WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN CARP CULTURE ACTIVITIES IN INDIA

M. C. Nandeesha
Fisheries College and Research Institute
Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University
Tuticorin – 628 008, Tamil Nadu, India
Indian contribution through aquaculture to the global fish production
Share of aquaculture (3.47 mt) in total Indian fisheries production (7.57 mt) (2008) (FAO)
Water resources used for carp culture

Area (7 million ha) of carp culture resources in India

- **Ponds & tanks**: 29%
- **Beels & derilict waters**: 16%
- **Lakes & reservoirs**: 26%
- **Irrigation canals**: 1%
- **Paddy fields**: 28%

Only 45% of area has been brought under culture in the form of ponds & tanks.
CARP CULTURE IN INDIA

- India basically a carp culture country
- Freshwater farming system mainly concentrates on carp culture
- 3 major carps
  - Rohu
  - Catla
  - Mrigal
- Contribute to more than 80% of aquaculture production

- 3 exotic carps
  - Common carp
  - Silver carp
  - Grass carp
- Are additionally cultured
The Scenario

Carps account for most of the inland aquaculture sector production.

Almost all of this production is from rural areas.

The study here focuses on 10 states representing different agro-climatic conditions with varied intensity of carp culture and cultural differences.

Objective was to understand the role and contribution of women in carp culture activities.
The 10 states have been grouped regionally into 3 categories:

1. **The Northern India**
   Punjab & Uttar Pradesh

2. **The Eastern and North-Eastern India**
   The Eastern India : West Bengal, Orissa & Jharkhand
   The North-Eastern India : Tripura, Assam & Manipur

3. **The Southern India**
   Tamil Nadu & Andhra Pradesh
Overview

- Women participation varied widely among the 10 different states.
- Low participation in states like Andhra Pradesh & Punjab in spite of higher level of carp production than other states.
- But considerable participation in states of Manipur, Assam & West Bengal in sustainable aquaculture in pond fertilization, nursery rearing, fish feeding & harvesting.
- Greater participation of women through self help groups (SHG).
The Northern India region

PUNJAB

- Amritsar
- Chandigarh

UTTAR PRADESH

- Mathura
- Vrindavan
- Taj Mahal, Agra
- Lucknow
- Varanasi
Punjab & Uttar Pradesh

Fisherfolk

Present status

- Most farmers have agriculture as their primary occupation, & aquaculture as secondary occupation
- Women participation in aquaculture negligible
- At present community ponds in Punjab are leased out to migrant labourers from Bihar & U.P.
Women participation in carp culture in Northern India

- Yes: 86.6, 87%
- No: 13.4, 13%
Reasons for non-participation of women

- No such tradition
- No time
- No knowledge
### Issues

Reasons for non-participation are mostly traditional beliefs, lack of knowledge, and priorities for household chores.

### Recommendations

1. Lease out community ponds to local women groups instead of migrant labourers.
2. Impart more training programmes on ornamental fish culture & value added fishery products to women.
3. Priority-based agendas needed from government for women empowerment.
The Eastern and North-Eastern India

The states here have been grouped according to cultural similarity, as this is a vital factor in determining the participation of women in aquaculture & allied activities, especially in the socio-economically weaker sections of the society.
1. Orissa

**Fisherfolk**

**Present status**

- Primary occupation of farmers is agriculture
- Over all women participation is poor
- Participation is more visible in socially weaker sections of the society
- Women from well-to-do families do not opt for aquaculture or fishery related activities
- However women from economically backward families interested to take up aquaculture if profitable returns are assured with risk coverage
Women participation in carp culture in Orissa

- Yes: 68.9%
- No: 31.1%
Reasons for non-participation

- Others (Agriculture)
- Husband takes care
- No such tradition

Percentage
Issues

- Social & cultural taboos
- Fully engaged with house-hold chores
- Incapability to buy inputs for financial constraints
- Pond-leasing under Panchayati Raj system upto maximum 3 years only
- Question of resource allocation to the needful

Recommendations

- Encourage women in economically backward families to take up aquaculture
- Provide financial subsidies and inputs to buy inputs along with bank support
- Lease out ponds to women SHGs & extend the period of leasing
2. Jharkhand

Fisherfolk
Present status

- Women participation almost negligible except in some marketing activities
- Most farmers undertake aquaculture as a secondary activity
- No seed production in the state
- Fish seeds transported mainly from other states
**Issues**

- Most of the families are vegetarian
- Women have no interest in aquaculture even though plenty resources are available
- Lack of social awareness
- Social taboos hindering women development in economically backward classes

**Recommendations**

- Raise awareness about fish as a nutritious food item
- Carry out extensive training programme for women development
- Demonstration of benefits of aquaculture with the available resources
- Special focus to the economically backward classes
3. West Bengal, Assam & Tripura
Fisherfolk

Present status

- The whole population – an admixture of tribal & non-tribal people

- No large-scale women participation in aquaculture

- Participation of women more in animal rearing than in aquaculture

- But considerable changes (15.19 % increase in production) when women participate
Percentage of Involvement of women in different economic activities other than household activities

- Nill: 30.5%
- Agriculture & vegetable cultivation: 40.6%
- Animal rearing: 61.1%
- Fishery: 54.7%
- Others (Govt. Jobs, small scale business etc.): 5.6%
Issues
- Social stigma hindering women from getting down to pond
- Obligations to attend to household chores and bringing up children
- Women have no knowledge about doses & application of feed, fertilizer etc.
- No clear understanding about aquaculture species & quality
- Gender biasness while arranging training programmes

Recommendations
- Encourage women part in decision making process in family
- Women empowerment with aquaculture knowledge & skills
- Appoint women trainers for better technology transfer
- Training programme to be rescheduled according to convenience of women
Recent Programs to encourage women involvement in carp culture projects in Assam

- Farmers Pond Development
- Community Pond Development
- Integrated Fish Farming
- Beel Fishery Development

Women empowerment through Fish Seed Raising Programme under State Plan Scheme
Women beneficiaries out of total beneficiaries in Assam is 11% during the last 5 years.

Constraints for women:

- Land holdings & ownership in the name of men only
- Women are less participatory as per family tradition in respect of outdoor work
Reasons reported by women for non-involvement in aquaculture

- No knowledge in aquaculture: 25.5%
- No time to spare in aquaculture: 44.8%
- Husband is enough: 16.5%
- Never thought about it: 13%
- Didn't have no such tradition: 2.4%
- Pond is too far: 1.2%
- Others: 10.6%

% of women
Issues raised by women fishery professionals in Tripura

- Difficult to convince fish farmers about scientific farming

- Cannot reach women from families involved in carp culture in the training programmes due to their non-participation in aquaculture activities

- Women professionals are also concerned about their children’s education & upbringing

- Because of various reasons, women prefer jobs in cities
4. Manipur

Fisherfolk
Present status

- Grass carp culture predominates because of presence of soft aquatic vegetation throughout the state

- Special focus on women & fisheries because women participation is the highest in this state in contrast other states

- No social stigma in women participation irrespective of rich & poor families
Interesting to note that fishing in some lakes is done by women exclusively by Chinese dip nets.

Women participation more in fishing than aquaculture.

Even though they participate in nursery rearing, feeding and exclusively marketing.

Participation also visible in integrated aquaculture.
Issues
- Burden of household chores
- Commercial aquaculture practices in small-scale only
- Inbreeding depression of carps
- Minimal use of manures & fertilizers

Recommendations
- Develop site-specific aquaculture policies like hapa breeding in Manipur
- More rigorous training & awareness
- Financial incentives for inputs like fertilizer & feed
- KVKs to train enterprising women SHGs
- Largely promote the socio-economic benefits of aquaculture
The Southern India

1. Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh

Tamil Nadu

Andhra Pradesh
Fisherfolk

Present scenario

- Overall women participation negligible in aquaculture

- Women tend not to work in fields and ponds with the betterment of socio-economic conditions

- If any participation, only as unskilled labourers, particularly in ornamental fish culture
However, women help men in post-harvest handling of fishes in capture fisheries.

Social taboos & cultural inheritance cite women participation in aquaculture as non-traditional.
Women participation in carp culture in Southern India

- Yes: 88.47%
- No: 11.53%
Reasons for non-participation of women in aquaculture in southern India

Reasons for non-participation:

- Others (Agriculture)
- No idea
- Husband takes care
- No such tradition
- No time
- No knowledge

Percentage

- Others (Agriculture) 25%
- No idea 1%
- Husband takes care 10%
- No such tradition 20%
- No time 35%
- No knowledge 10%
**Issues**
- Male dominated society
- House-hold obligations for non-participation
- Lack of knowledge & awareness about aquaculture
- Poor socio-economic status of women in villages

**Recommendations**
- Raise awareness about the importance of women in family in economically backward classes
- Demonstrate the benefits of aquaculture
- Impart women-focused training programmes
- Encourage women to take part in marketing activities
- Organize women to Self Help Group (SHG) for better performance
What the women have spoken out:

“We do not have knowledge about the doses & application of feed, fertilizer etc.”

“We need empowerment with knowledge & skills”
“We can still harvest fish by hook & line for family consumption when needed”

“Develop women-friendly aquaculture technologies so that we can involve ourselves in carp culture business”
“If we dare netting, people compare us with men & compare us with having manly attitude”

“Design special nets convenient for us to harvest fish”
“Not possible for us to know the hunger of fish unlike pig or cattle”

“Evolve mechanism to view fish in pond easily – UNDER WATER CAMERA!”
Gender status in teaching, research and development Indian institutions

- Women Teaching staff: 10.4%
- Women Scientists: 16.42%
- Women Development staff: 5.72%
- Number of female graduates passing out: 13.8%
- Number of female graduates passing out at Master degree level: 16.25%
Gender distribution of rank in 26 years

- Girls (19)
- Boys (7)
Key Gender issues in aquaculture

Aquaculture need women, but whether women need aquaculture

- Land ownership
- Technology
- Access to Markets
- Increased urban migration
- Access to information
- Access to credit
- Land ownership
- Unequal access to final output
Suggestions for consideration

- Generate technologies that are woman friendly
- Encourage training of women by adopting flexible timings and training approaches
- Promote credit support that are appropriate and sustainable
- Promote crop insurance to cover various types of risks
- Celebrate Aquaculture Gender Day annually
Suggestions for consideration

- Enhance knowledge of aquaculture professionals on gender issues
- Introduce a course on gender for aquaculture students
- Attract more girl students to aquaculture courses
- Encourage Collection of gender disaggregated data
Women participation in aquaculture

Constraints
- Farmer science congress
- Family approach training
- Increase access in information
- Farmer field day
- Less database
- Low access to credit
- Land ownership
- Cultural & religion norms
- Low access to family decision making
- Restricted mobility
- Lack of women’s organisation
- Low gender sensitivity
- Limited access to training
- Input supply accessible
- Gender sensitive extension staff
- Accessible credit system

Strategies
- PME
- Change in attitude
Thank You