

37. Gender based developmental approaches in sustainable fisheries management

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Prelude

We cannot solve global challenges unless women participate fully in efforts to find solutions. ('women holds half the sky'). The population of females in the world is estimated to be 3,905 million, representing 49.58% of the world population. Hence, female participation in the production sector is a critical driver for economic development of societies worldwide. When a woman is economically benefitted, it reflects positively in every facet of her life, the health, education and living standard of her family and ultimately it adds to the national income. Still, globally, women get lesser opportunities for playing a role in the economic activities than men, less right to access basic needs of life, education, information which poses serious threats on their health and safety and results in poor contribution for the national well being.

In India's population, females constituted 48.4% of it (as per census 2021) and India's sex ratio has improved in 2021, having 1020 females to every 1000 males, clocking a female majority for the first time. Hence, inclusive development has to gain more momentum in India.

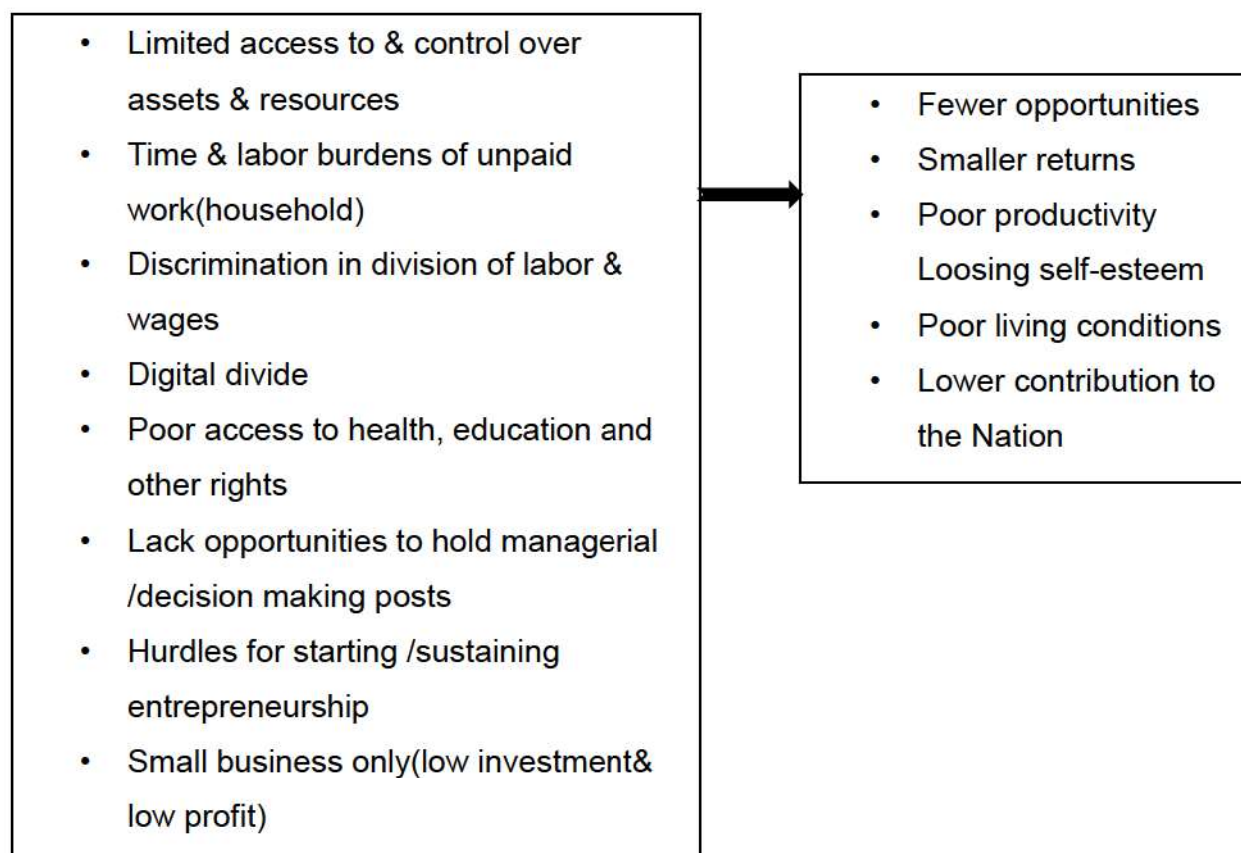
Women's scenario in Fisheries

Fisheries and Aquaculture sectors support the livelihoods of approximately 10-12 percent of the world's population Globally, women make up 15 percent of people engaged in the fisheries primary sector. Of the 200 million people employed full- or part-time in the primary & secondary sectors for fisheries and aquaculture, women make up around half of the workforce. Even though women play important roles and contribute significantly to the fisheries sector, their hands remain pitifully invisible. While drawing the series of events lead to the formation Asian Fisheries Society and ICLARM The World Fish Center, in the Women in Fisheries program and to the move towards Gender and Fisheries initiatives in a report, Williams, M.J.2002 has expressed her concern over some major gender issues in fisheries sector like poverty, division of household labor, health, access to education and other rights, organizational culture and raising awareness and sharing knowledge.

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Table.1. Women of fisheries sector, especially in developing countries face substantive issues:



Endeavours for Women inclusive growth

Eventhough more than 140 countries pledge gender equality through their constitutions, women face disparity in many forms, through laws, policies, rights to access resource and social practices. While looking back, the Seneca Falls Convention was the first women's rights convention held in July 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York, for women rights. The meeting opened the women's suffrage movement, which again took more than 70 years to give women the right to vote. Women's issues got a prominence on social and political platforms by 1960s and entered the development agenda in the late 1960s and 1970s. This was mainly because different several international aid agencies recognized that the reason for failure of many of their developmental projects was lack on women participation in the design and implementation. (Williams, M.J.2002).

Women in development (WID)

The WID approach was introduced primarily by “American liberal feminists” in 1970s and focuses on egalitarianism, especially in terms of economic participation and access (Rathgeber, 1990, p.490). Here the prime and only focus is on economic development. It addressed the disparity of employment opportunities between men and women. The concept is evolved based



on a recognition of the significance of women in development process. The WID approach helped to make sure, the participation of women into the workforce and increase their level of economic productivity and improve their lives.

Women and development (WAD)

WAD is a “neo-Marxist feminist approach”, which took shape in 1975 in Mexico, is simultaneously a theoretical and practical approach to development. Previous thinking held that development was a vehicle to advance women. But here, concept is development was only made possible by the involvement of women and women are pictured as who were already involved in the process of development. The movement was against women only development projects, and gave prime importance for proving the relationship and role of women in development rather than making efforts to integrate women into development process.

GAD: Gender and Development

Gender The word gender indicates the socially-constructed roles and responsibilities that is considered appropriate for men and women by the relevant societies. The GAD approach, which was developed in the 1980s, stepped away from both WID and WAD and was founded in socialist-feminist ideology (Rathgeber, 1990, p.493). It focus is on the root causes of gender inequality and is not concerned with women alone, instead with the social construction of gender by assigning specific roles and responsibilities to different gender.

These efforts and approaches had its reflections in the different specific production sectors where women were involved like Agriculture, Dairy, Fisheries, etc. Among the earlier initiatives which emphasized women in the development context (WID), the space for women in fisheries (WIF) was a specific case. This was because initially the interim goal was to ensure role of women in development programs & assure their sufficient involvement from which they were denied active participation in the past (Ostergaard 1992).

As per the latest State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture Report (SOFIA 2018) published by FAO, 59.6 million people were engaged in the primary sector of capture fisheries and aquaculture in 2016. Out of this, 19.3 million were in aquaculture and 40.3 million in fisheries. The FAO estimates that women represent nearly 14% of all people directly engaged in the fisheries and aquaculture. Sex disaggregated data is not available from many countries. Still, in Asia records maximum women employment, representing 15% of the total employment in capture fisheries while men represent 78% (SOFIA 2018) and the rest is not reported.

While considering the efforts for positive inclusion of women fisheries sector, the first major event was Global Workshop on Aquaculture, conducted in 1987, which was followed by a Workshop on Women in Fisheries in the Asia-Pacific region in 1995 as a preface of the Fourth World Conference on Women.



Table 2. Chronology of events related to women in development.

Date Events

- 1975 -The United Nations World Conference on Women (Mexico City)
- 1975 -1985 United Nations Decade for Women
- 1980 -Second World Conference on Women (Copenhagen)
- 1985 -Third World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women (Nairobi)
- 1987- The FAO Global Workshop on Women in Aquaculture (Rome)
- 1995- Workshop on Women in Fisheries in the Asia-Pacific region (Philippines)
- 1995- Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing)
- 2000- Beijing +5: Women 2000 - Gender, Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century - Special Session of the General Assembly (New York)

Source: (Williams, M.J.2002)

Development agencies identified that women's economic empowerment is a critical aspect of achieving gender equality. It ensures an improvement in a woman's self-esteem, decision-making power, capacity to control over her life and also access to resources, which altogether result in the personal, family and societal development.

Gender equity, Gender Equality and GAD Sustainable Fisheries

Gender equity, as defined by the International Labor Organization (ILO), refers to “fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs.” Gender equality, on the other hand, is defined by the ILO as the “enjoyment of equal rights, opportunities and treatment by men and women and by boys and girls in all spheres of life”.

Towards a sustainable fishery through gender sensitive development efforts

In small-scale fisheries and aquaculture, the resources, strength and constraints and benefits of involvement for women are different from that of men. Hence, in any development programmes or projects while being planned for implementation in fisheries sector, it should have a special focus on gender concerns to ensure that the implementation is done in a inclusive manner, assuring equitable benefits to both the genders. For that, the following measures may be taken essentially;

- Information base on gender disaggregated data, gender-based issues and concerns may be collected in a flawless manner
- An analysis of constraints and opportunities may be done at every major programme planning stage in a gender perspective
- Interventions needed to promote women to fully participate in fisheries and aquaculture
- Provide a working gender friendly environment for women in all spheres of fisheries, wherever women can contribute productively
- Strike a gender balance in division of job responsibilities
- Provide continuous motivational and awareness sessions, not only to women, but



assuring the whole societal reach

- Form and assure implementation of gender friendly policies, programs and legislation
Assure institutional frameworks for research & development as well as for gender mainstreaming to sustain continuity in gender sensitive

References:

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- Williams, M.J.; Williams, S.B.; Choo, P.S. (2002). Paper presented- From women in fisheries to gender and fisheries". "Global Symposium on Women in Fisheries: Sixth Asian Fisheries Forum, 29 November 2001, Kaohsiung, Taiwan" pp: 13-18

