Brahmapura. The tourist arrives at Chilika to observe the Dolphins near Satapada and stay in the Panthanivas. At Satapada very few rooms are available in Panthanivas. Some cottages should be developed by the Government or private organization at Mainsha for eco-tourism development which is preferred by the foreign tourist as well as the domestic

tourist. Water sports and boating should also be developed at Mainsha to attract the tourists. The delicious preparation of fish fry, prawn pakada and crab curry by the village people will definitely attract more tourist to Mainsha which will create a pleasant atmosphere and will increase the socio-economic conditions of the village people.

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