



Rethinking marginalization: Women in small scale fish processing and trading in Cambodia

Dried Fish Matters Project- Cambodia

GAF8- Cochin, India- Nov 2022

Gayathri Lokuge, Kyoko Kusakabe, Prak Sereyvath



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

Diverse products



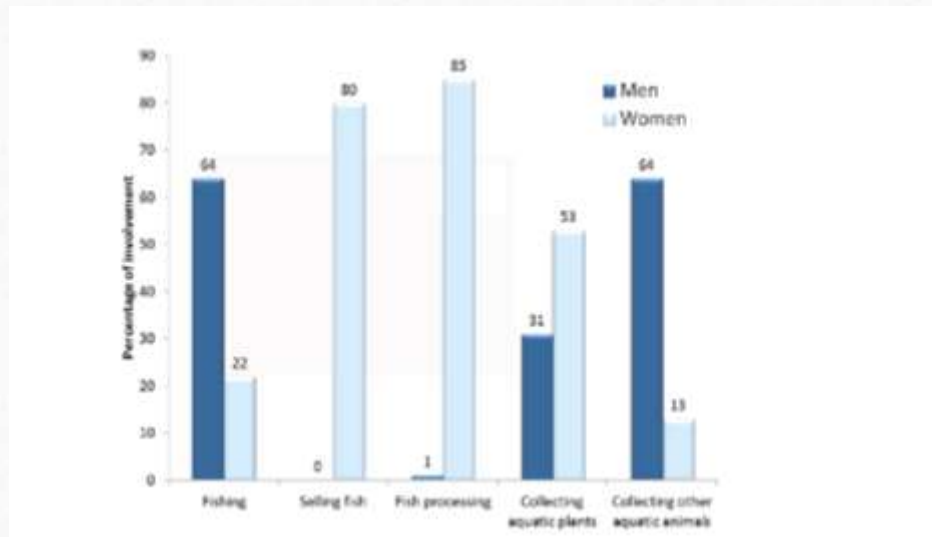


Diverse groups and inter-connections

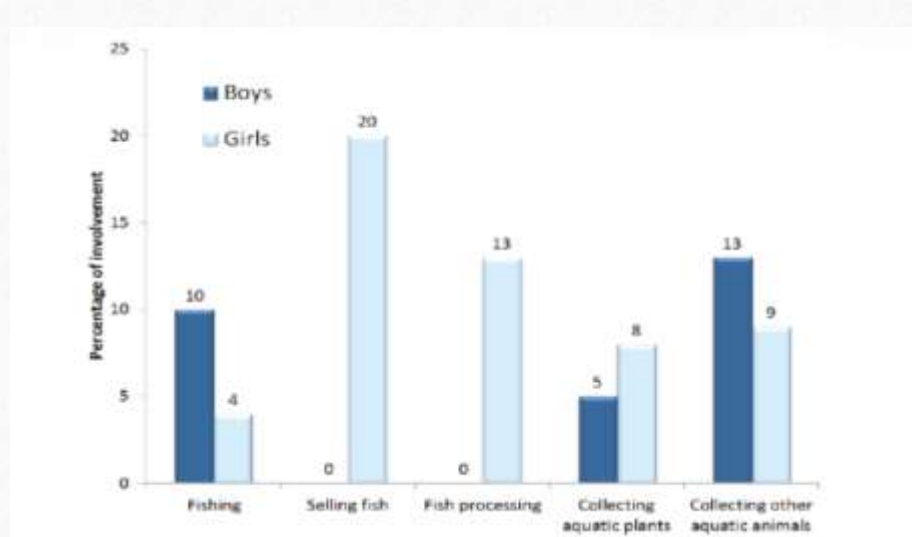
| Type of processor | Characteristics |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Fishing families | ‘Worse off’ households who use processing as a secondary income source for the family (ex: elderly women supporting themselves, and their family through fish processing). Processing happens at home, primarily by household member/s. Processed fish volume is less than 100kg per day during the peak season. Products are mostly sold to consumers in the village. (household/small scale) |
| | Households with a steady income from fishing or engaging in fishing but primary income being from another source such as remittances, engaging in processing as a secondary livelihood activity. Processing happens at home by household member/s mainly and in the peak season, with 1-3 hired workers. Products are traded within the village and sold to middlemen. (household/small scale) |
| Fishing cum farming families | Farming primarily in small islands on the water bodies, during the season. |
| Farming families | Subsistence purposes only |
| | Subsistence purposes mainly, but sells a certain proportion based on surplus production |
| Processing families | Households with no members involved in fishing or farming. (small to medium scale). Processing happens at home, involving household members and hired labour during peak season. |
| | Households with no members involved in fishing or farming, processing or semi-processing plants located in a separate location from their homes. (small to medium scale). Volume of production per day is 800kg-10Tonnes per day during peak season. At least some of the fish species are sourced from Thailand/Vietnam and the rest from floating villages around the Tonle Sap lake. Products are sold to middlemen/traders within the Province and outside the Province, including Phnom Penh markets. (Ex: processors at Battambang Psar Prahoc) |
| Processing factories | Primarily in Phnom Penh and Sihanouk, employing 40-60 workers, 80% women |

Gendered socialisation processes

Adult involvement in fishing and related activities in Lowlands Zone



Children's involvement in fishing and related activities in Lowland's zone

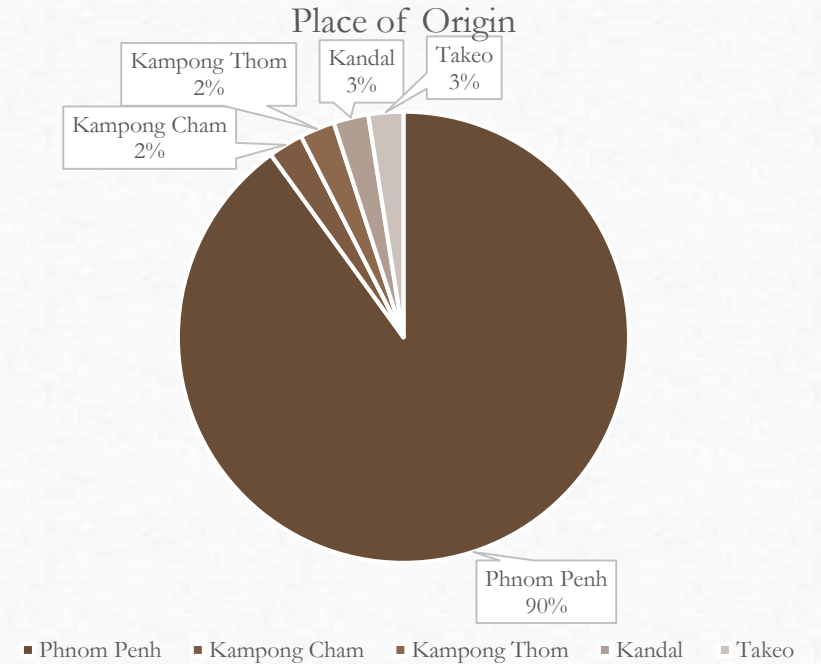
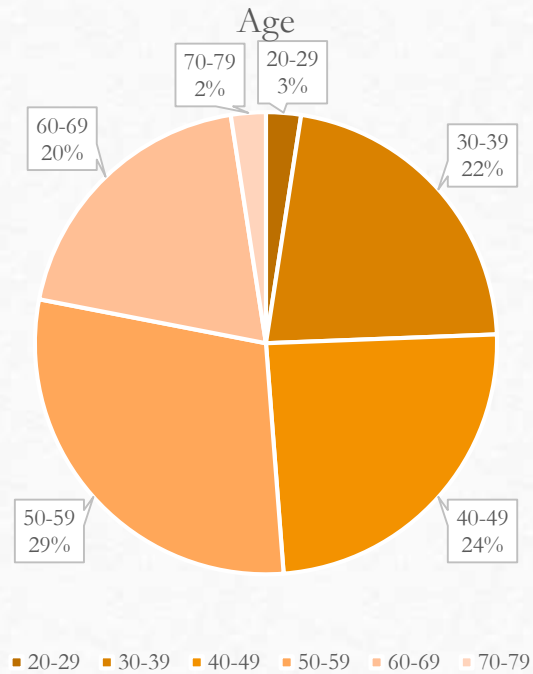
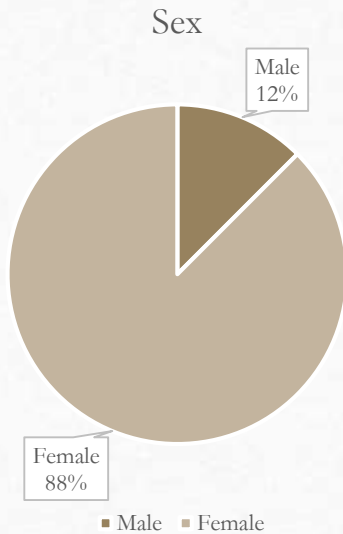


Gendered division of tasks in traditional fish product processing (% involvement by gender)

| Type of product | Men | | Women | |
|----------------------|-----|--|-------|--|
| | % | Tasks | % | Tasks |
| 1. Smoked fish | 40 | Carrying heavy loads Fire management | 60 | Frying Putting fish on a stick to be smoked Getting firewood |
| 2. Fish paste | 40 | Carrying heavy loads Heavy work Salting fish | 60 | Cutting fish Cleaning fish |
| 3. Fermented fish | - | None | 100 | |
| 4. Salted dried fish | 20 | Handling Heavy work | 80 | Cutting and cleaning fish Salting and frying |
| 5. Mam | - | None | 100 | |

Source: Navy and Johnston (2015):14

Who are the traders at Orussey market?



Processed fish buying routes (green) and selling routes (blue) by traders at the Orussey market



Processing and trading: part of ‘identity’ and ‘empowerment’

This is my birth place. I am not yet married (35years old) and I am living with my parents. My parents used to do this business so I am now continuing it. Both parents were involved in this. I have been doing this business for 20 years now and I don't know when my parents started this...It was a long time ago...I have hired labour; 20 women for fish drying and 10 men for making fish paste and fermented fish... I categorise this business as a large scale one. This location is good and popular for selling processed products. We send it out to other Provinces also. I am the only big wholesaler trader here, the others here buy from me... I know everything about this trade and I do it by myself...

I think it is an easy job, I take care of my parents, I like it.

(Woman Wholesaler, Pursat Province)

Precarity? ‘Safety net’? Processing and trading as the ‘only option’

I had 3 children, 1 son and 2 daughters. They are dead. I am now living alone, doing this small trade. I have 7 grand children. One is a fresh fish seller in the market, 4 of them are married... Consumers come to me because they pity me. They know that I need to feed small grand children, so they come and buy from me... There are no problems in the family, I don't have enough money to feed my grand children

(Retailer, Kampong Chhnang)



“I started the business since 1990s. at that time, I was around 20-22 years old. My parents first lived around Tonle sap and then moved to Phnom Penh. Then, they run this business (sell dried fish). I spent most of my childhood around the stall and help my parents with their trade, I didn't go to school at all. My sister also does trade like me here at the market. Family to me matters a lot. Even in the future, family continues to play an important role, to all the Cambodian people.”

(Woman, Processed fish wholesale trader, Phnom Penh-Orussey market)

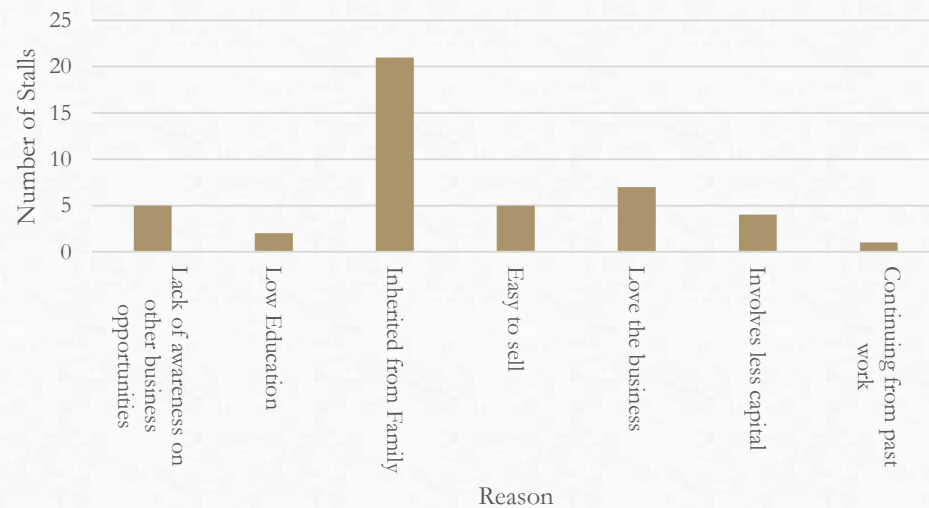
‘Family plays an important role, to all Cambodians’



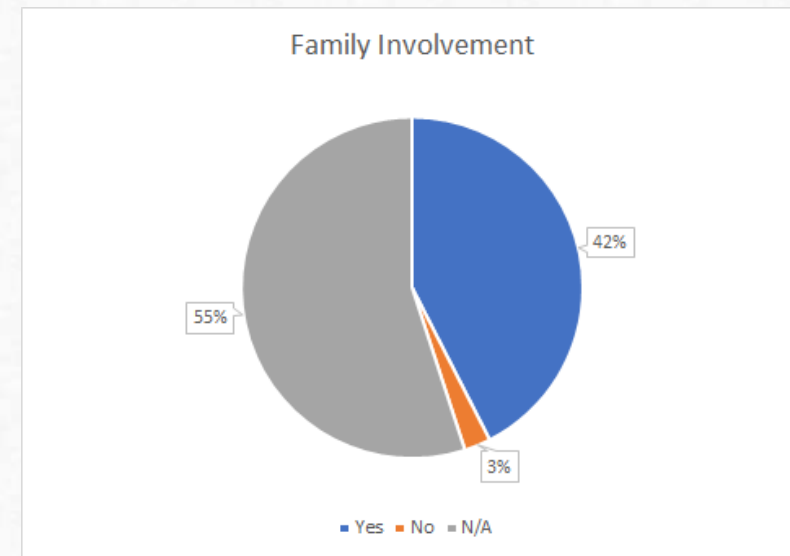
We buy fish from the fishermen, we go to the places where they catch fish. Son and grand daughter go there and bring it here. They leave at 5am and come back by 9am. During the high season relatives work full time.

Role of family and traditions in trade

Reason for establishment

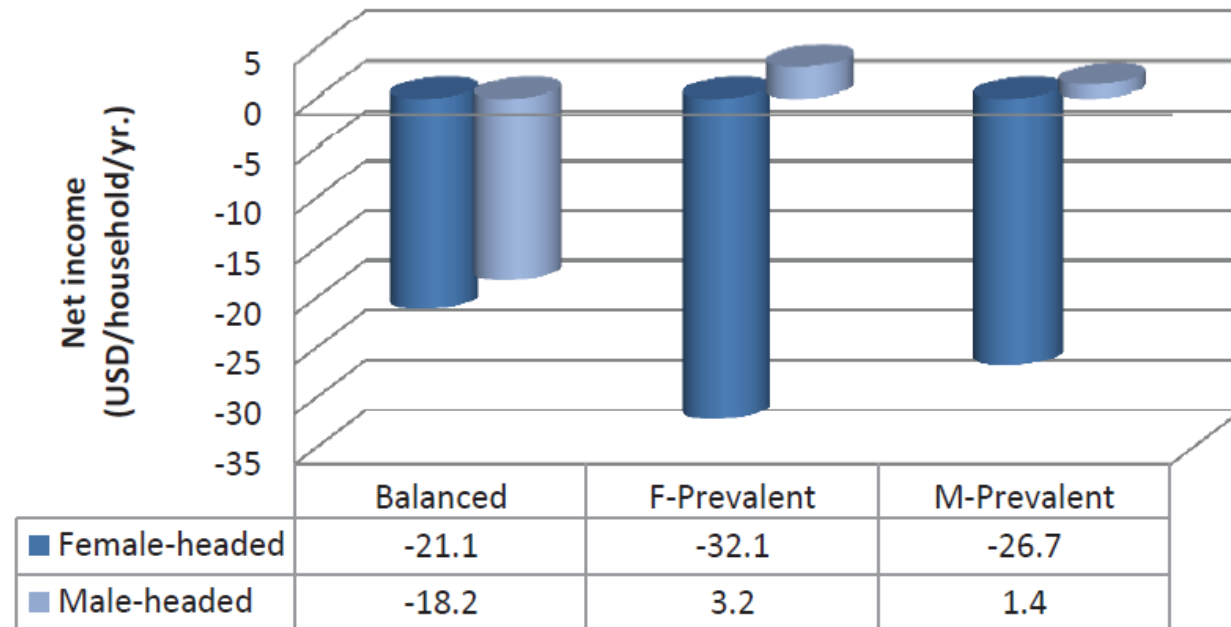


Family involvement in trade



Source: Rapid appraisal of 40 traders at Orussey, Central and Derm Kor markets in Phnom Penh

Net income from processing of fish capture- gender of HHH and family composition



Source: Mousset et al, 2016:9

'Paid' labour arrangements in the processing sector

| Type of processed product | Type of processing activity | Payment term | Payment value | Comments |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|--|
| Semi processed fish paste | Cutting head, gutting and cleaning | Per kilogram | 300r | Approximately 100kg processed per day per worker (BT PR 01) |
| Pa Ork | Mixing with salt | Per tonne | 30,000r | Approximately 3-4 tonnes processed per day per worker (BT PR 03) |
| Smoked fish | Cleaning fish and smoking | Per day | 40,000r | They work throughout the year |
| Dried prawns | Cleaning prawns | Per vat/container | 9,000r | 8-10 vats of prawns cleaned per day per worker (KP PR 01) |
| | Cleaning prawns | For 2-3 hours per day | 10,000r | |

Gendered wage disparities: Male workers are paid 800,000r to 1,200,000r per month while female workers are paid 600,000r per month for their work in the stalls at the market.

Conclusion

Gendered socialization processes- extension of food preparation – unpaid labour

Intersectionalities

What does fish processing mean: precarity, social protection and ‘empowerment’