

THE ROLE OF FISHERWOMEN IN THE FACE OF FISHING UNCERTAINTIES

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Fishing industries, especially those of small scale, are always challenged by uncertainties. The uncertainties are often mirrored in the livelihood of small scale fishers, who are still living in poverty. Every member of the fishermen's family acknowledges this condition, and they are seriously taking into account this situation. Fisherwomen, who are either wives of fishermen or women who work in fisheries related business, are members of the fishermen's family who have to take the leading role in the household's economy beside the fishermen. They have to support their family livelihood, especially when facing unsustainable income. This paper explores the role of fisherwomen in adapting to uncertainties in coastal communities of the north coast of Java, Indonesia. This paper develops indicators of uncertainties with respect to livelihood in fishery and tested these indicators by employing multi dimensional scaling method using a modified version of Rapid appraisal for fisheries (Rapfish). This technique is first used to analyze the role of women in dealing with uncertainty in fishing. Such an approach would be useful not only in understanding the degree of women's participation, but could also be used by policy makers to develop policy prescriptions for coastal communities in general. This paper also shows how the empowerment of local communities can be used as a cushion for absorbing income shocks due to uncertainties.

Key words: Fisherwomen, Fisheries uncertainties, Rapfish