

UNSUSTAINABLE FISHING AND ITS IMPACTS ON WOMEN IN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN THAILAND

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Unsustainable fishing causes widespread damage, particularly to the environment and the livelihoods of coastal communities. Women in small-scale fisheries are especially vulnerable to its impacts, not only due to depleted fishery resources but also because of gender dynamics amplifying the severity of these effects. Since there is still limited literature available on the relationship between unsustainable fisheries and the livelihoods of women in small-scale fisheries, this research aims to fill this gap by delving deeper into how unsustainable fishing impacts women in small-scale fisheries in southern Thailand. We utilise the gender analysis framework of Four Core Dimensions for Intersectional Gender Integration, enabling a deeper examination of the structural factors driving gender-based vulnerabilities and inequities. We not only descriptively try and explain the impact of unsustainable fishing on women but also unveil hidden gender aspects such as gender inequality that intensify the issue. To do so, participatory observation, unstructured interviews, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with women in small-scale fisheries from three different water territories—the Gulf of Thailand, the Andaman Sea, and Songkhla Lake. Our study shows that the general effect of destructive fishing, as a part of unsustainable fishing, on small-scale fishers in southern Thailand is a decrease in family income. As a result, fishers are forced to work harder and spend longer hours in the sea. However, the reinforcement of gender norms has intensified the impacts on women by adding burdens to the reproductive responsibilities that women already hold, and which are barely perceived as “real” work. Additionally, different intersectional social factors from each woman’s background create varying degrees of challenges depending on their individual circumstances.