

Implications to Gender and Fisheries Advocacy

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Abstract

This article has three objectives. First, it aims to summarize the core advocacy concerns of women in fisheries, emphasizing the duality of concerns – that of fisheries advocacy and gender advocacy. The second objective is to clarify and offer a critique of the limitation of current understanding of fisheries management by applying the gender perspective, thereby facilitating the task of highlighting policy implications of gender on fisheries advocacy. The conclusion reiterates the main arguments and summarizes the policy implications of highlighting gender in fisheries advocacy.

Emerging Women's Movement in the Fisheries Sector

To lay out women's core advocacy concerns is both an easy and difficult task. The formation of networks of women in fisheries, each with their own agenda, facilitates the task. Nevertheless, a synthesis of what constitutes the core advocacy concerns is primarily a subjective activity, one which the author has taken the liberty to introduce in this article.

This section maps out the agenda stated by two recently-established formations of women in fisheries at the national level, the *Kababaihan sa Kilusang Mangingisda* (KKM) and the Task Force Women in Fisheries (TFWF). Surely, there have been attempts at arriving at a women's agenda in fisheries even at the municipal and provincial levels, but 2003 marks an important year in the consolidation of a national women's agenda in the sector, borne out by a series of initiatives to mainstream gender concerns in community-based coastal resource management (CBCRM). It was during this year that two grassroots women's groups were formed to promote women's interest in fisheries industry development. A venue for these two women's groups to coordinate a common agenda was also established with the formation of the National Rural Women's Congress.

Task Force Women in Fisheries

In preparation for the possibility of the mandatory Fisheries Code review in 2003, the NGOs for Fisheries Reform (NFR) conducted a series of consultations with fisherfolk organizations nationwide to assess the implementation of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 (RA 8550).¹ One of the researches identified as part of this task was to determine advocacy points and policy position on women in fisheries sector, through the leadership of the Gender Thematic Group, with the Center for Empowerment and Resource Development (CERD) and *Sentro para sa Ikaunlad ng Teknolohiya* (SIKAT). In April 2003, the result of the research was presented to women coming from the different people's organizations who are partners of the NFR members. The output of the Validation Workshop for the Research to Determine Advocacy Points and Policy Position on Women in Fisheries Sector include (1) sharing of the research conducted in the two Municipalities of Almagro and Calbayog City, Province of Samar; (2) status of the implementation of the Fisheries Code and other laws including laws on women; (3) problems faced by women in fisheries; and, (4) advocacy points and plan of activities.

The outcome of the said workshop was the grassroots women's call to form a network of women in fisheries that will push their agenda at the national and local level. Thus, the NFR Task Force Women in Fisheries (NFR-TFWF) was born. The women selected three representatives from the major island groups (Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao), who shall comprise the interim coordinating structure of the network. The network in its initial year of development faced limitations in budget, but nonetheless took the opportunity to meet during consultations and meetings called for by NFR. Priority issues per major island group were identified in these meetings and updates on the advocacies and resource management initiatives were discussed.

Kababaihan sa Kilusang Mangingisda

In 2002, a broad coalition of fisherfolk federations and local organizations forged into the *Pambansang Kilusan para sa Pagpapaunlad ng Industriya ng Pangisdaan*, now more popularly known as the *Kilusang Mangingisda* (KM). The issue that fused these organizations together was the impending threat of trade liberalization in the fisheries industry, particularly, fish importation and smuggling, lack of government subsidy for municipal fisheries development, and absence of a comprehensive framework

¹ An Act Providing for the Development, Management and Conservation of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Integrating All Laws Pertinent Thereto and for Other Purposes. Manila, Philippines, 23 March 1998.

plan for fisheries management and industry development. About a year later, the realization came that women's participation in this campaign was minimal and that women leaders can hardly be heard in the national struggle. Thus, Tambuyog and KM conducted discussions with a group of women from the KM member federations to flesh out women's issues in the fisheries industry and pave the way for the formation of a core group of women who will take the lead role in advocating women and gender concerns in the development of the industry. Jointly, the two organizations organized a National Consultation of Women in Fisheries with the following objectives: (1) Sharing of issues faced by women as stakeholders in the different subsectors in the fisheries industry and issues they face as women; (2) Formulate an agenda and the stand of women on issues facing them; and, (3) Form a group of women who will represent their cause and lead in mobilization and advocacy in the fisheries industry development and trade liberalization.

Table 1 shows the matrix of issues identified by women in fisheries networks. Table 2 lists the action plan of both networks when they were formed. Note that these plans may have been revised or adjusted. The purpose of its showing here is to highlight the range of issues and advocacy challenges (Table 3) faced by women as a distinct sector in the fisheries sector.

Table 1
Matrix of Issues and Fisherfolk Women's Agenda

Issues	TFWF	KKM
Property Rights		
1. Lack of appreciation for the role and contribution of women in the fisheries sector	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Information gaps on women in the fisheries sector and gender issues	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. No concrete program and budget allocation for women in fisheries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Limited women's involvement in the formulation/planning and execution of fisheries policies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Women as fish wardens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6. Proper Waste Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7. Perpetual/ Continuous destruction of fishery/aquatic/coastal resources due to rampant illegal fishing activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Fishery law violations/ fisheries cases not given priority in litigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
9. Continued expansion of fishponds and cutting of mangroves in spite of ban/prohibition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10. Private lands used for fishpond and prawn farm purposes exempted from CARP		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Entitlements		
11. Fisherfolk settlement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

12. Health and water services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13. GAD Budget implementation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
14. Lack of opportunity for fisherfolk children to go to school, or to get an education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
15. Lack of infrastructure support for women in terms of post-harvest, port and market facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
16. Livelihood support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Freedoms		
17. Violence against women	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
18. Food security in coastal communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
19. Unequal distribution of wealth/ resources and division of labor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
20. Dumping of smuggled/imported fish and squid to the wet market.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
21. Fisheries Trade Liberalization		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Participation		
22. Non-recognition of women as major stakeholder in the fisheries sector.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
23. Women's representation in the FARMCs and the Local Sectoral Representation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
24. Lack of separate government agency focusing primarily on fisheries concerns.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Table 2
Action Plans**

Actions	TFWF	KKM
1. Research		
a. Lack of appreciation of women's roles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
b. Feasibility studies on <i>bangus</i> fry gathering		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Review the re-inclusion of private lands used as fishponds and prawn farms under the jurisdiction of CARP		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Education and Capability-Building		
a. Marketing and development of products	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Export competitiveness of women's fishery products		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Non-formal education for women		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Advocacy		
a. Government programs responsive to women's needs for livelihood, education and extension	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. LGU programs for resource management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Strict implementation and enforcement of provisions in RA 8550 and RA 7161 on the moratorium on the issuance of FLAs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. LGU programs for women's access to livelihood and related support services for economic participation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Dialogue with BFAR and other concerned agencies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Stop mariculture and expansion of aquaculture areas, and ban the cutting and conversion of mangroves.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. Health and basic services delivery	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h. Access to credit and capital	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i. Infrastructure support for women in fishery-based livelihoods	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

j. Promote self-sufficiency in food production	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
k. Creation/establishment of a separate Department for Fisheries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
l. Anti-Trade Liberalization in Fisheries Campaign		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Organize women in coastal communities and provide them with orientation/ on women's rights.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Table 3
Challenges

Issues	Calls	Concerned Agencies
Property Rights		
1. Lack of appreciation for the role and contribution of women in the fisheries sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch an educational campaigns and promotional activities that duly credit the role of women in the fishing industry ▪ Organize women in coastal communities and provide them with orientation on women's rights 	BFAR, LGU
2. Information gaps on women in the fisheries sector and gender issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct gender research ▪ Social research should consider both men and women's perception on fisherfolks and gender differences to get comprehensive information on the condition and needs of the fisherfolk families 	DA, BFAR
3. No concrete program and budget allocation for women in fisheries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish/institute programs for women in fisheries and provide/allocate clear budget for each program ▪ Create grant funds for women in fisheries. ▪ Provide micro-financing facilities for women in fisheries 	DA, BFAR, LGU
4. Limited women's involvement in the formulation/planning and execution of fisheries policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear statement/ provision on women's role in the protection, management and conservation of coastal and marine resources ▪ Recognition and deputization of women as fish wardens ▪ Developments in women in fisheries should be included in the NFIDP and Fisheries MTPDP 	DA, BFAR, LGU, DENR, DILG
5. Women as fish wardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deputization of women fish wardens ▪ Institutionalize deputized fish wardens 	BFAR, LGU, DA
6. Proper waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stop dumping of wastes in coastal areas ▪ Promote zero waste management ▪ Use CRM framework and provide IEC on this ▪ Implement sustainable resource management 	DENR, LGU, DOH, MMDA, LLDA
7. Perpetual/ Continuous destruction of fishery/aquatic/coastal resources due to rampant illegal fishing activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full implementation of RA 8550 (Fisheries Code) and DAO 17 ▪ Implement Coastal Resource Management in all coastal communities 	DA, BFAR, LGU, PNP-MariG, DENR, DILG, Coast Guard, DOJ
8. Fishery law violations/ fisheries cases not given priority in litigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment/ Creation of Marine Courts 	DOJ, DA, BFAR
9. Continued expansion of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strict implementation and enforcement of 	DA, BFAR, DENR

fishponds and cutting of mangroves in spite of ban/prohibition	provisions in RA 8550 and RA 7161 on the moratorium on the issuance of FLAs and ban on the cutting and conversion of mangroves	
10. Private lands used for fishpond and prawn farm purposes exempted from CARP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review the re-inclusion of private lands used as fishponds and prawn farms under the jurisdiction of CARP 	DA, BFAR, DENR, DAR, DOJ
Entitlements		
11. Fisherfolk Settlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment/ creation of fisherfolk settlement areas should be done in consultation with the affected community especially the women fisherfolk 	LGU, DENR, DILG, DOJ
12. Health and Water Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Installation of potable water facilities in coastal communities ▪ Access to free reproductive health services for women. (i.e. Pap Smear, breast exam) ▪ Strengthen institutional delivery of medical/health services 	DOH, LGU, DILG
13. GAD Budget implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full implementation of provision on GAD Budget ▪ Create critical mass of women to strengthen GAD budget advocacy ▪ Assert mandatory implementation 	All concerned line agencies, GAs
14. Lack of opportunity for fisherfolk children to go to school, or to get an education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide scholarship grants for children of fisherfolk 	LGU, TESDA, CHed, DepEd
15. Lack of infrastructure support for women in terms of post-harvest, port and market facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure active participation of women in the identification and establishment of community infrastructure facilities ▪ Integrate women's concerns in the development of municipal fishing ports and markets ▪ Give priority to women in building market places 	LGU, BFAR
16. Livelihood support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide alternative livelihood programs for women in fisheries ▪ Provide for women's participation in the analysis and planning of projects and programs for fisheries 	LGU, DA, BFAR
Freedom		
17. Violence Against Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment of shelter for abused women in coastal communities and detention centers for abusive husbands 	LGU, MSWD
18. Food security in coastal communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote self-sufficiency in the coastal areas especially of women in fisheries 	DA, BFAR
19. Unequal distribution of wealth/ resources and division of labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that equal opportunities for men and women are available in fisheries such as capital, training, support facilities, etc. 	LGU, DA, BFAR
20. Dumping of smuggled/imported fish and squid to the wet market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strict monitoring for smuggled fish products ▪ Lifestyle check on Customs and DA officials 	BFAR, DENR, DA, Coast Guard, PPA, PAGC
21. Fisheries Trade Liberalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fisheries Out of WTO! 	DTI, DA, BFAR, DENR, DOST
Participation		
22. Non-recognition of women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopt definition of women fisherfolk as stated 	DA-BFAR, Senate

as major stakeholder in the fisheries sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ in the Magna Carta for Women. ▪ Push for the passage of the Magna Carta for Women into law 	
23. Women's representation in the FARMCs and the Local Sectoral Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At least 30% of the total number of membership in Municipal/ City/ Integrated/ National FARMC should be women ▪ One seat in the National FARMC should be reserved for women fishers ▪ Women fisherfolk slot in LSR ▪ As a major stakeholder in the fishing industry, ensure women's participation in reviewing and evaluating programs and projects ▪ Active participation of women in government programs aimed at improving women's situation 	DA, BFAR, LGUs, Senate
24. Lack of separate government agency focusing primarily on fisheries concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creation/establishment of a separate Department for Fisheries. ▪ Transfer all marine and fishery related programs of DA and DENR to the department of Fisheries. 	DA, BFAR, DENR, Congress

Women Fisherfolk Cluster

The formation of the *Pambansang Kongreso ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan* or PKKK (National Rural Women's Congress) in October 2003 facilitated the merging of women's agenda of the two networks. In preparation to the Congress, a forum was held to discuss the property rights issues as they affect women in coastal communities.² The presence of the Gender Point Person from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Reform (BFAR) provided the NGO and PO participants an insight into how BFAR recognizes (or fail to recognize) women and gender issues in the fisheries sector.

Between 2003 and 2005, the KKM and TFWF formulated a one-year action plan to pursue the agenda. In the second quarter of the year, more opportunities came to develop a common plan and the Fisheries Cluster, initially composed of KKM, TFWF, CERD, NFR and Tambuyog, was mobilized to discuss relevant policy issues including the lobbying for Magna Carta for Women in the Lower House. The stage is thus set for the active presence and louder voice of women in fisheries to be heard in fisheries policy development and advocacy for gender equality.

The Fisherfolk Cluster³ at present is a loose network of women advocates from NGOs and POs, forged by common issues. This permits priorities of each member to be pursued independently and at the same

² Co-sponsored by Tambuyog, PPI/National Rural Women's Congress, and Institute for Philippine Culture.

³ Named as such to parallel the CARP Cluster and related structures under PKKK.

time provides opportunities for concerted analysis of issues affecting women in coastal communities and the pursuit of common activities, thus contributing to the solidarity of women in the fisheries industry. While at present, many of the warm bodies in these formations are rural women directly involved in local fisheries economy, there is still a space for outreach to other women in the industry, such as market vendors and informal workers in fishing-based enterprises.

Core Advocacy Concerns of Women in Fisheries

The Webster's Dictionary defines "agenda" as a catalogue of aims and goals. Table 1 helps us achieve an understanding of the women's agenda in fisheries. My task now is to offer my synthesis of the core issues which advocacy initiatives must address: property rights, entitlements, freedoms, and political participation. The end in view of influencing advocacy strategies is where women's rights and gender equality are incorporated in fisheries advocacy.

Property Rights

Being a *de jure* open access fisheries, access to (much less, control over) fisheries is insecure, particularly for the poor fishing households whose subsistence are dependent on the daily catch. The issue of property rights has been translated into policy (particularly the Fisheries Code) in the form of limited access, defined as "a fishery policy by which a system of equitable resource use and allocation is established by law through *fishery rights granting and licensing procedure*."⁴ The Fisheries Code furthermore provides that municipal fisherfolk shall enjoy preferential use of the municipal waters, although the law suffered a backlash with the revocation of Department Administrative Order (DAO) 17. Women fisherfolk have struggled along with the other stakeholders to protect this provision. Despite their participation in this struggle, the content of property rights advocacy shows partiality to the interest of protecting resources which in turn are the domains of men. The management strategies provided for the Fisheries Code include licensing, catch ceiling, gear restrictions and other resource enhancement measures.

My critique is that the struggle for property rights still desires a gender lens in its content and strategies. Definitely, any type of property rights regime would have an impact on women, but the effect of an open access situation is most severe. Notwithstanding, the gender differential impact of alternative

⁴ Art I, Sec 4 (51) of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998.

property rights regimes have not been raised. For the sake of argument, would not a state property regime be most beneficial to women since it will take out the additional burden of managing the environment and make it the responsibility of the state? Perhaps one of the reasons why less women are active, for instance in FARMCs, is that their direct concerns in the fisheries are not given due attention because of the failure to operationalize property rights from women's direct experiences and context.

I would like to suggest two policy implications these comments prompt. First, there is a need to collect gender disaggregated data on users of the fisheries resource and more specifically, a mapping of the specific resources used by men and women. These can be done locally and at the least cost, employing participatory research methods. Such gender-disaggregated resource utilization map will provide a very useful basis later on for community-level resource management planning. The second is to come up with gender-integrated resource management plans that provide for, among others, zoning plans delineating particular resources or areas for women's priority use, species-specific open-closed seasons (for resources used by women), gear restrictions and development of tools and equipment friendly to women, research and post-harvest support for the development (e.g., packaging) of women's products. Such a gender-integrated resource management plan can stand as the centerpiece of women's advocacy agenda within FARMCs,⁵ and can be used as a mobilizing strategy to increase women's participation in the negotiating table.

Entitlements

The essential recognition of women's contribution to the fishing industry can best be operationalized by providing entitlements, which in themselves are "rights" inherent to every individual as a member of society. As direct producers, women are equally entitled to credit services, post harvest facilities, technology support, education and training assistance, and other extension services that will enable them to produce goods at better quality and prices. In the context of trade liberalization, the government is duty-bound to provide safety nets to small producers to mitigate the negative impacts of trade liberalization.

As primary agents in social reproduction, women are also entitled to adequate, accessible, quality basic services, such as health, day care services, education, water, electricity, housing and settlement (land tenure), etc. These enabling factors are crucial to increasing women's capacities to become fully

⁵ NGOs and POs have already raised the fundamental limitation of the FARMC structure as a recommendatory body.

competent citizens contributing to the political, economic and social development of their communities and the entire state in general.⁶

The advocacy for the Gender and Development (GAD) Budget is a very potent tool for women to lay claims over their entitlements. The GAD Budget can serve different interests of women. It can also be used by service providers (the bureaucracy, local government units and their staff, NGOs and POs) to capacitate them so that they are more able to address women's concerns in their respective fields. Thus, gender in fisheries advocates can devote efforts both towards enhancing the gender responsiveness of national agencies, as well as at the local levels by assessing and challenging the implementation of the GAD budget of the primary government offices and LGUs involved in the fisheries sector. The GAD Budget is both an enabling response (e.g., capacity building) as well as a concrete response to women's needs where these are lacking in existing allocations, for example, provision on health services, day care services, access to credit and technology, and other unmet needs.

Freedoms

Because of gender inequality, women suffer oppressions including physical abuse and other forms of violence against women, servitude, multiple burdens, lack of capacity to decide, and lack of understanding of their basic human rights. Many young women from rural coastal areas are being trafficked or forced into prostitution because of lack of opportunities to education and employment. Other girls are forced to leave school to help earn income for the family. The realization of these freedoms are part of what women in coastal areas struggle to achieve, and should be part of the framework of fisheries advocacy – that women's rights should be an integral part of the advocacy agenda.

A case in point is the robust promotion of Philippine beaches as tourist destination and the vigorous advertising of Filipino hospitality in the image of the young Filipina. Tourism as such not only affects local initiatives on coastal resource management. It also poses a threat to existing local values and culture. The relationship between tourism and prostitution should further be explored to formulate local policy intervention that will prevent both the exploitation of the environment and women.

⁶ Refer to Amartya Sen's capabilities approach.

Participation

The only way that women will be able to advance their agenda is to open the political space for participation – whether it be in community-based organizations, FARMCs, local development bodies, Congress or the government bureaucracy. Integral to the call for women’s participation is the recognition that distinct issues are experienced by women as a result of gender inequality.

In the fisheries, women’s agenda should be pursued in the formulation of local resource management plans and with even greater challenge, to influence the formulation of the National Fisheries and Industry Development Plan. This task requires more consolidated effort among women to further refine their agenda and formulate specific targets so that their concerns will be integrated into the industry development plan.

The crucial challenge that will tie the wide-ranging needs and interests of marginalized women in fisheries is development of women leaders. The competencies required of these leaders are very exacting as these women need to be intimately versed with fisheries concerns as well as the tools of gender analysis, and be able to confidently assert their position in order to erode the power axes dividing women and men, private and public.

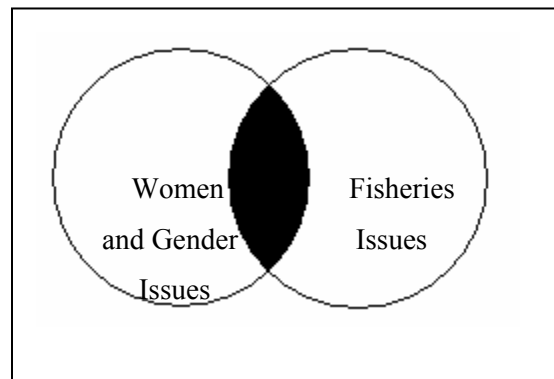
The Context of Gender and Fisheries Advocacies

Women and Gender

As noted in the previous section, the challenge for women in fisheries in advocacy consists of highlighting women’s invisible contribution to the industry and at the same time mainstreaming gender concerns in the different arenas of development and playing fields – within their organizations, in local development, and in national policy concerns. The duality of women’s concerns in fisheries does not mean its mutual exclusion, but rather the enlargement of the spheres of integration of the two areas.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship of women and gender concerns with that of fisheries or coastal resource management. First, we can analyze fisheries issues and their differential impact on men and women, i.e., how they mitigate or exacerbate gender inequality. For instance, how would resource management mitigate or exacerbate women’s multiple burdens? Second, we can start with issues relating

to unequal gender relations and how in the fisheries context, they are mitigated or exacerbated. For example, is violence against women more prevalent in fishing communities? Some of the social norms prevalent in fishing communities have been identified to increase the risk of domestic violence such as alcoholism among male fishers, low income, and the patriarchal decision-making process. Another example is the lack of control of women over their fertility, which results in large family size and successive births – which compounds to increased pressure on the natural resources.



It is therefore important to clarify the use of two important concepts throughout this article. First is the phrase “women and gender concerns”, and why the two are inseparable. Gender refers to the socially constructed differences between men and women, resulting in unequal relations and unequal advantage of one sex (male) over the other (females). The biological difference between males and females has been extended to the gender or sexual division of labor (production and reproduction) such that one has enjoyed an advantage or privilege over the other, i.e., men have greater advantages over women (in several respects that need not be listed here), and that productive work is more valued than reproductive work. Basic gender differences in societies also point to varied practices that either recognizes or denies women the right to be considered as state citizens – whether they enjoy equal rights and entitlements compared with men.

“Production” in broad terms means the creation of goods and services for the utility of consumers and market (which in turn provide wages for the family), whereas, “reproduction” refers to the work of care in the household, who will in turn provide the labor for the economy. In addition, there remains a distinction between the public and private domains which parallels the dichotomy between production and reproduction. This illustration may at best be overly simplified, but for the purpose of our

understanding, it merely aims to show various dichotomies between men and women, production and reproduction, and, the public and private. These dichotomies result in unequal status and relations whereby men are able to have greater power because they dominate the production and the public spheres. Such dichotomies are, however, not static. Changes have been taking place where women are involved in economic production and public political negotiations, while men are taking on reproductive work either by consent or by the force of circumstances (e.g., when women have to leave the home for employment elsewhere). Nevertheless, fundamental differences based on gender is still prevalent in both modern (e.g. urban) and traditional (rural, indigenous) societies, and that these dichotomies continue to be reproduced by the social and institutional systems despite gains achieved in gender advocacy.

Gender, as used throughout this article is laden with multiple meanings. One of which, as already explained above, refers to differences between men and women based on culture. Second, inherent in the conceptual understanding of gender is inequality – the differences become the source of conflict between men and women, but these conflicts are not necessarily considered as existing, but are taken to be the natural course of things.⁷

The concept of gender has also been construed to refer to the goal or task of levelling the playing field for women and men, thus we have such notions as gender equality or equity, and gender mainstreaming, etc. Underlying these differences is the subordinate position of women in society, such that one cannot address gender without allowing women to catch up with men in the different aspects of social life – political, institutional, economic, social and cultural. “Catching up” then refers to the task of providing women more opportunities and wider space for participation and involvement. Therefore, to aim for women’s empowerment is to recognize that the oppression and subordination of women in society is the primary concern of gender equality. Does giving women power mean taking power from men? Social power is something that is not additive or deductive in its nature as used here. The fundamental change envisioned in gender equality is shared power – both men and women having the ability and opportunity to negotiate the nature of power relations, whether it is in the sphere of gender, class, religion or ethnicity.

Fisheries and Coastal Resource Management

⁷ As in Gramsci’s concept of hegemony.

The second concept, coastal resources management, needs to be explained, not for its technical implication, but for the purpose of accentuating gender concerns in the sector. In its usage, “coastal resource management” is preferred over “fisheries and aquatic resource management”, simply because the former relates to the ecosystem (geo-physical characteristics and biological organisms found within it), while the latter relates only to the organisms thriving in the aquatic environments.

As defined under the Philippine Fisheries Code:⁸

Aquatic resources include fish, all other aquatic flora and fauna and other living resources of the aquatic environment, including but not limited to salt and corals.

Coastal Area is a band of dry land and adjacent ocean space (water and submerged land) in which terrestrial processes and uses directly affect oceanic processes and uses, and vice versa; its geographic extent may include areas within a landmark limit of one (1) kilometer from the shoreline at high tide to include mangrove swamps, brackish water ponds, nipa swamps, estuarine rivers, sandy beaches and other areas within a seaward limit of 200 meters isobath to include coral reefs, algal flats, seagrass beds and other soft-bottom areas.

Fish and Fishery/Aquatic Products include not only finfish but also mollusk, crustaceans, echinoderms, marine mammals, and all other species of aquatic flora and fauna and all other products of aquatic living resources in any form.

Fishery Management Areas a bay, gulf, lake or any other fishery area which may be delineated for fishery resource management purposes.

Fishery species aquatic flora and fauna including, but not restricted to, fish, algae, coelenterates, mollusks, crustaceans, echinoderms and cetaceans.

The idea of making this clarification may seem trivial, but such perspective is precisely the point of contention. What is the difference between managing the fisheries from managing the coastal resources?

⁸ Section 4 of RA 8550.

To begin with, the fisheries provide an important role in food security, as recognized by the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998. Protein derived from fish provides 70% of protein intake of Filipinos.⁹ To make the argument short, fisheries management has gained importance in public policy because it is important to the economy.

The strategies outlined in the Fisheries Code refer to the management of this resource to ensure food and fish supply, and to protect the fishery resources from further degradation. In the limited framework of “fisheries management,” selected commodities are managed for their economic significance. Pelagic and demersal fisheries are managed for their economic value, and fish sanctuaries are established in order to support sustainable production of fisheries resources. For the purpose of this article, we call this perspective “commodity-oriented or market-oriented resource management” to differentiate it from “ecology-based resource management” that considers both the natural productive potential of the environment and the interdependent relationships of the different elements of the ecosystem (geo-physical characteristics, organisms, human and institutional relationships).

Notwithstanding the importance of fisheries resources, other commodities in the coastal ecosystem also provide both economic and social contribution to the subsistence of many of coastal households. These resources have also been given due attention, particularly mangrove forests and coral ecosystems. Non-government organizations and peoples’ organizations have contributed to protecting these resources, and women have played a part in these initiatives as well. These ecosystems serve as habitats for the fisheries resources, again feeding into the fisheries industry. Here again, the purpose of policy is to serve the market economy, and expecting the gains from this to trickle down to the positive results in the care economy.

Use of the terms fisheries “resources”, “sector”, “industry”, may therefore have a limiting consequence, and it is this juncture that I clarify that their use throughout this article not only refers to economically significant fisheries commodities or species, but also refers to resources that are important to women, which may or may not be economically significant or market-oriented. The words “sector” and “industry” are also used to refer to the entire process of production (pre-capture, actual and post-harvest) which includes unpaid work being done by women.

⁹ Agnes and Gaynor Tanyang. 2001. Right to Food Fish. Tambuyog Development Center (Unpublished).

The call for an ecology-based framework of resource management not only appeals for an integrated approach, but also to highlight the opportunities for access, participation and benefit by women in coastal areas. It recognizes that management of the resources fulfils the demand for food security, and at the same, sustains other subsistence activities that contribute to the welfare of the household. Edible molluscs or shells, for example, provide alternative food source for households especially during low-catch episodes.

Limitations of the market-orientation of fisheries management

My primary critique is that efforts have been mobilized to protect the fisheries and coastal resources in order to ensure the sustainable production of fisheries commodities, in which women have been involved to a limited extent. Women's participation in Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Councils has been limited.¹⁰ Its impact on women as stakeholders in fisheries development has been a priority agenda in current advocacy initiatives, but as to why women have been less significant players in FARMCs and even local bodies has not been dealt with more systematically in the analysis. My main contention is that, other than the reproductive work that limits women's participation in local development and governance initiatives including the fisheries sector, there is a deeper fundamental and structural cause that hinders women's active involvement in coastal resource management. Fisheries management that is oriented towards economically significant resources or products has limited the impact on women's empowerment as a result of the rigid orientation of policies (market-oriented) that fail to account for broader concerns including gender considerations. It is concerned with production of goods and services that serve the public interest while subordinating the support and contribution of women's reproductive and unpaid work in the sector.

First, fisheries management is concerned about food availability to the consuming public, while household-level food security is left as a domestic concern (and becomes primarily a woman's responsibility). Grassroots women have often cited in anecdotal accounts that when their husband's catch is poor, the ultimate responsibility of ensuring that food is available for the family rests on them. In terms of policy implications, food security should have priority consideration, and it is in this context that

¹⁰ Tanyag, 2003; Cleofe, 2002 (unpublished); PRRM/NFR 2002, (unpublished).

existing policy on food security has been the subject of critique. The Philippine Fisheries Code and the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act¹¹ provides for the following definitions of “food security”:

refers to the policy objective, plan and strategy of meeting the food requirements of the present and future generations of Filipinos in substantial quantity, ensuring the availability and affordability of food to all, either through local production or importation, of both, based on the country's existing and potential resource endowment and related production advantages, and consistent with the over all national development objectives and policies. However, sufficiency in rice and white corn should be pursued.¹²

refers to any plan, policy or strategy aimed at ensuring adequate supplies of appropriate food at affordable prices. Food security may be achieved through self-sufficiency (i.e. ensuring adequate food supplies from domestic production), through self-reliance (i.e. ensuring adequate food supplies through a combination of domestic production and importation), or through pure importation.¹³

This policy has been criticized for its failure to account for (1) the need to access food that are of nutritional value or quality; (2) cultural acceptability of food choices being made available; and, (3) sustainability concerns. Essentially, the policy does not guarantee food security or the right to food of every citizen in its very essence. The concept of food sovereignty has been offered as an alternative concept:

Food sovereignty is the peoples', Countries' or State Unions' RIGHT to define their agricultural and food policy, without any dumping vis-à-vis third countries. Food sovereignty includes:

¹¹ An Act Prescribing Urgent Related Measures to Modernize the Agriculture and Fisheries Sector of the Country in Order to Enhance their Profitability, and Prepare said Sectors for the Challenges of Globalization through an Adequate, Focused and Rational Delivery of Necessary Support Services, Appropriating Funds therefor and for Other Purposes. 9 February 1998.

¹² Section 4 of the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act.

¹³ Section 3 of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998.

- Prioritizing local agricultural production in order to feed the people, access of peasants and landless people to land, water, seeds, and credit. Hence the need for land reforms, for fighting against GMOs (genetically modified organisms), for free access to seeds, and for safeguarding water as a public good to be sustainably distributed.
- The right of farmers, peasants to produce food and the right of consumers to be able to decide what they consume, and how and by whom it is produced.
- The right of Countries to protect themselves from too low priced agricultural and food imports.
- Agricultural prices linked to production costs: they can be achieved if the Countries or Unions of States are entitled to impose taxes on excessively cheap imports, if they commit themselves in favour of a sustainable farm production, and if they control production on the inner market so as to avoid structural surpluses.
- The populations taking part in the agricultural policy choices.
- The recognition of women farmers' rights, who play a major role in agricultural production and in food.¹⁴

At the household and community levels, food production is not simply making food available for the consuming public. It is an issue of survival. Moreover, embodied in food production are cultural processes of cooperation, conflict, reciprocity, dependency and exploitation.¹⁵ Thus, food production is not only an economic concern. To achieve food production at the household level, the productivity of the resource base is an indispensable strategy, thus the need for a comprehensive ecology-based resource management, not just the management of specific commodities. As the basic principles of ecology teach us, organisms exist in a relationship of interdependence, as do humans with the environment. Therefore, fisheries management should not only underscore the importance of market availability of food fish but make, as its overriding objective, the entitlement to every person's right to food.

Second, fisheries management, consisting mainly of effort regulation, resource enhancement and livelihood support, focuses on activities commonly associated as male occupations. Fishing is still considered as a dominantly male occupation such that early assessments of CRM work revealed that

¹⁴ <<http://www.viacampesina.org>>

¹⁵ Graham, Jennifer and Gaynor Tanyang. 2001. *The Sustenance of Life: Exploring Sustainable Livelihoods in Community-Based Coastal Resource Management*. Lundayan Monograph 2000-01. Tambuyog Development Center.

women have been consciously excluded.¹⁶ Income-earning livelihood activities of women in the coastal areas consist of gathering or taking of fishery products that have less significance to the local economy – but not without exception as certain resources have found their market value and involve women in production, such as seaweeds, harvesting of *balat* (sea cucumber), and even fry gathering. However, regardless of their value, these products remain secondary to food fish as the dominant commodity.

In terms of marketing the fish catch, women play a major role but attribution of income is credited to men. While little research is being done about the valuation of women's work in the seaweed industry, it is generally assumed that women perform much of the work (planting, transplanting, guarding). On the other hand, men are more involved in its marketing because of the considerably high value of the products.¹⁷

The seemingly marginalization of women in the industry arises from the question: Are women fishers? The question still stands as government and even non-government initiatives fail to provide adequate support to women in coastal communities because fishing is still seen predominantly as a male occupation. The current understanding of the fisheries industry, with its focus on economic production, has relegated women's non-economic or non-income generating activities in the coastal areas, as less significant, even as invisible.

Women perform work in the fishing industry revolving around their duties in reproductive sphere. This include preparing food, mending nets, and buying supplies - which are considered only as "support" to their spouse. Being unpaid, they are not considered as work per se. Much is still to be done to elevate women's contribution into "complementation" – which is again the premise of gendered advocacy in fisheries. This has significant policy implications, as can already be seen in the Fisheries Code where women's concerns have not been clearly spelled out.¹⁸

¹⁶ Now, women are becoming recognized as stakeholders in coastal resource management and efforts have been made to be women-inclusive in projects.

¹⁷ It has been noted in Calatagan, Batangas that marketing and negotiating with the trader is primarily the husband's job because they can negotiate a better price. In addition, since the transaction involves four to five digit amounts, women are more exposed to danger when taking home the cash. There has been one report of a vendor who was robbed on his way home after marketing the seaweeds.

¹⁸ It is not to say that women's concerns are totally excluded from the Fisheries Code, since the said law provides for a representative of the women's sector to sit in the Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council (Art. II Sec. 75).

The third relevant concern is the invisibility of women's contribution in the fisheries industry. Why have women been invisible?¹⁹ How can advocacy initiatives in the fisheries sector address this problem?

First, there are fewer women involved in actual capture. This fact is cultural as well as geographically situated. Surprisingly, there are still communities which believe that if women accompany their husbands fishing out to sea, they will get less catch. Colloquially, it is called "*malas*". On the other hand, there are a few communities where women are not disqualified to accompany their husbands to sea both in the time past and the present. Still, there are households where women are "employed" by their husbands instead of hiring other boatmen for the fishing trip in order to reduce costs and increase household income.

Such is a case in point in a municipality in Sorsogon, where it was observed that prior to the 1980s, women attend in capture fishing with their husbands. When shellcraft became an established enterprise in the community, women chose to work as crafters since it allowed them to stay home. Income from shellcraft was more stable and was not affected by seasons, at least during its heyday of shellcraft production. Now that the waters is overfished, women are "employed" by their husbands to accompany them instead of hiring another person. Some of the older men in the community reproach these men as incapable of providing for their family.

The prevailing view that women minimally participate in capture activities should be challenged. First and foremost, one cannot separate capture activities from pre-harvest and post-harvest activities. Secondly, women *are* engaged in various capture activities such as gleaning or gathering fishery products.²⁰ The volume and value of their production may be insignificant, but they are important for household survival. The displacement per se should be studied, but some of the factors contributing to this situation are already identified: introduction of new technology, transitions in local economies and market demand, and degradation of the resource base.²¹

¹⁹ Tanchuling (1993) offers three reasons why women are prevented from participating in capture fishing.

²⁰ Tanyang, Gaynor B. 2003. Fisheries and Gender: A Synthesis of Issues and Emerging Perspectives. Lundayan Monograph 03.04. Tambuyog Development Center; Cleofe, Jovelyn. T. 2002. Women in Fisheries. (unpublished).

²¹ Ibid., Demographics may also have an impact on women's interaction with the environment – particularly increase in population, educational attainment, employment opportunities.

Policy Implications

Integrating gender concerns in fisheries advocacy will require expanding the breadth of fisheries agenda to be inclusive and responsive to gender issues, with men and women in the fishing industry, both having the responsibility to pursue these concerns. The following summarizes the policy implications raised in this study:

- Gender disaggregated data collection (activity profile, commodities, production trend, institutional context, etc.);
- Redefining “fishing” to recognize the unpaid and reproductive aspect of the production process. It also includes reclassifying or redefining municipal fisheries to be inclusive of women’s activities in the fishing sector (both paid and unpaid work);
- Gender integrated resource management planning (local level);
- Formulation of gender responsive comprehensive integrated fisheries management plan (national level) which puts recapitulates the following concerns in an integrated framework plan:
 - food security as a primary agenda, not solely for achieving sufficient food supply but also for ensuring that the population (including the producers themselves) are able to achieve their right to adequate, quality and culturally sensitive food;
 - locally-managed coastal resources which ensures the sustainable capacity of the resources to provide for the present and future needs of the population; and,
 - integration of women’s needs in the industry plan for the development of fishery products that women produce and/or market including access to credit and capital, technology, post-harvest facilities, training and education;
- Engagement in policy making bodies and resource management formation (from local to national);
- Direct intervention (e.g., mobilization of resources) on gender issues such as access to basic services and VAWC through policy lobbying at the local level;
- Advocacy for GAD budget implementation;
- Review the gender responsiveness programs of the national agencies’ budget for women in fisheries (DA, DA-BFAR, DENR, etc.);

- Inclusion of population management in fisheries management, including access to comprehensive reproductive health services;
- Leadership development among women in fishing communities. Making women leaders visible in the national and local advocacy and campaigns as well as helping women fisherfolk groups to sustain networking and advocacy initiatives;
- Expanding the network of women in fisheries to include other subsectors (vendors, shellcrafters, and those who are employed in other fishery-based enterprises).

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