



WAVES
of Art...
Series 2

WOMEN IN AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES

Through the Eyes of Artists



Amaz

Arnawaz Vasudev Charities







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of Art...  Series 2

WOMEN IN AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES

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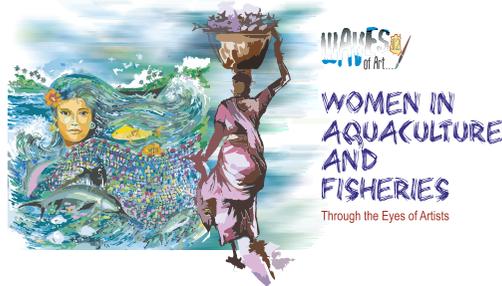
Arnawaz

Arnawaz Vasudev Charities





Dr. S Jayaraj
Co-Ordinator
Waves of Art Programme



BOBP-IGO, 2022. Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture-Through the Eyes of Artists, Bay of Bengal Programme Inter Governmental Organisation, p78.

The sketching included in this series are those drawn during a special event organized jointly by BOBP and ICAR-CIFT on 28.10.2022. The publication also includes the contributions from eminent subject matter specialists and artists from South Asian countries.

We thank Dr. Nikita Gopal, Dr. E. Vivekanandan, Dr. M. Sri Hari and Dr. Sivaraman for their assistance in drafting, editing and finalizing the descriptions for the sketchings.

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November 2022

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Shri Jatindra Nath Swain, IAS
Secretary



Department of Fisheries
Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying
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Foreword

I am happy to note that the BOBP-IGO in partnership with Arnawas Charitable Trust has initiated the Waves of Art Initiative to enhance its social outreach using art and creative communication. The current issue, second in the series, with the theme of *Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture*, being published jointly with ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) and Asian Fisheries Society (AFS) on the occasion of 8th Global Symposium on Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries, held from 21-23 November, 2022, in Kochi, is apt and very timely.

India is among the top three producers of fish in the world and about 28 million people are engaged in it. The women fisher folk population is roughly 12 million, of which about 81 percent are engaged in the inland sector and the rest are in marine realm. The role of women fisher folk in marine fisheries, however, deserves special mention as they not only participate in large number in pre and post-harvest activities but also ensure that the men take necessary precautions to ensure safety at sea. That is, the women fisher folk play multiple roles of nurturer, nourisher, negotiator, and navigator in the fisheries ecosystem. They are also the bridge between the world of the fisher folk and the rest of the world.

Even the folklores across the length and breadth of this sub-continent have widely acknowledged the role of the women in fisheries, particularly as fish vendors – a traditional activity of women fisher folk. The Government values the momentous role of the women in fishers and is also committed to accelerate the process of women empowerment through inclusive policies and programmes. The flagship programme of the Department of Fisheries, Government of India, *Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana* (PMMSY) has inherent components aimed at unlocking women entrepreneurship. The commitment of the Government to 'gender justice', is evident in its stated policies, pertaining to the fisheries sector.

The Frontier Gandhi and Bharat Ratna Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan once said, “*If you wish to know, how civilised a culture is, look at how they treat its women*”. In Indian milieu, women hold a position of respect, trust and recourse. Although the exalted role of women has not fully materialized in practice, by knowing, understanding, empathising and acknowledging, we can surely move towards that.

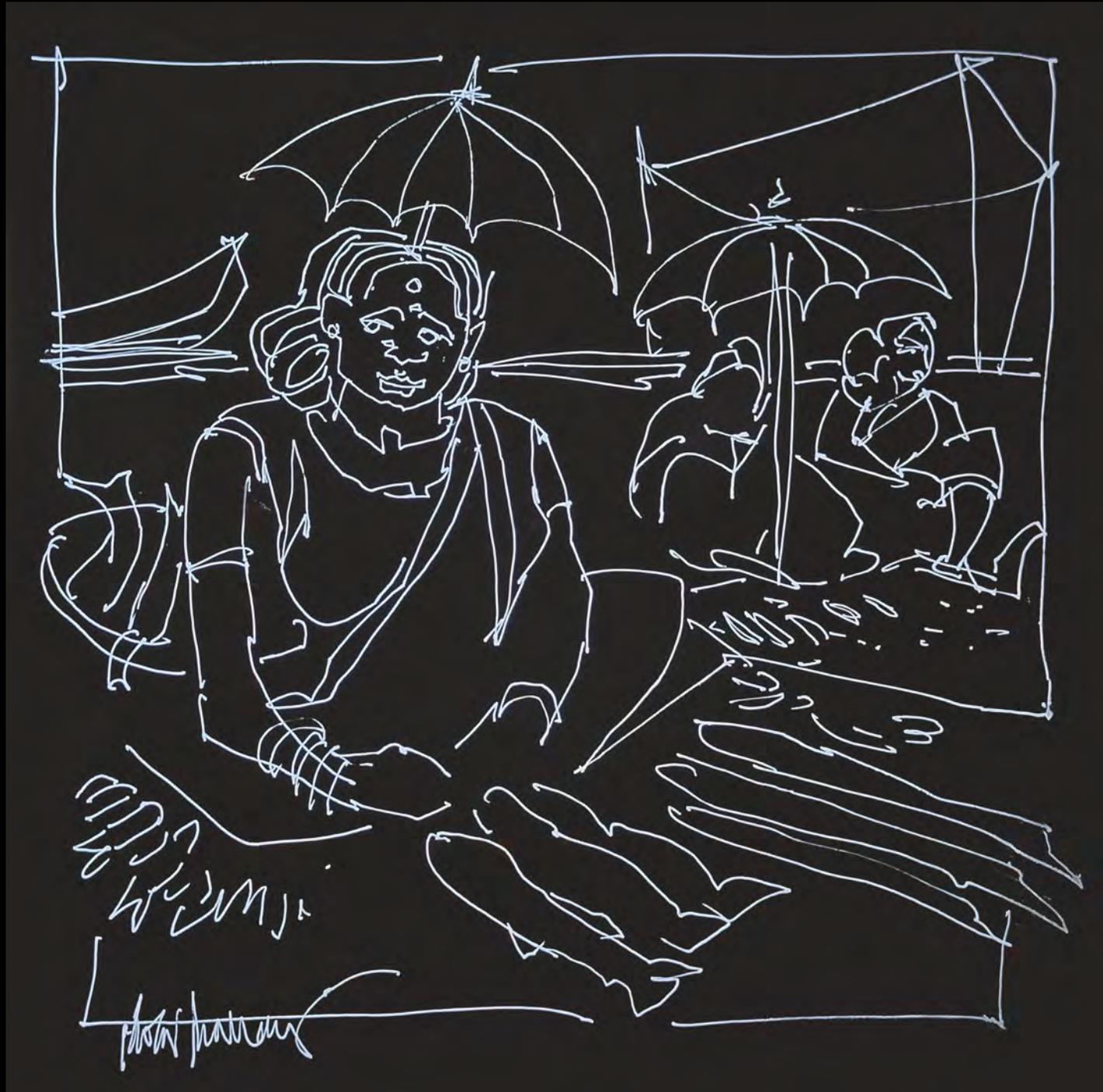
It is very appropriate that the focal theme of the first two issues of the *Waves of Art Initiative* of BOBP, has been on the role of women, and I hope this will contribute to our collective appreciation of the role of women in fisheries and aid in emboldening the women to weave a better future for all of us.

Date: 16 November 2022

(Jatindra Nath Swain)



Padmashri **Dr. Thota Tharrani**
Artist & Designer



Preface

The BOBP-IGO has recently started a new initiative - Waves of Arts Series, under which, art or sketching events are proposed to be conducted on themes related to sea, fishing and fishermen, joining hands with enthusiasts and sponsors. The first issue is available @ <https://bobpigo.org/webroot/publications/BOBP-Waves-Art-Women-Fisheries-Through-Eyes-Artists.pdf>.

The **Waves of Art Series -2** is planned in partnership with Asian Fisheries Society and ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) in the side lines of "**Global Symposium on Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Conference-GAF8**" at Kochi, during November 21-23, 2022. It is not sheer coincidence that the theme of the first two issues of the Waves of Art Series portrayed women and gender issues, rather a conscious effort to recognize the role of women in fisheries.

We co-organized a sketching event with ICAR-CIFT, preceding the GAF-8, which received significant attention among the stakeholders. Artists from Tamil Nadu and Kerala participated in the event. This publication is a compilation of the art works made by those participated in the event and also few subject matter experts and distinguished artists, who had contributed to this edition, on special request.

While BOBP looks forward to associate with relevant platforms, to use creative communication for the cause of sustainable fisheries, I will be obliged to receive your suggestions to expand the scope and reach of the **Waves of Art Initiative**.

We will reach you soon with our next series on an equally interesting theme, wherein you could be one of the partners or contributors.

Warm regards,

(P. Krishnan)



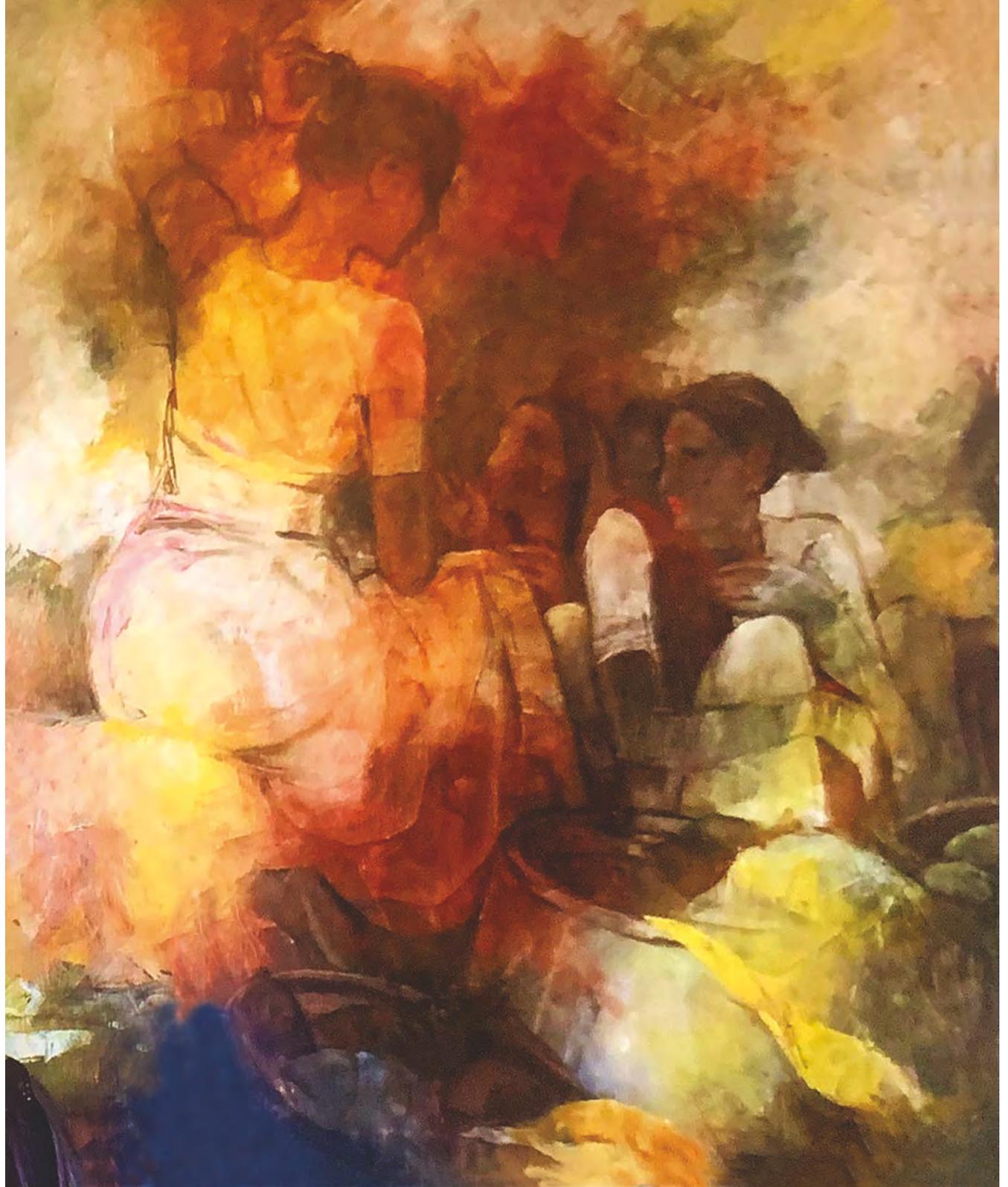
Dr. P. Krishnan

Director, BOBP-IGO
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Nikita Gopal

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ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Technology &
Chair, GAF Section (GAFS) of Asian Fisheries Society*



Meryl J Williams, Ph.D., FTSE,

*Honorary Life Member, Asian Fisheries Society,
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Fisheries Section, Asian fisheries Society*

Multifaceted dimension of women in fisheries and aquaculture

It is now a recognized fact that women contribute significantly to the aquaculture and fisheries sector through their labour in the sector. Balancing both household responsibilities and fish work they epitomize the struggles of a majority of women across sectors and professions. Women in fisheries are seen in all nodes of fish value chain and undertake a wide variety of activities that stretch from harvesting to marketing and processing. Their involvement in fish harvest globally, especially in small scale fisheries, is now much better documented than before. Fisherwomen use a variety of gear to harvest fish, molluscs, fish seeds and seaweeds in estuarine, near shore and inland waters by gleaning, diving, harpooning and other indigenous methods. The inconsequentiality attached to this work had resulted in this valuable contribution remaining invisible, especially by not being reflected in production data. Despite evidence, although sporadic and micro-level, whether this is still being accounted for is debatable. This calls for clear strategies to be devised, tested and adopted across regions with active involvement of fishing communities for this to be rightfully counted as an economic contributor. The fish harvested by women play an important part in ensuring nutritional needs of fisher households, besides bringing in much needed income. Not many women are seen in the industrial fishing sector where long hours (or days) of work onboard at sea are the norm, though there are exceptions with women owning fishing vessels and carrying out fishing.

Women have raised fish in backyard ponds. So they are natural aqua-culturists. The boom in commercial aquaculture is driven by technology, narrow in scope including a few commercial species that are consumer demand and market driven and a competitive space. The importance of SIS in aquaculture systems that will aid in hunger and nutrition management of vulnerable households needs reinforcement. Integrated agriculture-animal husbandry-aquaculture models need greater popularization. Women have engaged in pre-harvest work

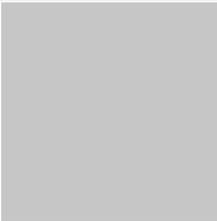
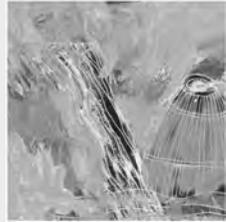
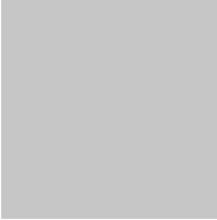
like net fabrication, which is still seen in several countries, though increasingly gear webbings are machine made rendering redundant the manual labour that women put into this activity.

As widely recognized, they dominate fisheries post-harvest. Right from shore based activities like sorting the fish to taking it to the consumer, they are involved in almost all activities alongside men. They are thus very crucial links in the fish economy. They subsidize marketing infrastructure by ensuring that fish reaches the doorsteps of consumers carrying them as headloads. Along the value chain challenges include lack of access to capital to meet competition at various levels and lack of capacities to exploit emerging opportunities like online marketing and marketing using social media (some women have experimented and found success in this). Despite challenges, millions of women run small fisheries enterprises, though it may not figure in any official statistic. Women add value to the fish by processing excess catches by traditional practices like drying, smoking and fermenting or by processing them in commercial establishments that are primarily market oriented and driven. Both are economic activities that have varied ramifications. Women doing such dexterous work are however categorized as unskilled or semiskilled in official labour terms. Evidence suggests that simple, effective technologies can be used to upgrade the production processes, reduce drudgery and potentially improve incomes. These require institutional and policy support that can make technology and capital accessible.

Women are the primary care givers in fisher families and almost exclusively handle household reproductive and care giving responsibilities. Though subtle changes in gender norms are being observed with marginalized gender groups also being mainstreamed or at least attempting to be mainstreamed, the journey continues on the long road to gender equality in the aquaculture and fisheries sector.



Annu Naik



Aquaculture

Aquaculture is the fastest growing fisheries sub-sector. It makes about 46 percent of global fisheries production in quantity and 62 percent in value terms. During last two decades, aquaculture sector experienced rapid growth in both production and employment. Currently about 21 million people derive their livelihoods from aquaculture. Of the total, Asia alone accounts for 19 million fish farmers. Aquaculture play an important role in rural transformation in Asia and contributes to food security, rational uses of degraded land, economic uplifting and women empowerment.



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Shrimp from brackishwater dominate the Indian aquaculture scene. However, fish culture could be the next big thing to look forward to. Globally, product innovations in the areas of vaccines and genetics coupled with IT technology will have a huge impact on aquaculture sustainability. From an Indian perspective, fish farming in cages in fresh and marine water will be the next big development. Species such as tilapia are proven but barramundi and seabass look promising too.

Rural Women in Aquaculture





Edible Oyster Farming in Kerala Edible oyster farming by women of Kudumbasree units in the backwaters of Sathar Island, Kochi, Kerala under the initiative of CMFRI.



Farhan Kabeer

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The picture portrays the women from Kudumbashree, a community organization of Neighborhood Groups (NHGs) of women in Kerala carrying out Edible oyster farming in the backwaters of Sathar Island, Kochi, Kerala under the initiative of ICAR-CMFRI.

The state of Kerala is endowed with a wide network of backwaters and estuaries. Edible oysters and clams are regularly harvested from these waters. Oyster farming has the potential to provide significant economic benefits to poor rural and semi-urban coastal communities. This is a viable activity to engage women effectively.

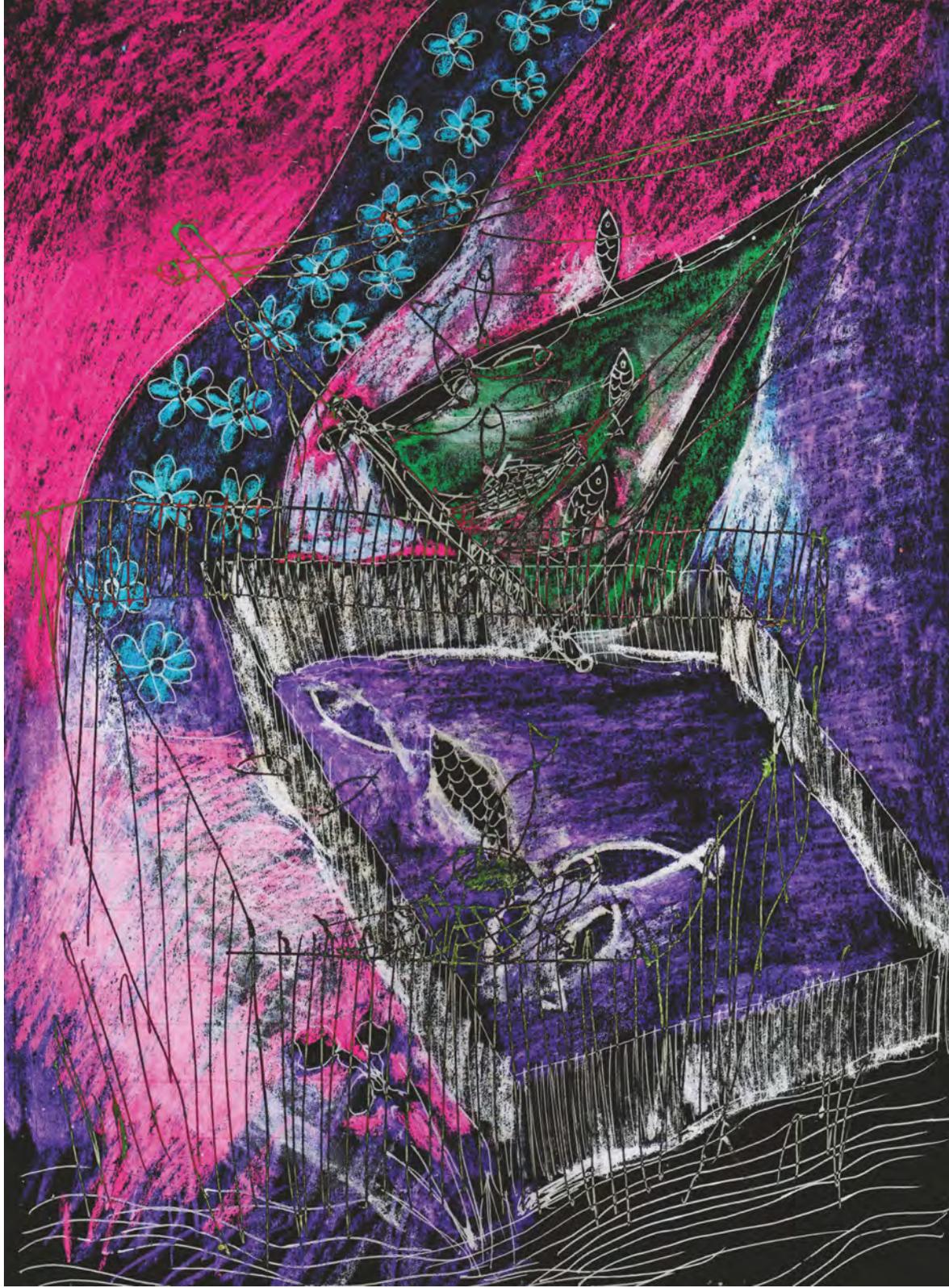


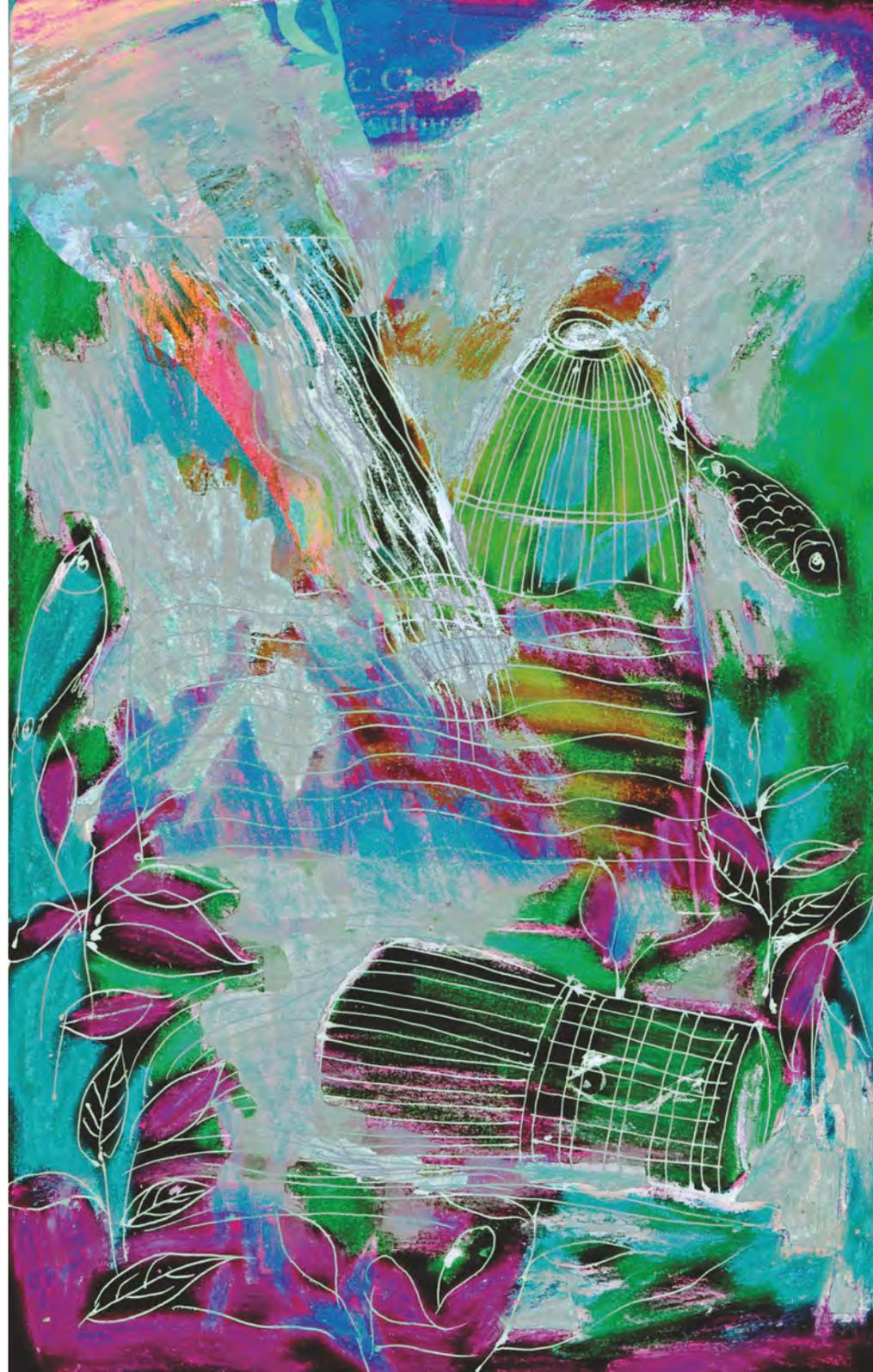
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My paintings depict the rich fisheries heritage of Bangladesh and the role of fisherwomen. Most of the fisherwomen in Bangladesh are illiterate. There are myriads of social and religious barriers preventing their participation in fisheries. Still 30 percent of women in rural and coastal areas are directly or indirectly engaged in small-scale fisheries. Their increased involvement in fisheries management could lead to increased household well beings.

Women involved in Backyard fish farming in Bangladesh





In coastal Bangladesh where shrimp farming is widespread, women took part in large number in fry collection, as it does not interfere with their day-to-day household work, and helps supplement the household income. The principal source of fry collection is from rivers where they have unhindered access. Moreover, the work is not time bound and women can do it at their convenience. However, at present, fry collection is being discouraged to protect the aquatic biodiversity of the area. While 85 percent of women are engaged in fry collection, they also participate in various other farm activities.



Manjula Anand

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The life is hard for many fisher women. However, with women-centric initiatives on the horizon they are ready to face the future with a bright smile. The artist wanted to capture the essence of the same through her painting.

The aquaculture sector has vast potential for women's participation, especially in small and backyard ponds. In Assam, Odisha and West Bengal these type of ponds are ideal sites for women. They help in pond fertilization, feeding, weed control, manuring and harvesting. Small-scale fish farming requires less capital and more effort. Women workers can easily engage in fish farming.



Women – The Multitasker



Manjula Anand

For the people whose livelihood is based on fisheries and aquaculture, the boundaries between land and water almost disappear. The artist visualizes the women as mermaids who blend in with the ecosystem and the artist is also inspired by how the manmade aquaculture elements blend in with natural elements.

In 2018, the Department of Fisheries, Government of India came up with its cage farming project, as part of Blue Revolution. This project aims to encourage more farmers to enter the field, especially women and members of scheduled castes/tribes. Around 500 cages were supplied to Kerala as part of this. Seaweed production is also emerging as a women-centric activity with encouraging earning potential. Pearl culture is another field where there is untapped potential.



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Seaweed cultivation provides a viable and sustainable alternative livelihood opportunity for small-scale fishers. The commercial exploitation of seaweed in India was started in 1960s. At present, seaweed is exploited in many localities of Tamil Nadu, India. The fisher communities of the Palk Bay region benefit from employment in seaweed collection, in addition to their normal fishery activities. Whenever the conditions are unfavourable for fishing, they are involved in the collection of seaweeds. Seaweed farming helps bring women into the mainstream of economic activity, and empowers them to achieve a better lifestyle, enabling well-being of the whole family.

Government of India is planning to boost seaweed production by earmarking Rs. 640 crores exclusively to promote seaweed culture with a targeted production of more than 11.2 lakh tonnes by 2025, in the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

Women engaged in Seaweed farming in Palk Bay



Waves of Art : Women in Aquaculture and Fisheries

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Coracles are light in weight, bowl-shaped boats with a frame of woven grass, reeds, or saplings covered with hides used by the fishers for fishing in the reservoirs. Over the years, these circular crafts were constructed by interwoven strips of bamboo and covered with water proof materials such as plastic bags coated with a layer of coal tar. The boat size ranges between 1.50 – 2.00 meters diameter. Apart from fisheries, these boats are used for transport, tourism and recreation.

A woman fishing in reservoir





Justino Lobo

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Fishing has traditionally been one of the major sources of livelihood of the people living in the coastal areas of Goa. Traditionally, the fisher women are engaged in the post-harvest activities like processing and marketing. However, nowadays their role as active participants is being recognised in other arena like transportation of fish, sales of fish and dry fish, cleaning, drying, fish feed production, ornamental fish culture, fin-fish culture, crab fattening in cages and pens, shrimp processing, shrimp, crab and fish farming and hatchery management, development of value-added fish products, aquaculture by-products business, seaweed culture, etc. The income thus generated is used to support their families.



Puthra Pravin

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Fisherwomen also do fishing from small canoes, Kattumaran and coracles. Coracles are used mainly in small water bodies and reservoirs, mostly seen in the southern parts India.

This fisherwomen is seen hauling the gill net from a Coracle in Kochi backwaters, Kerala.





Fisherwomen also do fishing without gear (hand picking) in shallow water bodies like, estuaries, lakes and ponds for fish clams, oysters and seaweeds.

The sketching depicts a fisherwoman harvesting oysters by diving and handpicking and shucking out the oysters using local sickle.

Oyster shucking

Puthra Pravin



This fisherwoman is seen sorting the fish at the shores of Frezergunj, West Bengal.



Fisherwomen returning home happily, after selling their fishes

Puthra Pravin



Image depicts women's role balancing family and livelihood



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Women account for 14 percent of the total fisheries workforce. They make approximately 19 percent of the workforce in aquaculture and 12 percent of the workforce in capture fisheries. They play a crucial role throughout the fish value chain, providing labour in both commercial and artisanal fisheries.



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It has often been said that women are marginalized despite their constituting one half of the world's population; one-third of the labour force, accounting for nearly two-thirds of the hours worked. According to some estimates, women receive only one-tenth of the world's income and possess one-hundredth of the world's property. It has also been said that most statistics are given more importance than they rightly deserve and any estimation (and indeed evaluation) of communities must be corroborated with findings on the field.



Women in Fishing – A New frontier



Waves of Art : Women in Aquaculture and Fisheries



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Along the Kerala coast the bivalve fishery has high significance because of the presence of extensive beds and the culinary preference of the people for the mussel. From Kasaragod in the north to Kollam in the south the green mussel is profusely distributed in all the rocky areas, the most important mussel centres being in the northern section from Cannanore to Calicut.

Women harvesting bivalves in Cochin backwaters



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Fish catching is one of the oldest occupations of mankind and fish has been also one of the most important food items of the human beings from the primitive times. The success of fisheries in a country depends on proper management of harvesting its fish fauna. In India millions of fishermen have been depending on this occupation. Like other parts of India, fishing is a caste-based occupation in Assam and is traditionally practised by the Kaibarttas. Fishing is their main traditional occupation of livelihood.



Traditional fishing method by Kaibarttas, tribal community of Assam



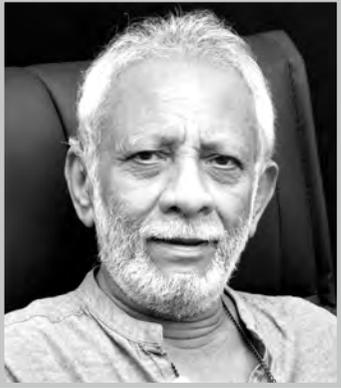
Women – The other half in Fishing



Prema Hiremath

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Fisheries, an important sub-sector of Indian agriculture, is dependent on the country's rich marine and inland water resources. The fisheries sector, through sale of relatively high value produce, has grown at an average annual rate of 4% in the last five years. Fish and fish products constitute 20% of the national agriculture exports and have been contributing about 1.07% to the country's total Gross Domestic Product. A range of employment is based on the sector-- capture and culture of fish from sea and inland waters, backyard pond management, fabrication of fishing gears and baskets, breeding, processing, fish marketing, export of fish and fish products, fisheries research, education and related activities – where women have substantial contribution.



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Outrigger canoe – an integral part of island culture traces back their origin to 2000-3000 years ago. The picture depicts a view of outrigger canoe on the shores of Sri Lanka, which is primarily used for fishing, both off the beach and further out in sea. The shallow dugout hull, carved from a single log, is raised with side strakes fixed on shaped inserted frames and sewn to the hull with coir. The two booms connecting the hull to the float, also made from a single log, support a platform for fishing gear and crew. This type of canoe, an Oruwa, is found on the west and south coasts of the island of Sri Lanka.



Outrigger canoe at Negombo, Sri Lanka



Kamrun Nahar

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Bangladesh is a major aquaculture producing country in the world. Women fishers have long been invisible in many countries, and often their contributions to fisheries can be underrepresented or ignored in country GDP figures. Bangladesh has a strong history of women's involvement in fisheries, most often through aquaculture, yet more can be done to include women on all levels of business and decision making. In rural Bangladesh, most women spend a major portion of their time doing household work. The type of work a woman does makes it necessary for her to be close to a pond where she has to wash, bath, collect drinking water and perform other household tasks. There exists therefore, a natural situation for women to explore the possibilities for fish cultivation.

Bangladeshi women operating a cast net in River





Snehal. K

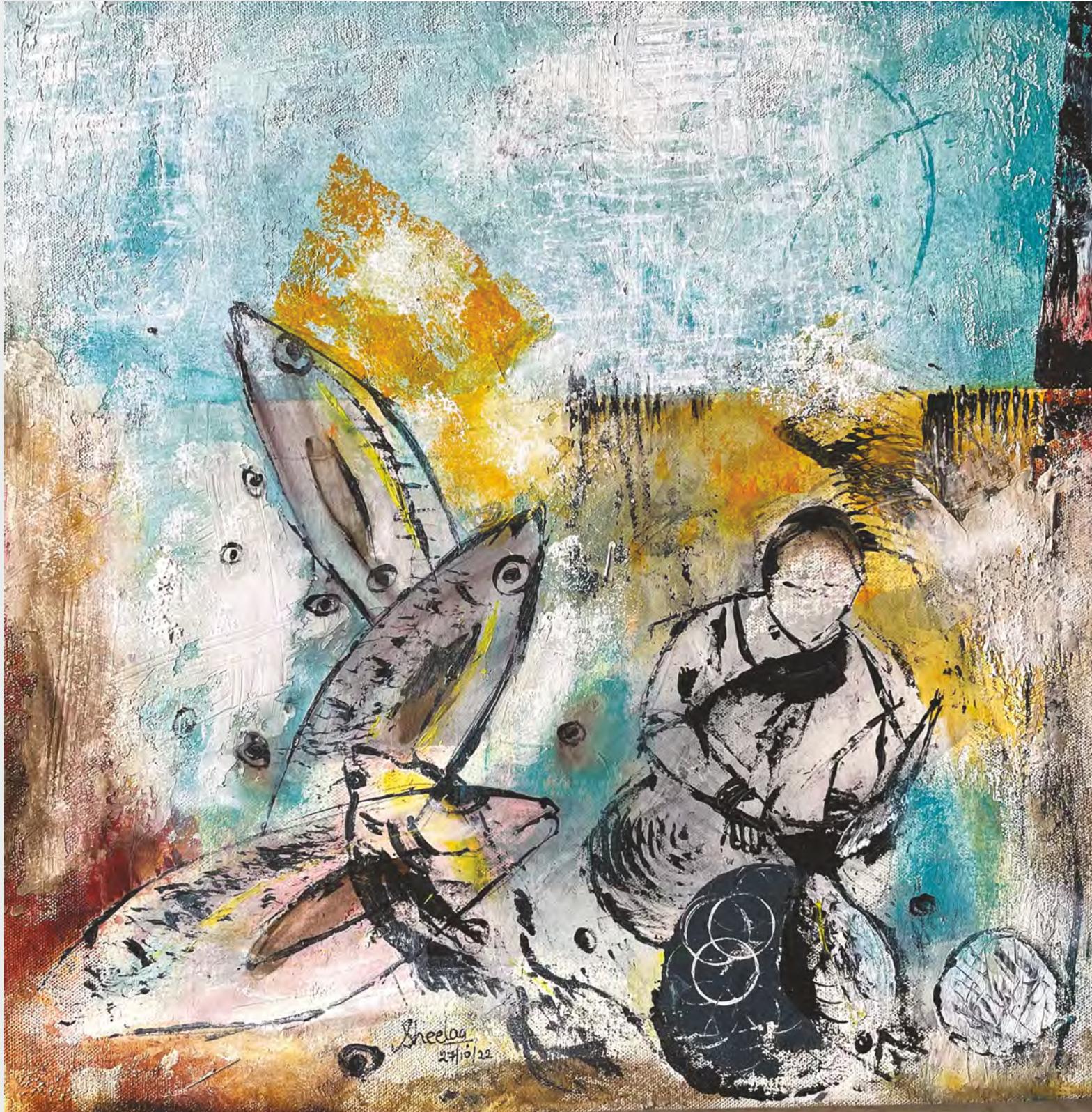
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The Symbol of a Mermaid is as changeable as the sea itself. In some cultures, the mermaid signifies life and fertility within the ocean, but in others, she embodies the destructive nature of the water luring sailors and serving as an omen for storms, unruly seas and disaster.

Artists frequently depict mermaids with a fish bone. their illustration come due to a sailor's beliefs that if you have a fish bone on-board a ship, one would know the type of weather and take control of a storm. These Angels of the sea appear frequently at dawn. Being female, the symbolism and meaning of the Mermaid is tied to the Sacred Feminine, specifically Goddesses like Venus who symbolise love, and Calypso, the Sea Goddess.

Woman symbolized as a Mermaid





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Small-scale fisheries are one of the first sectors to see the impact of climate change, and small-scale fishers are more and more exposed to extreme climatic events like cyclones, tsunamis and floods. Climate change presents key challenges for small-scale fisheries and mariculture and is projected to have significant impacts on the lives of people dependent on these activities. Changes in ocean temperature and chemistry are already affecting the distribution and abundance of marine organisms. In addition, recent climate projections suggest a significant increase in the frequency and/or magnitude of extreme weather events such as storms and floods.

Women in small-scale fisheries



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The sketching depicts a vanishing fishing technique where mother and son search the mud in tidal creeks to find shrimp.

The Puttalam Lagoon supports a range of inter-connected and inter-dependent natural habitats that form a mosaic in a larger landscape. The Nagulleliya fishing village is located 1.5 m above mean sea level in Puttalam district on the West coast of Sri Lanka. A special characteristic of the village is that women are actively engaged in fishing. They do beach seine fishing during the six-month period of the southwest monsoon and fish in the lagoon during the rest of the year. Some are engaged in year-round fishing in the lagoon. They do not use any gear to fish, instead rely on their bare hands. They catch fish by increasing the turbidity of the water by stirring up the mud at the bottom of the lagoon. Fish and shrimps, such as pearl spot, tilapi, tiger shrimp and white shrimp are the main species caught by this method.



Mother and son fishing in a tidal creek in Sri Lanka



Neha Mary Mathew

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The picture represents the community fishing during Bhogali Bihu celebrations, Panbari Village, Kamrup District, Assam.

Bhogali Bihu marks the end of the harvest season in the north eastern state of Assam. During the festival people of Assam traditionally organize community fishing and community feasts. Villagers assemble with their nets and baskets and engage in community fishing during the Magh Bihu festival, also known as Bhogali Bihu, in the Panibari village on the outskirts of Guwahati City in Assam. This festival marks the end of the winter harvesting season. Like other parts of India, fishing is a caste-based occupation in Assam and is traditionally practiced by Kaibarttas.

Woman fishing in lake in Assam



Laya P Premanandan

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In India's Exclusive Economic Zone of over two million square kilometres, there are many living and non-living resources, including recoverable crude oil and natural gas. There are also over 4 million fishers and other coastal communities. Considering these vast maritime interests, the Blue Economy in India is integral to the nation's economic growth. And, women play a crucial role in optimal utilization of the blue economy potential across sectors.

Women –The back bone of fisheries sector





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Backwaters are an invaluable source of fishery resource of the country, sustaining exceptionally high biological productivity. Being the nursery areas of several finfishes and prawns, the fishery of the adjacent marine sector is very much dependent on the health of these water bodies. Apart from fisheries, these water bodies are also being used for transport of men and material, mining of shells, waste disposal, tourism and recreation, and reclamation for agriculture, housing, industries and other activities.

Women harvesting in Backwater



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Women play significant roles in all aspects of fisheries, both in the artisanal, small-scale sector and in the commercial sector, yet their roles remain unarticulated and unrecognized. In many areas, women have also assumed a leading role in the rapid growth of aquaculture. They often perform most of the work of feeding and harvesting fish, as well as in processing the catch. In many countries, it is mostly women, who are engaged in inland fishing. The work done by women technically comes under the 'unskilled' or 'semiskilled' category as their employment does not require a formal education or education only up to some basic level.

Women - Major players in fisheries



Dhanya Raghuvaran

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Nearly three million fish workers along India's coastline depend on fishing for their livelihood and many more are engaged in inland fishing in rivers across the country.

Usually though, women in fishing communities take care of everything in the industry except actually going to sea. If women aren't selling their fish in markets early in the morning, they are usually processing it. Every day, about four hours are spent in fulfilling biomass needs: fuel, water collection, and cooking. Although women do not own boats, nets, and other means of production, they are actively involved in managing household finances.



Women fishing in Kochi backwaters



Kamrun Nahar

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The importance of aquaculture is undeniable not just in Bangladesh, but in every country of the world. One in seven people on earth relies on marine species as part of their diet and/or income. A safer, regenerative alternative is aquaculture, which is also the fastest growing segment, providing a major opportunity to meet the unemployment and food inequality challenges that Bangladesh and the rest of the world face while tackling the issue of preserving our fish species. One fifth of the world's aquaculture production is centered in Bangladesh, where women hold about 1.4 million of an estimated 17.8 million jobs in the sector. The fisheries sector generates incomes and livelihoods for 3.5 million people in the coastal areas.

Women in Bangladesh have been deeply engaged in aquaculture production and value chain activities.

Women with Bamboo traps – A traditional method of fishing



**Adhil Sujith**

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Backwater fishing is widely carried out in several parts of Kerala. Fishing is the main source of income for lake side residents. Most of the inland production is marketed domestically and consumed locally, and traditional fishing exists almost along all areas of backwaters. Small wooden canoes are used for fishing with the help of net/ pole and line. The traditional fisher men, women and children earn livelihood by involving in harvesting, handling, processing and marketing of fish and fish products.



Women fishing in Backwaters of Kerala



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Stanley reservoir (Mettur Dam is the one of the largest reservoir in the state of Tamil Nadu, with an area of 42.5 km². The fishing in the dam is done by the licensed fishers. The main fishing gears are cast net and gill net operated from Coracle. In the reservoir, the fishes are collected from different landing centers in truck carrying ice and brought to the society. Majority of the catch is then handed over to the highest bidder of the contract which is signed every year.



Wilssy Johnson

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Women have become accustomed to the risky nature of the job and have started venturing into the sea for fishing. Despite women's significant roles in fisheries, men are always picturized as navigating boats and conducting fishing. Of the approximately 5.4 million people engaged in fisheries in India, women account for nearly 1.6 million. Despite the high number of women in fisheries of India, they are underrepresented in the decision making process. They also lack access to financial and social resources.

A bright future



Waves of Art : Women in Aquaculture and Fisheries

*WILSSY
JOHNSON*



Post-harvest



Post-harvest sector includes sorting, handling, processing and distribution of fish. Fish processing is an area where women make significant contributions. In developing countries, women account for more than 80% of those involved in post-harvest activities.





Avinash Mathew

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Backwater are water highways connecting many villages in Kerala. A rich lush life can be seen along this highway. The people live around it derive their food and income from it. It is also the source of most popular food in Kerala – the fish.

Women dressing the fish





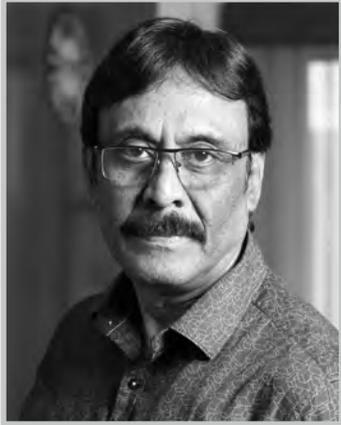
Women sorting fish at a landing centre



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One of the important roles of fisher women in both artisanal and industrial fisheries is in the post-harvest sector. Women perform most fish processing activities either in their own cottage level industries or as labourers in large processing plants.

Overall, the conditions and quality of life for women is deprived across different fishing groups and communities. This includes long working hours, poor wages as compared to men, added to the burden of household maintenance.

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Women are mostly head loaders and perform the task of transporting fish to the market after procuring it from the harbour. Marketing fish is a daily activity, and fish must be sold every two days to adequately meet basic household requirements. Seasonal fluctuations in catch render the activity less profitable during monsoons and fishing ban period, resulting in reduced income. A significant number of women are involved either independently in processing fish by sundrying methods or work in byproduct units.



S. Jayaraj/2022



Jayaraj S

Waves of Art : Women in Aquaculture and Fisheries

Sri Lanka- Women fish drying

Drying is a well-known method of fish preservation as well as an alternative way of reducing the fish post-harvest losses. The most distinct phases of dried fish production process include selection of suitable fish, cleaning, removal of internal organs, salting, and drying. Dried fish are very popular among Sri Lankans and a very high demand exists, especially from country-side people, who do not receive fresh fish of good quality. Although the total dried fish consumption of Sri Lankans varies from year to year, the average annual consumption remains at around 90,000 mt. Large-scale, medium-scale, and small-scale domestic level processors distributed along the coastal belt of Sri Lanka cater to around 60–63% of the dried fish demand in the country, mainly through traditional processing practices. Dried fish industry plays a significant role in livelihood improvement in the coastal fishing community and nutrition security of the Sri Lankan people.



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Women are involved in buying fish at the auction once the catch is landed at the harbour. Depending on the specialisation, women procure sardines, mackerels, and trash fish. Trash fish finds many buyers since processing fish as poultry feed is highly lucrative and requires less investment. With poultry farming becoming a growing industry, there is always consistent demand for the same.





Sathya Shenoy S

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Women dominate the seafood processing sector the world over. The manual dexterity required in processing seafood which involves activities like sorting, grading, peeling, gutting, slicing etc., is the primary reason for this dominance. However, women have been confined to the lower rungs of the production process.



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Women make up the majority of the world's industrial- and small-scale processors, holding up to 90% of these jobs. Fish-drying is becoming a significantly more profitable economic activity across the globe. The method of drying fish depends on the kind of species caught. Before sun drying, fish is soaked in saltwater; immersed in ice; or strung in ropes across poles and dried.





Marketing

The farthest place from the fish production center also needs fish, while the people who produce fish may not eat it. Marketing play the role of matching demand and supply for fish. With the improvements in transportation and cold chain facilities, fish is now marketed far and wide from the production center. Traditionally, in Asia, women dominate the marketing of fish in and around the production centers. The advent of modern marketing channels such as online marketing, lack of public finance and issues in access to public space to sell fish, pose significant challenge to them. Fisher women are braving the tide by adapting to the emerging trends, which requires public support.



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Women are mostly head loaders and perform the task of transporting fish to the market after procuring it from the harbour. Marketing fish is a daily activity, and fish must be sold every two days to adequately meet basic household requirements. Seasonal fluctuations in catch, render the activity less profitable during monsoons and other lean/ban periods, resulting in reduced income.



Women fishers, like their men, often work in informal groups



Women Buying Fish from Auction



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Women play a vital role all through the fisheries value chain all along the coastal areas. They buy and sell fish as fishers, wholesalers, retailers, vendors and commission agents from dawn to dusk regularly. Their multifaceted activities, however, are often imperceptible to the world outside.



Ajay George
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Fish trade is a traditional occupation that has been a means of livelihood for thousands in India with the majority of fish vendors being women. Unlike men, whose labour is largely confined to the sea, river or lake, fisher women vendors have to travel with their product to market places.



A lady arranging fishes at a market place



The hustle and bustle at the fish market



Manoharan NS
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Women have a dominant presence in post-harvest handling of fish: sorting, grading, weighing, gutting, icing, fish marketing, transporting / distributing and processing. The hustle and bustle that is typical at the fish market is thanks to these brisk women in business. n they transport the fishes to the auction centre. Senior women who have experience in the fisheries involve in the auction. Whoever bids for the highest price will be given the catches. Both men and women are seen sharing the work. While the men catch fishes, women ensure that it is utilised properly.

**Shailesh**

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Women fish head-loaders selling fish door-to-door have a crucial role in ensuring the nutritional security among poor households. In Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, fisher women sell fresh fish and also process them using traditional methods. The complex fish marketing/distribution makes the women vendor's tasks tedious and the changes in harvest and post-harvest further increase this complexity. The unpredictability of the supply, lack of homogeneity of the product and its perishability makes fish marketing more difficult.

*Rainy day or a sunny day,
the work shall go on*



Modern fish landing centres are needed for reducing the post-harvest losses in small-scale fisheries. Within the fishing industry, modernisation has often marginalised women and deprived them of their livelihood. Modernisation has also led to the landing of fish catches in distinct harbours rather than on beaches where women traditionally participated in post-harvest activities. The increase in price makes it more difficult for the women to make bulk purchases in the auction.



Fisher women bond with coastal commons

Shailesh



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Fish is a part of daily diet of most Mangaloreans. Fish market is found in every area in Mangalore. It is usually under small sheds. More than 10 fisherwomen sit in the market to sell their fish. Fisher woman calling customers to buy fish from them, is a common sight. Fish is not sold by weight in such markets, it is usually counted. One can find all varieties of fish here from prawns to crabs and freshwater fish.



A women in a fish market at Mangalore



The multifaceted and multi-tasking women fisher at work



Chandraprasanth

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Women often sell fish in public places. They select places where there is good gathering of people so that they can find customers. They also have to take care of their children and attend to their needs.



Dakshayani B

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Women play a key role in auctioning and selling fish in the markets near the Marina beach in Chennai. Women also collect trash fish from the shore. They stay in adjacent slums, where more than a thousand families stay, predominantly, those of fishers. This community was hit hard during Tsumani (2004) and Chennai floods (2015). The families undertake subsistence fishing.



Women grew old selling fish (Marina Beach, Chennai)



Dhiyaneshwaran

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Women are involved in processing and marketing dry fish. Although they are not directly engaged in fishing, women often accompany their husbands on long fishing expeditions, especially during the lean season when catch is procured from Orissa and southern Andhra Pradesh. Women also assist in mending nets, which is a non-commercial activity.

Women are not trained to conduct market research and detect opportunities to use their skills and widen their markets. In urban areas, value-added skills are of little use to women who are interested in marketing fish. For livelihood enhancement and diversification, appropriate market assessment methods are essential. It is important that women are taken to the market and taught simple methods of market research.

Will today be any different? the women fish vendor seem to wonder



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Traditionally, Bengal is renowned for its fertile agricultural land and its rice cultivation. At the same time, the rivers of Bengal are a seemingly inexhaustible resource of different varieties of fish. That is why, from the ancient times, rice and fish have been the staple food for the Bengalis. More than 90% of the state's population consume fish.

Fish is food, culture and life for Bengalis





Waves of Art : Women in Aquaculture and Fisheries



Justino Lobo
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In Goa, a fisher woman waits with basket perched upon her hip as fishing vessels unload their day's catch. She fills up her basket, saves a portion to feed her family, and balancing the basket on her head, travels to the markets to sell it. In the afternoon, she travels door-to-door to sell the unsold fish.

Their paid and unpaid labour often goes unrecognised though the women on the Konkan coast are increasingly assertive about their rights and seek to ensure that women's roles no longer remains 'invisible'. Fisherwomen deserve to have a voice in decision-making processes with respect to fisheries planning and management.

Women fishers in Konkan coast seek recognition and rights



Sandeep Ramnath

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FAO estimates that women comprise 15% of the workforce involved in harvesting and fill 90% of the jobs in fish processing. In fishing community women play either a role of a housewife or as a source of income generator through fishing jobs.

Women who are involved in marketing face many problems like fluctuating market prices, unhygienic market places, and lack of basic amenities in the market place.

Headloads against heavy winds





NS Mincham 2022

*At dawn on the shore,
where the day begins*



Manoharan NS

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Fish Landing Centre, a place from where the fishery value chain starts. Tamil Nadu has a coastal length of 1076 km (13% of the country's coast line), 1.9 lakh sq.km of EEZ (9.4% of the India's EEZ) and a continental shelf of about 41,412 sq.km and is one of the leading state in marine fish production. The marine fisheries production of the state is 4.97 lakh tons. The State has marine fishermen population of 10.07 lakh from 608 marine fishing villages scattered along the 13 coastal district. In the inshore waters the fishery potential is exploited by 38,779 traditional crafts and 5893 mechanized boats. The infrastructure facilities include 6 major fishing harbours, 3 medium fishing harbours, 36 fish landing centres and 254 fish landing points.



Shimha Shakeeb

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The fishing industry in the Maldives is the nation's second-biggest industry next to tourism, employing half of the country's workforce and providing a livelihood for much of the population. The Maldivian waters are home to an abundance of aquatic life and thousands of species of fish, ranging from small types such as snapper, squirrel fish, and parrot fish to large pelagic fish like grouper, giant trevally, and tuna. Fishing is a vital source of income for the country, which stems from both commercial and leisure fishing. There may not have been any female anglers in the Maldives, but the work of cleaning, smoking, and preparing the catch for consumption, bartering, or sale has always been the work of women. Women would be active in the preparation of the tuna; cooking, smoking, salting, drying and making the uniquely Maldivian fish paste 'Rihaakuru'.

*My head may be hidden,
but my work is not 'invisible'*





Against the tides of time: a woman fisher rushing to market



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Women fish vendors face competition from sophisticated sales outlets such as refrigerated booths. Invariably, she undertakes the job of fish marketing in addition to the household responsibilities of cooking, raising children, and attending to the needs of the family. At the same time, she also has to care for any unsold fish that she has had to carry back home, finding the time and energy to clean and salt the fish, and dry it the next day. To add to her problems, her financial responsibilities at home are many. For example, the repayment of debts incurred for weddings and other family functions as well for contingencies such as illness, are her sole responsibility. In order to carry out these responsibilities she has to be consistently efficient and successful at procurement of fish and its marketing.



Monika Gupta

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Priceless smile comes when we catch high-priced fish... View of fisherwoman with bountiful catch from a river in Karnataka.

Fisherwomen contribute substantially to the Indian fisheries economy in general and to the Karnataka State, India.

Fisherwomen form an invisible workforce but they are dominant in shore based activities such as processing, vending and trading of fish. Fisherwomen's contribution to the family income is vital and indispensable for the fisher families' livelihood.

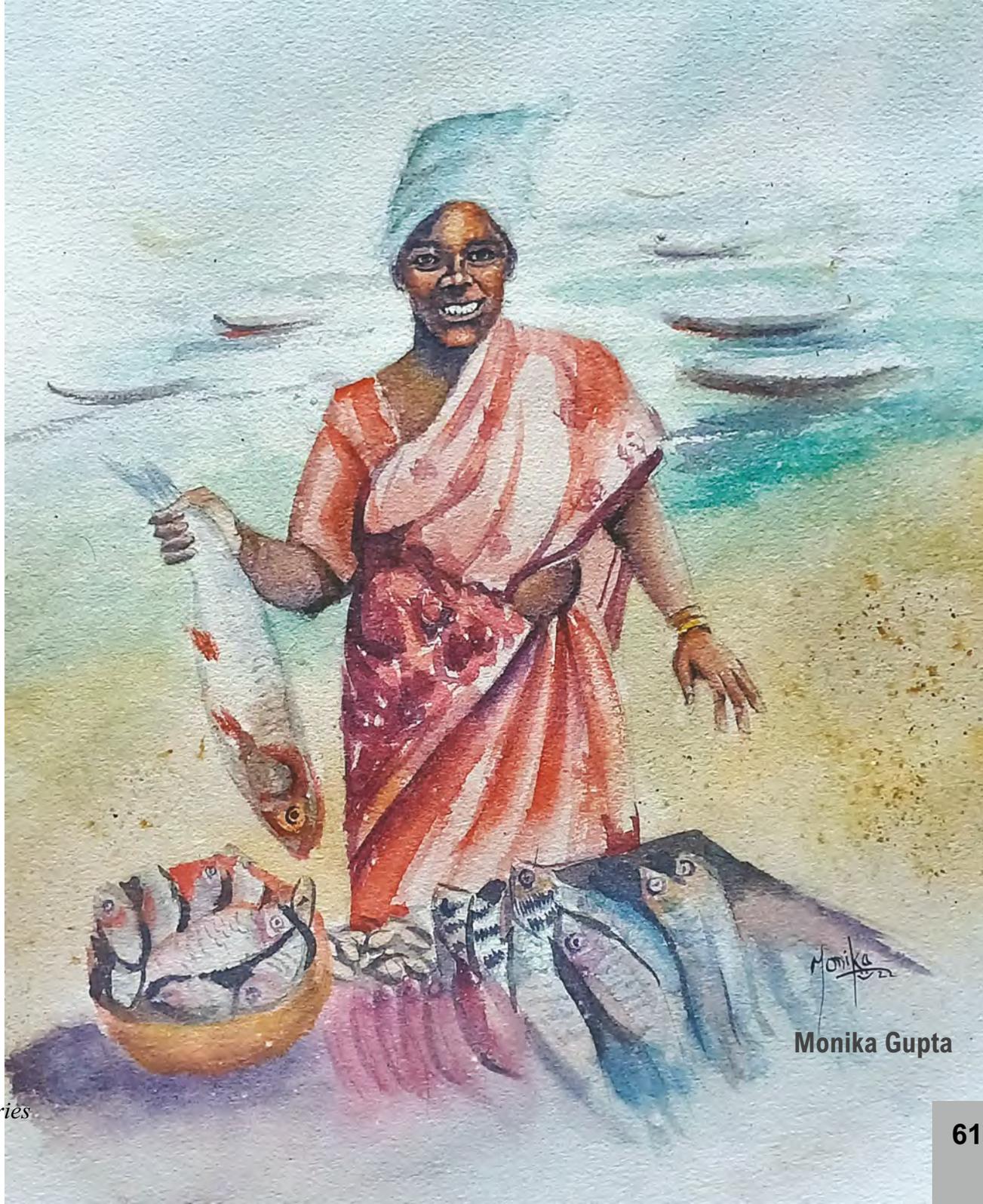
I am counting my luck to catch youand you are trying your best to escape...A fisherwoman checking the movement of fish while hauling the net in the river... (river fishing – Karnataka)



More than 10 million Indians from some of the most vulnerable groups depend on rivers for their livelihood and nutritional needs. This staggering number can be an underestimate as several riverine fisherfolk do not bring their produce to the market and the census hardly captures the intricacies of riverine fisheries sector. Karnataka, the eighth largest state in India, is situated on the western edge of the Deccan plateau. The climate and physiography of the region make the State one of the most important in the country with regard to water resources.

*Women fishers, many a time,
do have fun at their work place*

Waves of Art : Women in Aquaculture and Fisheries



Monika Gupta



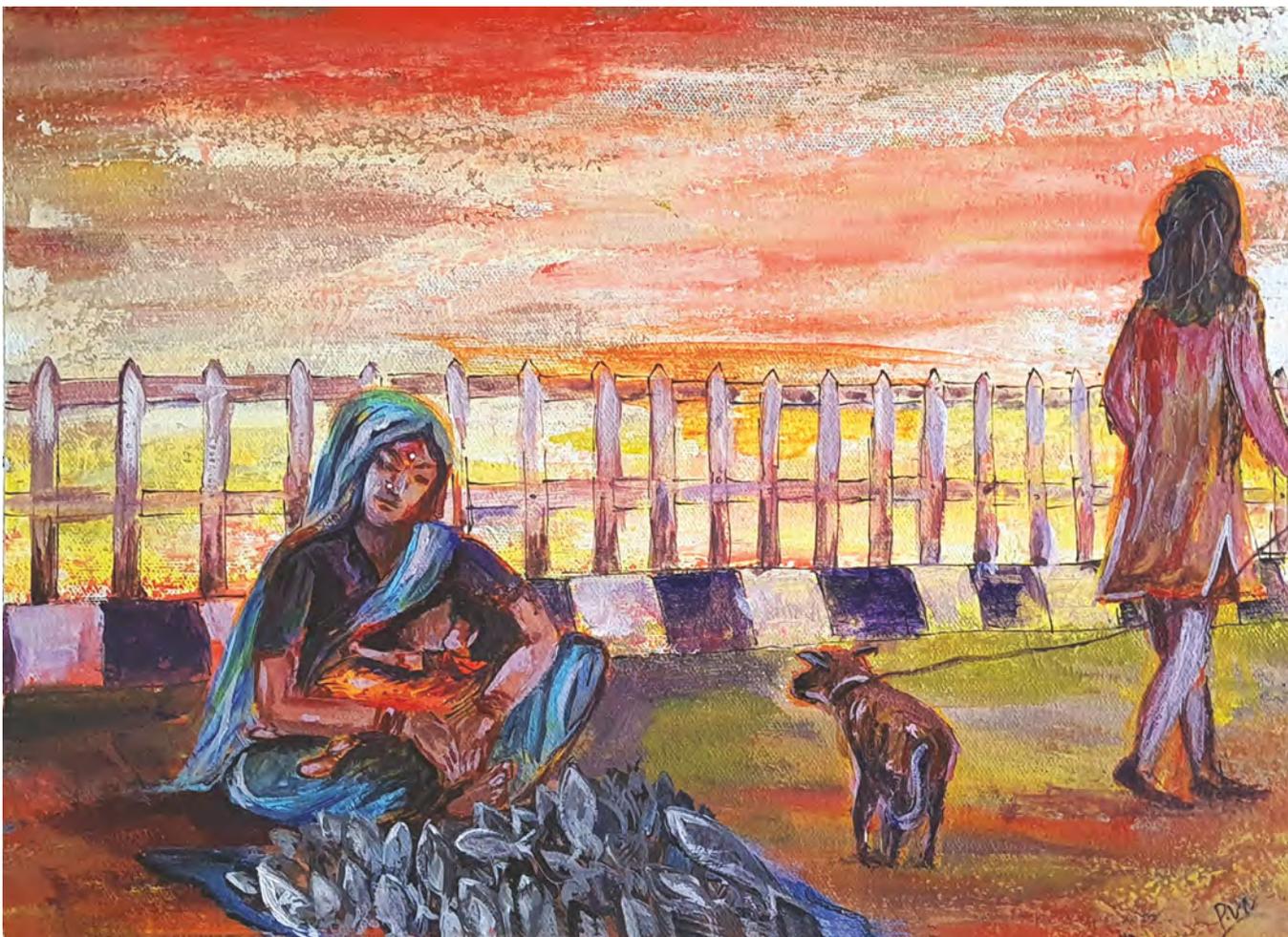
Prema Hiremath

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The labour force in the fisheries sector comprises of 46% women as per the Livestock Census, 2003. Besides, wherever men are engaged in self-employment in small scale fisheries, family labour is commonly resorted to. Historically, there has been a gender based division of labour in the sector with women being mostly employed in handling of the fish, indigenous methods of fish processing like salting, drying, in the making of nets and in retail sale of fish in various markets.

Squatting poses health risks among women in fish markets





Cats and dogs are a common sight in many retail fish markets



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Fisherwoman arranging her fish catch to capture the attention of customers, Kochi, Kerala.

Though Kerala is having only less than 10% of the country's total coastline, its water front contributes about 25% to the country's fish catch. The most important role of fisherwomen in both artisanal and industrial fisheries is at the processing and marketing stages. In some countries, women have become important entrepreneurs in fish processing. In fact, most fish processing is performed by women, either in their own cottage-level industries or as wage labourers in the large-scale processing industry. The fisherwomen in Kerala play an important role in the fisheries sector in terms of their involvement in fishery related activities viz., fish vending, fish drying, prawn peeling, sorting, grading, fish packing and net making.

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In fishery sector women play significant role in maintaining household and community needs. Yet their roles remain largely unarticulated and unacknowledged. It is being recognized that fisheries as a sector will achieve full development if women involved in the sector have equal opportunities with men. The empowerment of women is very important for the socio-economic development of the fisherfolk. It is necessary to empower the women - socially, economically, politically, and legally in various facets of their life in order to sustain their livelihoods more effectively.

Fish markets are often extension of their community life



Waves of Art : Women in Aquaculture and Fisheries



Women fish retailers chatting their problems away



Reshmi Mineesh

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Fish is especially important for every segment of the population providing a cost-effective and easily reached source of protein and essential micronutrients. A large section of the population depends on fish resources (both marine and inland) for their livelihoods, employment and income. Fisheries sector contributes significantly to the national economy while providing a good source of revenue to approximately 14.49 million people in the country. The role of women in fishing largely relies on the socio-economic conditions of the households.



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A routine day of fisherwomen starts with the investment of time, money and energy at fish landing centre. A group of fisherwomen discussing at the fish landing centre after the auction.



Women fish retailers at the margins in cities



Sui Anand

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In India, about 25% of women labour force is involved in pre-harvest activities, 35% in export marketing and 40% in internal marketing. Fisheries are an important sector of Kerala along with agriculture. It provides employment opportunities to number of people in primary and secondary sectors. They are the main bread winners of the family. The main problem faced by them is the lack of credit facilities and improper utilisation of the same. The main source of credit for them is the informal sectors and only very few are dependent on the formal sectors.

A lone roadside fish retailer in deep thought



Vidhu Pillai

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Mangalore fish market is famous for selling mainly Bangude (Mackerel), Boothayi (Sardine) and Kane (Lady Fish), which is the most popular fish varieties found in the Arabian sea and hence available in coastal Karnataka's fish markets. The fish is transported to the markets, after buying at the auction, and most of the fish is sold directly to customers.

Tools fish retailers use hardly caught up with changes around them



Waves of Art : Women in Aquaculture and Fisheries



Muhammad Ajnas

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Chinese fishing nets – Lift net catch marketed by women, Vypin, Fort Kochi, Kerala
Chinese Fishing Nets are among the most famous tourist symbols of Kerala and Kochi. Most of the Chinese fishing nets are owned and operated by private owners. There are two type of nets operated, one by six people and the other by four persons. These nets have been a major attraction to tourists. They are shore operated lift nets installed on the land and operated along the backwaters during high tide, operated on the principle of counter weight balance. This is a sustainable way of fish harvesting with minimal environmental damage. Once the net is lifted the caught shrimp and fishes are removed with the help of a scoop net. The average quantity of fish catch by the large Chinese dip nets was about 2 to 5 kg per day. About 4500 inland fishers' livelihoods depend on Chinese dip net fishing in Kerala.

Fisher women sport a distinct costume identifiable in coastal region

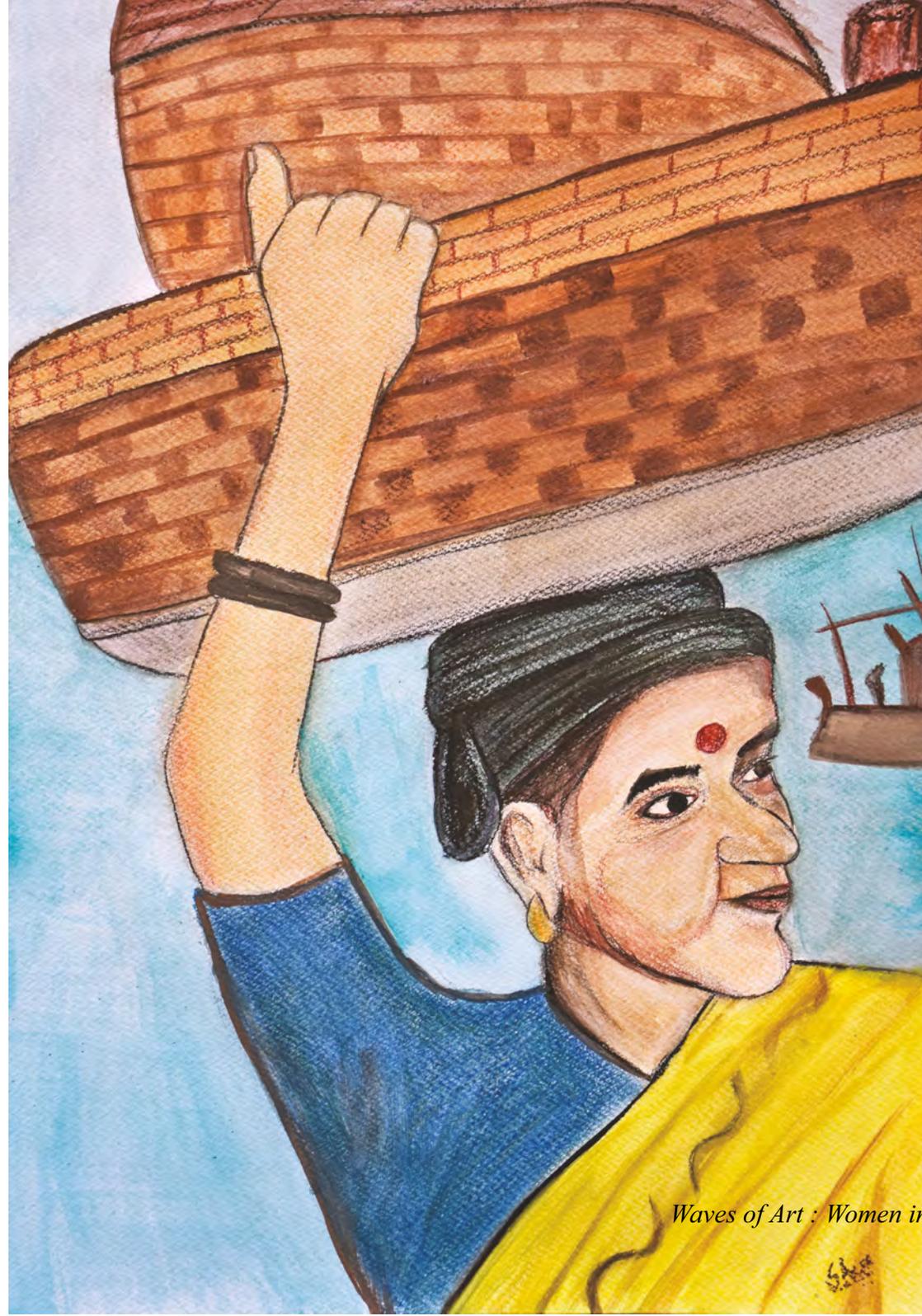


Shirihan

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Women's dominant contribution to the fisheries sector is in fish processing and marketing throughout the country. Pre-processing and fresh fish marketing are the major roles performed by fisherwomen.

Headload of fish is often a heavy load



Waves of Art : Women in Aquaculture and Fisheries



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The second largest fish producing state in India is West Bengal. Catla is one of the major freshwater fish in West Bengal that seeing high growth and market demand. The fish is usually sold fresh and it commands good price. Women earn, administer and control significant sums of money, financing a variety of fish-based enterprises and generating substantial returns for their household as well as the community.



Alluring mermaids of fish



Dhyaneshwaran

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Women are involved in selling both freshwater and saltwater fish. On an average, almost ten hours of everyday are spent in the activity (7 a.m. – 12 noon and 3 p.m. – 8 p.m.) The fish is bought from landing centres between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. Freshwater fish is less profitable than saltwater fish and an average woman earns a profit of Rs. 50 every two days. Women face severe competition from fisherfolk in other villages who sell fish at low rates in their market. The women want outsiders to be banned from selling fish in their market. Over time, the role of women in marketing fish has been greatly reduced. The advent of middlemen and resource depletion due to unsustainable fishing practices and increased fishing capacity has almost eliminated their role in marketing fish in some areas.

*Women with Bamboo traps –
A traditional method fishing*



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Arnawaz

Arnawaz Vasudev Charities



Dr. S G Vasudev

Arnawaz Vasudev Charities, a private trust, was set up by S.G. Vasudev following the untimely death of his artist wife Arnawaz in 1988. The principal objectives of the Trust are to promote art education and art activities, and to provide financial assistance to deserving young artists and art students.

The founding trustees are: Shanta Guhan, Girish Karnad and S.G. Vasudev.

The present trustees are B.O. Shailesh, Bharani V Setlur, Mala Chinappa, R.M. Palaniappan and S.G. Vasudev (Managing Trustee)

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The Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO), set up in 2003, evolved from the erstwhile Bay of Bengal Programme of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) founded in 1979. The current members of the Organisation are Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka.

The BOBP-IGO is a Regional Fisheries Advisory Body (RFAB), which serves as the think tank for the countries on transboundary and contemporary regional issues concerning fisheries management, biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, pollution management, livelihood and occupational safety. The IGO assists its member-countries in achieving UN Decadal Targets for fisheries management, ecosystem conservation and sustainable development in the region through research-based policy advocacy, need-based capacity development and extensive community engagement programs.

BOBP-IGO is a member of the Regional Fisheries Body Secretariats' Network (RSN), coordinated by the FAO.

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Release of 'Waves of Art Series 1

The "Waves of Art Initiative" was launched on 29 August 2022 in an event organized at the BOBP-IGO.

Dr. M. Venkatachalam, IFS, Joint Secretary & Head, MEA Branch Secretariat, Chennai, Ministry of External Affairs released the first issue. Prof. J. Ranganathan, Honorary Consul General of Myanmar, Padmashri Dr. Thota Tharani, Artist and Designer, Dr. B. Manimaran, Founder Vice Chancellor, TNJFU, and many fisheries experts and artists from the Chennai participated.



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