

Role of Women in Fishing Industry in Kalpitiya Peninsula, Sri Lanka

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In Kalpitiya, fisheries and aquacultural resources imperatively contribute to the income and food security of the local rural livelihoods. Small-Scale Fishery (SSF) activities are seen as male domain and role of women is poorly addressed. This paper examines the role of women in fishing communities in purposively selected six fishing villages in Kalpitiya peninsula in order to assess the contribution of women to the fishery industry. Primary data was collected through a questionnaire for ninety women along with thirty focused group discussions for fishermen across the six villages. The results provided a in local context-specific analysis of the role of women in fishing villages, demonstrating that 72 percent of women were engaged in non-paid production stage activities in fishing industry apart from other non-paid activities. Married women were directly involved in various fishery activities while some of them carried out aquacultural activities. Differences in women's 'bio-clocks' indicated various activities they carried out in their villages. Comparing to fishermen, women have done a wide range of activities daily including fishery related activities. Respondent women also participated in natural resource management activities which in turn contribute to increasing their fish, mollusc, gastropod and crustacean species harvest. Therefore, women must be included in future conservation and fishery management. Even though, women have played a vital role in fishing industry, their roles have not been given a proper place.

Keywords: gender division of fisheries; productive and non-productive work; women