

# **SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION WITH FAO...**

- **Note on Issues to Consider for FAO Special Workshop on Future Directions for Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries Action, Research and Development**
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- **I. Conceptual Frameworks that Link Production to Post-Production Activities and Impacts**

- Until relatively recently interventions in fisheries development have been fragmentary in two ways. First, an understanding of the physical science of fisheries has been disconnected from an understanding of the social dimensions of fisheries, i.e., the economic, political, cultural and social dimensions of fishing activities and fishing communities. Second, analysis and intervention in fisheries production has not been linked to an understanding of the relationship between fish harvesting and post-production activities (e.g., processing, marketing) and the impacts of interventions in the former on the latter. The emphasis of policy interventions on increasing output to meet emerging market demands at the national and international scale has often ignored the structure of and likely impact on local institutions for the processing and distribution of fish and fish products – even as a way of incorporating them into proposed development initiatives. With respect to gender, this has been a significant oversight, if not deliberate bias, since local gendered divisions of labor across the world’s fisheries often assign women to post-production activities.

- Emerging research over the past decade or so that utilizes commodity (or value) chain analysis and analysis of gendered divisions of labor within the fisheries represents an important and innovative conceptual development that should constitute standard practice in economic analysis of fisheries and underlie policy intervention within the fisheries sector. Such analysis should be expanded and incorporate a gendered component to understand gendered divisions of labor at each node of commodity/value chains and how these shape outcomes and impacts of transformations within the commodity chain.

- **II. Multi-scalar Framework**

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- The second dimension of analysis that is required is attention to geographic scale, i.e., an understanding of the manner in which economic processes unfold at the global, national, regional, local, household, and individual levels and the interconnections between each. That is, in what ways do national structures and policies and the state mediate global level trends and transformations and how do these then impact regions and locales within its jurisdiction? In what ways do local economic, political and cultural structures and institutions shape global and national trends and processes? In what ways are these gendered, and in what ways are men and women – either collectively or individually – impacted as a result?

- **III. Conceptual/Analytical Focus on Livelihoods and Household Economies**

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- Third, while the utilization of commodity/value chain and gendered division of labor analysis represents an important innovation in our understanding of fish economies and the impact of economic transformations (such as globalization or state-led initiatives) on fishing communities and households in a given region, extending this analysis to questions of livelihood provides a more nuanced understanding of how economic processes impact households and individuals in particular ways. For example, we might ask what the implications of globalization for fisherfolk livelihoods are. In what ways do economic trends within the fisheries sector impact individual and household access to assets and activities that support livelihood strategies? To whom and under what circumstances do economic trends provide access and opportunity? For whom and under what circumstances do such trends create constraints? How do these differ for men and women? How do individuals and households forge strategies to adapt to and cope with macro-level trends and processes and institutional structures?

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- An understanding of the dynamics of household economies and the ways in which these are gendered are critical and must be incorporated in our understanding of livelihoods. Factors structuring the household economy and livelihood strategies pursued include current asset base (boat ownership/non-ownership), household size and composition (age, number and gender of members), education and skill levels, work identities & family ideologies, and entrepreneurial initiative (agency) shape the particular livelihood strategies individuals and households adopt. An understanding of both power relations within households and communities as well as the way particular individuals or groups of individuals are linked to fish economies is central to analyses of livelihood options, opportunities, and impacts. Understanding the diversity of experience and impact within general trends, patterns, and processes, hopefully can lead to more effective policy interventions.

# Choo Poh Sze

- **Ideas on future directions on action, research and development (Choo Poh Sze)**
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- Immediate action given to the collection of sex-disaggregated data in the fisheries sector. FAO can take the lead and discuss with member countries on how and what kind of data to collect. This can be a follow-up action to the Big Numbers Project which was a collaborative project participated by FAO, the World Bank and the WorldFish Center.
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- The enhancement of women's equality should not focus primarily on improving income and work opportunities for women, who especially those in the lower income group, are already burdened with a heavy work load. A better understanding on the well-being of women taking into consideration their needs, aspirations and their perception of what will be an improved lifestyle should be given some research priority. We should try to answer questions like:
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- what is more important to women – higher family income or greater happiness or better health;
- more time for the intangible aspects in life, such as social relationships, creative, cultural and artistic expressions.
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- Identify opportunities and challenges to women in a patriarchal society in a globalized fisheries economy. For example what are the gendered effects of eco-labeling and product certification on small-scale fisheries producers.
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- Preparedness of women in fisheries communities in times of change and crisis situation.
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- Post-ante impact assessment studies to assess effectiveness of development programs aimed at addressing gender equality.

# Gender Issues in Fisheries and Aquaculture: Malaysia

- Lack of gender awareness and concern policy formulation and program planning. Policy and programs are very "FISH" oriented. Almost all programs available are focus on men and claim to be gender neutral. In Malaysia, except for Agro tourism, there seem to be very limited integrated program in the fishing sector.
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- The issues of access to productive resources often associated with low level of educational attainment. Women in fishing communities are also involved in time consuming activities and lack of appropriate technology which can save time in doing the tasks.
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- Limited evidence/ data available and accessible (could be available but not accessible) to enable proper gender analysis being done in the fishing sector. There are ample data on the fish but not much on the people in the fishing

- sector. The socio economic information on aquaculture sector is also limited. Even study on gender roles in fisheries and aquaculture in Malaysia is limited.
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- Much are focus on increasing income (immediate) but specific focus should be given to human capital investment so that the next generation of fishing communities can venture into high yielding fishing products either through downstream industry or technology driven production. Since Malaysia is projected to become an aged nation, the issue of social protection in old age is an emerging concern since fishermen families have no social protection program. This is true both for men and women.
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- With regards to women in this sector, there is no existing mechanism for women to be involved in decision making since the women group KUNITA is a non formal setup under the fishermen association, majority control by men.

# Marilyn Porter

- **Targetted, comparative qualitative communities studies.** This suggestion arises out of my theoretical concern that we have not yet applied the full power of sociological and feminist thinking to the problems that women fishers face. We have begun to supply the missing perspective of gender and have recognised that if, as Williams has indicated, we start by looking through a 'gender lens', we change what we look at, how we interpret it and how we address the issues it raised. but we are not yet equipped with an overall understanding of gender and fisheries, which means that we also lack a way of fully conceptualising the impact of globalisation and other macro processes on the situation.
- I would like to see enough resources to initiate a large scale, qualitative and comparative inquiry to show how dimensions of power, inequality and discrimination take different forms as different social, cultural and economic contexts interact with different fisheries. Such studies would draw attention to exactly how changes in the pursuit of marine resources are constructed in different situations, and thus obtain a greater understanding of how gender is one (very important but not exclusive) dimension in how power, culture and economy interact.
- We all quote from numerous small scale studies of particular fishing communities to make points about how women's situations could be improved but we lack systematic, overall, comparative studies that would parallel the large scale quantitative scientific studies and would enable us to create realistic and substantial policy frameworks to help women fishers and women living in fishing communities.

- **Women feed the World** Oxfam, and other large NGOs have paid increasing attention to the food shortages that now imperil many populations. The number of people who live in chronic hunger is already rising and is likely to rise more as climate changes take effect. In response to this, NGOs have drawn attention to the role of women as food providers for their families. While most of this attention has focused on women as farmers, we should argue that women can also provide nutrition from aquatic sources – fish, shellfish, seaweed etc. My thoughts on this are not well developed, but it seems worth developing as a theme. How can we enhance women's access to fish as a food source for their families, rather than as a form of employment or for sale. But at the moment, most projects and policies are directed at increasing women's access to fish as income; there is much less done to ensure that women have access to fisheries that provide food directly or to methods of fishing or processing that might not be economically viable for sale but would provide good sources of nourishment.

# Katia Frangoudes

- **Women professional empowerment**
- Women working in fisheries, shellfish harvesting and in aquaculture should be considered as professional as men involved in the same activities. It is the only way to be recognised.
- Recognition of the contribution of fishers spouses in fisheries and shellfish family enterprise. In some countries such recognition gives to women access to social benefits (maternity leaves, retire pension, health, etc.)
- Establishment of statistical data within fisheries based on gender
- The principle of the equality between women and men should be introduced in all public policies concerning fisheries industry.
- Monitoring the implementation of this principle in all fisheries policies
- Promote the participation of women's organisations in the decision making process concerning fisheries management.
- Equal access to fishing rights