NAVIGATING GENGER ISSUES IN AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES: INSIGHTS FROM SUBSAHARAN AFRICA

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GAF GENDER IN AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES SECTION

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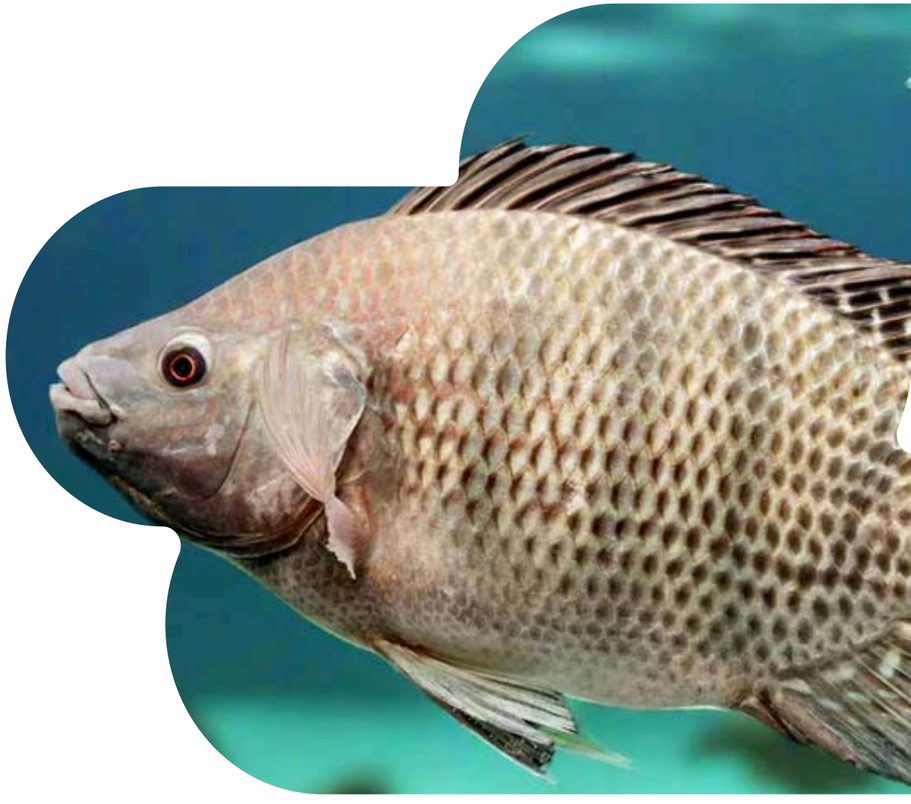
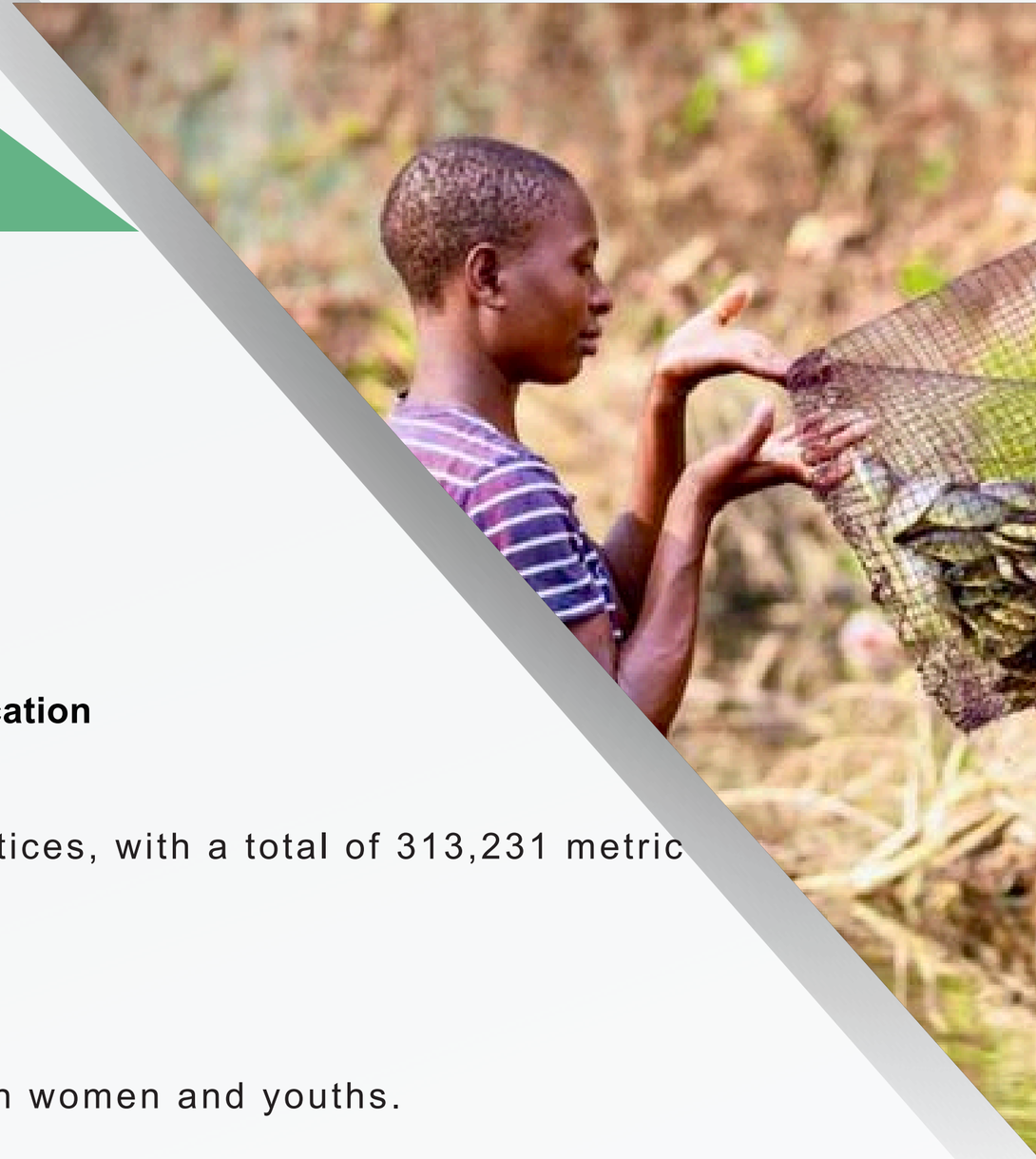


Introduction



- Aquaculture across Sub-Saharan Africa is imperative for:

1. **Food Security**

2. Livelihood

3. Economic diversification and growth

- **Nigeria** is the second largest contributor to Africa's aquaculture practices, with a total of 313,231 metric tons annually, and the largest in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Alienates, prevents poverty, and stands as a survival strategy
- Over **12 million** Africans benefit **directly** or **indirectly**, including both women and youths.
- SSA women represent 58% of the labour force in aquaculture with respect to pre- and post-harvest.
- The women contributed 16% of labor days, yet they were undervalued and underpaid.

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- In Zambia, women contribute to 60% of labourers across the aquaculture value chain.
- It is estimated that out of the total population in aquculture in Nigeria, 47 per cent are women.
- In Ghana, an estimated 40% of aquaculturists are women in with the majority in the post-harvest sector.
- SSA Women contribute notably to the national economies through their participation in aquaculture processing and marketing.
- Yet these women are being undervalued and underpaid for their labor.

Methodology

- A netnography method was employed to search for online literature through e-libraries, Google Scholar, Research Gate, and the Scribes database.

- Relevant literature was retrieved from the search databases using the keywords "aquaculture, Gender, Sub-Saharan, West Africa, Nigeria".

- The literature search was limited to the past 10-15 years to ensure currency and relevance
- Four SSA counties were chosen as case studies to: provide a regional spread across west africa9Nigeria, Ghana) and east africa (Uganda and Kenya), , also, they all capture both opportunities and co nstraints facing women in aquaculture and fishries in SSA with different gender dynamics

Gender Issues and Challenges - Climate and Economic Challenges

Rising temperatures and unpredictable weather

Disrupt the aquaculture engagements of women. (Malawi, Zambia)

Climate-induced water shortages

Increase women's workload in undervalued nodes of aquaculture

Macroeconomic downturns

Including inflation, currency depreciation, and the removal of fuel subsidy in Nigeria, 2023 contributes to economic downturn.

Low-Quality Seed

In Nigeria, women suffer from a shortage of high-quality seeds due to a lack of technical expertise amongst them.

Women Fish Processors: A case study of Nigeria

- Women dominate fish processing and marketing, but poor infrastructure leads to post-harvest losses up to 30%
- Clustered and cooperative farming(Epe Lagos women occupy 45.6% of the cluster), (Afodu et. al, 2016)
- Cultural and traditional norms(ondo and makoko women as case studies) (Oloko et al , 2022)

Small-Scale Aquaculture: A Case Study of Uganda

- **Ugandan** women in cooperatives reportedly improved bargaining power and higher incomes, showing that collective action can overcome systemic barriers

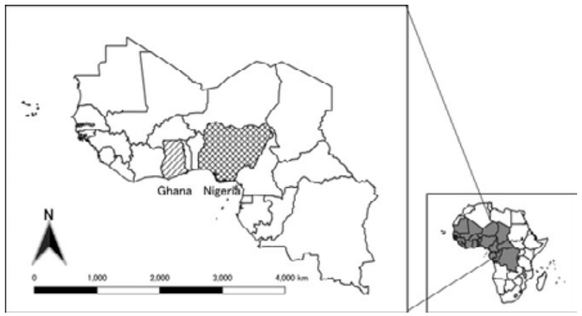
- lack of institutional recognition of their cooperatives with relevant authorities (Gertrude et al, 2018)

Small-Scale Aquaculture: A Case Study of Kenya

- 58% of women engage in post-harvest management activities (Chepkirui et. al., 2023)
- There is a high prevalence of Jaboya, a transactional relationship where women are coerced into bartering sex for fish, along Lake Victoria. (Farm Africa, 2025)
- Biological make up of women(mentruation) women are considered unclean, LUO community in Kenya(Zack, 2022)
- Women rely on shelled mollusc fishing as their primary occupation compared to men. (Alati,2023)

Women in post- harvest production: A case study of Ghana

- **In Ghana**, women traders (“fish mammies”) finance fishing trips but face exploitation in male-dominated decision-making structures. (Okafor-Yarwood et. al, 2025)



GAP IN LITERATURE

- Several studies have explored and confirmed that while Sub-Saharan African women are pivotal to aquaculture yet their roles are often underrepresented, and they engage in unpaid labour.

- Oloko et al (2022), in their review, explored the cultural nuances and barriers that women encounter in Ondo state, Nigeria.

- Adam and Njogu (2023), in their study of 78 articles on aquaculture in Nigeria, found that gender transformation within the sector remains limited.

- Similarly, Gertrude et al (2018) identified a lack of institutional of women's cooperatives by relevant authorities to be a major challenge for Ugandan women.

- In the same vein, the hindrances of the biological makeup of women, and sexual abuse in Kenya, as indicated by Zack(2022) and Farm Africa, (2025)

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- These studies highlighted the challenges of the SSA women, yet little or few have extensively explored how SSA women navigate these challenges.

- Although there are some successful projects but the policy frameworks do not fully incorporate the findings effectively. Few studies deeply explore how climate change specifically impacts women in relation to environmental change.

- Lastly, in Nigeria, despite the visibility of these women and the account of the production tons, we have little or no database of female farmers.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

- SSA women should not be viewed as marginal actors but as pivotal contributors to aquaculture’s growth.
- Embedding feminist frameworks, robust gender data will help measure and sustain progress.
- Lack of gender-disaggregated data: Lack of sufficient data on women’s actual participation across different aquaculture nodes, is making it difficult to design targeted interventions

THANK YOU!