

GENDER MAINSTREAMING AS A STRATEGY FOR POVERTY REDUCTION IN SMALL-SCALE COMMUNITY FISHERIES: A CASE STUDY OF NANDONI DAM, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract: This study assesses the basis of gender discrimination in the management of the fishery sector of the Nandoni dam and examines the role played by patriarchy in the management of the small-scale community fisheries of the dam. It analyses the role of gender in the fisheries sector of the Budeli, Manini and Dididi communities located around the dam in Vhembe district of Limpopo province of South Africa. A combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to assess how the people who manage the fisheries sector are chosen; whether there is any mainstreaming of gender in the selection process of the managers; observe the gender equality in the allocation of the fishing rights to the fishers; and propose gender mainstreaming strategies to be adopted by men and women to alleviate poverty in the fishing communities. The data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions. Specifically, the qualitative approach was used to capture and understand the intricacy of gender relations. Quantitative methods were used to collect quantifiable data, such as the demographic details and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, through individual structured questionnaire. The social construction of gender was used as the theoretical framework to discuss the findings of the study.

The study key findings indicate that the Nandoni dam small-scale community fisheries are managed

through the local authorities. Other findings are that the managers of the dam's fisheries sector are the community chiefs. These chiefs join with their ruling council to form the management. Additionally, the local government police division managed the fisheries with the local authorities; the managers of the fisheries sector of the dam assumed the position as chiefs of the community; only those born into the royal family (ancestral right) can qualify to assume the status of a manager of the fisheries sector of the dam; the right to fish at the dam is an indigenous right or resides with members of the community. Observations on gender equity in allocation of fishing rights show that, the management gives approval to persons who apply, and does not deny rights to fish at the dam. In addition, only men seek for approval to fish at the dam; if both men and women seek for approval to fish at the dam they will issue them the rights without bias; cultural influence in the management of the fisheries sector, dissuades women as compared to men who participate actively in the community fisheries. Women in the three communities indicated that the community attitude towards women's participation in fishing was discouraging, compared to men.

Various constraints limited participation in the fisheries. These include conflict between fishers and the local authorities; cultural beliefs and practices, market structure, capital, preservation tools, reduced

catches, no spouse support, technologies and price fluctuation. Nevertheless, prospects for integrating fishing activities were encouraging, women and men indicated their interest to be part of the fisheries management, do the actual fishing, fish processing, selling fishing materials, sun drying, trading in fish and restaurant/bar. In addition, findings in the three communities indicate diversification of livelihoods as a coping strategy for alternative income with prove that both women and men can form groups for businesses, partner in trading and borrowing, change occupation, conform to rules, and join government work, pooling resources to generate more income and to farm and engage in casual labour to supplement income.

Further, findings indicate that actual fishing is an only men occupation while women's involvement is in indirect fishing activities such as marketing, processing and preserving. Women are however involved in other diverse occupations such as trading and businesses, farming and casual labour. A majority of the respondents had no formal education as the men's and the women's educational attainment in the three communities is at a low level.

The study therefore, came to the following recommendations: the management of Nandoni dam fisheries should review and restructure to incorporate community members who are not part of the royalty and offer the opportunity for a small proportion of government representatives that will provide legislation, enforcement and other fisheries sector assistance. In the process of restructuring, priority should be given to women first and foremost. Other recommendations are: stimulation and promotion of cooperative pressure groups consisting fishermen and women should be encouraged; promotion and strengthening of women-only fishing associations should be inaugurated and there should be system that constantly reviews and provides pro gender equality in the fisheries. The management policies and their implementation should take into account the cultural background and gender dynamics of the communities; and they should encourage the development of education and entrepreneurial skills for the fishers as a diversification livelihood as well as alternative income.

Keywords: Fishing: Gender: Gender mainstreaming: Gender roles: Small-scale community fisheries.

INTRODUCTION

Gender refers to the socially and culturally constructed roles, responsibilities, privileges, expectations and relations involving women and men. Gender mainstreaming, therefore, addresses gender issues in all development policies and projected programmes. Mainstreaming is the very opposite of a

policy strategy which segregates gender issues and is used by those who recognize women's development as essentially concerned with women's participation and empowerment, in order to redress gender inequalities. From this viewpoint, the mainstreaming of gender issues involves the transformation of the development process.

The most widely accepted definition of gender mainstreaming is the one adopted by the United Nations' Economic and Social Council UNECOSOC [37], which states that: Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

The relationship between the issues of gender inequalities and poverty is that the incidences of poverty experienced are gendered by the differential impacts on women and men, girls and boys, and by their different responses [17]. Therefore, alleviating poverty requires strategies that are intrinsically social.

Poverty in the fisheries sector is linked to deeper social influences and processes. It is evident that poverty alleviation in the fisheries is not only an issue of sustainable resource management, but also one of societal governance. These societal governance implications impact on poverty reduction amongst the fishers. This phenomenon therefore deserves to be study.

Poverty alleviation in small-scale community fisheries presents a good area for exploring the merits of governance systems because of the way fisheries are understood and conceptualized [25]. For instance, poverty in the fisheries is typically understood as a problem and a cause of overfishing and resource degradation respectively. This would seem to suggest that, in order to address poverty, the problem of overfishing, as well as the decisions and institutions that are established to manage fisheries must be addressed too [25]. Poverty in small-scale community fisheries is not necessarily related to the state of the fisheries resources or specific to either the fisheries degradation or fishing problem [4]. Rather, the prevalence of poverty in the fisheries sector is as a result of the sharing of responsibilities and role assignment. This reflects the wider issue of rural poverty and the general lack of economics, political and institutional development that affects rural areas in which fishing communities tend to live [4].

Generally, poverty is often viewed through a macro-analysis approach that revolves around the issues of good governance, economic growth and institutional development at the level of the nation-state and beyond [25]. Ongoing studies have brought new dimensions to the understanding of poverty and its alleviation strategies, which place emphasis on the need for a micro-analysis. This micro-analysis asserts that an effective way of addressing poverty demands focus on the trivial details of a person's everyday life. This new perspective is built on the grounds that poverty is context-specific and that poverty alleviation strategies must take into account how poverty is actually experienced [2]. Thus, knowledge about poverty must be generated on the basis of specific situations and locations; it should also be concretized from below [25]. Micro-analysis has a lot of significance in small-scale community fisheries and their specific locations, different socio-cultural traditions, patterns and practices. Fishers adapt to their particular environments and their experiences differ from one place to another [38; 19].

A small-scale community fishery is a special fishery subsector that is dynamic and evolving, it employs labour intensive harvesting, processing and distribution technologies to exploit marine and inland water fishery resources [13]. The activities of this subsector, whether full-time, part-time or seasonal, are often targeted at supplying fish and fishery products to local and domestic markets, as well as for subsistence consumption. Recently, an estimated 90 percent of the people recorded by the FAO as fishers and fish-farmers were group as small-scale community fishers. Yet, globally the small-scale community fisheries sector is not given serious attention. Despite the huge number of people involved and the resulting benefits such as poverty alleviation, many states, donor agencies and researchers have not evaluated the policy programmes of the small-scale community fisheries sector. A starting point to making this sector substantially beneficial for the poor is to recognize and address the small-scale community fisheries sector and other sectorial policies and programmes. One of the major issues here is gender and the management at the fishery projects.

Small-scale community fisheries are often gender segregated and typically male-dominated. As a result, women's fisheries attract less attention from development policy-makers. This ultimately restricts women's opportunities in activities related to fisheries management and development. This in turn reinforces women's subordinate status in the fishing communities.

In Europe, only a few women participate in the small-scale community fisheries sector. According to

Pettersen [26], European women were more involved in shore-based community fishing activities than activities at sea. Women collected shellfish, seaweed or fish on the shore during low tides. Apart from these activities, a few of them are now working on board fishing boats.

However, women's participation in fisheries differs from country to country. Women in developing countries are more active in the small-scale community fishing enterprise and the aquaculture industry. Those who actively participate in direct fishing do so together with their husbands on the small family fishing boats. Women work on boats that operate near or close to the coast, particularly in estuaries and bays. It is believed that they perform more tasks than men on board the fishing vessel. They set and pull in the nets, sort and auction fish, while men's task is only to steer the fishing boat.

In Asia, small-scale community fishing activity provides certain opportunities for women. Their roles are traditionally important because they are the processors and handlers of fish for the domestic market [9]. Gender roles in small-scale community fisheries locate women's responsibilities on all the marketing points, starting from landing of fish to vending.

In Africa, small-scale community fisheries are male dominated, women involve indirectly through fish trade and processing. The actual fishing tasks are performed by men, who go out in their canoes with various types of fishing gear. Other activities performed by men in their fishing communities are boat building/repairs, and net (fishing gear) mending. After every fishing trip, landed fresh fish catch are sold to fish workers who then market them either as fresh fish or processed. The sales of either the fresh catch or processed fish are carried out by women. In most cases, women fish in streams, creeks and small water bodies using nets. According to Ibrahim *et al* [15], the status of women in fishing communities has always been considered culturally inferior to men because of the ways and tactics they use for fishing. Traditionally, in Africa, men have sovereign power, control households and the society as a whole, while women are ascribed to a lower hierarchy compared to men [3]. The historical deprivations of women, socially, legally, politically and technologically in fishing communities, aggravate their position as subordinates in the fisheries sector [1]. Tamale [34] contends that the non-recognition of women's labour in fishing communities is reinforced by the unequal allocation of resources.

Gender roles feature prominently both at the stage of involvement and participation in the fisheries sector. Involvement includes employment or socio-economic gains. Participation requires active involvement in the

prioritization of development activities and programmes [36]. Participation also entails taking part in the implementation of the decisions and actions, as well as benefiting from the outcomes. Participation in the fisheries sector can, therefore, be viewed from the perspective of gender roles and involvement in development activities of the fisheries sector. Fishing is a highly gender-segregated occupation and the women's role in community fisheries is embedded in the culture of their communities through the structuring of their norms for accessing resources [24].

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Small-scale community fishers in South Africa were formally recognized as a special fisheries sector in 1998 by the Marine Living Resource Act (MLRA). Political changes in the country which led to the end of the apartheid regime added both exigency and the prospect of broadened access to marine resources. Marine living resources have been harvested by the coastline communities for consumptive uses, livelihoods, medicinal purposes and as part of cultural and spiritual practices for centuries. Archaeological evidence and oral history confirm that small-scale community fishers have a long history of harvesting marine living resources in South Africa. For example, inter-tidal resources have been harvested for the past 100 000 years along certain areas of the KwaZulu Natal coast [35]. Many of the KwaZulu Natal fishing communities along the coast have ancestral links with indigenous communities and evidence, such as fish traps, shell middens, archival records and vestiges of customary practice, remain. Spiritual ancestral beliefs and traditions such as drinking sea water and bathing in the sea for healing, baptism, cleansing rituals and the use of a variety of marine living resources for traditional medicinal tenacities abound [33]. These are linked to the sea's role in healing processes.

The colonial and apartheid eras witnessed many traditional fishing communities living adjacent to the coast being dispossessed of their lands. In the 1920s, South Africa introduced policy and legislation to establish a fisheries management system. This system was aimed mainly at the growing of the commercial fisheries sector; it largely neglected the small-scale community fisheries sector. The commercial sector was dominated by wealthy white capitalists, who from the 1940s onwards were assisted by a range of measures that the apartheid regime introduced to support the establishment of a flourishing export-orientated commercial fishing industry [32]. During this period, most of the coloured and black coastal communities living outside of the designated 'Bantustans' were deprived access that they

traditionally had to the sea and marine living resources. Furthermore, prohibitions and regulations forced many into working for the white owned fishing companies.

The dispossession of land, combined with the imposition of new systems of fisheries management, led to many communities losing some or all of their customary access to harvest resources and traditional fishing practices. A few communities have managed to retain their traditions and customary practices of small-scale fishing in their communities.

Small-scale community fishers in the Limpopo Province, Eastern Cape Province, KwaZulu-Natal Province and the Northern Cape Province live mainly in rural areas, compared to those in the Western Cape Province, who live predominantly in urban and peri-urban areas. Fishers in the Western Cape are mainly males. The dominance of males decreases as one move towards the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. In the Western Cape, decades back women were involved in community fishing, but in more recent years, they have been marginalized. Women are, however, involved in many activities that are integral to the small scale community fishing activities.

The small-scale community fisheries sector in South Africa has from time received less or no attention from the apartheid regime. This is because the regime did not favour the rise of blacks and colored communities to dominate the commercial sectors. In addition, the apartheid regime gave no recognition to issues of gender which is the major issue that militates against development in the fisheries sector. The regime that came after the 1940s tried to introduce policies to develop the fishery sector, but its focus was not on the small-scale community fisheries sector. Reforms and policies during the apartheid era did not consider the small-scale community fisheries sector important, and yet this sector employs the largest population in the fisheries sector of South Africa. The apartheid regime's interests were, therefore, focused on transforming subsistence fisheries into the commercial and global entities which the whites dominated.

Several reforms seeking to develop the fisheries have been made since 1994, but the small-scale community fisheries sector still lacks recognition at government policy level. The post-apartheid Minister for Environmental Affairs and Tourism launched a process which led to the development of a new fisheries policy for South Africa. The development of the new policy was guided by the Fisheries Policy Development Committee. The final outcome of this process was the Marine Living Resources Act (MLRA) [33]. This was founded on a policy of sustainable resource use, equitable access to resources and stability of the fisheries industry. The

small-scale community fisheries were not considered in the policy. Although fishing for sustainability (subsistence fisheries) was considered, it is quite a different sector from small-scale community fisheries.

To add value to the part of MLRA that dealt with subsistence fishers, marine and coastal management (MCM), the national agency managing marine resources set up a Subsistence Fisheries Task Group (SFTG) to recommend policies for the management of subsistence fishers [20]. The terms of reference for the SFTG that were developed included those seeking: (a) To define subsistence fishers; (b) Identify coastal zones appropriate for their use; (c) Provide recommendation on the proportion of individual stocks that should be allocated to the various fisheries subgroups or segments; (d) Identify protocols to involve local communities and relevant authorities in the fisheries management process; (e) Recommend models for the implementation of management, monitoring, enforcement, training and research; (f) Finally, develop guidelines and mechanisms for the formation of fisheries subgroups or segments as an alternative to subsistence harvesting for food security.

Despite the efforts and policy statements made by the government and the SFTG to develop the new fisheries sectors policies in South Africa, development in this sector, especially in rural communities, has been slow. Aspects which would have recognized and dealt with the small-scale community fisheries subsector were not well defined. The small-scale community fisheries sector in South Africa has thus not been given deserved recognition, yet this subsector employs the largest number of people in the fisheries sector. This isolation has led to poor livelihoods among the South Africans involved in it. As a result of this isolation, the small-scale community fisheries sector ranks among the poorest management sectors in South Africa because this sector uses traditional culture in their operations resulting in gender being a major issue in this sector. This gender issues in the fisheries sector deserve to be studied.

THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The fishing industry is highly gender segregated in favor of men. It requires an equitable reorganization of gender relations to improve the wellbeing of all those involved in it. In South Africa, like all maritime nations, fishing is an important industry along the coast and in inland dams and rivers. However, like everywhere else in the world, the industry is gendered. Nandoni dam, which is situated in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province of South Africa, provides drinking water to the surrounding villages. However it also has a fishing sector. This

fishing sector has the potential to provide a livelihood to both women and men in the area, but fails to do so due to the gender discrimination that is common in the industry. Furthermore, the dam is situated in a highly patriarchal society where men dominate in everything and whose values affect the management of the dam and the fish resources. This study assesses the basis of gender discrimination in the fishery sector of the Nandoni dam. It also examines the role played by patriarchy in the management of the dam and the fishery sector. The study proposes a gender mainstreaming strategy to enable both women and men to benefit from the fishery sector.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to assess the basis of gender discrimination in the management of the fishery sector of the Nandoni dam and also to examine the role played by patriarchy in the management of the dam fisheries.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the following objectives were pursued: (a) To identify the people who are managing the fisheries sector of Nandoni dam; (b) To assess how people are chosen to manage the fisheries sector; (c) To examine the recognition and inclusion of gender in the selection process of the managers; (d) To examine the criteria used in the allocation of fishing rights to individuals; (e) To assess gender equity in the allocation of the fishing rights; (f) To assess the role played by patriarchy in the management of the dam; (g) To propose gender mainstreaming as a strategy to alleviate poverty in the fisheries community of Nandoni dam.

Research questions

In order to obtain answers that address the specified research objectives, the following research questions were formulated: (a) How is the fisheries sector of Nandoni dam managed? (b) What criterion is used to choose the people managing the fisheries sector? (c) What are the criteria used to allocate fishing rights to individuals? (d) Is there any gender recognition and inclusion in the selection process of the managers? (e) Is there any equity in the allocation of fishing rights? (f) What role does patriarchy play in the management of the fisheries?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed here focuses on the studies that have been conducted in the area of gender in small-scale community fisheries and the strategies that have been adopted to address the poverty that has arisen as a result of the phenomenon. In this respect, the following issues were addressed: the concept "gender mainstreaming" as a strategy for poverty

reduction; gender mainstreaming in small-scale community fisheries management; and co-management of small-scale community fisheries. This section also reviews gender theories and the social construction of gender as a theoretical framework for the study.

Gender mainstreaming as a strategy for poverty reduction

Gender mainstreaming addresses issues of gender. It starts with an analysis of the everyday life condition and experiences of women and men. It marks their different needs and makes problems noticeable. It also ensures that policies and practices are not based on inappropriate assumptions and stereotypes. Gender mainstreaming also makes it clear that women and men are not a homogenous group. The main idea of gender mainstreaming is not just to improve access or balance the statistics. Neither is it a women's only issue, nor about blaming someone for the inequalities that exist. It is also not about stopping or replacing gender specific policies and projects targeted at either women or men [29].

Gender mainstreaming is a millennium policy statement that targets development through a deliberate integration of women and men in development structures. In September 2000, at the United Nations Millennium Summit, 189 governments across the world made a commitment to take collective responsibility to reduce world poverty by 2015. The summit laid out several key development goals to reflect its major objectives. These include the reduction of poverty and hunger, commitment to the promotion of human development, environmental sustainability and development partnerships, and an explicit commitment to gender equality as an end in itself.

Gender mainstreaming is a pro-active process designed to tackle these inequalities that can and do discriminate against either sex. It also seeks to reduce poverty and enhance economic growth. It involves a willingness to establish a balanced distribution of responsibilities between women and men, and recognizes that gender is one of the most fundamental organizing features in society that affects our lives from the moment we are born [29]. Gender mainstreaming recognizes that differences do exist in men's and women's lives and, as a result, our needs, experiences and priorities are different.

Gender inequality, in itself, explains poverty sex differentials. The relationship between gender inequality and poverty is that, poverty experiences are stratified according to gender through the differential impact on women and men, and also by their different responses to this scourge. This is why Healey *et al.*, [14] indicate that investment in gender

equality can boost both economic growth and poverty reduction. Though there is increasing interest in the growth effects of inequality and a resurgence of concern over gender discrimination, gender differentiation should consistently or effectively be addressed in growth policy formulation or implementation. Consequently, developing countries with "less gender inequality", tend to have lower poverty rates [21].

Gender mainstreaming in small-scale community fisheries management

A core value of gender mainstreaming within small-scale community fisheries management is to ensure women's active participation in fisheries programs and management activities. Gender mainstreaming in small-scale community fisheries management is a process of integrating gender concerns into the management structures, programmes and practices. Mainstreaming gender within natural resource management frameworks requires a strategic process that would systematically integrate gender into all natural resources projects, structures and practices [39]. In its original form, gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector reflects a feminist heritage, targeting changes in fisheries practices and also promoting women's empowerment and gender equality in the fisheries sector.

Thus, the fundamental objective of small-scale community fisheries is community management of resources. The management includes protection of the resources through indigenous knowledge, in order to benefit the community. It is within the purview of this objective (indigenous knowledge in management of natural resources) that women should be mobilized to help in fisheries management, because women have strong ties with the environment they live in and the natural resources. However, women are not able to engage in such activities since the activities are largely male-oriented and ascribed.

Gender mainstreaming as defined by the framers of community fisheries is relevant only in terms of women's participation and involvement in fisheries management and poverty alleviation. But, gender mainstreaming is practically silent on the issue of power and gender relations that continue to assign women's social reproductive responsibilities over and above their often undervalued roles in productive and income-generation. This is where several gender mainstreaming projects and programmes actually fail since they are unable to address the rather complex problem of unequal power relations in society [16].

According to Mosse [22], planners and program leaders in the fishery sector are obliged to deliver clear environmental and poverty reduction outcomes, leaving out the more political and messy objectives of

empowerment or gender equality on the sidelines. This outcome results in the mainstreaming of women into projects and programs, instead of mainstreaming gender within such programs. This implies a far more preemptive effort that redresses long established gender-unequal mindsets, practices and institutions. In the fisheries sector, mainstreaming women may unseat the long standing notion that the sector is male oriented or ascribed. But in other natural resources management sectors, mainstreaming women would indeed pose performer partialities; a case of environment coming first, then gender later' and mindset would then be under the tricky banner of gender mainstreaming [8]. This approach falls within the bounds of current efficiency-oriented goals aimed at making certain that gender roles in the communities are involved in environmental management, in order to reduce gender inequalities in environmental governance [22; 16].

Co-management of small-scale community fisheries

Fisheries community based management refers to a partnership in which government, the community of local resource users (the fishers), external agents (non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions), and other fisheries resource stakeholders (boat owners, fish traders, money lenders and tourism establishments), share responsibility for making decisions about the management of a fishery. A small-scale community fishery is a traditional activity whose conduct is within the bounds of social and cultural practices of the inland and marine communities.

The co-management of community fisheries is a new approach to fisheries management, a deliberate departure from former approaches which involved the central government and community members. According to Berkes *et al.*, [5], co-management is a more dynamic partnership that uses the capacities and interest of the local fishers and community as well as the state's to provide enabling legislation, enforcement and other assistance. This approach to fisheries management requires a shift from centralized and top-down forms of management to a new strategy in which fisheries managers and fishers jointly manage the fisheries. Co-management includes a sharing of governance structures between stakeholders in the resource and institutions of local collective governance of common property [27].

In actual situations, the sharing of responsibilities and decision-making may favor one group over another, thus indicating the unevenness in power relations which is very common in locally created institutions that must not be ignored in some instances [10]. This assumes that communities, in themselves, are enclaves of equality, uniformity and that people in

communities are all equally disposed to manage fishery resources. The primary concerns of fisheries management, therefore, should address the relationship of fisheries resources to sustain the indigenes and the conservation of the resources for use by upcoming generations. This indicates that the fundamental focus of community fisheries management should be the people not fish as is always mistakenly put.

Thus, the fishers' participation in management can provide a wealth of local or indigenous knowledge to supplement scientific information, monitor the resource, and improve overall management. Fisheries cannot be managed successfully without the aid of the resource users. The realization of the need for increased participation by resource users in fisheries management and greater localized control over access to the resource can be seen in a wide range of policies and programs throughout the Southeast Asian region [27]. Co-management of small-scale community fisheries has re-emerged as a means of involving resource users and to utilizing locally established arrangements and knowledge in fisheries management.

Theoretical framework (Gender theory and the social construction of gender)

Gender theory explains how individuals become gendered in society, and in what manner sex-linked individualities are maintained and transformed to other members of a culture. Gender is created and recreated out of human interaction in our daily life, and form the texture and order of that social life [18].

The social construction of gender argues that gender is socially constructed therefore; men and women do not only adopt gender roles as they grow up but react to the changes confronting them in society. Gender forms part of daily life that it usually takes consideration of our prospect of how women and men are expected to act in a society. When children are born, they learn to categorize in terms of gender as soon as they grow to the stage of identifying their masculine or feminine. For instance, boys learn to deploy their physical and social environment through physical strength or other skills, while girls learn how to beautify themselves as objects to be viewed upon [7]. The environment children grow in influences and affects gender development. Being male or female is not natural, according to Butler [6], but it would only appear to be natural through repeated performances of gender, and in which these performances in turn reproduce and define the traditional categories of sex or gender.

The occurrence of gender as a way of structuring social life demands that gender statuses be clearly differentiated in terms of performance. In the social

construction of gender, it does not count what men and women do, nor matter if they do particular tasks. The social institution of gender insists only that what they do is apparently different. Lorber [18] contends that even though men and women are doing the same tasks, they are usually spatially segregated to maintain gender separation. Often these tasks are given different job titles as well.

Gender creates distinguishable social statuses for the assignment of rights and responsibilities in the society which usually takes unequal stands. Gender creates the social differences that define women and men. The extent of the social inequality between women and men varies from society to society, and in this respect, the status women and its associated performance and role allocations is usually less favoured than the status man. Within many social groups, men's groups are privileged over women groups.

When gender stands as a major factor of structured inequality in any society, the devalued genders have less power than the valued genders. Men dominate in positions of authority and leadership in society. They also dominate in cultural production because of the pattern of socialization of the society. Gender construction starts with underlining gender in relation to culture, sex segregation and work force participation.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section describes the research design and methodology that was used to answer the research questions that helped to achieve the objectives of the study. This study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The quantitative method was used to collect and analyze quantifiable data. The qualitative method was used to complement the quantitative methods. It helped the researcher obtain the real life experiences data of the respondents. The study focused only on primary data. Gender theory and the social construction of gender as described in the literature review section were used as theoretical frameworks for discussing the findings.

The design specifically gives a description of the study area, followed by the sample of the population, data collection and the instrument used to collect the data as well as data analysis. It consists of the following:

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

The field study was carried out in three communities around Nandoni Dam, a facility constructed by the National Department of Water Affairs on Tribal Land Act. Nandoni dam lies outside Thohoyandou in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province, South Africa. The dam was built in 2004, and has a great

structure that is surrounded by trees, which makes for some excellent fishing. The dam is fed by the Levhubu and the greater Lethaba rivers. It was built to provide water to Makhado town, Thohoyandou and the rural communities in the Northern part of the Limpopo Province. The dam is surrounded by the Nandoni Game Park Resort and a Golf Estate which offer a number of activities and facilities for the communities. It is about 50km away from the Kruger National Park, making it possible to get in some game viewing, as well as basing. It has excellent fishing potential, as well as other social activities. There are over 9 communities that are close to the Nandoni dam. The sample that was used in the study was drawn from 3 communities around the dam. The three communities, namely, Manini, Budeli and Dididi were chosen partly for their multi-cultural nature. These communities are inhabited by people from various parts of South Africa and southern Africa who have different cultural backgrounds and religions.

Sampling technique

Manini, Budeli and Dididi fishing communities were selected using purposive sampling because of their proximity to and convenience for the researcher. The study population consisted of only adult men and women. The respondents were drawn from different categories and socio-economic groups. One hundred and fifty respondents consisting of 75 men and 75 women were targeted for the questionnaire survey. These were chosen using household survey and simple sampling. The sampling procedure involved asking individuals some questions in order to identify the different categories. This was done with the help of interpreters and observations made by the researcher and research assistance. A total of 139 respondents participated in the survey and these consisted of 51 females and 88 males. Other categories of the respondents that were interviewed and selected purposively were the community chiefs, managers of the fisheries sector, who were the key informants and the fishers.

Data collection

The study used both methods of data collection. The use of a combination of methods was intended to improve the validity of results and for triangulation purposes. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The qualitative tools helped to analyse the gender dynamics in the communities and trace certain historical aspects and real life experiences of both women and men. The qualitative tools used to obtain data from the respondents were the key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). Qualitative tools were used to define and understand the complexity of gender relations and seek differences. Quantitative methods were used to

collect quantifiable data such as demographic information and the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The quantitative tool used to obtain data from the respondents was a structured questionnaire. The methods that were used are discussed below.

Key informant interview

Key informant interview guides that outline responses from the community chiefs, their ruling council and the managers of the fisheries sector in the communities were used. Not all the community ruling councils in the communities participated in the process of the interview. However, each community has one head chief and they constituted the respondents. The first to be interviewed were the community chiefs in order to seek relevant information for the study and also identify the managers of the fisheries sector. In each community, two to three interviews sessions were conducted. Some of the interviews were conducted at the community chief's palace and others at venues of their choosing. Community chiefs and their ruling councils were interviewed separately. This was intended to allow freedom of expression.

Individual structured questionnaire

Structured questionnaires were administered by the principal researcher and research assistants to members of the fisheries communities who had been selected randomly. The formal interviews were helpful solely for comparative purposes in that all the respondents answered the same set of questions that supported the comparative analysis of some variables of significance to the study. The exercises were conducted in different communities of Manini, Budeli and Dididi.

Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were conducted to obtain information from different groups of fishers and non-fishers. One group of men, another of women and a mixed group were interviewed to clarify some of the contentious issues and also produce supplementary data to aid the study. In each community, six focus group discussions were held. The fisher's category and non-fishers group consisted of three groups each. In Budeli community, the fisher's category of men's only group consisted of 21 community members and the women's only group consisted of 6 community members, while the mixed group consisted of 23 community members. The non-fisher's category of men's only group consisted of 10 community members and the women's only group consisted of 13 community members, while the mixed group consisted of 21 community members. In Manini community, the fisher's category of men's only group consist of 14 community members and the women's

only consisted of 5 community members, while the mixed group had 19 community members. The non-fishers category of men's only group consisted of 7 community members and the women's only group consisted of 10 community members, while the mixed group consisted of 12 community members. In Dididi community, the fisher's category of men's only group consisted of 11 community members and the women's only group consisted of 6 community members, while the mixed group consisted of 17 community members. The non-fishers category of only men's group consisted of 9 community members and the women's only group consisted of 11 community members, while the mixed group consisted of 14 community members. The researcher and research assistants also used informal interviews and extended these with verbal interactions with some of the community members chosen from the respondents. This enabled the researcher to clarify some aspect of the discussions. All these activities took place in the selected communities. For the focus group discussions, the same set of topic guides was used in the different communities.

OBSERVATION

Observations were made during the field study. This was planned to complement the data obtained from the study events, activities, processes and other affairs such as fishing methods, landing and sorting catches, handling and processing, selling, marketing and distribution. Focus was specifically on the patterns of relationships between the women and men in the communities. Above all, this observation activity helped in the identification of the fishers.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data obtained through the use of the questionnaire was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) programme. Tables and frequencies were created to categorize the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Thereafter, the multi variant frequency tables were created in order to analyze the gender roles in the various segments of the community fisheries. Cross tabulations were generated to bring out distinct characteristic of each segment in the selected communities. For the qualitative data collected through interviews, focus group discussions and observations, matrices were created according to themes. The responses were also grouped in accordance to their relevance to these themes. Above all, broad categories were generated to differentiate and explain the thoughts expressed by the respondents.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results are summarized separately according to the quantitative and qualitative instruments used in the study.

Quantitative instruments results

(a) The majority of the respondents range from 21-40 years of age. (b) In terms of marital status, single parents dominate this category. (c) Concerning religion, the majority of the respondents are Christians. None of the participant was Muslims or Hindus. A percentage not as high as that of the Christians said they were traditionalists. (d) In terms of the occupation category, actual fishing is an only men occupation, while women's involvement is in indirect fishing activities such as marketing, processing and preserving. Women are also involved in other diverse occupations such as trading and businesses, farming and casual labour. These findings correspond with the common observation that fishing is mainly a men's occupation. (e) In the aspect of formal education, the majority of the respondents had no formal education; the men's and the women's educational attainment in the three communities is low. These findings agree with the general thought that fishing communities mostly do not attain high levels of education. (f) In terms of tribe and ethnicity, the highest proportion of the respondents is Venda.

Qualitative instrument results

(a) The Nandoni dam small-scale community fisheries are managed through the local authorities. Other indications in line with this view are that the managers who manage the fisheries sector of the dam are community chiefs who join with their ruling council to form the management of the fisheries. In addition, the local government police jointly managed the fisheries with the local authorities. (b) The managers of the fisheries sector of the dam assumed positions as chiefs of the community. (c) Only those born into the royal family (ancestral right) can qualify to assume the status of a manager of the fisheries sector of the dam. (d) Only male children of the royal family become community chiefs. (e) The right to fish at the dam is an indigenous one or resides with members of the community.

The right to fish is allowed for every indigene who wants to fish at the dam to do so. (f) Management does not issue licenses either to the fishers, but an approval is always given mostly to outsiders such as Zimbabweans and Mozambicans, to mention but a few, to fish in the dam. (g) Management of the fisheries does not practice issuance of license/ rights. (h) Gender equality, the management gives approval to persons who apply. (i) Management does not deny rights to fish at the dam. (j) The findings also show that sometimes only men come to seek for approval to fish at the dam and that implies that the person is not an indigene. (k) The findings show that management issues the rights without gender bias. (l) The results also show that there has never been a case or instance where women had come to seek for

fishing rights at the dam. (m) Tradition dissuades women to participate actively in the management of community fisheries. (n) More women than men in the selected communities indicated that they did not participate in fishing. (o) Women in the three communities indicated that community attitudes towards women's participation in fishing were discouraging. (p) With regard to constraints limiting participation in the fisheries, conflict was identified as one of the major limitations for women's and men's participation in the fisheries. Other constraints are; cultural beliefs and practices, market structure, capital, preservation tools, reduced catches, having no spouse to support, technologies, price fluctuation. (q) Improved living conditions are some of the benefits enjoyed by the fishing communities as a result of their participation in the dam fisheries. Other benefits are; employment, investment, market, food/nutrition, poverty alleviation, and a low crime rate. (r) At the individual level, benefits enjoyed by both men and women are; augmented employment opportunities, increased incomes, education/tuition fees, food/nutrition, household support, leisure and popularity. (s) Prospects for integrating fishing activities were encouraging. Both women and men indicated their interest to be part of the fisheries management as well as to do actual fishing, fish smoking (fish processing), selling fishing materials, sun drying, trade in fish and running restaurant/bar business. (t) Prospects for alternative income were also positive. Both women and men indicated they can form groups to run businesses, partner in trading or businesses, change occupation in case their present one is not profiting them, obey rules, join government work, pool resources to generate more income, farm, transportation of fish to nearby markets, and do casual labour to supplement income.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section discusses the issues that emerged from the study findings. It discusses the findings in line with the objectives and research questions of the study and relates them to the reviewed literature, the theoretical framework and the broader social context. The discussion is organized in terms of the objectives of the study.

Identification of the managers for the fisheries sector of Nandoni dam

With regards to the study objective which seeks to identify the people managing the fishery sector of Nandoni dam, the findings show that the sector is managed by local authorities. It was also found from the field results that the managers who manage the fisheries sector of the dam are community chiefs, together with their ruling council. In addition, the local police jointly managed the fisheries with the local authorities.

However, there is substantial evidence indicating that the fisheries sectors at the dam are poorly managed. This is as a result of the fact that managers are not elected on basis of their qualifications or skills. Rather, to manager the dam fisheries are based on blood ties to the chieftaincy. The findings thus reveals that poor management practices are some of the problems related to illiteracy and lack of training on resource management. However, an alternative to the problems of the poor management of community fisheries, experts and scholars in this field have come up with a new approach to community fisheries management called co-management of community fisheries.

Berkes *et al* [5] indicates that co-management is a dynamic partnership which uses the capacities and interest of the local fishers and the community. This management is complemented by the state's provision of enabling legislation, enforcement and other forms of assistance in order to better people's lives. State provision (enforcement) was recognized in the present management of the dam fisheries sector, however, only in the aspect of enforcement which the police provide by way of arresting disobedient fishers. Arrest based on the poor decisions of the managers, which often result in conflict between the fishers and local authorities. Poor decisions by the management are seen in failure to consult the resource users. The decisions are based on incorrect assumptions, and the resource users are not incorporated in the deliberation processes of these decisions. In support of this view, Pomeroy [27] indicates that fisheries experts in Southeast Asia recognize that a fishery cannot be managed effectively without the cooperation of the resource users.

In actual situations, the sharing of management tasks and decision-making may favor one group over another, thus indicating the unevenness in power relations commonly found in locally created institutions that must not be overlooked in some instances for the purpose of gender equality [10]. This assumes that communities, in themselves, are enclaves of equality, uniformity and that people in communities are all equally disposed to manage fishery resources. The primary concerns of fisheries management, in the real sense, should address the relationship of fisheries resources to human welfare and the conservation of the resources for use by the community members.

However, this approach to fisheries management requires a shift away from a centralized form of management to a new strategy in which, managers and fishers jointly manage the fisheries. The findings largely indicate the lack of management skills for the

Nandoni dam fisheries sector. This causes conflict between the fishers and local authorities.

Assessment on how the managers are chosen to manage the fisheries

In terms of the selection process and how these managers are chosen to manage the fisheries, the results indicate that the community chiefs and their councils are not chosen by the government or community members. Instead, they have imposed themselves on communities by resorting traditional norms. The cultural beliefs and practices of the Nandoni communities allowed the managers of the fisheries sector of Nandoni dam to assume the position of chiefs in their communities. It is evident that only those born into the royal family (ancestral right) and qualify to be community chiefs can assume the status of a manager of the fisheries sector of the dam. In additional, only male children of the royal family become community chiefs.

This monarchical approach to decision making and ownership stifles progress in the community. However, the findings did not support the literature by Marisa [20] which suggests that people or managers of the fisheries sector should be chosen or appointed to manage the fisheries. The failure or lack of appointed managers of any fisheries sector would always result to the Nandoni dam fisheries management situation that gives patriarchy a fertile ground for control.

Recognition and inclusion of gender in the selection process of the managers

Other findings relate to the recognition and inclusion of women in the selection process of the managers. The results that emerged indicated that the Venda tradition demands that females should not be chiefs in their communities. This gives room for the patriarchal approach to dominate in the fisheries management. It is evident that it is only the chiefs (male) who play an important role in the management of the fishery sector of the communities. This result is contrary to the literature that says for development programs to be relevant and sustainable, the consideration and inclusion of gender issues in environmental management and poverty reduction activities is unavoidably crucial [31]. Without an adequate analysis of gender roles in fisheries management on people's livelihoods, the wellbeing and the environment they depend on will result in perpetual failure to achieve intended outcomes, and no reasonable impact will be made even if gender is mainstreamed into community fisheries.

Gender recognition and inclusion in the management of community fisheries, reflects a feminist heritage, aiming to promote changes in fisheries practices and

to promote women's empowerment and gender equality in the community fisheries sector.

To manage, what is required is a balanced, equitable and sustainable development of the sector in order to take all social groups into account. The lack of recognition and representation of women and other marginalized groups in this sector, especially at the Nandoni Dam, is not only discriminatory in nature, but also leads to an incomplete understanding of how the fisheries sector operates and functions. In environmental management, studies have shown that women are an integral and important part of the fisheries' workforce, and the contribution they make is significant. Without a doubt their involvement in some activities is greater than that of men.

Therefore, policies to develop fisheries should begin to take the role of women seriously. They should not underrate or undervalue the parts of the sector in which their work prevails. In small-scale community fisheries management, mainstreaming women may unseat the long standing notion that the sector is male-oriented or ascribed. But in other natural resources management, mainstreaming women may indeed pose performer partialities, a case of environment first then gender later and mindset would then be under the tricky framework of gender mainstreaming [8].

Assessment on gender equality in the allocation of fishing rights

In terms of the criteria used for allocating fishing rights to individuals, the results that emerge indicate that the allocation of fishing rights to individual fishers to fish at the dam is based on indigene or community membership.

With regards to gender equality in the allocation of fishing rights, the findings indicate that the management gives approval to all persons who apply. The results indicate that they do not deny anyone the right to fish at the dam.

The findings also show that sometimes only men come to seek for approval to fish at the dam. This implies that the person seeking those rights is not an indigene. There is also an indication that if both men and women seek for approval to fish at the dam management will definitely issue them the rights without bias.

Finally, the results indicate that no woman has ever come to seek for approval or right to fish at the dam. This is as a result of the patriarchy structured in the communities which Raymond [28] acknowledges when he says that men's control as the primary authority figure in any given social organization dissuade women involvement. Community attitudes and cultural beliefs and practices of the Nandoni

communities have gradually made women in the community to embrace their level of socialization as subordinates which in extension; limit their active involvement in the Nandoni dam fisheries.

Role of patriarchy in the management of the fisheries/Gender roles in the fishing communities

An analysis of the major gender roles in the three fishing communities of Budeli, Mainin and Dididi shows that women do not partake in matters of governance in the community. The respondents stated that women are either involved in the management of the fishery sector or participate in direct fishing. However, a relative small number of women take part in indirect fishing such as marketing the product. An analysis of the different responses by gender, points to the fact that few women participate in the entire dam fisheries, and that the ones who participate do so indirectly. What are considered to be women's roles are subsistent jobs such as trading, small businesses, farming, casual labour and domestic labour.

Findings from the three study areas with regards to sex disaggregation indicate that women's occupation is mostly that of doing household chores. This result may perhaps point to be the lack of appreciation by men for the women's other social roles. Part of the result could also be that these roles (domestic chores) are less visible to the public or it could be the socialization process that promote men's attitude (insensitivity) towards women's domestic chores.

The belief that women's occupation is for subsistence purposes cuts across the three study communities. This is a belief held by both men and women. This indicates that, traditionally, Venda women do not participate in the dam fishery sector because they believe that fishing is a men's job. For instance, none of the women in Budeli community, Manini and Dididi, participate directly in fishing. Women are involved in indirect fishing. Even then, the findings show that this is their secondary occupation. Other traditional roles played by women are trading/businesses, casual labour and farming. Female respondents from Dididi consider trading/business, casual labour and farming as their traditional roles. Although these women do this job, it is perceived as an extension of their domestic chores.

Men's dominance in the fisheries sector was indicated by body female and male respondents in the three study areas. Furthermore results, show that men in the three communities did household chores. Men in Budeli hardly did household chores but they participated in community roles. However, men in Manini and Dididi were hardly involved in community related roles. It is patriarchy that excludes women from the management of the fisheries sector of the Nandoni dam community fisheries.

Gender mainstreaming as a strategy to alleviate poverty in the small-scale community fisheries of Nandoni dam

In order to come up with a gender mainstreaming strategy in the fishing communities of Nandoni dam, a host of findings were made from the fishing conditions of these communities. First, a look at fundamental gender roles in the three fishing communities of Budeli, Mainin and Dididi reveals significant observations. The results that emerge indicate that women in the three communities do not participate in matters of governance their communities. Neither are they involved in the management of the fishery sector or participate in actual fishing. However, a relatively small number of them partake in fishing related activities.

Secondly, the influence of culture in the management of the fisheries and participation in fisheries was also examined. The results indicate that community attitudes, cultural beliefs and practices are responsible for the participation and non-participation of community members in the study communities of Budeli, Manini and Dididi. Although men are able to cope with some of the constraints as compared to women, part of the challenges that were highlighted include conflicts between the fishers and local authorities, cultural attitudes, beliefs and practices, market structures, capital, preservation tools, reduced catches, no spouse support, technologies and price fluctuations.

Other findings indicate the level of benefits gained from fishing dam. At community level, benefits gained include improved living conditions, employment opportunities, improved investment, market structures, food/nutrition, poverty alleviation and a low crime rate. At individual level, both women and men indicated that they got employment from the fisheries, had improved incomes, education/tuition, food/nutrition, household support, leisure and popularity.

With regard to the mainstreaming of gender, findings on the prospect for integrating fishing roles were encouraging. Both men and women indicated a willingness to manage the fisheries together, do the actual fishing together, fish smoking, sell fish material, sun dry the fish, trade in fish and run restaurant/bar businesses together. At the same time, results on the prospect for access to fishing technologies are positive.

Finally, prospects for alternative incomes were also assessed and the results were positive. The results indicate a willingness to adhere to change of occupation for sustainable purposes. These include: forming groups for businesses, partnering each other in trading or businesses, changing occupation in case

their present one is not profiting them, conforming to rules, joining government work, pooling resources to generate more income, farming, transportation of fish to nearby markets, and doing casual labour to supplement income.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

There is a clear indication from the findings that patriarchal structures dominate in the communities' fisheries sector. However, this seems to intensify the belief that the fishing occupation is highly gendered in favour of men. There is, therefore, need to re-organize gender relations in the fisheries sector for the sector to be substantial for those involved in it. A critical assessment and analysis of responses and other field observations indicates that most of the strategies might not fit in our definition of gender mainstreaming in small-scale community fisheries as a strategy for reducing poverty. Nevertheless, this research outcome would definitely transform the wellbeing of the Nandoni dam community fishers. It is also on this basis that some issues that were not intended for these study objectives, such as "community attitude, cultural beliefs and practices in fishing communities", became significant. However, some important observations came out of the findings.

CONCLUSION

In view of the previous discussion, conclusions of the study are drawn. First, there is need to review and restructure the present management of the fisheries sector in order to incorporate community members who are not part of royalty and the fisher's management. At the same time, representatives from government should also be incorporated in the review management to provide legislation, enforcement and other assistance that the management might require in the process of discharging the duties. In doing this, priority should be given to women in the fisheries management.

There is also need to promote cooperative fishing at the dam. It does not matter if only men come together to do fishing and women also group together to do fishing. These cooperatives need to be promoted not just because of socio-economic convenience, but also because they can promote communal bargaining. It is evident that men in these fishing communities are the beneficiaries.

Women's organisations need to be promoted as these would provide women with their own liberty to optimally exploit women's talents. For instance, a Nandoni Community Women Fishing and Development Association (HCWFDA) should be inaugurated. This organisation would help strengthen women in the actual fishing activities. Forming such an organization will draw support from Gender

professionals, Labour and Social Development, and reputable donor agencies for women empowerment and women's organisations, such as the National Association of Women Organisations in South Africa.

It is, therefore, very important for South Africa and the small-scale community fisheries policy drafters to ensure that policy adoption, formulation and implementation takes the local cultural gender dynamics into account. This will eventually require a lot of changes and additional support if the local women and men are to benefit from this sector.

However as confirmed from the results of this study, fishing communities largely exhibit low levels of education and skills in modern fishing. They are constrained by inadequate capital. Some people still believe that fishermen and women are illiterate or that fishing is a job for people with no education. While some may argue in that vein, the results of this study demonstrate otherwise. A comprehensive education system that encompasses all Nandoni people, and in extension, other fishing communities in South Africa as well as adult literacy programmes, should be put up as a matter of urgency. There is also need for the provision of capital from government. These could include grants and loans at affordable interest rates, as well as training in entrepreneurship skills, so that women and men will endeavour to do more than just subsistence work. This would encourage them to turn their enterprises into commercial and profit making entities.

Finally, the fishing occupation is a sector that is still under study, particularly, from a sociological and gender viewpoint. Therefore, it requires deeper and broader research into the numerous aspects of the fisheries such as those related to employment, the role of local authorities and their contributions to the management of the fisheries, as well as the inclusion of the resource users. This will ultimately provide knowledgeable opinions on how the sector operates and the subsequent formulation of policies and relevant interventions that will finally help in the process of mainstreaming gender into this sector.

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