

Original Research**Socio-economics of fishermen community around the Junglighat fish landing centre, South Andaman – a case study****Authors:****Santhosh Ram B,
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South Andaman**ABSTRACT:**

The socio-economic status of fishermen community around Junglighat marine fish landing centre was studied. 141 families were interviewed during the present study. Medium families were dominated (48.89%) followed by large (26.67%) while very large families were only 6.66 %. Most of the members of fishermen families (44.44 %) were under the age group of 15 – 34. 89.7% children were attending government schools while, 10.3% were in private schools. The literacy rate was found to be higher (30.68%) and most attended middle school level and 0.5% were graduates. Major religions include Hinduism (54.9 %), Christianity (37.3 %) and Islam (7.8 %). The maximum number of settlers were from Andhra Pradesh (48.3%) followed by Tamil Nadu (38.3%), while the settlers from Kerala (8.4%) and Jharkhand (5%) were the least. Most of the families were found to be residing in semi pucca (asbestos) houses (73.1%) and fewer families (7.7%) were living in kutcha (thatched) houses. Most of the fishermen from Junglighat landing centre (87.1%) were Above Poverty Line (APL) and only (12.9%) lives in Below Poverty Line (BPL) status. 36.17% of the members earn between Rs. 3001 – 4000/- per month and 12.77% between Rs. 4001 – 5000/- per month. Hygienic status of the fishermen population was found to be better and most of the houses were with latrine facilities (97.3%) and only 2.7% were found to be without latrine facilities.

Keywords:

Socio — economics, Andaman & Nicobar, Fish landing centre, Fishing community

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INTRODUCTION

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands commonly known as Bay islands comprise over 572 islands, islets and rocky outcrops of various sizes in Bay of Bengal in a North-South direction with a land area of 8293 sq. km and total coast line of 1962 km which is about one fourth of India's total coast line (Anon, 2005).

India is endowed with immense aquatic potential comprising rich diversity of cultivable fishes and has a boon of high tropical temperatures with a long tradition of exploiting fishery resources (Sujatha and Mahesh, 2006). An estimation of 6.7 million people in India depend on fisheries for their day to day life, among which two million are depending on marine fisheries. This roughly has 7,25,000 full time and an equal number of part time fishermen engaged in fishing operations and over 1 million people engaged in pre and post-harvest activities (NPCMT, 2001). In India, socio - economic status of a fisherman is based on the fish production in the coastal areas. Fisheries is an instrument of livelihood for a large section of economically backward population of the country. Bhatta (2003) outlined the socio-economic issues in the fisheries sector in India and found that education, employment, income, food and nutritional security are not encouraging. Similarly, Nongmaithem and Ngangbam (2014) have described the low socio-economic condition of fishermen in India. Several works related to the socio-economic status of coastal fisher folks were carried out in various fishing villages in the coastal states of India (Bhaumik and Pandit, 1991; Bhaumik and Saha, 1994; Jha *et al.*, 2003; Shiyani, 2003; Bhattacharya, 2011; Sivanesan, 2014; Kumar and Patnaik, 2014).

Income and expenditure pattern of fisher folk in selected rural coastal villages of Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu has been worked out by Rameshkumar *et al.* (2011). Vadher and Manoj (2014) studied the socio-economic profile of shrimp farmers of Gujarat. Modassir and Ansari (2011) studied the health and hygiene of

fisherwomen in Goa and found their health in poor condition. Marine fisheries play an important role in the coastal economy of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Fisheries in Port Blair tehsil is the major contributor for the food, social and economic security of the coastal communities as well as a major supply for the ever increasing demand for the rising population in the Port Blair town. The outcome of socio-economic surveys can be utilized for formulating the weaker section of the community and will cater as a backup for the identification of target people for implementing different Governmental programmes (Bhattacharya, 2011). Major studies related to the socio - economic status of fishermen community have been conducted by Roy and Dorairaj (1998) at two fishing villages of South Andaman with respect to sustainable development. Socio-economic status of Kareen community at the Mayabunder of North Andaman District has been carried out by Debnath *et al.* (2013).

The present study attempts to look into the present socio - economic status of the fishermen community living in and around the major fish landing centre at Junglighat in the Port Blair tehsil of South Andaman. An assessment was made on the income generated from fisheries and their distribution pattern along with other occupational patterns of fisher folks. Studies were made on the socio - economic problems and prospects for improvement through an analysis of the demographic profile of the fishermen and women, their social status, the economic condition, health and hygienic condition.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A detailed observation on the social aspects of the fishing community was carried out at Junglighat (11°39'23''N 92°43'31''E) landing centre of Port Blair tehsil to obtain a thorough understanding of their status of living. The data for the present study was collected through personal interviews discussions and observations

(Datta and Kundu 2007; Bhattacharya 2011; Mohammed 2012, Khan *et al.*, 2013; Ali *et al.*, 2014). A total of 141 families residing with in the vicinity of the landing centre were interviewed through door to door visits to collect accurate information on demographic, economic and social aspects to understand the socio — economic status of the fishermen community (Khan *et al.*, 2013).

1) Demography

a) Family size (1 - 3 small, 4 - 6 medium, 7 - 10 large and above 10 very large) and b) Age structure (0 - 20 young, 21 - 40 middle, 41 - 60 old and above 60 very old) were studied to understand the family structure of the population (Jahangir 2005, Khan *et al.*, 2013, Ali *et al.*, 2014).

2) Social

The social status of the population was studied by analyzing a) Types of houses; b) Religion; c) Educational status; d) Place of Origin (Khan *et al.*, 2013). The entire data was compiled and analyzed using MS-Excel 2007 (Mohammed 2012; Ali *et al.*, 2014).

3) Economy

a) Monthly income (Rs 1000 - 3000/- (low), 3001 - 5000/- (medium) and above 5001/- (high); b)

Capital investment to carry out the fishing occupation including all the accessories c) Sanitary facility (Jahangir 2005; Khan *et al.*, 2011 and Ali *et al.*, 2014) and aspects like the number of earning members in the family, occupation of female members were also studied to correlate with the aspects of income to understand their standard of living.

RESULTS

The general description of Junglighat landing centre are as follows:

Demography

In Junglighat landing centre, it could be found that 49% of the households were medium sized with four to six members in their family followed by large sized families (26.67%). Small families were comparatively less (17.78%) but very large families were the least (7%).

The age group within 21-40 was found to be maximum followed by age groups of 41 - 60, 11 - 20, >60 and 0 - 10 in a descending order indicating values of 44.44%, 25.93%, 12.97%, 9.26% and 7.4% in the case of 0-10.

Table 1. Basic infrastructure facilities and general features of Junglighat landing centre

Drinking water	Municipal supply
Source of lighting	Electricity, sometimes kerosene
Entertainment	TV, Radio
Capital investment for fishing	Own investment
Educational status: medium of instruction	Hindi, Telugu, English
Food Security	Able to cover
Daily food	Fish, cereals, other vegetables
Medical facility	G.B. Pant Hospital, Port Blair
Major craft	Motorised, Mechanised, Traditional
Types of marketing	Auctioneer, Fish market centre,
Transport	Van, auto, small truck
Government help	Fisheries dept.
Fishing grounds targeted by fishermen	Havelock, Mayabunder, Neil, Hut Bay and nearby islands

Table 2. Family size in Junglighat

Parameter	Categories	%
Size of family	Small 1 - 3	17.78
	Medium 4 - 6	48.89
	Large 7 - 10	26.67
	Very large > 10	6.66
Age group	0 - 10	7.4
	11 - 20	12.97
	21 - 40	44.44
	41 - 60	25.93
	> 60	9.26

Social status of fishermen

Educational level of the fishermen is categorized in to six groups as follows Graduate, Higher Secondary, High school, Middle school, Primary school and illiterates according to the completion of their education. In Junglighat a maximum of 30.7 % of the population has attended middle school while 25.4% of the population are illiterate, 20.6 % of the population has attended high school, 16.4 % of the population has

attended primary school, 6.3 % of the population have attended higher secondary school, and with a least of 0.5 % of the population are graduates. Altogether, the study have shown that the majority of the fishermen population at Junglighat fish landing centre are literates (74.6%).

Educational status of the fishermen were categorized according to the children studying in government or private schools. In Junglighat 89.7 % of the children are attending government schools and 10.3 % of the children are attending private schools.

In Junglighat 48.3% of the population belongs to settlers from Andhra Pradesh followed by 38.3% of the population belonging to Tamil Nadu, 8.4% were from Kerala and 5 % of the family belonging to Jharkhand. 54.9 % of the population were Hindus followed by Christians (37.3%) and Muslims were negligible (7.8%).

Economic status of the fishermen

36.17% of the population were earning between 3001-4000, 30.85% of the population between 5001-7000, 12.77% between 4001-5000, and 20.21% of the population earning between 2000 - 3000 Rupees. In



Figure 1

A. A view of houses from the landing centre
C. Hygiene status near the landing centre

B. Women folks waiting to buy the catch
D. Fishes on display for auctioning

Table 3. Education of the population

Parameter	Categories	%
Educational status	Government	89.7
	Private	10.3
	Graduate	0.5
Educational level	Higher secondary	6.3
	High school	20.6
	Middle school	30.7
	Primary school	16.4
	Illiterate	25.4

Table 4. Ethnicity of the population

Parameter	Categories	%
Religion	Hindu	54.9
	Muslim	7.8
	Christian	37.3
State of Origin	Tamil Nadu	38.3
	Andhra Pradesh	48.3
	Jharkhand	5.0
	Kerala	8.4

Table 5. Living standard and related aspects of fishermen

Parameter	Categories	%
Living standard	APL	87.1
	BPL	12.9
Monthly income	2000-3000	20.21
	3001-4000	36.17
	4001-5000	12.77
	5001-7000	30.85
Type of house	Pucca	19.2
	Semipucca	73.1
	Kutchu	7.7
Latrine facility	Available	97.3
	Outside	2.7

Table 6. Earners in family and their capital investment

Parameter	Categories	%
No of family members earning	1-2	89.36
	3-4	7.80
	5-6	2.84
	7-8	0.00
Capital investment for fishing	Credit	97.01
	Own investment	2.99

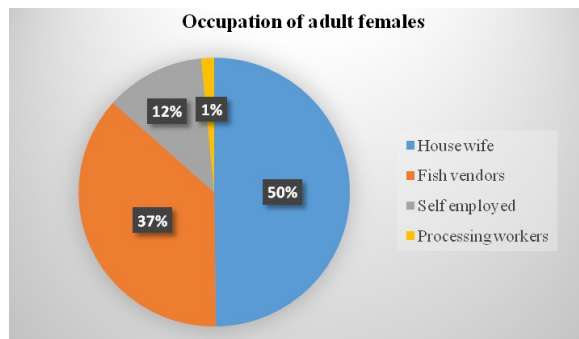


Figure 2. Occupation of adult females in the community

Junglighat fish landing centre, most of the fishermen lives in houses (Fig. 1 A) which are semi pucca (73.1%) followed by pucca houses(19.2%). In Junglighat 87.1% of the families were under APL category and 12.9% of the families were under BPL category. Latrine facility is an indication of the hygienic status in the households. Accordingly the percentage of population using latrine and defecating outside has been considered in the landing centre. In Junglighat it is found that 97.3 % of the population are using latrine facility and only 2.7 % of the population is defecating in the open environment. (Figure 1)

It was found that 89.36% of the families were dependent on 1-2 members for earnings. The adult male and his wife were the two members attached to fishery related work in most cases. It could be seen that only 2.99% of the fisher folks are able to invest in their own ventures. Most adult women members were house wives (49.81 %) followed by fish vendors (36.78 %), self-employed (11.88 %) and (1.53 %) were processing workers (Figure 2).

DISCUSSION

Junglighat is the most important and the largest fish landing centre in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. During the present study, it could be clearly noted that the fishermen population of Junglighat fish landing centre are living an average to above average life. Most families are medium sized (4-6 members) and very few

families are with members more than 10 which showed the understanding of the benefits of nuclear family amongst the fisher folks. Similar findings were made on the nuclear families of the fisher folks in Tamil Nadu (Anon 1984), West Bengal (Anon, 1990), Roy and Dorairaj (1994) from of Junglighat landing centre and Debnath *et al.* (2013) of the Kareen Community at Mayabunder of North Andaman District. More than half of the population here are Hindus and rest are Christians and Muslims which is similar to Tamil Nadu (Anon, 1984), Odisha (Kumar and Patnaik 2014) and Maharashtra (Kadam, 2015). Similarly almost half of the population is from Andhra Pradesh and rest from Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Jharkhand. Young population (15 - 35 age group) dominates the fishing community. Overall the income status was found to be average but literacy level was quite high. Most of the families belonged to the average income group of Rs. 3001 to Rs. 4000. Similar was the finding from the study of Roy and Dorairaj (1994) but much better than the income of fisher folks of Sundarbans (Rameshkumar *et al.*, 2011; Bhattacharya 2011), Masoli in Maharashtra (Kadam, 2015), Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu (Sivanesan, 2014). The households with more income showed that more than one member from the family is attached to fishing activities which is similar to the findings of Rameshkumar *et al.* (2011) at Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu. Close to 90 % of the population lives above the poverty line (APL) and rest are BPL families which is much higher compared 61 % (Kumar and Patnaik 2014) to whole of India's average BPL fishermen families and 49 % in Odisha (Kumar and Patnaik, 2014). But the irony is that most of the APL families fall in debts during lean seasons of fishing and unable to meet their daily expenses which is similar to the findings in Tamil Nadu (Anon, 1984), West Bengal (Anon, 1990) and in Sundarbans (Bhattacharya, 2011). BPL families primarily depend on artisanal crafts and depends of daily fishing trips to nearby waters. Almost 90 % of the school

going children attend government schools as most families cannot afford the expenses of private schools. Most are middle school drop outs and merely 0.5 % of them have completed graduation. The high literacy rate of the fishermen community in Junglighat is similar to fisher folks in Kerala (Sathiadhas, 2005) but much higher compared to the fisherman of West Bengal (Anon, 1990), Gujarat (Shiyani, 2003), Sundarbans (Bhattacharya, 2011), Odisha (Kumar and Patnaik, 2014) and Masoli in Maharashtra (Kadam, 2015). Most of the fishermen live in semi pucca houses with asbestos roofing as most were aware of earthquake resistance on such houses unlike their counterparts in Tamil Nadu (Anon, 1984), Sundarbans (Bhattacharya, 2011) and Odisha (Kumar and Patnaik, 2014) where they lack proper housing facilities. Most households had proper latrine facilities but the overall hygiene of the surroundings of the landing centre (Fig 1. C) was questionable and most fishermen were not aware of the benefits of keeping their surroundings clean.

An overview of this study suggests that the fishermen population have a better way of life than most of their counterparts in other fishing villages in the country. They are progressing socially and economically and the closeness of the centre to Port Blair can be a primary reason of their development when compared to other landing centres in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. But there is lot of scope for the development of the fishermen community in Junglighat similar to other fisher folks in India as suggested by Sathiadhas (1998), Bhatta (2003), Kumar and Patnaik (2014) and Nongmaithem and Ngangbam (2014).

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