

## **An analysis of gender roles in small-scale coastal fisheries in Negombo and Chilaw fisheries districts of Sri Lanka**

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The small-scale coastal fishery is recognized as a major subsector for sustaining livelihoods in fisheries industry and it is diverse in gender roles. The objectives of this study were to identify gender roles in productive, household and community activities and to examine constraints in gender empowerment in the three aspects: active fishing, dry fish processing, and marketing. This study was conducted in Negombo and Chilaw. A socio-economic survey was conducted using semi-structured questionnaire from 60 fishing households based on non-probability, convenience sampling method. Field data were analyzed using SPSS statistical package and Harvard Analytical Framework was used for gender role analysis. Study results found that majority of fishermen (41.7%) belonged to 41-50 age category while majority of fisherwomen (35%) were belonged to 31-40 age category. Though seagoing fishing was a male-dominated activity, more than 33% of fisherwomen supported their fishing activities. Fisher women engaged in pre-harvest and post-harvest activities including net clearing (56.7%), net loading (36.7%), net mending (25%), repairing nets (40%), sorting fish (51.7%), dry fish making (31.7%) and fish selling (60%). Study results revealed that fisherwomen provided more contribution in household management including preparing meals (86.7%), cleaning (91.7%) and washing clothes (80%). Further, some important decisions were made jointly by husband and wife such as financial management (40%), education of the children (33.3%) and borrowings from financial institutions (56.7%). 51.7% of fishermen participated in fisheries community organizations while both husband and wife jointly participated in weddings (95%), funerals (90%) and religious functions (78.3%). Low fish catch, high cost of fishing gears were major issues faced by fishermen while fisherwomen faced constraints such as lack of recognition for women's work and gender discrimination in wage labour. It is recommended to concern gender roles into fisheries policies for the well-being of small-scale coastal fishing communities in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** empowerment, gender roles, small scale coastal fisheries, well-being

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