

F-06 Role of fisherwomen in marine fisheries: a study in two fishing villages in Southern Sri Lanka

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The role of fisherwomen in the fisheries sector was investigated in the Kottegoda and Devinuwara marine fishing villages in Southern Sri Lanka. The information was collected from the women members of the families of craft owners and crew men.

The results revealed that none of the fisherwomen were involved in fishing and fish marketing. Since the majority of the southern fishing families are Buddhist and due to social inhibition, fisherwomen were not actively involved in direct fishing activities. Fisherwomen were mainly involved in fish processing (shark fin and fish drying). Very few were involved in other fisheries related activities such as net repairing and net cleaning. Other important roles of fisherwomen were inducing and encouraging of their male counterparts to purchase crafts and gears, and to obtain and repay loans. The family responsibility of the fisherwomen cannot be underestimated. They have to take care of elders (parents) and children, keep social contacts and also prepare daily needs (meals, water) for fishing activities. The majority of fisherwomen have membership in Fisheries Co-operative Societies. This is mainly to obtain loan and subsidy facilities through the societies. These loans are mainly utilized for self-employment activities such as coir-rope making dress making, and Maldive fish production.