

Traditional fish recipes of fisher households and their significance



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INTRODUCTION

From the life experience and years long association with the sea and its resource, the fisher community had developed their own unique delicacies with fish and had identified the nutritional and therapeutic significance of different fish species. The role of fisherwomen in nurturing the nutritional security of households is very significant as they are the key home managers in fisher communities. The indigenous knowledge of women in maintaining traditional methods of fish preparation is often neglected while documenting the Traditional knowledge in fisheries sector. This paper attempts to give necessary attention to the fisherwomen's traditional knowledge regarding seafood.



METHODS



- 23 fisherwomen were surveyed
- Personal interview method.
- The indigenous sea food recipes and knowledge and beliefs regarding food habits were noted down



RESULTS

1. Traditional recipes of fisher communities in Kerala

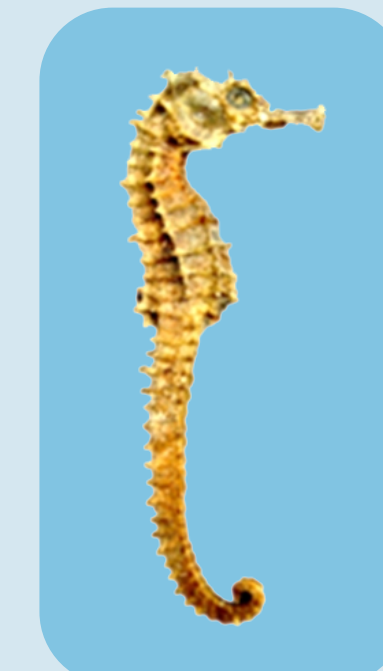


2. Beliefs and practices regarding consumption of sea foods and their science

Belief	Scientific Rationale
Sardine oil is good for children and pregnant ladies	Sardine oil contains PUFAs which are responsible for brain growth and development of fetus, new borns and children (Bulla MK, 2011).
Children are not fed with mackerel as it is hot for their body and also create allergic problems	Presence of histamine content in scombroid fishes such as mackerel is responsible for allergy (Taylor SL, 1989)
Mackerel, catfishes, squids, crabs and prawns should not be consumed in wounded conditions as healing gets delayed	It is found contradictory to the scientific explanation. The crabs and prawns are rich in arginine which helps boosts the healing phase during injuries as arginine assists in immune function and collagen growth. (https://www.thepaleomom.com/nutritional-support-for-injury-and-wound-healing/)
Silver bellies (mullan) is given to lactating mothers for increased milk production	The leiognathids are rich in Calcium, phosphorous and high quality protein (Pauly, 1981)

3. Beliefs regarding medicinal value of fishes

- ✓ To heal the deep cut wounds, cuttle fish ink sacs is dried and made a paste with milk and applied on deep cut wounds.
- ✓ The fish locally known as **Chumakurichi** (*Triacanthus biaculeatus*), is used to cure asthma. For this purpose, either the sun dried fish is powdered and consumed with honey, or the skin is peeled of and roasted with salt and consumed.
- ✓ Sea horses (*Hippocampus* spp) locally known as **kadal kuthira** is dried and then powdered. This powder is mixed with honey and consumed to cure Asthma.
- ✓ *Cynoglossus* spp. locally known as '**nangu**' is cleaned, covered in banana leaf and kept in fire (locally known as '**nangu vaatiyath**') is given to women soon after delivery as it is believed to heal the internal and external wounds quickly.



Sea horses



Triacanthus biaculeatus

CONCLUSION

On par with the ethno botanical food and medicinal knowledge, fisher community, especially the women possess knowledge on the nutritional and medicinal values related to the diverse resources of the sea. This must be given proper recognition as far as the role of gender in various sectors is one of the most debated topic in the present era. Women's ITKs are often neglected while documenting ITKs. This study attempted to redefine the role of women in ITKs in marine fisheries sector of Kerala which was remained hidden and unexplored so far.



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