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## **Socio-Economic Conditions of Fisherman of Bali Nolia Sahi, Puri, Orissa** **Monalisha Chakraborty**

*M. Phil Scholar, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, India*

### **Abstract**

*Orissa is a maritime state along the east coast of India having 589 marine fishing villages and 3289 inland fishing villages. The Telugu community with their age old experience started marine fishing in Orissa. Still now the non-Oriya group of people dominate marine fishing in the state. This paper mainly aims to show the socio-economic condition of the fisherman of Bali Nolia Sahi village, Puri. Data's were collected through primary surveys by preparing questionnaires consisting of both open ended and close ended questions and secondary data's were collected from various articles, journals and District Handbook of Orissa, 2011. The study shows that the socio-economic conditions of the fisherman of Bali Nolia Sahi are not good. The educational status of the boys is much lower than that of the girls. Their housing conditions are not too bad, but in terms of fishing they don't get much help from the Government. They lack the basic necessities of their fishing which deprived the development of fishing in the State. The fishermen should be provided with major facilities like cold storage, motorized boat and education programs too should be implemented so that it would help them in understanding the modern technologies of fishing and will help them to develop fishing.*

**Key Words: Nolia, fishing, peak season, socio-economic status.**

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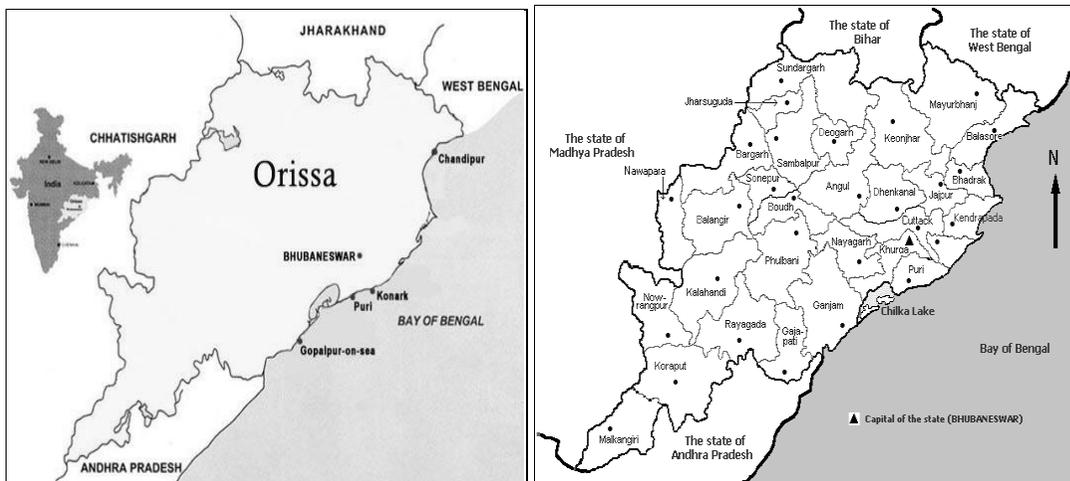
**1. Introduction:** Orissa is a maritime state along the east coast of India that has the total population of 4.2 crores among which about 0.793% of the total population are fishermen. The total number of marine villages and inland villages in Orissa are 589 and 3289 respectively. The total number of fishermen population of the state is just over 1 million (Nayak et al., 2012). In the continental shelf of Orissa the estimated potential exploitable fish stock is 100,000 to 120,000 tonnes (Indian Institute of Foreign Trade). The state of Orissa has 120 kms of continental shelf in northern part and up to 40 kms in southern part. The continental shelves are about 200 m in depth. The southern coastline is composed of sandy beaches and surf beaten sea shores whereas the northern coastline has rivers, estuaries and extended tidal area. Out of the total reserve, 25% is expected to be within 18 metre, another 25% within 18 to 72 metre and rest of the stock i.e. 50% within 72 to 180 metre (Mohanto, 2013). It has a coastline of 480 kms, of which Puri has the highest stretch of coastline i.e. 150.4 kms. The most important aspects of life at Puri sea beach are the fishery community, called 'Nolia'. They earn their livelihood mainly from fishing in the sea.

The present work has been carried out to show the socio-economic conditions of the fisherman of Bali Nolia Sahi village, Puri.

**2. Review of literature:** Fernando (1981) suggested that for improving the socio-economic status of the fisherman sufficient cold storage and ice plant facilities should be provided so that the additional

fishes should not become wastage. Kalawar (1981) examined the living conditions of fishermen in Maharashtra where he stated that the living conditions on the whole are deplorable. As there is lack of economic development in this region, there is continuous exodus of labour from the coastal region and hence the females have to bear most of the burden of economic activity. Kurien (1981) pointed out that there are two main reasons behind the poverty of fishermen; these are inequality in the asset holdings among the fisherman and their exploitation by the buyers. And hence for an average traditional fisherman, saving from his income for investment is a painful task and indebtedness among the fisher folk is high. Though there are large scale awareness regarding fishing technologies, but fisherman cannot afford those due to poor socio-economic constrains (Balasubhramaniam et al., 1991). Disparity in the standard of living, differential access to income earning capacity and others generally give rise to the growth of discontent amongst the relatively indigent fishermen, thus weaken their interest to participate in fishing activities wholeheartedly (Boyce, 1994). Nandeesh et al., (1994) pointed out that in small-scale aquaculture in Cambodia; women contribute more than men in almost all activities. Most of the housewives play a major role in fish culture and wherever there is any involvement of the housewives, the success rate and maintenance of data are better. ). Despite increasing importance of inland fishery, several fishery co-operatives/groups are beset with untoward socio-cultural and economic features (Rahim et al., 1994). Lilian Fay-Sauni (1998) explains the involvement of women in fisheries in the Pacific islands. Women are extensively involved in many types of fishing activities that range from collection of reef invertebrates to fish, to the processing and marketing of fish and fishery products. In a fishing village, the ownership pattern and individual status varies though the life style and social conditions of fisherman are more or less same (Balasubhramaniam et al., 2001). The fishing community are mainly formed of illiterate or semi literate, indigent fishermen who doesnot have the knowledge of latest fishery technology and proper attitude to fishery development (Chakraborty et al., 2005).

**3. Study area:**



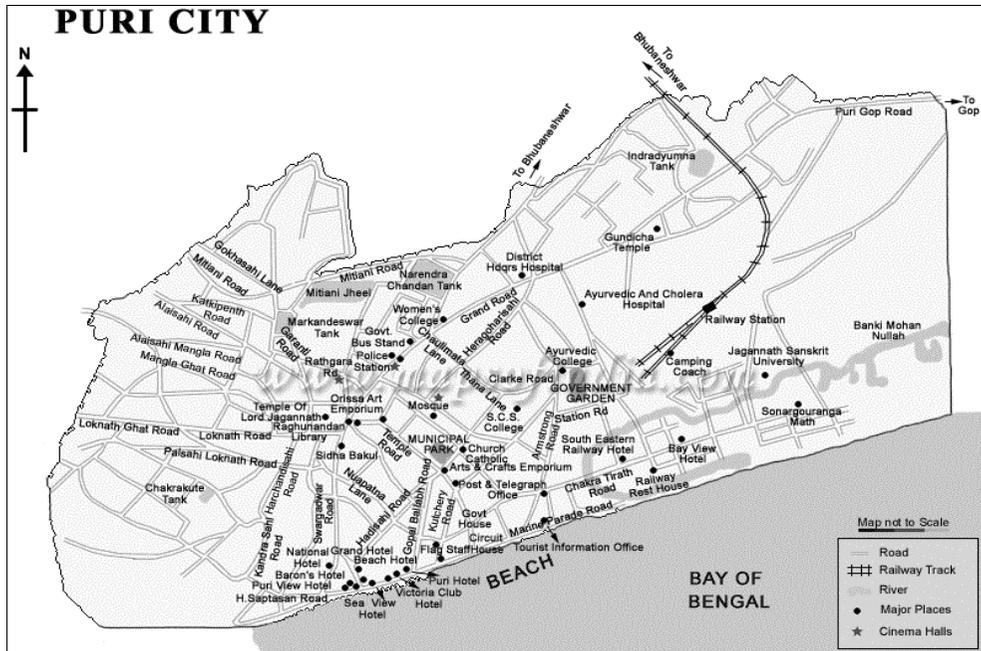


Fig -1: Location map of the study area

In the state of Orissa, marine fishing is mainly practiced in six coastal districts, namely Ganjam, Puri, Jagatsinghapur, Kendapara, Bhadrak and Baleswar. The total numbers of fishing villages in Puri are 75 as per Government record. The study area mainly covers the Bali Nolia Sahi fishing village of Puri district.

This fishing village is located in ward number 11 of Puri, on the coast of Bay of Bengal. The village is mainly inhabited by domiciled Oriya of Telugu community and they mainly depend on fishing for their livelihood.

**4. Methodology:** The study was descriptive as well as exploratory in nature. It emphasized on describing the socio-economic conditions of the fishermen of Bali Nolia Sahi fishing village of Puri District of Orissa. The present field work contains detailed database and information which includes secondary data from books, journals, thesis etc. as well as primary data through primary surveys by preparing questionnaires which consist of both open ended and close ended questions. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were done. The data's were analyzed through descriptive statistics and exhibited in numerical results.

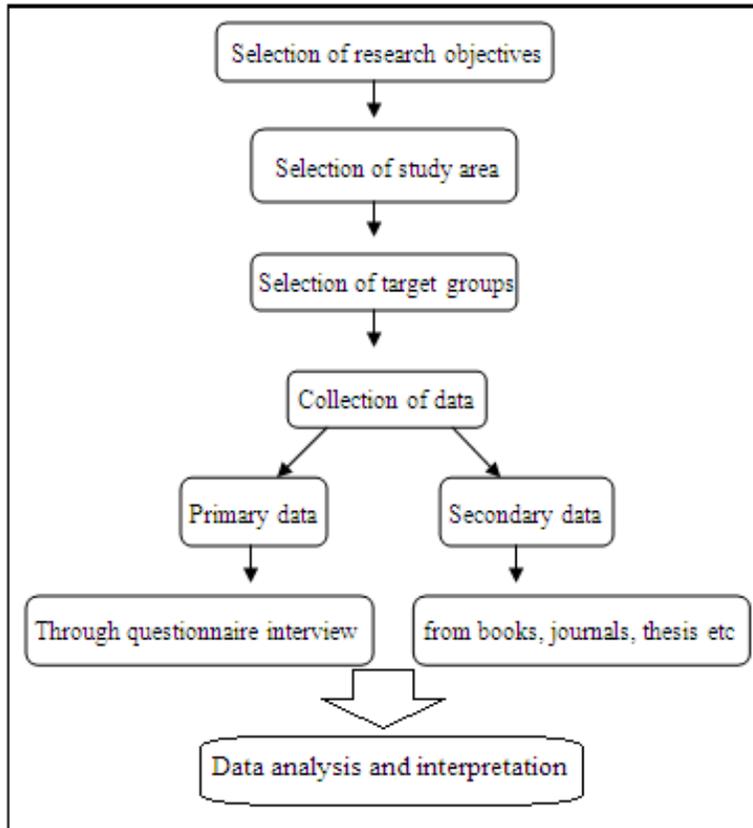


Fig-2: Flow chart of research methodology

## 5. Results and analysis:

**Marine fishing practice in Orissa:** The state of Orissa has favourable condition for inland fishing, brackish water fishing and marine fishing. Scariah et al., (1987) stated that the marine fishing villages in Puri are covered by 4 blocks i.e. Astarang, Krishnaprasad, Puri Sadar and Gop. Astarang has the maximum number of fishing villages i.e. 6, followed by Krishnaprasad (6), Puri Sadar (3) and Gop (2). In respect of fishermen population 56% of was in Puri (Sadar) block followed by 30% in Astarang, 11 % in Krishnaprasad and 3% in Gop. The average family size in all the blocks was found to be 6. The number of persons per fishing village was highest in Puri (Sadar) block (3,844) and least in Gop block (351).

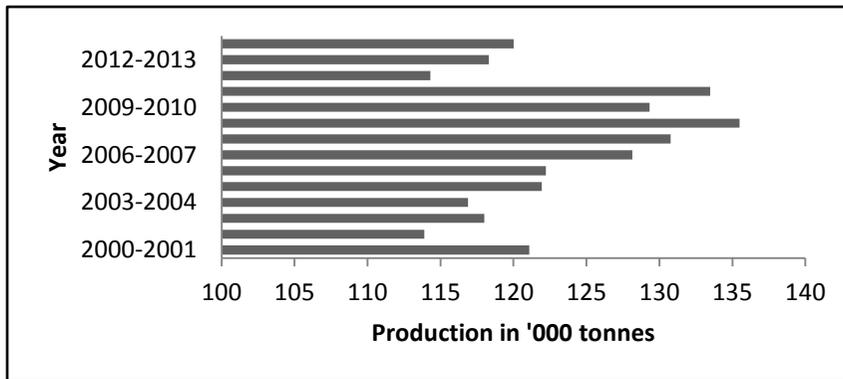


Fig 3. Marine fish production in Orissa (2000-2014)

All the marine fishermen of Puri district are mainly composed of migrant population of Telugu people. The Telugu community with their age old experience of almost more than 1,000 years started marine fishing in Orissa. Still now the non-Oriya group of people dominate marine fishing in the state. In the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century the Telugu migrants developed marine fishing in Arkakhuda, Puri. The ‘Nolia’ group of fishermen and boatmen migrated to Puri from the then state of Madras in 1908 and started marine fishing practice there (O’Malley, 1908). In the southern coastal districts of Puri, the fishermen migrated from 50 coastal villages of Ganjam district of Orissa and Shrikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh and are mainly settled in Pentakota, Bali Nolia Sahi of Puri municipality, Chandrabhaga Nolia Sahi of Konark municipality and Arkhakur of Chilka lake area (Mohanto, 2013).

It was observed that the marine fishermen of Bali Nolia Sahi are mainly part-time fishermen especially the elderly persons. The fishermen generally go for fishing at 4 to 5 AM in the morning and stay till 2 to 4 PM. Older people and children usually stays from 4 AM to 9 AM. The fishermen generally use to train their child (boys) for fishing and they are generally engaged in fishing at the age of 10 years. The types of fish they catch include prawn, catfish, sea perch, shark, seer fish, ribbon fish, shrimp, indian mackerel, eel, hilsa, pomphret etc. The peak period of marine fishing is September to March. June-July is also a good season for fishing. November to January is the peak period of the fishing of prawn. During peak season of fishing the fishermen even go to the sea for about 4 to 5 times for fishing if the catches are more.

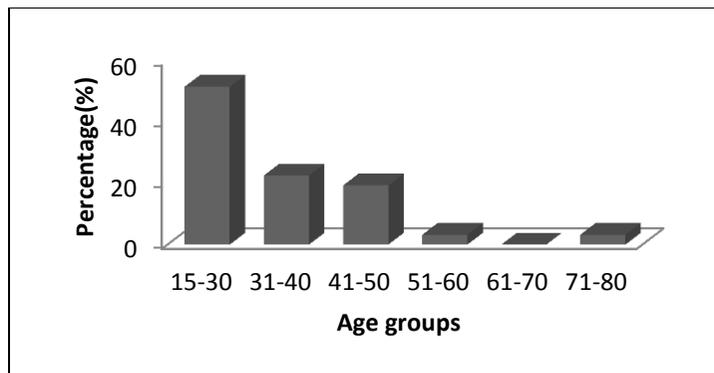


Fig- 4: Age groups of fishermen engaged in fishing

In Bali Nolia Sahi, the majority of the fishermen engaged in fishing are between 15 to 30 years of age. About 22.58% of fishermen fall under the age group 31 to 40 years and 19.35% of fishermen falls under the age group 41-50 years. A fisherman of 78 years old has been found and he had an experience of 65 years of fishing.

**Socio-economic conditions of fisherman:** The fisherman of Bali Nolia Sahi (Nolia para) mainly lives in semi- pucca houses with roofs made of asbestos. A very few number of fisherman lives in kuccha houses. They mainly live in joint families. A very few live in nuclear families. It has been found that the housing conditions of fishermen living in joint families are better than the fishermen living in nuclear families. The village has public toilets that are made by the Government (by Puri Municipality). They are mainly Telegu speaking Hindu. There is a public hospital nearby named Orissa State Government Hospital and Puri Boro Medical. The facility of electricity is comparatively well in this area. The fishermen have electricity in their houses. The major source of drinking water is public tube well and pipes that has also been provided by the Puri Municipality.

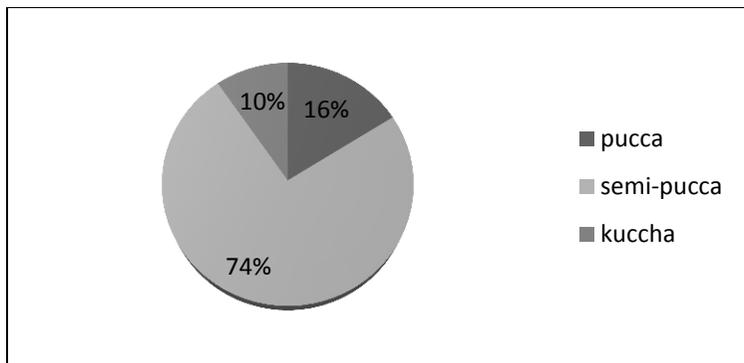


Fig-5: Housing conditions of the fishermen of Bali Nolia

There are nearby schools for children, those are Ratna school, Bharat Seba Ashram, Anganwari school. Girls of Bali Nolia Sahi are more educated than the boys, even use to study upto 10<sup>th</sup> standard. One of the main causes behind this is that the boys are generally engaged in fishing from 10 years of age. Most of the fishermen are illiterate and some have read upto 5<sup>th</sup> standard. A fewer number of boys study upto 10<sup>th</sup> standard.

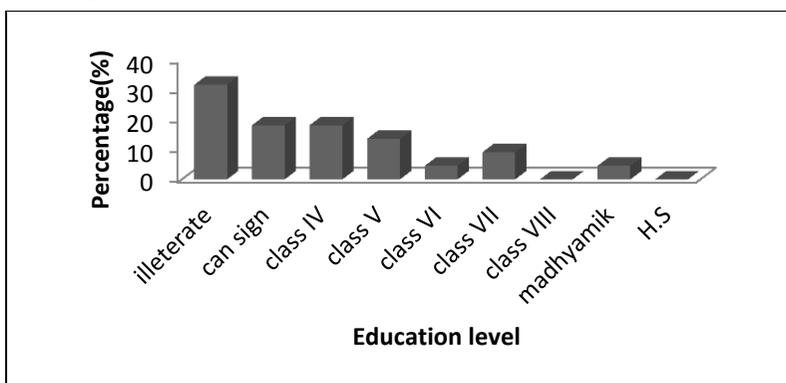


Fig -6: Education level of the fisherman of Bali Nolia

The fishermen generally use non-motorized boat for fishing and to some extent motorized teppa (indigenous wooden boat). The economic conditions of the fisherman are not so good that they could afford motorized boats. The suicide boats that are given to them by the Government are also non-motorized which are not so much useful to them. They have to give extra labour for fishing and it is much time consuming. A few fishermen have their own boats and most of them generally use rented boats or the boats provided by the Government. The income of fishermen groups varies from Rs. 5000 per day during peak season upto Rs. 200 per day. Every day a fisherman had a minimum income of Rs. 100. The average income of a fisherman varies from Rs. 400 to Rs. 600 per day. It was found that less number of fishermen takes financial support from reliable financial source like banks, credit society and they mainly prefer to be financed by non- reliable sources like friends, relatives, merchant etc.

While most of the males are engaged in fishing, but some of them are also engaged in other types of activities like working as casual labour, in a shop or in some private factories. Some are also engaged in pearl culture. The elder group of fishermen engage themselves in ancillary activities like collection of shell, selling of different types of sea shell, life guard etc. But fishing is their main livelihood and their family business too. There is a definite division of work between the male and the female among the fishermen. The women are mainly engaged in selling and cutting of fishes. The fishermen of Bali Nolia Sahi sell their fishes on agreement basis mainly to the bicycle vendors. To some extent the tourists are also the buyers of their fishes. If fishes are not sold, then they use to sell them in retail price as there are no facilities for cold storage and hence no options left to keep the fish for another day.

**6. Conclusion:** Fishermen contribute a lot in our economy. So improvement of their social-economic condition is very important in context of our national economic development and for that proper management is needed for the fisheries and proper training should also be given to the fishermen.

Education plays a vital role in changing the life of the fishermen. If proper education is provided to them it should change their mindset of accepting the new technology of fishing and as the knowledge of the fishermen about technological knowhow is almost nil, hence proper literacy program should be implemented and general awareness program should be given from school level among the children of fisherman. Changes in financing policies are needed like easy accessible loan with low interest rate for the fishermen so that they would not further be exploited by the money lenders and the middle man. Proper facilities for cold storage should be provided to the fishermen. Necessary policy measures must be taken for organizing fishermen in appropriate organization to fetch good market price. Different fishing programs should be implemented by the fisheries department because it would help in the development of fishing in the study area.

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