

RECASTING THE NET: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON WOMEN IN THE FISHERIES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) estimates the number of people directly employed in fishing and aquaculture to be 43.5 million (FAO 2008). Ninety percent of them are small-scale fishers¹ dependent for a livelihood on coastal and inland fishery resources (FAO 2005a). Fishing and fish farming activities, which make up the primary sector, critically depend on activities in the secondary sector, which include “post-harvesting” activities such as processing, transportation, marketing and distribution, and “pre-harvesting” activities, such as net and gear making, boat building, fuel supply, engine repair and so on. The FAO estimates that for each person employed in the primary sector, there could be four employed in the secondary sector, which would put the total employment in the fisheries at about 170 million. When families are factored in, it is estimated that about 520 million people are dependent on the sector, or nearly 8 percent of the world population (FAO 2008).

Women have a significant role in the small-scale fisheries. They perform many of the pre-harvesting, and most of the post-harvesting tasks. However, since these tasks fall in the secondary sector from which data is not usually gathered, women’s labour even in the formal economy remains invisible in the statistics. Over the years, however, research on women in the fisheries has revealed the astounding amount of work that women do in the sector and the various forces that shape the conditions under which this work is done. This stands in direct contrast to the official invisibility of women.

Most fishers and fish farmers (86 percent) live in Asia, many in China, and also in India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Viet Nam (FAO 2008). The majority are poor, small-scale fishers, and their poverty encompasses more than just income; it includes lack of land ownership, debt, poor access to health, education, and financial capital, and political and geographical marginalization (Béné and Friend, 2009). Despite this reality, fishing, in fact, has been likened to a ‘bank in the water’ that the small-scale fishers could rely on to lift themselves out of poverty. It is this gap between the potential of small scale fisheries and the reality that deserves greater policy attention (Béné, C. et al, 2009).

1.1. Aims, methodological concerns and structure of the paper

In the context of the critical role of the fisheries in sustaining livelihoods and the central but heavily undervalued role of women in the fisheries, the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) is organising a workshop titled “*Recasting the net: Defining a gender agenda for sustaining life and livelihoods in fisheries*” in early July 2010. The

¹ The FAO Working Group on Small-Scale Fisheries characterized small-scale fisheries as “a dynamic and evolving sector employing labour intensive harvesting, processing and distribution technologies to exploit marine and inland water fishery resources.” (FAO 2004)

present paper is intended to be a background paper for this workshop and research for it has been guided broadly by the workshop themes which include: Understanding “work” and changes in the sexual division of labour within fishing communities; rights to coastal and fisheries resources; women and fisheries decision-making; impact of fish trade and aquaculture on fisheries resources, community livelihoods and food security; culture and identity; climate change and organizing women in fisheries.

This review takes stock of existing literature and research and tries to identify key insights as well as critical gaps. It relied heavily upon the books, monographs, journals and magazine articles made available through the documentation services of ICSF. Particular mention must be made of back issues of the ICSF newsletters - Yemaya and Samudra. In addition, web archives were also referenced.

One of the striking aspects of the literature is the uneven nature of the information available. There are multiple gaps in the literature – paucity of information on entire countries; within countries, on regions; within regions, on women’s lives and livelihoods and on the ways in which gender intersects with other forces to determine the quality of lived experience. China and India together with Indonesia, the Philippines and Viet Nam are home to the largest numbers of fishers, with China dominating global fish production. Yet information about the fisheries in even these countries is partial and inadequate. To give just two examples, we know next to nothing about the conditions of work and livelihood of women in the fisheries in China; and from India, the information is patchy with several coastal states being represented significantly less than others.

Further, research has historically tended to focus more on some countries and regions of the North, such as the Atlantic region, Canada and certain parts of Europe, than others. Certain countries in Latin America, particularly where workers are better organised or others with a history of social justice movements like the Philippines appear to be better represented. Quite apart from the fact that striking gaps exist in our information base, even where we do have data, the data may not be readily comparable. The data about women in the fisheries, for instance, employs diverse definitions, assumptions and parameters. Official statistics are rarely available. FAO, the primary data source for much of the research, by its own admission, fails to capture the true magnitude of fishing in the informal sector, particularly part-time fishing (FAO 2008). Further, the data reflects multiple research persuasions and is presented in multiple forms – anecdotal, experiential, quantitative, and so on. While this makes for pluralism and diversity, it also makes a global literature survey a daunting task.

One of the vexing problems is to find common words, trends and analytical categories by which experiences may be compared and this opens up the troubling question of representation. Do the gaps in what we know allow the available literature to speak for what we don’t? A ready example is the use in the present paper, of the terms ‘North’ or ‘global North’ and ‘South’ or ‘global South’, used to denote blocs of countries of high

and low economic development respectively, with countries like Japan included in the North and countries in transition like India, China, Brazil and South Africa included in the South. Terms like North and South are freely used in the literature and have been adopted in this paper too because they serve a useful function as economic and political markers; however, they also run the risk of blurring differences and generalising experiences. They obscure the possibility that a country like, for instance, Japan might be closer to countries in the global South in terms of culture and occupational practices in the informal sector, and that growing numbers of elites within countries of the South have consumer habits that mirror those of the North. They also suggest rigid boundaries, obscuring the fact that global capital is increasingly transcending the borders of nation states.

The ambiguous and changing nature of other analytical categories also poses a challenge. The definitions of artisanal and small-scale fisheries and the nature of the fisheries across different regions differ greatly, and there is enormous variability in concepts and the meanings attached to certain terms commonly used in the literature. The difficulties are well-illustrated, for instance, in an attempt that tries to define 'artisanal fishing' through a combination of factors: *physical attributes* (vessel type and size), *patterns of fishing* (technique, location of land base and so on), the *social structure* of the fishery or fishing enterprise as well as the *economic condition*, in terms of market orientation and income. The researcher, in this case, is quick to acknowledge that for every example that fits the categorization, there are counterexamples: "... among fisheries labeled "artisanal" it is possible to find cases where the vessel is a trawler, or is quite large, or runs a powerful engine, or uses advanced technology, or is based in a city, or involves an off-shore fishery, or is targeted on a single pelagic species, or is organized around formal corporations with non-family crew, or is oriented towards export, or is returning a middle-class income to the fishers" (Schorr 2004 p17). Another commentator, observing in today's context of technological advancements in the fisheries that the terms traditional, artisanal and small-scale defy "elegant definition", advocates a relative approach: "It can be assumed that artisanal and small-scale fisheries, in general, refer to the smallest viable fishing units in a country or a province, with downward or lateral compatibility in fishing gear operation" (Mathew 2001 p 7)

There is ambiguity and variability in other routinely-used terminology in the gender literature - the term 'gender' itself, for instance. To give just a few examples, gender has been variously defined as a "social role" (Williams 2005); as "the relations between men and women" (FAO 1997); as a "structuring principle in society" (Bavington et al. 2005); and sometimes even tautologically, as the "basis of certain behavioural standards, values and patterns regarding both genders" (Aguilar and Casteneda 2001). In different contexts, thus, the term thus refers to different constructions, in one instance material, in another, ideological. The implications are of course significant and very different. The policy discourse on gender too has experienced several shifts from 'women in development', to 'women and development' to 'gender and development' and

presently, 'gender mainstreaming'. These shifts have not occurred in isolation but reflect perhaps a variety of pressures, for instance, the pressures of Western donor-funded research, the dominance of rights-based frameworks in the context of the ascendance of neo-liberal policy, and so on. From the point of view of women in the fisheries, an exploration of the changing nature of the gender discourse, for its policy implications alone, merits specific research attention.

Also useful would be a historical analysis of the literature of struggles of fisher people, in particular the struggles of women in the fisheries, for greater regulation of, for instance, welfare and fishing rights. These aspects are however outside the scope of the present paper.

The paper begins by outlining the key points of the overall context in which the question of women in the fisheries may be located. It then looks at women's work in the sector, drawing attention to the various forms of unpaid and (under)paid labour that women contribute in the household mode, as well as in the industrial mode, of fish production, and then examines the chief characteristics of this labour. The next section explores the key issues and challenges facing the fisheries and their implications for women. Next, women's struggles to protect their livelihoods and the community 'way of life' are explored. The following section interrogates this 'way of life', particularly in terms of its implications for women. Experiences of women organising for change are taken up next. In the final section, a schematic representation of women's labour and the relations of production and consumption in the fisheries are presented and the discussion ends with a set of conclusions.

2.0 CONTEXT

The context of the fisheries today is one that involves negotiating the twin pressures of development and sustainability. The majority of the small-scale fishers, as noted earlier, are poor and face multiple poverty-related adversities, such as nutritional deficiencies, including malnutrition, with women and children typically bearing the brunt (Ferrer 2006; Khader 2006; Saligrama 2006; WorldFish Center 2005). Connected to the issues of poverty and underdevelopment is, as Schorr (2004) points out, the question of international equity for while it may be that more than 75 percent of the world's commercial fisheries are overfished and that aggregate global fishing capacity needs to be reduced, the fact is that many coastal developing countries have not yet developed the means to fully exploit the fisheries within their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs).

The potential for development however raises the issue of sustainability, which, in today's context of climate change, is a vital concern. Globally, the trends of 'fishing up' and 'fishing down' the trophic chain² have been linked to the decline and collapse of

² Bavington et al define the term 'trophic level' in the following way: "Trophic levels refer to the distance between the primary producers (algae) that convert solar energy into usable energy through photosynthesis

marine fish stocks in many parts of the world (see Bavington et al 2004). Why has this happened and who is to blame? These questions, together with the search for solutions are at the heart of most of the current debates in the fisheries.

While there is consensus that the responsibility for overfishing lies primarily with the highly mechanized industrialized vessels and the distant water fleets, it is also the case that the traditional fishery is often so completely integrated with the industrial as a result of new technologies, particularly the motorization of vessels and modernization of fishing gear, that its own sustainability poses a challenge (Schorr 2004). In the context, therefore, some urge that the fisheries be seen not as discrete sectoral entities but as forming a continuum from the subsistence-oriented artisanal fisheries at one end through the small-scale to the industrial fisheries at the other, with increasing concentration of scale, resource ownership, processing facilities and control over markets and transportation (Barbara Neis pers. comm.).

Capital, the predominant force acting upon this continuum, particularly in the current context of neoliberal globalization, sucks into its framework the development of all types of fisheries. The dominant political thinking within capitalist societies, and also, though possibly to a lesser extent, within existing forms of socialist societies, is marked by faith in a paradigm of economic growth as essential for human development. This leads to all activities and ideologies linked to economic growth being accepted without adequate questioning. In the context of fisheries, the logic of economic growth, buttressed by the ideological and patriarchal force of 'science' (see Rocheleau et al 1996), opens up coastal and marine resources for exploitation by multiple capitalist interests - ports, oil refineries, mining and smelting companies, power plants, real estate, construction, and so on. The coasts therefore are contested sites with diverse stakeholders staking claims on the developmental opportunities presented, the least powerful among whom in most cases might be the artisanal or small-scale fisher.

In the present juncture with mounting anxiety over climate change, capital is likely to experience increasing pressure, particularly within the global North, to limit the overexploitation and degradation of the environment. The BP oil spill, for instance, underlines the cost to capital of environmental disasters in the Northern context. We can therefore expect increasing moves to relocate extractive industry, based upon the exploitation of natural resources, to the less-regulated South. Concomitantly, we can expect increasing pressures in the South to dilute regulatory regimes in order to accommodate capital.

Capital requires informal, unregulated and cheap labour to maintain its levels of profitability and growth. This explains its movement to the South as also the accommodation of traditional forms of production within its framework. In the case of

and the consumers that feed on the algae. Thus, fisheries dominated by shrimp and crab are lower trophic-level fisheries than those for cod, haddock and salmon..." (Bavington et al 2004 1)

fisheries, capital would collaborate with changing forms of patriarchy to ensure the survival of the traditional organisation of the fisheries, including the household sector, where women are predominantly the providers of labour. Inasmuch as traditional fishing is drawn into capitalist trade, it provides a cheap source of fish. The persistence of traditional fishing within the capitalist mode also plays a role in undercutting wages and regulation as well as providing hidden subsidies through decreasing the cost of reproduction of labour.

Patriarchy, capitalism and science have cooperated in devastating global fish stocks (Bavington et al 2004). This conjoint logic, as it plays out through private and public institutions, needs to be resisted and alternative forms of sustainable development need to be worked out. An important source of resistance lies within traditional fisheries. Communities are, for instance, rich repositories of traditional forms of knowledge though progressively excluded from modern scientific knowledge systems. Communities are not however monolithic but sites for oppression on the basis of gender, race, caste and class. Given this reality, capital would always find it easy to attract women into waged employment - the more vulnerable the easier - even when wages are low and conditions of employment are sweated.

It is important therefore to underscore a nuanced opposition to the rapacious development of capitalism in the fisheries. The resistance will have to unequivocally oppose the unregulated entry of capital into all forms of fishing and non-fishing coastal exploitation. The protection of the rights of traditional fishers will require both government regulation and, at all levels, community participation and control. While opposing capital, concurrent demands for wages, working conditions and regulation of employment conditions within the capitalist framework must be made. At the same time, the struggle for women has to address the various inequalities within traditional societies. The rest of the paper will discuss these issues at greater length.

3.0 WOMEN'S WORK IN THE FISHERIES

An early review found a sexist bias in early ethnographic accounts in the fisheries (Davis and Nadel-Klein 1988). The contributions of women to the fisheries were invisible, and subsequent feminist research began to document and analyse both the omission of women and their actual contribution (MacDonald and Connelly 1989; Nayak 1986; Thompson 1985). This served the vital function of making women's work in the fisheries visible. However, even as it was being documented, women's work was also changing because of the economic restructuring of the fisheries, and research developed to understand these changes and their implications on women's lives (Cole 1991, Neis 1987, 1993; Sinclair 1988).

The literature of the late 1970s and 1980s found that in most fishing communities it was men who fished and women who prepared for, and disposed of, the catch. Women's

work thus was on land while men worked at sea. Functionalist explanations saw this differentiation as essential to the maritime economy, which had evolved around household-based production where different but complementary roles ensured the efficiency of the fishing household (Smith 1977). Such explanations however failed to interrogate and explain power relations within the maritime economy or the reality of women outside traditional marriages, single women or women heading households singly, who form a significant and highly vulnerable subsection of women in the small-scale, household-based fisheries.

Even as studies focused on the household-based or domestic mode of fish production, it was being increasingly swept aside by a modern, capitalist mode of production, involving industrial fleets and modern fish processing plants. Mode of production refers to the organisation and relations of production, which includes both the ownership of the means of production (who, for instance, owns the fishing boats and gear) and the interaction of the relations and forces of production (what employment/exchange relationships exist, for instance, between women processors and boat owners). It is an abstract concept, never found in a pure state. For example, capitalist societies are dominated by a capitalist mode of production, a “terribly concrete reality” but “invisible (to the naked eye). ‘Invisible,’ i.e., abstract” (Althusser, 1971). As an abstract concept, a mode of production signals common features and tendencies but not variations and local specificities. There is considerable variation in the fisheries between capitalist societies just as there is between traditional societies, and some studies have rightly critiqued the gender literature for not paying sufficient attention to these variations in historical and ethnographic detail (Porter 1987).

It may further be pointed out that modes of production do not operate exclusively and it is quite possible for more than one mode of production to prevail. For example, the household-based small-scale fisheries might co-exist, as typically it does, with the larger industrial fisheries. While the domestic mode of production fulfils a subsistence role, it need not be oriented only towards subsistence. It may in fact be completely geared towards production for the market, linked to the capitalist mode of production as a supplier of goods and services. Under apartheid, for instance, capital in South Africa used the domestic mode of production by contracting individual small-scale fishers who used their own boats and gear, and thus, the expansion of the capitalist mode of production along the coastline overlapped with the household mode (Jackie Sunde pers. comm.). Historically, it may be noted, dominant modes of production have supported and maintained subordinate modes in order to expand and ‘articulate’ their base, as in the case of slavery in the days of early capitalism in the Americas, or more currently, in the case of outsourcing labour-intensive work, for instance in the garment sector, from the global North to the little-regulated global South.

In the domestic or household mode of production, wages play a minor, inessential role with labour typically being mobilised through family, kinship and community

networks. In contrast, labour operating directly under the capitalist mode of production, is mobilised essentially through wages. In both modes of production, domestic as well as capitalist, the means of production as well as the produce are privately owned, in contrast to either community- or State-owned production relations.

A body of research tried to analyse the changes in modes and relations of production and their implications on women's lives. It located the fishing household in a larger political economy, exploring the relationship between paid and unpaid work (Connelly and MacDonald 1983; Porter 1985); gender-based hierarchies within paid work (Davis and Nadel-Klein 1988); and the distribution of work and power within the fishing household (Thompson 1985; Neis 1999).

Several aspects of women's work can be drawn out from this literature, in the form of broad trends for analytical purposes although the specific nature of these processes took slightly different forms in different contexts. Bearing in mind both that modes of production, as discussed above, are interlinked in complex ways and that women's labour can straddle more than one production mode, broadly it may be said that the small-scale fisheries are organised around the household mode of production and the industrial fisheries around the capitalist mode of production.

In both modes of production, women contribute labour in distinct ways as shown in the table below.

Mode of Production	Women's Labour	
	Unpaid	(Under)Paid
Household/ Traditional/Small-scale fisheries	*Fishery-related work *Housework and care -giving, including food security	* Fishery-related self- employment
Capitalist /Modern/Industrial fisheries	*Reproduction of labour power	*Waged work in the fisheries *Waged work outside the fisheries

Women contribute unpaid and (under)paid labour to the small-scale fisheries, in which fish production is organised around the traditional household. They also, often simultaneously, contribute labour for wages as well as unpaid labour to the capitalist or modern, industrial mode of fish production. Each type of labour is briefly discussed below.

2.1. Women's work in the household mode of fish production

In most rural communities, especially in the economic South, the household, and by extension, the community is the hub of the small-scale fisheries into which women put in two types of unpaid labour: one that directly supports the fishery, and the second that indirectly supports the fishery by ensuring the daily and generational reproduction of the fishing household.

Women, whether in the North or South, put in unpaid labour into essential tasks without which active fishing could not be carried out or sustained. In the South, these include a range of pre-harvest tasks such as bait preparation; net-making and repair, and in some cases, boat-mending. In Europe (but also in countries like the Philippines), where family boat enterprises characterise the sector, it would additionally include all forms of liaison and administrative work which keep the familial fishing enterprise afloat, such as working with banks to secure and repay loans; managing crews; handling accounts and so on. (Binkley 2005, Frangoudes, 2004)

Across the world's coastal regions women also work in multiple unpaid ways to ensure the reproduction of the fishing household. This includes foraging and gleaning for fish, clams and other bivalves to feed the family. It includes all forms of housework, including cleaning, cooking, washing and so on, as well as the care and nurture of young, invalid and elderly dependents. In many countries of the South, the increasing privatization of essential services exacerbated by environmental degradation, means that the unpaid labour of women in the household also includes walking for long distances to access basic services such as water and health. Finally, women put time and energy into the community, building networks and sustaining relationships, indirectly contributing to strengthening the production mode (Moser 1993).

The paid (or more accurately, the underpaid) forms of women's household labour include all forms of self-employed work in the fisheries. When done against cash income, this would include pre-harvest tasks, such as fish baiting, net-making or net-mending. The bulk of self-employed work in the small-scale fishery however consists of the post-harvest tasks of fish processing (salting, drying and smoking fish), vending, marketing and distribution – work that, across the world, is performed predominantly by women. At the same time, as economies integrate with global trade, entrepreneurial opportunities in fish trade are also opening up for women in certain parts of the world, for instance, West Africa, Taiwan, parts of the west coast of India, and so on.

In contrast to the stereotype of fishing as a male activity, in some parts of the world women are also known to fish in the sea, either alone, as in Fiji and some other countries of the South, or as part of the crew in the family fishing enterprise in the North. But more typically, particularly in some Latin American and European countries, it is in the nearshore waters that women fish and harvest for shrimps, shellfish, crabs, algae, shells and seaweeds. However, the fishing efforts of women may remain unpaid if the catch is for home consumption or is counted, together with the husband's, as part of the family catch (Kronen and Vunisea 2005).

2.2. Women's work in the industrial mode of fish production

There is a rich body of socialist feminist research on how women's unpaid work in the household helps to reproduce the capitalist workforce. Women's unpaid services in the

home free the worker for an eight to twelve hour working day of paid labour. If these services were to be bought off the market, the worker's wage would run out in no time. Women thus function as an unpaid domestic labour force that allows the family wage to be kept lower than the true cost of the family's subsistence (Connelly and MacDonald 1983). The unpaid labour of women, by keeping wage levels depressed, thus constitutes a hidden and indirect subsidy to capital. The impact of industrialisation, privatisation and globalisation on women's work is dealt with in more detail in a later section.

In the North, industrialization of the fisheries and women's labour therein has had a long history (Thompson 1983, 1985; Nadel-Klein 1988), intensifying after World War II (Neis 1997). There is rich documentation of the conditions of women's work in the industrial fisheries particularly from the Atlantic region and Canada.

Although in the South, particularly Asia, the modernization of the fisheries began in the 1950s, economic globalization in the late 1980s and 1990s has accelerated the pace of industrialization in the region. Global production chains are today drawing more and more women into paid employment in the fast-growing, export-oriented, fish processing and aquaculture sectors. In many regions, a subsistence-based, small-scale fishery operates in parallel and quite separately from the sophisticated industrialised fishery. In other parts, local economies realign themselves to the requirements of industry, women from non-fishing communities are joining the fishing sector, for example, in fish processing, while women from fishing communities are being forced to seek a future in waged work outside the fisheries: in tourism, as household help, as construction workers, and so on. Work outside the fisheries has been crucial for the survival of the fishing enterprise in European countries as well. Women from fishing communities in the Netherlands were considered the best house hold helpers, known for their hard work. Women of fishing communities have sought work as rural labourers or in industries like the carpet and the textile industry (Cornelie Quist pers. comm.).

Women's paid work for the lowest wages of course directly profits capital. This explains the growing 'feminisation of labour' not just in industrial fish production but much more ubiquitously as one of the chief characteristics of the new economy (Ghosh 2009).

2.3. Characteristics of Women's Work in the Fisheries

Women's work in the fisheries has the same dominant qualities that characterise women's work in general: informal; invisible; lowly in terms of status; segregated in terms of range and scale, and poorly paid, if paid at all. The small-scale fisheries are deeply structured by a sexual division of labour, the valorisation of 'productive' labour and the consequent invisibility of labour deemed 'non-productive'.

Some have argued that in the labour-intensive small-scale fisheries, where production is home-based and decentralised, the sexual division of labour gives rise to

complementary roles within the fishing household. As men do the fishing and women manage onshore pre- and post-harvest activities and also look after the fishing household, this arrangement imbues the community with the resilience needed to survive heavy odds such as poor seasons and indebtedness (Nayak and Vijayan 2006; Thompson 1985). However, the complementariness of the roles is called to question by the fact that only one of the two roles - active fishing undertaken by men - is considered to be 'productive', contributing to the gross national product, while the second role, that of women's work in domestic fisheries production, is so hidden to the productivity metrics that it is even today regarded as largely undocumented (ICSF, 2004).

The principle of sexual division of labour determines that the daily and generational reproduction of the family is performed overwhelmingly by women. In the household-based fisheries, there is little or no separation of the tasks of production and reproduction, that is to say, the lines of spatial and temporal separation between fishery-related work, finding food, housework, childcare, and so on can be, and often are, blurred. The shift from household-based to industry-based production, however, as Neis (1997) has shown, results in the gradual separation of the roles of production and reproduction.

With industrialization, as the interests of the State align closely with those of capital, measures such as the family wage, welfare benefits and unemployment insurance may be introduced, both to prevent 'the premature exhaustion and death' of the emergent labour force (Marx 1974 p 253) as well as to ensure that labour is freed for 'productive work'. In several countries of the industrialised North, welfare protection has assumed the wife's dependence on the wage-earning husband, reflecting the continuation of patriarchal relations in the industrial economy (Neis 1997). Thus, notionally, the family wage in welfare states is meant to cover, however inadequately, the cost of maintaining a dependent wife and children.

In many poor countries that are on the industrialization track today, this is not the case. Here, capital (by not paying even the minimum wage) and State (by renegeing on social security provisioning) take no responsibility for the maintenance and reproduction of labour power; and the burden of social reproduction is left to individual families or communities to deal with. The prevailing relations of power that are shaped by a complex set of inequalities, including patriarchy, ensure that the most vulnerable will have to deal with it - typically (but not necessarily only) women rather than men; among women, poor women (in the form of hired household help, for example), rather than rich women; among poor women, racial, caste-based or ethnic minorities (who can be hired even cheaper) and so on. Because little or no value is attached to domestic labour, those who engage in it find themselves in the margins of the economy, with little or no formal power.

Work performed in the family, structured by the sexual division of labour, thus subsidises the State as well as capital. When, as in the case of artisanal fisheries, the economy is organised around the household, the logic of familial patriarchy determines that all the work associated with the economy, particularly when done by women, will come to be regarded as an extension of housework. Women's labour within and around the household, be it processing or vending, harvesting or petty trade, comes to assume the characteristics of domestic labour in general – unregulated, never done and poorly paid.

These relations within the family devalue women in the marketplace when they seek employment. Capital perpetuates the sexual division of labour because it serves as one of its many tools to drive a hard bargain for cheap labour. A growing demand for 'labour market flexibility', which has come to mean poor wages and working conditions, casual work and absence of organization, is therefore triggering a trend towards feminisation of employment. As Connelly and MacDonald (1983) have argued, women act as a reserve army of labour for capital, to be hired or fired at will as economic conditions demand. The seasonal nature of many sectors within the fisheries appears to play into the hands of capital in this regard (Jackie Sunde pers. comm.)

Unsurprisingly therefore, women's labour is invisible in the official statistics. Even in countries where fishing communities are relatively better organised, women's work is unaccounted for. In Chile, for instance, it is estimated that the number of women officially recorded as directly employed in artisanal fishing represents only between ten to eighteen percent of the actual female workforce (Iacomini, 2006) and that the bulk of the women in the artisanal fisheries (69 percent) have no social security coverage (Araneda et. al. 2005). Across the world, proper wages and welfare benefits do not accrue to the bulk of women in the small scale fisheries. In an example of frustrating tautology, women's labour in the sector is considered unproductive and is therefore not recorded; and because it is not recorded, it is treated as unproductive.

The invisibility of women's work is a major reason for gender-blind fisheries policies that assume that it is men who dominate the sector. The Indian census is one of the few that defines a 'marine fisherman' in gender-neutral terms, as a person —man or woman—engaged in the marine fishery, and provides important data on pre-and post-harvesting tasks. However, here too, the lack of gender-disaggregated data makes it impossible to gauge women's actual, even if marginal, participation in active fishing (Sharma 2007).

Women are everywhere in the fisheries, working ceaselessly at home, in the beaches, harbours, and markets, and yet, ironically, it is most often the case that as workers, they officially do not exist, except when they enter the capitalist mode of production as waged workers. Their conditions of work suffer allied neglect. A common complaint of women who sell fish is regarding lack of access and infrastructure. Transportation of

fish is a major issue with women fish vendors and traders having to invest their own hard-earned money to engage private transport. The lack of cold storage facilities is another issue that introduces a great deal of insecurity in women's lives. Market places are often unhygienic, dirty, poorly lit and unsafe. Sanitation and sewage facilities are usually absent as also are drinking water and toilet facilities. These increase the degree of vulnerability that women have to deal with on an everyday basis. Lack of access to capital and credit on fair terms also keeps the majority of women in the fisheries on the brink of poverty. However, as we will see in a later section, women through their struggles have, in certain cases, been able to change these dismal conditions and assert their rights as workers and citizens.

Women's invisibility reinforces their marginalization in the fisheries by keeping them in relative poverty and denying them the benefits of any possible policy interventions. Such invisibility is harmful at all times but especially so today when the rapid erosion of the small-scale fisheries demands sector-specific social and economic protection.

3.0. CHALLENGES IN THE FISHERIES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN

The small-scale fishing sector has lived for generations along coasts and water bodies, depending heavily on inshore resources for food and on fish for income. However, escalating pressures on coastal lands and resources pose a serious threat to the survival of fishing communities. This section summarises the key challenges facing the small-scale fisheries and their implications for women. The challenges include mounting pressures on coastal resources due to commercialization, industrialization and privatization and the impacts of climate change; economic restructuring of the fisheries; access restrictions due to marine protection and conservation regimes; trade liberalisation, and within its paradigm, the growth of industrial aquaculture, the question of food security; certification and eco-labelling schemes and issues facing artisanal trade; and finally, the employment trends and conditions in the current context.

3.1. Coastal Commercialization, Industrialization and Privatization

Coastal and marine ecosystems are among the world's most fertile but threatened ecosystems. Open ocean areas are home to varieties of marine species and habitats such as coral reefs and sea grass beds. Nearshore, estuarine areas, created by the mix of freshwater and saltwater, are complex and varied eco-niches, representing a fragile web of interdependencies. They include mangroves, wetlands, marshes and mud flats. Together with terrestrial coastal ecosystems such as sand dunes, these ecosystems perform critical functions like flood control; shoreline stabilization; protection against storm surges; water filtration and nutrient recycling. From the point of view of the small-scale fisheries, nearshore areas play a vital role in providing nesting and feeding grounds for marine and aquatic species (UNEP 2006). The health of the fisheries is deeply tied to the health and biodiversity of coastal ecosystems.

The natural productivity of the coasts however makes them prime targets of commercial activities. As a result of mounting and competitive pressures, coastal regions are experiencing profound changes. These include *land use change and habitat loss*, for instance, as mangroves are felled for coastal zone development, aquaculture, and agriculture or marshland reclaimed for port building; *increased nutrient loading* from agricultural run-off, sewage, industrial effluents, and burning of fossil fuels; *over-fishing and the use of destructive fishing methods*, such as bottom trawling, dredging and explosives; *climate change-induced vulnerabilities* such as sea-level rise, increased storms, and coral bleaching and mortality; and *demographic developments* leading to increased coastal population densities up to three times that of inland areas (UNEP 2006).

Increasing levels of coastal commercialisation and industrialization accelerate the processes of global warming and climate change. Fishing communities face the added risk of extreme weather events associated with climate change and their livelihood base is expected to be progressively destroyed as a consequence of rising sea levels and acidification of ocean waters. (Daw et al 2009). Women are particularly affected because their already-limited access to, and control over, land and natural resources is further compromised by climate-related disaster phenomena.

Port- and harbour-construction, industrial trawling, infrastructural and industrial growth, oil and natural gas exploration, sand-mining, commercial aquaculture, urbanization and tourism – these are only some of the multiple pressures being exerted on coastal land and resources, increasingly alienating fishing communities from their means of livelihood and survival. Since fishing communities usually have no legal titles to land but only customary rights established through generational use, displacement is an ever-present threat. Even in countries like the Philippines, where coastal areas are inalienable under law, reclamation and construction activities as well as commercial aquaculture in foreshore areas have caused widespread dislocation of fishing families (Munoz 2008) with nearly 200 000 fishers losing their livelihood due to displacement in the short period between 1998 and 2001 (Mulekom 2004).

Privatization and enclosure of coastal land and resources profoundly affect women's access to fish, coastal land and coastal resources. As beaches are sold to private parties and, as, for instance, in the case of Kerala, India, sand-mining lobbies and other private vested interests— often with the support of local politicians — take over the coastal land, women's access their traditional spaces of work is blocked. While these developments impact all poor women in the fisheries, single women in the fish trade are reported to be the worst affected by these changes (Saligrama 2006).

Privatization of coastal land and resources may institute new class relations with changing patterns of land ownership that intensify the stranglehold of patriarchy on women's lives in new ways. A case study of a village in northern Vietnam shows how

the privatization of property rights in Vietnam in the wake of the economic liberalization process (locally called *doi moi*) adversely affected the women, particularly poor women by vesting individual property rights with the male head of the household. Women experienced a collective disempowerment as their access to formerly common property lands and resources was now mediated by their relations with men, especially as husbands (Hue 2006). Another case study demonstrates how, under a new fisheries management regime in the Philippines, seaweed farming, traditionally based on usufruct rights, was privatised through lease permits, leading men to become the permit owners; women were thus alienated from their traditional common property resources and driven into the folds of a newly-constructed patriarchal relationship (Arandez-Tanchuling and Durano 2006).

3.2. The Economic Restructuring of the Fisheries

The coasts, it may be argued, have historically been magnets for human agglomeration and the fisheries always been shaped by the larger forces of international economies. While that may be the case, conflicts over land and resources have greatly intensified today. This intensification, and its impact on fishery resources, must be viewed in the light of the current context of neo-liberal globalization.

Martha MacDonald (2005) points out that while fish trade has had a long history of integration with mercantile and capitalist economies, the distinguishing feature of globalization, the present avatar of capitalist development, is the establishment of institutional structures on an unprecedented scale to support the expansion and deepening of free market trade. International financial and economic organizations like the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation are significantly influencing the writ of national governments to promote supply-side policies for the liberalisation of trade and capital flows, deregulation, privatisation and export specialization. Rapid technological developments and international competition have spurred an intensification of fishing effort.

In many countries, new fisheries management models have been introduced that selectively restructure the fisheries by, on the one hand, curbing the access rights of small players using a regime of licenses and quotas, and on the other, facilitating access rights for big players by liberalising the small-scale, community-based fisheries.

The ideological justification for restructuring, as Munk-Madsen (1996) has pointed out, derives from the 'tragedy of the commons' thesis – the belief that common property resources inevitably result in over-exploitation. Once open access fishery is seen to be the problem, then privatisation, as the solution for the rational use of finite resources, is but a few ideological steps away – steps that skirt significant questions of customary community rights, traditional community-based management of fish resources, and whether it is fair to distribute the responsibility for over-exploitation of fish equally between traditional and industrial forms of fishing.

The State, in many parts of the industrial North, deployed the logic of 'tragedy of the commons' to privilege individual rights over community rights in the fisheries. Aiding privatisation was the quota regime. The experience of Iceland, for instance, demonstrates how the Individual quota (IQ) system, introduced in 1984, first helped to consolidate fishing access in the hands of proprietors of large boats; thereafter, the individual transferable quota (ITQ) system, introduced in 1991, concentrated access even more in the hands of big corporations and absentee owners. Ocean fish, by law, common, national property, was transformed into a marketable, private commodity and the fishing license became a product that could be bought, sold, rented out or transferred at will (Munk-Madsen 1998; Skaptadóttir and Proppé 2005).

After decades of industrial over-fishing and economic restructuring fish stocks in the North finally collapsed by the early 1990s. Over-fishing had been initiated in the 1950s by offshore bottom trawlers and distant water fleets. The introduction of internationally agreed quotas in the early 1970s and of 200-mile EEZs and national quotas did not curb and in fact only continued over-exploitation. Newfoundland and other eastern provinces of Canada experienced a serious collapse of northern cod stocks by the late 1980s and early 1990s. The collapse triggered license buy-backs and early retirement. In order to deal with the crisis, professionalization was introduced. This restricted commercial fisheries to 'core fishers', defined as heads of fishing enterprises who had seven years or more of full-time fishing experience and earned at least 75 percent of their income from fishing. Not surprisingly, women constituted less than 2 percent of the core fishers' population. The rising cost of vessels and license fees led to quota concentration in the hands of fishing companies (Williams 1996). Similar trends are reported from other Northern countries such as Norway and the United Kingdom (Gerrard 2008; Polson 2004).

The collapse of stocks triggered high levels of job loss in the fish processing sector in the North due to plant closures. The reserve army of women that had been drawn into the formal economy to boost industrial growth was laid off a few decades later when the economy was restructured. A key point is that as fish stocks collapsed, women's labour acted as a 'shock absorber' to mitigate the adverse effects of restructuring. The workload of wives of fishermen in Nova Scotia intensified as they increased the amount of unpaid work they put in to sustain the coastal fishery in the wake of the Atlantic Canadian fisheries crisis (Binkley 2005); women in small boat fishing households in Newfoundland and Labrador stepped up their efforts to secure family incomes from fishing, leading to a sudden increase in the numbers of women active fishers (Grzetic 2005). Women began taking on a variety of administrative and liaison tasks to manage more efficiently the family fishing enterprise.

Thus, the very crisis caused by industrial over-fishing was used to drive away small fish producers, and consolidate the hold of large players on the sector. This model of

privatisation of the fisheries and the transfer of regulation from the state to the market is now being transferred from the North to the South. Reorganization along the lines of global supply chains deeply impacts the small-scale fisheries in the South, which in order to remain profitable, are rapidly becoming more capital-intensive, heavily dependent on investment, fuel and technological advancements in gear and fishing equipment.

The introduction of sophisticated technology has led to greater pressures on fish resources and the over-exploitation of fishing grounds. As catch volumes diminish or are diverted towards exports, women vendors and processors face growing livelihood insecurity. New technologies in netting have deprived women of work. In Tamil Nadu in India, for example, machine-made nets have rendered the hand woven -nets made by women redundant. Centralized bulk landing, often by trawlers, is increasingly throwing women vendors out of work as big traders buy up the catch, largely for exports. Centralized landing also means that women must travel long distances to secure catch (Shah 2010).

Often, only by-catch or 'trash fish' is available to women. However, this too can rapidly become inaccessible as was the case with *punk* or Nile perch fish skeletons in Tanzania, initially sold to women buyers for both human and animal consumption, but today sold wholesale to processing plants for the manufacture of animal feed (Medard 2005).

In South Africa, where the ITQ regime was introduced soon after the transition of power in 1994, traditional fishers find themselves increasingly marginalised by the quota regime and fundamental questions are being raised about the intent and implementation of quota allocation. As livelihood crises mount, poaching activities, financed by the drug cartel, have escalated, gang fights and drug abuse as well as an increase in rape, sexual abuse, and sex work are increasingly being reported from coastal areas where the drug mafia operates, and there are severe poverty-related issues in the others (Sunde 2002). The individualised, quota system is being held primarily responsible for the current crisis in the fisheries (Sunde 2010).

A clear shift from traditional to industrial fishing is visible, shored up by modern fisheries management models that rely on privatization and market regulation. The generational conservation and protection of coastal resources that is part of traditional fishing cultures is given the short shrift within the current paradigm which is fuelled by export-led, global trade in fish.

3.3. Trade and Trade Liberalization

The global trade in fish has undergone a sea change in the last two decades. Today a very large proportion of the global fish production enters the export market. According to the FAO, in 2009, 37 percent of fish (in terms of live equivalent weight) was exported out of the country of origin. The value of exports for 2008, at \$102 billion, was two thirds

more than exports in the year 2000. The rate of growth of exports in fish far exceeded growth in any other agricultural commodity (FAO 2008).

In 2008, Japan, USA and the EU received 70 percent of all fish exports from developing countries, which are now the largest exporters of fish and fish products. In 2008, fish exports from developing countries were 60 percent by weight and 50 percent by value. The net exports showed a sharp rising trend, from \$7.2 billion in 1996 to \$27 billion in 2008, a nearly 300 percent increase. This indicates a huge transfer of an extremely important source of protein for the common people, from the South to the North (FAO 2008).

This section will consider four aspects related to the globalised, export-oriented trade in fish: the growth of aquaculture, the question of food security, certification regimes, and artisanal trade – each of which, as we shall see later, has critical implications for women.

The Growth of Aquaculture

Since 1990, while capture fisheries have stalled at around 90 million mt, aquaculture production increased over five fold, from around 10 million mt in 1990 to 53 million mt in 2008. China, with 33 million mt, accounted for 63 percent of all aquaculture production in 2008 (FAO 2008). Equally significantly, 96 percent of global aquaculture production now takes place in Asia, with just three countries, China, India and Vietnam, accounting for about 75 percent (FAO 2008). The growth in global fish trade is mostly fuelled by increases in aquaculture production.

Aquaculture has a long history of traditional small-scale practice in Asia. The dyke-pond system developed as far back as the 14th century in China's Pearl River Delta region; the small-scale integrated farm system, consisting of garden, fish-and-shrimp pond and livestock pen in Vietnam's Mekong Delta; and the traditional shrimp filtration practice, in Kerala, India, known as *chemmeen kettu*, carried out after the paddy harvest – these are all examples of a sustainable fishery shored up by traditional knowledge on stock robustness and feed optimization and so on, gathered over millennia (Gura 2009).

These traditional systems are, however, being seriously challenged by the growth of industrial aquaculture, the main driver of export-oriented trade. Industrial aquaculture has been fuelled by subsidies and financial incentives in the North, while in the South, it thrives on weak labour laws and poor environmental regulation (Gura 2009).

Industrial aquaculture impacts livelihoods in both the fisheries and in other rural sectors, as coastal and inland spaces, usually common property resources, are cordoned off and privatised through leasing and other forms of exclusive use rights. It is capital intensive and associated with high levels of risk because capital penetration into the sector triggers a chain of tight dependencies – formulated feed provided by feed companies; veterinary products provided by the pharmaceutical industry; seed from

genetics companies, and so on. This leads to high concentration in ownership patterns, and restricts access. Industrial aquaculture also requires high degrees of access and linkage to global supply chains for fish, which in turn are controlled by a few large players. There are additional issues of the growth of genetics and biotechnologies in aquaculture for genetic modification, traceability and intellectual property protection.

According to Gura (2009), smallholder aquaculture is already buckling under the strain of corporate value chains that define breeding objectives for smallholders, force tie-ins with standard contracts, and compel heavy capital investments. The culture farming of Vietnamese pangasius, for instance, is so capital-intensive that it barely allows the fish farmer to break even. In China, industrially manufactured feed accounts for 75 percent of the total aquaculture feed consumption. Chile's export-oriented salmon monoculture industry, which collapsed due to repeated infestations – sea lice followed by the spread of infectious salmon anaemia (ISA) from salmon eggs imported from Norway – leading to a 50 percent drop in production and the laying off of nearly 40 percent of the workforce, is another case in point (Cardenas and Igor 2009).

The growth industrial aquaculture in the South leads to loss of livelihoods in direct and indirect ways in the traditional fisheries. By undermining traditional forms of aquaculture that provide livelihood to millions of women, it directly impacts women's lives. It also indirectly impacts women's lives by taking over nearshore, mangrove areas which are women's traditional fishing grounds (Tanyang 2008).

With industrial fishing leading to a decline in fish diversity, higher “trophic level” fish like cod and salmon farmed in aquaculture, are fed on fish meal from the coasts of Africa and South America (Bavington et al 2004). This not only impacts the ecology, through overfishing wild fish for fish meal, but could impact food security as well among coastal communities in the South.

FAO data indicates that even in a country like Chile, which is associated with low fish consumption, per capita fish availability declined from 26 to 21 kg per year between 1990 and 1999, which raises the question of the impact of diversion of large quantities of pelagic fish species to fishmeal production for salmon aquaculture (Kurien 2005). Fish meal and fish oil, exported from the South for aquaculture feed, make up 35 percent in terms of quantity and 5 percent in terms of value of total exports, indicating devalued transfers of a rich source of protein. In the context, it has been argued that a paradigm shift is needed in aquaculture development from industrialisation to supporting existing small-scale aquaculture production with adequate investments, public subsidies, regulation and legislation (Gura 2009).

The Question of Food Security

Fish protein is a crucial dietary component providing up to 50 percent of total animal protein intake in many countries (FAO 2008). The previous section briefly touched upon

the issue of diverting animal protein for aquaculture feed. Food insecurity as an outcome of global export-oriented trade has direct implications on women's lives, intensifying the burden of housework and lengthening the hours of invisible labour that women must put in to help their families survive. What impact do export-led trade and the transfer of fish protein from the South to the North have on food security levels in developing countries?

In a recent study, Béné et al (2010) summarise the two main arguments in the fish trade and food security debate: food security *through* fish trade and food security *versus* fish trade. The first argument, food security *through* fish trade, as summarised by Béné et al, follows Amartya Sen's framework of entitlements and claims that more important than the production of primary commodities is the entitlement-based access to these commodities. It would be perfectly economically rational, therefore, for a country to try to achieve food security by say, growing high-value crops for exports instead of staple grains, and to fulfil its domestic food requirements through importing or purchasing food with revenues generated from exports or farm crop sales.

Béné et al point out that the current situation of world fish trade does give credence to this argument and fish exports are indeed proving to be undeniably lucrative for the national economies of developing countries. However, foreign exchange earnings, particularly given the low efficiency of redistributive 'trickle down' mechanisms, need not necessarily translate into economic development or poverty alleviation. This, they say, is at the core of the food security *versus* fish trade argument, which challenges the legitimacy of export-oriented fish policies as a means of poverty reduction.

The anti-fish trade argument is that fish export transfers fish from the poor consumer's plate in the South to the rich consumer's plate in the North, an argument that is backed up by substantial evidence. The highest levels of food deficiency and absolute poverty are found in the very region that hosts 80 percent of Kenya's Nile perch export factories. There we have seen heavy job losses and asset alienation in the traditional fisheries as a result of the development of an export-oriented fish industry around Lake Victoria. Similarly, the example of Guinea-Bissau demonstrates the unequal terms of trade that are struck, with EU fisheries siphoning off the bulk of revenues; and finally, the situation in Namibia demonstrates the failure to reinvest foreign exchange earnings into development (Béné et al 2010).

John Kurien has shown, adjusting the data for the 'China effect', that the total domestic food-fish supply in low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDCs) was more or less flat, at about 5 percent growth, during the decade of the 1990s. The 'China effect' boosted the supplies dramatically. He infers, on this basis, that international fish trade has not reduced domestic food-fish supplies in these countries (Kurien 2005). While this may be the present case, some suggest a slowing, and even a reversal, of net export growth by developing countries. (Delgado 2003 c.f Ahmed 2006)

The 'China effect' could possibly have shielded the LIFDCs from the more intense depredations of fish exports, allowing food-fish supplies to remain more or less constant, and limiting the impact on fish security to certain pockets. However, with the rapid economic development of China and India, and growing consumption levels, fish consumption in both countries is likely to increase substantially. Projections indicate that by 2020, while China's net fish exports would tend to zero, India would become a large importer of fish (Ahmed 2006). This would increase the pressure for fish exports from other developing countries leading to declining per capita availability of fish, with consequent implications for food security, in those countries. Already, in the countries of West Africa, the combined effect of stagnating or declining imports, high population growth and a smaller share of domestic production retained for local markets, due to greater exports is leading to decline in fish available for local consumption – a situation that would worsen in the years to come (ICSF 2002). In South Africa, women report a negative health effects as a result of their dispossession of their right to harvest shell fish, which is high in certain proteins and omega oils (Jackie Sunde pers. comm.).

Certification and eco-labelling

Concerns about the declining status of fish stocks, and equally perhaps, the growth of vertical global supply chains in fish production have led to the development of certification and eco-labelling schemes in the fisheries. The UNCTAD estimates the presence of around 400 private certification schemes in the sector (FAO 2008). The issue of certification in the context of fisheries is a complex one

Proponents claim that certification schemes would help in enforcing standards leading to sustainable fishing. Detractors however see in private certification a dilution of government regulation. Most national sanitary regulations already conform to the FAO/WTO Codex Alimentarius Commission and/or the World Organisation on Animal Health (OIE), both of which are recognised by the WTO. Private certification in the context would be one more set of standards, without clear benchmarks.

More importantly, private standards run the risk of constituting unfair trade practice, which can be used to restrict market access, and to enforce conditionalities and trade barriers on exporting countries of the South. While the use of standards and regulatory measures as trade barriers by governments can be challenged under the WTO, there is no such recourse to private restrictive measures.

However, there is an important measure in which certification and labelling has the potential to change the paradigm of regulation in a global supply chain. A major lacuna in global trade is the absence of adequate regulatory control on global capital, which, through a web of outsourcing and sub-contracting, reduces restrictions and liabilities. The channel of certification can enforce some measure of responsibility on global capital through pressure from consumers in the North. It can force large corporates to be more

transparent about their operations. This is a weak form of regulation, dependent on the market. The efficacy of this form is yet to be proven in other areas like agricultural commodities and garments, where attempts have been made with greater vigour.

A plethora of certification possibilities exist today including first party (self-certification), second-party (industry association-based) and third-party (independently certified) in the fisheries but these appear to be chiefly geared to benefit the industrial fisheries, often under quota management regimes that marginalize the small-scale fishery sector (Sharma 2009). The FAO in 2005 attempted to standardize certification criteria by formulating eco-labelling guidelines. However, there are several factors that prevent the small-scale fisheries, particularly in the South, from benefiting. These include weak fisheries management regimes, problems in implementing the chain of custody³, higher costs of certification and shortage of trained manpower (Mathew 2007). The penalty of non-compliance would be particularly harsh on women vendors and small-traders, who stand the risk of being progressively marginalised as ownership is unfairly concentrated in the hands of big players.

Barbara Neis (2004) points out that any regulation that seeks to promote sustainable fisheries without addressing questions of deepening economic inequities will ultimately be ineffective. Small-scale fisheries representatives have already formally rejected eco-labelling schemes because of their narrow focus on environmental sustainability but do recognize area-specific labelling based on socially and ecologically sustainable criteria (Sharma 2009). Further, certification schemes should be considered not only in the context of South-North trade but also to support South-South trade (Mathew 2007). The potential marginalisation of small-scale producers from international markets owing to the costs and difficulties of compliance with international standards such as hazard analysis critical control point (HACCP) specifications also need to be urgently addressed.

Artisanal Fish Trade

In certain parts of the world, the sales of fish and fishery products depend heavily on domestic markets. In Africa, for instance, while international supply chains have evolved around high value fresh fish exports, there are strong regional and cross-border trade networks in lower-value products. Vibrant cross-border trade marks regions of high fish productivity such as the Cambodia, which has active informal trade networks across the Thailand border.

Artisanal regional and cross-border trade, predominantly done by women, provide livelihoods to many rural households and contributes to meeting the nutritional needs of the poor. However, there are only estimates of the numbers of women engaged in

³ Chain of custody refers to the set of measures which is designed to guarantee that the product put on the market and bearing the ecolabel logo is really a product coming from the certified fishery concerned (FAO 2005b)

regional and cross border trade. The volumes and quantities, the supply chains and the problems of the sector remain inadequately investigated.

Regional trade in West Africa, which is mainly smoked fish products but also fresh, salted, sun-dried or fried fish, takes place within countries as well as across borders. In many countries in the region, especially in Ghana, Benin, Togo, Gambia, Guinea Conakry and Senegal, women dominate on-shore handling, processing and marketing of fish (ICSF 2002). These are the 'fish mummies' who also play an important role in providing informal credit (FAO 2006).

In West Africa, three main types of problems are associated with artisanal trade: pre-harvest losses, post-harvest losses and trade-related problems. Pre-harvest losses and irregular supplies are due to fish stock depletion mainly due to poor resource management and overfishing by trawlers, industrial fisheries and by foreign fleets fishing under fisheries access agreements and joint-venture arrangements. Post-harvest losses are incurred because of poor infrastructural support, such as lack of cold storage and transportation facilities, lack of access to credit, poor processing techniques and inadequate information about markets (ICSF 2002). Because the vibrant trade in artisanally processed fish products is largely informal, it is further subject to an additional range of problems, particularly when conducted across national borders. In West Africa, these include prohibitive import duties, bribery and corruption, exchange rate issues, frequent inspections, police blocks and extortion by customs officials (ICSF 2002).

Cross-border trade is also vulnerable to changes in the political relations between neighbouring countries. The cessation of hostilities between Cambodia and Thailand and the subsequent opening up of the border between the two countries led to the proliferation of cross-border fish trade. While hostilities prevailed, women small-traders had worked out informal trade channels and managed somehow to get by. However, with peace, a rather more complicated and onerous regime of formal and informal tariffs came into being, making it difficult for women traders, who operated outside organised trade networks, to compete. Large traders, generally males, enjoyed an unfair advantage with greater capacity for capital investments and better mobility, and could manipulate market conditions to take over marketing chains (Kusakabe 2009).

In a significant meeting in 2001 on artisanal fish trade in West Africa, women fishers put forward a strong demand for sectoral support. They proposed stronger regulation and protection of domestic fish supplies, better infrastructural support for fish processing, as well as better support for artisanal fish trade through the speedy implementation of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) programmes by simplifying customs and tariffs; removing trade barriers on artisanally-produced fish products; improving access to markets, banks and credits; reducing border checks and harmonising of sanitary standards (ICSF 2001a).

In certain countries of West Africa, women have also organized themselves into economic interest groups (Palla 2000). The Sub-committee on Fish Trade of the FAO has recognised that small-scale fishers and processors can get better prices for their products by shortening the fish supply chain and increasing their bargaining and lobbying power, and therefore recommends the formation of marketing cooperatives and the strengthening of existing associations of small-scale fishers and processors. It also recommends leveraging value-addition as a strategy for better integration of the small-scale fisheries into fish trade (FAO 2006).

3.4. Industrialization, Globalization and Changes in Labour and Employment

Worldwide employment in the fisheries grew from 27.73 million in 1990 to 43.50 million in 2006. The growth in the numbers of fishers and fish farmers alone was from 3.83 million to 8.63 million (a 125 percent increment) while employment in the ancillary sector rose from 23.90 million to 34.87 million (a 46 percent increment). This growth has occurred chiefly in Asia while industrialised economies have experienced stagnation or decline.

Asia is by far the largest employer in the fisheries, employing 94 percent of the world's fishers and fish farmers and 84 percent of those in ancillary services. China alone with a work force of 13 million in 2004 represented about 30 percent of the world total. However, the average production per fisher in Asia, at 2.5 mt per year, is only about an eighth of the average annual production of a fisher in Europe and North America, reflecting the much lower level of industrialization of the fisheries in Asia.

Interestingly, while the numbers of fishers and fish farmers increased substantially by 125 percent between 1990 and 2006, the increase in employment in fish ancillary was much lower at 46 percent. This could be partly because of the increasing presence of part-time subsistence fishers in the sector.

Case studies of workers involved in export processing activities in the industrial sector reveal that significant new employment has been created as a result of international trade. This employment is however largely casual and seasonal in nature, 'matching the ebb and flow of fish arrivals' and draws heavily upon poor, rural, migrant labour (Kurien 2005 p 43). The vulnerable nature of employment including the seasonality of the work and the high turnover of staff would make it likely for young women workers to predominate in such work (ILO 2007).

Indeed, if the fish processing sector in the industrialised North developed chiefly on the back of female and migrant labour, a similar trend is visible in today's emerging economies. In China, women make up 90 per cent of the factory floor workforce in certain sectors of industrial fish processing (Wang 2008). In Vietnam, women form 85 per cent of the workforce in seafood processing factories (Gura 2009). In India, 60

percent of the predominantly female workforce in fish processing factories in 1995 was found to consist of young migrant women aged between 16 and 25 years (ICSF 1995). A more recent study of fish processing plants in India found twice as many women as men in the workforce, concentrated at the lowest levels and occupying only 4 percent of the managerial posts. Nearly 90 percent of the workforce was temporary, working on contract (Gopal et al 2009).

Employment conditions in a modern plant in the industrialised North would be very different from those in an informal backyard plant in a poor country. Although some reports suggest that the payment of minimum wage is usually observed, the ILO cautions that workers in fish factories, particularly those located in export processing zones may not appear in official employment statistics and therefore fall outside the protection offered by employment legislation (ILO 2007). In Pakistan's fish processing plants, for instance, women are denied an equal wage as well as equal overtime payment. Employment in the processing sector is thus vulnerable, characterised by low wages and low skills; it is casual, contractual and seasonal in nature, and marked by low levels, if any, of unionization (Andrade 2000). Occupational health is another important concern.

The processing sector is associated with specific occupational health hazards from working in highly humid and cold conditions, handling ice and water throughout the day, performing repetitive movements over a long period of time, and standing for long periods of time. These would be compounded by unfair labour conditions including excessively long shifts of work and absence of leave and medical benefits. The health problems, some chronic, that develop include repetitive strain injuries such as tendonitis and lumbago; chronic colds; muscular pain; back pain; sprains and fractures; hernias; and respiratory illnesses such as 'crab lung' (snow crab occupational asthma), emphysema and chronic bronchitis (Knee 2000; Neis and Grzetic 2005).

Globalization of the fisheries is associated with two processes on a world-scale: in the North, the process of 'McDonaldization', marked by a greatly reduced number of heavily modernised and mechanized units, utilizing a part-time, 'flexible' labour force; and in the South, the process of 'maquilization', a term originating in the Mexico's maquila free trade zones, characterized by the feminisation of the workforce, skill segmentation, low wages and absence of organization (Barndt 1999 c.f. Neis 2005).

Globalization-related changes in the fisheries affect women's work in complex, often contradictory ways. There is on the one hand, a disruption of local fish harvesting and marketing networks that leaves local fishers without work, income and food security; on the other, new niches of work are being created around emerging global supply chains. The sale of by-catch and 'trash fish', work in fish processing plants and commercial aquaculture and opportunities for women traders to take advantage of trade liberalization are examples.

In India where globalization is rapidly altering the contours of the fisheries, migrant women workers from Kerala who worked seasonally in the commercial fish processing industry in far-off Gujarat reported earning better wages and feeling less discriminated against as compared to men than did their counterparts engaged in home-based fish processing in Kerala (CSR n.d.). Women in India's Sunderbans district who are earning a decent wage today as a result of commercial prawn seed collection, report experiencing a sense of liberation from the exploitation of feudal and patriarchal landlords in whose fields they had laboured for generations (Jalais 2009). Recent research has also questioned the assumption that motorization and technological change always adversely affects women (Overà 2003). Female vendors of the traditional Catholic Kharvi fishing community in Goa, India (in contrast, however, to their Hindu counterparts) have also benefited from recent fisheries development, making an economically successful transition from "barefoot, headload peddlers" in the villages to market entrepreneurs, working in small co-operative groups (Rubinoff 1999). Indeed the globalization-induced 'feminisation of labour' in the South has entailed mixed consequences for women. It has created waged as opposed to unpaid, invisible work and thus contributed to improving women's status and bargaining power within the household. However, it has also brought in a punishing double burden of work since housework continues to be primarily women's responsibility (Ghosh 2009). There is a need for more detailed, local level studies on these issues and in particular, how gender is mediated by class and other power relations to shape women's experiences of globalisation and the patterns of labour it has resulted in.

In certain regions, such as the Kenyan coast of Lake Victoria, the phenomenon of 'fish-for-sex' transactions is increasingly being reported from small-scale fishing communities (Geheb and Benns, 1997 cf Allison, 2004). However, it is not clear whether this is a recent 'outbreak' or an artefact of the increasing attention being paid to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in recent years (Béné and Merten, 2008). The global fish production chain and the new niches of work and economic transactions it offers to women deserve to be more carefully studied if the conditions of work of women workers in these sectors are to be improved.

In some countries, where the opportunities are present, the crisis in the fisheries is also leading to more and more women leaving to seek a future in waged work outside the fisheries: in tourism, service sector work; factory work; garment-making; baking; working as maids or housekeepers and in agriculture (Maneschy and Alvarez 2005, Yahaya 2001). It would be significant to understand the response of women's groups and fisheries unions to women joining work outside the fisheries, to understand for example, whether strategies of organization would include such women.

3.5. Marine Protection and Conservation

The clear and present danger to coastal and fishery resources have spurred attempts at marine protection and conservation, notably, the evolution of the concept of the Marine Protected Area (MPA). Certain environmental principles and access restrictions in the form of 'no-take zones' are implemented in areas declared to be under the regime of marine protection. The Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD) aims to convert ten percent of the world's marine ecological regions by the year 2012 into effectively managed, protected area systems.

While an MPA might be viewed to be a success from a biological perspective, it may fail dismally from a social perspective. To address this concern, the ICSF, through a series of case studies, recently attempted to understand the social experience of communities living under the MPA regime. It was found that in most countries, the establishment of the MPA had had negative consequences on coastal communities. These communities had not been involved in either the design or the implementation of the MPA and did not consider themselves equal partners in the process. Furthermore, they had suffered a loss of livelihood as access restrictions were put in place.

In the case, for instance, of the Langebaan Lagoon on the West Coast of South Africa, a part of South Africa's MPA system, since the area came under protection in 1982, the number of fishing permits issued dwindled from 27 to only seven. The restriction of community access to the lagoon waters through the reduction in permits and the declaration of a 'no take' zone has negatively affected the local food security and worsened poverty levels (Sunde 2007). This in turn has spurred an increase in unemployment levels, alcoholism, drug abuse, gender violence and crime. The Park authorities did establish a tourism project aimed at promoting local livelihoods however this project did not target the traditional fishing community that had lost livelihood opportunities through the reduction in fishing permits and hence they did not enjoy any of the benefits of the Park that were supposed to offset their losses (Sunde and Isaacs 2008).

Among the ICSF case studies, the most positive example of "livelihood-sensitive conservation" came from Brazil. Here, communities demanded and set up sustainable-use marine extractive reserves to ensure that traditional livelihoods such as rubber-tapping are not jeopardised. Vigilant action by communities ensured that the protected area is safeguarded from the entry of commercial interests (Diegues 2008). However, though the reserve consists of both marine and land areas, communities have user rights only over the marine areas. As a result, in the surrounding land areas commercial interests, such as the hospitality and tourism industry, exert considerable influence and constitute new sites of social conflict (Di Ciommo 2006).

Conservation efforts must be viewed in the light of the larger social and political context and the levels of community organization that prevail. If the conservation effort leaves

larger questions of industrial growth unasked, the social dimensions of marine protection would be highly questionable and possibly inimical to the small-scale sector.

4.0. WOMEN, THE COMMUNITY AND LIVELIHOOD PROTECTION

Within the constraints of the spread of industrial fishing, and within regimes of governance that have favoured big business, women have continuously struggled to protect their right to livelihood. Within communities, women have struggled, sometimes autonomously and sometimes in association with men. Some struggles have been the product of individual choices by women who have sought alternatives within or even outside their traditional trade. The ideas of the women's movement, the ideas of ecological sustainability and the critique of modernity have cumulatively helped to build the realisation that alternative models of social and economic organization are needed. The new language of development, entitlements and empowerment that aid agencies have adopted also helped women to gain support from outside agencies. Several studies have documented these trends.

Two processes are visible at the level of the community. On the one hand, the entry of modern technology has heightened the process of social and economic differentiation of what were once relative homogenous communities. The community identity is thus being weakened, and even destroyed. It is not uncommon today to find livelihoods rooted in small-scale fisheries and processing as well as larger scale fisheries/aquaculture and processing within the same geographical community, and even within the same family (Chandrika Sharma pers. comm.) On the other hand, the idea of community identity is being mobilised as an organizational strategy, embodying a resistance of small-scale, community-based fishing to being wiped out by modern, centralised, technology-intensive fishing.

Governments in different countries have been forced to give some measure of legal recognition to the customary rights of fishing communities. The ravages of industrial fishing have also helped consolidate a strong critique that favours safeguarding traditional fishing as sustainable and ecologically sound. The work of the Nobel Laureate Elinor Ostrom, for example, has consistently challenged the position that for common pool resources to be saved from overexploitation ('tragedy of the commons'), they must either be privatized or brought under government regulation and management. According to Ostrom, "The best solutions to global problems like deforestation and depleted fisheries often lie with local people" (ICSF 2009a).

The small-scale fisheries sector offer several examples of community based management under diverse arrangements – autonomously as part of traditional resource conservation practice; supported by donor aid; supported by the government, and also, as part of union- or association-led efforts.

Pauline Wynter (1990) provides an example of traditional resource conservation in the Inhaca Islands of Mozambique where women in the mangrove crab fisheries use customary rights of access to exploit the intertidal zones adjacent to their villages. These women typically are the sole heads of their households. Since it is in their interest to manage resources wisely, the women have traditionally defined and followed their own system of access restrictions to coral reefs and intertidal areas.

Traditional, community-led regulatory practices may also be revived to counter top-down conservation efforts. Ramya Rajagopalan (2006) has documented how the tightening of access restrictions in the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park and Biosphere Reserve in Tamil Nadu, India, since 2002, has curtailed the access of fisherwomen to traditional fishing grounds and seaweed collection areas, with severe implications for livelihood security. As a result, while demanding a partial lifting of restrictions, these women have evolved their own system of regulations to manage and conserve natural resources effectively.

A ubiquitous model is the donor-assisted management model. In Zanzibar, for instance, women gleaners in the Menai Bay Conservation Area, supported by donor aid, have evolved intertidal zoning methods for better bivalve management, declaring certain areas as 'No take' zones, as well as drafting a co-management plan (Torrell 2007).

Management can also be the outcome of greater political participation of women in community associations and unions. In Chile, for instance, women in a certain region have formed their own *sindicato* (union) in order to be able to autonomously control a seaweed management area (Boegeholz 2006). In Galicia, Spain, the political participation of *marisqueadoras* (women shellfishers) was facilitated by a boom in the demand for shellfish, which in turn was stimulated by the country's integration with the European Community (EC). In certain regions, women became active in the *cofradía*, traditionally male bastions of power within Galician fishing communities. Through the *cofradía*, women came to assume significant political power and economic stature, and could develop an ecologically and financially-sustainable model for the shellfisheries. The flipside was the escalating turf war with neighbouring communities triggered by the soaring price of shellfish (Meltzoff 1995).

What can we learn from these initiatives? A recent study reviewed the experiences and best practices within community-based resources management (Quist et al 2008). While there were several positive examples of co-management, from the point of view of women's participation, these were largely confined to donor-led pilot projects, unsupported by national policy. The reviewers further observed that the social, political and cultural context in which such management practices unfold, greatly determines their efficacy and relevance.

In the Philippines, for instance, community management is historically rooted in the social movements for economic justice, political freedom and cultural identity dating back to the 1970s. Other countries in the Southeast Asian region adopted such practices later, and in ways that were not necessarily perceived as positive by fishing communities. The reviewers note for example, that while decentralisation, which is the context within which community-based resource management is taking place in Cambodia, may open up spaces for fishing communities, it may also create opportunities for locally powerful elites to ally with private capital to exploit natural resources, rendering the livelihoods of local communities more vulnerable. Similarly, co-management may remain a 'paper tiger' only, implemented in target-driven project modes, without genuine community participation.

There is no doubt that community-based management of coastal resources, unfettered by the agenda and dictates of market, state and donor agency, must be valorised. However, communities are not however homogenous bodies but have been sites of oppression on the basis of gender, caste, race and also, with the increasing penetration of capital, of class. Women themselves do not exist as a monolithic category but are separated by race, caste and class. For community-based initiatives to succeed and address genuine needs, they must be driven as much by the questioning the contradictions of gender, caste and other oppressive structures within the community as conservation goals. However, in the present context of neo-liberal globalization where vulnerabilities are increasingly being intensified with the state's retreat from essential sectors and regulation bequeathed to market forces, this is a vast challenge.

The economic, social and cultural base of fishing communities is being systematically weakened by industry forces supported by national policy reforms. The playing field is much less level, and the bargaining power of communities is being reshaped to suit the requirements of global capital. When Goliath arrives at the coastal battlefield today, he is in slingshot-proof armour.

A worrying aspect, particularly given the high level of penetration of donor aid into the NGO sector, is the increasing alignment of donor agencies with global capital, as witnessed in the Paris declaration process⁴ and subsequent calls for 'harmonization' of aid objectives. For women's organizations, eager to engage at the grassroots but starved of funds, to question the politics of aid is hard, particularly when it is couched in the cosy language of "partnerships". Some voices of criticism have been heard of donors who "use civil society, including women's rights organizations, as 'sub-contractors' to implement an agenda" as well as of the "growing push by many donors that 'gender' programs must involve men" (AWID 2006 p 17) but it is critical, if women's mobilization

⁴ The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was signed by 102 countries on March 2, 2005. See <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf>

in the small-scale sector is to have lasting impact and relevance, that this criticism be more widely articulated.

The fragmentation of small-scale fisheries is leading to great levels of insecurity and instability within communities. Women, as we shall see in the next section, often end up bearing the brunt of such turmoil. To deal with an intensification of private hardships while at the same time being proactive in the community is to place an unfair burden on women. Despite this, a sense of desperation is driving women to becoming increasingly more vocal and publicly visible in community matters. In Latin America, South and West Africa, Asia and Europe, women leaders are emerging in strong opposition to the destruction of their way of life. In the context, women's effective participation in community-based forms of coastal resource management is both a challenge to rise up to and an opportunity to redefine the prevailing relations of power.

5.0 WOMEN AND THE FISHERIES 'WAY OF LIFE'

Barring isolated, subsistence-based fishing communities, the 'way of life' in the fisheries has historically been dynamic and adaptive, associated with an outward-looking economy, integrated with trade, and reflecting the vibrancy of mixed societies. It is not a static arrangement or a relic of the past and certainly not to be framed in terms of opposition to modernization. Its assertion today as a distinctive cultural experience is to be seen in the context of sweeping economic changes which threaten the very survival of small-scale fisheries.

Early research interpreted the cultural experience of men and women in the fisheries in terms of the work they did. Women's distinct role in shore-based work gave them a distinct identity, greater economic independence and status. Men being away at sea sometimes for prolonged periods of time meant that critical decision-making powers regarding the wellbeing of family and community were left to the women (Smith 1977), furthering their experience of independence. However, this sense of self was not stable and autonomous but obtained within a larger context of familial patriarchy. Women in the North thus reported high levels of psychological stress as they switched roles to suit traditional expectations. When the husband was at sea, the wife would be a "reluctant matriarch" and under pressure, when he returned, to be the dutiful wife (Binkley and Thiessen 1988).

In the South, women's cultural experience is shaped by the critical role they play as the mainstays of fish processing, marketing and distribution. This role exposes women to high levels of diversity in their social relationships and builds a forced resilience. In a study of the Mukkuvar community in south India, Ram (1991) points out that women's work requires a continuous task of mediation between the community and the outside world, taking them repeatedly away not only from the domestic dwelling but away from the coastal belt into inner districts. As a result, women are exposed to a range of

mixed experiences outside their communities. The common depiction of the fisherwoman in fiction is therefore of a feisty, sharp-tongued person, capable of holding her own in any circumstances.

However, a common inland experience of fisherwomen, reported in both the North and South, is with prejudice. This could take the form of extreme caste aversion to the “polluting” labour of handling fish and generate derogatory stereotypes that not only insult fisherwomen but may also affect their livelihoods through the denial of public services and spaces (Subramanian 2009). Another form of discrimination is with petty law-enforcement which at least entails negotiation and may involve inherent risks of violence.

Between the borders of Cambodia and Thailand, for example, women who are concentrated in the often risky business of small-scale cross border trading learn to be deferential and subservient to get past border officials. In the process, the women come to believe that they are more suited to such trading because they can ‘act out’ subservience better than can men, who, they believe, would be hot-headed and soon begin to fight (Kusakabe 2009). Women’s socialization into patriarchal norms within the traditional household, such as being the dutiful wife (or at least pretending to be) thus seems to facilitate their dealings with public authority in whose presence they must be (or at least pretend to be) subservient.

For Thompson (1985), the sexual division of labour in the fisheries imposed “two divergent pulls” on the fishing family. By regularly taking men out of the home, it made the idea of a well-bonded conventional family impossible. Men learnt a “basic self-sufficiency” in the exclusive company of males at sea and could begin to regard their wives as no more than providers of domestic and sexual service. At the same time, the home-based nature of their work called for a partnership between husband and wife, allowing women the *possibility* of attaining a certain degree of independence and power.

The sexual division of labour runs deeply through women’s experience of work and family. Women’s land-based productive work and housework are merged in the same domain, which, under capitalism, becomes more and more privatised, invisible and valueless. The sexual division of *labour* alone however does not explain the variations in normative gender relations across fishing cultures (Porter 1985).

To explain these variations, Thompson (1985) urges us to turn to the sexual division of *power* which would include a range of factors in addition to how labour is organised: some local, such as customary practices with respect to women’s ownership of property and assets, the influence of religion, and so on; and some non-local, such as the level of capitalist penetration, the influence of markets and trade and so on. Thompson used the example of the drastic economic change in the fisheries in Aberdeen, which converted fishermen boat-owners into waged workers, to show how, in the new environment of

unlimited working hours and duty-free whiskey supplies, men who were originally devout and often teetotalers became heavy drinkers, violent to their wives and children. Indeed, the increasing levels of domestic violence being reported from fishing communities facing fragmentation in the North do seem to bear out Thompson's observations. In Nova Scotia, for instance, women from fishing communities report high levels of domestic abuse and violence as well as an overwhelming loss of control through being 'deskilled' by the economic restructuring of the fisheries (Christiansen-Ruffman and Lord 2000).

The high-risk nature of fishing; the hard work involved; the uncertainties of season and catch; and the requirement of specialised knowledge of the sea so essential to fishing, have all been identified as contributing to creating a masculine (*machismo*) subculture of the 'fisherman's' world (Kissling 2005). An FAO report attributes the incidence of domestic instability to this subculture. In contrast to women's work which exposes women to high levels of diversity in their social relationships, working at sea in exclusively male company, men develop strong bonds with just their co-workers. Among longer-voyage and migrant fishers, this may lead to emotional insularity, hindering social interactions on land, and may trigger, what an FAO report describes to be 'dysfunctional family relationships', alcoholism and drug dependence as well as psychological problems (FAO 2001), particularly in times of crisis.

'Dysfunctional family relationships' is gender-neutral terminology for increased domestic violence, wife-beating and desertion accompanying the growing economic crisis in the fisheries. The patriarchal structuring of the family and community permits and even naturalises such violence. Women in their role as the mainstays of the household and children are also the tradition-bearers or custodians of the fishing culture. Interrogating the culture they are supposed to be custodians of is both unlikely and difficult for women, particularly in their individual capacities. This is probably why, when women come together in workshops and meetings, personal narratives of violence emerge.

In a recent meeting, women in South Africa described how access to quick money from drugs and poaching had transformed their communities. Young men had felt free to rape and assault women, sometimes bribing their victims into silence, and women no longer felt that their communities were safe for their daughters (Sunde 2010). In Kerala, India, horrific incidents of domestic violence have been recorded by fisherwomen's organizations, including the torture and murder of wives by fishermen. Equally, as traditional bases of power and protection are increasingly fragmented or lost, women fish traders face the risk of abductions, sexual assault and rape at the hands of male traders, tax collectors, contractors, and mafia groups (Oamjie n.d).

Social, and often sexual, violence, it may be argued is a necessary adjunct to the privatization of coastal land and resources. The growth of tourism in coastal areas is

accompanied by the increased risk of sexual harassment and violence against fisherwomen and also, significantly, by the growth of human trafficking and the sex trade industry. In India, the demand for dowry has escalated in fishing communities under pressure to raise quick money to support an increasingly capital-intensive fishery (Shah 2010). Further, in the aftermath of a disaster, which literally collapses the social and spatial configuration of the community, increased levels of violence against women are recorded. A five-country study found extraordinary levels of sexual and domestic violence against women in the post-tsunami context (People's Report n.d.)

Violence adds enormously to the stress levels of women, particularly poor women who form the bulk of the sector, who are not only overworked and underpaid, but also required to shoulder domestic responsibilities, for the most part, single-handedly. In the South, the task of social reproduction is made even more difficult by the neglect of basic civic amenities. With the retreat of the State from the social sector and the privatisation of essential services, poverty and hence the workload of the bulk of women intensifies greatly. The absence of adequate drinking water facilities, transportation, sanitation and sewage disposal, health services add to the number of hours of unpaid labour of poor women.

Women from fishing communities are also overwhelmingly denied formal political power within the community and marginalised from representational politics in the fisheries. This exclusion of women from decision-making processes that are otherwise hailed as consensual and democratic is often justified in the name of "tradition" and "culture". This raises the pertinent question of whether cultural norms should supersede norms of justice (ICSF 2009) and is a significant question particularly in the context of the increasing demand for community-based forms of resource management in the face of the rapid economic restructuring of the fisheries.

Even as there is a strong need to protect and strengthen the small-scale fisheries against the depredations of industrial fishing, there is equally a need to interrogate the practices of the fishing way of life and address the patriarchal relations of power that keep most women in a position of exclusion and subordination.

6.0. ORGANISING WOMEN IN THE FISHERIES

The struggle of women organising for change in the fisheries face is both a struggle against patriarchy within their families and communities, and against the forces that threaten to destroy their work and livelihood base. This double-edged nature of struggle seems to invoke a dilemma of priorities. As a participant in the Civil Society Workshop in Bangkok held in October 2008 reportedly asked: "If small-scale fisheries itself is under threat of extinction, particularly as we see in Northern countries, why are we talking about protecting women's roles in fisheries? Let us, instead, talk about saving small-scale fisheries itself, as only if the sub-sector survives, can we talk of protecting

women's roles." The question seems to suggest that the larger common good calls for a subordination of women's issues. That this need not be the case; that women can simultaneously organise against their subordination and invisibility as well as for the protection of their livelihood base is apparent in women's struggles in the fisheries throughout the world.

Neis and Williams (1996) argue that women's access to work and wealth in the fishery has depended for generations upon their relationships with men and, more recently, with corporate employers. For more than a century, the labour of man and woman in home-based fish production had been shared but not so the fruits of the labour, which typically only the man received from the buyer. The politics of the family and community had never been interrogated when women and their work had remained confined to the private sphere. The militancy of the Scottish women who worked as seasonal 'gutting quines' in the early days of industrialization has been vividly described in some studies (Thompson 1985; Nadel-Klein 1988)

In the context of Newfoundland, Neis (1997) describes how the post-war phase of industrialization and the gradual separation of production and reproduction triggered a shift from familial to social forms of patriarchy. Newly instituted welfare measures such as unemployment insurance and minimum wages targeted males as the head of the household, discounting women's labour, while capital alienated women workers from fishery resources and wealth. In response, women in the industry invoked the idea of citizenship rights to demand minimum wages and challenge discriminatory practices. For example, in the 1970s, the struggles of unionised women plant-workers in Newfoundland, with support from the national women's movement, were able to bring about industrial wage parity between men and women (Neis 1997).

The decline in fish stocks and the fisheries crisis in the North led, on the one hand, to the closure of plants and massive job loss for women; on the other, to the emergence of new forms of organizing among women.

While women in the fisheries in Europe have had a history of organization (see Quist and Frangoudes 2005), in the present context, women, as 'wives' of fishers, are organising themselves for greater recognition. In France, women demanded that their contributions towards managing the fishing enterprise be valued through the extension of welfare benefits and professional rights. This right was recognised through the declaration of the EU directive 86/613 that granted a boat-owner's wife, or partner, the status of a "collaborative spouse". This victory gave further fillip to the process of organising. In the Netherlands, wives of boat owners and crew came together in 2001 to form VinVis, the Women in Fisheries Network. AKTEA, the European Network of Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture was founded in 2006 by women's organizations from France, The Netherlands, UK, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece and Scandinavia to press collectively, among other issues, for the formal recognition of

women's role in the fisheries and for wider implementation of the "collaborative spouse" clause. Industrial fisheries policy is however hard to change. Recently, AKTEA critiqued a key policy paper, the European Commission's Green Paper on Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), for ignoring the gender dimension and for focusing narrowly on a regime of individual transferable rights (Quist et al 2010).

The emergence of the European Union as an economic entity also impacted women's political status in the North. As we saw in a previous section, integration with the European Community, which spurred a boom in shellfish production for the newly-created markets, also spurred the rise of new class of professional, politically powerful women shellfishers. The fragility of the new economy was, however, apparent when, in the same region, Galicia, 6000 women, constituting 50 percent of the sector, were almost overnight forced out of shellfish farming due to changes introduced in the social security system (ICSF2001).

In the South, a different set of factors impinge on women's opportunities to organise. In most developing countries, a long history of colonization and underdevelopment means that women's ability to organise is greatly restricted by high levels of poverty, un/underemployment, seasonal work and absence of social security. In the context, women would be more likely to organise a) in regions that provide a political context for organization; where, for example, movements for social justice or workers struggles have taken place which have led to experiences of collective bargaining, and b) in societies that have some form of regulatory regime in place, the whittling down of which may spur resistance.

The experience in several Latin American countries does confirm the suggestion that a context of political mobilization is likely to encourage women to organise. This is not to say that women would not face patriarchal opposition to their efforts to do so – indeed this region even has a word, *machismo*, to describe the prevailing masculine subculture – but only to suggest that an idea of class consciousness and struggle would already be assimilated into the popular culture. In most countries of Latin America women are in the forefront of public life, and in some, popular socialist rule has opened up the space for women to politically assert themselves.

In Chile, for example, where gender mainstreaming and anti-discrimination were the planks on which Michelle Bachelet was elected as its first woman President, several moves have been initiated by the State to valorise the role of women in the small-scale fisheries, including the establishment, in 2007, of the National Network of Women in Artisanal Fisheries and Small-scale Aquaculture. Conapach, a federation of about 500 artisanal fishermen's unions with 60,000 members, elected its first woman President, Ziola Bustamante, a divers' assistant, who had for twelve years worked as Union Representative in her local syndicate. This was regarded as a highly significant move given that the artisanal sector in the country is dominated by men and notorious for its

machismo (ICSF 2008). There is room within Conapach for women to organise independently but only in regions where no fishermen's organization exists. Thus, women *encarnadoras* (fish baiters) were able to establish a women's union, affiliated to Conapach, in the region of San Antonio.

Women fishers in neighbouring Brazil are at the helm of struggles against displacement due to the growth of shrimp aquaculture and other forms of destructive coastal industrialization. Lobbying with fishworkers organizations such as National Fishermen's Movement (Monape) and active within the National Fisherwomen's Organization (ANP), they have wrested significant gains from the State. Women harvesters gained formal recognition with the approval of the Brazilian Federal Constitution in 1988, and the enactment of the Social Welfare Law in 1991 gave social protection to all rural workers, including women, regardless of marital status. The recently introduced Fisheries and Aquaculture Law has the most significant implications for women since it redefines the term 'fishworker' to include, and to extend social security benefits to, ancillary workers in the sector (ICSF 2009b).

Since women in artisanal fishing derive their primary identity from their traditional work, which is based in the household and community, they are more likely to protest when the community is perceived to be under threat. However, this is more likely to happen, as suggested earlier, in societies that have some form of formal or customary regulatory regime in place, the whittling down of which may spark resistance.

The rapid disintegration of the community way of life as a result of economic reforms in South Africa has triggered the emergence of a new layer of women leaders from fishing communities who are raising vital questions about resource management, fishing and access rights as well and the sustainability of fishing livelihoods. In parts of South Asia, too women have been organising themselves to seek solutions to the terrible degradation of their coasts. In Thailand and the Philippines, women are active in community-based coastal resource management initiatives.

In Africa, recent moves to harmonize capital have had significant impact on women's work and forms of organization. Women, in certain countries of West Africa, have organised themselves into GIEs (economic interest groups), a concept adopted by European Union member states, which work exclusively to further the economic interests of members. We need a better understanding of this process of entrepreneurship, particularly in the context of a critique of the GIE and its representational politics (Salle 1999). How does the GIE model compare with existing legal structures like cooperatives that embody democratic principles? What are the implications for women, particularly for women without resources and power, of the merger of community structures based on traditional hierarchies with global trade?

In India, where modernization of the fisheries was initiated several decades ago, and currently, the regulatory framework is being actively dismantled as a consequence of neo-liberal economic reforms, women have been at the forefront of community-based struggles against commercial aquaculture (Nayak 2009), trawling, coastal displacement; coastal tourism; and so on; they have also organised specifically around their issues as fisherwomen: to demand better public transport for women fish vendors; to press criminal charges against rapists and so on. Such public action helped to also establish women as members of a wider citizenry with a right to make claims on the state (Subramanian 2009).

As the organization and production relations of fishing in the traditional small scale fisheries are rapidly changing due to modernization and economic restructuring, women's identity is caught in flux. Women in the South would be likely to respond to the changes not as individuals but as members of households and communities. In a recent meeting in Ceará, Brazil, two proposals were mooted: first, that names of local fishermen's *colônias* be changed to reflect both fishermen and fisherwomen, and second, that identities based on local occupations like *marisqueiras* (shellfish gleaners) and *algueiras* (algae collectors) be abandoned in favour of the more general identity *pescadora* (fisherwoman). It was the second proposal, seen as signalling a loss of identity, that fired spirited debate. One participant asserted: "I consider myself a fisherwoman, but I don't intend to stop being a *marisqueira*!" (Maneschy 2009)

The likelihood, therefore, of women organizing as fishworkers, an identity that obscures not only their traditional work identity, such as shellfish gathering or fish vending, but also their identity as women, implicit in the term 'fisherwoman', is even more remote. Indeed, it is only in the context of industrial work in fish processing and aquaculture plants that women may experience a new identity as a worker. However, here again, having to shoulder the primary responsibility for household and care-giving activities would complicate the straightforward development of a class-based identity, triggering new conflicts between identities rooted in the dual spheres of work floor and family. The political mobilization of women in the South, particularly in Asia with its high concentration of artisanal population and the wave of feminization of industrial labour, migrant and seasonal in nature, sweeping through the continent, would have to take this complexity into consideration. The conditions of women's labour in China in particular, which dominates the world in terms of marine and aquaculture production, need to be better understood, since women reportedly form up to about 90 per cent of the factory floor workforce in certain sectors of industrial fish processing (Wang 2008).

Support from fishworker organization and unions

Women have invariably stood alongside men in struggles to protect the community way of life but when they have struggled for recognition and value for their work, they have often stood alone.

In the home-based, traditional fishery, the productive and reproductive labour of the woman is subsumed in the private realm. Since women's identity does not exist outside the identity of the family and community, patriarchy is naturalised, to varying degrees, within these institutions and taken for granted by both men and women. Thus, women fishers, rather than organising separately, look for spaces within mainstream fishworker organizations to address their issues. It is common to hear of women describing theirs as "the struggle within a struggle" (Nayak 1986) or a "movement within a movement" (Salle 1999).

In India, fishworker's wives automatically qualify for union membership by virtue of the reproductive tasks they perform even if their work in the fisheries is not remunerative. Unsurprisingly, one consequence of the subordination of autonomous identity is that in India, women find that even if they succeed in finding a place in the mainstream fishworker organizations, they rarely occupy decision-making positions (Sharma 2004).

Writing about women's experiences of trying to find a space within the National Fishworkers Federation (NFF), a movement with a militant and influential past in India's coastal politics, Nalini Nayak (2005) describes how several able and vocal women leaders in the movement were marginalised, and for a very long time, the NFF would not accept all-women unions as members. Even as this changed, and NFF began to accept a semi-autonomous women's federation as part of its structure, the leadership decided to consolidate the cultural (caste) dimension of the community. Analysing this shift, Nalini observes that it is "based on the pretext that fishworkers as a caste/community have to unite, forget all their professional differences and struggle together to get their share of mainstream development. The minute that caste identities are called into play, the old social and cultural norms that have subjugated women are also revived, and any attempt to raise feminist positions or to talk about an alternative development paradigm is jeopardized."

Although women in the small scale fisheries are better organised in Latin American countries than in many other parts of the world, here too they have low levels of participation in decision-making in artisanal organizations and their efforts to organise run up against patriarchal challenges.

In Chile, Conapach, with a membership base of 60,000 fishworkers, had only three women in its 21-member National Committee, not a single woman heading its regional federations, and women leading only 14 out of the 504 member unions (Iacomini 2006) but, as noted earlier, in a welcome move, it elected a woman president in 2008. Independent organising by women has been challenged by male unions in some cases. When, for instance, 45 women of a particular village in Chile decided to form a union to apply for a permit for seaweed management and exploitation under a government

scheme, opposition from male unions became so “fiercely oppressive” that formal negotiation channels were needed to resolve the dispute (Boegeholz 2006). Similarly, in Brazil, women who managed to get into leadership positions had to deal with the culture of *machismo*. Joana Rodrigues Mousinho, President of a local fishermen’s *colonia* recalls the difficulties she faced “because most of the men believed that the position of a woman was behind the stove or behind the sink washing clothes.” (Indu 2000)

In the North, the efforts to organise women have had mixed experiences. More women head the *Comite Locale* organizations in France, traditionally male-dominated structures, than ever before (Nayak 2008). However, these women, being individual members and not representatives of women’s organisations, may not represent the agenda of women in fisheries completely or adequately (Cornelie Quist pers. comm.). Women in the VinVis network in the Netherlands had to spend many years trying to change the perception of local fishermen’s organizations towards their efforts, even though they were organising themselves as fishermen’s wives. Only one woman from VinVis has so far been elected to the board of a local fishermen’s organization (Quist 2008)

Fishermen’s organizations, as male-dominated structures organised around a home-based mode of production based on the sexual division of labour, have tended to raise chiefly issues affecting men in the artisanal fisheries. Subsidies for gear and fuel would be much more likely to be raised as ‘community issues’ than would be the problems women faced in marketing or distributing fish. Thus, in India, issues such as bus transport facilities for women vendors became public issues only after women organised around them within larger fishworker’s organizations. The problems of alcoholism and domestic violence within the community would be even more difficult to address.

The blindness of fishworkers organizations to artisanal fisherwomen’s labour results in betrayals at the negotiating table as well as in policy formulations. For instance, when the 2007 ILO Work in Fishing Convention was found to have completely ignored shore-based workers, for the most part women, in the conceptualization and provisions of the Convention, sharp questions were raised about the role of worker’s organizations who had participated in the Convention but, by their silence, legitimised the invisibility of the labour of women who formed the backbone of the artisanal fisheries (Nayak 2008)

To explain its “community approach” in organising fishworkers the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF) states that “it falls on us to ensure that our sector is not weakened by dividing it, putting men on one side and women on the other, in a context where increasingly small-scale fishers from the North and South are having to abandon their way of life due to the impact of government policies which favour industrial fisheries interests” (Le Sauze 2000). It may be pointed out however that the sector would in fact be greatly strengthened, not weakened, if fishworkers organisations

took up the challenge of addressing head-on both patriarchy within the community and the low levels of organization among women, for it is only a community that is internally strong that can withstand the pressure of external assaults. Whether the political willingness to do so exists is a different matter.

The fragmentation of the community way of life increases the level of anxiety, violence and psychological stress that women experience while at the same time, increasing the responsibility of women for social reproduction. It destroys traditional fishing, forcing communities to seek alternative livelihoods. The responsibility for this more often than not is shouldered by women, who through their lived experience of greater interaction with rural society, develop greater resilience and are better equipped to deal with seeking survival outside the community. Following Thompson's analysis, it is precisely in this phase that the powerlessness faced by men, marginalised from their economic-earning capacity and pushed out of lives on sea, can be expected to translate into increased violence and disturbance in the domestic space.

As women are forced to seek alternative livelihood options their new role as wage earners destabilises the traditional relations of power in the household. It brings into the community notions of equality between sexes, and challenges traditional, patriarchal hierarchies. Thus, the self-esteem and bargaining power that the migrant worker from Tabasco gains within the household as an outcome of employment in crabmeat processing plants seem to mitigate the adverse effects of her harsh work environment (Vidal 2001).

The organisation of women in the new niches of work being created would thus have the power of challenging patriarchal hierarchies both at the workplace and at home. This is a big challenge for both community-based organisations and the trade unions. Women from the fishing community, who despite their vulnerability, also bring with them fortitude from having dealt with various economic and social challenges, as well as a feisty, take-no-nonsense attitude, would be able to take up the challenge of organising and taking on oppressive supervisory structures with greater strength than most other women first-generation industrial employees.

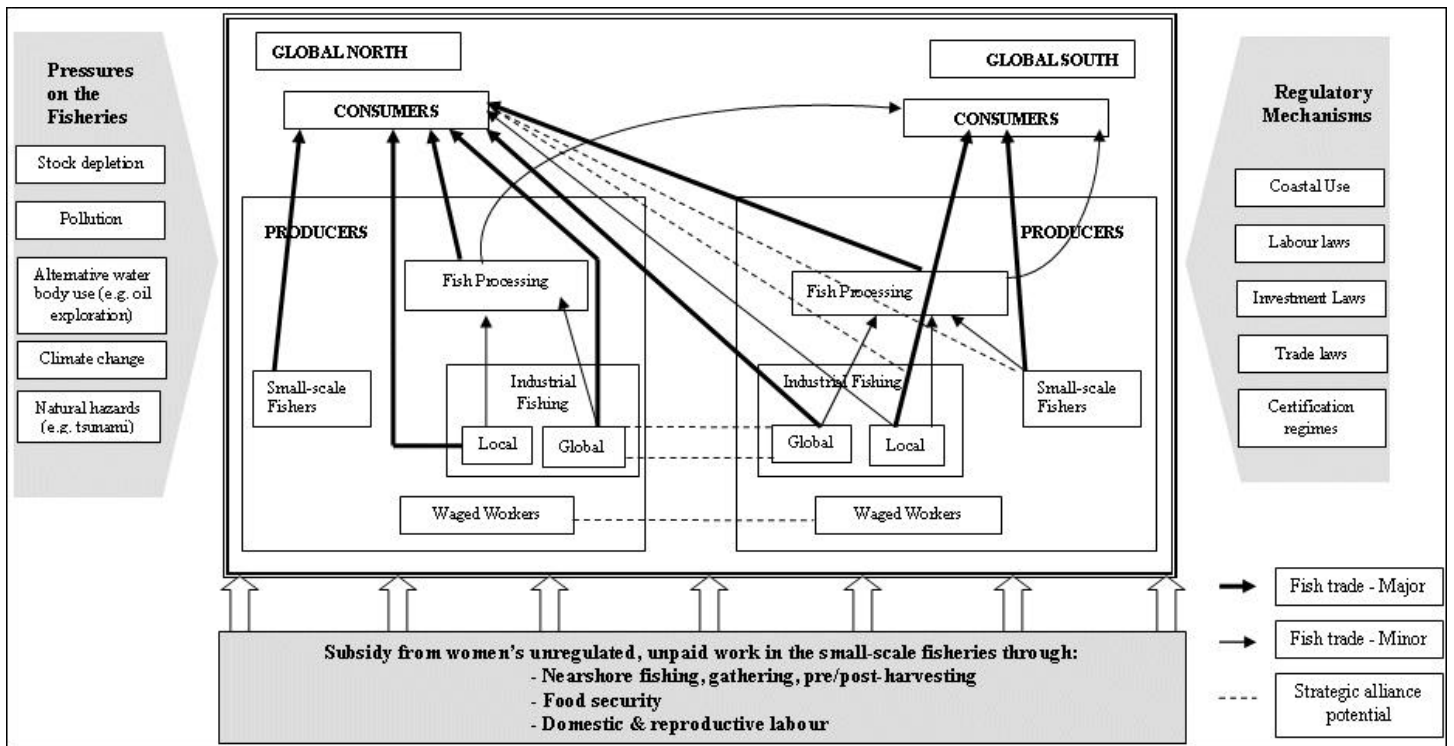
The literature suggests that while there have been countless protests against globalization by women fishers in many parts of the world, often these have been directed mainly against the destructiveness of globalization and the erosion of a traditional way of life in the fisheries. The plants and factories of the new economy have not become sites of organisation or collective bargaining. As a result, the frameworks used to understand women's work today have emerged not from contemporary struggles but rather from developmental organisations and aid agencies, who since the eighties, have sought to define the agenda of women's movements. This trend has more or less fitted in with the requirements of capitalist development for a docile labour force which does not radically question the system. The uncritical and ambiguous use of the

term 'gender' and concepts such as 'gender mainstreaming' (Baden and Goetz 1997, Nayak 2002) illustrate this denial of agency.

Conclusions

In the light of the preceding discussions, the figure below depicts a) the global flows of the relations of production and consumption in the fisheries b) the pressures and threats that impinge on the fisheries c) the regulatory mechanisms, which are contested sites sought to be controlled and shaped by multiple stakeholders, and d) the overall subsidy provided by women's labour in the fisheries, as structured by relations of patriarchy. The figure also suggests possibilities for strategic alliances within the fisheries in the context of the preceding discussions. The discussions raise several important issues and questions that merit further enquiry.

Figure 1: Women's Labour and the Relations of Production and Consumption in the Fisheries



The logic of capital is rapidly reshaping the development of all forms of fisheries from the artisanal and the small-scale to the industrial. The past few decades have seen a fundamental restructuring of the fisheries. If earlier production was geared primarily towards local consumption, with fish trade limited to a small hinterland, today production in the global South is increasingly aimed at an international market, located mainly in the North, with some elite customers in the South. This restructuring where production and consumption are geographically separated is energy-intensive,

environmentally-unsound, and leads to unsustainable industrial forms of fish production.

The consequences of fishing up and down trophic chains for profit maximization include the collapse of major fish stocks. The crisis of overfishing is sought to be addressed through culture fisheries, which raise serious questions of environmental sustainability. The growing sectors of industrial aquaculture and fish farming are tailor-made to suit the requirements of global capitalism, by freeing processing activities from resource supply locations. Changes from food to feed in global supply chain flows could, over time, directly impact the food security of the poor in the global South by diverting vital protein, oils and nutrients away from them to elite consumers directly through fish trade or indirectly through fish feed supplies for capture fisheries. They could also adversely impact regional trade, denying an important means of livelihood for women in fishing.

In addition to overfishing and marine stock depletion, other adverse environmental impacts of the present paradigm in coastal development include pollution; alternative uses of oceans and seas, for example, for oil exploration; the effects of global warming and climate change, which include rising sea levels, acidification of ocean waters, and increasing incidence of extreme weather events triggering natural hazards and disasters. These factors represent threats to the fisheries and their sustainability.

While sustainability, particularly in the context of climate change, is clearly an issue, it is also the case that the small-scale fisher population, concentrated in the global South, face high levels of poverty and underdevelopment. Under neoliberal globalization, governments in countries of the South are increasingly encouraging unsustainable, capital-intensive fisheries, liberalising trade and capital flows and adopting measures of deregulation, privatisation and export specialization to address the developmental challenges facing the small-scale sector. This, together with the fact that the costs of environmental degradation are becoming increasingly higher in the global North, makes the movement of capital to the less-regulated South and the perpetuation of cheap, dirty, profitable and unsustainable forms of industry here more likely and more common. What local and global strategies are needed in the fisheries to resist the spread of unregulated capital and the damages that stem from this?

The global regulatory mechanism consisting of regimes governing coastal use and management, labour, investment, trade and quality certification has a decisive impact on the fisheries. Under the present conditions of neo-liberal globalization, these are being rapidly restructured to benefit industrial fishing and global capital with neoliberal policy using science and scientific management regimes to further itself. The burden of iniquitous economic growth is being borne primarily by poor women in both the global North and South.

Global regulations marginalise small-scale producers and traders from international markets owing to the costs and difficulties of compliance with international schemes for fish certification. The factors and circumstances that prevent the small-scale fisheries, particularly in the South, from benefiting include weak fisheries management regimes, problems in implementing the 'chain of custody', higher costs of certification and shortage of trained manpower. In order to intervene effectively, a better understanding of chains of custody, global regulation and its impacts at both macro and micro levels is needed.

Despite the intensive industrialization of the fisheries and the consequent stock depletion due to competitive over-fishing, the small-scale fishery is not completely wiped out in the North and still supports the lives of millions in the South. This is primarily due to the enormous subsidy provided by the unregulated and unpaid forms of productive and reproductive labour contributed by poor women in the sector.

Women's unrecognised and un/underpaid labour also subsidises global capitalism by keeping wage levels depressed, working conditions poor and jobs insecure and unregulated. It allows industrial fisheries to reap the benefits of utilising a feminised and vulnerable labour force bereft of collective bargaining power for capital accumulation on a global scale. The unequal bargaining power also forces women to work in unhealthy and hazardous conditions.

It must be acknowledged however that capitalism, by providing waged employment to women, contributes to the economic security of the fishworker's family. In doing so, it allows new opportunities for women to challenge the forces of capital and patriarchy at home, in the community and at work. Waged employment by bringing women out of their community and traditional employment also enables them to recognise and confront oppressive structures within the community.

The labour of poor women thus shores up the crisis-ridden traditional fisheries and is mobilised cheaply for wages when economic conditions demand. The alliance of patriarchy, state and capital must be understood and challenged at all levels and spheres. It cannot be resisted in one sphere and left unchallenged in another. In what ways must women organise to challenge invisibility and oppression in both the traditional and industrial fisheries?

Fish workers and fishing communities in the North and South have to find common cause to jointly oppose global capital in alliance with other social justice groups. This struggle cannot be successful, however, unless it recognises and valorises the invisible labour of women, and the political relevance of women fishworker's organizations. Fishermen's associations and trade unions need to address the patriarchy within their organizations. Women's participation in the collective mobilization has to be encouraged, valorised and protected, and decision-making democratised for an effective

opposition to be built. Inasmuch as women are divided by a host of categories of social exclusion including race, caste, religion, age, sexuality, and, with increasing penetration of capital into the fisheries, by class, the challenge is to identify common areas around which critical alliances and a common political programme may be built by women fishers in the North and South. The shared nature of unpaid/ underpaid work of women in the sector is certainly of primary importance. Can mobilization of women in the fisheries include women from the sector who are increasingly being forced to seek a future through waged work outside the fisheries?

The struggle will also need to identify viable alternatives to capitalist fishing. These include various forms of cooperative organisations for fishing, fish trade and self-help. Communities must lead coastal resource management and genuine community-based management of coastal resources involving poor women in a central role and unfettered by the agenda and dictates of market, state and donor agency must be valorised.

The survival of the fishing community, in the circumstances, would depend on its ability to absorb both economic and social change. A holistic analysis of the skills within communities, and ways in which they can be redeployed, is needed. Can traditional fishing regenerate fish in areas left depleted by over-fishing? Can small-scale post-harvesting tasks, undertaken as family-based work be reorganised into cooperatives with greater bargaining capacity? Can traditional knowledge systems be valorised as means of organised livelihood? How can women's alienation from land and assets be addressed? What must be done to ensure that the reproduction of the fishing household is a collective, social responsibility and not the responsibility of individuals alone? What must be done to root out domestic and social violence against women as well as to make a zero-tolerance approach to violence against women a part of the culture?

Since environmental pressures and global deregulation are equally affecting other forms of traditional livelihood, and global trade such as agri-business, mining, and the industrial use of forest resources, there is a commonality of struggles among natural-resource-based communities such as farmers, indigenous groups, and landless rural workers and so on. In countries like Brazil, such alliances are already being explored. How can fisher organisations identify and build upon these strategic alliances?

Consumers in the North and South have an interest in opposing the depredations of globalised fishing. Consumer support must be sought in the North to push for a sustainable fishery with greater stakeholder equity. It would also be in the interest of Northern consumers to safeguard healthy fish resources grown in healthy environs. What bottom-up strategies can be identified and adopted to ensure that both ecological and developmental concerns are addressed along chains of custody in the fisheries?

Finally, there is need for more research and a better, more grounded analysis in a number of areas. There is a need to better understand, for instance, the conditions of

women's labour in the fisheries including the culture fisheries in the growing fishing economies of Asia. These would include terms and conditions of employment, and health and occupational safety issues. In particular there is need to understand fishing in China which dominates the world in terms of marine and aquaculture production, and where women reportedly form up to about 90 per cent of the factory floor workforce in certain sectors.

There is also not enough analysis on the impact of global trade on the fisheries. Regional perspectives and conjectural information are currently available but there is a paucity of analysis along the lines of the 'trawl to table' studies suggested by Martha MacDonald (2005), perhaps not by species, but by region. If the support base for the small scale fisheries is to be widened and civil society organizations are to be drawn in, such analyses would be vitally important in establishing commonalities of interests.

Over the years, there has been a decline in analytical research on the labour that women put into the household and in its everyday reproduction. This seems to indicate a loss of both political focus, and acceptance of the inevitability of patriarchy in the family sphere. Post modern analysis which seeks to see power politics in the subaltern arena, while benefiting a new form of enquiry into the oppression of women, has not contributed to the ability to organize women. Why, even after so many years of political organization and analysis, have the demand for the socialization of household reproductive tasks and valuation of women's labour not become global campaign issues joining women of the North and South in common cause is a question to be asked.

Other issues that deserve serious consideration and debate include the uncritical acceptance of language, analytical categories as well as agenda-setting by developmental agencies in the global North, many of which are linked to bilateral and multilateral funding. The effect of project-based funding of women's organizations and the increased dependence on aid for organising women is another area that needs attention.

An exploration of the changing nature of the gender discourse, for its policy implications alone, merits specific research attention. Also useful would be a historical analysis of the literature of struggles of fisher people, in particular the struggles of women in the fisheries, for greater regulation of, for instance, welfare and fishing rights.

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