

Net gains

YouTube is a sea of resources for documentaries on women in fisheries¹

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YouTube is an online resource that allows people to discover, watch and share originally created videos. YouTube allows for the easy creation of theme-based channels, a facility that is increasingly being used by organizations to upload video content on specific issues. There are several interesting international channels on fisheries on YouTube. This column covers a few of the major ones.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/FAOoftheUN> videos?live_view=500&flow=list&sort=dd&view=0) carries an informative introductory video to the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security. Besides this, there is a video featuring interviews with governments, regional organizations, civil society organizations and academia on the upcoming international small-scale fisheries (SSF) guidelines (www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0RyLppJ3iM).

The documentary “Lifting the Veil”, covering Tunisia’s clam fisheries, shows how FAO and its partners are actively strengthening the role of women in the beach clam fisheries subsector.

The channel of the FAO’s regional office in Asia-Pacific has a five-minute presentation on the invisible role of women in the small-scale fisheries as part of an Asia news flash (www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aa8llGee-Dk).

FAO regional offices have also uploaded other interesting documentaries, such as one on women in fisheries in Cambodia (www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLxkAMnEDyQ) and a seven-minute interview with a local chief of Community Fisheries in Cambodia, Nuor Chhai, which highlights the important issues that her community faces and how the Regional Fisheries Livelihood Project has helped improve community livelihoods.

Another interesting channel is that of the United Nations University (UNU). This has a few informative documentaries about *satoumi* — coastal areas in Japan where the sea and human beings coexist intimately. One documentary features *satoumi* in Hokkaido (www.youtube.com/watch?v=yR1B6fwW98U&list=PL8QnLThpVNcXJKx9285vQmyiTmo90s_2y), which shows the various ways in which the coastal community preserves a uniquely balanced interaction between the terrestrial and marine ecosystems. A more detailed documentary on *satoumi* in this channel (www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkgHbrXoXes) shows how the practice is linked to livelihood maintenance.

The UNU channel also has a documentary on the Ama women divers of Japan who have been practising sustainable fishing for hundreds of years (Where the Sea Whistle Echoes: www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTif2vA-JQ). Another splendid view is a documentary that follows the experience of a number of large and small fishing communities in Miyagi and Iwate Prefectures. Key individuals from these communities explain the impact on their lives of the 2011 tsunami (Standing Strong Again: Rebuilding the Fishing Community of Kesennuma—www.youtube.com/watch?v=miGwjQa0txo).



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Chronicles of oblivion

A documentary film on female fishworkers from Odisha, India¹

Produced by Dakshin Foundation, Directed by Priyanjana Dutta, with the support of Duleep Matthai Nature Conservation Trust

Duration: 25 minutes, Language: English

Odisha means the “land of the people”. There are an estimated 35,304 full-time fishers in the Indian State of Odisha (formerly known as Orissa). Of them, 7,973 are women. Besides these full-time women fishers, there are 12,499 women who work as part-time fishers. The film “Chronicles of oblivion” documents the lives of Odisha’s women fishworkers in different parts of the State.

Among the women shown in the film are the crab-catchers of the Bhitarkanika wildlife sanctuary. Since the entry of these women into the sanctuary area is completely restricted, they have to constantly fight the fear of arrest by forest guards or of being attacked by crocodiles and other wild animals. Many feel that it would probably be better for them to learn some other trade. These illiterate women are often also cheated by fish sellers. Their lives typify the challenges that fisherwomen of Odisha face as they pursue their traditional livelihoods in the face of modern day restrictions from the government and the development process.

There is very little support for female fishworkers in government policies and plans. The focus of existing policies has been on increasing fish production and modernizing the fisheries. They exclude the needs of traditional fishing and of women engaged in these activities. The women, over the years, have developed their own means of livelihood, fishing in creeks and rivers, using small nets to catch crabs and fish. The film tries to show how important it is that these women be included in government planning and decision-making process in the fisheries sector.

But what promise does this State hold for its forgotten people? Women from marine fisher communities have historically been a neglected lot. The stories of women living along diverse landscapes of Odisha’s 480-km coastline are of struggles for survival.

The daily lives of fisherwomen hinge on numerous uncertainties. Confronting a situation of depleting fish catch and unsustainable fisheries, women

located along biodiversity-rich habitats also have to contend with the fickleness of legal conservation restrictions, which have dealt a severe blow to their livelihoods and ways of life. The film reveals the insidious impact of sea turtle conservation as seen through the eyes of the women fishworkers of Odisha. These women and their families are losing access to their land and other resources and are frequently displaced in the name of conservation or development. Further, these fishers also face problems of identity as they are often regarded by government regulators as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

The stories of Odisha’s women fishworkers guide the narrative of this 25-minute-long film, revealing the highly unequal and invisible world that they inhabit.

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Two leaflets promote careers for women and men in fisheries

If you have a taste for adventure, you could become an on-board observer on a tuna fishing boat. If you want to work with local communities and design marine resource management plans, you will likely need a degree in fisheries science. If you are a woman, you may want to join the growing number of female fishery workers who hold positions of responsibility in the tuna industry.

These are just a few examples of careers covered by two leaflets produced by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community to inform women and men about jobs in the fishing industry (see: <http://www.spc.int/fame/en/projects/scicofish/activities/179-brochures>).

The following texts are extracted from the leaflets.



Fisheries Observer, a career for both women and men

For many Pacific Island countries, fisheries are the most valuable natural resource. At the front line of protecting those fisheries is the Fisheries Observer. Because they are present at the fishing grounds, observers are the “eyes and ears” of fisheries managers, scientists and compliance officers. As an observer, you will collect information from commercial fishing vessels, and ensure that it is accurate and unbiased. The role of the Fisheries Observer is crucial because for some data, the observer is the only person who can independently verify the data supplied by fishermen. The data may later be subject to scientific review or court interrogation, so needs to stand up to scrutiny. There is no doubt that working conditions are tough on a fishing boat. You need to be prepared to handle unusual, sometimes difficult, working conditions. But you don't have to be a superhero to apply.

Can women apply? Absolutely!

Attitudes are changing and more and more women are seen as being just as capable as men in the fisheries industry. At the end of 2012, around 40 women from Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Palau and Papua New Guinea had been certified as Fisheries Observers.

Careers for women and men in the tuna industry

Around 60% of the tuna caught, canned and eaten around the world comes from the western and central Pacific — the world's biggest tuna fishery. The job market in the tuna industry is growing fast and employers are eager to attract more young people from around the region. And, with recent changes in regional policies, exciting new opportunities have opened up for people of all ages who are keen to create and manage their own businesses.

Women and men – equal opportunity

Over the past 20 years, attitudes towards women working in the tuna industry have change, and people have come to acceptance that careers in the industry are equally appropriate for men and women. More and more training and development opportunities are opening up in tuna processing, quality control, and research and management, and the number of women working in these areas is increasing. These women are demonstrating that there are no physical barriers to them doing the work.

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