

MAINSTREAMING GENDER CONCERNS IN FRESHWATER AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT

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A Women Empowerment Program for mainstreaming women into aquaculture was undertaken for the overall economic improvement of the farm women in two districts viz., Puri and Khorda (Odisha, India). Participatory rural appraisal tools were employed to identify and prioritize the problems and one hundred beneficiaries from each of the two districts were selected. Approximately four acre water bodies in each selected districts were adopted for demonstration. Training was imparted to groups of 20-25 farm women both at the village pond site and the pond facilities of the Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA) on freshwater aquaculture and post-harvest value addition of aquaculture products.

Indian major carp seeds were supplied and stocked with requisite number of carp seeds in the ratio of 1:2:1 (catla:rohu:mrigal) in the community ponds of the villages Paribasudeipur (1 acre), Fakirpada (1 acre), and Jaipur (2 acre). In Jaipur village a total of five harvests were carried out yielding 675 kg of carps and 180 kg of miscellaneous fish. The fish were sold for INR 50,000/- and the net income generated was INR 28,000/-. In Paribasudeipur village in one of the pond (area 0.6 acre), about 200 kg of fishes were harvested. A part of the harvest was distributed among the members and the rest were sold for INR 8,000/-. In Fakirpada village aquaculture activity was undertaken in a 1.5 acre pond. A partial harvest of 150 kg of carps was done in 8 months culture period.

Under all the three operational villages the Self Help Groups (SHGs) managed the culture fish ponds with their available natural resources and could get a good amount of harvest which was sold to generate farm income. During partial harvest, a sizeable amount of Small Indigenous Fish (SIF) were harvested, Jaipur (180 kg), Paribasudeipur (80kg) and Fakirpada (45kg). The harvested SIF were consumed by the families of the beneficiaries and it contributed to their nutritional security.

The study revealed that the economic conditions in the three villages varied significantly which affected their aquaculture productivity. Further it revealed that with little external support and capacity building, the SHGs could generate economic benefits from small scale aquaculture.