

F-14. Women in fisheries in two ethnic groups in Batticaloa

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Fisheries is an important sector in the district of Batticaloa. Fishing is done by Tamils and Muslims. This study was done to obtain information about the role of women in the fisheries sector in Batticaloa. The study was conducted in 2 divisions: Manmunai North a predominantly Tamil area and Kattankudy, a predominantly Muslim area.

This study was conducted as a part of an overall study among the fisherfolk of Batticaloa. Lists of fisherfamilies were obtained from Fisheries extension office and a 10% sample was selected using random numbers. Detailed interviews were conducted with each family by means of questionnaires.

Women were involved in 2 types of fisheries activities: fishing in shallow coastal waters and land based activities such as net repair, processing fish etc. 72.7% in the Muslim sector were involved in net repair and none in direct fishing activities.

In contrast, among the Tamil fisherfolk 20.2% were involved in shallow water fishing and 3.6% in net repair etc.

Fishing in shallow water is by simple and primitive methods such as fishing with karappu, collecting mysids (kuni) using cloth, collecting mussels and prawn fishing using hands or dip net. Prawns are abundant from December to May giving more income. The aspiration of women in both communities were similar. Most desired training and strengthening of network of marketing, of netweaving and fish processing.

Women among the fisherfamilies of the 2 divisions do take part in fisheries activities. The agencies of development should not ignore women in fisheries in their programmes.