

The role of women in fisheries in Sri Lanka (with reference to Gampaha coastal belt)

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Key words: women participation and fishing activities

Abstract

A woman is an adult female human being, as contrasted to a man, an adult male, and a girl, a female child. The term woman (irregular plural: women) is used to indicate biological sex distinctions, cultural gender role distinctions, or both. Fishing is a term applied to any activity, which aims to capture fish or shellfish for subsistence, scientific, commercial or recreational purposes.

This paper is tried to identify the women participation in fishing activities in Sri Lanka. The problem of the study do the women contribute for fishing activities to the fulfillment of the family as individually and society as a whole. It has been used both primary and secondary data for this study. Secondary data was collected from secondary sources and primary data was collected from fishing families in Bimpadura Village in Gampaha coastal belt.

Everyday the women wake up to the realities of a new day. They are engaged in various forms of activities ranging from the simple household chores to the more complex functions like going to the Sea to fish. While some of these activities can be classified as cash generating activities, various others are only in kind. These are activities that directly add to income. They include fish production, processing, nets repairing, and marketing.

It has been used both participant observation and in-depth study to collect primary data. According to the collected data women contribute enormously to the stimulation of agriculture, forestry and fisheries as well as rural villages through participation in product processing and community role. Despite their important role, however, women are not duly recognized for their contributions and are not making advances in the way of participation in policy decision-making due to stereotypes and customs regarding the roles of women and men who remain firmly entrenched in such regions. For this reason, it is necessary to take steps toward the building of a society where women can plan their own lives, be evaluated for their contributions fairly, feel confident and fulfilled in their work, home and community lives, and participate as equal partners with men. Effective efforts must be made toward this end, including the setting of concrete indices and targets and studying of progress toward those goals.

There is a need to improve the economic status of women, improve their working environment and clarify their working conditions, through the distribution of profits and forming of assets commensurate with work, and the strengthening of entrepreneurial activities to the development of women's life in fishing communities in Sri Lanka.