

BAJAU WOMEN AS KEY WORKFORCE IN ARTISANAL FISHING HOUSEHOLDS IN KAMPUNG MENKABONG, TUARAN, SABAH

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Abstract

Fishers are often being thought of as men who catch fish. Women, on the other hand, are often being thought of as a community that mainly involves in grading, packaging and processing fish and fishery products. This article will present Bajau women in Kampung Mengkabong, Tuaran, Sabah, who involve themselves in fishing activities in traditional ways. The women also play an important role as fishmongers selling fish and other fishery products. It is also interesting to note that these women are also responsible to manage and handle the finance of their families. How they engage fishery activities, fish selling and managing family finance will be explained in this paper. The Bajau fishing community is often being portrayed as poor fishers, and certain researches show that they are below the poverty line. However, our analysis shows that this is not the case. This article is based on researches conducted on 50 Bajau women involve in fishery activities from production to selling the catches in Tuaran, Sabah.

Keywords: Bajau, Women Workforce, Fishery Activity, Poverty & Mengkabong

Introduction

Every morning, nearby the Tuaran Fish Market, there are several women selling fish and other fishery products under umbrellas at the street-sides or at the market's pavement. These are the Bajau women from Kampung Mengkabong, who participate in fishing and selling fishery products produced by their families. Kampung Mengkabong area is located near the Kabong River, the whole area consists of seven villages, namely Kampung Tembiluk, Kampung Jembulang, Kampung Buansa, Kampung Mempelam, Kampung Pensurun, Kampung Gerinsing and Kampung Soang Krumuan. The population of Kampung Mengkabong is 2,499, of which 97% of them are Bajau. 66% of Bajau women, as noted above, are in between 30 to 50 years old, and 20% of them are in between 50 to 65 years old. Almost all of them (96%) are wives of fishermen and 4% of them are widows. These women need to support an