

A note on women entrepreneurs of Iduvanipalem's fishing village of Andhra Pradesh

H. M. Manas*, Ashok Maharshi, Indira Divipala, Loveson L. Edward and Joe K. Kizhakudan

Visakhapatnam Regional Centre of ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Visakhapatnam-530 003, Andhra Pradesh

*E-mail: manas2u@gmail.com

Fishing village of Iduvanipalem under Kaviti Mandal of Srikakulam District, Andhra Pradesh is witnessing a silent women empowerment process. In this coastal village, around 40 women self-help groups (SHGs) are transforming their lives and community through the age-old trade of fish drying. The residence of about 3,000 fishers, and approximately 16 inboard boats, 65 outboard engine boats, and 90 non-motorized fishing vessels available, the men catch the fish while the women have organized themselves into self-help groups, each comprising 10-15 members. These groups play a pivotal role in the procurement, processing, and selling of dried fish, creating a thriving local economy. The resulting dried fish like anchovies, sardines, and ribbon fish, find their way to nearby markets such as Berhampur and Sonepur in the neighboring state of Odisha. The peak months of October to January witness a flurry of activity, with an average daily production of around 3,000 kg of dried fish. The economic impact of these women entrepreneurs is substantial. Dried anchovies, with their high demand, fetch an average of ₹250 to ₹300 per kg. Meanwhile, a 20

kg bag of sardines commands prices ranging from ₹550 to ₹650, and ribbon fish, sold individually, brings in ₹1200 for 80 pieces. Each woman earns about ₹750 to ₹800 rupees per day after negotiating the input costs of labour, packing and transport to market. This steady income not only supports the livelihoods of the women involved but also contributes to the overall prosperity of the village.

Beyond the economic benefits, the self-help groups in Iduvanipalem are fostering a sense of community empowerment. A portion of the revenue is deposited in the Grama Vikas Bank through a female agent of the community. Through collective efforts, these women are challenging societal norms and proving that they can excel in traditionally male-dominated industries. The ripple effect is evident as education and healthcare initiatives gain momentum, creating a holistic transformation in the village. Thus, these women entrepreneurs stand as beacons of resilience and empowerment which is a testament to the transformative power of community-driven initiatives.



Women filling bags with sundried fish to be transported to the market