

# CHALLENGES OF WOMEN IN FISHERIES – THE CASE OF FISH VENDORS OF MUMBAI

**Shuddhawati Peke**

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers

# Context

- ❑ ICSF conducted a study on Women Fish Vendors in Mumbai during 2012.
- ❑ It looked at existing markets, challenges faced by women fish vendors and the role of government and fisheries organizations and their policies.
- ❑ The study report can be accessed at [www.icsf.net](http://www.icsf.net)

# Women Fish Vendors in Mumbai

- Greater Mumbai has an area of 603 sq km with a population of 12.4 million; a population density of 20962 per sq km, the highest in Asia
- Mumbai has 155 fish markets (formal & informal )Greater Mumbai (City, Eastern and Western suburbs) has 64 municipal markets,16 private fish markets and 75 street fish market in its 24 wards.
- Mumbai has 8083 women fish vendors out of 38668 women fishworkers in Maharashtra.







दान्नी प्रोव्हीजन स्टोअर्स  
शौलार बंधु

# Three major challenges faced by women fish vendors in Mumbai

## **Access to Resources**

- ❑ Access to fish for sale
- ❑ Credit for purchase
- ❑ Storage facilities
- ❑ Transport to market

## **Protection and maintenance of women's spaces in fisheries**

- ❑ Vending spaces in the city
- ❑ Formal fish markets: Debates over corporations market policy and Public Private Partnership model of market development
- ❑ Informal fish markets: No recognition, under threat of eviction

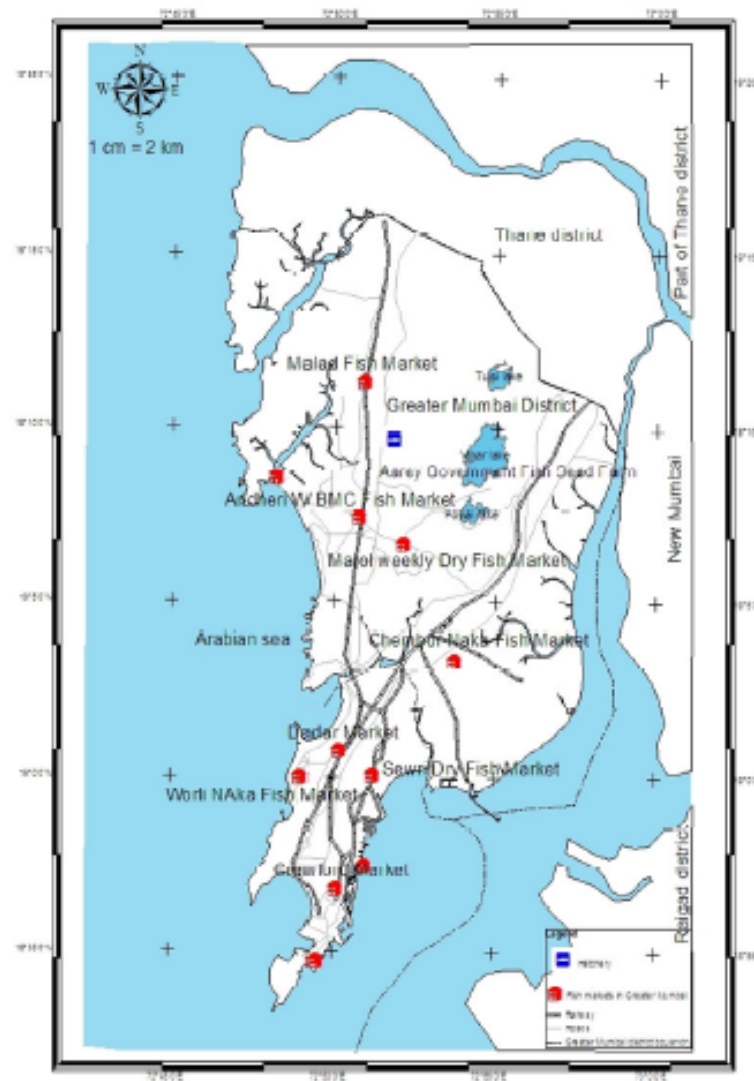
## **Organization**

- ❑ Lack of support from mainstream fisheries organizations to women vendors issues
- ❑ Societal structures inhibiting women from fully participating in developmental activities

# Access to Fish

Mumbai has 18 fish landing centers. Apart from that it is hub for domestic fish marketing with fish get supplied from other states.

Major fish landed are Bombay duck, croakers, ribbon fish, cat fish, carangids, mackerel, pomfret, penaeid and non penaeid prawns and cephalopods. These are the species usually sold by fish vendors in Mumbai. In 2011-12 prawns accounted for 32% of total fish landings in Mumbai which is an important species for export.





# Statistics of two major harbours in Mumbai

- Annual marine production in Mumbai is decreasing and prices are increasing
- (Source: Maharashtra fisheries department statistics yearbook for 2011-12)

Sr. No	Name of harbour	FY 2010-11 tonne (%)	FY 2011-12 tonne (%)
1	Ferry Warf	60119 (42.0)	54222 (34.8)
2	Sassoon Dock	43681 (30.5)	36282 (23.3)

Sr. No	Variety	2007-08 Tonne (economic value)	2011-12 tonne (economic value)
1	Pomfrets	1030 (203143)	511 (240049)
2	Black Pomfrets	760 (103954)	651 (264243)
3	Lobsters	245 (459857)	129 (495922)
4	Penaied Prawns	33223 (171732)	25840 (121049)
5	Sciaenid's	4573 (82408)	2435 (185343)

# Women's Space in Fisheries

- Women fish vendors experience indicates that the importance given to export-oriented high value species like prawns, dominance of mechanized fishing landings, increased competition from male vendors through their organized efforts have made women move from one fish market to another in search of fish to sell

## **Access to space**

- Impact of urbanization on fish markets and fish drying spaces
- Builder mafia eyeing fish markets: Corporation's market policy propagating Public Private Partnership agenda
- Expanding *koliwadas*/urban fishing villages has no space left for fish drying

# Women in fisheries organizations in Mumbai

- Currently there are fisheries co-operatives and some women's co-operatives, a women's wing of the Maharashtra Fishers Action Committee and women Self Help Groups. There are no NGOs looking specifically into women vendors issues.
- Women of state level units of National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF) have yet to find their voice to influence decisions and policies of larger mainstream fisheries organizations and their own organization. There is negligible participation of women as members and in leadership positions in these organizations.
- There are registered women cooperatives but they are inactive

# State intervention

## What is there

- Co-operatives of men and women
- Registration and issuance of fishermen and fisherwomen biometric cards
- Policies on fish harvesting neglect post harvest and social issues

## Loopholes

- Co-operatives dominated by men hence support reaches mainly men
- No real democratic process within co-operatives
- Co-operatives deal only with subsidies on fish harvesting and play no role in actual fish marketing
- Ignorance of social security measures for fishers

# Needs of women

- Credit for larger investments
- Access to fish at the landing centers
- Systematization and transparency of auction procedures
- Storage space
- Transport facilities
- Assistance in processing to maintain quality of fresh products
- Participation in trade discussions

# Follow-up actions

Capacity building in the course of the study has led to:

- ❑ Women are getting more articulate to raise issues
- ❑ They are trying to change the state co-operative by-laws to make it more gender friendly and to focus on fish marketing
- ❑ They are demanding for more wholesale markets in the city and new proposed markets to accommodate street vendors
- ❑ They are working with the Municipal Corporation to map markets and plan for the future and to implement the national street vendors policy.



THANK YOU