



**38** Years in Support of  
Small-scale Fishworkers

# Yemaya

ICSF'S NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

## Special Issue on GAF8



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### From the Editor

**W**e are happy to present a Special Issue on the recently-held 8th Global Conference on Gender in Aquaculture & Fisheries- Shaping the Future: Gender Justice for Sustainable Aquaculture and Fisheries (GAF8). Held over three days, from 21 - 23 November 2022 in the city of Kochi in the coastal state of Kerala in India, GAF8 attracted 198 delegates from 26 countries and hosted 79 paper presentations as well as a range of expertly-curated audio-visual media events.

The success of GAF8 is testimony to the fact that we have indeed come a long way from the early days when the case for gender in fisheries and aquaculture was invisible, and had to be repeatedly argued from first principles. At the level of policy and guidelines, much progress has been made, albeit not uniformly or consistently throughout the world, in terms of a formal recognition of the need for gender mainstreaming and gender equality. At the level of practice however, there remains much to be done, and nowhere in recent times, has this gap been more coherently articulated than it was at GAF8.

The presentations at the conference revealed that women in aquaculture and fisheries across the world are putting in long hours of hard labour in conditions that are becoming increasingly more challenging due to climate change impacts and the growing risk of biological and environmental disasters. As ever-increasing numbers of women join the fisheries and aquaculture sector in formal and informal employment. From the presentations at GAF8 we learn that while the bulk of the workforce, both men and women in the sector, are paid meagre wages, women are paid even less than men, with the migrant, the physically challenged and the other vulnerable categories of women, being paid the least of all. Never has the need for institutional and statutory support for gender mainstreaming in the sector been more urgent, starting with the formal recognition of all forms of women's labour.

The dire and long-overdue need for formal recognition of women's labour emerged as one of the chief recommendations from the conference. Other recommendations include women's rights of tenure and the management and use of coastal lands; women's right to receive institutional support and build capacity and entrepreneurship; to have access to food and nutritional security; to live and work in a safe, peaceful and hygienic environment; and to collectivize and organize themselves. Another key recommendation is the need for new approaches to document and analyse gender issues in aquaculture and fisheries, which draw upon political economy, human rights, intersectionality, and transformative, participatory, and gendered value chain concepts, and include standardized tools and methodologies to generate gender-based data.

Back in 1990, when the Asian Fisheries Society (AFS) organized a workshop on May 27, titled 'Women in Fisheries in India', little could it have been imagined that nearly 25 years later, the modest, one-day event would grow into an international conference of the scale, expertise and coherence on gender issues that GAF8 represented. Yemaya salutes all the women and men who pioneered GAF and who continue to steer its growth towards the goal of gender equality and gender justice within fisheries and aquaculture.

*Editor's Note:* This issue of Yemaya will not carry the Yemaya Mama strip as our cartoonist, Surendra, is unwell. We wish him a speedy recovery! 🙏