

WOMEN AND WETLANDS: MINI SUPPORT LEADING MAXI PROMOTE TO THE RURAL HOUSEHOLD OF WEST BENGAL

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Rural women and wetlands are virtually inseparable in India as well as West Bengal. Domestic level dependency of rural women on ponds (*Khirkipukur, doba, dighi, etc.*) for cultural rites and rituals (various pujas and ceremonies) washing utensils and clothes, bathing, and even for drinking water (Nandi, 2022) was earlier of immense importance which was continued to some extent even in the present decade. In the present communication minor support of livelihood dependency on wetland biodiversity for both plant and animal resources is reflected as observed in rural West Bengal. Rural poor women collect amaranths (*kochu, kalmi, helencha, Brahmi shak, etc.*), small fish and shellfishes (freshwater snails, shrimps, crabs, and small fishes) mainly for domestic consumption (Fig. 1) and fodder for domestic animals (Fig. 2). Virtually, these promote rural living suggesting higher integration of cultural practices and values. Thus, it is believed that rural women be involved in the rural village level (Gram Panchayat) wetland conservation and management issues and concerns to save smaller waterbodies and mini wetlands from encroachment and rampant waste disposal. The Ramsar Culture Network (RCN) suggests that cultural practices and traditions can play a powerful role in wetland conservation and wise use [<https://www.ramsar.org/activity/ramsar-culture-network>].



Fig.1 Woman collecting small fishes/shrimps Fig.2 Woman collecting fodder (water hyacinth)

References

<https://www.ramsar.org/activity/ramsar-culture-network>

Nandi, N. C. 2022. Two case studies of ponds in Gohat, Hooghly district, West Bengal. A. Das Pukur: A case study of drinking water pond. *Harvest (Online)*, 7(1):40.