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Study on the Socio-economic condition of fishermen in the Muzaffarpur Maun Region

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ABSTRACT

In the present study, it has also been observed that the male members of the society (as the society is of Mahila wing) of Bhusara maun are almost solely dependent on fishing who are in the age group between 18-65 years and almost all belongs to Sahani (Maghee or Mallah) community. Further, it has also been observed that though most of the female members of the Society are illiterate, but their wards are going to schools, few adults are matriculate, under metric and only one is \graduate. They have altogether sixty personal boats, cast nets, Drag nets. Gill nets, Dipnets, encircling nets etc for fishing. About 15-20% of them have bricks-house while others have thatched huts. Some of having agricultural lands, few have shops & automobiles (Tempo, Motorcycles etc.) but more than 90% of the population is depended on fishing & sale in the market. Fishing is usually done every day but 50% of the total catch they will have to give society.

1. INTRODUCTION

The lentil systems like lakes or maun and ponds with their various zones have characteristic organism. the littoral zone consists of producers consisting of rooted or benthic plants like Chara & Nitella and with these pytoplankton & filamentous algae grow profusely; Consumers consisting of most diverse varieties of animals like Zooplankton such as Daphnia, Cyclops, Cladocera etc. & Periphyton animals like Difflugelia, Vertically, rotifers, gastropods & eggs of frog etc.

The lake/maum is a large body of water enclosed by land and occupies a basin & larger than pond. They are usually born of Catastrophes occurring in nature and die quit (Hutchinson, 1957) . Besides these natural takes, man is building up artificial lakes usually called reservoirs. The habitat of an organism in lake or pond actually represents a particular set of environmental conditions suitable for its successful growth. For this, a word "Ecological niche" is created which includes physical space occupied by organisms, their functional role in the community and their position in the environmental gradients or temperature, moisture, pH & soil etc. and conditions existence. The different organisms (plants & animals) present in an ecosystem, are linked by nutritional requirement & thus constitute the "Food chain". In other words, the food chain can be defined as a group of organisms in which there is transfer of food energy through a series of repeated eating & being eaten. Each link of the chain is referred to as tropic level. A simple food chain in aquatic ecosystem is phytoplankton Zooplankton small fish large fish .

2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF FISHERMEN

As already stated above, this maun has been taken by Fisherman Mahila Cooperative society from the Govt. for ten years lease. The society has one hundred fifteen female members while male members of their families are fishermen engaged in fishing in maun. the President & Secretary of the society is Bilti Devi & Pana Devi respectively while only one graduate, Sri Prem Shankar Sahani explained every thing about the function of society, their grievances and other queries made in the presence of President, Secretary & other fishermen & Mahila members of the society.

Explanation

For knowing the socio-economic conditions, a house hold survey of twenty randomly selected families wee done along with a general information about others with the aforesaid important persons i.e. President, Secretary, Sri Prem Shankar Sahani & others to whom we selected for knowing details. The important information's on the following points were collected such as : Age group of fishermen, their primary & secondary occupation, their educational & technical background related to fish farming; about schooling of their children, family size, economic status (such as type of house in possession; materials in possession i.e. TV, Radio, automobile, Cycle, mobile etc). Crafts & gears, boats; mode of fishing by the society & their share, any financial help from the bank/their society/Govt. , Assistance from the Govt. /Fisheries Deptt. for the betterment of aquaculture etc.

One of the most important factors that have influenced the utilization and development of the water bodies whether they are lakes/mauns; ponds, reservoirs etc. for fishery resources in any state and/or country is the socio-economic condition of the fishermen community & both financial & technical support to the for better utilization of such water bodies as well to help them to improve their social-economic conditions. It is well known that fishing is generally considered as low profession in India & practiced by the members of backward communities especially Sahani (Fishermen) who are largely illiterate, superstitions and extremely poor (anon, 1982). Hence it becomes essential to know the socio-economic conditions of such persons. Bhaumik & Pandit (1991) wile studying socio-economic status of fishermen in West Bengal indicated age group of majority of them at 26-34 years. Sinha et al (2000) mentioned the dominant age group in Bengal as 30-60 years & mostly they belong to S.C. community. Biswas (1991) &

Suguman et al (2000) also observed fishing i\as primary occupation of the fishermen.

In the present study, it has also been observed that the male members of the society (as the society is of Mahila wing) of Bhusara maun are almost solely dependent on fishing who are in the age group between 18-65 years and almost all belongs to Sahani (Maghee or Mallah) community. Further, it has also been observed that though most of the female members of the Society are illiterate, but their wards are going to schools, few adults are matriculate, under metric and only one is \graduate. They have altogether sixty personal boats, cast nets, Drag nets. Gill nets, Dipnets, encircling nets etc for fishing. About 15-20% of them have bricks-house while others have thatched huts. Some of having agricultural lands, few have shops & automobiles (Tempo, Motorcycles etc.) but more than 90% of the population is depended on fishing & sale in the market. Fishing is usually done every day but 50% of the total catch they will have to give society. The society use to give short loans to the fisherman in need, but except once, on bank or government provided them loan, though according the Secretary of the Society, they returned the loan once taken by P.N. Bank long back.

Further, according to Singh et. al. (2007) , there are two types of fishermen's co-operative societies working in Bihar i.e. Matsyajivi Sahayog Samity Ltd. (No. 450) and Matsyajivi Swablambi Sahakari Samity Ltd. (No. 650) but almost all these co-operative societies are functional only to the extent of facilitating leasing of water bodies fishery rights by the government to fish farmers. According to Singh & Ahmad (2003), one model fish farm in the area of operation of each of the co-operatives or at block level society would be set-up for the front line demonstration of latest emerging technologies of fish farming. However, in the present study, it has been observed that even after giving special training to twelve fish farmers of the society at Block level , no further steps were taken by the Govt. & such type of steps becomes fruitless. Under the present condition, the Bihar Govt. should not expect to utilize its water bodies (which is very much more than other states like Andhra Pradesh) to become number one producer of fish & fisheries products unless & until the Govt. will change the present rules & regulations by including a fisheries expert/fishery graduates/post graduates etc. compulsory for each fishery society.

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