



Yemaya

ICSF'S NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

From the Editor

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is convening an international conference titled 'Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries: Bringing Together Responsible Fisheries and Social Development', from 13 to 17 October 2008 in Bangkok, Thailand. This is perhaps the first international conference focusing exclusively on small-scale fisheries being organized by FAO.

The attention to small-scale fisheries is clearly welcome. Also welcome is the fact that the Conference is envisaged to ensure significant, and gender-balanced participation of fishers, fishworker organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), apart from policymakers, researchers and others interested in small-scale fisheries. The Conference could, no doubt, offer an opportunity to valorize small-scale fisheries and to highlight the concerns and proposals of small-scale fisheries and fishworkers.

The Conference could also provide a meaningful platform to draw attention to the key issues facing women in fishing communities. This is of critical importance given that women are known to play central roles in the fisheries and in sustaining fishing families and communities. They are also known to bring a different perspective to the fisheries management debate—a perspective that brings together issues of fisheries, coastal management and community wellbeing, and that draws on the wide range of activities, of both a productive and reproductive nature, that women undertake.

There have been several commitments to gender equality, and to supporting women's roles at the international level. Several countries have gender equality policies in place. Yet, it is highly unfortunate, as the articles in this issue of *Yemaya* point out, that the issues that affect women in the fisheries and in coastal communities continue to be inconsequential in ongoing fisheries development. This is closely linked to the predominant and narrow perspective of fisheries as being about fishermen, production, profits and exports, with comparatively little attention paid to issues of sustainability, technology, equity and community wellbeing.

It is crucial to set right this imbalance. Gender-differentiated roles and concerns along the whole fish supply chain must be taken into account, to develop clarity on fisheries problems and intervention points, as one of the articles in this issue suggests. At a fundamental level, it must be affirmed that fisheries management is as much about ensuring equity, sustainability and improving the quality of life of fishing communities.

Policies that recognize and support women in the fisheries sector—that unequivocally help secure women's rights to coastal and fisheries resources and to post-harvest benefits, and that protect their basic human rights, particularly to basic services, to social security, to participate in decisionmaking and to live a life free of violence, sexual abuse and fear, are necessary.

As time closes in for the international conference, we urge that all those engaged in small-scale fisheries take this opportunity to draw attention to these vital issues, thereby giving voice and visibility to the struggles of women in coastal communities worldwide. We urge that actions and policies proposed are translated into concrete action at the national and local level, in the interests of resource sustainability, community wellbeing and gender justice.



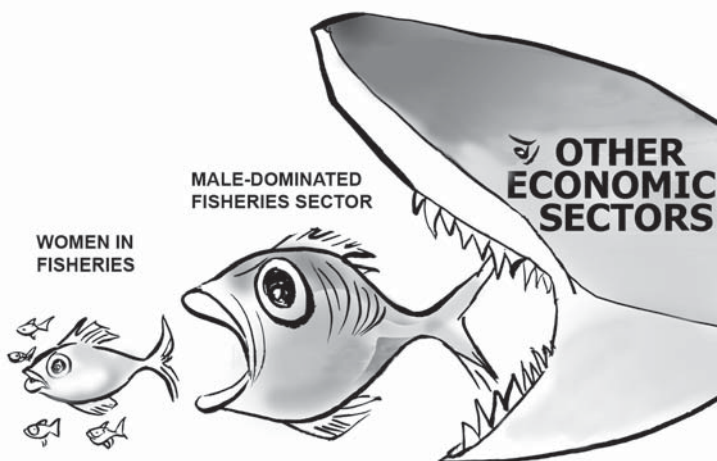
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Meeting the challenge

This article addresses how action and research can be used to make fisheries policies more gender-sensitive and what challenges are involved

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Thousands of seasonal fish products are produced by millions of fishworkers, many of them women. Fish trade is booming; fish farming is growing fast; fish prices were escalating well before other food prices rose; fish sustainability is a hot topic; and fuel prices threaten fishing profits. Power and authority is concentrated in the larger companies, the owners of larger fleets and the well-organized fishing countries. It has always been apparently held by men. Even so, fisheries power can be eclipsed by that of other sectors and national policies, such as for international trade, water and coastal tourism.



Governments and communities have to 'catch up' on fisheries policy development, and women's roles and contributions are often left behind, undervalued and unrecognized. Fisheries policies and industry programmes tend to address fish production, exports and fuel prices. Yet, a broader look at gender-differentiated roles and concerns along the whole fish supply chain shows a clearer view of fisheries problems and intervention points. For example, in the Republic of Palau, a mainstream picture identifies fisheries with men and focuses on offshore tuna resources, the live reef fish trade and tourist game fishing. It ignores women's inshore and lagoon fishing and increasing participation on boats, the need

for better fish market facilities, the importance to all Palauans of inshore fishery resources and marine conservation and of finding better domestic benefits from tuna. With a broader, gender-inclusive view, we can then better focus attention on where action is required. And women's contributions clearly emerge.

National governments have been slow to create opportunities, rights and responsibilities that are shared more fairly throughout the chain because they work in bureaucratic and compartmentalized ways. Therefore, through advocacy and the insights they produce, action groups and researchers must stimulate attention to women in fish supply chains.

Only in the last two decades has a small movement begun to document and understand women's contributions and to get these heard in policy making. This movement, of which the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), *Yemaya* and the Asian Fisheries Society (AFS)/WorldFish Center symposia are important parts, is still in its infancy.

Through action and research, women in fisheries are gaining policy attention, but so far the gains have been small. Development agencies are focusing on gender opportunities in the fisheries, and countries, charities and researchers are responding with proposals. National and international fisheries programmes are paying more attention to women. For example, in India, women's programmes for mussel culture have been successfully developed by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI). The Mekong River Commission's Network on Gender and Fisheries is a full member of the policy development committee, the Technical Advisory Body for the Lower Mekong Basin countries. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will cover the role of women in the October 2008 Global Conference on Small-scale Fisheries.

I see three obstacles to greater policy focus on women in fisheries. First, larger economic and more male-dominated interests control much of fisheries, providing little space for secondary interests, including those of women, crew and other service workers. Second, women's fisheries contributions are diverse, dynamic and not well known. Third, the fisheries sector is eclipsed by other economic sectors, and women are thus doubly overshadowed.

To overcome the power obstacle, activists can aid women by drawing public and political attention to women's real and potential contributions. Activists should aim to get women's needs into fisheries and related policies. This will mean shifting the focus to the whole supply chain.

To address the knowledge obstacle, we have to build the knowledge base on women in fisheries. In Kochi, India, on 22 November 2007, 21 gender experts concluded that social justice arguments have additional policy traction if supported by a deeper understanding and quantification of women's contributions. Studies are needed on women's unpaid and paid labour in fisheries and on whether women have equal opportunities for jobs and promotion throughout the sector, including as researchers.

Fisheries and aquaculture education and vocational training policy also need to incorporate gender-sensitivity. University teachers and extensionists need to share and have access to gender and fisheries curricula, syllabi and case studies. Several projects are

now addressing this need. The ICSF Women in Fisheries Bibliography (<http://wif.icsf.net/icsf2006/jspFiles/wif/bibliography/biblioHome.jsp>) provides useful pointers to research and policy reports.

Research and action agencies need to model their own principles and remove barriers to women's entry. Women may be restricted from professional education and training in fisheries and aquaculture research and extension due to lack of basic facilities, such as student dormitories. At the Assam Agricultural University, India, a girls' hostel was built for the Bachelor of Fisheries Science course. In Bangladesh, CARE developed affirmative action policies for its own staff to better reach rural women.

To remove the obstacle of being doubly overshadowed, women in the fisheries sector should be publicly involved in decision-making committees and management bodies. This can broaden the sector's profile, widen the talent pool and give fisheries a sounder position from which to engage with other sectors. ❏

“Getting women's needs into fisheries and related policies will mean shifting the focus to the whole supply chain.”

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Righting gender injustices

Women workshop participants in South Africa stressed that fisheries policy should promote broader social and gender justice imperatives, benefiting all in the community

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In the past, the role of women in fisheries policy and practice in South Africa was given little attention. Government fisheries officials, researchers and fisher activists did not of course deliberately exclude women; they merely saw little relevance for women in an industry that defines itself as predominantly male. More recently, the inclusion of general policy statements such as 'promoting race and gender equality' have served as catch-all phrases reflecting the apparent intent of the fisheries department to comply with the country's progressive anti-discrimination legislation. However, there are no further policy mechanisms or measures identified to make the commitment to gender equality a reality.

During the past year, a process for developing a new policy for the small-scale fisheries has been initiated. This process arose as a result of many years of struggle by men and women from traditional fishing communities who have been systematically excluded from the fishing rights regime introduced by the new democratic government in 2002 and consolidated in 2006. This approach is based on an individualistic, privatized notion of rights, in keeping with

the government's neo-liberal approach to economic growth. This new paradigm has greatly undermined the traditional way of life and livelihood in local coastal communities. In protest against their loss of livelihood, increasing poverty and food insecurity, these communities have fought hard to have their fishing rights and human rights recognized. Using the slogan "Fishing Rights = Human Rights" the fishers have made visible the link between basic human rights and the recognition of their fishing rights. The signing of an Equality Court order in May 2007, that compels the government fisheries department to begin a new policy process to "accommodate the socio-economic rights" of traditional fishers, has been hailed as a victory, and the process of developing a new policy is currently underway.

It was with the intention of highlighting the critical role that women should and do play in fisheries policy and practice that, in April 2008, a group of 35 women leaders from fishing and coastal communities in the Western and Northern Cape provinces of South Africa came together for the first ever 'women only' gathering from these communities. This 'Women in Fisheries' Workshop, facilitated by Masifundise Development Trust, aimed to provide an opportunity for women to engage with the current policy proposals for a small-



“Women bring to fisheries the values of a nurturing, community-oriented and developmental perspective in which the links between all aspects of the fish supply chain are integrated.”

scale fisheries policy in South Africa. While recognizing the importance of mainstreaming gender issues and ensuring that men and women work together to remove obstacles to gender inequality, the organizers felt strongly that, in this context, gender mainstreaming needs to go hand in hand with a strongly articulated vision from women fishers themselves, of their rights. The workshop aimed to equip women with the theoretical tools that would enable them to critically assess current proposals from a gender-based perspective. For many women, the notion of a ‘gendered lens’ was new; however, they found that it resonated with their practical, day-to-day experiences of the unequal power relations within their homes, communities, at work and in their dealings with the government fisheries department.

Prior to this workshop, men and women from fishing communities in South Africa had engaged in some debate about how women should benefit from the new policy but

these debates had tended to end in polarized positions—women arguing that they should get equal rights and men arguing that ‘a woman’s place is in the home’. What precisely does ‘equal rights’ mean in a context where women do not necessarily want to also go to sea? What does it actually mean to say that a policy should be ‘gender just’ in the context of small-scale fisheries? Is a fishing policy the right place to insert a range of issues that relate to women’s social, economic and political position in their coastal communities? What is the relationship between a fisheries policy and broader social and economic development? These were some of the very challenging questions that the women grappled with in this workshop.

Through a process of systematically identifying the many roles that women fulfil in fishing communities and through stories about their grandmothers’, mothers’ and their own work in their fishing households and villages, the women gradually painted a rich and detailed picture of the work that women and girl children have done and continue to do. This process of storytelling revealed the social, economic, political and spiritual value of marine resources to women. Most significantly, it highlighted the particular values that women bring to fisheries: those of a nurturing, community-oriented and developmental perspective in which the links between all aspects of the fish supply chain are integrated. This approach of viewing the fisheries not merely from the narrow perspective of harvesting fish, but in terms of all the ways in which value can be added and benefits maximized for the community, helped to expand the vision and objectives underlying the new policy.

Linked to this community approach was a strong emphasis on the need to ensure that the new policy provided social security, not

Statement from Women’s Workshop, South Africa

Women leaders from small-scale fishing communities throughout the Northern and Western Cape Provinces of South Africa, gathered from 8 to 10 April 2008 in Simonstown, for the first ever ‘Women in Fisheries’ workshop in South Africa. The workshop was facilitated by Masifundise Development Trust.

A powerful statement issued at the culmination of the workshop strongly asserted women’s rights to participate equally and effectively in the development of a new small-scale fisheries policy for South Africa.

The statement articulated the vision of a gender-equitable small-scale fisheries in which the wellbeing and livelihoods of fishing

and coastal communities and marine ecosystem are secured; where women and men in fishing communities are empowered to participate effectively in policy making and co-management; and where support is provided by local, provincial and national government to ensure that the small-scale sector is able to contribute to the growth and development of vibrant local economies based on the principles of social justice, participatory democracy, sustainable marine resource utilization, poverty eradication and food security.

View the full statement online at: <http://www.masifundise.org.za/docs/Women%20in%20Fisheries%20Statement.pdf>

What’s New, Webby?

Masifundise Development Trust
‘Coast to Coast: South African Women in Fisheries’
Oatlands, Simonstown 8-10 April 2008



*Women in Fisheries Small-scale Fishing
Policy Statement*

currently available for the small-scale fisheries. This issue was close to the hearts of many women as they shared with each other the impact of the loss of loved ones, often breadwinners, at sea. The women were also adamant that they should participate equally in the institutional structures set up to manage the fisheries and went as far as demanding 50 per cent of all seats on local co-management structures. They viewed this as a strategy for ensuring that the developmental focus of the policy is implemented. At the end of the workshop, the

women ensured that the draft policy statement developed by fishing communities was prefaced with a strong statement on the need for the government to recognize the role that women play. The women developed a plan of action for taking the outcomes of the workshop forward. Central to the plan was the importance of mobilizing women to fight for their rights and of networking with women from other countries who are fighting similar struggles to ensure that fisheries policy promotes broader social and gender justice imperatives. ❏

Contributing significantly

Women make major contributions to the fisheries sector in China but more needs to be done to promote equal rights in fisheries and accelerate women's development

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China has the world's largest fisheries sector. The sector contributes to poverty alleviation, food security and economic growth, and generates employment and livelihood. Fish is also a significant source of animal protein for Chinese people.

Though women form an important part of the fisheries workforce and participate in almost all activities, including aquaculture, fish sorting, handling and processing, distribution and marketing, their contributions are often overlooked and poorly documented. In general, women play a larger role in aquaculture than in capture fisheries.

The gross output value of Chinese fisheries increased from US\$18.93 billion in 1994 to US\$52.57 billion in 2004, largely due to the rapid development of aquaculture. In 2000, China had a population of approximately 1.3 billion people, of which 48.48 per cent were women. About 72.5 per cent of the population is rural and 104 million people, predominately women, are illiterate or semi-literate. In 2004, employment in the fisheries sector was estimated at 12.9 million people—approximately two per cent of the country's labour force—consisting of 7.1 million professional fishers and aquaculturists, and 5.8 million part-time workers. The 2000 general census reported that 74.5 per cent of the fisheries labour force was male and 25.5 per cent female. These proportions differ from that of the aggregate rural work force—51.7 per cent male and 48.3 per cent female.

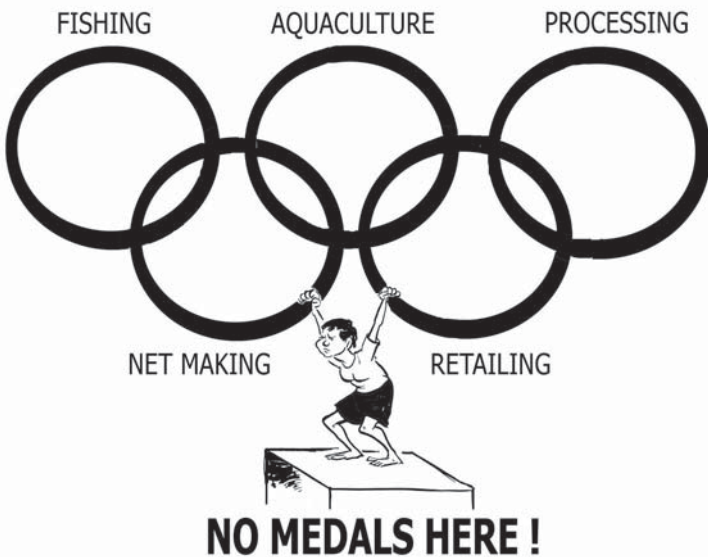
In national fisheries institutions, female staff and workers represent only about 23 per cent of the total 100,865 employees. The

share of women is highest (38.14 per cent) in fisheries and aquaculture science education and research institutions, and lowest in fishing port management (11 per cent), in fishing vessel inspection services (14.1 per cent) and in fishery administrative agencies (15.35 per cent).

In small-scale fisheries, women are involved in all stages of production, including in fish processing, preservation and marketing. Women constitute a higher proportion of the labour force in fish processing and distribution, in traditional processing activities for preparing dried, salted or smoked fish, and in factories for fish canning or prawn processing. Women in the canning and processing factories mainly work as operators in processing lines, and, in shrimp processing plants, women's work is mainly to peel, sort and clean the shrimp. In one fish processing company in Shanghai that we studied, raw material such as shrimp, squid, baked eel and fish was obtained from fishing boats or fish farms in fresh or frozen form, and then further processed by 300 employees. Of these, women accounted for 80 per cent of the 30 management staff, and 90 per cent of the factory floor workers.

Many women are involved in the retail marketing of aquatic products through their family units. For example, at the large food market in Shengsi, Zhejiang province (east and central China), there are 791 food stalls. Of the 388 that sell aquatic products, 372 are managed by women. Most of the stalls are run by husband-and-wife teams, with the wives being primarily responsible for retail sales.

Women involved in small-scale fisheries are usually wives or daughters of fishers. In many cases, they work to supplement the family income, and, in some cases, they may not have



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any wage if it is a home-based family business. They help their husbands sell the catch, accompany their husbands out to sea to fish, mend nets and process the fish caught.

Women play an important role in aquaculture, being actively involved in every aspect of production, from breeding fish fry and feeding the fish to managing the pond. In labour-intensive farms there are many skilled female workers providing manual labour. Women and the elderly are the main workers carrying out fish breeding as a family activity on the side. Rural women manage and manure fish ponds, feed fish, and harvest and market the products while men do agricultural or other part-time jobs.

Women comprise a much smaller proportion of the declining capture fisheries labour force. To protect marine fishery resources, maintain economically sustainable fisheries and promote social stability in coastal regions, Chinese fisheries authorities and local coastal governments have restructured the fisheries and are reducing the population of fishers by transferring them into other sectors of the economy. Most local young men do not become fishers nowadays. Therefore, the overall number of fishers, both men and women, has declined and the existing labour force is aging.

Our surveys show that many of the labourers in coastal fishing villages in Shanghai are migrants from other parts of China and receive only about US\$6.56 per day. The profile of fishing vessel workers has also changed. Old women do not work onboard fishing vessels any more; however, about 30 per cent of the crew comprises middle-aged women. Since the 1980s, women no longer work on fishing vessels

in some ports, such as in Yantai, Shandong Province. Most young girls seek jobs outside the fishing ports and villages. Few want to live in their fishing villages and those who stay usually engage in domestic work such as looking after the household, child care and repairing fishing nets.

Promoting leisure and recreational fisheries is part of the new strategy for fishery reconstruction in China. This includes creating tourism zones around coastal fishing villages, for tourists to fish, enjoy the scenery and learn about local customs and culture. Women have more opportunities for employment in such forms of tourism; they act as tourist guides, prepare and cook seafood and give performances, presenting folk songs or dances related to fishing life. Thus, women’s social roles are changing with the development of the leisure fishing industry. They are taking on multiple roles in society and are gaining more independence, economically and in family decision-making.

China has adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Chinese Constitution grants equal status to all citizens. The Government protects women’s rights and benefits, guarantees equal pay for equal work, and protects the health and safety of women at the workplace. Unsuitable work cannot be assigned to women, and women are provided special protection during the menstrual period, pregnancy, obstetrical and nursing period. The Chinese Government has also undertaken measures to enhance women’s labour market competitiveness.

To further improve the status of women in Chinese fisheries, we propose that employment platforms be built and that women’s employment as well as income be increased. We recommend that the government run capacity-building training courses on science, technology and law for fisherwomen; support women’s entrepreneurship and intensify campaigns to strengthen women’s self-protection and safety awareness.

Women’s development is not being addressed in an integrated manner in China’s efforts to build a more prosperous society. More research and monitoring is needed to improve the basis for development. At present, research on women and gender issues is rare and development progress is reported under such headings as family and per capita statistics. In the fisheries sector, little data is available on the condition of women. Data collection needs to be better designed to capture gender differences in fisheries participation in order

to help promote equal rights in fisheries and to accelerate women's development.

Women are active in all aspects of fisheries in China. However, the shackles of traditional ideals, low educational levels and the lack of empowering initiatives constrain their further

development. Policy makers in fisheries should specifically target women's development, right at the level of the fishing villages, so that comprehensive development of the sector takes place and a harmonious society may be built. ❏



PROFILE

Sherry Pictou

Sherry, a Canadian indigenous woman, is one of the two co-ordinators of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP)

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As one of the two co-ordinators of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), Sherry Pictou has had a long journey. Battling the obstacles of being born in poverty and under political oppression, today she leads a global struggle to end such conditions in fishing communities.

Sherry Pictou, 47, mother of a son and daughter and grandmother of one granddaughter, is a Canadian indigenous woman. The regions that indigenous people of Canada inhabit are known as "First Nations". It was only in the 1960s when Sherry was a young

girl that First Nation women in Canada gained the right to vote. Until this time, they were wards of the State.

Raised on the reserve of the Bear River First Nation, Sherry experienced the poverty, poor housing, and alcoholism that characterized so many First Nation communities. While the establishment of the reserve system by the Canadian Government was a deliberate attempt to marginalize and assimilate First Nations, the reserves nonetheless served as a land base, albeit small, for the continuation of traditional hunting and fishing livelihoods, nourishing land stewardship values.

As a young woman, and in her own words, "being something of a 'tom boy,'" Sherry went out hunting and fishing with her uncle. Thus she learned the traditional practices and way

of life of the Bear River First Nation, part of a larger confederation of people known as the Mi'kmaq, the aboriginal inhabitants of much of Canada's Atlantic coast.

Through the 1970s and 1980s, Sherry witnessed and participated in the struggle of the Mi'kmaq for political recognition, socioeconomic improvement, and basic human rights. Her grandmother became the second Mi'kmaq woman to become the Chief of a First Nation reserve. But the recognition of the rights of the Mi'kmaq and the improvement in social conditions through the 1980s and 1990s was a double-edged sword. Government programme for education, health, and housing also served to destroy the traditional way of life. It was assimilation with a benevolent face.

A turning point for the Bear River First Nation was when a landmark decision by the Supreme Court of Canada, guaranteeing the right of the Mi'kmaq to a commercial fishery, was undermined by the federal government by integrating First Nations into mainstream corporate-style fisheries management. The Bear River First Nation was one of a very small number of First Nations to say "No" to this maneuver and their leader was Chief Sherry Pictou.

It was about this time that Sherry met Thomas Kocherry, the founder of WFFP, at an international workshop on community-based management. According to Sherry, "WFFP was the only one that understood our struggle, and its constitution encompassed the values of the Bear River First Nation." A few years later, Sherry Pictou became a co-ordinator of the WFFP. She is now engaged in fighting for the political and labour rights of fisher women throughout the world. ❏

Taking along the ‘crewmembers’

The article argues for the need to develop a women-friendly fisheries policy based on dialogue with women of fisheries communities

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We are now in 2008—a year with fewer men and women registered in Norway’s fishing industry than there were last year. In the beginning of 2007, fishing was the main occupation of 10,797 persons and the secondary occupation of 2,771 others. The start of 2008 has seen the numbers in these sectors declining by 143 and 92 respectively.

The numbers of women registered as fishers, never high to begin with, are continuously dwindling. In 1990, there were 554 women in fishing as primary occupation as against 19,921 men, and 112 women in fishing as a secondary



occupation as against 6,931 men. While figures for 2007 are not available, during 2006, the numbers of women in fishing as a primary occupation had declined to 263, and as a secondary occupation, to 102.

The ownership of fishing boats reveals similar trends. Of about 3,000 fishing boats, sized between 10 and 27.99 metres, only 23 are owned by women. This also means that very few women enjoy a boat quota.

This tendency is repeated in onshore fish production, which employs only 9,482 workers today as against 13,941 in 2000. Here, the proportion of women has declined from 44 per cent in 2000 to 41 per cent today. The number of women in aquaculture is not increasing either. Women’s participation has grown only in the

sectors of research, consultancy and marketing. However, there is little statistical data on this.

Imbalanced gender representation in the fisheries has been a matter of great concern for many, among them the Minister for Equality and Family Affairs in Norway’s “Centre/Conservative” government: Laila Dāvøy. In 2005, she called for a meeting with the Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs to seek ways of increasing the proportion of women in the fisheries and aquaculture in compliance with Norway’s Gender Equality Act.

In 2006, Helga Pedersen, a woman minister from the “Red/Green” government, took the initiative to establish a committee consisting of five women and three men from fishworkers unions and organizations, owners of aquaculture plants and fishmongers. Represented in the committee was the ‘Fisherwomen’s Association’, a voluntary organization that works for the social and economic rights of fisherwomen and fishing families. Also represented were the Ministry for Equality and Family Affairs and the Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs.

The committee was asked to come up with suggestions to increase the proportion of women in the fishing industry, in fishery-related public committees as well as in public administration. In August 2007, the committee presented the Action Plan for Increased Proportion of Women in the Marine Sector (hereafter referred to as the Action Plan). The report is currently under review.

The Action Plan formulated several goals in accordance with its mandate to increase gender representation in fisheries.

It suggested the incremental increase in the number of female fishers from 2.6 per cent in 2006 to 3 per cent in 2010, 4 per cent in 2015 and 8 per cent in 2020. Several action plans were recommended: consciousness-raising to promote gender balance; incentives for marine enterprises; strengthening recruitment to the marine sector; greater publicity on fisheries among the youth; increasing the visibility of women in the marine sector; and finally, recruiting women to positions of leadership.

The committee made several suggestions in line with the action plans. These include creating a dedicated internet site; appointing special ‘ambassadors’ to advocate gender equality in the marine sector; awarding incentives and prizes for outstanding achievements in marine fisheries, and sensitizing local leaders to gender equality issues. It recommended financial support for

female entrepreneurship in the sector, and preference for female applicants in the grant of aquaculture licences. It also advocated better entrepreneurial training opportunities in educational institutions and the induction of more women in decision-making roles.

The Action Plan suggested that the responsibility for achieving the proposed goals would rest with the Ministry of Fishery and Coastal Affairs, together with other public institutions and partners in the marine sector.

This Action Plan, is however, not Norway's first. In 1990, politically-active women took the initiative to create the first action plan for the marine sector. A Fishery Industry's Committee for Women was established and financed by the Ministry of Fisheries until the year 2000. Thereafter, the Fisheries Minister from the conservative party suggested that the task be transferred to another committee: The Committee of Competence for the Fishery Sector. In 2002, the same minister proposed that various partners in the marine sector could finance the committee and its work, a suggestion that was rejected by the marine sector. Since then, there has been no co-ordinating body. The 2007 Action Plan discusses the establishment of such a committee, but does not recommend it.

My experience with the sector, both as an outsider engaged in research and as an insider having personal connections with people in many coastal areas in North Norway, suggests that much has to be done by the community's women and men in order to reach these goals. While the initiative taken by the Minister of Fisheries is a positive first step, what about implementation? Will the Minister be able to pull along "crewmembers" from the Ministry and the different organizations? Would they be willing to put in resources?

The emphasis on professionalizing the industry as recommended in the Action Plan must also be called to question. Fisheries is a way of life and culture; the so-called professional fisheries activities cannot be viewed independently from the ways in which fishery households and communities are organized. Powerful interventions are needed at the household and community levels in order to combat male-dominated structures in the marine sector. The first step would necessarily involve a continuous dialogue with women in the sector whose needs and aspirations must determine the direction for fisheries in general.

This dialogue would necessarily involve women from the Fisherwomen's Association and other women's associations. However, to hear the voices of young unmarried women, who are seldom organized in the same way as the middle-aged and elderly women are, other organizing principles have to be developed. Perhaps focus group discussions in different

parts of the country could be held. Women's voices must be heard and their problems must be put on the political agenda.

Norway's Fisheries Minister, like many young women in the fisheries sector, is well-educated; she comes from a farming-fishing family, and, since she has expressed the wish to settle in her home village in Finnmark, perhaps she would be most suited to the task of arranging continuous dialogues among women in fisheries. The aim should be to develop better gender balance, and, in the long run, a more women-friendly fisheries policy! ❏

"Fisheries is a way of life and culture; the so-called professional fisheries activities cannot be viewed independently from the ways in which fishery households and communities are organized."

Ancient food for future generations...

Sherry Pictou

This poem is dedicated to the struggles of clam fishers in Canada against the privatization of fishing areas

My heart is overflowing
with Grandma Sarah
teaching us to dig clams
and as she wraps all of our harvest
in foil over the heated coals
beneath the sand
I knew this was for me
and my lifetime...

And those life times
before and after me
where shell heaps
bare the answers to our existence
in both life and death...
The clam... the beautiful clam
hidden within its intergenerational
purple blue shell:
the food of life --
ancient food for future generations....

Oh my brother...
So contented as you walk slowly
the back roads....
With your bucket full of clams
and clam hack...

So serene and quiet
this walk of ancient paths
You carrying
so quietly
the ancestral knowledge
which the rest of us --
were too self absorbed
in the fast paced of tomorrow
thus not able to learn or feel
with our hearts, today.....

I see you there
with your shucking knife
and for a second
trying to teach me....
As Your ancient laughter
of fathers and grandfathers
before you...

Ring loud to this day
in my heart of all hearts
as I struggled to learn
this art now floating along
bay shores and inlets...
and continue to do so...
Today....

Bringing in the catch

For Uganda's Katosi Women Development Trust, fish farming offers a way out of various social, environmental and economic challenges

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Katosi is a fishing village located in the northern shores of Lake Victoria in Mukono District in southern Uganda. It is known for landing huge catches of Nile perch and tilapia. Its exports reach as far as Belgium and Italy. The thriving village has developed only within the last 20 years, drawing individuals from over ten ethnic groups across Uganda. Yet with so much production, where is the fish in the local market?

Katosi Women Development Trust (KWDT), currently an organization of 11 women's groups

onshore became a challenge. As Lake Victoria opened up to international market players, the price of fish at the local market increased and local consumption went down. Overfishing of the lake's resources led to a rapid decline in fish populations, forcing marginalized fishers to harvest juvenile fish, resulting in further depletion.

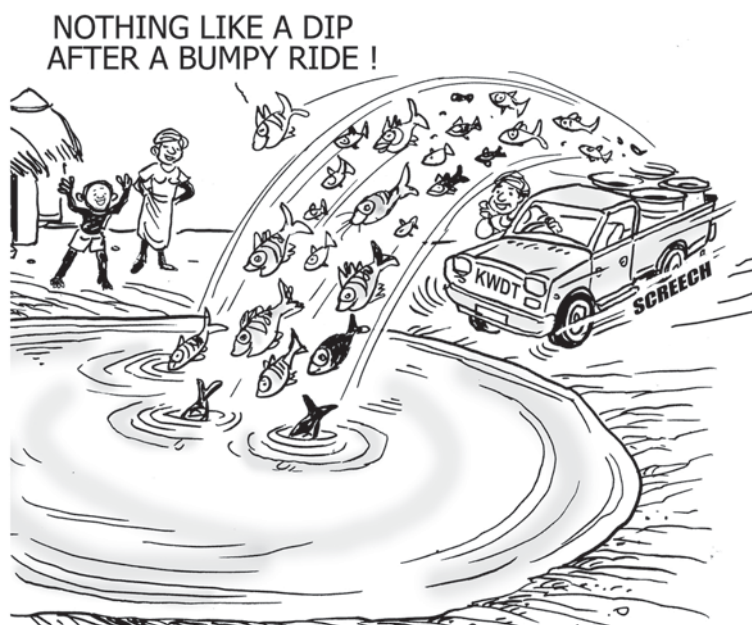
As a response to this complex mix of environmental and economic issues, the KWDT decided to turn to land-based fish farming. "When you tell an individual to conserve resources and not overfish the lake, but you don't give them an alternative to their current activities, you haven't solved the problem," says Margaret Nakato director of KWDT. "Individuals need an income and they need to feed their families."

Fish farming allows community members to address both the health and economic needs of the community. Fish is harvested without harming the lake's fragile ecosystem. Also, better quality fish is available at a fair price.

The construction of KWDT's first fish pond began July 2007. KWDT members dug out the pond on low-lying property belonging to one of them, chosen for its natural access to surface water. The pond was then ceremoniously stocked with tilapia and catfish that had survived a tremendously bumpy three-hour ride from Kampala to Bunakijja, just outside Katosi.

As the fish grew, so did the challenges. These included stabilizing oxygen levels in the pond and warding off local reptiles, grateful for the new addition to their diet. Yet with dedication to the project, the women are looking forward to their first harvest. Tilapias grown in the pond are expected to weigh about one kilo and bring in UGX1,000 (US\$0.60), per fish. Catfish, not common to the region, are expected to fetch approximately UGX2,500 (US\$1.50) per kilo. This is a dramatic increase over the small fish sold in the local market for UGX500 (US\$0.30) per piece. After the harvest, the pond will be restocked and harvested again after eight months. There are also plans for the construction of additional ponds.

Addressing the issues of Katosi's rural fisher women has required flexibility and determination. Competing in a market dominated by men, the women have had to



across Ntenjeru and Nakisunga sub-counties, was formed in 1996 with the objective of improving women's income from the fishing industry. In the initial years, the organization acquired a motorized boat and nets and set out to fish in Lake Victoria. But the competition was high and the market unfair. The women were unable to compete with their male counterparts, frequently being cheated out of a fair price at the market.

As processing companies began dominating the trade, the fishing industry became more and more hostile, marked by stiff competition. In order to fish, women had to set up residence on one of the islands. Looking after their family

think outside the box, turning from lake to land for an income from the fishing industry. The issues facing fishing communities around Lake Victoria are complex, encompassing social, environmental, economic and health factors. Decreasing the demand on

the lake will help sustain the fishing industry. Land-based fishing will give women the opportunity to create their own sustainable market, improve the nutrition levels of their communities, and further their own economic development. ❏



Milestones

International legal instruments of relevance to women in fishing communities

For more information visit legal.icsf.net

Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 1948:

The Declaration calls for the promotion of universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. These rights include the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment, the right to equal pay for equal work, as well as the right to rest and leisure. The UDHR also recognizes the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, the right to form and join trade unions, and the right to social security.

ILO C89 Night Work (Women) Convention, 1948:

The Convention prohibits the nighttime employment of women in industrial undertakings. The prohibition does not, however, apply to work involving perishable raw materials, which might include fish.

ILO C100 Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951:

The Convention affirms the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value. It also asks for measures to promote objective appraisal of jobs on the basis of work to be performed.

ILO C102 Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 :

The Convention aims to provide proposals with regard to minimum standards of social security. It defines the principal branches of social security: medical care, sickness benefit, unemployment benefit, old-age benefit, employment injury benefit, family benefit, maternity benefit, invalidity benefit and survivors' benefit. Ratifying the Convention requires the acceptance of at least three of these components.

ILO C111 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958:

The Convention calls for a national policy to eliminate discrimination based on race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, in access to employment, equal opportunity, training and working conditions.

ILO C131 Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970:

The Convention aims to provide protection for wage earners against unduly low wages, and to establish a system of minimum wages that covers all groups of wage earners whose terms of employment are such that coverage would be appropriate.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979:

This landmark Convention calls for protecting women's rights, especially against discrimination at home or in the workplace. Also, it specifically protects the rights of rural women to participate in decision-making processes, to enjoy adequate living conditions, to benefit from social security and to access loans and credit.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992:

The Convention recognizes the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of

biological diversity and affirms the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for the conservation of biological diversity.

Agenda 21: The Programme of Action for Sustainable Development, 1991:

Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 highlights the need to formalize fishworkers' rights to participate in decision-making processes and the right of women to have equal opportunities with men in fisheries management. It also affirms the need for support to local fishing communities, indigenous people and women.

The United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, 1995:

Article 5 (i) requires States to take into account the interests of artisanal and subsistence fishers. Article 24. 2 (b) requires States to take into account the special requirements of developing states and, in particular, the need to avoid adverse impacts on and ensure access to, fisheries by subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fishers and women fishworkers, as well as indigenous people in developing States, particularly small island developing States, while adopting conservation and management measures for straddling and highly migratory fish stocks.

Beijing Platform for Action, 1995:

This agenda for women's empowerment aims at removing all obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. It seeks to promote and protect the full enjoyment of all human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all women throughout their life cycle. It identifies twelve critical areas of concern, and priority actions for implementation.

ILO C177 Home Work Convention, 1996:

This Convention applies to all persons carrying on home-based work. It calls for the adoption, implementation and periodical review of a national policy on home work, aimed at improving the condition of such workers. It also calls for statutory social security protection, minimum age requirements, and maternity protection. The Convention is of specific relevance to those employed to engage in fish processing work from their homes.

ILO C183 Maternity Protection Convention, 2000:

The Convention applies to all employed women, including those in atypical forms of work. It calls for measures to protect the health of women workers, including maternity benefits.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 2000:

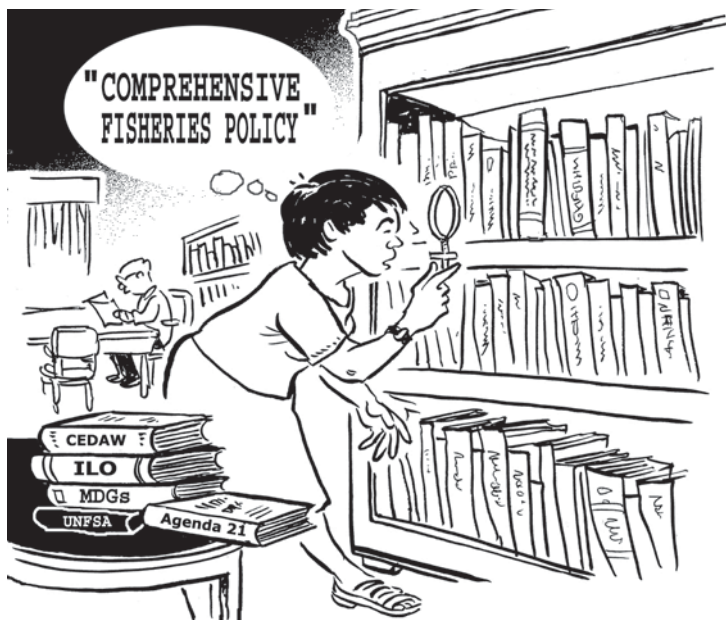
The MDGs have time bound targets, with clear indicators of progress, to meet eight agreed goals, including: reducing poverty, eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, reducing the maternal mortality ratio and halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. ❏

Recognizing women in fisheries: Policy considerations for developing countries

Greater cross-sectoral policy dialogue, advocacy and information exchange is needed to build more comprehensive and gender-just fisheries policy

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Gender issues in national development are cross-cutting and multi-dimensional, impinging on the activities and performance of several sectors simultaneously. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration & Platform for Action are key instruments that provide the basis for law and policy to address gender-specific issues across the sectors, whether fisheries, agriculture or manufacturing.



Are the provisions from these instruments, such as those relating to non-discrimination by sex, equal access to resources and opportunities for women and special attention to women in rural and industrial fisheries, reflected in our fisheries policies or their implementation? Do they influence other legal and regulatory regimes?

What are the major drivers for fisheries policies and why are gender issues in the sector yet to be adequately recognized? First and foremost, very few developing countries

have a comprehensive national fisheries policy. Consequently, the overarching national policy framework for fisheries management and development is usually derived from development strategies and legislation on fisheries and maritime matters. The legislative framework often provides general provisions on fisheries access, fisheries management, enforcement and monitoring, which are strongly influenced by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The emphasis is on regulation rather than on policy implementation.

As a result, specific principles and goals supporting sustainable fisheries and wider community interests, including the integration of gender issues, are either limited or non-existent. Furthermore, development strategies are focused on the market-driven and export-oriented commercial development of the fisheries sector, with the aim of increasing production and contributing to foreign exchange earnings, while creating employment. The concerns are often related to access to investment capital, development of joint-ventures, improving products for competitive markets, and technological upgrades for cost reduction or increased production. Such strategies are dependent on skilled labour and entrepreneurship, which most women lack. Therefore, in the industrial fisheries sector, despite policies aimed at creating employment, women's labour continues to be marginalized.

Global concern over the sustainability of fisheries resources, and their continued ability to support the livelihood of coastal communities, was highlighted during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). One of the outcomes of the UNCED process was the development of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and other related FAO fisheries instruments. There has subsequently been a major shift in policy focus towards conservation, protection of critical habitats, reduction in fishing

capacity and an ecosystem approach to fisheries management. This policy shift requires greater reliance on decentralized fisheries management, either through community-based approaches or, in the case of shared and straddling stocks, through the establishment of regional fisheries management organizations.

So far there has been very limited research on the gender implications of such policies. What is apparent is that the emphasis is on limiting access to fisheries resources through creating various types of rights-based fisheries, use of more selective gear and technology, and greater reporting requirements, all of which are likely to have differential impacts on men's and women's fishing activities.

Labour laws in the fisheries sector have been notoriously inadequate for both men and women. Given the legal formalities involved, the new ILO Fishing Convention which was adopted in June 2007 will take some time to come into effect. At the same time, the focus of the Convention is limited to the safety and protection of fisher's rights on fishing vessels. This does not cover the women in supporting shore-based activities or address social problems associated with seafarers in the port or with their families. With the globalization of fisheries, anecdotal information already indicates an increase in a wide range of social problems in fishing ports, and with communities heavily reliant on fishers' remittances from work on foreign vessels. These social problems are not directly addressed within the context of national fisheries policies but seen as implementation hurdles by the Fisheries Administration, and considered beyond their scope.

Instruments such as trade agreements under the World Trade Organization (WTO) and social considerations, such as under CEDAW, are also seen as indirect instruments of fisheries policy. These instruments are often administered by different government agencies. These may also be at different levels of the government structure and, therefore, may have different priorities and budgets and may not necessarily complement the agenda of the fisheries administration. For example, the responsibility for achieving gender policy goals are often with the Women's Department or Bureau which may be at a 'lower level' as an implementing agency, rather than as a policy-making agency. As a result, there is always the risk of a lack of congruency between gender policies of different government agencies.

Much of grassroots and community level work, as well as initiatives at the regional level, are being driven by NGO and civil society groups, concerned with the environment and with equitable social and economic development. A number of such initiatives aim to protect biodiversity or adapt to climate change. Implementation strategies, in line with the Biodiversity and Climate Change Conventions, include the creation of MPAs and the diversification of livelihoods, thereby indirectly addressing poverty and fisheries issues.

At the national level this work generally falls under the umbrella of the Environment Administration as the lead agency. In the case of community-focused projects, several factors that determine the extent to which women's concerns and interests are integrated come into play. These may include *inter alia* the type of social structure, cultural norms and practices, the type of NGO group, funding agency priorities, community leadership, status of fisheries resources, availability of alternative sources of income and the level of gender awareness amongst stakeholders. Where there are effective resource management systems and environmental consciousness is high, there is likely to be greater recognition of women's direct and indirect role, and a consideration of the impact of initiatives undertaken on them.

Therefore, if one looks at the status of women in the fisheries sector, their rights and access to resources and opportunities, one can say that while some progress has been made in areas of aquaculture, post-harvest and marketing, a lot more work is still needed to mainstream gender issues into the fisheries sector. Given the complex policy environment of the fisheries sector, integrating gender issues into policy implementation requires greater cross-sectoral stakeholder platforms for policy dialogue, advocacy and information exchange, so that a more comprehensive and socially-acceptable fisheries policy could be formulated. A co-ordinated approach is, therefore, necessary from the highest policy level, not only to achieve sustainable fisheries but also to meet the social and economic objectives of the sector. Gender analysis of various fisheries policies is an essential first step that can facilitate and better inform this decision-making process. ❏

**Interview with
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By **Harini Kumar** (icsf@icsf.net), Programme Associate, ICSF

Why is it important to have a policy focus on women in fisheries?

A policy focus on people—men, women and children—is of ever-growing importance in today's context. Blind emphasis on economic efficiency, without heed to social and environmental consequences, is starting to undermine even the economic viability of the sector. At long last the state of crisis denial is giving way to attention toward the worrying state of degradation of marine, coastal and inland ecosystems. Nonetheless, attention to social issues still remains inadequate. We do know, however, that without paying attention to all these dimensions at the same time, we will not be able to make the transition to more sustainable forms of fisheries.

Are there any countries where there is such a specific policy focus? Has it been implemented?

To my knowledge few countries have had strong and systematically applied policies for gender equity. Mexico has had a long tradition of having women in science and leading positions in the fisheries administration, and that has made some difference. The European Union (EU) has had several programmes to raise awareness on social issues and promote the role of women in leadership positions. Some nice results were achieved in Spain, among what was known to be the barefoot shellfish collectors in Galicia (see summary account in ACP-EU Fisheries Research Report No. 16, June 2005—http://cordis.europa.eu/inco/fp5/library_en.html—and its references). But a recent overview report on gender in fisheries in the EU concluded that there was still some way to go before equal opportunities were achieved across the sector. ❏

‘Engendering’ the fisheries industry development plan

The need to integrate gender as an analytical and planning perspective in the National Fisheries Industry Development Plan in the Philippines is being forcefully articulated by women fishers and advocates

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In the Philippines, the adoption of the term “fisherfolk” to mean both women and men who are fishers is important policy recognition of the gendered nature of the fishing industry. When the Fisheries Code was passed in 1998, following 10 years of lobbying by fisherfolk, gender was slowly being recognized as an integral element of development. At the time, the crux of the struggle was the priority use rights of small-scale fishers over the coastal waters. The specific issues and concerns of women were only to unfold in the new millennium, as NGOs

nearshore such as gleaning and harvesting. Despite the importance of these activities in the whole fishing cycle, these activities remain unpaid economically and unvalued socially.

The invisibility of women’s roles is further aggravated by their displacement from nearshore fisheries, as mangrove areas are felled to give way to aquaculture farms throughout the country, and as tourism and industrial development encroach on women’s traditional fishing grounds. Even as women participate in community-based coastal resources management, the fisheries development agenda still largely ignores the marginalization that women face, particularly women fishers without economic and political resources to participate in policy-making.

The Fisheries Code mandates the formulation of the “Comprehensive National Fisheries Industry Development Plan” (CNFIDP), which serves as the operational framework for “optimal development and long-term sustainability of benefits derived by the nation from its fisheries”. However, only after a decade since the passage of the Code did consultations, initiated by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), towards formulating the CNFIDP begin. The elements of the Plan include the Philippine fisheries profile, status and issues; fisheries sector development framework; medium-term priority programmes and projects; and institutional implementation schemes. Each section deals with the specific issues of the fisheries sub-sectors, namely, municipal, commercial, aquaculture fisheries, and post-harvest.

However, in neither the process nor the formulation of the Plan, did gender as an analytical and planning perspective receive attention. The Plan was strongly biased towards industry, focusing heavily on enhancing production, while critical social elements, such as fishing communities’ access to basic services or social protection were not included in the operational part of the Plan. The Plan was also silent on issues such as women’s access to reproductive health services or protection against violence and abuse, common in coastal communities. Even though the Plan document



took up research, consultations, training and the organizing of women fishers.

Roles in fishing communities and households are substantially shaped by gendered notions of work. “Fishing,” which constitutes the actual capture of fish and is usually done further offshore, is considered to be work (since it earns income) and is regarded as a male occupation. Women are engaged in various preparatory and post-capture (marketing and processing) activities, as well as capture, both offshore (fishing with their male family members) and

had almost been finalized, women fishers and advocates began strongly pushing for the integration of gender concerns within it. Finally, they submitted to the BFAR, the text for inclusion in the Plan document for each of the chapters, including medium-term priority programmes and projects.

To begin with, the need for recognition of women fishers' role in the local and national fishing economy was included among the nine key issues of the sector. These are: (1) depleted fishery resources; (2) degraded fishery habitats; (3) intensified resource use competition and conflict; (4) unrealized full potential of aquaculture and commercial fisheries; (5) uncompetitive products; (6) post-harvest losses; (7) limited institutional capabilities; (8) inadequate/inconsistent fisheries policies; (9) weak institutional partnerships; and (10) *lack of recognition of women's roles and contribution in fisheries development.*

In developing their proposed inclusions to the Plan, women fishers and advocates asked several questions. What gender issues are addressed in the CNFIDP? Are the roles and problems of women in the fisheries considered and integrated in the analysis of the context, problems and issues? How does the CNFIDP consider women as stakeholders in the development of the fisheries industry? What are the specific programmes that address issues and concerns of women in fisheries?

Given that the advocates believe that the empowerment of women is fundamental to gender equality, the elements submitted to the BFAR largely addressed women fishers' concerns. These included access to resources; women's effective participation in decisionmaking and planning; institutional reform; a favourable policy environment for the full integration of women in fisheries governance from local to national levels; and overall contribution

to substantive changes in the quality of life of fishing households. Also proposed were awareness-raising for men and women in the different fisheries management structures and capacity building for developing and implementing gender-responsive programmes and projects. While gender equality is a long term goal, the actions to be taken at present should be based on gender equity; this means addressing impediments that women fishers face in participating and influencing institutional and social reforms.

The advocates saw to it that the Plan recognized the differential roles and status of men and women as fishers; the importance of the institutional and policy environment; and that the "gender content" was both logical and comprehensive from analysis to operational mechanisms. Thus, the proposals also included national policies and international treaties signed by the Philippine government that relate to gender equality and gender mainstreaming, which is expected to help shape the policy discourse and practical interventions relating to fisheries governance.

The text for inclusion was well received by BFAR and is considered in the final document. However, the ownership of the new elements and the implementation of the Plan itself remain a challenge.

Going ahead, an analysis of the issues in the commercial, aquaculture and post-harvest sectors still needs to be done, since women in these sectors were not reached by the women-led consultations on the CNFIDP. Essentially, a more comprehensive gender analysis in the sector is required even as women fishers and advocates continue to create and seize opportunities to engage policy makers, fisherfolk leaders, and others, including the private sector, on gender equality as an integral part of sustainable fisheries development. ❖

"A more comprehensive gender analysis in the fisheries sector is required even as women fishers and advocates continue to create and seize opportunities to make gender equality an integral part of sustainable fisheries development."

YEMAYA MAMA

...goes to Bangkok!



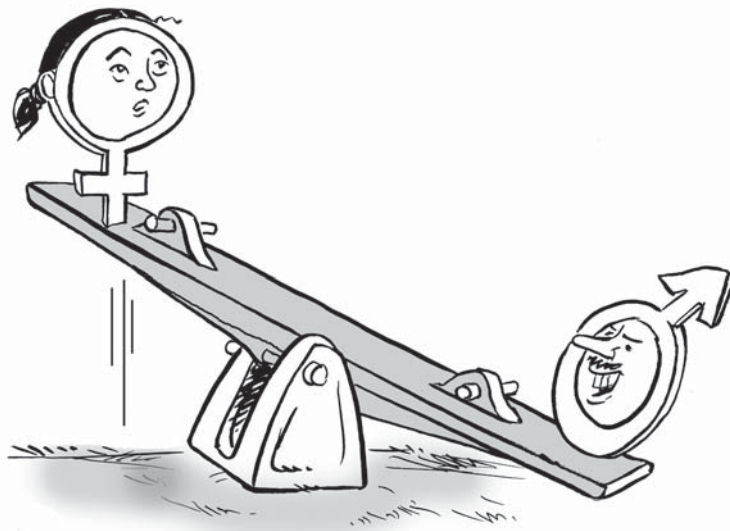
ARTICLE

Women in the Fishing: The Roots of Power between the Sexes

Paul Thompson; *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol 27, No 1, January 1985, pp 3 -32

This review is by
Chandrika Sharma and
Harini Kumar, ICSF

This article is an extremely insightful exploration of the sexual division of labour and power within fishing communities. Paul Thompson delves into the crucial and central roles played by women in fishing communities, and considers how far, and why, this contribution is reflected in the balance of domestic and communal power between the sexes. He notes that while there can be little argument about the prevailing male



dominance in Western societies, both in the past and today, within that overall framework there is immense variety in the degree to which women have been able to create space, independence and spheres of power for themselves.

The masculine image of the industry conceals, according to Thompson, the reality of an occupation which, by removing men to sea, makes them peculiarly dependent on the work of women. This dependence gives women not only more responsibility, but also the possibility of more power, both in the home and in the community.

However, while the sexual division of labour—the character of women’s work in fishing communities—often takes parallel forms in different societies, the same cannot be said for its consequences for the social position of women, or the power they enjoy. And this is the issue that the author explores at length.

He hypothesizes that the relatively higher ‘power’ enjoyed by women in fishing communities, as noted by some studies, could be linked to the spatial and economic dimension. With men away from home, the home (the spatial dimension) is perhaps a territorial power base for women. When combined with the dimension of economic responsibility, where the wife is responsible for the preparation and sale of the catch, there is a clear practical basis for her power. Because “them that sell the goods guide the purse—they that guide the purse rule the house”. And when women also control property, such as boats or land, the basis for their power is further enhanced.

However, much more is needed to understand the balance of power between the sexes. This is, the author notes, the result of a highly complex interaction, in which the economy, property, space, work and the culture of the family, religion and region, can, and do, play a vital part. And these variations in the balance of power will continue to be of critical importance to the way women in fishing communities live their lives. ■



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Writers and potential contributors to YEMAYA, please note that write-ups should be brief, about 500 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women and men of fishing communities working towards a sustainable

fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer.

Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.