

GENDERED SPACES, TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND FISHERIES SUSTAINABILITY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN IN TUNA FISHERIES IN LAKSHADEEP AND BIVALVE FISHERIES IN KERALA

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What happens to gendered spaces in two contrasting social contexts that survive on fishery-based resources consequent to technological change? The study, by comparing and contrasting the role of gender relations in tuna fisheries of the Lakshadweep islands and bivalve fisheries along the Malabar coast of Kerala, discusses this question on the basis of received notions of gender analysis. The women represent entrepreneurship endowments existing in two different socio-ecological contexts, namely islands and estuarine systems.

The paper, largely done as case studies, not only reveals new insights into the way technological change, brought about by two interventions (namely introduction of a canning factory in the first case and estuarine mussel culture in the second one), characterises the dynamic interplay of different factors, gender-related and others, but also poses new challenges to a feminist epistemology in the discourse on fisheries sustainability.

It is argued that policies that pursue the creation of livelihood and resource sustainability in fisheries-dependent coastal communities should view gendered spaces as an inclusive process, equally mindful of the context-specific factors that construct role segregations. The emergence of state sponsored empowerment platforms, though increasing bargain power, has been found to exert different levels of influence in the way connectedness to the resource gets mediated by gender, often constraining economic choices in the domestic as well as social spaces, even when buffered by alternative income in-flows. Similarly, variations in the cognitive map on sustainability indicate that such spaces are negotiated more by geographical factors than cultural identities. The positions that could be taken by the research system, while endorsing solutions through gender research, are also subjected to an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.