



## Investigating the role of women in small-scale fisheries

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### Abstract

The main participants in the processing, marketing, and sale of the catch are the women fishermen. The local economy, household incomes, and food security are all boosted by the women who manage the catch and sell the fish for cash and food when it has landed. Fish vendors must transport their goods to marketplaces, in contrast to males whose labor is mostly restricted to the sea, river, or lake. They must deal with the law and the public. They frequently have to cope with ingrained biases and a variety of issues during this process (ICSF, 2010). As women, members of fishing communities, members of the already marginalized Latin Catholic and Dheevara communities, and fish dealers, women suffer four forms of discrimination from the mainstream culture. Because they belong to the fishing community and sell fish as a living, they are shunned by mainstream social groups. They also face discrimination as women in a community that is dominated by men.

**Keywords:** Ecosystem, Aquaculture, women's role, Small scale fisheries management

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## Introduction

In India, the marine fisheries play a significant role in ensuring food security. The growth of fishing settlements has not kept pace with the enormous increase in fish productivity throughout time. Women are heavily involved in the fishing industry, particularly in the postharvest operations, where they make up about half of the workforce (Baiardi and Isoni, 2016). Women's involvement in the economy varies by community; for example, in West Bengal, women's involvement is restricted to net-making and retail marketing (Gibe, 2024; Saidova *et al.*, 2024). In contrast, women actively work in fish processing facilities, at markets and harbors, in net-making, grading, drying, and salting in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu (Gladkova and Gladkov, 2021; Hlushenkova *et al.*, 2024). Gender division in fisheries is evident worldwide; in Brazil, women are typically limited to shell collecting in addition to their household responsibilities, while males handle the actual fishing. According to Britton (2012), although women in Ireland performed a great deal of hard work on the coast, they never actively fished and, if they did, they were a small minority (Minnaar, 2022; Ghosh and Chatterjee, 2023). State exhibits a blatant separation of labor based on gender, just like other fishing towns. Post-harvest activities such as marketing and fish processing are primarily performed by women. Because she is "impure" and would "contaminate" the sea, a woman from the fishing community is not permitted to enter it (Agarwal and Singh, 2024; Alsafar *et al.*, 2024). This demonstrates how social norms and cultural ideas influence

occupational involvement, particularly for women working in the state's fisheries, where Thiruvananthapuram has the highest employment rate (45%), followed by Alleppey (18%) and Kollam (13%). Women's involvement in fish vending varies even within the state; only women from a small number of areas do so. Trivandrum, Kollam, Kannur, and Kasargod are the main locations for female fish merchants (Manyungwa, Hara and Chimatiro, 2019; Krishnan and Patel, 2023). In activities related to fishing, women outnumbered men by almost 67%. Women predominated in the three main fishing-related tasks of peeling (96%), curing/processing (84%), and selling (79%). Compared to males (4242), ladies (16,176) are more likely to market fish. In Kerala, female fish merchants typically sell their fish house to house, in both licensed and unregulated markets (Harper *et al.*, 2020). Women who sell fish must work long hours carrying heavy loads across 20 to 30 miles in order to purchase, transport, and sell the fish.



**Figure 1: Role of women in small-scale fisheries.**

The role of women in small-scale fishing is being examined in this study (in figure 1). The social, political, and economic facets of women's lives that affect their health especially non-communicable diseases will be covered

in the study (Chambon *et al.*, 2024; Hu and Sinniah, 2024).

### *Importance and Scope of the Research*

Feminism is a broad and complex collection of concepts and, in fact, behaviors rather than a single, cohesive ideology. Many definitions of feminism begin with the claim that feminisms are concerned with women's subordinate status in society and the sex-based discrimination that women face (Smith and Basurto, 2019). To lessen and ultimately end this prejudice against women, all feminists advocate for reforms to the social, economic, political, or cultural order. The term "feminism" was coined long after women began to question their inferior status and call for an improvement in their social standing. Various feminist movements are discussed as waves in the history of feminism. Equal rights for women were the focus of the first wave of feminism; women's inequality in the areas of labor, sexuality, and family was the focus of the second wave; and diversity and the emergence of intersectionality theory were the focal points of the third wave. In research, feminist inquiry is not limited to studies that are solely about or centered on women; rather, it prioritizes the fundamental tenet of feminism, which is to give women and the problems and experiences that impact them legitimacy (Frangoudes, Gerrard and Kleiber, 2019). A more comprehensive understanding of critical work on gender in society and its various enactments and sociopolitical formations is advantageous for feminist study. Feminist studies investigate how patriarchy and oppression affect women. Understanding the female reproductive system has always been the main goal of

medical study on women's health. Research initially shifted from studying the female reproductive system to comprehending how society affects women's health, following the trends in women's health. Women's health encompasses all facets of their socially constructed health identity, including relationships, interactions in society, socio-political battles, age-related variables, and biopsychosocial elements of health (Kleiber, Harris and Vincent, 2015). Studies from an illness-based perspective frequently generalize women's nonreproductive health issues, such as diabetes, heart disease, smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, cancer, and digestive disorders.

### **Materials and Methods**

The study's female fishermen were chosen based on their type of employment, which involves fishing in both inland and marine fisheries in India's main fishing regions. The emic and etic technique to participatory observation has been used to gain a deeper knowledge of the everyday lives of women fishermen. The emic perspective is in line with the history of psychology research on folk beliefs and the goal of cultural anthropologists to comprehend culture from the standpoint of the indigenous people. The etic perspective is in line with behaviorist psychology and anthropological methods that relate cultural practices to outside, antecedent factors—like economic or ecological conditions—that cultural insiders might not find particularly noteworthy.

### **Experimental Analysis**

A one-way ANOVA test was utilized to see whether the female respondents'

strengthening scores showed any perceivable change. Table 1 shows the determined one-way ANOVA results for the female respondent.

**Table 1: One-way ANOVA test consequences of strengthening score among costal ladies.**

Source	Degrees of Freedom	Total Sum of squares	Mean square	F-Value	F0.05
Between members	2	3569.21	1784.61	10.21	3.00
Within members	297	36241.22	122.02		
Total	299	39810.32			

In light of the typical worth (X) and its standard deviation (S.D.), ladies' strengthening has been classified into

three levels: low, medium, and high. The level of female respondents' strengthening is displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2: Level of empowerment of respondents.**

Level of empowerment	Processing activity	Marketing activity	Allied activity	Total
High	75	25	98	198
Medium	87	27	49	163
Low	45	78	79	202
Total	207	138	226	

Age, training, family size, mate business, and pay of the respondents in handling action are higher than the table worth of the chi-square worth at the five percent critical level, as per the chi-square outcomes. One may get the conclusion that there is a connection between the elements and the degree of empowerment.

## Discussion

At the five percent significance level, the ANOVA test reveals a significant difference in the respondents' yearly income across the different sectors and their family size. It also demonstrates that respondents who work in a variety of industries, including marketing, processing, and related fields, have considerably different yearly incomes and family sizes. According to the "F" statistic, there is a substantial difference in processing activity between the

respondents in terms of all six economic variables throughout the two distinct periods. There are notable distinctions between the six economic variables in the two distinct time periods prior to and following microfinance in the context of marketing activities. Significant disparities occur between the respondents in the two distinct periods of before and after the microfinance period condition with respect to all six economic factors in the case of allied activity. Significant differences are observed in economic indicators, such as assets, income, savings, family income, loan amount, and overall economic index, in the case of overall data. It suggests that the respondents' economic preferences during the time before and after microfinance significantly vary as the length of membership rises.

It has been found that the respondents' income generation during the post-

microfinance period is positively connected with each of the five economic variables. Reserve funds, family pay, advance sum, and the generally speaking monetary file are significant variables in exercises. Reserve funds, credit sum, and general monetary list are the three significant components in handling exercises, separately. Reserve funds, advance sum, and general financial list are the three critical components in showcasing exercises. Reserve funds and credit sum are significant variables in related exercises, separately. As indicated by the absolute information, reserve funds, family pay, and the overall financial record are the factors that are generally unequivocally related. Since the credit sum is utilized for two particular periods — when getting microfinance — it is seen that there is a positive connection between credit sum and pay age in post-microfinance circumstances. There is a huge and positive connection between's income age and expanding family pay and reserve funds.

### Conclusion

Using a set of criteria, including improvements in social recognition, participation, self-sufficiency, social communication, social independence, social interaction, and social index, which was created using the seven variables mentioned above, the respondents' level of social empowerment was assessed and categorized. Furthermore, by guaranteeing a respectable, steady level of income through various activities in the research region, small-scale programs have assisted the families of female responders who live below the poverty

line. The program has increased respondents' income, savings, and assets, created jobs, and increased the degree of women's empowerment in the decision-making process. In the upcoming four years, it is anticipated that this scheme would expand its coverage beyond the initial projection. Since it offers a different approach to the development of rural women, small-scale schemes are a useful addition to development planning. An important factor in the growth of an economy is the small-scale plan. Small-scale initiatives have the potential to become a rural powerhouse in enhancing the creative and productive capabilities of actual women if they are implemented with diligence. To put it briefly, small-scale programs should be seen as change agents that empower rural women.

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