

**Subject Area : Socioeconomic status**

# THE ASSESSMENT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF DEEP-SEA FISHERMAN OF PURBA MEDINIPUR DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received 15 <sup>th</sup> May2025 Received in revised form 29 <sup>th</sup> May, 2025 Accepted 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 Published online 28 <sup>th</sup> June, 2025	Fishing in the deep sea requires a lot of work in an unsustainable environment, unlike other occupations. Around 500 kilometres from the ocean's surface and 400–500 meters below it, they capture a variety of sea species. They mostly fish every year from July to March, with the rest of the time being spent on various activities like farming or small business. This study aims to create a data bank on the socioeconomic and educational status of deep-sea fisherman in Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, using a questioner approach to assess factors such as family size, income, residence style, sanitation, and qualifications. A study of 1226 deep-sea fisherman found that general cast fisherman makes up 78.71%, while other cast (OBC-A, OBC-B, SC, and ST) members make up 21.29%. The majority are aged 26-44 (58.08%) and 45-60 (41.44%). The majority of fisherman in the hamlet are nuclear families, with a sanitary system. Most homes are kutchra, pacca, or semi-pacca. The majority of fishermen are lack of literacy. Most earns less than INR 10,000 per month, and only a small percentage has a master's degree. The Purba Medinipur district's deep-sea fisherman suffers from a low level of education and a meager monthly salary. To improve their socioeconomic and educational standing, they need a lot of free health and education programs as well as various banking-only initiatives.
<b>Key words:</b>	
Deep-sea fisherman, socio-economic condition, educational status, life style.	
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## INTRODUCTION

Fishermen capture a variety of fish and other creatures from bodies of water. India has over 64,000 kilometers of rivers and streams, 1.6 million hectares of freshwater, lakes, ponds, and marshes.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 38 million people work as fishermen worldwide.<sup>2</sup> The size or structure of the family, the yearly income, the state of the house, the sanitary system, the family's occupation and educational attainment, and the family's source of revenue all affect the socioeconomic situation. The majority of fisherman is members of the Muslim community who are illiterate and range in age from 31 to 40. Their main source of income was fishing on the Baki River.<sup>3</sup> In Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, 33.33% of the population is illiterate, while 50% of trap fisherman are between the ages of 36 and 50, according to a study.<sup>4</sup> According to a significant 2017 study by Prabhavathi et al., Andhra Pradesh's fishermen suffer from a lack of socioeconomic and educational standing. They are not physically challenged in this line of work, and they are unable to

consume enough of the various food particles. The vast majority of fisherman lack literacy. They are also addicted to drinking alcohol and smoking tobacco. Children in the neighborhood suffer from helminthiasis, malaria, gastrointestinal diseases, and malnutrition as a result of these conditions.<sup>5</sup> According to a significant study on fishermen in Jelepura, the majority of them are males, Hindu, and marinade, while the minority are women, Muslims, and single. The majority of their families are nuclear. The fishing business brings in between BDT 6000 to BDT 15000 every month. The majority of pupils drop out of school.<sup>6</sup> The another significant research of Teknaf fisherman reveals that 60.96% of them lack literacy. Their poor financial situation has an impact on their dwelling type, sanitary system, education, and other aspects of their lives.<sup>7</sup> According to a significant study on fisherman in the Purba Medinipur district, the majority of fishermen (95%) are Hindu, while only 5% are Muslim. The majority of fishermen are between the ages of 31 and 65. Just 15% of their families are joint, and 85% are nuclear. The majority of their fishermen earn \$65,000.00 a year. The majority of fisherman in the district only has an elementary education (75%), and there are no fishermen with a doctorate degree or above. The majority of the fishermen's homes there are kutchra (65%).<sup>8</sup> According to Biraj Kanti Mondal and Bimal Duari's further study on the Purba Medinipur district's fishing

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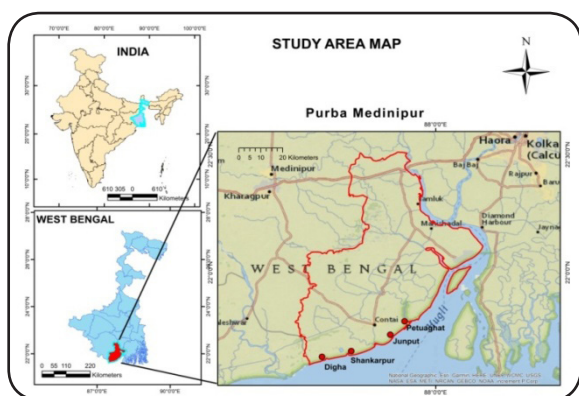
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population, 32% of fishermen lack literacy and 57% have only completed primary school. According to this study, 31% of fisherman is extremely poor, while 53% of fishermen are poor, with yearly incomes ranging from 40,000.00 to 75,000.00 and 80,000.00 to 140,222.00, respectively. The few fishermen's families are not impoverished.<sup>9</sup> The numerous research on the socioeconomic and educational situation of fisherman reveal that they earn minimal amounts each month and lack education, with the majority of them being illiterate. As of right now, no information is known regarding the socioeconomic and educational activities of Purba Medinipur district's deep-sea fisherman. The goal of this study is to learn more about the socioeconomic and educational circumstances of the deep-sea fishermen in West Bengal's Purba Medinipur area.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Study area

Purba Medinipur district has a total of four subdivisions, five municipalities, and twenty-five blocks.<sup>10</sup> The deep-sea fishermen who live in the blocks of Contai I, II, Deshopran, Khejuri I, II, and Egra I, II in the Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal were the subjects of this study. From the coasts of Patuaghat, Junput, Shankarpr, and Digha, these fishermen begin their fishing expeditions.



### Sample size

The focus of this study was deep-sea fishermen who work in areas about 500 kilometres offshore from the coast of Purba Medinipur. The fisherman also resides in the Purba Medinipur district. This study has a sample size of 1226. The age range of the fishermen is 18 to 60. The fishermen are all male candidates.

### Methods of Data Collection and Study Design

The social, economic, and educational status of deep-sea fisherman is investigated using the survey or questioner approach. 1226 deep-sea fishermen who lived in the Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal's Contai I, II, Deshopran, Khejuri I, II, and Egra I, II blocks participated in oral interviews to provide the main data. The Kuppuswamy scale is used to assess the socioeconomic and educational standing of deep-sea fisherman; however, in my field study, this measure was occasionally utilized in a modified form.

Information regarding social, economic, and educational conditions is gathered through a series of questions that include the fisherman's name, age, caste, number of family members, monthly income, kind of residence, sanitary system, education, etc. Data was being entered into tabular form. The number of

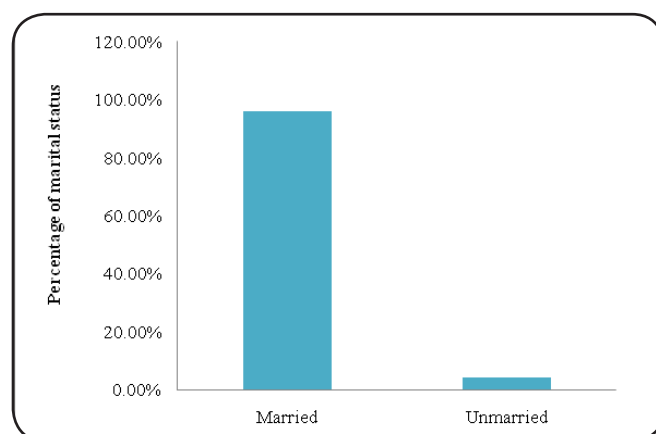
nuclear and joint families, the number of general, SC, ST, OBC A, and OBC B castes, the number of families earning more than and less than 10,000 per month, the number of kutchha, pacca, and semi-pacca houses, the number of illiterate and literate fishermen, and the number of class VIII, MP, and HS passed fishermen were all determined by data analysis. Third, the percentage and frequency were computed using an Excel sheet. Ultimately, columns were used to create a pie, column diagrammatic display. This result also reflects the social and educational conditions of the deep-sea fishermen in the district.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of the socioeconomic and educational status assessment include the average number of family members, the number of nuclear and joint families, the monthly income from fishing and other occupations, the caste and religious divisions, the type of house, the sanitation system, and educational qualifications. In the Purba Medinipur District of West Bengal, the prevalence and proportion of a number of indicators that reflect the socioeconomic and educational status of deep-sea fishermen are displayed in Table 1.

### Marital Status

The majority of deep-sea fisherman in Purba Medinipur district (95.84%) are married, with only 4.16% of them being unmarried. There is no widow type among the fisherman. Figure 1 shows the marriage status of the deep-sea fishermen.



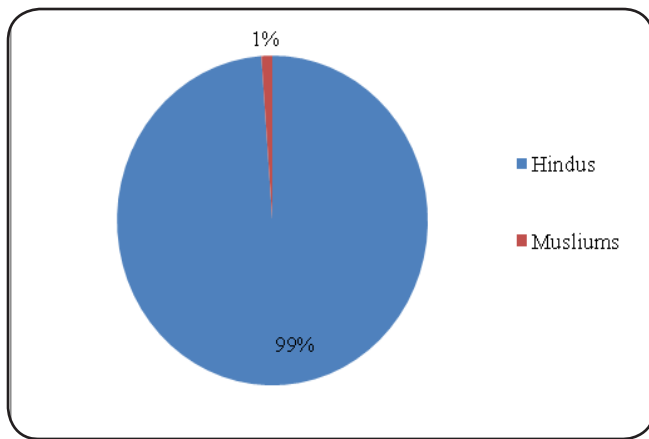
**Figure 1.** Marital status of Deep-sea fishermen

### Religion

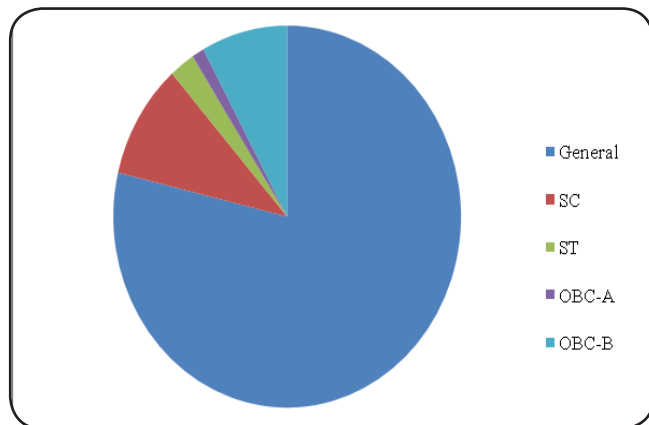
A community's social and cultural portrayal of its members as fishermen is significantly influenced by their religion.<sup>11</sup> In the Purba Medinipur district; there are two kinds of deep-sea fishermen: Muslims and Hindus. Just 1.14% of the deep-sea fisherman in this survey is Muslims, compared to 98.86% who are Hindus. The spread of fishermen's religions is depicted in figure 2.

### Cast Division

Five types of fishermen are classified according to their caste: General, Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and other backward classes like OBC-A and OBC-B. Muslims fall under the OBC-A caste. The proportion of general cast fishermen in this research is at its highest (78.71%). In SC, ST, OBC-A, and OBC-B, the proportion of deep-sea fisherman is 9.79%, 2.37%, 1.14%, and 7.99%, respectively. The fishermen's cast dispersion is depicted in figure 3.



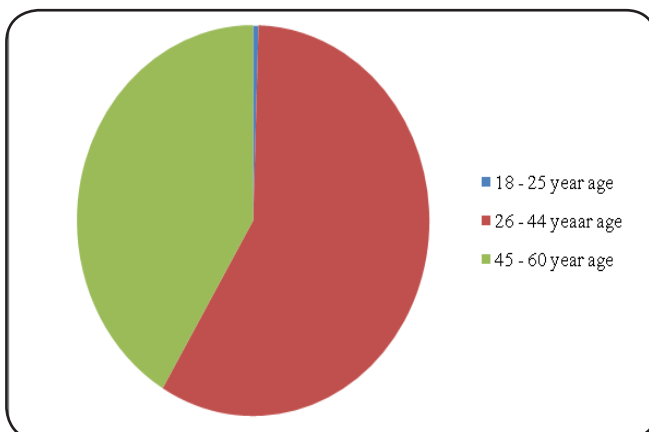
**Figure 2.** Religion status of Deep-sea fishermen



**Figure 3.** Cast distribution of Deep-sea fishermen

#### Age Structure

The study's age structure was split up into five groups. The age groupings are as follows: under 18, 18 to 25, 26 to 44, 45 to 60, and over 61. No fisherman is younger than eighteen and older than sixty-one. The largest percentage of fisherman are between the ages of 26 and 44 (58.08%) and 45 and 60 (41.44%). Only a small percentage of fishermen are between the ages of 18 and 25. The age distribution of the fisherman is displayed in figure 4.

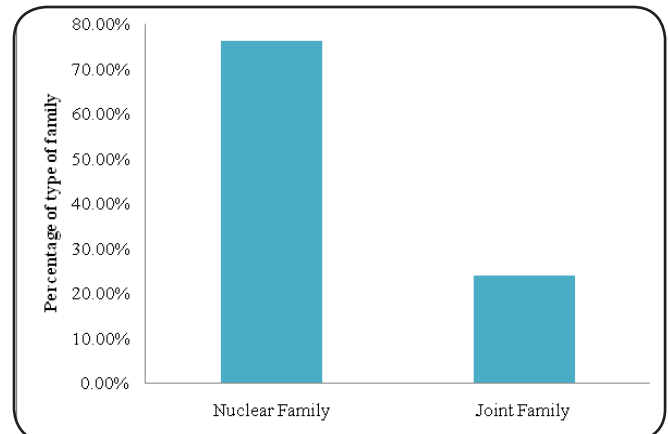


**Figure 4.** Age distribution of Deep-sea fishermen

#### Family Structure

Nuclear and combined families are the two main types of families. Joint families are made up of several generations, while nuclear families are made up of heterosexual parents and their legal offspring. 13. According to this survey, the majority

of deep-sea fishermen's families are nuclear (76.18%), with four or fewer family members. There are five or more members in the combined family, which is a small percentage (23.82%). The kind of deep-sea fishing family is depicted in Figure 5.



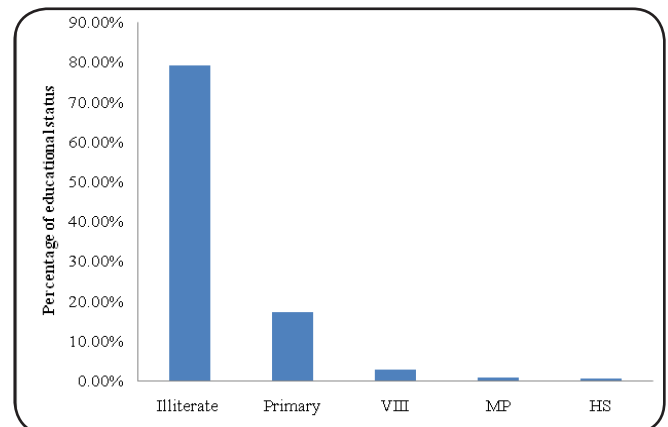
**Figure 5.** Family structure of Deep-sea fishermen

#### Assets

Deep-sea fishermen use Android phones 91.03% of the time, while 8.97% use non-Android phones. While 39.07% of deep-sea fishermen own a motorbike, 95.19% of fishermen own a by-cycle.

#### Educational Status

The deep-sea fisherman of the Purba Medinipur district are not well educated. A significant proportion of fishermen (78.96%) are illiterate. Of the fishermen, only 17.13% have only finished elementary school. Fishermen with VIII, MP, or HS degree make up 2.77%, 0.74%, and 0.41% of the total. No fisherman has a graduate degree or master's degree. Figure 6 shows the degree of education of the fisherman.



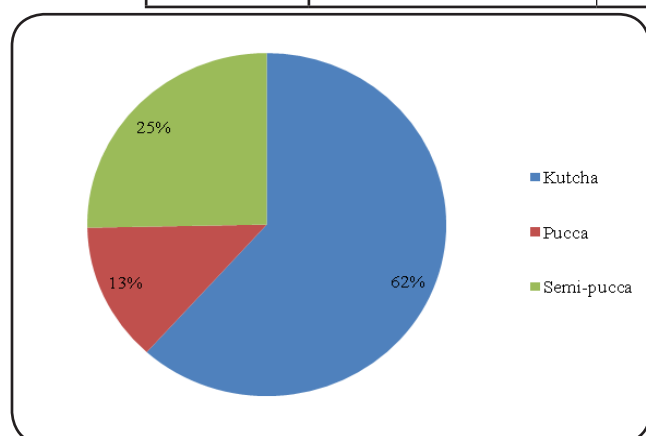
**Figure 6.** Educational Status of Deep-sea fishermen

#### Housing Condition

Three categories of living circumstances were identified for the fishermen: semi-pucca, pucca, and kutcha. The findings show that most fishermen (61.66%) own residences in the kutcha style. The majority of fishermen reside in semi-pucca-style housing, whereas the majority live in pucca-style housing. Figure 7 shows the sort of housing used by fisherman.

**Table 1 . Socio-economic and Educational Condition of Deep-sea Fishermen of Purba Medinipur District of West Bengal**

SL. NO	Parameters		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	Marital Status	Married	1175	95.84
		Unmarried	51	4.16
		Widow	Nil	Nil
2	Religion	Hindus	1212	98.86
		Muslims	14	1.14
3	Cast Division	General	965	78.71
		SC	120	9.79
		ST	29	2.37
		OBC-A	14	1.14
		OBC-B	98	7.99
4	Age Structure	18-25 yr.	6	0.49
		26-44yr.	712	58.08
		45-60yr.	508	41.44
5	Family Structure	Nuclear Family	934	76.18
		Joint Family	292	23.82
6	Assets	Android Mobile Phone	1116	9.03
		Non-android Mobile Phone	110	8.97
		Motor cycle	479	39.07
		By-cycle	1167	95.19
7	Educational Status	Illiterate	968	78.96
		Primary	210	17.13
		VIII	34	2.77
		MP	9	0.74
		HS	5	0.4
8	Housing Condition	Kutcha	756	61.66
		Pucca	160	13
		Semi-pucca	310	25
9	Sanitation	Present	1226	100
		Absent	Nil	Nil
10	Monthly Income	Above 10,000.00	61	4.98
		Below 10,000.00	1165	95.03



**Figure 7.** Housing condition of Deep-sea fishermen

#### Sanitation System

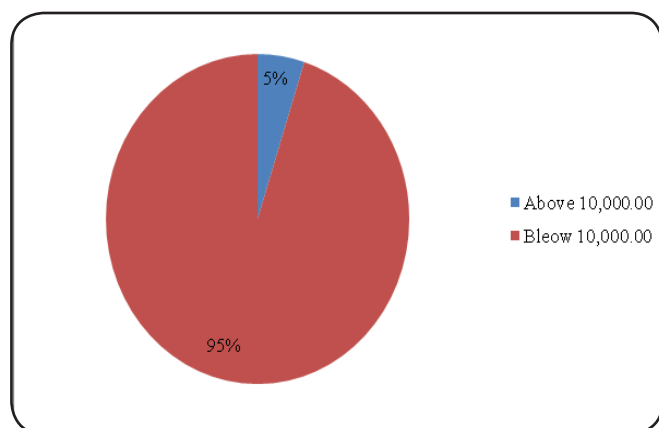
The sanitary system has an effect on many infectious diseases as well. Every deep-sea fisherman in the Purba Medinipur district has access to a good sanitary system.

#### Monthly Income

Deep-sea fishing is only feasible during nine months of the year, from July to March. During this period, their monthly income varies. The monthly salary of the driver of the fishing trawler is higher than that of the other crew members on each vessel. Monthly income can be divided into two categories: over \$10,000.00 and under \$10,000.00. Ninety-three percent of fishermen make less than \$10,000.00 a month. Just a small percentage of fishermen earn above \$10,000 each month. 2.37 percent of fishermen made less than \$10,000.00 a month during the non-fishing period from a variety of sources, such



as labour, small business, and agriculture. Figure 8 shows the monthly income of the fisherman.



**Figure 8.** Monthly Income of Deep-sea fishermen

## CONCLUSION

The deep-sea fishermen in the Purba Medinipur district are neither well educated or well off. Their meagre monthly income does not fund their children's education and keeps them from building a home. Their involvement in the fishing industry was generational. These days, the West Bengal government provides them through the banks' lone plan, a number of governmental and non-governmental organisations, free education, academic advancement scholarships, free health exams, and free drugs. I think that in the upcoming generations, the Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, and community peoples' socioeconomic and educational status will improve.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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