

INLAND FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN INDIA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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Fisheries and aquaculture are a sunrise sector in India, which contributes to around 8% of the global fish production along with contributing to 1.24% of India's Gross Value Added (GVA) and 7.28% to the agricultural GVA (2018-19). The inland fisheries sector in India provides livelihood to 23,117,820 people in which women constitute 43.7% of the populace. In India, inland open water fisheries are considered small-scale because of involvement of more traditional types of craft and gear which involve low levels of mechanization, and being less capital intensive. The major resources of inland fisheries in India are rivers (164,118 km); canals (64,972 km); reservoirs (3,460,301 ha); floodplain wetlands (564,288 ha); estuaries (458,185 ha); lagoons (246,529 ha); lakes (30,551 ha); upland lakes (96,900 ha); and others (146,730 ha). The participation of women and men in these fisheries resources are shaped by social, cultural, economic, environmental, religious and political factors across different regions. In this study, women's participation in various inland aquatic ecosystems has been evaluated through Moser's triple role gender framework which encompasses production, reproduction (household work and child care), and community management roles. The activities in the production role involve fishing, fish seed collection, fish processing and value addition, marketing, fabrication of fishing gears, helping family members in preparation of fishing trips, and in unloading and sorting fishes. Women are also significantly involved in participation at community events to gain knowledge and information through training, mass awareness and demonstrations which pave the path towards empowerment. The flagship programmes undertaken by ICAR-CIFRI in this regard were National Mission for Clean Ganga (northern and eastern India), Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (eastern and southern India), Scheduled Tribe Component (eastern, southern and central India), North-East Hill Component (north-eastern region), National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (northern and eastern India), and WorldFish Window-III Project (eastern India) by addressing 9 out of 17 SDGs. However, in spite of such valuable and critical contributions, the challenges that women often have to encounter are lack of recognition, drudgery and various occupational health hazards.