

# GENDER ANALYSIS: GHANA'S ARTISANAL FISHERIES 2019



Project implemented by:



**Hen Mpoano**

With financial support from:



**Far Dwuma Nkodo**

Securing Sustainable Fisheries



## Far Dwuma Nkodo

Securing Sustainable Fisheries

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Responsibility for the information and views set out in this report lies entirely with the authors.

## CONTENTS

<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>4</b>
Objectives	4
<b>STUDY AREAS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>5</b>
The gender dynamics of the fisheries sector	6
<b>SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>6</b>
Gender roles of women and men in the fisheries sector (marine and clam fisheries)	6
Role of the family in the fisheries sector	8
Gender roles in fisheries decision-making	8
Access to fisheries assets and other resources (power and marginalization)	9
Participation in fisheries management-related activities	11
Knowledge, belief and perceptions (cultural norms and beliefs)	12
Organization of men and women in the fishing sector	13
Policy and gender integration	13
Strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of women in fisheries	14
Recommendations and opportunities for improvement	16
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>17</b>

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### ACRONYMS

CEWEFIA	Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association	NAFAG	National Fisheries Association of Ghana
DAA	Development Action Association	NGO	Non-governmental organization
EJF	Environmental Justice Foundation	SSFG	Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council	VGGT	Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security
HM	Hen Mpoano	VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	WARFP	West Africa Regional Fisheries Programme
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing		
NAFPTA	National Fish Processors and Traders Association		

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## BACKGROUND

The contribution of women to the rural economy throughout the world is very significant. While the roles of women differ across regions, they have consistently less access than men to the resources and opportunities they need. In many countries, women in fisheries have traditionally occupied the pre- and post-harvest sectors, concentrating on financing the fleet and playing an intermediary role in linking fishermen and fish consumers through processing and marketing of the catch (Bennett, 2005). Contributing around 50% of the fisheries workforce (World Bank, 2012), women play a crucial role in fisheries globally.

In Ghana, fishing is a highly gender-segregated occupation with fishermen catching and landing the fresh fish, and women taking responsibility for processing and marketing. The role of women is significant because they add value to fresh fish through processing, while distributing and preserving fish to ensure its availability long after the peak season (Britwum, 2009) and allowing it to reach consumers far from the landing beach. Policy makers, however, often fail to take these roles into account during the policy making process. Despite the dominant role of women in financing fishing expeditions and in the post-harvest sector (processing, marketing and sale of the catch), their contributions to the fisheries sector are often overlooked or minimized. They are often left out of technical and capacity-building initiatives, community consultations and fisheries management decision-making processes because most women still constitute the majority of the marginalized population within the sector. The most marginalized groups in Ghana's artisanal fisheries sector are those that do not own fisheries-related inputs, such as boats, engines, nets and processing equipment. Contributing to their marginalization is that many are temporary or long-term migrants without access to secure land tenure. Many men and women also lack access to savings and micro credit. This reduces their opportunities to move into other livelihoods during lean fishing periods and may contribute, indirectly, to the use of unsustainable fishing methods.

A gender analysis of the fisheries sector within selected areas of Ghana was necessitated by the urgency to fully understand the gender dynamics of the sector in order to correct the general view that fisheries involve only men. This analysis forms a core component of the Far Dwuma Nkɔdo project funded by the European Union, which aims, as one of its objectives, at mainstreaming gender at all levels of the fisheries value chain. The project works with relevant stakeholders and government agencies to ensure greater environmental sustainability and social equity in Ghana's fishing sector by reducing illegal fishing; building local capacity to secure legal, sustainable and equitable fisheries; and promoting the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security

(VGGT) and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSFSG).

This gender analysis delves into the extent of gender inclusion and economic vulnerability of target groups, including fishers and processors/traders, and identifies the most appropriate levels for gender integration. The analysis builds on the gender analysis of the fisheries sector carried out under the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which was conducted in 2015 within selected communities in the Western and Central Regions of Ghana (Torell *et al.*, 2015).

The present report describes the current state of knowledge on gender roles in Ghana's artisanal fisheries, and the opportunities to strengthen how the project's interventions will promote gender equality within the fisheries sector. It also looks at power and marginalization of vulnerable groups, by looking into the access of men and women to fisheries assets and other fisheries-related resources.

## Objectives

The community-based gender analysis of Ghana's artisanal fisheries sector was conducted under the Far Dwuma Nkɔdo project to serve as the basis for supporting gender mainstreaming at all levels of the fisheries value chain and promoting the inclusion of women and marginalized groups in fisheries tenure rights reforms.

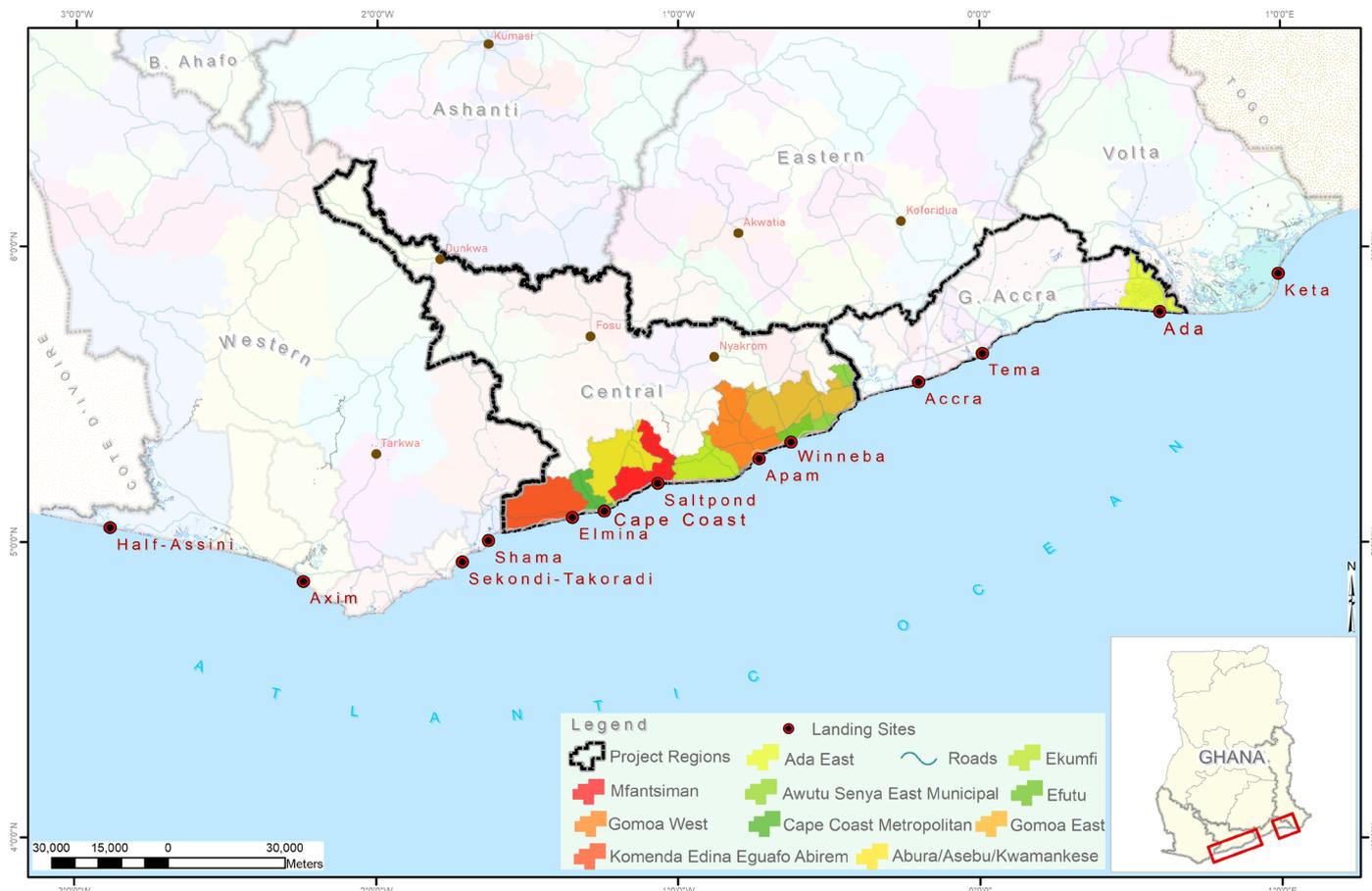
The objectives of the gender analysis are as follows:

1. To understand the gender dynamics of the fisheries sector.
2. To identify the gender-based constraints to, and opportunities for, the equitable participation of women in fisheries decision-making process and access to fisheries related inputs and resources.
3. To provide recommendations that identify and prioritize how gender considerations can be better integrated into the project.

The end goal of the analysis is to support the mainstreaming of gender in the fisheries sector and to better sensitize government agencies on the inclusion of women and marginalized groups and on economic vulnerability in coastal areas. The results are also expected to support the strengthening of women's groups/associations in terms of improved capacities and knowledge concerning tenure rights and fisheries legislation.

## STUDY AREAS

The study was carried out in the geographical regions of focus of the Far Dwuma Nkodo project, namely the Central and Greater Accra regions. Specifically, the gender analysis was carried out in Moree, Gomoa Fetteh and Mumford, which are noted for their active artisanal fishing activities, and in Kponkpo and Agorkpo at Ada in the Greater Accra Region, which are the main landing sites for clam fishing.



A map showing the study areas in the Central Region and Ada in the Greater Accra Region.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed both primary and secondary data collection methods. Relevant literature on the subject of gender and fisheries was reviewed to understand the gender dynamics of the fisheries sector; the constraints to and opportunities for the equitable participation of women in fisheries management processes; and access to fisheries-related resources and inputs such as boats, engines, nets and processing equipment.

In addition, data were collected through focus group discussions and key informant interviews in the target communities. The focus group discussions involved women fish processors and traders, as well as fishers. The key informant interviews involved selected individuals including the Chief fisherman of Moree, the Central Regional Zonal Officer of the Fisheries Commission, and the Executive Director of the Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association (CEWEFIA). The data collection was conducted over the period of April to June 2018 (see **Appendix A** for a complete list of sites and groups involved in the assessment). An interview schedule/protocol was also developed to guide the primary data collection (see **Appendix B** for the protocol for the focus group discussions and interviews).



Facilitation of focus group discussions at Gomoa Fetteh.

## The gender dynamics of the fisheries sector

The gender dynamics in Ghana's artisanal fisheries sector were assessed using a gender analysis method. This is a method employed to identify, analyse and understand the:

- Different activities of women, men, boys and girls (gender roles).
- Relations between men and women (gender relations).
- Patterns of women's and men's access to and control of resources.

A gender analysis considers the relevant gaps in the status of males and females, including their roles and access to/control over assets, etc., that could hinder project outcomes, and which could be reduced through project design. Generally, gender analysis addresses the following questions:

- What are male and female roles and responsibilities that could prevent or facilitate participation in the project?
- What is the status of women and men and their differential access to/control over assets, resources, opportunities and services relevant to the project?
- What gender norms exist that may affect a female's ability to assume leadership roles and decision-making in the project as well as to participate in the labour market?
- Are there laws, policies, and institutional practices that may contain implicit or explicit gender biases and that may need to be addressed by the project?



Fish processor smoking fish at Gomoa Fetteh in the Central Region.



Women selling clams at Ada.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Gender roles of women and men in the fisheries sector (marine and clam fisheries)

The term gender refers to the socially constructed roles and status of women and men. Gender roles and relations are sector specific and vary spatially and temporally. The unique roles men and women play in their communities lead to different bodies of knowledge about the environments around them. In the fisheries sector, as in many traditional occupations, there is a high degree of specialization or division of labour. Men are very active in the extractive sector while women are very much engaged in post-harvest activities, mostly processing and marketing of the fish. There are a few women fishers who fish in smaller water bodies, at the edges of lagoons, and in estuaries, where they collect oysters, crabs and other fish species (Torell *et al.*, 2015).

This is typical in the Central Region and in some parts of the Ada area, according to the study. In all communities visited, the roles of men and women in fisheries are clearly defined through tradition. In the Central Region, for instance, the men are mostly involved in marine fishing while women are generally engaged in processing and marketing. In Agorkpo, however, some women are actively engaged in the clam harvesting together with the men. These women are not indigenes but are mostly migrants from the neighbouring Volta region. They have developed the skills and experience to venture into a male dominated livelihood activity. The indigenous Ada women at Kponkpo, on the other hand, are only engaged in clam processing for sale.

In the Central Region, most women finance fishing trips by providing money for fuel, maintenance and repairs of boats and nets, while some own fishing canoes. With this, the women are able to build relationships with the fishers, which guarantee them access to fish when they are landed. But this role played by women in the Central Region is different from that of women in the Ada area, where the men own their fishing gears and finance their fishing trips. When the clams are landed, whoever has the money has a competitive edge over other potential buyers. Even when some women decide to pre-finance the fishing expeditions, the crew members are not obliged to sell the catch to them. They rather give the women daily "sales" as proceeds from the business. One major obstacle faced by women who have intentions of owning fishing gear is the assumed tendency of male crew members conniving and cheating them.

In the Central Region, women respondents reported that they do not join the offshore fishing activity because it is a risky venture and requires a lot of energy and time. Generally, the women are not interested in fishing. They tell a story of how, out of greed, a boat with women crewmembers kept packing fish until they all perished. Similarly, the men's group confirmed that, though few men are engaged in fish processing, the majority are not interested since this activity is time consuming and requires a lot of patience which most men do not have. The role of processing fish is assigned to women due to the traditional belief that kitchen duties are feminine.



Clam harvesters landing their catch in Ada.

**Table 1: Gender roles of men, women and youth in the fisheries sector**

<b>GENDER ROLES IN THE SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES SECTOR</b>			
<b>CENTRAL - MARINE FISHERIES</b>		<b>GREATER ACCRA (ADA) - CLAM HARVESTING</b>	
<b>ROLES</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>ROLES</b>	<b>GENDER</b>
Fishing activities (including repairs, maintenance)	Mostly men	Clam farming and fishing	Men and women
Boat ownership and financing of fishing expeditions	Men and women	Boat ownership, financing of fishing expeditions and maintenance of fishing equipment	Mostly men
Assisting with fishing trips	Young men and boys	Assisting with fishing business. Part of fishing crew	Young men and boys
Fish processing (business owner)	Mostly women	Fish processing (business owner)	Mostly women
Assisting with processing business	Young women and girls	Assisting with processing business	Young women and girls
Sales and marketing of fish	Women	Sales and marketing of fish	Women
Transportation of fish to market centres (commercial drivers)	Men	Transportation of fish to market centres (commercial drivers)	Men
Carriers	Young men and women	Carriers	Young men and women
Canoe construction	Men	Fabrication of air pumping machines	Men
Building ovens for smoking fish (especially complex ones such as the Ahotor)	Men	Purchase fishing inputs	Men

## Role of the family in the fisheries sector

In the past, the (extended) family usually worked together, and most families owned a boat, which worked to cater for the family. However, this culture has changed over time. In the Central Region, for instance, the fishing business has become a nuclear family affair with little involvement of the extended family. The communities visited in the region practice a matrilineal system of inheritance, but the children inherit the gear and vessel upon the demise of the father. This was not so in the past where the fishing assets were willed to the nephews and nieces when the man died. Smoking ovens are usually taken over by the daughters if the business is not co-owned by other women.

In the Ada area, fishers do not normally work together as families; it is mostly done on an individual basis. They practice a patrilineal form of inheritance, and assets are willed to the children or whoever the parents wish to inherit their assets. Upon death, equipment could be rented out or sold to gain income. The equipment could also be given to the next of kin if the child is not interested in continuing the business. The family could only take over if the child or nominated next of kin abandons the pursuit. If there are no children, the property goes to the brothers of the deceased.

In the Central Region and the Ada area, children are engaged in fishing and processing activities at a very tender age (boys: 8 years, girls: 6 years) for them to learn the business. The girls assist their mothers in cleaning and processing the fish; those of school-going age assist their parents during the weekends and on vacations. This is the same for the boys; those of school-going age assist their fathers on fishing trips during the weekend and on vacations. These fishers also employ helps, some of which are children and are paid. Because of the role of diving in clam harvesting, children are not allowed to dive but can be on the canoe to provide assistance to the divers.

In the past, families used to migrate together as a unit, especially in cases where there were children and no one to leave them behind with. Sometimes the men would move first to seek accommodation and later migrate with the family. In situations where the man was unable to go with the family, they would arrange for money to be transferred to the family periodically (Odotei, 1992). In the Central Region, most migrant fishers these days do not move with their families. In exceptional cases, where the man intends to move with his family, the man moves first to find suitable accommodation before the family follows. At Mumford, the men's group informed us that most of them migrate during the bumper seasons to towns such as Sekondi. They lodge in rented premises and have women they sell their catches to. When they migrate they do not normally do so with the family, except occasionally during vacations. Otherwise their wives stay at home to cater for the children.

Fishers from Ada migrate to new areas with their workers. They do not normally spend more than three days within these communities and hence do not go with their families.



Women landing fish catch at Agorkpo Kpanya.

## Gender roles in fisheries decision-making

Like any other economic occupation, fishing is not an activity carried out by individuals in isolation. Either as part of collective strategies to catch fish or to defend collective interests against those of fish buyers and suppliers, fishers are dependent on mutual cooperation and collective action, which involves all parties. In spite of this, women are often excluded from access to equal participation in fisherfolk organizations and are denied access to decision-making positions in many fisheries-related organizational arrangements (Alonso-Población and Siar, 2018).

For instance, the choice of methods for harvesting fish, and the gears deployed by fishermen, are key fisheries management decisions that impact profitability in the fishing business. Despite the dominant role of women in financing fishing expeditions and in the sale and processing of fish post-harvest, decisions regarding methods of fish harvesting are taken by fishermen without the involvement of women. Illegal methods of harvesting fish affect the quality of fish caught and the post-harvest storage, processing and pricing of fish. Women are negatively impacted by these decisions as they result in poor quality fish leading to low post-harvest profitability.

In the Central Region, women fish processors and mongers do not have the platform to participate in or influence decisions taken by fishermen concerning methods of fish harvesting. The majority of poor and marginalized fish processors and mongers who do not have capital to finance fishing expeditions but trade in fish to support their household income are the worst affected by these decisions. Men, however, do not make decisions for women concerning their processing operations.

Similarly, the men in Ada decide when to fish and how to sell at what price, regardless of who put in capital/money. Even when women invest in the clam fishing expeditions, the crew members are not obliged to sell the catch to them. During processing, the women determine how to process their fish. Men do not interfere in the duties of the women.

### Access to fisheries assets and other resources (power and marginalization)

In small-scale fisheries, access to and control over fisheries inputs, credit and other financial support is vital for enabling those involved not only to survive but also to gain from on-going developments in the sector (World Bank, FAO, IFAD, 2009). Despite efforts by development partners and governments through advocacy, the creation of enabling environments, and policy incentives (among others) to overcome limited accessibility to financial services within the small-scale fisheries sector, the majority of women, especially the marginalized, are still confronted with difficulties in financing their private initiatives.

In the Ada area, where some women are engaged in clam fishing/mining, they do not have the financial means to access fishing equipment such as canoes and breathing/air pumps, hence they are restricted to shallower areas of the water. This is due to the difficulties they face in accessing formal credit from the bank as a result of lack of collateral. Of course, wealthier women are able to access credit from banks to finance fishing trips and expand their processing facilities. The poorer women, who often work for the wealthier women, on the other hand, use revolving funds to meet household expenses in the lean season which reduces capital available for business.

Within the marine capture fishery, the government provides some financial backing for fishers through subsidising the cost of fuel, nets and outboard motors, which, to some extent, reduces the financial burden of the fishermen. Fish processors, however, do not receive such relief from the government. One of the main motivations for the formation of the National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAPFTA) was to aggregate women fish processors and traders to access soft loans from the government through the West Africa Regional Fisheries Programme (WARFP) funded by the World Bank. However, since its formation, the members are yet to receive any loan from the government.

Another important observation is the relationship between age and access to capital. Although age may not affect how powerful and influential one can become, and there may be young owners of canoes and processing equipment, most younger individuals and the marginalized within the fisheries sector do not own assets but rather assist the wealthier individuals in fishing, processing and marketing and depend on them for their livelihood. They carry the fish from the landing sites to the processing units, while young men also form the majority of the fishing crew. Where these individuals are determined, they might be able to save and accumulate money to purchase fisheries assets to start their own fisheries business or inherit from their parents or family members.



Clams harvested at Ada in the Volta estuary.



Children at the fishing community of Egyaa in Central Region.

**Table 2: Men and women – access to and control of fisheries assets and resources**

Fisheries assets and resources	Men in target area		Women in target area	
	Access	Control	Access	Control
<b>LOCATION – CENTRAL REGION</b>				
Fishing inputs (boats, nets, etc.)	Men have access to fishing inputs at subsidized cost from the government	Men have control over the fishing inputs	Some women use the proceeds from their trading to invest in fishing inputs (boats and gear)	Women canoe owners might have some control over their canoes
Processing equipment	Except for the few male processors, men generally do not have access to processing equipment	No	Yes	Yes
Access to formal credit from banks	Limited access. Access to formal credit requires collateral which is a barrier to some fishers	-	Limited access. Most women lack the collateral to access formal loans	-
<b>LOCATION – ADA</b>				
Fishing input (motorized canoes, air pumping machines, swimsuits, etc.)	Yes, inputs can either be purchased outright, purchased on hire purchase or rented. Owners of the canoes are to provide inputs for the fishing trips. Crew members require the permission of the canoe owners to use the available gear.	Yes	Most women miners do not own motorized canoes, or have access to swimsuits or air pumping machines. Canoes can be rented out to them. Some buy diving goggles.	No
Processing equipment	-	-	Yes, equipment can either be purchased outright, purchased on hire purchase or rented.	Yes
Access to formal credit from banks	Limited. The use of collateral discourages some men from accessing loans from banks	-	In general, face difficulty in accessing loans	-

## Participation in fisheries management-related activities

Income from fisheries is controlled/managed by whoever owns the business and determines how the proceeds are used. After the expenses of the business are paid off, the remaining benefits go to the financier. The boat captain determines what percentage of the income goes to the crew and to the maintenance of the boat and net repairs, and then gives the profit to the financier. When the profit comes to the house, both man and wife determine how the money is used. The fish processors/mongers also keep their profits after paying all expenses.

Findings from the study confirm Odotei's (1992) conclusion that fishermen do not give their wives daily, weekly or monthly money for home management, but give them either capital to trade with or fish from their expeditions. It is out of the income accrued from a woman's enterprise that she is supposed to cater for the needs of her husband and children. This includes general housekeeping and payment of school fees.

From the Ada interviews, it was also revealed that depending on how much each contributes to the family income, both men and women exert some control. According to socially determined traditions, men are the ultimate controllers of household income; however, in practice, a lot of women take care of the family expenses as most of their husbands are aged and unable to bear those responsibilities.

Women within the fisheries sector are very much dependent on fisheries for their livelihood and their family upkeep, hence any fisheries management effort with an impact on the economic environment of the fisheries sector will directly affect them. This requires their active participation as agents of change in fisheries management. Unfortunately, however, few women these days show an interest in these issues.

From the interviews conducted, women have not been very active in decisions relating to the fisheries sector; this has been left to the men. The main reasons are a lack of time due to the multiple tasks they perform and the traditional role assigned to men in fisheries management. Generally, a busy workload and schedule prevents some women and marginalized groups from engaging in fisheries management-related activities.

There are beach level committees within the Central Region, which are in charge of managing the landing sites and ensuring fishermen comply with all best practices. These groups are made up of the Chief fishermen and their assistants (all men). At Gomoa Fetteh, respondents indicated that sometimes, when the committee members refuse to allow fishers to land illegally caught fish, they do not receive the support of the women. In some cases, women from Gomoa Fetteh have subsequently purchased "boycotted" fish at other landing sites. When the few dedicated fish mongers/processors later realized others were still patronizing the illegally caught fish, they gave up on the fight against illegal fishing and joined the bandwagon.



Fishmongers in Elmina.

## Knowledge, belief and perceptions (cultural norms and beliefs)

In the Central Region and other coastal regions of Ghana, the Chief fisherman is the head of all fishing activities, managing the beach and the landing sites. He is an influential opinion leader and holds a lot of power in the fishing communities. The Chief fisherman collaborates with the local chiefs and sometimes engages in broader community affairs.

The queen fishmonger, locally referred to as the Konkohemaa, is the most influential woman at the fish landing site. She is elected by opinion leaders (Chief fishermen, elders, queen mothers, family heads, king makers). She does not necessarily have to be the wife of the Chief fisherman. Her nomination is based on years of experience in the processing business. Traditionally, the Konkohemaa is supposed to bargain fish price with fishermen and mediate issues related to fish purchase and processing. But because fishing has become more expensive, individuals have more bargaining rights than the Konkohemaa. The Konkohemaa are supposed to be leaders and the mouthpiece of women in the fishing communities. They are the ones that could gather the women to refuse bad fish from fishermen.

However, their role is currently not highly regarded by fishermen and even by some fish processors/mongers they are supposed to lead. Most women assert that once a Konkohemaa does not play an active role in financing individual fishing trips, she cannot effectively negotiate prices.

Unlike the Chief fisherman, the Konkohemaa does not take any toll from the processors. She is expected to benefit from the toll that fishermen pay to the Chief fishermen and his elders. However, this does not generally happen in practice.

Within the Ada areas, this leadership trend is quite different. Local management strategies, such as closed seasons and fishing holidays, are practices inherited from the forefathers, carried down for many years, and it is believed there could be negative implications if they are flouted. There have been no changes to these rules and they are respected. Most of these management rules were determined by the forefathers and are enforced by the deities. There are currently no leadership systems that ensure compliance with these set rules. Everyone simply complies.

There are no taboos, religious or traditional beliefs that prohibit women completely from fishing. However, there are such perceptions and beliefs that prohibit certain activities at different times. Most of the taboos in the past have waned with time. In Moree, for instance, there used to be a taboo preventing women who were in their menstrual period from crossing a particular lagoon (Mfa lagoon). However, this is no longer observed.

In the Ada area, particularly in Agorkpo, women miners do not wear earrings when harvesting the clams. This is regarded as a safety precaution against entrapment in nets. Nursing mothers are not allowed to harvest until three months after delivery. Women are also not allowed into the river during their menstrual period. Some of the customs of Ada used to restrict women from diving with clothes, but this belief is also no more. In contrast to Agorkpo, there are no known customs, norms or barriers for women in the Kponkpo community. In the past, men clam harvesters did not wear red shirts or eat leftover clams. They were also required to bath after sex before fishing. Again, these are no longer observed.



Fishmonger in Elmina.



Woman selling clams at a market near Ada.

## Organization of men and women in the fishing sector

Our study confirmed the findings of Torell *et al.* (2015) that men and women within the fisheries sector are organized into groups and associations depending on their role in the fishing industry. These associations serve as a vehicle for the members to receive government support and to increase the support of the group members. The membership also helps to increase negotiating power when purchasing equipment.

Fishers are organized into associations including: boat owners associations, canoe owners associations, Ghana Inshore Fishers Association (GIFA), Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC) and the National Fisheries Association of Ghana (NAFAG). Fish processors and traders are also organized under NAFPTA, which, in theory, should be organized at the community level. The goal of NAFPTA is to enhance women's participation in fisheries management. Unfortunately, these groups are not very active. The women are not well-organized within most communities and do not have the collective power to advocate for sustainable fishing.

Other groups such as the Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association (CEWEFIA) and the Development Action Association (DAA) also exist in some communities. At the community level, these groups are more organized than NAFPTA.

Some of the identified issues with NAFPTA include:

- Lack of communication between the national and the local groups
- Poor leadership
- Mismanagement of dues
- Lack of trust
- Loans promised by NAFPTA members did not materialize
- Timing of meetings inappropriate
- Executives perceived to be autocratic and had favourites
- Members not invited to attend meetings
- Some members involved were not fish processors/traders, resulting in collapse

In Ada, there are no notable associations formed in the community, not even NAFPTA. This is partly attributed to the reluctance of the women to work together for a common purpose. They would rather work independently of each other. Some of the reasons they gave for not organizing themselves into groups include:

- Lack of interest
- Nature of work does not allow for leisure time or to be part of a group
- Issues of trust

It was observed, however, that if presented with a proposal to organize themselves into groups, some of the women would oblige with some level of supervision. The men clam harvesters, on the other hand, have two associations at Agorkpo and Kponkpo. These associations do not meet regularly, resulting in a lack of communication among members. Interestingly the female clam miners were not part of these two groups.

## Policy and gender integration

Ghana's commitment to ensuring gender equity is evident in the National Gender Policy. The fairness of treatment of men and women is one of the national development priorities and general principles that guide the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy. However, the policy makes no mention of actions targeted at ensuring gender equity. In addition, the 2002 Fisheries Act 625 focuses on capture fisheries and not much on the post-harvest sector. There have, however, been considerations lately to include sections within the Fisheries Act that focus specifically on post-harvest.

Women were formerly not recognized as important actors in terms of decision-making processes in the management of fisheries. The creation of the national women's fisheries group, NAFPTA, has facilitated the increased participation of women in fisheries-related issues. With the formation of NAFPTA, women are recognized increasingly as important actors at the national level within the fishing industry. The previous Minister of Fisheries, who spearheaded the formation of the NAFPTA group, was a woman and the current Minister of Fisheries is also a woman. This is an indication that there are efforts to increase the voice of women in the fisheries management process.

Efforts such as the introduction of improved processing technology in the case of the Ahotor ovens and the institution of award schemes are ways the Fisheries Commission intends to improve gender integration. There is also a yearly interaction of the women fishers with the Minister of Fisheries where their concerns are presented.

From the key informant interviews, the district assemblies should be made to take up more responsibility on gender issues. For example, they can be supported to include gender in their Medium-Term Plans.

## Strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of women in fisheries

A SWOT analysis was used to help identify the gender-based strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the equitable participation of women in fisheries decision-making processes and access to fisheries-related inputs and resources. Generally, there are no cultural barriers that restrict women from participating in fisheries management-related activities. Women actively participate in all stages of the fisheries supply chain, from pre-capture to capture and post-capture. However, with notable exceptions, the participation of women and marginalized groups in fisheries management decision-making processes, access to finance, improved technology for processing and leadership roles are marked by enormous challenges.

Despite improvements, women remain underrepresented both quantitatively and qualitatively in decision-making processes at all levels. Given the critical role or stake of women in the fisheries business, their voice should not be relegated to the background but rather amplified to give them equal opportunities in the management of fishery resources. Due to poor organization of these women at the community level they are unable to access funds and voice their grievances, unlike the men who are able to organize themselves well to receive subsidies from government. In the case of Ada, most of the women fishers suffer from cases of theft of their clams. These issues are dealt with individually and they receive no support from the relevant authorities.



Women trading fish at Elmina.

## STRENGTHS

- Separate Ministry of Gender and marginalized groups (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection).
- Some women finance fishing trips.
- Some women own fishing inputs like canoes and fishing nets.
- Nationally recognized umbrella group for fish processors –National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA).
- General recognition of female leadership among fishers. The Konkohemaa is the leader and the mouthpiece of women in the fishing communities.
- Some NGOs are committed to helping improve the socio-economic status of fishmongers and the well being of their children, e.g. CEWEFIA, DAA.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- No cultural barriers that restrict women from participating in fisheries management-related activities.
- The use of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) as a tool to organize women within communities without associations.
- The past minister of fisheries who spearheaded the formation of the NAFPTA group was a woman and the current minister of fisheries is also a woman. This is an indication that there are efforts to increase women's voices in the fisheries management process.
- The expected outcome of the closed season to help rebuild some depleted fish stocks over time.
- Rising demand for fish consumption and exports.

## WEAKNESSES

- Existing local associations in the Central Region are not functional. There are no existing women associations in the Ada area.
- Konkohemaa's authority to negotiate prices of fish is questioned.
- No leisure time for women, not even time to participate in meetings, trainings and fisheries management-related activities.
- Fishing is capital intensive, very few women can afford to enter the business. In Ada women divers do not have access to fishing inputs.
- Start-up capital for improved processing technology is relatively high.
- NAFPTA community leadership is weak.
- High level of illiteracy in fishing communities.
- Low participation of NGOs. Most of their interventions are focused on the capture fisheries which is dominated by men.
- Low/non-existent government assistance.

## THREATS

- Depletion of fish stocks.
- Illegal fishing affects quality of fish caught and hence profitability.
- The tradition of the country that recognizes men more as leaders makes it difficult for most women to venture for leadership positions.



## Recommendations and opportunities for improvement

The active participation of women in the fisheries sector in Ghana is quite evident especially in the post-harvest activity. However, their presence in the organizational base needs to be strengthened, enhanced and recognized. Based on the analyses in the preceding sections, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Provision of support for the NAFPTA leadership to improve transparency and dissemination of information (e.g. development of a website), to establish clearly defined roles for leaders, and to define the vision, aims and objectives of the association and succession plan. NAFPTA should be independent and free from political influence.
- Provision of training for NAFPTA leadership on financial management, advocacy and business development. The leadership may then train the members on the management of loans.
- Strengthening of NAFPTA at the community level to better organize members through selected trainings on leadership, conflict management, communication and team building.
- Support to NAFPTA to develop sustainable financing mechanisms, for example through payment of membership dues and other fundraising initiatives.
- Support to CEWEFIA and DAA to assist the organization of women within communities where there are gaps such as Biriwa and Komenda.
- Collaboration between NAFPTA, CEWEFIA and DAA for training activities and also to avoid duplication of efforts and resources at the community level.
- The use of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) as a tool to organize women within communities with weak associations and without associations such as Kponkpo and Agorkpo in the Ada area. VSLA can also be adopted by NAFPTA members at the community level to strengthen the various groups.<sup>1</sup>
- Formation of two community-based fisheries management groups for the Ada clam fishers, one each at Agorkpo and Kponkpo.
- Build capacity of relevant stakeholders within the fisheries sector (such as GNCFC, Fisheries Commission, District Assemblies etc.) in gender mainstreaming in order to recognize the importance of gender equity within the sector.
- Provision of support from government in the form of subsidies for improved processing technologies such as the Ahotor ovens, FAO-Thiaroye Processing Technique (FTT), etc. to reduce the financial burden on fish processors.<sup>2</sup>
- Strengthening of fisheries laws and policies with regard to gender and post-harvest issues, including on the adoption of improved ovens.
- Enactment of fishing regulations to reinforce the powers of the Konkohemaa to make their work more efficient.
- Provision of seats for women to participate in the Landing Beach and Volunteer Watch Committees for the management of fisheries at the landing site.
- Appointment of a female representative on the Premix Fuel Committee at the landing beach.
- Formation of a network of Konkohemaa in the Central Region to coordinate their activities and further integrate all of them to be part of NAFPTA. Provision of training to Konkohemaa on their roles and responsibilities.
- Government recognition of the fishing industry as a major asset to the country due to its crucial role in food security, provision of employment and income, and because it is embedded within the culture of communities along the coastal area of the country.

<sup>1</sup> The VSLAs are self-selected groups of 15 to 25 persons whose capacity has been built to be able to mobilize savings to increase household security; provide opportunity for loans for additional livelihoods and other investments, e.g. school fees; and create a social fund for the relief of members experiencing emergencies e.g. sickness. It has been applied in rural settings to organize and empower community members to build cohesion for managing their natural resources and generate self-funding for livelihood initiatives.

<sup>2</sup> The use of traditional methods by the fishmongers to process, preserve and store fish for the Ghanaian market is one of the reasons accounting for high post-harvest losses and low profit margins among traders. The improved ovens have been specially designed to enhance the quality of smoked fish, and to help address the health and economic challenges associated with the traditional method of smoking fish.

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## APPENDIX A: Details of communities, focus group discussions and interviews

Regions and communities visited	Focus group discussions	Key informant interview
Central Region: Gomoa East – Fetteh Gomoa West – Mumford Abura/Asebu/Kwamankese District – Moree	Fish processors, fish traders and fishermen	Leader of CEWEFIA, Konkohemaa of Gomoa Fetteh and Mumford Chief Fisherman of Moree Central Regional Fisheries Commission – Gender Focal Person
Ada – Kponkpo, Agorkpo	Clam fish miners, processors and traders	

## APPENDIX B: Focus group and key informant interview questions

### CENTRAL REGION

#### **Gender roles, responsibilities and time use of women and men in fisheries**

1. What are the specific roles of:
  - a. Men engaged in the fisheries sector?
  - b. Women engaged in the fisheries sector?  
(*Who does what and why*)
2. How do families work together?
  - a. In fishing activities
  - b. In processing activities
3. Is this village matrilineal or patrilineal? (How does ownership transfer from one generation to the next?)
4. Do children help out in the fisheries industry?  
If so, do you pay them?
5. Do your children support you in your work?
6. Do you engage other people's children in work?
7. How do migrants connect to the fishing industry when they fish in a new place?  
(*Do families migrate as a unit?*)
8. How do women's and men's power and influence depend on age, socio- economic level, etc.  
(*Who are strong and who are weak*)
9. Who makes decisions in the fisheries sector?  
(*When to fish, how to sell and process fish, and how to manage fisheries*)

#### **Access to and control over fisheries assets and resources (power and marginalization)**

10. Do you have access to fishing inputs?
11. Do you have access to processing equipment?
12. Who controls fisheries inputs (boats, nets etc) and processing equipment (smokers, drying racks)?
13. Who controls the income from fisheries?
14. Who controls household income?
15. Are you able to participate in fisheries management related activities? If no, what prevents you from participating?

#### **Knowledge, beliefs and perceptions (cultural norms and beliefs)**

16. Are there any social norms, customs or barriers for women in the fisheries sector and fisheries management?

#### **Organization of men and women**

17. How are men and women organized in the fishing communities?
18. Which association do you belong to? (*List associations*)
19. What is the vision and goal of your association?
20. What other women's and men's groups exist within the fishing sector?
  - a. *How strong are the groups?*
  - b. *What can be done to strengthen the groups?*

21. What is the role of the Konkohemaa?
22. How relevant is the role of the Konkohemaa in our fisheries sector?

### **Policy and gender integration**

23. How are the roles and contributions of women recognized?
24. How is gender integrated into the fisheries policy and strategy?
25. How can we integrate gender into the project implementation?
26. How can women become more involved in fisheries management?
27. How is the government ensuring the voices of all groups participating in fisheries management decision making process are represented?

### **ADA (GREATER ACCRA REGION)**

#### **Gender roles, responsibilities and time use of women and men in fisheries**

1. What are the specific roles of:
  - a. Men engaged in the clam fisheries?
  - b. Women engaged in the clam fisheries?  
*(Who does what and why)*
2. Is this village matrilineal or patrilineal?  
*(How does ownership transfer from one generation to the next?)*
3. How do families work together?
  - a. In fishing activities
  - b. In processing activities
4. Do children help out in the fisheries industry?  
If so, do you pay them?
5. Do your children support you in your work?
6. Do you engage other people's children in work?
7. How do migrants connect to the fishing industry when they fish in a new place?  
*(Do families migrate as a unit?)*
8. How do women's and men's power and influence depend on age, socio-economic level, etc.  
*(Who are strong and who are weak)*
9. Who makes decisions in the clam fisheries?  
*(When to fish, how to sell and process fish, and how to manage fisheries)*

#### **Access to and control over fisheries assets and resources (power and marginalization)**

10. Do you have access to fishing inputs?
11. Do you have access to processing equipment?
12. Who controls fishing inputs and processing equipment?
13. Who controls the income from fisheries?
14. Who controls household income?
15. Are you able to participate in fisheries management related activities? If no, what prevents you from participating?

#### **Knowledge, belief and perceptions (cultural norms and beliefs)**

16. Are there any social norms, customs, or barriers for women in the fisheries sector and fisheries management?

#### **Organization of men and women**

17. How are men and women organized in the fishing communities?
18. Which association do you belong to?  
*(List associations)*
19. What is the vision and goal of your association?
20. What other women's and men's groups exist within the fishing sector?
  - a. *How strong are the groups?*
  - b. *What can be done to strengthen the groups?*



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