THE GENDERED AND SOCIAL IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Case studies from the Pacific

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FISHERWOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO TOTAL ANNUAL SUBSISTENCE AND ANNUAL CATCH
Social changes in the Pacific

Institutional change and modifications

• Traditional roles-
• Gender roles undergoing many changes
• Fisheries development and management strategies
• Post-harvest, distribution and marketing strategy also undergoing changes
Case studies

• In Fiji, Solomon Islands, Niue, Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia states
  – Women predominantly fish the coastal zone areas thus have a wealth of knowledge
Traditional knowledge and skills of women.

- Fishing methods are mostly traditional
- Have a very sound knowledge.
• Niue (Polynesia)- women are the major fishers along the coastal zone and engage in both subsistence and small-scale commercial fishing.

• Samoa (Polynesia)- Invertebrate fishing is mostly by women and women dominate fishing along the coastal zone. Marketing and distribution are also dominated by women.
• Fiji (Melanesia): Fishing in coastal areas dominated by women with many now moving into male traditional fishing areas- eg diving for bech-de-mer. Women are also the main distributors and marketers of seafood.

• Solomon Islands (Melanesia): Women dominate coastal fishing, marketing and distribution of marine species. Post harvest activities (smoking and treating of bech-de-mer).

• FSM (Micronesia)- women dominate invertebrate fishing and fishing within coastal areas. Post harvest activities and food processing also dominated by them.
Pacific women fishers

• Dominate fishing in the coastal areas- reefs, lagoons, mudflats, and mangroves.
• Fishing methods basically traditional thus posses a wealth of knowledge on fishing seasons, habitats, species targeted, etc.
• Marketing involvement – women are familiar with emerging demands and emerging markets, lucrative species in the market and market dynamics.
Climate change and its impacts

• Climate change- although a foreign concept to women- will be best addressed by women users of the coastal zone.

• Changes in tide levels, intrusion of salt water into fresh water sources and low lying areas where there are food gardens- immediately impact on women’s areas of food gathering.

• The use of knowledge that women have and using existing community groups- eg women’s church groups, women village groups- is crucial to any work to address climate change.
Decision making- where does this leave women?

• Most societies in the Pacific are male dominated thus decision making powers of women are restricted.

• Decision making and involvement in community decision making mechanisms are either through women groups representatives or other traditional ties which women utilize.

• Young people and women are major users of the coastal zone fishers but the least involved in decisions making bodies on fisheries/aquaculture fisheries development and management.
Climate change impacts & responses

• Responses at the community level- is best designed using the knowledge of women/men and young people.
• Understanding climate change is crucial to the participation of women and men at the community level thus the need for rigorous community awareness and education.