

3.10 Gender and Coastal Zone Management

Introduction

Sustainable coastal-marine zone management and conservation require a clear understanding of the differences and inequalities between women and men, because their needs and interests are often quite different in relation to aquatic resources. Access to and control over these resources, the resulting benefits and related decision-making are all differentiated by gender.

Gender Equality Issues Relevant in Coastal Zones

On the coast, as in many environments, both men and women play important but different productive, economic and social roles. There are differences in resource use patterns, access to land, natural resources, equipment, labour, capital, outside income, and education, and in the control that women and men exert over these resources (Anon, 1998 in van Ingen et al., 2002).

One of the most documented differences between the work of women and men in coastal zones is the segregated nature of the fishing industry. Studies show that men tend to fish offshore or in major inland water bodies, while women fish close to shore. Women tend to be more involved than men in post-harvest activities, particularly in small-scale fisheries. These differences are important, as women's tasks have often not been counted in economic analyses or received the same level of investment (for example, in terms of technological support, credit, or training). Women's economic activities may also be more difficult to categorise than men's. Women tend to juggle multiple activities (such as combining aquaculture with vegetable gardens or fish-smoking), whereas men's work is often clearly focused on one set of inter-related activities.

Women and men also have different access to and control over land and water resources in coastal zones. There may be conflicts between usufruct rights and legal rights or traditional tenure and formal tenure. Women tend to have access to land through male family members (husband, father, or brother), rather than hold titles in their own names. Tenure has proved to be important as it influences who can make formal decisions about land use, who is consulted on development plans, and who has access to other supportive services such as credit and extension services.

Often coastal zone management decisions are made without the perspective and leadership of female stakeholders and professionals. Women are still the minority decision-makers in political processes, because women tend to have less access than men to formal decision-making authorities and to local decision-making structures, including those related to coastal management.

In terms of environmental risks, it is important to highlight the increasing vulnerability of coastal zones, particularly for some women. For example, the Indian Ocean tsunami of December 2004 had differential impacts on women and on men, due to the strong gender-based division of labour of productive and reproductive activities in the areas it struck. Men have traditionally taken care of fishing and marketing, while women are responsible for fish processing. Therefore more men were away in the sea, while women were along the shores, resulting in a very high death toll for women and children. However, many relief and rehabilitation efforts continue to focus more on men than women. Understanding and measuring the gender differences is

essential for an effective response. An age- and sex-disaggregated analysis of the composition of the survivors as well as the constraints to rehabilitating the livelihood options open to both genders will facilitate a sustainable response (APFIC, 2005).

Mainstreaming Gender

Improving governance and planning

- Planners can borrow tools from gender analysis to work with women and men to collect information on gender differences in resource use, access to decision making and community priorities. It is important not to stereotype men's and women's interests. Sex-disaggregated information must be collected and incorporated into coastal zone plans and projects. Often when women's priorities are not included in programmes or projects they stop participating in them.
- It is important also to expand civil society access to coastal governance. Gender and population issues bring new civil society partners to the table for coastal governance at local, national and international levels. However, capacity building may be necessary to make effective use of this access. For example, the Tambuyog Development Centre in Palawan, Philippines, provided leadership, public speaking, advocacy and environmental awareness training for rural women engaged in coastal management activities.

Changing resource use and management

- In order to predict policy impacts, policy analysis and gender-related information will be needed on resource use and access, household demographics, migration, markets, employment and decision-making. With such information it is less likely that coastal zone policies will have a negative impact on women in general, and on those households headed by women.
- Gender-based knowledge should be used for management of coastal resources. Female resource users often possess different knowledge about marine, coastal and estuarine biodiversity than men. In many countries, it is mostly women who are engaged in inland fishing. In Africa, women fish in rivers and ponds. In parts of India, women net prawns from backwaters. In Laos and Thailand, women fish in canals. In the Philippines, women fish from canoes in coastal lagoons. Collecting shellfish, seaweed, and coastal edible plants for people and cattle is the work of women, children and elderly women who all have useful biological knowledge.

Habitat Restoration Projects

As everyday users of resources, women can also easily identify changes to habitats, species abundance and distribution and can single out factors relating to these changes. Women can also be instrumental in all forms of habitat restoration. An initial point in most management initiatives has been the introduction of practical activities, in which the communities become involved. This is then expanded to other management initiatives. Habitat restoration can include mangrove re-planting, coral re-planting, shore vegetation re-planting, and other such activities. Regeneration at that level can then motivate involvement in wider management issues. In the coastal zone of Senegal, many initiatives on mangrove restoration are developed with women villagers in cooperation with international and regional conservation organisations such as the IUCN and Wetlands International. Involvement of women in mangrove swamp restoration and

maintenance, using their knowledge about biodiversity in these coastal ecosystems, will also benefit coastal households and enable sustainable coastal zone management.

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Additional Resources

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Key Web Sites

The **Women's Aquatic Network** is a private, non-profit organisation incorporated in 1985 in the District of Columbia to bring together women and men with interests in marine and aquatic policy, research, legislation, and other areas. WAN facilitates the interaction of women and men with interests in marine and aquatic affairs in an atmosphere that encourages information exchange; identifies individuals, groups, organisations, programs, and/or employment opportunities that could benefit members in their field(s) of interest and expertise and provides a forum for discussion of topical issues in marine and aquatic affairs.

www.womensaquatic.net/

The Coastal Resources Center at the University of Rhode Island is dedicated to advancing coastal management worldwide. In addition to assisting in the development and implementation of coastal management programs in Rhode Island and the United States, the Center is active in countries throughout the world promoting the sustainable use of coastal resources for the benefit of all.

www.crc.uri.edu

Case Study

The complete case study is found in the annex of this resource guide

- Senegal: Role of Women in a Model of Community Management of Fish Resources and Marine Environments, Cayar