



Unsung Queens of The Coast:

A Photo Essay on Women in Harvest in
Small-scale Fisheries of Maharashtra



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By

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Women In Fisheries:

Global:

- ✓ 50% of the workforce in fisheries and aquaculture
- ✓ Globally, about 1 among 4 workers in SSF (25%)
- ✓ In developing countries, 50 % of the workforce in SSF

(*Illuminating Hidden Harvest, SOFIA, 2020)

India:

- ✓ 49% of adult population in marine fishing villages
- ✓ 33 % of adult population employed in the sector
- ✓ Women's work in fish harvest:
 - Not reported – active fishing (Lack of sex disaggregated data)
 - 58% - fish seed collectors (most of them part-time)
 - 74% of all fisheries allied workers - auctioneers, ice breakers, members involved in collection of bivalves, other shells, seaweed, ornamental fish etc. (non-specific data for each class)

(*Source: Marine Fisheries Census 2016, ICAR-CMFRI & DoF, MFAHD, GoI)



Women Work in Fisheries, Too!
November 29, 2021



Why this study?

- ✓ **No official data** of women in fish harvest (crew member/ licensed fisherwoman)
- ✓ **Ambiguous occupational categories** in fisheries census
- ✓ Women's participation in fish harvest - **underreported, unrecognised** and thus **unaccounted**.
- ✓ This deprives and excludes them from availing any of welfare benefits from the State.
- ✓ Hence documentation of the **involvement of women in fish harvest** activities, in SSF along the coastal districts of Maharashtra, India

Objective: To depict stories of women fishers engaged in small-scale harvest activities to narrate their everyday struggles and to locate them within the specific socio-cultural and ecological environment in which they work and live.

What is photo Essay?

- Simply, **Storytelling through photographs** focusing on the socially, culturally and historically induced **interactions** among people, place and entities of a region
- **Picturing everyday empirics** of processes, practices and (p)liabilities and situational complexities inherent in the work and life of an individual or a community
- Photography - **extremely important in researching**, (visible documentation can more accurately portray peoples' emotions than interviewing and can tell a story that cannot be described in words)



Present study:

- ✓ 3 photo essays of women fishers engaged in small-scale harvest activities such as **gleaning** and **gill netting**.
- ✓ **Tools used:** Combination of photographs (Samsung SM-A515F mobile camera), field observations, interactions, interviews and focus group discussion



Study areas of Photo Essay - PE1, PE2, PE3



Coastal Maharashtra

PE3:
Karave,
Navi Mumbai, Thane

PE2:
Hanuman Koliwada,
Uran, Raigad

PE1:
Navapada Satghar,
Uran, Raigad

Thane creek

Kranja Creek

Mumbai
मुंबई

MUMBAI FORT

COLABA
कुलाबा

DADAR
दादर

Thane
ठाणे

Bhiwandi
भिवंडी

Kalyan
कल्याण

Titwala
टिटवाळा

Ambarnath
अंबरनाथ

TALOJA
तळोजा

PANV
पनव

Wahal
वाहाल

Jasai
जसाई

Chirner
चिर्नेर

HANUMAN KOLIWADA

URAN

URAN
उरण

SATGHAR

Karanja
कारंजा

Pirwadi Beach
पिरवाडी बीच



Photo Essay 1:

**Women in 'Oysters, Gastropods, Crabs Gleaning'
Navapada Satghar, Uran, Raigad**

Photo Essay 1: Women in 'Oysters, Gastropods Gleaning'

Community: Who are they?

A group of 24 tribal women (8-10 HH)

Gleaning of oysters, gastropods and crabs from rocky intertidal areas

Katkari (Kathodi)

Occupational shift (Women & men)



Photo Essay 1: Women in 'Oysters, Gastropods Gleaning'



Community: who are they?



Photo Essay 1: Women in 'Oysters, Gastropods Gleaning'



Resource type & Access:
Coastal creek's rocky intertidal zone
exposed during low tide

Photo Essay 1: Women in 'Oysters, Gastropods Gleaning'

Village: Navapada, Satghar

Taluk: Uran,

District: Raigad



Village

3-4 kms from residence

Route

Fishing area/ Worksite



Photo Essay 1: Women in 'Oysters, Gastropods Gleaning'

Occupation: How they do?

Crab gleaning



Photo Essay 1: Women in 'Oysters, Gastropods Gleaning'

Occupation: How they do?

Oyster
Gleaning

Income Rs.
300-500/day

Working hrs (fisheries):
3-7 hrs in gleaning
3-4 hrs in marketing

Sharp iron rod / Claw Hammers/ Vessel with water



Photo Essay 1: Women in 'Oysters, Gastropods Gleaning'

Occupation: How they do?

Children accompanying their family members in gleaning



Photo Essay 1: Women in 'Oysters, Gastropods Gleaning'

Occupation: How they do?

- ✓ Resting in open sunlight before moving towards next gleaning site
- ✓ Carrying food and drinking water to gleaning area



Photo Essay 1: Women in 'Oysters, Gastropods Gleaning'

Occupation: What they get?

Oyster, gastropods & crab catch



Photo Essay 1: Women in 'Oysters, Gastropods Gleaning'

Long working hours in bending and squatting position

Challenges/ Issues



Photo Essay 1: Women in 'Oysters, Gastropods Gleaning'

Recommendations: What can be done?

- To reduce the health hazards from hot sunlight and mosquito bites at collection sites **breathable full sleeves cotton coats and hats** can be provided
- For night harvesting **hybrid solar cum battery operated headlamps** can be provided
- To reduce the risks of cuts in hands and legs from the opened and broken shells of oysters and gastropods; **comfortable gum boots and hand gloves** can be provided
- **Access to nearby village fish market** can be provided through local govt. institutions
- Need for dialogue between tribal women and local fisherwomen for **equitable resource access**



Photo Essay 2:

Women in 'Gill netting'
Hanuman Koliwada, Uran, Raigad

Photo Essay 2: Women in 'Gill netting'

Community: Who are they?

A group of 10-12 women (14 HH)

Gill net fishing in coastal creek

Hindu Koli

Rehabilitation (JNPT port)

Occupational shift (Women & men)



Photo Essay 2: Women in 'Gill netting'

Village: Hanuman Koliwada,

Taluka: Uran,

District: Raigad

Fishing area/ Worksite

2-3 kms from residence

Route

Village

Google Earth

Image © 2022 Maxar Technologies

Image © 2022 TerraMetrics

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Photo Essay 2: Women in 'Gill netting'

Site to go onboard



Small Creek to enter fishing ground



Resource type: Coastal creek

Catch landing for marketing



Fishing ground



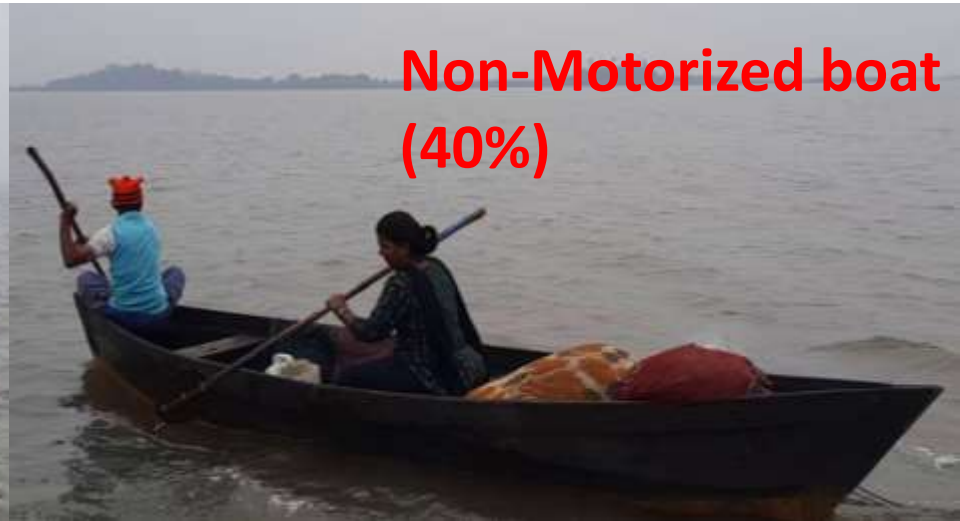
Photo Essay 3: Women in 'Gill netting'

Occupation: How they do?

**Motorized boat
(60%)**



**Non-Motorized boat
(40%)**



Fishing Implements & Access



Gill nets



Photo Essay 2: Women in 'Gill netting'

Occupation: How they do? Women accompanying their husbands after regular household duties



Photo Essay 2: Women in 'Gill netting'

Occupation: What they get?



Catch: Croakers,
mulletts,
Ribbon fish,
Shrimps,
anchovies

Income:
Peak: Rs. 3000-5000/ day
Lean:Rs.1000-1500/day



Photo Essay 2: Women in 'Gill netting'

Challenges/ Issues

Reclamation/
Siltation

Waste disposal/
pollution

Occupational
Health hazards



Lack of local market facility



Lack of proper jetty



Muscle pain & cramps due to propelling



Extended hours for to & fro journey due to unavailability of jetty

Photo Essay 3: Women in 'Gill netting'

Recommendations: What can be done?

- A small **landing centre/jetty can be constructed** in the village through govt. schemes to reduce working hours
- **Retail fish market shed** should be constructed in the village through govt. schemes
- There should be a **Monitoring and control mechanism** regarding **reclamation activities and waste disposal activities** of nearby companies



Photo Essay 3:

Women in 'Crab Gleaning'
Karave, Navi Mumbai, Thane

Photo Essay 3: Women in 'Crab gleaning'

Community: Who are they?



Group of 9 women Crab gleaners

Agri Koli

Urbanization/reclamation

Occupational shift (Women & men)

Photo Essay 3: Women in 'Crab Gleaning'

Village: Karave,

Taluka: Navi Mumbai,

District: Thane



Fishing area/ Worksite



Route
5-6 kms from residence

Village



Photo Essay 3: Women in 'Crab Gleaning'



Resource type:

Coastal creek's muddy intertidal zone exposed during low tide



Photo Essay 3: Women in 'Crab Gleaning'

Threads for tying crabs



Narrow plywood raft



plastic can for catch storage



Thermacol piece for knee cushion



4-5 pairs of socks



wooden/iron stick



Photo Essay 3: Women in 'Crab Gleaning'

Occupation: How they do?



Reaching worksite



Dressing up for work



Gearing up for gleaning



Photo Essay 3: Women in 'Crab Gleaning'



Reaching fishing ground

Occupation: How they do?

Fishing duration: 4-5 hours



Returning



Cleaning up self and gears



Back to home

Photo Essay 3: Women in 'Crab Gleaning'



Reaching gleaning site

Occupation:
How they do?



Returning

Photo Essay 3: Women in 'Crab Gleaning'

Occupation: How they do?



Green crab: 'Khapri Chimbori'



Income:
Peak: 15000-20000/ month
Lean: 9000-10000/ month



Red crab 'Kali chimbori'

Photo Essay 3: Women in 'Crab Gleaning'

Challenges/ Issues

Skin irritation due to
insects and mosquitoes



Risky journey



Health hazards due to
exposure dump and
moist environment



Siltation



Photo Essay 3: Women in 'Crab Gleaning'

Recommendations: what can be done?

- Plywood fishing rafts can be substituted with some other light weight materials like FRP
- To reduce the risks of cuts in hands and legs; comfortable gum boots and hand gloves can be provided
- Fishing accessories like cotton socks can be replaced with some non-absorbing material
- Livelihood options like crab farming, bivalve or oyster culture can be promoted for livelihood upgradation

Need

- to recognize their work in fish harvest,
- counting it in official data
- extending welfare benefits



Thank You..!

