CHAPTER – THREE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF FISHING COMMUNITY
The social and cultural aspects of every society evolve in the context of certain interacting ecological, demographic, technological and economic characteristics particular to it. The ecological and related resource determinants are characteristics that tend to exhibit a fair degree of stability since they are significantly nature-determined. The demographic, technological and economic variables seem to undergo a greater degree of change, as they are products of human enterprise. The social and cultural aspects, which arise from this historical nature-human interaction, take effect within a workday routine of livelihood and provide the element of specificity to the society. They accumulate over time and form a corpus of certain behavioural facets of the people. In the more ancient societies, such as those in Asia, these socio-cultural traits have been handed down largely through learning-by-doing and oral traditions of songs, stories and sayings. They evolve to represent a world view of the communities and represent in succinct fashion a coherent practice-knowledge-belief system (Gadgil et al., 1993).

The social and cultural aspects of developing societies were considered to be a drag on their transformation into modern economies. For example, certain communitarian principles and diet preferences, which had evolved in the context of resource fragility and population pressure, were perceived to be barriers to technological change and
market expansion. The many failures of the largely techno-economic orientation to development policies provide the basis for a new search: a search for giving fresh meaning to hitherto neglect socio-cultural norms before they are transformed beyond recognition.

The initial resource and ecological context of fish, and much of the traditional techno-economic aspects of fisheries in the tropical developing countries of Asia, have given rise to a considerable fund of socio-cultural features which are rooted in the context of people's pursuit for livelihood and food security. Examining some facets of this neglected reality, provides an opportunity to assess their continued relevance for the inextricably intertwined objectives of maintaining the integrity of the ecosystem and ensuring the food and livelihood security of the community.

Such a pursuit also attains particular relevance in this era of globalisation that often entails a continual substitution of culture and cultural knowledge by objective knowledge and formal institutions. This process sets into momentum tendencies for homogenization of social and cultural specificities. In the long run this threatens the variety and diversity of both the practices and the visions which societies have about their future.

**Fisher population in India:**

Some 3.52 million fishers and family members who belong to 756 households live in 3 202 marine fishing villages of India. Orissa has the largest number of fishing villages 641; Daman & Diu has the least
Education:

In India nearly 56.5 percent of the fisherfolk are educated, the levels of education varying from primary (28.6% of the fisherfolk) to above secondary education (5.6%). Kerala records the highest percentage of educated fisherfolk (72.8%); Andhra Pradesh (67.5%) has the highest percentage of uneducated fisherfolk.

Occupations of fishermen:

About 25.7 percent (889 528) of the fisherfolk are active fishers, of whom 80.7 percent (717 999) are full-time fishers. About 46.8 percent of the fisherfolk are engaged in fishing and fishing-related activities. Among men, the major fishery-related occupations are labour (39.2%), net-mending (28.6%) and marketing (14%). The major women’s occupations are marketing (41.8%), labour (18.4%) and curing/processing (18%). Women dominate in fish marketing (73.6%), while men dominate in net-repair and net-making (nearly 80%) and in providing labour to fishing boats (69.5%).

Religion:

In India Hindus constitute 74.1 percent of fisherfolk families, Christians 16.6 percent and Muslims 9.2 percent. In Kerala Christians dominate in fishing and fishing related activities (42.4%), followed by
Hindus (30.7%) and Muslims (26.9%). Christians are also significant in Goa (37.3%) and Tamil Nadu (34.6%).

**Fisheries co-operatives:**

In India about 15 percent of the fisherfolk are members of fisheries co-operative societies; one in five fisherfolk is a member of some co-operative society (either fisheries or any other). Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Kerala and Karnataka record significant percentages in co-operative membership from the fishing communities.

**Craft:**

Of the 238 722 fishing craft in India, 58 911 are mechanized and 75 591 motorized. Maharashtra and Gujarat account for 44.5 percent of the mechanized craft (Maharashtra has 13 053, Gujarat has 13 047). Of the 29241 trawlers in the fishery, Gujarat accounts for 8 002, Tamil Nadu for 5 300, Maharashtra for 4 219, Kerala for 3982. Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala together account for nearly two thirds of the motorized craft. East coast states account for about 73 percent of the non motorized / non-mechanized craft.

**Craft owned by fisher folk:**

Of the 185 438 craft owned by fisherfolk, 35 806 are mechanism, 52971 motorized and 96 661 non-motorized/ non-mechanized Trawlers account for 39.6% of the mechanised craft, gillnetters for 31.3 percent, dolnetters for 19.2 percent. Gujarat (4 300), Tamil Nadu (3 274) and Maharashtra (2 526) are leaders in trawlers owned by fisherfolk, while West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Orissa account for the bulk of the
gillnetters. Of the 52971 motorized craft owned by fisherfolk, 48 percent are fiberglass boats. Plank-built boats account for 22 percent and catamarans for 20 percent.

Other salient features:

Nearly 62 percent of fisherfolk families are involved in fishing and they do not possess any craft, about 49 percent have no gear. Nearly 47 percent of the families possess neither craft nor gear. In the maritime states, Kerala has 66 percent of such families, followed by West Bengal (49%), Tamil Nadu (46%) and others. In 10 percent of the fisherfolk families of Maharashtra, only women take part in fishing or allied activities. At the all-India level, this figure is 5 percent. The housing pattern is enormously varied. The proportion of kutcha houses varies from 8 percent in Maharashtra to 91 percent in West Bengal. Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat are leaders in the number of primary educational institutions in fishing villages. In Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra, almost all fishing villages are electrified. West Bengal and Orissa languish at the bottom.

Health infrastructure (number of primary health centres and hospitals) is unsatisfactory in West Bengal, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat lead in the number of financial institutions. As for boat building yards, Kerala leads with 112, followed by Karnataka with 32.

Kerala also has the largest number of freezing plants. According to the census, India has 399 processing plants and 471 cold storage
facilities. There are 176 EU-approved processing and coldstorage facilities; also 303 units, both EU-approved and non-EU approved, that follow HACCP standards. This information is based on the data provided by the Marine Products Export Development Authority, (The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Cochin, and the Fishery Survey of India (FSI), Mumbai, Marine Fisheries Census 2005).

**Fishing Community in Kasaragod:**

Oral tradition has come to mean myths, legends, folktales, proverbs, riddles, verses and a variety of other forms whose medium is the spoken language. The folk element prevalent among the fishing community (Mukkuvar in Malayalam) can be observed in their prose narratives, lament songs, labour songs, dredge songs, etc. Their oral tradition is worthy of extensive and deep research. An attempt is made in the following paragraphs to look at it against an environmental and sociological background.

**Legends of the origin of fishermen community:**

Many prose narratives found among the Mukkuvar are symbolic of their ethnic unity with other groups as well as their clashes with them. They also speak about their migration and religious coexistence. It was observed earlier that although the Mukkuvars have an amiable relationship with the other major communities of the area like the Nair there are discord and differences at times. Many stories are narrated in Mukkuvar families whose symbolic messages are not always understood.
A story often heard is about a crow, a deer and a fox. The crow and the
deer lived happily in a forest. There was a famine in the forest. The crow
went in search of a new fertile area. It then took its friend there and they
continued to live happily. One day a fox tried to befriend the deer, aiming
to take it as a prize catch to a hunter. The crow scented the evil designs of
the fox and advised the deer not to be carried away by a shallow and
cunning ‘friend’. At last the worst happened: the fox lured the deer into
the hunter’s net. The crow managed to find the deer and get it out of the
net. On finding the deer escaping, the hunter killed the fox.

The characters in this story represent different communities. The
shift from the forest to another area represents the Mukkuva’s migration
from Ceylon to Malabar and then to Kanyakumari. This story has a clear
socio-historical background.

A folk saying of the Mukkuvar has some sociological bearing.
"Puraiyiam vikiyatu Mukkuvar, anupavam eduttatucun", means that
while the Mukkuvar bought the land, the Nair enjoyed its produce. It was
mentioned earlier that the Mukkuvar once owned land in Puthur village.
While the Mukkuvar depend on fishing for their livelihood, the Nair
depend on toddy-tapping. The fisherfolk of Puthur bought land and
handed it over to the Nair to till, since they themselves did not possess
adequate knowledge and experience in agricultural operations. The Nair
took advantage of the Mukkuva’s ignorance and exploited them.

Another hilarious anecdote on the lack of agricultural experience
among the Mukkuvar is heard among the fisherfolk in Puthur and the
Nair in the Vilavancode and Kalkulam areas. Once a Nair borrowed sum of rupees 500/ from a Mukkuva man at Puthur promising to return it on a specific day. He did not keep his word. After several days the Mukkuvar went to his house, and demanded that he repay the loan immediately. He took the Nair’s kalakkumattai (a tool used to stir the toddy and mix calcium hydroxide during fermentation), shouting that he would return the implement only when the money had been repaid. The Mukkuvar then buried the implement, which is nothing but a Palmyra stick. After a few months the Nair brought two hundred rupees to the Mukkuvar. He pleaded for the return of his implement, promising complete repayment soon. The Mukkuvar, taking pity on the Nair went to dig it out. When he found it decayed he was nonplussed. He at once promised the Nair that he would make good the loss. The Nair immediately exploited the situation, demanding Rs. 1000 to buy a new kalakkumattai. The gullible Mukkuvar, comparing the Nair’s tool with his own fishing net, shelled out the money demanded by the Nair. This story points not only to the Mukkuvar’s ignorance but also to his absolute lack of common sense.

There is another story reflecting the gullibility of the Mukkuvar. A Nair and a Mukkuvar set out one evening for booze. On the way they saw an iron safe. The Nair told the Mukkuvar that it was not discreet to open the box when people were around. He took him away to the pub after burying the box. After drinking a good deal, both of them returned home. At midnight the Nair returned to the spot, took out the safe, opened it, and carried away all that was inside. Next morning, pretending that nothing had happened, he took his friend to the spot, only to find an empty box after tiresome digging. Finally he told the Mukkuvar to keep
the box. There are four versions of this story, but all of them concur on the gullibility of the Mukkuvar and their exploitation by the Nair.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, communal oppression and a rigid caste system were prevalent in Kanyakumari. Depressed classes as the Mukkuvar were not allowed the use of umbrellas or footwear. There was a rigid taboo on wearing gold jewelers and on carrying water pots on the hip. They were not permitted to own terraced houses or to speak the language that others spoke (George, T.H, 1982:11). There were a good many restrictions on coming near or talking to higher caste people. They were subjected to severe taxation. All these oppressions perhaps led them to change their faith to Christianity. A story is in vogue among the Mukkuvar as a satire on such oppression.

A sudra community woman had an illicit relations with a Mukkuvar. On an occasion when they were making love, the woman’s husband returned home unexpectedly. Thinking quickly, the sudra woman took her lover out of the house. She made him pretend that he was drinking water which she poured, asking him not to touch the vessel. The Mukkuvar came out on the street loudly crying, “The sudra woman will give the cunt but not the kettle” The sudra community, of course, is considered socially higher than the Mukkuvar.

The Mukkuvar believe that Malaikku Amman, the famous female deity of the area, and St. Lucy (Pirakasi Amman) are sisters. They believe that while Malaikku Amman came there through the mountains, St. Lucy came by sea. Quite a few stories abound on these two,
particularly on the origin of the Amman’s temple at Malaikku and about the origin of the goddess herself.

Malaiikkku Amman is believed to be one of seven sisters in a Nair family who died a young virgin. She is believed to have died by divine grace. Her spirit is still believed to be hovering in Malaikku. Once a group of seven people driving seven bullock carts and reached the village at late night. They were very hungry and went in search of a place where they could get food. A maiden standing before a hut warmly asked what they wanted. They replied that they wanted food. She promised that food would soon be ready and told them to go for their bath. When they returned they found a broad spread of tasty food, of which they made a sumptuous meal. When they sought to pay for the food they could not see the maiden; their search all around was futile. They were wonderstruck and they narrated this episode to all their people. In due course, the people around the place built a temple and made it the abode of Malaiikkku Amman.

It is also widely believed that Malaiikkku Amman is the daughter of a Namputari Brahmin, who immolated herself along with her three children when she realised that she had been married for years to a low-caste (Paraiyan) man in the guise of a Brahmin scholar. This is a relic of the strong distinctions of the caste system. When the Brahmin lady found her children eating fish, she realised that her father has mistaken a Harijan for a Brahmin because of his erudition.
The fisherfolk hold Malaikkku Amman in great esteem. They believe that the deity bathes in the sea, beautifully bedecked with jewels. During the festival of fishermen put up their fish stalls in the proximity of the temple. Expectant mothers from among the fisherfolk offer prayers to her, and it is no wonder that they address this deity as the sister of St. Lucy.

It is common for highly-placed men in any society to become the targets of public attention: apart from their failures, their personal lives are also discussed, sometimes to the point of obscenity. This feature is found in Mukkuvar folk tradition. There are a number of such obscene stories, jests, jokes, and anecdotes among the Mukkuvar.

When scientific advancements percolate through the lives of the common people, they evoke expectations, anticipations, disappointments, etc. These elements are given oral expression and form the nucleus for many forms of folklore. The common man would normally expect a train to move faster than a bus. But in Tirunelveli District there is a story about a train that makes fun of its snail-like speed. The story goes that the train from Titunelveli to Tiruchendur steamed out at the scheduled hour. After some time its driver noticed a herd of buffaloes lying across the track. He stopped the train, got down, drove the animals off and restarted the train. After some time and at a distance he again noticed buffaloes on the track. Thinking to repeat the earlier performance, he got down: but to his surprise he found it was the same herd. Similarly, stories are heard about the social, cultural and scientific gap between urban and rural areas. In many rural areas in Tamil Nadu we may hear stories on the toilets now
used in towns as well as trains. Such stories are only to compensate for inadequacies.

During the Republic Day celebration at Colochel, a cultural programme was arranged. To depict the ‘konwedgelge gap’ of a rural woman, a skit was enacted. An old mother from a village visits her daughter in a city. When all retire for the night, the old lady from the village is the last to go to bed as she does not know how to switch off the tube-light. Frightened, she thinks it is a fire and shouts aloud.

The fishermen have a funny story on the origin of cinema. It seems a husband wanted to prove the infidelity of his wife in a court of law. Once when she was making love with her paramour while, as she thought, her husband was away, the husband made a hole in the wall, and by passing the sun’s rays through, got their shadows on a glass to be produced in court.

New scientific ideas and developments take very long to percolate to rural folk. This has given rise to many attempts to bridge the gap and to compensate for them through imaginative compromises. The Mukkuvars have their own view of aeroplane. Two Mukkuvars, seeing an aircraft up in the air glittering in bright sunshine, wonder how it is polished. When one raises this very genuine doubt, the other promptly replies that when the plane goes high it becomes small, so that paint can be poured on it from a tin.
Knowledge has been transmitted down the generations of human history. Experiences, trials and tribulations, failures and achievements have become the knowledge base for humanity. To what is handed down, each generation adds its own fund of experience and wisdom. The fisher folk’s knowledge of water currents, wind, climatic change, all of which contributes to their occupation and fishing techniques, provide good examples of such acquisitions and modifications.

While using the karavalai (fishing net) the fishermen express themselves in a labour song that is called ampa in other coastal areas of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. This song is rendered by a group of 20 to 40. While the elders provide the lead, the youngsters follow in a mostly monosyllabic chorus. The rendering of the song follows the force of the waves. When large waves push the net ashore, making the drawing process easier, the voices are low-pitched; and when the tide is weak, the pitch becomes high. This song affords perfect co-ordination in pulling the net ashore and makes the job easier (Kesavan, 1985:30).

Karavalai songs are marked by discontinuity, a characteristic of labour songs. There is no cogency or consistency in them. Love seems to be the dominant theme of the ampa songs of Sri Lanka (Pushpa Rajan, 1976:5–12), and it is also found in songs sung in the fishing areas of Kanyakumari District (Nirmala Bai, 1980:44–55). In the songs of Ciluvai Curicil, a troupe, propose to consummate a marriage for the king of the ocean, the whale. This poetic imagination may be ascribed to man’s meek submissiveness towards the forces of nature (John Samuel, G, 1998).
Origin of fishing community (Mukkuvar):

Mukkuvar also Mukkuva are a social group or caste primarily a fishing community, living in the coastal districts of Kerala, south Tamil Nadu in India and also in Sri Lanka. It is a community that has differing ethnic identities based on the state or country of domicile. Although they may be an insignificant community in India, their social and numerical position makes them an important community in Sri Lanka. They are also found in Lakshadweep islands off India but are known as Mellcherries. Historically some believe that they are originally from East coast of Tamil Nadu who then migrated to Kerala, Sri Lanka and Lakshadweep. Also some may have re-migrated from Sri Lanka back to India and settled in the south western coastal side of Kerala. But in general they are indigenous fishers and inhabitants of the general area that are found today.

Many of the Mukkuvars do a variety of jobs, including engineering, education, clerical works etc, though major part of the community does fishing or fishing related works. However there are many entrepreneurs and educationists among them. In India, there is a misinformation that a social segregation based on fishers and boat owners exists in this community, with the boat owner’s today claiming to be a separate caste called Arayan or Aravan. However this segregation is not of much significance because poor fishers buying boats and becoming boat owners is very common. Similarly many boat owners of the past become poor fishers after losing the boats due to misfortunes at sea. This should be considered as a normal happening in any dynamic working
community. It should be noted that both boat owners and poor fishers identify themselves as belonging to the same caste/community and inter-marriage is not prohibited. Amongst ‘Malayalee’ Mukkuvas, the word Mukkuva was considered derogatory previously. However due to the increasing affluence of this community in the recent years, this is no longer a hindrance to their social interaction and mixing with other communities (Vishnu Namboodiri, M.V, 2004)

The root of Mukkuva community:

The term Mukkuvar, as is used at Vizhinjam, refers always and exclusively to people of the Catholic fishing community. The term Marakkan is used to indicate Muslim fishermen; Nulayan (also Arayan) is used for Hindu fishermen. The popular usage of the term in Malayalam does not bring more clarity either. In his famous novel Chemmeen, Thakazhi has this in the words of one of his characters: “Arayar are of five jatis: Arayan, Valakkaran, Mukkuvan and Marakkan. Then a panchamajati (fifth jati). Besides these, there is the Velan in the interior areas.” (Thakazhi Sivasankarapilla, 1995).

The term Mukkuvan is used here as a sub-caste of the Arayan fishing community with no religious connotation. Another novelist, Thikkotiyan, in his novel ‘Chuvanna Kadal’, uses the terms Mukkuvan, Arayan and Marakkan interchangeably (Thikkodian, 1963). These indicate the vagueness that exists regarding the term in popular understanding. In spite of the fusion of sub-castes or substitution of caste names in the course of history, the term Mukkuvar, it appears, was being
used originally as a generic term to refer to all fisher people. Ma Huan, an envoy of the Emperor of China, who visited the Kerala coast in 1409, has this to say: “There are five classes of men... the fifth the Mukkuvar, the lowest and the poorest of all” (Nagan Aiya, V, 1989).

In a footnote Nagam Aiya clarifies that Mukkuvar refer to the fishermen on the seacoast. The premise that Mukkuvar meant a generic term in early times is further supported by the fact that the name given to the association of fishermen that was formed in Malabar in 1920 was Akhila Kerala Mukkuva Sangam. The formation of Mukkuva Maha Sabha in Kozhikode in 1933 also supports the same. Both these were formed for Hindu fishermen. Some suggest that the term Mukkuvar is connected with the Canarese Moger; both the words come from the same root, which means to dive (Kalpana Ram, 1991).

The background of Moggaveeras community inhabited South Kanara from early times (Krishnamoorthy, 1987). It states that these fishermen called Mogayers are a caste of Tuluva origin. They resemble the Muccuas (Mukkvans) of Malayalam, but one caste will have no communion with the other. The Mogayers are boatmen, fishermen, porters and palanquin bearers. They pretend to be Surdras of pure descent and assume superiority over the Halepecas (Billavas) one of the most common castes of cultivators in Tuluva, but they acknowledge themselves greatly inferior to the Bunts (Buchanan, 1809).

Authors generally refer to three main subgroups among the Hindu fishermen of Kerala; Mukkuvar, Arayar and Valar. The names of
subgroups may change slightly from author to author, or from place to place. Velupillai includes Nulaya as a sub caste in Tiruvananthapuram area (Velupillai, 1931).

Thurston describes the Mukkuvans (sic) as the “sea fishermen of the Malabar coast”, and quotes Buchanan: ‘The Mucua, or in the plural Mucuar, are a tribe who live near the sea-coast of Malayala, to the inland parts which they seldom go, and beyond its limits anyway they rarely venture. Their proper business is that of fishermen, as palanquin-bearers for persons of low birth, or of no caste; but they serve also as boatmen’ (Edgar Thurston 1987). He also refers to the Gazetteer of Malabar 1908 which speaks of the Mukkuvans, thus: ‘A caste, which according to a probably erroneous tradition came originally from Ceylon, is that of the Mukkuvans, a cast of fishermen following marumakkauiiyam (inheritance through the female line) in the north, and makkauiiyam (inheritance from father to son) in the South’.

In the extreme South of the district they are called Arayar, a term elsewhere used as a title of the headmen. North of Cannanore there is some fishermen, known as Mugavars or Mugayars, who are presumably the same as the Mugayors of South Canara Mathew, P.T, 2001). Thurston remarks that the Mukkuva caste has supplied many converts to the ranks of Mohammedanism. Quoting the Madras Census Report 1891 he says, ‘Conversion to Islam is common among this caste. The converts are called Puislam or Putiya Islam (new Islam)’ (Edgar Thurston, 1987).
Some studies refer to the Arayar and the Mukkuvar as two distinct groups of fishermen in Kerala. Lamercinier discusses both groups among the lower castes and the outcastes. 'The Arayas were not exclusively fishermen. There were among them both farming classes and others who lived in the mountains'. The Mukkuvans were another fishing clan, a large number of who were employed in the pearl fisheries (Genevieve, Lamereinier, 1983).

The distinction she makes between Arayar and Mukkuvar as belonging to two different clans is a doubtful proposition. There is also an anachronism and factual error in the above account; the pearl fishers were mainly Paravas, not Mukkuvar; the latter are found rarely along the east coast of India. Besides, the mass-conversion of the Paravas to Christianity took place in the 16th century. Moreover, the Mala-Arayas, one of the hill tribes in the Western Ghats, 'have nothing in common with the Mukkuvan Arayan of the coastal regions (Louiz, A.A.D, 1962). From the above analysis it becomes clear that there exists no uniform understanding of the term Mukkuvar. Originally the term used more as a generic term to mean all marine fishermen, in the course of time it came to be employed to refer to one particular subgroup or another.

Socio-economic aspects of fishing community:

In traditional Kerala society all human activities were based on caste system which divided the Hindu community into innumerable number of groups. These groups developed mutual hatred and hostility; each considered inferior to those above it and superior to those below it.
The non-caste Hindus like Eshavas, Mukkuvas, Arayas, Pulayas and Parayas constituted the avarnas and were generally considered as untouchables and unseables. Branded as polluting communities, they were subject to several social disabilities (Kamala Vani, V, 2006).

The traditional social structure of Kerala has shown signs of decay towards the end of the eighteenth century. With the beginning of the nineteenth century a new social order began to emerge as a result of various socio-economic and cultural influences. Kerala society showed symptoms of social renaissance during the second half of the 19th century as a result of various reform movements. Sreee Narayana Guru was the foremost among the social reformers in Kerala during this period. He stood for the social, economic and religious upliftment of the lower castes (Sreedharaman, A, 1998).

**Income and expenditures among the community:**

Income is one of the major determinants in the economic status of the people and this is especially so among backward castes. The main sources of income for the fishing community are from traditional occupation of fishing and other subsidiary occupations of family members. Under non-traditional sources, the income is from various non-traditional occupation followed by the members of the community that include, Engineer, Lawyer, Military, business (whole-sale), School Teacher, Contractor, gulf, clerk, retail shop, priest, welder, tailor, driver,
carpenter, peon, sweeper, mechanic, painter, crew, petty shops and other. Table 3.1 shows the Monthly income levels of the respondent’s family from their primary and subsidiary occupations of traditional and non-traditional occupations.

Table No. 3.1. Monthly income of the respondents of the family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income in Rupees</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001-4000</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>58.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001-6000</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6001-8000</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8000-10000</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10000&amp;above</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is observed that 58 percent of the respondents have the income in the range of rupees 2001-4000, 16 percent of the respondents have the income in the range of rupees 4001-6000, 10percent of the respondents have the income in the range of rupees 6001- 8000, 9percent of the respondents income is in the range of rupees 8000-10000and 6 percent of the respondents income is in the range of rupees 10000 and above.
From the above figure it is observed with regard to the monthly family expenditure of the fishing community, the majority i.e. 58 percent of them have expenditure in the range of above rupees 5000, 12 percent of them have the expenditure of rupees 4000 to 5000, 17 percent of them have the expenditure of rupees 3000 to 4000, 1 percent of them have the expenditure of rupees 2000 to 3000, 5 percent of them have the expenditure of rupees 1000 to 2000 and another 1 percent of them spent 500 and below as they have no much income to be spent.
Table No. 3.2. Particulars of heads of expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars of expenditures</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption of alcohol</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is understood from the above table that 66 percent of the total expenditure is incurred for the consumption of food for the family members, 35 percent of total expenditure is incurred only for the consumption of dress for the family members, 24 percent of total expenditure is incurred for the educational purpose of the family members, 30 percent of total expenditure is incurred for medical treatment for the family members, 3 percent of total expenditure is incurred for the consumption of alcohol for the family members and 3 percent of total expenditure is incurred for buying luxury items.

**Indebtedness among the fishing community:**

Though credit is not an input, it plays an important role in fishing community. When government announced credit facility to fishing community, they began to make maximum utilization of the facility especially in the mechanized sector to acquire various gadgets such as boats, gear, fishing nets, fuel oils, ice, etc. and other households’ articles
by the members of the family. The table 3.3 shows the indebtedness of the respondents of the fishing community.

### Table No. 3.3. Indebtedness to bank

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indebtedness</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indebted</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not indebted</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main sources of credit observed among the respondents in the fishing community were nationalized and commercial banks, cooperative societies/bank, money lenders, contractors, friends and relatives. They took credit through formal lending agencies and informal sources. It is understood that majority of the respondents borrow from both the sources. Another aspect which has been noticed is that once they borrow from informal sources it is very difficult to get out of the clutches of such people and repay the debt completely.

Generally people borrow money for different purposes from various sources of credits at different times. Figure 3.2 shows the purpose and details of money which was borrowed by the fishing community.
Out of 300 respondents 192 of them expressed the opinion that they are indebted to loan and not able to repay loan amount to the bank. The money has been spent for varied purposes. 34 percent of them took the credit for meeting family expenditure, 25 percent of them got credit for purchase of inputs which are required to operate fishing activities, 19 percent of them took the loan for the educational purpose and 20 percent got credit for other purposes including personal purposes. It is observed that the amount is ranging from 5000 to 50000 and it is only one share of the total amount which is taken for the purpose of purchasing of boats, engine, nets etc. as a group loan. It is interesting to know that respondents have availed the loan facility to educate their children and it shows the interest of the community in educating their children and climb in the upward social mobility ladder.
Savings patterns of the community:

The fishing community once up on a time believed that saving was against the will of the Sea Goddess. They believed firmly that whatever they want their Sea god will give and bless them. But saving was practiced by the community in the beginning itself for the purpose of celebration of festival and worship which is takes place every year in the village. Table 3.4 shows various forms of savings followed by the fishing community.

Table No. 3.4. Type of savings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of savings</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chitty</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hundi</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Deposit</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is observed that fishing community have been practicing various types of savings such as, Chitty, Hundi and Fixed deposit. 40 percent respondents said that they save their money in the form of chitty, 28 percent respondents said that they save their money in the Hundi and 31 percent respondents said that they save their money in different forms. It is interesting to know that they are not ready to reveal the amount which is kept as fixed deposit due to fear.
Housing and other facilities:

Fishing villages all along the coastal waters in India are almost similar on their futuristic characteristics. The study of socio-economic profile of traditional fishing village shows the status of the community. Housing is one of the most important yardsticks to measure the socio-economic status of any community (Dehadrai, P.V. and Yadav, Y. S, 2004). Table 3.5 shows the housing pattern of fishing community in the study area.

Table No. 3.5. Type of dwelling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of house</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hut</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puckka</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiled</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asbestos</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is observed that respondents are staying in different mode of houses ranging from Hut to RCC according to their standard of living. 3 percent of the respondents are living in Hut houses, 5 percent of the respondents are living in Puckka houses, 60 percent of the respondents are living in tiled houses, 4 percent of the respondents are living in Asbestos houses, 27 percent of the respondents are living in RCC houses, and there is no respondent living in Kutcha houses. It is found from the above analysis that majority of the respondents are living
in Tiled and RCC houses. It reveals that the present generation of the fishing community is moving towards upward social mobility in terms of possession of houses.

**Table No. 3.6 Opinion on condition of house**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>60.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappy</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>39.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table explains the opinion of the condition of housing. From the above table it is seen that 60 percent of the respondents are feeling happy about the condition of the house in which they live and nearly 40 percent of the respondents are not feeling happy about the condition of their house. It can be found from the above data that majority of the respondents’ of fishing community are happy with the condition of the house in which they reside and it can be said that fishing community more or less leading an average standard of living.

**Table No. 3.7. Type of possession of house**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>65.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table shows the type possession of houses. From the above data it is clear that 65 percent of the respondents are living in their own houses and 6 percent of the respondents are living in rented houses and 28 percent of them are living in other mode of ownership. It is found from the table that majority of the respondents are having their own house in the coastal area of Kasaragod.

Table No 3.8. Ownership of the house

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ancestral</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>46.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-built</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>53.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>196</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates the real ownership of the houses of the respondents. It is observed from the above data that 46 percent of the respondents were living in the houses built by their ancestors and 53 percent of the respondents were living in the house built by them. It is found that majority of the houses in fishing community were built by the present generation and nearly half of the houses were built by their ancestors.

Table No 3.9. Electrification of housing of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electrified</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>90.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not electrified</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table reveals the electrification of housing of the respondents. From the above table it is clear whether the houses in the fishing community were electrified or not. 90 percent of the respondents’ houses were electrified and nearly 10 percent of the houses were not electrified in the fishing community. It shows that majority of the houses in the study area were electrified and it is evident that the basic requirements of modern living condition are available to the people living in the coastal area.

Table No. 3.10. Nature of power connection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of power connection</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own cost</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>51.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kudeer jyothi</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>40.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>272</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates the nature of electricity connection made available by the respondents. The above table clearly shows that 51 percent of the respondents’ got electricity connections to their houses were by their own investment by themselves, 40 percent of the respondents got the electricity connection through the government programme of Kudeer Jyothi at the concessional rate and 8 percent of the respondent got electricity connection through other modes. It is found that more than 50 percent of the respondents have spent their money for getting electricity connection to their house.
Table No. 3.11. Regularity of power supply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regularity of supply</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>48.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>51.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates the regularity of power supply in the fishing coastal village of Kasragod. Though 90 percent of the households were electrified the consumers are not able enjoy regular power supply. 51 percent of the respondents have opined that the power supply was not regular and only 48 percent of the respondents have opined that the power supply was regular. It is found that power supply in the coastal region of the Kasaragod district is not regular and due to this the consumers are not able to enjoy the facility much.

Religion:

Lukmann, (1970) defines world view as social form of religion that is elementary and non-specific. It is only within their specific world view that the scared universes of a people become intelligible. The religious representations that embody the scared universe provide sense and meaning to isolated events and objects in the world of everyday life. Durkheim, (1965) defined religion ‘a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things.... which unite in to one single moral community.'
Fisher folks in Kerala belong to one of the three religious groupings, namely Hindu, Muslim and Christian. Over the years, each group has developed a subculture of its own within a broad coastal culture, with its natural impact on the religious phenomena.

The religious division of Kerala's fisher people has been noted for the comparatively high proportion of Christians and Muslims to Hindus. The population pattern at all India level shows 83 percent of Hindus, 10 percent of Muslims and 2.6 percent Christians. The Kerala pattern, on the other hand, shows 57.28 percent Hindus, 23.33 percent Muslims and 19.32 percent Christians according to census data of 1991.

The pattern changes further among the fishing population of the state; it shows 27 percent of Hindus 30 percent Muslims and 37 percent Christians (Jonah, Half Dnardottir, 1993). These Hindu religious groups are further divided into sub-castes like Arayan, Valan, Marakkan, Mukayar and Nulayan. These groups together have given a generic name 'Dheevara' in modern times. Dheevara and Kaivarta were fishermen groups, probably counted among the dasa of the Rig-veda. The term has come into the current use only recently to refer to the conglomeration of all Hindu castes engaged in fishing occupation. It was in 1984 the government accepted the term officially to include all these sub-caste in the OEC (Other Eligible Castes) category.

In the northern district of Kannur, Malappuram and Trichur there is high concentration of Muslim fisher people, while in Kasaragod district there is high concentration of Hindu fisher people, and in
Southern district of Kollam, Trivandrum, Christians constitute the major segment. Both Hindu and Christian fishers reside in Alleppy and Ernakulum district. The Arab traders introduced Islam on the Malabar Coast in the 18\textsuperscript{th} Century. The Mappila Muslim fisher people in north Kerala form a cultural community with its own peculiarities (Mathew, P.T, 2001). The history of Christian communities begins with the arrival of the Portuguese at the turn of the 15\textsuperscript{th} Century.

Like other castes, the fisher folks worship the important Hindu God like Shiva and Vishnu and believe in the philosophy of the Hindu religion. They go to the nearest temple during important festivals and they also undertake pilgrimage to the famous temples in the state. Besides this, the fishing communities also have their own temple nearby their fishing hamlet. Table 3.12 shows the frequency of the religious worship of the fishing community.

\textbf{Table No 3.12. Frequency of visit for religious worship visit}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textbf{Total}</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above data it is seen that 20 percent of the respondents opined that they pay regular visit for religious worship, 56 percent of
the respondents opined that they pay occasional visit to such places and 24 percent of the respondents said that they rarely visit rarely religious places during their day-to-day activity. Besides the important Hindu Gods, innumerable local deities mostly mother Goddesses were worshiped by the fishing community. There are some mythological stories connected with the local deities (village temple) and their origin which form great tradition. The most important of all local deities named ‘Sree Kurumba Bagavathi’ is common to all village fisher folks. The Goddess mythologically associated with Lord Shiva. This deity is the personification of the Sea and she refers to Sea Goddess. The village community conducts festivals to appease the deity and get good catch while they operate fishing activity. ‘Pooja’ is performed by offering flower, clothes etc to get blessings from the God. Daily worship is carried by the same caste members. ‘Sree Kuramba Bagavathi’ is the village deity worshiped by the Hindu fishing community. They believed that the Goddess Sree Kurumaba is supposed to protect them from all kinds of ‘Vasuri’ (communicable diseases such as chicken pox) and provide health and wealth to all families residing nearby.

The religious rites that are performed and the deities that are worshiped by the fisher folks of Kasaragod district reflect their folk culture as well as their adherence to the culture of the larger society. While the Gods and Goddess of the Hindu great tradition does have a place in their worship. It is the local deities who play the most important role in the day-to-day life of the fisher folks.
Festival and fairs:

Kerala has a tradition of its own in the matter of colorful festivals and fairs from very early days. The fishing community celebrates mainly those festivals that are generally celebrated by Hindu's in the state. The most important festival celebrated in Kerala is the 'Onam' and fishing community also celebrate the same. The government of Kerala organizes and celebrates 'Onam' as a national festival in the state. Another festival which is common among Hindu's is the festival of 'Vishu' considering the astronomical New Year day. It is believed that this day would have an influence on fortunes for the whole year. Fishing community also celebrates the 'Puram' festival (Pattulsavam) associated with the temple in the month of March every year. Every fishing village there is a temple festival in every year and it is celebrated more than nine days according to the deities worshiped. The Christian fishing communities are celebrating the festival which is celebrated all over the world such as Christmas and Easter. Other than this people also celebrate 'Perunnal' in each church to honour their Saints every year. The Christian fishing community is settled in Pallikare a coastal village near Bekal Fort a world famous tourist centre. The Muslims of fishing community are also celebrating festivals such Bakrid, Ramsan and Milad-I-Sharif. Other than this Muslims celebrate the festival of feast named 'Nercha' on each Mosque and there is an annual festivals celebrated in commemoration of the arrival of Malik Iban Dinar. Table 3.13 shows the celebration of festival by the respondents.
From the above data it is clear that a vast majority of the respondents agreed that they used to celebrate their religious festival accordingly. 77 percent of the respondents opined that they celebrate festivals. Only 22 respondents said that they have no interest to celebrate all the festivals that are taking place in their village every year.

In each community there is a practice of contribution or fund collection for the celebration of community festivals and this is done for strengthening the feeling or cohesiveness among the members and to make each and every member to take part in the community and ensure community participation to a large extent. Celebration is part of the culture flowed by every community. Fund raising is a common phenomenon among the members of fishing community and each member contributes at his best to make the grand celebration of the festival. Table 3.14 shows the responses of the respondents regarding their contribution towards such festivals.
Table No. 3.14. Contribution to the festivals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributed</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>93.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not contributed</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above data it is clear that a vast majority is in support of celebration and ready to contribute towards the celebration of festivals. 93 percent of the respondents said that they do not hesitate to contribute towards fund collection and only 6 percent of the respondents felt that they would not do so for the community celebration. It can be observed that almost all the members are ready and they are actively involved in joining hand in hand for making the community festival celebration a grand success and exhibit their rich cultural heritage.

Regarding the mode of contribution for the celebration of community festival celebration people offer not only in cash but in kind also. Table 3.15 shows the various modes of contribution towards such celebrations.

Table No. 3.15. Modes of contribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of contribution</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical labour</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14.67</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the above table it is understood that 76 percent of the respondents contribute for the celebration of the community festival in the form of cash, 33 percent of the respondents said that they offer not only cash but in kind such as rice, vegetables, oil and other items required for the celebration and a meager 14 percent of them offer physical labour for the celebration of such community festivals.

To understand the cultural practices which were followed in most of the Indian villages’ questions are asked to the respondents about the practice of taboo at home. Table 3.16 shows the opinion expressed by the fishing community regarding the practice of taboo in their home.

Table No. 3.16. Taboo practiced in the home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practiced</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>37.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not practiced</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>62.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is clear that only 37 percent of the respondents opined that taboo was practiced in their home and 62 percent of the respondent said that no such taboo was practiced in their home. From the above data it is found that majority of the fishing community were not practicing any kind of taboo and that reflects the fact that progress has taken place among the people and modern cultural values are followed by the community members due to education, urbanization and technological development.
It is quite interesting to know the various occasions of taboo which was followed by a small section of the members among fishing community. Table 3.17 shows the variety of occasions that taboos are practices in their home.

**Table No 3.17. Occasions of taboo practiced**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occasion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During the puberty</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>51.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the birth</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the death</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>112</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of 112 respondent 51 percent of the respondents said that the taboo is practiced in their home during the attainment puberty for the girl child. But at the same time it is only optional. There is no much restriction inside home but only those members who have responsibilities related to work in temple and in worshiping the deities. 25 percent of the respondents said that they follow the taboo during the birth of a new born child, and it will be only few days that they will not visit pilgrimage centers as well as the village deities to worship. 23 percent of the respondents said that they follow the taboo during the death of nearer or dearer relative from their family or clan for 16 days. Thereafter the members will perform all type of auspicious ceremonies in the family as well as in the community.
Table No. 3.18. Type of restriction due to taboo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restriction</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No entry to home</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>46.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No entry to temple</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>53.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates the types of restriction due to taboo practiced by the respondents in the fishing community. 46 percent of the respondents said that there is no entry to home and 53 percent of the respondents said that there is no entry to home on the occasion of such taboo which is practiced among them.

Marriage:

Marriage is an institution of society which has different cultures. The social sanction of most cultures would imply a stable relationship, hence marriage is not co-existence with sexual life and excludes relationship which is viewed as casual relationship and not sanctioned by custom, law or church. The Hindus have both endogamous and exogamous rules limiting the selection of a mate. The Hindu community is divided into a number of castes which are endogamous groups; and in practice the caste is again divided into a number of sections. These sections are, in some cases, divided into sub-sections. The multiplicity of groups, which are endogamous in character, restricts the choice of mate (Kapadia, 1966). The Hindu fishing communities of Kasaragod district
adhere to their marriage rules. There are rules forbidding the selection of spouses from one's own group ('yillam'). There are certain relations among the people whom marriage is forbidden. These are exogamic rules. An exogamous group is one among whom inter-marriage is forbidden and which, consequently, requires at least another exogamous group with whom it may exchange its sons and/or daughters for marriage proposes (Levis- Strauss, 1960). Figure 3.3 depicts the marital status among the fishing communities.

Figure No. 3.3 Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>113.67</td>
<td>41.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above data shows the marital status of fishing community. The marital status of the respondents are classified as such as married, unmarried, divorced and widowed. 75 percent of the respondents were married, 20 respondents were unmarried, 1.33 percent were divorced and 3.67 percent were widowed. It is seen from the above analyses that majority of fishing community were married (240 respondents).
Marriages are usually arranged within the labourers’ group, small owners’ group or big owners’ group respectively and not between the groups in the fishing community. Functions performed and rituals followed are usually connected with economic status. The functions again reflect the social status of the person or family who performs the function. Marriages are preferably arranged within the same economic stratum.

Apart from economic considerations mentioned above, caste endogamy is strictly practised, when selecting bride and bridegroom. Both inter as well as intra-village marriages take place depending on the availability of brides and grooms. All families prefer kin marriages. A preferential bilateral marriage between cross cousins also takes place. At the time of marriage the girl’s family usually presents dresses, both to the bride and bridegroom. In higher economic strata the bride receives jewels and the bridegroom receives other gifts. Table 3.19 describes the type of marriage among the fishing communities.

**Table No 3.19.Type of marriage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of marriage</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arranged marriage</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>82.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love marriage</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>240</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above data shows the types of marriage such as arranged marriage, love marriage and other like inter-caste as well as inter-religion marriage. The present study explains that arranged marriage has still continued among the fishing community and there is very low preference for the love marriage and inter-caste and inter-religious marriage. Out of married people, 82 percent of the respondent married through arrangement and negotiations, 16 percent of the respondents had love marriage and 1 percent has had other form of marriage among fishing community. It is seen from the above analyses that a vast majority of fishing community preferred arranged marriage than to love marriage.

The method of mate selection practiced among the fishing community has also been observed during the study. Table 3.20 shows the method of selection of bridegroom by the fishing community in the Kasaragod coastal district of Kerala.

**Table No. 3.20. Method of selection of bridegroom**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>55.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder family members</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community head</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>197</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is clear that the fishing population follow different method for the selection of bride/bridegroom such as self,
parents, elders of family members and community head. 25 percent of the respondents said that the bridegrooms were selected by themselves, 55 percent of the respondents said that it was decided by their parents in the family, 13 percent of the respondent said that bridegrooms was selected by the elder family members and 5 percent said that there was active participation of community head in deciding the selection of bridegrooms among the fishing community.

It is very interesting to know the role played by the parents in finalizing the proposal of marriage and its approval among this community. To know about the role of parents, the questions were asked to the entire respondent to express their awareness and opinion regarding these phenomena. Table 3.21 shows the role of parents in settling the marriage proposal among the fishing community.

Table No. 3.21. Role of parents in settling marriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By parents</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>70.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By themselves</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>29.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is clear that a vast majority opined that there is a crucial role played by their parents in finalizing the proposal of marriage and deciding the mate selection among the coastal village community of Kasaragod. 70 percent of the respondents agreed that parents play an important role in selection of their partner and deciding
the acceptance of marriage from both parties. 29 percent of the respondents said that parents do not have to play any important role regarding the selection of mate and for approval of marriage and the final decision is taken by themselves.

Generally fishing community is strictly endogamous groups. The community heads do not approve inter-caste and inter-religious marriages and such marriages were not socially recognised and approved by the community. Even though there are no much strict rules followed regarding marriage alliance among the fishing community, majority follow the customs and practices which prevails in the community. Modern education and other factors influence the thinking pattern and perspective is changing among the community members. To know the opinion about inter-caste marriage and their views regarding the attitude towards it, opinions are gathered. Figure 3.4 shows the respondents outlook towards inter-caste marriage and the social approval.

Figure No. 3.4. Opinion on inter caste marriage
Though inter-caste marriage takes places among the fishing community the social approval and recognition is not sanctioned by the community immediately, but later it will not be a problem in living along with the community members. From the above data it is clear that 16 percent of the respondents are fully infavour of inter-caste marriage, 32 percent of the respondents are not fully confident to support the same and they said they partially favour inter-caste marriage among the community and 50 percent of the respondents have never agreed for an inter-caste alliance among the fishing community. The analysis shows that there is a change in the mind set of people among the community about the old believes on the selection of mate and they do not follow traditional norms strictly.

As in traditional community the marriage system followed by generations in the society become the thumb rule. Breaking such rules which are practiced by the majority is unanimously accepted by its members without questioning it and they are followed without much change. Generally the rules which are followed in the community help the individual to find the right partner and social sanctioning will also be much easy.

Figure 3.5 shows the support for traditional marriage system among the fishing community.
The above data indicates the opinion on support for traditional marriage system. 65 percent of the respondents fully encourage the traditional practice of marriage system which was followed by the community, 13 percent of the respondents said that they partially encourage the traditional practice of marriage system and 21 percent of the respondents not at all encourage the traditional practice of marriage system which was followed in the community. This shows that the attitude towards existing system of marriage is slowly changing according to the change of perspective among members of the community.

Marriage preference among fishing community which was practiced also noted during the study. It is observed that the people of southern part of the coastal districts compelled to have alliance from outside state rather than preference due to some factors. Table 3.22
shows the preference of marriage among the members of the fishing community.

**Table No. 3.22. Preference of marriage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blood relatives</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outside blood relatives</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is understood that 24 percent of the respondent would like to prefer to marry from their own blood relatives and remaining large proportion of 76 percent of the respondent would like to marry from outside blood relatives. They can choose any alliance from outside blood relatives but at the same time they do not have any alliance from their own family members called their ‘yillam’ or tharavadu’ (family clan). It is very clear that exogamy group were practiced among the fishing community.

Among the general population of Kerala state, the widows marriages have now become a socially recognized and such marriage are approved by the society. It is an exception in the fishing community. It is seen that people do not welcome the practice of widow marriage even by the majority of the people in the state as it follows the ‘varna’ system. But due to the influence of social reformers and western education, urbanization and other factors, the attitude of the people has entirely changed towards widow remarriage. Table 3.23 shows the support of the respondents towards widow remarriage.
Table No. 3.23. Support to widow-remarriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully support</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>53.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially support</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No support</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>30.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The influence of education leads to the change of attitude towards the existing believes customs and practices which were followed without being questioned and got sanction and approval from the community. The above table indicates that out of 300 samples 53 percent of the respondents said that they fully encourage and support widow-remarriage, 16 percent of the respondent said that they partially encourage and support widow-remarriage and 30 percent of the respondents expressed their negative support for widow-remarriage among the fishing community. It is through the education that awareness increases and changes of attitudes took place towards widow-remarriage but still a small percent of the people are not ready to change their attitude towards this.

The ideal age of marriage for both boys and girls shows the consciousness among the community regarding the health aspects and maturity and stability for leading a healthy and peaceful family life. Table 3.24 shows the opinion of the respondents regarding the ideal age of marriage for both boys and girls as perceived by them.
Table No. 3.24. Ideal age for the marriage for boys and girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideal age for boys</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Ideal age for girls</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-22</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10.66</td>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>26.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-24</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>26.67</td>
<td>20-21</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 &amp; above</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>62.67</td>
<td>22 &amp; above</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above data indicates the ideal age of marriage for girls and boys as perceived by the members among the fishing community. The data reveals that 10 percent of the respondents expressed the belief that the ideal age for marriage should be between 21- 22 years of age, 26 percent of the respondents expressed the belief that the ideal age for marriage should be between 23-24 years of age and 62 percent of the respondents expressed the belief that the ideal age for marriage should be between 25 & above years of age for boys. The data also reveals that 26 percent of the respondent expressed the belief that the ideal age for marriage should be between 18- 19 years of age, 33 percent of the respondents expressed the belief that the ideal age for marriage should be between 20-21 years of age and 40 percent of the respondents expressed the belief that the ideal age for marriage should be between 22 & above years of age for girls. As the data shows there is a high consciousness and awareness about the beginning of family life among fishing community.
In India one of the social problems as well as social evils is the practice of dowry system. Almost all community follows some or other type of dowry system at the time of marriage offer or final agreement. It may be called in different forms such as gifts from bride’s parents, bride’s prize or payment to retain social status or indication of socio-economic position, pocket money for the new couples or in the form of cash, land, gold ornaments, vehicles etc. Table 3.25 shows the attitudes of the respondents towards accepting dowry (‘sthreedhanam’ in Malayalam) among the fishing community.

Table No. 3.25. Dowry practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>25.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not accept</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above data it can be seen that 25 percent of the respondents accept the system of dowry and a vast majority do not agree in accepting the one of social evils in the modern society. It is clear that there is a change of attitude among the fishing community that they are not in favour of the practice of dowry system.

The criteria for the selection of partner have changed according to the change in other factors among the fishing community. The age old believes and criteria are all substituted with new criteria in selection and
proposal of alliance between male and female. Table 3.26 shows the various criteria chosen by the respondents in selecting their partner.

Table No. 3.26. Criteria for selection of spouse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational background</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>18.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family background</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other consideration</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>240</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above data indicates that out of 240 married respondents 13 percent of them have expressed the opinion that the criteria for selection of partner is their educational background, 15 percent of them have the opinion that occupation was the criteria for selection of partner, 18 percent of them have expressed the opinion that the criteria for selection of partner is their character, 14 percent of them have expressed the opinion that beauty was the criteria for selection of partner, 25 percent of them have said that family background was the criteria for selection of partner, 12 percent of them are of the view that other factors are the criteria for selection of partner. Data shows the variety of criteria used by the fishing community for selection of their partner.
As fishing community practice exogamous group, the place of selection of partner has also been also studied. The fishing community believes that alliance from the same ‘tharavadu’ (family clan) was incestuous and restricted. Figure 3.6 shows the place of selection of partners by the respondents among the fishing community.

**Figure No. 3.6. Place of selection of partner**

![Pie chart showing the distribution of partners selected by the respondents.](image_url)

The above data indicates that 22 percent of the respondents selected their partners and married from their own village, 45 percent of the respondents selected their partners and married from nearby village, 8 percent of the respondents selected their partners and married outside the Taluk, 21 percent of the respondents selected their partners and married outside the district 1 percent of the respondents selected their partners and
married from the nearby state. The data shows that majority of the respondents married either from the nearby the villages or from their own village.

**Conclusion:**

The above discussion indicates that in general the standard of life of fishing community is not very low in the study area. Some respondents do have a low standard of living while few respondents have moderately high standard of life. Most of the respondents have income level to a middle standard of life. It shows that respondents are from different strata various age groups, educational background, occupational status, income, housing situation and standard of living.