CHAPTER 2

2.1 Review of the past work:

Many scholars have so far worked more on the fishermen than on their settlements (Koliwadas). During 1903 i.e. during British period, Enthoven R.E. made studies on the Tribes & Castes of Bombay Presidency. He studied the various aspects of the Koli community that was practicing fishing in Mumbai and in the vicinity of Mumbai.

During 1959, Punekar Vijaya wrote on the Son Kolis of Bombay. It was published by Popular Prakashan, Bombay. The mode of the life of this community, their social set up and the various problems faced by the community were well elaborated by Vijaya Punekar. During 1961 Ghurye G.S. Head. Dept. of Sociology, Bombay University wrote a book titled as Castes, Class and Occupation which was published by Popular Prakashan, Bombay. This book is a detailed account of the varios castes and their traditional occupations. The Koli community and the various sub-castes of the koli community their occupations, beliefs and their social set up is discussed in detail in this book.

Karve Iravati, during 1968, wrote a book named as Maharashtra: Land & Its People, (Director, of Government, printing, stationary and publications; Maharashtra, Bombay). In this book she wrote an article on Son koli wherein she made minute observations of the beliefs and traditions of this community. She could effectively present how the culture of the community gets reflected through their dances, festivals and the Structures of their houses.

In 1980, Ghosh S. wrote a book titled as, ‘An Introduction to Settlement Geography’. He made a systematic study of morphology of settlement-distribution and social set up of the settlements. Indian situations of urban and rural settlements have been discussed and explained in detail. He also considered some aspects like type of the houses, location of the houses and building material of the houses in the villages located in the coastal parts of India.
During 1984, Gulati, L. wrote an article titled ‘Technological Change and Women’s Work- Participation and Demographic Behavior: A case study of three fishing villages in Economic and Political Weekly Vol. XIX. (1984). In this article Gulati discussed the changing mode of life of the fisherwomen with technological advancement in three selected fishing villages. He made a sincere attempt to interpret the relationship between technological advancement in the fishing sector like introduction of machine boats, advanced means of transport, new freezing techniques and the changing nature of the fisherwomen’s work and behavior. In the concluding part he says that technology not only affects the way of working of the fisherwomen but also the behavioral pattern of the fisherwomen. With technological advancement, the condition of fisherwomen have deteriorated in fisheries of the maritime states of India. The new technology in fisheries induced by the modernization package has been monopolized by large business firms rather than the fishing community. It is pointed out that the sexual division of labour in fishing communities excludes women from the central economic task of fishing. In a case study of three fishing villages of Kerala, Gulati has observed that women’s work participation has changed qualitatively and quantitatively and independent self-employed women have become employees for men engaged in prawn processing.

During this year (1984) Roche, P.A. made a social study of the Fishermen of the Coromandel Coast. This was published by Manohar Publications Delhi. Roche made important observations about the different social aspects of the fisher-folk staying in the eastern coastal part of Tamilnadu. Roche was aware of the pattern and locations of the fishing settlements.

During 1993; Nayak and Navta in their article titled as Continuity and change in artisanal fishing communities. Published by SIFFS and PCO, Trivandrum, Kerala examined the problems of women fish processors and dry fish vendors of Andhra Pradesh and concluded that they are forced to give up their traditional occupation of fish drying and vending due to scarcity and high prices of fish, and most women are caught in the debt-trap.

Nayak has also looked into the marine fisherwomen’s struggle against displacement due to military installations, construction of hatcheries and tourist
complexes in Orissa and observed that they play a vital role in the struggles for survival of their families and communities.

During 1997, Gracy in his article named ‘Women in Karnataka Fisheries’, Fishery Series No. 2, ICSF, Chennai discussed the way of the life of the fisherwomen and the various economic and other problems faced by the fisherwomen especially in their settlements. According to Gracy, establishment of credit and marketing co-operative societies in the fishing settlements managed by women is the solution to the serious problems faced by women fish workers in Karnataka.

Vijayan and Nayak during 2007 in their article published by Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDI), Protsahan Ahmedabad have concluded that women’s role is undergoing significant change with the advent of commercial fishing, and as a result fisherwomen are side tracked by larger male merchants and are slowly being marginalized from the marketing process in Gujarat and Maharashtra. Vijayan highlighted the need to safeguard the spaces women occupy in fisheries in the context of modernization and a programme of action should find solutions to the problems of exploitation of fisherwomen.

In India and abroad many scholars have dealt with the different aspects of fisher folk but one of the important aspects of the fisher folk i. e. their settlements has so far been much neglected especially in India.

Prof. Mandal R.B. in his books 1) Changing patterns of Indian villages and 2) Introduction to settlement Geography has discussed some aspects of fishing settlements like the general pattern of the fishing settlements, the types of the houses in the coastal belt etc.

During 1964 Prof. Mathur in his book, Rural Housing and Village Planning discussed some aspects of the fishing villages.


During 2004 Vivek Nirmale, B.S.Sontakki and R.J. Biradar from the central institute of fisheries education Versova, Mumbai wrote an article in the Karnataka Journal.
of Agricultural Sciences 17--1--2004 titled as, 'Indigenous Knowledge of Coastal Fisher-Folk of Mumbai District of Maharashtra State’. This study was the part of their thesis. Two zones from Mumbai district viz., Manori and Sassoon Dock were purposively selected. These two zones contributed about 13.3% and 26.3% to total marine fish landings of the district during the 1997-98 (Maharashtra State Fisheries Department, Mumbai). The data were collected from five randomly selected fishing villages of the two zones in the district. These villages were Malwani, Erangalbhati, Khardanda, Sassoon Dock and Jamshedji Bunder. As the topic of study was related to the knowledge of indigenous technologies in fishing activities, care was taken to select only those fishermen as respondents who are basically traditional or recently motorized their boats. In all 50 such fishers constituted the sample for the study. Information on indigenous knowledge of fishermen on various aspects of fishery management is documented in tables. The traditional way of constructing and maintaining the boats, traditional way of knitting the fishing nets and their maintenance, their ideas about the effect of lunar cycle and tides on the fish-catch, traditional methods of the drying and preserving of the fish, traditional indicators of cyclones and storms were studied in detail.

Three fourth of the total respondents (76%) opined that wind blowing from north direction (generally during the months of October to March and is known locally as Upercha vara) is favorable as it brings more fish. While equal number of fishers opined that the wind blowing from south direction (usually noticed from August to September and known as Hetcha vara) is not good as less fish are caught. Nearly seven out of every ten respondents (69%) operating the bag-nets stated that high tide results in more catch while the rest opined that low tied results in more catch. All the fishers operating the bag net stated that more fish are caught during 12th to 3rd days of lunar cycle due to more force of water current during these days, while the fish catch is moderate during 9th to 11th days of lunar cycle and very less catch during 4th to 8th days of lunar cycle when water force is less. The fishers make exclusive use of tidal energy to ensure success and lunar cycle thus plays a vital role in its operation. Large majority of respondents (94%) opined that muddy water yields more fish catch especially prawns, Bombay ducks, anchovies (Coila sp.), catfishes. The availability of different fishes in muddy water can be
attributed to the presence of turbidity caused by fish food organisms like phytoplankton and zooplankton. A wide variation was noticed in the opinions expressed by fishers regarding indicators of cyclone. Most of the fishers (60%) opined that increase in the intensity of water currents as the indicator of cyclone.

In conclusion, the authors said that indigenous technical knowledge in coastal fishing communities is rich and varied. The potential for a plying it to the management of coastal marine resources is substantial.

Drewes, Edeltrau, during 2004, wrote a very interesting article titled as, “The three fishing villages in Tamilnadu-A socioeconomic study with special reference to the role and Status of Women”. In this article the role of the fisherwomen in the field of fishing is elaborated and while discussing this role of the fisherwomen the nature and set up of the selected fishing villages have also been considered in detail.

The real study on fishing settlements in India started after the attack of the Tsunami waves on 26th December 2004. The worst affected areas along the Indian coast were in Tamilnadu, Kerla and Andhra Pradesh states. After the attack of the mighty Tsunami waves and the destruction of the fishing settlements caused thereby could draw the attention of the Government authorities and scholars towards the settlements of the fisher-folk. Many started writing articles on the social set up and especially on the location and structure of the houses in the fishing settlements.

A Paper written by Maneka Gandhi on Mangroves and Fishing was published during October 2010. In this paper she insisted on the protection and development of mangrove belt in the coastal area to protect the fisher folk and their settlements especially during the critical situations like the attack of mighty waves etc.

Prof. Vasudha Gokhale from Dr. B N college of Architecture Karve nagar Pune wrote an article titled as Analytical study of living environment in the Tsunami affected areas of Tamilnadu, India. (ISET Journal of Earthquake Technology, Vol. 42, No.4, December 2005, pp.219-225)

This paper of Prof. Gokhale highlights the character of typical fishing settlement pattern in Tamilnadu and various socioeconomic aspects responsible for architectural development to find out the cause of failure of existing building stock. The coastal parts
are prone to the natural calamities like Tsunami waves, cyclones, storms, land-subsidence, land-erosion etc. It was suggested that the new earthquake resistant structures, cyclone- shelters are essential in the fishing settlements. The new techniques that can provide maximum protection to the houses were discussed in detail.

During 2006, Salagrama V. wrote a very interesting article named as, “Trends in poverty and livelihoods in coastal fishing communities of Orissa State, India.” (FAO: Fisheries Technical Paper). He effectively presented social set up of the fishermen including their houses, food and the nature of their hard work in the coastal parts of Orrisa. According to him the high illiteracy and the exploitation by the middlemen or agents are mainly responsible for the poverty in the fishing communities of the coastal parts of Orissa. He could properly elaborate the horrible living conditions of the fishermen in the fishing settlements. His study analyses the livelihoods of marine fishing communities in the Indian coastal state of Orissa using the sustainable livelihoods approach. It investigates the relationships between livelihoods and coastal poverty and seeks to develop simple qualitative indicators to monitor the changes in these relationships over time.

The key trends affecting the livelihoods of the poor in the coastal fishing communities in Orissa range across the natural, physical, social, human and financial. The overall decline in availability of fish from the coastal waters is also accompanied by a declining access of the poor to the fish resources as a result of changes in fishing technology and in market supply chains. The shift in fishing methods from subsistence-based artisanal activities to sophisticated modern technologies has rendered redundant the traditional skills, knowledge and manual labor activities of the poor, while also increasing risks and leading to a dependence upon external sources of credit. As fish are sold directly to the traders at point of landing, fishermen no longer depend on the women to sell them, so the women find themselves marginalized. Apart from the factors having a direct bearing upon fishers based livelihoods there have also been changes affecting the life generally which contribute to or arise out of changes in the livelihood patterns and span across the social, cultural, political and economic spheres of life. There is evidence
that food insecurity is growing in the fishing villages and coupled with the weakening of the welfare state policies, to increasing deprivation.

Apart from the various trends, this paper also examines the impact of season ability and shocks upon the fisheries based livelihood sand the importance and influence of the various policies. It summarizes the various factors having an impact upon the livelihoods of the fishers and develops them into simple indicators relevant in accessing the changing pattern of poverty in the fishing communities of the state, ‘Orissa’

During 2008, in Asian Agri. Vol. 12, an article titled, Traditional fishing practices and socio cultural activities of Koli community in Konkan region of India written by Y. N. Ulman, V.G.Naik and J. M. Talathi Dept. of Agricultural Economics College of Agriculture, Dr. Babasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapodi, Ratnagiri Maharashtra India was published. Ratnagiri and Raigad districts were selected by the authors. From each district one tahsil and from each tahsil one village and from each village ten fishermen were selected randomly. Thus the final sample consisted of two tahsils, two villages and twenty sample fishermen. The data was collected for the year 2005-2006 and was presented through the tables and cross tables to arrive at meaningful conclusions. A preliminary survey was taken to collect information about the customs, beliefs, occupations, social life, living conditions and traditions of koli people. At the end, certain conclusions were drawn e.g. 1) very few want to stick to their ancestral occupations. This is because there is no guarantee of daily income. 2) The beliefs of the Koli people are also changing with education and modernization but still some of their beliefs like offering coconut to the sea to calm it down, a woman may get possessed and trusting her to solve their problems etc. still persist

The paper written by Ramchandra Bhatta, University of Agricultural sciences, college of fisheries, Mangalore and K Arun Rao, Mangalore University in the Indian Journal of Gender studies, (Sept.1 2009) titled as Women’s livelihood in fisheries in coastal Karnataka, India is very important.

This paper reports on the results of survey among fisherwomen in Coastal Karnataka. Data was collected on the nature of their work, earnings and role in decision making by giving different weightage to individual activities. The study suggests that
only 16 per cent of the women are fully involved in decision making, although their contribution to the family income and household work is substantial. There is a social stigma attached to fish marketing activities and the younger generation is not willing to enter the business. Government support in terms of subsidy does not help in improving social status. Employment generation by providing modern marketing facilities is required for improving the status of fisherwomen.