

ICSF Occasional Paper

**Women's Role, Struggles and Strategies
Across the Fisheries Value Chain
The Case of Lake Victoria—Tanzania**



by **Environmental Management and Economic
Development Organization (EMEDO)**



International Collective in Support of Fishworkers
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) were adopted in June 2014 by the Thirty-First session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI). The SSF Guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for the governance of small-scale fisheries and their contribution to food security and eradication of poverty. They provide guidance to state and non-state actors for the development of policies, strategies and actions for resource management, governance of tenure, value chains and trade, social development and decent work, disaster risks and climate change, and gender equality.

The SSF Guidelines are based on internationally accepted human rights standards and are to be implemented in accordance with those standards. They intend to support the governance and development of small-scale fisheries for the benefit of current and future generations, with an emphasis on vulnerable and marginalised people.

The SSF Guidelines emphasize that *women, vulnerable and marginalized groups should be fully engaged in a dignified and respected manner and their contribution to small-scale fisheries recognized*. This intervention, therefore, seeks to understand how and to what extent the contribution of women in small-scale fisheries is recognized and draw lessons to raise awareness of the issues and develop strategies for improvements.

Immediately after the adoption of the SSF Guidelines, the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Fisheries Coordination group—composed of the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) and the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)—under the coordination of International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) mobilized resources to strategically support organizations of small-scale fishery workers and their communities to defend

their rights through appropriating the SSF Guidelines, by

- Raising awareness and building capacity of national small-scale fisheries actors towards understanding of the principles of the SSF Guidelines that seek to promote a human rights-based approach.
- Focus was also on empowerment towards achieving the objectives of the Guidelines that include enhancing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and nutrition; contributing to the equitable development of fishing communities; and sustainable utilization and prudent conservation and management of fisheries resources.

These are among the reasons this study was conducted in June and July 2016, in the fishing areas of Mwanza and Kagera regions in the Lake Victoria side of Tanzania. The focus of this study was on Dagua (sardines) (*Rastrineobola argentea*) Fishery which involves mostly women in its overall value chain. The study sites were areas that are specialized in dagaa fishery and these include Lushonga Island located in the Muleba district of Kagera region, Mwanza Kirumba international fish market and in some of the landing beaches in Nyamagana and Ilemela districts in Mwanza.

The findings of the study are presented as case studies in the form of two video clips. One explores the role and place of women along fisheries value chain: The significance and values their involvement in fisheries brings to the communities and fisheries development. Why are they involved in fisheries? How are they organized for space in decision-making and policy processes? The second video case study explores the challenges that women involved in fisheries activities face: What successes have they achieved? How can their participation in fisheries be strategically improved? It also explains the strategies in place at local and national levels to counter and improve the situation.

The study is also presented in the form of this short report that further describes issues presented or could have been missed out in the video clips.

This study was conducted by a local organization, the Environmental Management and Economic Development Organization, a member of World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF), in collaboration with ICSF.

WOMEN'S ROLE, STRUGGLES AND STRATEGIES ACROSS THE FISHERIES VALUE CHAIN THE CASE OF LAKE VICTORIA—TANZANIA

1. Background information

The importance of small-scale fisheries and their role as a contributor to poverty alleviation, food and nutrition security and economic growth is increasingly being recognized. Small-scale fisheries contribute about half of global fish catches, and when considering the catches destined for direct human consumption, the share contributed by the sector increases to two-thirds. Inland fisheries are particularly important in this respect with small-scale fish production dominating the subsector.

In Tanzania, small-scale fisheries are the most important fishery as they lands almost all the freshwater and most of the marine catches. They contribute about 98 per cent of the country's total catch and generate income, provide food for local, national and international markets and make important contribution to nutrition. Small-scale fisheries employ over 90 per cent of the world's capture fishers and fishworkers, about half of which are women.

The SSF Guidelines are dedicated to defend and to promote small-scale fisheries, complementing other international instruments. They emphasize that women, vulnerable and marginalized groups should be fully engaged in a dignified and respected manner and their contribution to small-scale fisheries recognized. This study, therefore, seeks to understand to what extent this is realized and it draws lessons to raise awareness and develop strategies for improvements.

The video case studies produced under this study will contribute as training resource for capacity building for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries.

2. Objectives

The SSF Guidelines intend to support small-scale fisheries governance and development for the benefit of current and future generations, with an emphasis on vulnerable and marginalized people. The SSF Guidelines emphasize that women, vulnerable and marginalized groups should be fully engaged in a dignified and respected manner and their contribution to small-scale fisheries recognized.

Therefore, as we develop the roadmap towards implementing the SSF Guidelines, the approach must be bottom up, participatory and one of promoting community organization; the methodology must fit the local context but should start with the community. It must follow the consultation process by going back to communities at local level. It must organise and build capacity of the communities and civil society and build legitimate, democratically accountable and credible fishworker organisations that can gain recognition from their governments as legitimate representative bodies that will work with government to implement the Guidelines. The SSF Guidelines should not be considered as a solely fisheries department issue but should be integrated across sectors and departments, including those that deal with women's affairs, social welfare, rural development, labour, health, education and trade. Prioritising the inter and cross sectoral nature of the Guidelines and recognising the role of women, the latter should be encouraged to participate in organisations; unequal gender relations must be addressed.

The purpose of this study is to contribute towards developing resource materials for capacity-building programs towards implementation of the SSF Guidelines, that includes promoting all-round awareness about the SSF Guidelines, particularly gender equality and social development; informing women in the small-scale fisheries in Tanzania about the guiding principles of the SSF Guidelines. Specifically, the study has focused mainly on the terms of reference (ToR) which required:

- Production of video clips / training material on the struggles of women in fisheries and the strategies they adopt to overcome these;
- Production of video clips / training material on women's role across the value chain of fisheries;
- Development of a short report on both these issues.

2.1 Location

Lushonga Island in Muleba district of Kagera region and Mwanza Kirumba National Fish Market provided a ground for exploring and understanding women's

work in fisheries value chain, the challenges they face and strategies in place to improve the situation.

2.2 Methodology

The study was conducted in four key stages:

Desk review: The first stage involved literature review and collation of secondary data and information: reviewing published and unpublished manuscripts, official government record and publications. Information was also gleaned from several data sources, including the Regional Status Report on Lake Victoria Bi-annual Frame Surveys between years 2000 and 2014 by Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO) secretariat and the Fishery Country Profile for Tanzania by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), December 2007.

Field visits: The field visits were made to the dagaa landing sites that are also known as dagaa fishing camps as well as to the national and regional markets, fisheries and other relevant government institutions and departments, especially those responsible for fisheries research, management and sector development.

Table 1. List of Areas visited

Area/ Region	Name of the beach, market or institution involved
Mwanza	Kirumba fish market Mkuyuni fish landing site Igogo local market FETA-Fisheries Education Training Agency Sweya fish landing site TAFIRI-Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute
Kagera	Lushonga Island (Fishing camp)

Video production: This stage involved developing the video clips captured at different areas, compiling and editing to produce the video with key information of target, mixing of videos and some photographs reflecting women's work, struggles and strategies in the fishery sector.

Reporting: The final stage involved writing of this report from the information gathered during the field survey and presenting key interview inputs. This report has also benefited from the discussions that were held as part of the national capacity building workshop towards implementation of the SSF guidelines.

The issues that were identified as contributors to women's challenges and their possible solutions are included in this report.

3. Role and place of women in the small-scale fisheries sector

When one thinks of fishery, the image that comes to mind is of men out at sea pulling up the nets or bringing in the catch. Fishing has long been considered a male occupation and women were thought to be involved only in post-harvest activities. However, there is a growing recognition of women's contribution in capture fisheries in all activity spheres. African women play a leading role in artisanal fisheries in particular in the fish trade, processing and marketing of fishery products, fresh or processed. In the sub-sector of the processing, women are by far the majority.

The Tanzanian women in fisheries are active in both artisanal and commercial fisheries and their roles are becoming increasingly important. However, much as women have been key players with significant contribution to the development of the subsector, as several studies have shown; this study shows that women's' livelihood has remained poor and they are still facing several challenges that increase their vulnerability. This has been evidenced through their low economic status, poor resource ownership and control; inadequate participation in household and community decision-making and inability to access resources and social services. Women in SSF do not have sufficient capital; they have limited access to information and credit facilities supporting women. There is also lack of financial management skills among others. This has denied women better lives in terms of good health, feeding, hygiene, housing and adequate income among others.

The role and place of women in the small-scale fisheries subsector (Fig.1), and their challenges were discussed at length during the national workshop towards implementation of the SSF Guidelines. The dialogue was partly triggered by the showcased videos on the challenges, roles and place of women in the sector and was followed by groups and plenary discussions' that focused towards identifying what is needed to improve gender equality in the entire fisheries value chain, and to promote equal participation of women in decision-making processes and organizations, appropriate technologies, and supportive policies and legislations.

The figure 1 summarizes the outcome of the study and discussion that included issues and roles of women for both inland and marine fisheries.

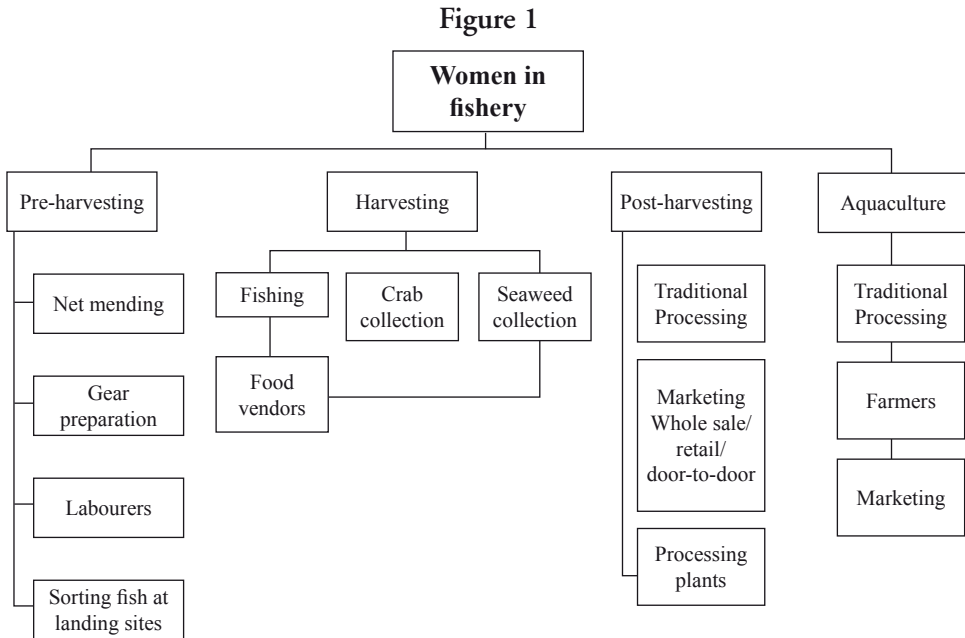


Figure 1: Different roles of women participation in small-scale fisheries, without drawing boundaries for marine and inland fisheries. They also looked into how SSF Guidelines can be used to improve gender equity of small-scale fishers and fishworkers.

There was seen a necessity for informing the fisher folk communities about the important role played by women in fisheries sector and hence the need to have various programs, workshops, and policy briefs to support this endeavor.

It was learnt through this study that women in small-scale fisheries in Tanzania are not well organized, there was thus a call for joint efforts to facilitate formation of national level platform/networks in order to simplify easy access to outreach services, information and other related services. Below are more of the issues that were generated from both the study and dialogue during the national workshop.

- There is need to build capacity of women so that they take important functions or leadership roles in the community.
- It is important to provide education about women's rights and responsibilities and empower them economically through establishing savings and credit facilities.

- It was noted that there is need to discard the unfriendly customary beliefs that discriminate against the women.
- It is important to stimulate the participation of women in government and support them to be part of the governance process.
- There is need to strengthen and implement regional collaboration (in free market) in order to promote security of fish traders in the region.
- There was concern that there is poor accessibility to credit facilities/ services to women.
- It was further acknowledged that the SSF Guidelines is an important tool that can be used to improve gender equity of small-scale fishers and fishworkers.
- Efforts need to be deliberate and progressive until
- Women in the sector are recognized and their contribution is valued, they are supported to get more organized; efforts made to unify their voices and collaborate in dealing with the challenges towards improving their business environment and working conditions. This can be done through establishing women's platform/networks or Women Fisherfolks Association to promote their visibility.
- It is necessary to inform the community to recognize the important role played by women in fisheries sector. There is need to have various programs, workshops, and policy briefs to support this endeavors.
- There is need to build capacity of women so that they get well organized and take important functions or leadership roles in the community.
- It is important to provide education about women's rights and responsibilities and empower them economically through establishing savings and credit facilities.
- There is need to discard the unfriendly customary beliefs that discriminate against the women.
- It is important to stimulate the participation of women in government and support them to be part of the governance process.

The men in the fishing camps were interviewed to capture their views on the significance of women's role in the sector. Their responses pointed to a

conclusion that women are less able than men to participate in economic opportunities through fisheries because of the work burden that fits only men. However, on the contrary the research team witnessed during this study that women in the dagaa fishery are aggressive, committed and more responsible for most of the activities in the whole value chain as well as their participation in other agricultural and reproductive activities. Very few women groups exist in the sector, and when consulted revealed that:

- 1) Women are hardworking and capable of performing more than one task and, because dagaa business does not provide full employment, women also accommodate other duties. In fact they do more work than men whose role is just cast out the nets for fishing;
- 2) Due to their daily work routine women provide the constant attention for quality production of dagaa and business management;
- 3) Once the fish is landed, all the activities thereafter are left to women; they offload the canoes and carry the offloaded dagaa to the land destined for drying and other processing. They normally carry the dagaa on their heads using plastic basins or jerry cans;
- 4) When dagaa are spread on the ground for drying, women spend all their time to guard against destructive animals such as dogs, birds and filches;
- 5) When the dagaas are completely dry, it is the women who are responsible for packaging of dagaa in sacks ready for transportation to the inland markets or to the regional markets e.g. at Kirumba International Fish Market (see picture 2);
- 6) Apart from all these responsibilities, women are still expected to meet domestic chores. For those dealing with small-scale processing and trading their businesses are home based most of the time for them to be able to attend other roles of taking care of children and other activities.



Picture 1: Women and men packaging dagaa in sacks ready for transportation at Kirumba International Fish Market

4. Struggles and Strategies across the Dagaa Value Chain

The decision to examine the role, struggles and strategies of women across the dagaa fisheries value chain is informed by, among others, the vast number of women involved in this fishery as also the important nutritional composition of dagaa that provides food security and nutrition to the local population in the region and beyond.

Dagaa (*Rastrineobola argentea*) is the most important fish resource in Lake Victoria. Its biomass is estimated at over 1.3 million tones. The rapid growth and lifecycle of dagaa allows its exploitation at a yearly level of 70 per cent, according to the LVFOs studies.

As a zooplanktivore, dagaa is low in the food chain and it contributes to the lake's eutrophication control. Its harvest then contributes directly to biomass removal. Its nutritional value is high as the whole fish is being eaten and, therefore, provides more micro elements and vitamins (contained in viscera, eyes

and heads) than fish flesh only. Its protein content varies from about 53 per cent to 63 per cent according to the season (personal communication with Mr. Emmanuel Mondoka, a Fish quality assurance and control officer). Its fat content is approximately 14 per cent and can also vary according to seasonality. Energy content of dried dagaa is around 1400kj/100g.

Its abundance and nutritional value make dagaa a priority choice for fishery as long as the whole harvest, processing and distribution can be improved and maintained at sustainable levels. It has been realized through this study that post-harvest handling and processing are done by women.

According to the literature cited during this study, the dagaa value chain is said to mainly involve three key stages: Fish harvesting stage; post-harvest fish handling stage; and the fish distribution stage. We have however learnt that the pre-harvesting stage is invisible and yet very important and it is occupied by women.

i. Dagaa Pre-harvesting stage

At this stage women are involved in other activities, which complement the fishing work. They collect and chop firewood, for cooking and are responsible for preparation of meals for fishers before and after fishing. Safeguarding of dagaa from birds and filches when dagaa are spread on land for drying.

ii. Dagaa Harvesting Stage

Artificial lights are used to attract fish for harvesting. Dagaa fishers are men with some experience or knowledge on seasonality on the fishery and the actual harvesting of the fish/fishing methods. Fishers use kerosene pressure lamps attached to a floater. The fishery is artisanal with locally made boats using traditional fishing methods and gears. The fishers use different kinds of gears to catch fish. The commonly used gears and fishing methods include a) beach seine nets mostly operated on sandy beaches, b) scoop nets, c) lift nets introduced from Lake Tanganyika and mostly used is Catamaran boats locally known as 'Kipe', d) encircling nets operated in deep water.

Once the fish is landed, the carriers, mostly women and some men, transfer the catch from the fishing boats to the drying area using plastic basins or jerry cans on their heads.

According to the Frame Survey 2010 (biennial census of fishers and fishing gears), it is estimated that there are 31,891 fishers and 8,272 fishing vessels targeting dagaa. This implies an average of four men fishers per boat. The statistics, however, do not include those who are involved in the post-harvest activities

such as carriers, processors, traders and those involved in offloading and packing of dagaa in sacks.

Issues of concern and constraints for women at the harvesting stage: Both women and men shared the issues and challenges facing women at this stage. Conversations with fishermen reflected that it is considered a curse for women to go out in the water to fish. It is believed that if a woman goes fishing to the lake, fishers will not get sufficient catch. At the same time, the task is regarded as very muscular and only fit for men. Weather conditions at night in the lake are said to be too unfriendly for women. Women also need to stay at camp for attending to their little children. The family responsibility for attending to children is culturally regarded as a woman's. Women stay at the fishing camp and engage in lighter jobs like offloading and drying of dagaa. However, though men view it as light, offloading is difficult and challenging as it involves a lot of bending and lifting heavy bags. Lastly, women's mindset itself is negative about going to the lake for fishing. Some women confessed that the task of fishing is primarily a man's responsibility.

iii. Dagaa Post-Harvest Stage

After landing, the dagaa is dried. The fish is spread on drying surfaces such as rocks, sand and grass, and sometimes on raised racks in order to dry. There are also some other handling/processing methods whereby processors/sellers take wet dagaa and salt it before either smoking or frying. The sun-drying process can take six to eight hours, but can extend to seventy-two hours depending on weather conditions.

This study confirms that processing of dagaa has been mostly reserved for women at many landing sites. However, there are now some men who are involved as well. Most of the women interviewed in Mwanza were previously involved in the processing of another fish species (the Nile perch). They were then displaced from the Nile perch processing after the establishment of processing factories. They are now also threatened by the high interest of men in the dagaa processing that they may also end up losing it to men who have more access to capital and other resources. This is one of the reasons for seeking support for them to get more organized. Men fishers revealed that the processing sector is dominated by women because most men believe it is a woman's occupation.

Some women, particularly those working in islands, are employed by fish vessel owners or fishermen mainly for offloading the fish from boats after landing, for drying the fish/dagaa, weighing and packing the dagaa into sacks.

However, other women work independently as self-employed. These are dagaa traders who purchase fresh dagaa and either smoke, fry or sun-dry by spreading it on rocks, sandy surface or grass. After drying, they take the product to the market, ready for trading.

Issues of concern and constraints at the processing stage: According to the processors (who can be the fishermen themselves or their employees or fish sellers), access to markets is one of their main challenges. Lack of capital and lack of economies of scale do not allow them or motivate them to access more lucrative outlets. As a result, fish are sold to traders on which they are too dependent.

On quality, processors follow old practices although a few of them have started improving. Those who are still practising old methods do not see incentives to improve. Although prices are relatively low, the demand continues to be buoyant and the prospect of receiving a higher price by processing a higher quality fish is not evident to them.

For those processors who buy fresh fish from fishermen, cash flow is an issue as it is throughout the whole value chain. It does not look like there are any cash reserves in the system because:

- Margins and volumes are said to be very small so that the profits are used for immediate domestic needs, and;
- There is no access to banking facilities for most of them, resulting in an inability to save cash.

However, there is little awareness of different processing methods. When questioned on the topic, men and women declared that they think other methods will add to the expense. For instance, salting is seen as adding to the cost and the market is not used to salted fish/dagaa. The same applies to the use of elevated drying racks; people don't see the point as they are expensive to build and maintain, and there are doubts about whether the quality obtained will compensate for the sand pick up and weight addition on selling price.

Another issue is the high cost of energy source used to dry the fish, especially for the fryers; most processors use firewood for frying the fish. Prices of firewood increase during the rainy season and its accessibility becomes limited.

Limited space for spreading the fish/dagaa during drying is another problem. For processors to acquire enough space, they need to have bigger capital which has been a problem. Considering the non-appreciation of fisher folks by several financial institutions, it has always been hard for them to access financial loans.

Last but not the least, women wake up in the middle of the night and sometimes very early morning to offload the fish, and others go to landing sites for purchasing the fresh fish. They mentioned a feeling of insecurity arising from harassment and falling prey to illness due to hard weather conditions at these times of the day.

iv. Distribution and Marketing Stage

The dagaa distribution chain consists of a crew, fishing vessel owners, traders, processors, retailers, wholesalers, transporters, importers and consumers. The supply chain is a complex web spanning dozens of internal and external markets in other countries and involving many thousands of individuals. The marketing of fish is a three-tier system, namely, local and national markets, regional markets and animal feed industries.

Local Markets: At the local markets, both wet, dry and fried dagaa is sold in volumes to consumers. The sellers consist of both men and women but mostly the function is dominated by women. The wet dagaa, however, is transported by male bicycle vendors to different estates where they are easily bought by consumers who prefer to process the fish themselves. The fried dagaa/fish is sold at local markets by women vendors during the evening. Dagaa is also transported to almost everywhere in Tanzania and outside Tanzania.



Monica Kische, a dagaa fish processor based in Kagera region packaging her processed dagaa (salted and deep fried) products ready for the market. Kische sells her dagaa locally in Kagera but she also transports to Mwanza and Dar-es- Salaam

Kirumba International Fish Market

This market is based in Mwanza, and it is the outlet of Dagaa and other fish species to regional markets. This study witnessed different groups and individual fish/dagaa vendors. Some groups like WASATU (Wauza Samaki Tushirikiane Society ltd) are composed of both men and women while other groups are only for women. Here women are actively involved in all sorts of activities including the cleaning and packaging of dagaa in sacks ready for distribution to regional markets. A series of big trucks were seen carrying dagaa to this international market. The major importing countries include the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Zambia, South Sudan, Kenya, Rwanda and Malawi.

Women in distribution of Dagaa

Although both women and men are working in the trading of dagaa, women are dominant in this function. Some women are street vendors of fried dagaa. These normally purchase fresh dagaa from fishers at landing sites and process them by separating them from unwanted species, salting and sun-drying and then frying. In the evening, they find a space in the street with concentration of people for selling the product. Others work as retailers in different local market places where they sell dry dagaa which was purchased from other processors. Some women who have access to higher capital operate as wholesalers. They have obtained a space in the big market places mainly at Kirumba fish market in Mwanza. They purchase dry dagaa from processors, pack them in sacks and wait for customers from neighbouring towns and countries who come to the markets.

Key Issues and constraints for women at the distribution stage: Fishers, processors and traders do not have access to market information, especially regarding export markets within the region. They do not know what the final destination of their product is. Even in well-organized markets like Kirumba, where data is collected on all fish movements, there is no proper handling and storage of this information. General information is not readily available.

Traders face challenges posed by market brokers. Some women declared that the brokers in the market, especially Kirumba fish market, sometimes cause delay in selling by quoting higher prices to customers than the sellers' original price. For example, if the actual price is Tanzanian Shillings (TZS) 120,000/= per sack, the broker will announce TZS. 150,000/= per sack so that they can pocket Tshs. 30,000/=. Often, a customer would be willing to pay TZS.120,000/=: the seller's price, but the broker would not allow the business to be done.

High interest rates are another issue. Some women who have never accessed loans from the savings and lending organizations complained about the high rates posed on their loans. There is no appreciation of their capitals since almost all the profits earned from their business is paid back as interest rates. Access to loans in itself is still a challenge to most women due to hard terms and conditions being put forward by several financial institutions. This has retarded the economic growth of women in the fishery business.

Low confidence amongst women who are part of male dominated groups to acquire leadership positions in their groups. Women of WASATU (Wauza Samaki Tushirikiane Society Ltd) confessed that they have never been willing to participate in leadership roles of their group. Men have always been asking women to introduce their candidacy for different posts but they don't utilize the leadership opportunities offered to them.

5. Challenges for women in fisheries

- Data accessibility/market information is an issue not only for women, but also for men. Fishers have no access to fishery information on catches, prices and trade levels regardless the importance of such information to people who are investing in fisheries. Getting first-hand information on the contribution of women in the fisheries sector to the national economy is still hard. This reflects lack of acknowledgement of women's contribution to the fishery sector and national economy. Lack of such data may be stated as amongst the causes for women not being given spaces in the decision-making processes, policies and legislations.
- Lack of appropriate hygiene and sanitation facilities especially to women working in islands is also an issue. This leads to health problems associated with poor hygiene. It also denies women privacy rights. Women were observed taking bath in open spaces.
- Most women have gone to work in fisheries because it is the only sector they see as an opportunity. They involuntarily leave their families and migrate to islands, searching for jobs. It is not easy to get a job since it depends on how much a job seeker is known and trusted. Sometimes women have to wait interminably for jobs and start engaging in commercial sex for their survival in the island. This poses them to high risk of acquiring sexual transmitted diseases such as HIV. At the same time, once employed, often a month

or two passes without enough earnings to support them or enable them to go back to their families.

- Women in fisheries have limited time to rest and spend with their families. They have to wake up either in the middle of the night or very early in the morning to offload the catch and go to procure the fish/dagaa at the landing sites. This raises an issue of lack of safety and security. Moreover, those working in islands often have to stay in unsecured houses, which makes them vulnerable to intimidation by alcoholic fishermen.
- Women working in fisheries, especially those who stay in islands, have low access to important social amenities such as health, education, safe water, credit. They have limited knowledge of their rights and entitlements and are much marginalized. Important services, food security and nutrition should be made accessible to them given their contribution to the fishery sector.
- Low technical and financial capacities for women in fisheries were reflected especially by the processors who have failed to generate products with acceptable quality for the regional markets. A few have received an opportunity for capacity enhancement but the majority are still performing below the standard level of international qualities. Some government officials such as the regional fish market manager of Kirumba Mwanza (Mr Kauswa) declared that financial institutions set terms and conditions for loan accessibility which are almost impossible to meet for women. He said that most women have little knowledge and limited skills vis-à-vis business management and enterprise development. This also retards women's development in the fishery sector.
- Lastly, efforts to organize women into collectives are slowed down because of inadequate knowledge on formation of cooperatives, poor leadership skills, little awareness of the importance of collectives, inaccessibility of establishment guidelines for cooperatives as well as lack of capacity-building programs to support women's initiatives. However, the situation in rural fishing communities is worse than in urban. For instance, the study team identified more than three fishworkers' groups at Kirumba Fish Market, Mwanza, each with a membership of seventy-six people. The situation was different in Lushonga Island where there is only one women's group with eight members.

6. Strategies to improve the situation for women in fisheries

- The Government of Tanzania is gender sensitive in all its sectors. It has established different regulatory frameworks including those governing the fishery sector. Such frameworks have given priority to women. The Fisheries Policy of 2015 has defined various challenges facing women working in the fishery sector and it provides different mechanisms for supporting women working in this sector.
- Different government and private institutions have been implementing various programs for capacitating women working in the fisheries. For instance, a trade and agricultural support project was implemented by a number of actors including the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MALF) which identified a number of women in fisheries, capacitated them especially in processing and packaging. It also facilitated their participation in different national exhibitions of business.
- Women themselves are undertaking various initiatives to work out their problems and meet the challenges they face. The best way currently is organizing themselves into groups. This will enable them to find capital through establishing savings and lending schemes in their collectives.

7. Recommendations and Conclusion

A number of recommendations have come out of this study from both women and men and are presented below for consideration.

- Instituting and capacitating women groups: Women working in the fishery sector play an important role in ensuring food security, nutrition and improving national economy. Some are working individually while others (very few) are already in collectives. Those working in collectives have evidenced performing better and other women are being inspired to go into groups but the challenge is how to do it. This study calls for actors to support women who are working in the fishery sector to form groups and build their capacity, especially on business management and enterprise development.
- Organization of trade fairs coupled with workshops/conferences: This should be done and women's participation ensured. This will enhance access and sharing of information and facilitate business in the region. Dagua is the key product in the Lake Victoria

region diet. Thus, a women's national platform of dagaa processors could be an avenue to encourage steps towards a more integrated and focused trade development environment. Environmental Management and Economic Development Organization (EMEDO) could be a facilitator of such fairs for a couple of years by finding an appropriate location for such events to be held, contacting a wide range of companies/individuals involved in fish production and trading.

- Facilitation of women tours to more advanced processors: Women working in the fisheries, especially the processors, need more investment as processing is the most critical activity in the whole value chain. This is where either value is gained or lost. Taking them to visit different markets for learning market demands would inspire them to improve fish quality, since the better quality product would attract better price in the market. However, as people love to learn practically, exposing women to advanced fish processors would be ideal for them to learn and practise better techniques for higher quality processing of fish.
- Product Information: The nutritional value of dagaa has been studied well and shows that the product is of high quality for humans and animals. The fact that the fish is eaten as a whole, including eyes, viscera and brains, actually supplies an increased amount of micro elements and vitamins to the body. It is, therefore, a very valuable source of nutritional food. Unfortunately, this knowledge has not reached the general population. Making this information available to the people is an indirect way of assisting women by increasing market demand of the fish product processed and traded by a woman. <https://www.icsf.net/en/cds-videos.html>

ICSF Occasional Paper

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ICSF is an international NGO working on issues that concern fishworkers the world over. It is in status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN and is on ILO's Special List of Non-Governmental International Organizations. It also has Liaison Status with FAO. As a global network of community organizers, teachers, technicians, researchers and scientists, ICSF's activities encompass monitoring and research, exchange and training, campaigns and action, as well as communications.

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