

Q&A

Interview with women from the shoe-dhoni community in Andhra Pradesh, India—a unique fishing community that resides onboard fishing vessels, returning to their villages only during festivals or special occasions

By **Dharmesh Shah** (deshah@gmail.com),
Independent Researcher

What is your main occupation?

Our main occupation is shell collection near the creeks, fishing in the sea and collecting mangroves wood from the near-by estuary areas.

What is the role of women in the shoe-dhoni community? Are there any taboos on women going on boats for fishing, as in other communities?

No, there are no such taboos. Women are actively involved in fishing operations at sea, especially in hauling in the net. They also collect shells. Both men and women are involved in marketing the catch, as it is seen as a familial activity. Besides, women also take care of cooking and other household duties such as washing, cleaning etc.

What do the women do during pregnancy?

Women who are pregnant stay on the boat up to the seventh month, after which they move to the village. They return to the boat after the child is born. ❏