



# Women in Post-Harvest Fisheries: An Asian Situationer

**Chandrika Sharma**

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers  
(ICSF)

**WOMEN IN FISHERIES CONFERENCE  
HANOI, VIETNAM  
2-4 DECEMBER 2008**

# Women in post-harvest fisheries



Women play vital roles in post-harvest fisheries:

- ✍ Vending fish in local markets, or even across borders (Cambodia-Thailand)
- ✍ Traditional processing of fish (salting, drying, fermenting ...) for sale in domestic markets, regional markets and international markets (Maldives fish, Vietnamese nuoc mam fish sauce)

# Women in post-harvest fisheries



Women play vital roles in post-harvest fisheries:

- ✍ Sorting and drying trash fish in harbours, for fishmeal or human consumption
- ✍ Peeling shrimp/ crabs etc. at harbours/ homes, on wage or piece rate basis
- ✍ Working as processing plant workers in the organized sector

# Women in post-harvest fisheries



- ✍ Nature of women's work in post-harvest varies across region and location, is culturally and socially determined, and is changing
- ✍ Rarely seen as 'productive'-seen as an extension of the 'domestic' space
- ✍ Remains largely invisible, lack of data (but what is available is indicative)

# Women in post-harvest SSF



- ✍ Small-scale fisheries characterized by gender division of labour, complementarity
- ✍ Women add value to the fish, bring back income and food
- ✍ Family and community as production/ reproduction unit
- ✍ Defending women's roles in SSF akin to defending small-scale fisheries and their communities

# Women's changing roles



- ✍ Women's roles in post-harvest SSF changing due to impact of changing technology and organization, trade flows, fisheries policy etc.
- ✍ New, emerging roles: Dealing with low-value fish, working as wage labour in sorting trash fish or working to process fish in organized or unorganized sector.

# Women employed in fish processing



- ✍ Women form bulk of labour force
- ✍ Work in organized and/ or unorganized sector
- ✍ Significant source of employment in countries like Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines and India
- ✍ Issues related to conditions of work, discriminatory payment, casualization, use of migrant labour, insecure employment...
- ✍ Problems particularly acute in unorganized sector (daily wage or piece rate basis)

# Women in post-harvest SSF



## Support needed :

- ✍ Strengthen women's role in all aspects of decision-making
- ✍ Enhance access to resources (eliminate discrimination)
- ✍ Access to fish (decentralized landings...)
- ✍ Access to formal credit
- ✍ Access to markets (problems of taxes, transportation...) and better prices
- ✍ Access to appropriate technology



# Women in post-harvest SSF



## Support needed :

- ✍ Better facilities at markets, processing sites, harbours and landing centers (including child care, water, sanitation...)
- ✍ Access to spaces needed for processing, vending...
- ✍ Better working working conditions (minimum wages, equal pay, protection against sexual harassment/ violence, child care, safety at work) and social security
- ✍ Access to basic services (education, health...)

# Women in post-harvest SSF



## Critical interventions:

- ✍ Collection of gender-disaggregated comprehensive data
- ✍ Valuation of productive and reproductive tasks
- ✍ Strengthening links between post-harvest and harvest (including in CBCRM)
- ✍ Strengthening women's organizations/ awareness of rights and ability to claim

# Key issues



- ✍ Different basis for organizing women in small-scale post harvest work, and those employed for post-harvest work/ different concerns and priorities
- ✍ Need to reinforce the community basis of organizing/ issues of community and resource sustainability
- ✍ Need to ensure that issues of women are addressed within organizations (feminist perspective)



**THANK YOU**

