STUDY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF FISHER COMMUNITY IN RURAL AREAS OF NADIA DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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Abstract:

Inland fishing has an important role on the socio-economic development of the developing countries. This economic activity will be a companion of agriculture in the populated countries like India. The present study deals with the locally availability of fishes under capture fishery from different source of water bodies in Nadia district and the social status of fisher family of this region is well discussed in this. This paper mainly aims to focus on socio-economic conditions of fisher family in Nadia district. Both primary and secondary data are collected by asking questionnaire and also with the help of some articles as well as survey report of director of fishery department of Nadia.

Index Terms: **Social status, fisher family, Socio-economic condition.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The fish farmer's community generally comes under the low income. They are perennially indebted to the middlemen. Several factors such as low social status, poor economic conditions, illiteracy, traditional fish farming and low productivity influence the socio-economic conditions of the fish farmers. As a preliminary step the investigation has attempted a socio-economic survey. The study is mainly based on the primary data collected by Random sample survey covered Nadia district the examine in Palit Beghia Village under Kaliganj block, maheschandrapur village under Chakdaha block, Khalsi Village Harin Ghata block, Sultan pur village Nakashi para block, Asannagar village Krishnanagar-I block and Goash village karimpur-I block in Nadia district to bring out the demographic features and evaluate the social and economic condition of fish farmers. An attempt has been made to analyse the following factors: age group distribution, religious composition, caste composition, marital status, type of family, type of housing, ownership of housing, level of education, size of the family, economic activity, source of drinking water, In addition to this, sources of income, saving pattern, expenditure pattern and sources of borrowing of inland fish farmers are also analysed.

II. OBJECTIVE

To observed the socio-economic structure and activities of the fish farmer in the study area

III. DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

The study has been based on mainly Primary data information. The primary data has been collected from two sources- (a) Field Survey and (b) district Office. District map was collected from district land revenue office. Primary data have been collected from selected six blocks through household survey running a structured questionnaire by applying random sampling in Nadia district.

IV. ABOUT THE STUDY AREA

Nadia district lies in the eastern side of the state of West Bengal sharing international boundary with Bangladesh. The Geographical boundary of Nadia district comprises Burdwan and Hooghly districts on the West, Bangladesh on the East, Murshidabad district on North and North West and North Twenty Four Parganas district towards South and South-East. Nadia district lies between 22º53'30'' and 24º54'0″ North latitudes and 88º08'10″ and 88º48'15″ East longitudes. The slope of the district is linear with orientation of North-South. Geographical area of the Nadia district is 3,927 sq. km. and the district lies 46 ft. above

the sea level. The district head quarter of Nadia is Krishnanagar and its population as per Census of India 2011 is 51, 67,600.The distances of the district from North to South and towards East to West are 135km. and 45 km. respectively
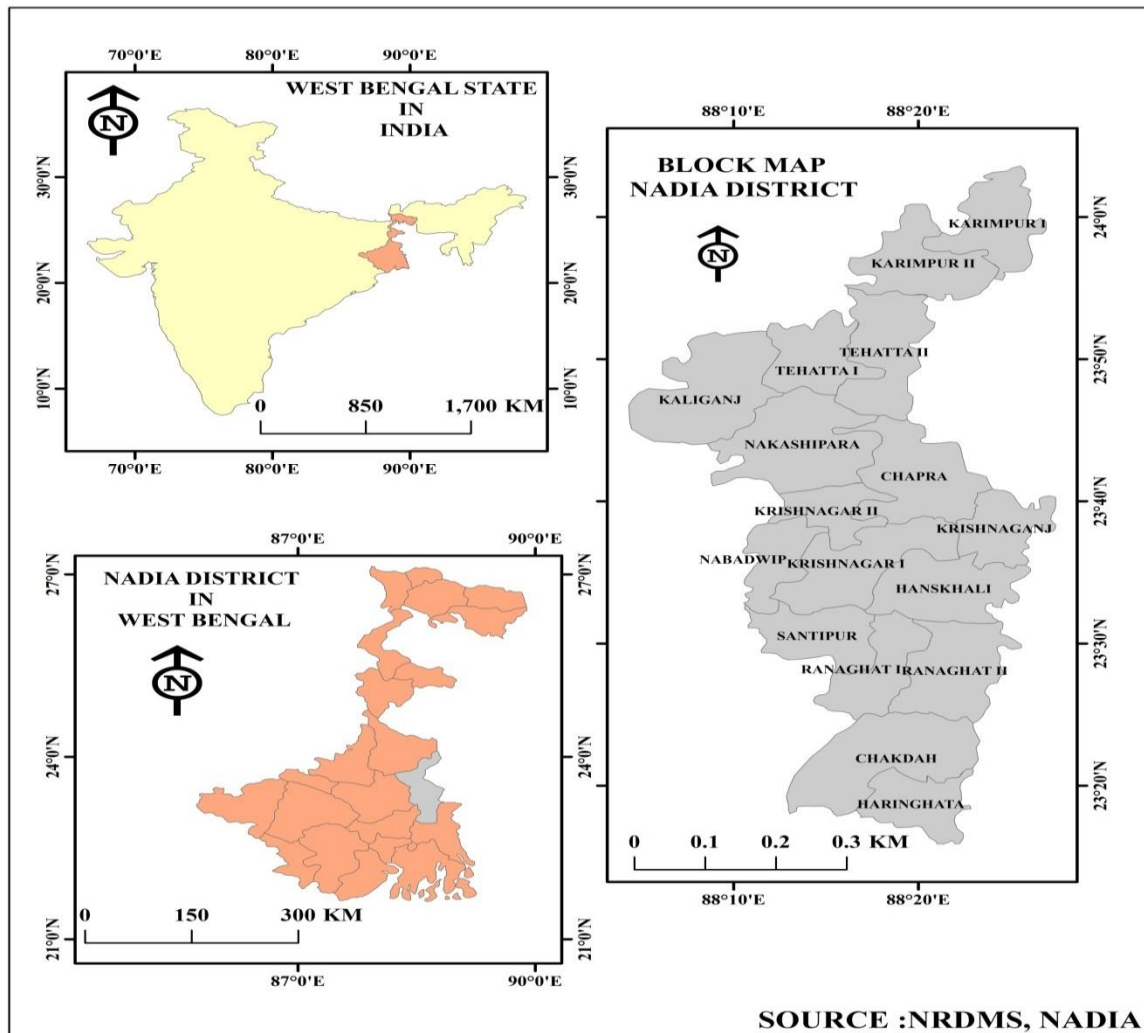
LOCATION MAP OF STUDY AREA

Figure: 1

V. SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE OF INLAND FISHERMEN

An overview of the salient socio-economic characteristics of the fishermen covered under the study. The sample consisted of 510 farmers from six villages less than six blocks in the district of Nadia.

5.1. Religious Composition:

Among the various social characteristics of a population, religion is an important one in the sense that it influences various types of behaviour. Hindus are the dominant forces of the Indian society. The following table explains the religious composition of fish farmers.

Table-1. Religious composition of Inland Fishermen

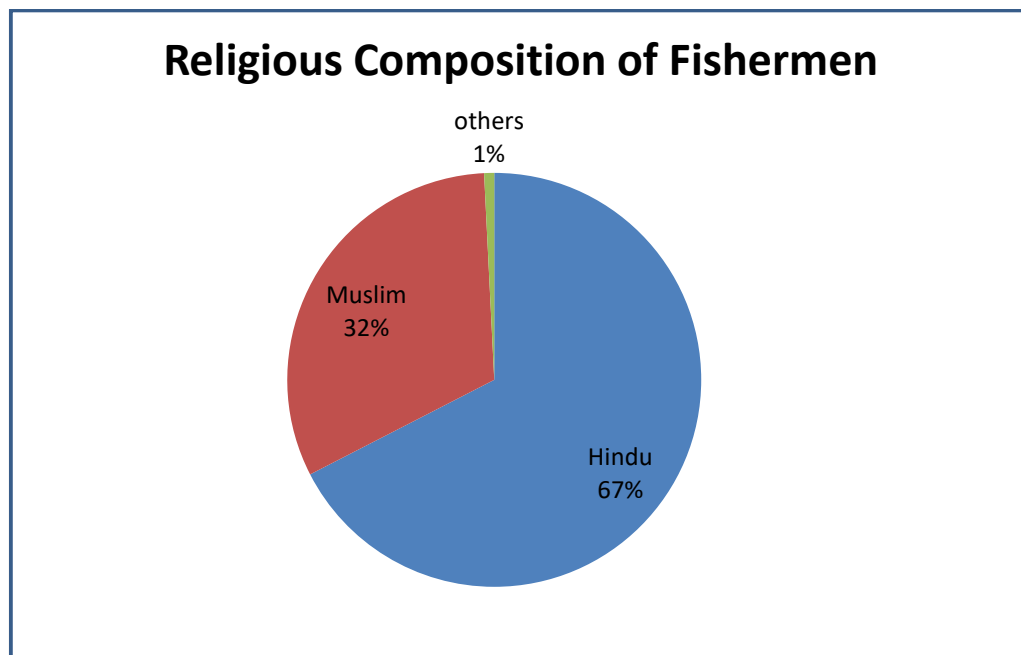| Sl.no	Block name	Village Name	Religious composition			Total
			Hindu	Muslim	others	
1	Karimpur-I	Goash village	33	31	01	65
2	Kaliganj	Palit beghia	40	33	02	75
3	Krishnanagar-I	Asannagar	69	30	01	100
4	Chakdaha	Maheschandrapur	62	28	00	90
5	Harighata	Khalshi	78	22	00	100
6	Nakashipar	Sultanpur	62	18	00	80
Total			344	162	04	510

Source: primary survey

Figure: 2

The Table .1 reveals that 67 percent of the fishermen belong to the Hindu community; another 32percent of the fishermen belong to the Muslim community and only 01 percent belongs to the other community.

5.2. Caste Composition:

The caste system is deep-rooted only in India and caste is an important institution which influences the Indian society very much. This factor is really a problem to the modern society. There is a high degree of complexities and diversities of castes among the Hindus..

The caste system of the Hindus has a decisive role in the social life of the people in India. The Table 2 shows the distribution of fish farmers according to their caste composition.

Table-.2. Caste composition of Inland Fishermen

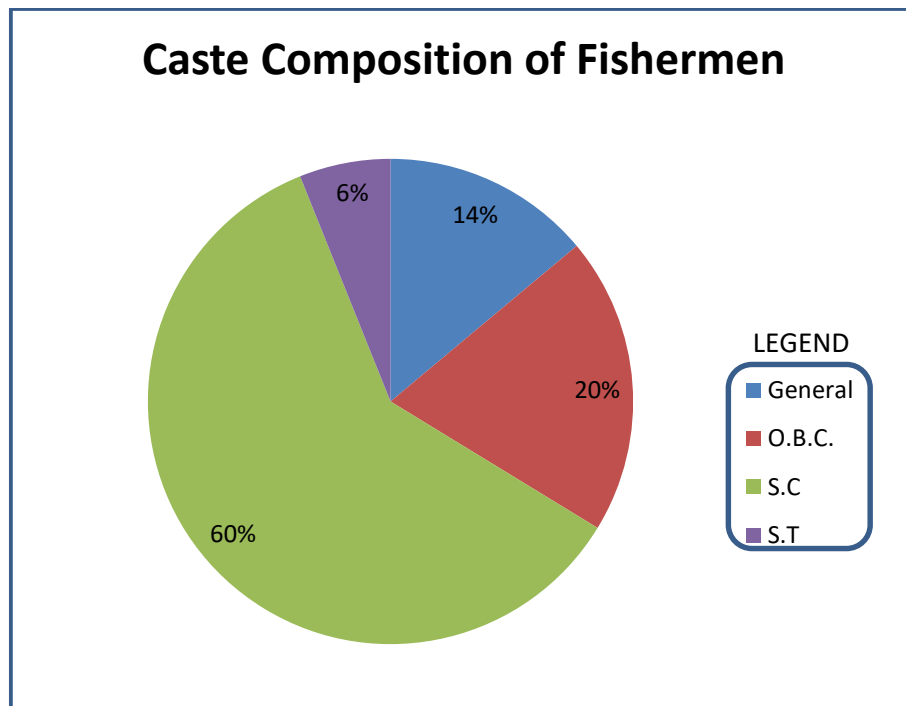| Sl.no	Block name	Village	Caste composition				Total
			General	O.B.C.	S.C	S.T	
1	Karimpur-I	Goash village	08	20	33	04	65
2	Kaliganj	Palit beghia	12	24	38	01	75
3	Krishnanagar-I	Asannagar	20	18	57	05	100
4	Chakdaha	Maheschandrapur	12	16	55	07	90
5	Harighata	Khalshi	08	14	70	08	100
6	Nakashipar	Sultanpur	11	09	54	06	80
Total			71	101	307	31	510

Source: primary survey

Figure: 3

This study brings to light the fact that the inland fishermen are not confined to one particular community and they belong to almost all the categories of the community irrespective of their religions and castes. About 60 percent of the fishermen belong to Scheduled Caste Community; 20 percent belong to the other backward Caste; another 14 percent belong to the General caste and the remaining 6 percent belong to Scheduled Tribes community

5.3. Age Distribution:

As a preamble to an analytical study of the population of the fishermen of Nadia district, age-wise classification of the population is attempted. This attempt will throw light on the particular age group which outnumbers the other groups in inland fishing. Age data are usually available in the form of single year but it is customary to classify them in a range *of* four years in demographic analysis. But in the present study the investigator for convenience safe classify them in a range of ten years. The following table explains age-wise composition of fishermen.

Table-3. Age group of Inland Fishermen

Sl.no	Block name	Village	Age group distribution					Total
			Below30	30-40	40-50	50-60	Above60	
1	Karimpur-I	Goash village	12	18	23	09	03	65
2	Kaliganj	Palit beghia	16	19	26	08	06	75
3	Krishnanagar-I	Asannagar	17	36	39	05	03	100
4	Chakdaha	Maheschandra pur	11	23	47	05	04	90
5	Harighata	Khalshi	19	31	43	04	03	100
6	Nakashipar	Sultanpur	09	18	41	07	05	80
Total			84	145	219	38	24	510

Source: primary survey

The Table .3. Shows the age-wise distribution of the fishermen it shows that both the young and the old people have engaged themselves in inland fishing. It is rhinestone clear that the middle-aged people outnumber the others in sharing the source of their income. 84 respondent are below thirty years of age; 145 respondent of them are in the age group of thirty and forty; other 219 respondent of the inland fishermen in the age group of forty and fifty; next 38 respondent are in the age group of fifty and sixty and only 24 respondent in the age group of more than sixty years. It is a pity that man has to take risk and struggle to feed his mouth and the members of his family even after he has crossed sixty years. In some cases, he is the only bread winner in his family and so he has to toil till he departs from this world. Darwins' 'struggle for existence' and 'survival of the fittest' is transparent here

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5.4. Marital Status:

The study of the marital status is essential and useful for various reasons. Marriage is the first step in the formation of a biological family. Since reproduction takes place only after the wedlock in most of the societies, the marital status distribution is an important factor affecting fertility. Certain related factors such as the proportion of persons who are unmarried especially females in the reproductive age groups, the proportion of those whose marriages have been dissolved by death or divorce, their ages at the time of dissolution of marriage are also of paramount importance. The pattern of marital status distribution of any society is determined by the combined effect of various biological, social and economic, religious, cultural and legal factors affecting the marriage. The following table explains the marital status of the Fishermen.

Table-4. Marital status of Inland Fishermen

Sl.no	Block name	Village	Marital composition			Total
			Married	Unmarried	Widow	
1	Karimpur-I	Goash village	55	09	01	65
2	Kaliganj	Palit beghia	64	08	03	75
3	Krishnanagar-I	Asannagar	69	31	00	100
4	Chakdaha	Maheschandrapur	66	23	01	90
5	Harighata	Khalshi	70	28	02	100
6	Nakashipar	Sultanpur	54	25	01	80
Total			378	124	08	510

Source: primary survey

The Table 4 shows that 378 respondents are married; another124 respondent are unmarried and only 08 respondents are widowers. Most of the fishermen are married and they are the bread winners of the family and this is the only source of income for these people.
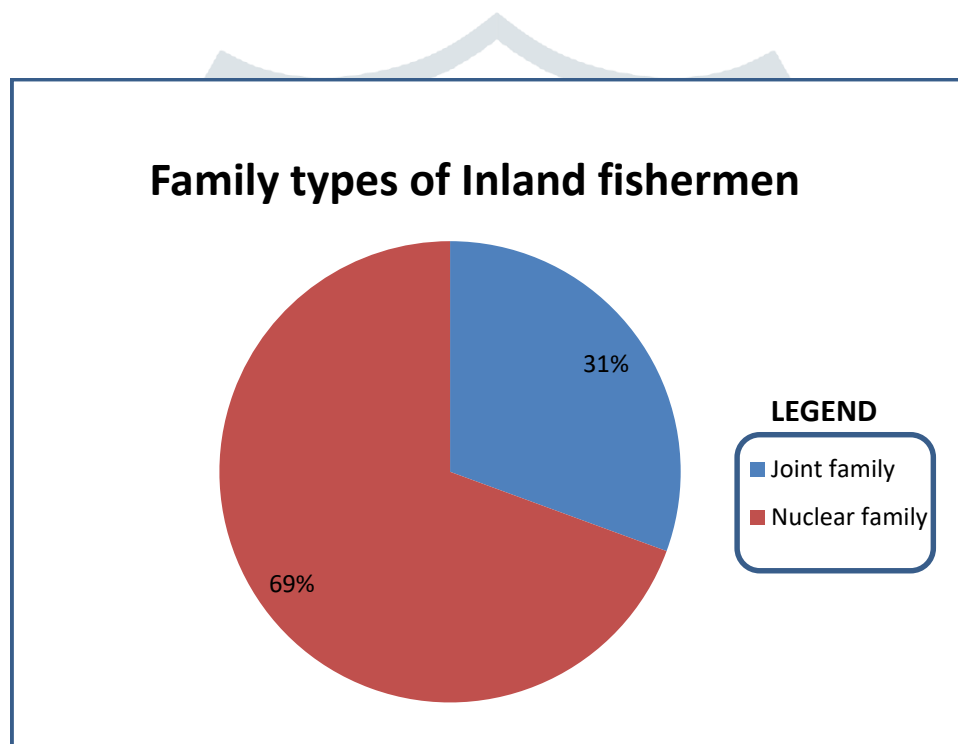
5.5. Nature of Family

Now-a-days people have a tendency to have a nuclear family rather than to be part of a joint family due to many factors such as economic progress, civilization, migration, education and urbanisation. Gone are the days when the senior citizens were considered to be an asset. Today, in the changed scenario, they are deemed to be a liability. So the joint family system is disappearing gradually day-by-day in the society. This feature is discernible in the study area too. The Table 5 shows the type of the families in the study area

Table-5. Family type of Inland Fishermen

Sl.no	Block name	Village	Type of Family		Total
			Joint family	Nuclear family	
1	Karimpur-I	Goash village	28	37	65
2	Kaliganj	Palit beghia	21	54	75
3	Krishnanagar-I	Asannagar	45	55	100
4	Chakdaha	Maheschandrapur	22	68	90
5	Harighata	Khalshi	25	75	100
6	Nakashipar	Sultanpur	15	65	80
Total			156	354	510

Source: primary survey

Figure: 4

The Table 5.opean the fact that majority of these people prefer nuclear families to joint families. About *69%*belong to nuclear families and the remaining *31%* to joint families. As the head of the family alone has to toil and moil for the welfare of the family, nuclear family is the need of the hour. But at the same time, the senior citizens must be given due respect that they deserve and they must be taken care of at any cost.

5.6. Type of House

The life style of the population in the study area makes it clear that people have a rural background and the nature of dwelling is a yardstick measures the quality of life and standard of living. The following table explains the nature of housing of the pond fish fanners.

Table-6. House type of Inland Fishermen

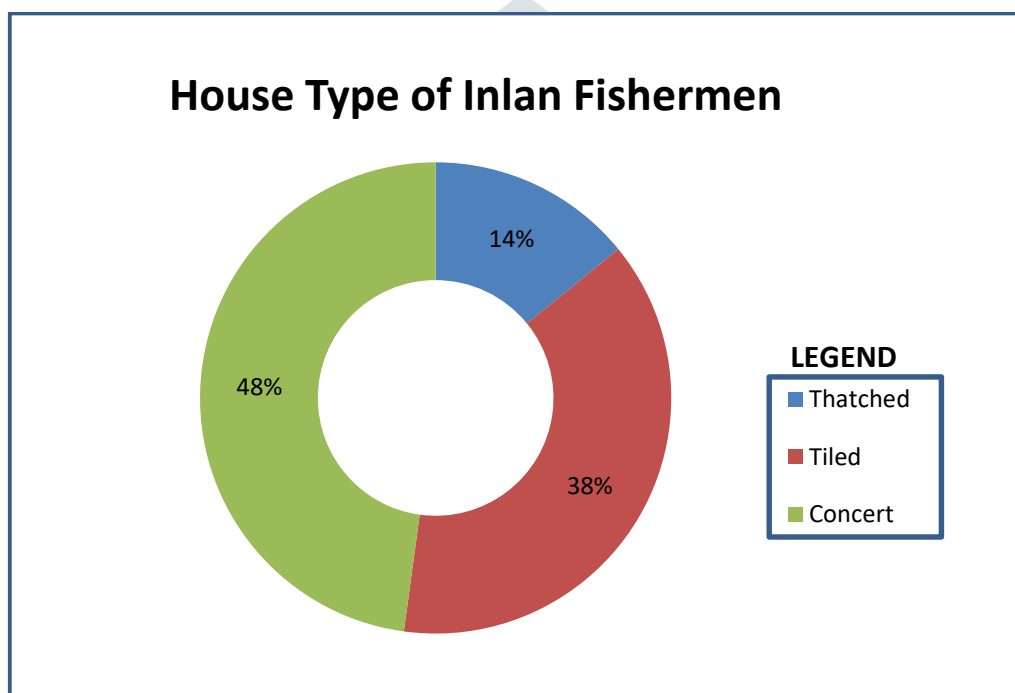| Sl.no	Block name	Village	Nature of house			Total
			Thatched	Tiled	Concert	
1	Karimpur-I	Goash village	05	24	36	65
2	Kaliganj	Palit beghia	08	36	31	75
3	Krishnanagar-I	Asannagar	10	40	50	100
4	Chakdaha	Maheschandrapur	20	33	37	90
5	Harighata	Khalshi	18	31	51	100
6	Nakashipar	Sultanpur	11	30	39	80
Total			72	194	244	510

Source: primary survey

Figure: 5

The Table6 shows an encouraging fact that the inland fishermen live in the thatched houses are very less (14 percent).Majority of the people 48 percent live in the houses with concrete roof or tiled roof 38 percent. So their standard of living is not too bad as in other districts of the West Bengal.

5.7. Ownership of Housing

Basic needs for survival are a minimum amount of food and drink, shelter, clothing and wealth. The family is a biological unit whose members have a common dwelling place. The nature of the ownership of the house determines one's status and position in the society. The following table explain the ownership of housing of the fishermen.

Table-7. Owner Ship of Inland Fishermen

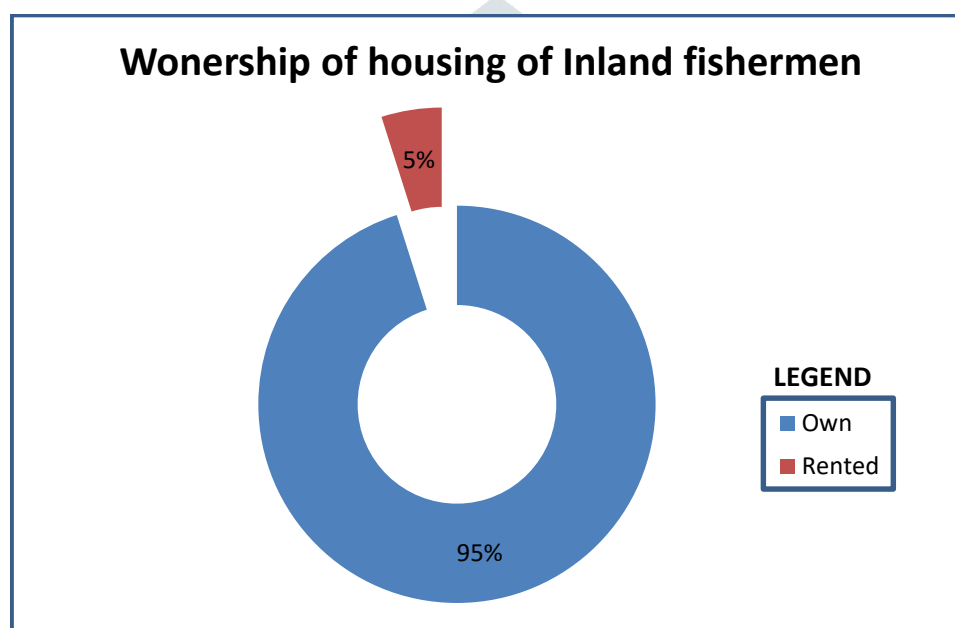| Sl.no	Block name	Village	Ownership		Total
			Own	Rented	
1	Karimpur-I	Goash village	61	04	65
2	Kaliganj	Palit beghia	72	03	75
3	Krishnanagar-I	Asannagar	98	02	100
4	Chakdaha	Maheschandrapur	87	03	90
5	Harighata	Khalshi	94	06	100
6	Nakashipar	Sultanpur	73	07	80
Total			485	25	

Source: primary survey

Figure: 6

The Table 7 reveals that 95 percent of the fishermen live in own houses or huts and 5 percent in rented houses. Those who are in the rented houses are at the mercy of the landlords. Their condition becomes worse when they are not able to pay the house rent within the stipulated time.

5.8. Education level:

One of the indices ordinarily used for ascertaining the position of the group in the socio-economic context is the level of education. The status of the family depends to a certain degree on the educational level of its members. Education is the most powerful element in enabling the social members to play their indispensable and vital role in the society. The level of their education is depicted in the following table.

Table-8. Education level of Inland Fishermen

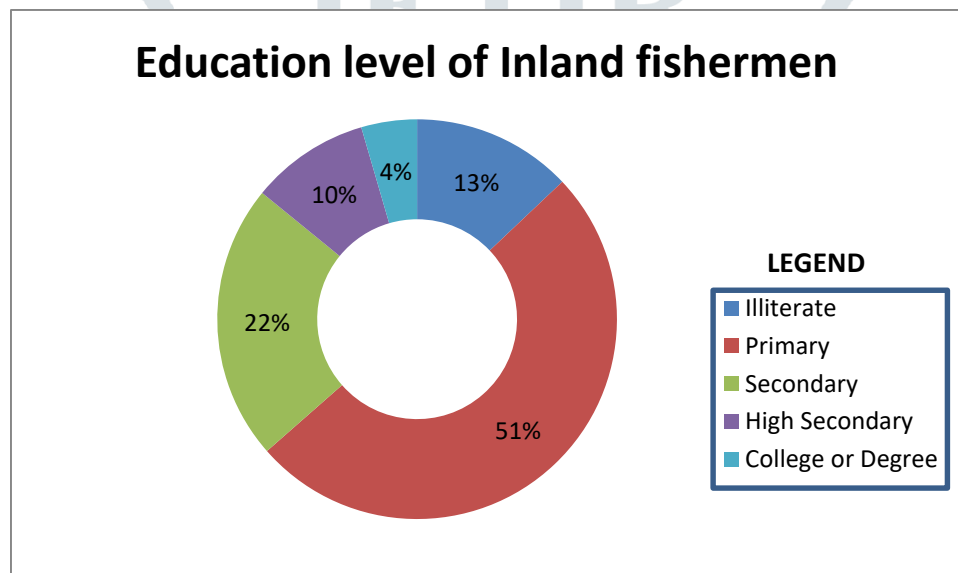| Sl.no	Block name	Village	Education level					Total
			Illiterate	Primary	Secondary	High Secondary	College or Degree	
1	Karimpur-I	Goash village	10	24	19	09	03	65
2	Kaliganj	Palit beghia	11	43	12	07	02	75
3	Krishnanagar-I	Asannagar	13	51	23	09	04	100
4	Chakdaha	Maheschandra pur	7	52	17	11	03	90
5	Harighata	Khalshi	17	49	25	05	04	100
6	Nakashipar	Sultanpur	08	39	18	08	07	80
	Total		66	258	114	49	23	510

Source: primary survey

Figure: 7

The Table 8 reveals that out of the total fish farmers, 13 percent are illiterates. About 51 percent are educated up to primary level, 22 percent up to Secondary level 10 percent High secondary level and 4 percent are degree holders. It clearly indicates that these people are well-educated and they will be able to eliminate illiteracy totally in the near future in their society.

5.9. Size of the Family

Gone are the days when almost every family was over-sized due to many factors like illiteracy, ignorance and superstitious faiths. In the olden times, people thought that the wealth of children was the greatest wealth. So they felt proud to have a large family. But today we see a sea-change in the attitude of the people. Family planning has also played a key role in reducing the size of the family to the normal size. Today even the common labourers are aware of all these things and they never go for a large family as they are cocksure that the more the members in a family, the more their sufferings are.

The following table explain the size of the family of the Inland fishermen.

Table-9.Family size of Inland Fishermen

Sl.no	Block name	Village	Family size						Total
			Below 3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	Above-7	
1	Karimpur-I	Goash village	6	17	24	09	05	04	65
2	Kaliganj	Palit beghia	09	21	33	06	03	03	75
3	Krishnanagar-I	Asannagar	11	27	39	14	07	02	100
4	Chakdaha	Maheschandra pur	08	23	31	11	1	05	90
5	Harighata	Khalshi	10	29	37	14	06	04	100
6	Nakashipar	Sultanpur	07	19	31	13	07	03	80
Total			51	136	195	67	40	21	510

Source: primary survey

The Table 9 give us a picture of how the inland fishermen maintaining a medium-sized family. Only in a few families, we see seven or more children. In majority of the families, there are four or five children. Another factor that comes to light is that no family follows the slogan of the government 'one family, one child'.

5.10. Annual Income

Income determines the economic and social status of the people. Moreover the economic functions like consumption pattern, savings pattern, investment pattern and borrowing pattern have a direct correlation with income. The following table explains the distribution of income from fishing.

Table-10 Annual income from fishing of Inland Fishermen

Sl.no	Block name	Village	Annual income from fishing(Amount in Rs)				Total
			Below30000/-	30000/-40000	40000/-50000	Above50000/	
1	Karimpur-I	Goash village	22	18	16	09	65
2	Kaliganj	Palit beghia	29	22	17	07	75
3	Krishnanagar-I	Asannagar	32	29	23	16	100
4	Chakdaha	Maheschandrapur	31	27	24	08	90
5	Harighata	Khalshi	28	34	25	13	100
6	Nakashipar	Sultanpur	24	30	21	05	80
Total			166	160	126	58	510

Source: Field survey by researcher

The above table 10 states that majority of the fishermen that is 166 respondent come under the income range of Rs.below 30000/-; 160 fishermen come under the income level of Rs.30000/- to 40000/- 126 fishermen come under the income range of Rs.40000/- to 50000/,and only 58 fishermen come under the income level of above Rs.50000/-.

VI. FINDING

The study area is a part of mature Gangatic Delta and its elevation is 13 meter above mean sea level River Ganga passes through this vast area and divides into three district parts –the old delta which consists of the district of Nadia. The formation of delta is completed .The area is also known as Bagri region. In socio economic status the study area has been considered as backward region.

❖   The study area is a lass economically area. Most of people are join with the primary activities .so their income is very low and they belong to BPL category. But some people are join pisiculture. Very little amount of money are achieved in this way

❖   In the study area is most population is backward. As a result multi-dimensional poverty is the major problem in this area. The poor suffer deprivation in multiple ways, low level of income, illiteracy, and relatively high level of mortality, poor infrastructure, and lack of voice.

❖   It has been observed that the rural sample regions, the number of fishermen family members consist of 4–6 members and the majority of the family are of nuclear type.

❖   Marriage expenses are high among inland fishermen. Family planning measures are adopted by most of the fishermen families

❖   Most of the inland fishermen and their family members are primary educated. Illiteracy is low. Female literacy rate is low.

❖   In the study area, all inland fishermen possess land of their own and a house. Majority live in huts or kutcha houses. Housing conditions are very poor.

VII. SUGGESTION:

❖   The housing conditions, electricity for lighting, source of drinking water facilities and poor sanitary conditions of inland fishermen must be studied in detail by the Governmental Agencies and necessary remedial measures should be adopted. There should be a simple and timely procedure of subsidized loan facility for the fishermen and Government must increase ceiling of loan and subsidy.

❖   Literacy is one of the social indicators of development. There is a high correlation between literacy and development. Implementation of effective literacy programmes and general awareness programmes must be conducted at local body level to reduce the dropout rates from school, among the children of fishermen

❖   A detailed study on all aspects of socio – economic conditions of inland fishermen must be conducted at the local body level and report should be submitted to the Government for taking necessary and effective welfare measures.

Thus, it is hoped that the present study of inland fishing and socio-economic changes of rural areas with a geographical perspective will reflect not only on the Inland fishermen community, trader for their prosperity but also to contribute to their Scio-economic development in an effective manner. The present study may be a model for the district areas.

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