

## **WOMEN IN THE SEAFOOD PROCESSING SECTOR POST GLOBALIZATION - AN ANALYSIS**

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In India, an estimated 0.2 million women are engaged in the seafood processing sector. The predominantly export-oriented industry has been a major source of employment for women in the coastal regions of the country. Women have thus played a key role in boosting the exports of seafood from the country which has crossed Rs. 8000 crores in 2006-07 (1 crore = 10 million Rp). It was observed that almost all the sorting, grading, peeling, cutting and other activities involved in processing are handled by women. Besides being involved in the actual processing work they are also seen in supervisory and technical categories, especially in quality control laboratories.

The overall economy of the country has been affected by the forces of globalization and liberalization and the seafood processing industry has also not been immune to it. Consequently the industry has become a more competitive one rising to world class standards. The industry is subject to very stringent quality standards set by the importing countries and has been successful in complying with them by upgrading the infrastructure and process facilities. The impact of these changes on the work force requires attention and needs detailed studies.

This paper provides an analysis of cross-sectional data on the extent of contribution of women work force to the seafood processing sector, the changes in the working environment, and socio-economic aspects including the casualisation of the work force in the industry and transfer of macro benefits to the micro level.