

Role of gender in global fishery value chains: A feminist perspective on activity, access and control profile

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Abstract

Women in fishing communities play multidimensional roles. Women pervade fisheries and their roles were identified as workers in both fisheries, markets, processing plants and non-fishery, mothers who give birth to successors, as caregivers of the family, as connecting agents of social networks, as representatives of local culture, as community workers and governors. The main aim of this study is to identify and measure women's involvement in global fishery value chains and investigating their activity, access and control profiles in fishery value chains in selected destinations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Primary data were obtained from fisheries and aquaculture operations in Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Honduras. Participant observation with experienced investigators, focus group discussion and gender resources maps were the principal data collection tools. Women play non-significant roles in capture fishery production and totally depend on religion and culture while their contribution in aquaculture production is great. Women's role in fish marketing, mainly handling, grading, packing and retailing is very important for timely distribution of the catch. Female roles were centred on household activities which take them away from direct income generation and access to the capital assets. Less educated, resource poor women are concentrated in the low value end of the value chains while the high value end of the value chains is mainly handled by the resource rich males and limited number of educated, resourced owned females. Women's engagement is less in modern value chains with few nodes than the

traditional complex and lengthier value chains. The departure of women from fisheries will adversely interfere with existence of the local fishing culture and industry.

Key words: women, fisheries, value chains