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**WOMEN IN FISH VALUE CHAIN
AND COLLECTIVE BUSINESS:
CASE OF PROCESSED FISH
TRADERS IN CAMBODIA**

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Women's economic empowerment

- Women's small scale enterprises and their limitations
 - Lack of access to resources (financial, information, technical)
 - High cost (transportation, raw material)
 - Lack of negotiation power
 - Lack of support from family
 - Triple workload
 - Lack of labor
 - Invisibility

Women's economic empowerment through collective business?

- Organizing women to
 - ▣ Access resources (credit, market information, technical knowledge)
 - ▣ Save cost (transportation, bulk buying)
 - ▣ Visibility
 - ▣ Negotiation (price, etc.)
 - ▣ Solidarity

Are fisheries-related businesses different from other business?

- Seasonal
- Price fluctuation
- Gender division of labor
- Value chain (short, fast)



- More intense than in agriculture-related business?



Do collective business empower women in fisheries-related (fish processing) business?



History of trade on processed fish in Cambodia

- Closed border and black market trade in the 1980s and early 90s.
- Open border 1994/95
- *Prahok* (fermented fish) trade
 - ▣ Large number of semi-processors, small number of exporters, one or two Thai buyers at the border
- 2005 Department of fisheries → one exporter per province
- 2010s: Organizing women processors
 - ▣ Group credit
 - ▣ Cooperative

Women processors in joint companies and cooperative

- Small scale processor (*fermented fish - prahok*) for domestic market (and little import)
 - ▣ Neighbors; seasonal
 - ▣ Stable procurement and market (small)
- *Prahok* association to sell semi-processed fish to larger scale processor
 - ▣ Save transportation cost
- Credit association



- “It is better to have one company per province. Since Cambodian traders are competing with each other, Thai traders can take advantage of that and not repay. If Cambodian traders are coordinated, we can pressure Thai traders to repay.” (women co-owner of prahok company in Battambang province)

Difficulties in joint business

- Linkages with Thai customers
- Conflict in which Thai customer to give priority
- Competing for raw material.



- “There is no fish traders’ association. It is difficult for traders to work together, especially now that there is less fish.” (male fish trader in Pursat)
- “It is easier to do business alone. Thai customers become confused, since they cannot order directly to us personally like before. In theory, it is good to work as a company, but in reality, it does not go like that.” (woman prahok company owner)

- “The most important part about trade is regular customers. The whole trade solely depends on this. The regular customer in Thailand will set the price, but she makes sure that I will also have some profit. Everyone wants to keep good relations with their own customers, so there will be conflict which customer will be given priority.” (former fish exporter woman in Banteay Meanchey)



Concluding remarks

- Companies (joint business) did not give women traders strong negotiation power, or price control.
- Value chain lead by Thai traders → Cambodian traders' dependence (and perceived reciprocity) on Thai traders
- Depending on the structure of value chain, horizontal linkages are not useful?
- Nature of value chain (unstable and need speed)



THANK YOU