



# **Occupation Mobility Of Fishermen Community: A Study On Two Selected Villages Of Nalbari District.**

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## **Abstract:**

Kaibarta, Malo, Patni, Maimal and Namasudra are the major fishing communities of Assam (Day, 1989). The process of globalization, Liberalization and privatization effectively started from 1991 in India. In the last few decades, the life style of Indian people both in urban and villages have drastically changed due to take place globalization of marketing, liberalization of different policies and privatization of service sectors like health, education etc. Now unlike the other communities of Assam. The fishermen community also engaged in different areas like government, private and entrepreneurial works. Occupation is closely interrelated with socio-economic and cultural factors, that's why it is important to make a study to understand the cause, for which they adopt new occupation in response to the process of social change. The present study is undertaken in two fishermen dominated villages of Nalbari District to explore about the occupational mobility among them. It also focuses what are new occupations they were chosen and what factors are responsible for adopting new livelihood source.

**Key Words:** Occupation, Social Change, Fishermen Community.

## **Introduction.**

Occupation is always related with the various activities performed by an individual within society. The earned of an individual from their engaged occupation, which associated with the livelihood depends on the nature of work. R. H. Hall (1975) in his book "Occupation and the social Structure" stated that an occupation has fundamental functional significance and multiple consequences for the individual and the society as a whole. It is learnt from the ancient Indian Hindu social system that castes have close relation with occupation. It is also observed that generally the lower caste (Scheduled caste) people associated with some unclean and

menial occupations. Now-a-days a large proportion of scheduled caste has found opportunity to mobilize various occupations due to spread modern education, reservation policy in education and other sectors. The concept of occupational mobility implies the process of movement from one occupational category to another. It is connected with changes in occupational attributes namely prestige, power, income, function and locus. These dimensions are focusing about the nature of social structure and parallelly impact fall influences upon behavior, attitudes and manner (Wastern, 2006). Occupational mobility is one of the important area for the fishermen community. The present paper attempts to analyze regarding occupational mobility of the fishermen community especially Kaibarta and Jeliya, Malo & Jhalo, Patni and Namasudra community. As per census 2011 out of the total population the percentage of Malo & Jhalo, Kaibarta and Jeliya Patni and Namasudra are 2.6%, 2.22%, 5.8% and 2.02% respectively.

### **Area of the Study:**

Nalbari is a district and town situated in the lower Brahmaputra valley of Assam India. It was officially declared on August 14, 1985, carved out from the larger, undivided Kamrup district. The name “Nalbari” derived from “Nal” (reed) and “Bari” (garden). Nalbari is historically significant and established as a center for Sanskrit learning and cultural activities. The north and west side of the district is bounded by Baksa and Barpeta district respectively and the entire southern and eastern part of the district is bounded by Kamrup district. The entire area of the district is located at the plains of the Brahmaputra valley. The tributaries of the Brahmaputra like Pagaldia, Buradia originate from the foothills of the Himalaya range. So, Brahmaputra is the life line of Nalbari district and have enormous contribution towards the agrarian economy of the district.

### **Methodology :**

The present study concerns only two villages namely Ratanpur, Bangnabari of Nalbari District, Assam. Ratanpur and Bangnabari Village is situated under the Block of Tihu and Madhupur respectively in the District of Nalbari. From each block one village is selected purposively for the study. There are 260 families in the two villages. Every households of the two villages are taken as a unit of the study and head of the family were regard as respondent. Data are collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data are collected through structured interview schedule through survey. Books, Journals, Government records and census are use as a secondary data. The study has analysis empirical data in comparative perspective of occupational mobility of the Fishermen community in a village setting of Nalbari district and findings are drawn by analysing average of two generation occupational position through table.

## Discussion on Occupational Mobility of Fishermen Community.

Occupational mobility, as nomenclature depicts, is change in traditional occupation of members of a society in order to earn their livelihood. Such occupational changes are mainly in terms of changes in distribution of their activities in socio-economic structure of a society. Fishermen Community, which constitutes predominant scheduled caste community in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam, are traditionally fishermen by profession. But the contemporary Fishermen Community is passing through a process of change and the occupational structure is under the process of transformation.

In order to assessing the occupational mobility the data were collected from two generations and only the respondents had answered for the both. Table 1 reveals the trend of occupational mobility among them. Most of the Fishers switch over to cultivation (36.15%). The cultivators of the to village are living hand to mouth as their paddy lands are scarce. They are adopting business (23.07%) as ways of their livelihood. In this group, it is found that they are holding small and medium size business such as grocery shop, stationary shop, and cycle repairing and furniture shop. A few percentages of educated Fishers are engaged in service (11.53) like teacher, army service, clerical and other department employee of the government and other private sectors.

Table 1 : Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	Respondent	Percentage
Fishing	14	5.37
Fish Selling	10	3.84
Cultivation	94	36.15
Business	60	23.07
Service (Govt. Semi-Govt. and Private)	30	11.53
Any Other (Wage earner, Carpenter, Driver)	52	20.00
Total	260	100%

Source : Field Study during 10<sup>th</sup> Aug. to 30 Nov., 2022

A few of them continue their forefather occupation i.e fishing (5.38%) and fish selling (3.84%) while 20% people engaged in any other occupation category as their present occupation along with agricultural activities.

In the same way, it has been traced out the occupation of the respondent's father's generation for assessing occupational mobility. It is observed that tangency of occupational mobility also exist in respondent's father generation.

Table 2 : Occupation of Respondents Father

Occupation	Father	Percentage
Fishing	40	15.38
Fish Selling	22	8.46
Cultivation	58	22.31
Business	63	24.23
Service (Govt. Semi-Govt. and Private)	27	10.38
Any Other	50	19.23
Total	260	100%

Source : Field Study during 10 Aug.to. 30 Nov., 2022

The data indicate that majority of father generation pursuing business (24.23%) occupation while 22.31% found engaged in cultivation for their livelihood. Among the respondents father 10.38% depend exclusively on Govt., Semi Govt. and Private Service where only 8.46% and 15.38% depend on fish selling and fishing respectively. 50 respondents i.e. 19.23% of respondent's father were engaged in any other occupation.

To make more specific of the study generation wise occupational position is need to be mention. Table 3 depicts the generation's wise occupational position and occupational mobility of the Fishermen community under studied.

Table 3 : Generation wise Occupational Mobility

Occupation	Father	Respondent
Fishing	40 (15.38%)	14 (5.38%)
Fish Selling	22 (8.46%)	10 (3.84%)
Cultivation	58 (22.31%)	94 (36.15%)
Business	63 (24.23%)	60 (23.07%)
Service (Govt. Semi-Govt. and Private)	27 (10.38%)	30 (11.53%)
Any Other	50 (19.23%)	52 (20%)
Total	260	260 (100%)

Source : Field Study during 5<sup>th</sup> Oct., 28 Dec. 2017

Any Other: Wage earner, Carpenter, Driver

10 Aug.to. 30 Nov., 2022

It can be outlined from Table 3, the occupation of two successive generations, 5.38% fathers were depended on fishing occupation followed by 8.46% were pursued fish selling as main source of living. But in the generation of respondent though it is not entirely different from the father generation, the traditional occupation is gradually declining among them. In the respondent generation, it is found only 5.38% are pursued fishing whereas 3.84% are resorted to fish selling. These occupational positions of the two generations show a declining trend of traditional occupation.

The study reveals a clear tendency in general to move away from traditional occupation to different occupations opened up in recent age. Occupational position of the two generations reflects a picture of occupational mobility among the Fishermen community under study. In this context several factors are responsible in shifting of occupation from traditional fishing and fish selling to new one. This are-

1. Emergence of job-oriented vocational and skilled based education among younger generation opens their eyes for new avenues of livelihood.
2. Fishing needs hard labour, Inspite of doing hard labour, They could not earn sufficient income to maintain their family due to unavailability of fishes, exploitation of middleman, lack of modern equipment prevents .
3. Most river, beels near the village have been taken over by the government and leaseholders and they enjoyed extreme power. In this aspect made some conditions by the Mahaldars are not favourable for them.
4. The younger generation has not been motivated toward other profession because of the Society's attitude towards fishing and fish trading.

The survey reveals that the fishermen of the Nalbari, who were traditionally fisherman, are gradually declining their forefather occupation. Reasons for such change in their traditional occupation are of both internal and external. Internal reasons are mainly due to psychological factors such as enthusiasm of people to assemble a better life, inferiority complex of younger people since profession is considered as derogatory and urge of people to enhance their social recognition in broader society. External forces are also playing an important role in bringing a change in traditional profession of villagers either by creating barriers to pursue their existing profession or by offering them opportunities to shift themselves into a better profession than their traditional profession.

External forces that are creating barriers and forcing the villagers to shift themselves to some other occupations i.e. low profit margin of fish trading more particularly during summer seasons, dwindling of sources of fish since most of beels and fisheries have been taken over by Government and the terms and

conditions of the Lease holders (Mahalders) are not satisfactory, negative attitude of society towards fish selling etc.

On other hand external forces which offer opportunities to villagers to shift themselves into a better profession include building of school and college due to which education is spreading in the village and educated people are reluctant to follow their traditional occupation. Besides provision for better educational facilities to villagers, advanced communication technology, governmental policies and programmes, banking facilities, and modern agricultural equipment etc., are enhancing villages to opt for a better occupational opportunity.

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