

Sustainability of Fishing as a Caste-based Traditional Occupation: An Analysis of Studies on the Kaibartas of Assam, India

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KEYWORDS Capital Assets. Social Mobility. Sustainable Livelihood. Traditional Occupation. Vulnerability Context

ABSTRACT Caste-based traditional occupations like fishing have been under pressure due to the inability of people to enhance technology against the intrusion of well-organised caste as well as non-caste entrepreneurial groups of people in to the trade. Fishing has been a traditional occupation among the Kaibartas of Assam who are recognised as Scheduled Caste. The present paper tries to analyse the sustainability of fishing as a traditional occupation among the Kaibartas of Assam amidst the expansion of organised Pisciculture on commercial basis. Some 25 research studies conducted among Kaibartas have been analysed to assess the situation. Using the DFID's Sustainable Livelihood Framework, the paper shows that the traditional Kaibarta fishermen are not in a position to improve their livelihood through fishing activities due to lack of required livelihood assets as well as due to lack of reach to the development and welfare plans initiated by the state and the central government.