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# **Gender Differences in the Decision to Change Production of Fermented fish paste (Prahok) among Cambodian Fishers in Tonle Sap Lake**

by

**Sokmoly Uon**



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# I. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

- Fisheries play a vital role: ensuring the national economy, household food security, and livelihoods for Cambodians.
- Contributes approximately 12 % to country's GDP (FiA, 2018)
- Tonle Sap lake is a main source of freshwater fish in Cambodia



- Fish processing is a significant process of fish value chain. 57 % of women work in the fisheries sector, mostly in post-harvest activities.
- Dried fish like fermented fish paste (prahok) is a very famous food ingredient for Khmer traditional food in Cambodia.

# I. Introduction

## 1.2 Research questions

- (1) What are the differences in change in prahok production among the areas with different access to fish resources?
- (2) How are decisions on the production of prahok made in the household?
- (3) What are the factors that influence the decisions on prahok production of prahok makers?

## II. Research Methodology

Methodology: qualitative method (phenomenology).

❖ **Selection of the study sites:** This study focuses on three main categories:

(1) Floating village

(2) Displaced village

(3) Flooded plain village

❖ **Data collection tools:**

- Key-informant interview
- Field notes
- In-depth interview (total respondents is 33).

❖ **Data analysis:** Interpreting, coding, and thematic analysis.

### III. Study's findings

#### ❖ Brief information of the study's areas

##### Flooded plain village

- Located on the low land area which is flooded when the level of water becomes high depending on the year
- Seasonal access to fish or less access to fish resources
- Characteristics of Prahok makers (fermented fish paste makers): Making Prahok for only home consumption; consumption and selling; stop making prahok.

##### Floating village

- Located on the water (floating on the water)
- Has good access to fish resources
- Characteristics of Prahok makers (fermented fish paste makers): Making Prahok for only home consumption; consumption and selling; stop making prahok.

##### Displaced village

- Former floating village but now has been displaced due to the reorganizing surrounding environment of Tonle Sap lake
- Formerly had good access to fish but now no more good access to fish
- Characteristics of Prahok makers (fermented fish paste makers): Making Prahok for only home consumption; consumption and selling; stop making prahok.

### III. Study's findings-Prahok for home consumption

Flooded plain village	Floating village	Displaced village
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prahok Sach (fermented fish without bones)</li> <li>• Making Prahok from caught fish (remaining fish of selling/smallfish/spoiled fish)</li> <li>• Amount of prahok production decreased overtime</li> </ul> <p>=&gt; Decreasing amount of fish, personal's preference on eating prahok, difficulty in accessing to fish resource, increasing number of fish for selling, change in food preference.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prahok Sach (fermented fish without bones)</li> <li>• Making Prahok from caught fish (remaining fish of selling/smallfish/spoiled fish)</li> <li>• Amount of prahok production decreased overtime</li> </ul> <p>=&gt; Decreasing amount of fish, personal's preference on eating prahok, Hh's economic matters, gender roles (Imbalance housework and activities in making prahok for women).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prahok Sach (fermented fish without bones)</li> <li>• Making Prahok from caught fish(remaining fish of selling/smallfish/spoiled fish)</li> <li>• Amount of prahok production decreased overtime</li> </ul> <p>=&gt; Decreasing amount of fish, personal's preference on eating prahok, change in access to fish resources, Hh's economic matters.</p>

### III. Study's findings-Prahok for home consumption and selling

Flooded plain village	Floating village	Displaced village
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prahok Sach (fermented fish without bones)</li> <li>• Making Prahok with specific amount of catching fish/spoiled fish/buying fish/buying semi-prahok</li> <li>• Amount of prahok production decreased overtime</li> </ul> <p>=&gt; Decreasing amount of fish, Hh's economic matters, trend of market (middle-men requirement/demanding), time saving.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prahok Sach</li> <li>• Making Prahok with specific amount of catching fish/spoiled fish/buying fish</li> <li>• Amount of prahok production decreased overtime</li> </ul> <p>⇒ Decreasing amount of fish, Hh's economic matters, trend of market (middle-men requirement/demanding), time saving, migration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prahok Ch'oeng (fermented fish with bones); Prahok Sach</li> <li>• Making Prahok with specific amount of catching fish/spoiled fish/buying fish/buying final Prahok</li> <li>• Amount of prahok production decreased overtime</li> </ul> <p>=&gt; Change in access to fish resources/ways of life, decreasing amount of fish, Hh's economic matters, trend of market (middle-men requirement/demanding), time saving, migration.</p>



### III. Study's findings-Stop making Prahok

Flooded plain village	Floating village	Displaced village
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prahok Sach (fermented fish without bones)</li> <li>• Making prhaok from remaining of fish or separate amount of fish from selling/spoiled fish/ buying fish</li> <li>• Reasons of stop making Prahok: Hh's economic matters, natural change, health problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prahok Sach</li> <li>• Making prhaok from remaining of fish or separate amount of fish from selling/spoiled fish/ buying fish</li> <li>• Reasons of stop making Prahok: Hh's economic matters, natural change, health problem, family's responsibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prahok Ch'oeng (fermented fish with bones) ; Prahok Sach</li> <li>• Making prhaok from remaining of fish or separate amount of fish from selling/spoiled fish/ buying fish</li> <li>• Reasons of stop making Prahok: Hh's economic matters, natural change, change in access to fish resources/ ways of life</li> </ul>

### III. Study's findings- Gender in Prahok production

- **Men:** go to fishing, cleaning fish, and transport.
- **Women:** cut head of fish, cleaning, processing, and selling.

⇒ In Cambodia, Prahok makers are women/has been known as career of women.

#### ❖ Decisions in Prahok production

- Women who make Prahok for only home consumption: Individual decision
- Women who make Prahok for both consumption and selling: Individual decision
- Women currently stop making Prahok either for home consumption or selling: Joint decision

## IV. Conclusion

- ❑ Significances of making prahok: main ingredient for Khmer food, job opportunity, especially for women; income/additional income; food preservation/food security, and reducing food expense in the family.
- ❑ Based on different access to fish resources, there are difference changes in prahok production depending on each type of prahok maker.
- ❑ Influential factor that influence on decision making of prahok makers for their production including: Decreasing amount of fish, Hh's economic matters, ways of life, trend of market (middle-men requirement/demanding), time saving, natural change, health problem, and family's responsibility.
- ❑ In Prahok production, the decision to change prahok production has been made differently among women prahok makers with their different purpose of making prahok.