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On the move

Gender, migration and wellbeing in four fishing communities in Sri Lanka

Country Monograph

Nireka Weeratunge, Ramani Gunatilaka, Nadine Vanniasinkam, Mohamed Faslan, Dilanthi Koralagama, Nirmi Vitarana

On the move

January 2021

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Acknowledgments

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1. Introduction

A monsoonal weather pattern, which constrains fishing either along the west or east coast during part of the year, has induced fishing communities in Sri Lanka to practice seasonal coast-to-coast migration. Migration has been an adaptive livelihood strategy to maximise returns from marine resources surrounding the coastal belt of the island. The bulk of this migration has been from the west coast to the east and northeast coasts during the Southwest monsoon. In the past, entire households, including women and children migrated. However, with increased awareness of the importance of schooling, more children and wives are now left behind at home. Other shorter, more localised migrations, involving mostly male fishers, take place in pursuit of specific catch species along the coasts. Additionally, both male and female members of fishing communities migrate to engage in other livelihoods during the off-season from fishing, and for overseas employment as well, during the last three decades. The need for coast-to-coast migration has decreased somewhat due to technological development in fisheries from the 1950s onward, enabling fishers to fish more successfully during the monsoon season. However richer fish resources on the east and northeast coasts have motivated fishers from the west coast to maintain their migration patterns.

The main migration pathway from the west coast to the east/northeast coasts has been negatively affected by almost three decades of civil war, with both economic and social consequences. Households in both districts were affected by the violence and trauma of ethnic conflict and the 2004 tsunami, which severely hampered fishing activities, alongside the loss of family members, livelihood assets and capabilities. Conflicts among local and migrant fishers over resources on the east/northeast coasts linger in Sri Lanka, intensified by post-war ethnic configurations. Fishing restrictions on Sri Lankan fishers, who were prevented access to fish resources in Sri Lankan waters during the war, resulted in the rapid development of an Indian trawler industry, which captured an opportunity to poach off the coast of Sri Lanka during that period. Post-war conflicts between Indian trawler fishers and small-scale Sri Lankan fishers have compounded issues affecting fisher livelihoods, especially in the north and northwest coasts.

The purpose of our three-year study, as the Sri Lankan component of a larger three-country study (which also included Cambodia and South India) on “Migration

and collectives/networks as pathways out of poverty: Gendered vulnerabilities and capabilities amongst poor fishing communities in Asia" was to gain a better understanding of internal seasonal migration between two coasts, in the context of changing internal and external migration patterns, to explore how migration is experienced by women and men, assess gendered capabilities and vulnerabilities, costs and benefits, and the role of social networks/collective action in enabling or disabling migration. The analysis seeks to establish whether migration helps or hinders fishing households to move out of poverty in two districts[1] (Puttalam and Trincomalee) in Sri Lanka. Puttalam, on the west coast, and Trincomalee, on the east coast, have historically been sending and receiving districts, respectively, of coast-to-coast fisher migrations. As this migration process involves similar castes and/or different ethnic groups in migrant and host communities, social relations and identities are central to this inquiry.

This study sought to address two knowledge gaps in social research in Sri Lanka: internal labour migration, especially within the fisheries sector, and a gendered understanding of migration within the fisheries sector, which is generally regarded as a predominantly male sphere of economic activity. Sri Lanka has an extensive literature (Warnasuriya and Gamage 2014)[2] on external labour migration, which began in the 1970s, primarily to the Middle East (Arunatilleke 2014). There is also an emerging literature (Wayland 2004; Reeves 2013; Thurairajah 2017) on the relatively large Sri Lankan diaspora, which settled in North America, Europe and Australia, as a consequence of three decades of war. However, there is a paucity of work on internal rural-to-rural seasonal migration for employment and livelihood activities within Sri Lanka, with the few available studies focusing on agriculture (Kearney and Miller 1987; Vansemb 1995). Fisheries research has concentrated on economic and biological issues related to fisheries production and the status of the fish resources on the one hand, and governance issues related to management of fisheries, use of craft and fishing gear, and conflicts between Sri Lankan and Indian fishers, on the other. However, socio-cultural

1 Puttalam and Trincomalee are two administrative districts in Sri Lanka. However, these make up three "fisheries districts", as Puttalam and Chilaw are managed under two different fisheries district offices, while Trincomalee remains one district for both general administrative and fisheries purposes.

2 Warnasuriya and Gamage (2014) Labour Migration in Sri Lanka: Select Annotated Bibliography includes 156 references, almost entirely on international migration, covering the topics of domestic migration control, employment, remittances and economic impacts, recruitment, reintegration, social costs and impacts, social protection, and welfare and protection.

issues around fisheries livelihoods and mobility have been less researched, and the gendered nature of livelihoods and gender relations within fishing communities have received even less attention, with a few exceptions (Lokuge 2017; Siriwardena-Zoysa 2018). While addressing knowledge gaps in Sri Lanka, this research also contributes empirically to a gendered analysis of migration in fishing communities globally.

As part of the overall three-country study, this monograph provides a qualitative and quantitative analysis based on fieldwork in four fishing communities on the west and east coasts of Sri Lanka. It uses data from a household survey, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs,) preliminary livelihood profiling, community histories and migration histories, and in-depth open-ended household interviews which focused on separate life narratives and social network maps of women and men, as well as key informant interviews and field observations. The analysis outlines the livelihood system and strategies, social relations including gender norms, roles and practices, migration patterns and experiences, poverty and inequality, vulnerabilities and risks in pursuing livelihoods, social wellbeing, identities and aspirations among women, men and youth in four study villages.

2. The context

2.1 The fisheries economy

The significance of fishing and fish in the economy, society and culture of Sri Lanka, an island surrounded by the Indian Ocean, might seem self-evident. However, the contribution of fisheries to the country's GDP[3] was very low at 1.3% in 2016 and its contribution in terms of direct employment (active fishers) is also low with 3.3% of all employment nationally[4]. The contribution to national employment rose to 7%, estimated around 580,000 in 2016, when direct and indirect employment in fisheries were combined (MFARD 2018). In terms of its share within the agricultural sector, fisheries contributed to 12.8 % of agricultural GDP[5] and 9.2% of agricultural sector employment[6]. Considering the population of fishing households and allied industries, altogether around 2.7 million people were estimated to be linked to "fishing and related livelihoods" in 2016 (MFARD 2018). This would account for around 12% of Sri Lanka's total population.

Sri Lanka's fish exports by volume comprised a mere 5% of its production, while imported fish amounted to around 14.7% of its total catch in 2014. As fish exports are of higher value than fish imports, which mainly consist of canned and dry fish, the trade balance has remained positive for Sri Lanka. However, the contribution of fish exports to the total value of exports was only around 2.4% in 2014 (MFARD 2014).

With regards to fish consumption, the contribution of fish to the nutrition of Sri Lankans, especially to animal protein intake, was relatively high at 53.1% in 2014 (MFARD 2018). Moreover, per capita consumption of fish increased by around 44% from 1995-96 to 43.4g per day by 2016, with the increase coming from fresh fish, while the consumption of dry fish has remained the same. However, this is below the recommended per capita level of 60g per day (MFARD 2013). The contribution of fish to the food basket also increased from 6.6% to 9.2% during the same period.

3 At constant prices, base year 2010; Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development (2018) Annual Report: Fisheries Statistics 2017. MFARD, Colombo, Sri Lanka

4 Calculated using statistics provided in Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development (2018) Annual Report: Fisheries Statistics 2017. MFARD, Colombo, Sri Lanka and Department of Census and Statistics (2015) Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey Annual Report - 2014. DCS, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

5 At constant prices, base year 2002; Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development (2015) Annual Report: Fisheries Statistics 2015. MFARD, Colombo, Sri Lanka

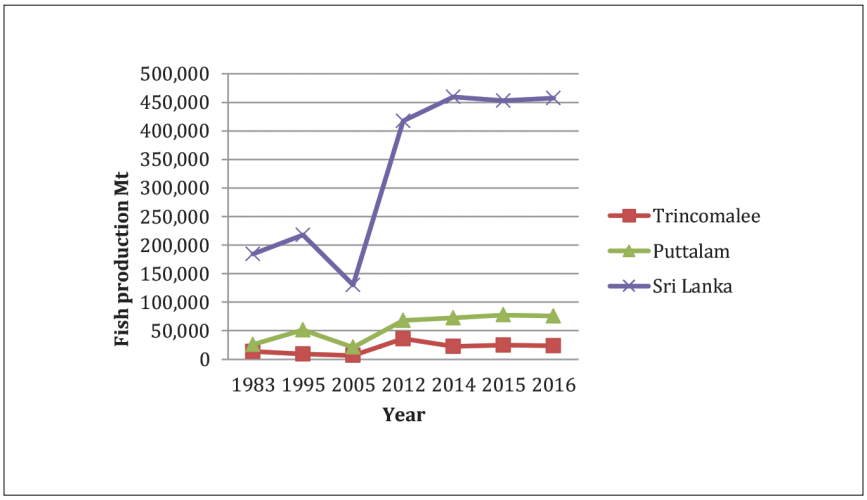
6 Calculated using statistics provided in Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development (2015) Annual Report: Fisheries Statistics 2015. MFARD, Colombo, Sri Lanka and Department of Census and Statistics (2015) Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey Annual Report - 2014. DCS, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Marine fish production

While the importance of inland fisheries and aquaculture has been growing, marine fisheries are predominant, contributing 86.1% to Sri Lanka's fish production in 2016 (MFARD 2018). The marine fish catch has grown markedly since the pre-war years, more than two-fold between 1983 and 2014, after plummeting in 2005 due to the tsunami (see Figure 2.1). This continuous increase in production was despite the depletion of marine resources that has been reported worldwide, including in the coastal waters around Sri Lanka by researchers. While marine fish production decreased substantially in the Northern and Eastern regions during the war, this trend reversed after its end.

However, marine fisheries production reached a peak in 2014 in Sri Lanka as a whole, plateauing at 456,990 MT in 2016 (MFARD 2018). The decrease came from coastal fisheries, while offshore fishing increased slightly. The most recent stock assessment of marine resources off the coastal waters of the island revealed a sharp reduction to a fifth of fish resources available in 1978/80 (NARA 2019).

Figure 2.1 Marine fish production Puttalam and Trincomalee districts in relation to total domestic production in Sri Lanka, 1983-2016

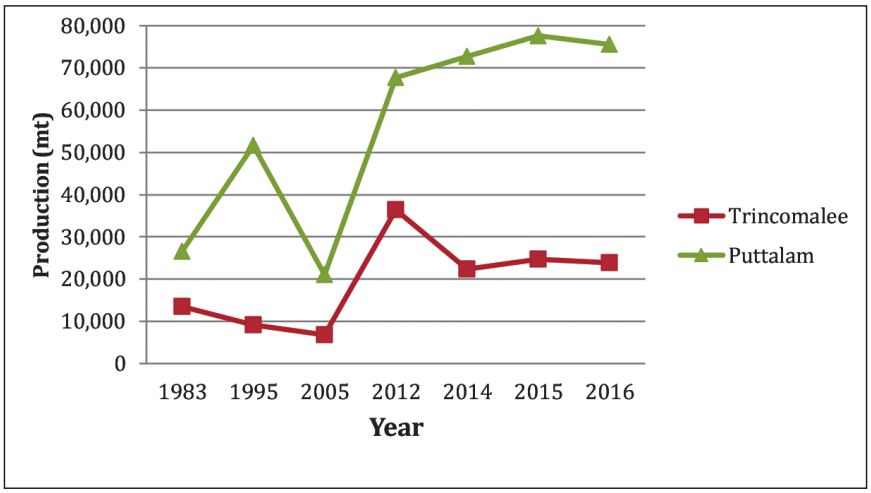


Sources: Based on data from MFARD 2015, Annual Report: Fisheries Statistics 2015; MFARD 2018, Fisheries Statistics 2017.

In terms of our study districts, Puttalam is the largest fish-producing district in Sri Lanka, bringing in 16.2% of the total national fish catch, while Tricomalee district contributes to

5.7% of the catch. Marine fish production has risen by 2.9 times in Puttalam, compared to 1.8 times in Trincomalee within the 1983-2016 period (see Figure 2.2). The significant drop in production in both districts in 2005, as elsewhere in Sri Lanka, was due to the tsunami of 2004. However, marine fish production reached a peak in Trincomalee district in 2012 and has been declining since then, while production appears to have peaked in Puttalam district in 2015 with a decline in 2016. Puttalam district produced thrice as much fish as Trincomale district in 2016.

Figure 2.2: Marine fish production in Puttalam and Trincomalee districts, 1983-2016



Sources: Based on data from MFARD 2015, Annual Report: Fisheries Statistics 2015; MFARD 2018, Fisheries Statistics 2017.

Fishing craft and gear

Around 90% of Sri Lanka's fishing fleet consists of small-scale/artisanal fishing craft, which include fibre-reinforced plastic boats with outboard motor (OFRP), motorised traditional canoes (MTRB) and non-motorised traditional canoes (NTRB) (MFARD 2018). These small-scale fishers, engaged in coastal fishing, brought in around 60% of the marine catch in Sri Lanka in 2016 (MFARD 2018). There has been a gradual shift away from traditional craft (canoes and rafts) and beach seine fishing into mechanised fishing craft since the onset of the so-called 'Blue Revolution' in the 1950s (Amerasinghe 1998). The Blue Revolution resulted in the mechanisation of existing traditional craft by

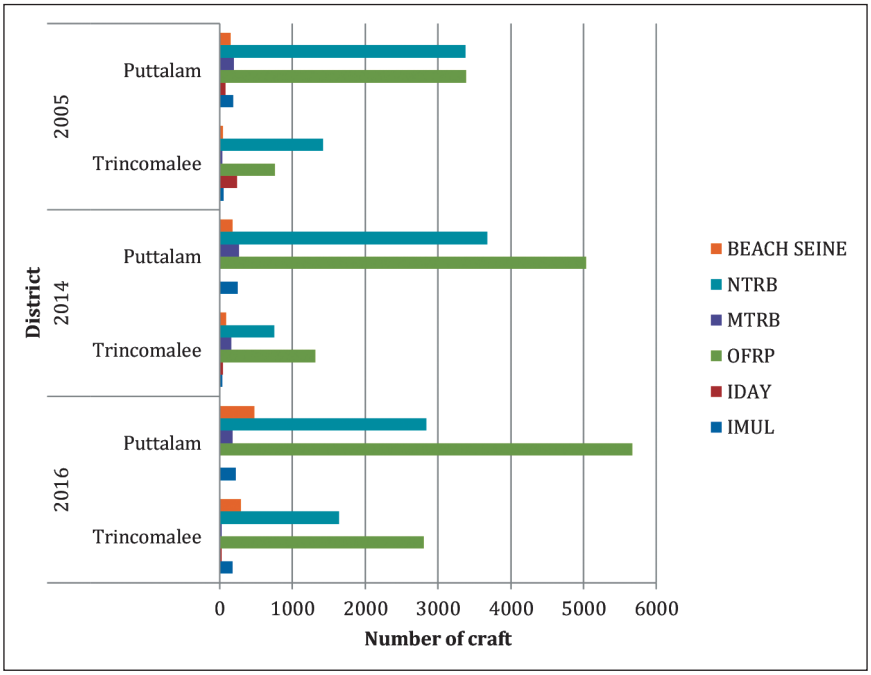
adding engines, as well as the introduction of new motorised fibre-glass boats and new fishing gear and techniques, such as nylon nets. It also changed processing, marketing and transport of fish by promoting the widespread use of ice and insulation. Thus, the Blue Revolution brought about large-scale and long-lasting transformations in economic and social relations in Sri Lanka's fisheries. However, while the proportion of modern craft and gear in fisheries and their share of production have increased since the 1950s, the new technology has not entirely displaced either traditional craft, such as canoes and rafts, or traditional gear, such as beach seine nets.

Since the tsunami of 2004, Sri Lanka's marine fleet almost doubled by 2014 (MFARD 2015). However, a slight decline in fleet accompanied the decline in fish production nationally and in the study districts between 2014 and 2016 (see Table 2.2 in Appendix 1). By 2016, 48% of Sri Lanka's fishing fleet comprised small-scale fibre-reinforced plastic boats with outboard motors (OFRP) and 35% comprised non-motorised traditional canoes (NTRB) (MFARD 2018). While both Puttalam (61%) and Trincomalee (56%) had higher proportions of OFRP boats than at national level (MFARD 2018), Puttalam had twice the OFRPs and 1.7 times more NTRBs than Trincomalee in 2016. This was despite a noteworthy increase in the Trincomalee fleet between 2014- 2016, when OFRP boats doubled in Trincomalee district, while the increase was much smaller in Puttalam district. This trend appears to be the result of a post-war rise in fishing activitities on the East coast, which is also confirmed by an increase in commercial multi-day boats. Multi-day boats (IMUL), which made up 8% of the the country's marine fleet in 2016, had increased 3.3-fold nationally between 2005-2014 but have also declined between 2014-2016. However, while this decrease is observed in the Puttalam district, IMULs have increased 4.7-fold in Trincomalee district between 2014-2016.

Beach seines have increased 3.2-fold in Sri Lanka between 2005-2016, with these increasing trends also observed in both study districts. In Trincomalee, beach seines increased 7.3-fold between 2005-2016, while in Puttalam they increased by over three times, close to the national trend. These two districts account for the highest proportion of beach seines within the country (MFARD 2018). While beach seines only account for 3.8% of the marine fleet in 2016, their catch sizes are larger than with many other gear. Thus, a quarter of the fish catch in Trincomalee district and over a third in Puttalam

fisheries district are made up of small fish typically caught in beach seines (MFARD 2015). Beach seine fishing was a mainstay of local and migratory fisheries in both districts in the past.

Figure 2.3: The fishing fleet in Puttalam and Trincomalee districts



Sources: Based on data from MFARD 2015, Annual Report: Fisheries Statistics 2015; MFARD 2018, *Fisheries Statistics 2017.*

In 1985 a mere 1.7% of the total marine catch was from offshore fishing by IMULs. By 2013, 40% of production came from offshore fisheries and it has remained so up to 2016 (MFARD 2018). Thus, coastal fishing by small-scale fishers continues to bring in the bulk (60%) of the catch in Sri Lanka.

Traditional craft mostly use gillnets, trammel nets and cast nets. OFRP craft generally use gillnets and long lines, and lately, ring/purse seines. Larger mechanised craft use gillnets, long lines, single hook and multi hook trolling and purse seines. Several fishing methods, such as push nets, moxi nets, gillnet and trammels over coral reefs and rocks, monofilament gill nets of small mesh sizes and dynamite, are not permitted in Sri Lanka under the Fisheries Act of 1996 (MFARD 2016). The Fisheries Department has imposed

a ban on monofilament nets below 1½ inch mesh sizes since early 2016; there are also area specific regulations on fishing gear, especially purse seines, dependent on the status of the fishery.

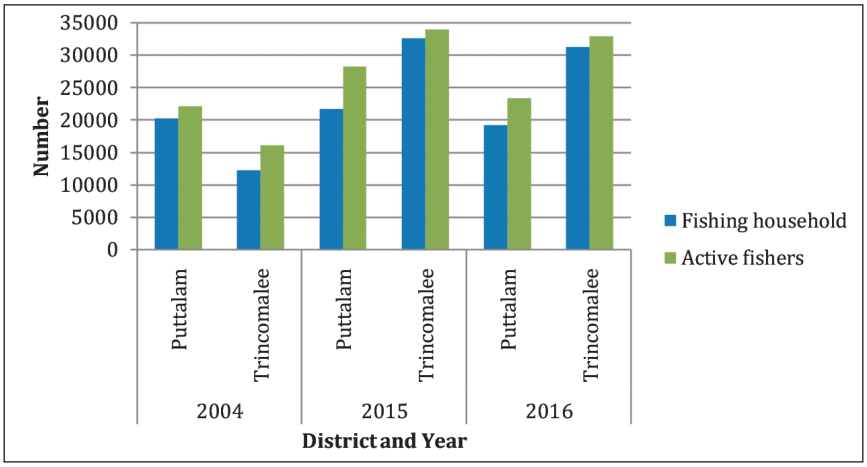
Marine fishing population, households and fisheries employment

Both active marine fishers and fishing households increased by over 40% nationally between 2004-2016. However, the slight decline in fisheries production and fleet size between 2015-2016 was also reflected in numbers of fishers and households. Active marine fishers in Sri Lanka reached a peak of 221,560 in 2015, decreasing to 218,830 in 2016 (MFARD 2018). Marine fishing households also peaked at 190,960 in 2015, declining to 188,690 in 2016 (MFARD 2018). However, despite the increase of marine fishers in the 2004-2015 period and the decline in 2016, the number of marine fishers per household has remained consistent at 1.2 nationally since 1982.

Active marine fishers had increased 2.1-fold and fishing households 2.7 fold in Trincomalee district between 2004-2015, before the slight decline in 2016 (see Figure 2.4). During the same period, active marine fishers and fishing households had increased at much lower rates (1.3-fold and 1.1-fold respectively) in the Puttalam district, before declining even further in 2016. Trincomalee district had 16.6% and Puttalam district 10.2% of marine fishing households in the country in 2016. The rise in fishing households is likely to have had an impact on the pressure on marine resources in both districts, but especially in Trincomalee.

The marked increase in marine fishing households in Trincomalee district might be due to the return of displaced communities from northern districts and India, new migrants moving in from other districts and/or new people moving into fisheries. The population per fishing household was somewhat larger at 4.9 in Puttalam, in contrast to 3.5 in Trincomalee district in 2016. The ratio of marine fisher per household is also marginally higher in Puttalam district, relative to that of Trincomalee district.

Figure 2.4: Fishing households and active fishers in Puttalam and Trincomalee districts, 2004-2016



Sources: Based on data from NARA 2008, Sri Lanka Fisheries Yearbook 2007; MFARD 2018, Fisheries Statistics 2017.

Overall, Puttalam district produces three times the catch of Trincomalee district, with a fleet twice as large, and with 30% less fishers than Trincomalee district. However, the recent stock assessment of marine resources (NARA 2019) indicated higher depletion of fish on the northwestern coast than in the eastern coast. Thus, fishers from Puttalam are migrating from a technology rich but more overfished area, with a smaller fishing population, to a relatively technology poor but less overfished area with a larger fishing population.

Fisheries cooperative societies

There is considerable discussion on the role of fisheries cooperative societies in fishing communities in the fisheries literature of Sri Lanka. There are examples of both well-functioning cooperative societies, which manage the local fishery effectively and provide a range of benefits to members (Amarasinghe 2006; Bavinck 2015), as well as societies where corruption and nepotism have led to dysfunctionality and/or loss of legitimacy with members. For example in 2006, 47% of all societies were enumerated as inactive (NARA 2006). An initiative by the Department of Fisheries to establish a parallel local institution, landing site committees in 2002, an attempt that was unsuccessful, is also considered to have contributed to the demise of some fisheries cooperatives (Amarasinghe 2006).

Thus, only a little over a third of active fishers were members of these cooperative societies in Sri Lanka in 2016 (see Table 2.4 in Appendix 1). Puttalam district was consistent with this national pattern, while membership in fisheries cooperative societies was considerably lower at 15.9% in Trincomalee district in 2016. It appears that membership has decreased within the last decade (see footnote 7). Approximately a fifth of the membership of fisheries cooperative societies were female both nationally, as well as in the study districts in 2004, for which data are available.

2.2 Socio-cultural and political change

Historically, fishing in Sri Lanka, as in South India (Hapke and Ayyankeril 2004), has been predominantly a caste occupation. The last study that looked at caste composition within fisheries (Munasinghe 1985)[7] found that almost 80% of fishers belonged to the Sinhalese *karava* or Tamil *karaiyar* castes, almost 46% were Catholics and 54% were Sinhalese. Tamils comprised 36% (both Hindus and Catholics) and Muslims and Malays 10% of fishers at that time. While these characteristics might have changed somewhat with the acquisition of multi-day boats by entrepreneurs of other social groups, most fishers who go out to sea remain from castes customarily associated with fishing. Historical and ethnographic evidence suggest that the *karava/kariayar* belonged to the same South Indian fishing caste, which immigrated to the island during the medieval period (Ryan 1953, Raghavan 1961; Roberts 1982, Sivasubramaniam 2009). Members of the caste who settled in the Tamil-speaking northern and eastern coastal belt remained Tamil-speaking and Hindu. Members who settled in the southern and south-western coastal areas became Sinhala-speaking and adopted Buddhism. Those who stayed on the west coast (between the towns of Negombo and Puttalam), which seemed to have been the entry point and hub to waves of immigration from South India, became bi-lingual and, with the arrival of the Portuguese in 1505, many converted to Catholicism or already arrived as converted Catholics (Perniola 1989)[8]. Also on the west coast are members of

7 This is based on data from the Marga study (1980) which used a stratified sample of 1230, covering 21 fishing villages in the country, representative of marine, lagoon and inland fishing, types of technology types (craft and gear), ownership of fishing craft (owners and crew) and types of traders. The ethnic composition of fishers in this 1980 study is very close to the figures indicated in the Census of 1921 (Sivasubramaniam 2009: 207).

8 It is not clear that those fishing communities which practiced the Roman Catholic faith during the Portuguese period, continued to do so during the Dutch period due to the persecution of Catholics by the Dutch. While some Negombo Catholic groups are reported to have escaped persecution by moving to areas north of Chilaw which were under the Kandyan Kingdom, as well as other coastal and interior areas

another caste, the *paravar*[9], also of South Indian origin, who were among the earliest converts to Catholicism in the Portuguese period (Perniola 1989) and engaged in fishing. A third caste, the *mukkuvar* are also found in pockets along the west coast, as well as in larger numbers on the east (McGilvray 1982) and north coasts (Ryan 1953). Members of this caste are generally Hindus or Catholics but the existence of *mukkuvar* communities who converted to Islam are also recorded on the west coast (Ryan 1953).

Even though many fishing households on the west coast retained a hybrid identity[10] well into the 20th century, pre-independence assimilation processes, as well as the subsequent ethnic conflict, resulted in many *karaiyar* on this coast choosing to be gradually absorbed into the Sinhala mainstream as *karava*, in an on-going integration process. It is members of this caste group, as well as the *paravar*, who constitute most of the migrants from the west to east/northeast coasts, where they settle seasonally in host fishing communities comprising Muslims or Tamils, mainly of *karaiyar* and *mukkuvar* castes.

The relationship between migrant fishers and host communities in Sri Lanka were long-standing and cordial from most oral accounts before the war began in 1983. While historical data on the migration process is scant, there are records of migrants from Negombo area to Mullaitivu, Trincomalee and Batticaloa in colonial Administration Reports from 1868 onwards (Stirrat 1972). There is mention in these reports of "jealousy" and occasional conflicts between migrant and local fishers sorted out by the relevant GA of the Eastern Province. Current migrants trace the migration to their parents and/or grandparents, while the mapping of fisher migrant routes by scholars exist from the late 1950s (Bartz 1959; Sivasubramaniam 2009). Migrants were of the same or similar castes (i.e. *karava*/*karaiyar*, *paravar*), spoke Tamil, the language of host communities on the east and northeast coasts, and interacted with local people while practicing a common

in the island (Sivasubramaniam 2009), it is possible that communities, which are Roman Catholic today on the west coast, were reconverted to Roman Catholicism in the British period, when persecution ceased, or were later converts or later migrants from South India.

9 This caste is also known as the Bharatha and constitutes a separate ethnic group in the Population Census since 2002.

10 Hybrid identity here is used to refer to an identity, which retains elements of at least two cultural groups, and where self /group identity do not necessarily coincide with the identity conferred on individuals or the group by external actors or groups. Hybridity can entail overlapping identities (especially due to migration), negotiation of identities, power relations and belonging to multiple life worlds at the same time. See: Smith and Leavy (2008).

livelihood. Some intermarried with local people and established kin relations, while others had a family on each coast. However, the war changed these relations drastically. Migration from the west coast declined with a good proportion of the younger generation of fishers not migrating and therefore not establishing relationships with fishing communities on the opposite coasts. Those who went sought favours from the armed forces to negotiate check points and fishing restrictions, losing the trust and goodwill of host fishing communities, who had to face deprivations and livelihood restrictions during the war. Many people from fishing communities on the north and east coasts were internally displaced or in refugee camps in India, so migrants did not have local communities with which to interact in some places. The general polarisation of ethnic identities and relations during the war, as well as perceived benefits from belonging to the majority ethnic community, resulted in the west coast fishers underplaying their previously fluid/hybrid identities and asserting a Sinhalese ethnic identity.

Thus, in the last years since the end of the war when migrants from the west coast have started returning or going for the first time to the east and northeast coastal communities in large numbers, conflicts have been observed between the two groups (Lokuge and Munas 2011). Host communities have a stronger sense of regionalism and ownership of their natural resources, while migrant communities assert their rights to these resources, based on customary migration patterns of their ancestors, and/or the rights of all Sri Lankans to live and work wherever they choose (Weeratunge et al. 2016). The larger numbers are a matter of contention. There is resource competition between migrants using more sophisticated fishing technologies and local fishers who use methods which require less capital outlay. Migrants or local fishers accuse one another of using illegal fishing methods, endangering the sustainability of the resource base. Thus, there exists a perception of overcrowding and resource conflict, with a tendency towards it being regionalised and/or ethnicised. Tourism and other development promoted by the state further exacerbate this situation, leading to competition for land between developers and fishers, who need beach access and space for *wadi* (fishing camps) and landing sites.

Protests and demonstrations have taken place on the east coast (Trincomalee district) against migrant fishers, occasionally leading to violence, including the burning of fishing camps, boats and gear (The Island 2015). There are decrees from the district fisheries

department in Trincomalee to restrict the number of boats and canoes from elsewhere, and a stipulation that migrants must work on boats of local owners or beach seine license holders. In Mullaitivu district, a restriction on new migrants stipulates that only migrants who have previously migrated are permitted to return to fishing communities there (MFARD 2016). There has also been conflict between Tamil fishers in Mullaitivu district and some Sinhalese migrants, originating from the west coast, attempting to resettle permanently in these north eastern coastal villages (Indian Express 2016). Fishers in Mullaitivu were also engaged in conflicts with Muslim fishers in Trincomalee district (Pulmoddai) over use of motorised boats and illegal nets in the Kokkilai lagoon, which is shared by fishing communities from both districts.

Thus, seasonal migration might not only create new conflicts between migrants and host communities, but can also exacerbate on-going conflicts among local communities, already expressed in ethnic terms. Even those currently perceived as overcrowding and/or resource conflicts, can very easily be ethnicised for political purposes. Migration from the west coast to east, as well as host-migrant relations, is a matter of substantial debate and frustration for fishing communities in both districts. While all those in the study sites do not articulate the current conflict in ethnic terms, it is expressed in regional terms of 'north' and 'south', although the communities concerned are located geographically in the east/northeast and west respectively. The fact that migrant fishers from some communities are Tamil Hindus of the same caste groups (*karaiyar*) or others are bilingual Sinhala-Tamil Catholics of the same caste group (*karaiyar*/*karava*) does not appear to confer any advantages on them vis-à-vis Tamil and Muslim host communities, who consider all migrants as 'southern' fishers and outsiders. There are several discourses on the issue of migrant fishers within the study sites and each community considers itself as an aggrieved party to this conflict. This debate is mainly framed around a 'right to a tradition of migration' in the Puttalam district study sites and a 'right to one's own local fish resources' in the Trincomalee district study sites.

Even though representatives of fisheries societies in all study sites have attempted to negotiate issues around migration among one another, they do not feel that this had been successful, instead leading to demonstrations and counter-demonstrations in both districts. Residents of all study sites have participated in these protests – in Trincomalee district, both Tamil and Muslim communities have united to stop 'southern' migrant

fishers coming to 'northern' fishing villages while in Puttalam district, both Sinhalese and Tamil communities have united to stop the transport and sale of fish from the 'north' in Colombo market if 'northern' fishers were to prevent 'southern' migrants from coming to the 'north'. Currently fisher representatives perceive that they are unable to solve issues around migration through discussion among themselves and expect the government to intervene on the matter. Thus, both caste and ethnic identities have been overlaid by a new construction of a regional identity as 'from the north' and 'from the south'.

The findings of the study elaborate on perceptions of members of fishing households on the migration process and day-to-day interactions among individuals and groups from migrant and host communities, as they construct identities, negotiate livelihoods and social relations, and explore the extent to which their perceptions and actions exacerbate or resolve conflicts.

3. Methodology

3.1 Conceptual Approach

There is a vast global literature on migration, with the theory of push-pull factors (Ravenstein 1885), which postulates that migrants move from unfavourable to favourable locations due to push factors in the former and pull factors in the latter, remaining the dominant approach. An array of economic, political, environmental, social and personal factors, differentiated into 'internal' and 'external' have been elaborated to explain the migrations of groups and individuals. Economic theory explains migration as arising from differentials in earning opportunities, in turn created by differences in the demand and supply of labour in segmented labour markets (Todaro 1969; Harris and Todaro 1970). In such markets, workers need to move for certain types of work (Piore 1979). In contrast, political economic/world systems approaches focus on the relations of production and conceptualise migration as a by-product of capitalist production and expansion (Wallerstein 1974; Sassen 1988).

Later approaches to migration have focused on individual decision-making (Sjaastad 1962), household decision-making (Harbison 1981; Stark 1991), the role of social networks and institutions (Massey 1990; Guilomoto and Sandron 2001) and cultures of migration (Cohen and Sirkeci (2011). As Hagen-Zanker (2008) has argued, these different perspectives are not necessarily contradictory but can be combined within a framework encompassing micro, meso and macro-level factors. Migration of small-scale fishers or fishing communities globally has also been explained in terms of resource scarcity and population pressure driving fishers to areas of more resources and less fishers (Jorion 1988; Cripps 2009) on one hand, and the relevance of an opportunity-driven combination of ecological, socio-economic and institutional factors (Haakonsen 1991; Jul-Larsen 1994; Overa 2001; Marquette et al. 2002; Kraan 2009) on the other. Gender approaches to migration have looked at the different costs and benefits of migration to women and men, as well as how they might experience this process differently (Asis 2004; Gamburd 2000, 2005; Waxler-Morrison 2004; Abeyasekere 2010; Kabeer 2007; Piper 2007; Rao 2009).

A central question in this study is the relevance of social networks/collectives in migration. Social relations were looked at within an institutional framework, which includes four domains – family/kinship, community, market and the state (Kabeer 1999a). Gender relations fall within these broader social relations and, "like all social relations, are constituted through the rules, norms and practices by which resources are allocated, tasks and responsibilities are assigned, value is given and power is mobilized" (Kabeer 1999a, p. 12). Social networks, as patterns of linkages and relationships among individuals within households, were also explored across these four domains – family, community, market and the state. The role of social capital or networks, especially that of bridging and linking ties in fisheries governance, has been discussed widely in the global literature (Grafton 2005; Sekhar 2007; Bodin and Krona 2009; Marin et al. 2012; Holland et al. 2013; Nenadovic and Epstein 2016). The relationship between social networks and migration (Overå 2001; Kraan 2009) has also been addressed in the fisheries literature but not as extensively. Social networks, as defined here, are close to the concept of 'social capital', as defined by Bourdieu (1985) – i.e. social resources that enable individuals to navigate their position within a hierarchical social structure and provide potential benefits relative to their inclusion in such networks. Thus, the strength or weakness of social capital entails social inclusion or exclusion respectively. However, the concept of social networks has been preferred in this analysis, due to the narrower, functionalist and utilitarian interpretation of social capital in the work of Coleman (1988) and Putnam (2000), and a reluctance to reduce an intricate web of social relations into an economistic notion of 'capital'. While remaining critical of Putnam's approach to social capital, we adopt his typology of bonding (horizontal), bridging (vertical) and linking (vertical) ties, as defined by Nenadovic and Epstein (2016), as this proved useful to understand the strength and weaknesses of social networks in supporting or constraining migration as a livelihood strategy.

The nature and extent of poverty in small-scale fishing communities has been a central debate in the fisheries literature. A long-standing assumption among a group of fisheries scholars and development organisations (Panayotou 1982; Bailey et al. 1986; World Bank 1992; Cunningham 1993; FAO 2010) is that poverty is widespread in small-scale fisheries or that fishers are among 'the poorest of the poor'. This perspective has been challenged by several scholars (Béné 2003; Thorpe et al. 2007; Béné and Friend

2011, Bavinck 2014), who have emphasised access and control over resources, rather than availability as being instrumental in determining poverty in fishing communities. A framework encompassing marginalisation and vulnerability together with a multi-dimensional approach to poverty (Allison and Horemons 2006; Béné and Friend 2011) is considered as more relevant to assess poverty in fishing communities.

In looking at the vulnerability of fishing households to short-term and long-term risks, we also draw upon the work of Wisner et al. (2004) who emphasised the importance of social, political and economic factors, as much as environmental factors. Arguing for the centrality of the concept of vulnerability in responding to hazards and disaster, they focus on the means of people to access resources and how these shape their responses.

The conceptual approach adopted here builds upon these theoretical perspectives, focusing on the motivations of members of household to migrate within a social/ institutional context. It is centred on social wellbeing (Gough and McGregor 2007, McGregor 2008, White 2008). The social wellbeing perspective emerged as a response to a critique of poverty as a deficit-centered understanding of the reality of lives of people in developing countries, especially by the dominant monetary approach to poverty (Lipton 1988, Ravallion 1998). Based on the work conducted initially by the Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD) Group at the University of Bath, social wellbeing is defined as:

> "*A state of being with others, where human needs are met, where one can act meaningfully to pursue one's goals, and where one enjoys a satisfactory quality of life*" (McGregor 2008: 1).

This approach has been referred to as three-dimensional (or 3D) wellbeing, systematically incorporating the three aspects of material, relational and subjective wellbeing (Camfield 2006; Gough and McGregor 2007). The social wellbeing approach is used as an analytical lens to determine the material (economic and ecological), relational (social and institutional) and subjective dimensions of livelihood strategies and outcomes, focusing on both monetary and non-monetary effects of migration on wellbeing of women and men in fishing households. In this three dimensional elaboration of social wellbeing, "material" concerns encompass practical welfare

and standards of living (for example, income, wealth, assets, environmental quality, physical health and livelihood concerns among others); "relational" aspects include relations of love and care, networks of support and obligation, social, political and cultural identities, including relations with the state and formal structures, which shape the scope for personal action and influence in the community; and "subjective" elements span notions of self, individual and shared hopes, fears, and aspirations, expressed levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, trust and confidence among others (White 2008: 11). It contrasts with previous economic and social welfare approaches in the importance given to the subjective dimension – i.e. human agency in its ability to influence outcomes. A main assumption is that individuals within households are engaged in the pursuit of wellbeing through their livelihood choices, and although circumscribed within an institutional context, are not merely victims of a larger system.

There has been extensive use of the social wellbeing approach to understand small-scale fisheries in the last years (Coulthard et al. 2011; Weeratunge et al. 2014; Jentoft and Chuenpagdee 2018; Johnson et al. 2018). The importance of perspectives on fairness and inequality as components of wellbeing of fishers and thereby fisheries governance has been highlighted by Fabinyi (2012, 2015). Bavinck et al. (2018) have argued that addressing social struggle and distributional justice might be a precondition for achieving sustainable human-nature relations in fisheries, given the current conditions of inshore fisheries, market relations and government interventions.

The social wellbeing approach complements Kabeer's (1999b) understanding of the agency of women expressed in decision-making, as critical to achieving equality in wellbeing outcomes, and the ways in which agency is exercised vis-à-vis different institutions (e.g. the domains of family/kin, community, market and state). The three dimensions of the social wellbeing approach are used flexibly here as an analytical lens to assess the motivations underlying household decision-making and agency being exercised, as well as to assess wellbeing outcomes.

The analysis here is also informed by the tension between fishing as a 'way of making a living' (livelihood) and as a 'way of life' as conceptualised by Powers (2005), raising questions on identity in fishing communities. Using a feminist lens, Powers examines the way these two ways are played out in an inshore fishery and how these affect men and

women differently, mediated, enabled and constrained by class and gender positions and by maritime values. She points to the ethos of individualism and freedom with underlying notions of masculinity or male virility that shape the perceptions of those who practice fishing as a livelihood (as has also been discussed by Ram, 2008 and Pollnac et al., 2001), and questions whether the 'crisis of fish' brought about by depleting fisheries resources, has also brought about a 'crisis of masculinity' in fishing communities. While the identity of being a fisher is important to men, the question of what type of identity is more important to women, for example being a fisher or a fish trader, has been raised (Overa 1993; Mwaipopo-Ako 2001, Porter 2006). From the perspective of social wellbeing, fishing as a way of making a living or a livelihood refers primarily to the material dimension, while fishing as a way of life encompasses the relational and subjective dimensions. How these three dimensions motivate or impact women and men differently, can provide insights on the significance of fishing and related occupations as livelihoods or a way of life, or both, in communities engaged in fisheries. We thus hope to contribute to addressing a knowledge gap in the gendered understanding of livelihoods, migration and wellbeing in fishing communities. The invisibility of women in fishing communities and the need for a gendered analysis of roles, contributions, costs, benefits and identities in small-scale fisheries have been emphasised by scholars (Nadel-Klein and Davis 1988; Overa 1993; Hapke and Ayyankeril 2004; Bennet 2005; Neis et al. 2005; Porter 2006; Weeratunge et al. 2012; Kleiber et al. 2015).

In this study we depart from the customary focus on economic "push" and "pull" factors for migration and the emphasis on remittance flows, which relies primarily on quantitative data and methods of analysis. Instead, we address current knowledge gaps in understanding the causes, processes and experience of migration in fishing communities by assessing the gendered relations, networks, identities and decision-making processes, alongside resource constraints, adoption of new technologies, new market opportunities and the operation of networks and collectives, which facilitate or restrict migration (Rao and Mitra, 2013). Social and aspirational motivations for migration are explored alongside its multi-dimensional poverty and wellbeing impacts, including the shifts in roles and responsibilities for care and social reproduction, and the gendered social and economic trade-offs of these changes in resource use. In accordance

with the grounded theory approach outlined below, relevant theoretical approaches, especially from the small-scale fisheries literature, are identified and discussed at greater length in the thematic sections that follow, in relation to the categories/sub-themes, relationships and explanations that emerged from the data generated by the study.

3.2 Methods

This study combines and builds on the strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods to enable triangulation of research findings. The starting point for the research was a systematic literature review of the economic and social aspects of the fisheries sector in Sri Lanka, including livelihoods, gender relations and migration amongst fishing communities, to map out the different patterns of and parameters shaping migration. Alongside the literature review, focus groups and interviews with key informants at local, regional and national levels, such as fisheries experts and researchers, government officials and policy makers in the fisheries sector, fisheries federations, NGOs and community leaders were conducted to understand the political-economic context and institutional linkages between households and communities with the market and state, including the role of informal and formal networks. This helped to assess the gendered institutional and regulatory frameworks that affect fishing communities, as well as the adequacy of current national migration policies, and highlighted knowledge gaps to be pursued in this research. This initial enquiry was followed by stakeholder workshops at national and district levels to better understand the larger pattern of migration in these areas historically and currently, as well as to validate the selected study locations, finalise the research questions and fine-tune methodology. The quantitative and qualitative research instruments were evaluated by two external reviewers for their compliance with global standards of social science research ethics, and informed consent was obtained from all research participants prior to interviews.

Current national datasets on livelihoods, fishing and migration do not provide any data on fisher migration and hence proved inadequate for the purpose of this research. Therefore, a household survey of 800 households in total (referred to in the analysis as HH Survey 2017) was conducted in the four study communities to address this research gap in relation to the prevalence of internal seasonal fisher migration and the varying ability to use this as a route to exit poverty and improve well-being, the existence of

social networks and collective action, and the ability to access state entitlements. As some household members are absent due to seasonal migration, the survey was conducted at a time when migrants were most likely to have returned.

Puttalam district on the west coast and Trincomalee district on the east coast were selected for study, for high fish production levels on the west and east coasts respectively, significant proportions of the ethnically diverse rural coastal population engaged in fisheries, relatively high levels of poverty, and because they are linked as locations of origin and destination for the major seasonal thrust of west to east coast migration.

In selecting sites within Puttalam district, the rural coastal Divisional Secretariat (DS) divisions of Arachchikatuwa, Mundel and Kalpitiya with higher levels of poverty were assessed. Among these three DS divisions, Arachchikatuwa and Mundel divisions were selected for the larger number of out-migrants. The selection of two communities (Grama Niladhari, GN divisions) within these two DS divisions was based on the following criteria: proportion of fishing households (over 50%), extent of out-migration, ethnicity (Sinhalese and Tamil), number of total households (adequacy for quantitative sampling), relative proximity of the two communities, and link to migrant destinations in Trincomalee district. The selection was based on DS level official statistics, as well as key informant interviews and FGDs.

In selecting sites within Trincomalee district, the rural coastal DS division of Kuchchaveli was assessed and selected for the large inflow of migrant fishers from the west coast, its ethnically diverse population, as well as its poverty level. Within this DS division, the selection of two communities was based on the following criteria: proportion of fishing households (at least 40%)[11], extent of in-migration, ethnicity (Tamil and Moor), number of total households, relative proximity of the two communities and link to sending communities in Puttalam district. This selection was also based on DS level statistics, as well as key informant interviews and FGDs.

11 The coastal communities on the east coast have more diversified livelihood portfolios and the migrants appear to go into those communities with a proportionately lower number of fishing households and where beach front is available for setting up migrant fishing camps, possibly to avoid overcrowding and conflicts with local communities.

Households for the survey were selected based on random sampling from electoral lists at the Grama Niladhari (GN) level to capture fishing, other livelihoods, migrants and non-migrants, in order to get statistically significant relationships. The econometric analysis using the survey data addressed five key research questions, three at the level of the household and two at the level of the individual. First, the analysis used kernel density estimation methods to examine the consumption distribution of fishing households in the field locations relative to non-fishing households. Second, it investigated the impact of internal migration for fishing on the distribution of consumption among fishing households using both semi-parametric methods and potential outcome models. This analysis was aimed at looking at the extent to which internal migration keeps households out of poverty, and at examining whether migration also helps move them along the distribution to the middle classes. Thirdly, probability regression analysis was used to understand the factors that are associated with the probability that a fishing household migrates to fish. These included demographic and household composition characteristics, as well as material (e.g. decline in fish catch; need for increased income, children's education), relational (e.g. conflict with other ethnic group, institutional/ governance framework, lack of access to resources) and subjective (e.g. autonomy, independence, security, new horizons) factors. In this monograph we only present the results of the probability regression analysis. Results of the kernel density analysis on the distribution of consumption, and the analysis of the impact of migration on the distribution of consumption are presented elsewhere due to space constraints.

A qualitative approach was used to understand the gendered experience of migration and power relations within the household, which often remain elusive to quantitative approaches. Qualitative methods included 24 semi-structured key informant interviews, 14 focus group discussions (referred to in the analysis as 'FGDs') separately with women, men and youth, 38 preliminary livelihood profiles of women and men, based on semi-structured interviews (referred to in the analysis as 'Preliminary Livelihood Profiles'), and in-depth open ended interviews with a purposive sample of 80 respondents from 46 households (referred to in the analysis as 'Qualitative HH Interviews'), constituting primarily an equal sub-sample of women and men (both spouses), selected from the quantitative survey. However, female-headed households and those with left-behind spouses, not captured by the quantitative survey were included in these qualitative in-depth interviews as well.

Based on life narratives and social network mapping, these interviews were used to assess multi-dimensional perceptions of wellbeing, and how these might be linked to impacts of migration, including gendered decision-making patterns. The qualitative component traced migrants from two sending communities to two receiving communities respectively within Sri Lanka to explore relations, compare poverty and wellbeing, and how benefits, capabilities and vulnerabilities of migration are distributed among households in sending and receiving communities. It also looked at the non-migrant households and those with family members who had or have currently migrated overseas. Apart from contributing to understanding the lived experiences of women and men in fishing communities, the life narratives (Langness and Frank 1981, Watson et al.1985) paid special attention to translating meaning through analysis of metaphors and keywords, to assess the dynamics of change among individuals, households and communities at critical turning points.

The qualitative analysis methods used were based on the grounded theory approach (Glaser 1993, 2001, Strauss and Corbin 1998, Berg 2009). The data generated were analysed by open and axial coding to determine categories, patterns and sub-themes that emerged from the data, within a broader set of themes/concepts of the study. These broad themes/concepts were livelihoods, social relations and networks, migration, poverty, vulnerability, social wellbeing, identities and aspirations. Categories/sub-themes were generated from the data by comparing across seven sets of sub-samples - women, men, youth and the four study locations. The categories, concepts, relationships and explanations that emerged from the data were then related to the broad conceptual approach of the study and prevailing theoretical perspectives on these concepts, especially from the small-scale fisheries literature, to determine their relevance in interpreting the data.

3.3 Study sites

Specific study sites included two fishing villages each in Puttalam (Kadalpalli and Cattiyur[12]) and Trincomalee (Selippur and Uppukadal) districts of Sri Lanka, comprising sending and receiving communities of fishers, engaged in seasonal coast-to-coast

12 The names of all study sites are pseudonyms, following ethnographic convention. Cattiyur is the pseudonym given by Tanaka (1997) who did an ethnographic study on religious practice and patronage of the ritual cycles of the three main Hindu temples of this village in the 1980s, and we have retained this pseudonym so as to enable longitudinal comparison. The other three pseudonyms are of our construction.

migrations, as well as sending communities of migrants to the Middle East, Italy, UK and Australia.

Kadalpalli, located in the Puttalam district, is a predominantly Sinhalese Catholic village with the majority of households engaged in small-scale marine fishing using fibre-glass reinforced plastic boats with outboard engines (OFRP). It is inhabited by two major fisher castes, the *paravar*, who make up the majority of households and inhabit the western part of the village, and the *karava*, who constitute a significantly large minority and inhabit the eastern part of the village.

Map 3.1: Location of study sites in Puttalam and Trincomalee districts

There are also a few households belonging to the *goigama* (farmer) caste, mainly engaged in lagoon fishing. The village has a church at the centre, which is attended by households of both castes, a Sinhalese medium state school in the *karava* section, and a Tamil medium state school in the *paravar* section of the village. At the boundary of the

village is a small, old Hindu *kovil*, which is patronised by households in the neighbouring Tamil Hindu village.

Cattiyur is a predominantly Hindu Tamil village, with a small minority of Muslims, located in Puttalam district. It is occupied mainly by households belonging to the *karaiyar* fisher caste, with a small minority of those belonging to priestly (*brahman*, *pantaram*) and service (*tattan*, *vannan*, *ampattan*, *parayan*, *cakkiliyan*) castes. The village has a considerable fleet of OFRP boats and non-motorised rafts operated by small-scale marine fishers, as well as a large labour force employed in beach seine fishing, operated by owners (*sammati*) using large wooden canoes or OFRP boats. It has four *kovils*, including one large, prominent one to Parthasarathy originally dedicated to Draupadhi Amman in whose honour the annual festival is held, and a mosque. It has state primary and secondary schools, both in the Tamil medium.

Selippur, located in Trincomalee district, is a predominantly Muslim village with a small minority of Hindu Tamil households. Most Muslim households are engaged in fishing and farming, while the Hindu households, who are from the service castes (such as *vannan*, *ampattan, kallan and parayan*) are mostly agricultural. The majority of fishers in Selippur use OFRP boats for marine fishing, as do the few beach seine owners in the village. Fishers use both OFRP boats and non-motorised canoes in the lagoon. The village has several mosques, one Hindu kovil, a state primary and a secondary school in Tamil medium, as well as a madrasa school.

Uppukadal is a predominantly Tamil Hindu village, located in the Trincomalee district, with a minority of Tamil Christian households. Originally comprising a farming community in the interior and fishing/farming community along the lagoon and coast, the village has expanded due to resettlement following the tsunami of 2005 and the end of the conflict. The marine fishing fleet of OFRP boats is relatively small, while a considerable number of non-motorised canoes are used in the lagoon. There are also several beach seines operated by owners from the west coast. In addition to new settlers originating from the northwest, north, northeast regions, the village has also received settlers from the estates in the central region. Thus, it constitutes a mix of castes, socially less cohesive than the other three villages. It has two *kovils*, a church, and state primary and secondary schools, both in the Tamil medium.

4. The livelihood system

4.1 Fishing and other livelihoods

Most households in all four villages are engaged in marine and/or lagoon fishing. However, the dependence on fishing and fisheries-related activities appears somewhat higher on the west coast relative to the east coast (see Table 4.1). Lagoon (inland) fishing is also prevalent in the four villages, especially among poorer households. Together with farming, lagoon fishing constitutes a seasonal occupation for many marine fishing households on the east coast during the Northeast monsoon period, whereas the majority of west coast fishing households are focused on marine fishing, with a minority of households specialised in lagoon fishing.

Table 4.1: Number of fishing households and active fishers in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts

Type of livelihood	Puttalam district (West coast), 2017		Trincomalee district (East coast), 2015	
	Kadalpalli	***Cattiyur***	***Selippur***	***Uppukadal***
Total HHs	780	897	838	813
Marine fishing HHs	650	856	433	287
Inland fishing HHs	100	- [2]	- [3]	33
% fishing households	96.2%	95.4%	51.7%	39.4%
Active marine fishers	975-1,000	1,500	725	396
Active inland fishers	100	-	-	33
Active Fisher/ fishing HH	1.4	1.8	1.7	1.3

Sources: Grama Niladhari, Divisional Secretariat and Department of Fisheries data, 2015, 2017.

The proportion of fishing households in the west coast villages was estimated at over 90% by both Fisheries department and FGD data. In Selippur, 52% of households were engaged in fishing, according to fisheries department data, while FGDs estimated around 70% of households fishing in this village. In Uppukadal, fisheries department data indicated 40% households engaged in fisheries while FGDs estimated around 64% households as fishing. The discrepancy in data between official sources and FGDs on the east coast villages is likely to be due to official data being outdated (2015). It appears that there was a marked increase in fishing households in the study villages on the east

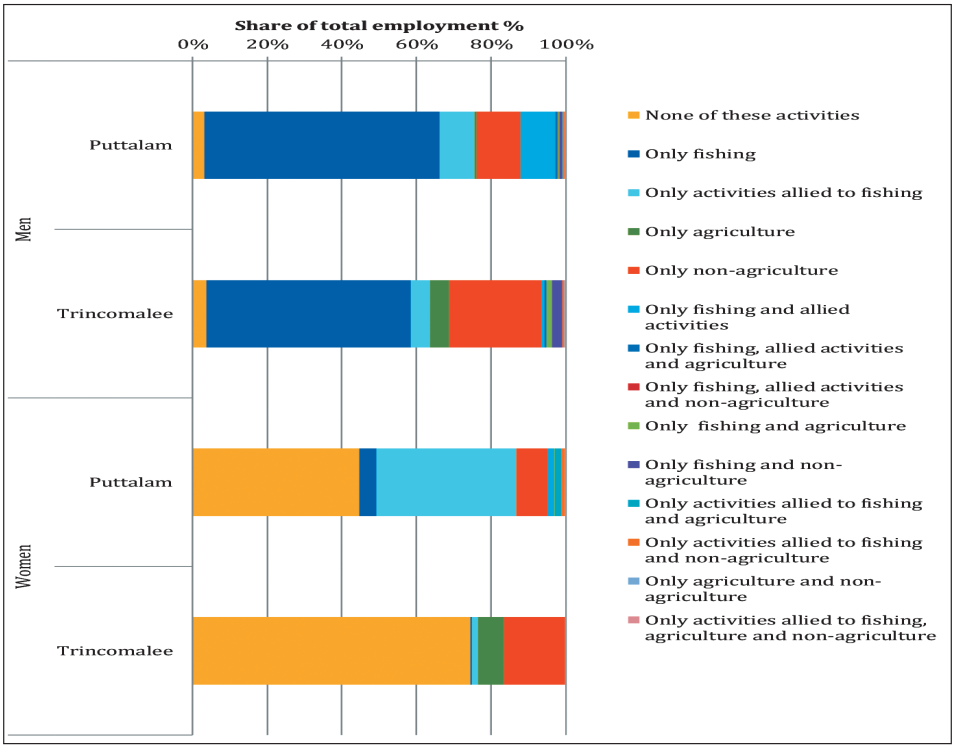
coast since 2015 and that this had not been captured by official data at the time of our fieldwork.

There is a thriving dry fish processing industry at household level in Kadalpalli, at small enterprise level in Kadalpalli and Selippur, and at medium enterprise level in Cattiyur. Households are also engaged in shrimp farming, small enterprises and skilled crafts in the west coast villages. Other livelihoods practised on the east coast are farming, mining (illmenite in Selippur and salt in Uppukadal), small enterprises and skilled crafts. Youth are employed in garment factories and tourist hotels near their villages on both coasts. A minority of households have state employment, such as minor officials or workers in local government institutions, and as teachers in schools in all four villages.

The data from the HH Survey 2017 shows 65% of men in the west coast villages and 58% of the men in the east coast villages as engaged in fishing (see Figure 4.1). A further 20% of men are engaged in fishing and allied activities in the west coast, while around 30% of men are engaged in non-fishing and non-agriculture related work in the east coast villages. In contrast, around 45% of women are engaged in fisheries-related work, including fishing in the west coast villages, whereas 75% of women report themselves as not engaged in livelihood activities, considering themselves primarily as housewives in the east coast villages. Around 25% of women in the east coast villages are engaged in agricultural and non-agricultural (non-fisheries related) activities.

The survey data generally confirms the higher engagement of fishing in the west coast villages, but the differences between the west and east coast villages are not as large, as indicated by qualitative data from FGDs or fisheries department data. This difference between qualitative data and survey data might also be due to the rapid increase in fishing households and fishers in the Trincomalee district not keeping pace with perceptions and situations of specific villages. For example, fishers increased by 66% in Uppukadal between 2015 and 2018, while they decreased by 27% in Selippur during the same period (Kuchchaveli DS data 2015, 2018). The qualitative data on engagement of most women in fishing and non-fishing related livelihood activities in the west coast villages concur with the survey data. However, a larger proportion of women engaged in home-based livelihood activities in the east coast villages appear to have not been captured by the survey data.

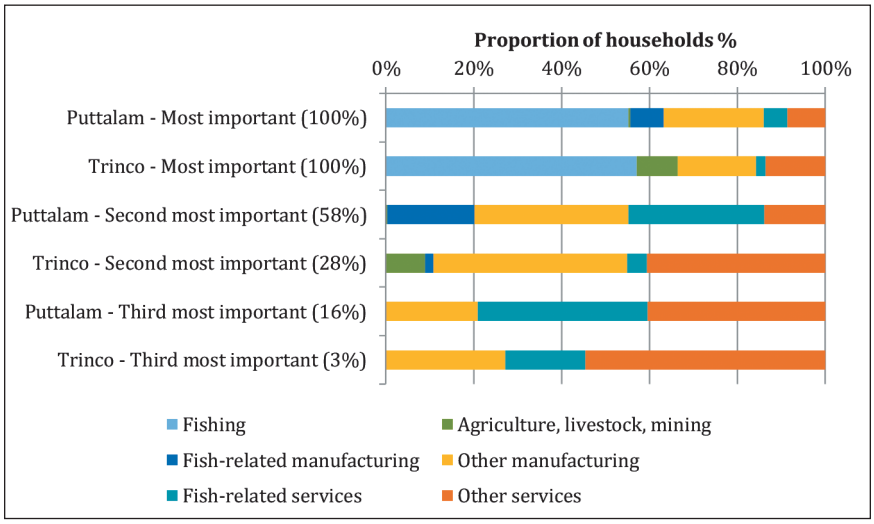
Figure 4.1: Engagement of men and women by employment activity in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts



Source and notes: Estimated with microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

The survey also revealed that fishing was the most important source of income for 55% households in Kadalpalli and Cattiyur in Puttalam district, and 57% households in Selippur and Uppukadal in Trincomalee district respectively (see Figure 4.2). Other manufacturing (35%) and fisheries-related services (31%) were the second most important sources of income for the west coast villages, whereas other manufacturing (44%) and other services (41%) were the second most important sources of livelihoods for the east coast villages. Fisheries-related and other services also remained the third most important sources of income for the west coast villages, while other services provided the third most important source of income for the east coast villages. Fisheries-related manufacturing provided the most and second most important sources of income for a minority of west coast households, while agriculture did the same for a minority of east coast households.

Figure 4.2: Economic sector by most important source of household income in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts



Source and notes: Estimated with microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

Overall, the quantitative data shows a greater reliance on fishing and fisheries-related incomes of west coast households than of east coast households, who are also dependent on non-fisheries related incomes. However, it appears that while a greater number of households might be engaged in fishing in the west coast villages, the dependency on fishing income is slightly higher in the east coast villages.

4.2 Fishing technology and ownership of assets

Apart from Cattiyur, which has a large beach seine fishing industry[13], most fishers in the other three villages use small motorised and non-motorised craft, with a smaller number of beach seine operations (See Table 4.2). In Kadalpalli and Selippur a large proportion of fishers operate fibre reinforced plastic boats with outboard engines (OFRP), while in Cattiyur, there are considerable numbers of fishers using non-motorised traditional craft (NTRB), rafts (*theppam*) in the sea and canoes (*thoni*, *kulla*) in the lagoon, although the majority operate OFRP boats. In Uppukadal, FGDs indicated around 50-55 NTRBs

13 Beach seine is a traditional form of fishing which is based on a system of *padu* (shares), which enable share holders (also referred to as owners) to fish from a prescribed piece of beach on a rotational basis, so that all share holders have relatively equal access to the different topographical/ecological features of the coast line of that piece of beach. The government provides beach seine licenses to share holders.

(canoes) being used in the lagoon; however, craft registered with the fisheries department were only around three canoes. There appears to have been a sharp reduction in NTRBs in Uppukadal, which recorded 287 in 2015 (Kuchchaveli DS data 2015). FGDs attributed a decrease in lagoon fishing due to the establishment of a saltern by a private company – this might account for the reduction in this type of craft. In Cattiyur, NTRBs also included large sea canoes (*vallam*) traditionally used in beach seine fishing, while in the other villages beach seining technology had changed with OFRP boats and small accompanying canoes replacing large sea canoes. In Kadalpalli, one man owned three multi-day boats (IMULs), which were anchored in Trincomalee fisheries harbour, and another anchored his boat in Chilaw fisheries harbour.

Selippur and Kadalpalli have the biggest fleets of OFRP boats with 0.9 boats per fishing household in Selippur and 0.5 boats per fishing household in Kadalpalli respectively in 2017. There had been a noteworthy 2.5-fold increase in OFRP boats in Selippur between 2015 and 2017 (Trincomalee district fisheries data, 2015 and 2017), reflecting the overall increase in OFRP boats within the district. Uppukadal has the smallest fleet of OFRPs with 0.2 boats per fishing household, while Cattiyur indicated around 0.3 boats per fishing household. Thus, there appears to be higher inequality in ownership of fishing assets in Uppukadal and Cattiyur. However, Selippur has several boat owners who own more than one OFRP boat. Cattiyur has the largest fleet of traditional craft currently, due to the marked reduction in traditional craft in Uppukdal. Distribution of fishing assets is one aspect of social stratification within the villages, with OFRP boat owners considered as 'middle' level and owners of traditional craft considered as 'poor', with some variations across villages. Owners of more than one OFRP boat or of large craft are regarded as belonging to the 'well-off' category.

Table 4.2: Number of fishing craft in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts, 2017

Type of craft	Puttalalam district		Trincomalee district	
	Kadalpalli	***Cattiyur***	***Selippur***	***Uppukadal***
# OFRP	355	250	380	80
# NTRB	90	180	60	3
# MTRB	2	-	-	-
# IMUL	4	-	-	-
# Beach seines	3 (operational)	15	8	12
OFRP/fishing HH	0.47	0.29	0.88	0.18
NTRB/Fishing HH	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.9

Sources: Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture district-level data, 2017

The main fishing gear used in all four villages was gill nets to catch small and medium sized reef fish species in the sea. Trammel nets were also used, especially in the lagoons to catch fish, shrimps and crabs. Hook and line were commonly used for catching larger pelagic species found farther out at sea, especially in the west coast villages. In Selippur, purse seine nets were used for catching small and large pelagics. Beach seine nets were used by owners of beach seine shares (*padu*), which were accessed on a rotational basis, so that all beach seine owners shared the different stretches of beach/sea terrain over a period. Fishers operating canoes, as well as wade fishers, used cast nets to catch fish and crustaceans mostly in the lagoon, but also in the sea, which was relatively calm in east coast villages.

5. Social relations and networks

Social relations here are analysed as constituted within an institutional framework of four domains – family/kinship, community, market and the state (Kabeer 1999a). Gender relations fall within these broader social relations and, "like all social relations, are constituted through the rules, norms and practices by which resources are allocated, tasks and responsibilities are assigned, value is given and power is mobilized" (Kabeer 1999a, p. 12). The rules, norms and practices around resource allocation and assignment of tasks/responsibilities are critical within a livelihood system and thus, social relations are at the core of how livelihoods are pursued, practiced and organised in fishing communities, as elsewhere.

Social networks are patterns of linkages and relationships among people. Social networks of individuals within households are assessed in the study as also spanning these four domains – family, community, market and the state. These networks are important determinants of the social resources available to households to pursue their livelihood activities. Social networks, as defined here, are close to the concept of 'social capital', as originally proposed by Bourdieu (1985) – i.e. social resources that enable individuals to navigate their position within a hierarchical social structure and provide potential benefits relative to their inclusion in such networks. However, the concept of social networks, rather than social capital, has been preferred in this analysis, due to the narrower, functionalist and utilitarian turn taken towards the latter concept in the work of Coleman (1988) and Putnam (2000), and a reluctance to reduce an intricate web of social relations into an economistic notion of 'capital'.

Among numerous benefits, social networks provide food, shelter, finance, labour, care, moral support, tacit "cultural knowledge", access to education/training, information and employment, status and identity – all of which can have variable impacts on the livelihoods and wellbeing of households. Social networks also exact costs such as obligations that need to be rendered to others, especially in times of celebration and misfortune. While these relationships of reciprocity offer security and help mitigate risk, they can also maintain the poor in social structures that perpetuate poverty (Wood 2003).

Following Putnam (2000), Nenadovic and Epstein (2016) define relationships among individuals with similar demographic characteristics such as family members, friends

and neighbours as 'bonding'; relationships among individuals differing in these characteristics but living in close proximity to one another are termed 'bridging'; relationships among individuals that differ in their positions of authority, such as between fishers and state officials, are referred to as 'linking'. Putnam (2000) observes that bridging and bonding social capital are not an 'either/or' category but is rather a 'more or less' dimension and that the same social ties can take on both bonding and bridging forms. The typology of bonding, bridging and linking ties is adopted in our analysis of social networks, which support or constrain livelihoods and migration. Siriwardena-De Zoysa (2018) has elaborated the significance of cooperation based on social ties, referred to as *sambandam* in Tamil (*sambandatha* in Sinhalese), in the everyday lifeworlds of coastal groups in Trincomalee district.

Qualitative social network mapping was used to understand the differences in the composition of social networks of women and men, migrant and host communities, and to what extent networks are a critical factor in supporting or hindering livelihoods, including migration strategies and poverty status and wellbeing. Social network maps outlined a person's convivial and exchange relationships within and without (i.e. other districts and overseas) the village/district, their density, strength and spread, and the nature of power characterising the relationships. The mapping indicated the gender, ethnic and religious identity of the persons within four categories/domains of networks elaborated below. The qualitative approach outlined here looks at the structure and nature of relationships of women and men, rather than actor centrality, which is the focus of many quantitative approaches to social network analysis.

The analysis of social relations begins with the gender division of labour within households and the community. Thereafter, we look at four categories/domains of social relations and networks, which emerged as instrumental in supporting livelihoods of women and men from qualitative social network mapping in the four study villages. These can be defined as (i) relations with kin (family), friends and neighbours (ii) relations within community organisations/institutions (e.g. fisheries societies, women's societies, village church/temple/mosque) (iii) labour relations (e.g. relations between boat owners and crew, between fish processors and employees, among co-workers) and (iv) market relations (relations with traders - i.e. suppliers of inputs and buyers of

products – and banks). Social networks based on the first two types of relations can be conceptualised as constituted of 'bonding ties', while those based on the last two types can be categorised as constituted of "bridging ties". However, according to each village context, relations within community groups and labour relations can also cut across the 'bonding' and 'bridging' forms, reinforcing Putnam's observation that the two types of ties are not mutually exclusive.

5.1 Gender division of labour

In all four villages men are engaged in marine and lagoon fishing using craft and nets. Men also disentangle fish from the nets and mend the nets, once they come ashore. Gender norms do not permit women to engage in fishing – this is attributed to tradition in all four villages, including Islamic tenets in Selippur.

> *Where this village is concerned, only men go fishing. Women do not go. Husbands do not like women to fish. They think that it is their role to earn for their wives. If we start doing that work, people will start talking and commenting. From the time that we were born, women haven't been fishing.* (Women's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *We don't engage in fishing. We support the men to remove the fish from nets, sort and stack into baskets. We also take them tea to the beach when they arrive by boat.* (Women's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *According to our Islamic laws, we don't go fishing. We pray and stay in the house. We cook what our husbands bring home.* (Women's FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

However, poor women engage in gleaning for fish, prawns, crabs, clams and mussels in the Tamil villages of Cattiyur on the west coast and Uppukadal on the east coast. This was referred to as "stroking for fish" (*meen thadavurathu)* in Cattiyur.

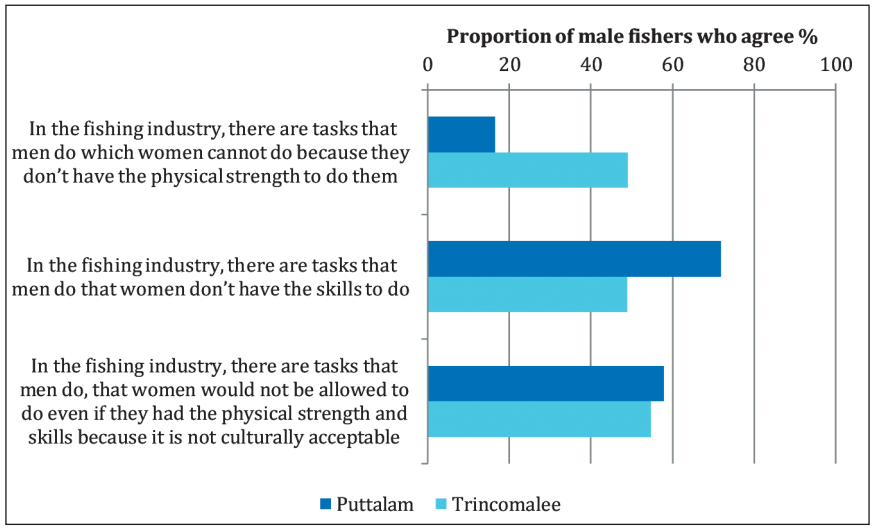
> *I glean for fish (meen thadavurathu)…There are around 20 gleaners. This is because men don't allow women to go to the lagoon. Men are afraid that they will lose their respect and that people will think of them as men who are eating*

> *from their wives' earnings. I catch clams, prawns, fish, crabs, kanjakutti (a thorny fish).* (Female gleaner, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Gleaning is done mostly without any fishing gear by hand, or using a small hand net, cloth or saree.

The significance of gender norms and practices in constraining women from fishing was supported by data from the HH Survey 2017 which indicated that between 55-58% of men in both the west and east coast villages believed that it was culturally unacceptable for women to fish (see Figure 5.1). Moreover 72% of men in the west coast villages and 49% of men in the east coast villages indicated that women did not have the skills to fish.

Figure 5.1: Male fisher views on women's engagement in fishing in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts



Source and notes: Estimated with microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

Taboos preventing women from touching the boat and fishing gear were mentioned in Uppukadal on the east coast, as well as Cattiyur on the west coast. However, several poor women in the former village helped to pull the end of the beach seine net or disentangle fish from nets in exchange for fish. In the two west coast villages, it was common for most women to disentangle fish from the nets right off the boats and sort the fish before sale. Women in these two villages also took tea to their menfolk working on their boats or nets on the beach.

The main engagement of women was in post-harvest activities. Women carried and sold the fresh fish caught by their husbands or themselves in the village market in the two west coast villages. However, of the two castes in Kadalpalli, only women from the *karava/ karaiyar* caste are engaged in trading at the market; women from the *paravar* caste did not. Apart from Selippur, in the other three villages there were some small-scale iterant women fish traders, who bought fresh fish from fishers or dried fish from processors in their village and sold within the village, as well as in markets in neighbouring villages or towns. In Cattiyur, fresh fish traders were mostly older women, as low status was ascribed to this activity.

> *Women [younger] only take the fish to the junction. It is only the older women who buy fish and sell from buckets. There are about 15 women fish sellers, above 45 years of age. They sell fish in Chilaw, Aarachchikattu, Aanamadu, Aanavilunthan, Pullichakulam and Keerenkalli. For women to sell fish outside the village is an embarrassment for the woman and her husband. It is an issue of prestige.* (Women's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

In Selippur, small-scale women fish traders are also mostly widows, who buy fresh fish on the beach and sell from their homes. In all four villages, men engaged in small or medium-scale fish trading, using motor bicycles, vans or trucks. There were small and medium-scale male traders, as well as agents (also male) for large-scale traders who came from surrounding towns, as well as large towns and cities to purchase fish from all four villages. Neither male nor female youth in all four villages engaged in fish trading – male youth said they lacked experience, while female youth, like their mothers, considered it shameful to engage in fish trading.

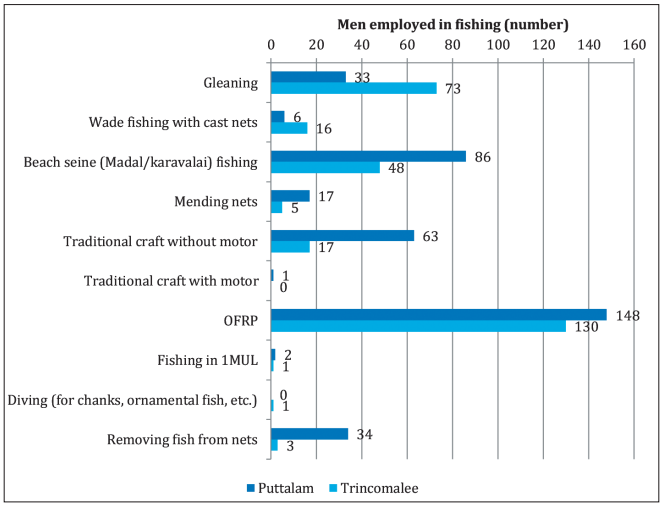
The owners of fresh fish or medium-scale dried fish *wadi* in all four villages were generally men, although many wives managed the *wadi* alongside their husbands. In the case of beach seine *wadi* in Cattiyur, some men had obtained the beach seine *padu* (share) as dowry through their wives, and wives continued to exert different degrees of control over the business. In Uppukadal, a woman had inherited her father's beach seine share, due to the lack of male heirs, and operated the business herself, with support from her husband, as a nominal co-owner.

In Kadapalli, household level and small-scale dry fish processing enterprises were owned by women, and employed around 3-5 workers who were family members, friends or neighbours. In Cattiyur, medium-scale fresh fish *wadi* employed 20-40 women for sorting while dry fish *wadi* employed 6-10 women for sorting, cleaning and processing, as well as several men for carrying and washing the fish. Some women also processed excess fish brought home by their fisher husbands.

In farming households and fishing households which engaged in farming seasonally on the east coast, both women and men engaged in agricultural tasks. In Uppukadal, where fishing households did not possess land, women engaged in agricultural labour in farming households in the village or in neighbouring villages. In all four villages there are small numbers of men who are engaged in skilled crafts, such as masonry, and in the east coast villages, poorer men are also engaged as wood cutters, and both men, women and children gather fruit and honey seasonally for sale. In all four villages, both women and men are engaged in small enterprises, such as grocery stores, tailoring shops, bakeries and eating houses. Women also prepare and sell cooked food, and in Selippur sell grocery items (meat, frozen food, such as ice cream), from their homes. Young women commute to work in garment factories in surrounding towns until marriage in all four villages, although the numbers are smaller in Selippur, as Muslim households prefer not to send their female members outside their homes to work. Most young men are engaged in fishing in all four villages, but some young men in Kadalpalli on the west coast and Uppukadal on the east coast are employed in tourist hotels near their villages. Small numbers of women and men are employed in state administrative jobs and as teachers in schools in all four villages.

The HH Survey 2017 data show that among men engaged in fishing, the majority in both west and east coast villages operate an OFRP boat (see Figure 5.2). The other main types of fishing engaged in by the west coast men are operating beach seines and traditional craft, such as rafts and canoes. For men on the east coast, gleaning and beach seine fishing are the second and third most important types of fishing respectively.

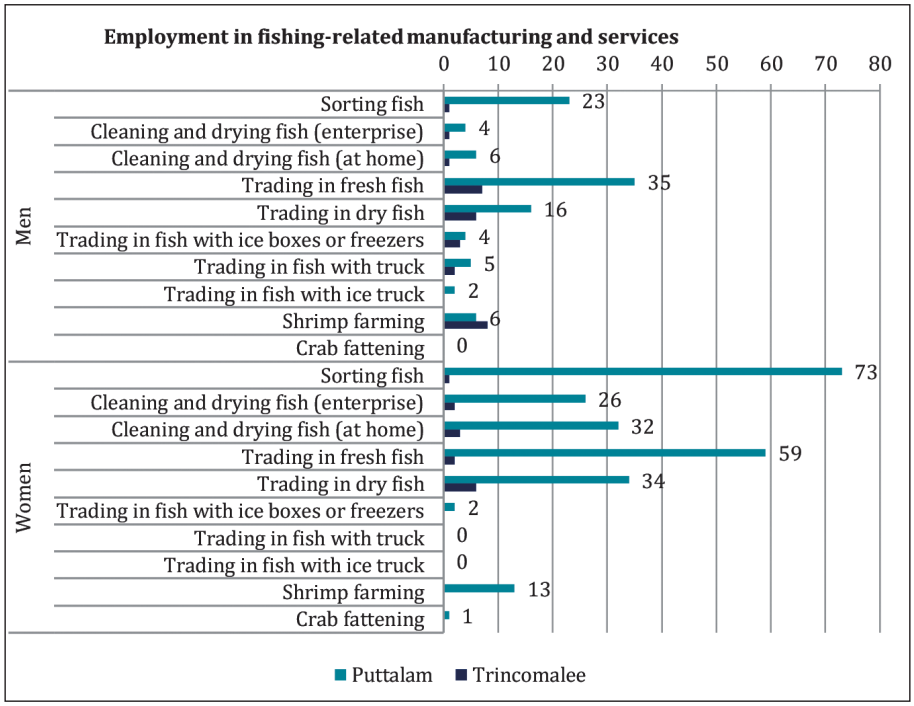
Figure 5.2: Men's engagement in fishing activities in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts



Source and notes: Estimated with microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

According to the survey data, the main fisheries-related activities engaged in by women in the west coast villages were sorting fish, trading fresh fish, trading dried fish and processing fish at home (see Figure 5.3). A handful of women in the east coast were reported to be trading in dried fish, processing fish and trading in fresh fish. A minority of men, in smaller numbers than women, were engaged in trading in fresh fish, sorting fish and trading in dried fish.

Figure 5.3: Men's and women's engagement in fishing related manufacturing and services in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts



Source and notes: Estimated with microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

Women perform an important role in the gender division of labour in management of household budgets. In all four communities, women are the keepers of earnings of both their husbands and themselves, and while decision-making relating to expenses is generally done jointly, investment in the form of savings, predominantly in jewellery, is managed by women. Loans raised by pawning of jewellery constitute a significant proportion of investment for purchase or replacement of fishing assets.

In addition to livelihoods related to fishing, agriculture, other enterprises and services, women have the burden of housework, other reproductive tasks as fetching water and firewood, and the care of children and elderly. This is considered their primary role and responsibility within the framework of gender norms and practices within their communities and is affirmed by the majority of women themselves.

In terms of decision-making within the household, most day-to-day decisions relating to fishing are made by men, while those relating to household expenses are made by women

in all four communities. Selling and processing fish, financing and purchase of fishing assets, as well as large household purchases, such as electric appliances and furniture are generally made jointly, although there is some variation on the influence of men and women over these decisions across households. Decisions relating to education of children are also made jointly between husband and wife, but women appear to have more influence over these decisions. While men decide the destination of migration, based on past experience or information from peers on sites with potentially good catches, most other migration decisions are made jointly, although wives defer to husbands in matters they might perceive that the husband has more knowledge.

> *For fifteen years we have been migrating to Uppukadal and it has not shifted. The choice of where to migrate is decided by my husband and it has not shifted. The date to migrate and when to return is decided together. Also where to sell and whom to sell [trader] is decided together too. But my husband knows more about the trade so I agree with his choices.* (Wife of migrant fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Thus, in addition to managing households, where men are often away at sea, women play an important role in financing and contributing to decisions relating to their husbands' fisheries livelihoods, even though most do not fish themselves.

5.2 Relations with kin, friends and neighbours

Social network mapping (as outlined in p. 37) revealed the strongest linkages of both women and men in all four villages constituted bonding ties among kin (family members), friends and neighbours. For most women, their main networks constituted of kin within the village, especially as the predominant form of marriage in all four communities is matrilocal.

> *Luckily my mother is with me in happiness and in sorrow. She cooks and does all the work in the house. I keep the kids with her and go here and there to do what I need - get the money sent by my husband, settle the loans, to the bank, school, and tuition classes and so on. I do everything with my mother's help* (Left behind wife of migratory fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam).

Only a minority of women in all four villages had migrated in from outside the village for marriage, ranging from 3% in Selippur to 22% in Uppukadal (HH Survey 2017). Moreover, apart from Uppukadal, the wife or her family owned the house and plot in which the household resided in most cases, with ownership in the hands of women in at least half of all households (Qualitative HH interviews). In Uppukadal, where house plots had been allocated with the support of the state and NGOs following the tsunami, the majority of house plots belonged to the husband or his family, with ownership in the hands of men (Qualitative HH interviews), revealing the role of the state in reconstituting customary property relations favourable to women to benefit men. A minority of women had linkages with family and friends outside the village and district. In addition to their families, men had strong linkages with friends in the village, and for those who moved to the village from outside, family members and friends beyond the village, and in some cases overseas as well.

> *I have a very close friend, who invested with me [in the business]. He used to own a beach seine and worked the seine in the village. But now he is in Italy. He introduced me to the present mudalali (trader) who buys from us regularly. This mudalali is reliable with his payments and is trustworthy.* (Male commission agent, Kadalpalli, Puttalam).

In Cattiyur, women indicated that they relied on peer support among family, friends and neighbours for childcare, food sharing and borrowing money. Both men and women rely on kin, friends and neighbours within their villages to provide labour as crew or in fish sorting/processing in the first instance, and only looked for external labour if they were not available.

5.3 Relations within community organisations and institutions

Relations within community organisations/institutions in all four villages were mostly among homogenous groups bound by a common location, identity and reciprocal ties, and thus constituted primarily of bonding ties. Community-based organisations included fisheries cooperative societies, savings and credit societies established by state agencies, NGOs or private sector, and religious institutions. In the west coast villages, social

network mapping revealed medium to strong linkages of fishers to fisheries societies and of both women and men to church/*kovil*-based organisations. Fishers in these villages relied on fisheries societies for loans for livelihood purposes, assistance and rescue at sea, as well as advocacy on their behalf with fisheries and other state authorities.

> *As members of the fisheries society, we make a deposit of LKR 50,000 rupees and can get a LKR 200,000 loan after two years at a very low interest rate of 1% per month – this amounts to LKR 1,000 interest for a LKR 100,000 loan. This loan system is only available for members of the fisheries societies.* (Men's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *We lost one boat with a two-person crew at sea. Then all the villagers [from both parts of the village] got together and hired a helicopter to search for the lost boat and crew. The fisheries societies pooled the money to hire the helicopter. The two members who were lost at sea were poor and brothers from the same household in the village and had assumed that the villagers would have forgotten about them and had resigned themselves to dying at sea. We were able to locate the boat and rescue them. That incident also showed the surrounding fishing villages and communities the unity of Kadalpalli.* (Men's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

If a fisher were having serious problems with indebtedness, peers from the fisheries societies help to pay off the loans and stave off a crisis. Fisheries societies in these villages had good relations with the fisheries department, as well as the Navy and the Army, which have provided support for their migration to the northeast/east coasts.

Beach seine owners in Cattiyur belonged to a village-based beach seine owner association, as well as the National Beach Seine Owners Association, based in Negombo. A lagoon fisher in Kadalpalli represented the village in a fisheries committee, one of 12 such committees, involved in the lagoon management committee of the Fisheries Development and Management Plan of the Chilaw Lagoon. Thus, these men were linked to wider district-based or national fisheries-related networks, which constituted bridging ties. Several occasions were recounted when fisheries societies in Kadalpalli and Cattiyur worked together on collective action on fisheries-related issues, including

migration. Gaining access to subsidies, especially in relation to fisheries inputs, such as fuel, has been one motivation for collective action in Kadalpalli. Fishers from these two villages have mobilised together for the right to migrate to the northeast/east coasts.

Women, while generally excluded from fisheries societies, held membership in other community-based organisations specifically for women, such as savings and credit groups.

> *I am a member in the village Samurdhi women's society where we make up a group of five members. We can borrow at an interest rate of 2% from this group. I got a loan of Rs.50,000 and we are paying it back. I have been in this society over the past year*. (Female fish processor, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Women, who belonged to such community-based groups, supported their husbands' livelihood activities, such as by obtaining loans for new fishing gear or repair of fishing assets, as well as financed their own fish processing or trading activities.

The main *kovil* in Cattiyur and the church in Kadalpalli provided these villages with public spaces for the fish and vegetable markets. In Cattiyur, the *kovil* administration operated and managed the daily fish market and received a commission of 5% on all fish sold within the market. Fish traders who sold from a counter, also paid rent to the *kovil* for the use of this sales space. The *kovil* restricted fish trading in the market during the fishing season (September-April) only to Cattiyur villagers, while during the off-season (April- September) outsiders were permitted to sell fish, but only through a local agent. The *kovil* also provided a bowser-delivered water supply to the entire village; a bus service in and out of the village to youth who worked in garment factories in nearby locations; and supported the salaries of teachers in the village pre-school. It engaged with the Grama Niladhari (GN) of the village to supplement government schemes, such as eye clinics and free distribution of spectacles.

Households contributed financially to the various *kovils* in the village according to their means, to hold the elaborate annual festivals, and for maintenance and repairs of the premises. Both women and men expressed pride over the main *kovil* as constituted of "their effort" and indicated that they were glad to pay the 5% commission on fish sales, as well as contribute financially to other *kovil* activities, as it provided many services to

the community. In contrast, some women and men were wary of external organisations, such as NGOs, which attempted to initiate societies within the village. Migrants returned from the east/northeast coast for at least a week of the main *kovil's* festival cycle, which took place for 18 days. The readiness to take so much time off in the peak fishing season and incur travel and other expenses to participate in this community event reveals its significance among fishing households. The role of temple festivals in galvanising the community, reinforcing social relations and cohesion is very important in Cattiyur.

In Kadalpalli, the church auctioned its grounds to bidders from the village to operate and manage the fish and vegetable markets. In addition, a church-based NGO, Caritas-SEDEC had initiated a credit and savings society of which many women were members. Households estimated that they donated 10-25% of their income annually to the church according to their means, in addition to the practice of contributing LKR 100-200 weekly at the church service. Women's engagement in church-related religious and cultural activities, as well as maintaining cordial relationships with priests, was as strong as that of men, as revealed in the social network mapping. Women were also leaders of Novena groups, and initiated religious activities in which the congregation was largely female. On several occasions the church has mediated collective action of fisheries societies in predominantly Catholic villages across the district on fisheries-related issues, including migration. While the festival of the village church took place during the fishing season within the village, just prior to migration, the festival of the larger more important church in the neighbouring village brought migrants back from the east/northeast coasts for at least a week. Many Kadalpalli villagers, including migrants, also participated in the pilgrimage to the festival of the Madhu Church during the migration period. As in Cattiyur, the church festivals are very important events for strengthening social relations and cohesion. The local religious institutions thus supported networks where bonding ties were nurtured and bridging ties were enhanced through linkages facilitated by local religious leaders, connected to translocal networks.

While fisheries societies in the east coast villages performed a similar role to those on the west coast, they were less well resourced and social network mapping revealed that the linkages of fishers to these societies were relatively weak. However, fisheries societies remained important within these communities.

> *The fisheries society is the only society that is functioning here. If we earn Rs. 1000, we have to give Rs.100 to the fisheries society. During the season when the sea is rough, we give half (Rs. 50). If a boat gets lost at sea, we go in search of it… [As members] we pay a deposit, which is saved for us. We are able to get loans and pay them off monthly. We continue our work through loans.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Membership and participation of women in fisheries societies were low or non-existent.

> *Women are not allowed to talk at Fisheries Society meetings. It is considered a crime if women talk. It is only for men.* (Women's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

In both villages, conflicts were reported among members within and/or among societies, while fishers in Selippur also indicated that it was difficult to collect membership dues.

> *Selippur fishermen can only get membership in fisheries societies. But there is a lack of support for fisheries societies in Selppur. When we go down, the fisheries society also goes down. There is no unity among people. No one pays membership fees.* (Men's FGD. Selppur, Trincomalee)

The linkages of fisheries societies with state authorities, such as the Fisheries department and Navy, were also weaker, and in the case of Selippur, fishers indicated strains in these relationships. However, there were occasions on which fisheries societies of both villages have participated in collective action, coordinated by fisheries societies at the district level, especially in relation to migration. Fishers have mobilised through these societies for action to prevent west coast migrants from seasonal fishing in their villages.

The mosque had a strong presence in Selippur, playing a role in settling disputes at home and within the community, as well as in monitoring the community to ensure morality and ethical behavior. Households make monthly donations of around LKR 200 to the mosque, while also making larger monetary contributions for the annual feast on Prophet Mohamed's Birthday, for which farmers contribute in kind, such as rice from the new harvest, coconuts and chickens. The annual feast is of a shorter duration than religious festivals in the west coast villages but remains important for reinforcing social relations and cohesion within Selippur.

In Uppukadal, an old *kovil* exists within the interior farming community and a small *kovil* has been built for the coastal part of the community with support from the saltern company. However, as people are not well disposed towards the company, coastal households are contributing finances and labour to build a new *kovil*, which is currently in the process of construction. Thus, unlike the other three villages, Uppukadal still lacks social cohesion brought about by a religious institution within the fishing/coastal community, especially as many households are newcomers, resettled following the tsunami or conflict. However, fishing households are contributing income from a day's fishing every month for the construction of the *kovil*, and the process is bringing together people towards a shared sense of identity as a community.

5.4 Labour relations

Labour relations differed according to the type of craft and fishing gear employed in all four villages. Fishers owning rafts or canoes fished singly or took a family member, friend or neighbour as a helper, who received a share of the catch. Catch share arrangements were more informal and variable with traditional craft if the owner were fishing with an additional person. The owner sometimes took a share for the craft of 1/3rd of earnings, dividing the remaining 2/3rd between himself and crew, or the owner simply divided the earnings in half, especially if the crew were a family member. Fishers owning OFRP boats fished alongside one or two crew, who received a share of the catch. Boat owners who did not fish, employed two or three crew, who were also paid with a share of the catch. Catch share arrangements in OFRP boats were intricate and varied across the four villages. Fishers in Kadalpalli and Selippur used a system of 1/4ths, in Cattiyur a system of 1/3rds and in Uppukadal a system of 1/6ths. In all four villages, fuel /food costs were first deducted from catch earnings before shares were distributed among owners and crew. In Uppukadal, a 1/6th share was deducted for the fisheries society. Owners received two separate shares for boat/engine and nets in addition to their effort if they fished alongside the crew, whereas they did not receive the latter share if they did not go out fishing in the boat themselves. The share of the catch of OFRP owners in the four study villages ranged from 1/3rd to 1/2 of the catch if they were not fishing and from 2/3rd to 3/4th if they went out in the boat themselves. While catch share arrangements were proportionally more beneficial to crew in the east coast villages, than in the west

coast villages, this was offset by the smaller number of crew employed in the west coast relative to the east coast. Some fish traders, who also owned several boats, employed multiple crew. Relations between boat owners and crew were considered to be cordial, as owner and crew depended on each other for their safety in navigating in the sea and/or ensuring a profitable catch. Owners sometimes expressed paternalistic attitudes towards their crew.

> *They treat us well like human beings, their own siblings. They help with emergencies and loans.* (Male crew, Selippur, Trincomalee*)*

> *The boat owner is my machchan (bother-in-law/cousin).* (Male crew, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *The owner and crew are friends. There is no difference between labourer and boat owner. We can't fight with each other as we depend on each other at sea. Some boat owners hit their workers. It is very difficult to find labour now. We have to treat them like our children – only then they come to work for us.* (Male boat owner/ fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Beach seine owners (*sammati*) employed 20-40 labourers to pull the nets, operate *vallam* (large sea canoes) or OFRP boats to cast the nets and bring it ashore, to disentangle fish from the nets, as well as sort and process the fish. These workers came from the village or were sourced from the Batticaloa district, which has a relatively high poverty level. Catch share arrangements in beach seine fishing varied across villages, as well. In Cattiyur on the west coast, 10% of earnings went towards food/fuel costs, while 30% went to the beach seine owner and 60% to the large group of workers employed. In Uppukadal on the east coast, following the deduction of food/fuel costs, $1/4^{th}$ share went to the owner while $3/4^{th}$ went to the workers. Thus, the catch share arrangements on the east coast were more beneficial to workers than on the west coast. However, in Selippur, beach seine owners paid workers a monthly wage of LKR 20,000, based on a system of advances. Hence, there appears to be a shift away from the share system to capitalist labour relations in beach seines in this village. Beach seine owners demonstrated a paternalistic and ambivalent attitude towards workers, indicating that they had to treat workers well, and provide loans, as workers depended on them for income and other support, at the same time complaining that workers were sometimes unreliable and difficult to manage.

> *I have about 10 people who have been working for me for 7-8 years. They will stay if we have a good relationship. We interact only during work hours. If they call and ask for help and I can help, I do that. I have to lend them money. It is then that they will come to work for us. They are all people who live in difficulty. They were affected by the tsunami. I sometimes just give them money out of kindness.* (Male beach seine owner, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *We have good relations among us. Their (the workers') sweat is important to us. It is because of it that we survive. They need to be happy. We help them with their problems. If they are good to me, I am good to them. We help them with family events and other needs if they are connected with us by love. If they think they are too big we don't feel the same way towards them.* (Male beach seine owner, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Workers on the other hand, generally indicated that their relations with beach seine owners as positive.

> *We have good relations with the sammati (owner) [on the east coast]. It is with the locals that we have problems, as they don't want outsiders.* (Male beach seine worker and crew, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

In Cattiyur, these relations of dependency were sometimes depicted as 'slavery', mostly by those who had left the beach seine industry as they or family members had migrated overseas for work.

> *Cattiyur was developed over the last 15 years due to migrants who went to foreign countries. Those days over 100 people worked like slaves in beach seine and were indebted with loans to the sammati. Those who migrated to foreign countries, sent money back, so family members could free themselves from the sammati and start earning something for themselves.* (Male fisheries society representative, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Fish sorting and processing took place in beach seine camps (*madel/karavalai wadi*), fresh fish camps (*ice wadi*), as well as dry fish camps (*karawala/karawadu wadi*), owned by entrepreneurs/traders. In Cattiyur, fish sorting and dried fish processing

are done mainly by women in medium-scale enterprises, paid weekly in cash and kind, depending on the quantity of fish processed. Relations between enterprise owners and workers were considered as good, with women often negotiating their work through the wife of the beach seine owner or trader.

> *Our relationship with the mudalali is good. The mudalalis give us food. They provide breakfast, tea and biscuits. They give us rice and buy clothes for us during festivals. We don't give him trouble, so there are no problems.* (Women's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *We have no contact with the mandadi [supervisor of beach seine operation]. We ask the sammatti (beach seine owner) if there is work. We do not talk much to the sammatti. We talk to the sammatti's wife and ask her if there is fish. She is the one who calls us if there is work. She is nice to us.* (Female fish sorting and dried fish processing worker, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Women workers who worked together in fish sorting/processing formed peer groups, relying on one another for childcare, food sharing and borrowing money. While these groups were mainly based on reciprocity and solidarity among networks of kin, friends and neighbours, they also sometimes entailed ties with women from outside the village.

> *We are part of a clique of [dry fish processing] wadi workers. We help each other when in need of money, food or any other help. If I need to go somewhere, they take care of my children.* (Women's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

When excess fish was available, fishers brought home the fish for their wives to process at home. In Selippur, dried fish processing is mostly done by men, as small or medium-scale enterprises, employing male labour. Some dried fish processing labour is also provided by women migrants from Cattiyur in Selippur. Relations between enterprise owners and workers were considered unproblematic, without undue obligation on the part of the employer.

> *Some are family members, some are outsiders. There are no problems. I don't lend them money and they don't ask.* (Male fish processor, Selippur, Trincomalee)

However, male owners of dry fish enterprises sometimes take fish home for processing by female family members, some of whom receive wages for this work.

> *We don't process fish every day. During the season, maybe once a month. We help our fathers who are dried fish processors. We put salt and sort the fish. They give us a wage for that. For a day's work, we get LKR 500. Families get together and do this work. There are sometimes problems – "he didn't give you money, he didn't give me money, he gave me less, gave you more".* (Women's FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

The few owners of multi-day boats (IMUL) in Kadalpalli recruited both village labour, especially youth, as well as local labour from the ports where the IMULs were anchored, as crew. The fishing labourers from Kadalapalli worked out of Chilaw and Trincomalee, where the IMULs were anchored.

While labour relations among both men and women were associated with bonding networks, men were more likely to be involved in bridging networks with employers and co-workers beyond the village, thereby expanding their opportunities for livelihoods and income.

5.5 Market relations

Market relations in the west coast villages are more complex than in the east coast villages, with longer value chains. In Kadalpalli and Cattiyur, the wives of small-scale fishers or the fishers themselves bring the fresh fish catch to the fish market in the village where an auction system prevails. Both consumers from the village, as well as small traders from the village, and small, medium and large traders from outside buy fish at the market.

> *Here we do not have a fixed trader. If anybody comes with a good price we sell our catch. Normally they value the catch per basket. The baskets are not weighed - they hold the cane basket and guess the weight and then quote a price.* (Men's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

While both women and men engage as micro/small traders who sell within the village and in markets in neighbouring villages or small towns, commission agents representing external traders from the village are men. Female traders from the village carry the fish as head loads in baskets while male traders use boxes attached to bicycles or motor bicycles. External traders, who purchase fish at the market transport their consignments in motor bicycles, vans, small and large trucks, including cooler trucks, are men, operating micro to large-scale businesses, and largely Sinhalese. Fish that is unsold by 10.00am in the morning is sold to medium-scale fresh fish traders (*ice mudalali*) within the village. Relations between fishers and traders are generally ambivalent over fish prices and debts owed to them by fishers, but fishers often considered certain traders as having their trust, attributing them with a form of kinship.

> *I had to sell my catch to the mudalali (trader) who gave me the loan. He took the commission and gave me the rest. I haven't settled the loan fully yet. Fishing never decreases the loan but just increases it. If the boat or engine meets with an accident we have to obtain loans [again] to repair or buy new ones. Fishing gear and equipment are easily damaged.* (Male fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *Here, Muslim traders come to buy fish. It costs LKR 3 ½ lakhs to buy a boat. We put 2 ½ and get ½ from the trader, so we are indebted to him.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *We migrate with the help of a fish trader [in Selippur] we have known him for more than 10 – 15 years. He is like our relative.* (Wife of migrant fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *I have been supplying to the same mudalali for the last 15 years. We are like brothers (kakka thambi). We help each other in times of difficulty. He helps me financially. If my engine breaks, he helps. If there is an illness he helps. We are like brothers.* (Male lagoon fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Fish traders, meanwhile, generally portrayed their relations with fishers as mutually beneficial and cordial. This was also true for micro/small female fish traders.

> *We have good relationships. When they have any hard time we actually support them. We help them to buy boats and nets. They also help us by selling the catch.* (Male fish trader, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *We do not have any problem with fishermen. If they have a good catch they will call us. If they ask for a loan we will give them. Also, we give them boats, nets and other equipment.* (Male fish trader, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *Only if we maintain good relations with them will they supply us with fish. If we get angry with them, they won't give us fish.* (Female fish trader, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Fish unsold by the end of the day or some part of a large catch is processed at home by wives and female members of fisher households or in micro/small enterprises employing a number of family members/neighbours in Kadalpalli, or in medium-scale enterprises in Cattiyur. In Kadalpalli, female processors and/or micro-scale traders sell dried fish in markets in neighbouring villages and towns as well. Some micro/small female traders in Kadalpalli also source dried fish from the east/northeast coasts, either traveling there themselves or by requesting processors on the east coast to send dried fish through migrant relatives and friends. Relations between female dried fish processors and female and male dried fish traders were regarded as cordial. Beach seine owners sell or auction their fresh and dried fish to large traders from outside the village. Relations between beach seine owners and external traders were generally considered cordial. Medium-scale fresh fish traders from the village sell their fish to external traders or transport their consignments direct to fish markets in large cities, such as Colombo, Negombo and Chilaw. Their relations with external traders, were mixed, sometimes regarded as cordial, and sometimes as difficult, as they did not always receive their payments on time, or occasionally not at all.

Relations among various fish traders were also fraught with difficulties, although less so for micro/small women traders, who did not see themselves as competing on the same scale.

> *Not everyone is the same in business. There is competition and jealousy among fresh fish traders to buy fish at the auction [in Cattiyur]. The sammatti [beach*

> *seine owner] wants the best price so he informs everyone. He won't inform just 2 or 3 people about the auction… The relationship is based on trust because they have faith that we will buy from them [in the north east coast]. There are samatti from our village in Mullaitivu, so the traders buy from them and send to our village. (*Male fish trader, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *They [men] compete to sell fish, but I don't cause any trouble. We can't compete with men. I don't buy large quantities like them. I only buy small quantities of fish.* (Female fish trader, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

In the east coast villages, the large proportion of fresh fish is sold by the fishers directly at the beach to medium and large-scale traders from the village, commission agents representing external traders or external traders themselves, transporting consignments in small and large trucks, including cooler trucks. External traders come from cities and towns in all parts of the country and belong to all ethnic groups – Sinhalese, Muslims and Tamils. In Uppukadal, some proportion of fish is also sold in auction to small and medium traders transporting in motor bicycles and small trucks as well. Most fishers in the east coast villages are "tied" to local traders who have provided loans to purchase boats and fishing gear, set against their future catch. However, fishers considered that they have relatively more bargain power over local traders than migrant fishers from the west coast.

> *If a boat costs LKR four lakhs and I get a lakh from the mudalali to buy my boat, I have to sell the catch to that particular mudalali and don't have a lot of capacity to bargain. If we don't depend on mudalalis we can sell to anyone. It is only one or two people who are not dependent in our village. All others are dependent on mudalalis. However, compared to people from Cattiyur, we have some power to decide the price of our catch. We get money from the mudalali every day. Cattiyur people get their money at the end of the month, after deducting all their expenses. Mudalalis prefer Cattiyur people because of that. Also we sell only 20-30% of our catch to the mudalali. We can sell the rest to others.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

When fishers from the west coast villages migrate to Selippur and Uppukadal they are often "sponsored" by medium-scale traders (mostly from the host villages but also in some cases from home villages), who pay them advances to transport themselves and their boats to the east coast (see section on Migration). They receive advances for constructing *wadi* (fishing camps), fuel and food as well. All advances are then deducted against the catch during the season. Relations between migrant fishers and local traders were generally considered cordial; traders were important in negotiating the terms of migration, ensuring the security of migrants and settling disputes between local and migrant fishers. However, in Selippur, some migrant fishers who did not receive anticipated prices from traders, moved to other migratory sites on the northeast coast, such as Nayaru.

While there are a few women, who are micro/small traders of fresh fish within their villages, women from the east coast villages do not engage in trading in nearby villages or towns. In Uppdukadal some wives of fishers engage in household-level processing of dried fish, as well as micro-scale trading within their village. There are a few women processors who sell to dried fish traders in larger towns, informing them when they have adequate quantities via mobile phones.

> *There are three buyers – a husband and wife from Kandy, who come in a van, and a Muslim man from Nilaveli who comes in an auto. I have their phone numbers and inform them to come and collect. They occasionally come by and see if there is dried fish.* (Female fish processor and trader, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Relations between fishers and dried fish processors, as well as processors and traders were perceived as cordial. Processors in Selippur sell mostly to external traders, both small-scale women traders from the west coast, as well as small/medium/large-scale male traders from large towns across the island. Relations between processors and traders were generally regarded as cordial here as well.

For both women and men, market relations facilitate bridging networks, which can be either ambivalent or imbued with an aura of a bonding tie.

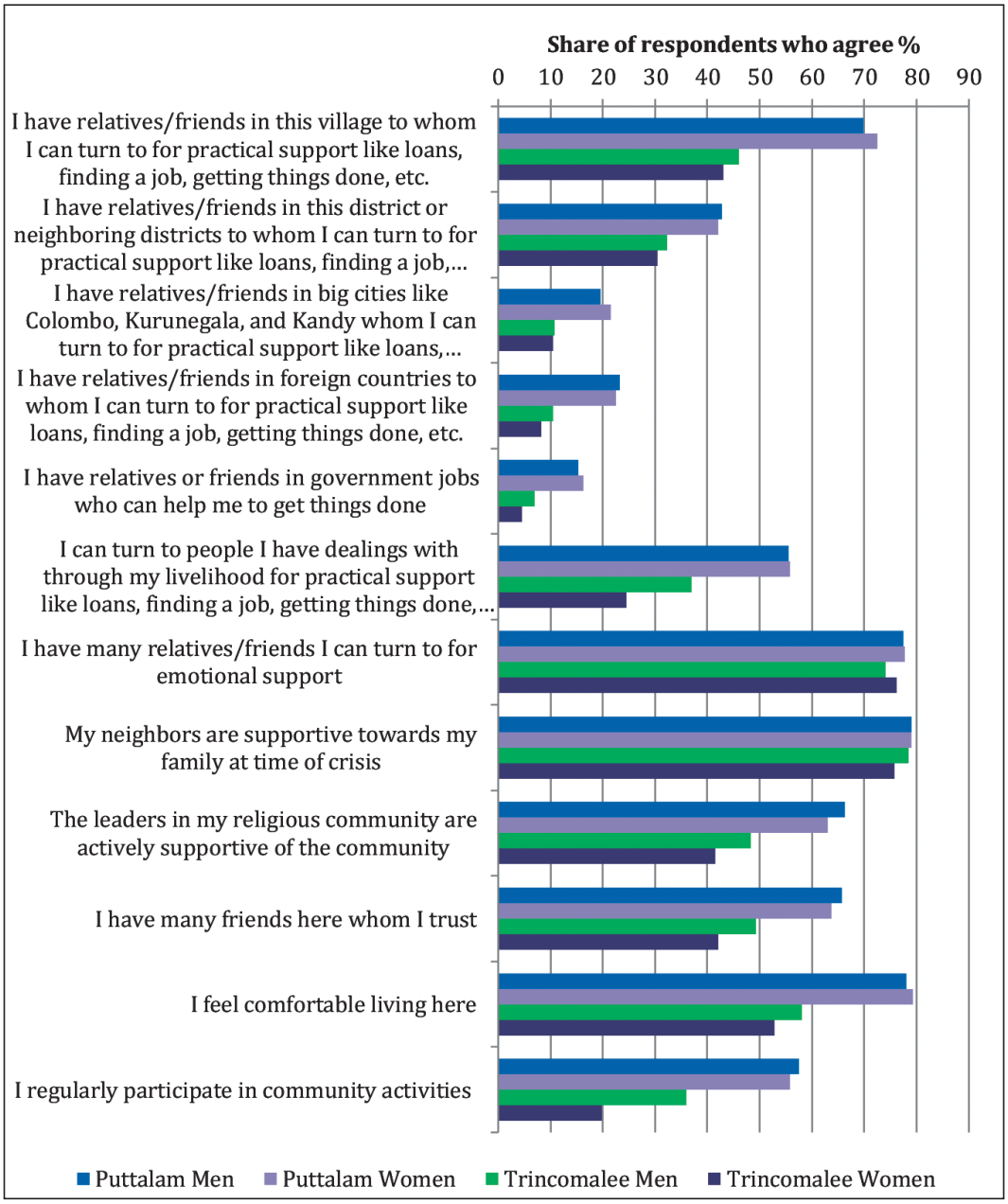
5.6 Livelihood support from social networks across communities

Both women and men in all four study villages indicated that they could count on relatives, friends and neighbours for emotional and crisis support, as revealed by the quantitative data for all households from the Household Survey of 2017 in Figure 5.4. However, there were noteworthy differences in the importance of social networks that support livelihoods between coasts and among women and men.

While most women (72%) and men (70%) in the west coast villages indicated that they could turn to relatives and friends in their village for practical support in their livelihoods, only a minority of women (42%) and men (45%) in the east coast villages were able to do so. Moreover, the support from work/business ties, indicated by the responses to the statement "I can turn to people I have dealings through my livelihood for practical support like loans, finding a job, getting things done" was considerably higher in the west coast villages (56% for women, 55% for men), than in the east coast villages (37% for men, 25% for women). While the difference between women and men in the west coast villages was negligible, there was a considerable gap in favour of men in the east coast villages. This can be explained by the higher engagement of women in fish sorting and fish processing in the west coast villages.

In addition, while most men and women participated in community activities in the west coast villages, only a minority did so in the east coast villages. Moreover, most respondents in the west coast villages also acknowledged support to the community from religious leaders, while a minority did so in the east coast villages. In both cases, while the gender difference was not large in the west coast villages, there was a considerable gap in favour of men in east coast villages. Thus, livelihood support from both bonding and bridging networks emerges stronger in the west coast villages than in the east coast villages. Moreover, while the difference between men and women in access to both bonding and bridging networks in the west coast villages is not large, there is a considerable gender gap in the east coast villages.

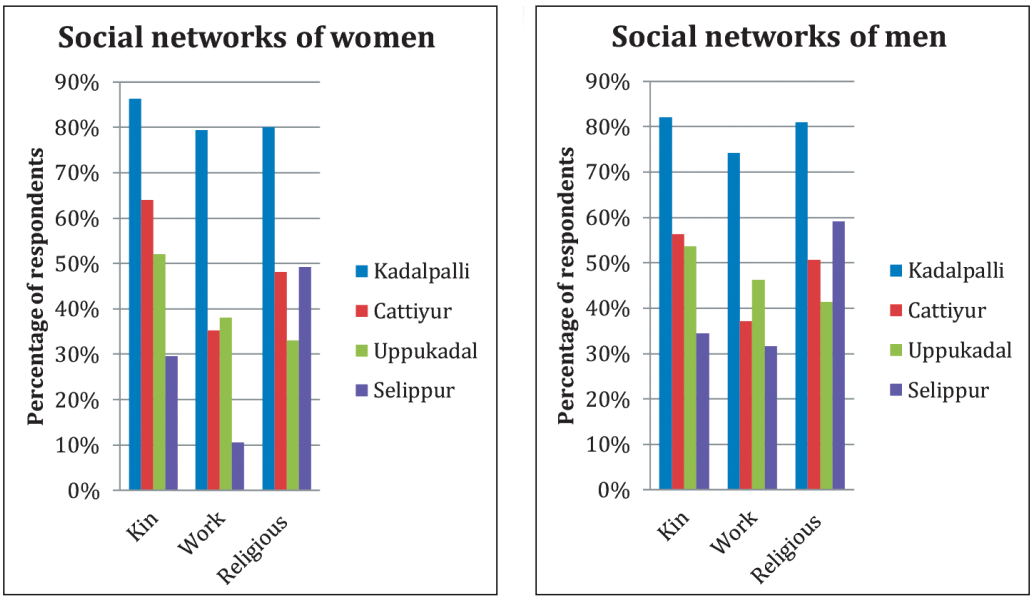
Figure 5.4: Importance of social networks for livelihood support to women and men in all households of study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts



Source and notes: Estimated with microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

As with all households, women and men from fishing households in the west coast study villages also indicated more livelihood support from social networks in general than those in the east coast villages (see Figure 5.5). Three types of social networks – kin, work-related and religious – were identified.

Figure 5.5: Importance of types of social networks for livelihood support to women and men in fishing households of study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts



Source: Based on ICES Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

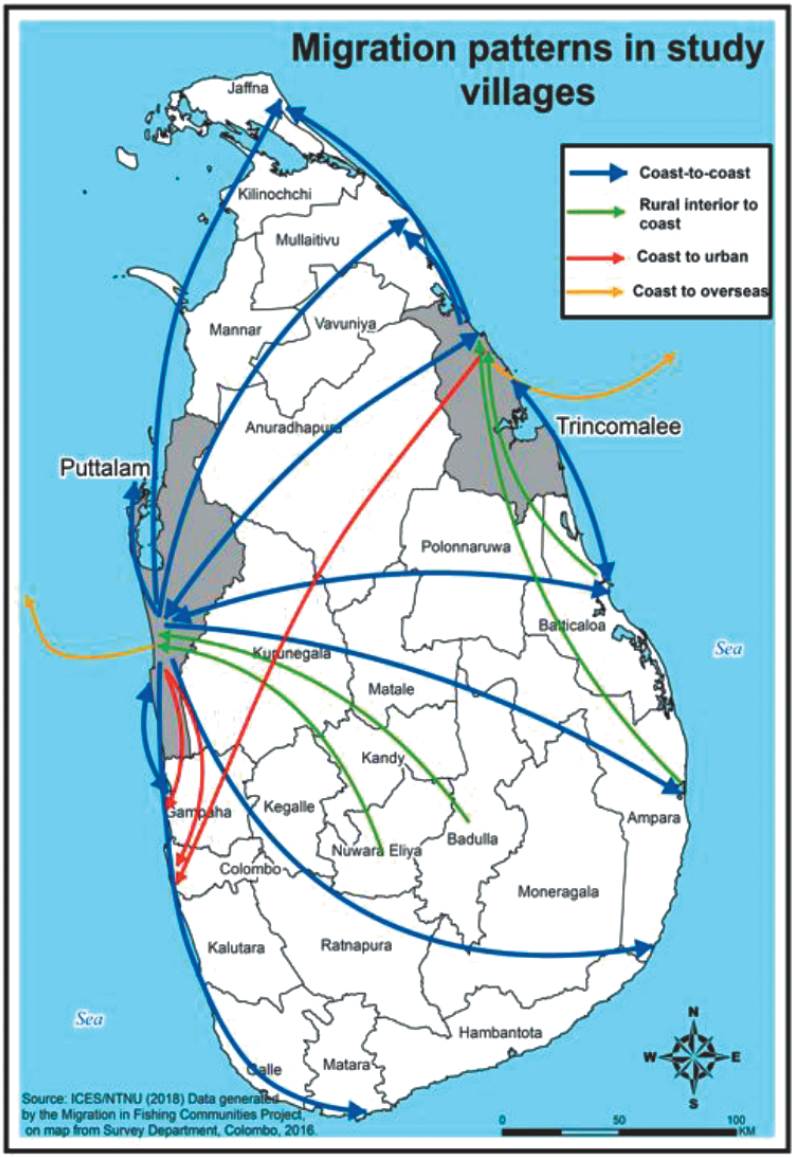
The difference between Kadalpalli and the other three villages is likely to be based on both cultural and economic factors. Thus, Kadalpalli has a strong identity as a Roman Catholic village, with the church and religious networks playing a central role within the community. The institutional basis for social networks is stronger in this village, and relatively more supportive of the participation of women. Moreover, the ownership of productive assets is also higher - the majority of fishing households in Kadalpalli owned their own OFRP boats, while only a minority did in the other three villages. Both ethnicity/religion and class appear to contribute to stronger networks for livelihood support in Kadalpalli.

6. Migration

Migration of small-scale fishers or fishing communities globally has been regarded as an adaptive livelihood strategy of poor, resource dependent people moving from areas of high poverty, high dependency on fishing and depleted fisheries resources to areas of lower poverty, less dependency on fishing and more productive fisheries (Jorion 1988; Cripps 2009). This Malthusian approach to migration has been challenged by other scholars (Haakonsen 1991; Jul-Larsen 1994; Overa 2001; Marquette et al. 2002; Kraan 2009) who argue for the relevance of an opportunity-driven combination of ecological, socio-economic and institutional factors. Thus, migration among small-scale fishers is considered to function as a mechanism that facilitates resource utilisation in the face of new ecological niches, enabling fishers to increase their harvesting of fish in response to seasonal and long-term 'booms' in the ecological system, connected with upwelling of the sea and the mobility of fish species (Overa 2001). Migration among some fisher groups in Ghana has also been seen as a 'search of profitability and gain' (Delaunay 1991: 161). The role of translocal social/institutional networks in initiating and sustaining fisher migration to expand social and livelihood spaces has been emphasised (Overa 2001, Kraan 2009). A case for understanding fisher migration within the overall context of mobility of specific socio-cultural groups and countries is argued by Kraan (2009: 173), who points out that while migration is not an exceptional phenomenon, as a component of livelihood strategies in West African societies, it is yet considered an anomaly to 'normal sedentary life'.

In this analysis, qualitative data revealed that migration in the four study villages is a multi-faceted phenomenon, motivated by a combination of material, relational and subjective dimensions of wellbeing in the sending and receiving villages, and resulting in a multiple set of outcomes, along these three dimensions of wellbeing. Quantitative data on household consumption corroborated that internal seasonal migration is not driven by material factors alone, whereas material dimensions were more important in external migration.

Map 6.1: Migrations patterns in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts



There are two main migration patterns to and from fishing communities identified in the four study villages – internal migration within the island seasonally for fishing, as well as other livelihoods and marriage, and external migration to the Middle East, Europe and Australia. Internal migration includes coast-to-coast, rural interior to the coast and coast to urban migrations (Map 2). External migration to the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Dubai, Oman, Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon) is for temporary labour,

mostly as unskilled workers. The migration to Europe and Australia is intended to be permanent. Members from fishing households have emigrated permanently to Europe (UK, Italy, Cyprus) and Australia legally through relatives/friends who have sponsored them or illegally by boat, some of whom have managed to establish residence there while others have been deported back.

6.1 Internal seasonal migration

Patterns of migration

Out-migration

For the west coast villages, the primary internal seasonal migration pattern is spending the southwest monsoon period (April-September) fishing on the northeast or east coasts. Although this was generally estimated as a six-month period, households varied their actual coast-to-coast migration period between March-October, ranging from four to eight months. The main destinations for Kadalpalli and Cattiyur fishers are Trincomalee district (along the coast from Kumburupiddy to Pulmoddai) and Mullaitivu district (around Nayaru). During the pre-war period, Kadalpalli fishing households scattered themselves all along the coast from Nayaru in Mullaitivu district in the northeast to Pottuvil in Ampara district in the southeast, with a significant presence in Nayaru, where some households owned land and were settled permanently. Cattiyur households migrated to villages along the northeast coast from Jaffna to Mullaitivu districts. During the war, migration for both villages was mostly confined to the coastal stretch north of Trincomalee town to Pulmoddai in the Trincomalee district, where there was a naval presence, which afforded west coast migrant fishers some protection, although there were fishing restrictions due to the fighting. Some migrants from both villages managed to migrate to locations in Mullaitivu district during the early phases of the war by negotiating with the LTTE cadres who occupied that area. However, during the later intense periods of war, those households permanently settled in Nayaru had to leave while migrants could also no longer access this location. During the post-war period, households from both west coast villages have been migrating to villages all along the northeast and east coasts, from Nayaru in Mullaitvu district to Pottuvil in Ampara district. Cattiyur fishers also migrate to Vettilaikerni (near Elephant Pass) in Jaffna district. Many migrant fishers continue to go to villages along the coast from Nilaveli

to Pulmoddai in the Trincomalee district where some households have permanently settled in the Kumburupiddy/Salapiyaru area. However, there is a steep rise in migrant fishers to Nayaru in Mullaitivu district, which is increasingly receiving the main thrust of migration from both Kadalpalli and Cattiyur.

A smaller proportion of fishing households from Kadalpalli also migrate to islands off the west coast of Kalpitiya in northern Puttalam, especially Baththalangunduwa, which has the same fishing season as their home village. This pattern was more prevalent during the years of war when many families were unable to migrate to the northeast/east coasts.

Around 70% of fishing households in Kadalpalli and Cattiyur were estimated to be engaged in seasonal migration, according to FGDs. The household survey indicated that members of 75% of fishing households in the study sites in Puttalam migrated elsewhere for fishing seasonally (Table 6.1). The majority of migrant fishers from Kadalpalli took their own OFRP boats or were crew in these boats, while the majority of migrants from Cattiyur worked as labourers in beach seines owned by Cattiyur traders or beach seine owners from other west coast villages, or were crew in OFRP boats owned by traders in east/northeast coast villages.

Table 6.1: Internal out-migrants (for fisheries) in fishing households in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts

GN Division	Men		Women		Migrant HHs		All Fishing HHs	
	#	As % of fishing HHs	#	As % of fishing HHs	#	As % of fishing HHs	#	%
WEST COAST (Puttalam district)								
Kadalpalli	145	76.3	71	37.4	146	76.8	190	100
Cattiyur	113	72.4	16	10.3	115	73.7	156	100
Both villages	258	74.6	87	25.1	261	75.4	346	100
EAST COAST (Trincomalee district)								
Uppukadal	23	19.0	0	0	23	19.0	121	100
Selippur	6	4.2	0	0	6	4.2	142	100
Both villages	29	11.0	0	0	29	11.0	263	100
ALL	287	47.1	87	14.3	290	47.6	609	100

Source: ICES Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

The migration pattern was gendered – the majority of migrants were men (75% of fishing households), while a minority of migrants were women (25% of fishing households), who were mostly wives of boat owning fishers, and in some cases mothers or mothers-in-law of boat owning fishers. While the fisher migration pattern for men is similar in both villages on the west coast, this pattern for women is different, with almost 40% of women from fishing households engaging in seasonal migration in Kadalpalli, in contrast to only 10% in Cattiyur. In both east coast villages, there were no women migrating for fishing, while around 19% of men migrated for fishing from Uppukadal.

There is a noteworthy difference in migration patterns according to ownership of fishing craft (Table 6.2). Large proportions of both men (90%) and women (46%) from households owning an OFRP boat migrated. However, the largest share of all male migrants (45%) came from those without a craft (i.e. crew and beach seine workers), followed closely by those owning an OFRP boat (41%), whereas 66% of female migrants came from households owning an OFRP boat. Women from boat-owning households accompanied their husbands or sons to support their fishing activities, cook and maintain the temporary shelter for their husband/son, as well as the accompanying crew member, and to engage in their own processing activities. Wives of crew and beach seine workers were generally not provided accommodation in migratory camps, did not have access to fish for processing and therefore were less likely to migrate.

Table 6.2: Migration of male fishers and accompanying female family members in study villages, according to ownership of craft, Puttalam district

Type of craft	Migrating male fishers		Accompanying female family members		All fishing HHs
	#	%	#	%	#
OFRP boat	107	89.9	55	46.2	119
NTRB	33	55.9	12	20.3	59
Beach seine owner	2	40.0	1	20.0	5
No craft (Crew/workers)	117	72.7	15	9.3	161
All	261	75.4	83	24.0	346

Source: ICES Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

There was no internal seasonal migration reported from Selippur village on the east coast, where households engage in fishing all year round in the sea and the lagoon or combine fishing with farming. In this Muslim village, people took pride that their natural resources could sustain them all year round and said that by Allah's grace they did not need to migrate seasonally for work. However, the household survey indicated a very small proportion of fishing households (4%) with male out-migrants for fishing. Data from the household survey indicated a somewhat larger proportion of fishing households (19%) in Uppukadal with male members migrating north to Mullaitivu and Jaffna districts or south to Batticaloa district along the east coast during the same fishing season as in their home village. Altogether members of 11% of fishing households from the east coast villages migrated elsewhere for fishing, according to the household survey data. This migration pattern was also gendered – no women from east coast villages migrated internally for fishing.

In addition, a smaller proportion of people from all four villages migrated internally, either temporarily or permanently, for non-fisheries related livelihoods, such as construction work, employment as shop assistants, business and trading, especially to larger towns and cities within their district or neighbouring districts, and permanently for marriage to all parts of the country.

Moreover, most households in Selippur were internally displaced, mainly to the Puttalam district, and lived with relatives or in refugee camps during different phases of the war. However, all have returned to their home village by the time of the research.

In-migration

The main thrust of internal in-migration is into the two east coast villages, Selippur and Uppukadal, from the two west coast villages, Kadalpalli and Cattiyur, as well as from other fishing villages in the Chilaw area of Puttalam district and Negombo area of Gampaha district. These are mostly fishers and crew with their own boats, and accompanying female family members and children, but there are also several beach seine owners and workers who migrate into the two villages from the same west coast fishing villages. Selippur receives around 400-500 OFRP boats, while Uppukadal receives around 40-50 boats, according to male fishers. This is despite the permitted number of migrant

boats for the entire Trincomalee district being 300, according to fisheries officials. In addition, considerable numbers of fishing labourers migrate to both villages from Batticaloa district (especially Vaharai, Kathiraveli and Valaichchenai areas) on the east coast to work in the boats of local fishers, as well as in beach seines belonging to local and migrant owners. Selippur also receives migrant fishing labourers from Ampara (Kalmunai and Akkaraipattu) district on the southeast coast, as well as agricultural labourers from other parts of Trincomalee district (Muttur, Kinniya), Batticaloa district and Ampara district (Akkaraipattu). In addition, several owners of harvester machines migrate to Selippur during the rice harvest season. Uppukadal receives small numbers of in-migrants who come seasonally to collect honey or wild fruit from the Muttur area in Trincomalee district.

There is a smaller migration of fishing labourers, mostly young single men, into the west coast villages, Cattiyur and Kadalpalli, during their fishing season. These mostly come from Batticaloa district, as well as from neighbouring villages, to work primarily on beach seines. There are also fishing labourers who come from Trincomalee district to Cattiyur to work on beach seines. In addition, there are migrants who come into both west coast villages from tea estates in Hatton, Nuwara Eliya district and Badulla district in the central hill-country to work as shrimp farm workers.

Apart from seasonal in-migration, Uppukadal itself is constituted of a large proportion of in-migrant households resettled permanently after the tsunami and the end of the war. These households came from neighbouring villages in the Kuchchaveli area, coastal areas of Mannar, Mullaitivu and Jaffna districts, as well as estate areas in Matale, Galle, Nuwara Eliya and Badulla districts. In addition, several fishing households, which were seasonal migrants from Cattiyur and Kadalpalli, are also settled in Uppukadal.

In all four villages, there is in-migration of men and women for marriage but most marriages are contracted within the village. As three of the villages are predominantly matrilocal, in-migration of men appears to be higher than that of women.

Reasons for migration

The reasons for out-migration as articulated by west coast villagers emerged primarily as material and relational, with some subjective considerations. In both villages, women, men and youth concurred that the main reason for seasonal coast-to-coast migration was both weather-related and economic. During the southwest monsoon period (May-August), the sea is too rough on the west coast to make a living from fishing and there is no other viable alternative to earn a livelihood other than migrating to the north/east coasts. The weather instilled a fear to fish in their home villages during the off-season. Moreover, fish were plentiful and fish prices stable on the east coast. Migration enabled households to set aside some savings as well.

> *During the warakang (off-season) we cannot fish in our sea. The sea is so harsh. We cannot earn much due to the poor catches. The estuary is so dangerous. So we are afraid to do fishing here. But we need to do our job. We need to eat and meet our expenses. If we borrowed money from a seetu (rotating credit association) we need to pay back. So we need to migrate. In the sea in Selippur we catch more fish. The prices do not fluctuate from time to time as they do here. We can get a fixed price throughout the day*. (Wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *We come here [migratory site] to get a better income than in our village during the off-season there. That is the main reason. We like coming here. We need money to educate our children. Expenses are high with tuition fees and so on. We can send back LKR 5,000 per week, LKR 20,000 per month and even save a little here. We can't do that in the village. We manage with the savings from here when we get there*. (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Men and women from both west coast villages considered migration to the north/east coast as a strategy to minimise risk. They perceived migration as a way of securing their lives from a dangerous ocean during the monsoon period.

> *Migration is to protect our life. It is a risk for us to fish here [during warakang]. We have to work, protect our family, as well as our life. We would prefer to stay here and not face difficulties there. We will stop migrating if they can stop the monsoon wind from blowing here*. (Men's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Migration was considered the only option to earn money during the off-season and meet expenses at home, including the education of children, despite the hardships faced in the process of migration.

> *There is no benefit in a job that involves hardship. What to do? Because there is no other livelihood, I take a little money and migrate. I won't earn the profit that I do if I stay at home. So I migrate. From my earnings, I have to alleviate hunger, see to our children's education expenses and the electricity bill.* (Male fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

The imperative to migrate was higher among households which had a bad fishing season in their home villages, thus incurring debts, which had to be repaid.

> *We could settle our loans by migrating and we could send money here [home village] for food expenses. My mother took care of our children when we were in the North. We used to go there in May and come back during the last week of October.* (Wife of fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *We don't enjoy our life there at all. We have to go there because it is off-season here. We have bank loans and we have to repay by earning money there.* (Men's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

In addition, male fishers in Kadalpalli referred to the ecological factor of fish migrations that took place during April-July on the east coast – especially of flying fish, which brought large predators, such as tuna and Spanish mackerel in their wake. Thus, migrant fishers maximised their earnings by harvesting this fish resource and perceived themselves as contributing to increased fish production in the country at large.

> *There is a migration of fish on that coast during that time. We go there to follow this migrating fish. We call them le malu (blood fish). It is a big harvest for our country. Those days, there were only a handful of boats to catch this fish there. It is people from here, our grandfathers, who first identified it and started to harvest it. The fish migrate at that time, so if we don't catch them, we lose this harvest. Those days, people over there were farming. They learnt to fish from us. Now they also know of this fish resource.* (Men's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Moreover, men from both villages emphasised the tradition of migration, which had existed from the time of their grandparents. They indicated that fishers from their villages were among the pioneers in fishing successfully in their own OFRP boats in the north/east. Beach seine owners in Cattiyur indicated that they had inherited beach seine shares (*padu*) in the north/east coasts from their ancestors, while beach seine workers pointed out that their families had accompanied beach seine owners for many generations.

> *For us here migration is very historical. However, the people in that area [host location] now do not know about our migration pattern. Before the war started we used to work in Mullaitivu. When the intensity of the war escalated we left all our belongings; boats, engines, nets and all and came back. During the intense war period we used to migrate to Baththalangundu. We cannot do livestock rearing or farming here. We don't have enough space. Our only skill and livelihood is fishing. So we migrate.* (Men's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Households in Kadalpalli migrating to Baththalagunduwa off the northwest coast and Uppukadal fishers migrating to locations in Jaffna, Mullaitivu and Batticaloa districts indicated primarily economic reasons. Migrating along the same coast during the non-monsoonal period was undertaken when the fishing season at home appeared not to yield an adequate catch and/or there was not enough work available as fishing crew/labourers in their home villages. While migrants from the west coast tended to use their own OFRP boats, migrants along the east coast worked as crew/labourers in OFRP boats in host villages or beach seines owned by host villagers or by west coast migrants.

In contrast, the main reasons that emerged from east coast villages for in-migration were perceived to be relational. Male fishers in the east coast villages see access to the fish resources of the east/northeast coast and the policy of the fisheries authorities that "the sea is for all" as the main reasons for in-migration of fishers from the west coast.

> *All the fishermen from Mullaitivu to Pudavaikattu fish in the sea in this area. So when 300 new boats [of migrants] come, there is not enough for everyone. But the fisheries authorities say that the sea is for all and there are no restrictions. They don't think of personal losses. There are no regulations for building wadis - the distance between two wadis and so on. We suffer great losses due to migration.* (Male beach seine owner, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *Migrants come here from Cattiyur, Negombo, Chilaw, Wennappu, Kalpitiya. We call them all Cattiyur people. We don't have good relations with them. Business people (mudalalis) bring them here. They use illegal fishing methods – such as disco valai (trammel nets). We use only 2.5inch thundel (hook and line). They have police support. The police says 'ape rata, ape minissu' ('our country, our people'). We have demonstrated against migrant fishers. We want to stop them from fishing here. But nothing happened. The government promised to send them back to their places but didn't do that.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Local traders who sponsored migrants into the two east coast villages indicated a labour shortage during the fishing season as motivating them to bring in migrant fishers and workers. Both men and women in Selippur indicated that agricultural workers were recruited from outside the village due to a scarcity of agricultural labour, while owners of harvesters came seasonally as villagers did not own harvesting machines.

There was a consensus among men, women and youth in the west coast villages that in-migrants from Batticaloa district and from the hill-country districts were recruited to work in their villages due to labour shortages in beach seines and shrimp farms respectively.

Enabling factors/capabilities for migration

Enabling factors for out-migration were perceived in both material and relational terms by west coast villagers, while east coast villagers emphasised relational factors for in-migration.

Skills and assets for fishing

West coast fishers historically migrated to the east coast for beach seine fishing, and both Cattiyur and Uppdukadal beach seine owners, had rights to shares (*padu*) inherited along the male line to beach seining sites on the northeast and east coasts. Alongside the shares, they owned large wooden sea canoes and beach seine nets, operating these with labourers from their home villages. These labourers also possessed skills for beach seine

fishing, which was not practised by local fishers on the east/northeast coasts. East coast fishers used non-motorised small wooden canoes, later converted to fibre-glass canoes, until around the 1990s in Selippur and the post-tsunami period in Uppukadal. These canoes enabled them to fish with gillnets near shore. West coast fishers began having access to OFRP boats, which enabled them to go further out to sea since the 1970s, and this became the predominant form of fishing in Kadalpalli, where beach seine shares/owners were a few, in contrast to Cattiyur, which maintained a large beach seining population. West coast fishers were skilled in the use of hook and line, in addition to gillnets. Hook and line enable west coast fishers to catch high value large pelagics, such as mackerel and tuna. When Selippur fishers expanded its OFRP fleet since the end of the war, they have been using purse seines in addition to gill nets. However, west coast fishers have longer experience with using OFRPs and consider themselves specialised in hook and line.

Knowledge of fishing grounds in the migratory site

Male fishers referred to familiarity with the conditions of the sea in specific east/northeast coast sites influencing their decision to migrate there, rather than other locations. They also indicated their knowledge of aggregation of target fish species and fish movements at particular times of the year.

> *There is the piyamessa (flying fish), which migrates [along the northeast coast]. Following the piyamessa are tuna and thora (Spanish mackerel), which feed on it. We had knowledge about these migrating schools of fish for a long time. They are only there for three months, from April to July. So that is why we try to get there before April. We have to go 40 km out to sea here to catch these fish. But there the sea is deeper already by 10 km, so we reach these fish faster. We call it the pirimi muhuda (male sea) over there in the east because it is powerful (balasampath). Many of the fish breeding grounds are there. Tuna for example, hatch on the east coast, and migrate north before coming to our west coast here.* (Men's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Their preference for sites in Trincomalee and Mullaitivu district was contrasted to the difficulties they had encountered with conditions of the sea in migratory locations in the Batticaloa district.

Knowledge of language of host communities

Cattiyur villagers are Tamil speaking and as Hindus, also share a religious identity with Tamil Hindu fishing communities on the East coast, such as Uppukadal. Kadalpalli villagers are bilingual, and although considering themselves as Sinhalese Catholics, were Tamil-speaking historically, and continue to be able to communicate in the latter language. Thus, migrants from both villages can communicate with Tamil and Muslim host villagers on the east/northeast coasts. Out-migrants from Uppukadal, who migrate along the coast to Tamil villages on the northeast and east coasts, also share the same language.

Access to facilities and cleanliness

Their preference for specific sites was also indicated by the availability of facilities such as convenient access to water, and availability of latrines near the migratory shelters. Also cleanliness of the beach and availability of space or lack of overcrowding were other considerations.

Linkages with traders

Linkages with traders in the host villages are critical for the ability to migrate currently. These traders acted as sponsors, who paid advances for the transportation of boats, palm thatch construction material, cooking utensils, bedding and the migrants themselves in trucks to the host villages. In addition they also provided advances for fishing gear and fuel, against the catch.

> *We partner with a trader when migrating. The trader gives an advance of about LKR 250,000 for a set of nets. From this amount we have to spend on buying/mending nets, hiring a lorry, which costs around LKR 15,000. We also have to buy cadjan [palm thatch] leaves to construct the wadi. We take cadjans with us: 100 thatches cost LKR 3,000. Normally we need about 250 cadjans.*

> *We also have to pay an advance to the helper [crew member]. We also have to purchase rations for the journey, as well as for the household to feed the children and elders [left behind] at least till we are able to send money back. So this advance is barely enough to meet all the expenses.*
>
> *When we start work at our [migratory] site, the trader pays us money on a weekly basis after deducting for the expenses of food and fuel.* (Men's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

In the past, linkages with traders, who operated on the northeast/east coast during the monsoon season, from their own villages also enabled migration but this was less the case in the present, apart from beach seine owners, who had their own shares on the northeast/east coasts.

Traders and boat owners in host villages in Batticaloa and Mullaitivu district were also important for enabling fishing labourers from east coast villages to migrate to these villages along the same coast for several weeks. Relations were generally considered cordial and workers were provided with fishing gear and food.

> *The only benefit [of migrating] is earning money there. We have no time to integrate with the community there. They provide shelter, boats, engines. They give us food and if we don't like that we can make our own food.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Social networks within the village

Migrant households plan the migration location and dates of departure with a small group of relatives, neighbours and/or friends. These are informal groups that migrate together, often year after year. At the beginning of the migration season, migrants make sure that they arrive at the migration sites in large enough groups so that any opposition or hostility they might encounter from host villagers could be thwarted by their strength in numbers.

> *Those who migrate from this village stay together in wadi. And when we migrate we do so in batches so that several lorries leave the village together.*

> *Our people have already started to get organised to migrate now*. (Men's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Fisheries societies within the communities play a role in facilitating migration by negotiating with authorities and handling paperwork.

> *Our [fisheries] society is more than 40 years old. There are about 350 members at present… We get a letter from our society and another letter from Grama Niladhari prior to migration. Then it is easier to solve any conflict or administrative problems that might come up*. (Men's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Migrants from Kadalpalli recreate mini replicas of their home villages in the migratory sites including sections, which separated out the two different castes, and engaged in clustering of extended families.

> *We migrate to Nayaru [Mullaitivu district] with a fish trader from our village. During the migrant season Nayaru looks like our village because the beach stretch and wadi are inhabited by fisherfolk from our village. We migrate with our wives*. (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

We observed the two sections, side by side in the migration sites belonging to the two castes from Kadalpalli in Selippur and Uppukadal as well. The recreation of space also includes a small church built of palm thatch in the migratory sites. Thus, the strength of the social networks within and outside the village, and a culture of migration that has prevailed over generations are critical in enabling migration.

Strength of linking ties/external institutional structures

Male fishers in both east coast villages indicated the support by politicians in the south, as well as the fisheries authorities as a main enabling factor for migrants to come to their villages.

> *Government officers are biased. They catch only boats [using banned nets] of Muslims but not boats of the Tamils and Sinhalese… What is banned in Trincomale is not banned in other districts. We do not have issues or conflict*

> *with outsiders. But government officers and media are biased and they take the side of outsiders.* (Men's FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *There has been so much violence both on the shore and the sea. We don't talk to them [migrant fishers]. If we have disputes and go to the police, they just say 'yanna, yanna" ('go, go'). Whether the police officers are Tamil, Muslim or Sinhalese, the migrants have political support.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Men in Uppukadal also referred to the ineffectiveness of their own political leaders at provincial level as an enabling factor for in-migration. In addition, male fishers in Selippur emphasised the role of local traders in their community who sponsored migrant fishers and labourers from the west coast.

> *Sinhalese and Muslim mudalalis bring migrants here, not our mudalalis [Tamil], who are concerned about local fishermen. Business people think that only they should live. We think all of us should live. If our society decides to sell a kilo of fish for LKR 100, the migrants sell for LKR 60. Migrants have earned lakhs of rupees from the mudalalis who have brought them here. Local people in the fisheries society have the capacity to bargain. Migrants will accept any price offered by the mudalali because they have loans with him and can't bargain.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

They also referred to the disunity within and among fisheries societies in their villages to dissuade in-migration.

Disabling factors/vulnerabilities for migration

Relational factors emerged very strongly in the perceptions of both west and east coast villagers as disabling factors or vulnerabilities relating to migration.

Concern about care of children and schooling

If both spouses decide to migrate, children below school age usually accompany the parents, while children who are already in school are left with grandparents or other relatives. In the past, this was considered a satisfactory arrangement and there appeared

to be no lack of kin to leave children behind in the home villages. However, currently while relatives who will take on the children are still available, parents question whether children receive adequate care from their elderly parents, who find it difficult to manage children and do not have sufficient education themselves to supervise schooling and homework.

> *In this community while growing up we didn't receive sound guidance and good direction. Parents migrate internally for fishing. So there were no adults to encourage us as children. And there was limited protection and care for children. No tuition, extra learning, skills development, no homework as there was no one to follow up. After school children cannot go to teachers [for extra help]. I recall distinctly how isolated we felt when parents migrate as there was no one to look after us. Parents leave us with the grandparents who are ill frequently. We would not get the right nutrition and food. Even my elder sister did not know how to cook so if a grandparent was ill, we hardly had proper food at home. I recall how we had passed out due to lack of food. Then I recall my parents making a decision to not migrate and for about 5 years my father did fishing only in the village.* (Wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Thus, many women decide that they need to stay in their home villages when their children are of school age to make sure that they go regularly to school, attend after-school private tutoring classes and complete their education as successfully as possible. Households with daughters were particularly concerned about their vulnerability and security if left behind at home.

> *Women don't migrate during the off-season here because they have to look after the children and see to their schooling. If the children are older, we can go North and to Trinco. If you have daughters, it is a problem.* (Women's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Ideology of motherhood

The migration of women is increasingly restricted by cultural norms in both Tamil Hindu and Sinhalese Catholic villages, where women are perceived to be wives and mothers, with the primary role of childcare. Thus, historically while the entire household migrated

and children were taken out of school during the migratory season to accompany parents, this pattern changed in the last decades where school age children were left behind with relatives, while their mothers migrated with husbands and toddlers. Currently more and more women stay behind with their school age children.

> *Normally we migrate in March and stay until July-August in Selippur. Up to now, I would take my child (now 3 years old) with me. But from next year onward I would not be migrating, I need to take care of my child, her schooling. Mothers nowadays don't leave their children behind and migrate.* (Wife of migrant fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Some husbands are now accompanied by their mothers or mothers-in-law or a paid labourer, who will cook and take care of the migratory shelter. In the case of Kadalpalli, the church has played an active role to reinforce motherhood and discourage migration of women, who are advised that their primary responsibility is to be good mothers, take care of their children and ensure that they are educated.

> *Through the church we have been given advice during Sunday mass about the need for at least the mother of the family to stay back with the children and look after the household while the father/men migrate.* (Wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

However, some wives of boat owners who perceived that they were neither well off nor too poor, felt compelled to migrate with their husbands, and negotiated the social pressure.

> *In families that have money, the women don't migrate with the husbands. They also don't migrate if the husband works in a karaivalai wadi [beach seine camp]. I have to migrate with my husband because we have our own boat. People tell me 'You are leaving your only child and going.' I tell them that we visit him during the holidays and he also comes to us during the holidays.* (Wife of migrant fisher and dried fish processor, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Restrictions by host communities and host-migrant relations

Fishers in host communities claim fish resources as their own, and mobilised through fisheries societies, actively prevent migrants from establishing camps, or negotiate mechanisms with local authorities and politicians to prevent migrants from setting camps in their villages. Host-migrant relations were historically claimed as cordial as host households were not engaged in full-time marine fishing in the past. However, the war broke down these relations as some host communities were displaced to India, and the tsunami of 2004 resulted in an increase in fishing households on the east coast, due to aid provided in the form of fishing assets. Post-war, more people have moved into fisheries, partially due to the lack of other livelihood options. Cattiyur migrants also attributed the increase in fishers as initiated by the army.

> *Life in a wadi in the North is a life of freedom, particularly in the Saalai, Pokkanai areas. There were no problems in those days. The people there were farmers and no one did fishing. After the war the army has made them engage in the fishing trade so now we don't have access.* (Male migrant fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

These changes from the pre-war to post war periods have increased competition for fisheries resources on the east and northeast coasts. This has resulted in accusations by migrants and counter accusations by host communities that the "other group" was responsible for using illegal gear and methods.

> *We follow the Fisheries Act. We don't use illegal methods. The people in Trincomalee use illegal methods – dynamite, surukku (purse seines). That's why they don't want us to come there – 90% of the fishers there use illegal methods whether the government says or not. They can't understand why not.* (Male migrant fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *We do not have serious conflicts with the host communities there. We are all Tamil speaking communities and there is no language barrier between us. Some of them engage in illegal fishing methods and they do not want us to go there. This is the main reason for the conflict. There are people who really interact with us in Uppukadal and Selippur. The people in Selippur use illegal*

> *nets – surukkuvelai are prohibited. Their attitude is if we cannot catch fish, then you should also not catch fish. It's a kind of jealousy. They also do illegal fishing in Uppukadal. We actually mostly go to Uppukadal now. Some people go to Selippur but we don't know what their relations are.* (Men's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

There are conflicts over use of specialised legal fishing gear by migrants as well, as experienced by east coast fishers who migrate north along the same coast.

> *There are conflicts. It all depends on the boat owner we work for. In Mullaitivu, the people don't know to fish with a thundil [hook and line]. So, when we fish with the thundil, the locals complain and tell us not to come.* (Male migrant fisher, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

The ambiguity, unpredictability and lack of trust in relations between migrant and host communities emerged in discussions.

> *It [relations] depends. While some people behave well, some do not. We have a kind of in-between relationship with them. They are good to us and then they chase us away. It depends on the mood. We can't know their hearts.* (Men's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

East coast fishers also referred to several occasions when their fisheries societies were able to get together and organise at district level to restrict in-migration.

Restrictions by authorities

In response to local protests and decrease in near shore fisheries resources, authorities have imposed quotas on the number of migrants who can bring their own boats and fish in fish landing sites on the northeast/east coasts. The entire Trincomalee district has a quota of 300 migrant boats per fishing season (Fisheries officer, Trincomalee district). The quotas for Selippur are 117 and Uppukadal 49 migratory boats respectively. According to fisheries authorities, these quotas are being observed in the last two years (Fisheries officer, Trincomalee district). The authorities issue permits for nets and check on the licenses of the boats, communicating with fishers through their

societies. However, both migrant and local fishers claim that the numbers of migrant boats, although they have reduced in the last two years, exceed the quotas set by the department.

Inability of migrant husbands to manage earnings

Some fishers have stopped migrating because they were unable to manage earnings and save when their wife was not able to accompany them. They wasted their money on alcohol and got into fights.

Alternative sources of regular income

Those households which owned businesses, such as grocery stores, bakeries and eating houses, as well as those which had household members overseas, and therefore had other regular sources of income, were unlikely to engage in internal migration.

Overcrowding of landing sites

The overcrowding of landing sites and beaches was seen as the main disabling factor for in-migration of fishers by male fishers in both east coast villages.

Benefits of migration

Benefits of internal migration were perceived mostly in material terms by both west and east coast fishing households, although some relational and subjective factors also emerged as important for west coast migrants.

Better earnings

Most migrant fishers from the west coast villages said that the main benefit they received from migration was higher earnings than in their home villages. This was due to better, higher-value catches. Their earnings on average were double to earnings in their home villages.

> *We can get a good harvest and a good income at the migrating site. We can catch big fish species there.* (Wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Income from dried fish processing

For women, the income from dried fish processing in the migratory sites was important. Dried fish was sent to their home villages to be sold by relatives, friends or neighbours.

> *We have been migrating for over twenty five years now. When in the migratory site we provide support to remove fish from the nets, cook and especially we have to treat the fish laborer well because they could leave if not treated well. We also do dried fish processing at the site of the wadi. The host community villagers buy dried fish from us. We can sell dried fish to anyone while we are there but the [fresh] fish we catch must only be sold to the trader who sponsors us to migrate.* (Fish processor and wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Some women also earned money in the migratory site by processing fish for local dried fish enterprise owners.

The ability to pay off debts

Income from migratory fishing helped to pay off debts migrants incurred in their home villages. For women, the recovery of their pawned jewellery was possible due to the earnings from migration. Migratory incomes also helped to pay off debts in relation to high expenses incurred for temple festivals.

> *We can settle loans and live happily. We can actually mange our expenses at home. We have to have at least LKR 5,000 for the kovil [temple] festival, which takes place in August every year. We can earn that money by migrating here [migratory site]. We call that kovil festival 'salli thiruvila' (money festival). This festival goes on for 10 days. We wear new clothes and relatives visit home. Therefore it is very expensive.* (Male fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Benefits to local host communities

Migrant fishers referred to benefits to local host communities by their presence, especially infusion of cash into the local economy through purchase of grocery items, vegetables, fruit, fuel and services such as three-wheeler hires. In addition, poor people who came to the beach to help pull in the boats received fish for their meals.

However, east coast villagers did not perceive any benefits from in-migration of fishers from the west coast, except to the few traders who sponsored them.

Getting away from home and camaraderie among migrants

Experiencing different surroundings than their home villages and the camaraderie among fellow migrants living in close quarters were mentioned mostly by male migrants from the west coast villages.

> *It is fun in the wadi. We bathe, play cards (our only entertainment), drink plain tea and go to sleep. We can't go anywhere. We have a radio, but no television. There is no electricity in the wadi.* (Male fish labourer, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *In the wadi, we can eat well. We get rice three times a day. They are not stingy with food. We work all the time, from morning till night. Women don't migrate with us. We don't visit [home village] either because we can't accept a salary [from the beach seine owner] and leave. We are wage labourers.* (Male fish labourer, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

While fishers/labourers who migrated along the coast from east coast villages tended to emphasise material benefits, a few mentioned the camaraderie as well.

> *In some ways, it is enjoyable there [migratory site]. Someone will fetch water, someone will cut the onions, someone will cook.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

New experiences in new places and freedom from restrictions

Youth in Uppukadal indicated the opportunities for new experiences in new places, and freedom from restrictions (i.e. parental control) as a benefit of out-migration.

A fisher in Kadalpalli recalled his freedom as a youth during the migration period.

> *I liked the village when people had migrated. Only the youth remain and it is lively and entertaining. We all stay up sometimes till past midnight watching films, chatting, keeping company. We have our grandparents. While we come*

> *home to eat and sleep, often we are visiting with friends and neighbors during the period when parents migrate.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Response to labour shortages

Women and men in Selippur on the east coast considered in-migrating agricultural workers as useful for the labour that they provided in the fields and gardens. Similarly, in west coast villages, the labour provided by in-migrants in beach seines and shrimp farms was considered as fulfilling the labour gaps and needs of their communities.

Costs of migration

Costs of out-migration expressed in the two west coast villages combined material, relational and subjective dimensions. Men in east coast villagers indicated both material and relational costs of in-migration, while women who did not interact with migrants as they generally did not go to or spend much time on the beach, attributed few benefits or costs to in-migration.

Expected earnings not realised

Migrant households receive advances from traders to migrate against their earnings. If the migratory fishing season does not turn out to be lucrative, migrants are unable to pay off their debts or earn enough savings to take back with them.

Incurrence of debts

For some households the debts they incur during migration are more than they had incurred at home. This is especially the case when the wife who is the financial manager of the household does not migrate and the husband is unable to mange his own expenses or the costs of hired labour.

Loss of assets due to host-migrant conflicts

The increasing tensions over fisheries resources on the northeast/east coasts have resulted in conflicts among migrant and host groups. In some cases migrants have lost

fishing assets or their camps, due to destruction and/or burning. Recovery from the loss of assets can take time.

Vulnerability/security of women

Women from Cattiyur expressed anxiety about their security and vulnerability to potential harassment and abuse from crew when their husbands were away from the migrant camp.

> *My husband brings a co-worker who also lives in our wadi. I cook for him too. These workers complain that their share is not enough or they ask for money. Sometimes there is a fight, which gets physical. They scold me in indecent language. So the co-workers we bring along are not always good. Some are good, some are not good. I am hesitant because I am a woman. The co-worker is there all the time whether my husband is there or not. So I feel awkward. It is difficult but I have to manage. If my husband is not at home, I sleep in another wadi with the other women. If there is no one in the next wadi, then I stay awake all night*. (Wife of fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Men also felt that their wives were not secure while they were at sea.

> *It is a very difficult life out there. We take our wives to the wadi there and leave the children here. Wives help us by cooking for us in the wadiya. But we do not take our wives to the kadal (sea). We are scared of the security of the women because we don't know what will happen until we reach the shore*. (Men's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

This was not the case, however, with women from Kadalpalli, who migrated in larger groups and said they felt very secure in the migrant sites.

Separation from spouses/children

While both men and women found it difficult to be separated from their spouses and children if the wife was left behind in the village, women especially found this separation difficult, revealing the trade-offs between material, relational and subjective wellbeing.

> *I have never migrated myself. I liked that my husband went there to the North for two seasons because we were able to build our house with the money he earned there. Now I don't want him to migrate any more because we have two children here and he needs to be here. When he is over there, I am lonely and every day I am thinking about when he would be coming back home. There is nobody here for me. I think about him going so far away. I have told my husband that with our house now completed we have enough. Don't go anywhere. We are fine here as we are.* (Female fish trader and wife of lagoon fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Men also acknowledged the trade-offs between material benefits of migration and relational costs, such as separation from children, and subjective costs, such as feelings of love and affection.

> *We keep our son at my mother in-law's house in Mullaitivu for schooling. Mother [in-law] migrated to Mullaitivu during war-time. We get to work only if we migrate here [Selippur] but we lose our son's love. You lose one thing to gain something else. We have been waiting for his school holidays. If he has holidays we go and pick him and bring him here.* (Male migrant fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Children left behind in the home village with grandparents or other kin also missed their parents. Some children, especially boys, said that they liked to have the freedom away from parents while girls said they felt more secure if their parents were around.

Neglect of children's education

Migrants who accompanied their parents to migration sites in the past, as well as those who left their children behind, and the children themselves felt that their education was neglected.

> *The schooling was not consistent. When parents migrate we also accompany them. We keep aside our books and go with our parents for the entire period. On our return, the school teachers accept us as they know the lifestyle of fishers and they know that there is nobody to look after us when our parents migrate.*

> *Somehow I started my fishing life at 16 years. Actually, I do not regret leaving school. I don't feel bad about that. Because fishing is our inherited occupation. Sometimes we worry about our poor literacy especially when we struggle to fill forms at the bank. During those times we feel "If only we had also learnt something". Otherwise, we don't have any bad feelings about not attending school properly.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Currently the neglect of education of children left behind with relatives is attributed either to the lack of attention by grandparents or the children's lack of commitment, including the propensity of boys to join groups, who hang out together and get into trouble instead of studying.

Difficult living conditions in the migratory camps

The difficult and temporary nature of living in migratory camps in thatched structures on the beach without easy access to a convenient water supply, and other comforts at home was pointed out mostly by women. Some women also perceived their work burden as higher in the migratory location.

> *We cannot live comfortably when there. During mid day it is very hot in the wadi we are almost burning. Especially during the Easter month. And we do more work there as we don't idle. We cook, make dried fish, help load nets, disentangle and sort fish. So life in the wadi [migratory camp] is hard. We have a good house here and comforts so imagine having to leave this and live in a wadi. We have to collect water daily and keep it stored.* (Wife of migrant fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Fishing labourers from the east coast who went north to Mullaitivu and south to Batticaloa along the same coast found working conditions in the migrant camps trying.

> *It is like living in hell. The moment you close your eyes, the next day dawns [it is time to get up]. We can't do as we like because we are working for someone else. Sometimes, we don't have time to cook. You have to migrate with a mudalali. If not, you have to go alone and look for work there. The mudalali gives us an advance when recruiting us. Therefore, we are slaves. We are stuck*

> *for six to seven months. We can only come home for the festival.* (Male beach seine worker, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Some migrant fishers from the west coast also referred to difficult working conditions as labourers, and deterioration of their health, while migration remained lucrative for boat owners.

> *When I used to migrate as a labourer, there was no benefit because I worked for a salary. Work was hard. I started developing a severe back pain because of the harshness of the work we do. Pulling boats, pulling heavy nets and carrying heavy nets, being severely tossed against waves, all have taken a toll on my back. When I used to own boats and migrated, the income was lucrative. Our best migration location is Pottuvil because the harvest is bountiful.* (Male commission agent, Kadalapalli, Puttalam district)

Nostalgia for home

Most migrants considered their home villages to be better than migratory locations and missed being away for half a year or more. This was because they felt more comfortable in their houses rather than temporary *cadjan* shelters, as well as being surrounded by both immediate and extended family.

> *We are happier here in Cattiyur. When we migrate, we take only two shirts and two trousers with us. We are happiest here in Cattiyur because it's our village and our families are here. If we had jobs here, we would not need to migrate during the off-season. We lose the happiness we have here when we go there. Our lives are spent six months in a jungle and six months at home. Sometimes, when we are there, we start thinking, 'what sort of a life is this? Why did we get caught into coming to such a place?' We feel fed up.* (Men's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

This nostalgia for a sense of home was particularly strong among beach seine labourers and crew members, who were accommodated in worker's quarters or in the boat owner's shelter respectively, and were generally separated from their immediate family

members, including spouse and children, although extended family members such as siblings, cousins or uncles might also be among the migrants.

Lack of fish catch and income

The main cost of migration identified by male fishers in the two east coast villages was the depletion of fish resources, and lack of catch and income for local fishers. Migrants were also identified as using illegal gear (nets with small mesh sizes) and methods (dynamites/lights) and thus causing destruction of the fish resources.

> *The only problem is the migrant fishers. If you use a ¾" – 1½" eye net and cast it on the rocks, the next day there will be no fish there. If you cast nets on rocks, the fish roe will also get trapped, so the fish resources decrease. Sea plants also get destroyed, so fish don't have a place to lay eggs. Therefore, there are no fish. The Fisheries Minister will be from their District/Province. The second problem is that they [fisheries authorities] view Tamils as second-class citizens.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

This was countered by migrant fishers, who accused local fishers of using illegal gear and depleting fish stocks. This resulted in conflicts between migrants and locals over access to fish and damage/loss of fishing gear.

The partiality of the fisheries authorities was reiterated by Muslim fishers, who however, included both Sinhalese fishers from the west coast, as well as Tamil fishers, as receiving their favour.

> *Government officers are biased. They catch only boats [using banned nets] of Muslims but not boats of the Tamils and Sinhalese.* (Men's FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Due to the lack of fish resources near shore, male fishers in Selippur said that they had to travel further distances into the sea, beyond 15 kilometres, increasing their fuel costs.

Lack of docking space

Fishers in both east coast villages complained of the lack of docking space for local boats due to the influx of migrant boats, while those in Uppukadal also claimed that migrants received the support of the police to secure spaces for their boats.

Pollution of beaches

The pollution of the beach by in-migrants was another issue mentioned by men in both east coast villages, while youth also considered the migrants untidy and responsible for cluttering their clean beaches. Women in Uppukadal indicated the pollution of a well by in-migrants.

Conflicts among youth

Male youth in Uppukadal indicated fights between local and migrant youth, due to the latter flirting with local girls.

Spread of prostitution and disease

Men in Selippur referred to spread of prostitution and disease by in-migrants during their stay on the east coast.

6.2 Rights discourses on internal migration

The qualitative data reveal that a combination of material, relational and subjective wellbeing factors, such as sustainable income, support from social networks and a tradition of mobility, are perceived as underlying motivations for internal seasonal migration for both men and women on the west coast. On the other hand, the resistance to migration from host communities is perceived in material and relational wellbeing terms, such as the need for a sustainable income for local people, overcrowding of beaches and rights to the local fish resource. Thus, the conflict between migrant and host fishing communities seems to stem from a contestation between two overarching discourses on access to fish resources - i.e. migrant fishers' claim to the 'right to a tradition of migration' and host fishers' claim to the 'right to one's own local resources'.

> *Fishing there [on the east/northeast coast] is a traditional right for us, from generation to generation. The government accepts that. We go there with the support of some people in those villages. There are others who are not entirely opposed to us but they have to show unity by joining with their village and the people who protest that we catch their fish. Even though they personally have good relations with us.* (Men's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Notions of generational migration patterns, combined with superior fishing skills and local knowledge of seas, waves, winds and fish movements, are embodied within the discourse of the 'right to a tradition of migration'. Both men and women also recollected the manner in which they themselves as children and/or their children had been socialised into the process of coast-to-coast migration.

> *From the time our kids were 5-6 months old, we brought them with us when we migrated here [Selippur]. They grew up eating the sand of Selippur. From the time they entered school we left them behind with their grandmother [my mother] but they used to come here for the school holidays.* (Male migrant fisher, Kadalpalli. Puttalam)

Some Kadalpalli fishers referred to permanent settlement and birth in the Mullaitivu district prior to the war, as well as ancestral graves, to justify their right to migrate.

> *My grandfather's grave is in Nayaru. We have had close relationships with Nayaru for generations. There are people in our village who also own land titles (deeds) in Nayaru. There are also villagers who were born in Nayaru while there are also those born in Selippur as well.* (Wife of fisher, Kadalpalli. Puttalam)

Loss of the fish catch to migrants, deprivation during the war, and recovery from displacement, loss of lives, homes and assets, are encompassed within the discourse of the 'right to one's own local resources'.

> *Fishermen here have problems with the migrants. It is the mudalali [traders] who profit from them. There are no controls. Sometimes, they bring 300 boats so local people have problems. How can we all get a catch? We don't*

> *go anywhere else, to Kokkavil or Pudavaikattu, for fishing. This sea has only space for 300 boats. If there are 1,000 boats, how can we fish?* (Men's FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *There aren't any big rich people here. There are only people who work for their daily expenses. All of us were affected. We are all people who have struggled. There is not a single person here who hasn't gone to India. 100% of us were affected [by the war].* (Men's FGD, Uppukdal, Trincomalee)

Moreover, there is a strong sense that regulatory authorities recognise the rights of migrants over that of local communities to beach space and access, and that there is a lack of support from these authorities for sustaining local fisheries livelihoods.

> *We Tamils don't have deeds, but these others (migrants) put up a wadi [camp] and say that they are paying a license and that no one can pull their boat in front of their wadi. They tell us, "If you do, we'll destroy your boat in the night". Our village boats are stacked one on top of the other. We don't have space. The police don't understand the law. You can work anywhere, but you can't allow the livelihood to dissolve.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Perceptions of rights to migration and local resources, which emerge in the discourses of migrants and host groups respectively, are enmeshed with perceptions of inequality and fairness on the part of regulatory authorities in their relationships with the two groups. Thus, horizontal conflicts among fishing communities based on local perceptions of inequality (Fabinyi et al. 2015) can be exacerbated by vertical conflicts between fishing communities and regulatory authorities over access to the fish resource and control of fishing gear, increasing the tendency of these conflicts to be ethicised or regionalised.

6.3 External migration

While external (overseas) migration is not the focus of this study, some findings relating to external migration are presented to contextualise it in relation to internal migration and wellbeing. First, there are considerable numbers of households, especially in Cattiyur and Selippur with members or relatives abroad, and receiving remittances. In

Cattiyur, such households are considered well-off and generally less likely to engage in internal fisheries migration. External migration supports the continuity of fisheries as a livelihood of family members of migrants or returnee migrants within the villages, and in some cases internal seasonal migration for fishing. Moreover, external migration is also gendered, with some noteworthy gender impacts, such as the inflation of dowry in these two villages. Therefore, external migration remains important as a livelihood strategy in at least two villages, an alternative to internal migration, a support to fisheries, and an aspiration, especially for youth in all villages, with significant impacts on perceptions of wellbeing.

Patterns of migration

Households in all four villages have engaged in external migration overseas but the patterns are somewhat different. Labour migration to the Middle East began around 30-40 years ago in all four villages. However, the proportion of household members who have migrated to the Middle East is currently higher in the east coast villages, than in the west coast ones. In Selippur this is the predominant form of external migration, and migrants are mostly women. Cattiyur has a large number of households with migrants in the UK (during 2000-2003) and Australia (during 2012-2013), while Kadalpalli has migrants in Italy, since around 30 years ago – while the original migrants were mostly men, who went illegally, some of whom obtained residence, women have also migrated legally as accompanying family members. Uppukadal has labour migrants to the Middle East, mostly women, as well as migrants to Australia, mostly men, who migrated illegally. A distinction is made in the two Tamil villages, Cattiyur and Uppukadal, between "small countries" (Middle East) and "large countries" (Europe and Australia), with the latter being the desirable destination.

Almost all households in Uppukadal were displaced to refugee camps in India during the war and upon their return they were housed in a refugee camp, not far from their village, within Trincomalee district, before they were resettled in Uppukadal.

Reasons for migration

The predominant reasons that emerged for external migration were material and relational in all four villages. The main reason indicated by both women

and men in Kadalpalli was indebtedness and the ability to settle debts through remittances. Men referred to failures in business/trading and women to financial difficulties in the household. One man who had been crew said he migrated to improve his status in life. One woman migrated to the Middle East due to the loss of her husband, lack of support from in-laws and the need to support her children. Women in Cattiyur indicated poverty, access to remittances and the inability to save from income earned in the home village, as primary reasons for external migration. Female youth referred to the lack of lucrative job opportunities in their home village, as well as marriage to men who had migrated and obtained residence in the UK or Australia, as reasons for overseas migration. Male youth indicated that they migrated abroad to support their families or to establish themselves in life. They were also interested in experiencing life in a new country.

> *We would like to migrate to big countries (periya naadu) like London, Italy and Australia. I have an uncle, aunt and cousins there [in London] and can work with them. I would like to see a new country*. (Male youth FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Women and female youth in Selippur identified financial difficulties, the need for savings, house construction and dowry for daughters/themselves as the main reasons for external migration to the Middle East. Several women indicated the need to get away from an abusive husband as a reason for their migration.

> *I was married off when I was 19. This was my first marriage. I was actually in love with my current husband but the parents from both sides opposed it… Therefore, my mother arranged a man for my future. I had to listen to my parents and give up my love affair. I lived two years with him. He started to taunt me about my love affair. When somebody talked about my love affair with him, he taunted me and sometimes he beat me. I got my first son after one year of marriage. He got more suspicious after my son's birth. He started to be suspicious that our son was not his. The abuse got horrible. In reality, I had forgotten my past and lived as a good wife to him. When my son was a year old, the abuse reached a peak. I told him to get out of the house. He went to his mother's house. I migrated to Dubai when my son was 2 years old. I felt relaxed*

> *after migrating there… I decided to migrate that time to forget my agony and the past two years.* (Female trader and wife of fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Men indicated the lack of job opportunities and of permanent incomes as reasons for overseas migration. Women in Uppukadal indicated financial difficulties, as well as the loss of gold during their displacement to India as main reasons for migration to the Middle East. Men referred to peer pressure to participate in the mass migration of 2012, the need to educate children, house construction and the scarcity of fish resources as reasons for migration to Australia. Male youth indicated the increased demand for them as bridegrooms if they were to obtain residence in foreign countries, as a reason for migration to Australia.

> *If we migrate to foreign countries we will have a good demand as bridegrooms. Most of the parents search for a groom from overseas for their daughters.* (Male youth FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

In the case of Uppukadal during the period of conflict between the armed forces and the LTTE, the main reason for external migration to India was to escape the conditions of war on the east coast.

Benefits of migration

The benefits of external migration were expressed predominantly in material terms in all four villages. However, several relational factors were also indicated, for example, in Cattiyur, where households managed to become independent from work as beach seine labourers. The use of the word 'slavery' as a metaphor to describe working conditions of beach seine labourers recurred in this village, and 'freeing oneself' from the dependent relationship with a beach seine owner was highly valorised.

> *After people migrated to London and Australia, our village became a happy place to live because we earned a lot there to live well here. Remittances improved the economic situation of the village. The village was developed over the last 15 years due to migrants in foreign countries. Those days over 100 people worked like slaves in beach seines indebted with loans to the sammati (beach seine owner). Those who migrated to foreign countries, sent money*

> *back, so family members could free themselves from the sammati and start earning something for themselves. If we compare life now with what was before, now we are in a good situation.* (Men's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

The main benefits of external migration was, in most cases, indirectly supporting the continuity of fishing households by providing remittances to settle debts, construct houses and arrange marriages. In some cases, external migration directly supported the fishing livelihood, by providing financial resources for the purchase of fishing assets or by subsidising beach seine operations by financing gear and advances for labourers. In addition, some external migrants were able to invest in shrimp farms and accumulate savings, used mostly to purchase household goods, such as TVs, rice cookers and washing machines.

6.4 Comparisons across types of migration and communities

Material motivations are important for both types of migration, but this is more pronounced for external migration as indicated by respondents in all four villages. The relational dimension takes more prominence in enabling or disabling internal migration, as well as its costs, while subjective considerations emerge in both types of migration to some extent.

A culture of migration linked to social relations and networks exists in the two west coast villages to pursue internal out-migration. A similar culture of migration also exists in Cattiyur and to some extent in Selippur, in terms of external migration. However, improving material wellbeing, whether through increasing incomes and savings, repaying debts, constructing houses, having enough money to eat and purchasing fishing assets are reasons for external migration in all four villages, while earning dowries are an additional reason in Selippur.

Enabling and disabling factors for internal migration in both west coast villages are largely relational, such as strong networks within the community, strong relations with fish traders/boat owners and hostile relations between migrant and host communities, emphasising the importance of social networks. On the other hand, enabling and disabling factors for external migration in all four villages are a combination of material, relational and subjective dimensions. Thus, having adequate savings or assets, linkages

with people who can facilitate the migration process, as well as attitudes and feelings towards migration all contribute to whether members of households are able to migrate or not.

Benefits of both internal and external migration are perceived largely in terms of the material dimension, although relational and subjective dimensions also emerge. Material benefits realised are the same ones that motivate migration, such as higher earnings, settlement of debts, savings, construction of houses, and dowries for daughters. Relational aspects relate to good relations cultivated in host-communities, while subjective benefits relate to experiencing new places, enjoying a sense of freedom, lack of fear or peace of mind, especially during external migration. These subjective benefits of migration are expressed more by women and youth than men. Costs of both internal and external migration are perceived in all four villages in terms of a combination of material, relational and subjective factors. The material factors hinge on not realising anticipated earnings due to cheating by traders, agents, employers or misfortune. While young women migrating to earn a dowry in Selippur might realise their objective, they also face the cost of loss of status/reputation as a potential bride for spending time away overseas. On the other hand, while dowry is not a reason for migration in Cattiyur, the cost of successful migration to "big countries" is an inflation in dowry payments, which puts a burden on households needing to marry off their daughters. The relational costs of both internal and external migration are centred on tensions in the relations between spouses, parents and children, and employers and employees. Subjective aspects range from loneliness, fear, vulnerability, sadness, physical abuse to psychological trauma, expressed more often by women and youth.

Migration and the distribution of consumption in fishing households

The combination of material, relational and subjective dimensions of wellbeing motivating migration is also corroborated by the quantitative data on distribution of consumption in fishing households. Whether men and women migrate or not appears not to depend on the level of household consumption - i.e. their economic/material status. As Table 6.3 shows, households from all expenditure quintiles engage in both internal and external migration in almost similar proportions. Far more men (75%) than women (25%) from fishing households engage in internal seasonal migration from

Puttalam villages, while no woman engages in this type of fisheries–related migration from Trincomalee villages. While more men than women have migrated abroad and returned in the Puttalam villages, more women than men have migrated abroad and returned in the Trincomalee villages.

Table 6.3: Migration behaviours of men and women by expenditure quintile and type of migration in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts

	Expenditure quintile in district	Puttalam		Trincomalee	
		Migrate for fish or allied fishing (only fishing households)	Migrated abroad previously (all households)	Migrate for fish or allied fishing (only fishing households)	Migrated abroad previously (all households)
Men	First	65.7	5.0	10.0	5.0
	Second	75.4	6.3	11.3	7.5
	Third	75.7	0.0	14.6	5.0
	Fourth	78.9	5.0	9.8	2.5
	Fifth	76.7	2.5	9.8	5.1
	Total (%)	74.6	3.8	11.0	5.0
	Total (number)	258	15	29	20
Women	First	14.9	1.3	0.0	2.5
	Second	12.3	0.0	0.0	11.3
	Third	25.7	0.0	0.0	8.8
	Fourth	28.2	0.0	0.0	4.9
	Fifth	42.5	0.0	0.0	11.4
	Total (%)	25.1	0.3	0.0	7.8
	Total (number)	87	1	0	31

Source and notes: Estimated with microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

Table 6.4 presents information about the numbers engaged in migration in the villages surveyed. The data on migration abroad likely underestimates the full extent of such migration because the survey was designed to elicit the perceptions of both husbands

and wives, and both needed to be present at the location where they were interviewed. Therefore, the sample did not include households where either the husband or the wife was working abroad, even though the qualitative fieldwork suggests that substantial numbers of households belong to this category. However, notwithstanding this limitation, the numbers in the table suggest that going overseas for work temporarily was more prevalent in the relatively less prosperous Trincomalee sites rather than in the field locations in Puttalam. As for internal seasonal migration, which is our focus, the data in Table 6.2 shows that three fourths of fishing households in the Puttalam locations engage in it, while only 11 per cent of fishing households in Trincomalee do so.

Table 6.4: Migration in fishing communities in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts

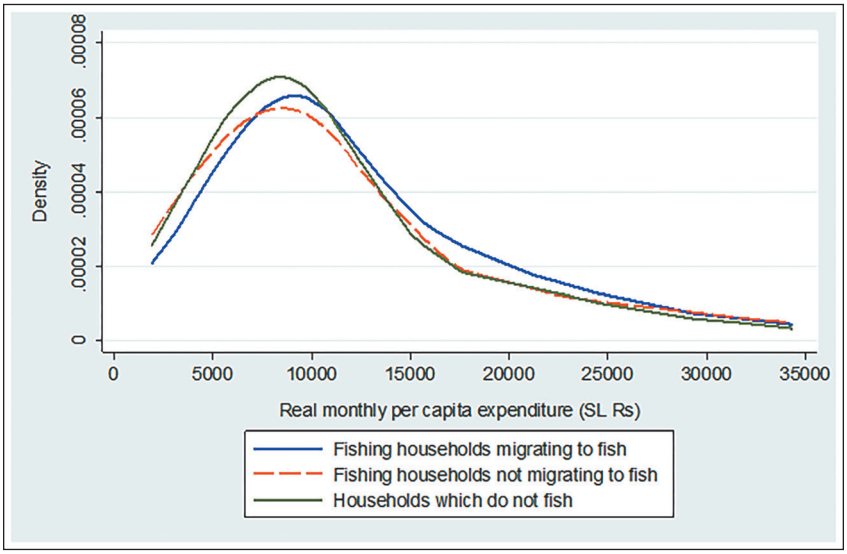
		Number	Share of total %
Households migrating internally for employment in fishing, fishing households only	Puttalam	261	75
	Trincomalee	29	11
Households where husband or wife had migrated abroad for work, all households	Puttalam	16	4
	Trincomalee	47	12
Households with members living abroad, all households	Puttalam	25	6
	Trincomalee	7	2
Total number of households	Puttalam	400	
	Trincomalee	400	
Total number of fishing households	Puttalam	346	
	Trincomalee	263	

Source and notes: Estimated using the ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017. The number of households in the community where husbands or wives had migrated abroad previously, and the number of households with members living abroad likely underestimate the total extent of external migration as the survey covered only households where both husband and wife were presently living in the residential location.

Kernel density analysis of internal migration to fish and the distribution of consumption suggests that households engaged in migration from Sri Lanka's west coast to the east coast are more concentrated in the middle segments of the range of consumption. This is evident in Figure 6.1, which plots density functions for three groups of households

in the Puttalam sample: fishing households whose members migrate to fish, fishing households whose members do not migrate to fish, and non-fishing households. The figure indicates that more migrant fishing households are in higher consumption ranges than fishing households whose members do not migrate to fish. This is evident from the position of the empirical density function of fishing households migrating to fish. The density function is situated marginally to the right of the density function of fishing households which do not migrate to fish, while the right tail of the function of households who migrate is above the right tails of the two other groups of households.

Figure 6.1: Adaptive kernel density estimation of the distribution of monthly per capita consumption expenditure and internal migration for fishing in study villages, Puttalam district 2017



Source and notes: Estimated using the ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

Characteristics of households associated with the probability of migration

Econometric analyses of the factors associated with the probability of having migrated abroad, and of fishing households migrating seasonally to fish within the country, suggest that village of origin is the strongest predictor of both types of migration (see results of estimations in Table 6.3 in Appendix 2). The microdata from the HH Survey 2017 was used for the analysis. Internal migration for the purpose of fishing is strongly associated with village of origin with households from Kadalapalli and Cattiyur being 57 percentage

points more likely to be engaging in it than households in Selippur. Fishing households from Uppukadal are also more likely to engage in migration than equivalent households in Selippur, but by a more modest 21 percentage points. Another factor significantly and positively associated with internal migration for fishing is the extent to which the husband agrees that he has access to big city-related networks. This increases the likelihood of such migration by 2 percentage points with each level of agreement. A third factor is whether the family had a tradition of such migration. Fishers who stated that as far as they could remember their family members had migrated to other parts of Sri Lanka to fish, were 11 percentage points more likely to be migrating likewise themselves. In contrast, fishers who owned motorised traditional craft and those who engaged in activities allied to fishing but not actually going out to sea to fish were less likely to engage in fisheries migration. Equipment costs were also found to be a statistically significant constraint. However, household income was not in any way associated with the probability of migration.

As for the characteristics associated with the probability of external migration, that is the probability that either husband, wife or both have migrated abroad previously and returned, the analysis suggests that compared to the reference village of Selippur, households in the three other villages were significantly less likely to have migrants who have returned from overseas, whereas households in Kadalpalli were the least likely to have done so. Households with district-based networks were more likely to have migrated abroad, but those where husbands reported strong bonds with friends were less likely to have engaged in overseas migration for work. Household income was not found to be a statistically significant predictor of overseas migration.

However, since the household survey was restricted to households in which both husband and wife were present, these results are not representative of the fishing communities studied, since the qualitative fieldwork suggested that the prevalence of external migration was much higher with many households reporting either the husband or the wife currently working abroad.

We also looked at the extent to which various factors that male fishers regarded as constraints to fishing and migration were significantly associated with impeding migration. However, since only a smaller sample of fishers responded to this question, we

could analyse the relationship between the constraints and the probability of migration using only the smaller sample of non-missing observations. The results suggest that confused policy in relation to fishing rights and destructive poaching in Sri Lankan waters by Indian bottom-trawlers were additional factors in holding them back from migrating to fish. But for this group of fishers, larger household size and dependence on middlemen and traders for facilities and fishing permits at the destination, were enabling factors.

Overall, the qualitative and quantitative data suggest that internal seasonal migration, as well as overseas migration, in the four fishing communities, are not driven by a Malthusian crisis of population and resources, but much rather by a combination of ecological, economic, socio-cultural, political and institutional factors that initiate and sustain these migration patterns. While poverty might be a driver of overseas migration for women and men in the east coast villages, the number of observations was too low for this type of migration for us to test econometrically whether a relationship exists between poverty and this type of migration. However, the qualitative data suggest that seasonal migration from west coast villages is a strategy for utilisation of fishing and market niches beyond their local communities during the lean fishing season in their own communities, as has also been argued in the case of the Fante fisheries migration in Ghana (Marquette et al. 2002). It enables production and accumulation, which in turn supports investment and working capital to sustain fishing in their home communities, in the absence of alternative livelihood options. Thus, while migration contributes to the material wellbeing of migrant fishing communities, it also has both positive and negative impacts on their relational and subjective wellbeing. An understanding of individual and household motivations, social networks, the environmental and institutional context, encompassing the status of fishing as a livelihood and a way of life within these communities, is central to the analysis of migration.

7. Poverty and inequality

In explaining the nature and extent of poverty in small-scale fishing communities, a long-standing assumption has been that poverty is widespread in small-scale fisheries or that fishers are among 'the poorest of the poor' (Panayotou 1982; Bailey et al. 1986; World Bank 1992; Cunningham 1993; FAO 2010). This is based on a Malthusian 'Tragedy of the Commons' discourse, reducing poverty in fisheries to a lack of income resulting from the overexploitation of the resource (Béné 2003). This perspective has been challenged by several scholars (Béné 2003; Thorpe et al. 2007; Béné and Friend 2011, Bavinck 2014), who have emphasised access and control over resources, rather than availability as being instrumental in determining poverty in fishing communities. Thus, a framework encompassing marginalisation and vulnerability (discussed in the next section) together with a multi-dimensional approach to poverty (Allison and Horemons 2006; Béné and Friend 2011) has been developed to assess poverty in fishing communities.

As published information about the incidence of poverty among fishing households is scant in Sri Lanka, there is no real evidence whether fishers are among the poorest of the poor or not. However, the only available data based on the last of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka's Consumer Finance Surveys of 2003/04 (Gunawardena et al. 2007) show fishing households to have the higher rates of poverty associated with employment in the primary sectors of the economy. Nevertheless, among those associated with primary sectors of the economy (i.e. agriculture, forestry and mining), poverty rates among households with members working in the fishing industry are the lowest, other than for coconut growers.

A distinguishing feature of small-scale fisheries has been the prevalence of the share (*pangu*) system - earlier often kinship-based - implying a sharing of the risk between owner and crew (Amarasinghe 1998). Thus, class relations have been less developed in fishing communities in Sri Lanka, although an increasing trend towards deep sea fishing in multi-day boats employing large crews, with owners who no longer go out to sea, might bring about changes. Moreover, fishing household incomes are highly stratified according to craft and gear, a development that took place with the adoption of new fishing technology. Thus, the annual fishing income ratio for households with crew on a traditional craft in contrast to crew on an OFRP boat was 2.8 times in 2004 (NARA

2008). Similar data from 1980 show this ratio at 2.4 (Munasinghe 1985), indicating a slight increase in income disparity over three decades. The income ratio between an owner of a traditional craft and of an OFRP boat was also 2.4 times in 1980 (Munasighe 1985). However, estimates of income or consumption poverty alone is not a good indicator of poverty in fishing communities, where the dimensions of poverty are many (Amarasinghe 2006). Lack of clear rights to the resource, variable and unpredictable catches from the fishery, the importance of the market and the middlemen, an asset base that is less stable, are some salient factors in understanding poverty issues in fishing communities.

The analysis in this monograph combines qualitative data focused on the notions of poverty articulated by women, men and youth in FGDs, with the quantitative consumption poverty data from the HH survey to determine which categories/groups of households are poor in the four study villages. An assessment of inequality in the study villages, based on the HH survey data, is also provided. The discusssions on poverty and vulnerability (in Section 8) are intended to complement and contrast with the more holistic analysis of social wellbeing that follows in Section 9.

7.1 Community notions of poverty

Qualitative data was focused on perceptions of poverty among women, men and youth, as expressed in FGDs, as these provide local (emic) interpretations of what constitutes poverty within a community, and are a useful comparison juxtaposed against an external (etic) assessment of poverty, based on quantitative HH survey data. Notions of poverty were similar across the four villages (see Table 7.1). Poverty was associated with dependency on daily wage labour and lack of adequate food or inability to eat three meals per day. In Kadalpalli and Selippur poor housing conditions were also considered a characteristic of poverty. Moreover, in Kadalpalli lack of fishing assets, such as an OFRP boat, was linked to poverty – fishers using traditional craft were considered poor. In Selippur, lack of toilets and wells was identified with poverty. In general, a smaller proportion of households were perceived as 'poor' in the west coast villages – 10% in Kadalpalli and 30% in Cattiyur. There was no consensus on the proportion of poor households in the east coast villages. For example, in Selippur, women perceived 10% of households to be well-off and 90% to be poor, while men considered 10% to be well-

off, dividing the remainder as 60% constituting a middle level and 30% constituting the poor. Furthermore, female youth differentiated among 30% well-off, 20% middle level and 50% poor, while male youth differentiated among 10% well-off, 20% middle level and 70% poor. Similarly, in Uppukadal men perceived all households in the village to be homogenously poor, as daily wage earners who had suffered the negative impacts of the war, while women differentiated among three categories of poor, lower and middle depending on their ability to withstand shocks.

Table 7.1: Perceptions of poverty in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts

	Puttalam district		**Trincomalee district**	
	Kadalpalli	***Cattiyur***	***Selippur***	***Uppukadal***
Socio-economic categories (%)	Poor (10%) Middle (90%)	Poor (30%) Middle (60%) Well-off (10%)	Poor Middle Well-off	Poor Lower Middle
Characteristics of groups				
Poor	Live in *cadjan* houses, do not own boats, dependent on daily wage from casual labour (all); marine fishers with rafts (Male FGD); lagoon fishers (Youth FGD)	Dependent on daily wage labour, struggling to live (all); beggars; cannot manage three meals per day (Male FGD)	Dependent on daily wage labour in fishing, net mending, agriculture (Male FGD); own boats, lack of adequate food, poor housing, no toilets, no wells (Female youth FGD)	Dependent on daily wage labour or gathering fruit; inadequate food (Female FGD)
Lower	-	-	-	Able to manage three meals, need to borrow in face of shocks (Female FGD)
Middle	Have houses; own boats; manage three meals (all)	Have houses; own bicycle or auto-rickshaw, own jewellery, nice clothes (Female youth FGD); father breadwinner, mother housewife (Male youth FGD)	Own boats (Male FGD); own motor cycles/ auto-rickshaws, houses (Female youth FGD)	Own beach seine, shop, boats, adequate food to eat, able to repair boat engines when these broke down (Female and Youth FGD); adequate money for food, resilient in shocks (Female FGD)

Well-off	-	Family members overseas (all); own shrimp farms (Male FGD); own dried fish enterprises (Female FGD); big houses, large vehicles (van) (Youth FGDs); own jewellery (Male youth FGD); own business (Female youth FGD)	Workers at illmenite factory with permanent employment, traders, own several boats, shops, paddy lands (Male and Female FGDs); own large houses, large vehicles, jewellery (Female youth FGD)	-

Source: Qualitative data from Focus Group Discusssions, 2017.

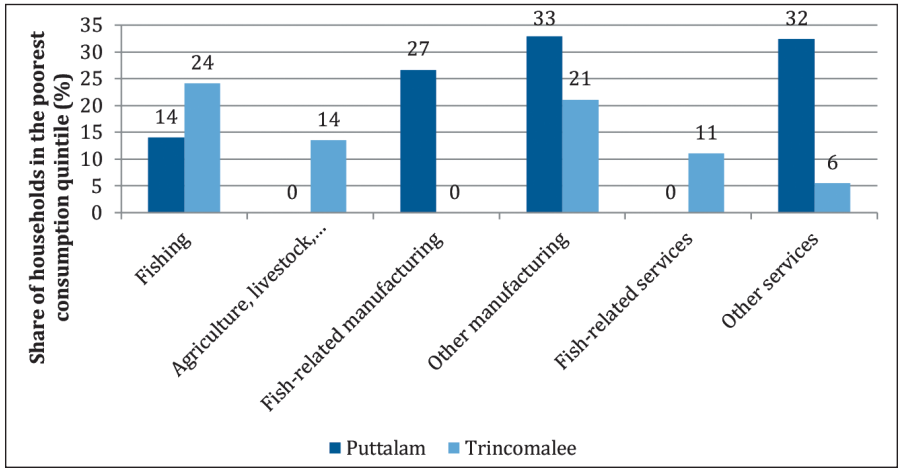
In the two west coast villages and among men in Selippur, the 'middle' socio-economic category was perceived as single boat owners, who owned a reasonable house, a motorcycle or an auto-rickshaw and could manage three meals. Female youth in Selippur, however, considered single boat owners to be among the poor. Managing three meals but having to take loans was considered characteristic of a 'lower' socio-economic category by women in Uppukadal. In Kadalpalli and Uppukadal, no socio-economic category was identified as 'well-off'. In Cattiyur, the 'well-off' were primarily perceived by women and men as those who had members of their households working overseas in countries such as UK and Australia, and owners of shrimp farms, dried fish enterprises or businesses. In Selippur, the 'well-off' were considered as those who owned businesses and/or paddy land or had regular employment in the government-owned illmenite factory. Interestingly, the youth of those villages tended to identify the 'well-off' not with their productive assets or employment but with their consumption patterns, such as large houses, vehicles and jewellery. All characteristics associated with poverty identified by women, men and youth were material, and indicated mostly relative notions of poverty. However, the multi-dimensional nature of poverty in terms of relational and subjective factors, in addition to material factors, was better captured in understandings of vulnerability and wellbeing in the sections to follow.

7.2 Consumption poverty

Sri Lanka's national poverty line is now considered out of date as it is based on consumption patterns that prevailed in 2002. Therefore, the analysis of poverty based on data from the HH Survey data conceptualises the poor as those households whose per capita monthly consumption expenditure falls into the poorest quintile (see Figure 7.1).

Descriptive statistics suggest that in the west coast villages there are proportionately more households engaged in manufacturing and services other than fisheries, and in fisheries-related manufacturing (i.e. fish processing) in the poorest quintile (20% of the population). In contrast, in east coast villages, there are proportionately more households engaged in fishing, in manufacturing other than fisheries-related, and in agriculture, in the poorest quintile.

Figure 7.1: Share of households in the poorest consumption quintile by most important source of household income in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts



Source and notes: Estimated with microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

Nevertheless, the econometric analysis of factors associated with consumption expenditure in the four communities (not reported here) shows that when controlled for other factors influencing per capita consumption, fishing is not significantly associated with a lower levels of consumption expenditure.

7.3 Consumption inequality

Consumption inequality in the west and east coast villages was also assessed using consumption data from the HH Survey 2017. The analysis suggests that consumption inequality is considerably higher in the west coast villages relative to that of the east coast villages (see Table 7.2). For example, the Gini-coefficient is 0.48 in the Puttalam sites but 0.33 in the Trincomalee sites. The percentile ratios show that Puttalam households in the 90th percentile enjoy nearly seven times the per capita consumption expenditure incurred by those in the 10th percentile, whereas the consumption of those in the 90th percentile in Trincomalee is only four times the per capita consumption expenditure incurred by households in the 10th percentile.

Table 7.2: Measures of consumption inequality in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts

	p90/p10	p90/p50	p10/p50	p75/p25
Puttalam sites	6.814	2.995	0.44	2.645
Trincomalee sites	3.577	1.933	0.54	1.953
	GE(0)	GE(1)	GE(2)	Gini
Puttalam sites	0.386	0.470	0.951	0.477
Trincomalee sites	0.185	0.219	0.352	0.329

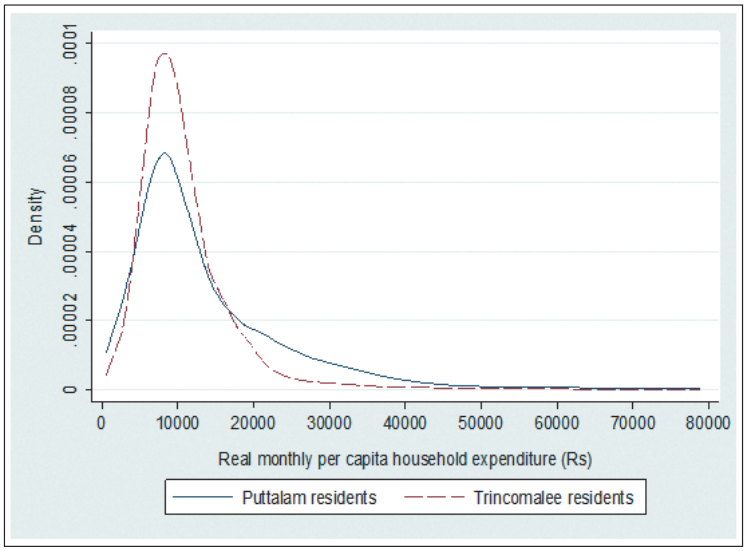
Source and notes: Estimated with microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017 using Jenkins (2008) inequality.ado.

Data obtained during FGDs with men in Uppukadal and women and female youth in Selippur (both on the east coast) suggest that these groups perceive households in their villages as being relatively equal. The summary inequality indicators generated using data from the quantitative survey and reported in the table appear to confirm that they are right. In contrast, participants in FGDs in Kadalpalli who also perceived households in their village to be relatively equal, appear to be less accurate. FGDs in Cattiyur presented a more differentiated image of their community, but a 'middle class' of 60% among households is not substantiated by the descriptive statistics based on data from the quantitative survey.

The kernel density estimation of per capita household consumption in Figure 7.2 showing the distribution of per capita consumption in the two locations presents a more

complete picture. This is because while the statistics in Table 7.2 are summary measures of inequality only and do not reveal the spread and concentration of households along the entire distribution, kernel density estimates of real per capita household expenditure in the two sites graphically present the distribution of income on the west and east coasts. The proportion of the 'middle class' in Puttalam is larger than in Trincomalee, while there are higher concentrations of poor in Trincomalee than in Puttalam. This can be seen from the kernel density graphs in Figure 7.2 where proportionately more households in the Trincomalee villages are clumped at the lower end of the distribution than in the Puttalam villages (note how the peak of the density curve for Trincomalee is much higher at around Rs. 10,000 than the peak of the density curve for Puttalam). In contrast, proportionately more households in the Puttalam villages are in the middle ranges of the distribution around Rs. 25,000 than are households in the Trincomalee villages (as the kernel density curve for Puttalam is above the curve for Trincomalee).

Figure 7.2: Adaptive kernel density estimation of the distribution of real per capita household expenditure in study villages, Puttalam and Trncomalee districts, based on Puttalam prices, 2017



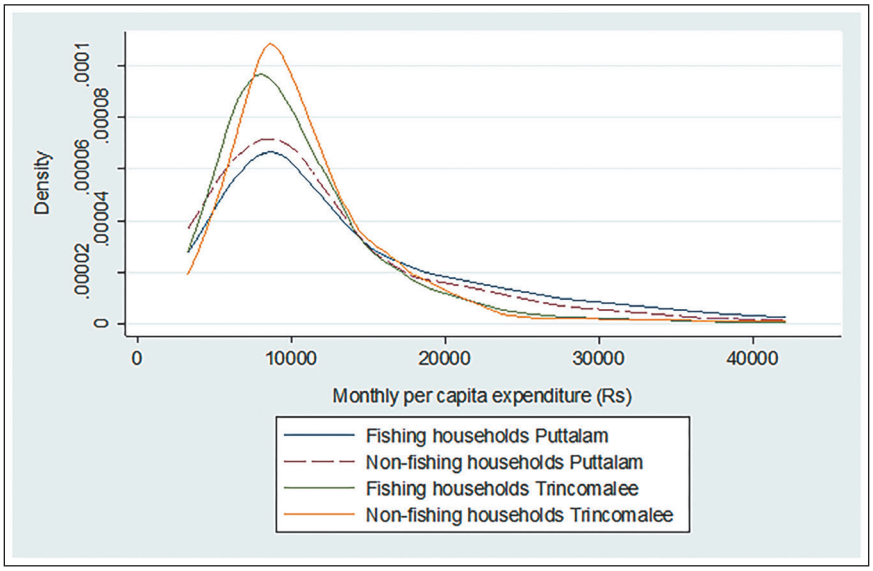
Source and notes: Estimated by applying Van Kerm's (2003) akdensity.ado to the microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

Underlying spatial factors are likely to be important: Trincomalee is on the east coast and much further away from economically advanced Western Province which surrounds the

metropolitan hub of Colombo. The district was also badly affected by the long military conflict. In contrast, Puttalam is on the west coast and more accessible by Colombo. It was also much less affected by the military conflict.

We disaggregate the density curves by whether the households fish or not, in Figure 7.3. In Puttalam, more fishing and non-fishing households are concentrated along the middle consumption ranges of Rs. 20,000 to 35,000 than in Trincomalee. In Trincomalee, fishing households appear to be in higher concentrations in the lower segments of the range of consumption, whereas in Puttalam, there are proportionately fewer fishing households in the lower consumption ranges than there are non-fishing households.

Figure 7.3: Adaptive kernel density estimation of the distribution of real monthly per capita consumption expenditure fishing and non-fishing households in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts, 2017.



Source and notes: Estimated using the ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

Earnings are a key determinant of household consumption expenditure and summary statistics of earnings differentials by occupation, region and gender provide interesting insights about factors driving inequality in the two locations. In villages on the west coast male OFRP fishers earn at least three times as much as beach seine workers (see Table 7.3). In these villages, the difference in earnings between the highest female earners (disentangling fish from nets) and lowest female earners (cleaning and drying fish in an

enterprise) is also threefold (see Figure 7.4). In the east coast villages in contrast, the highest male earners (OFRP fishers) earn only 1.6 times what the lowest male earners (gleaners) earn. Thus, earnings differentials for both men and women are considerably higher within west coast villages than in east coast villages.

Table 7.3: Mean monthly earnings and differentials, fishermen in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts (LKR)

	Migrant Puttalam men in Puttalam	Trincomalee men in Trincomalee	Migrant Puttalam men in Trincomalee	Earnings differential between migrant Puttalam men in Puttalam and Trincomalee men	Earnings differential between migrant Puttalam men in Puttalam and migrant Puttalam men in Trincomalee
Gleaning	15885	11556	25808	4328	9923
Beach seine (Madal/ karawalai) fishing	13097	16976	20944	-3879	7847
Traditional craft without motor	15622	12794	30689	2828	15068
OFRP	40012	18492	88911	21521	48899

Source and notes: Estimated using microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

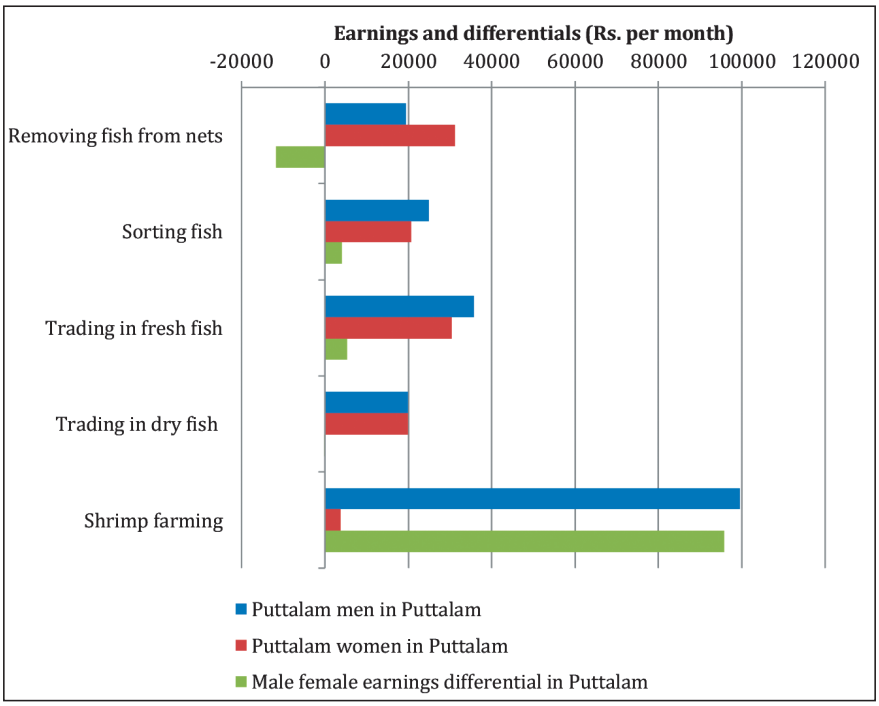
Table 7.3 also shows that Puttalam fishers migrating to Trincomalee earned at least twice as much in Trincomalee as they would have at home if they had been engaged in the better paid jobs (e.g. fishing in OFRP). They would have earned at least a third more if they had undertaken gleaning or beach seine fishing. Thus, by migrating to the east, west coast fishers (using OFRP boats) and beach seine workers are not only able to continue their fishing livelihood in the monsoon season but also have considerably higher incomes than those fishers/workers left behind.

During the fishing seasons of the respective coasts, west coast fishers (using OFRP boats) have double the income of east coast fishers (using the same craft), while there is no noteworthy gap at the lower end of income earners. To illustrate, the highest male earners (OFRP fishers) in the west coast villages earn 2.2 times that of the highest male earners (OFRP fishers) in the east coast villages, while the difference in earnings between the lowest male earners (beach seine workers) in the west coast villages and the lowest male earners (gleaners) in the east coast villages is negligible.

Migrating is lucrative for those with OFRP boats and generally beneficial in material terms even for beach seine workers. Differentials in earnings between migrant west coast OFRP fishers at their migratory locations on the east coast and OFRP fishers from the east coast during the same fishing season is the largest, with the former earning 4.8 times what the latter earns. While beach seine workers on the west coast earn less than their counterparts on the east coast during their respective fishing seasons, the former, when they migrate to the east coast, earn slightly more at 1.2 times of what their counterparts on the east coast earn.

We also looked at gender differentials in earnings. Figure 7.3 shows that the highest male earners (OFRP fishers) on average earn 1.3 times what the highest female earners (disentangling fish from nets) take home in west coast villages (Figure 7.4). This differential is smaller than that between male earners on both coasts, confirming that women engaged in this livelihood task, earn a relatively high wage.

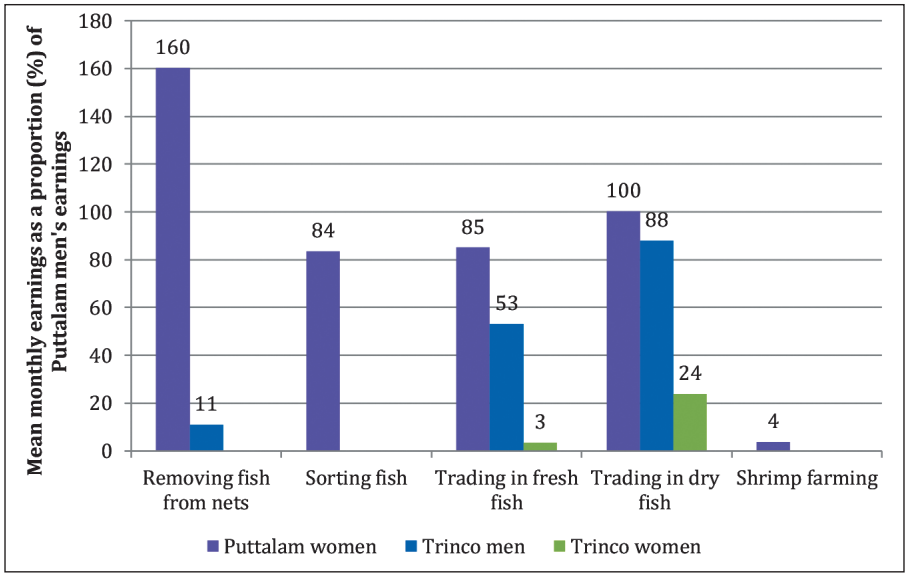
Figure 7.4: Monthly earnings of men and women in activities allied to fishing in study villages, Puttalam district (LKR)



Source and notes: Estimated using microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017. Numbers in parentheses show the number employed in these activities.

We examine the issue of differentials by location and gender more closely in Figure 7.5, which compares the earnings of women and men in fishing-related manufacturing and services, using men's earnings for the same tasks from the west coast as the numeraire. The figure shows that women on the west coast earn relatively more than men on the east coast, and overwhelmingly more than women on the east coast, in the same activities. According to survey data, not included in this figure, west coast women also earn as much as west coast men in dried fish trading, while they earn 1.6 times more than their male counterparts on the west coast when disentangling fish from nets.

Figure 7.5: Monthly earnings of Puttalam women, Trincomalee men and women as a share of the monthly earnings of Puttalam men in allied fishing activities in study villages



Source and notes: Estimated using microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017. The earnings of Puttalam men in these tasks have been taken as the numeraire. Only the activities for which there were a sufficient number of observations to generate standard deviations for each population sub-group were used to estimate the means.

Thus, the quantitative data reveal considerable differentials in earnings between the highest and lowest male earners in fishing within west coast villages, and highest and lowest female earners in fishing–related work within west coast villages, between the highest male earners in fishing in the west and east coast villages, and between women

employed in similar fishing-related tasks in west and east coast villages. Earnings differentials are lowest between the lower end of earners in fishing on the west coast and east coast respectively, and highest among women and men in the west coast, in fish-related work and fishing respectively. The considerable earnings differentials between west and east coast fishing households confirm the perceptions of participants in the FGDs in Selppur and Uppukadal that migrant fishing households from the west coast earn more and are on average materially better off than local households. The differentials in income between different categories of craft owners/workers also reveal the persistence of disparities and the increase of these disparities among groups across time, when compared with data from national-level studies of the past (NARA 2008, Munasinghe 1985).

8. Vulnerability

Income alone is not a good indicator of poverty within fishing communities, as there is great variability from year to year. This is due to the vulnerabilities that fishing communities face on a daily and seasonal basis. A recurring conceptual theme in the small-scale fisheries literature is the risks and uncertainty of fishing as a livelihood. This is based on the mobility of the resource, fish, which do not stay in one place, as an agricultural crop does, as well as the mobility demanded of the fishers themselves, as they pursue their catch. The fisheries sector is thus characterised by sheer unpredictability, as well as seasonality of catch (Kurien 1998), where both chance and skill play important roles. Moreover, prices obtained for catch on any given day can be highly uncertain and will depend on the species caught, total catches and prices prevailing on that day, and several other factors. Heavy dependence on the market is another feature of the fisheries sector, given the perishable nature of the commodity, and the seasonality of the product, influenced by a fishing season and off-season, determined by monsoon weather patterns. As Firth (1966) has pointed out, the dependence on a volatile market has also created conditions for the emergence of middlemen, characterised by patron-client relationships. In agriculture, investment is in the form of land that can be considered a relatively stable asset. However, in fisheries, investment takes the form of craft and gear, which have high maintenance costs, depreciate rapidly and are often lost or damaged (Alexander 1982). A fishing family can lose everything it has overnight if the boat it owns, along with the men of the family, is lost at sea during an unfavourable weather event. The relatively higher risk to life, craft and gear are thus marked attributes of the sector. At the same time, ownership or non-ownership of assets at a particular point in time cannot be interpreted in the same way as in agriculture. Apart from losses due to weather or theft, fishers may also sell off their craft or gear when a good price is to be had, and purchase the same later, making a profit in the process. Thus, even a relatively well-off fisher may be ‘assetless’ at certain periods of his life (Alexander 1982).

In understanding the vulnerability of fishing households to short-term and long-term risks that emerged from the data, the work of Wisner et al. (2004) who emphasised the importance of social, political and economic factors, as much as environmental factors, is useful. Arguing for the centrality of the concept of vulnerability in responding to hazards

and disaster, they focus on the means of people to access resources and how these shape their responses.

8.1 Short-term risks and shocks

Occupation-related risks and shocks

The uncertainty of fish catch was a risk factor mentioned by both men and women in all four villages.

> *Sometimes we catch fish, sometimes there is no fish. You can't predict anything about the sea. That is the nature of the job. For one week, we caught nothing. We weren't able to earn even Rs. 100. That is because there was no fish where we cast our net.* (Male fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

This created uncertainty in incomes of households and affected the quantities of fish dried by women. Damage to nets, engine breakdown and accidents at sea were other occupation-related risks at sea that were specific to the fishing livelihood, regardless of weather patterns.

> *In the dark there are possibilities of hitting another boat so we have to be careful not to have accidents…In our village, we often tear nets on rocks and reefs. (*Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *We are affected when nets break and if the engine has trouble midway – when this happens we have to pay for the repairs out of our earnings.* (Male fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

The main shocks were loss of nets and decrease or lack of income, resulting in fish traders reclaiming craft and gear as sureties to compensate for borrowing, and/or indebtedness.

> *If we do not get a substantial fish harvest and income, there are times we have to give the mudalali [trader] our nets and even the boat engine to compensate. We do this of our own free will and then when we are able to earn, we settle the debt and release our nets and/or engine.* (Women's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

In addition, health risks, such as back pains and other injuries due to fishing, were indicated by men, and swelling of hands, back pains and other injuries in the course of fish processing, were indicated by women, leading to shocks including medical expenses and loss of income.

> *Health risks are there in our line of work. As you can see from my own condition, after years of working as a fisher, this severity of the backache has caused me to transition into a different area of work.* (Male fish trader, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *Cutting fish in the wadi [dry fish processing camp] is tiring. Sometimes I don't go because my knees pain and I have backache. I have to take medicine and this is bad too.* (Female fish processing worker, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

In shrimp farming in the west coast villages, diseases in shrimps were a major risk factor, which resulted in shocks such as loss of entire shrimp harvest, investment and income, as well as reduction in harvests due to theft by people or birds.

> *We have to look after the shrimp farm very carefully as the shrimps grow. We have to spend a lot of time or money for security. There are a lot of thieves out there. There is only mud and water for three months and it is only after the fourth month that we know that there are shrimps in there… Disease is the main risk for us. We had big losses with shrimp farming last year due to disease. We had to mortgage the deeds for our house, land and hardware store in the bank when we bought the shrimp farm last year. We mortgaged our deeds, pawned jewellery and got loans from banks to pay off the losses.* (Female shrimp farmer, Kadalpalli. Puttalam)

In agriculture in the east coast villages, women indicated damage by wild animals/insect pests as a risk factor, with crop loss and the resulting loss in investment and income, as the main shocks.

Weather-related risks and shocks

In all four villages, weather related risks and shocks were critical for both men and women. In the case of fishers, risks related to unexpected storms, gales, waves and

currents, as well as seasonal monsoon weather patterns, which capsised and damaged craft, and gear.

> *We had two storms this year and our boat nearly capsized. We came back quickly when the black clouds appeared. Aiya [the crew member] and I carefully steered the boat out of the storm. (*Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *Warakang [windy off-season] is our main risk because the sea is rough at that time. One day my son's boat capsized due to heavy wind and waves. I nearly died but was rescued. If we encounter storms, we are finished.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Shocks incurred included loss of craft and gear, resulting in turn in decreased or loss of incomes, as well as loss of lives in some instances. In the case of women, rain and waves were a major risk factor in processing of fish on the beach, and shocks incurred were spoilage and loss of entire dried fish consignments, resulting in loss of investment and income.

> *If there is rain, we can't dry the fish. It spoils and we have to throw all of it away. If it is raining we take it inside the wadi and check for three days, but if it has spoilt we bury it.* (Female fish processor, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *Last week we couldn't dry fish because the waves came in and washed the fish away. Once when it rained, I lost Rs. 70,000 – 80,000. If it rains, it's over.* (Male fish processor, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

In addition, both flooding of houses and gardens, following rain and drought were risk factors, mentioned mostly by women in all four villages. These resulted in shocks such as illnesses, especially in children, and lack of water for drinking and household use. In the two east coast villages, flooding and droughts also posed risks for households engaged in farming, resulting in shocks, such as loss of crop harvests and incomes. As some households combined fishing with farming to spread risks seasonally, losses in farming put additional pressure on earning adequately from fishing.

Market-related risks and shocks

Price fluctuations in fish, as well as inputs and equipment, such as fuel, nets, engines and boats were indicated as risk factors by men and women in the two west coast villages.

> *When I buy a fish for Rs.100 and if the same type of fish has been caught in abundance in another area, the price in Colombo will decline and I run at a loss.* (Male fish processor, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *The fuel prices were also very high and we could not get a good return from the catch. So, most of the time, my husband returned with losses without even having money for fuel for the next day*. (Wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

These resulted in incurring financial losses or decrease in incomes for fishers and fish processors. The shock incurred generally was indebtedness. Industrial development, such as the establishment of a saltern in the lagoon, was a risk factor indicated by men and women in Uppukadal, resulting in shocks, such as loss of access to fish resources and decreased catches of lagoon fishers and gleaners.

> *The water level has gone down in the lagoon due to the saltern. X company has captured 2700 acres of the lagoon…I earned 2000 to 3000 rupees those days. I earn 400 to 500 rupees nowadays. The fish resource has been depleting after the saltern was constructed, as there is no space for the fish to breed.* (Male lagoon fisher, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Relational risks and shocks

Access to and reliability of labour were risks indicated by men and women primarily in the west coast villages. This was especially the case for labourers recruited seasonally for beach seine fishing, as well as crew members, who accompanied OFRP boat owners/fishers, who migrated to the north and east coasts. While boat/beach seine owners paid advances at the beginning of the season to secure the services of workers/crew, shocks incurred were losses due to labourers/crew absconding with the advances.

> *My workers are from Valaichchenai {Batticaloa district]… I go there before the fishing season in January and advance a worker Rs. 20,000. I go again in February and give an advance of Rs.10,000 so that they come here in March. In April when they go for the New Year, I give them Rs. 50,000-60,000 and another Rs. 10,000 when they return. There are those who take the advance and don't return. I can lose 500,000 per year. Their salary is Rs. 20,000 per month and this is deducted from the advance.* (Beach seine owner, Selippur, Trincomalee)

OFRP boat owners/fishers and beach seine owners also experienced the risk of labourers/ crew leaving migration sites on various pretexts, thus incurring losses in income.

> *When we take on crew, we give an advance payment from the wages due to him. But there have been instances where the crew returns [to the home village] without completing the stay [at the migrant site] and then leaving us helpless without a worker.* (Women's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

In addition, wives of OFRP owners in Cattiyur indicated that there was risk of harassment and sexual abuse by crew, when their husbands needed to leave the migration camps for an emergency, and if they had to be alone with the crew member, who occupied the same *wadi* as the boat owner and wife during the migration season.

Relational risks also existed between fishers and fish traders – in both west coast villages both men and women indicated that they experienced being cheated by fish traders in relation to prices and not receiving payments due to them.

> *There are buyers who still owe us money. They take bulk fish by making a partial payment (for Rs. 70,000 worth of fish they would only pay Rs.10,000) and promise that they will deposit the money into our account after selling the fish. But they don't keep the promise. My husband has to pay back the fisher/s from whom he gets the fish by the evening of the same day. To date we have several people from two years ago who have still not paid back their dues.* (Wife of commission agent, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Potential conflict between migrant and local fishers was indicated as a risk in all four villages by both men and women. From the perspective of west coast households, the main shocks were the loss of craft and gear, as well as migration camps.

> *His [husband's] boat got burnt in 2015 when it was left at the Uppukadal wadi. This was done by local fishers who were protesting against migrant fishers there. We had to incur more losses and got a loan to purchase a new boat. We are always living on loans, pawning jewellery for emergencies and repaying them with our earnings.* (Wife of migrant fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

From the perspective of east coast villagers, the main shocks were loss of berthing spaces and reduced fish catches. In addition, women from Kadalpalli indicated that leaving behind children in the home village during seasonal migration was a risk factor, as grandparents and carers might neglect them. Shocks incurred were loss of schooling, and in some instances emotional or sexual abuse of children.

Illegal incursion of Indian trawlers into Sri Lankan waters was also mentioned as a risk by a few women and men in Kadalpalli. The shock incurred was a loss of nets and loss of fish catches.

> *I lost LKR 75,000 worth of nets this season here because an Indian trawler cut and dragged them away. I looked for them but couldn't find any pieces. I lost them completely.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Idiosyncratic risks and shocks

Illness and lifecycle events were risk factors mentioned by women in all four villages. The main shocks incurred were expenses for prolonged illnesses and/or funerals of family members, as well as loss of income due to the loss of a breadwinner, and the increased care burden imposed especially on female family members

> *Him [husband] getting a heart attack was a big shock in my life. We had to spend [LKR] 7 to 8 lakhs for his operation. This was a big challenge in my life.* (Female farmer and returned Middle East migrant, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *He [husband] had surgery sometime during the last two years. I don't know why. They removed his gallbladder, they say. He was in hospital for a month. It was the rainy season. I had to get up at 4 a.m., go to the ward by 6 a.m. I had to wash his things, give him food and return at 8 p.m.* (Female dry fish trader, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Coping strategies

To minimise seasonal and weather-related risks, households engage in multiple or alternating livelihoods. Combining fishing and agricultural livelihoods is common in the east coast villages. Combining fishing and a non-fishing related livelihood is also practiced in all four villages. Women in the west coast villages indicated that they kept their enterprises, such as fish processing on a small-scale to avoid risks and shocks.

> *I don't conduct my business in a way that it will put me into risk. Whatever I don't sell, I make into dried fish. I don't suffer losses due to rain or waves as I sell and dry fish at a small scale.* (Female fish trader, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Acceptance of uncertainty, adversity and losses were widespread among women and men in all four villages.

> *We can't depend on the weather. Fishing is a dangerous job. (*Male fish trader, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *We are informed of rain or floods and we don't go to work, but our boats get damaged. What to do? We repair them.* (Male fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *We get losses. We can't cry so we try to make up later by earning. One person had to throw 500kg of fish into the sea. (*Female fish processor, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *We are sad but have got used to adversity.* (Male fish trader, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Misfortune or the will of God/s was attributed to many shocks experienced by households.

> *How can we solve something that God is doing? I got a loan from a bank and managed.* (Male fish processor, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Both women and men of all faiths practice an array of rituals to cope with misfortune, and fulfil desires for protection and success in pursuing their livelihoods. Both daily/ weekly household rituals propitiating a range of gods and goddesses, as well as annual community festivals in the village temples emerged significant for Hindu women and men in Cattiyur, while household rituals were more important for both women and men in Uppukadal, where a Hindu temple was still at the stage of construction.

> *I pray to God. I think of the three kovils - Kaali, Pillaiyar and Nahamma – and send him [husband] to sea. I send him with a prayer that he should return safely to the shore. On Fridays we place camphor, sandalwood, incense and flowers on the boat and worship*. (Female fish processor, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Catholic men and women in Kadapalli indicated the blessings received from the priest at the beginning of the fishing season and prior to migration, while women mentioned personal belief in God, as well as regular prayer and attendance of church, as important.

> *We never pray to increase the fish catch. But we pray for protection. God looks over us. We pray only for safety and health. The boat and engine get blessed by Father at the beginning of the [fishing] season*. (Female fish trader and wife of crew, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Belief in and prayer to Allah in the house, boat or mosque, as well as an annual feast, emerged as significant for Muslim women and men in Selippur.

> *Before starting work we pray. I go to the mosque before going to work or if we are at sea during prayer times, we say our prayers at sea. Once a year, we make a vow to protect us from danger and every year we fulfill the vow by slaughtering a chicken or goat and feeding people. If we make a lot of money during a particular month, we give a portion of it to the mosque*. (Male fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

In terms of accidents at sea, fishers rely on their membership in fisheries societies and fellow fishers to help or rescue them.

> *I met with an accident near Pigeon Island where my boat and all my nets got destroyed. I managed to go to the island and stayed there overnight. Next day 19 boats came searching for me and rescued me.* (Male migrant fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Men from the Puttalam villages also rely on social solidarity mechanisms to see them through hard times and/or to ensure that they do not fall into penury.

> *Before fishers migrate from the village during the monsoon, they have a lot of expenses to bear in preparation. Although mudalali (traders) who sponsor the fisher advance money, if fishers are not able to catch enough fish to pay back, there are some mudalali who take possession of the boat engine as collateral before they return back to the village. And so fishers tend to live in a cycle of loans and debts. There are both considerate mudalali and also non-flexible, money-driven mudalali. When a fisher gets into a cycle of never ending debt, usually friends come together and help out. That type of camaraderie is there among us.* (Male commission agent, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Women resort to pawning jewellery, which was the most widespread form of household savings in all four villages, used for consumption smoothening, as well as purchase of lost gear or craft. Reduction in consumption was practised by households in all four villages. Women in all four villages indicated that they attempted to manage their finances carefully to withstand shocks. Emotional and financial support in times of shock was provided by family members, relatives and neighbours in all four villages. Borrowing from moneylenders, informal credit/savings groups, and banks was resorted to by both women and men in all four villages. Access to banks was higher in the west coast, relative to the east coast villages.

> *We pawn our jewellery and eat when we catch fish. We sometimes borrow a bit of money from a family member. We also get money from the mudalali [trader] in the village – we supply one mudalali here… There are also traders from Negombo, Wilpotha who come here and buy – both women and men. Some people send [produce] to Colombo. We can get bank loans for dry fish processing. I have got loans from Commercial Bank for LKR 50,000 and LOLC for LKR 50,000 to*

> *125,000. If we get loans from the society, the interest is lower.* (Female dried fish processor, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Identifying reliable labour and looking after their needs with care in the migration camps on the east coast, were strategies indicated by women in the west coast villages to retain workers throughout the fishing season. Women in Cattiyur also mentioned coping with potential harassment by crew, whenever their husband was absent from the migration camp, by extra vigilance or spending the night in *wadi* where other women were present.

8.2 Long-term risks and shocks

Resource depletion

In both villages on the west coast and Uppukadal on the east coast, almost all men, women and youth indicated fish resource depletion during their lifetime and within the last five years. In Kadalpalli, fishers estimated the reduction in catch to be as much as by 90% and in Uppukadal by 75%. Fishers had to travel further to catch fish and use a larger quantity of nets now compared to the past.

> *We think that the fish catch has reduced by 90%. I can remember our father said that it is more than enough to use only 6 pieces of nets for a good fish harvest. But today it is not enough even with 30 pieces of nets. I can remember that we had only 10 boats here in my childhood. But now we have a lot of boats. The population is also increasing. We do not have enough space to lay at least a beach seine. Those days we did not have to go very far to catch fish. We could get a good harvest by fishing close by… Sharks are less now. We hardly catch any. If we do, then we are lucky and it is a good income.* (Men's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *There is a clear decrease of the fish resource. I can say 75% of fish resources have been depleted.* (Male fisher, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

The depletion was pronounced in large species of fish according to both women and men, but most species were considered to have reduced.

> *We cannot get now what we used to catch before. Those days we saw big angulavo (sea catfish) and arekula (Spanish mackerel). We can't see any now. Small sharks used to be around – very tasty. There were big keerameen (sardinella species) too. Can't see any of those now. There used to be a lot of pulumalu (milk trevally) and big kiri isso (sea shrimps). We have caught 100kg of isso here those days. Can't see any of those now. Our Kadalpalli mud was called raththaran mada (golden mud). We can't catch any kumbalavo (Indian mackerel) or hurullo (sardinella species) in the shallow sea with a theppam (raft) now. Those days one theppam would land 300kg. That's why we say that fish is less now. Nowadays we catch only one or two katuvello (wolf herring) in a net, those days we caught sacks full of them. A net would be full of kalu seelavo (barracuda). There are none now.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

In Kadalpalli and Uppukadal, in addition to fish, the decline of shrimp and crabs in the lagoon, was reported by both women and men.

> *In the lagoon too there is much less fish – very much less. Some families have depended on the lagoon for a long time. Theppam [raft] fishers do not even can catch kumbala (Indian mackeral) now. Those days they could catch 200/300 kg of hurullo (sardinella). There is nothing in there these days. Around 90% of fish species have been depleted in the lagoon. I think the reason is pollution in the lagoon.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *There are no prawns at all in the lagoon.. They are not breeding because of the saltern. Even our well water has become brackish. We have no drinking water.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Women in all three communities referred to the reduction in income due to depletion of the resource.

> *The fish resources have depleted. Those days we had a lot of money. In the last five years our income has reduced.* (Women's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *For the last five years at least, there has been no business, no profit made from fishing. It has all been interest and loans.* (Female fish trader and processor, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

It was also pointed out by some women that the increase in price of fish due to scarcity did not necessarily benefit them in engaging in their livelihoods.

> *The fish prices here have been higher. We can't buy for dry fish processing. They send it all to Colombo as fresh fish. Prices are LKR 200-350 per kg for small fish. We manage but it is getting difficult by the day.* (Female dried fish processor, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Men, women and youth in these three villages attributed the reduction in the fish resource to use of illegal fishing nets and dynamite, as well as the increase in the number of fishers, boats and nets.

> *Within the last 20 years, people have been using dynamite and lights and killed a lot of fish. They also dispose of the excess dead fish into the sea. The other fish don't come to the usual fishing areas because of this. This [dynamite] is the main reason. People do it on the sly though the government has banned it.* (Men's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *There are too many boats in the sea. In 2010 there were 280 boats going out to sea. Now there are 380 boats. If it is like this here, the whole area has more boats. All 24 hours people are in the sea. That's why the fish have declined.* (Male fish trader, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Some fishers also attributed resource depletion to the poaching by Indian trawlers within Sri Lankan waters, in addition to overcrowding and illegal fishing gear.

> *I think there are more fishers in the sea now compared to before. Illegal fishing gear is also another reason. Indian fishers also come close to Selippur.* (Male fisher, Uppukdal, Trincomalee)

A few women and men in Kadalpalli attributed the depletion in fish to the tsunami of 2004, and in Uppukadal to the increase in fishers due to aid provided to the fisheries sector.

> *After the tsunami there is a clear depletion of the fish resource but there is also a clear increase in fishing boats. Many farmers have got fishing boats after the tsunami and they also engage in fishing now.* (Male fisher, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Some women in Cattiyur attributed the reduction in fish to the operation of a coal power plant located not far from the village. In Uppukadal, some women attributed the loss of fish to the war, while men attributed depletion of fish due to use of illegal nets, such as trammel nets, by migrant fishers.

> *The fish resource has reduced because of the naaivalai (trammel nets) used by people from Kadalapalli. People from other villages use kalvalai and catch small fish so the fish resources reduce. No solution has been arrived at despite the 34 fisheries societies [of the district] protesting*. (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Men also indicated depletion of fish in the lagoon due to pollution by shrimp farms and the establishment of a saltern.

In the west coast villages, men's and women's responses to the depletion of fish was first voiced in terms of their inability to do much about it, that it was beyond their control. Men in three villages faulted the government for not regulating the use of illegal nets and emphasised the need for effective regulation by government for sustainable management of the resource.

> *We can't do anything about it. We have to earn to eat. Fish should be produced [resources renewed]. The government should control the use of dynamite. It is the loku katti (big people) who benefit [from dynamite]; poor people suffer*. (Men's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *We have spoken everywhere. Our economic situation is not good so we approach the government through the mudalalis (traders). But the government doesn't do anything*. (Men's FGD, Upukadal, Trincomalee)

Women in Cattiyur and Uppukadal expected assistance from government to address fish depletion, and in Cattiyur women also expected assistance from God.

> *We have to lift up our hands to God. If the government gives us things, we can depend on them*. (Women's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Several women in Kadalpalli indicated that they increased fish prices in response to reduction in fish, and several men there said they have changed their fishing techniques to have a better chance of catching fish. Women in Uppukadal also indicated that they took out loans and incurred debt in facing the decline of fish resources.

Women in these three villages did not expect their children to fish in the future if the fish resources continued to decline.

> *We have told them not to become fishers and encourage them to study. I get up at 1am with great difficulty and send my husband to fish. But if there is no fish, there is no point. Why should I go? To return empty handed? This is what some [fishers] ask*. (Women's FGD. Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

While some men also shared this view, others said their sons would have to continue to fish in the absence of adequate education and any viable alternatives.

> *There will be less fish. Only a few children here have education. So most will go out to sea. We will give them boats and engines and send them off for fishing*. (Male fish trader, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

While female youth in the west coast villages were confident that they would be able to find alternative employment in the future, male youth expected that they would continue to fish, as there were no other work opportunities. However, they expected many constraints, including the incursion of private companies into their livelihood space.

> *We are managing by doing different jobs, working in garments [factories] while boys do, painting, mason work, and work in the sheet factory. We are seeking alternative jobs. In 20 years, it [fish resource] will reduce even more. Because the youth do not go to cast the nets they don't know the trade. Only the old people are engaging in fishing. The youth don't go because they have to pull the nets on the hot sand and their hands get wounded and swollen.* (Female youth FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam).

> *If there are fish we will go fishing. Not in 20 years but just in 10 years no one will go fishing because they [the company] would have captured the whole lagoon for the saltern.* (Male youth FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

In Uppukadal on the east coast, male youth said they expected to continue fishing, and this was viable if migrant fishers were not permitted to fish on the east coast.

Selippur contrasted with the other three villages in that women, men and youth perceived an increase and/or sustainability in fish resources, rather than depletion.

> *I am 45 years old and I don't see any depletion in the sea or lagoon. I think these [fish resources] will remain in the future as now without any decrease. Due to the ban on surukkuvalai (purse seines) fishers have started to use dynamite. This may cause fish resource depletion.* (Men's FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *There is enough fish in the sea. The fish resource has increased. Fish breed very fast.* (Male youth FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

They explained this as due to the will of God who provides as the human population increases.

> *If the population increases, God increases the production of fish to meet human needs.* (Male fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

According to some men, fish reproduce fast and many species have increased stocks in the last five years. However, some women, men and youth saw a decrease in fish production in the last years due to the ban on nets of small-mesh size, purse seines and lights by government. Thus, the reduction in fish harvests was attributed to harassment

by the authorities, preventing fishers from catching fish that were plentiful in the sea. The rationale for the ban on small mesh sizes, purse seines and lights was questioned at length in this village.

> *We only know how to catch small fish. The Navy seizes our nets and fish when we catch paarai [trevally]. We catch saalai and keeri [sardinella species]in fear. We lose our boats and nets because they say that we are using medicine or dynamo to catch the fish. This is not so. They are lying and seizing our fish. The government makes a profit out of this because they take our fish and levy a fine for the boat.* (Women's FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *There is no shortage of fish. The government has placed bans on using lights to fish, but they can use lights in Hambantota [district in the south]. Here you can't use lights. We catch small fish by using lights. These fish are seasonal and they will come, go and come again. Why is there a ban? They are catching small fish in the beach seine, but that is not banned.* (Men's FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Thus, the denial of depletion of the fish resource in Selippur appears to be an expression of defiance and contestation of the area-specific bans on fishing gear by regulatory authorities. Most men said they responded to the ban on nets/lights and dynamite by continuing to employ these fishing methods while escaping the scrutiny of the authorities, and paying off the authorities when boats or fishing gear were confiscated. Some men said they were switching to alternative, permitted fishing gear. Men and male youth in Selippur expected to fish in the future as well, as they perceived that the fish resource would be sustained. Due to the uncertainty created by the banning of specific fishing methods and alleged harassment by authorities, women and female youth expected to pursue alternative livelihoods in the future.

Climate variability and change

In all four villages, men, women and youth perceived that the climate had changed within their lifetime and the last five years. The main changes indicated were an increase in heat and shorter, more intense periods of rain.

> *There is too much sun and dew. There is no rain and if there is rain, there is flooding. Our work is affected due to this. If it rains, we can't put the fish out to dry. Worms will start attacking the fish and we will have no wages.* (Women's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *Those days everything was in place. It would rain in time for farming. Not now. Now there is drought. It is too hot and there is no rain. It is hot because there is no rain. We can farm and garden only if we have rain.* (Women's FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Many women and men in all four villages said that the rainfall patterns were predictable in the past but this was no longer the case.

> *The climate has changed a lot. Seasonal rain is often late. We don't know - can't predict what will happen today or tomorrow. These days it is very cold at night and this is a change in climate patterns.* (Male fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

In all four villages, some women and men perceived that there was a change in the winds, and with this a change in the patterns of sea currents.

> *The winds should have come on April 10th, but now it is May and the wind hasn't come. The weather is changing every month. The water current usually flows from east to west. Now it flows from north to east in the morning and east to the north in the evenings.* (Male beach seine owner, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *There is no rain. The kachchan wind has not blown yet. The wind is not blowing as it should. It is only if there is wind that the fish come to the shore. If it rains, the fish come to the shore.* (Female beach seine owner, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

In the west coast villages, men and women reported that colder spells had increased in the months of December-February in the last years, accompanied by fog/mist. Changes in wave patterns were also reported.

> *There is mist and we can't see the boats out at sea. In the old days, people would say that the waves will break this way but it doesn't happen these days. The*

> *waves don't behave the same way they should at this time of the year*. (Female fish processor, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

The main impacts of climate variability/change in all four villages were droughts associated with the increase in heat and flooding associated with shorter but more intense rainfall events. Men in all four villages indicated a decrease in fish harvests due to the reduction in rainfall, while a decrease in shrimp and fish harvests in the lagoon due to lack of rain were reported by men in Kadalpalli, Cattiyur and Selippur.

> *Those days we thought that if there was dew and it was cold, there would be more fish. Now, the water needs to be warm for there to be fish. This is a change in patterns. If it rains there will be more fish. But this is not so now. Those days we used to catch more fish than we could sell. We have less rain now, but last year there was more rain. We don't understand the weather any more.* (Male beach seine owner, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *There are changes in rainy and dry seasons. The dry season and rainy season arrive either too early or too late. Those days during the season we caught shrimps in the lagoon and the sea; but we don't catch shrimps now. The [fishing] season here ends on the 15th of April and the breeze starts blowing hard. The sea is very rough now during dry [fishing] season now. The [fishing] season and off-season have changed.* (Male fish trader, Cattiyur, Puttalm)

Men in Cattiyur and Sellippur also associated an increase in the growth of algae and seaweed with climate change, with negative impacts on fish harvests

> *There are changes in the algae too because of the change in current. So fish resources decrease. Now there is no fish whether algae increases or not.* (Male beach seine owner, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *Now there is too much algae so we can't pull in the nets. The nets tear. This affects our work. We are able to catch fish only when we cast the nets closer to the shore in the evenings*. (Male beach seine owner, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Colder weather and fog/mist made it difficult to go out to sea for fishing, according to men in the west coast villages. Both women and men in the east coast villages reported

agricultural harvest losses due to drought. In addition, women in all four villages indicated shortages of drinking water during drought periods, including the increase in salinity of wells in Sellippur. Women in the two west coast villages indicated the inability to dry fish and income losses due to intense rainfall events, while women in Cattiyur and Uppukadal indicated an increase in diseases, such as dengue, especially among children, during the rainy season and periods of flooding.

Coping or adaptive strategies to climate variability/change were not extensive in any of the four villages and uncertainty was the main response that emerged from women, men and youth. In Kadalpalli and Sellippur, some men and women perceived climate change as the will of God, or an act of nature, and therefore not within their control.

> *We can't change the current. Even the government can't. It's nature.* (Male beach seine owner, Selippur, Trincomalee)

In Cattiyur and Selippur, men perceived that it was the role of government to deal with impacts of climate change and that it was ineffective and uninterested in fulfilling this role.

> *It is difficult. People [from government] come only to ask for votes. They are in AC [air-conditioned] rooms. It is we who are suffering.* (Male fish processor, Selippur, Trincomalee)

In terms of changing weather patterns, some fishers in the west coast villages indicated that they observed the wind and wave patterns carefully daily before venturing out to sea.

> *We look at the signs. We can see [the signs] and decide to go out to sea. Otherwise, we don't go. In fishing we understand a little about the weather. We decide whether to go fishing or not by looking at the sky. If it gets dark with lightening, we can't go out to sea. Kadalpalli people didn't get their boats capsized in a big storm [recently] while the Chilaw people did. It was God's will. We have had to return when winds are too strong.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Men in Uppukadal mentioned that they were educating their children to leave the fishery but most often they ended up fishing in any case.

> *We wonder among ourselves as to why we selected fishing as a profession. We are educating our children to do other jobs, but they will not leave the trade/ profession*. (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Men and women in the west coast villages perceived that migration to the northeast/east coast or overseas, and the ability to work and make a good income there as one response to climate change.

> *People migrate to the north [east] – it depends on the families. Anything from six to ten months. We have gone to Uppukadal in the past. Now we go to Mullaitivu*. (Female fish processor, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *If everyone has a (good) catch, everyone will have a job. It was because of the poor employment opportunities that a lot left for Australia in boats in 2012-2013*. (Male Fish trader, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Coping with climate variability/change by resorting to new fisheries technology was mentioned by a few fishers.

> *We are continuing [fishing]. One or two people have GPS and they call and inform us that the direction of the current is changing*. (Male fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Women in all four villages said they went longer distances incurring considerable costs in search of drinking and bathing water during periods of drought.

> *We go in an auto [rickshaw] and fill water in a can. We go to places where there is water to bathe. We are very careful with how we use water and conserve it. On the east coast it is not like that. There is no water in the wells there*. (Female fish trader, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

In Uppukadal, both women and men said that they also dug deeper wells, and sometimes the Navy and hotels in the vicinity provided the village with water during drought.

Female youth in Cattiyur and Selippur indicated that they stayed indoors during periods of intense heat.

8.3 Regulatory Environment

The state institutions with regulatory functions over livelihoods in fishing communities are the Department of Fisheries, Provincial Council, District Secretariat, Coast Conservation Department, Department of Agriculture, Department of Irrigation, the Police, Coast Guard and the Navy. Of these, the Department of Fisheries was most known, especially among men but also among women in the four villages. Most men and women did not have direct interaction with Fisheries department officers. They indicated that officers communicated on fisheries regulations, such as bans on small-sized nets, purse seines, dynamite, lights and capture of prohibited endangered species, through their community representatives in fisheries societies. However, licensing of fishing craft and beach seine had to be done by individual owners annually. Women in Cattiyur and Uppukadal pointed out that as they were not members of fisheries societies, they had no cause to interact with the Fisheries department. Men in the west coast villages said their relations with the Fisheries department officers were cordial.

> *Fisheries officers are good to us – there are no shortcomings there.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

However, the department did not often have the capacity to enforce their regulations. Men in Kadalpalli said this inability to enforce regulations, was due to pressure from politicians.

> *We follow their [fisheries department] advice. They inform us of the rules. We tell them if you have a rule implement it but they don't do that. If there's an illegal method being used, there are always some ministers behind that. The fisheries officers also know that but can't do much about it.* (Male fish trader, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

West coast fishers also considered east coast fishers as violating regulations, which the department was unable to prevent.

> *We follow the Fisheries Act. We don't use illegal methods. The people in Trincomalee use illegal methods – dynamite, surukku (purse seines). That's why they don't want us to come there – 90% of the fishers there use illegal methods whether the government says or not. They can't understand why not. (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)*

Many men in Selippur and Uppukadal perceived that fisheries officers were partial and enforced their bans only on local fishers on the east coast, but not migrant fishers from the west coast.

> *Government officers are biased. They catch only boats [using banned nets] of Muslims but not boats of the Tamils and Sinhalese.* (Men's FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *The only problem is the migrant fishers. If you use a ¾" – 1½" eye net and cast it on the rocks, the next day there will be no fish there. If you cast nets on rocks, the fish roe will also get trapped, so the fish resources decrease. Sea plants also get destroyed, so fish don't have a place to lay eggs. Therefore, there are no fish. The Fisheries Minister will be from their District/Province. The second problem is that they [fisheries authorities] view Tamils as second class citizens.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Fishers in Selippur indicated that they often confronted the confiscation of nets and boats, as well as arrest, and had to spend large amounts of money to get their fishing craft, gear and themselves released.

> *Even if we try to come to a solution through negotiation they confiscate our fishing equipment and take our fishermen into custody.* (Men's FGD, Selipur, Trincomalee)

Fishers in Uppukadal perceived that fishers in Muslim villages engaged in illegal fishing methods with the support of Muslim politicians, while they themselves had no support from Tamil politicians.

> *The Muslims from Kuchcheveli use disco valai [trammel nets]. Surukku valai [purse seines] are used by people from Selippur and Irrakkaandi. Tamil people don't engage in such activities. They have politicians like X. [prominent Muslim politician from the east coast] on their side. Y. [prominent Tamil politician from the east coast] doesn't have power. We have to carry him.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

The lack of clarity on the use of fishing gear and the variation of fisheries regulations according to conditions of specific fisheries was a cause of confusion and frustration in relation to fairness of these regulations, especially for east coast fishers.

> *What is banned in Trincomale is not banned in other districts. We do not have issues or conflict with outsiders [migrant fishers]. But government officers and media are biased and they take the side of outsiders [migrants].* (Men's FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

However, several boat owners/fish traders and fishers in both villages maintained that they had good relations with Fisheries department officers, and the conflict was only between the department and fishers who used illegal methods.

> *The conflict is between illegal fishers and the [fisheries] department. Not with us. My brother or nephew may engage in illegal fishing, but I have nothing to do with that. I don't get involved. It is between them and the department. We complain about those who use dynamite and lights. They are caught but released.* (Male beach seine owner, Selippur, Trincomalee)

The Navy was also involved in enforcing fisheries regulations, in addition to apprehending smugglers, and men in the east coast villages pointed to their lack of impartiality towards local fishers as well. Some men in Kadalpalli, Selippur and Uppukdal indicated conflicts with the Navy over what they claimed as false charges of smuggling. Fishers in Uppukadal also alleged that the Navy damaged their nets and bait during their operations.

> *The navy is a problem. They tell us to do this and that – bring our boat licenses to the sea with us. We can't do that because they will then get wet. We don't*

> *smuggle goods. They should know who the smugglers are. We don't want the navy here.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *The Navy comes and rummages and tramples over our boats while we are at sea damaging our fish and live bait.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

While women in Kadalpalli and Selippur perceived that they did not come under the purview of any regulations in pursuing their livelihoods, women and men in Cattiyur indicated that they had to follow public health regulations enforced by the Provincial Council in maintaining the cleanliness of the beach, especially while processing fish.

> *The government has told us not to throw fish heads into the sea. So we dry these and sell it to be used as chicken feed. The police and the navy tell us that the fish in the sea won't come to the areas we fish because of the smell of fish heads. If it rains, people throw the fish heads into the sea because they spoil.* (Female fish processor, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Women and men involved in farming in Selippur and Uppukadal mentioned occasional visits of extension officers of the Departments of Agriculture and Irrigation, and advice received from them in growing crops or obtaining water. There were regulations imposed by the Agricultural department prohibiting the use of bulldozers in land clearing and restrictions on cultivable extent of land during drought periods – these were followed by most villagers. In Uppukadal, an Irrigation department officer had to intervene once in a water conflict over an irrigation channel between two sections of the village. No conflicts between villages and officers of these departments were reported.

Institutions within the community regulating fishing were fisheries societies in all four villages and religious institutions, such as the church in Kadalpalli and Hindu temple (*kovil*) in Cattiyur in the west coast. The fisheries societies intervene in any conflicts among members within the community, as well as maintain vigilance over enforcement of regulations. Fisheries societies are very important in providing assistance to fishers who face danger at sea, as well as loans for fisheries-related activities. In Kadalpalli, according to some fishers, there are conflicts between fishers using purse seine nets and those using gillnets or hook and lines. Women in Cattiyur and Uppukadal indicated that they had no voice in fisheries societies, as they were not permitted to be members. In

Kadalpalli and Cattiyur on the west coast, fishers indicated that they belonged to several different fisheries societies, which cooperated with one another informally in the case of Kadalpalli, and formally as a federation in the case of Cattiyur, in negotiating with the authorities and dealing with fisheries-related issues within the communities. In Selippur and Uppukadal, both men and women mentioned that there were conflicts within and between the different fisheries societies, and thus they had varied success in resolving fisheries issues within the communities or increasing their bargaining power vis-à-vis traders.

> *In [this section of the village] we have two societies, five altogether in Selippur…There is no good mutual understanding among the societies. There is miscommunication between societies so we haven't been able to bring a market here. Also we are doing this business under the carpet as surukkuvalai [purse seines] are now banned. So we have to sell to the mudalalis [traders]. Otherwise the police will catch us. During the [previous] regime, the police didn't come. This government is strict which means we have to bribe more. Everyone gives something*. (Men's FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *On the 5th of each month, all the men in the fisheries cooperative society meet. They have conflicts among themselves. If the Fisheries Department does not do anything for us in times of difficulty, they also fight with the department. They find a solution.* (Female fish trader and processor, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

In Cattiyur, the beach seine owners' association negotiated on behalf of members and also mediated conflict among members over the use of the beach and nearshore spaces allocated in rotation to each beach seine share (*padu*) for fishing. However, these negotiations were not always successful due to corruption of law enforcement officers.

> *I am a member of the Samastha Lanka Madel Samithi [Sri Lanka Beach Seine Owners Association] based in Negombo. I am also a member of the karaivalai [beach seine] owners' society [in the village], which consists of 18-20 members. Our associations deal with the Fisheries department if we have issues. There are regulations regarding how to do our work. There are rules as to the extent of sea area we use, when allowing others to spread their nets. Now people don't*

> *follow the rules that much. The police are not helpful if the fisher in question has their favour. Peoples' salaries are not enough to live on, so the police succumb to bribes. It is difficult to ensure that justice prevails.* (Male beach seine owner, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

In Cattiyur, women and men pointed out that *kovil* regulations were more important for them than those of the authorities.

> *We abide more by kovil regulations than the government regulations. Fisheries officers come here. Some fishers use banned fishing equipment leading to conflict with government regulations.* (Male fish trader, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

The *kovil* operated and managed the daily fish market and received a commission of 10% on all fish sold within the market. Fish traders who sold from a counter, also paid rent to the *kovil* for the use of this sales space. In Kadalpalli, the church auctioned out its grounds to an entrepreneur to operate and manage the fish market in the village.

Thus, fishing communities in the study villages confronted a wide range of short-term and long-term risks and shocks in pursuing their livelihoods. Social institutions within the community were important in sustaining livelihoods and coping with these vulnerabilities. Fishing households relied on these local instiutions to mediate on their behalf with the state regulatory authorities.

9. Social wellbeing

The social wellbeing perspective emerged as a response to a critique of poverty as a deficit-centered understanding of the reality of lives of people in developing countries. The dominant monetary approach to poverty (Lipton 1988, Ravallion 1998) was challenged by the more multi-dimensional understandings of poverty expressed in the 'voices of the poor' studies of the 1990-2000s, as well as empirical data coming from wellbeing studies that people did not necessarily perceive their lives entirely in terms of deprivation or a lack of something – i.e. in terms of 'having' or 'not having.'

The social wellbeing approach, also referred to as three-dimensional (or 3D) wellbeing, systematically incorporates the three aspects of material, relational and subjective wellbeing (Camfield 2006; Gough and McGregor 2007). In elaborating wellbeing, White (2008) makes a distinction between *having* a good life (in terms of material welfare and a desired standard of living), *living* a good life (seen in terms of capabilities and relationships), and *locating* one's life (through experience, subjectivity, judgments and meanings about what constitutes happiness). These three formulations are useful in understanding ways in which the different facets of a 'life well lived' come together. These facets emerge within the notions of wellbeing articulated by women, men and youth in the study locations.

Social wellbeing notions are analysed here to obtain a detailed contextual understanding of the motivations that shape women, men and youth in pursuing their livelihoods within fishing communities, as well as to assess their attainment of social wellbeing outcomes. As Coulthard et al. (2011) argue, social wellbeing directs attention to the social and value heterogeneity that characterises populations dependent on fishing, the need for mediation among conflicting wellbeing aspirations and strategies, and the trade-offs made by individuals and households.

9.1 Notions of wellbeing

In contrast to the notions on poverty, which were centred on the material aspect, all three dimensions – material, relational and subjective – emerged in the understandings of wellbeing in the four villages. However, notions of wellbeing varied in terms of the emphasis placed on the different dimensions of wellbeing among the villages. There

was remarkable correspondence between the general wellbeing notions that emerged in focus group discussions and among individuals who were interviewed within a village.

In all four villages, material aspects of wellbeing were significant. Apart from Kadalpalli, this was indicated in terms of having adequate money in the other three villages. In Kadalpalli, material wellbeing was expressed in terms of a life free of debt. Relational wellbeing was indicated as important in both Kadalpalli and Cattiyur. In Kadalpalli social relations with kin, friends, neighbours and within the community in general emerged as even more important than material wellbeing, while in Cattiyur both social relations and money appeared to be equally important. In Uppukadal, the material dimensions of money, good incomes and employment emerged more important than social relations within the family and community. In Selippur, the subjective dimension of good qualities of people emerged as significantly more important than in the other three villages, together with the material dimension of money, good incomes and employment.

In Kadalpalli, no difference was evident among women and men in focusing on the role of social relations in wellbeing. In characterising wellbeing, the most important aspect that emerged from both female and male respondents was good relations within the family. This included relations between wife and husband, as well as parents and children, and among siblings.

> *Children and wife are foremost. Then parents are important. Love, caring, happiness are important for a good life. Money cannot give everything. We have money today but nothing tomorrow. I need to spend time with my wife. We cannot get these days back. We would be older later. So happiness in our lives is at this age. We can't measure it nor buy it. The most important people than any others are neighbours. Of course, wife, kids, parents get priority. But neighbours are more important than relatives. They are the people who come to us first in an emergency, not relatives from afar.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Good relations were indicated by notions such as unity, harmony, peace, love, kindness, caring, sharing within the family, avoidance of conflict, good conduct of family members, as well as participating in family trips and pilgrimages. Apart from

relations within the family, good relations with neighbours, relatives and members of the community were also considered important for wellbeing by both women and men.

> *A good life is to be able to help others and receive help in return. To be able to go out as a family on a trip or pilgrimage. To be able to lead a beautiful life. We help others out when possible because we must remember that during our time of need we would also require help from others.* (Female fish processor, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Helping others, sharing and reciprocity were notions associated with social relations with others, as well as avoidance of conflict and jealousy. For men, unity within the village and dependence on others in times of need, were key aspects of positive relations within the community.

A debt-free life was another important aspect indicated by more women than men in Kadalpalli.

> *A life without debt is most important. I prefer to live happily in Kadalpalli with my children without getting scolded by others due to financial difficulties. I don't like creditors coming and scolding us. I don't like to be a debtor. I don't need big houses or a luxurious life. A simple life without loans is more than enough. I want to keep my things with me. I don't like to mortgage my jewellery. I don't like to beg from others.* (Wife of migrant fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Managing the household, savings and retaining assets and jewellery were associated with a life without debt. While several women and men specifically indicated that money was not significant for achieving happiness in life, fewer women and men indicated money/income/savings as important for wellbeing. However, several of those who identified the importance of money/income/savings further specified that this was adequate money/income to meet daily needs and avoid undue suffering.

Good personal qualities were also mentioned by several women and men in Kadalpalli. These included qualities of being a good husband or wife such as responsibility, avoidance of alcoholism, good household management skills, and those linked with good relations with people, such as respect for others and refraining from envy or misdeeds

against others. Faith in God and devotion to God emerged as another dimension of wellbeing for some women and men in this village. For women, this was associated with regular church worship and a belief in God's assistance in times of need, while for a male respondent, God was perceived as above the family and providing advice to the community to live without conflict.

> *The main place is given to God, then to the family – wife and children. It is only after that we have to think of external things. If we have problems in our family, how can we tell others? We can only give advice if we have a good family life. We shouldn't eat only by ourselves. We should give to those who haven't. Everyone doesn't get what they need by working. We should not do things just by ourselves but work together with the community. Recently there was a problem with tungus nets – only 100 families depend on this and the others wanted them to stop using these nets. There was a lot of conflict among people and Father [from the church] had to get involved. We learnt a lesson from that. God has advised us not to go against the village.* (Male lagoon fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Youth in Kadalpalli generally mirrored adults in identifying wellbeing with relations within the family, relations with neighbours and life without debt. Relations within the family were characterised as having fun and a peaceful home environment, as well as going on family trips. Thus relational and material wellbeing both emerged as important for youth in this village.

In Cattiyur, the two aspects of wellbeing, which emerged among both women and men as equally significant was the need for money and good relations within the family.

> *It is my family that is important to me. My job is also important. I have to work in order to look after my family. Otherwise my family can't eat. I am the only breadwinner.* (Male beach seine worker, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Money was perceived as a means to lead a good life and obtain assets such as house and land.

> *We should have a good economy. If we want to live a good life we should have our own land. There won't be any problems if a person has his/her own land.* (Wife of beach seine owner, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Good relations within the family were characterised by unity, understanding, love and affection among family members. Good relations with neighbours, relatives and others in the community were mentioned by several women and a man, as well as a sense of pride in belonging to their village.

> *I have a good wife and a good child. That itself is enough. I have good friends. I can't say that the society is good. There is competition for jobs, but it is a good ur (village). Our arts, culture, piety and link with the kovil – I will never give up my ur no matter which country I am in.* (Male fish trader, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

The cultural importance of the *kovil* (Hindu temple) and its activities for the community were also indicated by some men and women.

> *The seven days of the kovil festival are the happiest days in the village. Relatives visit homes and we all get together. Those who have family members in London and Australia live happily every day. They have permanent incomes. We have to work every day to cover the daily expenses.* (Female fish trader and wife of fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

The subjective dimension of wellbeing as expressed in terms of peace of mind, good personal qualities/ethics, self-confidence, and satisfaction with what one has were other aspects of wellbeing mentioned by several women. One man indicated a good fish catch as an aspect of wellbeing.

While women in Cattiyur ranked the material dimensions of money, employment and education higher than the subjective dimension of happiness within a group context, men ranked the subjective dimension of happiness over the material dimensions of financial security and vehicles. Happiness, however, was associated both with the ability of receiving other aspects of wellbeing, as well as being able to earn and have things by men.

Youth in Cattiyur concurred with adults on the material dimension of wellbeing as being most significant. While good health, clean drinking water, good employment and regular incomes emerged as most important for female youth in their ranking of wellbeing, money was ranked highest by male youth. However, male youth also included aspects of relational wellbeing (helping the less fortunate, unity, a good social environment) and of subjective wellbeing (good personal qualities and attitude) in their list of rankings.

In Selippur, the two aspects of wellbeing that emerged as important to both women and men were the subjective and material dimensions. Many women and some men referred to good personal qualities as being important for wellbeing – these included patience, dignity, ability to compromise, hard work, confidence, good heart, modesty, discipline, love, perseverance, independence and intelligence. For women, fulfilling the role of wife or mother was associated with their wellbeing.

> *Love is first, then perseverance. In my understanding, we should live happily rather than going after money*. (Wife of fisher/farmer, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *We have to be respectable and live with dignity. I have to be a wife who conforms to her husband. I have to be a good mother to my children. I have to know how to look after my children and how to respect my husband. My desire is to live with dignity and respect*. (Wife of fish trader, Selippur, Trincomale)

Both women and men also identified money as an important aspect of their wellbeing.

> *Money is the most important for a good life, next is good qualities - a good heart, modesty and discipline*. (Wife of fish processor, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Money was indicated as a means to access possessions, such as vehicles, as well as respectability, but it was also coupled with good social relations.

> *When you consider everything, money is the most important. If society is united everything will flourish. That is also good.* (Male fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

In terms of social relations, unity was mentioned by several men, while respect and recognition by others were indicated by several women. Permanent employment, education, and new fisheries technology were also indicated as aspects of wellbeing by some men.

> *Education is most important. These days you can't do anything without education. Education and religious education are particularly important in this village. We also need knowledge on new technology related to fishing*. (Male fish trader, Selippur, Trincomalee)

In assessing their wellbeing, both women and men in Selippur ranked the material aspects as most important. However, while women prioritised government jobs for the entire family and government assistance for self-employment in their ranking, men prioritised permanent income, self-employment and business. Men also emphasised their role as breadwinners so that their wives did not have to go overseas to earn for the family. In their list of rankings, women additionally included a relational aspect of wellbeing - the need for a women's gathering place on the beach – as a measure that would enable them to enjoy time outside their homes and thus enhance their wellbeing.

As in the case of adults, youth in Selippur also identified the material aspects of wellbeing as important, with both male and female youth ranking this dimension highest. However, while all aspects of wellbeing ranked by female youth, such as employment, education, water and living conditions were associated with material wellbeing, male youth included material dimensions (money, economic development of the village) as well as subjective (piety, discipline) and relational (respect for old and young) dimensions in their rankings.

In Uppukadal, the material dimension of wellbeing emerged as predominant for both women and men. The relational dimension, where good relations external to the family were emphasised more than relations within the family, was more significant for women than men.

Money was identified as most important by both women and men, and considered a means to fulfil most needs.

> *Money is very important. We can't do anything without money. If we get a small ailment we need money. We do not have money – we earn money only if we go for fishing. Some people get money without doing any job but we have to go for fishing to get our food.* (Male fisher, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *One must engage in a job and should live in improved circumstances. It is money that is important, isn't it? But we don't have this.* (Female dried fish trader, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Wellbeing was also associated with good employment by women. Good relations with neighbours and others in the community emerged as another aspect of wellbeing for many women and a few men. Respect by others and a good reputation was indicated as important by many women. This was associated with helping others, as well as being polite in interactions and conversations.

> *We have to live respectfully with dignity. We should not get a bad name [reputation].*
>
> *We should be hospitable and help people in any way we can. There is a woman who comes to the post office to collect pichcha sambalam. I give her tea. While we are alive we should do good to people and people should feel they can always ask for a glass of water from me. They should say that I talk nicely.* (Female food seller, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Good relations within the family, especially between spouses and parents and children were another aspect mentioned by more women than men, and linked to respect in society.

> *You have to live happily with your children without any family problems. It is then that you can have a good name in society. You need a good job or profession too.* (Wife of fisher, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Ownership of fishing gear and a good fish catch were considered aspects of wellbeing by several men.

> *If we have good catch we can live happily. I need an engine boat for lagoon fishing. Those who have migrated to Australia illegally have bought boats and engines. If we want to live a good life we need a boat and engine.* (Male crew, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Good qualities, including dignity, hospitality, polite conversation, peace of mind, intelligence, faith in the Saviour were indicated by more women than men, while access to education, health, land, and good harvests were mentioned by men.

While the material dimension (good economic situation, good living conditions, health and sanitation) was identified as more important in the rankings of men in Uppukadal, the relational and subjective dimensions of wellbeing (unity and happiness despite suffering, perseverance) emerged higher in the rankings of women, who also included some material dimensions (money for education and support for small enterprise) in their rankings.

Youth in Uppukadal generally concurred with adults in identifying material (employment, good income, health), relational (good relations with parents) and subjective (happiness, cleanliness) dimensions of wellbeing. However, mirroring the perspective of adults in this village, female youth ranked aspects of relational wellbeing (good relations with parents) higher than material wellbeing (employment and health), while male youth ranked material wellbeing (employment and health) higher than relations with parents. The latter also considered the sea as the biggest asset for their wellbeing as fishers.

9.2 Satisfaction and dissatisfaction with wellbeing dimensions

In assessing their satisfaction with the various aspects of wellbeing identified, most women and men in all four villages indicated that they were satisfied with the relational dimension of wellbeing. In Selippur, a higher proportion of respondents expressed satisfaction with the subjective dimension of wellbeing as well. In all four villages, most women and men were dissatisfied with the material dimension of wellbeing. In Cattiyur, dissatisfaction of several women and men also extended to relational aspects of migration.

Many women and men in Kadalpalli expressed their satisfaction with good relations within their family, as well as with good relations with relatives, neighbours and members of their community. Several women and men were satisfied with their faith in God and church rituals. One woman was satisfied that she did not have debt. Thus, the

main satisfaction indicated in this village was in terms of the relational dimension of wellbeing, followed by the subjective dimension.

Respondents in Kadalpalli did not indicate their dissatisfaction as much as their satisfaction, but of those who did, debt was the most often cited reason by women, as well as lack of money for a pilgrimage by a woman and lack of income by a man. Theft by outsiders and a bad relationship with the daughter were two other reasons for dissatisfaction by a man and woman respectively. Thus, the main aspects of dissatisfaction in Kadalpalli were in terms of material wellbeing.

In Cattiyur, most women and men expressed satisfaction in terms of lack of hunger and want, as well as participation together with relatives in the *kovil* festival and receiving blessings of the Gods. Good relations with the host community during internal migration was another aspect of satisfaction, while personal qualities such as happiness and literacy also emerged as aspects of satisfactory wellbeing. Thus, most satisfaction was expressed in terms of all three aspects of wellbeing - material, relational and subjective.

Dissatisfaction was expressed by both women and men in Cattiyur mostly in relation to external migration. Women indicated the inadequate money received from migration to the Middle East, lack of respect from relatives despite supporting them with remittances, as well as hard work engaged in by local people, compared to household members of migrants to UK and Australia who were perceived as leading easy lives. Similarly, a man referred to substance addiction by the youth due to easy money from migrants in UK and Australia. Dissatisfaction was also associated with aspects of livelihood, such as lack of access to loans, hard physical labour in beach seines and lack of other opportunities by men. Lack of love from and communication with the husband was a cause of dissatisfaction for one woman, while estrangement from parents due to their opposition to his marriage also caused dissatisfaction for a man. Thus, dissatisfaction in Cattiyur was expressed both in terms of material and relational wellbeing.

In Selippur, women expressed satisfaction, mostly in terms of good qualities, such as dignity, being a good wife and mother, and happiness, while men referred to mental

happiness, good conduct and learning from experience/failure. Both women and men were also satisfied with aspects of social relations, such as respect from others, solving problems for others, and lack of anger and hate by others. Thus, respondents primarily expressed their satisfaction with the subjective and relational aspects of wellbeing.

None of the women respondents in Selippur expressed dissatisfaction in terms of their wellbeing, while several men who did so, associated dissatisfaction with lack of money, low income, and exploitation of boat owners/fish traders. Thus, all aspects of dissatisfaction by men were related to material wellbeing.

Most women in Uppukadal expressed their satisfaction in terms of respect and good reputation, good relations within the family and marriage and children. Some also referred to their satisfaction with good employment and income. Several women indicated satisfaction with good qualities, including ability for thought. Fewer men expressed satisfaction than women, and this was in terms of adequate income. Thus, respondents in this village indicated their satisfaction mostly in terms of relational and material wellbeing.

Dissatisfaction in Uppukadal was associated by women with lack of money, lack of income from farming, lack of employment, loss of assets (jewellery), as well as relations within family (lack of support from siblings, disillusionment in marriage) and village (conflicts related to illicit liquor production). Men expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of support from government, lack of access to education and health care, dependence on the fish catch and loans, lack of income for medical expenses, loss of income and assets, and lack of ground water due to the establishment of the saltern. The disappearance of a son during the war, and difficulties in family relations due to the external migration of a wife were also aspects of dissatisfaction for some men. While most dissatisfaction in Uppukadal was linked to material wellbeing, it was also associated with relational wellbeing to some extent.

9.3 Comparison with others

In comparing their wellbeing with others, most women and men in Kadalpalli saw themselves as better off than others. In Cattiyur and Selippur most women and men differentiated themselves among categories of better off, average, worse off and unwilling to differentiate. In Uppukadal most women refrained themselves from comparison with others, while most men considered themselves as average or "middle level".

In Kadalpalli, most women and men perceived themselves as better off than others. Several women thought they were the same as others, or were unwilling to differentiate themselves. Those who considered themselves as better off, explained this mostly in terms of good relations within the family or with others in the community, with several also indicating that they were economically better off. Those who considered themselves the same as others or did not differentiate also used relations within the family, relations with other members of the community and their livelihood or economic situation to explain their views. Overall, the main criteria of comparison were in terms of relational wellbeing, followed by material wellbeing.

In Cattiyur, women were divided between those who thought they were worse off, better off, same as others and those unwilling to differentiate themselves. One man saw his family as similar to others in the community. Those who considered that they were worse off or the same as others, referred to difficulties around livelihood and economic situation. The respondent who considered her family to be well off indicated the education and wealth of her husband, and the lack of necessity to migrate and experience separation from spouse. Those who refrained from comparison, expressed their perspective in terms of satisfaction with what one has, living without difficulties, and in the case of a Muslim, the will of Allah. Thus, the main dimensions of comparison were related to material and subjective wellbeing.

In Selippur, women and men were divided among those who felt they were better off, same as others, worse off and those refraining from differentiating themselves. Being better off was associated with respect from others, lack of conflict, living according to the teaching of Allah, and assets such as education. Being the same was identified with

being at a middle or "normal" level or middle class, without luxuries in life. Being worse off was associated with struggling, poverty and weak economic situation. Those who avoided comparison generally considered themselves as leading a good life with respect and happiness, managing with what they get, happiness due to good family relations, with the exception of one man, a boat owner, who considered himself as experiencing "mental poverty" despite appearances of wealth. Thus, in comparing wellbeing, the material, relational and subjective dimensions were all taken into consideration.

In Uppukadal, most women refrained from differentiating themselves, while one considered herself as better off, due to education of her family members despite it being a female-headed household. Those who desisted from comparison, explained their household status mostly in terms of facing economic difficulties and lack of adequate income, while one woman indicated access to income through personal initiative, another referred to her lack of peace of mind due to her husband's alcoholism, and another sorrow due to childlessness and social marginalisation. Most men considered their household to be average, at a "middle level", "some above and some below us", one taking pride they were at a level above the poor but considering it unattainable to be wealthy, while one male respondent considered his household to be worse off. Ownership of a boat or vehicle was considered an indicator of being better off. Thus, in comparing wellbeing, the material dimension emerged the most important criteria for most respondents.

9.4 Comparison of wellbeing across communities

Overall, from the qualitative data it appears that in Kadalpalli most women and men made a trade-off between the relational and material dimensions of wellbeing, with the relational being given higher priority. In Cattiyur, most women and men attempted to balance the material and relational aspects of wellbeing, with neither being prioritised over the other. In Selippur, most women and men seemed to try to balance the material and subjective dimensions of wellbeing, while giving slightly more priority to the material aspects. In Uppukadal, most men prioritised the material dimension, while women made a trade-off between the material and relational dimensions, with the material being given a higher priority. However, individuals and

households within these villages also expressed other motivations and made different trade-offs to these general patterns.

Figure 9.1: Perceptions about changes in life, living standards and economic situation in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts

Source and notes: Estimated with microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.

The results from the HH Survey 2017 reveal women's and men's perceptions on their wellbeing, standard of living and economic situation in these west and east coast villages (see Figure 9.1). A majority (over 70%) of respondents, women and men, in all four villages thought that their life was better than during the war years, over 80% thought that their standard of living was better than during the war years, as well as better than it was in their childhood. The same proportion of respondents perceived that their economic situation was better than at the end of the war (2009), and that it was better than two years ago (2015). The perception of a better standard of living and economic situation was even higher at over 90% for women and men in the east coast villages. Thus, despite greater material poverty among fishing households on the east coast, and greater consumption inequality between them and their counterparts on

the west coast, people from east coast fishing communities perceived that their life was better now than in the past. This is understandable given that their reference points for comparison would have involved the war years during which their standards of material consumption would have been most deprived. Thus, the end of the war and resumption of normal economic and other activities would have made a more substantial difference to their living standards and sense of material wellbeing than to residents of other parts of Sri Lanka.

10. Identities and aspirations

A core concept in both the relational and subjective dimensions of the social wellbeing perspective is identity. Identity in its social, political and cultural sense, including scope for personal and collective action and influence, falls within relational wellbeing. Identities in this relational sense are often rooted in social differentiation, such as family lineages, gender, ethnicity, caste, and religion. At the same time, identity, in terms of the concept of self and personality, hopes, fears, desires and aspirations, as well as meaning attributed to experiences, is encompassed within the dimension of subjective wellbeing. These relational and subjective dimensions of identity are, of course, interlinked.

In the fisheries literature, there is a considerable body of work dealing with the significance of the identity of fishers and fishing as a 'way of life' (Pollnac et al. 2001; McGoodwin 2001; Blount and Kitner 2007; Gupta 2007), as well as the importance of self-actualisation as an explanatory factor for fisher resistance to move out of fisheries (Pollnac et al. 2012). An important strand of this literature is the work on gendered meanings and identities in fishing communities (Nadel-Klein and Davis 1988; Hapke and Ayyankeril 2004; Neis et al. 2005; Power 2005), where the question has been raised on the kind of identity claimed by women, confronted with the predominance given to the identity of 'fisherman'.

In this analysis, we focus on collective identities that emerge through myths of origin in the four villages, as well as everyday identities of women, men and youth to understand what types of identities are prioritised. Identities, as well as aspirations expressed by people, are explored to obtain insights on the relational and subjective aspects of wellbeing, as well as their salience in fishing as a way of life.

10.1 Collective identities: Myths of origin

How a community views itself and the origins it claims sheds light on its character and identity, its values, politics, practices, rituals and way of life. Origin stories "connect the past to the present, clarify meanings of important events, reaffirm core norms and values and assert particular understandings of social order and individual identity" (Engel

1993, p. 785). They reveal how a community and culture emerge and infuse significance to everyday life and social relations as they explain the status quo. Examining the origin stories of a community is also "a way of looking at society as integrated wholes" (Skar 1995, p. 33) and helps to orient the community within the larger context of the country. Therefore, the purpose of examining origin stories is not to determine historical veracity, rather to look at the ways in which the narratives of the community lead to a deeper understanding of the meanings/importance (the whys and hows) attached to values, social structure and behaviour.

The four villages, Kadalpalli and Cattiyur on the west coast are fishing villages, with a tradition of seasonal out-migration, while Selippur and Uppukadal on the east coast are fishing/farming villages which host migrants from the west coast. Each has distinct ways of portraying their identity through origin stories, which provide insights into how the communities position themselves within the larger socio-political context of the country. The four fishing villages represent three ethnic and three religious communities in Sri Lanka – Sinhalese/Tamil Catholics who demarcate their separate caste identities spatially by residing in two adjoining divisions in Kadalpalli – Greater Kadalpalli and Smaller Kadalpalli respectively; Tamil Hindus, Tamil Catholics (small minority) and Muslims (small minority) in Cattiyur; Muslims and Tamil Hindus (small minority) in Selippur; and Tamil Hindus in Uppukadal. Of the three villages, Uppukadal occupies a unique position as it is largely a new village created post-tsunami and constitutes a heterogeneous mix of households, incorporating original inhabitants, who were farmers in the interior part of the village, an older group of coastal inhabitants and resettlers from a neighbouring tsunami-affected area, as well as newcomers from other parts of the country, who resettled in the post-war period.

The primary purpose of this analysis was not to reconstruct a history through the origin stories of each village, but to arrive at a deeper comprehension of the values and perceived identity of the village, which would help in understanding the underlying motivations for the pursuit of their livelihoods and concomitant wellbeing. Hence, the narratives are selective in that they were sourced from either a village elder, scholar, *mudalali/sammatti* (beach seine owner) or other respected individual considered by the community as an authority on the history of the village. Eight narratives were

collected in total - one from Kadalpalli, two from Cattiyur, three from Selippur and two from Uppukadal. In all four villages at least one narrator was a beach seine owner and/or senior fisher, while in the east coast villages, Selippur and Uppukadal, at least one narrator was a farmer, as well.

The village histories/origin stories recounted, therefore, are derived from privileged imagination while the imagination of the common fishermen and women in the villages is not represented. All eight narratives represent male voices as community members directed the researchers to male respondents, when the question of village history was broached. Furthermore, when women were approached, they deferred to the men as being more authoritative repositories of the past. This could be attributed to the patriarchal and masculine ethos that characterises fishing villages. The absence of the woman's narrative is, therefore, a conscious omission. Nevertheless, the village histories provide valuable insights into how these communities position themselves both in relation to their livelihood system, ethno-religious neighbours, and also within the country at large. In the words of one respondent, "Our history (*sariththiram*) will always speak for us" (Male beach seine owner, Selippur, Trincomalee district).

Reconciling history and myth

The narratives from three of the villages infused both historical and mythical accounts. Given that a community views its origin story as 'history' (as exemplified in the statement of the male beach seine owner from Selippur) and given the fact that some of the oral narrations are steeped in mythical occurrences, there is a need to situate myth within what is understood as 'history'. History is largely considered a field of inquiry, which is chronological, factual, evidence based and focused on 'hard' sources. Alternatively, history can be approached as folk history, local history or ethno-history through 'soft' sources such as materials in the oral tradition (Srikanthan, 2014). Thus, history can be viewed as a "process, which involves interaction between man and man, man and his environment, man and the cosmic world" (Mohammed 2013, p. 51). This definition allows for the legitimisation of origin stories, which are believed as real by the narrators and accepted as fact and 'history' by the community. It also facilitates an understanding of origin stories as encompassing both factual and mythical accounts in a community's effort to rationalise and legitimise 'being.' Eliade (1963) further explains and reconciles

this dualism within origin stories by distinguishing between "sacred history" and "profane history." He defines myth as narrating a "sacred history" which is associated with the supernatural and which communities often value as 'real' more than "profane history." While this understanding of history as encompassing the sacred and the profane is useful, the term 'profane', which stems from Western Christian ideology does not sit well with polytheistic societies. Thus, this analysis will use the term 'secular history' to refer to accounts that are based on natural realities. The origin stories of three of the villages embodied elements of both sacred history (myth) and secular history (history) with differing levels of emphasis, while the origin story of one village narrated only the secular.

Sacred history and identity of the four fishing villages

Myth is characterised by a rigorous and repetitive logic, which is required to be deciphered systematically (Levi-Strauss, 1955). A systematic coding and examination of the narratives revealed that the origin stories of the four fishing villages were framed similarly by recurring discourses on identity and legitimacy, which were reinforced by reference to the spiritual.

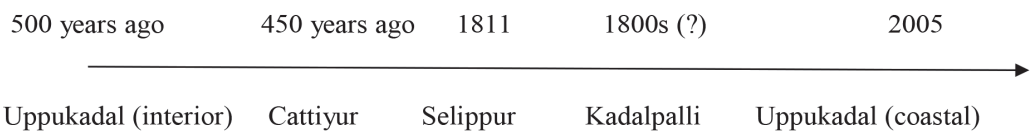
Identity in its many forms – based on personal family history, ethnicity, religion, caste and profession – were represented in complex ways in the narratives from all four villages. Ethno-religious identity was a common feature in all of the narratives, but, the manner in which distinctions were drawn, took different forms based on the socio-political composition of the different villages and the point-of-view from which the narratives were presented. As the respondents were important and respected elders in the villages, some of the narratives, particularly those of the *madel* (beach seine) owners in Selippur and Kadalpalli approached the village history through personal family history. This could be attributed to the antiquity, prestige and feudal nature associated with beach seine fishing, which was predominantly adopted before mechanisation. The beach seine owners, therefore, approached their narratives through emphasis on the influence they had in the village (in the case of Kadalpalli) and being able to trace one's ancestors to original settlers (in the case of Selippur). The narrators from Uppukadal and Cattiyur, on the other hand, positioned their narratives in terms of shared ethnic and religious identity, i.e. as being Tamil, Hindu villages. In addition, Uppukadal, unlike the

other villages, emphasised its identity as a fishing community with the fisheries society, at the centre of all activities. The identities of the village, therefore, were framed around personal history, ethnicity, religion and livelihood.

Engel (1993) argues that such positioning or framing can be explained as a feature of origin myths, which can "reflect the dominant ideological systems in a society, but can also be constituted by subordinate or disempowered groups" (p. 791). It is significant that the narrators from the four sites alternate between dominant and subordinate subject positions, depending on the communal ethno-religious or caste 'other' against whom they position themselves.

Identity and Legitimacy

Origin stories often account for how a community came to reside in a particular location. The communities in all four villages are migrants (except for the interior sub-section of Uppukadal), but who had settled under different conditions and at different times in history. Thus, all the narratives from the four villages commence with a founding year followed by a story of migration and an account of how the community happened to displace the original inhabitants and establish dominance in the area. This is achieved by a strategic and systematic mix of reference to sacred and secular histories.



The narrative of the aged patriarch of Greater Kadalpalli remains strictly within the realm of secular history and uses fact to reinforce the dominance of his community in the area. The narrator refers to the origin of his community belonging to the *paravar* caste as those who came from Thuthukudi in India and settled in Mannar from where they found their way to Kadalpalli. Migration entails imposition of one community on another or assimilation into an existing community or both, if migrants were to arrive at a location that is already occupied. Thus, in this case, the narrator distinguishes his community from the original Tamil Hindu community, which inhabited Kadalpalli, and was later displaced to a neighbouring area. He legitimises his people's settlement in

Kadalpalli stating that the Catholic Church (an authoritative body in the coastal region at the time) purchased land in Kadalpalli and sold it to his family. The distinction drawn between the original inhabitants and settlers is further ethnicised when the respondent explains his proficiency in Tamil as being a result of the educational infrastructure already in place on his family's settlement in Kadalpalli whereby it was inevitable that they learned Tamil. This is significant as people in Kadalpalli have identified themselves as 'Sinhalese' for all official purposes, including the Census, for at least 50 years. Belonging to a coastal population, which has been referred to as 'Tamil-speaking Sinhalese' in the anthropological literature (Stirrat 1988, 1992), the majority of people in Kadalpalli however, are in the process of moving further away from their 'Tamil roots' by embracing a linguistically Sinhala identity. The origin story is therefore used to explain and justify this modern linguistic shift.

The narrator from Greater Kadalpalli, further attempts to distinguish his community from a subsequent migrant community belonging to the *karaiyar/karawa* caste, who occupy Smaller Kadalpalli.

> *Our ancestors came from Thuththukudy, India. They arrived in Mannar and then came to Kadalpalli and formed Greater Kadalpalli. Then people from --- (local villages) arrived and settled above [beyond] the church forming Smaller Kadalpalli. The church Sister who distributes sapsa (Holy Communion) is from Mannar and she is a --- (his family name*). (Male beach seine owner, Kadalpalli, Puttalam district)

Here, fact is again used to highlight the difference in lineage and caste between the two different communities residing in Greater and Smaller Kadalpalli. Reference to the connection to India and Mannar as opposed to other coastal villages in Sri Lanka verifies not only the caste background of the respondent but also reinforces the claim of having migrated from India. The respondent also repeats his family name several times in the narrative, as it is a name associated with importance among the fishing community at large. Legitimacy, importance and dominance are, therefore, a primary concern in the narrative from Greater Kadalpalli.

Legitimacy, was also a dominant discourse in the narrative from Selippur which is a Muslim village ensconced in a predominantly Tamil region. Like the narrative of Kadalpalli, the Muslim narrator traces his community's origin to merchants from Iran indicating a direct and pure link to Islam rather than a secondary link through Muslims of Indian origin who were converts. He further legitimises the community's presence in a largely Tamil area by interspersing secular history and sacred history in his story of origin which was orally passed down to him by his father and by claiming to be a seventh generation descendent of the founder of the village. The story has two parts - the secular history setting the time of settlement to 1811 and a preceding sacred history, which explains the origin of the settlers and ethno-religious composition of the village. The historical/secular narrative attributes migration of the community to Selippur to the threat posed by leopards in their original village. The mythical narrative goes back in time to explain the concentration and stronghold of Muslims in a predominantly Tamil area. The myth consists of two protagonist communities – the Muslim self and the Tamil other. The narrative is set around a leader of a small band of Muslim merchants commissioned by the Sri Lankan king to hunt elephants. The leader of the band is Adampillai, whose name translates as 'Adam's son', positioning him as the founder. Adampillai abducted and married a Tamil *udayar's* (village leader/lawman) daughter who had insulted him. The mythical narrative, which involves magic and charms, is also very careful not to insult the Tamil *udayar* who pursues the abductor in portraying him as a man of greater strength, but who succumbs to compassion for his daughter's situation, accepts defeat and accedes to her marriage to Adampillai. The dominant presence of Muslims in a Tamil area is further legitimised when the daughter of the Tamil *udayar* converts to Islam and her father signals approval by sending a dowry in the form of Hindu service caste families to the Muslim settlement. This not only accounts for the presence of a small Tamil Hindu settlement of farmers in Selippur, but also emphasises the hierarchical caste relationship between the Muslim and Tamil community in the village. Adampillai's heirs, by virtue of having a high caste Tamil mother, have gained legitimacy of presence and power in Selippur.

> *My ancestry is Tamil from my mother's side. I am the --- Udayar's great, great, great, great, great, great grandchild. The udayar had only one daughter, so*

> *there was no chance for his generation to prosper*. (Male beach seine owner, Selippur, Trincomalee district).

This mythical story, however, was not part of the Tamil community's imagination as they referred to the more recent historical settlement in 1816 of Muslim and Tamil families, who had fled their original village due to the threat posed by leopards in the area. While this corroborates the historical/secular part of the Muslim origin narrative, apart from the exact year, the Tamil perspective on the origins of the village did not contest the mythical/spiritual part of the Muslim narrative. Nevertheless, the Tamil narrative also laid claim to their ancestral presence in the area by referring to a pond that was constructed by a Tamil individual (which is known by his name) and to a Hindu pilgrimage to Kathirgamam which was already part of the culture of the Tamil community on settlement. Furthermore, by locating the establishment of the Muslim settlement within the time of the rule of Pandara Vanniyan Sethukavalar who ruled the Vanni region in the 18th century, it could be argued that a subtle attempt is made to weaken the importance claimed by the Muslims of Selippur.

The narratives from Kadalpalli and Selippur demonstrate a preoccupation with self-determination by the majority ethnic/religious/caste group and the use of both secular and spiritual history to explain present ethno-caste relations.

Fishing vs. farming as a livelihood: Caste identity, dominance and difference

The four villages are 'traditional' fishing villages, or have a significant proportion of the population engaged in fishing. Hence, there is a discourse of pride in one's livelihood that threads the narratives of all the respondents. However, this pride in identifying as fishermen or as fishing villages, manifests differently in some of the narratives. One manifestation of this pride is in relation to caste differences.

Livelihood is one aspect of a vast array of caste symbolism (Roberts, 1982) and forms a basis for hierarchies among castes. In Sri Lanka, fisher communities occupy a lower rung in the caste hierarchy in relation to farming communities. The tension between the fisher and farming castes is a long existing one with the fisher caste asserting their equality with the farming caste through various means including nomenclature (Srikanthan, 2014).

Caste is also a very sensitive subject in Sri Lanka and is not broached in conversation. Nevertheless, the origin stories of the respondents from the four villages revealed this tension through the emphasis on the importance of livelihood in defining the identity of the village.

Pride in one's livelihood as a fisherman was a dominant discourse in the narrative of the beach seine owner from Kadalpalli:

> *We learnt about the sea while fishing; the sea dynamics, when the sea becomes rough, sea erosion period, sand dunes forming period are all known through experience and careful observation…By looking at the sea we can tell about fish availability. We can see fish shoals as black clouds. I can smell fish too. We are the only two who didn't move on the tsunami day. All the villagers left their houses. I went to the beach and saw the way the waves were coming. I said to all that these waves would not hit our beach … My wife and I stayed at our home. But nothing happened to us. The tsunami didn't come.* (Male beach seine owner, Kadalpalli, Puttalam district)

Here, secular history is used to highlight not only family importance, but also one's communion with the sea and the innate ability as a fisherman to understand its patterns. Moreover, being a 'patron' within a fishing community also meant that, he had the responsibility of taking care of his 'clients', including exhibiting largess in times of need, especially when there was excess production.

> *Those days … I freely offer fish to the widows whose husbands worked for me and died… sometimes, we get a harvest which is more than enough for jadi, more than enough for selling and more than enough for dry fish and more than enough for distributing among villagers. Then, we dig holes in our back yard and bury the excess harvest.* (Male beach seine owner, Kadalpalli, Puttalam district)

However, the tensions within the fisher community are reflected in the narrative when the respondent refers to the fact that his family cultivated land as well.

> *We --- (family name) had lands from --- (local village) to Chilaw. We had 20 acres of coconut in … and another 20 acres of coconut in … From this house to the road, about 20 perches were mine. Then I gave it to one of my daughters. She sold it. I cultivated chilli and tobacco on a 50% portion basis. Those who cultivate the land get 50% of the harvest and I receive 50% as the owner of the land.* (Male beach seine owner, Kadalpalli, Puttalam district)

While this could be viewed in light of what Roberts (1982) and Srikanthan (2014) among others define as the aspirations of the fisher castes "to adopt status symbols and the idiom favoured by" (Roberts 1982, p. 2) the agricultural castes, or as what Roberts (1980) explains was the true state of affairs for some migrants from South India who adopted livelihoods that were not traditionally their own due to paddy land being already occupied, it could also be interpreted as a challenge to the caste structure which discriminates based on livelihood. This is achieved by the respondent strongly identifying with fishing as part of his being, while putting on record that agricultural enterprises were also the precinct of fishing communities.

A similar discourse emerged from the two origin stories from Cattiyur. Both narratives agreed on the migration of seven *thonis* (canoes) from Rameswaram, India 450 years ago. However, while the older narrator stated that the migrants "belonged to one caste and they were all fishermen" (Beach seine owner, Cattiyur, Puttalam district), the middle-aged narrator asserted that "those who came were not fishermen. They were tobacco farmers" (Fisherman and office bearer of *kovil* Council, Cattiyur, Puttalam district), indicating that fishing was a livelihood that the community adapted to due to the rich marine and fresh water resources in the area of settlement. A similar claim was made by the Muslim respondent from Selippur:

> *After coming to Selippur, they gave up elephant hunting. It was an ur (village) where all resources were available – you could catch fish in the lagoon, the sea and also farm. This [village] is like Saudi, wherever you place your hand there is money*." (Male beach seine owner, Selippur, Trincomalee district).

Thus, while both villages identify strongly as fishing villages (as will be illustrated further), the pattern of qualifying this pride in livelihood with mention of the agrarian

origin of the community based on its rich resource base speaks significantly to the caste identity crisis discussed above.

While the narratives of Kadalpalli, Cattiyur and Selippur attempt to draw parallels between the fishing and agrarian castes, with claims to both identities, establishing and emphasising 'difference' was the preoccupation of the narrative from the coastal subsection of Uppukadal. Uppukadal occupies a unique position due to the fact that it predominantly constitutes a new village constructed in 2005 after the tsunami. It consists of a mix of people, with a sizeable fisher population from three different parts of the Trincomalee district. This community was not only affected by the tsunami in 2004, but was also displaced during the civil war whereby some of the residents are still abroad in India. Therefore, the village could be described as an emergent village and this is reflected in the aspirations expressed in the historical narrative presented by the village leader, from the coastal sub-section. His narrative focused on the need to nurture unity and instil tradition in the village, which he aspires to transform into a "pioneering and progressive fishing village". Thus, Uppukadal positions itself as a fishing village with the fisheries society at the epicentre of governance.

> *We have built a kovil… We conduct the kovil festival… We have constructed a cemetery … Everything was done by the fishing community… We are nurturing unity among the fishing society What the older people say should be practiced.* (Male leader of fisheries society, Uppukadal, Trincomalee district).

This is significant considering the fact that Uppukadal is a coastal subsection of a largely agricultural village of antiquity, boasting a spiritual and political identity of its own. It also considers fishing as a relatively young occupation as described by the narrator who states,

> *At the time, there were fishermen who used the kai veechchu valai (castnets). The Fisheries Department came only after 1945.* (Male village elder and farmer, agrarian sub-section of Uppukadal, Trincomalee district).

Thus, the desire of the people of Uppukadal is to identify as a fishing village in their own right. This desire could also be attributed to the threat imposed by the presence of

a saltern operated by a private company, which is encroaching on the lagoon surrounding the village and drawing some youth away from fishing. The narrative also gives away a sense of fear of the tenuous hold on eroding traditional practices of fishing communities due to disruptive forces such as war, natural disasters and private investors from elsewhere in the country. The fisheries society, therefore, plays a key role in shaping Uppukadal's identity as a fishing village.

The sanctity of fishing and sacred geographies

While the focus of the origin stories from Kadalpalli and Selippur pivot around ethnic identity, caste, livelihood, difference and dominance, the origin story of Cattiyur is centred chiefly on religious identity, which is inextricably linked to the livelihood. Again, like the two narratives above, the respondent commenced the village history by positioning its foundation in time – 450 years ago – and space by mapping out a route of migration from Rameswaram in India to Mannar to Puttalam and finally to Cattiyur. For the narrator from Cattiyur, however, it is not only the time of founding that was important but also the evidence of their spatial presence in the island since their arrival from Rameswaram (a location of mythological significance connecting the histories of Sri Lanka and India) in the form of temples (*kovils*) built on the route of migration at points of settlement. While this links the landscape between Rameswaram and Cattiyur and marks them as sacred, both respondents' accounts of the history of the village were also centred on the construction of temples in the village and the festivals dedicated to each temple, the oldest of which contains murals of the seven *thonis* (small canoes) which set out from Rameswaram to Cattiyur. This echoes the importance of legitimacy of the claim to the land/village in the narratives of Kadalpalli and Selippur, but it does so in a different way. By framing the history of the village through the construction of temples and celebration of festivals, the narratives from Cattiyur map out a sacred geography of their village, which is of great significance to the community. Legitimacy for this community, therefore, lies in spiritual endorsement of space. Both narratives from Cattiyur describe the spatial boundaries of the village by referring to the five *kovils* constructed in the village and refer to time and season in relation to the festivals of each *kovil*. Fishing as a livelihood is both prioritised and spiritualised, as it is associated with the founding *kovil* dedicated to the goddess Kali, whose festival is integral to commencing

the fishing season in Cattiyur. This relationship is explained through a mythical story of a theophany that occurs at a time when the sea was plagued with poisonous snakes and posed a threat to the lives of the fishermen.

> *During this time… the women used to stand and wait on the beach praying for their husbands' safe return… At this time, while the women were crying, when fire was burning in their hearts, an old lady dressed in white and carrying a staff, came to the place where the Kali kovil is today and asked why the women were crying. She told the women to fill a shell with sea water and place a wick in it. The old mother lit the wick and placed the shell in the protective centre of a plant with purple flowers that grows on the beach. She asked the women to close their eyes and pray. When the women opened their eyes, the old woman was missing. That Amma (mother) is Kali. Our people were Kali worshippers. It is in this place that the Kali Kovil stands.* (Male kovil council member and fisherman, Cattiyur, Puttalam district).

Eliade (1963) states that, "Religious man has always sought to fix his abode at the 'centre of the world.' … no world can come to birth in the chaos of the homogeneity and relativity of profane space" (p.22). Furthermore, "the theophany that occurs in a place consecrates it by the very fact that it makes it open above – that is in communion with heaven" (p.26). Thus, the Kali *kovil* of Cattiyur stands at the Centre of the coastal strip[14] of the village representing the spirituality of fishing as a livelihood and its annual festival functions not only as an invocation for blessings but also as a "memory anchor" which connects the spiritual past with the spatial and temporal realities of the present (Van Dyke, 2017). The annual Kali *kovil* festival memorialises the theophany and renews the miracle of lighting a wick with seawater. Sacred history is also kept alive through the singing of songs depicting the history of the village, which "are ancient songs composed before me and my father. When we hear them, tears come to our eyes" (Fieldnotes, 5th February, 2017). The strong link between the community's religious identity and livelihood is emphasised:

14 There is a Sri Parthasarathy Draupadhi Amman kovil at the centre of the village built after the Kali kovil. This Kovil also celebrates a famous annual festival. While the Kali kovil represents the identity of the village as a fishing village, the Sri Parthasarathy Draupadhi Amman kovil links the community of Cattiyur to the larger national and global Hindu family.

> *It is only after this festival finishes that people set foot into the sea. This is the respect we give to Kali who protects us when we are at sea (Fieldnotes, 5th February, 2017).*

This powerful discourse on the preservation of religious identity through traditional practices related to fishing which enables the community to "relive" the sacred history and thus truly "know" one's origins (Eliade, 1963) is further reflected in modern Cattiyur in the Hindu Kovil Administrative Council which comprises of members of beach seine owning lineages overseeing all aspects of governance from running the fish market, to religious activities, to liaising with government officials on behalf of the village and ensuring the perpetuation of tradition. These beach seine owning families also sponsor the main *pujas* at the annual festivals and had a 'customary right' to do so in the past (Tanaka 1997). This practice however, is being challenged by families who have prospered through migration to the UK and Australia and are increasingly taking on the role of sponsorship of *pujas* (Fieldnotes 5th February 2017) increasing their status within the spiritual realm and through that within the community as a whole. Fishing in Cattiyur is, therefore, more than a mere livelihood, but enacted as a spiritual way of life directed by time through rituals and sacred spaces. It is also significant to note the emergent spiritualisation of space and fishing as a livelihood by the fisheries society in Uppukadal which, by virtue of being a new village, is working backwards by building a *kovil* as a centre which will bind the fishing community in ritual, cultural practices and values.

This spiritualisation of space or geography was a pattern emerging only among the Hindu respondents, but it is not unique to the fishing community. The narrator representing the agrarian sub section of Uppukadal also defines the village in spiritual terms. He outlines a sacred geography comprising of five hills of which one is associated with mythical occurrences and the most important hill which hosts an ancient Vinayagar (Ganesh) *kovil*. This *kovil* has stood since the founding of the village from which the village derives its name. It also hosts an annual harvest festival, which again highlights the spiritualisation of livelihoods by the Hindu community. Similarly, for the Hindu respondents from Selippur, the village derives its name from the religious significance of the special grass found in the area and used by Hindu pilgrims to Kathirgamam even before the community settled in the area. The Muslim community, however, identified

with the more literal meaning of the village name, which refers to the topography and natural resources of the area.

Another significant pattern in relation to the sacredness accorded to the geography of the fishing villages is that it is not limited to the physical boundaries of the village. Instead, in identifying themselves, the fishing communities interestingly extend the sacredness of their spatial boundaries by linking local ritual to external religious festivals. Both the Hindu respondents from Uppukadal and the Muslim respondents from Selippur in the Trincomalee district draw a link with the Vattapallai Kannakki Amman kovil in Mullaitivu in different ways. The agrarian sub-section of Uppukadal celebrates its largest festival, which is connected to and coincides with the festival of the Vattapalai Kannakki Amman kovil. The Muslim respondent from Selippur also claims a link with Mullaitivu from his Hindu ancestor's (founding mother's) side by claiming that:

> *There is a share for the Udayar's daughter's generation. The Vattapalai Kannakki Amman kovil and the land surrounding it is the Udayar's property.* (Male beach seine owner, Selippur, Trincomalee District).

While the spiritual connection claimed by the respondent from Uppukadal could signal the spiritual interconnectedness among Hindus across space (as evident in the narrative from Cattiyur which links itself to Rameswaram), it also speaks to and challenges a larger discourse related to the 'othering' of East Coast Tamils by Northern Tamils in Sri Lanka by claiming a link to the *kovil* in Mullaithivu which is in the Northern province. Similarly, the Muslim respondent from Selippur claims his connection to the Northern Tamils and his superiority over the Eastern Tamils in his village by emphasising his ancestors' link to the Kannakki Amman kovil in Mullaitivu. Thus, sacred geographies can also be ethnicised and politicised by communities.

A different manifestation of this politicisation of what a community views as sacred space was critiqued by respondents in Uppukadal and Selippur. They emphasised the etymology of the names of the villages as clearly reflecting Tamil Hindu origins and critiqued the Sinhalisation of the current versions of the village names. This speaks to a larger and long-standing discourse in the Northern and Eastern parts of the country

in response to Sinhala nationalism, one aspect of which is the Sinhalisation of place names. Both respondents from Selippur and Uppukadal commenced their narratives by clarifying the real spelling of the village name, which had been Sinhalised during the post-independence period.

The origin stories of the four fishing villages provide a deep insight into the complex ways in which a community employs sacred history ('myth') and secular history ('history') and determines itself in terms of various factors such as livelihood, ethnicity, religion/spirituality, caste, familial pride, ancestry and region. The narrators alternated from dominant to subordinate subject positions when referring to these different aspects of identity. The identity as fishermen or as a fishing village emerges strongly in all four villages, but for different reasons. In Kadalpalli, it is linked to beach seine fishing as an ancestral livelihood that runs in the blood and pride of the feudal beach seine owners, despite their decreased status and importance in the village economy. In Cattiyur, fishing is constructed as a sacred and ancestral activity which links the community to the spiritual, downplaying the role of beach seine owners, who constitute the dominant family lineages controlling the village economy, but increasingly challenged by prosperous overseas migrants. In Selippur, fishing is linked to their ancestors' ability to adapt to their environment of lagoon, sea and land, and harness the resources available. In Uppukadal, identity is marked by a fervent desire to preserve the fast eroding cultural values and practices of fishing communities in the face of encroachment by large-scale private enterprises from outside. In identifying as fishermen in their own right, the narrators adopted a dominant subject position. However, when speaking about their livelihood in relation to their agrarian others, a subordinate position, almost of defence was adopted. This subordinate subject position was also present in the discourse on legitimacy of presence and dominance in the village, which was an important preoccupation in the narratives despite the fact that their presence dates back to colonial, pre-colonial and even ancient times. Thus, the narrator from Selippur subtly reinforces the superiority of the Muslims' claim of the land over the Tamils, and the narrator from Kadalpalli legitimises the displacement of the original inhabitants of the village by attributing his migration to the authority of the Church. A subordinate subject position is also indicated in the references to caste identity where the hierarchy between agrarian and fishing castes is challenged by the narrators from Kadalpalli, Selippur and Cattiyur.

Thus, while fishing as a livelihood and identity emerge as an integral aspect of the lives of the people of all four villages, this is inextricable from other identities such as ethnicity, religion, caste, ancestry and familial pride which define the way of life in these fishing communities. Oral history provides us with some facts of village composition and interactions, and its mythical nature provides insights into the meanings underlying such compositions and interactions.

10.2 Everyday identities of women, men and youth

Among the multiplicity of identities expressed by people in the four villages, the main forms of identity, similarly to the myths of origin, revolved around family, livelihood, religion, ethnicity, village, and to a lesser extent around caste. However, these identities were not elaborated to the same extent, as in the myths of origin, as these were expressed in more informal terms, either as responses to direct questions on identities in FGDs or as they emerged within the life narratives of women and men. The analysis here of a multiplicity of voices is a counterpoint to the voices of male leaders whose narratives provided a more formalised sense of collective identity within these communities in the previous sub-section. There were differences among the villages in which aspect of identity emerged more important for women and men.

Family identity

Apart from Kadalpalli, in the other three villages, the main identity emphasised by women was belonging to a family, with this often defined as being a wife, mother or daughter.

> *My identity is being his [husband's] wife. Before that I was the sammati's [beach seine owner's] daughter.* [Wife of beach seine owner, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *I don't like to be identified in my own right. What is the point in having an identity of my own? My children should develop an identity. I am mostly attached to my family. My family puts me and my husband first for everything because we are brave and tackle anything. We don't hide and lag behind.* (Wife of fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *We give most importance to our role in the family. It is a respectable thing to be a mother, isn't it? We see ourselves as Hindu, Tamil and family-oriented women.* (Women's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *I am a family woman (kudumba pen). I want to be a good mother. I have brought my children up without remarrying and without borrowing money from others. I have made something of my children. Isn't that an achievement itself?* (Female head of household, widow of fisher, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

In Kadalpalli, several women emphasised a family-related identity as well. For example, one woman identified herself as a wife ("being O's wife"), and another reinforced her role in the family while expressing her identity as a human being and "good person".

> *I respect family. We have a small family – son and mother. We need a family – it is so valuable. Caste, religion, ethnicity, age, gender – everything is not important. We are all human beings. We like to live with others.* (Female dried fish processor, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Male and female youth also identified with being a part of a family and being children of their parents.

> *We are known as 'so and so's daughter' or 'so and so's wife'. This is because people know our parents. They don't know us. We don't identify ourselves in terms of our religion.* (Female youth FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Occupational identity

The majority of men in all four villages defined themselves primarily by their occupation or livelihood. The identity of fisher was emphasised, together with the 'harshness' and hard work in a hot, salty environment.

> *I am a fisherman. Even my ID card says I am a fisherman. The job is like God and we should respect it. I am proud of my job. (Male fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)*

> *We were born to fish. We are fishers.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *We have no one to help us. We are a bit harsh because we work hard in the salty heat. People misunderstand this (our harshness) as being rough.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

In the case of beach seine owners, their livelihood also carried hereditary prestige and status linked to the fishing way of life, difficult as it might be in material terms. The status within the village compelled even some migrants who had permanently settled overseas to continue operating beach seines.

> *This is a hereditary occupation. I do this for honour. There is no great profit in terms of money. A lot of sammatis [beach seine owners] are indebted. From the outside, people think we are big mudalalis [traders] but that is not the reality. It is very difficult do engage in this occupation. My brother operates the beach seine owned by my father from France. He has hired a mandadi [supervisor] and workers to carry out this business. He continues the business even though he is now living in France.* (Male beach seine owner, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Some men expressed a dual identity as farmer and fisher.

> *I will say that I am both a farmer and fisher. If someone announces a meeting for fishers I will go, if there is an announcement for a meeting for farmers, I will go there too. I own 3 acres of paddy and work as a fishing labourer during the season.* (Male farmer/fishing labourer, Selippur, Trincomalee)

For several men their identity was linked to their status as office holders of village organisations.

> *I am the secretary of the Selippur Agricultural Federation.* (Male fish trader, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *I was the leader of the big mosque, which means I have good qualities and so on. That is why people elected me to the post. I am a leader both in my family and the village. If you are the leader of the mosque it is like being the leader of the village. The big mosque has 20-25 mosques under it.* (Male grocery store owner, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Religious and ethnic identities

Religious and ethnic identities were also important, sometimes perceived separately but often enmeshed. For the majority of women and men in Kadalpalli the religious identity of being Roman Catholic was the most important.

> *We are good Catholics*. (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *Jesus is everything to us. We have faith in him and we have given our troubles and our life to him*. (Wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Moreover, their faith was associated with the livelihood of fishing, with fishers being identified as the "chosen people" of Jesus.

> *As Catholics we have deep faith. We are sure that God will take care of us. God is very close to fishers. All of Jesus' disciples were fishers. Our Father at the Kadalpalli church says that fishers are the people chosen by Jesus. We always go to the feasts and support the church to make sure that the feast is done well. People here are surprised at the way we support our church*. (Female dried fish processor and wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

However, some women identified with belonging to the Sinhala ethnic/language group.

> *Now the trend is Sinhala [language], so we give priority to Sinhala*. (Wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Some men also pointed out that as they were bilingual, they could pass off as members of both ethnic groups, as the occasion demanded.

> *During the period of war we used to identify ourselves as Tamils to the LTTE guys and as Sinhalese to Army soldiers*. (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam district)

In Uppukadal, the majority of men identified themselves in terms of their ethnicity as Tamils.

> *My identity is Tamil. I would like to call myself Tamil.* (Male saltern worker, Uppukadal, Trinco)

In Selippur, the combined religious/ethnic identity as Muslims was emphasised by men, women, male and female youth. Women referred to the cultural identity of being part of a Muslim community, bestowing hospitality on strangers.

> *If you know Islam, that becomes your primary identity*. (Male farmer and lagoon fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *We are Muslim and when outsiders like you come, we welcome you with our hospitality and love. We demonstrate our identity through our unity as a community*. (Women's FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Caste identity

Caste identity also emerged as important in several communities, especially in Kadalpalli, which was divided into two neighbourhoods, along caste lines.

> *We are Sinhala Catholics and paravars*. (Men's FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

The caste difference in the two sections of the village was discussed as relevant in the past but no longer of consequence.

> *Earlier we had a division between Greater Kadalpalli as parawar and Smaller Kadalpalli as karaiyar. Now we do not have such a division. All are mixed.* (Male lagoon fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Village identity

For both men and women in Cattiyur, a sense of identity with their home village, "being Cattiyur people" emerged as very significant.

> *I introduce myself as a Cattiyur person. It is better introduce [myself] with the village name than the family*. (Raft fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *People in Cattiyur are so proud of their village.* (Wife of raft fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *In Ceylon there is a differentiation between Tamils and Sinhalese, but people [here] don't really think that way. There is no difference. When you say 'Cattiyur people', people will understand what that means. Cattiyur people are liked.* (Men's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Male youth in Selippur also indicated their sense of belonging to the village, in addition to their faith.

> *We are proud of our religion, and then of our village. Islam is a great religion. Selippur has a lot of natural resources. This village contributes much to the Sri Lankan economy.* (Male youth FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Overall, what emerges as important in this analysis of everyday identities is a noteworthy difference between women and men, between the west and east coast villages, as well as specific differences in emphasis of identity among the four villages. The predominant identity for women in three of the villages was linked to their families, which was not the case with men, who more often referred to livelihood, status, ethnicity and religion. Thus, the identity of being a wife, mother, daughter, emerged as the important identity for most women, as a counterpoint to the identity of being a fisher, farmer or leader/big man for many men. Ethnic identities were emphasised more in the east coast villages, where these identities have been challenged due to the traumatic experiences and negative consequences of the war, than in the west coast villages, where ethnic identity appeared to be taken for granted and more "secure". In considering the four villages, the religious identity of being Roman Catholic emerged most important for Kadalpalli, while the sense of 'ur' (village) was significant for Cattiyur, and the ethno-religious identity of being Muslims was important for Selippur. There did not appear to be a predominant identity emerging in Uppukadal, apart from women's association with their families, perhaps due to the village still being in the process of becoming a community. Kadalpalli villagers also expressed a hybrid identity (Smith and Leavy 2008), based on their Tamil origins, current notion of Sinhalese ethnicity and bilingual linguistic capabilities, employing this identity strategically within different socio-cultural contexts.

10.3 Aspirations for the future and notions of success

In addition to exploring current identities, we also analysed the future aspirations of women, men and youth, the aspirations of adults towards their children, as well as the underlying notions of success, which motivate women, men and youth to pursue specific livelihood strategies. These included their goals, hopes, feelings and attitudes towards how they perceived their future lives.

Aspirations of women and men for themselves

Most men in all four villages aspired to continue fishing or another livelihood, such as dried fish trading, other businesses and farming, in which they were currently engaged. However, apart from Kadalapalli, in the other villages the men expected the future to be unpredictable and uncertain. Among women, there was a variation among the four villages. In Kadalapalli and Selippur, the majority of women aspired to continue with their current livelihood activities such as fish processing, livestock rearing and micro businesses. In Uppukadal, women wished to start their own businesses. In Cattiyur, women aspired to be housewives and good mothers, and take care of their families. Living without debt, constructing a house or pursuing spirituality were other aspirations expressed by some women.

Continuing and/or expanding current livelihoods and activities

The majority of women in Kadalpalli and Selippur aspired to pursue and improve current livelihoods – for example, dried fish processing/trading, combined with disentangling fish from nets, continue their own business (sewing, poultry, gardening), support family businesses (shrimp farm and hardware store), or combine family businesses with housework.

> *I know how to cook well. I can also process dried fish and disentangle fish from nets well. This is what I can do. I am too old to go and work in a garment factory. I can manage to process 500-1000kg of fish by myself.* (Female fish processor, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *I would prefer to improve the karawala (dried fish) business - buy a small vehicle and trade karawala. I prefer my husband to continue to remain in the village and engage in karawala trading*. (Female fish processor, Kadalapalli, Puttalam)

> *I would like to be able to employ about ten people*. (Female owner of food business, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Several women wished to confine themselves to housework, either because they considered fisheries-related work hard or their husbands preferred that they only took care of the house, thus conforming to gender norms of domestication within these communities.

> *I prefer household work, I don't like to do dry fish processing. It is hard for me. I do this [dry fish processing] only for home consumption*. (Female fish trader, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *I would like to stay at home without working. My husband should earn and bring money home*. (Female dried fish processor, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *I will not work. My husband does not want me to work. He says he will take care of me*. (Wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

The majority of men in Kadalpalli and Cattiyur had a strong attachment to the sea and wished to continue fishing. While pointing out that it was a 'tough' job, freedom and independence from working under someone else, was emphasised.

> *By being a fisher we can earn a lot. There is no limit on that. But we must have luck as well. The job is very tough and hard. But we have freedom. If we think of not going out to sea we can stay at home. We are not under anybody*. (Male marine fisher, Kadalpalii, Puttalam district)

> *Four years ago, I took the theppam [raft] out to sea, fell overboard, got injured and nearly drowned. There was a man who came and pulled me out, rescued me on behalf of God. My wife is scared after that when I go fishing in the sea but I am not scared. I think the great sea will not harm me. At that point I felt*

> *that if I died out there I would all be all alone. And I felt like telling God that. I thought of my wife and two children who would need me. I go even now to the sea as crew on my nephew's boat – my wife's sister's son-in-law. I would like to do sea fishing – it was my father's job. That's why we don't want to put our hands into anything else.* (Male lagoon fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *You need a job. It doesn't matter whether you like it or not. It is not like farming. I think of my job as my God and work. 'The' job in Cattiyur is fishing.* (Male fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Men in the three traditional fishing villages also pointed out that this was the only livelihood they knew.

> *I only know this work. Going out to sea fishing is what I know. I don't know anything else.* (Male marine fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *I got a theppam (raft) as dowry because it was the only thing that I was used to. I haven't got any idea to leave fishing for any other job.* (Male fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *I have been fishing all my life so learning a new profession would be difficult.* (Male fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Beach seine labourers aspired to become raft or boat owners.

> *If I could be self-employed, I would like to fish on a boat or theppam (raft).* (Male beach seine worker, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Those engaged in other work wished to continue current businesses (such as a bakery or grocery), or employment in large enterprises (saltern).

> *The bakery is our traditional job and therefore I did not take up fishing. I do not have any intention to go to foreign countries due to my family responsibilities. I deliver bakery products such as breads, buns and cakes within Cattiyur village.* (Male baker, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *The saltern job is enough for me and this is better than lagoon fishing. The company runs a nursery and pays the salary of the pre-school teacher. If there is any funeral in this village, the company provides dry food. Those who engage in lagoon fishing still oppose the company. There are 30 people from our village working at the saltern.* (Male saltern worker, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Starting new businesses

Some women aspired to start a micro-business, such as a grocery store, tailoring shop, and food preparation, while others wished to start rearing livestock.

> *I would like to have my own business – maybe a small shop or to own a wadi (dried fish processing camp). It can be anything but it has to be owned by us.* (Female dried fish processing worker, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *I would like to start a string hopper business. I am not doing this because of financial difficulties and lack of means.* (Wife of lagoon fisher, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *Right now I am selling dry fish. I would like to expand and sell mixture and other small food items.* (Female dried fish and ice popsicle trader, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Women in Selippur preferred to work from home, conforming to gender norms within a Muslim community.

> *I would like to have a good job that I can do at home - such as a small shop so that I can look after my mum and children. I can't leave the house because of my mum. That is why I started this shop at home. I would like to go abroad because of our difficulties, but I can't leave my mother.* (Female grocery store owner, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *I want to work, but the work must be inside the house. This is because you encounter a lot of problems when you go out.* (Wife of lagoon fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Gender norms also confined some women in Uppukadal, such as a saltern worker's wife, who wished to work in a garment factory, but was not permitted by her husband.

> *I would like to go to work, but he [husband] won't allow me. I have to eat with what he earns and gives me. I would like to work in a garment factory but he won't let me. He was like that with his grandmother. He wouldn't let her go to work. I would like to go to a garment factory to learn sewing*. (Wife of saltern worker, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

In contrast to women, most men wished to continue fishing, with only a minority aspiring to start new businesses or expand current ones.

> *My aspiration is to buy a boat with an engine and go marine fishing. There are no longer any fish resources in the lagoon*. (Male lagoon fisher, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *I can live a good life if I have more buffaloes and cows*. (Male livestock owner, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Ensuring a good marriage and family life

In Cattiyur, the majority of women conformed to gender norms of domestication, aspiring to be housewives, who took care of children and grandchildren, led a happy life with the husband and were taken care of by grown children. They wanted to be caring and live a life without conflict within the family.

> *Our aspiration is to be loving and kind to our children and live a life without fights and arguments*. (Women's FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *I would like to build a house and live happily with my husband. There are no possibilities to engage in a job in Cattiyur because we don't have space*. (Wife of fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

One woman indicated that she did not want her husband or herself to migrate overseas again but rather have happiness and be together, and potentially for the husband to engage in seasonal migration, as needed.

> *Both of us decided not to go abroad again. We don't have any debts now. So what we have is enough for a happy life. We can start life once again. I don't need jewellery. I don't want such material things. Happiness and living together is important. I am ok if he [husband] migrates to Selippur or Trincomalee. That is fine. But my gut feeling is we can manage without migrating. I don't know - it is up to God.* (Wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Uncertainties of the future

Some men aspired to have jobs that would bring them profit but were uncertain what the future would bring them. They said they had no aspirations as they expected the future to be uncertain, just as the present, while others perceived that the future could not be predicted, as it was Allah's will.

> *We cannot say what will happen in 10 years. It is very difficult to live. Today we don't have something and we are not sure whether we will have it tomorrow. It is uncertain.* (Men's FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *We cannot predict anything and all depends on Allah's will.* (Men's FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Aspirations of women and men for their children

In all four villages, both women and men overwhelmingly aspired to educate their children so that they had good employment and prospects for the future. In all four villages the majority of women and men desired their daughters to have professional or white-collar employment. In the west coast villages, many women and men had aspirations that their sons would migrate abroad for work. In Kadalpalli and Selippur, considerable numbers of women and men wanted their sons to continue fishing, whereas in Cattiyur and Uppukadal neither men nor women aspired their sons to continue fishing.

Educating children for good employment

The majority of women wanted their children to be educated, and get out of the fisheries livelihood.

> *I would love to give my daughter a good education and bring both the children [including one to be born] to a good social standing. And I would like them to be professionals and not suffer like us by being in the fishing industry.* (Left behind wife of migrant to Italy, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *I must educate my son and make him study. I don't want him to be a fisherman. He has to study well. What he does depends on how he studies.* (Female dried fish processor and wife of fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *My children should study well and do a job they like. They should not fall ill. They shouldn't suffer like us. For this we should work hard and save for their future. That is why we are working hard for them to have a job and be happy.* (Female owner of a grocery store/food business and Middle East returnee, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *My daughter has to study well and get absorbed into whatever working scheme. That is my thinking now. I can think of other things after she finishes her education. She has to study well. I can think of what work she can do after her studies, but I don't know what will happen when she is older. So, I can't decide now.* (Female farmer, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

This was echoed by most men, who considered fishing as hardship and did not wish their children to follow in their footsteps. They also pointed to the costs of illiteracy.

> *We want to educate the children. We would never expect them to become fishers. Fishing is a tough job full of uncertainty. We are engaging in a huge battle with the sea. They might do a respectable job in an office.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *I didn't study, so it is my desire that my children study well. The children shouldn't be of our standard because we didn't study. Certain situations remind us of the fact that we are uneducated. For example, when we receive a letter we don't even have the skills to read it. So I want to educate my children well. That is my goal. In time to come I will be able to realise my goals. Right now*

> *the children are my foundation. They are foremost.* (Male beach seine worker, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *My children should not go through the difficulties I faced. I must bring them up to a good state. I must make them study.* (Male lagoon fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *My children should be educated and get good positions. They should at least get a teaching job.* (Male hotel worker, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Many women's and men's predominant aspiration was for their children, especially daughters, to engage in respected, white-collar or professional employment in the state sector.

> *We want our children to be educated - not drop out of school early. My younger daughter wants to become a teacher. She also likes to learn music.* (Female dried fish processor, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *I want to send my children to universities and make them doctors and engineers rather than teachers. There are many teachers in our village.* (Female pre-school teacher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *I would like them to do any government job. My children should study well because they should live without struggling. A government job also involves service to people, so that is why I want my children to have government jobs.* (Male fishing labourer, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *My son and daughter must become teachers because that is the best profession. Teaching is the source of everything. It is also an honest job.* (Wife of fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *My daughter's desire is to study and become a doctor. My desire is for her to study and do some work even if it not a big one. She could do teaching or be a nurse in a hospital or a midwife. She wants to be a doctor.* (Wife of lagoon fisher, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *I want a safe job for my daughter - a job where she can come home on time. It should be a respectable, decent and worthy job. I would like her to be a teacher or work in a bank.* (Female tailor, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

In Kadalpalli and Selippur, a few women wanted their sons to pursue the religious calling and become a Catholic priest or *moulavi* (Islamic leader) respectively. A minority also indicated a crafts occupation other than fishing, or employment in the private sector as desirable for their sons.

> *One of my sons looks like he is going to become a mechanic. There is no point in depending on the sea. This work is not good. Children these days are doing what they like. They need a job in keeping with their education. I don't want my sons to be fishermen. It is a job with a lot of uncertainties.* (Female farmer and wife of fishing labourer, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *My sons should get jobs in the company [saltern] and my younger daughter should be educated.* (Male lagoon fisher, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *My children should be educated at least till A/Ls. If you have an A/L pass you can find a job in hotels in Nilaveli.* (Male fisher, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Pursuing overseas employment

Many women in Kadalpalli and Cattiyur wanted their sons to migrate overseas for work, rather than continue fishing. By migrating they also expected the male siblings to support the female siblings in their aspirations for education and employment as teachers.

> *I would like my son to go abroad, do some job or other there - the second son too. I hope our daughters will learn well in school and have more chances in life. The elder brothers will then help the younger sisters.* (Female shrimp farmer, Kadalpalli Puttalam)

> *I want my son to be able to go overseas and avoid the hard work of a fisher he is doing with his father now. And my daughter would like to be a teacher. She can study well and I encourage her. I don't know but we will see about the*

> *youngest son. We are sending him to school out of the village.* (Wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *Our children will have a good future only if they go abroad.* (Female fish trader and wife of raft fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Continuing fishing

Some women and men, particularly in Kadalpalli, wanted their sons to continue fishing, as it was their traditional occupation, or thought that it was inevitable, even if it were not lucrative enough. Some men also considered the continuity of seasonal fisheries migration by their children as critical for their wellbeing.

> *I would like my sons to go fishing. Government jobs are not suitable for us.* (Fish trader and wife of crew, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *Fishing is not bringing much improvement to the lives of my two sons. They don't know anything else and they don't like to do anything else either. So they will keep fishing. But I have hopes for my daughter. I would like her to do some job - she can do any job well because she is educated.* (Female dried fish processor and wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *I would like them to get a good job somewhere. But it is up to their wishes. If they prefer fishing I don't mind that too. Anyhow it is better to have at least one son to continue our lineage (paramparawa). We are fishers, so at least one son must be a fisher. Otherwise, the fishing generation would not continue.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *If the children are doing well that is enough for me… Actually, the village has developed 100% due to the [internal] migration process. We cannot achieve this development by only fishing here. Buying new things or putting aside some savings is only possible through migration. All these nice houses in the village could be built because of migration. Otherwise it would have been a dream. We need to continue this migration pattern for our children too.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

Having a good or better life

Some men expressed the view that they wanted their children to have a good life overall, and some wished to not pressure their children with educational achivement.

> *Our children should have a good life and they should not have to face hardship like us.* (Male raft fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *My children should have a better life.* (Male dry fish processor and farmer, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *We didn't study. Our dream is that he should study well. But, we will not infringe on our son's independence. We tell him to do whatever he can. We won't push and pester like other parents. When our parents told us to study, we didn't realise the importance of education. Now we know.* (Male fish trader, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Aspirations of youth

Female youth in the two west coast villages aspired to have good jobs, as well as have good marriages and children. Female youth in Selippur expected to engage in micro-businesses and other livelihood activities at home and live well. Female youth in Uppukadal aspired to continue with their current livelihood activities, such as tailoring, and to start their own businesses in the future. Male youth in Cattiyur and Uppukadal wished to start their own fisheries or non-fisheries related businesses. Male youth in Kadalpalli wished to have permanent state employment, while those in Selippur aspired to have permanent employment or continue fishing if the ban on purse seine nets were to be lifted.

Combining good employment with marriage and family

In Kadalpalli and Cattiyur, female youth wanted to combine good employment or businesses with marriage and kids. In Cattiyur, becoming wives and mothers, and taking care of the family was an important role, conforming to the gender norms of the community.

> *We would like to have good jobs and be married – have about two kids. I would like to have my own salon.* (Female youth FGD, Kadalpalli Puttalam)

> *We will be sewing and teaching in the future as we are doing now. We will be cooking, we will have children, husbands –we can't go beyond this after marriage. It is a shortcoming if we do not look after our husband's mother and father.* (Female youth FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

In Cattiyur, even male youth aspired to have a good marriage and family life, together with a business.

> *I would like to do any business. I expect to be married and living happily in the future.* (Male youth FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Continuing fishing or other livelihoods of parents

Male youth in Kadalpalli who went into private sector employment opted to get out and continue fishing, as income from fishing was higher than in many other kinds of employment, including work in the tourism sector.

> *Those who preferred to not engage in fishing joined the hotel as gardeners, room boys, security guards, chefs and supervisors. But those who were not happy with the income left and started fishing because the income level is better. They compared the income and life status of their friends who were engaged in fishing and were tempted to return to fishing.* (Male youth FGD, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

In Selippur, female youth, like their mothers, expected to rear livestock, and engage in gardening but perceived that they were limited by a scarcity of water. They expected to be living well without difficulties, and not experience poverty in the future.

> *We would like to rear cattle and chickens. We would also like to do gardening and grow vegetables but there is no water. We expect to be doing well and not be in poverty. We will be living without difficulties.* (Female youth FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Starting own businesses

Male youth in Cattiyur and Uppukadal wanted to own their businesses, such as fish trading, prawn farms and hotels, own productive assets and be respected in the future.

> *I would like to be a businessman in my village - to own a prawn farm or a beach seine. We will be respected in the future*. (Male youth FGD, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *I want to buy a fishing boat and become a mudalali (fish trader). I expect to be a mudalali who has four boats in the future*. (Male youth FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Female youth in Uppukadal also aspired to own their own businesses in the future.

> *I would be happy with tailoring. I want to have my own tailoring shop*. (Female youth FGD, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Having permanent employment

Male youth in Selippur aspired to have permanent employment, such as in the state sector. They also hoped that the ban on purse seine nets would be lifted. In the future they expected to have better incomes and be stronger economically.

> *We would like to have permanent jobs and the ban on purse seine nets lifted. We expect to be much stronger economically in our incomes in the future. If we have a strong economy other things will come to us automatically*. (Male youth FGD, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Data based on the HH Survey 2017, revealed that while 71% of male and female respondents on the west coast perceived that the younger generation was not interested in fishing, and would rather pursue work overseas, only 44-45% of respondents perceived the same on the east coast. These proportions also corresponded closely with the 74% of Puttalam district respondents who stated that their families have always been fishing on the west coast, in contrast to the 44% of Trincomalee respondents who said that their families have always been fishing on the east coast. Thus, despite the background and pride in fishing expressed in the qualitative data, it appears that most

households on the west coast perceive their children to be leaving the fisheries, according to the quantitative data.

In comparing the aspirations of youth articulated in the FGDs with those expressed by adults for their children in both the FGDs and qualitative HH interviews, there was a general resonance in the kinds of employment desired. In villages such as Kadalpalli and Selippur where some men desired their sons to continue fishing, this was an aspiration of the male youth as well. In contrast, in villages such as Cattiyur and Uppukadal, male youth aspired mostly to do both fishing and non-fishing related businesses, while their parents desired them to be employed mostly in non fishing-related state or private sector employment. While most parents in all four villages desired white-collar or professional employment for daughters, female youth desired to run their own businesses mostly from home, and also have good marriages. Parents emphasised education first to obtain regular work and a good life without their own experience of hardship, whereas youth underplayed the importance of education, instead expressing their aspirations in terms of desirable work and a good standard of life.

Notions of success

Apart from Uppukadal, in the other three villages the predominant notion of success expressed by both women and men was relational, associated with unity and happiness within the family. Material aspects such as life without debt or want, adequate money, savings, assets, and good employment were other criteria of success expressed by women and men in these villages. In Uppukadal, the predominant notion of success expressed by both women and men was material, associated with good employment, life without debt and assets. Relational aspects such as having children and bringing them up well were other notions of success, indicated especially by women.

Relational notions of success

In Kadalpalli, Cattiyur and Selippur, the predominant criterion of success perceived by most women was a happy, peaceful, and united family. This included harmonious and supportive relations with family members such as husband/wife, parent/child and siblings, as well as fulfilling obligations to children, such as a good education. Life without hardship and sorrow, and achieving a good social status were considered important.

> *Success is being able to live happily together as a family without any troubles.* (Wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *I feel my life is beautiful. I don't have any problems. I have a well-educated nice daughter. I have my parents' support. I can live nicely in this society. So I am happy. I am satisfied about my position. I am happy that I could achieve this status with the help of my parents but without a husband.* (Female dried fish processor, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *Success is myself, my mother, father, husband, children and neighbours living happily. That is how we are now.* (Female fish processing worker, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *I am 48 years old. I have managed so far without conflict with my husband, without divorce. My husband doesn't have any mistresses. That is an achievement. I want my children to be united and happy. We should be united and happy with our husband, siblings, children and the villagers.* (Wife of dried fish processor, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Good relations within the family was similarly considered as a significant notion of success by most men in these three villages.

> *Happiness in the family is success. We expect the happiness of our children and a good future for them.* (Male fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *Success is having children and becoming a husband. I have the confidence to leave my children and go anywhere. We have a hut of our own [referring to his house]. God has given us shade [shelter]. I have got shade under which my children and wife can live happily. That is enough.* (Male beach seine worker and returned migrant, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Foregoing migration to remain with the family was also considered success.

> *I do not go anywhere during the off-season and I like to spend time with my family. We take decisions together on everything.* (Male saltern worker, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

For one woman, the return of her son missing due to war and life in an extended family, was the measure of her success.

> *I want to live as an extended family household with my children. My [missing] son should return. I should be with him during my last days and die. That is my goal. My son should return.* (Female dried fish processor and trader, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Good relations with and reciprocity among members of the community, participation in religious festivals, humility and respect from society were also expressed as important notions of success by both men and women.

> *If we have lived well, we should not praise ourselves but the community should praise us. We should give to others – if my neighbours don't have enough to eat, we should give food to them.* (Male lagoon fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *Society should respect us.* (Male grocery store owner, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *I have a desire to help mothers like myself who are truly respectable and are bringing up their children. I would also like to help the aged. I have educated my children and made something of them. One is working. I have to bring up well whom I gave birth to. There is no other achievement.* (Female tailor, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *I expect a drug and alcohol free society. Perumal (God) should protect us.* (Male beach seine owner, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Knowledge imparted by elders in the community and the status achieved due to this knowledge was considered a measure of success by one man.

> *You must have knowledge. It is only then you can succeed. I am a person who has achieved something. It was all because of those who were doing well those days. They put pressure on us to succeed. If I were not intelligent, people would not have elected me as the president of the mosque. People were upset when I resigned in two years.* (Male fish trader and community leader, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Material notions of success

Men's notions of success in Uppukdal were predominantly material, such as having good work, having a good standard of life like others, ownership of a TV and refrigerator.

> *Work is the measure [of success]. If we have good work we can live happily*. (Male fishing labourer, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *I want to be at a good level as other people. I have not overcome the level of hardship. I have not achieved anything*. (Male fisher, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *I have bought a TV and refrigerator*. (Male saltern worker, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Women's notions of success in this east coast village combined the material with the relational in many cases.

> *I expected a permanent house for us and I have got that. The next step is the children's education*. (Female agricultural worker and wife of beach seine worker, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *My husband should do well. This will bring happiness and pride to me because my husband is different from others [not the usual]. So is my child. I don't get help from any other source*. (Female farmer and wife of hotel worker, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

Material notions of success, such as success in fishing, house ownership, savings, living without debt, adequate money, and white-collar employment for children, also emerged important for some women in the other three villages.

> *Our success is the success of fishing. That is what we request from God. If we can buy enough nets and new boats that is our success. Also, I would like if my children can get a smaller job to do with the pen rather than working hard day and night like us. So I pray to God*. (Female fish trader and wife of fisher, Kadalpalli, Puttalam)

> *To live well without want itself is an achievement*. (Female dried fish processor, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *We built our own house and moved from my mother-in-law's house. That itself is an achievement. It is my desire to improve beyond that*. (Wife of fisher, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Ownership of fishing assets and the ability to earn adequate income were considered notions of success by men in these three villages.

> *I am very happy that I own a theppam (raft) because I was just a beach seine labourer before. Society respects those who do their own work. We also have a life insurance plan with Union Insurance*. (Male raft fisher, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

> *I do not have any big hopes but if we can manage our meals everyday that would be enough [success] for me. I would be happier if I have my own boat for fishing*. (Male fishing labourer and left-behind husband, Selippur, Trincomalee)

Subjective notions of success

Support by God for a good life was perceived as a notion of success by a few men and women. They indicated that their personal faith in God ensured their virtue as a human being and/or their good relations with others.

> *I believe God will give us a good life. Everything happens according to God's will*. (Lagoon fisher, Uppukadal, Trincomalee)

> *I have confidence that Allah won't ask many questions from me on the Day of Judgment. The success of my life is that people in the village are close to me*. (Male farmer, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *I want to die as a good human being. Everybody should participate in my final cremation*. (Male fish processor, Selippur, Trincomalee)

> *If a husband listens to his wife, God never gives him up. Everything happens according to the will of God*. (Wife of beach seine owner, Cattiyur, Puttalam)

Youth's notions of success tended to mirror those of adults, in emphasising a combination of the relational and material dimensions, in three of the villages. In Kadalpalli, both female and male youth perceived success in terms of good relations within the family and community, and a life without debt. In Cattiyur, female youth's notions of success ranged from being financially independent from parents, being able to make decisions independently, to be able to host a coming of age ceremony or wedding, to have children, and in one case to be able to join the husband in London. Male youth perceived success as being able to take care of parents and others, ability to help others, achieve a good economic status and advancement in one's career. In Uppukadal, success for female youth was perceived in terms of having a good husband and making progress in their work. Male youth's notions of success were associated with a profitable livelihood and owning livelihood assets, such as boats. In Selippur, unlike the adults whose measures of success incorporated relational and material dimensions, both female and male youth perceived success in material terms of good earnings and doing well economically.

10.4 Fishing as a livelihood vs. a way of life

In assessing the identities and aspirations from the perspective of fishing as a way of life, the collective identities that emerge from myths of origin in all four villages encompass fishing as a livelihood within a multiplicity of identities that revolve around religion/ethnicity, caste and family. These multiple identities are also expressed by women, men and youth in their everyday interactions in a more informal manner. Fishing as a way of life is manifested more strongly in the older fishing villages of Kadalpalli, Cattiyur and Selippur, than in the 'emerging' village of Uppukadal, where fishing is yet to be linked to an ethno-religious/spiritual realm and the ritual cycle. However, there is a lesser commitment to fishing among households in which members have successfully migrated overseas in Cattiyur, as well as in the east coast villages, Selippur and Uppukadal, where women and men express a desire for their children to leave the fisheries. At the same time, considerable numbers of male youth in the latter two villages express a desire to engage in fishing or fish-related businesses, as in the west coast villages.

The importance of social relations in fishing as a way of life also emerges in the future aspirations and measures of success, as expressed by women and men in the three older

fishing villages. They often prioritise social aspirations towards the wellbeing of the family and community over material aspirations of making a livelihood, whereas the reverse is true of Uppukadal, which also appears to be economically less well-off than the other three villages. The aspirations of female youth in all four villages, as well as male youth in the west coast villages revolve around both family and livelihoods, revealing the importance of a way of life, as well as a livelihood. In contrast, there is a strong livelihood orientation in the aspirations and notions of success of male youth in the two east coast villages, as well as in the measures of success among female youth in Selippur.

Two discourses emerge in relation to fishing that contribute to the understanding of fishing as a livelihood vs. a way of life. One that is engaged in mostly by men, who own their own boats or are crew in these boats and who see fishing as a "tough life of freedom and independence", in which they and their sons would continue to engage. Here the masculine ethos of freedom and independence in fishing is valued, resisting a move out of fisheries, as discussed by Power (2005) and Pollnac et al. (2012). The second discourse engaged in mostly by women and beach seine workers, who perceive fishing as a "life of hardship and suffering", one which their children should strive to get out by educating themselves and seeking other kinds of work. This is the discourse of individuals and groups who stay in fisheries due to a lack of alternatives and wish for a different future for the next generation. The first discourse corresponds more with the current reality, where the majority of households in the four villages are still engaged in fishing and/or dependent on fisheries-related work. Whichever discourse prevails will influence whether women, men and youth move out or stay in the fisheries, migrate or not, in the future.

11. Policy implications

The policy implications of the findings of the study will be outlined here in the context of perceptions of fisheries-related policies and regulations among community members and fisheries department officers interviewed.

Policies were perceived relatively narrowly by community members and mainly understood in terms of various regulations related to the use of fisheries gear by all fishers and restrictions on migrant boats. First, fishers in all four villages had a notion that access to fisheries resources was governed by a national policy based on the principle of "the sea is for all". Second, even though most fishers perceived that there was a depletion of the fish resources and that sustainable management of the resource was needed, they did not necessarily agree with the ban on specific fishing gear. Nor did they perceive that these bans were effectively implemented. Foremost, was the lack of clarity about different prohibitions of gear in different districts, and a notion that there was a lack of fairness in the regulations and their enforcement. Similarly, the quotas on migrant boats were questioned by east coat fishers on the basis that these were too large and not monitored adequately. For their part, the west coast fishers thought that the quotas were too small and had to be negotiated with rent-seeking law enforcement officers. Underlying this questioning were two contrasting perspectives - access to their own local fish resources by east coast fishers and the right to a tradition of migration to pursue a mobile fish resource by west coast fishers. While west coast fishers generally considered their relations to fisheries officers as cordial, east coast fishers regarded fisheries officers as partial to migrant fishers and to specific ethnic groups. However, all fishers concurred that enforcement of most fisheries regulations was ineffective largely due to political pressure, as well as the rent-seeking behavior of law enforcement officers.

Women were not directly affected by fisheries policies and regulations but those in the west coast villages, particularly in Cattiyur, where many women were employed in medium-scale dried fish processing enterprises, referred to provincial council public health regulations. These regulations applied to dried fish processing on the beach, and these were considered effective to some degree in preventing pollution and public health hazards.

For their part, fisheries officers in the Chilaw, Puttalam and Trincomalee Fisheries Districts perceived that they were able to enforce regulations related to fishing gear, as well as quotas on migration. Regulation of gear was dependent on the state of the specific fisheries within those districts and what was required to maintain the sustainability of the resource. The department had enforced a quota of 300 migrant boats for Tricomalee district in response to the requests of local fisheries societies, and as the number of both local and migrant fishers and boats had risen since the tsunami of 2004 and the end of the war in 2009. However, they indicated that it was not difficult to regulate the migrant boats in the last few years, as the number of migrant fishers/boats coming into the district has decreased. Fisheries societies from migrant communities provided lists of migrant fishers and the licenses of their boats were checked when they entered the migrant district. If conflict occurred between local and migrant fishers, either the police or the department intervened. They maintained that there was minimal conflict as migrant and local fishers pursued different target species and used different gear. However, most district-level officers concurred that as in the case of external migration, an internal migration policy could be useful. They indicated that an internal migration policy would help to sustain the fisheries resource, regulate migration for fishing, ensure better infrastructure facilities for migrants, reduce costs to local communities, and reduce conflicts among local and migrant fishers.

While none of the fishing households or fisheries society representatives brought up the new national fisheries policy in their perceptions and discussions, it is noteworthy that the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy of 2018 addresses environmental and social concerns to a greater extent than previously. The new policy promotes sustainable resource management through science-based information, increased marine fish production and increased opportunities for employment and enterprise development. It commits itself to a strategy to address environmental and climatic change challenges and impacts of natural disasters. It has included gender equality as a goal, to promote women's participation in the fisheries sector. Within a component to improve socio-economic conditions of fisher communities, it promotes the respect of tenure rights of traditional, migrant, subsistence and artisanal fishing communities to land, water and fish resources. Other issues addressed are improving the social safety net and social security protection for fishers and fish workers including women; involvement of fishing

communities in designing, planning and implementation of fisheries management measures; and to progressively realise rights of small scale fishers and fish workers to an adequate standard of living.

Thus, the opportunities to share the findings and policy implications of this study have increased with the new fisheries policy orientation. There is a need to bridge the gap between the sustainable management of fisheries based on scientific information promoted by fisheries authorities and the perceptions of fishers on how they practice their livelihood. While most fishers on both coasts acknowledge that there is a depletion of the fisheries resource, their more important concern, as also indicated in other studies in the Asian region (Fabinyi 2012, Fabinyi et al. 2015), is that they receive a fair share of the available fish resources. Thus, the effectiveness of regulation of fishing gear and quotas on migrant boats will be limited unless there is also a discussion and resolution on fairness in the distribution of the fisheries resource among sending and receiving districts, migrant and local fishers. The new fisheries policy needs to be adequately transformative in providing mechanisms to ensure access and tenure rights to the fisheries resource by migratory and host fishing communities, in locations where seasonal migration occurs.

12. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of internal seasonal migration between two coasts in Sri Lanka, in the context of changing internal and external migration patterns in fishing communities. It explored how women and men experienced the migration process, assessed gendered capabilities and vulnerabilities, costs and benefits, and the role of social networks/collective action in enabling or disabling migration. The analysis sought to establish whether migration helped or hindered fishing households to move out of poverty in four villages in the two study districts. As this migration process involves similar castes and/or different ethnic groups in migrant and host communities, social relations and identities were central to this inquiry.

A conceptual approach centred on the social wellbeing analytical lens (McGregor 2008; White 2008) revealed that migration in fishing communities was motivated by a combination of material, relational and subjective factors in the pursuit of wellbeing, rather than by poverty or scarcity of resources, as postulated in some influential theoretical perspectives (Jorion 1988; Cripps 2009). Social networks analysis of bonding, bridging and linking ties (Putnam 2000; Nenadovic and Epstein 2016) showed the importance of networks based on the latter two types of linkages to institutions beyond the community, such as markets and the state, in supporting or hindering migration, and the continuity of migration due to the strength of these networks among west coast fishing communities. Econometric analysis revealed the village of origin as the most important determinant for both internal and external migration, thus reaffirming the importance of relational factors of migration, underlying a culture of migration.

The research also highlighted the significance of gender relations in fishing communities (Kabeer, 1999a; Hapke and Ayyankeril 2004). While gender norms and practices confine most fishing activities to men, women's engagement is focused on post-harvest activities or non-fisheries related businesses and services. Men also engaged in post-harvest activities but at larger scale than women. Women have a predominant role in managing household budgets, as they are primary keepers of earnings of both husbands and wives. They are entrusted with savings, mostly in the form of jewellery, which when pawned constitutes a large part of the investment of purchase or replacement of fisheries assets.

Even though women do not generally fish, they are critical in enabling investment and financial transactions sustaining the fishing livelihood of their husbands.

Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches enabled triangulation and consolidation of findings, as well as provided complementary insights. Quantitative methods established the significance of fishing as the main economic activity and source of primary income, the scale of migration processes among these fishing communities, as well as comparative material benefits and costs to migrant and host communities, men and women, of pursuing various livelihood options and strategies, including migration. Qualitative methods brought forth the relational and subjective aspects of the migration experience through life narratives and enabled perspectives of households excluded by the quantitative survey criteria to be included in the overall analysis.

The survey findings revealed that fishing households generally were less likely to be among the poorest quintile of households on the west coast, with kernel density analysis of the distribution of consumption confirming a larger 'middle class' in the west coast study villages. On the east coast, there was a higher concentration of fishing households at the lower ends of distribution of consumption than in the middle or upper ranges, compared to non-fishing households. Members of around 75% of households from all expenditure quintiles migrated from west coast fishing communities, with crew and beach seine workers, well as those working on their own OFRP boats, constituting the majority of male migrants. Wives and female members of boat owning households were most likely to migrate relative to other women. Thus, as poverty was not the primary motivation, internal fisheries migration did not emerge as a significant factor for households to move out of poverty, although it was likely to keep households out of poverty in the off-season on the west coast. Households, which could rely on permanent sources of income and remittances of household members overseas, were least likely to engage in internal seasonal fisheries migration.

The quantitative findings were generally corroborated by the qualitative data on poverty perceptions. In the west coast villages a minority of households were perceived as poor, based on dependency on daily wage labour and inadequate food. The majority of households, which owned fishing assets and houses were placed at a 'middle' level in both these villages, while a small minority of households, which owned businesses, and

had family members who had migrated to the UK and Australia were considered 'well-off' in Cattiyur. In contrast, poverty perceptions in the east coast indicated a larger group of households as poor or of a 'lower' level, while smaller groups were considered 'middle' or 'well-off'.

From a multi-dimensional perspective, vulnerability has been identified as an important dimension of poverty in fishing communities by scholars (Allison and Horemons 2006; Béné and Friend 2011). The households in the study villages confronted a range of short-term risks and shocks, related to the fishing occupation, weather, market, social relations and their life cycle. They have developed a number of coping strategies to deal with these shocks, based primarily on livelihood diversification, acceptance of adversity and loss, spiritual faith and religious practices, and borrowing from social networks, such as family, fisheries societies, as well as market sources, such as money lenders and banks. Informal and formal (fisheries societies) mechanisms of support in west coast villages were indicated as preventing fishers/households from falling into the depths of indebtedness with no recourse for recovery. Long-term risks and shocks associated with depletion of the fisheries resource, and climate variability/change, however, were more complex. While men, women and youth recognised these challenges, they could not think of viable adaptive strategies, except to indicate the role of the state to respond with better policies of regulation and support.

Coast-to-coast migration, in the context of depletion of fish resources all along the Sri Lankan coast and restrictions imposed on fishing gear by regulatory authorities, has resulted in conflict between migrant fishing communities on the west coast and host fishing communities on the east coast. This conflict is articulated in two discourses of resource access – 'the right to a tradition of migration' by migrant fishers and 'the right to one's own resources' by host fishers. Notions of generational migration patterns, ancestral graves in migratory locations, superior fishing skills, local knowledge of seas, waves, winds and fish movements, and socialisation of children in migratory locations are embodied within the discourse of the 'right to a tradition of migration'. Deprivation of the fish catch, the post-war recovery from displacement, loss of lives, homes and assets, and lack of alternative livelihoods, are encompassed within the discourse of the 'right to one's own local resources'. While the conflict is manifested over the material dimension of fisheries resources, it is driven mostly by the relational dimension

encompassed in the discourses of the rights to access these resources, in terms of local inequalities and perceived marginality, as argued by Fabinyi et al. (2015). Horizontal inequalities within and between fishing communities were confirmed by the quantitative survey data, which indicated higher inequality within west coast fishing communities, relative to within east coast fishing communities. Moreover, while earning differentials between the lower end of earners (beach seine workers) are marginal between the two coasts, the differentials between the higher end of earners (OFRP boat owners) are substantial between migrant and host fishers, both in their respective home villages, as well as in migratory locations. Such horizontal inequalities are exacerbated by the imposition of non-transparent, area-specific regulations on fishing gear by fisheries authorities, perceived as favouring migrant fishers over host fishers. This strengthens the tendency to ethnicise/regionalise resource conflicts, which have emerged among these groups following the war.

Despite vulnerability to risks and shocks, as well as conflict over fish resources, wellbeing outcomes in the study villages were indicated as largely positive. Over 70% of households in both west coast and east villages perceived that their life in general was better than during the war years, that their living standards were better than during the war years, as well as during their childhood, and that their economic situation was better than after the war and than two years ago. The perception of a better standard of living and economic situation was even higher at over 90% among women and men in the east coast study villages. Notwithstanding greater material poverty among fishing households on the east coast, and greater consumption inequality between them and their counterparts on the west coast, people from east coast fishing communities perceived that their life was better now than in the past.

Qualitative notions of social wellbeing in the study villages included all three dimensions – material, relational and subjective. However, these notions of wellbeing varied across villages in terms of the emphasis placed on the different dimensions. In all four villages, material aspects of wellbeing were significant, either in terms of having adequate money or of a life free of debt. Relational wellbeing was indicated as important in both Kadalpalli and Cattiyur. In Kadalpalli social relations with kin, friends, neighbours and within the community in general emerged as even more important than material wellbeing, while in Cattiyur both social relations and money appeared to be equally important. In Uppukadal,

the material dimension of good incomes and employment emerged more important than social relations within the family and community. In Selippur, the subjective dimension of good qualities of people emerged as significantly more important than in the other three villages, together with the material dimension of good incomes and employment. Thus, the relative emphasis placed on relational wellbeing in the west coast villages seem to translate into stronger social linkages and networks of support to pursue livelihoods, as well as internal seasonal migration.

In interweaving the analysis of social wellbeing, identity and aspirations, there are two discourses, which emerge, contributing to an understanding of fishing as a livelihood vs. a way of life. The first, engaged in mostly by men, who own their own boats or are crew in these boats and who see fishing as a "tough life of freedom and independence", a way of life in which they and their sons would continue to engage. Based on a masculine ethos of freedom and independence in which fishing is valorised, this is a discourse, which resists a move out of the fisheries. The second discourse, engaged in mostly by women and beach seine workers, perceive fishing as a "life of hardship and suffering", which they and their children should strive to get out of, education being the means to other kinds of work. This is the discourse of individuals and groups who stay in fisheries due to a lack of alternatives and wish for a different future for the next generation. The first discourse corresponds more with the current reality, where most households in the four villages are still engaged in fishing and/or dependent on fisheries-related work. It remains to be seen whether the pull of fishing as a way of life is stronger than fishing as a livelihood, to determine whether women, men and youth stay in or move out of the fisheries, migrate or not, in the future. Whether individual aspirations and household decisions, structural economic transformations or ecological change will bring about this transition also remains a question.

The main issue from the perspective of fishers of both coasts, in terms of policy implications relating to seasonal coast-to-coast fisheries migration, is not resource depletion or sustainable management but fairness in the distribution of the available fish resource. Reconciling the two perspectives - the right to access their own fish resource and the right to a tradition of migration to pursue a mobile fish resource – will remain a challenge.

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Statistical Appendix 1: Fisheries statistics

Table 2.1: Marine fish production (Mt) in Puttalam and Trincomalee districts, and Sri Lanka

District	1983	1995	2005	2012	2014	2015	2016
Trincomalee	13,510	9,130	6,790	36,410	22,340	24,770	23,780
Puttalam	26,500	51,570	21,030	67,690	72,740	77,620	75,560
Sri Lanka	184,740	217,500	130,400	417,220	459,300	452,890	456,990

Sources: MFARD 2015, Annual Report: Fisheries Statistics 2015; MFARD 2018, Fisheries Statistics 2017.'

Table 2.2: Fishing craft in Puttalam and Trincomalee districts and Sri Lanka

Type of fishing craft	Trincomalee district	Puttalam district	Sri Lanka	
IMUL			#	%
2005	48	183	1,328	4.5%
2014	37	242	4,447	8%
2016	175	219	3,996	7.9%
IDAY				
2005	234	81	1,164	4.0%
2014	42	-	876	2%
2016	26	-	786	1.6%
OFRP				
2005	760	3390	11,010	37.6%
2014	1,316	5,039	23,982	44%
2016	2,808	5,668	24,282	47.9%
MTRB				
2005	30	190	1,660	5.7%
2014	162	262	2,720	5%
2016	27	172	1,839	3.6%
NTRB				
2005	1,421	3,380	14,150	46.3%
2014	751	3,674	20,584	41%
2016	1,640	2,843	17,853	35.2%

Beach seine				
2005	39	152	589	2%
2013	90	173	873	1.7%
2016	288	474	1913	3.8%
Total				
2005	2,532	4,005	29,312	100%
2014	2,308	5,165	52,609	100%
2016	4,964	9,376	50,669	100%

Sources: MFARD 2015, Annual Report: Fisheries Statistics 2015; MFARD 2018, Fisheries Statistics 2017.

Table 2.3: Marine fishing households, population, active fishers in Puttalam and Trincomalee districts, and Sri Lanka

Districts	**Fishing HHs**			**Fishing HH Population**			**Active fishers**			**Fisher/ fishing HH**
	2004	2015	2016	2004	2015	2016	2004	2015	2016	2016
Trincomalee	12,300	32,600	31,270	-	-	109,460	16,100	33,950	32,960	1.1
Puttalam	20,200	21,710	19,230	-	-	93,370	22,100	28,220	23,330	1.2
Sri Lanka	132,600	190,960	188,690	-	830,560	827,480	151,800	221,560	218,830	1.2

Sources: NARA 2008, Sri Lanka Fisheries Yearbook 2007; MFARD 2018, Fisheries Statistics 2017.

Table 2.4: Fisheries cooperative societies in Puttalam and Trincomalee districts, and Sri Lanka

District	**# fisher societies**		**# members**		**Members as % of active fishers**		**% Female members of total members**	
	2004	**2016**	**2004**	**2016**	**2004**[1]	**2016**	**2004**	**2016**
Trincomalee	62	74	7,298	6,230	45.3%	15.9%	22.5%	n/a
Puttalam[2]	105	178	12,775	8,706	57.8%	31.8%	21.2%	n/a
Sri Lanka	989	1088	123, 735	104,738	81.5%	38.3%	20.9%	n/a

Sources: NARA 2006, Sri Lanka Fisheries Yearbook 2003-05; MFARD 2018, Fisheries Statistics 2017.

Statistical Appendix 2: Probability of internal and external migration in study villages

Table 6.5: Characteristics associated with the probability of internal and external migration in study villages, Puttalam and Trincomalee districts: Marginal effects of logistic regression

		Household migrates to fish (fishing households only)			Either husband or wife has migrated abroad previously (all households)
	Mean or proportion	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Kadalpalli	0.250	0.5772***	0.6678***	0.6365***	-0.1967***
	(0.433)	(0.059)	(0.115)	(0.111)	(0.048)
Cattiyur	0.250	0.5762***	0.6691***	0.6359***	-0.0516
	(0.433)	(0.054)	(0.112)	(0.108)	(0.030)
Uppukadal	0.250	0.2114**	0.3019*	0.2760*	-0.0602*
	(0.433)	(0.065)	(0.124)	(0.122)	(0.029)
Either husband or wife has migrated abroad previously	0.0788	0.0674	0.0462	0.0995	
	(0.270)	(0.064)	(0.119)	(0.120)	
Husband's characteristics					
Husband's state of health	2.759	0.0031	0.0033	0.0036	0.0092
	(0.874)	(0.018)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.013)
Husband's age	42.87	-0.0003	0.0038	0.0058	0.0098
	(11.81)	(0.012)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.007)
Husband's age squared	1977.1	-0.0000	-0.0001	-0.0001	-0.0001
	(1081.7)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Household characteristics					
Number of children less than 6 years of age	0.547	-0.0258	-0.0126	-0.0203	0.0151
	(0.686)	(0.027)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.017)
Number of children between 7 and 16 years of age	0.779	0.0102	0.0023	-0.0016	0.0074
	(0.891)	(0.020)	(0.025)	(0.024)	(0.014)
Household size	4.607	0.0195	0.0349*	0.0327*	-0.0060
	(1.623)	(0.012)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.009)
Log of per capita household expenditure	9.281	0.0093	-0.0055	-0.0067	0.0043

	(0.700)	(0.024)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.017)
Family has traditionally fished in residential location	0.799	-0.0421	0.0085	0.0411	
	(0.401)	(0.044)	(0.061)	(0.058)	
Family has traditionally migrated internally to fish	0.696	0.1138**	0.0565	0.0083	
	(0.460)	(0.037)	(0.051)	(0.050)	
Husband engages in fishing related activities	0.135	-0.1157**	-0.1273**	-0.1354**	
	(0.342)	(0.038)	(0.045)	(0.044)	
Ownership of fishing assets	0.0925	-0.0982*	-0.1346**	-0.1061*	
Family has traditionally fished in residential location	(0.290)	(0.040)	(0.049)	(0.048)	
	0.220	0.0524	0.0715	0.0754	
Family has traditionally migrated internally to fish	(0.415)	(0.037)	(0.048)	(0.048)	
Strength of district-based networks	1.955	-0.0127	-0.0142	-0.0243	0.0208*
	(1.164)	(0.014)	(0.018)	(0.022)	(0.009)
Extent of networks in big cities	1.251	0.0294	0.0067	0.0146	-0.0060
	(1.059)	(0.016)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.009)
Strength of husband's bonds with relatives	2.704	-0.0313	-0.0242	-0.0287	0.0060
	(0.968)	(0.020)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.012)
Husband has many friends he can trust	2.419	0.0120	0.0064	0.0187	-0.0231*
	(1.051)	(0.019)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.011)
Perception of how strong the following constraints to fishing are:					
Cost of equipment	252.7	-0.0005***	-0.0159	-0.0269	
	(429.9)	(0.000)	(0.027)	(0.028)	
Costs of material inputs			0.0112	-0.0287	
			(0.018)	(0.027)	
Government's confused policy with respect to fishing			-0.0456*	-0.0648**	
			(0.020)	(0.023)	
Additional variables on networks and constriants					
Extent of husband's village networks				0.0224	
				(0.023)	
Extent of husband's foreign networks				-0.0186	
				(0.020)	

Extent of husband's government networks	0.0121	
	(0.026)	
Extent of husband's work networks	0.0076	
	(0.019)	
Extent to which husband thinks that religious institutions are helpful	-0.0310	
	(0.021)	
Husband frequently attends community meetings	0.0010	
	(0.018)	
Hostility of people at migration destination	0.0152	
	(0.020)	
Population growth at migration origin	0.0173	
	(0.028)	
Population growth at migration destination	0.0071	
	(0.026)	
Dependence on traders at destination to get permits for fishing at destination	0.0531*	
	(0.026)	
Traders offering low prices for fish	0.0314	
	(0.029)	
Illegal fishing methods used destination	0.0182	
	(0.021)	
Destructive fishing methods used by Indian poachers	-0.0429*	
	(0.020)	
Main income source is fishing		-0.0085
		(0.027)
Main income source is manufacturing or services related to fishing		0.0253
		(0.042)
Main income source is agriculture		-0.0323
		(0.048)
Main income source is manufacturing		-0.0375
		(0.034)

N	590	352	352	798
Pseudo R^2	0.445	0.487	0.523	0.108

Source and notes: Estimated using microdata from ICES' Survey on Migration and Livelihoods in Fishing Communities 2017.
Marginal effects are presented with standard errors in parentheses. Standard deviation appears below the estimation of means.
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Notes on co-authors

Mohamed Faslan is a Lecturer at the Department of Political Science and Public Policy, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Previously a researcher at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) in Colombo, he was a member of the qualitative research team of the Sri Lankan component of the study. His main areas of research are ethno-religious conflict, peace and conflict, fishing disputes between India and Sri Lanka, and Sri Lankan Muslims. He has MA and BA (Honours) degrees in Political Science from the University of Colombo.

Ramani Gunatilaka is an economist and Research Associate at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) in Colombo. She carried out the econometric analyses for all three countries - Cambodia, India and Sri Lanka - of the study. Ramani also works as an independent consultant, specialising in the econometric analysis of labour markets, income distribution, education, and subjective well-being, in Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, the Maldives and China. She has a PhD in applied econometrics from Monash University, Australia.

Dilanthi Koralagama is a social scientist and Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka. She was a member of the qualitative research team of the Sri Lankan component of the study. Her main areas of research are wellbeing, resource management, and marketing in fishing and farming communities. She has a Masters in Fisheries Economics and Management from the University of Tromso, Norway and a PhD in Governance and Inclusive Development from the University of Amsterdam, in the Netherlands.

Nadine Vanniasinkam is a Researcher at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES), Colombo, Sri Lanka. She was a member of the qualitative research team of the Sri Lankan component of the study. Her research interests include inter-religious relations and conflict, nationalism and minority identity politics with gender as a crosscutting focus. She has a Masters in Applied Linguistics from the University of Melbourne, Australia.

Nirmi Vitarana is Senior Programme Officer – Governance, for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Australian High Commission in Sri Lanka. Previously a researcher at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES), she was a member of the qualitative research team of the Sri Lankan component of the study. Her research interests include social networks, the wellbeing of persons with disabilities, and role of governance in promulgating social justice. She has a Masters in Sustainable International Development from the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, USA.

Nireka Weeratunge is an anthropologist and Research Fellow at the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) in Colombo, Sri Lanka. She led the ICES team as Principal Investigator of the Sri Lankan component of the study. Her main areas of research are the social and cultural aspects of natural resource use, focusing on gender and livelihood strategies in relation to poverty, vulnerability, wellbeing and resilience of rural households in fishing and farming communities. She has a PhD in anthropology from the University of Toronto, Canada.

On the move

Gender, migration and wellbeing in four fishing communities in Sri Lanka

Every southwest monsoon season, men and women from west coast fishing villages migrate to east coast villages, leaving their homes and their school-age children behind with kin. This monograph is an exploration of the motivations and aspirations that drive an internal process of seasonal fisheries migration. It focuses on the gendered livelihood patterns, collective identities and the social networks that enable or disable a long practice of seasonal coast-to-coast migration. It also examines the contestation of access to resources on the basis of 'a right to a tradition of migration' among migrant communities and a 'right to one's own local resources' among host communities.

The study is based on a range of qualitative methods and a quantitative household survey conducted in two migrant sending communities in the Puttalam district and two migrant receiving communities in the Trincomalee district between 2016-2019. The monograph inquires the extent to which seasonal migration contributes to poverty reduction in fishing communities. It concludes that internal coast -to -coast migration is not primarily motivated by poverty or resource scarcity. Instead, it is an adaptive livelihood strategy pursued by men, women and youth in fishing communities in response to monsoonal weather patterns, as well as a way of life to fulfil a complex combination of material, relational and subjective wellbeing goals. It asserts that an understanding of the causes, processes and relations of internal seasonal migration can facilitate more effective policies and regulations governing the fisheries industry in Sri Lanka.

This manuscript provides a thorough, wonderfully detailed account of the gendered aspects of migration and well-being in Sri Lanka's fishing communities... In fact, apart from addressing a contemporary interest in the role migration plays in fishing community livelihoods and well-being, I see long term value that the publication will provide in terms of historical documentation. Years from now, the published study will inform understanding of Sri Lankan social and economic history.

Holly Hapke, University of California, Irvine

'On the move' is an engaging multi-sited study on the many dimensions of seasonal coast-to-coast migration among fisher communities, with a focus on the gendered dynamics of mobility... The study pays as much attention to the varied aspirational futures of fisherwomen and men, in which inter-subjective meanings of wellbeing, success, and what it means to have "good life" are creatively pieced together... It would undoubtedly serve as an essential reference for future work in the context of both internal migration and gendered relations in Sri Lanka´s small-scale fisheries sector.

Rapti Siriwardane-de Zoysa, Leibniz Center for Tropical Marine Research, Bremen

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