

Yemaya

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ICSF'S NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

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From the Editor

Dear Friends,

Greetings! In this issue, besides articles from Tanzania, Brazil, Mozambique, Guinea Conakry, and Malaysia, we carry excerpts from a recently released report on the role of women in European fisheries.

The article from Tanzania analyzes the experiences of two fisheries development projects and stresses that integrating the concerns of women of fishing communities right from the very conception of the project has been an important reason for the success of one of them. "Involvement in planning does not mean that all women participate. But it gives them a chance to come up with their priorities and strategies at an early stage", notes the author. An important lesson, often ignored.

In several countries, both in the North and South, women play vital and unacknowledged roles in managing on-shore work of the fisheries enterprise, including maintaining accounts, liaising with bank and port officials etc. The report on women in European fisheries highlights the important and undervalued role of women as support to seagoing spouses ("collaborating spouses"), and recommends the need to recognize and support this work.

It is evident that even if women are not visibly playing a role in fisheries activities, it is important to ensure that their work and priorities are reflected

in management plans and other policies, as much for reasons of equity as for sustainability of resources and livelihoods.

Women of fishing communities have been in the news in several countries, as they take up various initiatives to improve their life and livelihood. We have fished out two such news items from India and Spain.

And finally, as *Yemaya* goes into its tenth issue, we take a look at its readership. At present *Yemaya* English goes to 134 individuals and organizations in 78 countries, *Yemaya* French to 57 individuals and organizations in 20 countries and *Yemaya* Spanish to 74 individuals and organizations in 20 countries. Most copies go to fishworker organizations, NGOs and women of fishing communities, especially in India, Brazil, Philippines, Senegal, Chile, Spain, France and Canada.

The challenge for *Yemaya* is to continue to attract write-ups, especially from grassroots groups in the South. Linking up with other newsletters in local languages being circulated among fishing communities, is also an option that needs to be explored. In case you have any suggestions, please write to us.

The next issue of *Yemaya* will be brought out in November 2002. Can we request you to send us your write-ups by end-October?



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Africa/ Tanzania

Women are Capable

Participation of women in the planning stages of fishery projects along the coastal region of Tanzania, has led to the success of these projects

This piece, by Catherine Chando, is based on her Master's thesis titled *Gender Roles in Fishery Planning and Projects: A case study of coastal region in Tanzania* completed in 2002

As a civil servant working in the fisheries bureaucracy and as a Master's student in fisheries management, I have often wondered why women's position in fisheries seems to be so important within the household economy and so marginal in fisheries politics. Their contributions to industry output are poorly registered and recognized. Women have been identified as producers, assistants to fishermen, processors—predominantly involved in post-harvest activities—traders, and prominent actors in activities that are not directly related to fisheries but are essential for family and community welfare. However, the focus on the work of men very often overshadows the economic role of women in fishing communities. This leads to a relative neglect of their needs and interests. Fisheries policies and programmes have, as a consequence, focused mainly on the needs and interests of men, ignoring the fact that women are engaged in fisheries.

Interested as I am in gender aspects of fisheries, I wanted to take a closer look at women's participation in project planning. I consider such participation as an important aspect of women's empowerment. Participation in the planning process gives women an opportunity to influence aims and strategies and to discuss different alternatives given their situation.

This article focuses on the roles played by women in the planning of fisheries projects in the coastal region of Tanzania, more specifically in the districts of Bagamoyo and Mafia.

I visited some fisheries projects in the Bagamoyo area and in Mafia Island. In the Bagamoyo projects, both women and men were not involved in the planning process; the projects were initiated and planned from outside—by the staff of the fisheries department, the community development officer, or by a seaweed farming company—so I will leave out this example.

The project in Mafia Island Marine Park (MIMP) represents, in many ways, a contrast to many projects

I know. At Mafia women are now engaged in seaweed farming, factory work and shell collection. In this way they have shown that it is possible to find alternatives to the dynamite fishing that male fishers had been engaged in, almost ruining fish stocks in the process. The government and communities have worked together to counter the practice of dynamiting and to safeguard biodiversity.



The big difference here was women's involvement in the planning process. From the very beginning the ideology and the structure of the project included women. They were included at the national level when planning for the Park was initiated. When the plans for the Park were elaborated, they were members of the staff and were represented in committees and boards. In addition, there were also positions in the village that favoured women, for example, development officers and gender officer. Women were also called upon as community members to participate in the planning meetings initiated in each village.

Involvement in planning does not mean that all women participate. But it gives them a chance to come up with their priorities and strategies at an early stage. If they want to, they can use this opportunity in their favour. This means that women's inclusion from the very beginning of a project is of great importance.

The example from Mafia shows that, through a project, women in fishing communities can play an important role in sustainable management of resources. The projects at Mafia managed to mobilize women; they were leaders of the groups and they were active participants. The success in stopping the practice of dynamiting could also be due to women's involvement

in meetings planning for the establishment of the park—one could say that discussion /planning started at the household level. This was a positive outcome in the villages of Jibondo and Juani in Mafia.

A closer observation of women's participation shows that women were more active and easier to mobilize in the projects compared to the men, and that a majority of the groups comprised women.

I also observed that:

- Women were participating in income generating activities outside fisheries and were contributing to their family incomes from the profits coming out of their group activities.
- Women, and some men, acquired and developed skills, particularly in conservation, by practicing seaweed farming.
- Women from villages in the two districts studied, exerted some influence on women's groups in neighbouring villages directly benefited by these projects.
- The women, having gained a better socio-economic status, found it easier to share their own experiences and learnings with the rest of the women and men. They thus motivated others, particularly men, to participate in group activities.

Lesson learned and recommendations

When women participated from day one in formulating the aims of the project—including, for example, increasing women's incomes, enabling them to make a better living, especially for their households—they managed to create a female orientation already in the planning phase. This female orientation seems to have impacted on the implementation and the activities carried out under the project, which in some cases also resulted in social change.

My findings also showed that there were an interrelation between participation in the planning process and level of education. At Mafia many women had comparatively higher levels of education.

The Mafia projects gave women experience in project planning, decision-making and in collaborating with external partners. In this way they have obtained knowledge and skills that might not only give them better economic living conditions, but also enable them to take care of their fisheries resources in a better way. They have also developed skills that can enable them to initiate new projects and take control over their own lives.

The fact that women are able to plan their own projects, therefore, seems to be an important factor that empowers women. The best results were seen in Mafia where women were brought into planning positions. Women held job positions aimed at assisting women to progress. The organizational structure of the Mafia Island Marine Park (MIMP), for example, created chances for women to be present at all phases of planning and implementation. The position of the gender officer at the park created a greater awareness, and men in the island were able to accept the mobility of their wives beyond their households, in a context where, given the prevailing Arabic culture, women tend to be confined to the household.

My experience from Mafia area is that if women are more involved in planning and leadership, problems of both women and men of many fishing communities can be solved.

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Africa/ Guinea Conakry

Fair dreams

Women from Guinea Conakry benefited in many ways from the West African Fair for Artisanally Processed Fish organized in June 2001 in Dakar, Senegal

By Mamayawa Sandouno of the NGO, ADEPEG

The women fish smokers of COFUB (The Co-operative of Women Fish Smokers of Boufi) represented the Guinean women fish processors at the fair in Dakar. This was for them an opportunity for exchanging technologies and business experiences.

The women learnt about different kinds of wood that can be used during smoking to give different shades to processed fish. There were exchanges of fermented fish and other fish processing techniques between women from Guinea and Senegal. Guineans also came to know that the Mauritians produced packed dried fish to supply their supermarkets. Encouraged by this experience, Guinean women are currently experimenting with sliced, smoked fillets, which may be of interest to some markets in Conakry. So far 400 kg have been prepared in this manner, on an experimental basis. The first buyer showed great interest.

It was not only a fish fair—it was also a fair for several other agrarian products. As well as fish, the Guinean women were engaged in selling red (palm) oil, ginger, small chilli peppers and root crops (cassava etc). There were several transactions going on. For example, the women from Guinea Bissau and Guinea Conakry traded products like palm oil and ginger. Many transactions went unnoticed because they took place outside the fair grounds, in the rooms where the women were staying.



It is significant that the contacts made at the fair between women from different countries, are proving very helpful. Women from Senegal and Guinea Conakry, for example, now stay in each others houses when they come to trade, not in hotels.

After the fair there was an exchange of letters between the women of COFUB and the regional support unit of the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihood Programme (SFLP) in Cotonou, through Mamauding Kouyoté, the expert responsible for fisheries development. The proposal is to support exchange programmes between the women of COFUB and those of the CNPS of Senegal (Mbour) by sending two women from Boufi to work on smoking methods. This is a demand from women's groups of both countries.

The women appreciated the approach of ICSF with regard to regional integration. They are keen to take forward this initiative and to organize another fair, which would allow them to discuss common and specific problems, enabling them to be better prepared. They are keen on a sub-regional network of processors and traders. Now, what possible strategy is there to make this dream of the women come true?

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Africa/ Mozambique

Where they cannot go

Women in the fisheries of Mozambique feel left behind, both by their men and their government, as fish resources continue to evade their present catching capacity

By KG Kumar

The East African nation of Mozambique, which lies between Tanzania and South Africa, boasts a 2,770-km coastline along the Indian Ocean and an Exclusive Economic Zone of 493,700 sq km. The FAO estimates the country's coastal area to be 738,030 sq km. Of the 110 districts in the country, 42 are coastal, covering 23 per cent of the total surface area.

Given these conditions, it is but natural that the fisheries sector plays an important role in Mozambique's economy. It contributes to three per cent of GDP and has lately been accounting for nearly half the country's total foreign exchange earnings. About 85 per cent of Mozambique's exports by value (mainly to the European Union, Japan and South Africa) come from industrial, shallow-water shrimp fisheries.

Mozambique is one of the world's poorest countries, with 70 per cent of the 16 million population living below the poverty line, mostly (80 per cent) in rural areas. About half the total protein intake of the population is estimated to come from fish.

The FAO estimates that much of the country's marine resources remain underexploited, and that Mozambique uses only about 25 per cent of its exploitable fish resources. Marine fisheries provide for more than 90 per cent of the jobs in the sector. About 90,000 people are involved directly in fishing, processing and marketing. In 1999, there were about 74,000 fishers practising marine artisanal fisheries, using 11,000 – 12,000 vessels, mostly operating from about 700 fishing centres. In addition, there are about 19,000 fishworkers who collect fish along the shoreline.

But where are the women in Mozambican fisheries? While many women work in agriculture, there are cases of women involved in fishing for food, and in some cases, for sale, as in the community of Mitubane in Angoche district of Nampula province. The women who do fish, use low-cost fine-meshed nets (called *kinias*) in estuarine areas and inshore waters, mainly to catch fish for home consumption.

In some areas they are also involved in post-harvest activities, like drying, salting and smoking small pelagics. Male traders sometimes hire women to process the catch. There are also a few women who trade in processed fish. However, lack of capital and transportation facilities is a major constraint.

These problems became more than evident in a brief interaction with some of the women from the Maputo region who had come to participate at ICSF's General Body Meeting at Maputo in early June. One of them, Maria Fernando Dgambo from Costa do Sol, said that while she does go out to fish using nets, her activity is not socially approved, and so she has often thought of giving it up. Maria says that she and other women sell the men's catch as fresh fish, and they are not much involved in post-harvest processing. Though she does want to continue fishing, lack of money is the single most important constraint. Maria says she does not know where to get credit to fund her small-scale fishing or which agency to approach. Though the men have participated in meetings with government organizations, little has been done in practical terms to address the problem of credit.

Contrast Maria's experience with that of 24-year old Leenos, a hook-and-line fisherman from the same region, whose father has given up fishing. Leenos was able to raise a loan to fish to earn a livelihood to sustain his family. But even he finds his earnings insufficient to plough back into investments for new material or gear.

Lack of credit means that women like Maria, most of whom are mothers with children, are hampered by the size of their fishing vessels. Maria says her rowboat is so small that she cannot reach the deeper waters where marine resources now appear to be available. Trawling has decimated stocks in her traditional fishing grounds, she says, and "the fish now appear where we cannot go".

Another apparent area of discrimination for the women is in the matter of unionization or organizing under the banner of a common trade union. Most of the fishermen are members of different regional fishermen's associations, though these are not affiliated to any national federation or union. But the women say they are not members—whether this is due to outright gender discrimination or a mere (but unforgivable) oversight, is not clear. But the women clearly feel the need for some form of association to fight for their causes. "We feel left behind," says Maria.

In this context, Maria was especially happy to have had the chance to attend ICSF's General Body meeting which, she said, opened the eyes of both the men and women participants from the fishing village of Costa do Sol to what is happening in other regions of the world.

Latin America/ Brazil

Changing women's lives

Income women earn from processing crabmeat is leading to socioeconomic and cultural changes in some parts of the state of Para in Brazil

By Denise Machado Cardoso, an anthropologist and teaching assistant at the Department of Anthropology of the Federal University of Pará, Brazil.

Women's work in fishing communities is little recognized or acknowledged, especially when it involves processing shellfish. This can be explained by many factors, one of them being the division of labour in these communities. Whereas women are shore-bound to 'drudgery' work, men engage in the more prestigious sea-faring activities. For example, net repair and maintenance as well as the preparation and salting of fish are frequently relegated to a 'non-work' status. Thus, women's involvement in productive activities is considered of little consequence.

In spite of its significance, the work of women processors in Guarajubal is not recognized by their companions or by the women themselves. Apart from the reasons mentioned above, women themselves do not want to upset the existing social order in their community.

Women processors will not openly admit to the significance of their work because to do so would be tantamount to claiming that their companions are unable to sustain their roles as providers. Within the domestic sphere, one notices that women play a significant role in decision-making, but upon further investigation one finds that women tend to accede more power to the men in their family.

Residents of Guarajubal, like in other fishing communities, are not strictly limited to fishing as they also farm and hunt to sustain themselves. Situated in the coastal region of Pará state in Northeastern Brazil,

Guarajubal forms part of the municipality of Marapanim. Marapanim, on the Atlantic coast, is crisscrossed by many rivers and streams, and is home to extensive mangrove areas. Fish, shrimp, crabs and other species of crustaceans and molluscs have been harvested in this region for a long time although harvesting crabs has become an important activity in the last decade.

The work of women shellfish processors starts after the crabs are caught in nearby swamp areas and ends with packaging the crabmeat in plastic wrappers. Crab collection and processing started approximately 10 years ago in Marapanim and, since then, this type of work has led to sociocultural changes in the many towns that comprise this municipal district.

Shellfish processors are predominantly healthy, adult married women, with children, since some income can be earned from this activity without necessarily travelling too far from the domestic space. Concern over reconciling remunerative work as collectors and processors with the non-remunerative activities of housework (childcare, cooking, garden cultivation, livestock raising, etc.) is encountered more among married women, as their single counterparts without children seek working opportunities elsewhere, in the municipal district headquarters or in other municipalities of northeastern Pará.

The work of women shellfish processors begins at daybreak, starting with household chores such as preparing food, washing clothes, childcare, sewing and maintenance of fishing equipment. After lunch, the women head off to begin their work, returning only by the evening. Men, who manually catch the crabs by reaching into their burrows and pulling them out, usually do the physical capture of the crabs. The task of removing the crabmeat from the shell is that of the women. This is stored for delivery to the middlemen, locally known as *amarreteiro*, who usually monopolize this trade.

Women may start off in this work accompanying their relatives or neighbours, ostensibly to help them. Help may not be as much towards production as towards giving company to friends to render their work more pleasurable. Thus, 'help' in itself is more of a leisure strategy among women of Guarajubal than an effort to reduce the overall workloads. Children also engage in shellfish processing to help their mothers. It is more the girls who learn these skills, as the boys prefer to engage in work considered more 'masculine'.

To become a shellfish processor in this region requires patience. The amount of crabmeat processed daily depends on the amount of time invested in this activity and can take up to six hours to shell 120 crabs yielding about 2 kg of crabmeat. In addition to taking care of their young children, shellfish processors have to display great perseverance in performing a repetitive task that can also cause injury as they often cut their fingers in the process of separating crabmeat.

Although women do face some risks and adverse conditions in their work, there are hardly any other alternatives for paid work in this region. Despite these problems, therefore, women recognize the positive changes that the processing activity has brought about, both to their lives and that of their families. These changes are evident from a socioeconomic as well as a cultural perspective. The socioeconomic status of working women has improved and, at the same time, women now enjoy more decision-making powers within the family as well.



Nowadays, in Guarajubal, the decision as to how many children a couple will have, rests primarily on the woman. This change is a direct consequence of a married woman's increased participation in the job market and their greater purchasing power. Of course, other factors such as television have influenced behaviour in Guarajubal.

The observation that women now have greater control over the number of children they have is reinforced in other ways. When comparing the degree of domestic violence suffered by women in Marapanim's communities, we can observe that married women processors who have started earning an income are more

prone to resisting their companion's aggression than are women who do not engage in this activity.

The processing of crabmeat, known as *massa de carangueijo*, has thus stimulated many changes in the lives of people in northeastern Pará. Until recently, women had few prospects for gaining access to paid labour. They are now able to reconcile earning an income with other activities normally attributed to women, such as being mothers and companions.

People engaged in harvesting and processing crabs are aware that increasing production can eventually compromise the sustainability of this species. Public policy, so far blind to this issue, could eventually see the implementation of a 'closed season' for harvesting crabs.

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Asia/ Malaysia

A step forward

Women fishworkers find representation in PIFWA By P Balan, Adviser to the Penang Inshore Fishermen Welfare Association (PIFWA)

Penang Inshore Fishermen Welfare Association (PIFWA) has moved a step forward by establishing a women's bureau in its committee. This will allow a woman representative to be present in organizational meetings where decisions on activities and directions of PIFWA are taken.

Previously, women participated alongside their husband and families in projects like mangrove replanting and workshops organized by the Association. Now, PIFWA's action to include a women's representative in its committee means that women will play a bigger role in future activities.

On 20 May 2002, a meeting between PIFWA and a group of women from the fishing community took place in Sungai Chenaam, Penang. These comprised fisherwomen and women involved in the fishing industry. In the meeting, the women welcomed the decision to have a women's representative and they elected one candidate for the post.

The meeting also discussed problems faced by women especially regarding micro credit: the problems faced

in paying back loans especially when fish prices fluctuated or when weather conditions made it hazardous for small boats to venture out at sea, depriving them of their source of livelihood. PIFWA has promised to look into their problems.

In the meantime, PIFWA is also seeking partnerships among local and international organizations for projects for women in the fishing community. PIFWA welcomes suggestions and recommendations.

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European Union

Collaborating Spouses

The Executive Summary of a Report on 'The role of women in the fisheries sector', prepared for the European Commission, Directorate General for Fisheries, by Macalister Elliott and Partners Ltd in March 2002

Methodology

A lack of detailed gender specific data led to an approach where reviewing existing literature was backed up by field enquiry by a team of specialists based throughout the Member States. The wide geographic coverage required (EU 15 countries) meant that, given the study's scope, (i) enquiry needed to be mostly limited to specific key Fisheries Dependent Areas (FDAs) or pockets of fisheries activity in "non FDAs" and (ii) fully statistically rigorous surveys could not be undertaken and surveys had to rely upon opinion from a limited number of key knowledgeable individuals in the FDAs. A template was devised to impose a common approach, and this was successful up to a point, though variations in the different team members' perception of the issues led to a diverse response. However value was seen in this in that where there were common results, these were seen as being the more valid because of the diversity of the researcher's outlooks.

Key areas covered

- *Employment data*, including gender differentials, for each main discrete occupation within the fisheries sector i.e.: fishing, aquaculture, marketing & distribution, processing, administration & management and informal (especially unpaid spouses support).

- *Legal and social status*, women's legal position concerning involvement in the sector, and problems inherent in this.
- *Organizational*, concerning how women are organized within the industry (e.g. unions), what formal support systems there are (e.g. childcare) and how education serves women in the sector.
- *Socio-cultural constraints*, resolved into three aspects—external social factors that effect women's decisions, the social status (thus desirability) of fisheries occupations and 'internal' psychological factors related to women's interests, aspirations and concerns.
- *Economic*, mainly concerned with the respective earnings for various fisheries occupations, and particularly with gender-related earnings discounts and economic alternatives.

Key Findings

It was a surprise to find that, for all the cultural and economic diversity within the EU, the position and perception of women regarding the fisheries sector showed a considerable degree of commonality. Within this common pattern the following findings stood out as interesting and important:

- Women feel unwelcome in the seagoing fishing sub-sector, but have little interest in participating anyway. It is not surprising that very few women are involved (3 per cent of the workforce).
- Women feel discriminated against in aquaculture, but to a much lower extent, and are far more representatively involved. There are a few specifically women-managed aquaculture activities.
- Processing is the one sub-sector where women are over-represented, but mainly because they predominate in low-grade unskilled jobs. Seafood processing is perceived to hold few career prospects for women, mostly with good reason.
- Management/ administration: women have made significant inroads into this segment, which is both better rewarded and more positively viewed by women. It is particularly in the public sector that women have been successful.
- Informal: the role of women as support to seagoing spouses ("collaborating spouses") was found to be both very important and highly undervalued by the fishing community. This was seen as providing the most relevant and potentially productive avenue to explore in order to better women's position in fisheries.

The study found that there was economic discrimination against women in the sector. Women are paid 12 per cent less than men for what appears to be the same work, though given the limited data, like may not have been compared exactly with like. However, this is much less than the overall earnings discount women face across the EU economies of around 22 per cent.

Recommendations

Following these findings, a number of practical recommendations for subsequent action by the EU and Member States became clear:

- *Fishing*: Women on the whole don't wish to go to sea and aren't particularly wanted, so whilst ensuring that women can participate if they so wish (i.e. no unfair barriers) there is little point in pushing for greater involvement. However, for some small-scale, discrete inshore fisheries there could be scope for community-based management (CBM), an approach both potentially beneficial in itself, and one offering women a more widely acceptable as well as a more genuine role in the primary production segment.
- *Aquaculture*: Barriers are lower and opportunities significant in this sub-sector. Focused training should enhance access to technical and managerial positions viewed as desirable by women. Women already manage a few specialized culture activities and enhancing their skills in this direction is also recommended, with community-based management (CBM), seen as the most appropriate approach.
- *Fish Processing*: There is clearly discrimination in processing, but it is perhaps best to help women exit the industry rather than concentrate on upgrading what are likely to always be low-grade jobs. So in non-FDAs there is little justification for special support other than the general education/training that will allow women to move out of these undesirable jobs, which are probably insecure anyway. In short, this is part of general national gender-support and overall development programmes. In FDAs, though, there is justification in assisting women to take 'ownership' of some added-value or processing functions so that they

can maximize and upgrade their shore-based role as co-managers of family businesses.

Administration: Environmental and resource management issues are potential key themes for women's continually expanding involvement, and so training should focus on these as well as core management subjects. Public sector administration and research are identified as key areas where women's involvement and equality are relatively high, and probably where there are the best prospects for further enhancement. Thus training directed towards the public sector will probably yield best results.

Women's shore-side support role - "Collaborating spouses": Our principal recommendation concerns acknowledging, upgrading and expanding women's support role in the sector. A package of support should be devised to promote the enhancement of this role for women, possibly containing specific support for (a) enhanced mutual support networks, (b) assistance with improved communication (especially internet-based), (c) public awareness campaigns to enlist wider community support (especially from fishermen), (d) training including a mix of specific local technical and managerial courses plus IT skills to encourage women to become the internet managers for their family enterprises. This would reinforce the networking capabilities of shore-based women as well as generating transferable skills in a marketable area, should fisheries fail the family, or the women require greater independence. Topics that training would need to cover could include: management, marketing, selling, quality control, modern processing, business planning, accountancy & bookkeeping, employment regulations and taxation, safety at sea, environment and long term resource management.

Etymology

Fishmonger, fishwife

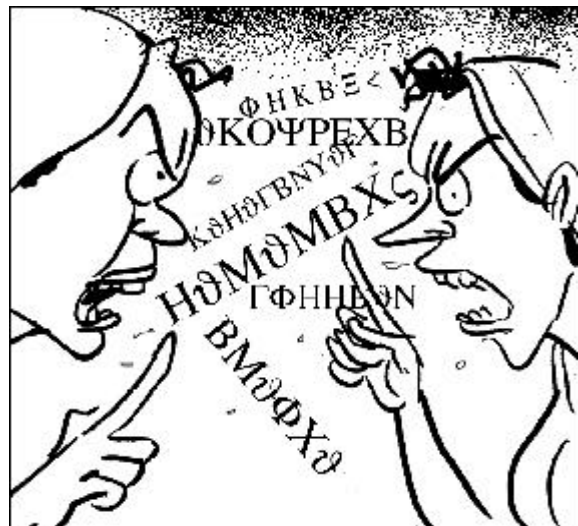
The following comes from an old, out-of-commission web site called The Mavens' Word of the Day, recycled and distributed by Dick Thien to a list of journalists

Recently on the NPR show, "Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me", a contestant identified herself as a fishmonger. This was the occasion for many jokes about "mong-

ing fish" and questions (unanswered) about where the word came from. That question in turn reminded me of the word fishwife. I wondered why the one word—fishmonger—seems to have a straightforward meaning of 'fish-seller', while the other has such derogatory connotations about women's temperaments, vocal characteristics, and vocabularies. Is there a common derivation? And why the relationship to fish?

In the compounds fishmonger and fishwife, the "fish" element is circumstantial; the real link lies in the second halves of the compounds, -monger and -wife. Sceptical? Read on.

Let's start with wife. The word's earliest meaning was simply "woman". Today, we use woman in compounds such as chairwoman and policewoman to indicate "woman who does X". In the same way, -wife meant woman who does X business. An alewife kept an alehouse; an oyster-wife sold oysters; a fishwife sold fish. The modern survivors of this meaning are housewife, meaning a woman in charge of a house, and midwife (the combining form mid- is either an adverb of means, or a preposition meaning "with"—the jury's still out on that one).



Fishwives were working-class women who sold fish from baskets along the quays of fishing villages, touting their wares at the top of their lungs. Sweet Molly Malone aside, this was not considered a reputable occupation for women, who too readily picked up the sailors' rough talk, and gained a bad reputation for both the timbre and content of their speech. It's interesting that few dictionaries record this meaning—not even the OED—and our citations are recent, so I can't actually tell when the term entered the language.

Dating is not a problem with monger. The radio show guests made an understandable assumption that if the person is the monger, the main verb must be to “mong”. They probably like to think they were being original, but they weren’t. The Old English verb is *mangian*, and *mong* is a variant form of this verb. It meant to traffic in; barter and now survives only in the agent noun, monger, and compounds that use it—the chiefly British terms fishmonger and ironmonger. (The fishmonger’s and the ironmonger’s are shops that sell fish or hardware, respectively.)

Today, monger is used most often as a more abstract synonym of peddler and trafficker, when referring to something negative that is being promulgated. In this use, it’s incredibly productive: a newspaper archive search of the last two years shows the favourite compound form is gossip-monger, with rumour, scandal, mischief, hate, gloom, doom, rule, sensation, cliché and crisis also collocating with a healthy frequency. Its implication can be as benign as “Victorian nonsense-mongers”, or as insidious as “brutal race-monger”. My favourite is from a particularly florid translation (from the online Early Church Fathers collection) of St. Augustine’s anti-Manichaeism writings: “O abominable monger! O execrable perdition and ruin of deluded souls!”—this under the chapter-title accusation “He compels to the perpetration of horrible turpitudes”. Judging by the kind of vitriol you can excite if you cross St. Augustine, I’d take a fishwife any day.

In the News/ India

India: Creating waves

A fisherwoman in India carries the message of conservation and management

An article by Sabyasachi Bandopadhyay in The Indian Express, New Delhi, dated 18-5-2002

Dadanpatrabar, West Bengal, May 17: An illiterate fisherwoman from Dadanpatrabar in East Midnapore is creating waves along the coastal belt of Bengal with her slogan “Save the sea, save marine life”.

Ratna Majhi’s voice has now travelled beyond the state’s boundaries. She will address a seminar in Bangalore in June. The Thiruvananthapuram-based National Fishworkers’ Forum, a countrywide organization of fishworkers, is the organizer. Ratna, a Greenpeace International award winner, champions the cause of marine life after learning from experience.

As secretary of Midnapore District Women Fishworkers’ Welfare Association, Ratna travels along Bengal’s coastline voicing her concern for fishermen’s livelihood.

Though she has managed to wrest some sops for fishermen, government indifference often comes in the way. “They have thousands of demands,” Fisheries Extension Officer, Piyush Kanti Jana said. “We have conceded some but it’s impossible to grant all. It is the Centre that can help.”

Government apathy only helps reinforce Ratna’s resolve to fight destruction of marine life. She first raised her voice in protest when the catch along the Digha-Contai coastline dipped.

According to Sreekanta Das, member of a 10,000-strong fishermen’s association at Dadanpatrabar: “During off-seasons we catch, on an average, 15-20 kg fish. But 10 years ago, it was just the double. If this downtrend continues, we will soon starve.”

Ratna cited several reasons for fish scarcity. “Foreign trawlers are encroaching in our economic zone. With their better technology, they make a clean sweep. But they are selective in their catch. What they don’t want is chucked out in the sea. This destroys marine life,” she said.



Another reason for the declining catch is farms set up along coasts for prawn culture. “The Centre’s Aquaculture Authority Law helped people set up prawn culture farms which have harmed marine life,” Ratna said.

Aquaculture expert Bishnupada Sen, who was in-charge of several government projects, shares Ratna’s

fears. He said the farms' untreated toxic effluents are dangerous. Ratna has been protesting but it hasn't really helped her people get a better deal. After several protest marches from last August, all she got were some bicycles, gloves and shoes for fellow fisherfolk and some all-weather roads in her locality.

Members of her organization, however, have faith in Ratna and more people are closing ranks with her. "Earlier, we had no hope for the future," Ashalata Rout, a fisherwoman, said. "But she (Ratna) has brought us hope."

In the News/ Spain

Silent Slaves

Fishermen's wives associations in Spain have initiated a campaign to improve the working and living conditions of sea-going fishermen

An article by L.C. Saavedra in *Voz de Galicia*, Spain, translated by Brian O'Riordan.

Several organizations have initiated a campaign to obtain the 500,000 signatures needed for establishing a Common Law. Several associations of seafarer's wives from all over Spain will send a proposal to the Congress of Deputies for establishing, as Common Law, a norm for regulating the activity of sea-going fishermen. They will continue to collect the half million signatures needed until 30 November 2002.

Till today, there is no legal way for fishermen to improve their on-board working and living conditions through the Constitution. An initiative such as this to establish a Common Law requires half a million signatures for it to be taken up by the Congress, and for it to be treated as a binding norm within the Spanish legal system. The authors of this proposal are several associations of fishermen's wives from the autonomous communities of Galicia, Basque country, Catalonia, Andalucia and possibly, even from the Canary Islands communities.

The main idea of such a law is that the legal system can be used to increase the rest period on shore as a function of the time worked at sea. It is proposed that, initially, for every four months worked, two months of rest be provided. The main sticking point that must be solved is who will pay for this. To start with, it is proposed that the government approaches the European Social Fund to pay for part of this rest period, and that the rest be shared by boatowners and the administration.

Josefa Soto and Cristina de Castro, respectively the President of Rosa dos Ventos and the national fisheries delegate of the Apostolate of the Sea, spoke in Vigo about the task facing working society in the 21st century to humanize. They declared that "seafaring fishermen are this century's new and silent slaves".

In the opinion of Soto and de Castro, the proposal will not only contribute to improving life of the workers but the rest periods will also, at the same time, reduce fishing effort as the current working regime, more than 10 hours daily, is a factor that favours overfishing. Josefa Soto, and Cristina de Castro are carrying out the awareness raising campaign across the length and breadth of the country in order to obtain the half million signatures needed. All kinds of Spanish institutions will be contacted, including the official representatives in Madrid and Europe. The promoters hope that the signatures can be presented before 30 November, a date that will coincide with a Congress they are organizing in Vigo.

Film/ Africa

Fishers of Dar

A film on fisheries in Tanzania by Lina Fruzzetti, Akos Ostor and Stephen Ross

Fishers of Dar explores the continuity and integrity of traditional fishing practices in contemporary Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Dar es Salaam is a metropolis of three million people, yet the city's demand for fish is entirely met by equipment and methods practiced there for centuries.

The film takes the viewer to the city harbour's pier and fish market and to a small fishing community nearby. The film shows the hundreds of people who make a living in the process, before the fish reaches the customer. The story begins before dawn, with small sailboats and bigger diesel-powered boats leaving for fishing grounds. We see fishermen and women, boat builders, boat crews, auctioneers, labourers and vendors. Not least are the women who come with buckets, buy and clean small fish and go home by bus to sell fried fish in the hundreds of smaller markets of the city. Recently the market was demolished to provide for expansion of the harbour. The age old process continues but under difficult new conditions. 37 min. Sale \$250. For more information see:

<http://www.filmakers.com/indivs/FishersDar.htm>

Net Resources



WIF report

The English report of the ICSF *Workshop on Gender and Coastal Fishing Communities in Latin America* organized from 10 to 15 June 2000 in Prainha do Canto Verde, Ceara, Brazil, is now available on ICSF's website. (www.icsf.net)

The workshop brought together 36 participants—men and women—from five countries in the Latin American region, i.e. Chile, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador and Mexico. Included in this document is the report of the workshop, as well as background papers from Chile, Mexico, Peru and Brazil that were prepared for the workshop. These papers discuss the situation of women fishworkers in these countries and their role in organizational and decision-making processes.

WIF Bibliography

An FAO document that gathers a selection of publications on gender and fisheries produced from 1990 onwards. We carry the Abstract...

In the last 20 years the issue of "Women in Fisheries" (WIF) has become increasingly important. WIF as a term underlines not only the role of women in the fishery industry as such but also women as wives and mothers with all their household activities. The aim of this work is to bring the issue of WIF closer to readers and offer them an overview of a wide range of documents on women's participation and role in the fishing industry. The study's focus is from 1990 to date. The bibliography is divided into five main parts: monographs, articles, documentaries, projects and workshop papers, and website addresses on WIF. The reference is as below:

Kyprianou, M-H (comp.), Bibliography on gender and fisheries (1990-2001), FAO Fisheries Circular. No. 969. Rome, FAO. 2001. 42p

The document can be downloaded from:
<http://mujeres.infopesca.org/pdf/art006.PDF>

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Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We would also like names of other people who could be interested in being part of this initiative. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.

Writers and potential contributors to *YEMAYA*, please note that write-ups should be brief, about 500 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women and men of fishing communities working towards a sustainable fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer.