



**ROLE OF WOMEN IN INLAND FISHING:  
STUDY FROM AN ISLAND FISHING VILLAGE  
OF A TROPICAL ESTUARY ON THE SOUTH-  
WEST COAST OF INDIA**

**Sandhya K. M\*., Prajith K. K. & Remesan M. P.**

**ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Kochi,**

**Kerala-682029**

**\*[sandhyafrm@gmail.com](mailto:sandhyafrm@gmail.com)**

# Introduction

- Women play a major role in fisheries particularly in the inland sector.
- More than half of the people employed in global inland capture fisheries are likely to be women, a proportion that is higher than in marine fisheries (FAO, 2012 Bartley *et al.*, 2015)
- The role of women in fishing is much more visible in inland waters, though their participation in marine fishing is negligible.



- In the inland fisheries sector, 72% of the workforces are women (Mishra, 2011)
- In India, the role of women in fishing activity is much more visible in inland water bodies



- The total population of fisher folk, who depend for their livelihood on the inland waters of the Kerala, is around, 0.23 million and which accounts for 0.69% of the State's total population (Sruthi *et al.*, 2016)
- The Vembanad Estuarine system, declared as a Ramsar site, is the largest in the state of Kerala and serves as a source of livelihood for more than half of the total inland fishing population of the state.

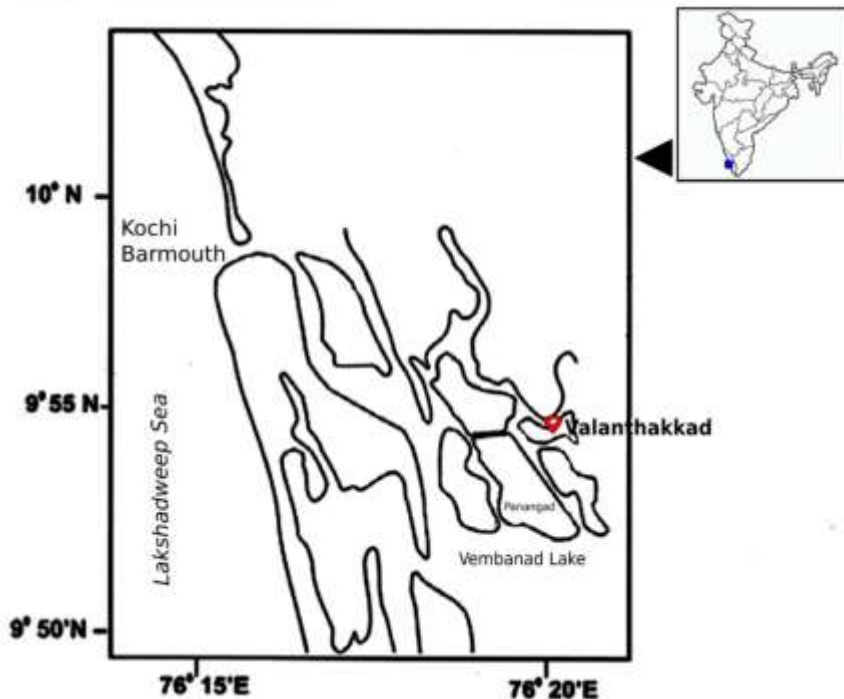
## **Objective**

- To document the role of women in inland fishing in Valanthakad, an island fishing village along Vembanad estuary in South West coast of India.



# Study area

- Valanthakad, ( $9^{\circ}55'10.24''\text{N}$  latitude and  $76^{\circ}20'01.23''\text{E}$  longitude) an island fishing village spreading over 200 acres lying in the Northern end of Vembanad estuary, Kerala, South West coast of India.
- A small island surrounded by mangroves.
- “Valantha” denotes surrounded and “Kadu” stands for forest



## Materials and method

Using an unstructured questionnaire, individual and group interviews with women of the island was carried out





- Direct observation of different types of gears and their operations were also made



## Results

- There are 45 families residing in the island and all of them belongs to weaker sections of the community.
- Fishing and allied activities are the main occupation of the villagers in the surrounding backwaters.
- Women represents 42% of the population
- Fishing is usually a collective family activity in the island and all the women are directly or indirectly involved



- The 20% of the women population conduct fishing by themselves using traditional wooden canoes and remaining women assist men in fishing operations



Nets are operated from traditional wooden canoes or FRP coated wooden canoes (5.5-6m LOA)





# Fishing gears

- Major fishing gear operated are nylon monofilament gillnets with a mesh size ranging from 50-75mm
- Depth of gillnets varied from 25-50 meshes.
- Floats were mainly apple shaped/disc shaped plastic (60x20 and 70x20mm) floats whereas small disc shaped floats were used in crab and prawn gillnets





- Small mesh gillnets (25-35mm) are used for capturing prawns.
- Larger mesh gillnets (*Njenduvala*) of 120-155mm mesh size (0.28mm dia) mainly used for capturing crabs (*Scylla serrata*)
- Tripple walled gillnet (Trammel nets, Inner mesh size 60mm and outer 150mm, mesh dia 0.16 and 0.39) were also used by the fishers targeting mainly *Etroplus suratensis*.

- Commonly used gillnets (*Karimeen vala*, *Kanambuvala*) targets mainly fishes such as *Etroplus suratensis* and *Mugil cephalus*
- Catch varied from 0.5-8kg per day per person
- Fishing duration 1h - 4h
- Fishing time 3-7am
- Daily income ranges from Rs. 200-1500



- Women are also involved in clam (*Villorita cyprinoides*) harvesting either by hand picking or using hand held scoop nets
- Catch varies from 10-15kg per day
- Income Rs 150-200/kg









Scoopnets made of HDPE netting material (15-25mm mesh size)



Cast netting done by few women only







## Issues

- Declining fish catch
- Influx of polluted water from the nearby industrial sites
- Increment in the amount of plastic debris
- Absence of road access to the mainland is the main issue faced by them
- All the 45 families depend on canoes for transportation.











## Distribution of ice boxes for fish storage to fisher women from Valanthakad



## Conclusion

- The picturesque island provides ample scope for the promotion of ecotourism involving all the residents to improve their socio- economic status.
- Fish production enhancements by aquaculture, cage culture etc.





**Thank you**