

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING  
EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS  
IN A MARGINALISED COMMUNITY ;  
A Case Study on the Marine Fisherfolk of Kerala**

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**1989**

## CERTIFICATE

I here by affirm that the research work for this dissertation titled "Socio-Economic Factors. Influencing Educational Standards in a Marginalised community: A Case Study on the Marine Fisherfolk of Kerala" being submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University for the award of Master of Philosophy, was carried out entirely by me at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum.

Trivandrum

Date: 29/12/89.

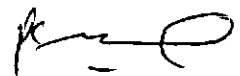
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This is to certify that this dissertation titled "Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Educational Standards in a Marginalised community: A Case Study on the Marine Fisherfolk of Kerala" is a bonafide work of Jessy Thomas and has not been considered for the award of any other degree by any other university. This dissertation may be forwarded for evaluation.

  
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## INTRODUCTION

It is generally held that economic development of a country is influenced by investment in both physical and human capital. Therefore in national development policy human capital investment, particularly educational investment, gets a prior position. This is evident from the fact that the share of educational investment in GNP of developed countries is as high as six percent. On the other hand, in developing countries the corresponding share is only one per cent (Philips, 1976).

While investment in human capital has been a major source of growth in developed countries, the negligible investment in human capital in developing countries have hardly contributed to extend the capacity of people to meet the challenges of accelerated development. This manifests itself in the low labour efficiency, factor immobility, deficient supply of entrepreneurship, customary values and traditional social institutions that minimise the incentive for economic change (Mynt, 1954) and above all in the lower physical quality of life.

Thus the level of education is rightly considered as one of the criteria to differentiate the developed region from a developing region. From the experience of developed countries, Galbraith (1983:16) remarked, " economic development is what education allows."



Kerala's development pattern bears ample testimony to the above suggestion. Even though Kerala's per capita income remains one of the lowest among the Indian states, (ranking only thirteenth in 1987), it has managed to achieve a much higher physical quality of life --lower birth, death and morbidity rate along with higher consumption levels. Kerala's high literacy rates (70.4 percent) and higher average level of education are primarily responsible for this achievement.

However, within the State there are certain groups, such as the scheduled tribes and the marine fisherfolk, which depict a different picture. These less privileged groups of the State have always been in a disadvantaged position. Due to ecological and socio-economic constraints, they were doomed to ignorance and illiteracy for centuries. Various attempts made by the Christian missionaries in the early stages and later on by the State Government for the educational upliftment of these groups enabled them to get more exposed to the mainstream society. However, these groups continue to have the lowest position in the matter of literacy rates in the State.

To elaborate: the literacy rates of the two less privileged groups, viz. the scheduled tribes and the fisherfolk, according to the 1981 Census, is only 32 percent and 51 percent respectively, while the State average is as high as 70 percent. But, due to various infra-structural facilities, incentives and special assistance provided to them by the government and few organisations, their present problem appears to be not that of illiteracy but of low educational standards. This is quite

evident from their high levels of drop-outs and their inability to compete successfully in jobs at all levels.

The main thrust of this study, is to analyse the plausible relationship that exist between education and economic development of a less privileged group in Kerala --marine fisherfolk-- and further to probe into the various social and economic factors that are responsible for their low educational standards.

#### **CHAPTER SCHEME**

We present the study in seven chapters. In Chapter 1 we review various views and empirical studies that have been done on the subject matter of our study. The main focus of the study, methodology and objectives are given in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3 a clear picture of the fishing communities of the State is given with due emphasis on their various social and economic factors that are relevant for our study and further the three sample villages are discussed in detail. An analysis of the relationship between education and economic development of the fisherfolk is done in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5 & 6 the various internal and external factors that influence the educational standards of the fisherfolk are analysed and finally in Chapter 7 the summary of the study is given along with the conclusions drawn from the study.

## CHAPTER 1

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of literature covers three aspects which are of relevance to us in this study. First we will review some of the materials that exists on the subject of education and economic development. This will be followed by a brief look into the state of knowledge on the issue of wastage in education. Both the former relationship and the latter issue are of central concern in our study. Coming to the specific context of Kerala State we shall review the studies that have been conducted regarding the educational and socio-economic conditions of the marginalised communities in the State.

#### Education and Economic Development

The relationship between education and economic development has been a highly debated issue even from very early days. It continues to be so even today. The different views regarding the relation between the two variables is reviewed in some detail in this section. For the sake of convenience, they are grouped as the views expressed on this issue from the merchantalists period until the 1950's as 'early views', and the views from the 1950's onwards when the economists got interested in this issue till the recent period, inclusive of few empirical studies done both internationally and within India as 'latest views'.

### Early Views

Early mercantilists like John Hales and Gerald Malynes were in favour of education being confined to specific privileged groups in society who would assist the rulers in the formulation of correct policies for national economic development. Another group of mercantilists, notably William Petty, Nehemiah Green and James Stuart advocated mass education for rapid economic progress.

The classical economists on their part were not concerned with the macro relationship between education and economic progress. They stressed the micro relationship between education and personal efficiency. Adam Smith believed that education would lead to the development of intelligent and disciplined behaviour among the people which was essential for rapid economic progress. Other classical economists like Malthus and Senior were of the opinion that education would dampen population growth and promote habits of savings. Marx looked upon education as a means to reduce the inhuman miseries caused to the workers by division of labour.

The neo classical economists (1870-1930) who were primarily concerned with the economics of equilibrium, were not bothered about the economic improvements brought about by education either at the micro or at the macro level. The radicals and neo marxists on the other hand, were not interested in the question of how education contributed to social and economic development, but rather in what kind of education was appropriate for what sort of development and in whose interests? They did not deny the

contribution of education to economic growth, but they were concerned only about the particular form that education had taken as it historically evolved in western capitalist societies.

Keynes and his followers were in general, not interested in this kind of problem. Their short run theory of output and employment determination was based entirely upon expenditure on (material) investment. Even when Keynesian economics was later elaborated to include a long term theory of capitalist growth, its emphasis was mainly on mechanical relations among material categories like the capital-output ratio, the income-savings ratio and so on (Gopinathan Nair, 1978; Tilak, 1987; Fagerlind & Saha, 1983)

#### Latest Views

Empirical studies in the post war period on the sources of growth in output and productivity in a number of countries have demonstrated that, a large part of the increase in aggregate production over a long period cannot be explained in terms of an increase in the standard physical inputs of 'capital' and 'labour' alone. This implied that apart from capital and labour, there are some unisolated factors contributing to economic growth. Solow (1957) attributed this 'residual factor' to as much as 50 to 85 percent of the increase in total output of advanced countries. (also see, National Bureau of Economic Research, 1959). Obviously, this has provoked economists to look for the residual factors and hence from the late 1950's onwards economists began to pay serious attention to the role of human capital in economic growth and development. The Presidential Address of Theodore

Schultz to the American Economic Association in 1960 probably marked the beginning of what Bowman(1966) later described as the 'human investment revolution' in economic thought (Tilak,1987: 18). This revolution established that education was an investment and an important component of human capital.

The theoretical framework most responsible for the widespread adoption of the view that education was important for development has come to be known as the 'Human Capital Theory'. Based on the work of economists such as Schultz(1961), Denison(1962) and Becker(1964) human capital theory rested on the assumption that formal education is highly instrumental and even necessary to improve the production capacity of a population (Fagerlind & Saha,1983).

Between 1950's and 1970's, sociologists had a general view that there is a direct relationship between education and socio-economic development. To them education, particularly, schooling was perhaps the most important agent for transferring society into a modern one (ibid).

In India, the direct and indirect effects of education on economic development has been looked into by Goel(1975), Kothari and Panchmuki(1975) and many other scholars. They were of the opinion that education affects economic development directly through enhanced productivity and employment, changes in the composition of the labour force, division and mobility of labour and so forth. Education was pointed to indirectly influence economic development through savings, limitations of the size of

the family, and by inculcating the right kind of attitudes and skills as well as by removing some of the obstacles to social change and progress.

This direct and indirect relationship between education and economic development has been examined in a different way by George Psacharapoulos(1988). He termed the direct relationship from school to the labour market as the "external efficiency of education". The relation between family background, schooling and learning outcomes as the "internal efficiency of education".

A few empirical studies have also been undertaken to examine the extent of the relation between education and economic development. Some of these studies discussed below, show that there exist some relation between the two variables, whereas others rule out the possibility of any relation between the two variables.

An international comparison of the relationship between education and economic performance was done by Kiong-Hock Lee and George Psacharopoulos(1979). They divided the 114 countries into 3 groups, that is, the developing countries with per capita income less than \$750; intermediate countries with per capita income between \$750 and \$2000 and advanced countries with per capita income above \$2000.

The data that they used refer to a set, each of education and economic indicators for 1960 and 1970 in 114 countries as reported in IBRD(1976) and UNESCO(1976). The educational

indicators used were the percentage of adults who were literate; the percentage enrolment ratio in primary, secondary and higher education respectively; and the percentage enrolment in vocational education relative to total enrolment in secondary education. The economic indicators are per capita income(GNP) in 1973 measured in US dollars, the percentage of the labour force employed in agriculture, and the average growth rate of GNP at constant prices during the 1960's. The social indicator used was the number of people in the population per medical doctor.

Using simple correlation matrices they found that at low levels of economic development, educational development contributes significantly to further economic development. This was because education even of a low quality adds to the productivity of the worker and this in turn would contribute to higher national output. At the intermediate and advanced economic levels, they found that educational development was not strongly associated with economic development. This was mainly because these countries have more or less achieved 'universal education' especially at the primary level. Therefore enrolment beyond this level may be considered 'education producing' rather than 'wealth producing'. Moreover, enrolment ratios in these countries may be poor measures of the the quality of education and hence of the actual and potential stock of human capital. At these advanced levels, physical capital and technical change are more important than education.

Another international comparison was done by Bowman and Anderson (1963) to examine the relation between education and



national income. They looked at literacy rates (the percentage of adults who have achieved rudimentary literacy) in 1950 and GNP per head in 1955, measured in US dollars in 83 countries. From the experience of these countries they concluded that 40 percent literacy rate seemed to be a pre-requisite for incomes to exceed \$300 per head and that 90 percent literacy seemed to be necessary to realize income over \$500. Eventhough they found such a close association between literacy rates and GNP per head, higher literacy rates were sometimes found in very low income countries. Therefore their studies show that literacy was a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for development.

In India, a study was conducted by Goel (1975) to examine whether there existed a direct and significant relationship between growth of education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels on the one hand, and economic development as measured by the per capita income at current prices on the other. He found a high and positive correlation between education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels and percapita income at current prices. He also found that since the correlation of education with per capita income at constant prices was lower than those with per capita income at current prices, education cannot be regarded as a determinant of economic growth. To him education is only one subset in a complex of factors, such as, natural resources, labour, physical and human capital that brings about economic growth.

In Kerala, Gopinathan Nair (1978) has looked into the influence of educational development on the course of social,

demographic and occupational change. He found a positive relation between education and social developments in Kerala. With educational development a new social awakening was visible in most sections of the society which resulted in the emergence of many social reform movements both among the depressed and privileged sections of the society. This social awakening in turn led to a rapid growth of cultural activities like the production and publication of an increasing number of books, journals and news papers as well as the wide spread establishment of libraries and reading rooms in all parts of the State.

Gopinanthan Nair's study also looked into the positive benefits of educational development on the demographic changes of Kerala. He found that the death rate and birth rate had a highly significant negative correlation with the literacy rates in the various districts of Kerala. Relatively high death and birth rates were found in the educationally backward districts of the state.

Further his study pointed out that, the growth of education in the state has not led to any significant change in the inter-sectoral distribution and occupational structure of the population. Even though the proportion of the working force engaged in the primary sector declined from 64.2 percent in 1901 to 55 percent in 1971, and the corresponding proportion in the tertiary sector increased from 20.6 percent to 28.6 percent, this change does not imply an inter-sectoral shift, but it is because the work participation ratio has declined sharply in the agricultural sector and remained constant in the other sectors.

This has resulted in a phenomenal growth of unemployment particularly among the agricultural population and the educated. The educated in the rural areas began to search for employment opportunities outside agriculture, thus bringing 'disguised unemployment' out into the open. Kerala's experience thus shows that widespread educational development can take place in economically backward societies and that many social benefits, both direct and indirect, can result from such a process.

From the different views discussed above, it can be inferred that, even from the days of merchantalists, education was given due importance and it has been upheld as an important catalyst that accelerates the economic and social development of a country. Further, a few empirical studies confirmed that educational development can take place in economically backward societies, with the society enjoying many direct and indirect social benefits. This can be true in the case of the totality of a state or a country, but the practicality of this possibility is very limited in the case of a less privileged group, who are economically and socially very backward. In their case, the main incentive behind their education is a remunerative job. In the case of a majority of them, lack of prospects for employment following their education acts as an important factor for their increasing drop-outs. However, no serious study has been done to empirically prove the sort of relation that can exist between the two variables in the case of a particular community or group, who depend primarily on a traditional occupation for their living.

### Wastage in Education

An important factor which requires special treatment while analysing the educational development of a country is the magnitude of wastage in education. This problem has been looked into as early as 1928 by the Hartog Committee and more recently by the Kothari Committee (1). Hartog Committee has defined 'wastage' to mean 'the premature withdrawal of children from school at any stage before the completion of the primary course' and 'stagnation' was defined to mean 'the retention in a lower class of a period more than a year'. In India, Gopinathan Nair (1978) has made an attempt to estimate the drop-out and stagnation rates at the stage of elementary education in the different states in India. He observed that in most states in India both the drop-out and the stagnation rates are lower in the higher classes than in lower classes; highest rates was found particularly in Classes I to III. At the all India level wastage due to stagnation in classes I to IV came to 39.4 percent and that due to drop-out to 46.3 percent of the minimum necessary cost for education. Further he found out that in most states the wastage due to drop-out and stagnation was higher for girls than for boys. His study further asserted that among the states in India, Kerala has the lowest wastage particularly due to drop-outs. In Kerala only 15.2 percent of the boys and 10.8 percent of the girls entering the system, drop-out before completing four years of schooling. Kerala High Level Committee on Education and Employment (1982) has pointed out that of the total drop-outs in Kerala about 70 per cent belong to SC and ST and other weaker sections of the society. Since our study concentrates on a particular less privileged group at a particular point of time,

we will not be able to take into consideration the conventional drop-outs from among them, meanwhile we will be considering the total number of those who discontinued their studies.

All the studies that have looked into the causes for wastage and stagnation in education in India has pointed out that the most common causes are poverty and indifference of parents, need for children to be engaged in domestic work; need for them to do paid work to supplement family income; sometimes education being irrelevant; want of instructional materials and so on (Seetaramu & Usha Devi, 1985: 4).

#### Studies Specific to Marginalised Communities in Kerala

Few studies have been conducted on the educational status of the marginalised communities in Kerala. For instance, taking the case of tribals, we can see that the majority of these studies have been on the tribal economy of Kerala. These studies (Kattakayam, 1983; Luiz, 1962; Kunhaman, 1982) have looked in detail at the tribal economy of Kerala and the changing pattern of the life of the hill tribes.

A study was undertaken to understand the educational problems of the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) college students in Kerala (George, 1975). This study looked into the attitude and opinion of SC and ST respondents towards their problems and to their upliftment as a whole. It also further tried to assess the attitude and opinion of teachers who teach the SC/ST students in various colleges. Similar studies under an ICSSR project have been undertaken in states like Punjab, Haryana, Bihar and West Bengal.

PRG Mathur's (1977) study on the tribal situation in Kerala made an attempt to analyse and describe the functioning of the Government Residential Basic Tribal Schools in Wynad on the one hand, and the inter-relationship between economic development and tribal education on the other. The author found a close relation between the education of tribal children and economic conditions of their parents. Further he concludes that tribal education should be functional. It should result in providing new knowledge, skills and new technology so that their economic development is ensured.

Reviewing the literature on the fisherfolk of Kerala, we see that many studies have looked into the socio-economic conditions of the fisherfolk of Kerala (Iyengar, 1985; CMFRI, 1985; Vasavan, 1982; Kurien, 1986; Mathur, 1977). All of them have looked into the living conditions of the fisherfolk and the various socio-economic factors influencing their way of life. In all these studies the educational backwardness of the fisherfolk has been cited as an important factor responsible for their low socio-economic status in society. Some of the studies concentrated mainly on the impact of modern technology on the traditional fishermen of Kerala (Klausen, 1968; Iyengar, 1987; Achari, 1986; Kurien, 1985).

Even though many studies on the fisherfolk of Kerala have highlighted their educational backwardness as an important factor for their social and economic backwardness, no serious work has been done to analyse the possible impact their education has on

their income levels, occupational mobility and the levels of unemployment among them. Moreover no study has been undertaken to probe into the socio-economic factors that are responsible for their low educational standards. We have no knowledge of the factors responsible for persons in the fishing communities discontinuing their schooling. This study is a modest attempt to enquire into these factors.

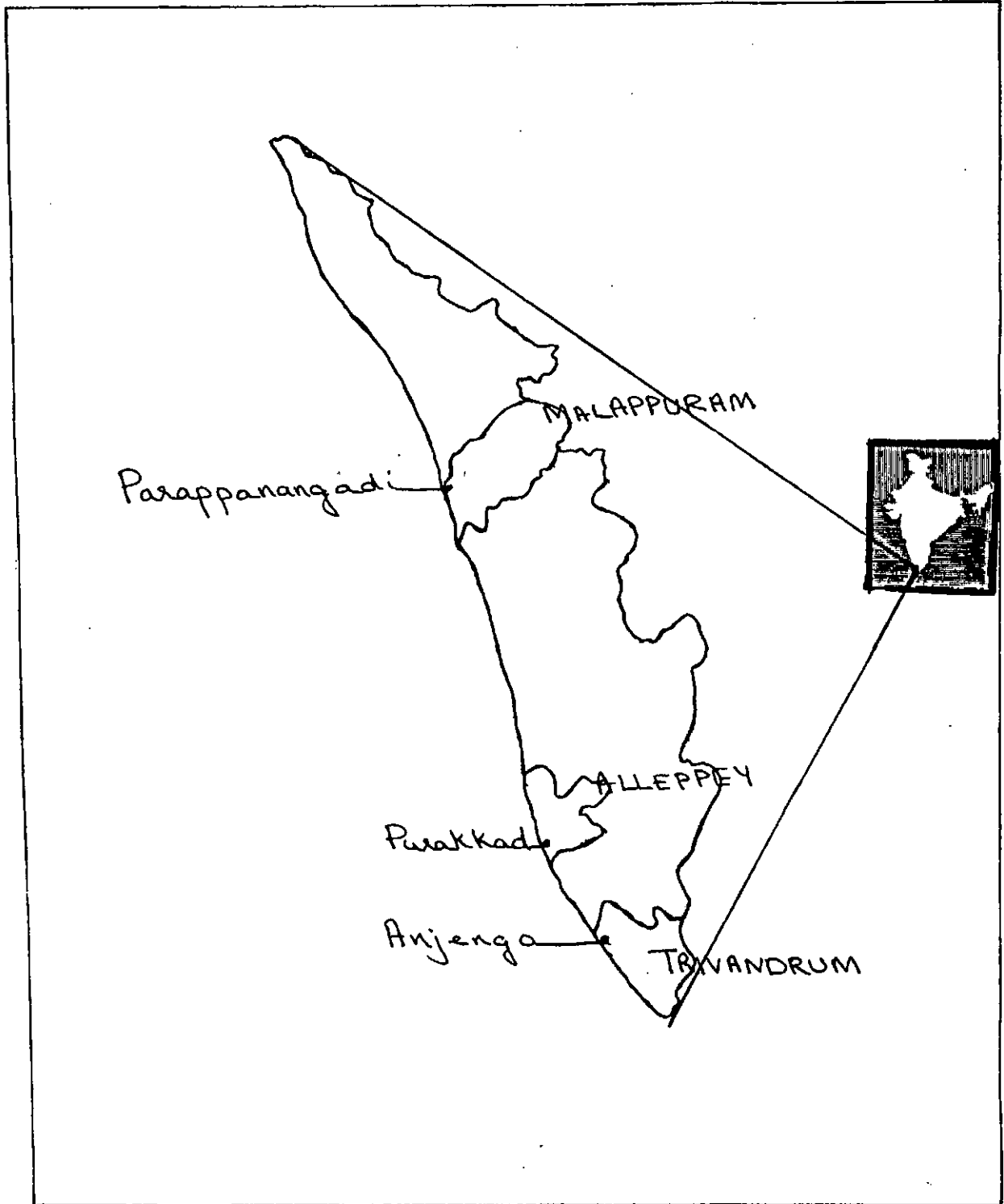
### Notes

1. Hartog Committee is an auxiliary committee appointed by the Indian Statutory Commission in 1929 to review the growth of education in British India.

Kothari Committee submitted a report to the Education Commission on Education and Development in 1970.



MAP OF KERALA SHOWING THE THREE SAMPLE VILLAGES



## CHAPTER 2

### FOCUS OF THE STUDY, METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES

Our study will concentrate on the fisherfolk of Kerala State. This community has been geographically marginal and depend on a natural resource for their livelihood. They live in dense but highly dispersed clusters along the entire 590 km coastal belt of the state. Education exposed them further to the mainstream society. Both the Centre and State government provide various incentives for them in the form of lump-sum grants, noon-meal facilities, residential schools and so forth to promote education among them. In spite of all the efforts taken by the Government, it is surprising to find that even now the majority of them are not much aware of the importance of education. And where they are, there are many socio-economic factors that stand as a stumbling block for their further educational development. Since the literacy rate is one of the factors which is a proxy for educational performance, it is shown in the following table, which highlights the inter-regional disparities found in the literacy rate among the total population and the fishing population of Kerala.

Fisherfolk in Trivandrum and Malappuram districts had the lowest level of literacy, and those in Ernakulam and Alleppey had the highest level of literacy.

**Table 2.1: District-wise Distribution of the Literacy rate of the Total Population and Fishing Population**  
(in percentage)

Districts	Literacy rate	
	* Total population (1981)	**Fishing population (1979)
Trivandrum	71	39
Quilon	74	68
Alleppey	79	72
Ernakulam	77	80
Trichur	74	66
Malappuram	61	35
Kozhikode	70	67
Cannanore	66	65
State Total	70	62

Source: \*Census of India 1981 (Kerala) Primary Census Abstract.  
\*\* Census of Fisherfolk 1979 Dept. of Fisheries 1982

In order to look in detail at the reasons for these inter-regional disparities, we will be concentrating our study on the fisherfolk of three districts of Kerala, that is, Trivandrum, Alleppey and Malappuram. (see Map 1).

### **Sample Selection**

For the purpose of our detailed analysis we selected three villages-- one in each of the districts. The main criteria used to select these villages was the accessibility to them in terms of obtaining what we considered to be good information. The villages selected were Anjengo in Trivandrum District, Purakkad in Alleppey District and Parappanangadi in Malappuram District.

Since the three villages selected were distant from each other and due to the paucity of time we had to restrict ourselves to a sample size of 25 households from each village. In selecting the sample households of two villages, Anjengo and

Parappanangadi, we had the help of a voluntary organisation working among the fisherfolk, situated in Trivandrum, which was conducting a socio-economic survey. Their criteria for selecting the sample was to use the method known as "wealth ranking" (Grandin, 1988). This is a simple method widely used for collecting necessary socio-economic data of small, rural communities. It is a card-sorting technique, by which, two or three informants of the concerned community, by using small cards help to rank the households of the community on the basis of their wealth status. Once the households were ranked the members of the organisation randomly selected 50 households. The same method was followed in the second village also. From the households thus selected, we purposively took 25 households from each village.

In the case of the third village, that is, Purakkad we had to depend on the house listing of the Panchayat Office of the respective village. In that Panchayat fisherfolk were concentrated in two wards. We selected at random 25 households from the two wards.

#### Methodology of Data Collection

Primary data was collected by administering a questionnaire method and by holding discussions with the younger and older generation of the village. The questionnaire included questions regarding their literacy level, occupation, details about currently studying children, details about those who discontinued their studies, about those never educated, the parents education and their impression about the current

education trend prevalent in the village and the degree of influence of the various socio-economic factors of the village on the education of their children.

Available secondary data on the incentives and other assistance given by the Government and other voluntary organisation for the educational and economic upliftment of the fisherfolk were collected from the respective offices.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyse the possible relationship that exist between education and economic development of the fisherfolk, and
2. To identify the influence of the social and economic factors within the village and the incentives and facilities provided by the State Government and voluntary organisations on the educational standards of the fisherfolk.

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## CHAPTER 3

### FISHING COMMUNITIES OF KERALA STATE

While fisherfolk in general form a single community, they are composed of heterogeneous groups with a variety of religious, socio-cultural and economic differences. It is to get a representative picture of this heterogeneity that we selected fishing villages in the three districts: Trivandrum, Alleppey and Malappuram for our study.

The three maritime districts are located in the south, lower central and northern areas of the coastline of Kerala (refer Map 1). The former two are located in the region which formed the erstwhile State of Travancore and the latter in the region which formed the erstwhile Malabar District of the Madras Presidency. Travancore and Malabar have been influenced by different traditions of social and cultural development. Travancore has been known for its early advancement in literacy and education (refer Tharakan, 1984).

The three major religions among fisherfolk are represented in the three districts of Trivandrum, Alleppey and Malappuram respectively. The traditional fishing practices and technologies in these districts are different and the employment prospect of those who do not take to fishing early in life can vary significantly. The extent of involvement of women in the economic activities of the fishing sector also vary significantly.

In this chapter we give details of the above characteristics-- and also a few others-- which will provide an understanding of the possible variations in the social, economic and cultural factors that promote and hinder literacy and education among fisherfolk. We shall also present details of the three villages selected for the study.

For facts about the three districts we depended on secondary data of the State Fisheries Department (1987, 1979 & 1985) and the Census of India (1971 & 1981).

### Characteristics of the Fishing Communities

#### 1. Population

According to the Fisheries Census conducted by the Fisheries Department 1985, there were 98,178 marine fishermen households in Kerala, with a total population of 650,143, with 334,001 males and 316,142 females. Among the three districts in our study, Trivandrum has got the highest density of population. The coastal length of Trivandrum district is 78 kms, Alleppey 82 kms and Malappuram 70 kms. Of the 222 marine fishing villages in the State, there are 42 villages in Trivandrum, 30 in Alleppey and about 23 in Malappuram. When we take into consideration the total number of fisherfolk households in the State, nearly 22.5 percent are concentrated in Trivandrum, 15 percent in Alleppey and 9 percent in Malappuram. So the average household per village is the highest in Trivandrum-- about 525 households. It is only 490 and 386 households for Alleppey and Malappuram. The average household size is the highest in Malappuram followed by Alleppey and Trivandrum. The details are given in Table 3.1 given below.

**Table 3.1: Distribution of the Fishing Community in the Three Districts**

(in percentage)						
Districts	Coast lines (kms) *	Number of marine villages *	Number of hhs of marine	Average no of hhs/village	Total fisher folk	Average hhs size
Trivandrum	78	42	22,070	525	1,17,128	5.3
Alleppey	82	30	14,695	490	1,04,415	7.1
Malappuram	70	23	8,890	386	76,216	8.6
<b>State Total</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>98,178</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>6,50,143</b>	<b>6.6</b>

Source: 1. Census of fisherfolk in Kerala 1985, Dept: of Fisheries (provisional) 1989.

2. \* Kerala Fisheries an overview 1987, Dept: of Fisheries.

## 2. Religion

In the State as a whole the fisherfolk population is fairly evenly distributed between the three major religions-- Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Christian fishermen are concentrated in Trivandrum, Quilon and Alleppey district; Muslims are mostly in the northern districts of Malappuram, Kozhikode and Cannanore; and Hindus are the majority in Alleppey and Ernakulam. In the early days, spread of education among the less privileged groups of the State was advocated by the religious leaders for the propagation of their religious beliefs. Later on, social and economic development of the weaker sections became an equally important objective of religious leaders and religious institutions. We have taken the three districts as representative of the three religious communities. Table 3.2 given below gives the distribution of the fishing households by religion in the three districts.



**Table 3.2: Distribution of Fishing Households by Religion**  
(in percentage)

Districts	Total No. of households	Hindus	Muslims	Christians
Trivandrum	22070	4.5	20.5	75.0
Alleppey	14695	40.5	4.0	55.5
Malappuram	8890	3.0	97.0	0.0
<b>State Total</b>	<b>98178</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>31.0</b>	<b>36.0</b>

Source: Census of fisherfolk in Kerala 1985, Dept: of Fisheries (provisional) 1989.

In Alleppey we see a more or less equal distribution of Christian and Hindu fishermen, but towards the north of Alleppey there is a pre-dominance of Hindus. So Alleppey in our sample has been taken as a representative of Hindu fishing district.

### 3. Fishing Technology

The craft that traditional fishermen in Kerala has been using from very early days are Cattamarams, Plank-built canoes and Dug-out canoes.

Cattamarams are made by tying together few logs of light-wood. This craft is used for off-shore fishing and therefore fishermen can use a wide variety of fishing gear. This craft requires highly skilled labour. In order to master this skill, parents encourage their children to go with them for fishing. The other crafts the two types of canoes are used for near-shore fishing. These crafts do not require much skill and so a person can learn its technique even after he becomes an adult.

Among the three districts, Cattamarams are widely used in Trivandrum, Plank-built canoes in Alleppey and Dug-out canoes in Malappuram. The table given below gives an idea about the district-wise distribution of these traditional fishing crafts.

**Table 3.3: Distribution of Traditional Fishing Crafts**  
(in percentage)

Districts	Total No. Crafts	Plank-built Canoes	Dug-out Canoes	Cattamaram
Trivandrum	12,495	7.3	10.3	82.4
Alleppey	2,177	66.2	33.8	0
Malappuram	2,013	29.7	70.3	0
<b>State Total</b>	<b>20,271</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>39.6</b>	<b>43.6</b>

Source: Kerala Fisheries an overview, 1987. Department of Fisheries, Kerala. p.53

From 1980 onwards, motorisation of country crafts evolved as a new strategy in the traditional fishing sector to step up the operational efficiency of the fishing units in a bid to increase fish production and income of fishermen. These motorised boats are now used on an increasing scale in all the traditional fishing villages. With the introduction of motorised crafts more persons-- even the educated who were reluctant to go for fishing in the country crafts and those who cannot find employment outside their sector-- have begun to get involved in fishing.

#### 4. Economically active fishermen

The definition of active fishermen are those persons who actively pursue the activities connected with fishing either on a full time or part time basis.

According to the Fisheries Census 1979, out of the 7,78,882 persons in the fishermen households, 1,61,267, that is approximately 1/5th of the fishermen population were actively engaged in fishing. Nearly 91 percent of the active fishermen in the State were in the working age-group of 15-54 years. About three percent of the active fishermen were children and about six percent were older people of above 55 years. The age-wise distribution of the active fishermen in the three districts are given in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4: Age-wise Distribution of Active Fishermen**  
(in percentage)

Age	Trivandrum	Allepp- ey	Malapp- uram	State Total
Below 15 yrs	4.3	1.1	4.4	3.2
15 to 44	76.5	83.8	78.3	78.0
44 to 54	12.7	10.8	13.2	13.2
55& above	6.5	4.2	4.1	5.6
Active Fishermen	100 (25,081)	100 (19,743)	100 (12,432)	100 (1.21.959)
Total Fisher- folk popula- tion	1,27,384	87,027	57,998	6,02,467

Note: Figures in brackets represent the number of active fishermen  
Source: Census of Fisherfolk in Kerala 1979, Dept: of Fisheries, 1982.

In absolute numbers Trivandrum has got more active fishermen, when compared to the other two districts. But when they are taken as a percentage of the total fisherfolk population in the districts, all the three districts have comparatively equal percentage of active fishermen. Taking their age-wise

classification into consideration, we see more active fishermen in the age group below 15 in Trivandrum and Malappuram than Alleppey. In Trivandrum, their involvement at an early age may have some relation to the type of technology used (as we have mentioned earlier). The reason for larger number of the 'below 15' age-group in Malappuram, may be due to various social reasons within the villages, which will be looked at in detail in the forthcoming chapters.

#### 5. Fisherfolk engaged in marketing of fish.

In addition to fishing, a large number of persons in the fishing community are engaged in the marketing of fish. They mostly carry the day's catch by headload, shoulder load or cycle load to the nearby households or markets for selling directly to consumers. Except a few districts, a major share of this work is being done by women from the fishing community. Even though they are a source of income to the family, their activities can affect the educational development of their children. Since women fish vendors are engaged in work always away from home, this can have negative effects on the learning habits of their children.

According to the Fisheries Census 1979, of the total fish vendors, 60.70 percent were women vendors. Mostly Christian women are engaged in this business. In our districts, more number of women fish vendors are found in Trivandrum followed by Alleppey. Table 3.5 given below will give us an idea about the number of men and women engaged in this activity in the three districts.

**Table 3.5: Distribution of Persons Engaged in Marketing of Fish**  
(in percentage)

Districts	Total No. of persons	Male	Female
Trivandrum	5154	11.0	89.0
Alleppey	6117	37.0	63.0
Malappuram	340	94.8	5.2
<b>State Total</b>	<b>28263</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>60.7</b>

Source: Census of fisherfolk in Kerala 1979, Dept: of Fisheries, 1982.

### 6. Income

According to the Fisheries Census 1985, 72.5 percent of the fishermen in the marine sector had annual income below Rs.5000, 23.1 percent had below Rs.10,000 and only 4.4 percent had income above Rs.10,000. The distribution of the annual income of the fishermen of the three districts is given below.

**Table 3.6: Distribution of Fishing Households by Annual Income**  
(in percentage)

Districts	Total No. of households	1000-5000	5000-10000	10000-25000
Trivandrum	22070	85.2	13.4	1.4
Alleppey	14695	75.2	22.6	2.2
Malppuram	8890	45.5	40.5	14.0
<b>State Total</b>	<b>98178</b>	<b>72.5</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>4.4</b>

Source: Census of fisherfolk in Kerala, 1985, Dept: of Fisheries (provisional) 1989.

In Trivandrum and Alleppey, a greater percentage of households have lower incomes. In Malappuram incomes are more or

less evenly spread in the lower two levels and a comparatively greater percentage of households fall into the highest income category.

The ownership pattern of land among fishing households will give us an idea about their wealth. According to the 1979 Census on Fisherfolk in Kerala, nearly 84.2 percent of the households owned land. The size of holdings of land in each district is given in the table 3.6.1 below.

**Table 3.6.1: Distribution of Fishing Households by Ownership of Land**

Districts	* No: of HH's	HH's possessed with land	(in percentage)		
			Size of holdings (in cents)		
			0 to 5	6 to 25	26 to 500
Trivandrum	22355	76	69	26	5
Alleppey	22383	78	25	66	8
Malappuram	7552	89	39	48	13
<b>State Total</b>	<b>118801</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>11</b>

Note: \* Includes both marine and inland households.

Source: Census of Fisherfolk in Kerala, 1979, Dept: of Fisheries (provisional) 1989.

A greater percentage of households in Malappuram possess land than those of Alleppey and Trivandrum. Thus taking income and land holding we can conclude that fisherfolk in Malappuram are in a better overall financial situation, followed by those in Alleppey and Trivandrum.

## 7. Physical Environment

The housing conditions of the fishermen are extremely poor. Majority of the houses are kutcha houses and huts with hardly two or three rooms without proper lighting facilities. According to

the Fisheries Census 1979, nearly 48 percent of them live in Kutcha houses, 36 percent in huts and only 16 percent in Pucca houses. Their houses are always exposed to monsoon and sea erosions since they are generally located very close to the sea face. Majority of the houses in the fishing village do not have electric lighting. According to the Census, 95 percent of households in Alleppey, 94 percent in Malappuram and 85 percent in Trivandrum do not have electric connections.

Scarcity of good drinking water has always been a problem in the fishing villages. Some of the households get water from unprotected common wells and from tanks which are subject to perennial contamination. In many cases, the family members especially women and children of the family will have to walk long distances for water. As per Fisheries Census 1985, nearly 90 percent of the households in Alleppey, 76 percent in Trivandrum and 62 percent in Malappuram depend on common source for drinking water.

Added to this has been the poor sanitary conditions in which the families live. According to the Fisheries Census 1985, in Alleppey nearly 89 percent, Trivandrum 78 percent and in Malappuram 71 percent of the households do not have separate latrine facilities. All these factors clearly explain the pathetic condition in which the fisherfolk live. Table 3.7 will give an idea about the number of households who have the various facilities in the three districts.

**Table 3.7: Distribution of HH's on the basis of Type of House, Drinking Water Facilities, Electrification and Sanitation Facilities**

(in percentage)

	Trivandrum	Alleppey	Malapp- uram	State Total
-----				
*				
<u>Type of House</u>				
No: of huts	45.0	61.4	64.4	48.0
No: of kutcha houses	42.8	24.6	27.6	36.0
No: of pucca houses	12.2	14.0	8.0	16.0
-----				
<u>Drinking water facilities</u>				
Owned well	15.2	7.1	35.8	16.6
Owned tap	.73	2.5	2.7	3.6
-----				
HH's electrified*	15.0	5.0	6.0	10.0
-----				
HH's with Latrine facilities	22.4	11.2	28.7	18.8
-----				

Source; 1 \* Census of Fisherfolk in Kerala 1979, Dept: of Fisheries 1982.

2 Census of Fisherfolk in Kerala 1985, Dept: of Fisheries. (provisional) 1989.

### 8. Literacy and Educational Standard

Literacy and educational attainments can be said to be indicators of the social and economic development of a community. When compared to the general population of the State, the fisherfolk as a whole lag much behind in literacy and educational standards.

Detailed Census data on the literacy and educational standards of workers in the fishery sector are available for the years 1971 & 1981, and are given in Table 3.8.



**Table 3.8: Distribution of the Educational Level of the Workers in the Fishery Sector**

(in percentage)

Level of Education	Trivandrum		Alleppey		Malappuram		State Total	
	1971	1981	1971	1981	1971	1981	1971	1981
Literates without edu:qualifications	26.5	24.0	46.5	33.4	44.6	42.5	34.8	35.1
Below Matriculation	72.0	72.0	53.0	64.9	55.4	56.7	64.3	62.6
Matriculation & above	1.5	4.0	.5	1.7	0	.8	.8	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Literates	(32.4)	(38.0)	(72.0)	(82.0)	(27.0)	(38.0)	(55.4)	(64.5)

Note: Figures in the brackets represent the percentage of literates to the total main workers.

Source: 1. Census of India 1971, Series 9, Kerala, Part II-B(ii) Economic Tables (Tables B-v to B-ix).

2. Census of India 1981, Series 10, Kerala, Part III-A&B(iii) General Economic Tables.

The table highlights some encouraging trends. The literacy level of workers in the fishery sector in the State as a whole as well as in the three districts have increased between 1971 & 1981. The level of literacy in Trivandrum district is lower than that of the State as a whole and the increase in literacy in the district between 1971 & 1981 is lower than the State average.

Interestingly though the literacy rate of workers in Alleppey has been high, the percentage of those with education of matriculation and above has always been lower than those of Trivandrum. Further the percentage of literates without educational qualifications to the total literate workers has been high in Alleppey and Malappuram when compared to Trivandrum.

The above discussions have made clear the heterogeneous nature of the fisherfolk in the different districts.

### Description of the sample villages

#### Anjengo

Anjengo is a fishing village with predominant Christian population in Trivandrum district. It is situated 40 km away from Trivandrum city. Though there are buses to the village, since it is considerably distant from the National Highway, journey at times was a problem. Though close to the State capital the village retained its very rural characteristic. The village on the whole looked very crowded with houses situated very close to each other on either side of the road. (This rural characteristics of Kerala State is to a certain extent different from those found in other states). Of the household's we visited more than 50 percent were huts, and only a few were kutcha and pucca type. The total fisherfolk population of the village is 8,932 with 52.6 percent males and 47.4 percent females in 1,642 households. The average household size was 5.4. Except coconut trees no other cultivation was found there. Majority of the households in the village did not have proper latrine facilities. Recently few latrines were built for some fishermen households in the village under the Dutch project supervised by the voluntary organisation mentioned. Drainage facilities did not exist in the village. Water scarcity was a big problem for the village people. Majority of the villagers depended on common tap water. All the pucca and a few kutcha houses of the sample were electrified.

There is a big church in the middle of the village. It was built solely with the contribution of the fishermen of the village.

There are several educational institutions in and around the village. There are two Balwadies, one under the church and the other under the Kerala Scouts and Guides. There is also a nursery school under the management of the Medical Mission nuns. There is a lower primary school run by the Government as well as a High School and an English medium school managed by the nuns with government aid. For college education children had to go to places like Trivandrum and Varkala by bus. There is also a Government Hospital in the village. The Fisheries Technical School nearest to the village is situated 60 km away in Vizhijam.

Various voluntary organisations work in this village. Within the Anjengo Panchayat area there are 5 fishermen societies, that play an important role in the economic and educational upliftment of the villagers. Groups among women called 'Mahila samagam's' also function there. They are of two types: one was formed under the initiative of the nuns and the other was formed by some of the women in the village itself. A unit of the Kerala Swathantra Malsysa Thozhilali Federation (KSMTF) a trade union, works among the menfolk in the village.

The majority of the menfolk of the village are active fishermen. The crafts used in the village are cattamaram and motorised ply-wood boats. The latter is a new craft type introduced by the boat yard of the South Indian Federation of

Fishermen Society (SIFFS) in the village. Women folk in the village are mostly engaged in fish vending.

### Purakkad

Purakkad is a fishing village in Alleppey District predominated by Hindu population. It is 14 kms away from Alleppey on the National Highway. It is therefore an easily accessible village. The life style of the villagers has been considerably influenced by the urban set-up surrounding them. The village is not very densely populated. There are 321 households in the village, with the total fisherfolk population coming to about 2,153. Of this 49.4 percent are males and 50.60 percent are females. The average household size of the village was 6.7. Houses are spaciouly situated on either side of the small village road. Each had half or one cent of land around it. Coconut trees were found everywhere in the village. About 3/4th of the families in our sample had pucca houses. The rest had kutchra and a very few had huts. The village in general do not have any water problem. Only 15 percent of the total sample households had latrine facilities. Drainage facilities did not exist in the village. Majority of the pucca houses were electrified. Since the houses were not close to each other, the village on the whole did not look very congested and unhygienic.

Schools and colleges are easily accessible to the villagers. Opposite the village, on the other side of the Highway there is a Balawady under the ICDS project. There are three Lower Primary Schools near the village, one run by the Government and the other two run by private managements with government aid.

There are two High Schools very close to the village, one under government and the other privately run but aided by the government. There is also a government High School for girls further away from the village. For college education students have to go to nearby urban places like Alleppey and Edathuva by bus. Fisheries Technical School nearest to the village was situated in Arthunkal about 45 kms away.

The majority of the men in this village are active fishermen. A few had shifted to other sectors from their traditional occupation. Active fishermen fish using plank-built canoes. They have been motorised for nearly six to seven years. Womenfolk in this village are mostly engaged in household duties.

There was no voluntary organisation involved in the village.

### Parappanangadi

Parappanangadi is a fishing village in Malappuram District, where the majority of the population are Muslims. It is situated 3 kms away from Parappanangadi town. Accessibility to this village was therefore easy. The village is densely populated with the children population dominating the adults. The fisherfolk population in the village is 2,695 with 51.8 percent males and 48.2 percent females in 355 households. The average household size was 7.6. The houses are situated close to each other on either side of the road. More than 3/4th of the houses are pucca houses. Nearly 1/3rd of the households in the village have plots of coconut trees away from the village.

There are two mosques in the village. Educational institutions are located very close to the village. Two Balwadies under the ICDS Project function there. A Lower Primary School and one Upper Primary School under the government and one High School under the Muslim private management (a memorial school) aided by the government function in the village. Thanur, about 25 kms away is the location of the Fisheries Technical school nearest to the village. Colleges are located in Thirurangadi about 3 kms from the village. Girls in the village go to madrassas attached to the mosques where they are given religious and sexual education.

Fishermen use small and large dug-out canoes for fishing. The large ones are now motorised. Women in this village are always at home engaged in household duties.

No voluntary organisations function in the village.

## CHAPTER 4

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENTS AND OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

This chapter attempts to provide some details about the levels of educational attainments of the fisherfolk in Kerala and the relationship this has to their occupational profile. Following on the views of Goel (1975), Panchmuki (1975) and Psacharapolous (1988) that education does result in an upward mobility of labour resulting in a changed occupational profile, we use our sample data to first make a broad analysis of the validity of this view.

#### Educational Attainments

Analysis of educational levels generally start with an examination of literacy levels. We make an age based analysis of literacy levels in three sample villages (Table 4.1). Our definition of a 'literate' person was adopted from the criterion used by the Census-- a 'literate' is defined as a person who can read and write.

Based on this we find that among the three villages, Purakkad had the largest number of literates, followed by Anjengo and Parappanangadi. Table 4.1 gives the age-wise distribution of the literacy level of the sample population.

**Table 4.11 Age-wise Distribution of the Level of Literacy of the Sample Population**

(in percentage)

Age limits (in yrs)	Anjengo		Purakkad		Parappanangadi	
	Lite- rate	*Illit- erate	Lite- rate	*Illit- erate	Lite- rate	*Illit- erate
(5 to 36)	77	33	73	0	91	61
(36 to 81)	23	67	27	100	9	39
Total	100 (170)	100 (27)	100 (148)	100 (5)	100 (203)	100 (39)

Note: Figures in the brackets represent absolute no. of persons.  
 \* Children below 5 years are not included. They number 71, i.e. (10%) of the sample population.

The age-wise classification reveals that the younger generation is significantly more literate than the older one. This increase in literacy is certainly a function of several socio-economic factors which interact in a complex fashion. It is significant that there are such a high percentage of illiterates in the younger age group in the Muslim village, Parappanangadi. Such deviations and the village-wise variations in the literacy and levels of educational attainments can only be explained by examining closely the socio-economic and cultural factors internal and external to the communities which we have studied. These we shall consider in the subsequent chapters.

The educational levels observed in our sample population ranged from primary school to the degree level and also included some form of technical education. For the sake of convenience we have grouped the educational level under three main categories. The first category included those who have studied up to secondary, that is primary and upper-primary. Those who reached



the secondary and matriculation levels together formed the second category and those above matriculation, that is, predegree, degree and technical education formed the third category.

Table 4.2 given below gives the level of educational attainments of the sample population.

**Table 4.2: Educational Attainments of the Sample Population**  
(in percentage)

Educational Attainments	Anjengo	Purakkad	Parappanangadi
Below Secondary	65	66	87
Secondary & Matriculation	29	30	11
Above Matriculation	6	4	2
Total	100 (170)	100 (148)	100 (203)

Notes: Figures in brackets represent absolute no. of persons.

#### Educational Attainments and Occupation

Increased literacy and the concomitant, though varying levels of educational attainment need to be viewed against the occupational profiles of the sample population. We have divided the various occupations observed in the population into two broad categories: (a) Fishing and Related occupations and (b) Other Sector occupations. In the first category are included the active fishermen, fish vendors and other fishing related jobs, for example, business in fishing sector and subsistence fishing. In the second category are included all self-employed and wage earning jobs in other sectors of the economy and government employees.

Matching educational attainment to occupations we notice that for the active working population in the three sample villages taken as a whole, there is a strong relationship between educational attainments and occupational characteristics. (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Educational Attainments and Occupation of the Working (earning) Population

(in percentage)

	Illit- terate	Below Sec	Above Sec	Above Matri- culation
<u>A. Fishing &amp; related occupations</u>				
Active Fishermen	82	74	67	0
Fish vendors	13	10	0	0
Other fishing related activities	5	3	8	0
<u>B. Other Sector occupations</u>				
Self-emped & workers in other sectors	0	12	17	29
Govt employees	0	1	8	71
Total	100 (38)	100 (126)	100 (48)	100 (7)

Notes: Figures in brackets represent absolute no. of persons.

We can safely assert from the Table that the higher the level of education, greater was the tendency for the people to get involved in occupations other than those in the fisheries sector. Moreover no illiterate person was working in any occupations outside the fishery and also the majority of them had qualifications above matriculation.

(a) Fishing and Related Occupation

Active fishermen formed the bulk of the work force and we notice that educational attainments were restricted to schooling below matriculation. The Human Capital theorists (Schultz, Denison and Becker) have argued that education is highly instrumental and even necessary to improve the production capacity of a population. Traditional fishermen learn the fishing technique exclusively through practice. Hence whatever may be their educational qualifications all the fishermen of a particular coastal area would be using broadly the same fishing technique-- variation being primarily on the extent of assets used which is more a function of their financial resources. The recent changes in traditional fishing technique-- most notably the introduction of motorisation-- can have an indirect effect, in the sense, educated fishermen would always be more willing to adopt, learn more quickly and adjust to changes brought in the fishing technology over time. Since it is only 5 years since these changes have achieved widespread adoption, it is perhaps too early to arrive at any firm conclusions.

Pursuing the analysis of the relatively more qualified among the active fishermen an analysis of their educational attainments along with their age groupings would point to the fact that, there has been an increasing tendency for these relatively more educated to continue as fishermen. Table 4.4 which depicts the age-wise classification of the educational attainments of the active fishermen in the three villages highlights this tendency.

**Table 4.4: Age-wise Classification of the Educational Attainments of the Active Fishermen**

(in percentage)

Age limit (yrs)	Anjengo			Purakkad			Parappanangadi		
	Illi- terate	Below Sec	Above Sec	Illi- terate	Below Sec	Above Sec	Illi- terate	Below Sec	Above Sec
(5 to 36)	21	57	75	0	69	67	65	71	100
(36 to 81)	79	43	25	0	31	33	35	29	0
Total	100 (14)	100 (30)	100 (20)	0 (0)	100 (29)	100 (6)	100 (17)	100 (34)	100 (6)

Notes: Figures in brackets represent absolute no. of persons.

In Anjengo and Purakkad, more number of active fishermen in the age-group (5 to 36), were literate and had higher level of education than the older group. The Table also reveals that the illiterate in the lower age group of Parappanangadi (noticed in Table 4.1), are indeed fishermen and that they are relatively more than in the older age group. Even though in all the three villages there were more number of educated among the younger fishermen, it needs to be examined as to why they stick to their traditional occupation. It could either be that they earn more in fishing than what they could in other alternative employments or more likely that they were not qualified enough to seek employment outside the fishing sector where in any case employment opportunities are very low.

The former part of the above statement can be justified to a certain extent by examining the occupational status of the educated fishermen in the three villages. (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Occupational Status, Craft Type and Educational Status of Active fishermen

(in percentage)

Occupational Status	Craft Type	Age group	Educational Attainments			Total
			Illit- erate	Below Sec	Above Sec	
Owner-Worker	Non-moto- rised	Below 36	6	2	-	2 (3)
		Above 36	6	6	3	6 (9)
	Moto- rised	Below 36	-	18	3	12 (18)
		Above 36	13	13	3	11 (17)
Non-Owner Worker	Non-moto- rised	Below 36	6	14	16	13 (20)
		Above 36	19	6	-	7 (12)
	Moto- rised	Below 36	34	33	59	38 (60)
		Above 36	16	8	16	11 (17)
		Total		100 (32)	100 (93)	100 (31)

Note: Figures in brackets represent absolute no. of persons.

The Table reveals that, the more educated the fishermen, the more they prefer to own and/or work on motorised crafts. In our sample, nearly 80 percent of more educated fishermen (ie. those who had above secondary level of education) owned and/or worked on motorised crafts. If we take the case of younger educated fishermen separately, it can be noticed that, of the 72 percent of the fishermen who owned and/or worked on motorised crafts, nearly 60 percent of them were young and educated. Further none of the more educated fishermen owned non-motorised crafts and majority of them (ie. nearly 59 percent) preferred to go fishing as workers on motorised crafts.

### (b) Other Sector Occupations

In the case of those engaged in other sector occupations (B) in Table 4.3, we see that their higher level of education was indeed one of the important factors that enabled them to get employment. This tacitly confirms the views held by scholars like Goel(1975), Kothari & Panchmuki(1975) and Psacharapolous(1988) that education can bring about mobility of labour.

### Education and Non-Earning Population

To complete the picture of educational attainments and occupation, we have given the details of those who are not undertaking any occupation which brings any earnings. The categorisation was so made because of the sizeable number of women and girls who perform very important jobs which by virtue of being in the house are not reckoned as gainful employment. Table 4.6 gives the details of this segment of the population.

**Table 4.6: Educational Attainments of Non-Earning Population**  
(in percentage)

	Illit- erate	Below Sec	Above Sec	Above Matri- culation
Household work	46	38	42	14
Students	0	56	38	72
Dependents	51	3	7	0
Unemployed	3	3	13	14
Total	100 (96)	100 (285)	100 (69)	100 (14)

Notes: Figures in brackets represent absolute no. of persons.

It is of significance to note that those who are involved in household work-- all women and girls-- have a fairly reasonable level

of education. Taking the case of unemployed it can be seen that the majority of them were educated unemployed. This group was always in a dilemma. To become an active fishermen a person should get used to the sea (particularly in places like Anjengo). In the sample population, many educated people who had not gone for fishing during their school days, later found it difficult to spend long hours at sea. The result: they are unfit for going fishing and at the same time, given the competition for jobs outside the sector, are unable to make their way easily into this job market. For parents the rate of return of having educated these family members is very low or negative.

The above discussions reveal that the problem that the fisherfolk in the three villages face is not primarily one of illiteracy, but rather the inability, for a variety of factors, to be able to rise above a 'threshold level' of educational attainments (ie. above secondary and matriculation level of schooling) which will facilitate movement into gainful employment outside the sector. As a result the majority of the men in the villages had to stick to fishing irrespective of the level of incomes from it or remain unemployed. The women on the other hand had to restrict themselves to employments such as fish vendors or be content with restricting themselves to work in the household irrespective of their educational attainments. Among those who were fortunate to go above the matriculation level, few managed to get employment outside the fishing sector. The low educational development of the fisherfolk in the sample, can be traced through various social and economic factors from within and outside the fishing villages that influence their educational activities. These factors will be examined in some more detail in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER 5

### INTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

In this chapter we will look into the internal factors, that is, the various socio-economic and cultural factors within the village and the community, that influence educational standards among the fisherfolk.

In the first section of this chapter we shall focus our attention on three of these factors, (a) religion (b) family background-- which will include an analysis of family income, educational level of parent's and their involvement in their children's educational activities and (c) associative physical surroundings. The second section of the chapter will briefly analyse how these factors affect educational standards by using the level of drop-outs among the youth in the villages as an indicator of this.

#### Section 1

##### Socio-economic and cultural factors

##### 1. Religion

Fishermen in general are religious-minded people. Their work and life being always in confrontation with the raw forces of nature, makes their profession very risky. There is also considerable fluctuation and uncertainty in the quantities of fish they harvest from one occasion to the next. This risk and uncertainty in their work make it necessary for them to appeal to supernatural influences to explain concrete outcomes. Invoking of 'God' and the adherence to religious beliefs are a function



of this.

There is considerable difference in the religious conceptions of Christian, Hindu and Muslim fishermen. Houtart and Nayak (1988) have looked in detail into these different religious conceptions.

According to their study, the majority of the Christian fishermen believe that God intervenes in the world and that man is dependent on him. They further believe that all the problems that they have to face are the result of the will of God and solutions for them are in the sphere of religious institutions. Therefore they give much importance to religious institutions and religious authorities. Individual success according to them depends on prayer.

Hindu fishermen largely holds the view that God is present among men and that there is no intervention from above. They therefore do not attach much importance to religious institutions. They believe in hard-work and education for their success in life.

The majority of the Muslim fishermen, on the other hand, look upon God as the master of the world. As God's agents, religious agents play a more direct role in their social life. Like Christian fishermen, they also give importance to prayer for their success in life.

These different religious conceptions makes clear the possible influence that religion and religious institutions can have in the social and educational development of the fisherfolk of the three communities.

If we look through the history of Kerala's educational development, we can see that Christian religious institutions have always played an important role in promoting education among the fisherfolk (Gopinathan Nair, 1983 & Tharakan, 1984). Since fisherfolk are the largest single occupational group in the Latin Catholic Church, its authorities have been interested in promoting education among them for their social and economic development. Increasing participation of Latin Catholic priests and nuns in the educational activities of the fisherfolk can be seen in almost all the Christian fishing villages in the State.

Involvement of religious institutions in the educational activities of the Hindu fisherfolk who belong to the Araya community is very rare. But educated men from the community always took the initiative to bring together the socially disorganised people of their community and in strengthening them to fight for their social and economic development. The attempts made in the early stages, due to some reason or other, failed to produce the desired results.

The first attempt to organize the Araya community was made by Pandit K P Karuppan (refer Chummar, 1974). He started various local associations of the Arayas in Travancore and Cochin region, which enabled them to join together for the first time, to fight for their rights. The Vala Samudhaya Parishkkarani Sabha (1910) and the Kalyanadhayini Sabha (1912) are the two among them. Realising the importance of education for the rise and development of any community, he took special interest in the educational development of his people. He encouraged the local associations to fight against the institutions and practices which stood against the development of their community.

Since the Araya community failed to accept all his ideas in the proper spirit, the local associations could not survive for long. Even the first central organisation of the Arayas of Kerala, the Araya Mahajana Yogam did not survive long due to the absence of proper leadership. In 1927, the Araya leaders of Malabar and Cochin, like K.P Karuppan, P.K Dewar, Rao Bahadur, V.Govindhan and Velukutty Arayan, formed a new organisation called the Araya Vamshodharani Maha Sabha. Due to the internal fights between the leaders of Malabar and Cochin region, this organisation could not last long.

Later on from 1953 onwards, an adhoc committee had been working for the formation of a State wide organisation of the different sub-sections of the Hindu fishermen under the common title 'Dheeveras'. In 1957, in a public meeting of the Dheeveras convened in Vaikom, under the auspices of this committee, a new organisation of Dheeveras called the present 'Akhila Kerala Dheevera Sabha' was formed. This organisation was registered as an association only in 1975. At present 282 local Araya Karayogams are affiliated to this central organisation. It was only in 1984, that the State Government agreed to include all the sub-sections of the Hindu fishermen (11 sub-sections) under the common name 'Dheeveras' and to consider them as an OEC (Other Eligible Community). The aims and objectives of the central organisation was to create an awareness among the fishermen, especially the Hindu fishermen about the various welfare programmes implemented by the Government for them, to achieve socio-economic equality in the community, to undertake programmes and agitations among the fishermen to enable them to fight for their rights and thus to work for the all round development of the Hindu fisherfolk. Even though this community organisation started with all these social objectives, it is now more

interested in achieving political gains.

In the case of Muslim fisherfolk, Muslim religious leaders have not fully backed the spread of secular education. They have generally considered it a threat for their faith. They have however encouraged traditional education which consisted of learning of the Quran in madrasas attached to the mosques. They are not in favour of educating girls after a certain age. In the Muslim community in general, rather than the religious leaders, it is the lay Muslims who have taken the initiative for the spread of education. Although an organisation called Muslim Educational Society (MES) was formed in 1964, for the cultural, economic and educational upliftment of the Muslims, their activities have not reached the weaker sections like the fisherfolk.

In our sample villages, the influence of religious institutions in the educational activities of the fisherfolk was found in the Christain fishing village, Anjengo. The Church and the priest occupied an important position in the political, and social life of the villagers. There were two religious orders of Catholic nuns in the village, who were very much involved in the social and economic upliftment of the villagers. They have set-up various educational institutions in the village. There is a Balawady under the Church and a nursery school run by one of the religious orders. There is a High school and two primary schools under the management of the nuns. Tuition classes are conducted by a Jesuit priest for the children of the village. The easy accessibility to schools has encouraged greater number of parents to send their children to schools. Besides educational activities the nuns also engage in the health care and child development activities. The involvement of the religious

institutions in the day-to-day activities of the villagers has made them more aware of the need for social and economic development.

In Purakkad, the Hindu fishing village, no religious institution was involved in the social or economic aspects of the fisherfolk. There was one Karayogam office in the village which was involved only in their political and/or social activities.

In Parappanangadi, the Muslim fishing village, religious leaders were much interested in the promotion of religious education through the madrasas attached to the mosques. The villagers were very particular in sending their children to these madrasas. This was particularly so in the case of girls who were given religious and sex education.

## 2. Family Background.

The development of an individual is very much influenced by his family background. The income or wealth of the family, parent's education, and their involvement in their children's activities counts a lot in the educational development of an individual. This is essentially what Psacharapolous (1988) refers to as the 'internal efficiency of education'. James S Coleman (1988) also has partly examined these different components of family background. He distinguished them as financial capital, human capital and social capital. According to him financial capital which is measured by the families wealth or income, provides the physical resources that aids achievement. Human capital measured by parent's education provides the potential for a cognitive environment for the child which aids learning. Social capital within the family represented by the relation

between the children and parents helps children to retain their interest in studies. We shall use his categories to analyse how the various aspects of family background influence the educational standards in the fishing communities studied by us.

#### a. Financial Capital

The macro-level studies at the level of the economy which we referred to in our review (Bowman & Anderson, 1963 and Goel, 1975) suggest that there is a positive correlation between income and levels of education. Our study suggest that there are other factors that intervene between these two variables which may result in their taking a different relationship.

Income instability of fishermen is an important factor responsible for their low educational development. Income from fishing is highly seasonal. Depending on the weather and on the availability of fish, there are daily and seasonal fluctuations in their earnings. The generally meagre incomes are used to fulfil the basic necessities of life. With bigger harvests the additional income is used to service old debts often incurred at an earlier date to buy fishing equipments or tide over a lean season. Education is given a low priority in their items of expenditure (Achari, 1986). During the peak seasons parents are able to send their children to schools, but during the lean season when they face real financial problem they find it very difficult to incur the necessary recurring costs associated with schooling. As a result in course of time the child loses interest in his studies and drops out of school.

Traditional fishing communities commonly follow a pattern of sharing incomes. For all the craft-gear combination, the gross earnings from fishing less the common operating costs (fuel costs, sales commission etc) were divided between the crew and the owner of the equipment according to certain predetermined sharing norms. The repair and maintenance cost, depreciation and debt services are covered from the share of the equipment. If the owner works as a crew member he gets two shares-- one as worker and the other as owner. The following table will give a rough idea of the earnings of the crew and owner of the three predominant types of country crafts-- cattamaram, plank-built canoes and dug-out canoes-- used in Trivandrum, Alleppey and Kozhikode districts respectively during 1980-81.

Table 5.1: Earnings of Fishermen (1980-81)

Districts	Predominant Craft	Earning/year (in Rs)	
		Owner	Crew
Trivandrum	Cattamaram	7,968	5,043
Alleppey	Plank-built canoes	12,586	1,505
Kozhikode	Dug-out canoes	6,848	2,232

Source: Kurien and Willmann (1982).

Due to the increased competition from the mechanised sector, the output per fishermen in the traditional sector has declined substantially. (For details about this process see Kurien & Achari, 1988). It declined from 3.05 tonnes in 1969 to about 1.29 tonnes in 1980 (Fisheries Dept., 1987).

It was at this juncture in 1980 that the State Government introduced motorisation of country craft as a new strategy to boost the productivity of the traditional sector. With motorisation the traditional fishing techniques became much more capital intensive. In some cases this resulted in group ownership of craft and gear. However the system of sharing the earnings from fishing remained unchanged, but for the fact that the relative share to the owner of the equipment increased as the share of capital increased.

The operation of the motorised fishing units (with the exception of most of the villages in Trivandrum), take place more or less in the same fishing ground and for the same species as the non-motorised units. However motorised fishing units can reach the fishing ground quicker, stay for longer hours in the sea and carry more nets for fishing. Their catches are much bigger than those of the non-motorised units. Production of non-motorised units fell from 230,000 tonnes in 1976-80, to about 163,000 tonnes in 1981-85. Their income in current prices stagnated, but declined in real terms (Kurien & Achari, 1988). Thus motorisation has brought in additional income to one section of the fishermen at the expense of the fishermen who have had to continue using non-motorised crafts.

Although gross earnings of the fishermen with motorised crafts has gone up particularly in Trivandrum district, due to the increased operational costs which the owner shares with the crew, and the depreciation and the debt services on borrowed capital which the owner has to bear by himself, there is increasing evidence that the net income of the shareholder or owner fishermen has not increased substantially. The huge capital investment has only increased their



indebtedness. Those who have worked as crew seem to have at least a temporary advantage of increased income.

Fishermen with their dwindling income found it difficult to meet the growing cost of even their basic needs-- including educating their children. As a response to this difficult situation, the Kerala Swathanthra Malsya Thozhilali Federation (KSMTF) spearheaded an agitation to pressurise the Government, demanding among other things lump-sum grants (1) for all the school and college going children of bonafide fishermen. Accordingly, in 1984, the Government implemented a scheme for the distribution of lump-sum-grants among the children of the fisherfolk. The grant was implemented to provide a sort of incentive for the parents to send their children to school (see Chapter 6 below for a more detailed discussion). To a certain extent the scheme failed to fulfil its primary objective mainly because it was not distributed at the appropriate time. Thus inspite of the steps taken, the financial burden of the traditional fishermen has been on the increase day-by-day.

While this is generally true, the earnings of fishermen has also been spatially variable. Consequently, other things being equal, the new schemes of the Government to promote education and the increase/decrease in earnings following motorisation have resulted in a variety of responses by the fisherfolk of different regions. We shall now consider the three villages studied by us in some more detail on this count.

## Anjengo

Among our sample villages, parents in Anjengo stated that financial problems had been an important factor which prevented them from sending their children to schools. However now that almost all the families have atleast one member working in a motorised boat there has been an improvement in their financial position. (See Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Annual Earnings of Fishermen in Anjengo (1988-89)

Type of craft used	Owner		Crew	
	* Gross Earnings/ year/person (in Rs)	% of persons	* Income/year/ person(in Rs)	% of persons
Cattamaram	2,400	9	1450	23
Ply-boat	32,700	16	10,658	52

Source:\* SIFFS/PCO, Cost-Earning study, (forthcoming)

There was however a fall in the earnings of the owner and crew of cattamarams when compared to the situation before motorisation in 1980-81 (refer Table 5.1). The comparative economic improvement of the majority of the fishermen in Anjengo, has encouraged them to educate their children. In addition to that, due to the high density of population and declining marine resources, the younger generation did not have any other option but to seek employment outside their sector. Eventhough the earnings of the owners of cattamarams went down with motorisation, coupled with the incentives of Government and the influence of voluntary organisations, there has been an increasing tendency among them also to educate their children. This was due to the demonstration effect and also because in the majority of such families

the income of the men from fishing was supplemented by the earnings of women fish vendors. These fish vendors buy small quantities of fish transport it over short distances and sell it to their more or less regular buyers and make small profits. Their earnings fluctuate with the fluctuation in the fish prices.

Though the slight improvement in the financial position of the parents has encouraged them to send their children to schools, nearly 38 percent of the parents of the currently studying children in our sample still found it difficult to pay the fees and provide lunch for their children. About 67 percent of these respondents depended on the cattamaram for their main source of income.

#### Purakkad

In Purakkad the income factor as such, was not the overriding contributory factor towards the educational development of the fisherfolk. As we shall see below, since the majority of the parents were literate (unlike in Anjengo and Parappanangadi) and due to the urban set-up surrounding them, parents always took the initiative to educate their children.

However although children in the village had the opportunity to go to school, given that the technical and skill barriers to enter in to the fishing were minimal and the chances for employment outside the sector less, we notice that children seemed to more quickly loose their interest in studies and get back to fishing.

Purakkad was the first fishing village in Kerala to adopt motorisation in a big way. It provides a very important example of a

boom and burst situation in a tropical fishery where the rapid addition of capital (in the form of engines and more effective fishing gear) resulted in economic overfishing in a very short period. This has resulted in a general fall in income and migration of capital and labour from the village to the northern parts of the State.

Given these circumstances, the fall in their real income in 1988-89 (see Table 5.3) as compared to the situation in 1980-81 (refer Table 5.1) has had an adverse impact on the education of the younger generation.

Table 5.3 gives an idea of the number of owner-workers and workers in the two type of motorised craft in the village and their income for the year 1988-89.

**Table 5.3: Annual Earnings of Fishermen in Purakkad (1988-89)**

Type of craft used	Owner		Crew	
	* Gross Earnings/ year/person (in Rs)	% of persons	* Income/year/ person(in Rs)	% of persons
Plank-built canoe	10,044	26	3,020	28
Small canoe	5,614	6	2,625	23
Share in both	15,658	17	-	-

Source: \* SIFFS/PCO, Cost-Earnings study, (forthcoming).

Their growing indebtedness together with the increasing cost of education in terms of rise in the price of clothes, books, bus fare and so forth made it difficult for nearly 39 percent of the parents in our sample, who had children currently in schools, to provide fees and lunch

for their children.

### Parappanangadi

Parent's in this Muslim village only wanted their children to become literates, in the sense, they should learn to read and write. According to them, whatever may be their education, their children have to follow their traditional occupation, for which they do not require any special training. Added to this the prevalence of the joint family system in the village in which the head of the family had so many mouths to feed, restricted the parents from educating their children beyond a certain limit. Only a minority of the parents were interested in sending boys who were really interested in studies for higher education and for jobs outside their sector.

Table 5.4 gives the number of persons employed in the different types of craft and their earnings for the year 1988-89.

**Table 5.4: Annual Earnings of Fishermen in Parappanangadi (1988-89)**

Type of craft used	Owner		Crew	
	* Gross Earnings/ year/person (in Rs)	% of persons	* Income/year/ person (in Rs)	% of persons
Thoni	3,200	11	3,600	30
Big Dug-out	12,100	5	7,800	42
Owns Thoni & Share in Big Dug-out	15,300	12	-	-

Source: \* SIFFS/PCO, Cost-Earning study, (forthcoming).

The increase in investment due to motorisation resulted in more group ownership among working fishermen in this village. This in turn raised their income. This financial improvement did not bring about much change in their approach towards educating their children. There was however marked improvement in their asset position over the last five years. Several kutchra houses in the village were renovated within the last five years and nearly 25 percent of the sample households purchased plots of coconut land ranging from 5 cents to 1.5 acres away from the village.

b. Human Capital.

It is generally believed that the educational aspirations of children are influenced by parental education. It is argued that literate and educated parents are more likely to send their children to schools than illiterate parents. In the case of a socially and economically backward group, this argument may only be partially true. In their case, given the proper facilities the illiterate parents will be more enthusiastic to send their children to school and to make them learn things which they were not fortunate enough to do in their youth.

Among our three villages, parents as a whole were more literate in Purakkad followed by those in Anjengo and Parappanangadi. Table 5.5 gives the level of literacy of parents in the three villages.

**Table 5.5: Level of Literacy of the Parents**  
(in percentage)

	Anjengo	Purakkad	Parappanangadi
Literate			
Father	47	50	72
Mother	53	50	28
Total	100 (19)	100 (28)	100 (18)
Total no. of parents	(48)	(47)	(47)
% of literate parents	40	60	38

Notes; Figures in bracket represent the absolute no. of persons.

Eventhough parents in Anjengo and Parappanangadi had almost the same level of literacy, when disaggregated on a gender basis, we notice that, women in Anjengo were more literate than men in their own village, unlike in Parappanangadi. This was mainly because since the majority of women in the village were fish vendors even from early days, due to their contacts with the outside world, they felt the need for education and this served as a sort of incentive for them to educate their children, unlike the women in Parappanangadi who were always at home and so did not have any compulsion for learning and above all who had the religious restriction on their education.

Table 5.6 gives an understanding of the educational level of the parents in the three villages.

**Table 5.6: Level of Education of the Parents**  
(in percentage)

	Anjengo		Purakkad		Parappanangadi	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Below Sec	67	80	50	50	85	100
Above Sec	33	20	50	50	15	0
Total	100 (9)	100 (10)	100 (14)	100 (14)	100 (13)	100 (5)

Notes: Figures in brackets represent absolute no. of persons.

When educational level is taken in to consideration, unlike their male counterparts, the majority of the literate women in Anjengo and all of them in Parappanangadi had only below secondary level of education. In Anjengo eventhough mothers who were fishvendors were interested in educating their children, their absence from home at the day time forced their girls to discontinue their studies and to get involved in household duties at an early age. In Parappanangadi religious feelings restricted them from getting educated beyond a certain limit. Women in those days were taught only till 4th standard. In Purakkad, on the other hand equal proportion of men and women had above secondary level of education.

The attitude of both the literate and illiterate parent's towards sending their children to schools can be understood from the table 5.7 given below, which gives an idea about the feelings that parents had regarding their own levels of literacy.



**Table 5.7: Feelings of the Parents regarding their own Level of Literacy**

	(in percentage)					
	Anjengo		Purakkad		Parappanangadi	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
* Literates who wanted to study more	42	42	32	39	56	11
** Illiterates who feel handicapped	45	41	37	53	17	48

Note: \* Figures in each of this row represents percentage out of the total literate parents in the three villages.

\*\*Figures in each of this row represents percentage out of the total illiterate parents in each of the three villages.

More than 80 percent of the literate parents in Anjengo and about 70 percent in Purakkad wanted to study more in their childhood. Of this nearly 40 percent constituted women in both the villages. In the Muslim fishing village nearly 67 percent wanted to study more and of this women constituted only 11 percent.

In the present world, where ability to read and write became a necessity, majority of the illiterate parents in the three villages became aware of their limitations. In Anjengo and Purakkad more than 85 percent each of the illiterates and in Parappanangadi 65 percent of them felt handicapped. Nearly 50 percent of these illiterates in Purakkad and Parappanangadi were women. Eventhough Muslim religious feelings were always against women's education, in the present world Muslim women highly appreciated the need for education. In the earlier days women in Farappanangadi were taught only till 4<sup>th</sup> standard but recently girls are sent to schools till 7<sup>th</sup> standard.

The interest that the parents in the three villages had taken in sending their children to schools is quite evident from the literacy level of their children as shown in Table 5.8.

**Table 5.8: Level of Literacy of the Children**  
(in percentage)

	Anjengo		Purakkad		Parappanangadi	
	Male	Female	M	F	M	F
Literates	92	93	100	100	90	90
Illiterates	8	7	0	0	10	10
Total	100 (92)	100 (56)	100 (51)	100 (55)	100 (97)	100 (93)

Note: Figures in the brackets represent the absolute no. persons.

In the three villages more than 90 percent of the children were literates. This shows that the parents were fully aware of the importance of education. This coupled with the easy accessibility to schools and the lump-sum grants and free noon-meal provided to the school going children of the community also gave incentive to the parents to send their children to schools.

### c. Social Capital.

According to J S Coleman (1988), the level of human capital development of parents, if not complemented by the appropriate social capital embodied in family relations, it will in itself not be useful for a child's education. Further he argues that, the child's accessibility to the parent's human capital depends both on the physical presence of the parents in the family and on the attention given by the parents to the child.

In a fishing community since the life of men is always oriented to the sea, women play an important role in the educational growth of their children. In our sample population in general, there was no dearth of interest on the part of the mothers, irrespective of their being literate or illiterate, to ensure that their children pursue school. In Anjengo and Purakkad since at least half the mothers were also literate we would expect that they would take active interest in ensuring that this in fact materialises in reality. However, although literacy among the children is very high (refer Table 5.8), their continuance in school is subject to considerable uncertainty. (We shall examine the reasons for this below).

In Anjengo 50 percent of the literate women were involved in fish vending. This activity keeps them away from the home. Hence, despite their desires, they cannot get actively involved in their children's educational matters. After a hard day's work of selling fish they have neither the energy nor the motivation to do so. Infact, the social compulsions embodied in family relations when both parents work, provides the basis for more and easy drop-outs. In fact it sometimes even actively prevents children from pursuing their schooling. In this there is a strong gender bias. If the eldest child is a girl it is likely that she will drop-out from school to manage the affairs of the home at an early age.

In Purakkad we noticed that parents were much more involved in the educational activities of their children. Since women in the village were literate and always at home, unlike in Anjengo, they had more time to spend with their children and to help them

in their studies. Even though parents were interested in educating their children and in sending them for job outside their sector, a sizeable number of boys lost interest in their studies and got involved in fishing at an early age.

In Parappanangadi, schools were easily accessible and parents sent their children to them as a matter of routine. Beyond that no special interest was taken by the majority of them in educating their children. Though the women in this village were always at home, since the majority of them were illiterate, they were not of much use in guiding their children's studies at home. Since girls education was not given much importance, they generally studied only till the middle school level, after which they dropped out. Besides religious feelings, another important reason for not encouraging girls' education in this village, was the low demand for educated girls in the marriage market. In the case of boys, after some preliminary education they took to fishing-- a trend which has not changed significantly even with the increased incomes.

### 3. Associative Physical Surroundings.

In addition to the factors explained above, learning habits of children can be influenced by certain other factors, which can be clubbed together under 'associative surroundings'. These include the circumstances in which the children grow, their living conditions-- housing condition, lighting facilities, drinking water facilities and the like.

The educational development of an individual is very much influenced by the circumstances in which he lives. Since the subjects taught in the schools are quite different from the local conditions of the child, the atmosphere at his/her home and surroundings should be such as to encourage him/her to retain interest in studies. If a child is not given the proper circumstances to develop study habits, his/her performance will slow down and gradually he will lose interest in his studies, triggering off factors that lead to dropping out of school.

The atmosphere in fishing villages was not conducive for the development of study habits among the children. Children were always found in and around the sea, either playing with their friends or helping their parents in mending nets and in other activities. As mentioned above, with the exception of parents in Purakkad, the others were not able to give proper guidance to their children at home in regard to their studies. Children in all the three villages took advantage of the helplessness of their parents and sometimes even got engaged in some petty jobs on the sea-shore to make money at the neglect of their studies. This always had its bad influence on even those children who were interested in their studies. This was pointed out as an important factor by a few parents in Anjengo and Purakkad for the poor performance of their children in their educational activities (2). Although this tendency was increasingly found among the children in Parappanangadi, the majority of the parents did not seem much concerned about it.

Housing conditions in fishing villages are generally poor and very much reflected their financial backwardness. The majority of their houses were small, without proper lighting facilities and situated very close to each other. Among the three villages, the situation in Anjengo was the worst, mainly because the majority of the houses were huts without any lighting facilities. In Purakkad and Parappanangadi, nearly three-fourth of the houses were pucca and kutcha and half of them had electric connection. Whatever be the type of house in the three villages, the majority of them had only two or three rooms without proper ventilation. Under such circumstances, it was difficult for children to have a fixed place and proper facilities in the house for studying. The situation in Parappanangadi was made worse by the joint family system. A family could have as many as six or seven currently studying children. Further since the houses in the villages were situated so close to each other, children found it difficult to concentrate on their studies in the noisy environment. In Anjengo since men consumed alcohol at night there were fights and quarrels, which were a disturbance not only for their family members but also for their neighbours.

Lack of proper drainage facilities in the three villages always had its effect on the health condition of the villagers. Scarcity of good drinking water was another problem found in the fishing villages. In Purakkad common tap water was available and in Parappanangadi there was a well for every three houses. Among our sample villages, the water problem was there only in Anjengo. Although there were a few common taps, they provided water only once a day. In front of each tap we found number of vessels, and

in many cases villagers had to walk a long distance in search of the nearest running tap. In majority of the families, women and children were entrusted with the task of collecting water for the household use. When there was acute shortage of water, children were even forced to stay back at home to collect water. Since majority of the women in this village were fish vendors, scarcity of drinking water always affected the activities of young boys and girls in the family. Majority of the parents in the sample were of the opinion that lack of a conducive atmosphere was an important contributory factor for the poor performance of their children in studies. The good performance of children of fishing community in the Fisheries Technical schools (see Table 5.9), where proper food and environment are available gives credibility to the former view.

**Table 5.9: Details of Students Presented for the SSLC examination by Regional Fisheries Technical Schools (1983-87)**

	Trivandrum	Alleppey	Malappuram
Total presented	107	33	37
No. of pass	107	33	33
% of pass	100.0	100.0	89.1
No. of 1st class	48 *	NA	2 **

Notes: \* Information for one year is not available.

\*\* Information for two years not available.

Source: Dept. of Fisheries Administration Report for the respective years.

If we compare the pass percentage of the students in the Fisheries schools with those of the general population, which normally comes to below 40 percent, it can be seen that the former students performance was remarkably good.

The influence of religion; generally low and fluctuating incomes; the literacy of parents and the nature of interaction with children, as well as the overall associative physical surroundings interact in a variety of ways to influence the standard of educational attainments of children in fishing communities. We have seen that despite the wide variations in the factors mentioned above, the level of literacy of children in the three villages is high (see Table 5.8), and not significantly different between them. This clearly justifies our argument that illiteracy is not a major drawback of the marginalised communities in the present world.

## Section 2

### Factors Influencing Drop-out

In the above section we have examined in detail the various social and economic factors within the fishing villages that influence the educational attainments of the fisherfolk. The actual influence of these factors can be assessed, if we examine the factors influencing the drop-outs among the respondents.

A study on the educational performance of a group will be complete only if we look into the details regarding the drop-outs of that group. A drop-out is one who has withdrawn from school at any stage before completing the course. Conventionally, three methods have been adopted in India, to measure the wastage in education due to drop-outs and stagnation (3). Since our study was done at a particular point of time and because the major thrust of the study was a diachronic analysis of the various social and economic factors responsible for persons in the fishing



communities discontinuing their schooling, we did not make use of any of the conventional methods. In fact we are therefore also not using the term 'drop-out' in its conventional sense.

In our study we have considered any respondent who had discontinued his/her studies at one stage or other in school, as a drop-out. Using this as our criterion, we found that 64 percent of the total population who had at some point in time set out to get educated had discontinued their studies during schooling. The highest level at which such discontinuance occurred was in 10th standard (11 percent of drop-out), but the majority of those who dropped out studied only up to 5th standard (46 percent of drop-out). The drop-outs in the three villages were in the age range of 10 to 85 years.

For the sake of convenience we have classified them into four age-groups. Drop-outs from the age-group 10 to 16 years; (ie. those who should have been in school at the time of our study); those in the age-group 16 to 25 years and 25 to 60 years (ie. those who are in the labour force) and the rest (ie. those generally out of the work force) in the age category 60 to 85 years. Further to get a better understanding of the characteristics of the male drop-outs, we have split them into 'active fishermen' and 'others' (see Table 5.10).

**Table 5.10: Age, Sex and Activity Profile of Drop-outs**  
(in percentage)

Age limit (in yrs)	Anjengo			Purakkad			Parappanangadi		
	Male		Female	Male		Female	Male		Female
	A F	Oth- ers		A F	Oth- ers		A F	Oth- ers	
(10 to 16)	2	5	7	0	3	2	9	3	11
(16 to 25)	26	7	39	6	16	29	24	5	50
(25 to 60)	37	20	52	59	12	69	35	18	39
(60 to 85)	2	2	2	-	4	-	3	3	-
	67	33		65	35		71	29	
	(41)	(20)		(32)	(17)		(41)	(17)	
Total	100	100		100	100		100	100	
	(61)	(46)		(49)	(45)		(58)	(54)	

Note: Figures in brackets represent absolute no. of persons.  
A F : Active Fishermen

The Table reveals some interesting characteristics about the drop-outs. In general we can conclude that drop-out rate in all the three villages have declined over time. The older generation (males and females) were much more compelled by socio-economic factors to discontinue their schooling. In the presently school going age group (10-16 yrs) the drop-outs are significantly lower-- with Purakkad accounting for the least. In this age category we notice that only in Anjengo and Parappanangadi did male drop-outs join the labour force to become active fishermen.

In the next two age groups (16-25 yrs & 25-60 yrs) we notice that among the males greater number of those who dropped out became active fishermen. The notable exception again is the case of Purakkad where a very small number of the drop-outs in the age group 16-25 years became active fishermen.

The reasons given by the respondents for the dropping out followed the same pattern of reasons as pointed out by many studies on the general population (Seetharamu & Usha Devi, 1985).

Table 5.11 gives the various factors that influenced the respondents of the three villages to discontinue their studies.

**Table 5.11: Factors that influenced the Respondants to discontinue their studies (sex-wise)**

Factors	( in percentage)					
	Anjengo		Purakkad		Parappanangadi	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
1.Low income of family	60	20	39	16	57	4
2.Need to help in H H work	0	37	0	18	0	4
3.Lost interest in studies	7	6	4	2	0	0
4.Parents not interested	2	11	2	2	0	70
5.Distractions of local milieu	17	20	39	53	36	22
6.Health Problem	7	6	6	9	2	0
7.Poor facilities	7	0	10	0	5	0
Total	100 (61)	100 (46)	100 (49)	100 (45)	100 (58)	100 (54)

Note: Figures in the brackets represent absolute no.of persons.

The table reveals the extent to which the factors discussed in the previous section have accounted for the discontinuance of the male and female respondents in the three villages. Although we have categorised them separately, in reality, these factors are interlinked.

The Table highlights that the factors influencing a person to discontinue studies in school are significantly gender specific. In all the three villages the low income of the family and hence the inability to pursue studies is the single most important reason for males to discontinue their studies in schools. From the analysis of our previous table (5.10) we can conclude that the majority of the males dropped out and took on to fishing thus helping to augment the family income.

Prime factors prompting female discontinuance varies from village to village. In Anjengo, where low income from fishing and the need for the mothers to take to fish vending led to discontinuance of females in order to help in the household work. In Purakkad where such negative economic compulsions were far less, female respondents (53 percent) reported that they lost interest in studies and hence discontinued schooling. In Parappanangadi the religious and cultural factors made the lack of interest on the part of the parents the most important reason for female discontinuance (70 percent).

In all the three villages and across gender, the second most important factor for discontinuance was indicated as distraction of local milieu. Evidence of this was much stronger in Purakkad and Parappanangadi. This point needs to be explained in the context of the physical environments of fishing villages. Without reference to the economic conditions of a family or the physical facilities of its home, it must be noted that within the narrow confines of a fishing village arise the prospects for earning pocket money, recreation and socialising. The continued attraction

of this is often far greater than the incentive to go to school thereby prompting individual to gradually lose interest in studies. Respondants perceived this as a 'positive' aspect of their physical surroundings. The 'negative' aspects of their physical surroundings related to poor facilities like the lack of lighting and space; the unhygienic surroundings and so forth.

Although the above were the factors that inhibited the respondents of the fishing communities from continuing their studies, it would be interesting to see whether there was any change in the intensity of the influence of these factors over a period of time. The age-wise classification of the respondents in terms of the common factors may give us a better understanding of the situation. For the sake of convenience we have clubbed together the interlinking factors (mentioned in Table 5.11), and classified them on the basis of Coleman's classifications used in the previous section. Gender specification was ignored. The first three factors together constituted the influence of low 'financial capital'. The fourth factor was taken as such and categorised under the influence of weak 'social capital' or 'human capital', and the last three factors were clubbed together to represent the influence of 'physical surroundings'. (see Table 5.12).

**Table A.12: Factors Influencing Discontinuance of Studies  
(age-wise)**

(in percentage)

Age limit (in yrs)	Anjengo			Purakkad			Parappanangadi		
	F C	S C	P S	F C	S C	P S	F C	S C	P S
(10 to 16)	3	0	4	0	0	2	2	4	7
(16 to 25)	20	1	18	7	0	18	3	19	16
(25 to 60)	39	5	9	31	2	38	25	11	9
(60 to 85)	3	-	-	1	-	1	3	-	1
Total	65 (70)	6 (6)	29 (31)	39 (37)	2 (2)	59 (55)	33 (37)	34 (38)	33 (37)
		100 (107)			100 (94)			100 (112)	

Notes: Figures in brackets represent absolute no. of persons.  
F C : Financial Capital    S C : Social Capital    P S : Physical Surroundings.

The Table highlights that factors pertaining to lack of financial capital-- particularly the fact of low incomes-- have been a more important reason for discontinuance of schooling among the older generation (those above 25 years) in the three villages. Only in Anjengo do we see its continued influence in the 16 to 25 age group. This is a reflection on the poorer state of the fishery in Anjengo. The lesser significance of the lack of financial capital in the presently school going age group in general points to possible improvements in income and wealth (in Purakkad and Parappanangadi for example) as well as the external factors like enhanced government support to the education of children of the community.

Lack of social capital and human capital do not constitute an important reason for discontinuance of studies in Anjengo and Purakkad. In Purakkad higher literacy among women (mothers) and their presence at home facilitated this. It may seem paradoxical

that in Anjengo where parental concern for children's education was not readily forthcoming due to the occupation of both parents, lack of social capital was not perceived as a major factor for discontinuance of studies. This is in sharp contrast with Parappanangadi where despite the presence of mothers in the homes, lack of social capital is a factor of consideration across all age groups. Illiteracy of women and religious taboos combine to explain this observation.

At this stage we would assert that the paradox in Anjengo can at least be partly explained by the presence of active voluntary agencies and committed social workers who to a certain extent 'substitute' for the lack of social capital-- a point we will highlight in the following chapter.

## Notes

1. They had 17 demands on varied matters, which basically include demands on fishery management, welfare measures and so on. Of these Government took action only to satisfy their welfare demands.

2. In Anjengo, we came across a family who was planning to shift their stay from that village, mainly because the atmosphere in the village was not conducive to develop study habits among their children. The head of the family was once an active fisherman in early days. Later due to poor business, he had to find some other outlet. Since he had studied till 10th and due to his relatives influence, he managed to get a job as a welder in Saudi Arabia. After going there he realised the importance of education. When he came for leave, he found it very difficult to create interest in studies among his children in the unfavourable physical condition in the fishing village.

3. The first method is the comparison of enrolment in each of the higher classes with that in Class I during any selected year and to take reduction in the proportion of the enrolment in the higher classes as a measure of wastage or drop-out.

The second method, which is another version of the first method, is to compare the enrolment in Class I in a given year with the enrolment in Class II in the next year, with the enrolment in Class III in the third year and so on.

The third method is to follow the educational career of the Class I cohort of any particular year over a number of future years. (Gopinathan Nair, 1978).



## CHAPTER 6

### EXTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

The primary objective of this chapter is to analyse the varied education related activities introduced by the State Government and the voluntary organisations for the social and economic development of the fisherfolk. Realising the need to bring this marginalised community into the main stream of the development process, the State Government and later a number of voluntary organisations have implemented various measures to promote education among them.

In the previous chapter we have examined in detail the various social and economic factors within the fishing villages that influence the educational attainments of the fisherfolk. Analysing these factors classified on the basis of Coleman's classification, we found that their low financial capital, weak social and human capital along with unfavourable physical surroundings were the major factors that hindered their educational attainments.

The State Government realising the need for substituting their low financial capital as the first step towards their educational development, implemented various economic and welfare measures for them. The economic measures included upgradation of traditional technology, introduction of new craft, provision of fishery infrastructure, improving the processing and marketing

process and so forth. The welfare measures consisted of provision of infrastructural facilities like dispensaries and schools in the coastal areas, providing subsidies for building houses, provision of various educational concessions and so on. The increase in the State's annual expenditure on general education from Rs.1,854 lakhs in 1961-62 to about Rs.41,100 lakhs in 1985-86 (Kerala Economic Review, 1986) gives ample proof for the interest taken by the State in providing education related infrastructural facilities and concessions for the educational upliftment of the people.

Since the activities implemented by the government are very broad based, it is not in a position to get involved in specific problems of the educational development of marginalised communities. The role of voluntary organisations and social workers in a marginalised community becomes relevant due to this.

Various organisations have voluntarily come forward to work for the development of the fisherfolk in Kerala. We may interpret that the various activities undertaken by them are primarily to make-up the void created by the fisherfolk's weak social and human capital in their educational and social development.

In the first section of this chapter we will look into the activities undertaken by the State Government for the educational development of the fisherfolk. The involvement of the voluntary organisations will be discussed in the second section. The relationship of both these to our sample population will be discussed in between to analyse the various external

interventions.

## Section 1

### Activities undertaken by the State Government

The effort from the part of the Government to promote educational interests among the weaker sections of the State began as early as the end of the 19th century. The first step taken by the Government, was to provide liberal grants-in-aid to set-up schools for the weaker sections. Various private institutions took advantage of this liberal grants-in-aid and started numerous schools for the weaker sections.

In the case of fisherfolk, at present there are a number of educational institutions in the coastal villages run both by the Government and by private institutions with Government aid. Such widespread investment in infrastructure was based on the assumption that easy accessibility to schools will encourage parents to send their children to schools. In addition to these the State Government also set up various specialised Technical High schools, Vocational Higher Secondary courses and Mechanised Fishing Training Centres for children from traditional fishing communities. The objectives and performance of these institutions will be discussed below.

### Financial aid provided by the Government

Though the State Government provided all the infra-structural facilities for the educational development of the fisherfolk, their poor financial situation stood as a discouraging factor for their children to continue their studies. Realising

this the State Government started giving scholarships to the eligible students of the traditional fishing community for post-matriculate studies from the Third Five Year plan onwards. Until 1980, the Fisheries Department of the Government was engaged in the distribution of these scholarships. From 1980 onwards the Fishermen Welfare Corporation was entrusted with this responsibility. The details regarding the scholarships distributed in each year is given in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1: Details of scholarships awarded to fishermen students**

Years	Number of scholarships	Amount (in Rs)	Average Amount/ scholarship (in Rs)
1961-66	373	1,45,641	390
1966-71	463	1,82,112	393
1971-76	539	1,93,458	360
1976-80	789	2,43,280	308
1980-81*	486	1,44,650	298
1981-82	490	1,48,600	303
1982-83	878	380,000	433
1983-84	N.A.	N.A.	-

Note: N.A.-Not available.

Source :Kerala Fisheries Facts & Figures,1980,p-92.

\* Govt of Kerala ,status paper on schemes implemented by the Dept:of Fisheries submitted to the Hon' Estimates committee of the Kerala Legislature,Dept :of Fisheries ,Nov,1983.P.53.

Although on an average the amount per scholarship was reasonably high, these scholarships were benefiting only a small minority of the fishermen children who were fortunate enough to go for post-matriculate studies. We have seen in our previous chapter that very few attain this level of schooling considering that there are compelling circumstances which lead to discontinuance of education. Inorder to motivate the parents to send their children even to primary and secondary schools, some sort of incentive was

highly necessary. These incentives to a certain extent should cover the opportunity cost of sending the children to schools, that is, the income forgone by the parents by sending them to schools.

In the case of some weaker sections especially the Scheduled Tribes, these incentives were given by the State government from early days in the form of lump-sum grants. The fisherfolk who are as equally under privileged as the scheduled tribes were not provided with any broad based incentive of that sort.

The worsening income position of the fisherfolk in the early eighties united them under the leadership of the Kerala Swathantra Malsya Thozhilali Federation (KSMTF), to demand from the Government the provision of educational grants to the children of traditional fishermen for all levels of schooling. As a response to that, in the year 1984-85, the State Government stopped the early scholarship scheme and introduced the scheme of distribution of lump-sum-grants for all school and college going children of the traditional fishermen. These grants are distributed by the Fisheries Department as per the rules followed in the distribution of lump-sum-grants to the tribal students by the Tribal Welfare Department. The details regarding the educational grants sanctioned by the Government from 1984-85 onwards are given in Table 6.2.

**Table 6.2: Details of the Lump-sum grants distributed**

Year	Sanctioned amount (in lakhs)	Amount Distributed (in lakhs)	No: of beneficiaries	Avg Amnt/ beneficiaries
1984 to 85	43.31	43.31	65,977	66
1985 to 86	70.00	70.00	1,28,657	54
1986 to 87	70.00	70.00	68,649	102
1987 to 88	70.00	70.00	64,748	108
1988 to 89	100.00	91.00	-	-

Source: 'Alakal' a fortnightly paper published by the Kerala Swanthantra Malsya Thozhilali Federation (KSMTF), 1988, December 15 to 30.

Notice that the number of beneficiaries have increased substantially (over 8 fold) but that the average amount per beneficiary has declined when compared to the earlier situation as seen in Table 6.1. The amount of lump-sum-grants distributed in each classes are given in Table 6.3.

**Table 6.3: Lump-sum grants Distributed at Various Levels**

Classes	Amount distributed (in Rs)
1 to 5	30/year
5	65/year
6 to 8	75/year
8	95/year
9	105/year
10	110/year
Pre Degree	125/month
Degree	130/month
Postgraduation	140/month

According to the Fisheries Department, since the amount required for distributing the grants is not given to them by the Government, they are not in a position to meet the requirements of all the eligible children. As a result each year a large number of

children are not benefited by this scheme. Their needs would be met only by the next year's fund which means that the pending cases increase every year. As per the Department estimates at least Rs.120 lakhs is required every year to meet the demands of 82,000 students.

All the students in the sample population in the three villages of our study presently studying in Government and private aided schools and colleges reported receiving lump-sum-grants. Those who appeared for the second time in a class received only half the amount in that year. Although these grants were indeed a sort of incentive to the parents, it was not of much help for them, since the grants were not distributed at the proper time of the year. About 50 percent of the parents in the sample were of the opinion that these grants would be of much use to them, if they had been distributed in the months of June or July, soon after the school re-opens, that is, in those months when fishing is poor and when they have real financial problems and so cannot buy new books and clothes for their children. During the peak seasons of September and October parents earn sufficient income to send their children to schools and to feed them. The grants have been distributed only by the middle or end of the school year, and parents are thus not able to reap the required benefits from them. There were also cases where many children did not get grants for a year. It was thus obvious that the primary objective behind the provision of grants, namely to reduce the financial burden of the parents, was not achieved. It did seem that the Government was using the grants as a device to satisfy their own political needs.

## Investment in Education

The State Government realising the need for investment in education in the fisheries sector, to enable the children of the traditional fishermen, to get used to modern fisheries science and technology, started various Fisheries Technical High schools and Vocational Higher Secondary courses with special emphasis on fisheries. Later on, to make the traditional fishermen aware of and competent in the operation of modern fishing techniques started various Mechanised Fishing Training centres.

### Fisheries Technical High Schools

Fisheries Technical High schools were established by the Government in 1968, mainly to enable the fishermen who have obtained secondary education to be active participants in not only implementing the various Fisheries Developmental Schemes successfully, but also to popularise the prime need of adopting modern techniques of fishing, fish processing, fish trade and in building up strong co-operative organisation to better their social and economic condition (Fisheries Dept: Administration Report 1967-68). In Kerala there are eight Fisheries Technical Schools at present. Fisheries schools in Trivandrum, Ernakulam and Cannanore districts were started in 1968, those in Trichur, Malappuram and Calicut districts in 1981 and those in Quilon and Alleppey districts were started in 1984.

Boys from bonafide fishermen families who have completed their primary and upper-primary education are given admission to these residential schools. Each year a maximum number of forty students are admitted to the 8th and taught till 10th in all the



Technical schools. These schools provide a public school type of education with a fisheries bias. In addition, the children are given instructions in seamanship and navigation and practical training in net fabrication and workshop training. The majority of the Technical Schools are run in rented buildings, so due to the lack of proper facilities new applicants are sometimes avoided in many schools in certain years.

It is said that boys who come out successfully from these schools can seek admission for the entrance examination to the training ship Dufferin (Rajendra), seek selection to the seaman and fireman training in the trainingship Bhadra in Calcutta, Mekkala at Vishakapattanam and training establishment Navalakhshi. They can also join Central Institute of Fisheries Operatives, Ernakulam for Seaman and Engine Drivers Course and join Fisheries Institutions of Central and State Governments for training in fishing methods, fish processing etc: (ibid.1968-69).

The performance of the students in these schools are very satisfactory (see Table 5.9). Pass percentage is high in all these schools. This shows that students of fishermen community if given proper food and circumstances are able to perform well in their studies.

In theory, eventhough many possibilities (mentioned above) are open for a boy coming out of the Fisheries schools, two or three cases in our sample showed that, in practice the situation was different. In one case, the boy remained unemployed for sometime and then went back to fishing. There were another case

where the boy went to work in non-fishing sectors. Poverty had been an important factor for both these cases. It was quite clear that these boys were not aware of the opportunities open to them. Further, the training in these schools were not in keeping with the stated standards to enable them to apply for further studies.

#### Vocational Higher Secondary Course in Fisheries

In 1984-85 the State Government started Vocational Higher Secondary Courses in fisheries in eight Fisheries Technical High schools and six Government High schools. It is a two year course with emphasis on Aquaculture, fish processing technology, fishing craft and gear technology and marine engines operation and maintenance. All these subjects are taught in a very elaborate manner with appropriate practical training.

Due to the meagre facilities available in the Fisheries Technical schools and Government High schools as well as the limited number of applicants, this course has not started yet in two Fisheries Technical schools and one Government High school.

In our sample there was only one case, where a boy after completing his matriculation in the Fisheries school, had the intention to join the Vocational Higher Secondary Course. He was discouraged by some students who were undergoing the course, due to the disorganised way in which the course was carried on in the respective schools which did not have proper facilities.

#### Fishermen Training Centres

Fishermen Training Centres were started by the State Government to enable the traditional fishermen to get used to the

mechanised fishing operations. There are five such training centres in the State. The centres at Ernakulam and Beypore (Calicut) were started in 1956, those at Vizhingam (Trivandrum) in 1961, at Cannanore in 1963 and Neendakara in 1967. Fourty bonafide fishermen between the age of 18 and 35 are trained in each centre\$ for a period of 38 weeks.

The Centres give training in modern fishing operations and in the working and maintenance of modern fishing boats, thus making the traditional fishermen competent to handle mechanised fishing boats for improved and intensive fishing operations. Table 6.4 will give us an idea about the number of fishermen who completed their course in the various Centres till the end of June 1985.

**Table 6.4: Details about the various Training Centres**

Training Centres	Year of commencement	No:of students completed course till 31/6/1985
Ernakulam	1956	1218
Beypore	1956	1063
Vizhinjam	1961	941
Cannanore	1963	758
Neendakara	1967	608

Source: Kerala Fisheries, An Overview 1987. Fisheries Dept: P-79.

Due to various inter-related factors the existing training was stopped in all the Centres in 1985. Meanwhile under the Centrally aided TRYSEM scheme two courses, that is, Boat Syrank Course and Out-board Engine Course was started in these Centres. Fifteen fishermen are selected for each centre for a period of one

year by the District Rural Development Agency. Trainees are given Rs 200/month as stipend in each centre. During the last few years, due to the absence of applicants these courses were not taught in many centres.

In our sample many parents suggested the need for mechanised fishing training courses for their children. They seemed to be totally unaware of such courses started for them at the district level. This clearly reveals the communication gap that exists between the top officials who implement the various courses and the fishermen in the villages who actually demand such courses.

Thus the State Government provides various facilities and incentives for the promotion of education among the fisherfolk. Although the various measures introduced by the government have not been fully successful, to a certain extent, the State has succeeded in its venture by developing an incentive among the fisherfolk for freeing themselves from their world of ignorance and illiteracy and to come up in their life. The reasonably high literacy rate found among the children in the three sample villages (refer Table 5.8) inspite of their varied social and economic hindering factors and the tendency found among the educated among them to get employed outside their sector (refer Table 4.3), to a certain extent clearly justifies the above fact.

## Section 2

### Involvement of Voluntary Organisations.

The State Government is involved in implementing activities for a community as a whole. It is therefore not possible for the State to handle certain specific problems of the community and to devise mechanisms to get involved in them more intensely. This is the niche for voluntary organisations and social workers who work for the socio-economic development of a community. Unlike the Government, since the area of activities of these organisations are small, they are able to undertake their various activities more vigorously with fuller co-operation from the fisherfolk.

In Kerala various types of voluntary organisations work among the fisherfolk of the coastal areas. Even though their mode of operation varies, their objectives are similar. These include promotion of education (both formal and non-formal); health and various economic activities of the fisherfolk.

There are two organisations mainly involved in the promotion of functional literacy and reading habits among the people. These organisations have a state-wide coverage and considerably State patronage. They are the Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development (KANFED) and the Grandhashala Sangam (Library Organisation/Movement). The former is mainly the 'resource centre', in the sense, it provides all the resources required for the promotion of literacy. It provides trained workers and all the essential materials suited for each community of people. KANFED is also engaged in the promotion of adult education.

The Grandhashala Sangam has taken on the challenge of developing the reading habits among the people. Depending on the demand from the people, the organisation provides funds and resources for starting libraries in a particular area. Since the organisation has not classified the coastal areas separately, there are no libraries for the fisherfolk as such. But there are a few libraries near some of the fishing villages. Due to the lack of sufficient number of users in such libraries some of them had to be closed down.

The Kerala Shasthra Sahithya Parishad (KSSP) is also a state-wide organisation which is very much involved in the promotion of functional literacy in the State. Now it has taken up the responsibility of securing cent percent literacy in Kottayam district in Kerala.

The majority of the voluntary organisations working in the coastal areas are formed under the Christian leadership. FIDES Centre in Trivandrum, Quilon Social Service Society (QSSS) under the Quilon Diocese, Fishermen Community Development Project (FCDP) under Don Bosco fathers in Quilon and the Beach Blossoms under the Socio-Religious Centre (SRC) run by Jesuit priests in Calicut region are examples of this type. (In Appendix 1, we provide more details of the functioning of one of these organisation-- FIDES Centre). There are also centres under individual priests in some villages in the State, especially in the Trivandrum and Alleppey districts where there is a concentration of Christian fishing communities. Each organisation has concentrated its activities

mainly in one district or in two or three villages in a district. They work through their centres with trained people selected from among the villagers.

Some of these organisations are mainly interested in the promotion of education, both formal and non-formal. Taking into consideration the limited facilities and guidance available for the children from the fishing community at their home, they conduct tuition classes for the school-going children in their centres. They assist the children in their education mainly by inculcating an interest among the parents in their children's education by making them aware of the need for education. These organisations are also engaged in the promotion of non-formal education, particularly adult education. The method adopted by them for this is to a certain extent based on Paulo Freire's method of teaching literacy to adults known as 'conscientization' (Freire, 1968). It mainly advocates authentic dialogue between learners and educators regarding oppressive elements of reality.

In addition to these, few organisations are also involved in undertaking health-care activities among the villagers and to create a general awareness among them.

There are certain other organisations which basically operate through the various people's organisations in the village like fishermen societies, mahila samajams, children and youth groups formed by the initiative of the villagers. Programme for Community Organisation (PCO) situated in Trivandrum and few congregation of catholic nuns like Medical Mission sisters, belong

to this category. They are mainly interested in conducting seminars, discussions and training programmes for the villagers and thus help them in identifying and sorting out their problems. (Brief description of the activities undertaken by the PCO is given in Appendix 1).

#### Working of Voluntary Organisations in Sample Villages

Among our sample villages, it was only in Anjengo that there was any involvement of voluntary organisations. The important factor responsible for this is the influence of the Christian religious authorities in the village. In Purakkad and Parappanangadi voluntary organisations were conspicuous by their total absence. In Purakkad even the attempt to form organisations like mahila samajams failed due to the lack of initiative and interest on the part of the womenfolk of the village.

In Anjengo, there are three fishermen societies. These organisations started by the fishermen initially were interested only in the improvement of economic activities, but latter educational upliftment of the member and their family members also became one of their objectives. For promoting education they conduct tuition classes for students. Non-formal education like adult education is also promoted by them. Due to the lack of proper facilities they are not able to carry on their activities more extensively.

The village also had two mahila samajams. One group was formed under the initiative of the Medical Mission sisters and the other under the initiative of few women in the village, with the



support of PCO. Both the groups undertake various activities mainly for the social upliftment of women and children in the village. They conduct classes among the members on health-care, child development, diseases, cleanliness etc.:. Full participation of women in the village was absent in both these groups. Fish vendors who formed the majority of the working women population in the village were not very interested in attending such classes. This was mainly because after their days hard work they would not be in the proper physical and mental state to attend such classes. These groups always took the initiative to conduct meetings and other cultural programmes to bring together all the villagers.

The group under the Medical Mission sisters was primarily concerned with the health-care activities. They always took the initiative to give vaccines to the children of the area at the proper time. They introduced a chit-fund scheme among the members. As per this scheme, 25 paise was collected from the members every day and this amount was partly used for their medical treatment and the rest was kept as their savings.

The other group was concerned with the social and cultural development of the women and children in the village. They started a 'Balavikasana' (child development) group mainly to encourage children in their cultural activities. Recently a 'Balawady' was also started under their initiative. A scheme for building low cost house and toilets has also been launched by the PCO through these groups.

Among the fishermen of the village, a unit of the independent trade union-- the 'Kerala Swathanthra Malsya Thozhilali Federation' (KSMTF) was working in the village. The unit holds monthly meetings and if necessary weekly, to discuss their problems and it also encourages members to fight for their rights.

The active involvement of the voluntary organisations in the day-to-day activities of the fisherfolk in Anjengo clearly explains the paradox we have seen in the village in the previous chapter. Their various activities have to a considerable extent helped in compensating for the inability of the parents to get involved in their children's educational activities. In totality the involvement of the voluntary organisations has succeeded in developing a new outlook among the people in the village towards their social and economic development.

## CHAPTER 7

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Education has always been upheld as an important factor for the social and economic development of a society. Although Kerala State have made rapid strides in the field of literacy and educational attainments, certain marginalised communities of the State have still not been able to attain a satisfactory position in this field. In this study we first examined the possible relationship that existed between education and economic development for a marginalised community in Kerala-- marine fisherfolk. Further we looked into the various social and economic factors (both internal and external) that influenced the standards of educational attainments of this community.

To get a representative picture of the marine fisherfolk of the State, the study focussed on the fisherfolk of three marine fishing villages, one each from the southern, lower central and northern regions of Kerala which represented different economic, social, religious and cultural conditions. The villages were Anjengo in Trivandrum, Purakkad in Alleppey and Parappanangadi in Malappuram.

As the first step of our analysis, we examined the relationship that existed between education and economic development for the fisherfolk. In this context their occupational distribution was taken as a proxy for their economic development.

We found that education did not have much direct influence on the skills of those engaged in fishing and related activities. Fishing being their hereditary occupation they learnt the technique by practice-- learning by doing-- and they got involved in it irrespective of their educational qualifications. We noticed that the younger generation of the active fishermen were more educated and there was a pronounced preference among them to own and/or work on motorised crafts. In their case to a certain extent education had an indirect influence on their fishing practices, in the sense, education gave them more confidence and willingness to adapt to changes brought about by the new technology in the fisheries sector.

Further, to a limited extent, education also enabled mobility of labour among the fisherfolk. A small minority of those who were reasonably educated managed to get employment outside the fisheries sector.

There were also cases of educated unemployed youth among them. This group was always in a dilemma. Their schooling prevented them from going fishing at an early age. As a result they found it difficult to take on to fishing later. At the same time they were also not qualified enough to compete with the general population in the employment market. But this dilemma was often solved by the fact that after remaining unemployed for a few months, due to the financial pressure at home they were forced to engage themselves atleast in some petty work in the fisheries sector.

All this points to the fact that, when compared to the earlier generation, basic education has gained added importance among the younger generation in the fishing communities. There was a noticeable change in their levels of literacy, but higher education directly influenced only a small minority. The majority of them, due to their low educational standards, had to restrict themselves to fishing and related activities irrespective of the level of earnings from it, thus getting themselves entangled in a vicious circle of poverty and hardships.

Further in our study we analysed the various social and economic factors that influenced the educational standards of the fisherfolk. For the sake of convenience we clubbed together the various factors within a village community as 'internal factors' and external intervention from the side of the state government and voluntary organisations as 'external factors'.

The internal factors that were looked into were: (a) religion; (b) family background-- which included parent's income, their level of education and their involvement in their children's activities -- and (c) associative physical surroundings.

The influence of religious philosophy, religious institutions and religious leaders on educational activities varied between communities. The Christian religious leaders by providing various physical facilities and due to their personal influence on the fisherfolk always played an important role in promoting education among them. Muslim religious leaders, on the other hand, were not very much in favour of promoting secular

education and even restricted girls education beyond a certain level. Neither Hindu religion nor its religious leaders seemed to influence the educational activities of the fisherfolk.

In analysing the family background, Coleman's classification of the constituent factors were adopted. We found that fisherfolk's low financial capital and lack of sufficient human and social capital were the major factors that hindered their educational attainments. But the extent of influence of these factors varied between the villages.

In Anjengo even though the literacy level of the parents were low (when compared to the parents in Purakkad), they were interested in educating their children. But their low income and the particular working condition of the mothers who were fish vendors, affected the educational activities of their children.

In Purakkad since the majority of the parents were literate and due to the influence of the urban set-up surrounding them, they were very keen in sending their children to school and in educating them. In addition to that, since the mothers were always at home they had enough time to get involved in their children's activities. However, inspite of all these positive factors, since the technical and skill barriers to enter into fishing was very low and due to the lower prospects for jobs outside the village, the majority of the males in the village lost interest in their studies, discontinued it and joined fishing.

In Parappanangadi, on the other hand, even though the

parents earned a comparatively higher level of income, their low level of education, and their lack of interest in educating their children beyond a certain level encouraged the boys in the village to go fishing to earn money for themselves. This was the only village where there were illiterates in the younger male generation. In the case of girls, religious and cultural barriers to female education prevented the parents from educating their girls above a certain level, particularly beyond middle school level.

The associative physical surroundings in the fishing village have not been conducive for developing study habits among the children. The chances of earning pocket money by engaging in petty jobs in the village and children's indulgence in various recreational and socialising activities provide a strong incentive to stay away from school. Added to this the poor housing conditions make learning at home an impossible task.

We looked into the various educational welfare measures implemented by the Government and voluntary organisations in substituting some of the internal factors that hindered the educational attainments of the fisherfolk. The Government by providing various education related infrastructural facilities and concessions encouraged them to go to school and get educated and thus join the main stream of development process. Voluntary organisations, on the other hand, through their active involvement in the daily activities of the fisherfolk helped them to a great extent to overcome some of the barriers to their development caused by their ignorance of various subject matters. The general

awareness and incentive showed by the fisherfolk in Anjengo gave credibility to the activities undertaken by the various voluntary organisations in the village.

Due to the paucity of time and since the main thrust of our field survey was mainly to analyse the various social and economic factors within the families of the fisherfolk that influenced their educational attainments, our study has not looked into the performance of the schools in the fishing villages. Of particular significance in this context would be the quality of the facilities provided by these schools, the teachers approach to the students, of whom the majority are first generation learners and so forth. A proper analysis of these factors would enable a researcher to assess the problems faced by the students in the schools. This in turn would provide some more explanations for the early discontinuance of children of the fishing communities from their studies. Except a few surveys and seminars conducted by the voluntary organisations on this matter, no serious work has been done on it till now in the State. Regarding Scheduled Tribes, the ICSSR has sponsored such studies in many states, as we have seen in our review.

Even though it is difficult to generalise the findings of our study to understand the problems confronted by other similarly disadvantaged communities, it can be concluded that to a certain extent the various social and economic problems faced by them in achieving their educational attainments are broadly similar.

The concerted effort taken by the Government has enabled



these communities to a certain extent to come out of their world of seclusion, characterised by ignorance and illiteracy. Although they get the opportunity to go to school, the hopes and aspirations of the majority of them fail to produce the desired results. This is primarily due to the various social and economic problems within each community, which are more or less similar to those we have seen in the case of the fisherfolk.

Voluntary organisations, due to their personal involvement in the daily activities of these communities play an important role in enabling them to overcome some of their problems, thereby strengthening them to stand up for their rights and privileges. But the majority of their problems are conditioned by the objective conditions of their occupation and living.

The concept of 'education and economic development' becomes relevant for a community only if the education that they secure can in some manner be utilised for their economic betterment. The present system of education, which qualifies everybody to become atleast a 'clerk', is actually making the educated people of the marginalised communities alien to their own culture and at the same time the majority of them are also not fit to compete with the general population. Here education is in a way hindering their development.

After providing the basic level of schooling, if the children of these marginalised communities, particularly those who are engaged in some traditional occupation, are given some technical education keeping in tune with the modern techniques

introduced in their sector, it is likely that children will show more interest in their studies. At the same time they will be more equipped to work in their own sector with greater self confidence and vigour. For example, if a simple case of the fisherfolk is taken into consideration, for repairing the engines of the motorised crafts, now they have to carry the engine to the nearest dealer and get it repaired at a huge cost. If the youth among the active fishermen are given some training on those aspects, they will not only save the money and time but also gain some self confidence in their work.

Even though the State Government with the intention of promoting technical education has started various schools (as we have seen in the case of the fisherfolk), it is likely that they fail to satisfy the basic objectives. This is mainly because the good intentions of the Government are there only on paper (in the form of a good written syllabus), but in practice either due to the lack of properly qualified staff or physical facilities, the required amount of practical training is not provided. This in a sense is only giving them bookish knowledge which is not essential for them to survive in their traditional occupation.

Thus it can be seen that in the case of marginalised communities due to the low quality of formal education provided to them it is difficult to assess the improvement their education brings to their production capacity as mainly envisaged by Psacharapoulos (1988) and the Human Capital theorists.

The State Government's attempts to improve the external efficiency of education of these communities generally fail to

produce the desired results mainly because while implementing the various activities the Government does not take into consideration the actual dimensions of the socio-economic problems faced by these communities. Even though the Government cannot rectify all these problems, to a certain extent it will enable the Government to undertake various activities for the genuine interest of these communities. Voluntary organisations also at times fail to realise the gravity of the economic and social problems of these communities while implementing various welfare activities for them.

There is an opinion that the higher literacy of women in Kerala is mainly responsible for the overall improvement found in the State's literacy rate over time (refer Jeffrey, 1987). This is mainly because the literate women in a family will always take more interest to send their children to school and to educate them. From our study we found that, besides literacy it is the mother's involvement in their children's educational activities, that is, the social capital in the family, that is more important. In a marginalised community since financial problem can force both parents to work to earn a living, their constant absence from home restrict themselves from getting involved in their children's activities.

Thus it can be concluded that the low financial capital, weak social and human capital of marginalised communities and unfavourable physical surroundings along with the low quality of education provided to them always hindered their educational development, thereby continually leaving them at a socially and economically disadvantaged position in the State.

## APPENDIX 1

### Activities undertaken by two voluntary organisations

ELDES Centre was formed in 1978 under the initiative of a Jesuit priest and some educated youth from the fishing community. Their prime motive was the social and cultural development of the fisherfolk. The organisation concentrated its activities mainly in six fishing villages in Trivandrum district. They are Poovar, Kochuthura, Puthiyathura, Pulluvila, Adimalathura and Poonthura. They had their centres in each of these villages. They trained a few educated youth of the respective villages and made them the workers of these centres.

The main aim of the organisation was to create an awareness among the fisherfolk of the need for their emancipation from their world of ignorance and illiteracy. Both formal and non-formal education was taken as a media by them to reach thousands of illiterate fishermen.

To make the parents aware of the need for educating their children, they used to conduct meetings for the parents. In the beginning, parents were reluctant to attend such meetings. In such cases, the workers visited each of the houses and invited the parents personally. Parent-teacher associations were formed in all the village, to get more co-operation from both the parents and teachers of the children. Taking into consideration the thousands of drop-outs in the village, they started tuition classes in the various centres. Thousands of children in the villages have

benefited from these classes. The present aim of the organisation is not to have any drop-outs within the age of 10 in the villages by 1995. In May 1989 the organisation conducted a meeting of the social workers, head-masters and teachers of the different schools in the fishing villages, to discuss the various problems faced by the children of the fishing community in their educational growth. The meeting came up with various useful suggestions.

The organisation was also interested in the spread of non-formal education, particularly adult education. Within a period of 10 years, they have made at least 7000 illiterate adults of the villages literate through its various non-formal education centres.

Besides the promotion of education among the fisherfolk, the organisation is also involved in various health-care activities of the villagers. They try to make the villagers more aware of the need to take care of their health, the need for environment, hygiene and so forth.

Taking into consideration the various problems faced by educated men and women in the fishing villages in the employment market, the organisation recently started an Employment Guidance Service scheme. Through this, they make the educated youth aware of the various job opportunities available in the various sectors; and prepare them for such jobs. The FIDES centre thus through its various trained educated youth of the villages are playing an important role in the social and cultural development of the fisherfolk.

Programme for Community Organisation (PCO) is an autonomous voluntary organisation registered in 1977, for undertaking socio-economic, educational and cultural activities among the weaker sections of the society, especially the fisherfolk. To achieve its objectives, it encourages and assist the fisherfolk in different coastal villages in Trivandrum district, to form their own 'people's organisations', and PCO works only through these organisations. During the last twelve years, it has assisted the establishment of several co-operatives, service organisations, mahila samajams, children and youth forums in various coastal villages. Through seminars, discussions and training programmes, PCO helps these organisations in identifying and sorting out their problems.

At present there are 23 children's group or 'Balavikasana' groups in 14 coastal villages in Trivandrum district. Each group meets on a weekly basis, and children get an opportunity to develop their extracurricular abilities and leadership potential. Every year nearly one thousand children are benefited from the summer tuition programmes conducted in all the 14 villages, by educated local youth specially trained by experts. Four or five summer camps are conducted every year in PCO centre in the city for children of all the 23 groups. About 150 children from the various groups attend such camps. Besides the regular classes, discussions on various relevant issues and extra curricular activities, the children are taken on field visits to places of educational importance to expose them to a better understanding of

reality. Children's festival's or Balamela's are conducted every year, which brings together children of all the groups. Various processions symbolising different subject matters and cultural programmes are performed by children on that day.

Youth groups are working efficiently in 10 coastal villages in the district. Every year besides conducting discussions on current socio-economic matters, they also get involved in various local problems. Once in a while PCO conducts seminars on various current issues for the youths.

PCO animators took the initiative to assist nearly 18 mahila samajams to carry out their regular functioning which included monthly meetings, savings and loan schemes and nursery schools in some areas. In the monthly meetings these groups discuss issues closely related to their lives and work, which include matters pertaining to their health, their role as housewives, their work as fish vendors and so forth. Seminars and discussion are also held among the groups to discuss the atrocities and injustice faced by the women and attempts are also made to formulate solutions and plans of action. Women's day is celebrated every year and in the seminars that follow, topics of current importance are discussed.

Earlier PCO was very much involved in the functioning of the 12 Fishermen societies in the district. Later on, since the apex body of the societies, that is, Trivandrum District Fishermen Federation (TDFF), became active, PCO restricted their activities to animation work and in undertaking training programmes.

PCO's involvement in the different organisations always has its own benefit. Children who attend the group meetings and discussions, become very active. They acquire self-confidence and they perform well in their school, in both curricular and extracurricular activities. The youth acquire a seriousness and purpose in life by their interest to learn about the social issues and reality of the country today. Participation of fishermen and women in fishermen Societies and mahila samajams have made them increasingly aware of various relevant socio-economic issues and to stand together for their rights.



APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire

Socio-Economic Factors that Promote and Hinder Education  
among the Fisherfolk in Kerala

Sl.No. :

Village:

H.No.:

I. Identification particulars:

a. Name of the head of the household:

b. Religion:

II. Family particulars:

Sl No.	Name	Sex	Age	Relation with hh.	Education	Occupation

III. Children's (presently studying) education:

Sl No.	Grade/ Course	Institution		Distance (in kms)	Mode of reaching	Availab- ility of- noon-meal	Educ. grants
		Name	Nature				

Details regarding educational grants:

Sl No.	Educa. grants		Any difficu- lties for getting them	Whether properly used
	Sourc	Amount		

C. Problems encountered in children's education:

Problems	Child to whom this applicable					
1. Unable to pay the fees						
2. Unable to provide the lunch						
3. School/college is far						
4. Lack of interest in studies						
5. Child is irregular in studies						
a. Health problems						
b. Household work						
6. Conflict between fishing/studies						
7. Problems with subjects taught						

D. The rationale, motivation and expectation behind child's education

1. Rationale :

2. Motivation:

3. Expectation:

E. Details about drop-outs:

Sl No.	Sex	Age	Class at which dropped out	Reasons for dropping out

F. Details of those never educated:

Sl No.	Sex	Age	Reasons why they never send to school	Can he/she read or write Malayalam

G.Details about non-formal education:

Have any of the children attended any non-formal education class or training course?

1. Yes

2. No

SNo	Sex	Age	Details of non-formal education

IV. Parents' Education:

a. Level of education: Father

Mother

If no formal schooling, can you read and write?

Yes No

Yes No

b. Did you want to study more in your childhood ?

Yes No

Yes No

c. If yes, what specific reasons prevented you from this?

1.Lack of money.

2.Involvement in job at an early age.

3. Lack of school facilities.

4. Did not find it a necessity.

5.

6.

7.


d. If not educated, do you feel handicapped?

Yes No

--	--

Yes No

--	--

If yes, specify the problems.

F. If literate/educated do you find it an advantage?

Yes No

--	--

Yes No

--	--

If yes, specify the economic returns/gains.

f. Is there any kind of education/technical knowledge/skill which you (or your spouse) would now like to attain in order to pursue your present occupation better or to branch out to some new occupation or earn more income from a secondary job?

Father:

Mother:

g. Are there any organisations/institutions in your village which offer any such training?

Yes No

--	--

Yes No

--	--

If yes, give reasons why you are/you are not able to participate in the course.

Father:

Mother:

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