



Regional Fisheries Livelihoods Programme for South and Southeast Asia (RFLP)

GCP/RAS/237/SPA



Sri Lanka

A visual guide of key baseline survey findings

About RFLP

The Regional Fisheries Livelihoods Programme for South and Southeast Asia (RFLP) sets out to strengthen capacity among participating small-scale fishing communities and their supporting institutions in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam. By doing so, RFLP seeks to improve the livelihoods of fishers and their families while fostering more sustainable fisheries resources management practices.

Funded by the Kingdom of Spain, the four-year (2009 - 2013) RFLP is implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) working in close collaboration with national authorities in participating countries.

RFLP focuses on a number of key areas as follows:

- Strengthening **co-management** mechanisms for sustainable utilization of fishery resources
- Improving **safety at sea** and reducing vulnerability for fishers and communities
- Improving the quality of fishery **post harvest** products and market chains
- Strengthening and diversifying **livelihood** income opportunities for fisher families
- Facilitating better access to **micro-finance** services
- Sharing knowledge and lessons learned both nationally and regionally

RFLP in Sri Lanka

RFLP activities take place in three areas on Sri Lanka's west coast: the Puttalam estuary, as well as Negombo and Chilaw lagoons. Sri Lanka's lagoon and estuary areas play a valuable role in the support of coastal fisheries. However, they are complex ecosystems and are subject to a range of pressures from fisheries and other resource users. An RFLP project coordination office has been established in Negombo, while the Ministry of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources (MFAR) is the main implementing agency.



Source: Google Maps



Source: wordtravels.com

The Sri Lanka baseline survey

The RFLP Sri Lanka baseline survey was carried out from October - December 2010. The survey used mainly primary sources of information, while depending on secondary sources too as and when required. In all, over 1,000 household questionnaires, 12 focus group discussions and over 20 key person interviews were conducted. The baseline survey report was finalized on September 2011.

The full version of the baseline survey can be downloaded from: www.rflp.org

Socio-economic background

Puttalam District (Chilaw and Puttalam)

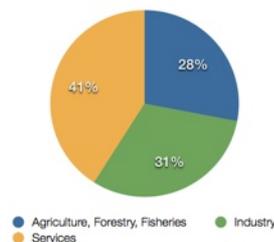


Total Population: 709,677
 Male: 352,455
 Female: 357,222
 Density (person/km²): 246



Literacy rate
 Total: 90.7%
 Male: 91.2%
 Female: 90.3%

Puttalam labour structure



Gampaha District (Negombo)

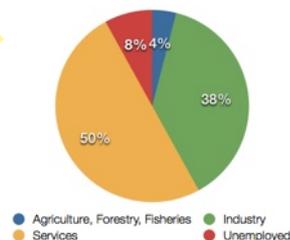


Total Population: 2,063,684
 Male: 1,007,702
 Female: 1,055,982
 Density (person/km²): 1,539

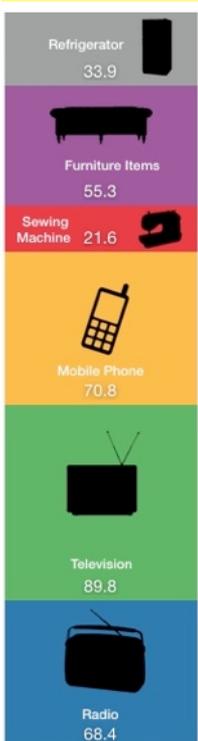


Literacy rate
 Total: 95.4%
 Male: 95.7%
 Female: 95.1%

Gampaha labour structure

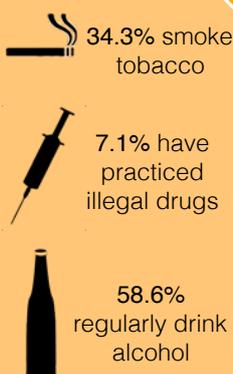


Households in Negombo (%) possessing:



Household assets were used to measure living standards. In Negombo, a high ownership of television and radios was reported when compared to Puttalam and Chilaw districts. The amount of households having mobile phones in Negombo is similar to the other two districts. Very few respondent households in all three study areas possessed personal computers.

Consumption of drugs, tobacco and alcohol in Chilaw



The consumption of and spending on illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco were surveyed. In Chilaw, 38% declared that they consume one or all forms almost daily; another 35%, around once a week. In Chilaw, similar to Negombo, over 82% of the respondents spend above Rs. 500/month on drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Almost 61% spend more than Rs. 1,000 a month (at least 25% of the declared household incomes).

Expenditure on drugs, tobacco and alcohol in Negombo



Bicycles and motorcycles were the most common vehicles used and owned by fisher households.



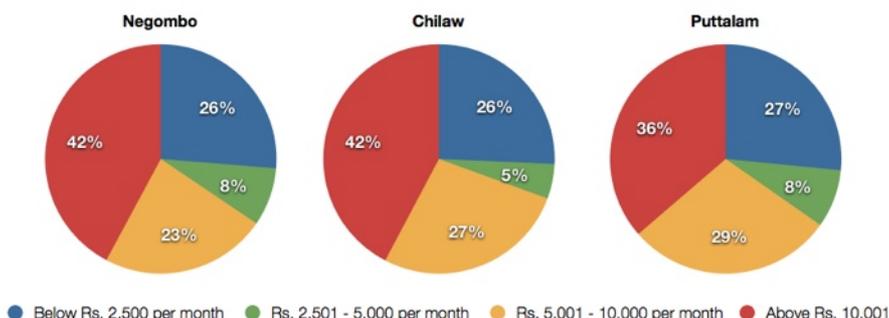
Negombo: 49.8%
Chilaw: 49.7%
Puttalam: 35.4%



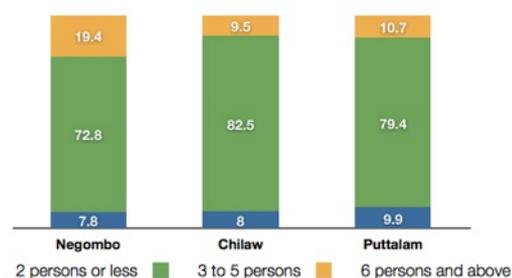
Negombo: 18.7%
Chilaw: 29.3%
Puttalam: 18.6%

The **bullock cart** is a mode of transport used by a small group of fisher households. Very few households actually owned a car or a motorized automobile, e.g. three wheelers and trucks.

Average monthly income of fisher households



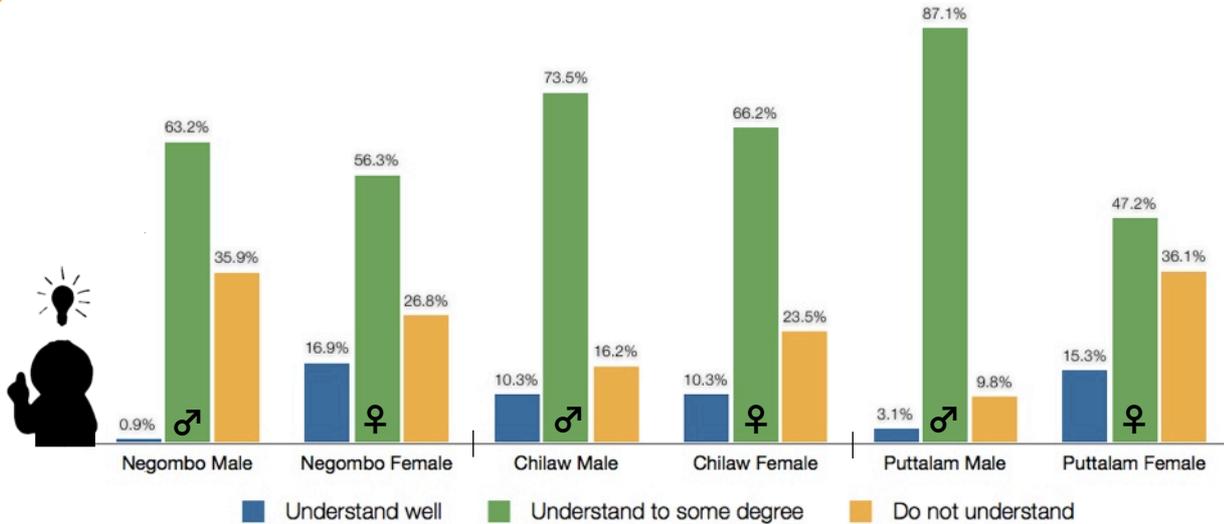
Size of households (%)



Co-management

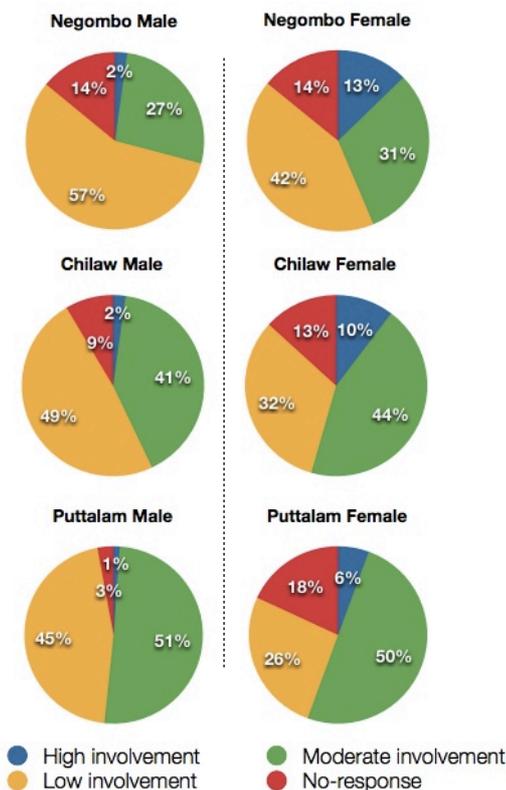
Respondents possess limited understanding of the co-management concept. Fisheries policy has had reportedly little to moderate impact on natural resources, its management and human well-being for the study areas.

Understanding of the Co-management concept

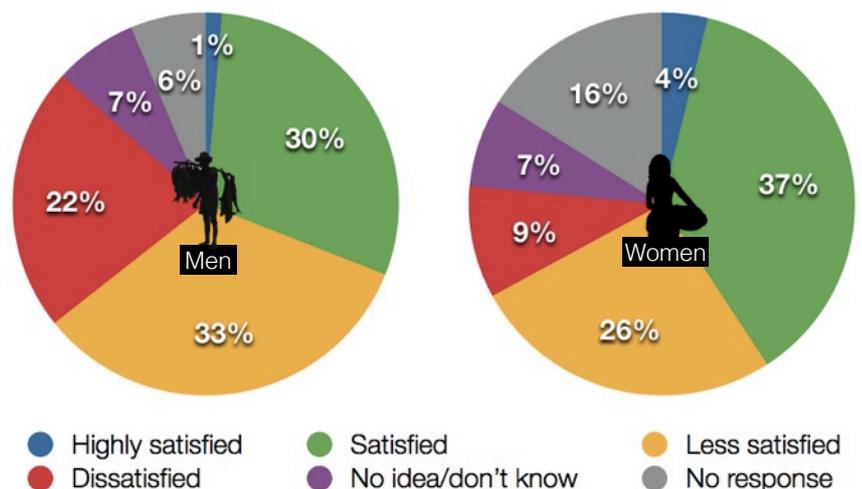


Respondents believe that state and government officers have low to moderate involvement/impact on fisheries management and are somewhat satisfied with the present management system.

Perception on the government's involvement in fisheries policy



Respondents' satisfaction with the present fisheries management system

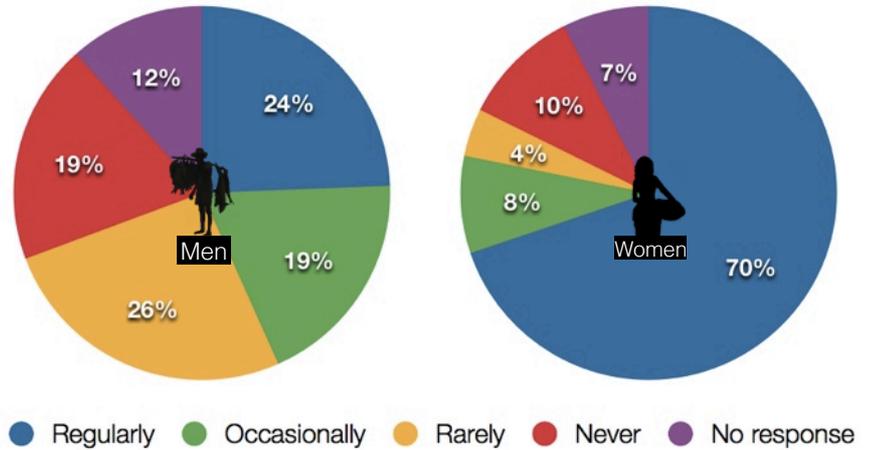


The dominant community organisations are fishery cooperative societies in which there is little state intervention. Most fisheries policies are regulated according to community norms and pre-established laws.

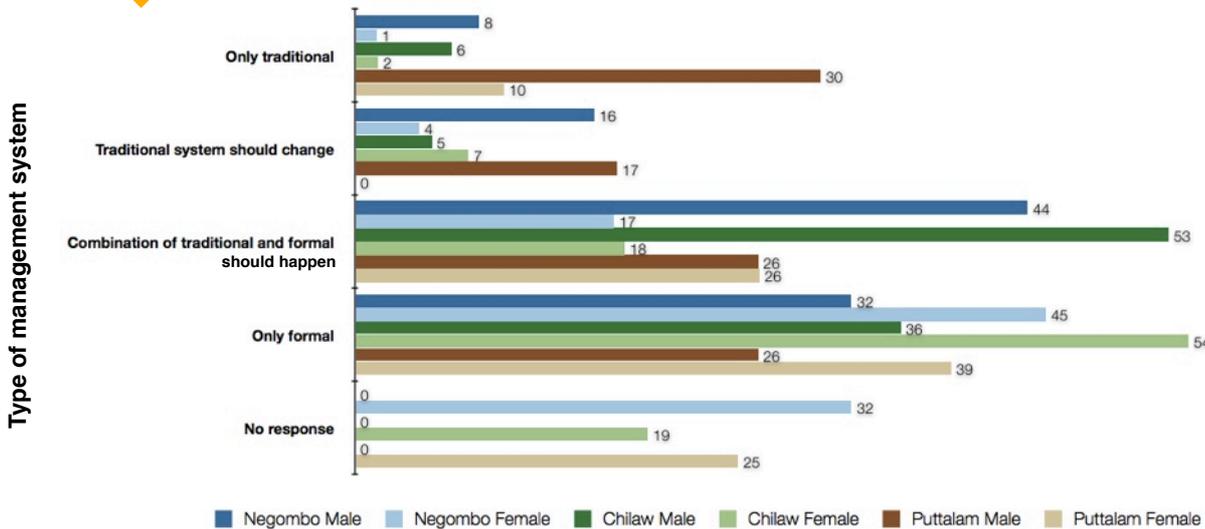
Women are very active in fisheries management meetings as they often represent their husbands.

Many fishers believe that a combination of both traditional and formal fisheries management methods is the most effective way to manage coastal resources.

Respondents' average participation in fisheries management meetings

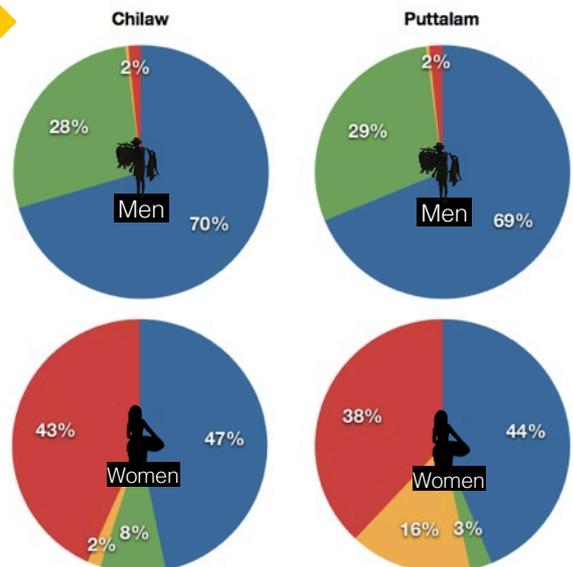


Respondent perceptions on how the management system should be conducted (%)

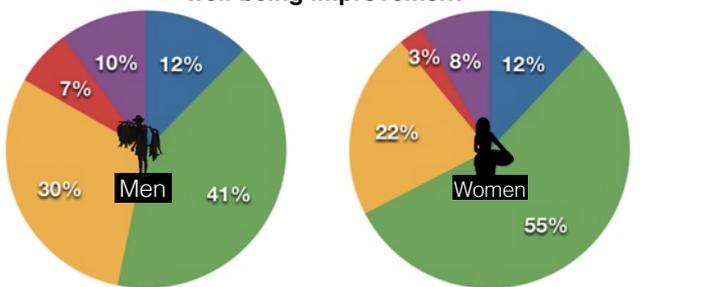


Local community members are perceived as the key group involved in fisheries management. Such management had moderate to little impact on improving well-being.

Community perception on the extent of involvement in fisheries co-management



Average perception of the impact of fisheries management on well-being improvement

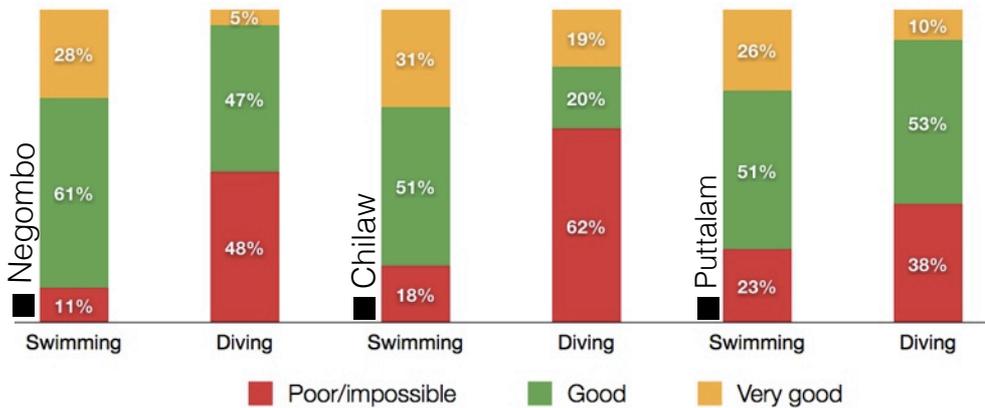


Legend for Well-being impact: High impact (Blue), Moderate impact (Green), Little impact (Orange), No impact (Red), No response (Purple). Legend for Co-management: Local community (Blue), Government (Green), NGOs (Orange), No response (Red).

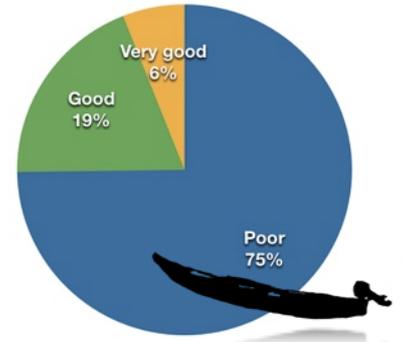
Safety at Sea

Respondents were generally strong swimmers, but lacked diving skills. Most fishers do not possess minor engine repair skills.

Respondent fishers' swimming and diving ability



Ability of fishers to attend to minor engine repair at sea

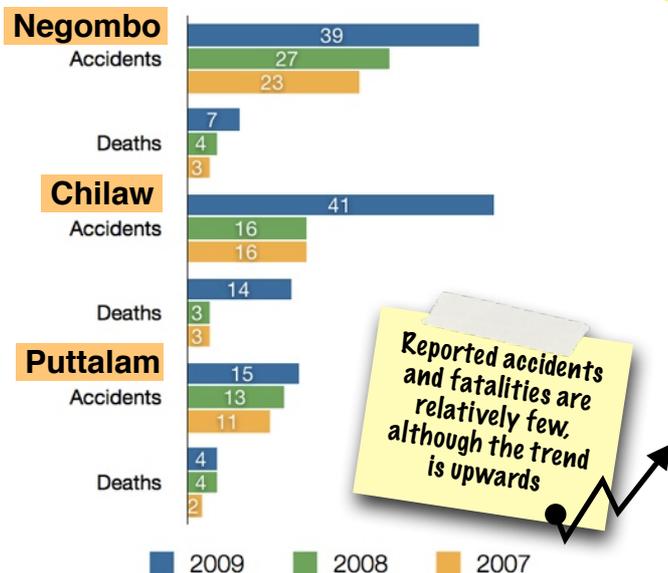


As the Sri Lankan continental shelf is narrow in many parts of the country and the number of coastal fishers high, many fishers conduct fishing operations in close proximity to each other.

The topography of certain beaches, sand bars, lagoons, and other landing sites combined with rough sea conditions were the main hazards confronted by coastal fishing vessels.

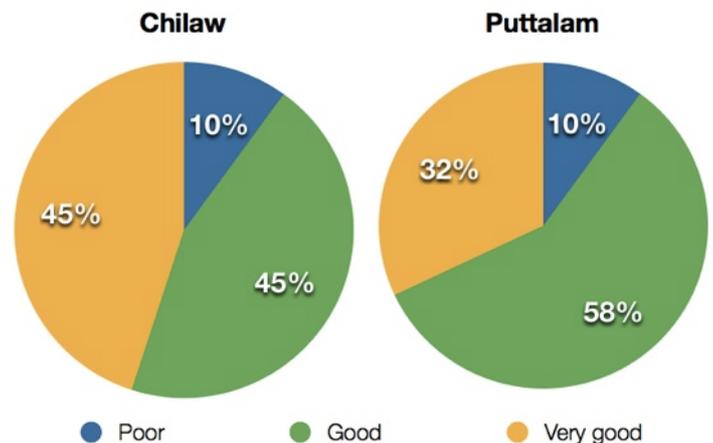
Accidents occur more during certain seasons (e.g. monsoon, May - September) when leaving or returning to the landing sites.

Number of accidents and deaths (2007 - 2009)



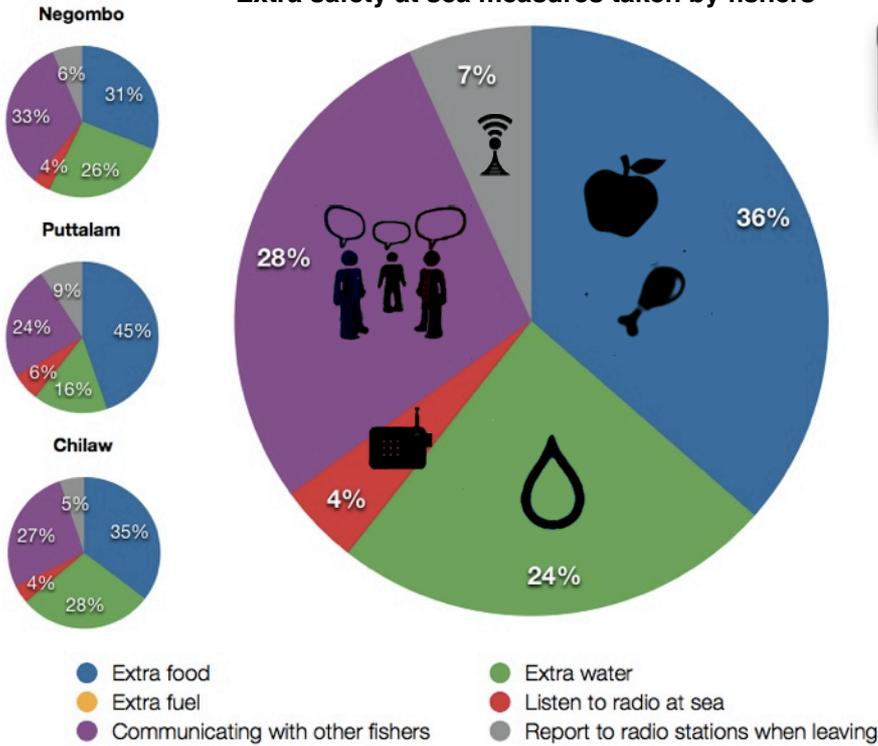
Reported accidents and fatalities are relatively few, although the trend is upwards

Fishers ability to navigate motorized boats - examples from Chilaw and Puttalam



Most fishers do not consider fishing as a dangerous activity and often do not take extra precautions when fishing (e.g. taking on board extra food, fuel, and water).

Extra safety at sea measures taken by fishers



No respondent fishers took on board extra fuel on fishing trips.

Most fishers did not receive navigational training or possess authorized certification. In Negombo, Puttalam and Chilaw, 85% of the respondents **do not** possess official navigational licenses.



Around 60% of boats are built in approved boatyards. The number of boats constructed in non-approved boatyards has increased following the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami.

Safety at Sea Snapshot

...examples from Negombo district



16% of the reported craft have onboard first aid kits.



0.4% fishing crafts had onboard SSB radios.



30% of Negombo fishers use GPS. It was revealed that the preferred use of GPS is to find submerged rocks rather than navigation.



16% of the fishers use life jackets and 8% of the fishers have life rings onboard. Most boats often do not have sufficient space to store life jackets or life rings.

Commonly, fishing boats measuring 18-23 feet which fish 15-20 km off shore take onboard insulated boxes for icing their catch. However for smaller size vessels this could result in stability issues under rough weather conditions.

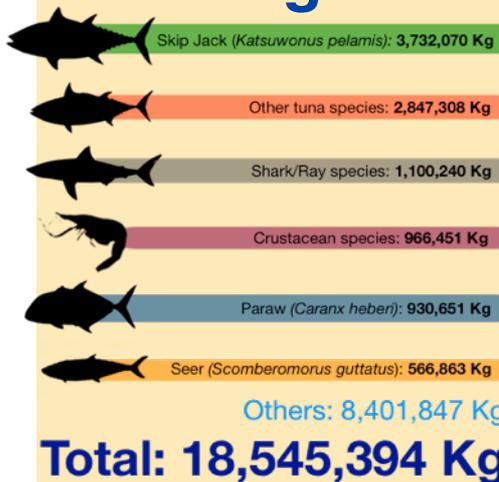


53% of the boats in Negombo have seaworthiness certificates. Around 50% of the boats engaged in coastal fisheries are 6 to 10 years old. Another 10% are more than 10 years old.

Post Harvest and marketing

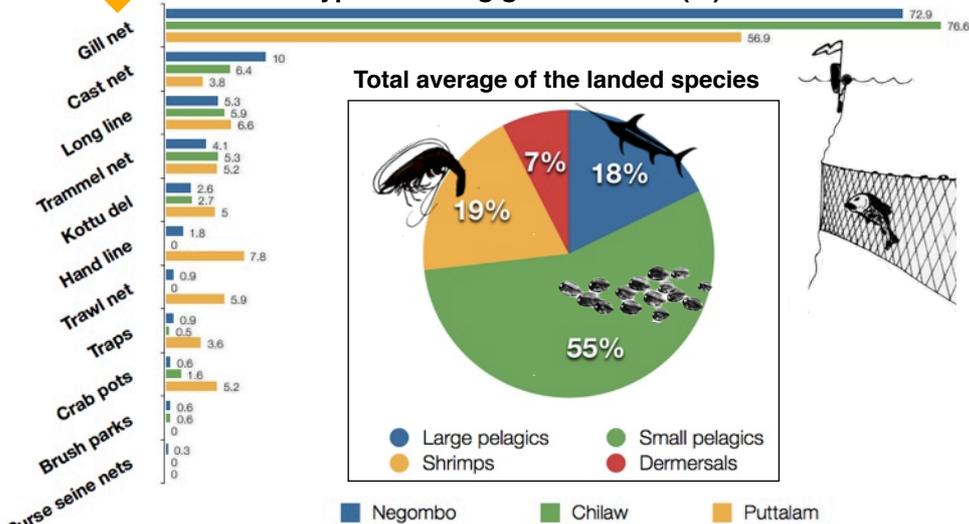
Landings 2009

Negombo

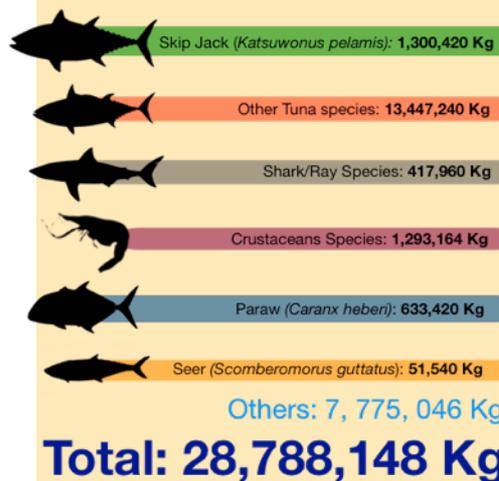


Small pelagics are the main landed species and gill nets the main fishing method utilized.

Type of fishing gears utilized (%)

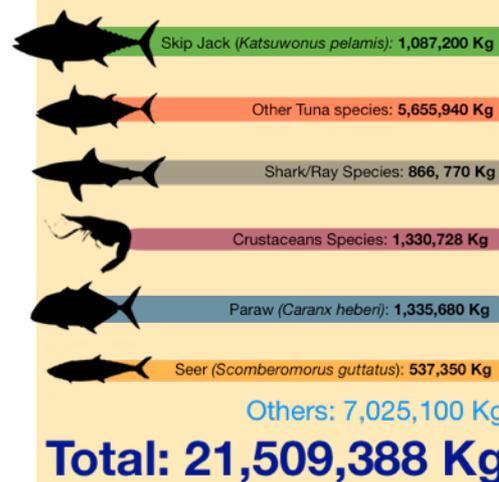


Chilaw



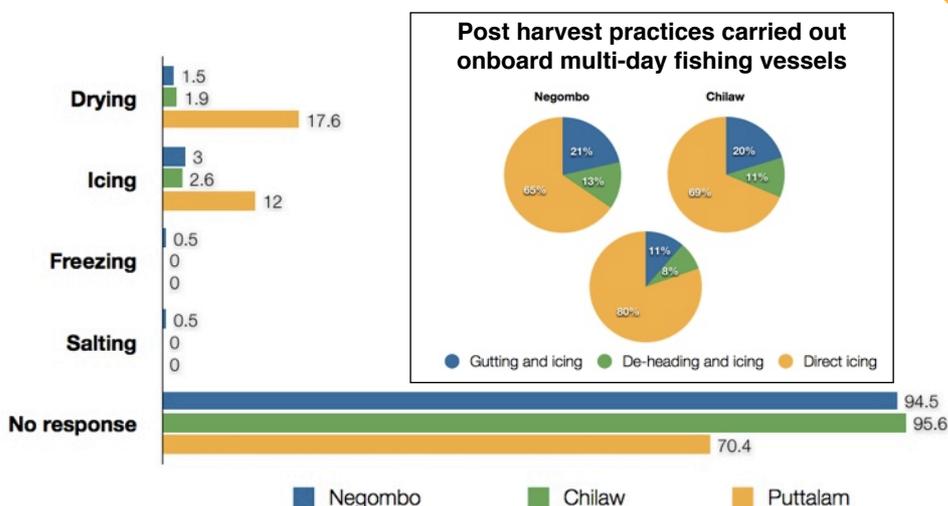
As there is a ready market demand for day boat fish landings, the need for onboard post-harvest practices is not seen as a priority by most fishers.

Puttalam



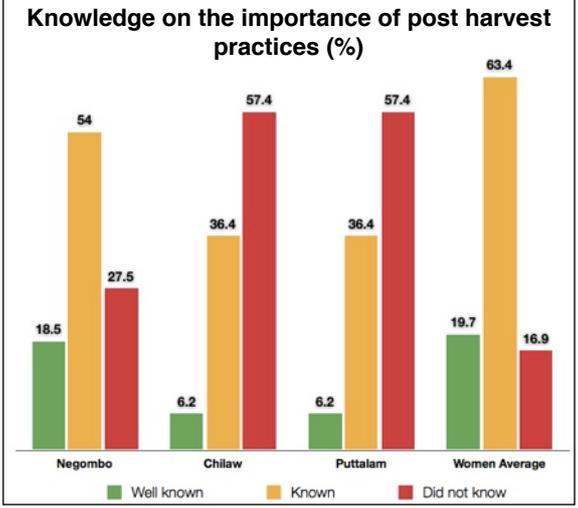
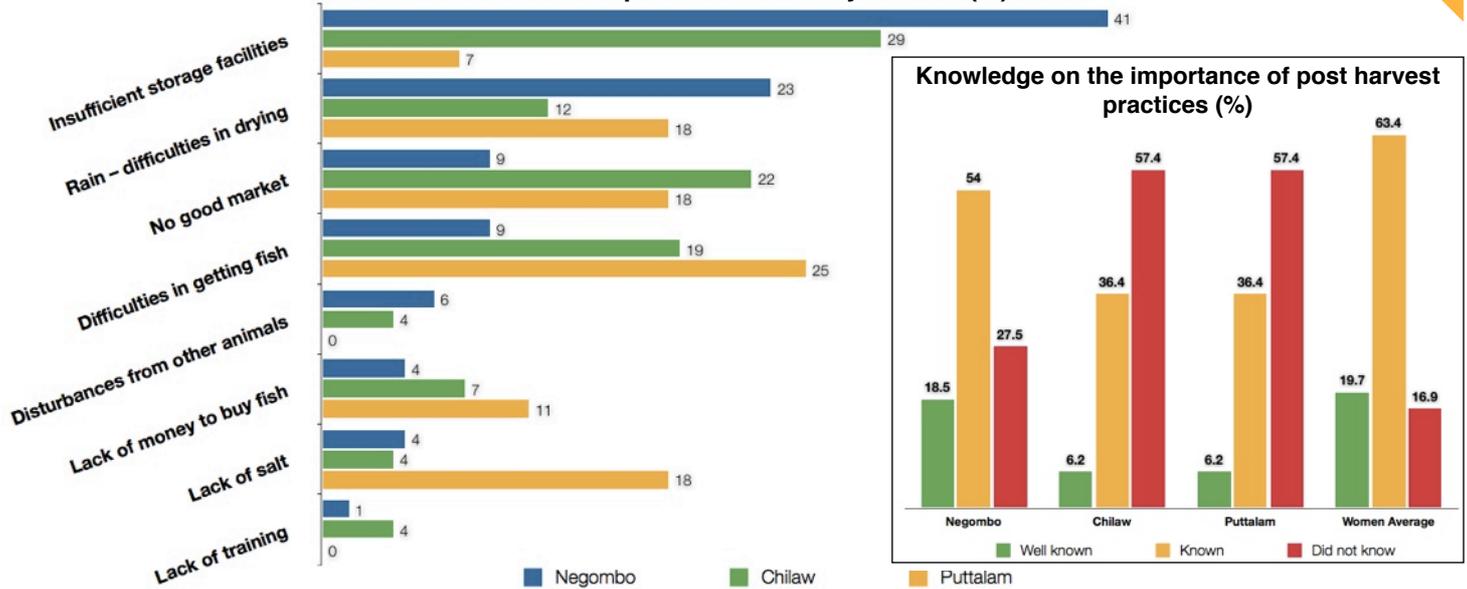
Fishers that fish for less than half a day often avoid post harvest practices on board and were unaware of its impact on fish quality. Whereas most multi-day fishers often use ice for their catch.

Post harvest practices carried out onboard single day fishing vessels (%)



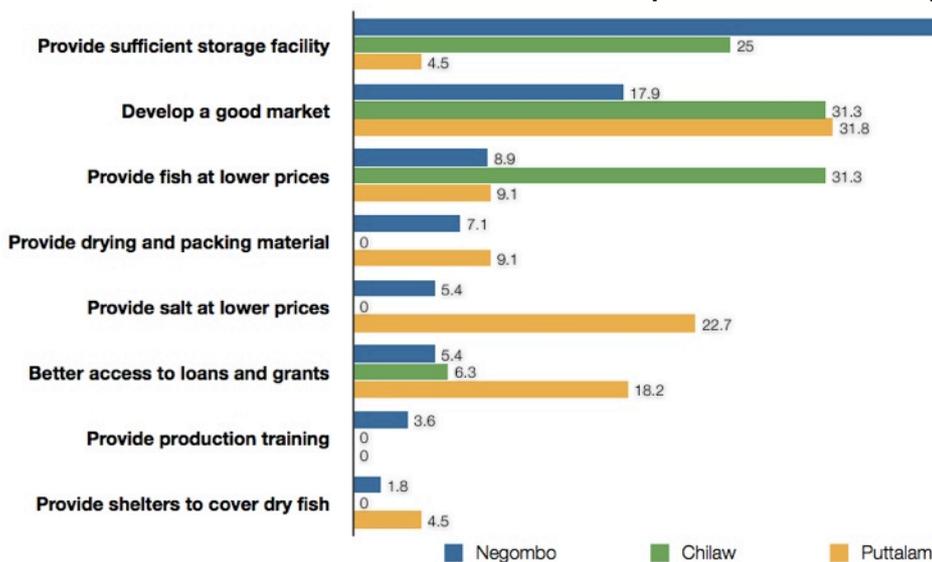
Men are somewhat aware of the importance of post harvest practices. Women are more aware of the importance of post harvest practices and declared insufficient storage facility/space as the biggest issue faced.

Post harvest problems faced by women (%)

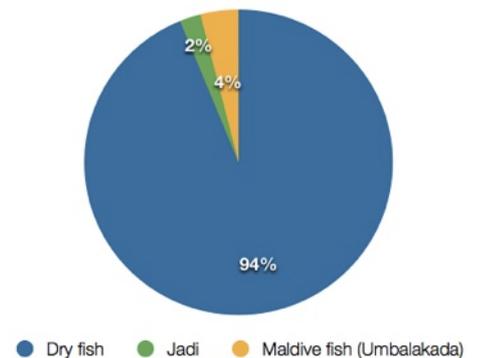


Women are responsible for processing the landings done under three methods: *jadi*, dry fish and *maldive*. 'Dry fish' being the most common. Different issues were faced in different districts.

Post harvest requirements declared by women (%)



Types of post harvest products



Middle persons power over prices

After the fishers have landed their catch it is often bargained and sold to middle persons. The middle person then transports the catch to markets. It was revealed that middle persons in the Sri Lanka study areas greatly dictated the price of fresh fish and fish products, often extracting the highest returns.

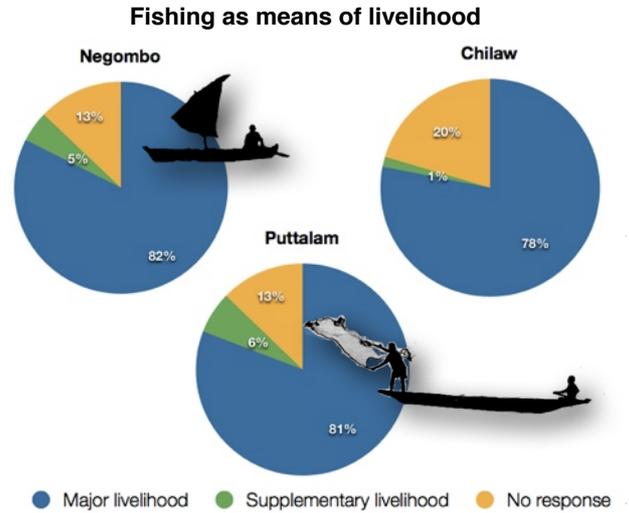
Dry fish: sun and air dried fish.

Jadi: gutted and skinned, then salted or smoked in large barrels/containers.

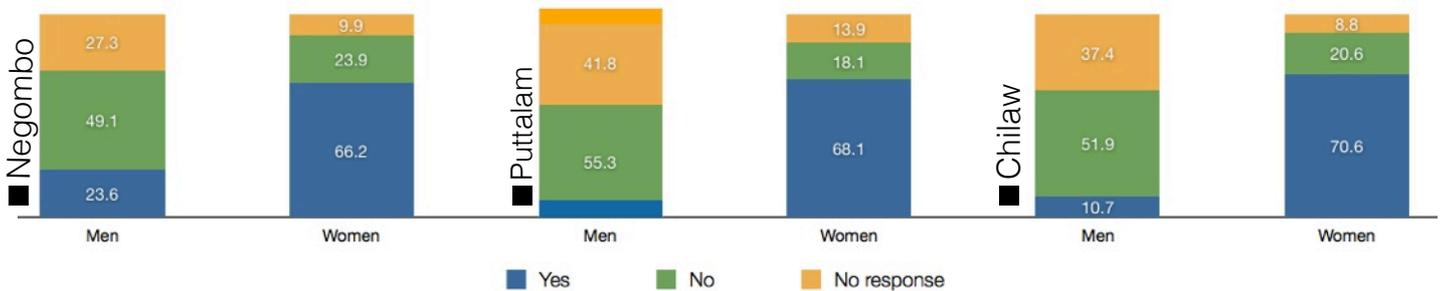
Maldive: (*umbalakaḍa*) gutted, skinned, then cured. Usually a tuna species.

Livelihoods

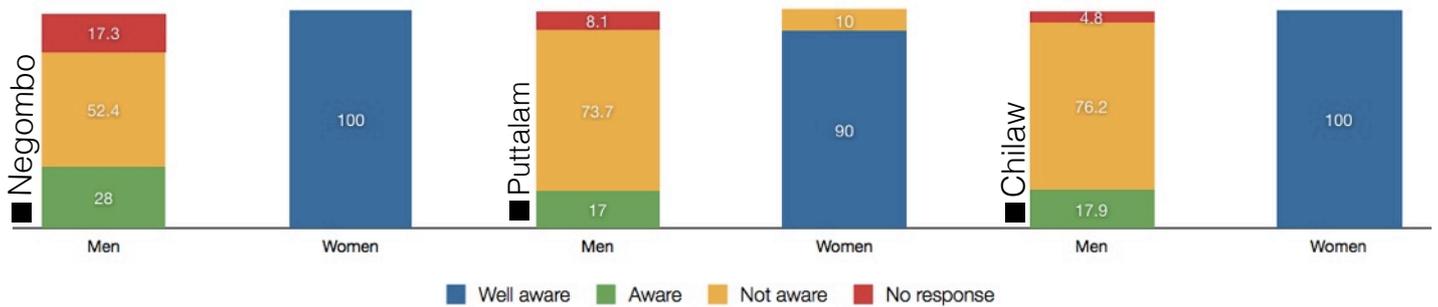
Most fishermen are unaware of alternative livelihood options and declare little interest in diversification. Women on the other hand were more aware and deemed livelihood diversification to be more important.



The importance of livelihood diversification (%)

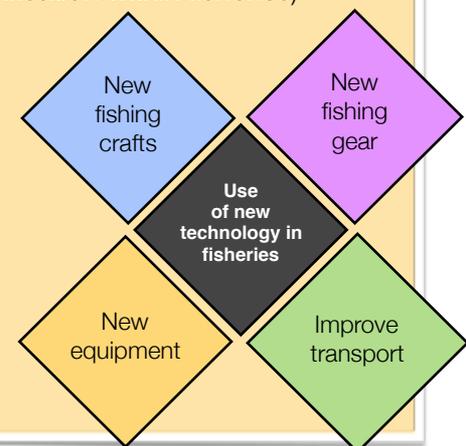


Awareness of alternative livelihood options (%)



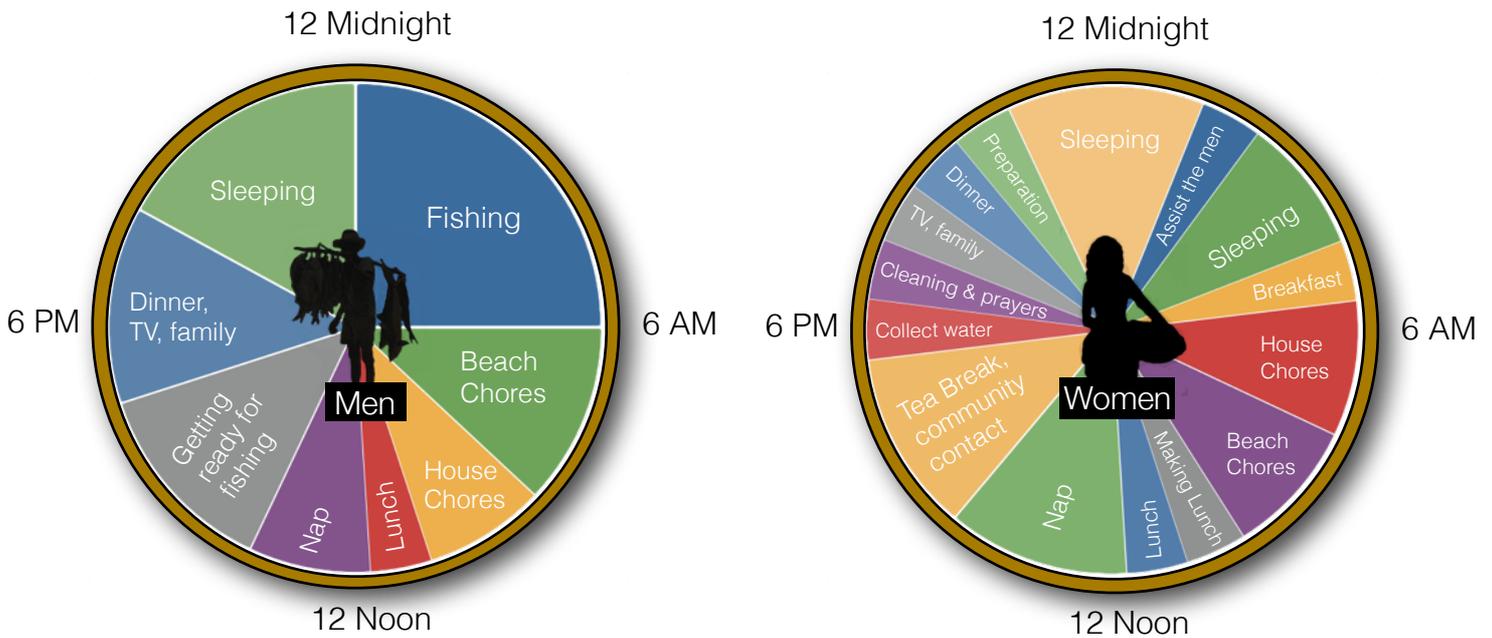
Men and women identified several livelihood diversification possibilities. Interestingly, almost all mentioned diversification possibilities and means are fishing related.

- Use of new technology/applying better fishing practices (diversification within fisheries)
- Off-season fishing
- Fish processing; making of dry fish: 'maldiva' fish and 'jadi'
- Improving the quality of products
- Diverse self employment activities (mainly small businesses)
- Acquisition of crafts and gear for concessionary rates
- Possibility to engage in deep sea fishing
- Possibility to acquire fish finding devices
- Getting involved in fish marketing and transportation



Men spend most of their day preparing to fish and fishing while women attend to domestic/family duties and process the catch.

Fisher folk daily routine - an example from Chilaw



Respondents described certain factors that influenced livelihoods. In addition, women highlighted key problems relating to coastal livelihoods.

Negative Influences

- ▶ Seasonality in fisheries
- ▶ Low catches
- ▶ Increasing costs of parts and fuel
- ▶ Low market prices
- ▶ Natural disasters
- ▶ Ineffective community organizations
- ▶ High production costs

Positive Influences

- ▶ Good harvests
- ▶ Favourable seasons
- ▶ Fair market prices
- ▶ Living close to the sea

Important influences for women

- ▶ Access to loan facilities
- ▶ Income stability
- ▶ Training opportunities

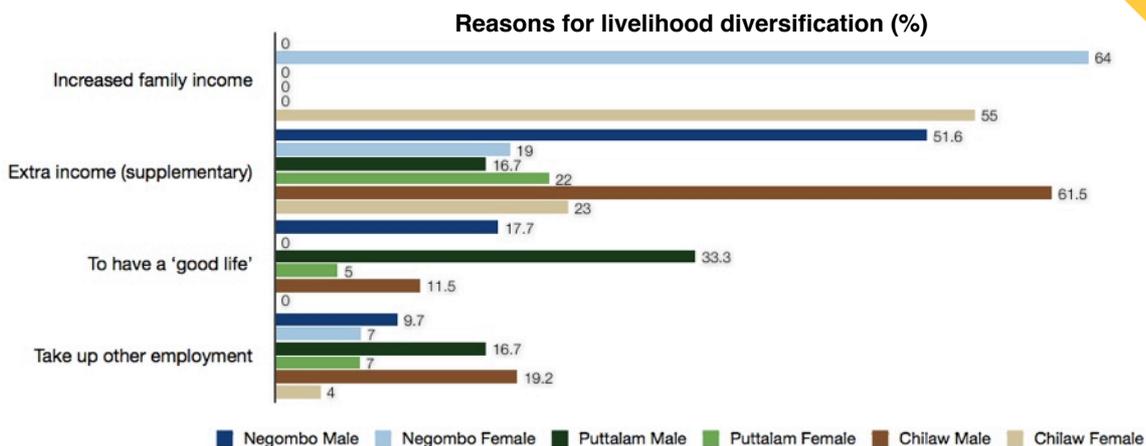
Women's livelihood diversification alternatives

Food processing (represented by a can icon), Small businesses (represented by a box icon), Farming and husbandry (represented by a cow icon), and Garment industry (represented by a sewing machine icon).

Problems highlighted by women

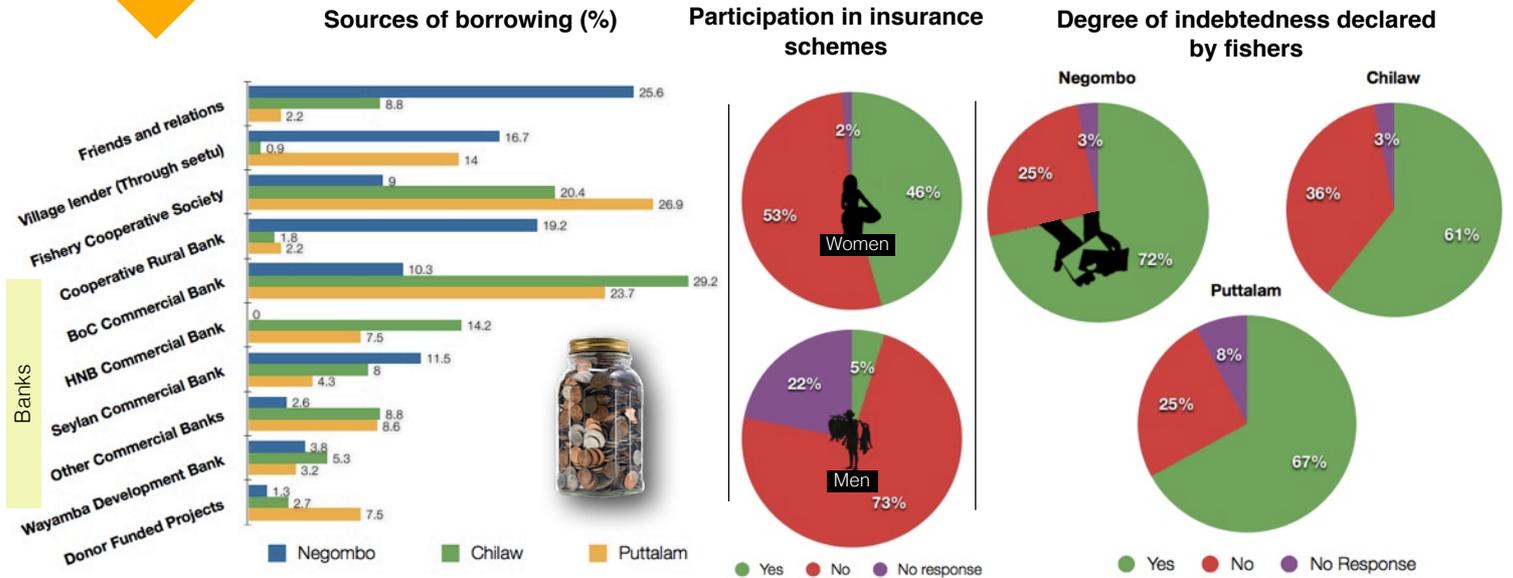
Inadequate access to new knowledge (represented by a book icon), Lack of proper storage facility (represented by a fish icon), Inability to access modern equipment (poor access to credit) (represented by a computer monitor icon), and Weak market access (represented by a shopping basket icon).

Diversification was seen as a means to bring in additional income.

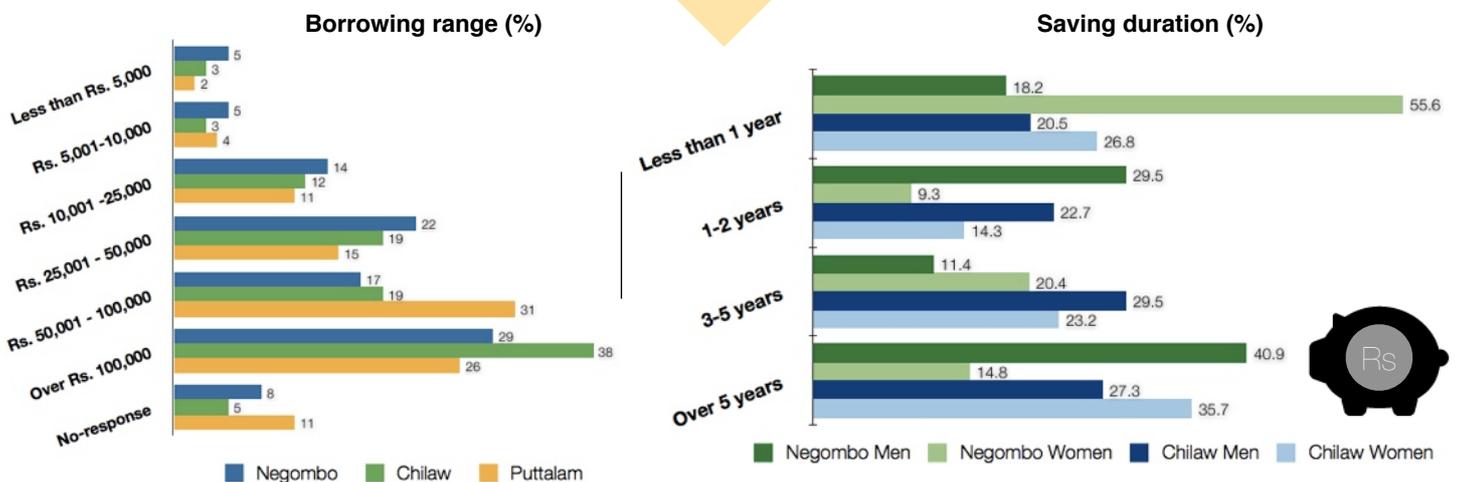


Micro-finance

Forms of loaning money are unique for each study area. 'Village lenders', friends/relations, and fishery cooperatives are the most popular sources of loans. It was also revealed that most of the respondent fishers were in some form of debt.

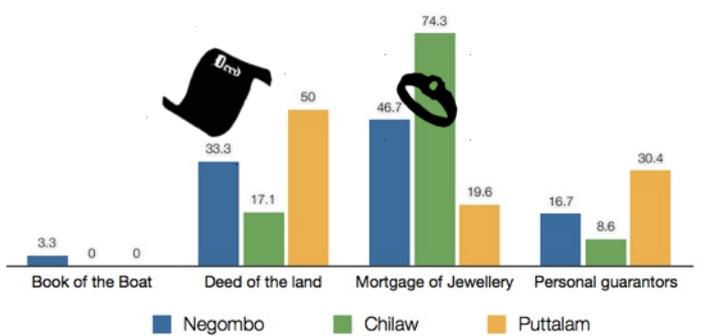


Most fishers did not participate in micro-finance or insurance schemes, but women are more active in this respect. Borrowing is usually done at higher sums (over Rs. 100,000) throughout the three study areas and saving duration varies for each district. For example, in Negombo women tended to save for shorter periods (less than one year) and the men over longer periods of time (over five years).

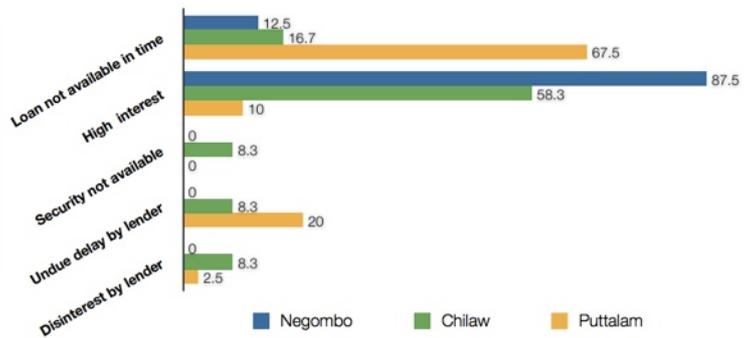


Pawning of jewellery and land deeds are the most common ways to secure loans in the three study areas. It was also revealed that high interest rates were issues in Negombo and Chilaw.

Security offered on borrowing (%)

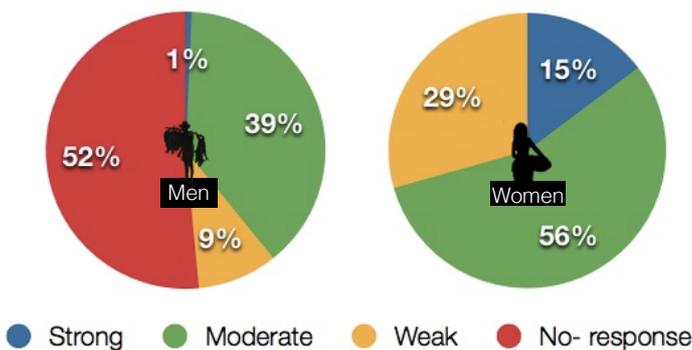


Issues faced with micro-finance (%)

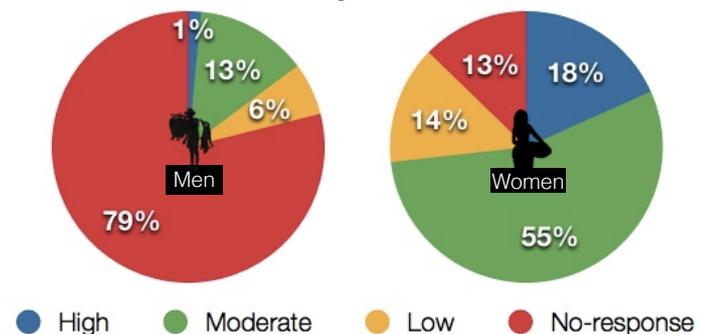


Women are generally more positive with regards to access to micro-finance services as well as satisfaction with credit services compared to men. Men generally have less access to and are less aware of the potential benefits of micro-finance services.

Access to credit services - an example from Chilaw

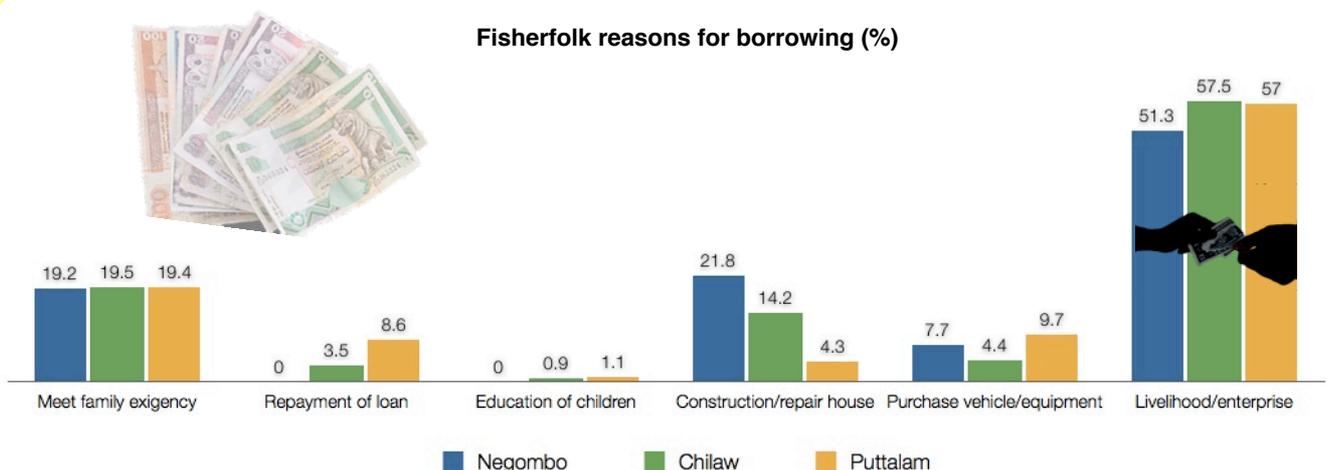


Satisfaction with credit services - an example from Negombo



The main purpose of saving is for improving livelihoods/enterprises. Other reasons include securing children's education, purchasing household goods and the repairing/construction of houses.

Fisherfolk reasons for borrowing (%)



This publication has been made with the financial support of the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AECID) through an FAO trust-fund project, the Regional Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (RFLP) for South and Southeast Asia - GCP/RAS/237/SPA. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the opinion of AECID, FAO or RFLP.

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