

# How gender perspective contributes to improved understanding of fisheries management

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Kyoko Kusakabe, Asian Institute of Technology





Gender equalities  
have been reflected  
in various regional  
documents

- FAO's Policy Guidance Note on Strengthening Sector Policies for Better Food Security and Nutrition Results
- ASEAN good aquaculture practices
- Mekong River Commission's fisheries management and development strategies
- ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action for the ASEAN Cooperation in Agricultural Research and Development (2016-2020)
- SEAFDEC's Plan of Action on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security for the ASEAN Region Towards 2030
- Etc.



# Outline of the presentation

Methodology of the study

Visibility of women in fisheries and aquaculture

Problems of women remaining invisible

Women's organizing

Five points for future gender research in fisheries and aquaculture

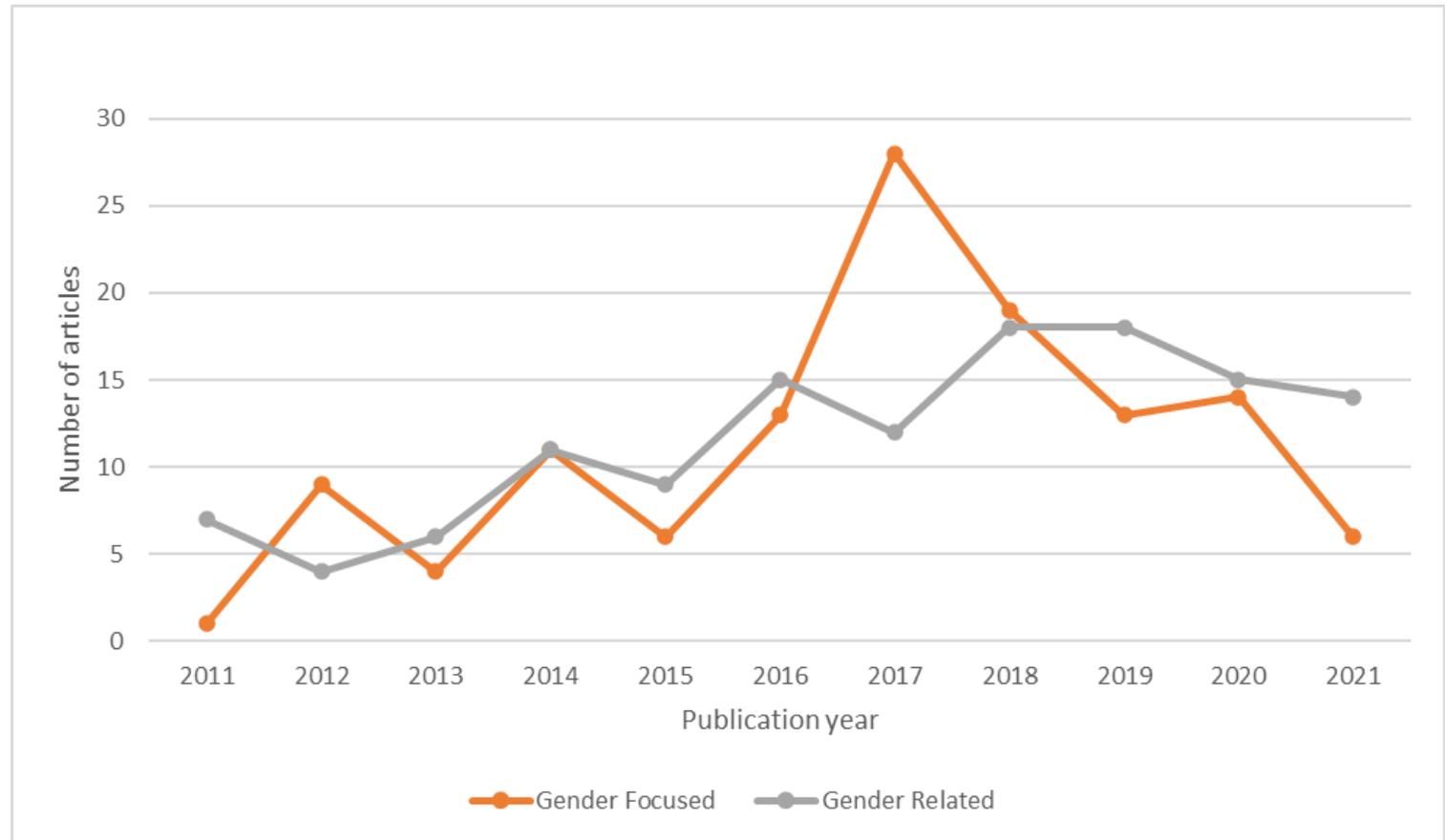


# Methodology

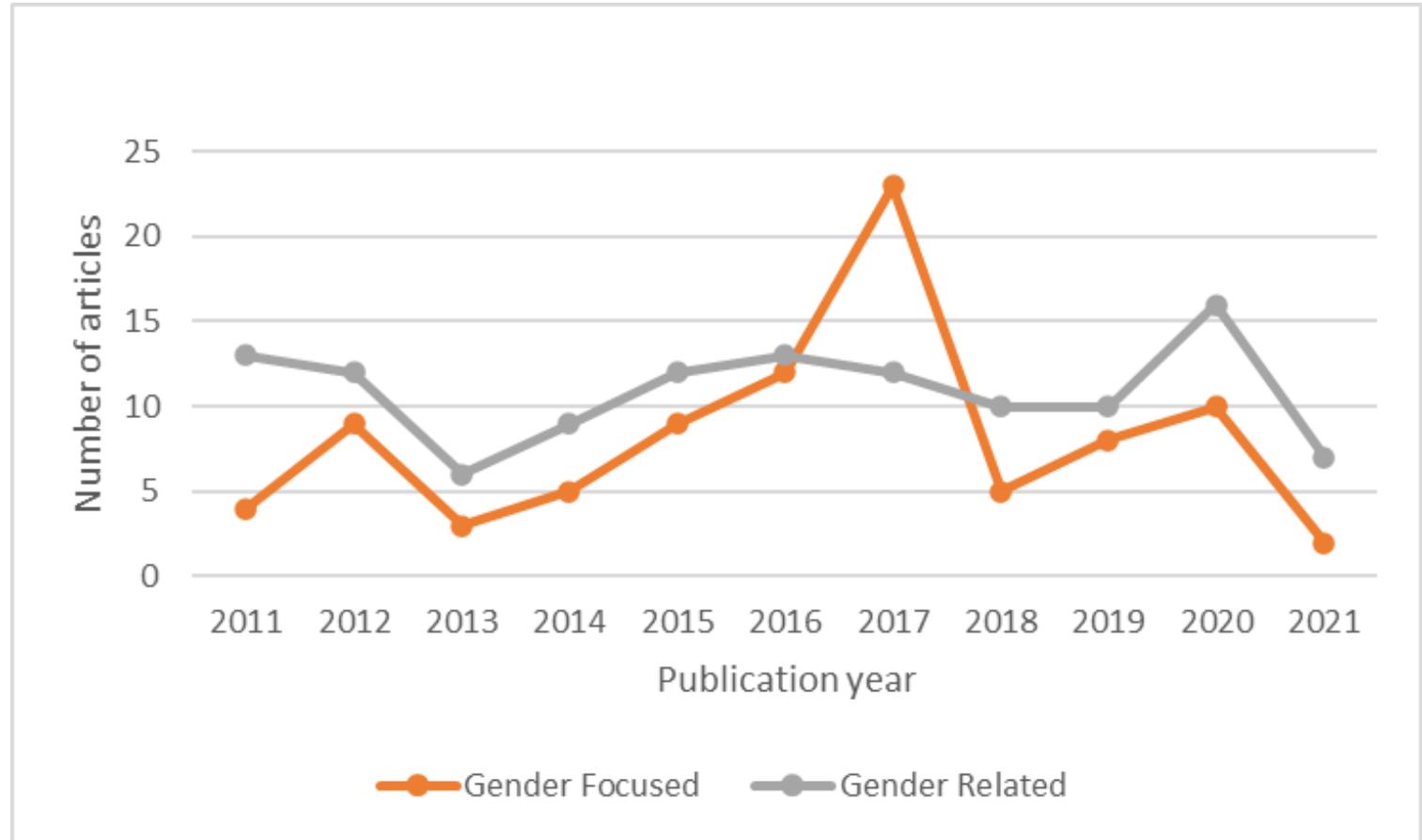
Online literature search on gender and fisheries and aquaculture in South and Southeast Asia published between 2011 and 2021.

Were able to collect and reviewed all the 253 publications on fisheries and 210 publications on aquaculture.

Number of publications on gender and fisheries by year of publication



Number of publications on gender and aquaculture by year of publication





## Examples: Contribution of women through fish processing

- South Sulawesi, Indonesia; Java, Indonesia; Negros Oriental – women’s fish smoking and marketing activities are crucial to household income and contribute to alleviating poverty (Nurbayani et al. 2021; Anna 2012; Pedrajas et al. 2018).
- In Cambodia, women owned enterprises account for 54% of total fermented products, 67 % of marinated fish and fish ball products, 75% of fish sauce production, and half of dried shrimp production (UNIDO 2021).

# Still women's invisibility in fisheries and aquaculture persists

- Negros Occidental in the Philippines – only boat fishing is counted as fishing
- North Sulawesi province, Indonesia – fish processing and marketing are not included in fisheries data.
- Cambodia – fisher women identified fishing as part of their work, while few men acknowledged that women play a role in fishing.
- Women's contribution taken for granted
  - Women and children engage in alternative business as part of the diversification strategies of fishing households (Indonesia, Cambodia, Timor Leste) – non-fish income generating activities, migration
  - Seaweed farming – considered to be “family” business

Because women  
are invisible,  
they get missed  
out in support

- **Women's capacity building not supported**
  - Indonesia – support for ice and boats, but few for women including facilitating women's ability to participate in mangrove management.
- **Women's need not met after disaster**
  - Philippines – after Typhoon Haiyan, men identified fishing boats as their (community) needs but did not reflect the needs of women. But after the typhoon, men left the village for labor migration leaving women in the village. Women came together to protest and were able to create community stores with the help of external support (Badayos-Jover 2017)
- **Women not able to secure place to sell fish**
  - In Bihar, India, women traders were driven out of marketplace and had to sell in unauthorized spaces in roadsides (Kumari 2016), but in General Santos City, the Philippines, women were also prevented from establishing formal business but they were able to circumvent the rules by making sure that no trouble is caused (Pavo and Digal 2017).

# And it can lead to problematic practices in fisheries and aquaculture

- Exclusion of women lead to their less understanding of the need for environment protection/ conservation
  - Tonle Sap, Cambodia – women’s opinions were valued less and women were not included as committee members – which led to women having less knowledge on the consequences of environmental damage (Kwok et al. 2019).
- Women’s unpaid work and role in food provision neglected
  - Bangladesh – women’s workload changed – with shrimp farming, women stopped rice production and were drew into shrimp farming – brackish-water shrimp farming increase made it impossible for them to continue with rice and vegetable production (Swapan and Gavin 2011).
- Women vendors sell at night because they are not entitled to sell during day time
  - Kerala, India – Women vendors are not entitled to sell during day time. Women face difficulty in taking public transport because they work during odd hours, and are accused of seducing drunken men (Aswathy and Kalpana 2019).

# Women organizing for change



# Women's groups

- Raise money and provide legal support
  - Maharashtra, India – women vendors raised money to upgrade the amenities of the market, issued ID cards to members which allowed them exclusive rights over sales of products (Salim and Geetha 2013).
- Better access to finance (loan, savings, pooled funds)(India, Indonesia, Philippines)
- Better knowledge and technologies
  - Use of Chinese dip net (India – Vipinkumar et al. 2017)
  - Clam collection techniques (Indonesia – Fitriana and Stacey 2012).

# Group enterprises of women

- Improve fish handling for higher value product
  - Philippines – in the conservation enterprise group, women processors improved quality of their product and processing by improving fish handling to meet higher demand and passing safety standards to earn high value labels for their products. They served not only as a business enterprise, but also served as an advocacy organization for fisheries' sustainability (Pedrajas et al. 2018)
- Improve access to customers
  - Karnataka, India – M-commerce helped women vendors to quickly reach customer on the same day to avoid lowering price because of decline in freshness (Prabhu and Joshi 2018).

# Women's leadership and engagement in fisheries management

- Alleviating women's household work allow women to take up leadership in turn improved the efficiency of fishery organization
  - Pangasinan, Philippines – alleviating women's domestic responsibilities enabled them to participate in stronger leadership and management roles in fisherfolk organizations. Female leadership of a male dominated fishery organization was made more efficient because woman leader abolished the male leaders' practice of post-work drinking that was draining the organization's resources. (Dasig 2020)
- Women's engagement in community-based tourism
  - Philippines – women's involvement in fisherfolk association lead to women's active engagement in community-based tourism. Women were not able to earn enough by gleaning and fisheries work, but with tourism activities, they were able to decrease the time spent in gleaning and fishing and earn better income (Lowe and Tejada 2019).
- Traditional resource management allowed women to participate better
  - Indonesia – traditional style of marine resources management method called *papadak* or *hohlok* was introduced and women participated in drafting the rules of *papadak*. This allowed women's voices to be heard, and changed the idea that women were only responsible for reproductive activities (Oktavia et al. 2018)

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- Technology transfer + other welfare measures ensure women's income increase
    - Tamil Nadu, India – post tsunami, brackish-water aquaculture technologies were transferred to women's SHGs + welfare measures directed by various government agencies and NGOs -> positive changes in attitudes among women and they were able to improve their contributions to family incomes (Shanthi et al. 2017)
  - Women trained for marketing challenge gender norms
    - Bagerhat, Bangladesh – women trained on marketing fish where social norm is that men are the ones who sell fish. Women gained confidence to sell in the market and now leading the selling activities- even though they face criticism. (Farnworth et al. 2015)
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# Uphill battle in organizing

- **Competition between women's SHGs and men's SHGs**
  - Kerala, India – mussel farming is dominated by women lead SHGs – but with men's SHGs joining mussel farming, competition grew and cost of labor and quality of seeds increased, space in aquaculture for women's SHGs reduced (Ramachandran 2012).
- **Vocal women not necessarily the best leader**
  - Khulna, Bangladesh – Aquaculture training project trained women and men lead farmers. Elected women leaders were active and empowered, ready to challenge social norms, but not necessarily worked to support the group over her own economic benefits. Quieter women can actually be better leaders especially with capacity development on assertiveness (Farnworth et al 2015).

What have we learned?



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learned?

Terminology matters

Value Chain Analysis

Fostering women's sense of entitlement

Security in fisheries and aquaculture

Learning from gender and agriculture

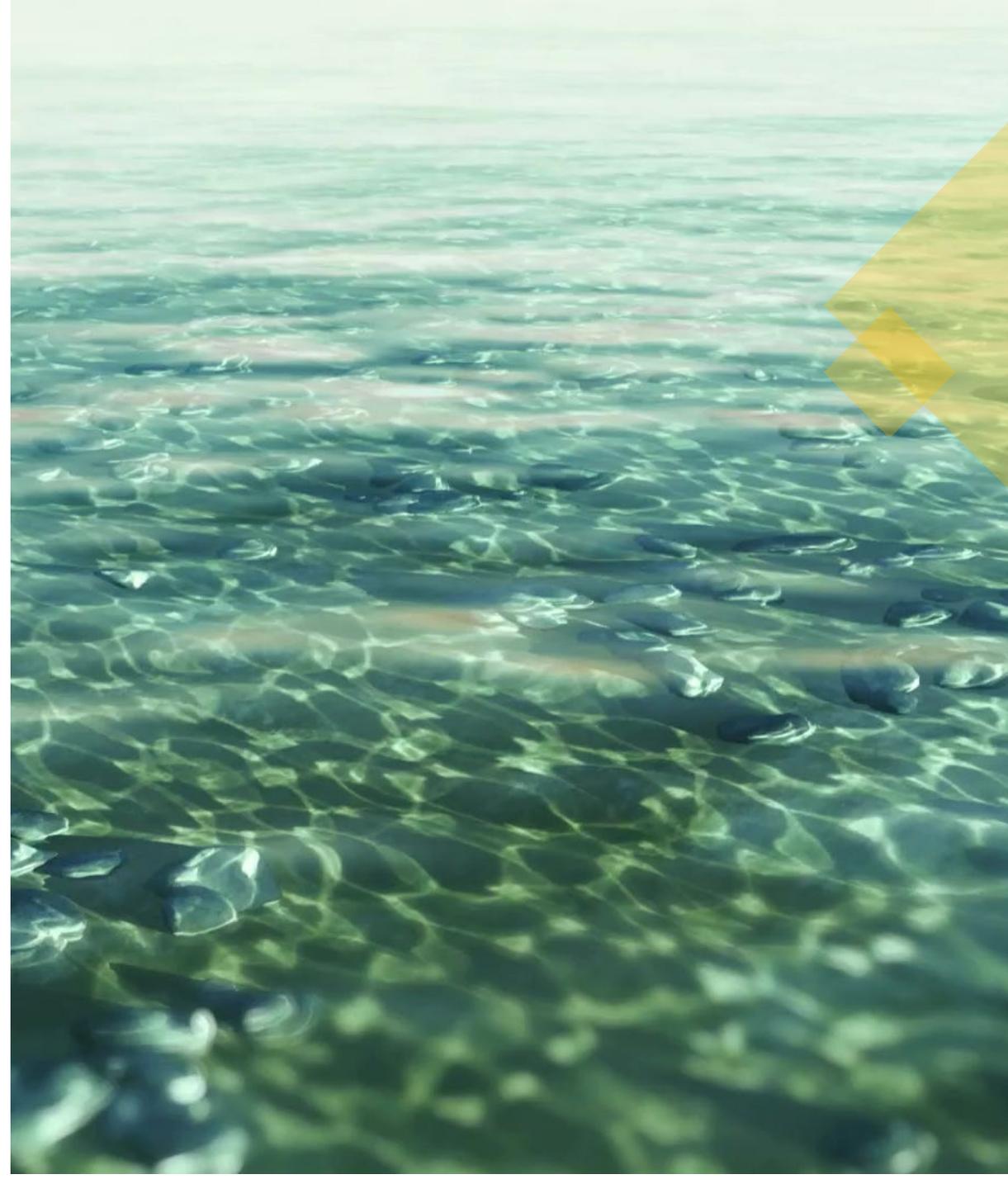
# (1) Terminology matters

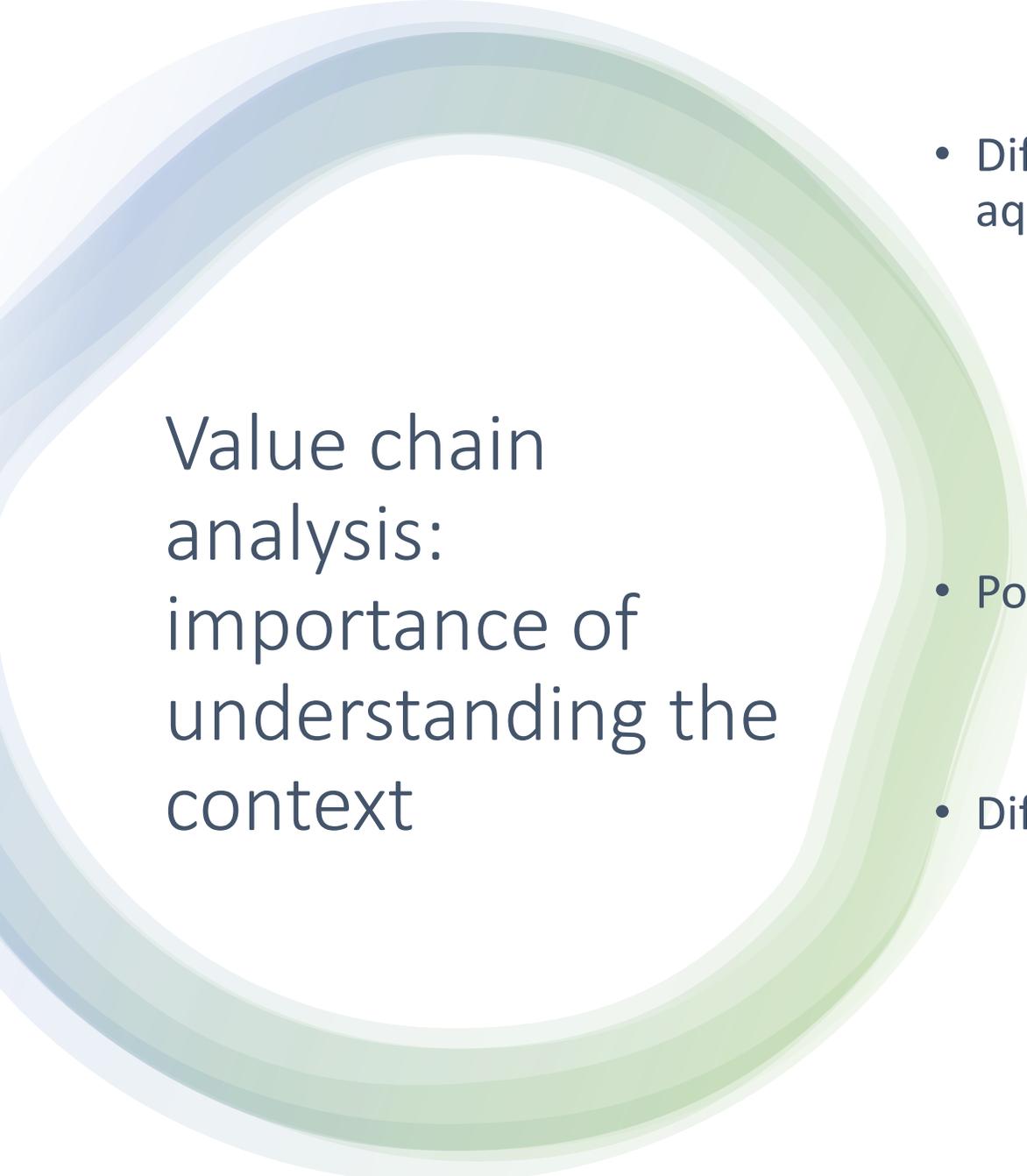
- Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication noted that
  - “Small-scale and artisanal fisheries, encompassing all activities along the value chain – pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest – undertaken by men and women, play an important role in food security and nutrition, poverty eradication, equitable development and sustainable resource utilization” (p. ix).
- Need to make sure that women are included as “real” fishers and not excluded from fishers’ organizations and their roles and contribution acknowledged/ recognized / supported.



## (2) Value Chain Analysis

- The value of Value Chain Approach is that it encompasses all activities, including women's post harvest work, unpaid support work in fisheries and aquaculture as well as household reproductive and care work.
- Holistic understanding of the livelihood (which fisheries and aquaculture is only a part of)
- Women need to renegotiate their domestic responsibilities to be engaged in fisheries and aquaculture.





Value chain  
analysis:  
importance of  
understanding the  
context

- Different involvement of women in fishing and aquaculture
  - On boat/without boat, alone/ with men,
  - Ownership of seaweed cultivation business can be different by location: Alor Regency, Indonesia, it is a family business owned by men as head of household. In Rote, Indonesia, seaweed farming is an individual business and women and men own separate farms, although they cooperate in labor intensive work.
- Pond water for multiple use
  - aquaculture, washing, watering, bathing
  - women prefer to keep it close to home and shaded in Bangladesh (Farnworth et al .2016)
- Differences by age, location, education level, religion
  - Muslim women do not sell fish, while Hindu women does - India
  - Younger women go for labor migration while older women remain in fisheries – Thailand
  - Richer women do not work in aquaculture (hire workers) - Bangladesh



### (3) Fostering women's sense of entitlement

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- Society's recognition and the individual self-perception shape women's sense of entitlement. Women can accept and internalize their vulnerability and marginalization because of their constant reminder of their inferior position (especially in fisheries and aquaculture)
  - Time constraint that restricts women to be engaged in aquaculture can make women feel inferior.
  - Women suffer from criticism that they are neglecting the care of children and household work (Bosma et al 2019)
  - Women's contribution taken for granted as a "member of household"
- Women (and also marginalized men SSF) do not demand, voice their needs or try to negotiate under deprivation because of their low sense of entitlement.
- Importance of support and recognition from other members of the family, by other group members, etc.

## Women's sense of entitlement is further discouraged because of their dependence on others (men)

- Bangladesh – women were trained but were not able to implement technology because her family members did not trust her knowledge.
- Khulna, Bangladesh → aquaculture training to women → men felt excluded and do not help in aquaculture → increase in women's workload (Morgan et al. 2015)
- Trincomalee, Sri Lanka – women operate their fish selling businesses through their kinship network, buying fish from male relatives. But in order to sustain this tie, women need to extend their domestic responsibilities to the whole kin group, cooking, collecting water and gathering firewood for the whole extended family network (Lokuge and Hilhorst 2017).
- Philippines – women can benefit from male relative's position in the fishing community, but in turn this sustain male dominance because the influence does not come from the woman herself (Kawarazuka et al. 2017)

More research needed to identify how to strengthen women's sense of entitlement in fisheries and aquaculture.



## (4) Security in fisheries and aquaculture

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- Little insurance for fisheries and aquaculture.
- Insurance through fisherfolk organization, where women are excluded
- Violence against women in fisheries and aquaculture
  - Bangladesh – GBV in the fisheries sector persists (Munir 2020)
  - Philippines – when fish catch is low women are more likely to be subjected to DV since they are blamed for the loss (Torell et al. 2021).
  - Myanmar- “expression of a masculinity that becomes distorted by long months of captivity and isolation” (Belton et al. 2019)
  - India – alcoholism not only resulted in violence but also affected seaweed harvesting activities (Coulthard et al 2019)
  - Cambodia – reduction of DV improved income (as a result of awareness-raising campaigns) (Locke et al. 2017)
- How do gender norms change under shock/ rupture?



## (5) Learning from gender and agriculture

- Land rights and inheritance
  - What kind of rights is important
  - Perception / legal
- Access to technology, inputs and water
- Division of labor
- Climate change adaptation
  
- Especially for aquaculture

## MORE IN THIS PUBLICATION

Kusakabe, K. and Thongprasert, S. 2022. *Women and men in small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in Asia – Barriers, constraints and opportunities towards equality and secure livelihoods*. Bangkok, FAO.

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Or contact:

Kyoko Kusakabe (kyokok@ait.ac.th)



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

### **Women and men in small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in Asia**

Barriers, constraints and opportunities  
towards equality and secure livelihoods



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Thank you

