

# Annex I

## **BASIC FEATURES OF WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN FISHERIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

While fisherwomen share many of the activities, have many of the needs and face many of the problems of other rural women, their situation has some particular dimensions:

The most obvious difference is that fisheries involve special knowledge, skills and problems in harvesting, handling, processing and even marketing the catch. Fisherfolk and fishing communities are among the poorest and most undernourished of the rural poor, with all the terrors and constraints that accompany severe malnourishment and abject poverty. Few fisherfolk have either the land or the skills to grow crop foods and so depend on a single source for food and income. Due to the nature of various fishing types, requiring men to spend extended periods at sea, many fisherwomen are alone much of the time. Ocean fishing, especially, is often extremely hazardous; injuries and deaths are not uncommon, so it is not unusual that women find themselves the sole providers for their families.

### **WOMEN'S ROLES**

In most rural communities, there are essential differences between the economic, social and political roles of men and women. This also holds true for fishing communities. While these roles and the responsibilities they entail may differ from country to country and even from community to community, a number of basic features can be identified.

— Women have primary responsibility for all household tasks: child care, preparation of food, collection of water and fuel for domestic use, cleaning, etc.

— Women normally purchase whatever food the family eats beyond what the household itself produces; they therefore tend to have a central role in determining, within the family's resources, the nutritional value of the diet.

- Women often have primary responsibility for meeting all household expenses and thus may have discretionary control over some part of the family's financial resources.
- In some communities, women are engaged in the actual harvesting of fish from boats or from the shore.
- In most communities, women play a major, sometimes exclusive, role in making and/or mending fishing gear and in such post-harvest activities as handling, processing, preserving, storing and marketing the catch; while, in some areas, women may be employed as wage labour in large-scale processing operations, generally their efforts are small-scale and home-based.
- In a few regions of the developing world, women are important fisheries entrepreneurs, earning, handling and controlling significant amounts of money and financing a variety of fisheries enterprises.
- Where aquaculture is practised, women often play a major role in nurturing and harvesting.
- If foods other than fish are produced by the household, it is generally the women who are in charge.

## **WOMEN'S CONSTRAINTS**

In most rural communities in the developing world, women not only face most or all of the constraints confronting men but also many which men do not face. Again, these may differ in kind, severity and importance from region to region; however, some generalizations can be made.

- Due to their domestic duties women tend to be more restricted in their movements than men, in the amount of time they can spend away from home and in the amount of time they can devote to economically productive activities. Hence, an additional activity which would call upon women's time would have to be justified in terms of economic and social benefits and/or financial returns.
- In many regions, custom and habit have traditionally reserved formal education, if available, largely for males, with the result that illiteracy among women is usually higher than among men.
- Too often, when training and extension services are offered, they are geared to the needs and interests of men rather than women.
- Training and extension, even when appropriate for women, may be held in locations or at times which make regular attendance a hardship.

- The vast majority of training sessions and extension services are conducted by men and, in cultures where contact with men outside the immediate family is discouraged or even prohibited, women will be unable to take full advantage of such programmes.
- In many cases, women find it more difficult than men to obtain credit from rural financial institutions, either because they are considered greater risks (they usually have no assets of their own to use as collateral and may have little or no control of whatever income they do earn), or because they are unfamiliar with banking procedures.
- The introduction of large-scale development projects, mechanization or improved technology may increase productive capacities, but it can also increase the post-harvest work burden of women or deprive them of traditional forms of employment and income; if a fisheries activity is enlarged or mechanized, it often suddenly or gradually becomes male-oriented.
- Women are generally under-represented in cooperatives and thus lack the support and economic power that such collective enterprises can offer.
- Men tend to hold the vast majority of leadership positions, both social/political and economic; women, therefore, have little or no say in many areas which affect their lives and little chance to develop leadership and decision-making skills.



## Annex II

### **GUIDELINES AND CHECKLISTS FOR NON-FISHERIES ACTIVITIES**

*Guidelines for the integration of women in agricultural and rural development projects.* Rome, FAO. May 1977. (Reprinted 1980)

FAO/UNDP, WCARRD Programme of Action — Integration of Women in Rural Development (WCARRD — World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, 1979). *World Conference of the United Nations Decade of Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Copenhagen, Denmark, 14-30 July 1980.*

*Checklist for women in development for programming and project formulation.* Rome, FAO. July 1981.

*Integrating nutrition into agricultural and rural development projects: a manual.* Nutrition in Agriculture, No. 1. Rome, FAO. 1982.

*Guidelines — Women in land and water development.* Land and Water Development Division. Rome, FAO. 1982.

*Country fact sheets to identify women's role in agriculture and food production.* FAO. March 1983.

*Report of the Training Session — FAO/INSTRAW Advisory Service: Regional Training Session on Development and Use of WID Guidelines and Checklists at National Level.* Dhaka, Bangladesh. 24-28 August 1986.