

# **GENDER BASELINES IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE VALUE CHAINS IN INDIA:A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW**

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- o Documentation of 'what is' and 'what has been done' is an important step to further knowledge and information in any area of enquiry.
- o The lack of authentic data and information is often quoted as a reason for the formulation of policies and programs that are not completely in tune with the on-the-ground realities.
- o Systemic review has been used as a method to collect information and draw meaningful conclusions.
- o This study is part of an ongoing collaborative attempt to collate information on gender in fisheries and aquaculture.

# Introduction

- o Just like any other sector, in fisheries, gendered differences in roles depends on the types of activity being performed as well as the external factors that can have impact on factors like physical, social, cultural, political.
- o The lack of authentic data and information is often quoted as a reason for the formulation of policies and programs that are not completely in tune with the on-the-ground realities.

- o The search for latest data on actually fishermen involved in actual fishing landed up into statistics way back in the year 2003, after which there has been no data regarding the number of men and women involved in fishing.
- o Another factor could also be the dispersed nature of availability of information.

- o Though it is now acknowledged the women play important roles in fisheries and aquaculture value chains, the continuing invisibility is partly due to lack of systematic collection of data and information that can further be used for policy formulation and programme implementation.

# Objective

- o To elucidate the gender roles in fisheries and aquaculture value chains in India
- o To identify the issues of social, cultural and economic importance that pertains to restricting the women roles in the sector and also analyzing the policies that could serve as avenues for a change.

# Methodology

- o Systematic review approach
- o The literatures were searched using the following keywords:
  1. Role women aquaculture India
  2. Role women fisheries India
  3. Gendered roles fisheries India
  4. Women activities fisheries/aquaculture India
  5. Women policies fisheries/aquaculture India
  6. Women education fisheries India
  7. Women access credit fisheries India
  8. Women access resources fisheries India

- o The results were filtered based on the availability of the literatures for each topic.
- o Some topics like roles of women in grow-out stages did not fetch much literature. Hence all the available literature that was directly focusing on to the topic was selected.
- o In other cases where literature was available, the search was filtered according to the year of publication which was set as 2000.
- o The quality and consistency of the body of evidences was evaluated according to Arthur et al. (2013).





# Results

- o In India, the men generally dominate fishing activities and women are perceived to be involved in post harvest activities (*Yap, 1980; Nag et. al., 2012; Velayudhan ,1999;* ).
- o However women are involved in a broad spectrum of activities from fishing in inshore waters, gleaning in water bodies, small scale aquaculture, fabrication and mending of gear and post harvest activities like sorting and grading, pre-processing, processing, drying and marketing (*Gopal et al., 2013; Sudhakara et al., 2003 and ICSF, 2010; Vijayan and Nayak, 1996; Sarkar, 2009; Chandra, 2014; Manna et al., 2011*).

- o Migrant fisher families from the Southern state of Andhra Pradesh travel from place to place and fish using coracles where even women are seen to be fishing (*Ranjan et al., 2011*).
- o Women glean clams, mussels, crabs and fish from inland water bodies and *kol* lands using rudimentary fishing implements which include various traps and pots and gear like scoop nets (*Sruthi et.al,2016; Inatombi and Mahanta,2016*).

- o The fish catch by women generally goes for subsistence of their families and only anything in excess of that is marketed. Women in certain North Eastern states like Assam and Manipur also participate in community fishing activities in flooded rice fields (*Inatombi and Mahanta,2016; Das, 2002*).
- o Seasonal fishing activity like *Kolim* fishery where women and children engage in harvesting tiny mysid shrimp is also seen in Maharashtra state in Western India.

- o Women seaweed collectors of Tamil Nadu collect seaweeds by diving into the waters of the Bay of Bengal (*Rajagopalan, 2007, Chathurvedi, 2004*).
- o Collection of shrimp seed from intertidal regions in estuaries is also largely carried out by women (*Sathiadas et al., 2003, Lagade et al., 2013, Das et.al, 2016*)
- o Women also engaged in aquaculture activities like working in prawn and shrimp farms and hatcheries, feed preparation, and also negligible presence in mariculture (*Shaleesha and Stanely 2000, Immanuel et al. 2008; Nandeesh, 2007; Ghosh et al. , 2003, Shanthi et al., 2011; Sahoo et al., 2009*)

# Access to Resources

- o Mechanization of the fishing activity has resulted in displacement of women from their traditional roles in the sector (*Yap, 1980; Nikita et al, 2015; Tietze, 2007*).
- o West India, which is increasingly becoming restricted through interference from the actual owners of the lands. Access to land, including for aquaculture activities, and implements is decided within a male-dominated community system or clan where women play little or no role and inheritance practices are patrilineal (*Vijayan and Nayak, 1996;Gopal et. al., 2015*)

- o Access to credit is a limiting factor to increasing scales of operation whether in marketing or in any other activity (*Karmakar et.al,2009,Gopal et.al,2012*).
- o Spatial mobility is an important aspect of marketing and this was traditionally by foot. Groups of fisherwomen hire transport facilities and reach harbours and travel back to their areas of business (*Gopal 2005*).
- o Recent social mobilization to form SHGs have seen a marginal improvement in asserting for rights of women in fishing communities (*Gopal et.al,2010,Gopal et.al,2010*) especially as far as livelihood issues are concerned.

- o It was found fisherwomen in Kerala state in south-west India felt discriminated in access to legal establishments (Salim & Geetha,2013).



# Decision Making

- o The ability to make decisions is a factor of community hierarchies as well as socio-economic factors and tends to be limited (*Narayana Kumar et al, 2005*).
- o They may be engaged in income generating activities but their incomes are part of the general family pool and they may not have a say in the spending, inspite of their incomes being a substantial portion of the family income (*Bhatta, 2003; Sruthi et. al, 2016; Gopal,2017*).

- o Women engaged in small scale fishing activity like gleaning, fishing in reservoirs using hook and line and traps, small enterprises etc. have been found to have a say in how their incomes are spent (*Goswami, 2009; Immanuel and Rao, 2012; Gopal, 2017; Liya et. al., 2016*).
- o Some women in fish marketing were economically independent and they took decisions on their fish business matters (*Mahesh et.al, 2014*). When working in groups like in Self Help Groups their perceived decision making abilities tend to be high (*Gopal et al, 2010*).

# Time

- o Women fish sellers spend 6-8 hours day selling fish in markets and as door-to-door vendors (*Shah, 2010; Seshagiri et al. , 2014; Bhibha, 2016*).
- o Women engaged in gleaning of fish, clams, mussels, prawns etc. usually start the day very early and go for fishing activities after finishing household chores (*Gopal et.al., 2014; Gopal et al, 2015; Sruthi et.al, 2015*).
- o Women in seafood factories also spend long hours in no so friendly environmental conditions (*Gopal et.al, 2017; Gopal, 2017*)

# Norms and Attitudes

- o Women are mainly restricted to certain jobs in aquaculture, because of the social dogma that the activity cannot be entrusted to women, though they are involved in other activities like wild fish seed collection (*Gurumayum et al., 2006; Mohanty and Jena, 1996; Goswami and Ojha, 1997 ; Chandra and Sharma , 2014*).

- o Though women have numerous opportunities in the grow-out operations, they are mainly restricted due to several factors, of which the most important one is the distance of hatchery from their places of residence. Hence women feel insecure to work without the company of other women (*Shaleesha and Stanley 2000*)

# Other Constraints

- Reports indicate that women tend to be employed in low-paid jobs with low levels of job security in seafood pre-processing and processing, often under poor conditions of work with long-term implications for their health, as has been reported in India (Nishchith 2001; Gopal et.al,2017,Gopal,2017)
- One of the most common problems among fish factory workers is musculoskeletal pain and discomfort due to bad ergonomics either in standing or squatting positions (Nag and Nag, 2007). This is also seen in women selling fish as they carry heavy loads on their head when selling door-to-door and sell in markets (Gopal,2005; Gopal et.al, 2014)

# Outcome

- o Women have been involved in small scale aquaculture activities and this has resulted in income generation and generation of self employment(Bhanotet *al.*, 1999; Sharma *et al.*, 1988; Thakur *et al.*, 1988).
- o Women use incomes generated from alterantive livelihoods to pay off family debts and for the health and education of their family and children (Kripa and Surendrathan 2008;Gopal *et.al*,2012)
- o Encouraging thrift and formation of groups has helped in improving access to credit facilities (Mathew,2004).

# Conclusion

- Through this systemic review it has been observed that there are scattered and largely micro level studies on gender in the fisheries and aquaculture.
- Studies have also reinforced the commonly held views on gender division of labour in the sector – men fish and women process.
- However, there are studies highlighting women fishing for subsistence and livelihood, dispelling the above notion.
- Women however are marginalised in decision making and in access to fishing and related resources.





**Thank you**