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Yemaya

ICSF'S NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

ICSF

30 Years in Support of Small-scale Fishworkers

From the Editor

If the contextually relevant implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines) is a challenge facing the small-scale fisheries sector, an even bigger challenge is the gender equitable implementation of the SSF Guidelines. For women in the sector, this will involve struggling at two levels: one, at the level of the household and the community, and the second, at the level of the State and other stakeholders.

The home and the community, often sources of much needed strength and support for women, are also sites where women encounter the most crippling barriers to progress. Hidebound, patriarchal customs, beliefs and practices serve to keep women in their so-called place, away from autonomy, decision making and leadership, tied to invisible, underpaid and undervalued roles. Customary laws often deny women the right to step outside predetermined and restrictive boundaries, and as the articles from Africa in this issue demonstrate, the male leadership in community organizations is often the first obstacle to women's participation in community affairs and decision making.

However, the obstacles to women's progress in fisheries go far beyond the level of home and community. They are usually embedded in complex societal arrangements of laws, rights and entitlements that serve to privilege men simply by treating women's lives and work as invisible, whether it is the running of fishing households including—taking care of children, the sick and the elderly—or the whole range of pre-harvest, harvest and also post-harvest roles that women perform. The denial of their human rights is a basic everyday reality for women in small-scale fisheries.

The struggle for recognition of women's roles within the fish value chain is particularly important today as states and international institutions turn their attention to the question of implementation of the SSF Guidelines. This is a historic opportunity for women to make their voices and demands heard. However, democratic and gender equitable forms of community representation are a precondition if gender concerns are to find due space in dialogues on implementation. As Micheline Dion of African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional Organizations (CAOPA) has observed, "Non-elected, non-representative organizations which sometimes claim to speak on behalf of coastal communities, have a disproportionate influence on the decision making process. It is very important to be able to change this situation. It is also vital for women in the artisanal fisheries sector to participate actively in decision making processes. Women's legitimacy as professionals should be recognized by policy makers and professional organizations alike."

Women's struggles for gender justice are deeply linked to community struggles for survival and space. The article from Côte D'Ivoire shows how declining fish stocks and fisher incomes are playing havoc with the sustainability of the small-scale fisheries, and how unless regulatory mechanisms to protect the artisanal fisheries are urgently instituted, the future of small-scale fishers is rather bleak. In this context, it is vital for decision makers to appreciate the role of women in small-scale fisheries towards strengthening the local economy, local food security, the future sustainability of the sector, and even the broader struggle for the survival of this planet against the ravages of climate change.

Sustainability through unity

On World Fisheries Day, CAOPA vowed to promote sustainable fisheries through strong artisanal fishing organizations in Africa

By **Béatrice Gorez** (cffa.cape@gmail.com), Coordinator, Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA)

On 21 November 2016, hundreds of men and women from 16 African countries gathered in Lomé, Togo, to celebrate World Fisheries Day, an event organized every year for the last six years by the African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Professional Organizations (CAOPA). This year, the occasion also saw CAOPA hold its second General Assembly, renewing its board comprising four women and four men, to lead the organization for the next three years.

Togo was no random choice. Some months ago, a team consisting of members from CAOPA and the West African Journalists Network for Responsible Fisheries (REJOPRAO) went there in connection with a report that was published in January 2016, titled 'Voices from African Artisanal Fisheries'. In Lomé, a new autonomous port had been built without any consultations with fishing communities. The port had eaten into a large part of the fish landing and processing sites. Pirogues lay piled up one on top of another, waves destroying them as they collided. To avoid dangerous encounters with the continuous flow of commercial vessels passing in and out of the autonomous port, fishers had been forbidden from accessing their traditional fishing zones.

CAOPA

On 21 November 2016, hundreds of men and women from 16 African countries gathered in Lomé, Togo, to celebrate World Fisheries Day

The team that met with Togolese artisanal fishing communities encountered a sense of despair, a sense of being forgotten by those who were deciding their futures. The leaders among the fishermen spent much time squabbling with and contradicting each other. Men in fishing organizations seemed annoyed to hear women expressing themselves. "These women, they are going to spoil it all!" said one fisherman, a leader who couldn't understand why women fish processors were being allowed to speak at all in these meetings.

For the 2016 World Fisheries Day Conference, which was on the theme 'Strong artisanal fishing organizations for sustainable fisheries', Togo therefore was the right choice.

CAOPA's member organizations too are plagued with issues: the lack of information sharing among fishing organizations, the lack of solidarity, issues related to representation, leadership, internal transparency and governance, and women's low participation in professional organizations being some. In the words of Micheline Dion, in charge of CAOPA women's programme: "Non-elected, non-representative organizations which sometimes claim to speak on behalf of coastal communities, have a disproportionate influence on the decision making process. It is very important to be able to change this situation. It is also vital that women active in the artisanal fisheries sector can participate in decision making processes. Women's legitimacy as professionals should be recognized by policy makers and professional organizations alike."

To address these issues, the CAOPA at its General Assembly adopted, as part of its strategic plan for the period 2017-2021, a specific programme of support for the organization of its members at national level. Gaoussou Gueye, the newly elected president of CAOPA explained: "The objective is for CAOPA to facilitate an inclusive dialogue between all *bona fide* local professional organizations of fishworkers, men and women equally, so that, at the end of the day, they put together a single transparent, democratic, nationwide platform which can become a credible and representative interlocutor for the decision makers."

With opportunities for dialogue increasingly opening up at the national, continental and international level, strong organizations are needed now more than ever before. As CAOPA members said in a statement released on the occasion: "The greatest recognition of the importance of the artisanal fisheries has been obtained

through the adoption, in 2014, after a participatory process, of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Alleviation (VGSSSF)."

The statement also endorsed the proposal issued by the FAO regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean at the 32nd Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) to establish an 'International Year of Artisanal Fisheries' in order to promote the implementation of the VGSSF. In that context, CAOPA called on African states to promote this initiative, including through the development, in a participatory manner, of national action plans aimed at the implementation of the VGSSF.

CAOPA welcomed the African Union reform strategy for fisheries and aquaculture which identifies sustainable artisanal fisheries as a key component of the economy, and is committed to strengthening the contribution of artisanal fisheries to poverty reduction, food security and nutrition. CAOPA also took a favourable view of the recent initiative of the African Union to create a structure for consultations for the harmonization of policy inputs from African stakeholders into the reform strategy, seeing it as a platform for artisanal fishing professionals to make themselves heard.

A major rising concern identified in the discussions was the threat posed to African artisanal fisheries from other competitive uses of the coast, including seabed mining, drilling for oil and gas, mass tourism, and maritime traffic.There are also renewed pressures on all African coasts from industrial fishing companies based in foreign countries, through chartering arrangements, fishing agreements and joint ventures. "The opaque management of these arrangements does not present any guarantee, either in terms of social and economic benefits expected by our countries, or in terms of contributing to the sustainable exploitation of our resources and respect for eco-systems," insisted Antonia Adama Djalo, vice president of CAOPA, and president of a women fish processors cooperative in Guinea Bissau.

Antonia initiated discussion on this topic through a presentation on foreign fishing presence in West Africa. "There is no transparency whatsoever about the activities of fishing boats from China, Russia and Korea in our waters. From the fishing agreements, we have some information on the role of the European Union (EU), but the EU is also present in our water through joint ventures, about which we have no information," she said. In Antonia's view, foreign trawlers in coastal areas represented competition over fish with the artisanal sector, and incursions of trawlers in the coastal zone meant accidents with traditional pirogues and the destruction of the coastal environment.

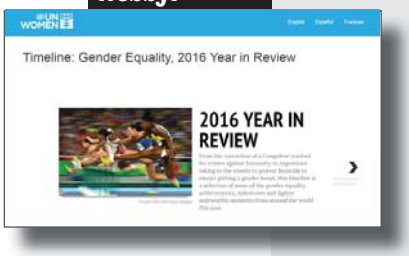
Women also suffer in this situation. Their fish supply from artisanal fishers dries up. Accidents often leave them the sole person in charge of their families. "Our governments focus more on the needs of these fleets rather than on the needs of the artisanal sector," added Antonia.

CAOPA members are today demanding that all access arrangements with fleets from China, the EU, Russia, Korea and other nations be renegotiated, taking full account of the needs of local fishing communities.

Plans were also made at the meeting for the next International Women in Fisheries Day to be held on 8 March 2017, in Uganda. Like the event in 2016, organized jointly by CAOPA and the African Union, which brought together women in artisanal fisheries from 47 African countries, the International Women in Fisheries Day in Uganda will serve as a vehicle to raise awareness about the rights and roles of women in artisanal fisheries.

Women's legitimacy as professionals should be recognized by policy makers and professional organizations alike

What's New, Webby?



By **Ramya Rajagopalan** (ramya.rajagopalan@gmail.com), Programme Associate, ICSF

Timeline: Gender Equality, 2016 Year in Review

From the conviction of a Congolese warlord for crimes against humanity, to Argentines, taking to the streets to protest femicide to, emojis getting a gender boost, this timeline is a selection of some of the gender equality achievements, milestones and lighter noteworthy moments from around the world in 2016.

The issues covered are diverse: childbrides in Zimbabwe whose legal action led a countrywide, ban on child marriage; women taking the drivers seat literally! As pilots and bus drivers in Brunei and India.

The issues highlight the remarkable progress women are making in various spheres, thus gradually changing the status quo towards more gender equality.

http://interactive.unwomen.org/multimedia/timeline/yearinreview/2016/en/index.html

Independent and happy

This article describes the life and work of a woman fish smoker in Ireland's artisanal fishery

Adapted from an account by **Sally Barnes** (sally@woodcocks mokery.com) at www.woodcocksmokery.com

Sally Barnes runs an artisanal fish smoking business in a coastal town in West Cork in southern Ireland. The Woodcock Smokery, Sally's enterprise, has an enviable reputation, winning prestigious awards over almost 40 years. But now, after all these years, since the cold of the workshop is making her hands ache some nights, Sally is toying with the idea of selling her business, and moving to sharing what she knows with others. It's okay to dream, Sally tells herself.

Although she is single now, Sally used to be married to an inshore fisherman. They had two children. Like many fisher wives, Sally, for all practical purposes, was a 'single parent' to the children, the 'at home' wife assisting with the fishing business, finding buyers, ordering parts, running the household, with never enough cash to manage expenditure. Her ex-husband tried different kinds of fishing: tangle nets inshore for spiny lobsters, turbot, and other whitefish, salmon, and nephrops prawns. For some years, he helped establish an offshore fishery for hake, travelling up to 80 km out from the shore.

While the family had the freshest fish (though prices were poor), they were too far from urban life for Sally to find employment. In any case, the demands of domestic work made leaving home impossible. Then, Sally and her husband incurred a bad debt—a client didn't pay for their wild salmon. After two years of waiting, they were forced to take him to court. The man offered them a smoking kiln as part payment.

WWW.WOODCOCKSMOKERY.COM

Sally Barnes runs an artisanal fish smoking business. Through the smoking business, she added value to her husband's catches and increased the family income

After much trial and error, Sally taught herself to use the kiln and began selling the products. Some help came from the government towards the costs for refurbishing a shed for fish processing. Sally took a loan to invest in certain assets: a chill-room, a vacuum-packing machine, sinks and tables. She borrowed again to buy stocks for smoking. Through the smoking business, Sally added value to her husband's catches and increased the family income. During many winters, it was the sole income—for example, when bad weather made fishing impossible.

Slowly, Sally gained a sense of financial independence. She enrolled at the Open University and took courses in food production and oceanography. She had already instinctively developed methodologies to increase the shelf life of fish, a highly perishable commodity, and these courses augmented the knowledge she gained. By nature, Sally was a 'sustainable' entrepreneur, buying not too much but just enough fish to keep busy and enjoy a good life.

One year, a friend introduced Sally to AKTEA (European Women in Fisheries Network). Soon she began participating in AKTEA events, meeting women who were truly inspirational. Some had lived and worked in remote coastal communities just like she had. These women gave her enormous encouragement in her personal and business life. She realized that she was not alone in her desire to see women's lives, as partners or wives of fishermen, improve, and be acknowledged as vital components in the whole fishing enterprise.

Today, as a member of the Artisan Working Group in Ireland, Sally regularly meets the Food Safety Authority in Dublin to discuss regulatory changes that may affect the local artisan sector, which employs many self-employed women. Says Sally, "Big Business tends to be well-represented at the EU level but small artisans are not. The implications for all our foods and how they are prepared, and good health in human populations, must not be allowed to rest in the hands of huge businesses. Artisans are more concerned with integrity and clean food, which we are proud to put on our own tables. A little profit for our efforts is not the sole reason for engaging in this work. But it helps!"

Some years ago, one of Sally's customers, who was going to the food festival Salone del Gusto, organized in Italy by Slow Food, invited Sally to come along too. This was the

start of a long enchantment with Slow Food, and Slow Fish in particular. Despite the occasional blip, the relationship with Slow Food has been extremely rewarding.

Among Sally's many interests is a deep love for knowledge—both learning new things and teaching what she knows. For many years, interns from Slow Food's University of Gastronomic Sciences have been coming to Sally to learn about preserving fish proteins with salt and smoke, and other aspects of the science behind fish processing.

The involvement with Slow Food led Sally to meet a person named Kamal Mouzawak, who was responsible for initiating the first 'Farmer's Market' in Beirut, Lebanon, in 2005. Through this effort, local producers were able to reach the urban consumer who was eager to find good, clean and fair priced foods. Every day, rural women would come to the city to prepare traditional Lebanese dishes for customers who had signed up for lunch. Based on traditional recipes, these dishes varied from one village to the next. Through several restaurants set up over the years, women in war-torn Lebanon were being able to earn their own incomes.

Kamal Mouzawak invited Sally to visit his country, and so, in 2014, along with two chef friends, Sally travelled to Beirut to demonstrate artisanal fish-smoking to three groups of women, primarily war-widows from Tripoli in Northern Lebanon and refugees from Syria. The women studied all aspects of food production, food safety, pricing and costing, with the ultimate goal of making and selling nutritious foods available to consumers. The relationship with the Lebanese women however didn't start off quite as smoothly as Sally had desired.

The demonstration began with Kamal Mouzawak describing what Sally's session would involve. The moment he mentioned that the fish would be cooked in smoke, every single woman turned and walked away! Probably, they thought that the foreigner was planning to burn all the flavour out of their fine fish. Although alarmed at losing her audience so quickly, Sally continued her preparations, and soon, when the fish was smoke-cooked, Kamal invited the women for a taste. The fish disappeared so fast that Sally herself didn't get a chance to try any. Afterwards, the women expressed their appreciation through a moving ululation, which brought tears of joy to her eyes.

Sally believes she has led a full life and has everything she requires: "I have a roof over my head, food in my belly, a dry and safe bed, and clean water to drink. What else does anybody truly need?" If there's anything she looks forward to, it is the opportunity to teach fisherwomen around the world how to make fish last longer and taste delicious at the same time. Says Sally, "This will take the pressure off having to sell fresh fish as rapidly as possible, sometimes even at low prices, if necessary, before it spoils, and it will allow homemakers to gain some financial independence as well!"

If there's anything Sally looks forward to, it is the opportunity to teach fisherwomen around the world how to make fish last longer and taste delicious at the same time

Milestones

By **Ramya Rajagopalan** (ramya.rajagopalan@gmail.com), Programme Associate, ICSF

A cultural heritage—women divers of Jeju Island

Earlier issues of Yemaya have carried stories about the remarkable women divers (*haenyeo)* of Jeju Island—see, for example, Yemaya Issue 35. Recently, a milestone occurred in the lives of *haenyeo*, when the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) inscribed *haenyeo* culture onto the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Jeju Island, off the southern coast of mainland Korea, is a volcanic island with a population of about 600,000 people, famous for its community of *haenyeo*, some in their 80s, who dive underwater without the use of oxygen masks to gather shellfish, such as abalone or sea urchins. During the 90 days of the year when harvest is available, these women work for up to seven hours a day, holding their breath for up to one minute as they dive and making a unique sound, called *sumbi-sori*, as they surface. Based on their level of experience, divers are categorized into three groups, with the most experienced, the *sanggun*, guiding the others.

There are about 4,500 such *haenyeo* on Jeju Island who are part of *haenyeohoe* (organizations), which in turn are affiliated with village fishery cooperatives. These bodies jointly petitioned the Jeju Provincial government seeking formal recognition of the Jeju *haenyeo* culture.

The provincial government deemed that not only did the culture of Jeju *haenyeo* represent the island's character and people's spirit, it also contributed to the advancement of women's status and promoted environmental sustainability and community involvement in the management of fishing practices. The Jeju provincial government has undertaken several comprehensive measures to safeguard this culture.

The decision to include it in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity was taken at the 11th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage that met in Addis Ababa, from 28 November to 2 December 2016.

An uphill task

AKTEA's presentations at a recent symposium highlight the challenges that women in Europe's small-scale fisheries face

By **Marja Bekendam de Boer** (info@hoekman-bekendam.nl), Chair of AKTEA and **Katia Frangoudes** (Katia.Frangoudes@univ-brest.fr), ICSF member

The Institute of Social and Political Sciences of the University of La Laguna in Spain in association with the GOBAMP2 Project and the Too Big To Ignore (TBTI) partnership, organized a symposium on 'European Small-scale Fisheries and Global Linkages' at Tenerife in Spain from 29 June to 1 July 2016. The purpose of the symposium was to discuss issues affecting the sustainability of small-scale fisheries (SSF) in Europe and explore linkages to global SSF, especially through markets and stewardship efforts.

Seventy scientists, students, fishers and managers participated at the symposium. They discussed wide-ranging issues of relevance to SSF in Europe. Needless to say, gender equality in European SSF was also part of the discussion. Marja Bekendam, Chair of AKTEA, the European network of women's organizations in fisheries and aquaculture, highlighted the importance of women's contribution in small-scale fisheries.

The AKTEA network was started in 2006 in Ancona in Italy. Its name derives from the goddess of Hellenic mythology symbolizing the shore, which is the source of fisheries-based livelihood for European women in SSF. The group emerged out of a process of deliberations held in transnational meetings by fisherwomen from different European countries. AKTEA has several aims: for women's roles in fisheries to be visible and recognized; for employment statistics in the fisheries to reflect gender; for women to have access to decision making on fishery management and coastal development; for enhanced visibility of coastal and inland fishing communities and women's contributions to these communities, and for greater exchange of experiences and sharing of knowledge.

AKTEA is a voluntary network. This is true of most organizations of fisherwomen in Europe except for a few notable exceptions. In Spain, for example, the Spanish Network of Women in Fisheries, a network of fisherwomen, women shellfish gatherers and organizations supporting women in fisheries, was created by the Secretariat of Fisheries in 2010. Another example is that of Estrela do Mare, the Portuguese network of women fish harvesters, small-scale fish sellers and wives of fishers, which functioned on an informal basis for many years before gaining legal recognition in 2014.

Women in Europe's fisheries and aquaculture undertake mainly activities on the shore. Their tasks are multiple, from net mending to shellfish gathering and administrative work. In family-based fisheries enterprises, women play an important role that is undervalued and under recognized. Fisherwomen in Europe today are advocates for the social aspects of fisheries, and for their own rights. Some of them play an important role in resource management by participating in the advisory councils for fisheries regional management. European and national authorities have stated that they consider women as being more open-minded than men on critical issues concerning fisheries.

At the Tenerife symposium, Carmen Serrano Soller, a member of AKTEA, made a presentation on a fisherwomen's group named Thyrius in Valencia, Spain. The group members had for several years struggled against a patriarchal custom whereby local fishing rights passed down the male line. Though several court decisions were made in favour of the women's group, fishermen's associations still refused women the right to fish. A January 2008 ruling of the court in Valencia finally forced the fishermen's organization to allow women fishing rights. But women found that eel, the most important fish species in the Laguna, had disappeared due to overfishing. Women of the community are now conducting a campaign for the revitalization of the local lake through a restocking programme. But they still have an uphill task to get their ideas accepted by the local fishermen.

The story of the women fishers of Valencia demonstrates the difficulties women experience in the face of patriarchy. Even when women have submitted proposals for sustainable fishing for community benefit, these tend to be ignored. It is important that the experiences of these fisherwomen are given space, and also, are heard by other communities of fishers.

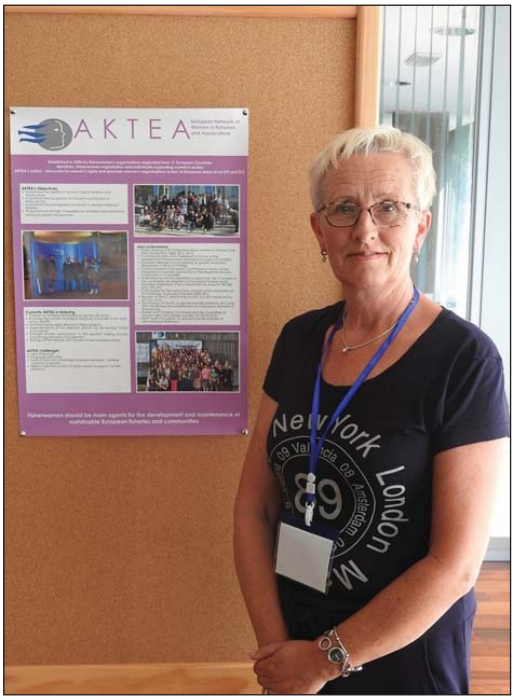
At the symposium, a presentation made by Yesmina Mascarell, an independent researcher, highlighted the role of female ship owners in Valencian Mediterranean coastal communities. Women in the Valencian *confraries* (fisher's artisanal associations) are invisible in the public space in terms of access

to power, property and decision making as well as in terms of their work, which is largely unpaid—areas where the cultural and social exclusion of women is more noticeable.

In the area studied, around 275 women are part owners with their husbands or other relatives and only a few of them (less than six per cent) are sole owners. They bear the main responsibility of running the family business. Nevertheless, their work as ship and crew managers is still unpaid, unreported, and is not regarded as contributing to the Marine Social Security, and, thus, without retirement rights. Moreover, their presence at decision and power positions is still very low; women make up only a small percentage of the members of fisheries' organizations and their management board teams.

During the TBTI symposium, members of AKTEA met with the newly established SSF organization called LIFE (Low Impact Fisheries in Europe). The aim of LIFE is to provide a clear and coherent voice at the European Union level for the largely silent majority of European fishers, who operate on a small scale and who use low impact fishing gears and methods but have historically lacked dedicated and effective representation in Brussels and at the level of Member States.

AKTEA



Women in the Valencian *confraries* are invisible in the public space in terms of access to power and property

AKTEA members asked LIFE to extend support to actions by fisherwomen. The contribution of the authors of this piece towards building the bond between AKTEA and LIFE was acknowledged.

In family-based fisheries enterprises, women play an important role that is undervalued and under-recognized

AFRICA **TANZANIA**

Study time

A study tour allows a group of women in Tanzania's post-harvest fisheries to visit and learn from their counterparts in Kenya

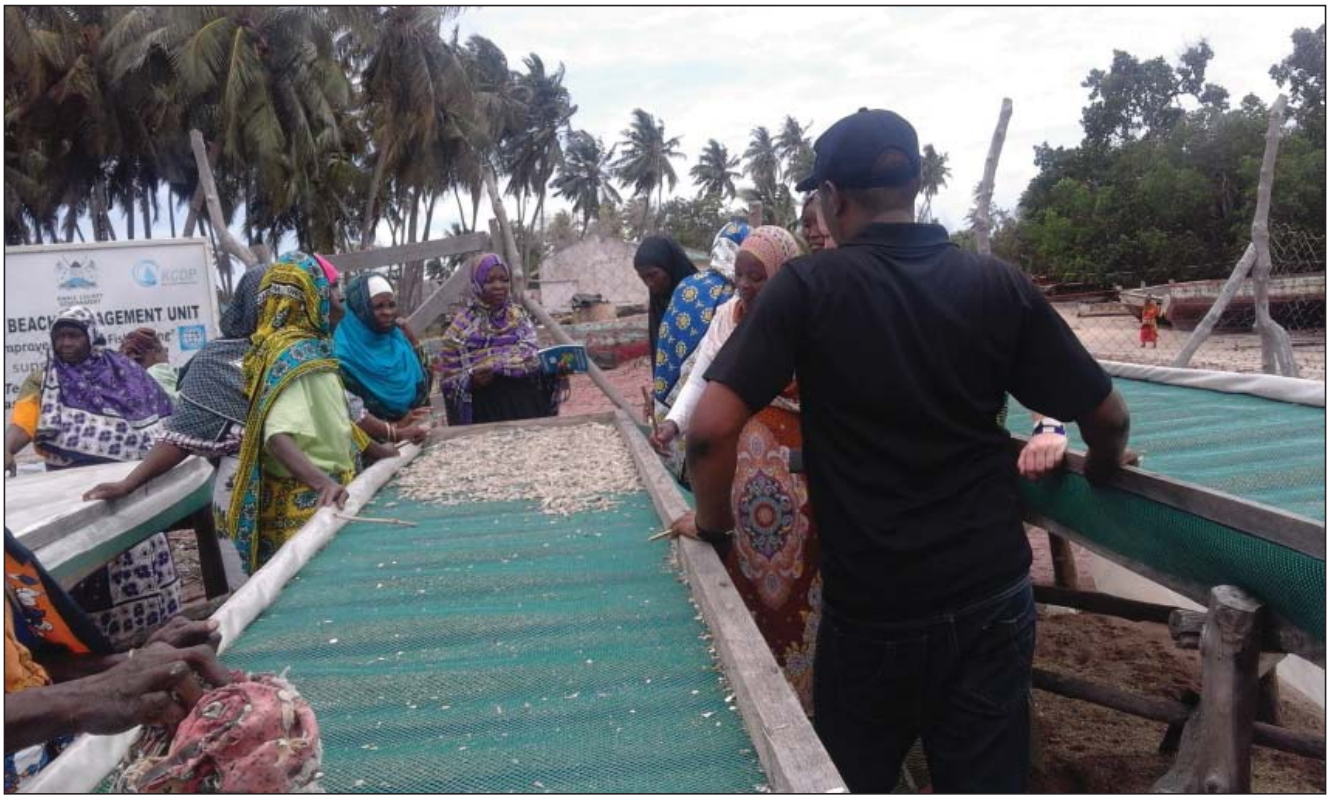
By **Ali Thani** (alythani@mwambao.or.tz), and **Lorna Slade** (lornaslade@mwambao.or.tz), Mwambao Coastal Community Network, Tanzania

Lack of education and a lack of skills: these were the two issues that, in a workshop organized by the Mwambao Coastal Community Network in Tanzania back in 2015, women coastal East Africa had identified as the main barriers to value addition in post-harvest fisheries.

A year later, in order to address these challenges, Mwambao, which is a network linking coastal communities and other stakeholders in Tanzania, with support from the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), organized a study tour for women from nine districts in Tanzania—three from Zanzibar and the rest from mainland Tanzania. Accompanied by two facilitators from Mwambao and aided by the Kenyan NGO Community Action for Nature Conservation (CANCO), this group made a trip to Kenya in November 2016 to improve their knowledge on techniques of post-harvest value addition as well as marketing strategies, visiting the Kenyan fishing communities of Jimbo and Kiruwitu as well as the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KEMFRI).

The group of women first visited the coastal town of Jimbo, where members of the Jimbo Community Conservation Project (JCCP) first made a presentation on their conservation efforts, and then, demonstrated the methods and materials they used for processing anchovies (known locally as *dagaa*), including sorting, cleaning, boiling and drying of the fish. A number of differences between the methods used in Tanzania and Kenya were observed. The participants felt that in Kenya, higher quality materials and better techniques were used, such as net-like plastic sheets for storing hand-picked anchovies ready for boiling. Following these discussions, the group visited the Jimbo community fish landing site, to see the different boats used by the community and the Beach Management Unit (BMU) for patrols, fishing and any potential emergencies. The Tanzanians were particularly impressed by the strong collaboration between

ALI THANI



The study tour taught the participants many valuable lessons: methods for improved post-harvest processing, the use of superior materials such as solar power instead of kerosene lamps,

the BMU and the community, evidenced, for example, by a fish market that is managed by the BMU.

Next, the participants visited the KEMFRI where they were shown current technological innovations designed to help communities improve fisheries activities such as fishing, marine-resources management and post-harvest processing. The participants were told about the operation and use of solar driers for processing, and also participated in classroom activities led by KEMFRI staff.

The group next visited the Kiruwitu Community Marine Conservation Project (KCMCP). Over the last ten years, with support from CANCO, the KCMCP has successfully implemented a range of conservation measures for coral reef ecosystems and sea turtles, conservation awareness, ecotourism and fish trading. Of particular interest was a successful community fish marketing initiative, with a direct market chain connecting, by air, the village to supermarkets and hotels in Nairobi. The market chain was facilitated by certain private companies who contributed finances and other forms of support to set it up. The success story of the KCMCP provided valuable insight into potential income generation opportunities.

Since the National Women's Fisheries Conference was just round the corner, CANCO invited the group to extend their stay by two days to be able to participate in the event. Held on 19 - 20 November 2016, the conference was a forum to explore and discuss commonly shared challenges and issues faced by women in the small-scale fisheries sector. Attending the conference, the group found that the issues they faced in Tanzania were, in reality, being faced by women in other countries as well. Common challenges included harassment of women, poor governance, lack of respect for women leaders and limited overall knowledge about post-harvesting techniques.

The following day—21 November—the group participated in the World Fisheries Day celebrations, organized by CANCO with support from the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC). The event was held in Tsunza village in Kwala County of Mombasa, and attracted hundreds of members of nearby communities. It was attended by political leaders and government officials, including the Assistant Director of Fisheries and the representatives of the Blue Economy. Here too, participants discussed challenges faced by coastal communities in managing and accessing marine natural resources. Limited consultations with local communities, the lack of transparency related to large development projects, such as ports, railways and roads, and the challenges posed by the loss of fishing grounds were also discussed. The event included competitions and speeches, and the Tanzanian women had the opportunity to participate in mangrove planting.

The study tour taught the participants many valuable lessons: methods for improved post-harvest processing, the use of superior materials such as solar power instead of kerosene lamps, the role of the fisheries sector in community development and education, increased participation of women in all fisheries activities as well as successful collaboration between communities, including BMUs, and private companies for conservation and income generation.

While the Kenyan and Tanzanian communities both identified many shared challenges—acknowledging these in fact as challenges facing small-scale fishing communities throughout most of the Global South—the visit allowed a rich exchange of knowledge and solutions. In addition to the improved anchovy processing methods they witnessed, the Kenyan communities were also impressed by the Village Community Banks (VICOBA) set up for improved livelihood development of Kenya's fishing communities. As the study tour concluded, the Kenyan hosts expressed their hopes of being able to conduct a return exchange visit, with Kenyan participants travelling south of the border to learn from their Tanzanian neighbours.

Small-scale fishers, particularly women, continue to face significant social, economic and political challenges. Under the circumstances, such initiatives offer valuable opportunities to share knowledge, to look for common solutions, and to strengthen rights and livelihoods.

The visit allowed a rich exchange of knowledge and solutions.

PROFILE

Gilda Olivia Rojas Bermudez: In defence of rights and culture

Garifuna women are quick to defend their rights and their value as women...

By **Vivienne Solis** (vsolis@coopesolidar.org), Member, ICSF

One of the participants in the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP 13) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Mexico in December 2016 was Gilda Olivia Rojas Bermudez. Although participating in a conference of this sort was a first-time experience for her, the idea of biodiversity was not. In fact, you could say that respecting biodiversity is second nature to Gilda.

Born in Livingstone, Guatemala, Gilda was orphaned as a child and brought up by her grandmother. Her grandfather, a fisherman who was part of a group of fishers belonging to the Garífuna community, worked on a big canoe owned by Gilda's maternal grandfather. In those days, a *cayuco* or traditional fishing boat used to be made out of wood and not fibre like today's boats are.

Gilda recalls that her granduncle, who owned the boat, would bring bread and coffee for the fishermen who worked for him. Every morning at four, a group of eight to ten fishermen would set out to fish after a cup of coffee, carrying food and gear for the trip in their backpacks. They would return in the afternoon, around 2 pm, with the morning's catch. Says Gilda, "Garífuna fishermen fish only as much as they need, and only during the morning hours, never after that. They respect the sea and know that, just like they do, the sea also needs to rest and replenish itself."

The Garífuna fishermen know their reefs. They do not need GPS systems. Instead, they do what they have been doing for generations—using various points on the coast as markers to find the locations they need. "The Garífuna fisherman is a responsible fisherman. If his net traps a small fish, he will release it so that it can continue to grow", says Gilda, adding however that things are beginning to change. Trawling boats have arrived and their dragnets trap everything, even the smallest fish.

Gilda continues to describe the daily life of her people. "When the men return with the morning's catch," she says, "the women are waiting to take the fish and sell it from door to door, or to restaurants, or in the streets."

Women in Garífuna culture play an important role. Earlier, says Gilda, they used to be dominated by their husbands. Not any more. Today, Garífuna women are quick to defend their rights and their value as women.

Only one of Gilda's grandmothers learned to read. During her time, this was a rare privilege. Today things have changed. Garífuna women are getting educated, and some even work as lawyers, teachers and doctors.

For Gilda, the Convention on Biological Diversity was an opportunity to meet women from different parts of the world. She believes that more fishers from the Garífuna community should attend such conferences. They have been taking care of the sea for a long time and would be able to contribute richly to such gatherings.

Anjali: Woman of the waters

A moving account of the life, the struggles and the indomitable spirit of a woman fisher from West Bengal, India

By **Sujoy Jana** (sujoykh@gmail.com), Member, Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum (West Bengal Fishworkers Forum); translated into English from Bengali by **Santanu Chacraverti** (s.chacraverti@gmail.com), Freelance researcher, consultant, and social worker

Baaisha's bridge!

'Baaish' in Bengali—the language of West Bengal on India's eastern coast—means 'twenty-two'. Baaisha's bridge got its name from its 22 piers. Located not far from Mandarmani, a seaside resort in West Bengal, the bridge spans a stream that flows even in the driest months. If you come here one day and, standing on the bridge, look seaward, I can wager you will experience a rush of well-being. You will see the stream serenely meandering down to the sea, silvery fish ponds lining its banks. You will see flocks of migratory birds and fishers with small nets adrift on their dinghies. You will probably also see a woman in her mid 40s easing down the sharp slope of canal into her dinghy. Alone. Wearing a headband. Dark and daring. Supple as steel. With what ease she rides the tide, casts her net, and manoeuvres her dinghy through the treacherous eddies! Be it the dry summer or the pouring rains, she hunts for fish, as day passes into night and night into day.

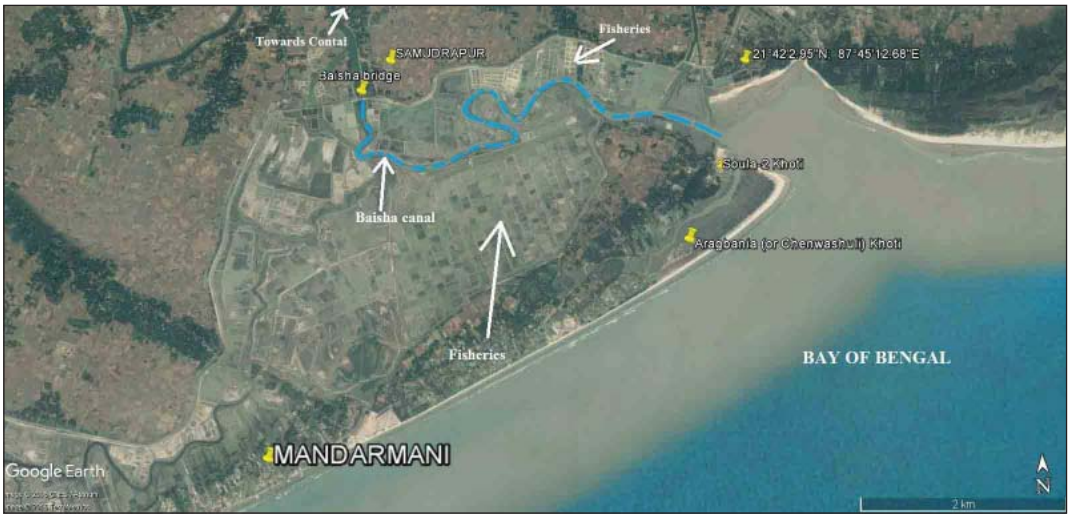
This is Anjali Bar. She dwells at a stone's throw from the canal in a small hut besides the sea-dyke. Anjali is a fisher. Her days and nights are spent in mud and water—hunting for small local varieties of fish like *parshe* (Goldspot Mullet), *tangra* (a local catfish), and *gule* (mudskipper). Then, after ten to twelve hours of hard labour and with luck, one or two kilos of fish in hand, she hastens to the Satmile market 12 km away. This gruelling toil to feed her family never ends. Anjali knows the Baaisha area as intimately as the contours of her palm. And they all know her—the angry eddies in Baaisha's canal and the swift swirls where the stream meets the sea. For, none dares them with such disdain as Anjali in her 12 ft *pauki* (dinghy).

Anjali was born in April 1971, in a poor fisher family. Her father was Haripada Bar and her mother Sandhyarani. They were residents of Samudrapur village, not far from Baaisha's bridge. Anjali was the first child of this poor couple. Her childhood was one of energetic activity and scuffles with her peers. When the little girl swung from one prop root of the banyan tree to another and leapt into Baaisha's canal, swam against the current and ran laughing up the bank, the elders were impressed. True, people often frowned when she took her tiny siblings far across fields and meadows. But, nobody was really worried. They had faith in this daring yet responsible youngster. She would not let any harm befall the younger ones.

Anjali could make it only to Class Two in her village school. How could she study any further? Poverty stood in the way. How could she afford books? Even a change of clothes was hard to come by. Her mother was ill and it was left to Anjali to take care of her siblings. Her father was a wage labourer at the gigantic drag shore seines. He could come home perhaps once a week. Sometimes he would cast his *beundi* (bag net) in Baaisha's canal hoping for a substantial catch. But, his was a household with eight mouths to feed. The ceaseless toil was telling on him. Haripada's health deteriorated. When Anjali was ten, Haripada fell ill with chronic intestinal ailments. The family could not afford a doctor. How could it arrange for a patient's diet, when even a bare meal proved so difficult?

With her father no longer able to work, Anjali tells how at the age of 11, she suddenly realized that she had grown up. No more games for her. No more waiting for the father to bring in food. Anjali decided she had to feed the family. In those days, fish wealth abounded in and around her village Samudrapur. But, catching fish was not easy for Anjali.

SUJOY JANA



Anjali's village Samudrapur, Baisha canal (in light blue), and other places important in Anjali's tale

She had neither appropriate gear, nor was there anyone to assist her. Moreover, getting a fair price for her catch was more difficult for a youngster. The market was far away. Yet, this girl of 11 had lots of courage and strength of will.

The little Anjali could at first use only the easiest nets—the *chhani jal* (small strainer shaped net that even a child can drag along the water to scoop up shrimp and other small fish) and *khyanpa jal* (a still smaller strainer net that one can use to catch crabs and small fish on mudflats). Having got her catch she would run to the market, sell her catch, and buy food for the family. The villagers would wonder at the playful sprite of yesterday who had suddenly become the mainstay of her family.

When Haripada's health improved, he started going down to Soula at the mouth of Baaisha's canal to cast a *beundi* (bag net). And, his eldest daughter would always be there besides him, assisting him at every stage of work. If the local traders refused fair prices, an uncompromising Anjali would go to another market. And to another and yet another. The roads were unpaved. There was no transport. With a basket of fish on her head, by the end of her day, Anjali would easily have walked some 25 km. She would sink to her bed and fall asleep, dead to the world. But, the net fixed in the stream was waiting for her and the rhythm of the tides was in her blood, waking her up in time to pull in the catch at dawn.

In the mid-1980s, the small-scale fishers started using mosquito nets in their *beundi*. The season for these bag nets was from October to February. The catch consisted of small fish and shrimp. These were dried on the beach and sold. Anjali managed to get a spot for her family at the Aragbania *khoti* (community managed fish landing site) quite a distance from her home. The work at the *khoti* required long hours of hard work. Fixing the net, bringing in the catch, spreading it on the sand, applying the broom at intervals, dusting off the sand, putting the dried fish in packets, weighing and storing them—there was no end to the work, and Anjali and her family would stay at the *khoti* throughout the five-month season.

With the coming of the rains and wind from the south, began the season of the drag shore seine. Haripada's health was now much better. With Anjali beside him, he grew bolder. Hitherto, he had been a wage worker at the seines. Now, he procured a loan and partnered with some other fishers to begin his own business. The business thrived. The family's poverty was eased. But Anjali refused to relax. She continued selling fish with her usual vigour. One day, quite suddenly, her father's business suffered a loss. Haripada fell into debt. Anjali now had to work day in and day out to free her father of debt.

She sits on the ground in front of her hut, reminiscing. Staring bleakly into the distance, she says how her life of continuous struggle had not brought her family anything more than a couple of meals a day. She had not even a tiny piece of land or a few saved rupees to call her own.

Haripada may not have succeeded in his relentless battle against poverty but he did succeed in arranging a groom for Anjali—a young man named Atithi Bar who was from a large and moderately well-to-do fisher family. The young sprite of the waters now became a complete housewife. As the eldest daughter-in-law of the family, Anjali took charge of the household.

Five or six years passed by smoothly. Anjali's first daughter was born. Then, gradually, the family began to face economic difficulties. With poverty, discord raised its head in the household. Anjali began to feel unwanted in the domestic turmoil of the larger family. Hurt, she returned to her parental home, bringing her husband and daughter with her. Did she feel that returning to her old haunts, to Baaisha's stream and the sea, would infuse new meaning and direction into her life? Perhaps.

Each day has been a battle to survive.

And she was not disappointed. The familiar landscape, the unending expanse of untamed water, breathed new life into her, brought her hope.

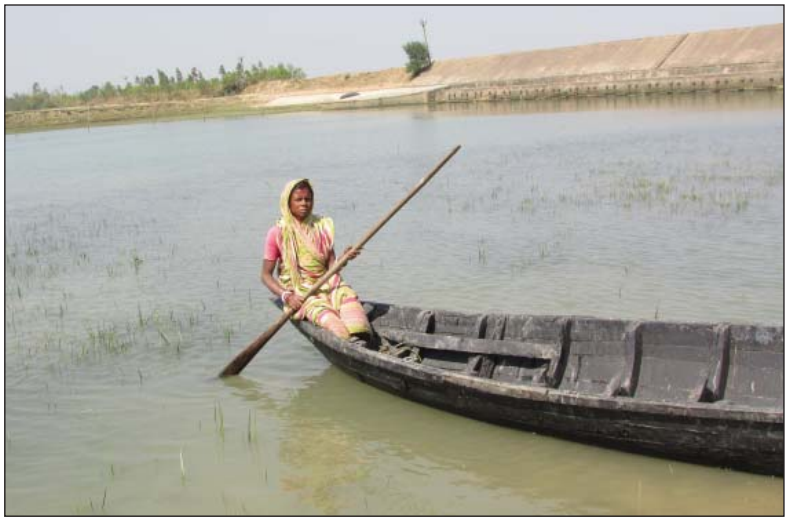
Anjali refused to burden her parents for long. Within a few months, she fixed a new home besides the Baaisha's bridge, at the foot of the sea-dyke. A home for three, built of bamboo and slips, plastered with mud. Anjali had neither boat, nor net. No share in any *khoti*. An uninvited guest on public land, she had little time to brood about her future, present demanded all her attention.

With a tiny girl to care for, Anjali found it difficult to make ends meet. She sent her husband to work as a wage labourer. The quiet and even-tempered Atithi was well-liked. Getting work wasn't too difficult. Slowly things started falling into place.

But, after a time, difficulties resurfaced. Three more children were born, and with their arrival, the needs of the household multiplied. Leaving the children at home, Anjali was forced to take on more work, to assist her husband or take the fish to the market. The earnings were never sufficient. Holes appeared in the roof. The moon shone in; the rain left the floors muddy and the beds soaked.

But, the roof was the least of their concerns. The home itself was at risk. The land belonged to the irrigation department.

SUJOY JANA



Anjali Bar at work. The endless hours on the boat do not bring sustenance. What will happen in the days to come?

There was a constant threat of eviction. Where would they find a place to stay? They have been living here for 20 years. Yet, says Anjali, people in the neighbourhood see them as refugees and outsiders. Anjali uses the land at the foot of the sea-dyke as her yard and the drainage canal along the sea-dyke as her pond. Besides this 'pond', she has planted mango, jackfruit, and tamarind trees. As she looks at her small home amidst this wilderness, she suddenly feels it isn't hers. As if it was a piece of theft. If only she had a roof, a yard to call her own! Never again would she wake up in panic from sleep—terrified of losing her home!

Anjali is a veteran of countless battles. Each day has been a battle to survive. Sometimes the struggle is against nature, sometimes against social processes, at other times against greedy and powerful individuals. On Baaisha's stream, you find nets fixed at an interval of 50 to 100 cubits. The rampant use of mosquito nets has destroyed fish eggs. Toxic effluents from the countless shrimp farms are poisoning the canal. Fish are dying. Anjali is forced to take her dinghy out to the sea. The fishers at the *khotis* refuse to let her fish. There was a time when Anjali would fish along the length of the entire shore. Now, she is no longer permitted. There was a time when the wetland expanses on both sides of Baaisha were open to her. No longer. The *panchayat* (local administrative unit) has leased them out to wealthy individuals. Where would Anjali find the money for a lease?

Anjali also fishes in the upper stretches of the Baaisha canal. During the last eight years, even this has become a problem. There are now nets fixed in the canal belonging to wealthy people from non-fishing communities. The local administration is hand-in-glove with them. Fish can no longer swim freely. The small-mesh nets are destructive of stock. Anjali has protested. She has sought to mobilize opinion against these practices. As a result, she has earned enemies. Sometime back, a fisher, Nanda Jana, had been thrown out from a local fish market by miscreants. Anjali was quick to protest and she was punished for raising her voice. Her goods were thrown out and she too was evicted from the fish market. She has been fighting long and hard to regain her rights to sell fish.

However, the corrupt local administration and local miscreants joined hands to defeat her efforts. Anjali, however, refuses to give up. She sends her husband to vend their fares from village to village.

Anjali became a member of the Medinipur Jela Upokulio Matsya Vendor Union (Medinipur District Coastal Fish Vendors Union) in 2010. The organization has helped her to get a clearer view of her rights. The stories of fishworkers' struggles in other parts of the country have boosted her spirits. She has also found much inspiration in the tales of struggle of the Sundarbans' fishers, particularly of the poorest, fishing from dugout canoes.

Today, Anjali is a leader and comrade of local fishworkers. She has led the struggle in asserting the fishers' rights to the common use of the Baaisha canal. She has been vocal in raising the demands of fish vendors. She represented her organization at the seminar on marine biodiversity and the rights of small-scale fishworkers held in Chennai in 2014. She has also represented her organization at various forums in her state on several occasions.

As the leader of the fish vendors' union, Anjali feels the need for unity and collective action among vendors in her district to put pressure on the government. There have been some gains. But, much more needs to be done.

Anjali's own profession is in peril. Nowadays, even 12 to 13 hours of fishing do not bring enough catch to sustain the family. Using a boat is impossible in the net-clogged Baaisha canal. That is why Anjali is seen walking along abandoned fisheries, looking for molluscs.

Atithi is now a full-time fish vendor. Since the family has little catch of its own, Atithi buys fish from various *khotis*. He sometimes takes his fare from village to village; at other times he finds a place for himself in this market or another.

Once upon a time, the sea had provided for Anjali. Today, Anjali and her husband no longer think of going to the sea. The endless hours on the boat do not bring sustenance. What will happen in the days to come? To her home? Her pond? The trees? What of their claims on her?

Anjali has no answer to such queries. An urge to survive had pushed her to abandon her childhood and take to the sea. Today, the same urge to survive is pushing her away from the livelihood she knows so well.

Will she be able to ignore the pull of the water and the tides? Anjali has no answer.

Fourteen months later...

Anjali's tale was penned down some 14 months ago. Something changed in the meanwhile.

Sometime in May last year, the dreaded day arrived. Anjali's home was dismantled to make way for a road. How could a humble home and hearth stand in the way of the greater public good? Anjali and her family found a place to stay with a poor woman who had a little extra space.

If you go to Baaisha's bridge, you will still find Anjali's old dinghy. But, no sign remains of her hut.

Round table of women in fisheries

A state-wide round table of women in small-scale fisheries in Goa, India, not only reveals a range of priority issues but also starts a process of self-organization

By **Mariette Correa** (mariettec@gmail.com), Senior Programme Co-ordinator, ICSF

On the 19 February, 2017, a round table of 30 women in various small-scale fisheries related activities was held in Goa, India. This meeting was a follow-up to a workshop held in November 2016 where 63 women from the coastal districts of India gathered together for three days to discuss the issues they faced, and to learn about the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines) as well as schemes and laws relevant to them and how these could be used. Five women from Goa participated in the November workshop and were motivated to carry forward the work in their state. It also resonated for Saad Aangan, a Goa-based gender resource group, which has felt the need over the years, to consolidate the experiences of women in small-scale fisheries in Goa, to take the concerns forward.

Not much has been done at the state level in Goa on the issues faced by women in small-scale fisheries. Their concerns have been subsumed under the overall issues of small-scale fishing communities which come to the fore when there are specific incidents or immediate threats to their livelihoods, as, for example, with the pressures on the coastal lands or waters due to development or tourism. Therefore, to begin with, there was a need to collect information and meet with various groups or representatives of women involved in fisheries, including those who were involved with local level struggles.

Representatives of Saad Aangan and Internationa Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) visited parts of Goa to meet with women. It soon became apparent that certain occupational groups (represented by individual women) would be unable to come to the meeting on 19 Febuary. They were asked to share their concerns which were then presented in the larger group at the round table. Across Goa, there are small markets where a few women (between three and eight, on an average) sit either on the streets or in the markets selling their fish. They travel to the big towns in the early hours of the morning, buy the fish from the wholesalers and then travel back in time to get the morning customers at the market squares. These women survive on their daily earnings and being absent for a day would cause considerable loss. More importantly, many of them are cynical about a resolution of their issues, and may not be sufficiently convinced about the idea of presenting their issues to larger groups nor feel their issues are representative of many other women in similar situations. Some, in fact, pointed to the wholesalers who they said would know of their issues, have helped them in the past and could represent them. However, post the round table it was clear that more efforts would need to be placed on meeting with these women and hearing about their problems in more detail.

The workshop was largely interactive with women from different groups talking about the issues they faced. As a questionnaire had been shared with the groups when they were invited, they had come prepared to discuss the issues they faced in terms of access to resources, markets, health, education, housing, violence and discrimination.

Most of the participants at the round table were in fish vending, from traditional fishing communities. For the majority of the participants, it was the first time that they were speaking in large gatherings about the problems they were facing. Though they came from different parts of the state and represented different communities and groups, there were a lot of common issues that they

faced. They spoke about the threat to the livelihoods of their traditional fishing communities and the lack of protective measures. They lamented the lack of spaces in the markets and being gradually edged away from prime locations in the local markets due to other vendors. In certain areas, fish vendors from outside the municipality or *panchayat* (local administrative unit) boundaries sold their fish on the roads or any open area just outside the fish market, reducing the sale of the traditional users of the market. Within the markets, they deplored the lack of water and toilet facilities, and the lack of storage facilities. In several places, the markets were in need of repair and there were inadequate light facilities.

The sharing of experiences and contacts enriched the round table and the women have decided to come together and self- organise.

Another problem in recent years that the women faced was the lack of regulations of market timings. Due to the purse seiners, wholesalers arrived at the markets at different times during the day, and vendors came in from various parts of the state to sell fish. This resulted in huge fluctuations in prices over the day, affecting sales of the traditional users. Traditional vendors have been asking for regulations in market timings to prevent this, but to no avail.

In the capital city of Panjim, the fish market was in a disastrous condition, they said. Alongside the fish vendors were the sellers of meat products, preventing customers from coming to the fish market due to the smells. The lack of regulation of timings in the markets meant that the market was never closed long enough for it to be properly cleaned.

The government-supported mobile vans for fish vendors were also creating problems for the local vendors. The vans were given on condition that they would be parked in, or travel to, villages where there were no local markets and that they would sell fish at five per cent less than the market rate. However, these vans were parked near the town markets creating competition for the local fisherwomen with their reduced prices. Similarly, cycle vendors purchasing from wholesalers in the markets were selling door-to-door in the villages, reducing customers in the markets. This was being done without the clear permission of the *panchayats* or municipalities.

There being no clear rule about the annual *sopo* (a traditional tax collected by the municipalities/*panchayats*), different amounts were collected in the markets, either according to person, load or space occupied. Women from some remote areas were adversely affected by this when the rates were increased for no ostensible reason. The street vendors along highways or in smaller markets, faced the problems of lack of safe spaces and shelter from the wind, rain, dust on the roads.

The reduced access to fish for sale and for drying fish was experienced across the state, with women having to work longer hours, leading to health problems. They also experienced threats to their land and water resources due to tourism, construction activities, 'development projects' like casinos, and industrial fishing in Goa and neighbouring states. They pointed out the lack of political will and weak governance systems to deal with their problems. Several participants were part of communities that had complained or appealed to the authorities to protect their interests, but nothing much had been done.

Dr Smita Mazumdar, Superintendent of Fisheries, shared the few schemes available for women like provision of ice boxes, loans at low interest rates for fisheries related activities, and funds for 'construction of fish markets'. She said that Rs. five lakhs (approximately, USD 7,500) was available under the last scheme, which was underutilized though the fisheries department had been asking the *panchayats* for their proposals. She informed the group about the requirements to access these, as well as the roles of the fisheries inspectors, surveyors and officers, and who could be approached. Women shared their concerns with her about the implementation issues with some of the schemes, as well as their problems which went far beyond welfare schemes. They were amazed to learn of a new central government scheme which would be implemented by the Goa government, where fish vendors would get Rs. 30,000 subsidy for the purchase of certain brands of motorbikes. The women were upset with this new information. In their view, the schemes would only strengthen those with cycles or who could be mobile—mainly men—further impacting the local market vendors who were already suffering due to the cycle fish vendors.

Success stories were also shared, where women were organized and their federation's demands were not ignored, when the market had to be renovated. The redeveloped market has to an extent been made in accordance with their requirements. Even so, they were facing a lot of difficulties due to the lack of storage space and shelter, and the fact that they have to pay for the use of the toilet and for water.

The fish farms in Goa are largely improved traditional ponds and are owned by families or by the *communidade* (a form of communally-held land association) who lease out the ponds annually or for several years. Most of the farms are monoculture, and the government provides subsidies and training. A few farms are owned by women. The representatives

from the fish farms at the round table spoke about the lack of support from the local administration for infrastructure for the fish farms for the economically backward sections.

Participants were informed about the SSF Guidelines, its key guiding principles and its relationship to the issues raised by the women. The importance of social auditing and monitoring of the implementation of the schemes, how the Guidelines could be used to support capacity building of women and strengthening of their associations or collectives, and how elements of the Guidelines could be used to advocate for their interests were discussed. The lack of schemes for women in fisheries in Goa pointed to the lack of recognition of women's work.

The women raised various demands in the course of the round table. They called for transparency and accountability in the design of markets and accountability at all levels. They made a concerted demand for proper markets, and that women fish vendors be consulted in their design so that it considers their needs. They stressed the need for ice to be provided by the government for small-scale vendors. They demanded that toilets needed to be constructed and maintained in the markets and that water facilites and adequate spaces for storage be provided. They emphasized the need to regulate the timings for wholesalers and vendors in each market, and that ID cards be provided to women vendors who have traditional rights over the markets.

They demanded that fisheries inspectors ensure that there were no vendors just outside the markets and that cycle and rickshaw vendors as well as mobile vans plied in areas where there were no markets. They also demanded the formulation of regulations on where fish markets could be set up. They felt that women vendors should be entitled to pensions and social security schemes, as was being done for the motorcycle pilots in Goa. They asked that certain schemes of the Department of Fisheries could be extended to others (for example, the schemes for rampon nets could be extended to other nets or fishing gear in the *agor/ khazan* or estuarine lands). Finally, as the capital city was being converted to a smart city, the women vendors would like to collaborate with the Fisheries Department to propose a model fish market.

Importantly, the sharing of experiences and contacts enriched the round table and the women decided to come together and self-organize to raise their concerns to the authorities, with the support of Saad Aangan. Representatives of each locality took on the responsibility to organize local meetings to raise the issues and look at the formation of associations or groups. They also decide to explore the possibility of having joint meetings at the local levels with *panchayat* authorities, women vendors and the fisheries department. A delegation would meet with the Director of Fisheries and other concerned departments shortly to formally present their demands.

Q & A

Interview with Mercy Wasai Mghanga, fish trader and Chairperson, Bamburi Beach Management Unit (BMU) and Vice-Chairperson, Mombasa County BMU network

By **Hadley B. Becha** (becha.canco@gmail.com), Executive Director, Community Action for Nature Conservation—CANCO

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I have been a fish trader in Mombasa, Kenya, for 20 years now. I was inspired to join this profession by a friend, who used to supply fish to tourist and beach hotels. My husband, who is a businessman, gave me the start-up capital to start my work and also helped with transportation of the products to the market.

What are the challenges that you and other women traders face?

Women have financial needs. And so, we must have the right to work in any sector of our choice. Kenyan resources are for all Kenyans. But men think they are superior to women. They occupy all the leadership positions, and downplay the rights of women to leadership in the sector. We met with a group of Tanzanian women processors who were on an exchange visit to Kenya. It was their experience too that fishermen consider women as the weaker sex, and this view is compounded by cultures and customs based on gender discrimination. However there are also good signs: women are beginning to fight for their rights. Women definitely need to stand up for their rights and fight discrimination by men in the BMUs and county network positions.

Tell us about the Women Fishers' Conference you attended recently.

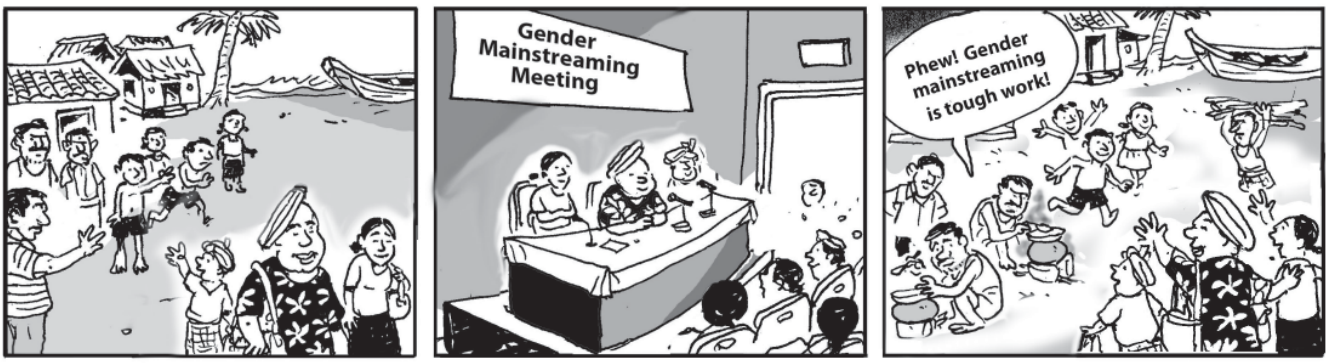
I was very proud to be part of the conference. The conference gave women an opportunity to share and discuss issues affecting all women fishers in Africa. We realized that the problems of women are similar but we also realized that women traders can no longer be considered *mama karanga* or informal traders, rather we are entrepreneurs.

What future steps would women need to take?

Women must struggle, fight and advocate for women's rights and leadership in the fisheries sector. We need support and we must look for adequate assistance to equip women fishers with appropriate fishing equipment and vessels, and continue to engage with all stakeholders and well-wishers, including banks, through the Mombasa county BMU network.

YEMAYA MAMA

"Gender equality begins at home!"



DOCUMENT

Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in fisheries and aquaculture

The document is available at http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6623e.pdf

This review is by **Ramya Rajagopalan** (ramya.rajagopalan@gmail.com), Programme Associate, ICSF

This 12 page fact sheet presents an overview of current gender equality and women's empowerment issues in the fisheries sector. It is a useful summary document that can be used for many purposes—training and capacity building, as an information booklet, as a media supplement and so on. The following description is adapted from the introduction to the document.

No matter which perspective is used to analyse women's engagement in fisheries, the fact is that women's roles are highly underestimated. This inadequate recognition of women's contributions hampers the sustainable development process, resulting in increased poverty and food insecurity.

The document provides information on policy, institutions and planning processes, on statistical dimensions in gender analysis, and, on specific concerns in the field of fisheries industries. It identifies lessons learned and opportunities for gender mainstreaming at various levels. Certain relevant approaches for enhancing women's role in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development are broadly indicated.

In the fisheries sector, men and women engage in distinct and often complementary activities that are strongly influenced by the social, cultural and economic contexts they live in. Male-female relations vary greatly and are based on economic status, power relations, and access to productive resources and services.

In most regions, fish catching is male dominated. Ocean-going boats for offshore and deep-sea fishing have male crew, while, in coastal artisanal fishing communities, women often manage smaller boats and canoes. Women are mostly responsible for skilled and time consuming onshore tasks, such as making and mending nets, processing and marketing catches, and providing services to the boats. In western Africa and Asia, as much as 60 per cent of seafood is marketed by women, and in many parts of the world they also do a significant amount of shellfish gathering/clam gleaning—a fishery activity that is often under-recognized, or not recognized at all.

As in other sectors, women's empowerment in fisheries requires an examination of their means of production, gender relationships, and how to create equalities in their access to resources, services and employment opportunities. New institutional arrangements are being created as climate change, resource depletion, aquaculture development and global trade shape and reshape the fisheries sector. These must ensure new opportunities for equitable resource access rights, access to markets, benefits from aquaculture and codes of conduct in the industry, especially for the most marginalized and poorest categories of men and women.

Future research is required to better understand women's and men's roles and relationships in the fisheries sector and to promote more sustainable and equitable fisheries development. Even after two decades of highlighting women's roles in fisheries, comprehensive and accurate sex-disaggregated statistics are lacking, and this gap must be filled as the first step in gender mainstreaming at the policy level. There are efforts required to be taken at various levels to achieve gender equality in fisheries.

The document provides information on lessons learnt. It also looks at how to integrate gender analysis in fisheries projects. It gives examples of gender sensitive indicators in the sustainable management of marine resources.

ICSF

Published by
the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers
27 College Road
Chennai 600 006
India
Tel: (91) 44 2827 5303
Fax: (91) 44 2825 4457
E-mail: icsf@icsf.net

Web site: www.icsf.net

Edited by
Nilanjana Biswas

Illustrations by
Sandesh
(sandeshcartoonist@gmail.com)

Designed by
P. Sivasakthivel

Writers and potential contributors to *YEMAYA*, please note that write-ups should be brief, about 500 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women and men of fishing communities working towards a sustainable fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer.

Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.