

GENDER DYNAMICS IN CONTRIBUTION OF MARICULTURE THE WELL-BEING OF COASTAL COMMUNITIES IN KENYA

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In Kenya, the mariculture sub-sector has received increased attention through financial investment by the government and non-governmental bodies, aiming to improve the wellbeing of the coastal communities. Nevertheless, since the beginning the practice of mariculture in Kenya – for over three decades, the general research in this area is very scanty. Studies that assess the contribution of mariculture to livelihoods of the coastal people are completely missing. The current study sought to analyse the gender dynamics which promote the role of mariculture in the well-being of the coastal communities in Kenya. To achieve the overall objective, the study explores how mariculture, two specific objectives were applied: 1. To analyze household's gender dynamics influencing and extent to which mariculture contributes to household's overall income. 2. To analyze farmers' gender and group-level characteristics influencing absolute income from mariculture

Data were collected in the coastal region from Kwale, Kilifi and Mombasa counties, through a survey, Key informant Interviews (KIIs), In-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). In total 603 households were interviewed, 20 KIIs, 22 FGDs and 30 in-depth interviews were conducted. To analyse the data, econometric models and theories were applied in quantitative data, while thematic analysis was used in qualitative data. The econometric models include: A maximum likelihood mixed-effects GLM regression model and Multilevel generalized linear model (GLMM) with a gamma distribution and a log link function.

Single female households have a high dependence on seaweed farming as a source of livelihood (based on the seaweed farming households; data), but a lower dependence on fish farming (based on fish farming households' data). While fish farming is conducted by a community who own the ponds and share activities and income, seaweed farming is more individual or household based. In fish farming, farmers who spend more time in the group's activities tend to get a higher income share from the activities. Women have high domestic and reproduction activities and tend not have as much time to invest in the activities as compared to male group members. As a result, they may not have high reliance or income-based benefits from the sector

Male farmers obtained higher income as compared to female farmers. Additionally, more formally educated farmers obtained higher income in seaweed farming. Mariculture in general requires the ability to understand the technical dynamics in production within this sector. For seaweed farming, proposer planning allows farmers to maximize their production and minimize losses – which may favour more educated farmers. Women in the coastal region of Kenya are disadvantaged in accessing formal education – an inequality which magnifies economic disempowerment – including in mariculture.