

Yemaya

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ICSF's NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

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From the Editor

Greetings! We are pleased to bring you the 25th issue of *Yemaya*, featuring articles from Asia, Europe and Latin America. This issue covers a wide terrain for women in fisheries—from personal accounts of struggle to stories of collective action.

The article from Uruguay, for instance, profiles two extraordinary women who have made a mark as successful seafarers. And from Calhoun, Texas, comes an inspiring film, documented in this issue, about another indomitable fisherwoman, viewed by the establishment as Public Enemy No.1.

Moving from the personal to the political, the article from the Pacific Islands discusses the systemic changes needed to bring a tangible difference to the lives of the millions of women engaged in fisheries in rural areas. The piece from the Phillipines, a review of policies related to women in fisheries, points to the additional steps needed to ensure gender justice in policy formulation.

In some cases, as the story from Chile highlights, women are taking control of their own lives to bring about change. A co-operative venture in Pisagua, notorious as the killing fields under the Pinochet regime, demonstrates how fisherwomen are converting the

challenges in their *caleta* into opportunities.

The report from the European Union describes another dynamic and successful effort in co-operation—the Second Conference and the Second General Body meeting of AKTEA: European Network of Women's Organizations in Fisheries and Aquaculture, which took place in Northern Ireland in April, providing an opportunity for women in European fisheries to share a common platform and strengthen bonds of solidarity.

The article from Brazil discusses the structural issues and disparate interests that are hindering the functioning of the National Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CONAPE). And finally, from India comes an analysis of how the neoliberal reforms being pushed by the government in the name of coastal management threaten to jeopardize the livelihood security of fishing communities, with a particularly pernicious impact on women and coastal ecosystems.

As always, we invite you to share with us your experiences and stories related to women in fisheries and fishing communities. Please send us articles for the next issue of *Yemaya* by 15 September 2007. You can reach us at icsf@icsf.net



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Latin America/ Uruguay**Battling against Wind and Tide**

A profile of two women from the port town of Punta del Este who have made careers as seafarers

This article (Uruguay: *Mujeres contra viento y marea*) has been translated by Brian O’Riordan from Bulletin No. 18 of *Foro Latinoamericano de Pesca Artesanal*

(http://www.cedepesca.org.ar:80/foroclaro/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=52&Itemid=3)

The view of yachts and supplies of fresh fish draw visitors like a magnet to the Uruguayan port of Punta del Este. Among the bustle, people go about their business virtually unnoticed. However, in their midst are two women who one cannot ignore.

At first glance, Laura Sosa and María Biaño seem quite different from each other. The former is extrovert, passionate and talks quite openly. The latter is reserved, cautious, and initially seems sullen and distrustful. But these women share a common passion: the sea. Laura is the first woman captain of a racing yacht in Maldonado. María is the skipper of a fishing vessel, with a crew to look after.

Laura is 28 years old, has been married for 12 years and has a six-year-old daughter. Born into a family of five boys, she grew up amongst mooring lines and wharfs because her father was the captain of a deep-sea fishing boat. Six years ago, she got a sales job on the vessel *Calypso*, but as she did not get seasick and was bold, she gradually landed seagoing jobs. “My colleagues made bets about how much I would put up with — and I just carried on”, she says happily, like a winner.

Today Laura is the captain of a private yacht. Her work encompasses all the tasks from steering to cleaning, cooking and looking after the boat. Her day starts early in the morning with cleaning the boat. “You must soap it, rinse it and dry it before each voyage”,

she explains. She must ensure that there is no shortage of supplies, and as soon as her bosses arrive, they put to sea. She shares the navigation with her employer, but when he turns in to rest, she is left in command. Despite skipping an English yacht of the latest generation—unique on the River Plate (Rio de la Plata)—she still remains on the alert when the auto-pilot is on. “I don’t trust it”, she says.

Being a woman did not help with her training. Laura had to face the prejudices of her colleagues, who often made out that she was not up to the job. “This is man’s territory, and you are too feminine for this cruel life”, they would say. But this did not bother her. Her passion could not be crushed by mere sexist remarks. “I made fast a large mooring rope under torrential rain and I am happy”, she laughs.

To get where she has, Laura took courses and sat for complex exams. First she got her cabin boy’s card, then a sailor’s certificate and had to do practical tests in first aid and fire control at sea, to pass a course of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). She also learned how to follow routes and to deal with maritime charts up to the standard of Grade B.

María (45), a fisherwoman and the mother of three children, aged 14, 19 and 24, had to face very different circumstances to become the captain of an artisanal fishing vessel. A marriage break-up, advancing pregnancy and a distressing financial situation were the motors that drove this woman to sea. Though she has been sailing since she was three because her father owned a boat, María’s previous occupation was as a lorry driver.

“To start with, I was frightened,” she explains about her days at sea. “You think that a 5-m vessel with three people on board and with an outboard motor is not a very safe place to work. But my ‘needs’ pushed me out to sea, and today, almost 20 years later, I am convinced that I have a wonderful job.”

Time permitting, María sets out “as night falls” to fish for *brótola* (codling), *pescadilla* (croaker), and *cazón* (dog fish/tope) from a small vessel named *Piruleta*.



Before leaving, she prepares and baits 100 hooks, work that is “very time consuming”. Out at sea, she does not get sick, but when she was pregnant and fishing, she “was sick all the time”. Her work is not only at sea; when she gets back on land, the fish must be cleaned and sold in a stall at the port. Her summer earnings, after deducting fuel costs and taxes, provide barely enough to survive for the rest of the year.

Moreover, in the last eight months, she has not caught a single fish. The reason? Destruction caused by vessels fishing with trawls or *barrido* out at sea. The nets used by these vessels catch everything in their paths, and the small fish—that have no commercial value—end up dead, and are thrown back. “In artisanal fishing, small fish are not taken on board, and are returned to the sea alive,” explains Maria.

On the wharf, the fish is divided into equal shares between the crew, and sold. Daily earnings vary between 200 and 1,000 pesos (US\$ 7-32). In any case, they don’t go out every day because they depend on good weather. Costs for fuel and vessel repairs are borne by the owner, in this case, Maria.

As for the future, says Laura: “Now I would like to continue up to Grade A and to start making longer voyages”. She is just about to make her first long voyage, to Angra dos Reis in Brazil, a voyage that will last three weeks, requiring 14 hours of navigation

per day. Despite the prospect of being away from her husband and daughter for so long, the joy of the anticipated trip is reflected in her shining eyes.

And Maria says, “You really feel at ease at sea. To spend six hours in the silence of the sea, listening to the seabirds, takes away all your stress. What’s more, I am at a stage in life where money is not everything. So, although it’s not very lucrative, my work brings me much peace”. What she would like is to have a larger boat to be able to catch *corvina*, which fetches better prices. But she will need to invest US\$30,000 for a new boat. Maria has placed her hopes on a project that aims to renew the fleet with larger fibreglass vessels.

Maria and Laura are well known on the wharfs. A brief walk with them shows how much affection and respect their colleagues have for them. Evidently, these two intrepid women have already found a place in the history of the port of Punta del Este.

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Oceania/ Pacific Islands

Women’s Changing Participation

In the Pacific Island countries, women’s participation in fishing is increasingly the mainstay of their families but remains generally undervalued and unrecognized

This piece by Aliti Vunisea is a condensed version of the article that originally appeared in the *Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin*, Issue 16, March 2007 (<http://www.spc.int/coastfish/news/WIF/WIF16/index.htm>)

Among fishing communities in Pacific Island countries, women’s increasing participation in the market economy is in addition to their traditional and social roles. The involvement of women in the fisheries sector is sometimes under-reported because their fishing



activities are viewed as an extension of their traditional role of food foraging for home consumption.

Although fisheries in Pacific Island countries offer excellent potential, there are many challenges. Women fishers dominate the inshore and subsistence fisheries in many parts, but have limited access to training and decision-making opportunities.

Decreasing catches, the loss of certain inshore species, the development of coastal fisheries areas for non-fishing uses and tourism, general land reclamation and industrial development, have direct impacts on women's fishing activities. As a consequence, women have to travel farther to fish, search for transportation to distant reefs, or seek alternative sources of livelihoods.

In many Pacific Island countries, even where women are the main income earners, assets such as boats and fishing gear are owned by men, particularly in patrilineal societies. Since women usually do not own the boats needed for transportation to outer reefs, fuel price hikes directly affect them, increasing their overall indebtedness.

Traditional institutions, protocols and beliefs are, however, slowly changing. Women who have achieved a measure of educational and economic success have somewhat changed the codes of conduct and systems of interaction in island communities. These women

have become the change agents, representing women's grievances at village forums.

However, in some communities, like those in the rural coastal areas of the Solomon Islands and Fiji, women's productive work remains unrecognized and faces traditional barriers. For example, women not only fish but also gather root crops. They have to paddle long distances in canoes to fetch food or walk long distances carrying heavy sacks of root crops and coconuts on their backs. There are taboo periods, such as during menstruation, when women cannot go fishing.

The concept of 'bride price' conditions women to believe that since their husbands have paid a price for them, it is their duty to do the food gathering and fishing. In some areas of the Solomon Islands, women are the predominant fishers in the mangrove areas, where crocodiles, sighted frequently, are a real threat.

In Fiji, women in some rural coastal areas also undertake gardening and fishing activities as part of the traditional roles of food foraging. In some Fijian rural villages, women exchange crabs and other marine products for money or food. In cases where middlepersons buy from communities, prices are set by the buyers, and as women have little knowledge of the market, products are often sold at very low prices.

Exchanging mats, baskets and *tapa* for modern household amenities such as curtains, blankets, mosquito nets, plates and pots is, in some cases, their only means of accessing consumer goods. These transactions between women in rural and urban areas are often mediated by unequal conditions of power and privilege.

At the other extreme, in Tokelau and Niue, women's fishing participation is more a leisure activity. These countries enjoy a higher per capita income and a more Western lifestyle because of their association with New Zealand. Women in these countries have high

access to income and education, and men are the main fishers and food gatherers.

In Samoa, women are less involved in fishing but actively participate in certain invertebrate fisheries. Samoan women target the sea cucumber fishery, collecting, cutting and gutting several species of sea cucumber. The guts are used in popular dishes.

In Kiribati and Tuvalu, women are mainly gleaners, while men are the fishers. Women are regularly out in the nearshore areas gleaning and netting small reef fish. Most fishing in Kiribati is from canoes and is mostly done by men.

In general, women in the Melanesian countries of Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are involved in fishing. Tradition highly influences the participation of women in the sector, and there is thus regional variation. Women's fishing participation may seem unchanged and minimal in some cases, but the roles they play significantly affect food security and the future of children in the Pacific.

Women dominate seafood selling and marketing activities in nearly all countries of the Pacific, selling at the market, on the roadside, to middlepersons, house-to-house, to restaurants and to exporters. In most cases, women sit under the hot sun all day, trying to sell their highly perishable products. Selling in municipal markets is on a small scale, with no capital support. Women learn selling skills on the job. Their exposure is confined to the local market. However, over time, women have formed informal self-help groups to aid their selling.

Although women's work in fishing may be the primary income earner and takes many forms, from preparation of fishing gear to involvement in fishing, harvesting, processing or distribution activities, especially marketing, these activities are economically undervalued, and women are neglected in mainstream development initiatives, education and training. The significant point is that the fisheries sector is where most women entrepreneurs and home supporters are.

These women run their families with little acknowledgement or assistance.

If they are to be included in mainstream development, existing barriers of technology, market, education, opportunity and so on, must be removed. Access to markets, and training in marketing, quality handling, budgeting, credit facilities, nutrition and entrepreneurship are needed. The bigger challenge is how to translate policies into meaningful actions that will benefit women. Linking women to available development resources and information in newly-emerging private and informal sectors is also a challenge.

Using the advances in information and communication technologies to benefit people in rural areas, especially women and youth, is an urgent need. At the regional level, networking and advances in regional approaches to fisheries have progressed rapidly. How can the same sort of networking and collaboration be achieved at the national and community level to benefit women? And which is needed—the equitable representation of women or the empowerment of rural coastal women? The overemphasis on women in leadership and decision-making could draw attention away from the urgent need to lift the standard of living of women in rural coastal communities.

The needs in these two cases differ enormously. At the decision-making level, there is a need for political willingness to open doors to women in spite of institutional barriers. Campaigning, education and training are needed to empower, and engage with, them.

At the community level, the need is to take women out of poverty; to put in place measures that will have direct impacts on the work areas and responsibilities of women, and help them tap existing opportunities. For many women, it is not the lack of income or food that is the biggest problem; it is the lack of opportunities to be able to carve a future for themselves and their children.

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Latin America/ Chile

From Challenge to Opportunity

Pisagua achieved notoriety as a prison, torture and death camp during the brutal Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1990). Today fishermen's wives want to give Pisagua another reputation, as a lovely tourist destination boasting tasty seafood

This piece is translated by Brian O'Riordan from an article by Daniela Olivares that appeared in *La Caleta*, Edición 8, No 1. Marzo 2007 (http://www.conapach.cl/revista/la_caleta_8_01.pdf)

On 21 February 2007, a group of 21 women connected with artisanal fishing in the Commune of Huara in Chile's Tarapacá Region I, incorporated themselves into the artisanal fishery by setting up the Co-operative of Women Entrepreneurs and Harvesters of *Caleta* Pisagua, Comuepi. Their aim is to improve the commercialization of seafood produced by fishermen from the *caleta*.

The specific objectives of the co-operative are to engage in the production, purchase, sale, distribution and processing of goods and products, to provide services related to the harvesting of seafood, the export of products and services, and activities that contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of those who carry them out.

According to Solange Alvarez, a member of the co-operative, the idea arose from the needs expressed by several wives of the divers and fishermen of the No.1 Syndicate in Pisagua. They wanted to form an association to jointly commercialize the fishery products caught by the fishermen. Until then each one had bought and sold sea urchin (*erizos*) and abalone (*locos*) on an individual basis in different parts of the region, including Huara, Pozo, Almonte, Iquique and even in the metropolitan region of Santiago.

"We realized that we were heading nowhere; having to travel here and there from this very isolated place meant that each of us was spending a lot of money. On the other hand, organized and united, we can



apply for funding and projects to improve the way our products are presented," Solange explained. "At the moment, we are hoping to be granted some seed capital that will enable us to arrange a processing area where we can bottle and serve our products, and so add value and increase our incomes."

Pisagua has wide notoriety in the region's collective memory. Over three presidential periods, it was used as a detention and torture centre. But it was the discovery of human remains there during the decade of the 1990s that shed light on the brutality of the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. Through its association with this dark period of the country's history, the port was inevitably stigmatized.

The co-operative now has enthusiastic plans to blot out this stain and promote Pisagua as a destination for bountiful seafood. The co-operative plans to use one of their member's houses to welcome tourists and offer them tastings of the fishermen's daily catch.

"In this way, through the joint work that we are planning with the artisanal fishermen, we hope to stimulate tourism, so that Pisagua is not just known for past political events", emphasizes Solange.

These wives and mothers from the artisanal fishery hope that their work will allow them to give Pisagua another face, one that is more inviting for people to get to know the *caleta*. Over time, they believe, the fishermen, and especially their sons, will progress along with the community.

The women say: “We don’t want our sons to stay in Iquique when they go to study there. We want them to return as professionals and to join us in our efforts to bring development and education to both our commune and our *caleta*”.

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European Union

AKTEA Meets Again

The Northern Ireland Women in Fisheries (NIWIF) network hosted the AKTEA network members in Annalong during 27-29 April 2007
By Katia Frangoudes, Facilitator of AKTEA, the European Network of Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture

Eighty women from eight European countries—United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece—met in Annalong, Northern Ireland, from 27 to 29 April 2007 for the Second Conference and Second General Body Meeting of AKTEA: European Network of Women in Fisheries and Aquaculture, with the aim of shaping the future actions of the organization. Women representing 15 organizations and speaking eight different European languages converged in Annalong, to act not only for the maintenance of fisheries and aquaculture on the coast but also for the recognition of their significant contributions in these industries.

On the first day, participants visited the three main fishing harbours of Northern Ireland—Kilkeel, Ardglass and Portavogie—where they learnt about the local fisheries, the shell fishing and the processing industry. The main species for local fisheries here are nephrops, cod and crabs, which have a high commercial value. Both artisanal and industrial forms of processing are practised, and visits to both types of industries were organized.

The second day was spent in presentations and discussions, covering a wide range of issues. From the socioeconomic condition of fishing villages to

restrictive legislation, the issues facing fisheries in Northern Ireland were discussed. Cornelie Quist, a member of the Netherlands-based VinVis network, talked about the growth and activities of women’s organizations in Europe that are struggling for the recognition of women’s contribution in fisheries and aquaculture. Ann Bell, the secretary of the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) of the North Sea, spoke about the role of the RAC, with a focus on why women’s organizations in fisheries should be active participants in such bodies.

In another presentation, Marie H el ene Aubert, Member of the European Parliament, addressed the issues of women being the invisible workforce within the industry. She also explained the importance of lobbying at the European and national levels. An outline of the European Fisheries Funds (EFF) 2007-2013, which provides financial aid to fisheries and aquaculture industries and includes women-specific aspects, was also presented.

On the final day, the issue of globalization came up for discussion. Barbara Neis of the Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada, talked about globalization in the context of gender, fisheries and socioecological health. Brian O’Riordan of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers presented a film and led a discussion on the impact of globalization on fishing communities. The participants were then invited to share experiences from their communities related to globalization.

Reflecting on the conference, participants felt that the lack of simultaneous translation facilities was an obstacle to good communication. They expressed the need for better information exchange. An AKTEA website, a newsletter and training on various aspects such as leadership-building, lobbying and resource management, were identified as important needs.

Everyone acknowledged the important role of the annual AKTEA meeting in maintaining the dynamic nature of the network. The kindness and hospitality of the Irish hosts was also warmly acknowledged.

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Latin America/Brazil

Why Are We in CONAPE?

The results, so far, of CONAPE have been disappointing, with highly disparate workers interests being represented, including NGOs, trade unions and associations

By Adriane Lobo, Adviser to the National Association of People Affected by Dams, Brazil

CONAPE, Brazil's National Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture is a consultative collegiate body, integral to the basic structure of the President of the Republic's Special Secretariat for Aquaculture and Fisheries (SEAP/PR). Its role is to review the formulation of public policies, promote debate between different levels of government and organized civil society, and develop and support aquaculture and fisheries activities in Brazil.

CONAPE consists of 54 members who represent government and civil society. Workers (15 seats), the industry (10 seats) and researchers are represented. Civil society organizations are not mentioned per se, as they are considered to be covered in the three categories. The workers' sector is composed of such a wide variety of interests that it is impossible to come to any common position.

In the SEAP/PR, fishworkers are represented by the following:

- The National Fishworkers Movement (Monape, two seats);
- Consejo Pastoral de Pescadores (CPP, two seats);
- National Women Fishworkers Platform (Articulación Nacional de Mujeres Pescadoras, ANP);
- Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST);
- Movement of those Affected by Dams (MAB);
- Movement of Professional Artisanal Fishermen (MPPA);



- The National Confederation of Fishermen and Fishfarmers (CNPA, two seats);
- National Confederation of Aquatic and Air Transport Workers in Fishing and Ports (CONTTMAF);
- National Federation of Aquatic and Related Transport Workers (FNTTAA, two seats);
- The Federation of Fishery Engineer Associations of Brazil (FAEP-BR); and
- The Brazilian Co-operatives Organization (OCB).

Notably, of the worker's organizations represented, the National Women Fishworkers Platform (ANP) is the only one that purports to represent the interests of women fishworkers.

The first meeting of SEAP/PR, during 27 -29 March 2007 in Brasilia, aimed to set objectives and define how the Council should function, but it left many disappointed. It failed to establish working groups, avoided providing an overarching perspective for fisheries and aquaculture in Brazil, and fragmented the agenda of the Council into too many areas.

Civil society has a role in SEAP/PR in defending the dignity and culture of fishing in Brazil, where food sovereignty and the environment provide the basic

pillars that support the fisher people, fishing communities and Brazilian families that depend on artisanal fishing and aquaculture.

There is clearly much work to do.

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Asia/ Philippines

Women in Fisheries, Policy

Palihan, A Policy Journal on Gender Issues and Women in the Philippines Fisheries Sector, Volume I, 2006, published by NGOs for Fisheries Reform in partnership with Foundation for the Philippine Environment

This review of the first article in this volume is by Neena Koshy, Programme Associate, ICSF

Palihan, the journal of NGOs for Fisheries Reform (NFR) in the Philippines, aims to provide relevant policy research, in aid of legislation, that can assist local and national policy institutions in developing a more responsive Fisheries Code in the country. Volume 1, 2006 of the journal focuses on “Gender Issues and Women in the Fisheries Sector in the Philippines”.

There are six papers in this volume. The first, titled “Looking for Women in Fisheries Policies and Programmes: A Review of Literature on Women in the Fisheries Sector in the Philippines”, by Amelia Marie Dasig-Salazar and Shiela Marie Dasig, is reviewed here. This paper is a contribution towards the mandatory review of the Philippines Fisheries Code of 1998 (Republic Act (RA) 8550). The Fisheries Code is the national legislation that provides for the development, management and conservation of fisheries and aquatic resources. Considered a landmark piece of legislation for fisherfolk, it has not, however, provided enough space for women to raise their particular issues and assert their claims to the benefits that the law has to offer.

The review is in three parts: (i) policies and literature pertaining to women in general; (ii) policies and plans related to fisheries and how gender is incorporated in them; and (iii) local development plans and gender plans in the service municipalities of the Community Empowerment and Resource Development (CERD) Inc., in the island municipality of Almagro and Tinambacan District in Western Samar.

The paper concludes with recommendations on how policies and programmes can better take into account the interests of women in the fisheries sector.

The paper notes that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979, and the Beijing Declaration can be used as a basis for crafting laws that address gender-specific concerns. The Philippines, as early as 1975, responded to international calls to uphold women’s rights through the establishment of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW). The Philippine Constitution, which integrated the principles of gender equality, was enacted in 1987. The Constitution states: “The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of men and women”.

Soon after, the Republic Act 7192 (RA 7192), known as the Women in Development and Nation-building Act of 1992, was enacted. This landmark legislation strengthened women’s position as full and equal partners of men in development and nation-building. RA 7192, among other things, gives the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), with the assistance of NCRFW, the mandate to ensure that the different government departments and agencies formulate and implement development programmes for women, and ensure their participation in the entire programme development process.

Executive Order 273 approved and adopted the Philippine Plan for Gender-responsive Development (PPGD) for 1995-2025. This is the government’s perspective framework for pursuing full equality and development, and the primary reference for integrating gender dimensions in the long-term development plan.

It is also notable that the Gender and Development (GAD) Budget Policy requires agencies or local government units (LGUs) to set aside a minimum of five per cent of their annual appropriation to be used for priority programmes, projects and activities designed to address gender issues and women's concerns, in accordance with RA 7192.

Given the strong legal basis, nationally and internationally, the paper explores whether, in reality, issues and concerns of women have been addressed in different policies and programmes in the fisheries sector. The paper notes that the two most important national laws for fisheries, the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) (RA 8435) and the Philippine Fisheries Code (RA 8550), which became effective in 1998, lacked a clear gender perspective. For example, only a few of the Administrative Orders issued under the above laws included provisions on women in their formulation. AFMA, in particular, lacks a gender perspective, and women are mentioned only in passing, even though the Act is said to be the cornerstone of the government policy for poverty alleviation in the agriculture and fisheries sector. The role women perform in the whole production process is not recognized. There is no consideration of the importance of their participation in policy formulation, or even the need to consult them in matters that directly affect them, such as credit policies, marketing and training programmes.

As compared to AFMA, the Fisheries Code, the paper notes, has a more appropriate gender perspective, in that there are efforts to provide for more participation of women in the fisheries, particularly in the Fisheries and Resource Management Councils (FARMCs). However, several provisions still need to be revised to ensure gender fairness, such as to provide for women's representation in higher bodies, for example, at the national level NFARMC.

The paper concludes with some recommendations to ensure gender fairness in the fisheries sector, particularly in policy formulation. There is need to advocate for changes in fisheries law and for frameworks for making development plans gender-sensitive.

Copies of the journal can be ordered through the NFR website, www.nfrphil.org

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Asia/ India

A Disaster in the Making

The Indian government is seeking to replace existing coastal regulation with reforms for coastal privatization. The impact on fishing communities, particularly women, will be devastating

By Nilanjana Biswas, writer and researcher on developmental issues

Home to more than 6 mn fisher people, India's over 7,500-km long coastline has become something of a battleground in recent times. The only piece of legislation that protects India's coasts is a notification issued in 1991: the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification. Although, in its original form, the notification offered some protection to fragile coastal ecosystems and made mention of the traditional rights of fishing communities, subsequently, numerous amendments and violations made mockery of the law. Today, the government is seeking to altogether dismantle the Notification and introduce in its place another Notification: the Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Notification.

There are numerous problems with this move. There has been no consultation with fishing communities—surely the primary stakeholders in such a process! Further, enacting new legislation without penalizing existing violations under the 1991 CRZ Notification, primarily by commercial interests, will help only to legitimize the violations. The zonal demarcations being proposed will pave the way for the displacement of fisherpeople from their traditional habitats and open up ecologically sensitive coastal areas to unbridled commercial exploitation. The privatization that will be introduced in the name of coastal



management is nothing short of a recipe for large-scale disaster.

The gender dimensions of the impending disaster are particularly worrisome. Already, decades of commercialization have degraded Indian coasts, and created havoc in the lives of fisherwomen, restricting their access to their traditional means of livelihood. Aided by the proposed reforms, as an unregulated free market takes over the coasts, the impact on women will be devastating.

Privatized beaches will mean no place for drying fish, mending nets, or carrying out all the ancillary activities that provide fisherwomen a means of survival. Sand and mineral mining—activities already controlled by organized mafia—will weaken large tracts of the coast, causing flooding and sea water intrusion. Drinking water, food security and housing—the basic rights of fishing communities, indeed every human being—will be undermined, thus overburdening women who bear the primary responsibility for the family. Further, hotels, resorts and entertainment parks mushrooming along the scenic coasts will open up avenues for sex tourism and pedophilia, multiplying, among other problems, the incidence of HIV/AIDS in a country already classified as high-risk for the disease.

A number of campaigns have been initiated against the proposed coastal reforms and the CZM Notification. United, consistent and widespread public

pressure is needed to force the Indian government to reverse the perilous path it has chosen to follow in recent times.

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Film

Texas Gold

Texas Gold: One Woman's Fight in the Most Polluted Place in America. Documentary. 2005. Producer and Director: Carolyn M. Scott

The following synopsis, by Judith Hefland, is from the film's website: <http://www.texasgoldmovie.com/>

Texas Gold follows the adventures of one of the most dedicated—and unlikely—muckrakers of this generation. Diane Wilson—mother of five, fourth-generation fisherwoman, Public Enemy No.1 in Calhoun, County Texas.

From Wall Street to the front lawn of CEO Warren Anderson's multi-million-dollar mansion on Long Island, all the while chased by Texas Rangers charged with bringing her to justice, Diane pursues a reckless industry with a soft drawl, dogged determination and her own special brand of southern bad-ass fisherwoman humour.

When Diane discovered that her home, Calhoun County, Texas, had been named one of the most toxic places in America, she decided to take action, taking on the giants of the petro-chemical industry, who were poisoning her community and knowingly devastating the once-thriving fishing industry. These companies continue to illegally spill millions of pounds of chemicals into the gulf bays, while their hired-gun PR firms busily underplayed the chemical plant explosions and soaring local cancer rates. This was business-as-usual for Dow/Union Carbide, one of the biggest toxic offenders in Calhoun, also responsible for the now famous/infamous 1984 pesticide gas leak at its plant in Bhopal, India, killing 20,000 over the last 20 years.



In the 16 years since she began her fight, Diane has received death threats, and suffered intimidation tactics; shots were fired at her house from a helicopter and her dog was poisoned.

Texas Gold profiles the brave and ballsy actions that have earned Diane Wilson the title of “unreasonable woman”: waging multiple hunger strikes, starting up a business bottling toxic water taken from a superfund site—which she creatively labelled ‘Texas Gold’ and sold back to the tycoons whose heedless business practices had polluted the water—sinking her own shrimp boat on top of a toxic discharge site, and being convicted for trespassing after chaining herself to an ethyl oxide tower at her local Union Carbide plant and unfurling a banner emblazoned with the words: “Justice for the victims of the Bhopal disaster!”

On 3 October 2005, District Attorney of Texas ordered Diane Wilson to begin a jail sentence for criminal trespass of the Dow plant. She jumped bail, refused to serve time for her ‘crime’ until Warren Anderson, the former CEO of Union Carbide, answers a summons from the Indian government to stand trial as the chief defendant in a culpable homicide case for the Bhopal tragedy. Diane was arrested and is serving time in the Victoria County Texas jail; when she gets out, hold on to your wild-feathered hats. The adventures of this “unreasonable woman” have just begun!

YEMAYA

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Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We would also like names of other people who could be interested in being part of this initiative. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.

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.