

The Role of Socioeconomic Factors, Psychological Motivations, and Social Networks in Women's Participation in Community-Based Fishery Management in Ghana

ABSTRACT

Women's participation in community-based decision-making in managing natural resources such as fishery is considered crucial to the sustainability of the fishery industry. However, women experience the brunt of inequality in fishery tasks and decision-making despite their crucial contributions. Using survey data ($N=400$) from an ethnographic study on Ghanaian female fisherfolk, we examine the factors affecting women's participation in community-based fishery decision-making. Findings show that while women attended community meetings, only a few held positions in the fishery associations. Whilst education was not a significant factor in women's community participation, the age of children, women's ownership of fishery assets as well as psychological characteristics such as trust, interests and gender role attitudes were very crucial. Results further show that network variables such as women's position in other associations were more important to their participation in community-based fishery decision-making than mere membership in such associations. This study highlights the need for fishery policies aimed at gender equality to move beyond gender structures and economic models toward examining the complexity of factors affecting different aspects of women's participation in fishery decision-making.