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Socio-economic status of fishermen of the Padma River in Chapai Nawabganj district, Bangladesh

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Abstract

The present study aimed to assess the socio economic status of fishermen of the Padma River in Chapai Nawabganj district during January to July, 2016 through questionnaire survey method. The socio economic status of fishermen were studied in points of age structure, family size, educational status, daily income, subsidiary occupation, land ownership, housing pattern, sanitation, religion, training about fishing or other related matter. 36% fishermen were belonged to the age groups of 21-30 years where 25% in the age group of 31-40, 25% in 41-50, 9% in below 20 and the lowest 5% in above 50 age groups. Most of the fishermen are Muslim (96%). The family size of 72 % fishing community is consisted of 4-6 members. About 32% of the fishermen were only could write name while 12%, 49% and 7% of the fishermen were illiterate, primary and secondary level of education respectively. About 50% fishermen earn Tk. 200-300 per day during peak harvesting period but 54% fishermen were involved to subsidiary occupation in off season. Majority (70%) of the fishermen had <50 decimal lands, while 21% had >100 decimal lands and 9% were landless. Rather than fishing at present they are more interested in rearing domestic cow and mango business by taking loan facilities from NGOs at Chapai Nawabganj, Bangladesh.

Keywords: Socio-economics, livelihood, fisherman, Padma River

1. Introduction

Fisheries sector is considering one of the most potential sectors in Bangladesh in terms of protein supply, employment generation, poverty alleviation and foreign currency earning. The sector provides 1.78 million people's full-time and part-time employment facilities and contributes about 60% of the national animal protein in-take (DoF, 2015) [1]. Among the 800 rivers including tributaries, Padma is the second longest river of Bangladesh (CEGIS, 2003) [2]. The river offers immense scope and potentiality for augmenting fish production and socio-economic security of the people living around. Livelihood status of fishermen mostly depend on fisheries resources. Fishing is the main source of income of the river adjacent fishermen household. But the fishermen cannot catch fish properly due to economic, social and technical constraints. Thus, the socio-economic conditions of the fishermen are not so good. Fishermen are one of the most vulnerable communities in Bangladesh. Most of them are poor, leading a pathetic life and live from hand to mouth. At present the number of fulltime fishermen is decreasing and they are trying to uplift their livelihood status by small scale businesses. For proper development of fishing community, it is essential to understand the baseline information to initiate proper developmental steps and improve the livelihood of fishermen. But, there is no sufficient information about socio-economic status of fishermen community of Padma River in Chapai Nawabganj district of Northern Bangladesh. The main objective of this study is to reveal the socio-economic conditions of the fishermen of Padma River in the Northern district Chapai Nawabganj, Bangladesh.

2. Methodology

The study was carried out in four villages namely Ghughudhanga, Attnumber bad, Dairapur and Hayatmor under Shibganj Upazila in Chapainawabgonj district beside the Padma River. This study was conducted from January to July, 2016 based on the collection of primary data. Draft questionnaire was prepared and pre-tested with several fishermen interview and given

attention to include further information in it to achieve the objectives of the study. After pre-testing, the questionnaire was modified and developed. The final questionnaire included the questions on the socio-economic condition including age structure, family size, educational status, daily income, subsidiary occupation, land ownership, housing pattern, sanitation, religion, training about fishing or other related matter etc. Primary data were collected through personal interview supplemented by multiple methodological Participatory Rural Appraisal tools such as Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Crosscheck Interviews (CI) with key informants. Questionnaire form was filled in by interviewing 100 fishermen fishing in the Padma River. All the collected data were accumulated and analyzed by MS-Excel and then presented in textual and graphical forms to understand the present status of the livelihood status and constraints of the fishermen of the studied area.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Age structure

Age structure of population plays a vital role in the analysis of the social status of an area. The survey stated that only male fishermen were engaged in direct fishing in the study area. Age of the fishermen varied from 15-55 years. The highest 36% is in 21-30 age groups whereas 25% in the age group of 31-40 and 41-50 each, 9% in below 20 and the lowest 5% in above 50 age groups (Fig. 1). Ali *et al.* (2010) [3] have reported fish farmers (50%) belong to age group of 31 to 40 size in Mymensingh district and Hossain *et al.* (2015) [4] have recorded the highest (40%) in 36-45 age groups in the Punorvaba River under Sadar Upazila, Dinajpur.

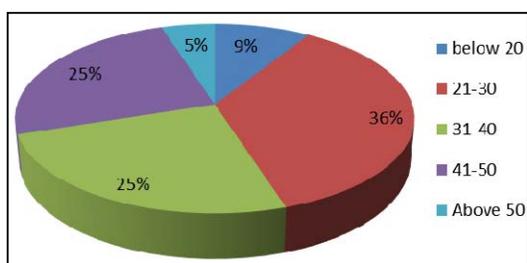


Fig 1: Age structure of fishermen

3.2 Family size

In this study, 12% family has only 1-3 members. The highest (72%) is found in 4-6 members group. Only 16% are belonging in case of above 6 members (Fig. 2). Major fish farmer (45%) family consisting of 4-5 members in Mymensingh district (Ali *et al.* 2010) [3] and highest 60% belonging in 5-7 members in Dinajpur district (Hossain *et al.* 2015) [4].

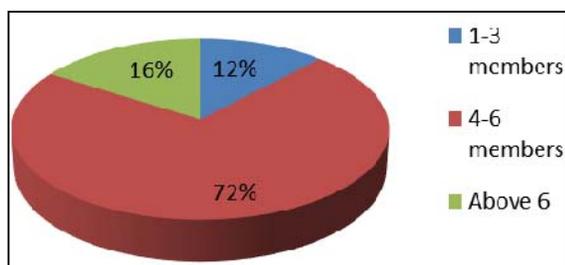


Fig 2: Family size of fishermen

3.3 Educational Status

In the present study, educational status of the fishermen have been grouped in 4 categories viz. (i) Illiterate (ii) Illiterate but sign (iii) below class V (iv) class VI-X. In case of fishermen, the highest (49%) are below class V and the lowest (7%) is class VI-X. 12% is illiterate group and 32% is Illiterate but sign group (Fig. 3). Rabbani (2007) [5] has stated that 20% of riverine fishermen were illiterate, 71.67% were below class V and 8.33% were class VI-X. It might be due to impoverished condition and lack of awareness about education.

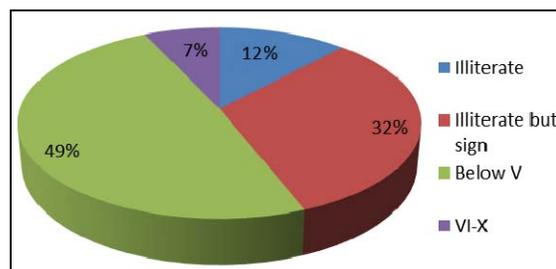


Fig 3: Educational status of fishermen

3.4 Daily Income

The daily income of the fishermen ranged from Tk. 100 to 500 per day. The highest (50%) fishermen earn Tk. 200-300 per day during full harvesting period, the next, 32% is Tk. 100-200 per day. 13% and 5% are earned below Tk. 100 and above 300 per day respectively. (Fig. 4)

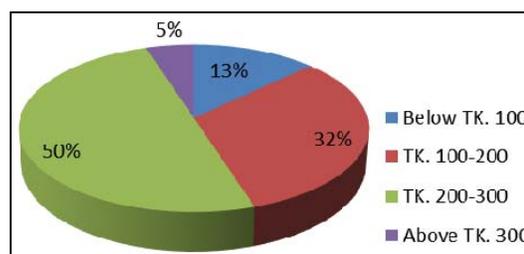


Fig 4: Daily income of fishermen

3.5 Subsidiary Occupation

Subsidiary occupation means the second occupation in which the fishermen are engaged or seek in the off period of fishing. In this study the highest (54%) fishermen are involved to pass their labour in non-fishing sector specially rearing domestic cow, sometimes in mango business and others, 26% fishers are engaged in agriculture. About 8% are engaged in fish trading and related works as second occupation. 12% fisher has no any subsidiary occupation. It is good news that some NGOs and Islami Bank provide loan facilities among the fisherman round the year.

3.6 Land Ownership

21% fishermen have more than 100 decimal agricultural lands but due to less fertility they cannot get enough production. 70% (highest percentage) have below 50 decimal agricultural lands with patrimonial homestead, 9% have no any agricultural lands nor any homestead. Reza *et al.* (2015) [6] has reported 48% of fishermen have ownership 0-20 decimal ownership and 32% have 41 decimal and above.

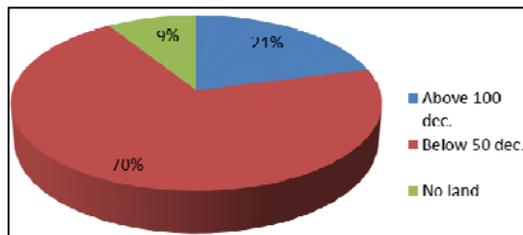


Fig 5: Land ownership of fishermen

3.7 Housing pattern

In this study only three major categories of house was found mud wall and tin roof was 71%, bamboo or tin wall and tin roof was only 17%, concrete wall and tin roof was 8%, the other type was 4% (Fig. 6). The housing pattern of the study area indicates the economic weakness or poverty of the community. Reza *et al.* (2015) [6] has found that about 84% fishermen had kacha house while 16% had semi-paka house in Dinajpur district.

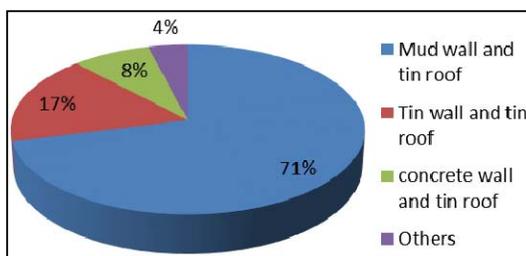


Fig 6: Housing pattern of fishermen

3.8 Sanitation

Sanitation systems in the study area are not satisfactory. 12% is good hygienic condition, 24% hygienic and 64% unhygienic (Fig.7). No family use open latrine. The present study reported that the sanitary conditions of the fishermen were not satisfactory which is opposite with Kabir *et al.* (2012) [7] found about 70% of fishers had sanitary facilities in old Brahmaputra River and also Ali *et al.* (2010) [3].

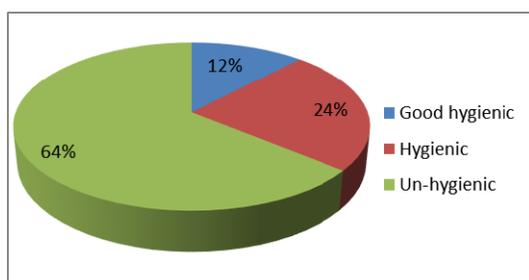


Fig 7: Sanitary condition of fishermen

3.9 Religion

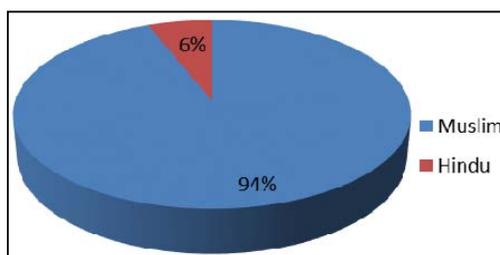


Fig 8: Religious status of fishermen

It was observed that Muslims were featuring as the absolute majority of the fishermen in the study area. About 94% and 6% of fishermen were Muslim and Hindu Respectively (Fig. 8). Rahmatullah *et al.* (2015) [8] reported the fishermen (95%) were the Muslims and 5% of fishermen were Hindus which is similar to the present findings. Ali *et al.* (2010) [3] also reported 85% of fish farmers were Muslims and remaining 15 % were Hindus.

3.10 Training about fishing or other related matter:

It has been observed in this study that about 62% fishermen have training on one or more related matter, 38% have no any training facilities. NGOs like BRAC, ASA, and Islami Bank Ltd. also provides some extension program and training facilities. Ali *et al.* (2008) [9] reported about 30% of the farmers received training facilities from other, while 15% of the farmer got from DoF and NGOs. According to Rahmatullah *et al.* (2015) [8] 41.67% farmers have training knowledge on fishing which is similar to the present findings.

4. Conclusion

Considering the findings of the present work, it is clear that the livelihood status of the fishermen in Chapai Nawabganj is not satisfactory. Fishermen are deprived of many amenities of life. Now a day's to uplift their living standard they are getting more interested in rearing domestic cow and mango business rather than fishing. As a result the number of fulltime fishermen gradually decreasing in Chapai Nawabganj.

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