An Economic Perspective on Integrating Gender Issues in Fisheries Management and Development in the Pacific Islands

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Background & Aims

- Gender policies not yet on the development agenda despite men and women having different impacts on economy, environment, fisheries and society
- Articulate new ways to manage marine and fisheries resources for sustainable outcomes
- Argue need for deeper insight into the role of women through an economic perspective
  - Focus on maritime regions of the Pacific
Study Question & Methods

- How do the different roles contribute to the economic performance of the sector?
- Gender issues are cross-cutting and multi-dimensional impinging on activities and performances of several sectors simultaneously
- Multidisciplinary approach within the context of NIE – to understand economic performance of informal institutions
- Literature reviews and case studies
Key issues in Pacific Island fisheries

- Fisheries – important source of livelihood and income
- Two categories of fisheries – women play key roles
- Overfishing & loss of biodiversity
Addressing over-exploitation

• A number of Projects - to control fishing pressure and protect biodiversity

• Need to recognize integrated nature of fisheries
  – Need for cooperation- individuals, groups, nations – to act on “good faith”

• Good governance/institutions – contributes to social stability, resource sustainability and hence support economic development
Fisheries management.....

• Good fisheries management outcomes – strong moral and ethical component (McIlgorm, 2000)
• Understanding human behavior and incentives (Hilborn, 2007)
Ethical considerations

- Good governance – rules and institutions to bring about required behavior and attitudinal change
- Ethics – rules of behavior governing decision-making, having concern for others
- Values – what we learn during childhood
Capitalize on ‘social capital’ to reduce cost of management

• Articulate on an integrated approach to improve fisheries management
  – Changing people’s behavior, attitude and action
  – Moral and social values in children
  – Early childhood development – learning environment
  – Empowering women in coastal communities
  – Marine stewardship
Individual action

- Marine stewardship – transformation of character (McIlgorm, 2000)
- Environmental education – to change behavior and attitude

Photo by Johnson Seeto, USP
Marine education and learning environment

• How to control human behavior and attitude towards the use and protection of the marine environment – ethical considerations and values to change the mindset towards voluntary action
• School and university curriculum
• Pacific Islands children – first exposure to marine environment
Children’s learning environment
Cont’d
Children’s learning

• Learning – process of acquiring knowledge, behavior, skills, and attitudes

• Early years are important for brain development, sets foundation for learning and life (Morrison 2008:39)

• “A young plant can be planted, transplanted, pruned and bent this way or that, when it becomes a tree these processes are impossible” [John Amos Comenius (1592-1670)]
Women and Children
......at the market place
Mothers have strong influence on children’s lives
Fishing and related activities

Knowledge is transmitted through performance of daily tasks, observing, listening and imitating:

- Harvesting
- Processing
- Marketing
- Cooking
- Resource management
Conceptualizing the Role of Women in Supporting Marine Stewardship in Fishing Communities in the Pacific Islands

Social customs
- Norms and values systems
- Household division of labor
- Traditional ecological knowledge

Women in fishing communities

Values, beliefs, and customary practices

Marine Public Education
Awareness & environmental sensitivity

Formal Education
Marine Education
Other Disciplinary Subjects

Learning Environment

Personal Development
Professional Development

Responsible Fisher
Responsible Fisheries Manager

Marine Citizenship

Marine Stewardship

Community Influences
- Children

Gender Policy
- Access to resources
- Availability of time
- Level of education and training
- Health and well-being

Sustainable Fisheries
Food and Nutritional Security
Economic Growth
Sustainable Livelihoods
Biodiversity Protection
Social Stability

Responsible Fisheries Outcomes
Subsistence & artisanal fishery

- Supply contributes to economic production
- Contribution to food and nutritional security
  - Development of rural economy: better health, reduced medical bill, self-reliant strategies
Optimizing resource benefits

- Need to increase effective supply of fish and fishery products –
- Raise consumption levels by proper handling, processing and storage
  (within the fisheries sector – women in marketing and processing)
Shore-based activities: Marketing and distribution

- Poor post-harvest, quality control, poor pricing
- Informal nature of the work does not reflect the rate of depletion, scarcity of production, unpaid nature of their labour
- Real value of coastal fisheries resources is not realized
- Potential for economic gain or current loss of value?
Observed market price distorted

- Need for cost & benefit analysis
- seaweed in Fiji, Shell collection in Kiribati
Opportunities

• Valuation studies looking at costs and benefits of action and inaction (impacts) e.g. reflecting on – labour, production, savings, costs to economy

• Women are seen as key agents for change

• Affirmative policies to support women’s education and training

• Empowerment of women to support their families and children
Constraints

- Methodological constraints for valuation of informal sector
- Gender issues are multi-dimensional & complex
- Mainstream fisheries development focused on bigger picture
- Lack of policy support and platforms for gender awareness & advocacy
Thank you for listening

• Questions?