

Edited by Julieanne Porter

Welcome to Gender & Development's Views, events, and debates section. We'd like to invite readers to respond to any of the views expressed in this section, to contact us with reports of events, and to suggest debates on important contemporary issues of relevance to the journal's core concern: to strengthen and support development which supports women's empowerment and gender equality as goals. We'd also like to invite you to send us your feedback on Gender & Development, and suggestions for future issues, to: gadeditor@oxfam.org.uk

Gender and fisheries: solutions through gender research

On 21–22 November 2007, the 2nd Global Symposium on Gender and Fisheries will be held in Kochi, India, as part of the 8th Asian Fisheries Forum. Fisheries and aquaculture have previously been considered an industry dominated by men and male workers. Yet rapid changes in the world's fish supply chains are having a direct effect on the livelihoods of millions of women. The Asian Fisheries Society (AFS) and partners have been working to address this missing element through research on gender roles and issues effecting women in the industry, and this will be discussed at this year's Symposium.



Female vendors waiting for the fishing boats to arrive, Koolaiyar, India (Rajendra Shaw/Oxfam)

History of the symposium

The genesis of the 2007 symposium lies in earlier workshops, first in Cambodia in 1994, then a regional 'women in fisheries in Indochina' meeting held in 1996. At the latter workshop the organisers were joined by WorldFish Center – one of the 15 centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). This meeting highlighted the important contributions that women make to fisheries in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. Participants

recommended organising a meeting at the Asian level to explore women's contributions more broadly.

The first Asia-wide symposium was organised by AFS and held on 'Women in Fisheries' at the 5th Asian Fisheries Forum in Chiangmai, Thailand, in 1998. The published proceedings reviewed the largely unrecognised contributions made by women in each Asian country or sub-region. Many suggested how to remedy the identified problems, such as women's poor access to credit, and oppressive labour practices towards women in Asia's new export processing factories, though few addressed systemic causes.

In 2001, AFS followed up with a global examination of 'Women in Fisheries' at the 6th Asian Fisheries Forum in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. This larger forum included participants from Asia, Africa, North and South America, Europe and Oceania. This symposium was one of the first in the world to warn of the high incidence of HIV and AIDS in Asian and African fishing communities.

Recent developments

To this point the symposia papers had been largely descriptive and it was now felt that that focusing on 'women in fisheries' risked simplifying the complex relationships between women, men, and children in the fishing communities. Therefore, with the aim of addressing the gendered context of the fisheries industry, the First Global Symposium on Gender and Fisheries was held in 2004 in Penang, Malaysia, at the 7th Asian Fisheries Forum. The new 'gender' focus embarked on the current course, with papers of greater research depth and topicality. The theme was 'Changing Tradition: First Global look at the Gender Dimensions of Fisheries' and delegates considered the impact of HIV and AIDS, globalisation, and trade on women, and worked towards making the conceptual shift from 'women in fisheries' to 'gender and fisheries'. Support for the Symposium came from the CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) Gender and Diversity Program and WorldFish.

The 2007 event

The 2007 2nd Global Symposium on Gender and Fisheries, with its theme "Gender and Fisheries: solutions through gender research" invites scientists and researchers to share their methodology

and knowledge in the emerging research field of gender and fisheries in the following areas:

- gender issues on inland and coastal resource management and aquaculture;
- income, fish processing, trade, globalisation, and the WTO;
- nutrition and human health;
- gender mainstreaming in fisheries research and development projects;
- models for successful fishing/fish farming families/communities.



Musulamma, a fisherwoman, selling fish near Brichgunj, Andaman Islands (Rajendra Shaw/Oxfam)



Members of Union Regionale Santa Yalla, an NGO representing women's 'groupements', Santa Yalla, Senegal (Ami Vitale/Oxfam)

Further Information

If you wish to be added to the Gender and Fisheries email list, contact Choo Poh Sze on p.choo@cgiar.org. Further information on the WorldFish Center can be viewed on their website: www.worldfishcenter.org.

A copy of the reports from all three Asian Fisheries Society Symposia can be downloaded from the WorldFish Center website:

- Global Symposium on Gender and Fisheries: Seventh Asian Fisheries Forum (Malaysia, 2004): www.worldfishcenter.org/cms/list_article.aspx?catID=39&ddIID=350
- Global Symposium on Women in Fisheries (at the Sixth Asian Fisheries Forum, Taiwan 2001): www.worldfishcenter.org/Pub_WIF.htm
- International Symposium on Women in Asian Fisheries (at the Fifth Asian Fisheries Forum, Thailand 1998): www.worldfishcenter.org/Pub_WIF.htm

Gender & Development readers can obtain further information about the 2nd Global Symposium, 'Gender and Fisheries: solutions through gender research', as well as registration details, by contacting the organisers:

- Professor Mohan Joseph Modayil (Convenor), 8AFF 2007, C.M.F.R.I., P.O. Box 1603, Kochi-682018, Kerala State, India, Fax: + 91-484-2394909, Email: 8aff2007@gmail.com, Web: http://www.8aff2007.org/html/aff_inr_gen_08.html
- The Secretariat, 8AFF 2007, c/o Director, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Marine Drive North Extension, Ernakulam North P.O., Kochi-682018, Kerala State, India

You can also find out more about CGIAR's Gender & Diversity programme at www.genderdiversity.cgiar.org/