

# **THE ROLE AND ENGAGEMENT OF WOMEN IN FISHERIES IN FIJI**



Women selling at the Suva and Nausori Markets. Photographs ©A.Vunisea

**Report by Aliti Vunisea for the The Women in Fisheries Network - Fiji**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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ADB – Asian Development Bank  
AUSAID- Australian Aid  
CEDAW – Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women  
CCIF - Conservation and Community Investment Forum  
CSO – Civil Society Organization  
CMT - Customary Marine Tenure  
ECREA - Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy  
ESCAP – Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific  
FAD - Fishing Aggregation devices  
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization  
FLMMA - Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas  
FNPF – Fiji National Provident Fund  
FFA - Forum Fisheries Agency  
GDP – Gross Domestic Product  
IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature  
LMMA – Locally-Managed Marine Area Network  
MDG – Millennium Development Goals  
MWCPAMWCPA - Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation  
NGO – Non Government Organization  
PAFCO – Pacific Fishing Company  
PANG - Pacific Network on Globalization  
PCDF- Pacific Community Development Forum  
PICTs – Pacific Island Countries and Territories  
PIFS - Pacific Island Forum Secretariat  
RDSSED - Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development  
SDP - Strategic Development Plan  
SPC – Secretariat of the Pacific Community  
STL - Solomon Taiyo Ltd  
UNDP - United Nations Development Program  
UNDP Pacific- United Nations Development Program- Pacific Centre  
WIF - Women in Fisheries  
WiFN - Women in Fisheries Network  
WCS – Wildlife Conservation Society  
WWF – World Wide Fund for Nature



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Women fishers predominantly fish in the coastal areas of Fiji. Fishing participation of women although still dominantly in the inshore areas has undergone significant changes with increased emphasis on marketing and distribution of products with selling and buying networks becoming more organized and women increasingly engaging not only as fishers but as middle sellers, buyers and increasingly involved in the development of value added products. Women are also engaging in areas previously only fished by men and with technological introduction men have started to take over some areas of fishing women previously dominated. Women's participation in the offshore fisheries sector have not changed much and contributing to the slow progress of women's involvement in the different fisheries sectors is the lack of data to assist women to be part of fisheries development and management initiatives. Women's participation in the Tuna Industry continue to dominantly be in the processing sector in PAFCO and the long line tuna shore based activities, Although women have contributed substantially to fisheries development and management in coastal communities, there has been little consistent data collected on women participation in fisheries and how their engagement have empowered and changed their social status. The fundamental dependence of community-based management work on traditional systems, institutions and customary practices and norms mean that the institutional barriers that women face in decision making and other areas of public life in communities will continue to exist into the future unless steps are taken to identify entry points for women participation in decision making. There has not been much documentation of women's involvement in export species from the inshore areas however women participate in the collection and in post-harvest activities relating to beche-de-mer, trochus and ornamental species. Sex disaggregated data is needed in these fishing sectors so small scale commercial activities that women are engaged in can be accurately enumerated and areas of their participation strengthened. Legal and technical enabling mechanisms can then be developed to further progress women's participation in the various fisheries sectors. Some of the changes in the fisheries sector will need policy interventions which will require collaborative work by NGOs and CSOs with the Department of Fisheries.

Gaps and challenges faced by women fishers are primarily related to cultural and social norms and practices, which in many cases limit women's progress in the fisheries sectors and places fisherwomen at a disadvantage where they have to depend on their menfolk when trying to access financial support and to be their voices in decision making relating to fisheries development and management. Another major gap is the lack of systematic research and collection of data to inform policy development on fisheries development especially as it relates to women participation in the sector. To bridge the gender gap in fisheries participation in the offshore and inshore fisheries there is need for training and capacity building targeted especially for women fishers. Identification of key outlets, buyers and markets will ensure that women fishers have equal access to distribution and export opportunities. Opportunities to build the

capacity of women fishers, to provide networking and communication prospects and to provide the avenue where women's concerns and needs can be raised need to be pursued. Entry points for expanding women in fisheries work need to be built into already existing networks and institutions.

A lot of the work described in this report fall under the informal sector and some under the unemployed and household unpaid categories (Narsey, 2007). Steps to accurately define women fishers work, to include women fishers in the enumerated sector and to classify unpaid household work under various classifications including self-employment, will help progress women fishers status. This will also assist in monitoring the shift in emphasis and changing participation of women in the different fisheries sectors. The shift in women's participation from the informal to the formal sector can then start to be addressed by the inclusion of women fishers in all aspects of fisheries training and capacity building. Because women already have established networks for buying and selling of marine products, effort should be made to maximize the use of these networks and formalize such mechanisms to enhance entrepreneurial activities.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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Women play critical but still poorly understood, undervalued and underappreciated roles in fisheries supply chains. Gender issues are not on the policy agenda, which is sustaining a vicious cycle where only limited resources are dedicated to understanding the gender dimensions of fisheries and how to address them. While small-scale fisheries and nutritional security are strongly linked, much more attention needs to be given to recognizing, strengthening and protecting the role of women in both coastal and offshore fisheries in Pacific Island countries (ESCAP 2014). Knowledge of gender roles are an important part of fisheries management because it allows interventions to be tailored to specific groups of fishers. Long standing gender patterns continue with men predominantly targeting finfish while women target invertebrates (SPC 2013). Women's participation has dominantly been in the inshore fisheries with primary involvement in the subsistence sector and the small-scale commercial fisheries sector. Involvement in the offshore fisheries sector has been in certain areas only, predominantly in the processing and post-harvest sector at Pacific Fishing Company (PAFCO), and the selling of cooked and uncooked fish in markets, roadsides and other outlets. While there has been increased acknowledgement and documentation of the participation of women and gender inclusion in the fisheries sector in recent years, these have been mostly in specific areas. In 2011 studies on the participation of women in Pacific island countries, which included Fiji, indicated that women participation in fisheries science and management only accounted for 18% of total staff working for fisheries in science and management in government fisheries, environment institutions and environmental NGOs in Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). In



contrast women account for more than 60% of administrative and clerical staff in government fisheries divisions.

For the purpose of this report, women fishers relate mostly to Fijian women (*I Taukei*) who engage and dominate in Fiji's fisheries sector. Although women from other major ethnic groups in Fiji generally do not engage in fishing activities, studies to identify and document participation of other ethnic groups should be pursued to establish ethnic participation in other aspects of the fisheries sector in Fiji, such as value-adding or selling.

## 1.1 PROGRESS ON THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN FIJI

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Overall, gender mainstreaming processes to achieve the Government's commitments to gender equality are still not well integrated into the government institutional structure, planning, and budgetary processes in Fiji. Despite the considerable progress made in the various sectors, the gaps in the implementation or achievement of government policy on gender are numerous, and need to be addressed in institutional arrangements and in the planning and budgeting process (ADB 2005).

Traditionally and historically, fishing beyond the reef was the domain of men, while women concentrated their activities on fishing and collecting invertebrates within lagoons and inshore areas. The dominant participation of women in the inshore fishery, their involvement in the post-harvest sector and involvement in marketing and distribution has been documented in numerous writings and reports (Mathews 1993; Tuara 1995; Vunisea 1996; Lambeth et al. 1998). In comparison recent writings and reports highlight the fact that fishing participation of women have not changed much and women still dominate the inshore fishery, with primary involvement in post-harvest activities, marketing and distribution of marine products (Kronen and Vunisea 2007; Tawake et al. 2007). With technological changes come changes in fishing trends and demands – new fisheries have emerged through the years.

## 1.2 CULTURAL ROLES OF WOMEN

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Cultural roles of women continue to define and determine their spheres of influence at the community level, and dictate their roles and participation in the various fisheries sectors. Nainoca (2010) in her discussions on Traditional Environmental knowledge (TEK) makes reference to the different institutional levels in which people live in communities and the need to further understand how TEK and other customary matters relate or contribute to management at these levels. Veitayaki (2002) and early writers on Fijian lifestyle and livelihoods described these levels of kinship at length in relation to marine resource management and food and social

security in communities. Traditional knowledge and practices in the Pacific and as is the case in Fiji is often gender defined. Gender often dictates where women and men work and separates traditional knowledge held by women and knowledge held by men. Traditional or local knowledge is therefore important for understanding gender roles and responsibilities, however it must be kept in mind that traditions and customary practices have undergone a lot of changes and in some areas modified versions of what were traditionally practiced is what people now know. While it is important to be gender sensitive, there's a need to recognize the danger of stereotyping women as vulnerable in ways that might obscure their strengths and resilience to change (Campbell 2010).

Writings and discussions on cultural roles of women have tended to focus on the hindrances women face through culture with little mention of the many avenues which exist to enhance women's roles. Women also have certain roles and status depending on clans they belong to or are married into. Women have made progress in many areas of work and in the public and private sectors in Fiji. This has been the case for most urban and peri-urban based Fijians. Most women that live in the villages and in rural locations live within constrictive unwritten traditional rules and expectations subjecting women fishers to two modes of influences. The cultural and restrictive demands of village life and the modern market demands women are exposed to through their marketing and participation in fisheries. The issue of women straddling two worlds through their selling marketing experiences as highlighted by Vunisea (1996), is still an issue today because marketing and engagement in the modern economy does not mean a reduction of domestic chores, child rearing and other village responsibilities. **Further research is needed to better understand how women are meeting their cultural obligations while increasing their engagement in the fisheries market sector.**

### 1.3 WOMEN IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL SECTORS

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Gender disparities are evident in most areas of work in Fiji including the fisheries sector. The majority of women's involvement is in the informal as opposed to the formal sector. With only 109 thousand females in the formal Labor Force, and 121 thousand doing 'household work', more than a half of women's work is being defined away as 'economically inactive' because it is in the household (and unpaid) category (Narsey 2009). Most fishing activities for household consumption done by women are in the subsistence sector thus is not enumerated and falls into the unpaid work category. Women spend more time than men on work overall, have fewer hours in paid work, and in general have less discretionary time than men (UNDP 2008).

Government efforts to assist women in business have been limited and largely restricted to microfinance. In its Plan of Action, the Ministry for Women, Social Welfare and Housing had identified activities to increase women's access to finance and address legal barriers to women's participation in the economy, although the focus is on women at the microenterprise level, rather than on larger businesses owned by women that have significant job-creation potential (AUSAID

2008). Through discussions with the Department of Women there have not been much success noted on projects implemented or in projects women groups initiate. The Department of Women have identified a number of factors that impede project success by women – these include lack of capacity to write proposals for funding, lack of knowledge on project implementation, monitoring evaluation and reporting. These are areas where women groups could be assisted to access financial support to be able to improve their livelihoods. Work with women fishers need to be aligned to national planning priorities and there is need for involvement or contribution to policy level discussions with Government Line Ministries to advance women’s concerns at a higher political level.

#### 1.4 CUSTOMARY OWNERSHIP AND ACCESS TO TRADITIONAL FISHING GROUNDS

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Customary ownership of rights to fishing grounds (*i qoliqoli*), which extend to the outer reef slope, determine how community groups including women participate in fishing (Fong 1994; Waqairatu 1994; Veitayaki 1995). Customary marine tenure is complicated because ownership is not a straightforward arrangement and is not uniform across Fiji. There is no strict defined user system that systematically disadvantages women within their own fishing ground - however, other traditional practices where ownership of land for example is patrilineal in nature, has a lot of impact on marine tenure use systems. There are 385 marine and 25 freshwater fishing grounds in Fiji and these areas define where people fish and influence the type of fisheries communities engage in. An advantage of communities having custodianship over their traditional fishing areas is that local management can be implemented and monitored by them. Examples of these management practices include *tabu* areas, which are temporary closures to all forms of fishing, or bans on fishing for certain species, limitations of the number of fishers or amount of harvest, temporary moratoria on fishing (Aalbersberg et al. 2005). The traditional fishing grounds also have allocated ‘*I kanakana*’ areas which are fished exclusively for household needs. These ‘*I kanakana*’ are reserved for “food for the community” and can be actively managed by local communities. Freshwater *I qoliqoli* and *I kanakana* are used and operated similar to marine areas, where there are areas exclusively fished for household needs and temporary bans are placed on the fisheries during certain times. The existence of these traditional management systems are being used in a modern context as a fisheries management tool by local communities across Fiji with the support of the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area (FLMMA) network (Govan et al. 2009). Recent changes to regulations and policies on fisheries licenses issued has implications for use of these fishing grounds by the communities, especially if outside fishers are accessing the same fisheries resources.

Traditional fishing area rights are defined and owned by *vanua* or *tikina* (social units that include a number of villages in a district) which regulate their use and exploitation. People are expected to use their own allocations, and those seeking to use grounds belonging to others are expected to get permission from the owners. Women have varying ownership and user rights to fishing grounds and this differs according to clans they belong to and whether they married into the

village. Those belonging or married to chiefly clans have more rights than those married to other clans. Those from the village usually enjoy more privileges than those married into a village. While the villagers understand the traditional fishing boundaries, officially drawn maps of those same boundaries do not always concur with the perceptions of resource users. For women, ownership and access to marine resources and to land influence their participation in the fisheries sector. Setting up roadside stalls, selling from central points in villages, arranging barter of goods and negotiating deals with outside groups or fishers from the next village, setting up alternative income generating ventures depend on their status, traditional roles in the community and access to resources. Further work in identifying changes to status of women in communities given the modern economy and how they can use existing relationships and status to further their fishing and marketing activities should be an area of further research.

## 1.5 DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN

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The Department of Women is mandated to work on issues relating to women in Fiji, under the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation to achieve gender policy goals (ADB 2006). The work of the department is guided by the Fiji Gender Policy which was adopted in 2004. Prior to this women related issues were dealt with under the National Women Plan of Action (2004–2008). Fiji has ratified eight Human Rights and Gender Rights related International instruments which assist in progressing the situation of women in the country. Statistical data needed for gender analysis is sparse, sometimes of poor quality, and often out of date. The Ministry needs to define its data requirements to support its role in advocating and advising on gender planning and mainstreaming across sectors, but in a mainstreaming environment, the collection and analysis of gender-sensitive data appropriately belongs to the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics (ADB 2006). The ADB proposal raises the need for the Department of Women working with other line ministries to support them in specific areas like data and statistical reporting. The assignment for achieving gender policy goals to the Department of Women is problematic as the department is not a policy agency but a line department focusing on general community development. In relation to tuna fisheries, there are little linkages between the gender policies of government under the Department of Women and those of the Department of Fisheries under the Tuna Management Plan (Gillet and Preston 2008). The policies mentioned above can be leveraged to progress the case for women engaged in the fisheries sector. The challenge, however, is in the capacity of the Ministry to support women fishers and how effective collaboration work can be between the Ministry and other stakeholders.

## 2. THE SCOPE OF WORK

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The objective of this report is complete a review of the current status of women engaged in fisheries in Fiji. The review is designed to: (a) highlight how much this sector has advanced, (b) the challenges women still face in Fiji, and (c) the key gaps and opportunities for the Women in Fisheries Network-Fiji (WiFN-Fiji). The report contains recommendations which can be used by the WiFN-Fiji and partners to develop a 5-year strategy, building on the experiences and lessons learned in Fiji and where applicable, the wider Pacific region, over the last two decades. Specifically, the report contains:

- descriptions of all major fisheries that women are involved in and their role in Fiji;
- updated information on the current social and economic importance of those fisheries to women and their families;
- an understanding of the ecological status of those fisheries, if known (e.g. stocks stable, declining, improving);
- a summary of all key organisations that are currently supporting or engaging with women in fisheries, and their relative capacity and effectiveness;
- a summary of the key lessons learned from women and fisheries projects implemented over the last 10 years in Fiji and where relevant, the wider Pacific;
- an understanding of the challenges women in Fiji are facing in the fisheries sector, and what key gaps are not being addressed; and
- an outline of what key focal areas or opportunities exist for the WIFN-Fiji to engage in, to make a meaningful contribution to gender issues this sector.

Information was largely gathered through a desktop study of all existing literature including both primary and secondary publications. The desktop study was supplemented by rapid market surveys which were conducted at the Suva, Lautoka and Nausori markets to ascertain current trends and dynamics in local markets. Market surveys included questionnaire survey to women sellers in the market, middle sellers and distributors of marine products. Interviews and informal discussions were held with roadside vendors between Nausori and Suva markets. Field visits were conducted to some fishing sites to talk to women fishers and entrepreneurs. Interviews were also held with NGOs and other stakeholders on project implementation.

### 3. INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR

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Since the 1980s work on women in fisheries has gone through several phases. The initial emphasis on progressing women issues under the Women in Development (WID) approach resulted in programs and projects that focused only on women. Having specific women in fisheries programs reinforced the tendency of national fisheries agencies to only work with men (Lambeth et al. 1998). Issues relating to women tended to get offloaded onto the women in fisheries program, or onto women's agencies that have no experience, resources or expertise in fisheries management. By the late 1990s and early 2000, there was a shift to have women projects included in mainstream fisheries development, removing the separation of gender. The

argument was that successful fisheries development and management needed to deal with the entire community involved in harvesting, processing and marketing marine resources. This caused the shift to gender inclusive approaches where women issues and concerns become part of core development priorities and trends. Recently in Fiji, the focus of the gender work in government is through gender mainstreaming into the sectors. The challenge will be how this process is implemented and monitored and how successful this will be in enhancing women's roles and participation in the fisheries sector.

### 3.1 POLICY AND LEGAL MECHANISMS

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Gender work in Fiji is directed by eight major international agreements on gender equality and the advancement of women. Three of these include Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the Pacific Platform for Action, which provide an opportunity for reporting on the state of women in the country. These international and regional agreements provide the basis for development of law and policy to address gender-specific issues across all sectors including the role of women in the fisheries sector. The challenge will be whether the provisions from these instruments, such as those relating to non-discrimination by sex, equal access to resources and opportunities (as required under CEDAW, the MDG) are reflected in fisheries policies or their implementation. Greater cross-sectorial policy dialogue, advocacy and information exchange is needed to build more comprehensive and gender-just fisheries policy (Bidesi 2008). In February, 2014 the Fiji National Gender Policy was launched and has its mission to "promote gender equity, equality, social justice and sustainable development through the promotion of 'active and visible gender mainstreaming in all sectors'". The promotion of gender mainstreaming will become a part of government work in the fisheries sector and this will provide opportunities for more gender focused work which will raise the profile of women's engagement and role in fisheries. The National Gender Policy also provides the framework under which women fishers' issues can be strategically addressed. While everything looks good on paper, some oversight and support are required to ensure effective implementation on the ground to effect change.

Over the past few years, Government has sought to address existing legislative shortcomings in the management of marine resources. The Marine Spaces Act Cap 158A and Fisheries Act Cap 158 are currently being reviewed in an effort to modernize Fiji's laws in line with international and regional obligations relating to fisheries management. Likewise a new Fisheries Aquaculture Decree and Inshore Fisheries Management Decree are being developed. Through technical assistance from the Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), a new Offshore Fisheries Management Decree was gazetted in 2012 for Fiji. For inshore fisheries there is limited potential to use mechanisms within the *Fisheries Act (Cap.158)*, such as license conditions, permit conditions and gazettal of restricted areas to protect *tabu* areas. However, compliance with, and enforcement of, these mechanism and fisheries law in general, is a major

obstacle in the effective management of the inshore marine environment (Minter 2008). The law also empowers the Minister to make special regulations relating to methods, species targeted, prescribing size limits amongst many other specific areas. Special Ministerial powers, as in this case could also undermine management initiatives if licenses given are counter to management initiatives in place in certain areas.

### 3.2 THE FIJI DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

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The Fiji Department of Fisheries is the lead agency responsible for the management of the country's fisheries resources. Its vision is "to have fisheries continue as one of the leading sectors in Fiji's socio-economic development and generate economic growth and ensure that resources owners are equitably remunerated." The Department has an advisory role to the customary rights holders and institutes legislative and enforcement measures to ensure commercial viability. The Department also approves licenses for fishing and administers permits to other fishermen, and works on bi-lateral and multi-lateral arrangements with other countries on export of fisheries products and aid to ensure the development of the fisheries sector.

The main fisheries sectors are offshore or oceanic, inshore , freshwater and aquaculture. These sectors will be discussed taking into account women participation and status of each sector. From early 2000, funds were set aside in the Department of Fisheries to address the concern of women engaged in fisheries. With the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas (FLMMA) Network, women targeted work is through the assistance of the Department of Fisheries. Currently the Department includes women fishers through a gender mainstreaming approach to all its work. However, the Department does not have the capacity to roll out and implement projects that include women, and thus there is an opportunity for the WiFN and other partners to work collaboratively with the Department to help achieve gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector.

### 3.3 OFFSHORE FISHERIES

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#### 3.3.1 *Engagement of Women*

Pacific Island states have been keen to encourage the development of offshore fishing activities, to generate income and to reduce pressure on inshore resources. The offshore fisheries concerns are often related to access to investment capital, development of joint-ventures, improving products for competitive markets, and technological upgrades for cost reduction or increased production. Such strategies are dependent on skilled labor and entrepreneurship, which most women lack, thus women are largely left out of offshore tuna fisheries development. Early writings on the offshore fishery highlighted how most initiatives concentrated on supporting men's activities in development and management of fisheries in the region (Lambeth et al. 1998). Early studies on PAFCO highlighted poor working conditions and low salaries of women as major concerns (Emberson 1994, 2001, Scoop Independent News 2003). Similar sentiments were

raised recently by Bidesi (2008) who stated that in the industrial fisheries sector, despite policies aimed at creating employment, women's labour continues to be marginalized.

Recent research on the tuna industry has provided an update on these situations at PAFCO and there has been some positive progress documented. These include improved working conditions of women at PAFCO, wages are comparable or higher than other countries and women now entering the workforce are better educated (Diffey et al. 2008). However there exists a bottleneck for women between the unskilled processing work and promotion to skilled or middle management positions. Because unskilled women are generally multi-tasking their household needs, customary roles and waged jobs, their priorities tend to be with the family rather than with advancing their career. As women continue to dominate the processing sector of the industry, special attention must be paid to their specific needs as multitasking members of their communities: as mothers, wives and fishmongers, matriarchs and homemakers (Diffey et al. *ibid*).

In spite of the progress in the offshore fisheries, cultural beliefs and norms continue to influence fishing participation in this sector. In recent years some women have become observers on tuna fishing vessels and some are engaged in shore-based activities in some countries in the region. The conditions of fishing vessels and the length of fishing trips which usually lasts up to three months, usually deter women from joining as crew members or as observers in fishing vessels. Although working conditions have generally improved with the upgrade of the factory since the new partnership agreement with Bumble Bee, some issues remain in the working conditions of women in PAFCO. These relate to the need to improve the relationship between workers and staff, the adoption of a gender policy for PAFCO to assist the company to be more accountable and transparent and avoid any discrimination by unions, NGO groups supporting women and from the local community.

In the tuna long lining sector the direct participation of women varies depending on the nature of work and type of business operation. There are several types of companies in the harvesting sector: those that focus on fishing only and have their own vessels or those that act as agents for certain contracted vessels. If these companies own a shore-based office there is direct employment for 1 to 2 women as clerical staff (see Table 1 below). All vessel operations and harvesting is done by men. Another type of fishing company is one where the company operates a fishing fleet and uses the processing services of another company and exports the processed fish. In the latter type of operation, women also work as office managers and administrators while the fishing operations, engineering and mechanical work predominantly employs men (Table 1). Shipping agents that facilitate customs clearance, border inspections and provide other services and provisioning for vessels also employ women in clerical type positions.



**Table 1: Employment Longline Vessel Operations, August 2007**

Activity No. of	No. of Men	No. of Women	Total	% Men	% Women
Company/boat owner/manger	25	3	28	11	81
Skippers	<b>90</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>
Engineer	<b>180</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>
Crew	<b>968</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>
Workshop & other	<b>105</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>81</b>
Office administration	<b>46</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>36</b>
Total	<b>1414</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>1524</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>93</b>

The exploitation of offshore resources has been promoted as the primary alternative to ease fishing pressure in coastal areas. This is to be through exploitation of offshore species through use of Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs) (SPC 2011). This alternative would indirectly reduce women's participation in the fin-fish fishery as cultural and social inhibitions to women's participation in the offshore fishery still exist. Because of culture and social customs, most Pacific Islands women, including Fijian women, do not participate in deep sea fishing. Cultural beliefs that women on fishing boats are bad luck, traditional norms that inhibit women's ownership and use of large powered boats and the belief that offshore fishing is a man's domain and the social obligations of household and family inhibit the participation of women (Tuara, 2008).

Although oceanic in habit, some of the important species in this category are also found in coastal waters, where in some cases they form resident populations. In general, offshore resources are in relatively good condition, with the exception of bigeye tuna and to a lesser extent, yellowfin tuna. Women's involvement in this sector is mostly in the post-harvest and processing sectors, however there is potential for involvement in shore based activities in ports. Increasingly evident in Fiji is how women use the by-catch from vessels in cottage industries.

Growth in transshipment activities in Pacific Island ports lead to an increase in shore-based services. Contact with local people is based on the exchange of goods and services, with the sex trade being one service. The spread of sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS, is an issue of concern, particularly for the tuna industry and its management (Lambeth et al. 1998; Vunisea 2006). Tuara (2006) in an assessment of women participation in the tuna industry highlighted the impacts, costs, benefits, and constraints of women engaging in tuna fisheries. However, there has been little implementation of the report's findings.

There is need for affirmative actions to assist women enter areas of study that enable more practical and meaningful participation in the offshore fisheries sector. NGOS and other

stakeholders could work on this as a priority to systematically enable the entry of women into this sector. Recommendations of reports as mentioned by Tuara (2006) should be strategically included in policies and work done in the Offshore Fisheries sectors.

### *3.3.2 Key Issues*

*Summary of key issues faced by women engaging in offshore fisheries:*

- despite policies aimed at creating employment, women's labor continues to focus on the processing sector;
- lack of strategic education and training of women limits their participation in the offshore fisheries sector;
- there have been many studies but little implementation, highlighting the need for knowledge management to be in place to ensure that all information is centralized and work progressed to implement recommendations from reports carried out;
- the sex trade and the spread of sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS, are issues of concern, particularly for the tuna industry and its management. There has not been much work into this area, in the last 8 years; and
- exploitation of offshore species as an alternative to shift the pressure off coastal fisheries, will affect women because of cultural beliefs restricting their offshore fishing participation.

### *4.3.2 Recommendations*

- Strategic involvement of women in education and training that will enable more participation in the Offshore Fisheries sector.
- There is need for further research into the socio-economic issues related to the tuna industry. This should include working conditions in the processing sector and the link between the tuna industry and the sex trade.
- Exploring alternatives for credit access, financial loans or assistance and training on small business development to assist women to fully engage in this sector.
- Develop a knowledge management system to build up resources for women in fisheries. This will allow information to be centralized, accessible and used for strategic policy planning, education, training and monitoring of initiatives.

## **4. 4 THE INSHORE FISHERIES**

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Women are largely involved in inshore fisheries, which includes a diverse range of marine and freshwater finfish and invertebrates, many of which are poorly understood. Because there is little information on species, catches and fisheries trends in general, it is difficult to quantify women's

contribution to different fisheries. Inshore fisheries are targeted by both subsistence and commercial fishers. It is difficult for small-scale fishers to access the offshore fishery resources and there are difficulties associated with marketing products from the remote areas where abundance is greatest, to the urban areas where the marketing opportunities are the greatest (FAO 2009).



A range of products sold at the market- Women are generalists collecting and selling a range of species.



Different crabs species sold at most municipal markets.



Kaikoso/*Anadara* is a popular bivalve sold in most markets in Fiji.

Early work on the participation of women in coastal fisheries (Lal & Slatter 1982; Mathews 1995; Vunisea 1996; Lambeth 1998) made reference to the numerous activities women were engaged in and the need for proper acknowledgement of their involvement. Also important is women's perception of their fishing activities at the time – the majority of the women did not see fishing as work. This means it is important to keep in mind the roles assigned to women within the social structure and context they lived in. Recent studies indicate that women's participation have not changed much with fishing activities continuing to support subsistence and economic livelihoods (Veitayaki 2005; Tuara 2006; Fay-Sauni 2008, Verebalavu 2009). Women's involvement in the small-scale fisheries sector is significant, as evident by the number of women selling seafood at the Suva, Lautoka and Nausori municipal markets from Thursday to Saturday every week (Verebalavu 2009). The political instability of the last few years has seen an increase in marketing and selling of marine products as a fall back option for people who have lost jobs, or those taking the opportunity to work as small-scale commercial enterprises. The inshore fishery is complex as it involves work with different species and is the major target for export and income generation for coastal populations.

Evidence suggests that the inshore fisheries of Fiji are in decline. In response to this, many communities in Fiji have established co-management plans for their traditional fishing grounds, using permanent and/or temporary closures (*tabu*). These communities are supported by various development partners, local and international NGOs, academic institutions and government departments, many of whom are also part of the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area (FLMMA) network (Govan et al. 2009).

There are huge gender disparities in employment and income earning in Fiji. Coupled with this is the contribution of women is lost in enumeration, through the exclusion or underestimation of household work and unpaid family work. The work of women fishers largely fall into the subsistence or semi-subsistence fisheries sector which in most cases is included under household work (collection of food for household consumption). These disparities are obvious in labor force engagement, with males dominating the money income, women dominating the 'subsistence only' sector, and a very high number of women in the unemployed category (Narsey 2009).

The inshore fishery also falls within *i qoliqoli* and *i kanakana* areas which have traditional use mechanisms that have been used by resource owners for generations. These resource use strategies have sustained households, ensured food security and have been the source for income livelihoods for people. Despite the state of decline of the inshore fishery, the importance and reliance of the fisheries to rural/remote communities remain the same. What is important is looking at how aquaculture and other emerging fisheries can enhance and rebuild the fishery. This is where women fishers' roles become crucial as they are important holders of information on species, their habitats, their seasonality and use patterns. As generalists, women gather all sorts of species through their gleaning activities thus have a wide knowledge base that they could use for the management and/or recovery of populations.

Fishing methods and equipment used in the inshore fisheries are generally simple, many involving the use of hands and simple tools. The methods and skills, however, are diverse and require an intimate knowledge of the environment and the species targeted. In addition to the collection of invertebrates, women net fish, set up barriers and traps, and use hand lines. Seasonality of different species and the effects of lunar cycles, winds and other natural phenomena on marine species are well known and used to advantage when fishing. While the role of women may have substantially changed both in the urban and rural context, the real question is how far these changes have been acknowledged and are being considered in national policies and in fisheries management (Kronen and Vunisea 2007).

Today, many women are educated, are conducting household business in the absence of working husbands and have taken a more influential role in community life. They can earn real income through fishing and controlling family finances. Often, this development has been reinforced through networking among themselves what is needed is an approach that acknowledges that the

roles of women and men may differ, but that there is a need to pay equal attention to women and men in PICT coastal fisheries. (Kronen and Vunisea *ibid*).

#### 4.4.1 SUBSISTENCE / SEMI-SUBSISTENCE FISHING

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Subsistence fisheries are focused on providing food for the household, with any surplus sold if women have access to local markets or given away to friends and relatives through traditional systems of barter (exchange). Women are generalists, foraging and collecting in the inshore areas for a wide range of species. Seasonality of species is known to them and fishing patterns and trends are usually dictated by the species in season, or that which is in demand in markets. Valuable species are taken to a market if accessible (e.g. lobster to a resort) (FAO 2009). An estimation of 70 to 80% of the catch from inshore fisheries in the Pacific Islands (reefs, estuaries and freshwater) is used for subsistence purposes, with the remaining 20% going to commercial markets (Gillett and Lightfoot 2001). This figure may have changed given the increased emphasis on commercial activities and increase in cottage businesses targeting cooked seafood products.

Women dominate the subsistence fishing sector and with their daily fishing activities and generations of knowledge, have an intimate knowledge of the coastal zone. Women are also the dominant sellers of crustaceans, molluscs and seaweed in Fiji with many fishing for household needs and selling the surplus. Most sought after species for selling in the local markets include sea grapes (*nama*), *Anadara* clams (*kaikoso*), mangrove crabs (*qari*), mangrove lobsters (*mana*), seaweed (*lumi*), giant clams (*vasua*), shrimp (*moci*), sea cucumber (*dairo*), urchin (*cawaki*), d octopus (*kuita*), freshwater mussel (*kai*) and sea hare (*veata*).

Women fishing activities are within the coastal reef areas, mud and sand flats and mangrove areas. In Fiji, over 70% of the fishes landed in municipal markets are coastal or estuarine species mainly dominated by *Mugilidae*, *Siganidae*, *Garangidae*, *Lutjanidae* and *Lethrinidae*. Of these over 60% of the species were found to spend some time in the mangroves. It has been roughly estimated that at least 30% of the commercial fishery is intimately tied in with mangroves (Lal 1984). The mangrove fishery is of primary importance to women fishers as they are the main users of the coastal mangrove areas.

#### 4.4.2 SOME SPECIFIC FISHERIES

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Women are expert fishers in the coastal zone and most fisheries species are targeted both for selling in the domestic markets and household consumption. Many fisheries species have also been the target of value added activities.

*Sea Grapes (Nama)*

Sea grapes *Caulerpa racemosa* or *Nama* is a type of seaweed collected on reef flats but increasingly women dive to collect from deeper lagoon areas. It is found in most coastal areas, and is abundant for example in the Yasawa Group. *Nama* from the Yasawa islands is sold regularly at the Lautoka and Suva markets. Eible seaweeds are an important part of the diet of coastal people. Indigenous Fijians have a long tradition of collecting and consuming different species and varieties of seaweeds. However, *nama* or seagrapes is one of the most common species that is regularly harvested for consumption and sale in Fiji. *Nama* is almost predominantly collected by women, and left in sacks before being transferred to markets. Work on value adding has started on the *nama* fishery, and is an area the WiFN-Fiji can focus efforts on.



Sea grapes are mostly sold after they are cleaned, have had sand removed and the salt water washed out. Women sell seaweed that is sold raw, or pre-cooked in local markets.

### **Seaweed (*lumi cevata* / *lumi wawa*)**

Seaweed which include *Hypnea pannosa* (*lumi cevata*) and *Gracilaria maramae* (*lumi wawa*) are popularly collected and sold in domestic markets almost exclusively by women in most coastal communities in Fiji. *Lumi cevata* is often sold cooked in municipal markets - however quality handling and the following of hygienic standards is still a challenge.

### **Sea Urchins (*cawaki*) and sea hares (*veata*)**

Sea urchins (*cawaki*) and sea hares (*veata*) are also popularly collected by women and are eaten raw. Women in the Muaiyuso Peninsula close to Suva are some of the biggest sellers of sea urchins and sea hares. Because these are eaten raw, food handling and hygiene in food standards are important.

### **Octopus (*kuita*)**

Octopus (*kuita*) is a lucrative species, sold at a slightly higher price and is popularly targeted by women in most reef areas. Women from Verata, Namara and those from the Tailevu province areas are regular sellers of octopus. Octopus is sold smoked in markets and recently served as part of packed lunches. Challenges of quality handling and setting of hygienic standards are areas that need to be addressed.



Octopus prepared and smoked in Yasawa sold at the Suva market.

### **Reef fish**

Different species of reef fish are caught and sold by women. Some women also sell their husbands catches. The current trend is the selling of cooked reef fish. Women selling on roadsides usually do not fish themselves, but buy from middle sellers and sell.

### **Sea cucumber (*dairo*)**

Sea cucumber that is targeted for local consumption is usually the sandfish *Holothuria scabra* (*dairo*) that currently has an export ban due to severely depleted populations in Fiji. *Dairo* is usually processed and sold cooked.

### **Crabs (*qari*)**

The mangrove crab fishery is a lucrative product on the domestic market as the price is high at \$50 to \$200 per string of crabs depending on size and number. Crab sales are mostly from the Rewa and Ba areas where there are large tracts of mangrove. Evident from the market surveys in Suva and Nausori, was the sale of undersized crabs – this indicates that both sellers and consumers are uninformed or unwilling to follow size limits under fisheries laws. Fisher women may not be aware that the continuing sale of under-sized crabs (below reproductive age) will cause rapid depletion of stocks. The recently established Navua Crab Farm has plans to work with communities to provide pens in mangroves where crabs can be bred to a marketable size. Given women are involved in this fishery, there is an opportunity to get them involved in these initiatives, and ensure the sustainability of their fishery.

### **Shrimp (*moci*)**

Women residing close to mangrove habitat are also engaged in the shrimp (*moci*) fishery. These shrimps are sold as food and/or fishing bait to fishermen. Moci is a main protein source in some coastal communities and is a delicacy for people in the Rewa delta area. It is fished predominantly from within mangrove and estuarine locations. During low tide, tidal pools in or near mangrove areas hold water that women bail out. Once these small pools of water are dry the moci are then caught using hands or small nets. Moci is sold at FJ\$2 a heap and most women sell between 10-20 heaps on the roadside daily. From discussions with women who sell *moci* at Laqere in Suva, it was learnt that women often walked long distances to get the *moci* and then get to the roadside to sell.



Women selling moci on the roadside at Laqere near Suva. Fishing and selling done by women of all ages

### **Mangrove lobsters (*mana*)**

Currently mangrove lobsters (*Thalassina anomala*) are also cooked and sold in markets, with both women and men participating in this fishery. Women walk through mangroves searching for mangrove lobster mounds and once the mounds are found traps are set to get the lobsters out of the mounds. There are special seasons when these mud lobsters are sold. Women in the Rewa area in particular, are known for fishing and selling mangrove lobsters.

#### **4.4.3 DOMESTIC SALES AND MARKETING**

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Domestic sales mainly involve finfish (both pelagic and reef-associated) and invertebrates and take place either in (a) municipal markets, (b) non-municipal markets (fish shops, butchers and supermarkets and hotels), or by the roadside. There are 16 municipal markets in the Fiji, seven in



the central division, four in the western division, and five in the northern division (FAO 2009). The municipal markets are in the main urban centers of Fiji.

Despite women's contributions, their participation in the artisanal sector is minimally acknowledged. For the last few decades this trend has continued and women participation still not accurately enumerated and the amount of products sold by women not monitored. The trend is changing in some cases where fishing is focused on selling with only the surplus consumed in households. For example, women sellers interviewed at the market in Lautoka (October 8, 2014) said that sea cucumber collection and trochus collection were specifically for commercial purposes and any other species caught or collected was for household consumption. In this case orders had been placed for two bags of processed *dairo* and trochus (meat) had been ordered from middle sellers at the Lautoka market. There is need for data to accurately define the semi-subsistence nature of coastal fisheries and this is to include catch and sales pattern, marketing and distribution networks in existence at the community and market levels and the economic returns from these activities and how this has contributed to household livelihoods. Fish and other invertebrate sizes also need to be monitored at markets to help sustain resources. The lack of capital and support costs for transportation cause women to resort to selling undersized species to make ends meet. Selling of undersized crabs, invertebrates and fish point to the need for rigorous work on management that especially target women fishers.

#### 4.4.4. MARKET SURVEY

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A rapid market survey was conducted in October 2014, with twelve market vendors from Lautoka, twenty in Suva, and fifteen in the Nausori market. The survey revealed the changes in the involvement of women in marketing. There has been a significant increase in number of women middle sellers- who buy products from fisherwomen in the villages, and either sell the food at a slightly higher price, or cooking /or processing the food to add value before re-selling at a higher price. It is indicative of a sector in transition from traditional selling and marketing techniques to participating in more lucrative products to win customers. In the Lautoka market from the twelve women interviewed, three were middle buyers and sellers, buying products and processing before selling cooked food at the market. Two fisherwomen were from Rakiraki and Tavua who were at the market especially to deliver order to the middle sellers (two bags of seaweed, three bags of sea cucumbers, and two bags of trochus (without the shells). Seven were women who had travelled from Yasawa to sell their produce and they do this every weekend, bringing seafood in every Wednesday or Thursday, spending two to three days in Lautoka selling products and returning home on Saturday.

The Suva market is especially attractive to women sellers because of the high marketing opportunity and the potential to sell easily. From the twenty women interviewed at the Suva

market, ten were regular sellers coming in four days a week to sell at the market. They were also fishers who gleaned for their own products to sell assisted by their families. Once they are in Suva, members of the family which included their husband, mother, sister or daughter will continue fishing in the village and products sent on the bus or by carriers by someone coming from the village.

These women also bought sea grapes and other products like *dairo* (*sandfish*) from middle sellers who bring in products from Yasawa and Tavua. One of these women who had been marketing seafood from the Suva market for more than 20 years, now owns a boat and hires other people in the village to fish for her. Two women were not fisherwomen and bought fish from vendors at the Nausori market daily. They then cooked the fish and sold this at the Suva market daily, coming at lunch time and returning in the late afternoon. The other eight women come weekly to the market and this was mostly on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. These women sold their own catches and that of their husbands also. On the three days when work was done in the Suva market ( Thursday, Friday, Saturday) there were vendors from Yasawa, Rakiraki, Tavua, Nausori, Namara, Namuka, Verata Ucunivanua. Naloto, Nakini, Naganivatu and Muaivuso area. Many women pay the high fares from Nausori, Lautoka, and outer areas of Tailevu and Rakiraki, Tavua to come to the capital city to sell because the possibility of products being bought was high. Those who come in regularly include kai sellers from villages close to Nausori town and these include Nakini, Naganivatu and Nacokaika.

Once the women are in Suva, family members collect kai and send this to Suva on carriers through relatives to be sold. Many of the women who come in to sell at the market stay for two to three days with relatives until all products are sold. Those who come in from the villages on Thursdays, Fridays or Saturdays only, usually come as early as 3am to secure selling places and most sleep at the market while waiting for the market to open. These women cannot afford to be late in the morning as spaces for selling are limited.



Food is cooked and packed or sold in paper plates targeting workers in the urban centers- or on Saturdays- cooked food target the general public.

The Nausori market had slightly different dynamics with most women coming in to sell travelling daily from villages in the neighboring area. Travel to the market is between 40 minutes to one and half hours in buses and carriers. For most coastal villages that have access to the Nausori market, selling is the main means of income thus marketing of products is regular and there is little buying from middle sellers. Many women selling fruits and vegetables in Nausori were middle sellers; however with marine products it was the fishers themselves selling *moki*, crabs, mud lobsters, seaweed, land crabs, *kai*, fish and other products. From the sixteen interviewed, eight sold raw products and the other eight sold a combination of processed (cooked, clean and prepared, fried) and raw seaweed, *kaikoso* (*ark shell*), *nama* (*sea grapes*) and fish. The only middle sellers were those women who sold finfish in the early mornings, evenings and on Saturdays. These women buy fish from fishermen in villages who sell at the Nakelo landing and sell fish in Nausori town outside the market in the evenings or early mornings. Women fishers in the Nausori area are usually suppliers of *kai* and other products like *kaikoso* to middle sellers in Suva, Navua, Nadi and Lautoka. A *kai* seller interviewed at the Lautoka market bought two to three bags *kai* from Nakini near Nausori (her village) every week. A *kai* bag cost her FJ\$100 and she sells and manages to get an extra FJ\$40- \$50 out of each bag.

Roadside sellers also had their own networks and source of products. There are roadside stalls that have become centers for fish selling. In Vatuwaqa near Suva, most of the women who sell fish are either selling their husband's or family catch, or are middle buyers and sellers with fish supplies being brought in from Vanua Levu daily. A family buys fish from several villages in Vanua Levu, the fish comes on the ferry and is transported to Davuilevu to be sorted and then delivered to the buyers in Vatuwaqa. This is a secure source of fish for women sellers as the middle sellers bring fish to the roadside stall at 10-11 am daily. *Kai* sellers who sell on the roadside in Toga village near Nausori also sell daily. About eight women sell daily and some of them have middle buyers who buy products from them on a daily basis. Bags of *kai* are sold at a

lower price (FJ\$30/bag) to the middle buyers for which they get up to a FJ\$100/bag if they sell themselves.

The above figures highlight the increased participation in the market economy and the maximization or exploitation of traditional and social networks and institutions by women to be competitive. This entrepreneurial spirit has become increasingly crucial in today's changing economic conditions. A question which must be asked is: Why are women seemingly bearing the brunt of these changes, while at the same time retaining responsibility for their "family roles"? (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1994).

The rapid market survey which included questionnaire surveys conducted to more than 40 fisher women in the Suva, Lautoka and Nausori markets showed the high number of women selling cooked and uncooked products, the many networks and organized groupings that women use in their marketing activities and the emerging patterns of selling. More important in these new marketing trends is how women have continued to identify marketing niches, have increased networks and linked with other women from source sites, have managed to survive competition and in the process have taught themselves marketing strategies, the basics of supply and demand and budgeting and using money. The increasing number of middle sellers is also an important factor as they could affect not only the prices of products in local markets, they also will have an impact on species that is harvested as producers at the community level will try to meet their demands. This was the case for the Suva and Lautoka market where products were ordered and bought from Yasawa, Rakiraki, Tavua, and Nakini in Naitasiri, the greater Nausori /Tailevu areas. Further in-depth research into marketing and distribution mechanisms will expose the complex networks and systems that women have tapped into to remain competitive on the local market. With such tenacity at the local and national level, women could also be more competitive in the export market if they receive proper skills, business and export training. With the decline in fisheries resources in the in-shore fisheries, Fiji Fisheries has placed a lot of emphasis on resource management primarily through community based interventions. This is an area where women fishers' knowledge and skills can be maximized.

Where modern market economies exist and where women have paid employment, new household divisions of labor are emerging. In some cases women do all the selling of marine products at the market as in the case of selling *Anadara* in Verata, Ucuivanua (Tawake et al. 2007 ) in which case men are expected to take over responsibilities usually handled by women. In other cases, women use other women like grandmothers and relatives as caregivers. Verebalavu (2009) had identified three categories of fishers in her study on women fishers and sellers in Fiji and these include full time artisanal fishers, seasonal fishers and casual fishers. Full time fishers could then be again divided into producers, producers and sellers and buyers and sellers.

The establishment of a rest house for market vendors in Suva has helped vendors travelling long distances; there are however, challenges and gaps which need to be addressed before marketing options are fully utilized. These include the need to work with women small business entrepreneurs, formalize networks and associations they are using for marketing, monitoring species, sales and marketing, identifying source areas of marketable products and where there is no resource management initiatives in place, attempts should be made to start these. In all these activities women should be included as equal partners. Market vendors in Lautoka, Nausori and those selling from roadside stalls still have to sleep on the cement floors of the market or in the case of roadside vendors sell in makeshift shelters. Networking and working with established women in business networks could assist women mitigate some of the challenges women face in the marketing of their produce.

In general, coastal fishery resources are heavily fished and often show signs of overexploitation, especially in areas close to population centers and in fishery products in demand by the rapidly growing Asian economies (ESCAP 2014). With the increasing focus on selling in domestic markets a lot more pressure is exerted on coastal fisheries and has resulted in the decline in resources in the near-shore areas. The inshore fishery provides the subsistence and income livelihoods of coastal communities. However, overfishing is depleting the abundance and availability of fish species (Kronen and Vunisea 2007; Gillet 2010). The catch from coastal commercial fisheries is for both local consumption and export. Given the probable declining state of the economies of many countries of the region, in the future there will be greater numbers of people without jobs or access to remittances who will be seeking income and food security from harvesting coastal resources (Gillet and Cartwright 2010).

The protection of village food fish supplies is arguably the most important objective in the management of coastal fisheries in the Pacific islands, but to know if such management efforts are effective overall; some idea of the gross coastal fisheries production and its trends is required. In terms of government priorities, it seems that a lack of production information tends to lead to a lack of attention. Within these data constraints, a lack of gender-disaggregated data contributes to “gender blindness” in coastal fisheries policy. Because coastal fisheries have a great direct effect on the lives of all Pacific islanders, coastal fisheries data collection deserves more attention. (ESCAP 2014).

Market dynamics influence fishing and collection patterns at the community level and this in turn cause changes in gender roles within fishing communities. Where there is demand for a certain species, both men and women may participate in the fishing and selling of the product. An example is the increased involvement of both men and women in the sea cucumber trade. In other situations, men may take on commercial fishing activities, leaving women to fish for home consumption, although there are instances where women may be the ones involved in commercial fishing. Further in-depth research into marketing and distribution mechanisms will

expose the complex networks and systems that women have tapped into to remain competitive on the local market.

#### 4.4.5 POST-HARVEST ACTIVITIES AND VALUE ADDING

Formal production has, in most cases, doubled in intensity and volume and processing and preservation activities have changed a lot. There has been recent emphasis on value adding and supply chain development for fisheries and aquaculture products in Fiji (Lako 2012; Morris *et al.* 2012). In the case of *nama*, a major challenge is its perishable nature which prevents it from being stored long after harvest. Its utilisation within the Pacific has thus been restricted to domestic trade and consumption thus there have been attempts at value adding activities for both the domestic and export markets (Lako *ibid*; Morris *ibid*).

Women's fishing and marketing activities could be greatly enhanced by proper handling and processing techniques and there needs to be systematic training on value added techniques to ensure better value for their products (Lako *pers comm*). For the *kai* fishery for example sales have been restricted to the domestic market because of the gap in quality handling and the many requirements that need to be met to enable consideration of exporting. The same can be said of the post-harvest handling of *beche-de-mer* where up to 45% of the value is lost due to poor handling and processing techniques that are conducted in the villages before selling to Chinese traders (Ram *et al.* 2010).



As can be seen from this picture sea grapes is cleaned properly ready to be eaten raw, trochus meat is boiled, sea urchin has been taken out of the shell and packed in plastic containers, kaikoso (*Anadara*) has been taken out of the shell and prepared raw also in plastic containers.

#### 4.4.6 EXPORT COMMODITIES

Fiji's major export commodities include beche-de-mer (to Asia), aquarium fish (USA), deep slope bottom fish (USA), and trochus shells (Asia, Europe), with sporadic exports of live food fish (China). The trade in marine aquarium organisms includes ornamental fish, invertebrates, coral, and live rock, and has been active in Fiji since the early 1970s (Yeeting 2007). There are five companies involved in the trade of aquarium products in Fiji. These companies operate in 25 *qoliqoli* (traditional fishing grounds) that are located along the Coral Coast and islands off the Western Division (Lal and Cerelala 2005). The involvement of women in the aquarium trade is not documented but because collection is within village traditional fishing areas, women could have some form of involvement which is unrecorded.

Table 2 below shows the different commodities and amount exported in the seven years from 2007-2013. There has been a steady increase in beche-de-mer, trochus and ornamental fish and invertebrate export. These are industries that women are involved in.

**Table 2: Inshore commodity exports**

Commodity	Unit	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Beche-de-mer	Kilograms	235,728	218,584.28	167,362.05	194,597	397,517	268,306	322,590
Trochus (Shells & Scraps)	Kilograms	83,942	14,751	14,062.27	0	0	44,902	87,400
Coral Base Rock/Cultured Rock	Kilograms	1,311,362	45,220	129,866	43,075	85.062	126,712	54,153
Live Rock	Kilograms	0	1,043,064	805,701	839,898	778,187	839,401	589,320
Hard Corals	Pieces	75,640	122,274	73,310	68,852	118,242	65,878	90,431
Soft Corals	Pieces				12,779	10,151	36,024	43,676
Ornamental Fish	Pieces	187,236	190,861	143,636	140,158	208,239	286,277	395,828
Ornamental Invertebrates	Pieces	35,727	39,644	30,376	31,019	49,938	61,500	109,825
Trochus Butn and Butn Blanks	Pieces	11,300,000	19,450,000	3,400,000	0	0	0	0
Black Lip Pearls	Pieces	19.328	20,000	55,324	11,742	35,914	15,310	10,188

*Department of Fisheries: Fisheries Statistical Report 2013 - Provisional'*

*Beche-de-mer production figures for 2012 and 2013 were forecasted*

#### 4.4.6.1 BECHE-DE-MER

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A total of 27 species of sea cucumbers are present in Fiji waters, of which around 20 species are important in the commercial beche-de-mer trade and 19 species were recorded from shallow-water assessments. Given the lack of export price data, it is difficult to estimate the value of beche-de-mer exports. However, it is reasonable to assume that since 2003 the beche-de-mer trade has provided an average annual income of approximately FJ\$10 million in total to households that collect sea cucumbers and process them. Beche-de-mer is of economic importance for coastal communities. For example, communities in Lau often use the cash income from sea cucumbers to pay for household, school and medical expenses (Pakoa et al. 2013). All 27 species (including rare species) are being fished and exported with limited restriction; however, sandfish is prohibited from exports although there has been record of this species being also exported.

Beche-de-mer is gleaned from shallow reefs by men, women, and children, or collected by men during dive fishing trips (Ram 2008). In a study of the socio economic importance of export trade in coral reef resources, from total respondents interviewed, 51 percent of respondents collected beche-de-mer. Of these, 71% also engaged in artisanal or subsistence fishing. In villages where beche-de-mer was harvested, respondents often indicated that most women participated in collecting the invertebrates (Zeller et al. 2008). This industry has acknowledgement of women's participation in the collection stage, more work on the sector could show their level of involvement in the processing of beche-de-mer. Given the importance of beche-de-mer as an income generation alternative for rural households, participation of women in the industry and how their involvement can be advanced should be a priority.

A challenge for fishers is local buying prices vary between buyers and between areas, and they lack information on international market prices, so many fishers do not know what realistic selling prices are. For example, sandfish (*dairo*) is sold for FJ\$25/kg for fully dried product and FJ\$4.00/kg for wet product in Bua Province yet this high-value product is ranked as the most valuable product in regional terms, fetching FJ\$169.14/kg (US \$90/kg) (Carleton et al. 2013).

A highly complex network links the activities along the production chain, which include fishing activities, buying, processing, selling and exporting product. Some exporters are also providing incentives to fishers such as the provisions of fishing equipment in return for catch therefore taking exclusive control over the catching and processing of beche-de-mer. The complexity of the network makes it particularly difficult to effectively monitor the flow of products from fishing grounds to export exit points as well as the activities of individual fishers, buyers, processors and exporters. In addition, much of the product value is realized by those involved in



the production chain after the product leaves the fishers, who then get low prices for their product (Pakoa et al. 2013).

Knowledge of the reproductive biology of commercial sea cucumber species and their effective management is essential for future sustainability of beche-de-mer production in Fiji Islands (Ram et al. 2010; Pakoa et al. 2013; Purcell, 2013). Women in rural locations of Fiji work alongside men in the collection and processing of sea cucumbers; however there is a lack of sex-disaggregated data to correctly capture women's participation.

#### 4.4.6.2 LIVE ROCK AND OTHER AQUARIUM PRODUCTS

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Fiji exports 56,152kg of live corals with an annual quota of 807,601kg of live rock last year and this industry injected \$25million (0.41 per cent of the gross domestic product) into the country. Soft coral exported in 2012 was 33,083 kilograms (or pieces) and live ornamental fish was 238,865 pieces or individual fish. "The other aquarium products that are currently exported from Fiji include invertebrate species such as feather stars, star-fish species, gastropods (live shells such as cones, mitrids, cypraeid, cymetids, terebrids, strombus, tritons, etc) and bivalves (largely include giant clams (tridacnids) and other bivalve species including oysters, cockles and mussels (Vamelei, 2013).

There are five companies involved in the trade of aquarium products in Fiji. These companies operate in 25 *qoliqoli* (traditional fishing grounds) that are located along the Coral Coast and islands off the Western Division (Lal and Cerelala 2005). The coral reef trade is a supplemental and not a primary focus of fisheries in coastal communities that engage in the fishery. Participation of women in this fishery is not documented, however, live rock collection could impact reef resources and in this way women fishers will be affected. Communities engaged in collection see little impact of these activities on the reefs as this generates needed income, however there has been a lot of concern on the live rock collection and its impact (Keith-Reid, 2006).

#### 4.4.6.3 TROCHUS

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Trochus (*Trochus niloticus*) have long been exploited for both subsistence and export in Fiji. Most can be collected by hand or free diving. The shells are used to make jewelry and as inlay in carvings. However, their primary use is in the production of mother-of-pearl clothing buttons. Women are involved in the trochus industry through collection and selling of the shells for button making and cooking and selling of the meat in the markets. During the market survey undertaken in Lautoka two women from Tavua had come in with two large plastic bags of trochus meat to sell to buyers in the market. The plastic bags were bought for FJ\$50/bag and the

trochus meat is sold for FJ\$10/heap thus from one bag ten heaps of trochus meat were sold. Women's participation in this sector is not well documented, and therefore poorly understood.

#### **4.4.7 FRESHWATER FISHERIES**

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Inland fishing is mainly for home consumption, with market and roadside sales of some species. Recent studies indicate that inland fishery production is about 4 000 tonnes (FAO 2009). Most of the inland catch comes from the two largest islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. Main inland fishery resources are the freshwater mussel (*kai*) and river prawns (*ura*). Other species consumed are eels, various freshwater crustaceans, and introduced fish such as tilapia and carps. Flagtails (*Kuhlia* spp.) and a number of gobi species were formerly important for interior villages, but abundance has decreased in recent years.

All inland fishing is carried out with very small-scale gear. This consists of baited lines, spears, a variety of traditional woven traps, hollow poles and cane knives. Most fishing effort for freshwater resources is subsistence based. Freshwater fisheries issues and/or problems and their solutions are generally closely linked with freshwater quality. The most important species by weight is the freshwater mussel (*Batissa violacea*). *Batissa* fishing is carried out by women and takes place in the shallow parts of rivers, where the shells are located by hands and feet. Surveys by the Department of Fisheries in the mid-2000s show that about 2 500 tonnes of *Batissa* is marketed annually).

##### **4.4.7.1 KAI FISHERY**

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Major rivers in Fiji support robust fisheries for freshwater mussel *Batissa violacea*, which is a reliable livelihood opportunity for village women with few alternative sources of regular income. *Kai* is one of the main sources of livelihood for those rural communities in close proximity to the lower reaches of the major river systems (Pickering et al. 2010). This shellfish has export potential to Pacific islanders living in Australia and New Zealand; however export license applications are routinely declined because of the uncertain phyto-sanitary status. Lack of capacity in shellfish food safety thereby results in economic losses for Fiji (ibid 2010).

Women predominantly dive and sell *kai* in freshwater locations around the country. A lot of these are concentrated in the Nausori/Naitasiri area with *kai* fishers from Nakini, Nagalivatu, Natoaika, Deladamanu, having organized systems of taking of *kai* and selling. There are also areas for traditional use (where *kai* are not sold) and areas for selling. In the four communities above, *kai* is the main source of income and as a management measure there is an arrangement where two villages will fish to sell *kai* in a week and the other two villages will sell the following week and this means the four villages will not all fish together in a given week. The two villages that cannot sell can fish for consumption only.

Most women dive and collect *kai* and fishing times are usually during low tide. *Kai* from these villages are sold in the Nausori and Suva markets. Middle buyers buy *kai* from the villages at a

lower price and this is sold to the Sigatoka, Nadi and Lautoka markets. Main constraints to selling activities are transportation to the markets. A woman interviewed in Suva market comes in on Wednesday and sells until Saturday. Her daughter dives for *kai* on Thursday and Friday and sends the *kai* to the market with those from the village going to the market. She comes back to the village on Saturday afternoon. In Kasavu village which is a *kai* fishing village close to Nausori town, women also fish for *kai* everyday. They dive for *kai* in areas away from the immediate village area, Fishing is also at low tide. *Kai* is sold on the roadside and some middle-sellers come to the village to buy bags of *Kai*.

In Toga, Rewa diving for and selling *kai* is also an everyday activity. Women usually dive for *kai* at low tide and spend about two hours in the water and are out of the river when the tide starts to come in. In discussions with women, some have been fishing for *kai* for more than 20 years and have perfected diving skills, markets and selling techniques over the years. A woman who has sold *kai* for more than 20 years has managed to build her house, send her children to school and maintain her household through money from *kai* (pers comm. Titiana). *Kai* selling is restricted to sales of raw shellfish as there is no value added activities as yet. This would be an area that would really benefit the many women *kai* sellers in Fiji. Fresh water fisheries is usually the domain of women thus there is need for documentation of women's involvement and looking at ways of improving or enhancing their participation.

#### **4.4.8 Future of inshore fisheries**

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Research on the dependence of communities on small-scale fisheries needs to be prioritized. There is need for urgent awareness, guidelines and regulations in place to assist in ensuring sustainable fisheries. Small- scale commercial fishers will continue to increase given increasing reliance on alternative sources of livelihoods and the shift to the informal sector for survival by rural households. The survey of the Suva, Lautoka and Nausori markets in October 2014, highlighted the high number of women involved in selling and marketing activities and working through various networks and associations and contacts to get products to sell or buy. Also obvious was the high number of cooked and processed food sold in the main markets showing women's understanding of adding value to products to get maximum benefit. Pricing of goods and proper handling to attain hygienic conditions are areas that still need to be addressed.

#### **4.4.9.0 SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES IN INSHORE FISHERIES**

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Having considered the various inshore fisheries that women are engaged in and the challenges that they face, the key issues can be summarized as follows:

- a) Although formal production has, in most cases, doubled in intensity and volume, processing and preservation activities has not changed much. Some processing activities like smoking, drying and salting are still traditionally practiced by women.
- b) There has been a significant increase in number of women middle sellers- who buy products from fisherwomen who come in from the villages and either sell the food by marking the prices up-or cooking /or processing the food to add value before re-selling.
- c) Value adding activities are constrained by the required standards that women need to meet, whether it is processing or hygiene-related standards.
- d) Further in-depth research into marketing and distribution mechanisms will expose the complex networks and systems that women have tapped into to remain competitive in the local market.
- e) There is also need to consider gender approaches to some issues discussed as women focused projects sometimes get isolated.
- f) Sex-disaggregated information on women's access to bank loans is lacking as is lack of collateral (some women said they are asked by banks to bring a male guarantor when applying for a loan).
- g) There is need for data collection in the formal and informal sector of fisheries to accurately record participation of women in both sectors.
- h) Strategic actions needed to engage women in small scale fisheries to lift women out of poverty need to be developed and prioritized.
- i) Difficulties associated with marketing products from the remote areas where abundance is greatest to the urban areas where the marketing opportunities are greatest.
- j) Fishing trend is changing with consumption of the surplus instead of selling of the surplus in many coastal communities, thus food security will become a future problem where there is high sales of marine products by women.

#### 4.4.9.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

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- More work and investment on value added activities of marine products should be pursued.
- There is need to work with women small business entrepreneurs to formalize networks and associations they are using for marketing, monitoring species, sales and marketing,
- There is need for in-depth research and studies of processing, post-harvest activities, marketing, and distribution to monitor women's activities and provide an accurate enumeration of women's involvement.
- Further research needs to be done on the impacts of processing methods on beche-de mer quality in Fiji and how women involvement can be improved.

- In most fishing and marketing work by women fishers there is the obvious involvement of husbands and other family members- thus there is also need to start looking into gender relations in the sector to involve and account for family and other factors.
- There is need to work together with the Statistics Department in the collection of data on fishing participation of men and women in the different fisheries.
- Fisheries project that target women need to be long term and need to target household units so that there is continuity and there is interest in maintaining projects after development partners or the government exit.
- Innovative marketing and networking needs to be in place to assist source communities in the rural areas get products to the urban centers or to the appropriate buyers. This will need working with the Department of Fisheries and other government ministries and departments.

#### 4.5 THE AQUACULTURE SECTOR

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Recent aquaculture efforts in Fiji have included tilapia, freshwater prawns, carps, saltwater shrimp, milkfish, seaweed, giant clams, trochus, pearl oysters, beche-de-mer, sponges, turtles, mud crab, and corals. The primary focus of the Department of Fisheries in the last few years has been on pearl oysters, tilapia, shrimp, seaweed, and giant clams.

Although there were four commercial brackish water shrimp farms in Fiji in 2007, all 2007 production of these shrimp came from one operation on the island of Viti Levu. Most of the tilapia and seaweed production is from village-level. The primary policy of aquaculture in Fiji is to ensure sustainable development and management of aquaculture resources. Aquaculture in Fiji has developed through the years with many species cultured in marine, brackish water and freshwater. The cultured species include tilapia, carps, freshwater prawns, saltwater shrimp, seaweed, clams, giant clams, pearl oysters, mud crabs, corals, and turtles. In the fresh water aquaculture, three main species are cultured: tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*), freshwater prawn (*Macrobrachium* sp.) and carps (silver, grass and bighead). Nile tilapia is popular in local markets and is an area where women have participated especially in community ponds. Most of the tilapia and seaweed production is from village-level operations (FAO 2009).

Development in this area include sea cucumber (beche-de-mer) re-stocking trials, *Kappaphycus* seaweed culture is well established in the outer-island provinces, freshwater prawn *Macrobrachium* is being cultured commercially in Fiji. Aquaculture governance needs to be improved in PICTs and the best success occurs if aquaculture is run as a business ( Pickering 2013). The commercial development of the aquaculture sector has been hindered by high input costs. Government continues to support research and development in this area and training and extension support for interested farmers.

Participation of women in aquaculture is minimally documented and where women groups have taken on aquaculture projects this also has not been noted. The expansion of aquaculture is an alternative for income generation, relieving fishing pressure in the reefs and lagoons and allowing for the restocking of depleted resources, but it is hampered by the need for more investment, improved farming technologies and more technical expertise.

There is little documentation of women's participation in the aquaculture sector. Their inclusion is only mentioned as participating in collection or processing activities but there is no specific writing on where they participate, what they do and the contribution of their participation is hardly noted. Except for noted participation of women in the tilapia and seaweed culture, there is no mention of women involvement in the other cultures species like black-lip pearl oyster, penaeid shrimp, milkfish and giant clam. Therefore, if one looks at the status of women in the fisheries sector, their rights and access to resources and opportunities, one can say that while some progress has been made in areas of aquaculture, post-harvest and marketing, a lot more work is still needed to mainstream gender issues into the fisheries sector (Nandlal *ibid*).

#### 4.5.1 SEAWEED FARMING

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Seaweed *Kappaphycus* farming requires low level of technology and is ideal for rural Fiji. Farming is organized as a family activity and run as a family business. Men, women and children are involved in farming seaweed because it is cultivated in inshore areas and these areas are also used for subsistence fishing (Lal and Vuki 2010). In 1998, seaweed farming in Fiji took a new turn. Under the Commodity Development Framework to assist economic development, the government financially committed to re-establishing seaweed farming. At the end of 1998, there were 37 fully operating farms at Kiuva alone. In 2005, there were four existing sites under cultivation. Two were in the Lau group, on the islands of Ono-i-Lau and Namuka-i-Lau. One was on Kadavu, near Kabariki village and one was on Vanua Levu, near Namuka village. While production was carried out on a commercial basis in these areas, the volumes were very small.

Women play an important role in both farming and processing of seaweed. Most of the activities relating to preparation of planting materials, preparation of lines where the seaweed are stretched out under water, then later the process of harvesting, drying then packing are done in family units with men and children assisting in the work. Women especially pick planting materials and this is an important role because the planting materials need to be of good quality.

Women and men do the packing, after which the dried seaweed is ready either for storage or for transportation. In general, women carry out quality control (Lal and Vuki *ibid*). Liviana who had initially been a farmer under the seaweed farming project in Kaba from 2000 still continues to make products out of seaweed today.. She no longer is in the community but buys seaweed from women in Kaba and other areas of Fiji and does her products from home. Products she makes include soap, body lotion, conditioner made from seaweed and her outlets include offices in Suva and Nausori. Income from her products help pay for her household needs (pers comm).

#### 4.5.2 SHRIMP

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Although there were four commercial brackish water shrimp farms in Fiji in 2007, production of these shrimp came from one operation on the island of Viti Levu. There is no documentation of women participation in this sector. A shrimp farmer in Kasavu Village near Nausori had operated her farm for several years now and had successfully harvested and sold her shrimps. The Fisheries officers at the Naduruloulou Station help her market her prawns. She does shrimp and tilapia farming and money from her farm has helped her a lot in improvement and welfare of her household (Ledua pers. comm.).

#### 4.5.3 TILAPIA

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Tilapia is farmed extensively in the Central Division and this is usually carried out with other agricultural activities. Special tilapia projects targeting women were set up in Driti, Bua and Kasavu in Nausori, however most were household owned ponds. In these cases women were largely involved in daily feeding of fish. Women also participate in the harvest and selling of tilapia in the local municipal markets. Through discussions with women from Kasavu village, it was obvious that women do a lot of work on the tilapia farms. According to Ratuki (pers. comm.) who owns several tilapia ponds in Kasavu, the success of his tilapia business has been through his daughters and his wife. His wife had mostly looked after the financial components of the business while his daughters who were both tertiary students, did all the feeding and maintained the ponds. There are environmental concerns about the culturing of tilapia in areas adjacent to rivers. Tilapia if released into local rivers may be highly detrimental to this ecosystem, and may impact other native and endemic species in Fiji's river systems.

#### 4.5.4 PEARL FARMING

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In Fiji, the great majority of spat is collected from the ocean using "long-line spat collectors". These are basically fibrous ropes, set in the ocean for several months, onto which free-floating larvae settle and grow to juvenile oysters. The collection of spat is not difficult, but it does require maintenance of the lines and careful handling of the juvenile oysters. Skill is required to recognize the species being farmed and then to separate them from the many other species that settle on the rope. Support available through an ACIAR-funded project, coupled with development grants from the Fijian Department of Fisheries, has enabled the expansion of spat collection to happen in the last couple of years. Women's groups in particular had been involved in spat collection, and the results have been a huge success for them and for the pearl industry. In Navunievu village, for example, the project provided an extra five long lines, which helped the community double their capture of spat. Their first harvest of 2,000 oysters sold for Fiji FJ\$4,000 (about AU\$2,300). The villagers have built a shop from these proceeds, and aim to double their income next harvest and earn enough to buy a boat. Similarly in Nukavalabu, villagers sold their spat harvest to Fiji's largest pearl company, J Hunter Pearls, for FJ\$4,200 (ACIAR 2013). With their increased capacity and confidence, these and other communities are planning to continue

spat collection as well as further their economic engagement in the industry. Other options that women could be engaged in are handicraft production using mother-of-pearl, and communities producing *mabé* pearls. Participation of women in other pearl breeding ventures is not documented.

#### **4.5.5.0 Key Issues**

- Participation of women in the aquaculture sector is minimal, and could potentially be increased. Involvement of women in this sector will assist in easing fishing pressure from the coastal zone areas.
- Women have demonstrated their ability to be successful shrimp and tilapia farmers in areas away from communal areas.

#### **4.5.5.1 Recommendations**

- Aquaculture is an area where women can be assisted to engage in. Women are already working in aquaculture initiatives and working with the Department of Fisheries and communities in this area can enhance women's involvement.
- Value added work on cultured commodities to be explored.

### **5. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

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Traditional fisheries management, the shift to urbanization and the commercialization of fishing activities led to the destabilization of those traditional management structures, effectively turning Fiji's previously restricted coastal resources into open access resources. Community governance, management and influences over resources differ as there are many variations and interpretations of the use of *I kanakana* and *I qoliqoli*. Fundamental to all the various user systems and protection systems is the acknowledgement of ownership / custodianship passed down orally through generations. Various examples have been researched and documented in the attempt to explain and define how these traditional and customary systems work; however it must be noted that the slight variations and similarities are tied to relationships which are understood and form unwritten rules that people use. These examples include the study on Veivatuloa, Namosi (Kitolelei *et al.* 2012). This system of folk management enabled sustainable resource use (DeMers *et al.* 2011).

The community-based monitoring approach, applied "scientific concepts" as a tool for measuring the success of the community's resource management interventions. This was an adaptation from the traditional method of measuring conservation successes. It must be noted that the community-based monitoring approach adopted was specifically sought to help communities routinely measure the effectiveness of *tabu* areas as replenishment zone (Tawake 2007).



The proper management—including the proper regulation—of fisheries and aquaculture resources is a fundamental requirement for Fiji if the potential of the fisheries sector and the aspirations of its people are to be fully realized. Furthermore, establishing a legal framework to enable the proper management of fisheries is essential for developing fishing activities and conserving stocks.

Traditional systems and customary practices have changed with time however the fundamentals of respect, traditional protocols still existed until quite recently. Major changes to traditional set ups and systems mean that a lot of existing fall back options and alternative systems of governance will be questioned and challenged in the near future. The modern approach to community-based management, which people will need to adapt to, is working with outside 'intervention' and adapting to new leadership and learning modes. Village leaders must deal with distributing money, working out monetary compensation and organizing people's time to balance both traditional lifestyle needs and modern demands and requirements (Vunisea 2002).

With the Fijian name being synonymous with all ethnic races in Fiji- a change in existing regulations needs to be urgently put in place to avoid confusion on the dual mode of governance where before all Fijians referred to the native Fijian. The fact that some communities feel increasingly powerless is likely to have an impact on any community based resource management regime, as consensus in issues concerning the entire community and traditional respect accorded to the chiefs are declining everywhere in Fiji (Ravuvu 1988; Cooke and Moce 1995; Ruddle 1995; Vunisea 2002; Tomlinson 2004; Toren 2004).

The loss of the Great Council of Chiefs and the consequent effect this may have on the chiefly system as a whole, the whole management regime that pegs some, if not most of its success on chiefly support, could in the future be challenged. This also throws the question of where women stand in all this. Does this mean the freedom from traditional and customary restrictions, or does this mean, a more modern barrier where systems cut off women land owners and inheritance rights and where there is loss of respect, where women will have to compete more for access to marine resources, markets and finances?

Responsibilities for management and development of coastal marine resources are shared between national ministries, provincial governments, and indigenous Fijian (*i-Taukei*) institutions. These mechanisms enhance the various areas they are useful in, however, as pointed out by CCIF (2013) a lack of enforcement primarily due to a lack of resources and inadequate understanding of regulation sometimes hinder management interventions. Conservation Officers at the provincial level, organized by the *i-Taukei* Affairs Board, show promise in terms of voicing community interests regarding near shore fisheries and coastal marine resource management at various levels of government, however all these positions are dominated by men without rigorous attempt to include women who are the major users of coastal zone areas.

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## **6. STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN WOMEN IN FISHERIES WORK IN FIJI**

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A range of stakeholders work on women in fisheries issues- some directly and some through community based interventions. These engagements vary with some stakeholders including women in some aspects of the projects, some throughout the projects and some as part of community interventions with no specific women focus.

### **Government Involvement**

#### **The Fisheries Department**

The Department of Fisheries that primarily targets women involvement is in the Inshore Fishery through development and management projects. Studies have been conducted on the participation of men and women in several traditional fishing grounds in Fiji to determine the areas of involvement and expertise. Aquaculture work on tilapia, Shrimp farming, pearl farming, seaweed farming has primarily included women fishers. Women participation in the freshwater fisheries (*kai*) and inshore fisheries for a wide range of species for both consumption and selling is closely monitored by the Department in terms of licensing, size limits and market and selling trends. The department also develops policies that relate to developing fisheries in Fijian waters through government inputs into infrastructure development, such as multi-species hatcheries to boost freshwater and brackish water aquaculture and mariculture, and the introduction of exotic shrimp species resilient to adverse weather conditions due to problems associated with climate change. The work of the Department is country wide.

#### **The Department of Women**

The Department of Women is mandated to work with issues related to women in Fiji. The Department works with women groups in communities in the rural locations of Fiji and will be an important future stakeholder for the WiFN-Fiji given the work that will be undertaken in the future. The MWCPA has attempted several projects targeting women fishers in seaweed culture and tilapia culture. Both are still at initial stages and little success noted. From discussions with the Department (Qereqeretabua, pers.comm.) it was evident that the Department lacks the capacity to do most of the gender or women related work in the sectors. One of the challenges of women targeted project is project proposal writing and understanding what projects are, the monitoring process and reporting process. Thus women are part of projects without a clear understanding of what they are engaged. The WIF could work collaboratively with the MWCPA in addressing concerns on Proposal writing, reporting and monitoring of projects.

#### **The I Taukei Affairs Board and Native Land Fisheries Commission.**

Women ownership and access to *qoliqoli* in rural coastal communities is defined and determined by the NLFC and future access and custodianship rights will involve the work of the NLFC. This

will be more complex given the name change of Fiji citizens and rights over resources and resource use that will be implemented under the new form of governance for the country. The I Taukei Affairs Board and the Native Land and Fisheries commission are important stakeholders because work at the community level requires understanding and working through existing systems. For research in communities and in land and marine tenure boundaries, ownership and access, the above institutions will be the primary stakeholders to work with.

### **PCDF**

PCDF is an organization which deals with communities and has projects that cover a wide range of areas including community based resource management, also tackling climate change issues in this work. In some areas there are specific women land-based activities to offer alternatives to overfishing of coastal resources. Area of coverage is large and includes Lomaiviti, Yanuca, Cicia District in Lau, Serua District, Mataso District in Ra, Nadrau District in Navosa, Savatu District in Ba, Navakasiga and Lekutu District in Bua and Nabobuco district in Naitasiri. PCDF has delivered a wide range of project activities that directly and indirectly benefited over 10,000 people in these remote and detached communities. These project activities work towards addressing 4 main focus areas of the organization. These focus or thematic areas are Education and Capacity Enhancement (ECE), Natural Resources Management (NRM), Health Improvement (HI) and Institutional Development (ID). PCDF also partners up with other NGOs in other project sites for example the work in Verata with IAS and FLMMA and work in Ono with WWF.

### **FLMMA**

The Fiji Locally Managed Marine area Network is a network of NGOs, CSOs, Government agencies and institutions that work on community based marine resource management. The network has established 249 protected areas in 387 villages in Fiji. 207 management plans have been developed in these sites. On all FLMMA sites and in all community-based management initiatives women are part of the planning and development of community-based management plans, the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects. In some cases specific women projects had been implemented as part of projects in communities. Recent work by FLMMA has included the scaling up of projects from communities, to district and Provincial level initiatives with the example of Kadavu where 44 of the 59 qoliqoli areas are under the network of locally managed marine areas (Tawake 2007). The approach used by the FLMMA network is a mix of traditional resource management and modern concept of monitoring the resources and structured process of participatory decision making. In Verata the management committee consisted of 20 men and women (Veitayaki 2003) and women were equally represented throughout the project implementation and continue to be involved. The inclusion of women on LMMA committees has been a way to address gender issues in project sites. Collaboration with outside researchers has also helped to boost the profile of women at LMMA sites, while the network has introduced a

gender programme in which meetings are held with local women's groups to discuss progress of LMMA action plans. Because FLMMA is a network of practitioners they have been effective in including women in projects implemented. Sex disaggregated data are not available in sites where work has been done to support gender inclusion in projects. The WiFN-Fiji should consider working collaboratively with FLMMA to conduct gender assessments of projects done.

### **The Provincial Offices**

All villages and districts in Fiji come under the umbrella of a Province. The 14 Provincial Offices around the country are the first entry point when working in any rural community. Provincial officers facilitate discussions with the Village headman, the chiefs before NGOs and outside partners can then have access to a community. Currently Provincial officers have Conservation officers who assist work on resource development and management. The provincial offices which are the administrative centers for work in rural areas have information on villages and districts and know priorities and planned work that women are involved in. They are also involved in NGO work in all qoliqolis and work with the Department of Fisheries and the Department of Women to reach women in rural locations. Collaborative work with the Provincial offices will facilitate any planned community-based work by the WiFN-Fiji.

### **WWF/FLMMA-Tikina Wai, Tikina Cuvu, Nadroga.**

#### **World Wide Fund for Nature - Pacific**

WWF has worked in many locations in Fiji and is one of the partners under the FLMMA network thus have engaged in community-based work in more than 100 qoliqoli areas in Fiji.. These work involved the use of participatory approaches that included women. An example of the work done was the establishment of 3 community mangrove protected areas and 3 marine protected areas in Tikina Wai in Nadroga. This project included specific women's involvement through the revival of salt making and inclusion in an eco-tourism project set up as an alternative income generation venture. Salt making, protection of mangroves and ecotourism dominantly involved women (WWF 2011). WWF through community-based interventions and approaches include women in work done, however there are no gender assessments or analysis of projects. A proposed livelihoods project to be implemented in the Macuata province has as its goal and project activities the inclusion of women through food processing and quality handling for marketing purposes.

**IOI/USP-** The University of the South Pacific has an on-going project in Gau Island which covers a wide range of issues including marine resource management and inclusion of women in community based initiatives. These initiatives are in partnership with other NGOs in Fiji. There also is a lack of systematic collection of data or information on gender participation to be able to see women's contribution to the work done and to gauge gender impacts of these projects.

## **IUCN**

IUCN has various projects in the country but does not have any project that focuses specifically on women in fisheries. Current project work on the kai fisheries and mangrove work directly impacts on women's fishing participation and livelihoods and this means engagement with the kai selling communities in Toga, Rewa. The work on mangroves in Fiji also directly impacted women fishing participation as protection of Mangrove in the Rewa Delta area means protection of sources of livelihood and income for people in communities. Most of the work done at the moment is at policy level and building partnerships through the IUCN commissions.

## **Wildlife Conservation Society**

Since its establishment in 2003, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) geographic reach in Fiji has grown rapidly. WCS is currently engaged with 95 villages and 22 settlements spread across Bua, Cakaudrove, and Lomaiviti provinces to facilitate ridge-to-reef planning using an ecosystem-based management approach, which includes a strong emphasis on community-based inshore fisheries management. WCS is currently leading research in Fiji that will be used to develop community guidelines on the establishment and management of *tabu* areas for improved fisheries outcomes. The organisation is recognised for its investments in robust scientific research to investigate the social, political, and biophysical factors that influence outcomes within community managed areas in Fiji. While WCS does not have a specific gender program, it facilitates training on community engagement for management planning that promotes gender awareness and has supported communities to establish *tabu* areas, and marine reserves (such as Namena in Kubulau) where fishing is not allowed. It also is expanding its program on beche-de-mer, a fishery that women are often involved in the collection or processing of sea cucumbers caught from the wild. Over the last two years, WCS has trialed a project supporting women from Bua and Cakaudrove provinces to establish alternative livelihoods focused on honey, kuta mats and virgin coconut oil production. Thirty women have received business planning and empowerment training. WCS has prepared a proposal to the Packard Foundation to establish a women in fisheries program, focusing on mud crab fisheries in Bua Province. If successful, this program will start in late 2015.

## **Regional Organizations**

USP/ IAS/ IOI/ Marine Studies-Faculty of Islands and Oceans- The University of the South Pacific has community-based marine management work in Namatakula, Muavuso, Sanasana, Waiqanake, Nakavu, Gau Island and works closely with FLMMA in all the sites in Fiji.

SPC – The Inshore Fisheries Program publishes bi-annually the Women in Fisheries Bulletin. This information bulletin has been in place for more than 10 years and has international readership. PROCFISH project sites in Mali, Macuata & Kaba involved research work on men

and women participation in the fisheries sector. SPC also works on Aquaculture sites with the Department of Fisheries throughout the country. SPC also engages in the Tuna Industry in Fiji which includes work on the socio-economic aspects of the industry. The work on the socio-economic aspect of the Tuna industry had been done in collaboration with the Forum Fisheries Agency and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. One of the main areas of interest of SPC is the engagement of women in fisheries development and management.

Most of the stakeholders discussed above have included women fishers in their project planning, development and implementation processes although this inclusion has not been documented. Women inclusion is still measured by participation at workshops, presence at community meetings and trainings and there has been little to no attempt to develop gender based indicators of projects to measure inclusion of women in projects and the impacts of the projects on women's work areas or their welfare. Collaborative work with the stakeholders mentioned will be an opportunity to conduct gender assessments and analysis of projects.

## **7. KEY LESSONS LEARNED FROM SELECT WOMEN AND FISHERIES PROJECTS**

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**Seaweed project in Kaba-** The seaweed planting project was a project that targeted women. The project had its successes through those who went on to establish small businesses through the use of seaweed. One of the women who started working with the seaweed project in Kaba is still making products from seaweed and now does training for women groups and continues to sell seaweed products to some key outlets. Her challenge is in taking her cottage industry to a larger outlet with wider customer base. The lesson learnt from this project is that some commodities like seaweed are best handled by women. Women can successfully run business operations if properly trained and with the right resources.. This also raises the point of varying indicators to suit information sought.

**In Verata- women are equal partners in the FLMMA project** implemented in Ucuivanua. The project which involve the banning of collection of *kaikoso* (*Anadara*) over certain areas and consistent monitoring and valuation over a period of time- proved to be very successful not only in the number of shell fish in the *tabu* area but in the spill over effect to adjacent areas- thus improving collection for sales for women. In this case women were also monitors and evaluators of the project.

**Projects of the previous Women in Fisheries network** that were established in Nananu (mangrove replanting) worked when the organisation was working in the area and was lost when the project exited. The lesson learnt is the need to have practical exit strategies when implementing projects. As outside partners there has to be an exit strategy which should enable the sustainability of the project for a long period of time.

**Community-based marine management in Nakavu.** In all four sites, the marine protected areas helped empower women economically and socially. Women are the reef gleaners in Navakavu and benefit financially by collecting and selling shellfish from just outside the marine protected area from the spillover effect of management and tabu sites set up. There were mixed reports on distance and time taken to reach fishing grounds. In Nakavu fisherwomen were saying, for instance, that it takes longer (about one hour) to get to the reef outside. Moreover, some have to find other areas to fish and it's usually in a neighboring fishing ground and this is viewed as an act of stealing. Yet people still make the effort to travel further because they recognize the spillover effect and translate this directly into greater potential for earning income from the harvesting of marine resources (van Beukering et al. 2007). This project raises the question of impacts and benefits of projects implemented and how these can be measured.

**A tilapia farmer in Kasavu** shared how he had started tilapia breeding in his farm. This had some successes but after a while he gave the pond and its running to his wife and two daughters. His wife run the financial part of the business and his daughters look after the feeding of the tilapia. His farm has only been successful because of the collective effort of his daughters and his wife. The lesson learnt from this project is that family run business can be very successful when women are involved. Other farms around the Nausori area have women involved in the financial running of ventures and also women are increasingly taking up activities previously done by men.

Most of the Community based marine resource management initiatives established through FLMMA around the country target the involvement of women. Although this involvement is not explained, women are part of all stages of the work done in the management initiatives. This also highlights the importance of spelling out stakeholder participation and who is doing what and who is benefiting when the same type of work is done in other communities. The greater emphasis on reliance on traditional institutions, protocols, kinship and chiefly systems and respect within the *vanua* system could in the long term cause instability in the whole community-based management process if there is change in leadership and if the system is challenged through modernisation and emergence of new modes of leadership.

Women in aquaculture in Driti, Bua. In Driti women were part of a community based project that especially targeted women. The achievements to date provide strong evidence that village women can raise tilapia and prawns to meet the needs of their village and can market them efficiently if given the opportunity and support to do so. It also highlights the important role that women can play in the development of aquaculture in the region. Women are now doing more than their traditional roles of working in gardens and attending to domestic chores; many are now venturing into development enterprises. It is therefore necessary to recognize that women contribute significantly to the social and economic livelihoods of communities (Nandlal, 2005).

Most documentation of women’s involvement in management and development have been on the successes. Little has been written on the failures or gaps or challenges in women involvement in projects or community-based initiatives. Unless there is systematic collection of data and indicators developed to assess success of projects, there will be little evidence based argument on the success and failures or lessons learnt for WiFN-Fiji.

Some of the key lessons learnt include the need for exit strategies where projects have been implemented in communities, roles of women in projects should be better defined and indicators of success and progress included in the project planning stage. The need for data gathering to enable gender considerations are included in projects. The continuing reliance of community-based interventions on traditional institutions, protocols, kinship and chiefly systems means that women continue to be left out of decision making processes. Women can play an important role in the development of aquaculture in the region. Little has been written on the failures or challenges in women involvement in projects or community-based initiatives. Unless there is systematic collection of data and indicators developed to assess success of projects, there will be little evidence based argument on the success and failures of women in fisheries work in Fiji.

## **8. GAPS AND BARRIERS TO WOMEN’S FULL PARTICIPATION**

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Generally, it can be argued that women have been largely disadvantaged in institutionalized fisheries development in the Pacific Islands. Apart from traditional and social constraints, they are hindered by technological innovations, which principally target male fishing activities and marginalize the participation of women in fishing. Their non-inclusion in decision making processes at the community level leave them out of fisheries development and management decision making that affect them. The trend, however, is where women projects are developed to ensure alternative income sources it has been largely in traditional women work areas and activities. Examples of these are mat making, tapa making and “women focused activities”. There is need to move out of gender stereotype activities and challenge women’s capabilities by engaging them as equal partners giving them roles as team leaders of projects and as members of monitoring and evaluation teams.

The following were the main gaps identified;

<b>Non-enumeration of fishing activities.</b>	Non-enumeration of women fisheries participation because of the dominant participation in the subsistence sector of fisheries- and the sector
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	classified as economically inactive. The lack of information and data on women-specific participation in the different fisheries results in difficulty in assessing economic contribution of women in the numerous fisheries sectors and activities in which they are engaged.
<b>Lack of sex-disaggregated data</b>	Semi-subsistence/small-scale commercial fisheries participation of women is usually conducted in household units or with family members thus there is a lack of women specific data and information
<b>Need to link to policy level discussions</b>	Work with women fishers need to be aligned to national planning priorities and there is need for involvement or contribution to policy level discussions with Government Line Ministries to advance women's concerns at a higher political level.
<b>Lack of understanding of Legal mechanisms</b>	Women in the inshore fisheries work traditional unwritten rules of resource use and national legal mechanisms that define the use of resources. Capacity building and awareness on regulations and changes to licensing and permit requirement in the inshore areas are an area where women need to be assisted with.
<b>Distribution and marketing of catches</b>	There is little documentation of seafood marketing dynamics and the involvement of women. Transportation needs, access to markets, market space still considered some of the main challenges women face in their selling and distributing activities..
<b>Lack of Access/ knowledge of Finance &amp; project mechanisms</b>	Lack of direct access to credit and finances restrict women from participating equally in the Fisheries sector. Banks have strict rules and criteria that govern lending that make it difficult for women to access loans. Lack of knowledge and skills of project proposal writing to secure funds for group projects. No experience in implementing, monitoring and reporting of project funding
<b>Socio-economic challenges related to the Tuna Industry</b>	Lack of strategic education and training of women limits their participation in the offshore fisheries sector; Need for knowledge management to be in place to ensure that all information is centralized and work progressed to implement recommendations from

	<p>reports carried out;</p> <p>The sex trade and the spread of sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS, are issues of concern, particularly for the tuna industry and its management.</p> <p>.</p>
<b>Social and Cultural Barriers</b>	<p>Complex traditions and customary differences in communities become a barrier to the progress of women in fisheries work.</p> <p>Status of women fishers in communities and changes as a result of marketing activities.</p>
<b>Lack of Education and Training in Business</b>	<p>Women participate in the market economy and have little or no education or training to prepare them for this shift from the informal to the formal economy</p>
<b>Collaboration with other Stakeholders</b>	<p>Need to collaborate and link into already existing work done in fisheries by NGOs and CSOs.</p> <p>Networking and working with established women in business networks could assist women mitigate some of the challenges women face in the marketing of their products.</p>
<b>Lack of documentation of participation in the Aquaculture sector</b>	<p>Women participate in the culturing or collection of commodities and are part of family, or community projects.</p>
<b>The lack of Quality Handling requirements, standard procedures of products sold in local markets.</b>	<p>A lot of cooked seafood sold in the local markets without quality controls and standards.</p> <p>Value added activities being carried out without proper training and health requirements in place</p>
<b>Women involvement in Community based fisheries management interventions</b>	<p>Most community-based work implemented in communities lack women trainers and facilitators.</p> <p>Although women are included, strategic approaches that include gender considerations need to be included.</p>

<p><b>Lack of specific research on women engagement in the fisheries sector.</b></p>	<p>Specific research should be conducted on women specific areas of specialization like shrimp fishing, crabs, seaweed fisheries.</p> <p>Need for research into participation of all ethnic groups in fisheries and new fisheries legislations and other policies that will affect the fisheries resource use, marketing and distribution mechanisms.</p> <p>Research into emerging fisheries and the participation of women. This is to include work on trying to find avenues on the export of kai and other commodities.</p> <p>Research into the participation of women in the different commodities exported.</p> <p>Food security and climate change and value chain development research.</p> <p>Further research needs to be done on the socio-economic impacts of the Tuna Industry to update existing findings.</p>
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## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

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For the following recommendations there can be a phased approach where areas of work that can be addressed now is identified as short term while work that require strategic changes and need resources to start to be addressed under long term plans. Immediate focus of the WIFN is to start the organization and focus on a few work areas where women dominate in their fishing activities.

The first few years should focus on building up the structure and membership of the network, work guidelines and should involve collaboration work with other sectors like Aquaculture and work with other NGOs and CSOs on work already undertaken. This will involve providing gender analysis work, doing research, collecting data and work on the network establishing itself. The following is a set of recommendations for both short term and long term interventions. Immediate focus areas of work for WIFN is summarized at the end of this table.

**Opportunities for Engagement of the WiFN are as follows;**

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Immediate -Short term (2-3 years)</b>	<b>Long term ( 5 years)</b>
Enumeration and documentation of Women Fisheries activities	Document and enumerate women’s activities in fisheries sectors they are engaged in, targeting species such as sea cucumbers, crabs, mud lobsters and moci – identifying needs and gaps.	Systematic documentation of participation of women in other fisheries (long term).  Addressing of gaps and needs in areas identified. Eg markets, sustaining fisheries, etc.
Collection of sex disaggregated on marketing and distribution involvement. marketing dynamics, engagement in artisanal fisheries	Sex disaggregated data collected on women involvement in specific fisheries eg beche-de-mer, kai fisheries, shrimp fisheries.	Develop a database of data collected from the various fisheries and sectors.  Knowledge management – systematically document and store information relating to women in fisheries.  Sex-disaggregated data systematically collected in all fisheries women are engaged in.
Analyzing and strengthening women’s roles in Aquaculture	Analysis of women involvement in (all) commodity development in the aquaculture sector. Identify and assist women entrepreneurs in the aquaculture sector	Strengthening of women’s involvement through identification of markets and development of value added products, development of proposals for financial support and providing networking opportunities for women in the sector.
Policy level input and engagement	Have input into policy development and strategic planning processes in the various fisheries sectors. E.g. In development and review of policies relating to beche-de-mer fishery, the trochus fishery, mud crab fishery, etc.	Contribute to fisheries input in gender policies. This includes the National Gender Policy, the Pacific Platform for Action, and the Women Action Plan for Fiji.

Education and Training on policies, regulations, legal mechanism	Education and training on policies and regulations on inshore fisheries. Training on traditional and legal marine tenure, and implications for women fisher's.	Workers' rights and obligations in the tuna fisheries. Translation of policies and regulations into simple languages and to the main vernacular languages.
Mobilizing and strengthening women fishers marketing and selling networks and activities.	WIF to work on identifying and mobilizing women fishers in markets, middle sellers and strengthen networking systems being used to move products around the country. Capacity building and training of women distributors.	Set up outreach mechanisms for women sellers in the municipal markets and in source areas around the country.
Management plans to be developed for specific fisheries. Small business development in the fisheries sector-targeting species where management plans have been developed.	Business training to be with women fishers engaged in networking and selling/buying of products. Business management plans to be developed for business development for fisheries that have management plans already in place. women entrepreneurs.	Business development and training to be expanded to other areas in Fiji. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework developed to monitor progress of small businesses developed.
	Identify women entrepreneurs and find best practices that can be used as models for other women and communities	Women fisheries entrepreneurs' network set up linked to WIF-for lessons learnt and best practice models.
	Identifying source areas of products and working with women in these communities – strengthening networks and building capacity.	Implementing sustainable forms of harvest and management in source communities (work with other NGOs and partners on these).
		Develop M&E Framework to evaluate work done on mobilizing women marketing strategies.
Food handling and marketing	Training and awareness on quality handling, packing methods for seafood sold in the local markets and other outlets.	Develop training programs targeting the post-harvest sector with emphasis on potential export commodities.

	<p>Training on value added activities and value chain development.</p> <p>Develop monitoring and monitoring framework for value chain development.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Training and education on Standards requirements, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) requirements for export.</p> <p>Conduct an M&amp; E of work already done.</p>
Communications and coordination	<p>Develop communications between women in communities using the radio, mobile phones, social networking.</p> <p>Develop guidelines for engagement of WIF with other organizations and women fishers network in communities.</p>	<p>Develop a communication strategy.</p> <p>Constitution of WIF to be developed/reviewed.</p>
Training on proposal writing, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation and PRA facilitation	Training of trainers on proposal writing, report implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.	Training to be conducted where requested-by trainers targeting key areas of women fishers' involvement.
Working through traditional /customary mechanisms and institutions to empower women, address barriers	Identification of and working through institutional mechanisms that support women's work. Identifying champions to work with on the ground.	Work with the Provincial/ district councils and other (ethnic) traditional institutions to train and empower women and identify women leaders to assist women fishers in communities.
Women in decision making processes	Work with local governance systems to enable the identification of appropriate structures which can be maximized to enable women's full participation in decision making at the community level- to be trialed in 2-3 model sites.	Work on good governance expanded to other sites as requested.
Strategic Focus area	Short Term ( 2-3 years)	Long term ( 5 years)

Networking of women involved in fisheries.	Networking of women involved in fisheries as a start (e.g. kai, shrimp/moci, tilapia, beche-de-mer). Once a model for engagement has been established and networks set up, engagement can then be expanded to other fisheries where women are engaged in.	Networking with relevant NGOs in Fiji and systematically build linkages with Government Departments and other stakeholders.
	WIF to include as members and part of the network women working in the Fisheries sector, Government sectors, CSOs, women's groups, those in academia and women in communities.	Work with Women groups in Fiji on CEDAW, MDG, and other Regional and National instruments to progress women issues through WiFN-Fiji and the Fisheries Sector. Empowerment of community women to take over leadership roles of the WiFN-Fiji
Value added and research work in the Tuna fisheries sector.	The development of value added products in the Offshore Fisheries Sector is a proposed business opportunity for women. This could involve small scale ventures. Tuna and by-catch from fishing activities could be used for smoking, salting, drying and cooking for selling in cottage industries	Research to be undertaken on the social status and conditions of women workers in the tuna industry and offshore fisheries. Research on women participation in the sex trade, to update existing status. Education, awareness and capacity building of women in the offshore fisheries and identification on areas where women can be meaningfully involved.
Value added activities of marine products should be pursued	Development of management plans for targeted species. Business development on species identified.	Expand development of Management plan to other species.
Access to Finance and working with Small Business Enterprise Programs	.Review of finances available to women and financial institutions they can work with. Training which can include but not limited to understanding of supply and	There is need for credit and access to finance to enhance women small business enterprise. Assisting women to move from semi-subsistence ( informal sector) to running

	demand, budgeting, selling techniques and standards required	small-scale commercial operations (formal sector required)
Strategic engagement and linking up with other stakeholders on management and other fisheries development initiatives at community level.	Gender analysis and assessments of community-based on-going and proposed projects. These analysis and assessments to be systematic and strategically conducted so WiFN-Fiji has the primary information and access to women fishers in these locations and could monitor progress of involvement over set time periods	Through the gender analysis /assessment work core indicators could be developed to help measure progress of projects and women's involvement. A set of tools (toolkit) to be developed to assist practitioners in conducting gender analysis/assessments and also how to develop relevant women interventions.
Strategic interventions to address gender and climate change impacts.	Need for strategic interventions and work with women in Climate Change impacts and adaptation.	Disaster response mechanisms to be in place
Strengthening income generation ventures that women are already involved in at the community level. Facilitate exchange programs, training, and access to credit.	Identify successful women in business, women sellers, women middle sellers and buyers from urban and rural areas.	Use successful women in business (tilapia, prawn farm, kai selling) as models for women entrepreneurs.
Community-based Management work and training on PRA tools	Training of women practitioners and women leaders on PRA tools.  PRA tools to be developed using existing tools and working collaboratively with other NGOs and CSOs	Train a pool of community trainers from communities- set up network for information exchange for trainers.
Women in community-based fisheries management and resource management.	Identify areas for community-based management initiatives to be developed with women targeting specific women's fisheries e.g. mangrove crab farming, Capacity building on development of Management	Women engagement in fisheries management work in the qoliqolis in Fiji to be monitored by the network through collaborative work with other partners (NGO, CSO, Department of Fisheries, etc.)



	<p>Plans, Proposal writing, Project implementation and monitoring, project reporting</p>	<p>Training and capacity building for women on alternative livelihood and income sources. Networking and linking women across communities in Fiji. Networks to be used for exchange purposes for women, forums for lessons learnt avenues for linking suppliers and buyers of products. These women from communities will also form the core of the WiFN-Fiji members</p>
<p>Research – Research will be an on-going component of the work of the WIFN</p>	<p>Research should be conducted on women specific areas of specialization like shrimp fishing, crabs, seaweed fisheries.</p> <p>Research into participation of all ethnic groups in fisheries in Fiji and new fisheries legislations and other policies that will affect the fisheries resource use, marketing and distribution mechanisms and access.</p> <p>Research into emerging fisheries and the participation of women. This is to include work on trying to find avenues on the export of kai and other commodities.</p> <p>Research into the participation of women in the different commodities exported.</p> <p>Food security and climate change and value chain development research.</p> <p>Further research needs to be done on the socio-economic</p>	

	impacts of the Tuna Industry to update existing findings.	
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**Recommended Immediate Strategic Areas of Focus Include the following:**

- ***Enumeration and documentation of Women Fisheries activities through collection of sex disaggregated data on marketing and distribution involvement, marketing dynamics, engagement in artisanal fisheries, and participation in specific fisheries.***

***Conduct a stocktake of women involvement in the different fisheries sector***

Document and enumerate women’s activities in fisheries sectors they are engaged in, targeting species such as sea cucumbers, crabs, mud lobsters and moci – identifying needs and gaps. Sex disaggregated data collected on these fisheries and setting up of a database to store data and information collected.

- ***Mobilizing and strengthening women fishers marketing and selling networks and activities. Targeted training and capacity building for women distributors, sellers, middle sellers, suppliers of seafood.***

WIF to work on identifying and mobilizing women fishers in markets, middle sellers and strengthen networking systems being used to move products around the country.

- ***Value added work and training and capacity building on food handling and marketing***

Training and awareness on quality handling, packing methods for seafood sold in the local markets and other outlets. Training on value added activities and value chain development. Develop monitoring and monitoring framework for value chain development.

- ***Business Development program developed for women***

Management plans to be developed for specific fisheries. Small business development in the fisheries sector-targeting species where management plans have been developed.

- ***Networking of women involved in fisheries- Communications and coordination***

Networking of women involved in fisheries (e.g. kai, shrimp/moci, tilapia, beche-de-mer). Through this network lessons learnt and models of participation in fisheries can be identified and used in other locations. This initiative also helps to build and establish the WIFN at community

Develop communications between women in communities using the radio, mobile phones, social networking. Develop guidelines for engagement of WIF with other organizations and women fishers network in communities.

- ***Strategic engagement and linking up with other stakeholders*** on management and other fisheries development initiatives at community level. Gender analysis and assessments of community-based on-going and proposed projects. These analysis and assessments to be systematic and strategically conducted so WiFN-Fiji has the primary information and access to women fishers in these locations and could monitor progress of involvement over set time periods. This strategic focus of the network also helps to establish and build the network in Fiji and starts collaboration work with other stakeholders.
- ***Analysis and strengthening women's roles in Aquaculture***

Analysis of women involvement in (all) commodity development in the aquaculture sector. Identify and assist women entrepreneurs in the aquaculture sector.

- ***Research***

Research into the participation of women in the different commodities exported

Research should be conducted on women specific areas of specialization like shrimp fishing, crabs, seaweed fisheries.

The above strategic activities should be the focus of the network in the first 2-3 years.

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## CONCLUSION

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Women have progressed a long way from when they were described as "unseen workers" in the Fisheries Sector. Even though their participation may not be fully enumerated, their presence is acknowledged and understood. Women dominate the inshore fisheries working largely in the semi-subsistence and artisanal sectors. For most women in rural coastal communities, fisheries resources not only provide for food security, it is the only source of financial livelihoods for the majority of them. This is the same for those in inland locations who depend on freshwater fisheries with increasing reliance on aquaculture.

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Women in fisheries challenges and barriers have been documented for Fiji for more than 20 years and most of these barriers point to non-inclusion through cultural and social stereotyping and thinking. There has however been a significant shift in attitude to enable the many forms of

marketing and fisheries engagement that women are involved in. Most women interviewed in the Lautoka and Suva markets are away from home for 3-4 days until all products are sold then they return to their families, only to return the following week with a new batch of marine products to sell. There is a lot of flexibility in arrangements and there is acceptance of women staying away from homes, engaging in marketing and living in urban areas, negotiating with sellers and buyers from various locations and negotiating space and payments at all levels- from the boat rides to the reefs, the buses and carriers that bring them to urban centers and to the market outlets.

A stocktake of what the situation on the ground is now and how women in fisheries initiatives can be bettered should be the focus of the network in the next 5 years. Questions to ask is; Has there been a move away from just counting women, is there a shift to newer areas of work and are women breaking away from traditional stereotyped work?

The recent changes in government Regulations and Policies relating to inshore fisheries and the work done by NGOs in training and building up capacity at the community level mean that women are engaged at all levels, even though these involvement may not be to the extent where women can be seen as equal partners and being at the forefront of decision making. For legal mechanism to have impact at the community level, the WiFN-Fiji could be instrumental in translating, training and building the capacity of women to understand legal issues and use these to their advantage.

New and emerging issues like climate change and disaster risk management will continue to have more impact on inshore fisheries and will have impact on fisheries production and participation by women. Thus climate change and disaster risk management and responses could be an area that the WiFN-Fiji could also be engaged in as a long term objective.

The WiFN-Fiji in the long term could be the voice of women fishers at national, regional and international forums and this work could begin by looking at the National Agreements relating to gender that Fiji has signed and working with women from the ground up.

As advocates for women in fisheries it will be necessary to take a gendered approach to fisheries development and management to fully understand the dynamics in fisheries at the community and the national policy level. Thus the focus on Women in Fisheries should not exclude discussions on “gender in fisheries” especially as it relate to work done nationally in Fiji.

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