

# Gender & Fisheries

## A report on the training workshop on the use of gender analysis in aquaculture and fisheries research organised by the Asian Fisheries Social Science Research Network

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The Asian Fisheries Social Science Research Network (AFSSRN) organized a panel session titled “GAF Training-Workshop: Gender Analysis in Aquaculture and Fisheries Social Science Research” during the 8th Global Symposium on Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries (GAF8), held in a hybrid format on 22 November 2022 in Kerala, India. The session was attended by students and early-career researchers involved in, or planning, social science studies incorporating a gender perspective.

The GAF workshop aimed to immerse participants in the evolving field of gender analysis in aquaculture and fisheries social science research and development. Through this initiative and similar capacity-building programs, AFSSRN aspired to inspire researchers to explore innovative approaches to gender analysis within their academic disciplines and areas of expertise.

Specifically, GAF was designed to enhance participants’ understanding of the importance of integrating and mainstreaming gender in social science research. It also aimed to familiarize them with the process of developing gender-specific research questions and tools, as well as to provide guidance on the appropriate application of various gender analysis methodologies.

A range of country case studies on gender analysis were presented. These included studies on India by Neha Wajahat Qureshi and Nikita Gopal (with co-authors Naila Majid Bhat and Abhilash Thapa); the Philippines by Marieta Ba ez Sumagaysay, (with co-authors Harold M. Monteclaro, Rosario H. Asong, Ida M. Siason, Alice Prieto-Carolino, and Rowena Paz L. Gelvezon); Malaysia by Zumilah Zainalaludin; and Nigeria by Kafayat Adetoun Fakoya together with Ayodele Oloko and Ismot Olabamiji.

In her keynote lecture, Alice Joan Ferrer highlighted two key themes: the significance of social sciences in fisheries research and the necessity of integrating a gender perspective into social analysis in fisheries and aquaculture. She emphasized that, as fisheries is a sector grounded in the exploitation of natural resources, an interdisciplinary—or ideally, transdisciplinary—approach is essential to

addressing its challenges. Ferrer underscored the importance of integrating biological, ecological, and social dimensions into fisheries research and management, advocating for equal emphasis on all disciplines. She identified the pivotal role of social sciences, given that effective fisheries management ultimately seeks to influence human behaviour.

Ferrer also drew attention to the persistent marginalization of women in fisheries and aquaculture, noting that their work remains largely invisible and their contributions unacknowledged. She argued for prioritizing gender equality in policy, research, and practice within the sector. As part of her presentation, she shared a study illustrating how research can more effectively address gender issues in fisheries by employing a comprehensive framework that integrates social well-being, intersectionality, and value chain analysis. She concluded with a set of actionable recommendations for moving forward.

### India

Gender inequalities are deeply entrenched in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in India. Addressing these disparities through gender-focused research can significantly promote equity and empowerment. Studies show that incorporating a gender perspective in fisheries and aquaculture enhances outcomes such as increased productivity, better resource management, and more sustainable development.

In the Indian context, numerous studies have addressed gender issues in these sectors. A paper presented at GAF provided a comprehensive review of research conducted across India, identifying gaps in three broad areas: the application of methodological frameworks, data collection approaches, and sampling designs. While nine major frameworks for gender analysis have been documented, many Indian studies, though theoretically robust, lack an appropriate methodological focus on gender. Most of these studies primarily document women’s roles, their access to and control over resources, and the constraints they face in pre-harvest, post-harvest, and other value chain activities.



Women selling dried fish at the fishing harbour, Andhra Pradesh, India. Women are more active in processing and trading, performing complementary roles across all nodes of the value chain

A scientometric analysis of gender studies in India highlights the persistence of patriarchal norms, portraying fishing as a male-dominated occupation. Despite gender being a social construct, most studies fail to adopt an intersectional approach that considers the interplay of ethnicity, caste, religion, and other factors.

To strengthen gender studies in Indian fisheries and aquaculture, several key steps are essential:

1. Integrating Gender Perspectives in Research and Policy: Research and policy initiatives must explicitly incorporate gender dimensions to address systemic inequities.
2. Training and Capacity Building: Equipping researchers, policymakers, and practitioners with the skills to integrate gender perspectives into their work is vital.
3. Promoting Collaboration: Partnerships among academia, government, civil society, and the private sector are crucial to advancing gender studies in the sector.
4. Enhancing Data Collection and Analysis: Developing robust, gender-specific datasets will provide a clearer understanding of

the sector and support evidence-based policymaking.

5. Establishing Training Platforms for Young Researchers: Orientation and training programs should focus on the use of diverse methodological frameworks and participatory, gender-sensitive approaches to ensure holistic development.

### The Philippines

In the Philippines, efforts to integrate and mainstream gender in fisheries research and extension have significant implications, particularly for sustainable fisheries management (SFM) and the ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM). Given the traditionally male-dominated nature of this sector, gender mainstreaming across the tuna fisheries value chain is essential for fostering inclusive and sustainable development, in alignment with SDG 5.

In 2017, the National Network on Women in Fisheries of the Philippines (WINFISH) conducted an USAID-supported gender analysis of the tuna fisheries in General Santos City, the tuna capital of the Philippines. This



study employed a gender-responsive value chain analysis (GRVCA) framework alongside USAID's six gender dimensions: access to assets, beliefs and perceptions, practices and participation, time and space, legal rights and status, and power and decision-making. Both small-scale (municipal) and large-scale (handline and purse seine) value chain participants were included, along with value chain enablers.

The research involved a survey of 219 respondents (109 males and 110 females) representing producers, processors, and traders; 22 key informant interviews (5 males and 17 females); and eight focus group discussions (two all-male, three all-female, and three mixed-gender groups). The findings on existing gender disparities informed the development of strategic interventions aimed at reducing gender biases, enhancing women's engagement, and promoting equality. The study identified several gender-responsive interventions:

1. Capacity-building for both male and female participants and enablers in the value chain.
2. Development and dissemination of gender-sensitive knowledge products.
3. Strengthening partnerships with value chain enablers.
4. Promoting governance practices that are inclusive and gender-responsive.

These interventions have the potential to expand opportunities for women in the fisheries value chain, improve gender dynamics, and address both practical and strategic gender needs.

### Malaysia

The study presented aimed to identify the types of vulnerability that predict the likelihood of respondents belonging to low-income households, using sex-disaggregated data. A total of 322 respondents were surveyed across Padang Terap, Kedah; Pekan, Pahang; Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan; and Hulu Perak, Perak. All respondents reported experiencing at least one of six types of vulnerabilities included in the questionnaire.

The demographic profile of the respondents revealed that they were predominantly older adults, with an average age of approximately 66 years for both male and female participants. The analysis utilized a Binary Logistic Regression (BLR) model, which yielded significant findings. The model indicated that handicapped men and single fathers were 3.60 times more likely to fall into the poor income category compared to the average male respondent. For women, single mothers and handicapped individuals were

16.15 times more likely to experience poverty compared to the average female respondent.

In conclusion, the study highlighted that the most vulnerable members of freshwater fisheries communities are older adults. Moreover, women in vulnerable circumstances are disproportionately poorer than their male counterparts, with handicapped men and single mothers identified as the poorest groups within these communities.

### Nigeria

In Nigeria, men and women engage in the fishery system in distinct ways shaped by cultural and traditional practices, religion, norms regarding resource access and control, mobility, technology, and the type of products involved. Factors such as access to resources, control, the accrual of benefits, wealth, family heritage, and social capital significantly influence gender participation across the value chain.

Men are predominantly involved in fishing activities and hold a monopoly on fisheries governance. In contrast, women are more active in processing and trading, performing complementary roles across all nodes of the value chain. However, the vast majority of these roles are unpaid. Women have limited influence in fisheries management, except in contexts where they traditionally harvest resources. Despite their critical roles, gender is often misunderstood and reduced to "women's issues," disregarding the broader dynamics of gender identities and power relations. This limited perspective also means that women's potential to participate meaningfully in harvesting and fisheries governance is largely overlooked in empowerment programs.

The 2019 National Policy on Gender in Agriculture seeks to address gender disparities in agriculture, including fisheries and aquaculture. However, the policy's success is threatened by challenges such as inadequate political will, insufficient resources, limited access to information, and a lack of capacity to support effective gender mainstreaming.

GAF featured a workshop that provided participants with hands-on experience in designing survey tools using a gender analysis framework tailored for fisheries and aquaculture. Paul Joseph Ramirez and Neha Qureshi facilitated an open forum, followed by a workshop conducted after the presentation of gender analysis case studies from India, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Nigeria. The panel highlights from GAF were presented by Zarirah Binti Mohamed Zulperi. ❏

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