

OCCUPATION AND SOURCES OF INCOME OF FISHERMEN AND SCAVENGERS “WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PULWAMA DISTRICT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR”

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to trace the detailed socio-economic profile of fishermen community and scavenger community of the state Jammu & Kashmir. It was exposed that fishermen and scavenger community of this state are in abysmal condition with their traditional fishing practices which need improvement or modern scientific fishing technology. The socio-economic conditions of fishermen and scavenger communities had been negatively affected due to poverty. The fishermen and scavenger community are facing issues in getting some basic things to sustain their lives, which is a clear deprivation and neglect of the community on the part of the government and non-government. Sheikh Community of Kashmir or Watalas as they were earlier known as forms the scavenging community of Kashmir. Manual scavenging is an occupation carried out by manual labourers as a caste practice to collect human dung. Previously, they cleaned dry toilets and sewage pits but with the building of modern toilets in place of dry toilets, their mode of work also changed. In the present time they are involved in septic tank cleaning, sewer cleaning, open drains or septic pits cleaning. It may be a positive step to change their lives if they form cooperatives and self-help groups (SHGS) to work towards their set targets. In this research paper, an effort was made to understand the procurement of occupation and sources of income of Fishermen Community and Scavengers in Pulwama district of Jammu & Kashmir. This research paper also suggests some suggestions to solve the problem/challenges of the fishermen and scavenger communities in the state.

Keywords: Pulwama district, Fishermen Community, Scavengers, Socio-Economic, Self-Help Group.

Introduction:

Fishermen's Community (Hanjis):

A social group is a community of people who live in a certain area and form a substantial ethnic group in the Kashmir Valley is known as the Fishermen Community (Hanjis). They are constrained on the banks of the river from Pampore (District Pulwama-South Kashmir) where the river Jhelum originates till Baramulla town in Khadniyar (District Baramulla-North Kashmir). This community is the artisanal (traditional) fisheries of Kashmir, and provide majority of fish consumed by the indigenous people. Artisanal fishing communities are among the most poor and neglected people and are often excluded from the mainstream of economic and political activities. The Fishermen Community comprises of various sub-social groups based on occupation, profession, economic/water related activities and social status.

The largest sub-group are:

- Demb-Hanz (vegetable growers),
- Engo Lolo (olive oil gatherers) and
- Gad-Hanz (Fisherman),
- Mata-Hanz (who sells wood),
- Parkes (owners of trucks), and
- Haka-Hanz (gatherers of wood from water bodies),
- Bahatchi-Hanz (who live in Bahatch boats),
- Shikare Hanj (who ply Shikara boats), and House boat-Hanz.

Scavengers (Watalis) :

Scavengers (Watalis) are spread throughout the valley and mainly concentrated in Pulwama, Srinagar and Anantnag. The Scavengers are a very marginalized group and are deemed to be the lowest in their occupational structure. Cobblers make up the majority of scavengers and they are referred to as sheikhs. Most of them are still employed as sweepers and they are a landless community. In addition, agriculture labour is an important subsidiary occupation. Many work for the municipal corporations as cleaners in urban areas; many are also specially

hired to snow plow during winter in the urban areas.

Objectives

1. To study the occupation Status of Fishermen Community and Scavengers of pulwama district.
2. To analyse the sources of income among Fishermen Community and Scavengers.

Research Methodology

The research is based on both primary and secondary data will be collected. The required Secondary data will be gathered from following sources: The National Human Development Reports, State Human Development Reports, Economic Surveys, Digest of Statistics, NFHS, NSSO Survey, Village Education Committee, Village Sanitation Committee, Developmental Participation Committees and other unpublished data from various government and non-government agencies. The well structured questionnaire will be used to get primary data from the field survey.

Study Area:

The sampling method to be used will be purposive sampling and stratified random sampling. The choice of the district is suitable for the study of the selected social groups such as Fishermen Community and Scavengers.

Sample Size:

One hundred (100) households was randomly selected in each of the social groups. The sample of the households will be taken from at least four villages in small, medium and big villages of Pulwama district. The total sample of 200 households will be studied.

Results and Discussions:

The researcher was able to get fairly good assessment from the data collected and analysed about the occupation status and sources of income of the Fishermen Community and the Scavengers. The number of people, both men and women belonging to the Fishermen Community and Scavengers hailing from the village Pampore, Bajibagh and Kandizal and Dadsara. The data which was taken 200 households and 100 households for each social group will be chosen randomly.

Occupational Structure

Table No.1: Types of Occupation among the Social Groups:

Community	Fishermen Community		Scavenger		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nothing	192	37.43	183	36.75	375	37.10
Fishermen	136	26.51	0	0.00	136	13.45
Fire Pot Maker	2	0.39	62	12.45	64	6.33
Shoe Maker	0	0.00	17	3.41	17	1.68
Employee	2	0.39	19	3.82	21	2.08
Others	22	4.29	91	18.27	113	11.18
Student	159	30.99	126	25.30	285	28.18
Total	513	100	498	100	1011	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The analysis of the above table shows that the percentage of student in the total population is The proportion of individuals who use public clinics for treatment, which is high for Fishermen Community (30.99 percent) and low for Scavenger (28.18 percent), was found. The survey results revealed that the economic activities of the total population were 34.67 per cent, which includes government employees (2.08 per cent), businesses (11.18 per cent), Fishermen Community (13.45 per cent), Fire Pot Maker (6.33 per cent), Shoe Maker (1.68 per cent), respectively. The other 65.33 per cent of the total population are not economically active, either because they are under 15 years or over 60 years.

Household Income

Table No.2: Average Household Annual Income and Per Capita Income among various Social Groups:

Social Groups	Total Income	Percentage	Average Household Annual Income	Per Capita Income (RS)
Fishermen Community	7882000	88.38	78820	15364.52
Scavengers	1035500	11.62	10355	20793.17
Total	8917500	100 ⁴	89175	88.20

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The above table shows that the mean of annual income per house on the basis of all the social groups is Rs 89175. The highest average annual income was among the Fishermen Community (Rs.78820) with the lowest average annual income being among the Other Workers Community (Rs. In the game of Scavengers, the number 38070 is Rs. 10355. The highest Average income per capita per year value was for Scavenger (Rs. Fishermen Community (Rs. 15364.52 respectively).

Distribution Income:

Table No.3: Distribution of Households among the Social Groups according to Income Category:

Income Category (Rs)	Social Groups		Total	percentage
	Fishermen Community	Scavenger		
Upto 50000	3	9	12	6.00
50000-100000	73	64	137	68.5
100000-150000	13	12	25	12.5
150000-200000	5	5	10	5.00
200000 & above	6	10	16	8.00
Total	100	100	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The income range goes from Rs. 50,000 and below, up to Rs. The peak of the distribution is 200,000 or higher. The table indicates that 6.00% of the households had an income of less than Rs. Households with incomes between Rs. and Rs. 68,500 make up 50% and 68.5% respectively. 50000 to 150000. If added together, nearly three-fourths (74.5 percent) of all the households earned an income of up to Rs. in one year. 100,000.

The percentage of households with an income of less than Rs. 50,000 varies from 3 percent in the case of fishermen to 9 percent in the case of Scavenger. The percentage of households (8.00 percent) with an annual income of more than Rs. 200,000 is almost negligible among social groups, being nowhere more than 10 percent of households.

Sources of Income

Table No.4: Different sources of income among the social groups:

Sources of Income	Fishermen Community	Scavengers	Total	%
Fishing	67	0	67	33.5
Selling (firewood, fruits, stones, mats and Fire pot maker), Handicrafts etc.	0	76	76	38.00
Livestock (milk and milk products selling) and Income from selling animal & animal products	11	6	17	8.5
Wage Income (Casual Labour)	18	7	25	12.5
Salaried Employment	3	11	14	7.00
Pension	1	0	1	0.5
Total	100	100	200	100

Source: Field Survey.2024

The table shows the proportion of households in the study area that derive their income from different sources. Although it is what can be termed casual labour work, it plays a significant role in the income of household. Non-agricultural labour was the source of the largest proportion of income (38 percent) for households. The percentage of households those living on casual earnings differs across the social groups. The highest percentage is from the Fishermen Community (18 percent) and Scavengers was (7 percent). The fifth largest source of income is salaried employment. Approximately 7% of households had a paid occupation of various types. (permanent and casual). When the data of social group households were compared, the highest level of Salaried engagements were found in households of Scavengers (11 percent) and Fishermen Community (3 percent). Most of the Scavengers worked for a salary, but most of these were unskilled and low paid. The fishing activity is carried out primarily by the Fishermen Community, with only 33.5 per cent of the households in this community undertaking this activity. The fishing activity is not regular but seasonal among Fishermen Community and is done during winter when the water level of the river Jhelum is low. Most⁶ of the homesteads in this community have

been undergoing occupational shifts and are working in other activities over time. For the Fishermen Community and Scavengers, Livestock (milk and milk products selling) and Income from selling animal & animal products is the third highest source of income among the social groups. The statement is often made that "livestock is the major source of income with minimal expenses, especially in hilly areas. About 29.5 percent of the total households rear livestock, which is their main source of income. 100% of these homes are of Fishermens (11 percent) and Scavenger was (6 percent).

Suggestions:

1. The statistical base in the district needs to be strengthened and better estimates of incomes and shares of the sectors need to be created.
2. To facilitate income-generating activities, and community-managed savings and credit schemes that allow households to obtain credit to finance physical infrastructure development.
3. Enhancing the system of providing a basic level of living for rural people. The government should revise the minimum livelihood guarantee line and standards to provide low income people with a minimum standard of living.
4. As population lives in rural areas govt. should give great attention on cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises development with the active private public participation which will significantly increase the employment opportunity and increases productivity.
5. Enhancement of credit facilities and creation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in particular will increase the work participation of women, even though they may not be able to engage in labour activities outside the home due to domestic responsibilities.

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