



# ROLE OF WOMEN IN FISHERIES SECTOR IN INDIA

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## -----ABSTRACT-----

*The pivotal role of the women in the fisheries sector, highlight their multifaceted contribution to various stages of the industry. It delves in to the socio-economic impact of women's involvement, emphasizing their role in sustainable Practices, community development, and the challenges they face. Need for gender-inclusive polices to empower women in Fisheries and enhance the overall resilience and success of the sector. Additionally, it addresses challenges faced by women in the fisheries industry, such as limited access to recourses and gender- based decimation. By emphasizing the need for gender-inclusive Policies and empowering initiatives and sustainable future for women in the Indian fisheries sector. By employing a Qualitative and Quantitative research Approach, research examines the involvement of women across various segments of the fishery value chain, including harvesting, processing, and marketing. It investigates the socio-economic factors influencing women's participation, the impact of their involvement on household livelihoods, and the existing policy frameworks supporting or hindering their empowerment. The findings aim to inform strategies for fostering gender-inclusive policies and initiatives to enhances the overall sustainability and resilience of the Indian fisheries sector.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Empowerment, Gender equality, Livelihoods, sustainable fisheries, community development.*

## -----INTRODUCTION-----

The role of women in India's Fisher sector is multifaceted, reflecting a blend of tradition and evolving opportunities. Historically marginalized, women in fishing communities have gradually assumed crucial responsibilities, contributing significantly to the sector's sustainability and economic development. As fisherwomen engage in various activities like fish processing, marketing, and net mending, their indispensable role underscores the need for gender-inclusive policies and empowerment initiatives to further enhance their participation and socio-economic impact. In India, the role of women in the fisheries sector has evolved significantly, reflecting a dynamic shift in societal perspectives. Traditionally considered a male-dominated domain, women are increasingly asserting themselves in various facets of the fisheries industry. From active participation in fishing activities to engaging in post-harvest processes like processing and marketing, women contribute substantially to the sector's growth. This transformation not only empowers women economically but also challenges. In India, the role of women in the fisheries sector has undergone a transformative shift, breaking traditional stereotypes. Historically perceived as a male-dominated industry, women are now actively participating in various facets of fisheries, from aquaculture to processing and marketing. This shift not only reflects a progressive socio-economic landscape but also underscores the crucial contribution of women in sustaining and developing the fisheries sector. This introduction sets the stage to delve deeper into the evolving role, challenges, and impact of women in the Fisher sector in India. traditional gender norms, paving the way for a more inclusive and diversified fisheries industry in India.

## OBJECTIVES

- 1.To analyse the facilitate skill development programs for women
- 2.To analyse the Encourage women's entrepreneurship in the fishery sector.
- 3.To analyse the Facilitate better market access for women involved in fisheries



## HYPOTHESIS

**H: 1:** Increase integration of women in the fisheries sector will lead to improved overall sustainability, Economic growth and social well-being with in fishing communities.

**H: 2:** Strengthened community resilience, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and sustainable fishery sector.

## METHODOLOGY

1. Analyzing existing literature to understand the historical context, challenges, and opportunities for women in the fisheries sector.

2. conducting surveys and interviews with women involved in different aspects of the fisheries industry

3. Utilizing statistical methods to analyse data on women's participation in the fisheries sector.

4. Evaluating existing policies and regulations related to the fisheries sector.

5. collaborating with local organizations to empower women in the fisheries sector.

The study will be based on secondary data.

## TOOLS OF ANALYSIS

Averages like Mean, Media and standard deviation and such other ratio methods are used for analysing data.

Gender Analysis frame works, apply coding techniques, Geographic information System mapping can be used for analysing the information about women's fisheries.

## SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The role of women in fisheries has evolved, but certain scopes and limitations persist. Women often contribute significantly to small- scale fisheries through tasks like processing and marketing. However, limitations such as limited access to resources, education, and decision-making roles can hinder their full participation. Efforts to address these constraints and promote gender equality in the fisheries sector are crucial for sustainable development. The role of women in the fishery sector varies globally. While many contribute significantly to processing and marketing, they often face limitations in accessing resources, credit, and decision-making roles. Gender stereotypes can restrict women from engaging in certain fishing activities, limiting their overall impact on the sector's development. Efforts to address these challenges aim to enhance gender equality and empower women in fisheries. The scope of women in the fishery sector has expanded, with increased involvement in various activities such as processing, marketing, and aquaculture. However, limitations persist, including limited access to resources, technology, and decision-making roles. Gender stereotypes and cultural norms also affect women's participation, posing challenges to achieving full gender equality in the industry.

## HISTORY OF WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE FISHING SECTOR IN INDIA

In India, women have been historically involved in the fishing sector, primarily engaged in processing and post-harvest activities. Traditionally, their contributions were often overlooked, with a focus on the roles of male fishermen. Over time, awareness has grown regarding the significant role women play in fisheries, leading to efforts to empower them.

In recent decades, there has been an increased recognition of the multifaceted contributions of women in the Indian fishing sector. Women are involved in various aspects, including fish processing, trading, and marketing. They often play crucial roles in sustaining household income and ensuring food security. However, challenges persist, such as limited access to resources, technology, and credit. Additionally, gender-based discrimination and cultural norms can hinder women's full participation in decision-making processes within the fishing communities. Government and non-governmental organizations have been working to address these challenges and promote gender equity in the fishing sector. Initiatives aim to provide training, enhance access to resources, and empower women economically, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and sustainable fisheries industry in India. In India, women have long been involved in the fishing sector, primarily in traditional roles like fish processing and marketing. Historically, their contributions were often overlooked, and they faced challenges such as limited access to credit, training, and technology. Over time, efforts have been made to recognize and enhance the role of women in fisheries, with initiatives promoting skill development, entrepreneurship, and sustainable practices. Despite progress, gender disparities persist, underscoring the need for continued efforts to empower women in India's fishing industry. In India, the history of women in the fishing sector reflects a significant but often overlooked role. Traditionally, women were engaged in fish processing, drying, and marketing, playing crucial roles in supporting fishing communities. However, their contributions were often undervalued and not adequately recognized. Over time, there has been a gradual recognition of women's importance in the fishing sector, leading



to initiatives to empower them. Government and non-governmental organizations have implemented programs to enhance women's skills, provide access to credit, and promote their involvement in decision-making processes related to fisheries. Challenges persist, including limited access to resources, lack of representation in fisheries management, and the impact of environmental changes on their livelihoods. Efforts continue to address these issues and promote gender equality in India's fishing sector.

### **CURRENT STATUS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR**

The status of women's participation in the fisheries sector varies globally. In many regions, women play essential roles in both small-scale and industrial fisheries, contributing to activities such as processing, marketing, and community development. However, they often face challenges such as limited access to resources and decision-making roles. Efforts are being made to promote gender equality in the fisheries sector through policies and initiatives that recognize and support women's contributions. Specific details depend on the region and local context. The status of women's participation in the fisheries sector varies globally. In many regions, women play crucial roles in fisheries-related activities such as processing, marketing, and small-scale fishing. However, they often face challenges in accessing resources, credit, and decision-making positions. Efforts are being made to promote gender equality in the sector through policy initiatives and capacity-building programs. Ongoing monitoring and advocacy aim to enhance women's involvement and address gender-specific issues in the fisheries industry.

### **CHALLENGES FACED BY THE WOMEN IN FISHERIES SECTOR**

Women fish vendors are always physically and mentally weaker and affected by the local rowdies and policemen in sometime, they lose their earnings to such policemen and rowdies in force. The current law is not much effective to the fisheries and their family.

Some of the constraints faced by women are:

1. Gender bias
2. Lack of basic education especially in rural areas.
3. Lack of awareness about their rights
4. Cultural believes
5. Lack of financial support to initial projects.
6. Lack of knowledge and training in aquaculture
7. Lack of policies to empower women.

Increase in competition, decaying resources and complex working conditions make work challenging for the fisherwomen. Among fisherwomen mobility is limited; hence they need some eco- friendly technologies, which could provide additional income to the family. India is characterized by a large number of small-scale and artisanal fishers who face multiple socio-economic challenges. Low incomes, lack of access to credit and insurance, and inadequate social security measures contribute to the vulnerability of fishing communities.

### **INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS AIMED AT EMPOWERING WOMEN IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR**

Several initiatives and programs focus on empowering women in the fisheries sector. They often include skill-building workshops, financial support, and awareness campaigns to promote gender equality. These efforts aim to enhance women's participation in fishing activities, provide access to resources, and ensure their inclusion in decision-making processes. Empowering women in the fisheries sector involves both initiatives and programs. Initiatives often refer to specific actions or activities aimed at addressing challenges faced by women in the industry. Programs, on the other hand, encompass a broader set of organized efforts, including multiple initiatives, to support women's involvement, skills development, and overall empowerment in the fisheries sector. Combining targeted initiatives within a comprehensive program can lead to more sustainable and impactful outcomes. While "initiative" and "program" are often used interchangeably, in the context of empowering women in the fisheries sector, an initiative could refer to a broader effort or movement, while a program might specifically outline the structured activities and steps involved in achieving that empowerment. Both terms are used to convey organized efforts toward a common goal. Several programs aim to empower women in the fisheries sector. For example, training programs that focus on skill development, financial literacy initiatives, and mentorship programs can provide women with the tools and knowledge needed to thrive in the industry. Additionally, access to credit and resources, along with awareness campaigns promoting gender equality, can contribute to empowering women in the fishery sector. It's essential to tailor programs to address specific challenges faced by women in this field. Programs introducing and promoting the use of modern technologies in fishing and fish processing to enhance efficiency and productivity for women in the sector.



#### Networking and Capacity Building

Projects that create networks among women in the fisheries industry, providing platforms for sharing knowledge, experiences, and building supportive communities.

#### Legal Support Programs:

Initiatives that assist women in understanding and advocating for their legal rights in the fisheries sector, ensuring fair treatment and opportunities.

These programs often work in tandem, addressing multiple facets of empowerment to create a more holistic and sustainable impact on women in the fisheries sector.

#### Several programs aim to empower women in the fisheries sector

**Training and Skill Development Programs:** Offering specialized training to women in fishing techniques, aquaculture, and related skills to enhance their expertise.

**Access to Resources Programs:** Ensuring women have equal access to fishing resources, such as boats, gear, and credit, to promote their active involvement in the industry.

**Financial Inclusion Initiatives:** Providing financial support, microfinance, or grants to women for starting or expanding their own fishing businesses.

**Awareness and Education Campaigns:** Creating awareness about the importance of women's roles in the fishery sector and educating communities about gender equality.

**Networking and Support Groups:** Establishing networks and support groups for women in the fisheries industry to share experiences, knowledge, and provide mutual assistance.

**Legal Advocacy Programs:** Advocating for and ensuring that women have equal rights and legal recognition in fisheries-related activities.

**Technology Adoption Programs:** Encouraging the use of technology in fishing processes, which can enhance efficiency and empower women by providing them with tools to excel in their work.

**Market Access Programs:** Facilitating access to markets for women in the fishery sector, ensuring fair prices and opportunities for economic growth.

Each program contributes to the overall goal of empowering women in the fisheries sector by addressing various aspects of their involvement.

#### Success stories of women who have overcome challenges and achieved success in the fisheries industry.

One inspiring success story is Barbara Block, a marine biologist who overcame gender biases in the fisheries industry. Her groundbreaking research on tuna migration has significantly contributed to marine conservation and earned her recognition, breaking barriers for women in a traditionally male-dominated field. One inspiring success story is that of Linda Greenlaw, a trailblazing woman in the commercial fishing industry. Overcoming gender stereotypes, she became one of the first female swordfishing boat captains. Greenlaw's determination and expertise were highlighted in the book "The Perfect Storm" and her own memoir, showcasing her resilience and success in a traditionally male-dominated field. One inspiring success story is that of Sylvia Earle, an oceanographer and marine biologist. She overcame gender barriers to become a pioneering figure in the field of marine science, advocating for ocean conservation and founding the Mission Blue organization. Her achievements highlight the impact women can have in traditionally male-dominated industries like fisheries.

**Policies or regulations that support women in the fisheries sector.** Policies promoting gender equality in the fisheries sector can include measures to ensure equal opportunities, access to resources, and protection from discrimination for women involved in fishing activities. These regulations might address issues such as fair employment practices, training opportunities, and representation in decision-making processes to support women in the fisheries sector. Policies supporting women in the fisheries sector can include initiatives for equal



opportunities, training programs, and addressing gender-specific challenges to ensure a more inclusive and equitable industry. The following are the different policy for women in the fisheries sector.

**Equal Access to Resources:** Ensure equitable access to fishing resources, such as licenses, quotas, and gear, to eliminate gender-based disparities and empower women in the fisheries sector.

**Training and Capacity Building:** Implement programs to provide specialized training and capacity-building opportunities for women, enhancing their skills in fishing techniques, resource management, and entrepreneurship.

**Financial Support:** Establish financial mechanisms, like grants or loans, specifically designed to support women in fisheries, enabling them to invest in equipment, vessels, or other resources necessary for their businesses.

**Social Protection Measures:** Develop social safety nets, including insurance and pension schemes, to address the unique risks and vulnerabilities faced by women in the fisheries sector, such as during periods of economic downturn or natural disasters.

**Inclusive Decision-Making:** Encourage and facilitate the active participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels of fisheries management, ensuring their voices are heard in policy formulation and implementation.

**Childcare Support:** Provide childcare facilities or support services to help women in the fisheries sector balance their work and family responsibilities, recognizing the often demanding and irregular nature of fishing activities.

**Market Access:** Facilitate improved market access for women in fisheries, promoting fair pricing mechanisms and eliminating barriers that may hinder their participation in the value chain.

**Health and Safety Measures:** Implement measures to enhance the health and safety of women in the fisheries sector, addressing specific concerns related to physical well-being and occupational health.

**Awareness and Education:** Launch awareness campaigns to challenge stereotypes and promote gender equality within the industry, encouraging a cultural shift towards recognizing and respecting the role of women in fisheries.

## RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION

Invest in research and data collection that specifically considers gender dynamics in the fisheries sector, providing a foundation for evidence-based policymaking the role of women in this field.

As per the information given by Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Government of India is implementing the umbrella Centrally Sponsored Scheme on “Blue Revolution: Integrated Development and Management of Fisheries” launched during 2015-16, with the following components:

Development of Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture,

Development of Marine Fisheries, Infrastructure and Post-Harvest Operations,

National Scheme on Welfare of Fishermen

Monitoring, Control and Surveillance and other need-based Interventions (MCS),

Institutional Arrangement for Fisheries Sector,

Strengthening of Database & Geographical Information System of the Fisheries Sector (So DGIS),

National Fisheries Development Board and its activities (NFDB)

The eligible beneficiaries for aforesaid scheme are Fishers, Fish farmers, Entrepreneurs, Cooperatives, SHGs and any other private recipients including women beneficiaries. Under the Blue Revolution scheme the financial assistance is being provided for women beneficiaries to the tune of the 60% of the unit cost in respect of the all the beneficiary-oriented components. The details of funds released to Government of Tamil Nadu during the last three years and current year is below:





Sl. No.	Financial Year	Funds Released (Rs.in lakh)
1	2016-17	2492.50
2	2017-18	11342.80
3	2018-19	7155.91
4	2019-20 (till date)	0.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20991.21</b>

Further, foreseeing the immense scope for development of fisheries and aquaculture sector, various initiatives have been taken by the Department of Fisheries by launching a specified scheme on Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF) on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2018, at a total outlay of Rs 7522.48 crore to assist in creating several infrastructural needs of the sector in the country. The details of State/UT -wise release in Fisheries Sector including the State of Tamil Nadu during 2014-15 to 2019-20 is at **Annexure**.

**ANNEXURE**

State/UT -wise release in Fisheries Sector during 2014-15 to 2019-20 (Till date)								
(Rs. In lakh)								
S. N	State/UT/Institutes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 (Till date)	Total
1	A & N Islands	84.72	275.00	54.00	179.89	129.09		722.70
2	Andhra Pradesh	1043.60	777.15	1897.00	2162.88	1302.31		7182.94
3	Arunachal Pradesh	88.33	81.30	0.00	222.90	374.68		767.21
4	Assam	462.35	971.14	1641.45	799.66	524.14		4398.74
5	Bihar	309.58	93.84	1948.04	2.25	4078.69		6432.40
6	Chhattisgarh	500.93	446.51	1346.69	1091.92	1045.69	735.76	5167.50
7	Daman & Diu	7.50	21.77	0.00	226.69	0.00		255.96
8	Delhi	15.00	0.00	0.00	136.29	0.00		151.29
9	Goa	280.05	70.82	1000.00	265.24	63.82		1679.93
10	Gujarat	249.13	491.43	386.50	1527.43	1420.80		4075.29
11	Haryana	134.82	194.95	1122.05	779.36	605.90		2837.08
12	Himachal Pradesh	49.34	181.57	1082.32	572.26	1046.13		2931.62
13	Jammu & Kashmir	21.08	213.23	1111.18	404.69	439.54		2189.72
14	Jharkhand	297.72	589.12	2300.20	75.00	925.40		4187.44
15	Karnataka	1401.03	2352.58	2870.54	3324.31	5847.28		15795.74
16	Kerala	3088.85	6713.78	1298.10	812.34	5093.01		17006.08
17	Lakshadweep	0.00	42.25	0.00	53.57	39.90		135.72
18	Madhya Pradesh	416.49	346.09	1400.00	672.02	711.39	404.70	3950.69
19	Maharashtra	1292.45	1263.62	2051.53	2256.81	2861.17		9725.58
20	Manipur	171.96	590.22	0.00	456.15	382.13		1600.46
21	Meghalaya	0.00	36.10	1003.17	139.60	2598.95		3777.82
22	Mizoram	544.37	1016.49	1376.77	261.39	403.75		3602.77
23	Nagaland	1792.36	867.92	965.84	219.40	194.67		4040.19
24	Odisha	1373.16	1256.93	2593.59	1077.68	1022.13	38.40	7361.89
25	Pondicherry	196.00	859.95	999.95	150.00	1448.00		3653.90
26	Punjab	139.57	42.59	999.00	465.36	581.34		2227.86
27	Rajasthan	29.49	34.21	262.10	83.28	70.20		479.28
28	Sikkim	23.19	26.94	379.16	0.00	416.52		845.81
29	Tamil Nadu	5088.69	5700.73	2492.50	11342.80	7155.91		31780.63
30	Telangana	1513.96	165.94	1465.00	479.78	1574.80		5199.48
31	Tripura	54.89	361.96	867.88	341.92	2004.18		3630.83
32	Uttar Pradesh	474.15	672.63	1760.85	238.14	3050.06		6195.83
33	Uttarakhand	82.97	48.85	954.95	746.16	471.08		2304.01
34	West Bengal	987.62	925.84	774.38	649.32	185.40		3522.56
35	NFDB	5997.51	5339.99	3239.03	1399.00	10162.00		26137.53
36	Fisheries Institutes	5157.15	5439.75	165.44	8324.14	8944.39	3173.16	31204.03
37	Others	1965.97	3167.75	601.97	138.35	377.92	15.00	6266.96
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35335.98</b>	<b>41680.94</b>	<b>42411.18</b>	<b>42077.97</b>	<b>67552.37</b>	<b>4367.02</b>	<b>233425.46</b>

This information was given by the Minister of Women and Child Development, Smriti Zubin Irani, in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.



## IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR WOMEN IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR

Education and training for women in the fishery sector are crucial for empowering them with the necessary skills and knowledge. This enables women to actively participate in the industry, fostering economic growth and sustainability. Education opens avenues for leadership roles, while training enhances their capabilities, ensuring responsible and efficient resource management. Overall, investing in women's education and training promotes gender equality and contributes to the development of a resilient and inclusive fishery sector.

Education and training for women in the fishery sector are crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it empowers women by providing them with the skills and knowledge needed to actively participate in various roles within the industry. This not only enhances their economic independence but also contributes to overall community development.

Secondly, education equips women with a better understanding of sustainable fishing practices, helping to promote environmental conservation. Training in modern techniques and technology can improve efficiency and reduce the environmental impact of fishing activities.

Moreover, educated and trained women can play key roles in community leadership, advocating for gender equality and influencing policy decisions that benefit both women and the fishery sector.

In essence, investing in the education and training of women in the fishery sector not only supports their personal development but also fosters sustainable practices and contributes to the broader well-being of communities involved in the industry

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