

## **Issue Paper on Women / Gender in Fisheries**

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Women constitute 70% of the world's poor; for every dollar that a man makes woman makes less than 75 cents no matter where she lives in the world; Billions of women support their families through precarious employment in the growing informal sector (Scampini 2002). World Bank recent studies states that in the 40 plus years during which women have been the object of international development programs, norms, values, rules and practices that determine how a woman should be treated within the home and by the different institutions in society have not changed.

In the Philippines, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) has been created as the national machinery on women. NCRFW is considered a model and training resources for gender mainstreaming in the Asia and Pacific Region.

At the policy level, the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article II, Section 14 declares that "the State recognizes the role of women in nation-building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men. This provision lays the foundation for Gender and Development and mainstreaming efforts.

National instruments to actualize the basic principle of gender equality are as follows:

- The Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDPW), 1989-1992, a companion plan to the MTPDP, this was the first major effort to raise gender issues and concerns to the level of policy discussion, formulation and implementation. This consolidated plan advocated the priority agenda and programs in response to Filipino women's situation.
- In 1992, the Women in Development and Nation Building Act (R.A. 7192) reiterated the need to address the issue of gender inequity; encouraged national and local agencies to utilize external and domestic resources in support to women programs and projects. The mandate to allocate a minimum of 50%, increasing to 30% of all official development assistance funds for gender concerns came from this law.
- The Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development (1992-2005) updated the PDPW and is a long term or "perspective plan". E.O. 273 was

passed for the approval and adoption of PPGRD. All government agencies, national, regional, local levels were directed to:

- institutionalize GAD efforts by incorporating gender concerns when agencies formulate, assess, and update their respective annual plans and inputs to medium and long term development plans; and
- include GAD in the annual budget proposals, as well as in the financial plan of agencies and local government units.

At the international level, the Philippine government has commitments to the UN Convention in the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the UN Nairobi Forward - Looking strategies for the advancement of Women, and the Beijing Platform for Action. It is bound to implement the provisions of these agreements and report on their implementation.

Policy issuances such as the Joint Memorandum Circular 94-1 on the Integration of GAD in the Agency Plan and Budget (1994), the General Appropriation Act 1995 (all departments, bureaus, offices, and agencies shall set aside an amount out of their appropriations to be used for projects designed to address gender issues in accordance with RA 7192) and further versions were issued. Even local government units were instructed to set aside 5% for the GAD budget through the 1997 DBM Local Budget Memorandum 32, Section 9.6 and DILG Memorandum Circular 99-146, August 16, 1999, NCRFW, DBM and NEDA – Joint Circular No. 99-4.

With clear legal mandate, instruments and policies, how are women in the fisheries sector faring given existing policy environment.

### Women as Fishers

Fishing and its related activities have often been perceived as dominated by men. It is automatically associated with the capture fisheries. Even the definition of the fisherfolk and subsequently municipal fisherfolk (Sec. 3.56) connotes this kind of perception. Furthermore, women are not clearly accounted for in the data on fisherfolk population.

**Table 1. Employment in the Fishing Industry (NSO, 1990 Census of Population and Housing)**

1. Aquaculture	74,537
2. Municipal Fisheries	374,408
3. Commercial Fisheries	357,984
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>806,929</b>

This makes women's role, participation, issues and interests in the fisheries industry and the coastal communities unrecognized, misunderstood and "invisible".

However, recent documentation, testimonies, and studies showed that women are involved in the various activities related to the fisheries.

In the capture activities women participate in fishing operations. They used hook and line, scoop nets, fish traps, spears, gillnet fish baskets and push nets (for fry gathering). They join their husbands and tasked to cast and/or have the nets and lines. Women also participate in the fishing operation of the beach seine.

Commonly done by women and children is the gathering of shels, oysters, clams, sea cucumbers, sea urchins, harvesting of shrimps and crabs, and other aquatic products for food, medicinal purposes and additional income (shell craft, seasoning, etc.). Women are also major users of the mangrove forests and swamplands. Products harvested in these areas are used for household (fuel, medicines, food) and productive purposes (crabs, vinegar, nipa shingles, firewood, etc.)

Before actual fishing, women prepare the baits and hook to be used. They mend nets, buy and pack ice, other fishing paraphernalia and meals for each fishing trip.

Women also play a major role in the post harvest activities related to fishing; marketing is a commonly recognized domain of women in the sector. They help have the catch and then directly oversee the sorting, weighing, and packing of the catch. They do several marketing activities such as vending, selling (using market stall) and trading.

Fish processing is another activity predominantly done by women and includes smoking, drying, salting, fermenting and de-boning. Often home-based and small scale in nature, this provides additional source of income and food supplement.

Women are employed in canning and (commercial) fish processing factories. Initial interviews reveal that factories for (tuna) sardines and packaging of prawn for export employ majority women workers (Mindanao).<sup>1</sup>

Women's participation in aqua and mari-culture activities has also been increasing recently. Particularly in household based culture activities. They feed, guard, clean, harvest and market their produce.

On top of these activities, women have to manage the household and ensure the well being of all family members. Rearing the children is a major task. Together with other women in the family, she does the household chores.

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<sup>1</sup> Need further investigation / study

Oftentimes, she augments the limited income of the husband to help ends meet. More and more women are forced to seek employment in the cities as domestic helpers, waitress, factory workers, and other menial job because of the decline in fish catch. (Samar Coastal communities) She engages in several income generating activities and/or look for credit.

In the community, women still find time to participate in development and socio-cultural activities

Several case studies have showed women leading and participating in resource management activities such as mangrove planting and management, establishing marine sanctuary and apprehending illegal fishers

The different activities show the complex situation and diverse roles of women in the fisheries sector and in coastal communities differently from the men.

As a major stakeholder in the fisheries sector, women are affected differently from the men by the issues confronting the sector.

Continued Resource degradation Conversion of mangrove area and "development" of coastal areas to aquaculture, residential areas (not for the coastal population) denied women access to these resources and further marginalize them. Rapid decline in fish catch requires them to seek employment outside their communities leaving the children behind. Low level of education and lack of skills further marginalizes them in these workplaces.

Fisherfolk Settlement. Women have been on the forefront in the battle against the demolition of their houses and eventual wiping of their barangay to give way to the construction of industrial parks and beach resorts, quarrying and other agro-industrial projects (Calatagan, Calaca, Balayan, Batangas; Coastal Municipalities around Manila Bay)

Resource Use conflict. Due to decline in fish catch, women are displaced because men are using areas dominantly used by women.

Change in technology. Introduction of technology without considering resource use patterns of women usually affects them.

Lack of access to credit and capital. Project and funding facilities targeting the municipal fisheries sector do not recognize the distinct difference interest, special needs and priorities of men and women in the fisheries sector.

Non-recognition and participation in policy and program development, decision making and representation. Even though women have long been contributing to the fisheries sector and to resource management, no significant policy, program or mechanisms has been promulgated or created to reflect women's issues and interest in the fisheries sector. Representatives are taken and typecast in stereotype roles and function. Since the common knowledge is that women are not fishers, then there is automatic exclusion of women in whatever policy or program designed for fisheries development. To illustrate this, in Chapter VII General Provisions Sec. 109 of the Republic Act No. 8550, states that for the development, management and conservation for the municipal resources, there is hereby created or Fishery Grant Fund to finance fishery projects of the LGUs primarily to uplift the condition of municipal fisherfolk. The amount of One hundred million pesos (Php 100,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated out of the Department's Act (GAA) to support the Grant Fund.

Women's representation to development councils and other management bodies are limited to local level. This situation limits their participation and influence over public policies and programs from the local, national to the international levels.

Given the low level (if not nil) of recognition and appreciation of women as fishers and biases in favor of existing gender division of labor in the fisheries, women's concerns and interest will always be overlooked.

Policy options and recommendations could include:

1. In formulating policy and programs concerning the fisheries sector, women's role, participation, issues and concern must be discussed extensively and corresponding policy provisions explicitly stated. Data gathering and analysis must be improved so that both women and men's needs, opinions and interest are accounted for.
2. Policy makers and advocates have to be well informed of gender differences and interest in the sector; identify and agree on the basic principles that would guide them in mainstreaming gender concerns at the level of policy formulation, program and plan design and implementation.
3. Positive/affirmative actions need to be drawn in order to facilitate women's empowerment.

### **Guiding principles: Informed choice, Gender equality and equity**

Gender equity refers to increasing poor women's access and control over the nation's income and resources in order to address an existing maldistribution of economic of economic resources and opportunities between the sexes. (Josefa Francisco)

Mainstreaming women and gender issues in policy requires consciousness among advocates, policy makers and other public opinion makers of the existing gender biases of government policies and programs and its effect on women. Understanding gender differences in access to resources, control and benefits is necessary for the formulation of laws and policies aiming at addressing gender inequity at home, workplace and community.

Gender equality

### Identification of Issues, Implications and Policy Options

ISSUE	PROVISION	COMMENTS	OPTIONS
Non recognition of women as a major stakeholder in the fishery sector	Chapter I Declaration of Policy and Definitions Sec. 2.d  Sec. 3. 28 Sec. 3. 56	Term fisherfolk was not qualified unlike in Sec. 2, c wherein women and youth sectors were specified as part of the municipal fisherfolk	Consistency in the use of terms, phrases all through out the document.
		In Sec. 3.28, the phrase "other fisheries related activities such as preserving processing, marketing, development conserving and managing aquatic resources and the fishery resources... resource thereof" was omitted in the definition thus affecting subsequent chapters and sections.  The definition of fisherfolk has been limited to those engaged in <u>taking</u> , <u>culturing</u> , and <u>processing</u>	Include a separate provision on women in the fisheries sector defining roles and participation

		Fisheries related activities where women also engaged in such as marketing, preserving, etc. were not specified	
Women's representation in the FARMC's	Chapter III Article II Sec. 70  Sec. 75 and 78  Article II Section 72, Section 74, Section 77 on Functions of FARMCs	Women and youth sectors representation in the NFARMC was not specified.  It is not clear how many women and youth could sit as regular council members even if these women are representatives in the FARMCs. If the council members are not gender sensitive, then women's representation even at the National level will be useless.	1.Include women and youth representatives in the composition of the NFARMC 2. Clear ratios on men and women representation 3. Additional provision on building the capacities of women for meaningful participation in fisheries development and management. 4. There should be a provision or qualifying phrase to include that the Fishery Development policies and plan at all levels and ordinances ensure that women – specific issues on the fisheries are addressed. 5. Define clear criteria and process to specify that the women representatives really bring and voice out the interests and demands of women fishers.
Information gaps on women in fisheries sector and gender issues; Invisibility of women in the sector	Chapter V Fisheries Research and Development Section 84, Research and	* Understanding of the fisherfolk families' conditions and needs would be limited in scope if only coming	1. Social research should consider both the men and the women's perceptions and gender

	Development Objectives	<p>from one side or perspective (usually the men as the head of the family)</p> <p>* Men and women have different knowledge, experiences, interests and priorities.</p>	<p>differences to get the real, comprehensive conditions and needs of fisherfolk families.</p> <p>2. Add provision on Documentation of fisherfolk's (men &amp; women) initiatives on fisheries management. Conservation and protection of the coastal and marine environment</p>
	Chapter VII General Provisions Section 108 Fisherfolk Settlement areas	<p>Safe and secure settlement area is a major concern of women. They ensure that they have a healthy community wherein people could be counted and provide support while their husband are out fishing. There are threats of demolition/ displacement, they are heavily affected because it is not just the livelihood that is affected but also the children, the support system, and other matters related to the maintenance and management of the households. Usually, women are not consulted in the choice of resettlement areas and/or other options to the problem. Basic services and infrastructure usually</p>	<p>1. Establishment and creation of fisherfolk settlement areas shall be determined in consultation with the affected community especially women.</p>

		overlooked by men whose main concern is the source of livelihood.	
Lack of appreciation on the role and contribution of women in the fisheries sector	Chapter VII Section 118 Educational Campaign at all levels	Educational campaign that will be launch and pursued do not highlight the roles and contribution of the different stakeholder in the sector the efforts of the municipal fisherfolk in the management, conservation and proper use of the environment should be documented.	1. Educational campaign materials give due credit to the fisher folks including women in the promotion activities. This could be coordinated with the National Fisheries Research and Development (NFRDI).
	Chapter III Reconstitution of BFAR and creation of FARMCs Section 65. g		Add: with due consideration to the different interest and issues of men and women in the fisheries sector
Low level of women's involvement in formulating, planning and execution of fisheries policy	Sec. 124	Women are capable and actively participate in apprehension of illegal and destructive fishing activities. In some cases, they were at the forefront of apprehension operations * Women not able to access support services such as extension programs and training, because of gender biases and blindness	* Clear statement / provision on women and coastal resource management * Concrete support to women's initiatives in protection, management and conservation of the coastal and marine environment * Women should be deputized as fish warden or Provision recognizing women as fishwarden.
Infrastructure support for women in post-harvest, port and market facilities	Chapter VII General Provisions Sec. 119	Fisheries activities related to post harvest such as marketing involved women but facilities and other	Conduct proper consultation with women in establishing post-harvest, port and market facilities (add

		infrastructure support projects often do not consider the effect of these facilities and services on women. Instead of improving their access to better services, they are usually displaced.	in Sec. 119 C)
Violation of catch ceilings	Sec. 103 C Gathering and marketing of shell fishers – it shall be unlawful for any person to take, sell, transfer or have in possession for any purpose any shell fish catch which is sexually mature or below the minimum size or above the maximum quantities prescribed for the particular species	Women (vendors) are in danger of being put in prison because of “illegal actions” they did not really commit. In the first place, they do not know if what they sell are illegally caught.	* Add a provision: Give incentives to market vendors who reports about the sources of illegally caught fish and other aquatic products  * Capacitate vendors on identifying fishes and other aquatic products caught by illegal means.
	Sec. 88 (A) Dealing in, selling, or in any manner disposing of, for profit, illegally caught, gathered fisheries species shall be punished by imprisonment ranging from six (6) months to two (2) years  Sec. 91 Ban on coral exploitation and Exportation		

<p>Livelihood Support</p>	<p>Sec. 2.e To provide support to the fishery sector, primarily to the municipal fisherfolk, including women and youth sectors, through appropriate technology and research, adequate financial, production, construction of post-harvest facilities, marketing assistance and other services.</p> <p>Sec. 24 Support to Municipal Fisherfolk</p>	<p>Support to improve post harvest facilities could positively or negatively affect women if there is no in-depth analysis of their situation and possible effect of the projects on women</p>	<p>* Have women's participation in the analysis and planning of projects and programs * As a major stakeholder in the fishing industry, ensure women's participation in the review process. * Women should actively participate in government programs aimed at improving women's situation.</p> <p>In particular, identify beneficiaries and specify funding window for women fishers. Add separate provision for gant fund that addresses improvement of women as fishers. The GAA provisions on GAD budget policy could be another option to push for women's access to credit and capital although this is already outside policy legislation.</p>
<p>Incentives for municipal and small scale commercial fishers</p>	<p>Sec. 58 Post-harvest facilities, activities and trades 1. Extension of credit and incentives for post-harvest</p>	<p>* It is not clear in the fisheries code where the money/funds would</p>	<p>* Ensure women's participation in the formulation of a</p>

	operations; 2. Strengthen fisherfolk capacity, e.g. organizing. Training and credit management	come from. * The provision states increased participation of fisherfolks in post-harvest and ancillary industries. However, women's participation/ involvement in the planning of such projects is not clear when usually they are the first to be displaced by such.	comprehensive plan for post-harvest and ancillary industries. (Add in the general provision and in Sec. 58.g.)
Functions of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in ensuring women's issues and concerns in the fisheries policy and programs.	Sec. 65.M. Coordinate with LGUs and other concerned agencies for the establishment of productivity enhancing and market development programs in fishing communities to enable women to engage in other fisheries / economic activities and contribute significantly to development and <u>management efforts</u>	* Women are always considered as clients / beneficiaries not as partners or an important stakeholder in the fisheries sector	* BFAR should coordinate not only with the LGU's and other concerned agencies but also most especially with the women in the sector (Add to Sec. 65.M.)

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