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Women's voice and identity of Small Scale women Fishers

Women Work in Fisheries, Too!
November 29, 2021



Shaping the Future | Gender Justice for Sustainable Aquaculture and Fisheries



Add your photos above or as a background

- Small scale fisher
- Women fishers role and work
- Invisibility and concerns issues
- Policy Implications
- Conclusion / Recommendations

Topics

Small scale fishers

- Women are an integral part of small-scale fisheries and fishing communities. Their work and labour continue to remain invisible.
- Specific forms of discrimination cut across all aspects of women's lives their labour, sexuality and their fertility undermining their dignity, sense of self-worth and self-confidence.
- It is women's labour, unpaid or poorly paid, which sustains the existing model of development.
- The existing model of development is also based on the unsustainable extraction of natural resources.
- This is leading to environmental degradation and the poisoning of waters and lands, eroding the very basis of the lives and livelihoods of inland and coastal fishing communities, including indigenous communities, while increasing women's burden of unremunerated work.



Small scale fishers

- Fishing communities today increasingly face displacement from their lands and their fishing grounds due to, among other things, mega-projects related to oil and gas exploration, wind farms, tourism, commercial aquaculture and port development, which are being promoted by large corporations and some national governments.
- Displaced communities are forced to migrate in search of livelihood, facing heightened insecurity and vulnerability.



Small scale fishers

It is the need to defend the
role and contribution of
small-scale

and

artisanal fisheries to
providing livelihood,
employment and food
security in a sustainable
manner,

into the future.



Role **VS** Work

Home



Multi-faceted roles women perform roles that straddle the home, the family, the community and the workplace.

Fishing



Processing
and
Marketing



SSF Women : invisibility

- Hardly statistics on the number of women involved in fisheries-related work despite women play important roles in the sector. Available data does not capture the multidimensional nature of work undertaken by women of fishing communities.
- Women engage in a wide range of activities in the fisheries and in fishing communities all around the world: as workers (paid and unpaid) within the fisheries, in pre- and post-harvest activities. Women engaged in inland fishing and capture fishing ,as workers in seafood processing plants.
- Women work as caregivers of the family and in maintaining social networks and the culture of the community, as workers in non-fisheries sectors to supplement the household income, and the often erratic returns from the fisher, as members of fish worker movements and fishers' organizations.
- In general, while the exact nature of women's work differs by culture and region and between rural and urban areas, the common factor is that it is rarely seen as "productive".
- It has low social value and is normally seen as an extension of the "domestic" space. Little value is attached to the domestic and community tasks performed by women.



Issues and concerns

- Invisibility /non productive sector.
- Work burden → Quality of life in fishing communities.
- Access to health, sanitation and education.
- Their role /work have not been recognized
- Un clear policy to address their issues and concerned.
- Limit space to voice their needs and concern as well as participate in the decision making.



Policy Implications

- Need to link with the struggle for sustainable small-scale fisheries.
- Need to analyze and challenge: forms of fisheries development that jeopardize and overexploit resources; unregulated developments in the coastal zone that threaten to take over spaces traditionally occupied and used by fishing communities while destroying resources; patterns of trade that bring few benefits to small-scale communities while making their livelihoods more vulnerable; and models of aquaculture that impose high social, environmental and economic costs on these communities.
- There is equally a need to challenge fisheries management and conservation approaches that are leading to privatization of resources, denying access to sustainable small-scale fisheries.
- Need to guarantee women's participation, as they are often imposed 'top down' by government agencies through artificially-created institutions that protect elite interests, or work through existing gender-oppressive community structures.
- With growing awareness about the potential impact of climate change , disaster, Covid 19 pandemic on fishing communities and livelihoods, there is also need to formulate responses to this, while challenging externally-formulated strategies being mooted to deal with climate change, with implications for fishing community livelihoods.



Conclusions

- Women of fishing communities take on multidimensional roles that straddle both production and reproduction. It remains invisible and is considered to have no real cost.
- Need to question the concept of "production" and stresses that production should be understood to refer to both the production of commodities and the production of life (reproduction).
- Present policies have not recognizing and valuing the labour that goes towards the creation and sustenance of life. Such a perspective counters the agendas of organizations that, in the long term, facilitate the unsustainable use of resources and undermine the community basis of fisheries.
- Redefining what is valuable also means redefining the power relations that exist between the rich and the poor, between men and women, and between races and nationalities. Such a perspective is important in the quest for sustainable, equitable and gender-just fisheries.
- A feminist perspective seeks to reshape gender relations by questioning the dominant discourse and those who set its terms. Gender issues thus focus not only on women, but on the relationship between men and women, their roles, rights and responsibilities, while acknowledging that these vary within and between cultures as well as by class, race, ethnicity, age and marital status.





Recommendations

Recommendations

Generate sex-disaggregated data on those who work in all aspects of fisheries, through census operations

Guarantee that both men and women of fishing communities are consulted and enabled to participate in decision making, including in relation to fisheries conservation and management. Guarantee access and control over resources by small-scale and fishers, fisherfolks and their communities, with ensure meaningful participation to women.

Recognize and protect collective rights to the resources and territories on which fishing communities, including indigenous communities, have traditionally depended on for their food security and livelihoods. Guarantee universal health and social security and the socialization of housework, and protect existing systems of social security that have proven to be adequate. Guarantee safety, and assure freedom from violence and sexual abuse.

Build the capacity of, and empower, fishing communities to manage their resources.



Recommendations

- Fully implement human-rights instruments, in particular CEDAW and the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, by adopting specific measures to address discrimination against women, while creating spaces for civil society organizations, in particular for women fish workers and their organizations, to participate in monitoring their implementation.
- Support and protect coastal and inland communities, with particular attention to women, in relation to natural disasters, climate change and pandemics such as Covid19, HIV/AIDS.
- Recognize SSF ,integrate an understanding of gender that shapes fisheries policies at various levels towards sustaining life and livelihoods in fishing communities.



Recommendations

- Recognize and value traditional and local knowledge as an integral part of information required for fisheries conservation and management. Promote sustainable fisheries, mitigate pollution and reduce the impact of extractive industries such as oil and natural gas.
- Recognize workers in the informal sector, in particular, women, including as collaborative spouses, and guarantee their labor rights and their rights to decent work.
- We resolve to work together to ensure that this agenda is widely disseminated, incorporated and implemented at all levels, including in an international instrument on small-scale fisheries that may be considered by the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the FAO.





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Thank you!



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