

CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN FOR FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD SECURITY IN HILLS THROUGH AQUACULTURE ACTIVITIES



A woman by nature is a symbol of patience. This inherent quality has found her a place in all fields where patience is of paramount importance including hill Agriculture. Fish culture too involves patience.



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Women play important role in the hill aquaculture

Major occupation in the mountain region of the country is agriculture based activities. The land holding in the hill area is smaller (700-900m²) as compared to the national average (1370 m²). The farmers in the hill region have integrated type of farming pattern. Fish can serve as an additional source of income if integrated with the animal husbandry and horticulture. To cop up the climatic stress, animals are the main source of protein in the hills but animal flesh is more expensive due to adding in transport cost. Locally farm produced fish is suggested to be the best substitute of the animal protein. The coldwater aquaculture is important in providing the protein and improving socio-economic life of the people dwelling in the mountainous zones of the country.



Women participate directly in fish feeding, retail marketing and processing of fish and performed 46-80% of the total job. They are also indirectly involved in net mending, boat rowing, pond construction etc. In North East states, women are fully engaged in traditional "Jhora fishery" as well as in retail marketing of fresh fish in their petty shops. J & K and Sikkim states are leaping forward for trout farming due to the active participation of women. In North East states, 48% integrated fish units and trout raceways are owned by women.

Women participation (%) in different activities of aquaculture

Activities	J & K	HP	UK	Sikkim	Manipur	Meghalaya	Arunachal
Direct related activities							
Fish feeding	44	24	14	58	66	62	54
Retail marketing	46	22	14	80	76	72	84
Small scale processing	70	62	68	80	92	90	98
Ownership of the pond	24	18	12	48	51	46	47
Indirect related activities							
Net mending	56	34	16	48	42	38	54
Boat rowing	86	-	-	16	10		12
Pond construction	58	45	52	78	82	84	76
Feed manufacturing	24	36	10	68	64	62	60



*W*omen are a largest workforce behind the aquaculture production in hills. Lack of technical skill, non availability of Institutional credit and lack of organized fish markets in the hills are the major constraints. In order to ensure better participation of women, it is desirable to create awareness, to impart training and organization of women self help groups. There is a potential of women participation in the trout culture, fish based eco-tourism and ornamental fish trading in hills.

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