

Study says women play vital role in fisheries

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Women form nearly half of the workforce in fisheries and aquaculture, with their involvement reaching up to 90 per cent in post-harvest activities like processing and trading in developing countries. Despite their crucial contributions, women face numerous challenges, such as limited access to preservation technologies, credit, and decision-making platforms – barriers rooted in gender norms and power dynamics. These obstacles restrict their potential, affecting productivity and efficiency across the fisheries' value chain.

At the same time, fish loss and waste (FLW) caused by spoilage and poor handling practices threaten both economic livelihoods and food security. In response to these intertwined challenges, a groundbreaking study led by WorldFish and partners was launched in December 2024 in Mombasa, Kenya. The study aims to explore the impact of gender dynamics on fish loss and waste and to develop gender-responsive strategies for more sustainable fisheries.

The research is being conducted in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Resources Institute, and Kenyan institutions, including the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), Coastal and Marine Resource Development (COMRED), and Pwani University. Together, these partners aim to uncover the intersections between gender inequality and fish loss and waste, paving the way for more equitable and efficient fisheries value chains.

For the first time, researchers are combining two innovative methodologies: Gendered Value Chain Analysis (GVCA) and FLW assessment. This novel approach acknowledges the significant influence of gender norms and dynamics on every aspect of the fisheries value chain, including the causes and consequences of fish loss and waste.

"Addressing fish loss and waste requires pinpointing the hotspots along the value chain and designing climate-smart interventions that are both accessible and affordable. This approach not only reduces waste but also enhances resilience and sustainability for those who depend on fisheries for their livelihoods," said Dr Aditya Parmar, WorldFish scientist and lead on

Work Package 3 of the Asia–Africa BlueTech Superhighway (AABS), which focuses on scaling climate-smart technologies for reducing fish loss and waste and adding value.