

streams and tidal waters. This is perhaps one of the fisheries in India having ownership for women also. Stationary bag nets and stakes (*Oonipadu*) were received by daughters as dowry. But nowadays inheritance is mainly through male lineage and passes on from father to son/daughter. This study attempts to categorise the activity of women into pre and post-harvest operations in stake net fishery along Aroor fishing village of Alappuzha district. Under the pre-harvest activities, women are engaged in preservative treatment of net by using indigenous technical knowledge. They prepare a decoction of tamarind seed/bark of 'Kalasu' (*Lamnea coromentilica*) / 'Panachikka' (*Diospyros malabarica*) etc, and immerse the net for 24 h, which they believe will improve the strength and longevity of netting materials. This treatment is repeated every two to three months. Another major activity is the involvement of women, post harvest, in sorting of fish which includes removal of debris, species and size wise segregation; drying and marketing of dried as well as fresh fish. Although women play a pivotal role in stake net fisheries, their participation is not recognized or it remains imperceptible and considered to have no real value.

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Women in inland fish farming – supportive roles in the value chain

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Being one of the fastest-growing food sector in the world, aquaculture is expected to contribute more than 50 percent of total fish consumption by 2020. Although shrimp production is the main focus of this

sector, the development potential of aquaculture species is large which varies from region to region. In Kerala catfish, tilapia, crab, pearl spot production systems contribute to the inland fish production considerably. The vast inland water bodies are conducive for farming of certain commercially important fish species due to favourable environment and weather conditions. Owing to high level of investment and nature of work the aquaculture sector is often considered a male domain. There have been many relevant development projects and programs operational in Ernakulam district, Kerala which have led to gainful employment of fisherwomen. Women's role and participation is considered largely supportive in this domain. However this study from selected fish farming groups in Pizhala and Chendamangalam in the district proves that they are crucial in the chain and contribute from pond construction, fingerlings sorting, pond stocking, feeding, sex identification and fish harvest. It was more of a family enterprise with all members contributing and the earnings were around Rs.2.5 to 3 lakhs per annum. The defined roles and potential of women in inland fish farming sector have been discussed in this paper and the challenges faced by women which can be addressed through capacity building and R & D initiatives are outlined.