

Gendered Perspective on Co-management and Conservation of Fisheries Resources: Roles and Research Priorities



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Outline

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Background

Women play a critical but often undervalued role in the fisheries sector.

Several studies conducted.

Tools and methodologies developed to analyse the contributions of women to the fisheries sector.

Roles played and constraints perceived/experienced by women fisherfolks at various stages of fisheries and aquaculture value chains including production, processing, value addition, marketing, etc, documented now.

Increased awareness of gender issues in fisheries.

Gender emerging as an important agenda in the research, development and policy discourses in fisheries.



Focus of this paper

Restricted to:

Potential role of women in co-management and conservation of natural/ capture fisheries resources.

Freshwater fisheries - large reservoirs, lakes and riverine.

Research issues on this theme.

Why gendered perspective? (1)

Few specific points w. r. t . co-management and conservation of natural fisheries resources

- **Gender dimensions missing in fisheries management**
(Source: Meryl Williams 2010).
- Women often have different knowledge and experience to share w.r.t. resource availability and use. They can contribute to a different and 'bigger picture' for resource managers and planners.
- Due to their differential roles, men and women fishers could be affected differently by conservation measures.

Why gendered perspective? (2)

- Understanding the gender dynamics and how it can potentially impact emerging processes like CBFM will help improve the likelihood of success of these processes.
- There is a strong gender dimension to the way in which climate changes could be experienced by fishermen and women, due to gender roles and differential access to resources.

(Source: <http://www.unfpa.org/public/news/pid/4499>).

- The organizational and collaborative abilities of women make them ideal partners in fisheries development and management initiatives. With some training and empowerment, women could participate in monitoring activities, particularly important in mitigating the impact of climate change.

(Source: Harper et. al. 2013. Marine Policy 39. 56–63).

Moving beyond '*Why gender*'..... to '*Gender for What*' in fisheries management!

.... More 'questions' to further strengthen the growing realization!

- Can women play a significant role in improving the management of fisheries resources?
- Can women prove a valuable support system at the grassroots level for planning and effectively implementing conservation measures?
- Can women's greater involvement in fisheries resource management lead to sustainable resource uses?.

If yes, how?

- What could be its implications for management of fisheries resources?

Our field observations

Participation of women fishers in various roles played by fishing cooperative societies in co-management of resources

Study sites and respondents

State	Location	No. of Coop. societies studied	Total no. of respondents	Women respondents
MP	Tawa reservoir	10	100	30
	Bergi reservoir	15	150	35
HP	Gobind Sagar reservoir	11	110	25
	Pong reservoir	9	90	15
UP	Riverine societies (Sultanpur)	4	40	10
	Small reservoirs/ Lakes (Faizabad, Jhansi, Lalitpur)	9	90	20
Odisha	Suroda reservoir	1	100	20
Chhatis garh	Mahanadi river basin (Initiated)	-	70	30
	Total	58	785	185

Methodology

A methodology mix

Survey research (Quantitative)

With the help of specifically prepared questionnaire.

Qualitative

- In-depth informal interview with key informants, office bearers of state fisheries department officials, NGOs.
- Observations of selected activities at the selected sites

Views from field interaction



Participation of women fishers in various roles played by fishing cooperative societies in co-management of resources (1)

Production and marketing management

Roles played	M.P.	H.P.	Odisha	UP
Devise mechanisms & procedures, and coordinate fishing efforts of members	M ✓	M ✓	M ✓	M
	W ✓	W	W ✓	W
Manage marketing of fishes of the members	M ✓	M ✓	M ✓	M ✓
	W	W ✓	W	W
Maintain proper records	M ✓	M ✓	M ✓	M
	W	W	W	W

Participation of women fishers in various roles played by fishing cooperative societies in co-management of resources (2)

Just subject of revenue collection and implementation of state schemes

Roles played	M.P.	H.P.	Odisha	UP
Provide an organizational base at grass-root level for state fish agencies to implement revenue collection	M ✓	M ✓	M ✓	M ✓
	W ✓	W	W ✓	W
Facilitate implementation of state welfare schemes	M ✓	M ✓	M ✓	M ✓
	W ✓	W ✓	W ✓	W

Participation of women fishers in various roles played by fishing cooperative societies in co-management of resources (3)

Socio -organisational and educational

Roles played	M.P.	H.P.	Odisha	UP
Provide moral support to their members	M ✓	M ✓	M ✓	M
	W ✓	W ✓	W ✓	W
Organise collective action to get the fishing rights	M ✓	M	M	M
	W ✓	W	W	W
Facilitate equitable sharing of benefits among its members	M ✓	M ✓	M ✓	M
	W ✓	W	W ✓	W
Serve as a social & organizational force for making members to abide by the conservation rules	M ✓	M ✓	M ✓	M
	W ✓	W ✓	W ✓	W



Views from the field



Participation of women fishers in various roles played by fishing cooperative societies in co-management of resources (4)

Resource enhancement/ conservation

Roles played	M.P.	H.P.	Odisha	UP
Offer suggestions to state agencies & eager to innovate for improving resource	M ✓	M ✓	M ✓	M
	W	W	W ✓	W
Undertake resource enhancement measures (e.g. stocking of fish seed, etc.)	M ✓	M ✓	M ✓	M
	W ✓	W	W ✓	W
Take innovative steps as solutions for local limitations in resource management	M ✓	M	M	M
	W ✓	W	W	W

Active (A) vs. Passive (P) participation

Roles played	M.P.		H.P.		Odisha		UP	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
Production and marketing management	P	A	P	A	P	A	--	P
Being a subject of revenue collection and implementation of state schemes	A	A	P	A	A	A	--	A
Socio -organisational/ educational	A	A	P	A	A	A	--	--
Resource enhancement/ conservation	A	A	P	A	A	A	--	--

Views from the field



Conservation orientation of women and men fishers

- inclination, opinion and commitment that the fisherfolk expresses towards conservation of fishery resources.
- measured by an index developed for this purpose.

Conservation orientation	M.P.		H.P.		Odisha		UP	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
Low			√				√	√
Medium				√				
High	√	√			√	√		

Inferences (1)

Women can play roles not only in production and marketing component of the freshwater fisheries value chain, but can contribute in resource enhancement measures in various ways.

Women can play roles equal to those performed by the men in co-management and conservation of freshwater fisheries resources.

Inferences (2)

Activeness or passiveness of roles played by men and women in freshwater fisheries could be a function of the awareness and empowerment that the fishers may have undergone due either to self-awakening because of pressing needs or assistance/ hand-holding by the external agencies (like NGOs or state institutions) or both !

Further research studies are needed to explore these issues in greater details and depth in varying situations.

Where do we go from here ?...Few pointers for research (1)

Assessing the gendered nature of access to fisheries resources in fishing and ecosystem services and overall effect this has on resources health as well as livelihoods.

Participation (quantitative as well as qualitative) of women fishers in co-management initiatives/ institutions /organisations, and its impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of these institutions and vice – versa.

Assessment of the gendered impacts of climate change and responses of women and men fishers in various aquatic ecosystems.

Where do we go from here ?...Few pointers for research (2)

Whether reducing fisherwomen's vulnerability and marginalization will increase their incentives and capacity to participate and contribute to a responsible and responsive resource management? . If yes, how to do it?

How the institutional framework for freshwater fishery governance at various places impacts upon the livelihood strategies followed by the fisherwomen?

How fisherwomen have adapted to the declining fishery resources over time, and how the strategies adopted by them have impacted upon the resource health?

Thanks for your kind attention