



Role of Fisherwomen in Kashmir

Shabana Arjamand 

Associate Professor, Government Degree College, Bemina, Srinagar, India.

Type of Work: Peer Reviewed.

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jmss.v22.n2.p2>

Review history: Submitted: June 20, 2026; Revised: July 10, 2026; Accepted: July 27, 2026

How to cite this paper:

Arjamand, S. (2026). Role of Fisherwomen in Kashmir. *IRA-International Journal of Management & Social Sciences* (ISSN 2455-2267), 22(2), 46-50. <https://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jmss.v22.n2.p2>

© IRA Academico Research.

 This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#), subject to a proper citation to the publication source of the work.

Disclaimer: The scholarly papers as reviewed and published by IRA Academico Research are the views and opinions of their respective authors and are not the views or opinions of IRA Academico Research. IRA Academico Research disclaims any harm or loss caused due to the published content to any party.

IRA Academico Research is an institutional publisher member of *Publishers International Linking Association Inc. (PILA-CrossRef)*, USA. Being an institutional signatory to the *Budapest Open Access Initiative, Hungary*, the content published by IRA Academico Research is available under Open Access. IRA Academico Research is also a registered content provider under *Open Access Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH)*.

This paper is peer-reviewed following IRA Academico Research's [Peer Review Program](#) .

Shabana Arjamand  / 0009-0007-4494-8257

ABSTRACT

While Hanji (fisher folk) in Kashmir are mainly engaged in fish capture, Hanji women take care of most of the jobs such as fish processing and marketing. Retail marketing of fish and cured fish are undertaken by women. Previously, there was an area in the valley commonly known as 'Gadda Kocha' (Fish Market), where marketing of fishes were mainly done by Hanji women. The condition of Hanji women in the valley is miserable. There is an urgent need to establish fisherwomen Cooperative in the valley, on the pattern of fisherwomen Cooperatives established in other parts of the country. The Cooperatives should provide a particular water area settlement from Dal Lake, Nageen Lake and other such sources for fish culture.

Keywords: Hanji, Gadda Kocha, Dal Lake, Nageen Lake and Cooperatives.

Introduction

Hanjie is an ancient and popular tribe living mainly in sub-urban areas of Srinagar city in Kashmir valley of Jammu and Kashmir state. Hanjies are regarded as the most hardworking community in Kashmir valley. The study reveals that Hanjie women are generally married at early age and their family size is also found large. Though all Hanjie women are involved in hereditary occupation, their majority of work goes unpaid. The Hanjie women are generally illiterate and the main reason for their illiteracy is poverty, ignorance and lack of interest. The drinking water facilities provided to them is very unhealthy and contaminated. They do not have proper toilet and bathroom facilities. The Hanjie women have meager population education. In spite of this, they do not favor small family norm. Hanjie women depend on familial decisions for the sale and purchase of moveable properties and for making arrangements for marriage ceremonies. In case of desire for social freedom, Hanjie women have a high desire for it. Their desire for freedom from parents and or husband is at moderate level. However, they have high desire for freedom for sex and marriage. They have high desire for freedom from customs, taboos and rituals. Their social and economic desire is also found high. The Hanjie women have the right to participate in the development processes to enable them to work, product, and survive in the society. The Hanjie women have the right to participate in the different awareness campaigns such as; children and youth problems, marriage problems related to armed conflict, etc. Not even a fraction of the Hanjie caliber and capacity has been yet pressed into service for our socio-economic advancement. Let the Hanjie youth be involved in the services at humanity in a big way. Powerful subversive agencies are working overtime to destroy our beautiful homeland. Let us arrange our priorities and make a purposeful beginning by using the talents and energies of the Hanjies in sensibly conceived action plans which may bring glory to them and others alike. When given the opportunities and resources, Kashmiri fisherwomen have proved to be active partner in development efficient dynamic and open to innovation. Fisherwomen are involved in capturing of fish, handling, preservation, processing, trading and marketing of fish. Purposefully fisherwomen of Kashmir has been centered in the present study because of the fact that she holds the key position in the family and influence the general development of the family through her literacy, work participation, accepting family planning devices and extending financial support to family more specially.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the four districts of Kashmir region during the year 2024. Field surveys and personnel interview were conducted to know the exact role of women in the field of Fisheries at the Baramulla, Kupwara, Bandipora and Srinagar districts.

Results and Discussion

Role of Women in fish and Water chestnut Marketing

When a fisherman fishing from dawn to dusk in the rivers or lakes and return back to his home with his catch, the women-folk take it overhead in large baskets or containers to nearby villages where they sale it in against to money or exchange with other essential commodities like rice, dal, vegetables etc. some fisherwomen go to the nearby fish-markets to sale their fish stock. So, they perform fish monger/ vendor job from their part apart from household maintenance, accounts keeping and decision-making.

The wetlands of the Kashmir valley have a significant value as Water chestnut (*Trapa* sp.) locally called Singhara and Lotus Stems. (locally called Nadru) are the two major food resources plants derived from these plant species and take these natural products. During the Mudy period it was found about 10% of the fisherwomen are involved. The fisherwomen sell these products to the concern landing centers or at the crowded markets like bus stand etc as dealers/ vendors of these products for the sale purpose. Two species of Water chestnut occupy large belts in the lake area. These two species are of great economic value to the people living in the area particularly economically disadvantageous group.

Role of Women in fish smoking/ fish preservation

In Kashmir Valley, the processing and value adding to the fish in the form of dry and smoked fish is an age old practice. The fish species mostly dried are *Carrassius carrassius*, *Crossochielus latius* and fingerlings of common carp. About 8% fisher folk (Men and women) in valley are involved in the drying process of fish. Due to high demand of dry fish particularly during the winter months when the fish catch is scarce, the dry fish is also brought from outside the state to meet the increasing demand of dry fish. Smoking the fish with the saw dust is an age old practice among the fisher folk of the valley. The *Schizothorax* species is mostly utilized for smoking process in the valley of Kashmir. The smoked fish is locally known as "Fareh". Both dry and smoked fish are processed during the summer months when the fish catch is available in abundance and are made available during the winter months.

Role as fish Vending

Fish vending is a traditional occupation that has been a means of livelihood for thousands in India. In the valley of Kashmir about 15% fisherwomen are fish vendors. Fish vendors engage in their trade in various ways: they procure their fish directly from landing centers, where they participate in daily auctions of the catch; they buy from traders and merchants; or they buy from the wholesale markets for resale at retail/local markets. Vendors also carry out value addition by sorting, grading, and cleaning the fish. Fish may be sold as either (a) fresh fish that is door-to-door by

vendors, or (b) smoked fish, which is sold in local markets or to merchants who take it to other markets once it is processed; such processing is usually done by women using traditional methods.

Role as fabrication of fishing gear and baskets

The manufacture of fishing nets, fish traps and baskets for fresh fish transportation can be taken up by women as a cottage industry. A study conducted by Radheyshyam et al. (1988) in Orissa showed that, once trained, women could earn more from net fabrication than from agricultural labour. Women would also definitely benefit from the manufacture of large baskets for packing fresh fish with ice, as they are in great demand in all important fish production centers.

Role in preparation of ready to use fish products

With increased production of fish through aquaculture, it will perhaps soon become necessary to prepare ready-to-use fish products in order to protect the interests of the primary producer as well as to cater to the requirements of the urban consumer. The rapid pace of urbanization is also likely to increase the demand for fish products over the years, especially among upper and middle income groups. Similarly, preparations such as mildly fried and fish products should find a ready market in urban areas. Rural women can be suitably trained and employed in the preparation of such products. Certain species like silver carp and grass carp which do not fetch a good price when sold fresh, can be suitably processed and marketed in the value added form so as to increase the net returns from aquaculture.

Role of Women in Aquaculture

A culture fishery is a widely growing area providing huge labour-days to the fisher folk. Women are increasingly independent and devoid men's involvement in the collection of wild seeds, segregation and stocking, construction and maintenance of ponds, feeding and harvesting in Kashmir. In view of the expansion of diversified aquaculture practices utilizing more of the potential water bodies, women can be largely absorbed into the sector. In the East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh (Purushan, 1995), women get employment in shrimp farms for 4 to 5 months in a year for activities like pond construction, seed collection and segregation, de-weeding of pond and hand picking of shrimp during harvest. Similarly women constitute about 40 per cent of the labour force involved in shrimp farm activities in Tamilnadu (Gopalakrishnan, 1996). Some of the small-scale coastal aquaculture technologies tested and proved as economically viable and could be adopted in a commercial scale are Backyard hatchery technology for seed production of white shrimp *Penaeus indicus*, Scientific shrimp culture practices, Mud crab culture and fattening technology. Seed production technology of pearl spot, different finfish culture practices, poly culture of sesbass *Lates calcarifer* and Tilapia, Mussel culture technology, pearl culture technology, edible Oyster culture technology, ornamental fish culture practices and Carp culture practices.

Suggestions

- The series of complex cultural, social, traditional, economic and legal constraints should be solved in such a way that this community could get its status in every respect.
- Cast Bias is to be eradicated among the community.

- Health facilities and health education is needed.
- Fisherwomen need to be given training in professional skills and knowledge.
- Fisherwomen should be given projects with special emphasis on fisheries which could be started to develop their skill, knowledge, habits and attitude towards adoption of new and economically viable technologies.
- Government should develop schemes for providing loans and leases in easier way.
- Co-operatives and their role is to be introduced in the community.
- Self-help groups to be introduced in the community.
- Marketing channels and standard of fish market is to be developed.
- Government should emphasize and general hygiene of fishing vessels, landing sites, auction halls, utensils and gears used by fisherwomen, education regarding all is needed.
- Short course training for fifteen days at block level should be imparted on the different programs.
- Issuing of license to the fisherwomen should be easy process.
- During off season the community should be provided alternate employment opportunity.
- Credit is an important input required by fisherwomen for consumption and production purpose.
- It plays a crucial role in their livelihood and offers the opportunity of channeling their creativity into income generating activities.
- To increase the income of the fisherwomen and thereby raise their standard of living, 50% subsidy should be given to the fisherwomen or buying crafts and gears.

References

- Annual Report. (2012). *Department of Fisheries, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Survey Division, Assistant Director Office, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir.*
- Bisoyi, T. K. (2009). *Women in fishery* (pp. 195, 202–209). Mohit Publications.
- Gopalkrishna. (1996). Role of women in Indian shrimp farming. *NAGA, The ICLARM Quarterly*, 19(4), 16–18.
- Habib, H. (2024). The pattern of livelihood: A study of fishing community living along Wular Lake, Jammu and Kashmir. *Antrocom: Journal of Anthropology*, 20(1), 115–126.
- Malik, R. (2022). Occupational and health profile of fisherwomen: A study in two districts of Kashmir Valley. *CAB Reviews*, 17(25), 1–9.
- Purushan. (1995). Vital role of fisher women in Kerala's agriculture. *Fishing Chimes*, 15(2), 13–14.
- Radheyshyam, et al. (1988). Net weaving technology for rural women folk. *Fishing Chimes*, 12(9), 37–49.
- Siddiqui, S., Afshan, H., Hashmi, S., & Srivastava, A. (2024). Value addition of fish in Jammu and Kashmir: A review. *Journal of Aquaculture*, 33(1), 69–78.
-