



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

Women in Fisheries: Malaysia and Indonesia

Dr. Suad Joseph, General Editor

Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and Women and Gender Studies, University of California, Davis

EWIC Staff: Datasheet

- ❖ Fisheries are a significant component of the economy in Indonesia and Malaysia and contribute 2.4% and 1.62% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) respectively. However, the economic participation of women involved in fisheries is significantly underestimated.¹
- ❖ In the fisheries production process, Malaysian and Indonesian women are mostly involved in tasks relating to production (net-weaving, etc.), processing (sorting, gutting, etc.), transportation, distribution, as well as aquaculture activities (stocking of the cages/ponds, feeding the fish, etc.).²
- ❖ The 2001 Global Symposium on Women in Fisheries Report found that as aquaculture becomes more commercialized, the number of females involved in fisheries decreases; from 1996-2001, only 18 out of a total of 952 people trained through aquaculture courses on prawn, giant freshwater lobster, mussel and fish at the National Prawn Fry Production and Research Centre in Kedah, Malaysia, were women.³
- ❖ A 1991 study, carried out by the Fisheries and Development Research Project, recommended that a long-term National Fisheries Development Strategy for the Government of Indonesia be established in order to strengthen the roles of women in the fisheries sector at the small and large-scale level.⁴
- ❖ A 1994 survey on two Malay fishing communities in the east coast states of Kelantan and Terengganu in Peninsular Malaysia found that 51% of working women were self-employed, with 31.4% as paid workers and 17.6% involved in unpaid labor. Women in the self-employed and unpaid labor categories generally worked up to 10-12 hours daily along with domestic chores.⁵
- ❖ According to a 1995 study on fisher households in Indonesia, Indonesian women are predominantly involved in fish processing and marketing jobs whereas few of them are involved in capture fisheries. Although there is not any data on Malaysian women, general observations show that the majority of women are involved in post-harvest activities.⁶
- ❖ The “Empowering Vulnerable Stakeholder Groups” workshop was held from February 6-10, 2012 in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia through the Universiti Putra Malaysia’s Asia-Europe Meetings Aquaculture Platform. The workshop focused on gender issues in aquaculture and fishing as well as developing action plans to empower vulnerable stakeholders and implement best practices in aquaculture food production.⁷

¹ http://pubs.iclarm.net/Pubs/Wif/wifglobal/wifg_asia.pdf

² http://horizon.documentation.ird.fr/exl-doc/pleins_textes/pleins_textes_6/colloques2/36815.pdf

³ http://pubs.iclarm.net/resource_centre/WF_328.pdf

⁴ http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1381&context=ma_etds

⁵ Yahaya, J. Women in small-scale fisheries in Malaysia, University of Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur. 1994

⁶ Sitorus, F. 1995. Peranan ekonomi wanita dalam rumahtangga nelayan miskin di pendesaan Indonesia. Lokakarya 'Integrasi Kepentingan Wanita dalam Perencanaan Pembangunan". Cisarua, Desember.

⁷ <http://genderaquafish.org/2012/04/20/malaysian-workshop-upgrades-knowledge-develops-plans-for-gender-equity-in-asian-aquaculture/>