



Gendered Analysis of fish & Water chestnut Value Chain in Wular Lake, Jammu & Kashmir

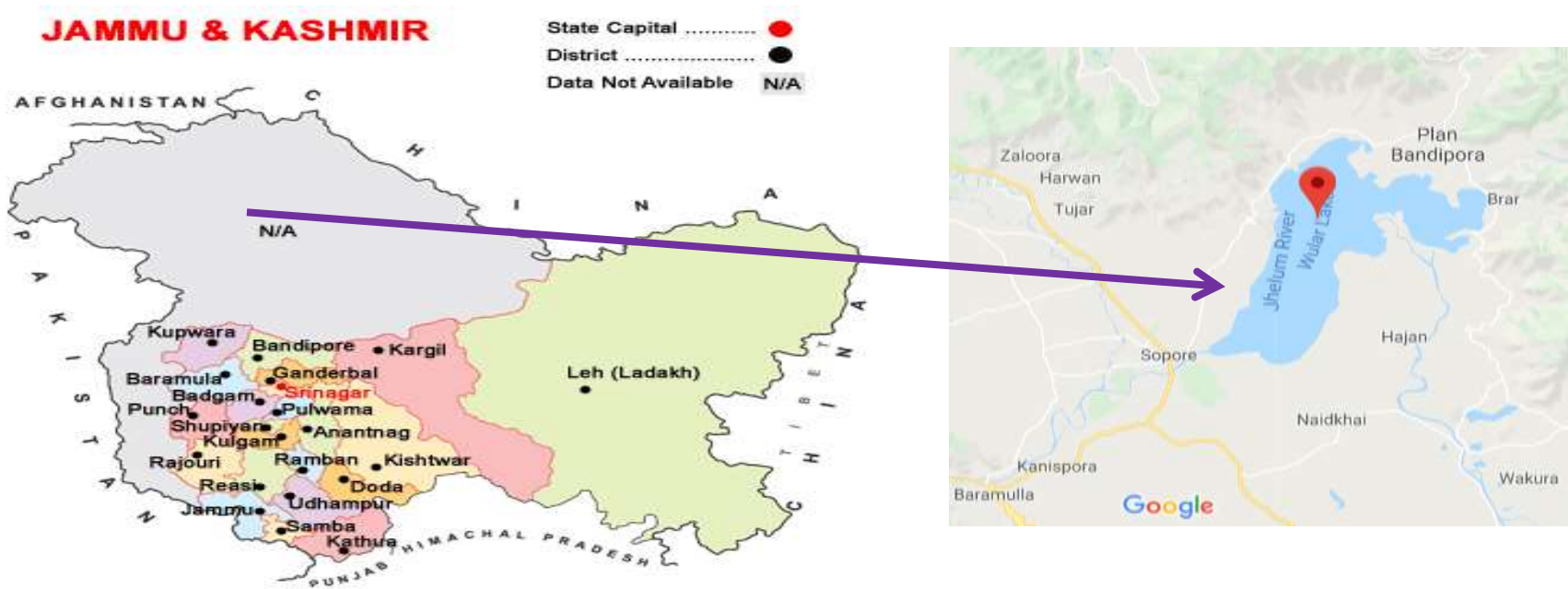


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Locale Of Study- Wular Lake



Jammu & Kashmir has **0.30 lakh ha** inland water resources, namely Rivers & Canals 27781 kms, reservoirs 0.07 lakh ha, tanks & Ponds 0.17 lakh ha & flood plain derelict water bodies 0.06 lakh ha DAHD&F (2017)

Jammu and Kashmir is one of the major contributors (31%) to cold water fish production of India DCFR (2010)

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About **30,000 to 35,000** families including **3245** fisher and **900** *Trapa* harvesting households living on Wular shores depend on it for livelihood (DoF,2019 : DoR, 2018)

Out of total 62 fishing villages, 48 villages are located in Bandipora district. Also 79% of fishers are from Bandipora itself

Important Functions and Values of Wular Lake are: Flood protection, drinking water supply, irrigation, fish production, hydropower, biodiversity, tourism and aquatic vegetation (CMAP, 2007)

In 1990, it was designated as a **Wetland of International Importance** under the Ramsar Convention (Ramsar, 2018)



The Wular lake is crucial in maintaining the valley's water ecology because the lake acts like a sponge for four rivers and three other lakes in the region (The wire, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

The data was collected through

**Pre formed interview schedule from 170 fisher
Households harbouring 1040 members.**

- Key Informants Interviews**
- Focus Group Discussions**
- Participant Observation**

RESULTS

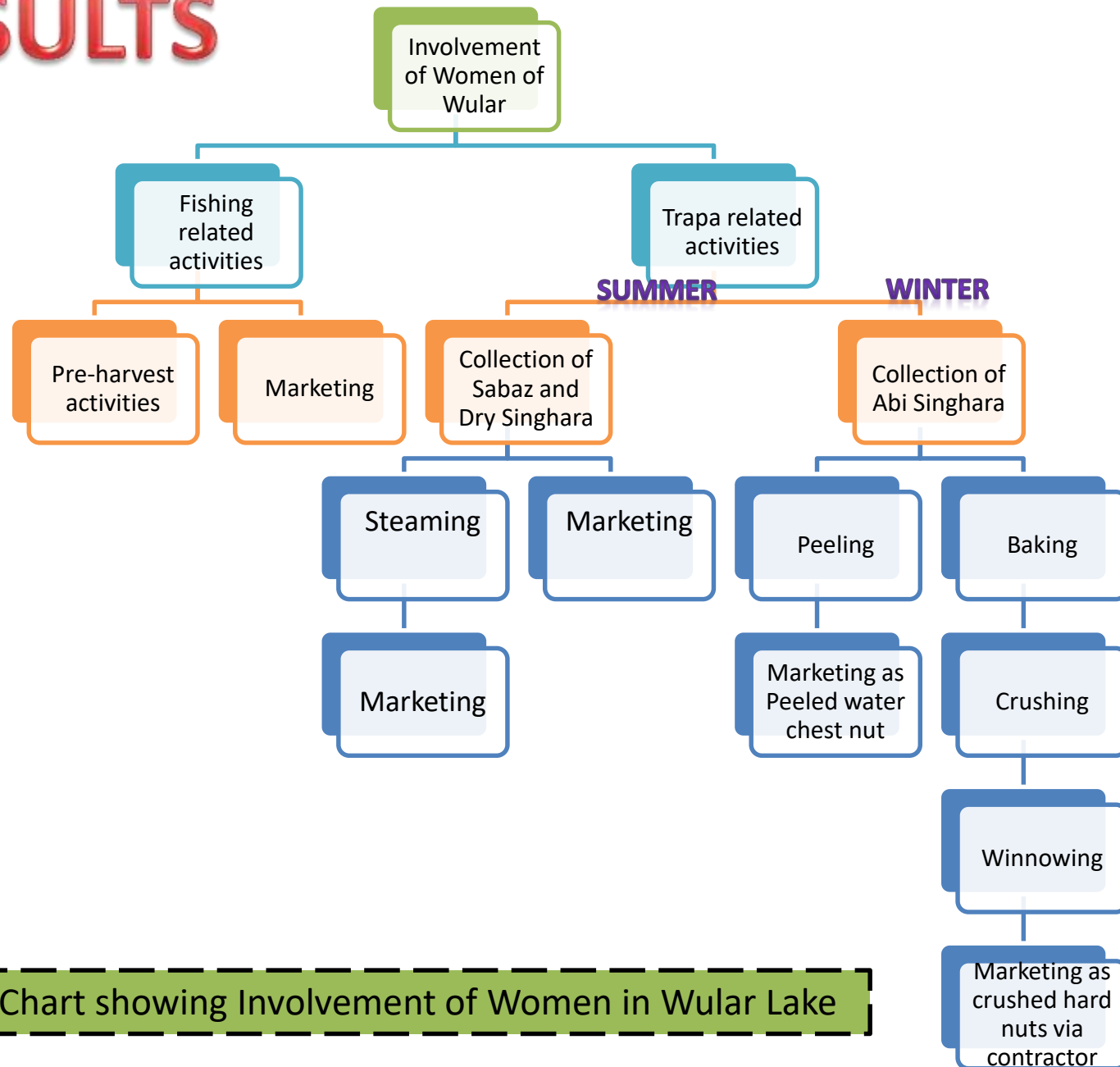


Fig. Flow Chart showing Involvement of Women in Wular Lake

Post-harvest Activities

Once catch is unloaded on landing centres, it's taken to market where women are already waiting

- When there is ***no intermediary***, men carry their catch in traditional thread baskets (*obb*) home, then transfer to plastic tubs which women carry over their head towards market place
- Fishes are also **dried** (*hokh gad*), **smoked** (*phary*) traditionally which are in good demand especially in winter
- ***'in summer, fishes are sometimes dumped, as they get spoiled quickly'***, said a 45 year old fisher of Maharajpora
- DoF has constructed a **landing center at Ningli Bala** which will be functional



Fish Demand and Supply Dynamics

- During the slack period i.e. from **November till March** fish production from the lake is generally less

‘It is not unusual for a fisherman to come back empty handed even if he spends time in Wular from dawn to dusk in Wular’ said Haleema, 60, Watlab village

‘I have 42 years of experience, purchasing power of people was earlier and so was the demand. Now demand is more but catches from the lake has decreased considerably’.

- Ghulam Rasool Sofi, 55, President of fish sellers Association

- Sopore market is known as fishing hub of Wular; they do not want to discredit this market by selling outside stock here’



DWINDLING FISH CATCHES...

'First time in my life I have purchased fish for consumption' said a local leader in the village Muslim Peer

'If we will rely on fish catch only then it will become very difficult for us to eat twice a day', said 40 years old Bega of Watlab

Bakhta Begum, 55, Lankrishipora said *"last week I brought fishers from a trader in Dal Lake and sold the same in Bandipora market"*. She added Dal Lake has a facility of water retention so fishes are present there unlike Wular.



Involvement of fisherwomen in *Trapa* related activities

Licensing for *Trapa* collection (Revenue Department, Kashmir (2018-19))

TYPE OF TRAPA	TIME PERIOD	LICENCE FEE (Rs.)	NO. OF MALES	NO. OF FEMALES
Sabaz Singhara	April	250	250	700
Dry Singhara (<i>milech gair</i>)	June to 15 July	300	50	500
Abi Singhara (<i>Kamai gair</i>)	Oct. - Feb.	500	900	0

- Wular lake fishers harvest *Trapa* traditionally involving a lot of time & effort
- It includes **harvesting, steaming, peeling, baking, crushing, winnowing and then marketing where women are mainly involved**
- In 2018-19 about **1200 women** are registered who are involved in *trapa* related activities. They play a major & important role in sustaining the livelihoods of communities which depend on Wular Lake

Summer Season (April, June-July)

1. COLLECTION

- Mainly collected using hands
- Of total 1500 licenses, 1200 (80%) are women (2018-19)



Source: Nasir Karchoo,
Outlook India Magazine

2. STEAMING

- During summer raw trapa (*neel gaer*) green in colour is boiled which turns brown or near black - enhanced taste - and are then sold in market
- A kg of raw water chest nut sells for about Rs. 30



Source: Nasir Karchoo,
Outlook India Magazine

Winter Season (October- February)

COLLECTION

- During chilling winters, collection of trapa is mainly carried out by men. In villages like **Laherwalpora**, women also collect.
- In 2018-19 licenses are issued to **900 men**
- Fisher women of Ningli Bala village said ***'we do not go out to lake, men bring fish and trapa & the rest (to process and market) is our duty'***
- Chest nuts are collected using the net ***Kashop*** which is dragged over the bottom
- Male Fishers of Watlab said ***'Our women never rest, they get very busy after collection of Trapa, women here are more overburdened than we are'***



PROCESSING

Fisher women are exclusively involved.

Winter Trapa products - **peeled water chest nuts** (*gaer goge*) and **crushed nuts** (*gaer*)

A) PEELED WATER CHEST NUTS (*GAER GOGGE*)

Peeling/Scraping

- After a brief steaming process, *women of the household gather in a room / outside and sit encircling the trapa heaps.*
- Each woman has their special **wooden knives** and a **thumb ring** made of iron. The folded wooded traditional knives are used to peel off skin of trapa
- **Seeds are marketed as such**; are also **roasted** (*til goge*) with rice flour and spices, and then sold - more demand in winters
- Peeled ones are directly sold in market - no intermediary
- **A kg sells for Rs. 100**



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B) CRUSHED HARD NUTS (GAER)

1. Baking

- Collected *Trapa* are **washed** in running water in order to remove mud and impurities from it.
- Then baked on the **tradional chula** (*daan*)
- Women collect firewood which is used in these chulas. Each household almost has this type of structure which is located outside of their house/shed.
- Poshha, 35, Watlab says '**sheikh che sane khot asal**' (we are no lesser than sweeper, they are better than us). She added, 'during smoking whole dust gets covered all over body'.
- After baking crushing is followed

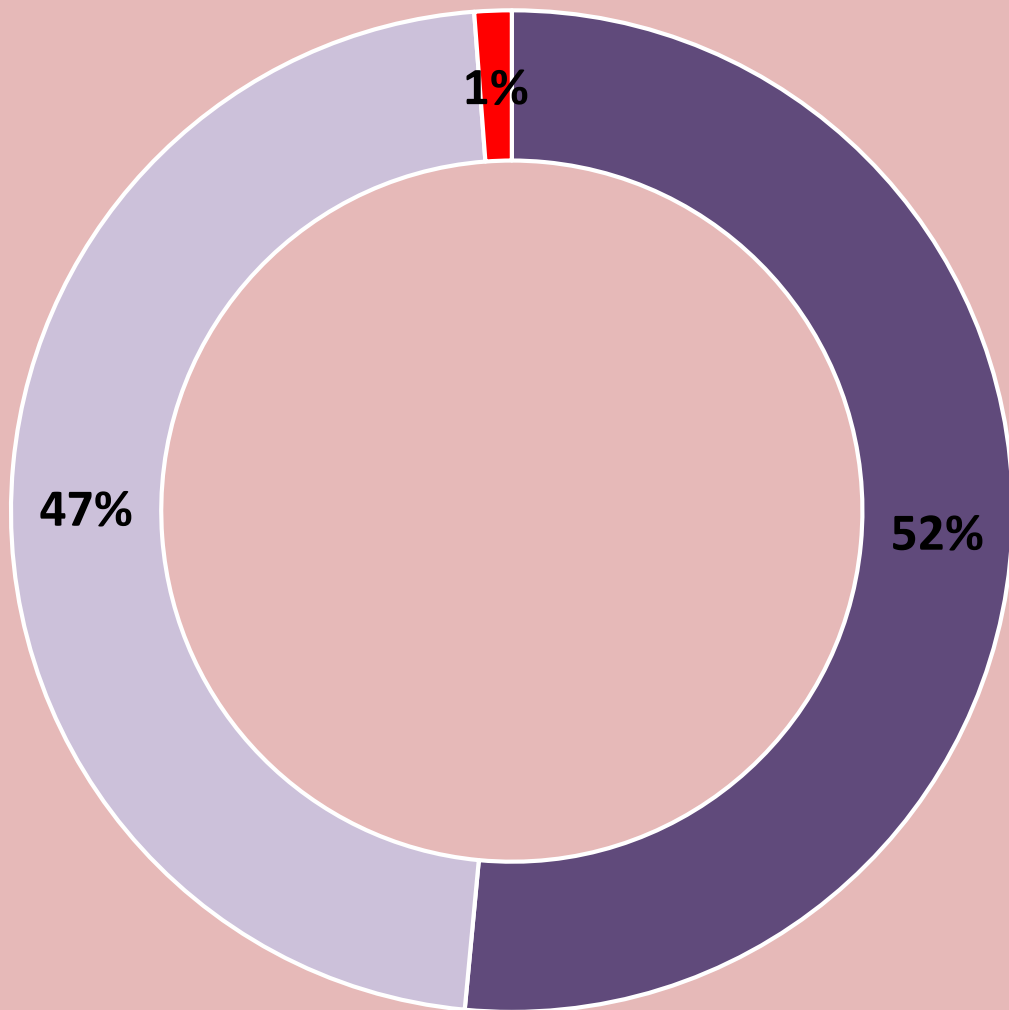


Marketing of *Trapa*

- Three types of *Trapa* forms exist in market viz., water chest nuts (*gaer goge*), hard crushed nuts (*gaer*), and flour (*gaer oat*)
- water chest nut seeds (*Gaer goge*) are directly marketed by women involving no intermediaries.
- In winter season, trapa seeds are in great demand either as raw or value added. **A kg of water chest nut sells for Rs. 100.**
- Hard crushed nuts (*Gaer*) are also converted to flour.
- Traders and agents abound in the value chain during winter and is finally sold in the markets of Srinagar and other towns.
- **A kg of *gaer* sells for about Rs.30**

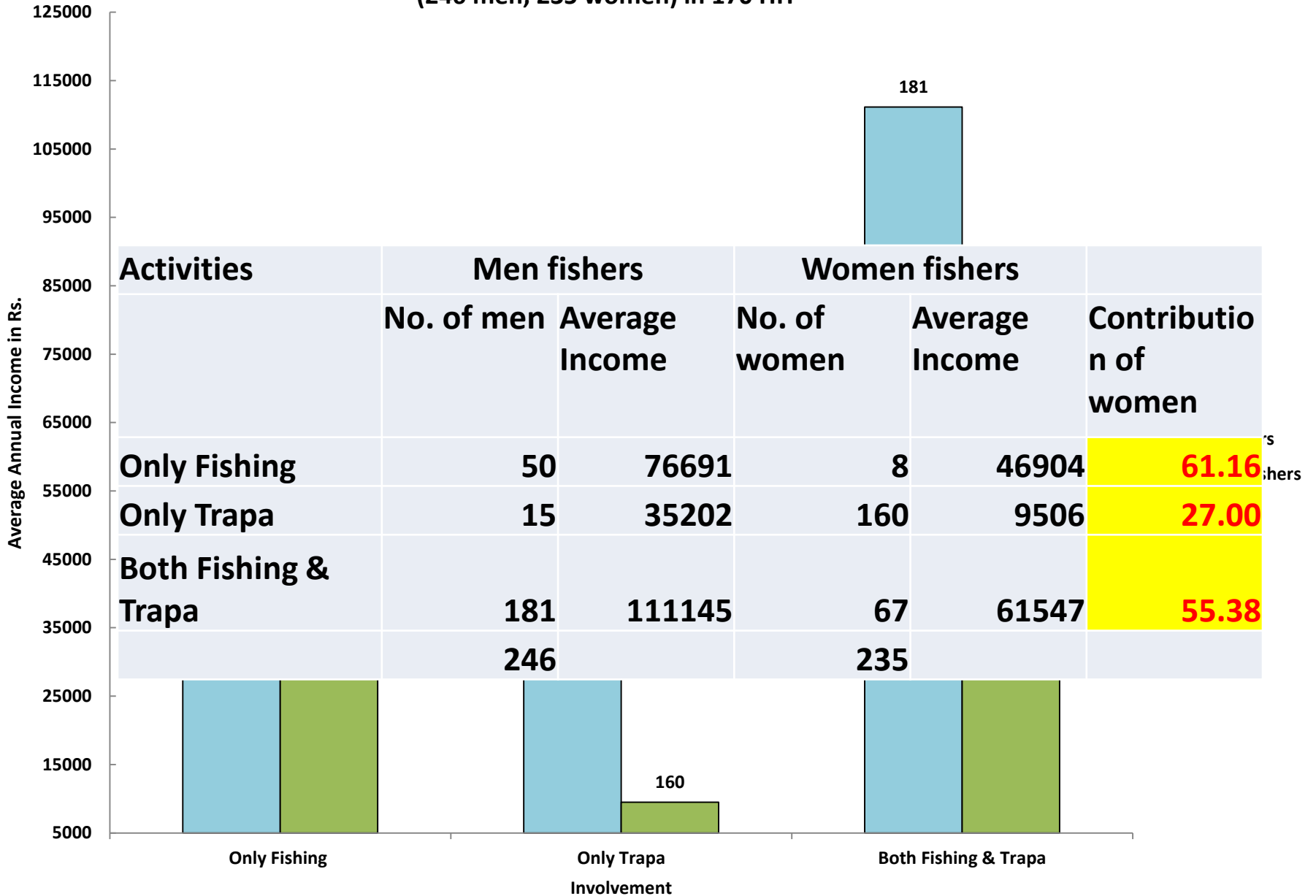


Occupation profile of sample households, n=170, 1040 members



- Others: School going kids, elderly, unemployed, Other dependents, etc
- Fishing & Trapa collection
- Other unorganised jobs

**Contribution of fishers to income in fish and water chestnut value chain, N=481
(246 men, 235 women) in 170 HH**



Data Collection Challenges and the way forward

- **Difficulties in screening out the literature available on gender and the non uniform usage of various gender related terms**
- **Complexities within and across the Households and Villages: Seasonal/commodity/processing/market/ price**
- **In built biases**
- **Social realities of data collection**
- **Qualitative and Quantitative aspects**

Why gendered study??

- **Women and men** have an important role in **fisheries and aquaculture** as fishers, fish farmers, and across the value chain. One of the major reasons why gender has been overlooked for long in fisheries sector is the **stereotype that it is a masculine job**. On the other hand, fisheries research has shown that the sector has a significant participation of women ([Arlene et al., 2016](#); [Kleiber et al., 2014](#); [Satapornvanit, 2018](#); [Siason, 2001](#))
- Gender is the topic of importance and increasing interest to those working in fisheries and aquaculture development, including many researchers, fisheries administrators, and students
- Data disaggregated by sex
- Valuing the unseen/ unsung
- Many more.....

Further approaches

- Gender in Ecosystem Services
- Contribution and Access to Food & Nutritional Security
- Households Decision making with respect to consumption/ harvest/ assests
- Contribution and access to income: Profit margins across value chains
- Involvement as actors in various nodes at VC

Thank you