

GENDER ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL-SCALE SHRIMP FARMING AND RECENT CHALLENGES IN THE COASTAL REGION OF BANGLADESH

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Small-scale shrimp farming is considered especially important for its potential to generate employment and income at the household level in the coastal areas of Bangladesh. The export earnings from the shrimp sector are the second largest source of Bangladesh foreign exchange earnings, contributing about US\$ 487 million in 2009-2010. The recent challenges for the shrimp sector have been its inability to respond correctly to evolving new market standards, food safety and quality requirements of the importing countries. A post-project evaluation of a UNIDO supported Bangladesh Quality Support Program (BQSP), implemented to strengthen the capacity of the Department of Fisheries in good aquaculture practices (GAP) and in inspection of shrimp and seafood products for compliance with market standards, suggests that involving female farmers and farmer couples can be a useful entry point to develop the sector and overcome the challenges. This paper presents empirical results from two sets of gender focused GAP training held *in-situ* for (i) only female farmers and (ii) farmer couples at three coastal districts of south-western Bangladesh. It also sheds light on the factors affecting the success of gender focused GAP training in a conservative society like Bangladesh.