



Critical Analysis On Socioeconomic Situation Of The Coastal Community Engaged In Fishing And Related Activities

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ABSTRACT:

Man –environmental relationship is closely related to human adaptive skill or adaptive strategies. These strategies vary because of the variation of environmental factors. We observe a variety of human adaptive strategies, associated with environmental factors and socioeconomic system, varies from hunting gathering to herding to farming. This study reflects, critical analysis on socio-economic situation of the coastal community engaged in fishing and related activities.

KEYWORDS : socioeconomic, coastal, hindu, muslim, fishing.

INTRODUCTION :

The role of environment as well as ecological background is very significant in understanding human society and culture from all possible angles. Every community adapts differently in response to its unique ecological background. Man is the only species, who can survive in any region of the world because of his biological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation. It is fact that social transformation takes place in any particular environment. Society evolves under the impetus of increased technological control over nature. Social evolution has taken place from the beginning of prehistoric culture, and it is still continuing. It has also taken place from primitive society to rural society to urban society to industrial society to post-industrial society. In every stage, ecological factors had tremendous impact and people had no alternative to adjust with their environment in order to survive. At present, people are suffering from ecological imbalance and growing environmental threat. So social-ecological analysis is our crying need in understanding present socioeconomic and bio-cultural situation of any community, and it is also essential to prevent people from growing ecological crisis.

Environment and society, both are interacting with each other and this is the main theme of environmental sociology'. It is more simply the study of "societal-environmental interactions"(Dunlap and Catton, 1979). It is fact that the emergence of environmental sociology has taken place as a coherent subfield of inquiry after the environmental movement of the 1960s and early 1970s. In this area, the contributions of William R. Catton and Riley Dunlap have played significant roles. Basically the works of William Catton and Riley Dunlap, have been considered to mark the emergence of "Environmental Sociology". Their analytical framework derives from 'Otis Duncan's ecological complex' which stems from an effort to apply insights from general ecology to sociology. The work of Otis Dudley Duncan (1984) integrates the interdependence of population, organization, environment and technology. Catton and Dunlap (1992), unlike Duncan, emphasize the natural environment as an important factor that may influence or be influenced by human behaviour.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

According to N. P. Chekkutty (2006), foreign trawlers, entering Indian fishing zones as part of global joint ventures, are likely to further jeopardise the livelihoods of traditional fishing communities. These strategies have been described as "Trawlerisation" by John Fernandez, a leader of the Kerala Matsya Thozhilali Federation, who died a few years ago. "Trawlerisation" basically indicates an unchecked exploitation of coastal as well as marine resources. This practice has further marginalised and pauperised fish workers and destroyed coastal habitats. Traditional fisherman communities are seriously affected by the process of "trawlerisation". It is also responsible for ecological imbalance in coastal environment.

According to Vinita Govindarajan (2017), Indian fishermen are using traditional rules to tackle declining catches. The artisanal fisherfolk of South Maharashtra, belonging to the Brahmeshwar community organized a meeting to discuss the impact of the use of purse-seine, a large net that can stretch up to a Kilometre and is used to capture a shoal of fish, usually sardines or tuna. It is made of a fine mesh that also traps fish eggs, thereby hampering fish multiplication. (Govindarajan, 2017)

Govindarajan (2017) has also pointed out that the customary laws of the Brahmeshwar fisherman community do not allow the use of purse-seine net to catch fish. "As traditional fishermen, we have a unique understanding of how best to care for the sea. We know which fish are declining and why. We have even made representations to the government about the disappearance of Hilsa and some catfish, but they did not pay attention". This statement had been given by the members of Brahmeshwar fisherman community and meeting witnessed by Divya Karnad in December 2014. (Govindarajan, 2017).

Ray, Chakraborty and Bhattacharya (2002) have conducted an investigation among the 'Meendharas' of Sunderbans, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal to study their cultural tradition and socioeconomic condition on the basis of the environmental background of the Sunderban delta area. Basically, a group of people, locally known as 'Meendhara' is connected with the catching of tiger prawn seeds. These fisher folk collect juvenile prawn and prawn seeds from brackish water.

According to the study report, all the 'Meendharas' of the village Kamdeb Nagar belong to a community, known as 'Bagdi'. It has also been studied that due to the salinity of soil, agriculture is very difficult in this area. So, collection and cultivation of prawn is an alternative means for subsistence here.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

Research methods basically concern how research is carried on. To study rural society, fieldwork or field research method is very important. It is basically ethnographic fieldwork to conduct micro-level study and to collect primary data. Ethnographic fieldwork has a long history in sociology, social anthropology, and some other related disciplines. This method, based on 'participant-observation' is very significant to collect qualitative and quantitative data. During fieldwork, the researcher is to spend long periods of time with the group or community being studied. Here, a fieldworker takes a direct part in the social activities of the members of the community. It is obviously, a direct experience and it has tremendous opportunity to find out hidden social facts. It is true that the researcher must explain as well as justify his presence to its members. The researcher must gain the co-operation of the community and sustain it over a period, if any worthwhile results are to be achieved (Giddens, 1989).

The information of socioeconomic aspects is to be collected, both from documentary and primary sources. Documentary sources include newspaper, journals, books, and another research publications. These are very helpful in collecting data. On the other hand, primary

sources basically indicate the data, collected from intensive fieldwork. The present investigator has conducted fieldwork among the fisherman communities of 'Birampur Colony', a coastal village of Junput, East Midnapur, West Bengal.

Based on the situation, 'social survey' and 'sampling method' have been used. The variabilities and differentiation suggest adopting a statistical design for systematic understanding of those people. Data on health and hygiene in relation to demographic characteristics have also been considered.

Statistical design is basically statistical method. It has been applied in present research work. The present researcher has also employed sampling method to collect data. It is true that sampling is an aspect of social survey. In some cases, census survey is very difficult. So sampling and social survey have tremendous utilities to collect data. The sampling design has been further specified according to the exigency of study situation. The data has been classified and tabulated.

It is true that proper sampling means the proper study of the problem. In this work, a group is considered as the representative of the whole. This is the present researcher's method of sampling. It is a smaller representative of a larger whole (Williams Goode & P. Hatt, 1952). Sample size is determined based on the investigation. Although census survey method is employed at 'Birampur Colony' during fieldwork. The present investigator has selected 600 (six hundred) persons of different age groups as the sample. This number includes both males and females. For equal representation of male and female, 300 units have been selected from each sex. These 600 strong samples is more than 27% of the universe or population. This is basically, a probability sampling, although children and boys and girls below 14 years are not included. So, to some extent or little bit, non-probability sampling may work. Voter's list is not followed, because it suffers from the defects or duplicity. For investigation 600 persons have been selected from total people of 'Birampur Colony'. This is basically entire population, also known as 'universe'. Now current population of village, Birampur colony, Junput is 2210 (Total population). Total population consists of "1150 male members" and "1060 female members". So 600 strong sample is more than 27% of the universe.

In this research work, data on geotopography and biosphere have been collected from the study of those who have already carried out their works in the coastal region of South-West Bengal.

The Study Area:

The study area is "Birampur colony", a coastal village of Junput, under Kanthi (Contai) subdivision in the district of East Midnapur, West Bengal.

Intensive fieldwork has been conducted among the villagers of 'Birampur colony'. Here census survey method has also been employed for understanding total population size. To study the fisherman communities of coastal villages of East Midnapur, it is essential to point out some information regarding the district of East Midnapur, West Bengal. These information from secondary sources have helped social-ecological study.

Objectives of Study :

This social-ecological study is practical. The findings may be utilized for the purpose of application. This application-oriented study clearly shows the sociology of environment which is

concerned with the study of growing environmental threats towards mankind. In the context of coastal environment, the present study seeks to shed light on the following aspects.

1. To study social-ecology and cultural adaptation of the fisherman communities in coastal environment.
2. To study the interaction and interrelationship among the different communities, related to fishing activities from social ecological point of view.
3. To study sociocultural, techno-economic, and religious organization, related to fishing and coastal environment.
4. To study food-habit, the problems of health and diseases, and folk medical practices, related to coastal environment.
5. To study growing socioeconomic problems, regional imbalance and environmental threat due to destructive large scale commercial deep-sea fishing and "Trawlerisation".

This present investigation on the lifestyle of the fisherman communities of this coastal village, has the ample opportunity to find out the nature man relationship as well as ecological influence on their day-to-day activities. This social ecological study is obviously action and welfare oriented to maintain regional balance as well as to prevent coastal environmental threat, caused by commercial fishing, trawlerisation, local pollution and commercialization of land. This study will give a dimension, which will be ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable for present and future generation of the fisherman communities in coastal Bengal.

In this investigation, data have been collected in between January to September, 2017.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

The villagers of this coastal area are found of green leafy vegetables, locally name as 'Shak'. They also call 'Shak-pata'. They often say 'Shak-Bhat' khabo. That means, we will rat rice with green leafy vegetables. Pui-shak, Chik-shak, Dheki-shak, Kachu-shak, Saluk, Giria-shak, Hinch-shak, Susni-shak, Gimashak and some others are naturally and automatically grown. We may consider these green leafy vegetables as natural vegetation and these are important food resources of poor people of this coastal area. They also cultivate pui-shak, lau-shak and others.

The villagers of 'Biramput Colony', Junput regularly use these green leafy vegetables along with rice. These are easily available and easily grown, within Junput and its surrounding.

The present investigator has observed that the villagers of 'Biramput Colony' have planted many trees in their own areas.

These trees are as follows.

Local Name Scientific Name

1. Aam - *Mangifera indica*
2. Peyara - *Psidium guajava*
3. Kanthal - *Artocarpus heterophyllus*
4. Pepe - *Carica papaya*
5. Narkel - *Cocos nucifera*
6. Supari - *Areca catechu*
7. Pati lebu - *Citrus aurantifolia*
8. Jaba - *Hibiscus rosa sinensis*
9. Kala - *Musa paradisiacal*
10. Bel - *Aegle marmelos*

The above-mentioned plants are easily available and easily grown in the coastal villages of East Midnapur district, West Bengal. Although, these are grown in all parts of West Bengal. It is true that many villagers of West Bengal plant the above-mentioned trees for earning money.

The villagers of Biramput Colony, Junput, are to interact with their coastal environment. The plants and the animals of this area play very much important and major roles to maintain -ecological balance and these are obviously the natural resources. It is

interesting to note that sea and sea-fishes are their main economic resources. Their economic activities are mainly dependent upon the availability of different types of sea-fishes. They catch fishes from the open sea, sell to the market, consume sea-fishes and they also dry up these fishes. Now a list of sea-fishes, caught by the villagers of Biramput Colony, is being presented here as fauna.

The list is given below.

Sea-fishes

(According to local name)

1. Ilish.
2. Chandani-ilish.
3. Mukundi.
4. Forok.
5. Bhola.
6. Telia-bhola.
7. Gangmural.
8. Jabda.
9. Chanda.
10. Ruli.
11. Koibhol.
12. Aartangra
13. Sonatangra.
14. Patra.
15. Sankar.
16. Tapra.
17. Lote/Babla/Lahara.
18. Tauri.

19. Sonabum.
20. Nonatangra.
21. Bhetki.
22. Khasla.
23. Patia.
24. Rupa-patia.
25. Haldechingri.
26. Motka.
27. Balighasa.
28. Firka.
29. Chela.
30. Solia.
31. Ranhi
32. Gaghua.
33. Patal.
34. Chatki.
35. Med.
36. Chakkhuratan.
37. Baul.

The villagers of 'Biramput Colony', Junput, also domesticate some animals, namely cow, dog, hen, goat, and some birds. Their name and scientific name as follow.

Name -Scientific name

1. Cow - Bos Taurus
2. Dog - Canis lupus familiaris
3. Goat - Capra hircus

4. Cat - Felis catus

5. Hen - Gallus gallus

6. Pigeon - Columba livia

7. Indian parrot - Psittacula kramera

Along with plants, animals, soil-type, rainfall, and temperature, the present investigator has considered land-use and land-type of 'Birampur Colony', Junput. Land is very important for social ecological analysis. There is no agricultural land inside the village. The forest of casuarinas is observed outside this village. Grazing land is not fixed. Forest land of casuarina is used as grazing land. Junput seabeach is very long and broad. Soil is basically sandy. Vacant dry seabeach is used to dry up the enormous amount of seafishes by the villagers.

Different types of 'Palas', made by 'Hogla' leaves (Southern cattail) are constructed on the sea beach during seasonal fishing. Another portion of the area is used in making the fishing net and boat. Entire Junput area is famous for its dry fish firms. The villagers call them 'Khoti'. Khoti is local name and khoti consists of many and different types of 'Palas'. Vacant land as well as dry seabeach are filled up by 'Khoti'. The villagers of "Birampur Colony" and others use maximum portion of land during seasonal fishing. They are engaged in carrying, sorting, selling, drying, storing and packing the sea-fishes. The villagers also assist to transport the dry fishes. Actually, they help in loading the dried fish on the truck. Trucks carry the loads to various states of India.

In social-ecological analysis, it is important to highlight the pattern of 'land-use'. The villagers of 'Birampur colony' and the entire Junput areas are very sensitive about their homestead land, forest land, vacant dry seabeach and surrounding agricultural land of Junput areas. The important point is, there is no agricultural land inside the village of 'Birampur Colony'.

The famous Haripur village, once selected for Nuclear Power Plant, is very close to Junput. It is hardly 2Km away from Junput. The govt of West Bengal decided to acquire 1013 acres of prime agricultural land, in and around Haripur, including the fish processing center at Junput to set up the nuclear power project.

The present investigator has selected a fisherman village, names Birampur Colony. This is a coastal fisherman village of Junput, under Contai subdivision in the district of East Midnapur, West Bengal. It is an interesting place for social ecological study, because Birampur Colony is an Ecovillage and the villagers have their own nature - based sea - oriented lifestyle.

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The villagers have got 'Patta', that basically indicates ownership of land. The villagers think that sea is their mother and everything, because they have no agricultural land, and their economy is dependent upon the resource of the sea.

For the villagers of Biramput Colony, tube-wells are the sources of drinking water. Some families have small ponds, and they use these ponds to wash clothes and take bath. Although, there are many tubewells in this village.

To describe about the people of Biramput Colony, Junput in the district of East Midnapur, West Bengal, it is necessary to highlight "POET" variables. It is basically an ecological complex, pointed out by Otis Dudley Duncan (1964). Social-ecological study is impossible without people or population or community members. "POET" variables include 'population', 'organization', 'environment' and 'technology'. The present investigator has situated the people or villagers of Biramput Colony, Junput from demographic point of view. Although sampling method has been employed in this research work. Now current population of Biramput Colony is 2210. It is entire or total population of this coastal village. Here census survey method is applied. Total population consists of 1150 (One thousand, one hundred and fifty) male members, and 1060 (One thousand & sixty) female members. The present investigator has selected 600 (six hundred) persons for this research investigation. 300 units have been selected from each sex for equal representation. These 600 strong samples is more than 27% of the entire population of Biramput Colony. Among the female members, 200 from the Hindu community and 100 from the Muslim community have been chosen. Among the male members, 200 from the Hindu community and 100 from the Muslim community have been selection. In this case, age group and sex as well as nature of activities have been given importance.

There are four hundred and eight families (Total = 408) in this village. Total families of Biramput Colony, Junput consist of 278 families of the Hindu community and 130 families of the Muslim community. The people are basically engaged in fishing and some other activities. Some of them are the boat-owners and net-owners. They directly go to the sea and catch fishes. Many of them are engaged to dry up the sea-fishes on the sea-beach. In this village, fishing-related activities are also important. These include net-making, boat-making, sorting out of fish, drying up of fish, small trading etc. during off-season, some people are working as day laborers. Both male and female members are hand-working. The female members are also engaged in household activities. The boys and the girls of this

village work in the “Khoti” during seasonal fishing to earn money to support their parents. They also sort out the sea-fishing in the ‘Khoti’ on the sea-beach under the ‘Saudagar’ to earn money.

As the present investigator has chosen 600 persons from the entire population of Biramput colony, so it is necessary to give some data about sample size as well as the respondents, which consist of age - sex composition, community membership, marital status, and educational level of the respondents.

It is found that 21% of the respondents are illiterate. That means out of 600, 126 respondents including both male and females are illiterate. Again, it is found that the education level of about 74% of the respondents is up to class VIII. Here female share is very close to male members. 3.66% of the respondents have cleared Madhyamik examination. Here male’s share is pre-dominant. Total 1.3% respondents have cleared.

Higher secondary examination including males and females, and only 0.3% respondents (only 2 male members), that means 2 members out of 600 have completed graduation.

Marriage is very important because of the formation of family and population size, this is also important for financial and social security. In this village both husband and wife are working in the Khoti, during seasonal fishing to earn money. Even, the children also work to earn. The present investigator has studied the marital status of total 600 respondents including male and female. Early marriage of the females take place. Both nuclear family structure and joint family structure are available.

Out of 600 Villagers of Biramput colony, 477 members, that means 79.5% are married. About 76% of the males are found to be married, whereas 83% of the females are found to be married. It is also interesting to note the widow and widowers. Among the male respondents, 2% are widowers, whereas 6.66% respondents are widows.

The Hindu Community of Biramput Colony:

There are four hundred and eight families (408) in this village. The Hindu community consists of 278 families, and the Muslim community consists of 130 families. Now, current population of Biramput colony is 2210 including the Hindu and the Muslim. The Hindu communities consists of 1638 members including children. On the other hand, the Muslim community consists of 572 members including children. The present investigator has selected 200 male members and 200 female members from the Hindu community, and male members and 100 male members and 100 female members from the Muslim community. So, 600 persons have been chosen from the entire population of Biramput Colony, including males and females. The number of sample size.

The Hindu Community consists of some caste people. The caste system is obviously a Hindu social division and Hindu based social organization. The Hindu people of Birampur colony, Junpur are belonging to several castes.

1. Mahishya
2. Karan
3. Kayastha
4. Raja
5. Teli
6. Napit
7. Jele
8. Hanri
9. Dhopa

The present investigator has also studied the clan composition among the Hindu people. The Hindu families are subdivided into some 'gotras', also known as 'clans'. The gotra is basically a descent group and the members of the same gotra try to trace their common ancestral link.

The gotra or clan composition of Birampur colony among the Hindu people is given below.

Kashyapa : 284

Sandilya : 59

Nageshwar : 28

Bageshwar : 19

Pakkhichattya : 10

The present investigator has also studied the close relation between caste and clan. Many caste groups may have the same clan- membership, say for example, the 'Jele', 'Karan' and 'Hanri' are belonging to 'Kashyapa' gotra. Here 'Kashyapa' gotra (clan) is common for all these three-caste people. The "Kashyapa' and 'Mahishya' caste people have 'Sandilya' gotra. The 'Raju', and 'Teli' are belonging to Nageshwar. The Napit caste people have also 'sandilya' gotra. Some 'Mahishya' and 'Dhopa' caste people are belonging to 'Bageshwar' gotra and some Karan caste people think that they have 'Pakkhichattya' gotra.

This coastal environment has influenced all coste people to choose fishing and related activities to earn their livelihood. In this village, except 'Jele' (Fisherman), caste-based occupation has become functionless.

The Muslim Community of Biramput Colony

The Muslim community of Biramput colony consists of 130 families. The Muslim families have total 572 members including children. The present investigator has selected 100 male members and 100 female members from the Muslim society. Actually, in the district of East Midnapur, the Muslims are belonging to minority group and they constitute 14.59% of total population. On the other hand, the Hindu constitute 85.24 % of the total population. But. At contain (Kanthi), a Coastal town of east Midnapur district, the Muslims constitute 19.80 % of total population and the Hindus constitute 79.95 % of total population (Purba Midnapur District Regional census 2011).

Out of 600 respondents 200 persons are belonging to the Muslim community and the present investigator has selected them in this research work. That means 33.33 % respondents are Muslims. But in the entire village of Biramput colony, 25.88 % people are Muslim, because out of 2210 (Total population), the Muslim members are 572.

The villagers of Biramput Colony, including both communities (Muslim & Hindu) have deep-rooted beliefs & faith on supernatural as well as devine power of 'Babasahed'. It is also known as the Dargah of "Masnad-e-Aala" or "Hijli Sharif". There is a close relation between the spiritual power of "BabaSaheb" & "deep sea fishing". Both communicating think that deep-sea fishing has uncertainty & quantity of catch depends. But the blessing of 'Babasaheb' always acts as a safeguard during deep sea fishing. The villagers offer 'Sinni' to invoke his blessing to increase the quantity of catch as well as to lead safe & peaceful lifestyle. The present investigator has considering this as 'Religious-ecology' ,where sociocultural as well as religions.

Harmony between the Hindu& the Muslim is properly maintained.

Sociocultural adaptation or cultural adaptation is more or less similar concept. Here ecology of man is meaningful. The present investigator has already explained Cultural adaptation. Now it is important to highlight the sociocultural adaptation of the village of Biramput Colony, Junput. Both the members of the Hindu & Muslim of this village are to adopt equally in response to unique coastal environmental pressure of East Midnapur district. Here behavioural skills play significant roles. Although techno-economic skill also important.

The villagers of Biramput Colony accept intercaste marriage gladly. Some people have traditional belief on gotra exogamy. They do not accept marital relationship within the

same gotra, but they accept inter-caste marriage. It is also interesting to note that Kanailal & his first wife Bipasa are belonging to Mahishya caste & gotra is 'Sandillya'. But his second Jyosha is belonging to Karan Caste & her gorta was Kasyapa.

It is interesting to note the marriage style of Muslim members of this village. The Muslim villagers of this village usually avoid "Ramadan month" to establish marital relationship. They called it "Ramjan month". But sometime 1 or 2% marriage occurs in this month during 'Ramjan'. Muktaza Ali pointed out. The duration of Ramjan month is from the middle or end of the Chaitra to the middle of Vaishak (Bengali).

After that they will took lunch & in the afternoon Muktaza Ali returned to his home with his wife. During marriage, the father of groom give Rs. 110/- (One Hundred & Ten) to the headman Ishmail Mahamad for the construction of mosque.

Muktaza Ali also got bicycle, wrist watch & gold chain from his father-in-law. Her wife got some ornaments of silver & gold chain from her father. In this occasion, the villagers took different type of food, such as rice, dal, vegetables, fish beef, sweets, etc.

Muktaza's wife spent three days in her father-in law's house & then she spent three days in her father's house with her husband & after all, both husband & wife returned to their own residence. In this marriage, "Palaquin", was used. The villagers call it 'Palki'.

Family Organization (Hindu & Muslim):

Family organization is obviously social organization. Both marriage & family have biology foundation & family have biological foundation & both are complementary to each other. Family may be various types, which include nuclear family, join family, extended family & some others, associated with the forms of marriage. The villagers of Biramput Colony have both joint family & nuclear families. But maximum cases, nuclear family structure is predominant. In some cases, father is the only earning member & some cases both father & mother earn & their son & daughters assist them. The present investigator has studied family structure of both the Hindu & the Muslim, by employing case study method.

The present investigator has also studied the Muslim family by employing case study method. The picture is the same in the Muslim community. Father is the headman of the family & he is the decision maker. Mother is engaged in Child rearing & household activities. Mother & other adult females are engaged to sort out & dry up the sea fishes during seasonal fishing.

In this Muslim Joint family, all members are living together in their common house. They always maintain face to face relationship. It is obviously the most important Social unit of Biramput Colony, Junput. Father (Ishaque Md) is the head of the family. Their family occupation is fishing, fish-trading & related activities. All members always try to maintain

their family integration. Here ecological influence is clearly observed. During seasonal fishing all male members work in the 'Khoti'. Their wife assists them. Here seasonal fishing, availability of sea-fish & family integration are closely related. They always try to cooperate each other. Here mutual respect is very prominent. Although, Ishaque Md, the head of the family & senior most member is main decision maker, but he takes the views of other members to do all activities. Here decision is taken on the basis of general Consensus.

Both the Hindu community & Muslim Community give respect to their relatives, & Kinship terms are properly maintained. The Muslim Community of Birampur Colony allows marital relationship among the kin members. It is interesting to note that both cross-cousin & parallel cousin marriage are allowed among the members of the Muslim community Of Birampur Colony, Junput monogamy is the general rule & both the Hindu & Muslim maintain it. Although, Kanailal Jana of this village is the exception.

Economic Organization, Birampur colony:

The economic organization of the Villagers of Birampur Colony depends on fishing from open sea & related activities. Here ecology & economy are closely related. It is true that seasonal fishing is very important for them. Actually here environment determines their nature based economic activities. both The Hindu & the Muslim have common Occupation, that is fishing & related activities. The present investigator try to find out their economic activities through social ecological point of view.

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