

A study on Women's Access to Productive Tools

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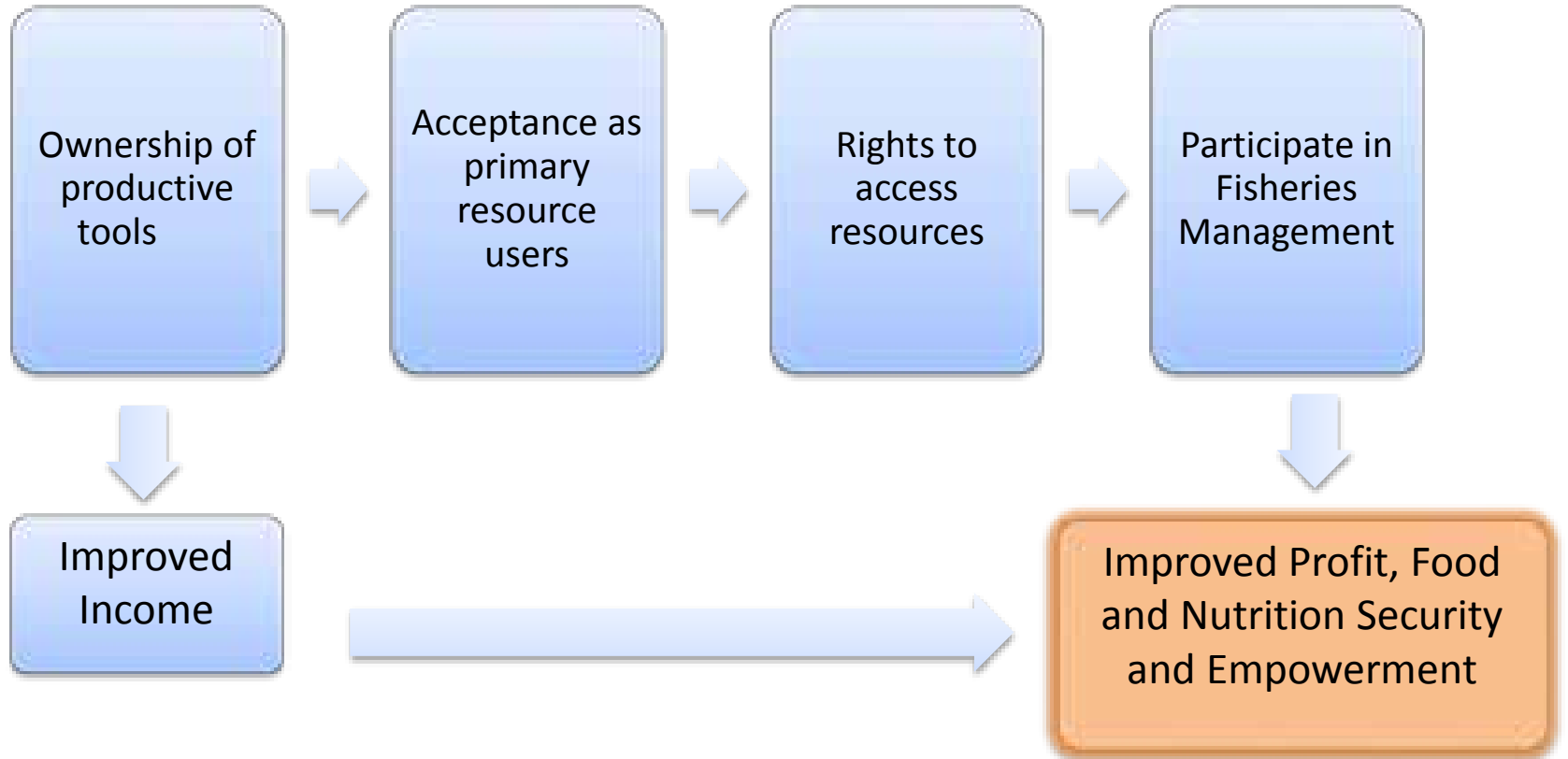
Research question

What are the gains for women owning or managing productive harvesting tools...

- better economic benefits?
- better participation in resource management?
- access rights to the resource?



Hypothesis



Well documented

Women = Processing(?)

- In the SSF, women's roles are dominant in the post-harvest sector.
- They process fish products: drying, salting, smoking, making fish balls or fish/shrimp sauce, etc.
- They either sell to generate a supplementary income, or use for household consumption (food & nutrition security).



How do women access fish?



- **Primary users:** By fishing themselves or owning the boat and gear
- **Secondary & tertiary users:** They have access to the catch from:
 - A male family member, usually husband.
 - Buying fish from the market or landing site.
 - “Fish” for “sex” transaction (Bene & Merten, 2008).

Characteristics of Women Fishers

- Short periods of time in river, lakes, near shore.
- Accompanying their husbands/brothers and do supporting roles.
- They can also fish alone, but will do it near their households in small boats.
- They can collect shellfish (gleaning) close to shore, in the intertidal area.
- Daytime.



Characteristics of Women Fishers

- They use homemade and low-tech tools (e.g. bush knife, bucket, rod and line, etc.), in contrast to more sophisticated gears that men have better access to.
- Some cases of women as owners of boats, engines and small enterprises – Ghana, Uganda, Chile, etc. (very little work done on comparative analysis)





Constraints and perceptions
hindering direct access to fisheries
resources and tools

Constraints and perceptions

- Women's fishing is categorized by being mainly for subsistence, either for household consumption, or to be sold for a small supplementary income.
- Their activity is regarded in the informal sector, not being accounted for, and much less being managed (Norlund, 2012).
- Lack of ownership of boats and gears hinders access rights and participation in policy dialogue.
- Lack of attention that fisheries agencies give to women's roles in fisheries management.
- As a result, women do not receive any type of support or recognition by government agencies.

Constraints...

- the lack of representation in fisheries organizations, also means lack of:
 - participation in decision-making mechanisms,
 - access to credit
 - technology and gear
 - information and,
 - capacity building



Constraints...

- New technologies brought out with modernization have displaced women.
- As soon as a resource obtained by women gain economic significance, men will displace women out of fishing (e. g. Case Octopus, Tanzania, Porter et al, 2008)



Perceptions and beliefs (of others) on women going fishing

- It is not socially acceptable for women to go fishing at nighttime.
- Some superstition and taboos suggest that women should not stay away from their households during long periods of time.
- The perception also considers fishing as "too risky for women".
- Government support programs, holding a perception that fisheries is a male domain, do not target women as beneficiaries.



Women fishers own perceptions

- They see actual fishing as one of last resort and low social value, mainly because of its subsistence and informal nature.
- If they do not perceive women fishers as a professional group:
 - Do not demand support of government programs.
 - If the resource they gather gains higher relevance in the market, they will likely be displaced.



However...

- If certain fishing season requires extra labour, women will travel longer distances and for longer periods accompanying their husbands. (eg. Cambodia, Sopanha et al, 2008)
- An increase in poverty levels can bring more women into fishing (e.g. Bangladesh, Sultana et al, 1998).
- They can take on "male" type of fishing to support themselves and their families. (E.g. female fisher divers in Korea, *Haenyo*, Gwi-Sook Gwon, 2005)



What do we know about the cases
where there is direct access
(and control)?

Social capital

- In the case of the *fish mammies* in Ghana (Overa, R., 1993), the increase in production and modernization also provided new opportunities for women thanks to their **kinship and marriage relationships**.
- In this case, it was women's **access** to social capital and networks that secured their **control** over technology and resources.

Community based organizations

- Appropriate supporting actions to women's organizations and their recognition of their activities as a professional activity
- Women's own perceptions about their work can quickly change to a feeling of pride and belonging, to a sense of *collective self-worth* which can improve their own wellbeing as well as the management of the resources.
 - Women gleaners north of Spain (Marugan Pintos, 2004)
 - Women clams collectors of Tunisa (FAO Project documents, 2012)
 - Women participation in *colonia de pescadores* (Yemaya dossier, 2007)

Some questions on how to Promote Gender Equity and Empowerment of Women?

(From COLLECTIVE ACTION AND ORGANISATIONS IN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES - A BACKGROUND NOTE – John Kurien)

- *The collaborative perspective*: How can gender relations and women's empowerment be factored into fisher organisations which deal with the activity of fishing that is an overwhelming male domain?
- *The independent perspective*: Can gender relations and women's empowerment issues be dealt with more fittingly in fishworker organisations meant exclusively for women?

Approach to improve women's participation

- There are participatory management arrangements that can improve women's recognition as fishworkers and guarantee their access to productive resources.
- But for this to happen, women must realize their own potential.
- **Adaptive governance** (integrated, flexible and holistic approach) could be used to increase women's participation in co-management
- Monitoring can be done through **outcome mapping**, with focus on behavior change



Preliminary conclusions

- Rights to access and control (decision-making) to resources and fisheries management
 - **Empowerment is key**
 - Do away with taboos
 - Greater perception of their role in fisheries – not just processing and marketing – away with the box
 - Greater ownership of productive tools such as boats and gears
 - Greater recognition and action on promoting organizational capacity
 - More strategic studies on socio economic roles in fisheries production and management



Thank you for your attention!