Mobility is integral to fishing, centred on the pursuit of a mobile resource. Fishing communities in Asia reveal different types of mobility - e.g. seasonal fisheries migration, transition from near-shore to deep-sea fishing, migration for non-fisheries livelihoods. Processes of migration and mobility can confront heterogenous social groups with one another or reconfigure homogenous social groups. Based on the results of a three-country research project combining qualitative/quantitative methods in Cambodia, Tamil Nadu (India) and Sri Lanka, this panel will explore issues of social inclusion and exclusion in the context of migration and mobility, focusing on gendered social networks and identities in fishing communities. The papers will look at how women and men mobilise social networks and construct identities to enable or disable mobility, negotiate conflicts over access to fish resources between migrant and host groups, as well as cope with precariousness and build resilience through migration processes. Depletion and sustainability of the fisheries resource remains a critical concern of fisheries governance. However, contestation of rights and fairness in access to the resource emerge as greater concerns to fishing communities, as also the construction of fishing itself as a ‘skilled’ identity. Ascertaining the ways in which some groups benefit from mobility/migration while other groups are excluded is central to this discussion.

Gendered mobility, fish vending and powers of exclusion in Batticaloa and Ampara districts, Sri Lanka
Ragnhild Lund & Faezeha Azmi

This presentation investigates the link between gendered mobility and exclusion in small-scale fishing communities in the districts of Ampara and Batticaloa (Eastern Province, Sri Lanka), through a study of the particularly marginalised group of female household heads (FHHs). We analyse the situation of FHHs through the lens of social exclusion and ask how migration is both a cause and an effect of exclusionary processes among individual fishers and their communities. Emphasis is on how social exclusion is multidimensional, how it extends beyond material poverty, incorporating social disadvantages (access to education, health, social care), and how people may experience different stages of social exclusion at different points in their lives. Social exclusion is also context-specific, as any productive use of land requires the exclusion of some potential users and that most projects involving transformed land relations are accompanied by painful dilemmas with respect to identity and belonging. Social exclusion is also relational, as it involves both excluders and those who are excluded. This calls attention to the role of majorities and how inclusion can be obtained through better policies and practices.

The social exclusion lens is used to examine the effects on the sea and beach, as well as fishing activities, as coastal areas are converted from fishing sites to other purposes by drawing on narratives collected at three locations in the Eastern Province. FHHs manage to establish and re-establish their livelihoods despite their precarious situation resulting from the various forces that have restricted fishers’ access to coastal land and the sea. Mobility and migration are only partial solutions to their problems.
Fishing in distant waters: Gendered discourses of resource access, skill and wellbeing on the west coast of Tamil Nadu
Nitya Rao & C. M. Pratheepa

The phenomenon of multi-day, long distance fishing as a route for livelihood security is well-established amongst coastal communities of Kanyakumari district, Tamil Nadu. In this paper, we specifically seek to explore the complexity of this movement as a dynamic process, and the diverse factors motivating fishers to look for fishing grounds further and further away from home. We unpack its relationship with changes in fishing technologies and practices over time, but equally with notions of skill and wellbeing. Based on a survey of 103 fisher households in Thoothoor village, and supported by indepth interviews and focus group discussions, we find a host of factors shaping fisher decisions to fish in distant waters. While resource depletion alongside growing competition is a push factor, many of the fishers see their identity as specialized in deep sea fishing, especially ‘shark-hunting’. More than earning money, they get a sense of satisfaction from the display of their skills in confronting and overcoming serious risks. Pride in their ability to manage risks and innovate as fishers has ensured that most of them have attained reasonable levels of material wellbeing – very few can be classified as poor. While the fishing industry itself is increasingly masculinised, with women’s direct roles in post-harvest processing and marketing on the decline, their control over money and decision-making on household expenditure has however remained intact. This can be explained by male absence from the home for extended periods of time, but equally women’s heightened role in maintaining social relations and status, central to both household maintenance and raising capital for fishing.

Migration and wage work: Precariousness in the fishing communities in Cambodia
Kyoko Kusakabe & Prak Sereyvath

Decrease in fish resources have impacted large numbers of rural population in Cambodia, where over 70% of the rural population engage in fishing in some form or the other. The study was conducted with 14 community fisheries in four agro-ecological zones in Cambodia (Tonle Sap, Flooded plains, Mekong River, Coast) and explored how fishing households cope with decrease in fish resources. The strategy is different according to the level of dependence on fisheries as well as their identities as fishers – the former taking a diversification strategy, while the latter taking a supplementary strategy. In both cases, the options that they employ are similar – migrating to cities or cross border; going for wage work; strengthening agriculture and livestock income. However, the status of these activities and how they are perceived by family members are different under the two categories. Women often work to supplement fishing activities that are mainly done by men. Availability of options such as migration and wage work can hamper the ability of fishing households to diversify or transform their livelihoods in the face of decreasing fish resources, putting them in a precarious situation.

Migration, resource access and contestation: Networks and rights discourses among fishers in the West and East coasts of Sri Lanka
Nireka Weeratunge & Nadine Vanniasinkam
The depletion of coastal fish resources and a marked increase in fishing households on the east coast of Sri Lanka pose a challenge to west coast fishing communities, which have engaged in seasonal fisheries migration to the east and/or northeast coasts during the Southwest monsoon for generations. Coastal communities whose livelihoods were negatively affected by the war on the east coast, claim local fish resources as their own and contest the rights of migrants for seasonal access to this resource. Based primarily on qualitative data from four fishing communities of different ethnicities in Puttalam (west coast) and Trincomalee (east coast) districts, this presentation focuses on social networks which enable or disable migration, as well as discourses that have emerged on the right to a tradition of migration vs. the right to one’s own resources among migrant and host communities respectively.

Horizontal conflicts, manifested along perceptions of fairness of access to fish resources among fishing communities, are exacerbated by vertical conflicts between fishing communities and regulatory institutions, increasing the tendency to ethnicise or regionalise these conflicts. Furthermore, social inclusion or exclusion is shaped by the nature and strength of networks among migrant and host communities, and among women and men. Stronger support from bonding, bridging and linking networks characterises social inclusion and collective action of west coast migrants to continue migration to the east coast. Social exclusion characterised by weaker social networks impedes collective action by host communities on the east coast to prevent the inflow of migrant fishers.

**Participatory video: Youth perspectives on migration and aspirations from four fishing communities in Sri Lanka**

*Nadine Vanniasinkam*