

Socio-Economic Inclusion of Fishermen Communities, Chilika, Odisha

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Abstract: Orissa is endowed with water resources which provide potentials for development of fisheries sector. It has coastline of 480 km and continental shelf area of 24,000 sq.km. There are 3878 fishermen village with 14, 80,704 populations. The fisheries sub-sector contributed about six percent to the GSDP share of the agriculture sector for the year 2012-13. Traditional fishermen through their country craft contribute 15-20 % share to the country economy. Instead of primary stake holder of the contribution to the GSDP, most of the fishermen due to geographical isolation are alienated, vulnerable to natural disaster and subject to extreme poverty. They are socio-economically excluded. They have limited access to infrastructure, developmental assistance. Extent of poverty and exclusion are clearly reflected in their substandard housing and sanitation systems, their meager access to basic amenities such as nutritional food, clean drinking water, health care and inadequate transport services. The prevalence of diseases related to hunger and malnutrition is high in fishing villages, and the problem becomes more serious during monsoon period. Open access to sea allows the entry of bigger players into the fishing sector and wielding considerable power in the sector result in marginalization of the traditional stakeholders. This article attempts to discuss , how traditional fishermen are being marginalized with the entry of big players, superimposition of a modern, capital-intensive, specialized technology and governmental plan , programmes and policies for all inclusive development of fishermen communities. A government for the development of weaker section of society. In the last two decades both government and voluntary organizations have paid special attention to the problems of fisherwomen, who have suffered from several kinds of inequality and deprivation. Fisherwomen, being victims of both backwardness and gender discrimination, are struggling to find out space for them.(Gulati,1984){6}

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1. Study Area

The vast & dream like Chilika lake is situated on the east coast of India. It is the largest brackish water lake of India with estuarine character and a welcoming wintering ground for million of migratory avifauna. It was designated by the Government of India as a Ramsar Site in 1982, under the convention of wetlands of international importance especially as water habitat popularly known as Ramsar convention. Chilika is also included in the list of wetlands selected for intensive conservation and management by Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India. The lagoon is highly productive ecosystem with rich fishery resources. The area of lake varies between 1165 and 906 sq. Km. Chilika is situated in 19°28' and 19°54' North latitude and 85°05' and 85°38' last longitudes⁷[Malley, O L S S, (1908) It extends from south corner of Puri and Khurda districts to the adjoining Ganjam district of Orissa State. Orissa extends over an area of 155,707 square km with a coastline of 480 km, which is approximately 8% of the Indian coastline. The position of Orissa is eighth among the other coastal states and union territory of the country. The state is bounded by the Bay of Bengal on the eastern side. The state has been divided into 30 administrative districts of which 10 are the coastal districts. The continental shelf area of 24,000 km is open to marine fishing and is widest off the northern district of Balasore, narrowing toward the south. Among the districts, Puri covers more than a third of the total coastline of the state. My studied village Arakhakuda comes under Puri district of Krushnaprasad Block. Both the lake and the village is well connected by Satpada and 60 km from Puri and 100 km from Airport. The communities around Chilika lake are fisher communities population. P eople belong to SC communities are Keuta, Kandara, Tiara, Nolia, Khatia etc. The people of Arakhakuda are belong to

Nolias. All the fishermen communities living around the lake are Oriya where as Nolias are Telugu speaking people.[Panigrahi Rekha, Mishra Manas, Rao Giri.Y (2001)8].

2. Methods Used

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data collection. Primary data was collected using anthropological fieldwork technique . Various datas gathered through scheduled questionnaire, interviews, case studies and focus group discussions and were compared with secondary data.

3. Discussion

Socio-Economic Profile

The socio-economic inclusion diverted the people not only to other sector but also to avail basic necessities of life. The fishermen engaged in other occupation vary according to their local surrounding. At present there are two types of fishers in the marine sector i.e. full time & part time. The fishermen who have other livelihood assets such as river, cultivable land, estuarine, etc, they have partly diverted to fishing to live a healthy life. Still a large number of fishermen preferred to run small business, work as a daily labour in construction sites, brick kilns, and some educated young fishermen migrated to other cities in search of other job in industries and uneducated youths to the mechanized fishing sectors in their native place or in neighboring states.

Housing, is one of the most important physical assets for each human being. In terms of type of construction of housing, 8 percent of the fishermen had permanent (pucca and semi pucca) houses; another 16 percent had semi-

permanent houses(IAY and Mo kudia), while the large majority of over 80 percent people lived in non-permanent (kutcha) houses. They are most vulnerable from the point of view of cyclones. After every cyclone they have to rebuild their houses. After the super cyclone of 1999 the number of IAY & Mo Kudia houses increased but still 50 percent among them are unable to complete their houses due to poverty. The inter-connected roads are muddy and watery. Approaches to the fish Landing centre and improvement of village roads specially for those fishermen villages in the inaccessible areas are undertaken by Government. The villages around the lake are facing the problem of drinking water and various health problems due to poor sanitation facilities. The CDA is implementing infrastructure development programmes like renovation of village ponds, construction of fish landing jetties, construction of village community centres, providing solar street lighting system etc. in the villages in and around Chilika lake. Alternate income generating programme through value addition for the poor fishermen like fishfed preparation, dry fish techniques, preparation of fish pickles etc. are promoted in village. The introduction of prawn culture, gheri and bund fishery in 1991 had led the process of changes in the hydrology and sediment transport were restricted by government.

Literacy is a key aspect of human development. The coastal districts have higher literacy rate, it is not applying to fishermen communities. The literacy rate in fishermen community is 48.65 percent of which male literacy is 62.37 percent and female literacy is 34.40 percent. This low level of education are attributed to open access to natural resources, which encourages involvement of children in short term productive activities. In Arakhakuda village, schools have opened since long, but interest of fishing people in getting education did not take off for a long time. However, the efforts of Government and voluntary organizations to spread education among fisher people have not been a total failure. They have achieved some success. Many fisher boys and girls have not only passed M.E. and High Schools but some students of this village and nearby villages are studying in colleges. Fisher men still seem to think that there are no points in giving education to their daughters.

Nolia people observe only Nolia **rituals** i.e. Telegu tradition in all ritual and worship Ganga Devi, Makar Sakaranti, Ammavairavi etc. But now in contact with Oriya Nolia people their tradition is changed. They worship all festivals like Durga Puja, Kartika Purnima, Dola Jatra and God like Vishnu, Laxmi, Shiva along with their Budi Maa, Kali Maa, Sana Maa, Hara Chandi and Simanchal Devata etc. The people celebrate all the festivals in Hindu way. With the increasing of the education the modern thoughts are increasing slowly in the evolutionary manner. They are socially included by taking Dikhya. The people of Arakhakuda village are going on a transformation.

Women of Arakhakuda village are seen as inspiring factor. Many women of this village are working as Anganwadi workers and ASHA members. The females of this generation are giving up their traditional occupation selling of fishes and drying fishes etc. The dress pattern of women are changing. The earlier people wear a Noli shaped in ear and

nose which is now changed. The people tattoo their body but now this is not practised by the younger generation people. Fishermen are always busy in playing cards and drinking. Majority of women are engaged in post harvest fishing activities like sorting, processing, drying, selling etc. Some of them are also engaged in collecting firewoods, worked as labourer in cashew field. Due to economic inclusion women are running SHGs which make them economic self sufficient and literate. They are able to solve their problems. For drying fishes machine is used. This is quite hygienic. The earlier unhygienic methods of drying fishes are not market demanding any more. The machine drying fishes are packed and export to outside district and state. Different types of pickles and cutlet are also prepared. Marketing facilities are also provided by FishFED & ORMAS. But early women do not get any scope to earn more, even if they have to walk on foot a long distance to sell their dry fish and fresh fish. This is now done by bus services which is a communicable medium in the village.

Techno-economic aspect

In India, there are about 1 million fisher people in 3651 villages situated along the coast are employed in marine capture fisheries and allied activities, representing about 1 percent of our total population. Among them two third fisher folk live along the coastline and others on the banks of rivers, lakes and backwaters. The marine fishermen community of the state can broadly be classified into three groups traditional fishermen, mechanized gill-netters and mechanized trawlers. Traditional country fishermen have been fishing for centuries along the Orissa coast with the help of rowing and sailing boats while fishing by mechanized gill-netters is a recent development. The state does not have a natural harbour and the potential for artificial port is also negligible due to shallow coastline. The total fish production of Orissa is 2, 81,807.24 metric tones with inland fishery contributing about 1, 67,914.18 metric tones and marine fishery contributing about 1, 13, 893, 06 metric tones. The total number of fishing craft in Orissa is 11,314 of which the number of mechanized craft is 1529, Motorized craft is 3292 and that of the traditional craft being 6520. The total brackish water area available for fishery is 12,828.05 hectare with a production of 7203.63 MT shrimp during 2001-02. As per 2010 census out of total 1,480,704 fishermen population in Odisha State 605,514 are marine and the remaining 875,190 are inland fishermen. There are about 169,000 active marine and about 189,000 inland fishermen.9 (Marine fishery Dept, Puri)

But now the government has imposed much restriction on the marine fishing. The increasing numbers of trawlers caused the disappearance and decrease of special variety of fishes. Nolia people are doing mainly lake fishing along with sea fishing through the year. To save the Janala, the government has imposed restriction on Janala collection and ban on fishing from May 15 to June 15. Trawlers are violating the OMFR Act and in 111 coastal villages the fishers directly lost their nets and boats for the trawlers. For each accident made by the trawlers the fishers need three months to rebuilt the lost assets and in an average Rs. 45,000/- cost of nets lost in each accident. The Government provide them plastic net and machine boat on subsidy basis.

The relation of boat owner and crew has changed. Now they are more friendly to each other. The people are taking ice basket along with them to store the fishes . They do not borrow money easily from outsiders. They borrow money only from some friends and relatives. But now the people borrow money from the bank with a minimal interest and spend money more on education.

Still people are facing the problem of improper implementation of Governmental programme.

In a case study, I found Harihar Behera was a beneficiary of the IAY. He got it in 2010 for building the house. He got 45,000 amount in 3 instalments. He got the money from the cashier of block office. Besides that he complained that those who are actually poor or possess BPL cards do not have IAY. The influential people by giving some bribe to sarpanch took the facility of IAY. These people do not possess any BPL card. There are only two twenty five BPL families in Arakhakuda village having approximately 5000 population .People demanded more family be included in the BPL list.

NREGA programme promises villagers a minimum of hundred days of paid work in a year. Arjun Behera one of my informant told several families have reported that their NREGA job cards were being withheld, and they get Rs.25-30 as daily wages which should be Rs.58/- There are other cases where job cards are paid for ten to fifteen days of

work, but in reality it is only for two to four days of work.

Still government is trying hard to fill the lacunae. Saving cum Relief scheme is being given to fishermen during lean period of fishing and to inculcate the habit of savings among the fishermen. Matsyajibi Unnayan Yojana (MUY) was declared during 2011-12 to provide social securing and livelihood support to Fishermen Community. This scheme envisages providing award to meritorious children of fishermen community and financial assistance to fisher women self help groups. It has been proposed to provide scholarship to 2940 children of active fishermen and 429 fisher women Self Help Groups and provided with revolving fund of Rs.5000/- each during 2013-14. Under this scheme, 60 country boats are replaced by FRP boats, 658 traditional crafts have been motorized, 960 units of Icebox with cycle/moped/Auto have been provided , 825 number of fishermen have been issued work order under “Mo Kudia”. Besides, 10 lakh active fishermen were covered under Group Accident Insurance Scheme (GAIS). Odisha Economic Survey, (2014 -15) provides low Cost Housing Scheme. The National Welfare Fund for Fishermen (NWFF), model fishermen’s villages are created at low cost . FISHFED helps in forming PFCS(primary fishing co-operatives) in the State and ICZMP in the Arakhakuda village and serves the socio-economic interest and welfare of its members.

List of NGOs involved in social training in fisheries sector in Puri district

SN.	Name of NGO	Area of operation	Activity
1	Coastal People's Development Association (CPDA)	Konark, Chandra bhaga of Puri district	Involved in training of fisher women/men in social sectors like family, hygiene, mother and child care, sanitation, nutrition etc. Formation of SHG for both men / women. Provide instrument to handicapped person. Besides that training to women and housing facilities are provided by them.
	People's Empowerment & Need based Community Development (PENCODE)	Penthakota area and Arakhakuda of Puri District	
3	ICZMP – Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project	Arakhakuda, MOHO village of Puri district	
4	United Artist Association	Ganjam District and Arakhakuda of Puri district	
5	International Handicap	Arakhakuda of Puri district.	

4. Conclusion

The fishing community is one of the most vulnerable sections in Orissa. Their social system is very weak. Women position in their society is miserable. They are poor, deprived, marginalized and exploited by the dominant class . The introduction of nylon nets, which needs low maintenance cost has increased economic status and managerial capacity of traditional fishers. Conflicts between the trawlers and traditional fishermen rose high over the years .The fishermen worked hard, their numbers increased, their investments and crafts increased, and they produced more but got less income and became poorer due to exploitative system in marketing. Depletion of fish resources also contributed to push the poor fishers under the poverty level. There is a need of capacity building among them. Now they are organized to raise voice against the exploitation and demand their genuine rights from the Government.

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