

Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries: Engendering Security in Fisheries and Aquaculture

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Extended Abstract



Women in the Seafood Industry: Different Countries, Diverse Level of Knowledge and Awareness

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Introduction

On a global scale, quantitative and qualitative data on the participation of women in the seafood industry is sparse and when it exists it may be of poor quality and only cover some segments of the industry. Thus, the knowledge and understanding of the very complex distribution of roles, power, access to resources and profits between genders are incomplete and vary greatly between regions and industry sectors. This presentation draws on a study (Monfort 2015) that, among other themes, illustrates the level of knowledge, the level of awareness and the understanding of the distribution of roles by gender through case studies in 6 different countries, Croatia, Egypt, France, Iceland, India and Senegal.

The case studies, carried out in early 2015 for Globefish the unit in the FAO Fisheries Department responsible for information on international fish trade, summarize the knowledge on “the role of women in the seafood industry”. What is known, documented? Does sex disaggregated data over the full employment spectrum in the seafood industry exist? Do sociological, anthropological and economic studies shed a light on the role and power distribution between sexes?

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Methods

In each country, we measured the level of knowledge and the level of awareness of women's situation in the seafood industry, not the actual level of disparity or discrimination. We have used an assessment grid made of 3 successive steps as described in Table 1. Note that this simple tool is not meant to run comparisons between countries

Step one. What is the state of knowledge on potential gender-bias in the seafood industry? To answer this question, we looked for sex disaggregated data in the different segments of the industry (fishing, fish processing, aquaculture, fish trading), and for qualitative social studies carried out by sociologists, anthropologists or economists about gender-based distribution of roles and power in the industry and all along the value chain (access to education, capital, network, visibility, power). Are women recorded in official statistics? What do we know about their contribution to the seafood value chain?

Table 1. The 3 step assessment grid for gender analysis (source: Table 9, Monfort 2015)

Step 1. Knowledge of women's participation, gender-based roles and power distribution in the seafood industry	
Gender-based role distribution: quantitative data in the industry	Does sex disaggregated data exist? Is there a systematic collection organised? Who provides labour force/ capital; who owns resource; who makes decisions?
Knowledge and understanding of gender relationships in the industry	Social research work on the issue? Gender surveys?
Step 2. Awareness of inequalities and barriers against women in the society in general and in the industry	
Inequalities identified in the society	Have inequalities affecting women been identified/published/publicised and recognised?
Inequalities identified and addressed by seafood stakeholders	Have this issues been addressed by stakeholders: NGOs, associations, public authorities, private businesses?
Step 3. Correctives measures and initiatives in the seafood industry	
Taken by the public sector, NGOs and aid agencies	Specific provisions, dedicated projects?
Taken by private businesses	Have private companies developed specific gender related programmes?

Step two. What is the level of knowledge of the status of men and women in the society and the existence or otherwise of gender inequality (access to education, capital, network, visibility, power). If/when there is evidence of gender-bias in the industry, has this bias been publicised to raise people's awareness. Has any gender imbalance been addressed by public authorities, trade unions, NGOs, by industry stakeholders in the society and in the seafood industry?

Step three. What is done in practical terms to correct the imbalance? What initiatives have been taken in the seafood industry, by the public sector and/ or by private companies?

Results and Conclusion

Globally, quantitative and qualitative data on the participation of women in the seafood industry is sparse and when it exists it may be of poor quality and only cover some segments of the industry. Thus, the knowledge and understanding of the very complex distribution of roles, power, access to resources and profits between genders are incomplete and vary greatly between regions and industry sectors.

Table 2. Knowledge of the situation of women in the seafood industry, based on surveys of experts in each country, each of the dimensions of knowledge was rated on a scale from 0 to 6.

	Egypt	France	Iceland	India	Senegal	Croatia
Knowledge of women's participation, gender-based roles and power distribution in the seafood industry	0	2	4	3	3	2
Awareness of inequalities and barriers against women	1	2	4	3	3	1
Correctives measures and initiatives in the seafood industry	1	1	1	1	2	0

Of the 6 countries (Republic of Croatia, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the French Republic, the Republic of Iceland, the Republic of India and the Republic of Senegal) studied in this report, only 1 collects sex disaggregated data over the full employment spectrum in the seafood industry, namely Iceland. Sociological, anthropological and economic studies on the role and distribution of power between sexes are still rare.

The knowledge and understanding of the very complex distribution of roles, power, access to resources and profits between genders are incomplete and vary greatly between regions and industry sectors. This report provides evidence that the quality of data is not linked to a country's level of economic development. Developing countries such as India and Senegal, for instance, offer rather good records because these important fishing and aquaculture nations have received the attention of gender sensitive development aid agencies. By contrast, the knowledge of the participation of women in the seafood industry in a developed country such as France is dramatically poor.

Reference

Monfort, M.C. 2015. The role of women in the seafood industry. GLOBEFISH Research Programme, 119, 67 pp. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bc014e.pdf>. Accessed 30 April 2016.