

Gender Mainstreaming Strategies: Exploring the Successes and Failures of Gender
Mainstreaming in the Fisheries Sector in Ghana

RUKAYA ISSAH

SUPERVISED BY: GUÐNÝ GÚSTAFSDÓTTIR

GRÓ GEST, University of Iceland

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ABSTRACT

The persistence of gender inequality in the aquaculture and fisheries value chain, which hinders women's participation in economic opportunities and decision-making roles, is a pressing issue. The slow progress in incorporating gender perspectives into policies and programs has not yet achieved gender equality fully in the sector. A study conducted in Ghana, which is of significant importance, aimed to assess the successes and failures of gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector. The study, which involved 43 respondents from various subsectors using semi-structured questionnaires, revealed that a majority of respondents were aged between 31 and 50 years, with varying levels of education.

While there was a high level of awareness of gender mainstreaming among respondents, with most acknowledging its importance, a significant percentage of actors and regulators were unsure if gender mainstreaming had been integrated into their associations/organization's policies. Although efforts were being made to appoint women into leadership roles based on competencies, training in gender mainstreaming was lacking for a substantial portion of respondents. While respondents deemed financial resources allocated for gender mainstreaming insufficient, hindering long-term success, the absence of designated gender-focal persons responsible for overseeing gender mainstreaming initiatives also posed a challenge. The associations/organizations also lacked clear rules of procedure for responding to gender-related and sexual harassment, indicating a need for improved policies in this area.

Successful gender mainstreaming efforts were seen to involve increasing women's involvement in decision-making, reducing gender disparities, and enhancing women's livelihoods through access to resources and opportunities. Despite the challenges posed by limited resources and deep-rooted traditional gender roles among others, there is a clear path to advancing gender mainstreaming in the sector which includes allocating adequate financial resources to implement gender-responsive programs, enhancing the awareness and capacity of policymakers and implementers, strengthening monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure progress and identify areas for improvement and collecting gender-disaggregated data within fisheries organizations for proper representation. By implementing these recommendations, we can facilitate progress towards greater gender equality and inclusivity in the sector.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEWEFIA	Central and Western Fishmongers Association
DAA	Development Action Association
DOPA	Densu Oyster Pickers Association
EJF	Environmental Justice Foundation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FTT	FAO Thiaroye Technology
FC	Fisheries Commission
GFRA	Ghana Fisheries Recovery Activity
GNCFCC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NAFPTA	National Fish Processors and Traders Association
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VSLAs	Village Savings and loans Association

CHAPTER ONE; INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The fishing industry significantly impacts global food security, economic expansion, and social well-being, especially in middle-income nations (Shamsuzzaman et al., 2020). Fishing has long been a traditional activity in Ghana's coastal regions and supports many activities, including fish processing and trade, as per Adjei and Sika-Bright (2019) and Ayoudi and Failler (2012). Fisheries in land, sea, and aquaculture are all included in this sector. Small-scale and artisanal fishing is a common activity among the local population in Ghana; it makes up a sizable portion of the business and contributes to local food security (Akpalu et al., 2018).

Historically, the fisheries sector has been a patriarchal community with notable gender disparities with gendered division of labor (Torell et al., 2019) related to roles they play in the *value chains* in relation to fisheries, primarily due to socioeconomic position that influences the unequal power relations (FAO,2016). The involvement of women in economic opportunities and decision-making is hindered by gender inequality concerns that exist across the fisheries value chain. A lot of women are found to be present throughout the whole fisheries value chain, but there are differences in the roles that women and men play, and this has led to less awareness regarding the significant role that women play in the fishing industry (FAO,2023). This also explains why their struggles in daily interactions with the marine environment and its resources have not received as much attention (Golo & Erinosh, 2023) and why their efforts, needs, and interest in policy planning that impacts sustainable development have not been acknowledged (USAID/SFMP, 2020).

Gender equality is necessary for the development of a sustainable fishing industry as well as for economic growth and higher productivity. In the framework of ending poverty and ensuring food security, the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries (Wilson et al., 2015) call on all stakeholders to make determined efforts to incorporate gender equality into all small-scale fisheries development strategies and to uphold gender equity and equality as fundamental guiding principles. This is becoming more widely acknowledged as a crucial element of sustainable growth in a number of industries, including the fisheries industry (Torre et al., 2019).

The goal of gender mainstreaming is to promote women's rights, increase their involvement, and resolve gender disparities in various facets of value chains and fisheries

management (Jie et al., 2023). Additionally, it helps to save the environment and manage natural resources more skillfully (Rao et al., 2023).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Gender inequality limits the fisheries sector's potential to preserve marine resources and ecosystems despite the sector's critical role in global food security and economic development (Ameyaw et al., 2020). Recognizing and implementing gender equality as pertinent and essential to the development, management and planning of fisheries has been a very slow process for the fisheries sector (Mangubhai et al., 2022), despite the numerous efforts made over the years by many countries to integrate gender perspectives into their policies and program (FAO, 2013). As required by the UN, nations have decided to advance gender equality and women's rights in all processes and areas of development (Lawless et al., 2021) and the fishing industry is no exception.

Factors that affect the roles, positions, opportunities, and experiences that women and men in the industry demonstrate gender dimensions in the fishing sector. Division of roles within this industry is one of these important elements. The role and position of women fishers are very important because, in coastal fishing communities, in particular, they form part of the patriarchal social hierarchy-based division of the labor system (Fesanrey et al., 2020). Women are mostly active in small-scale fisheries and pre- and post-harvest operations like net mending, processing, marketing, and trade, whereas men are put in the center of fishing activities like going to sea to fish (FAO,2023). More attention is put on the act of “fishing” making men superior to women rather than “processing” where the women are mostly found. Traditional, cultural, and societal standards are reflected in these gender roles, perceiving men as breadwinners and clearly describes the ways in which privilege and oppression interact to influence people's lives and how these interactions result in various types of complex social hierarchies (Yuval-Davis, 2011). However, it has been observed that despite the gendered division of labor, a number of women own boats, especially canoes and vessels, which allows them to pay for fishing trips and employ men to fish on their behalf (Kyei-Gyamfi., 2022) and the few men who are often found in the post-harvest sector of the fisheries mostly do so on a commercial basis.

Generally, because women bear a heavier workload than men do in terms of house chores and care work, they typically cannot fully participate in the economic sphere with

greater opportunities. Time constraints, domestic duties, reproductive obligations, capital accessibility, cultural norms, and a host of other factors that are socially ascribed limit their participation (Alonso et al., 2019) and as a result, they are unable to obtain formal education or training and thus shut out of meaningful involvement in the fisheries industry, both as employees and as decision-makers (Kleiber et al., 2015). In addition to being unpaid, this extra workload hinders the ability of women to take part in activities that fetch meaningful income, which frequently calls for complete dedication before yielding a profit and so has an adverse effect on how long they can thrive in the production and trade industries (Ameyaw et al., 2020). Women must be allowed equal access to and authority over their economic and financial resources when the idea of achieving gender equality and promoting equitable and sustainable economic growth and development is conceived (Endalcachew, 2016).

Determining the extent of women's contributions along the aquaculture and fisheries value chain, which includes pre-production, production, and post-harvest (processing and marketing), is difficult due to insufficient disaggregated data on sex and age (FAO, 2023). Globally, data on fish obtained by female gleaners in fisheries, for instance, is mostly disregarded, undervaluing the overall amount of fisheries production and how it contributes to generating household income and food security (Harper et al., 2020). Further, the lack of disaggregated data in the fisheries industry, according to Weeratunge and Synder (2009), supports the conventional view that men dominate the industry. This viewpoint has historically resulted in policies that prioritize the commercial value of fish as a product and see fishermen as the only workers thereby showcasing how patriarchal systems put first the views of men. This disregards other important aspects of the industry including the unequal power dynamics in households and communities, social structure or class, gender roles, means of subsistence and eventually, the “invisibilization” of the role of the women in the sector caused by these sociocultural norms and institutional challenges. The term "fisherman" itself perpetuates this deeply ingrained social belief and further worsen the issue of inequality, as highlighted by the FAO in 2015.

1.3 Rationale

While there has been advancement in recognizing women's involvement, representation, and gender-sensitive laws, the implementation of these policies has not been entirely successful. The government of Ghana, along with Namibia and South Africa, supports

the FAO SSF Fisheries Guidelines, which includes a specific chapter on gender equality. However, according to Verloo (2001), there are significant difficulties in effectively implementing these policies, leading to women's organizations being inadequately represented in current fisheries governance structures (Chuche, 2023) in Ghana. Kleiber et al., (2017) were of the view that including gender in the SSF Guidelines is a significant and positive development, but the next crucial step is implementing them effectively. Creating information specific to a given culture and area will be a part of the implementation process, enabling local agencies to identify and prioritize gender needs. It will also involve examining power dynamics and social relations.

Considering the prevalent gender bias existing in the fishing sector, the study narrows its scope to only include women, hence focusing on the viewpoints of women. This strategy seeks to address the gender gaps in the field and lay the groundwork for possible further studies. The study aims to bring to light the challenges women encounter and the contributions they make by focusing on their lived experiences and perspectives to begin with and a mixed study would be an opportunity for further research on the topic. This will help to advance a more inclusive and thorough knowledge of gender dynamics in the industry.

1.4 General Objective

To examine the successes and failures of gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector in Ghana to help identify the barriers and opportunities to inform policy formulation.

1.5 Specific Objectives

1. To assess the extent of gender mainstreaming efforts in the fisheries sector in Ghana
2. To identify the factors contributing to successful gender mainstreaming initiatives
3. To identify the challenges that hinder effective gender mainstreaming

1.6 Research Questions

1. What is the extent of gender mainstreaming efforts in the fisheries sector in Ghana?
2. What are the factors favoring gender mainstreaming?
3. What are the challenges mitigating effective gender mainstreaming in Ghana

1.7 Organization of the Study

Following Chapter One (Introduction), which examines the study's background, problem statement, rationale, purpose, objectives, and research questions, Chapter Two addresses the

literature review, such as Gender mainstreaming efforts in the fisheries sector in Ghana and barriers that hinder effective gender mainstreaming. Chapter Three responds to the methodology applied in the study; Chapter Four presents the results and discussions, and Chapter Five presents the conclusion and recommendation of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: STATE OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE FISHERIES SECTOR

2.0 Introduction

Chapter two examines both the successes and challenges of gender mainstreaming through an examination of current policies, regulations, and programs to reveal the degree to which gender issues have been incorporated into many facets of the fishing industry. It also aims to identify and evaluate the difficulties and barriers that hinder the successful execution of gender mainstreaming initiatives, considering the gaps in institutional policies and sociocultural factors at work. This prepares the ground for arguments and recommendations in a later chapter.

2.1 Gender mainstreaming efforts in the fisheries sector in Ghana

2.1.1 Institutional Frameworks and Policies

The implementation of institutional frameworks and policies is crucial in steering the endeavors towards gender mainstreaming within Ghana's fisheries industry. The Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Co-Management Policy for the Fisheries Sector in 2020 talked about a change to a more inclusive approach where decision-making procedures involve resource users, including women, men, representatives of traditional fisheries institutions, and stakeholders, among others (FC / MOFAD, 2020). It stressed that Community-Based Co-Management Committees must include women in their representation. At the national level, Fisheries management and development are supervised by the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD) and the Fisheries Commission (FC) of Ghana. In the fishing industry, they are primarily in charge of formulating, enforcing, and regulating policies.

The sector's adopted policies and strategies emphasized the necessity for focused interventions as well as the progressive identification of gender imbalances. The Ghana National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy, 2022 states that gender equality and women's empowerment are essential for achieving sustainable fisheries management. It also recognizes the importance of gender and youth in the sector and recommends a long-term bottom-up approach to ensure equity among the sexes in the sector (MOFAD/FC,2022). The strategy improves the sustainability of the industry and places a strong emphasis on integrating gender issues into all facets of fisheries planning, including capacity building, resource allocation, and decision-making procedures.

Several institutional measures have been put into place to support gender mainstreaming in the fishing industry in recent years. One noteworthy outcome of these initiatives is the greater number of women holding managerial roles in fishing organisations. The fact that women are increasingly leading divisions, units, and even regional directors indicates a major change in the governance of fisheries towards gender inclusion. Initiatives in the fisheries sector, such as the adaptation of the 2015 FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Small-scale Fisheries in relation to eradicating poverty and ensuring food security (SSF Guidelines) and many more national and regional fisheries policies, will enhance the involvement of women serving in government (Barclay et al., 2021; Murunga, 2021).

Once more, institutional rules have been created to actively promote and encourage female employees to pursue career progression and training possibilities in the fishing industry. For example, the National Aquaculture Center's recent opening offers both men's and women's training opportunities, a strategic intervention to close the gender gap in aquaculture. This programme gives women access to leadership roles and training opportunities in the aquaculture industry in an effort to empower them and advance gender equality. Affirmative action has contributed to the trend towards gender-balanced leadership, but it also shows that women are valued contributors to the industry. These women in management are essential to the development of policies, the execution of gender-responsive programs, and decision-making procedures in fishing organisations (FAO, 2017).

Ghana's commitment to gender equality is further projected on the international scene by national policies that are in line with international frameworks like the Agenda 2063 framework of the African Union, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It has also embraced the Beijing Platform for Action. Ghana's 2015 National Gender Policy strongly emphasizes integrating women's empowerment and gender equality into the nation's development initiatives.

2.1.2 Participation and Representation of women in the fisheries sector

Evaluating women's presence and involvement in decision-making in the fishing industry is a good way to gauge the effectiveness of a gender mainstreaming approach because it shows both areas of development and enduring issues. Gender equality in decision-making processes is being promoted more actively due to governmental and non-governmental

organisations recognizing the contributions of women to aquaculture and fisheries (FAO, 2016).

Gender equality and women's empowerment are promoted in Ghana's fishing industry by grassroots movements and women's organisations such as the Densu Oyster Pickers Association (DOPA), Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC) Women's Wing, and National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA). Since its inauguration in March 2015, NAFPTA has provided a common platform for networking, exchange of ideas and experiences, training, and capacity building of members. NAFPTA members are on the frontline of the fishing industry and, therefore, contribute overall towards the improvement of the fishing industry by supporting the campaign against fish caught through illegal means (USAID/SFMP, 2018) which forms part of an agenda to sustain the sector.

The Densu Oyster Pickers Association (DOPA) is a tangible illustration of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) 's success in advancing women's leadership in fisheries management. To manage the oyster resources they harvested in the Densu Delta on the outskirts of Accra, SFMP formed DOPA, through the Development Action Association (DAA). The group is primarily comprised of women and works as a community-based fisheries resource group (USAID/SFMP, 2015). In addition to resource management, they actively engage in co-management strategies to guarantee sustainability. DOPA offers helpful training courses that are meant to empower women in their community.

Last but not least, a very important and notable example of women's representation within the fisheries value chain is the position of the “fish mammies” or “Konkohemaa” held by women. A woman, "Konkohemaa", literally means the head of fishmongers/processors. Due to her leadership position in the community, the woman known as "Konkohemaa" has the authority to set prices for landed fish, mediate disputes, and make a substantial number of decisions (EJF; MOFAD, and FC, 2022). She coordinates activities between fishmongers and processors to ensure smooth operations within their operation areas; they network with other fisheries industry players, advocating for fishmongers' and processors' interests in negotiations among others. They also provide mentorship for those in the fish trade to empower their professional development in the sector to improve on their livelihoods (EJF; MOFAD, and FC, 2022).

2.1.3 Training and support from Donor partners

Implementing gender mainstreaming initiatives in the fisheries sector is made possible in large part by donor partners' contributions. Donor partners such as FAO of the United Nations and projects funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) such as the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP), Ghana Fisheries Recovery Project (GFRA), Feed the Future, Hen Mpoano¹, among others, also supported gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector. They provide women with access to resources and are involved in decision-making at every stage of the fisheries value chain(FAO,2023). These donations may take various forms, including financial assistance by allocating funds to support projects, programs, and market opportunities aimed at addressing gender disparities in the fisheries sector.

Technical assistance and resources include developing and implementing gender-responsive strategies and providing innovations and technology within the sector. For instance, supporting institutions such as the Fisheries Commission, in collaboration with SFMP and local stakeholders, have supported the NAFPTA in developing and promoting the Ahotor oven as a more efficient and environmentally sustainable alternative to traditional smoking methods. It is to ensure food security and boost the fishing industry as part of a sustainable fisheries project by the Government to streamline activities in the industry. It also formed part of an action plan to reduce the pressure on the fish stock by educating fishers to avoid practices that depleted the stock and introducing them to alternative livelihoods to boost their income(USAID/SFMP, 2018). The FAO Thiaroye Technology (FTT) oven was developed also to enhance fish processing efficiency (USAID/SFMP, 2015). These technological advancements have increased fish processing productivity and efficiency, increasing women's output and income. Additionally, capacity-building support strengthens the skills and capacities of individuals and institutions involved in fisheries management (Torell et al., 2019).

In addition, a project worth US\$24 million, backed by a USAID-funded project dubbed the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project, was implemented, and one of its objectives is to support 100,000 men and women in Ghana (USAID/SFMP, 2015). Throughout the project's duration, SFMP provided funding for several trainings aimed at women and initiatives to

¹ Hen Mpoano literally means "our coast" is a not-for-profit organization legally registered in Ghana since 2013 and based in Takoradi in the Western Region. Between 2009 to 2013, we existed and operated as Coastal Resources Center- Ghana, with affiliation to the Coastal Resources Center of the University of Rhode Island, USA

mainstream gender. These included training in business skill development, resource management for fisheries, and leadership development. In order to give women access to credit, SFMP established 56 Village Savings and Loans Associations, of which 94% are women, and arranged microloans for 118 women processors to build Ahotor ovens. Following that, the establishment of village savings and loans associations (VSLA Financial Literacy Training) was evaluated in relation to the SFMP's gender programme review (USAID/SFMP, 2015).

2.2 Challenges and barriers that hinder effective gender mainstreaming

2.2.1 Socio-cultural Norms and Practices

The expectations of society regarding masculinity and femininity present another difficulty that is frequently disregarded in the context of mainstreaming gender in the fishing industry. Despite their desire to go fishing, men who are viewed as feminine may experience discrimination and be forced into roles that are often associated with women. Research on gender-based violence and inequality in fisheries brings attention to this problem. Stereotypes and the strict divisions of labor in the fisheries value chain can lead to discrimination and violence, especially because it is male-dominated and so could be linked to hegemonic masculinity. Effeminate men employed in the sector may suffer abuse, sustain injuries, or even lose their lives as a result of this "out of place" notion or the lack of belongingness. The intersections of gender with other identities, such as gender, race, socioeconomic class, and ethnicity, can increase the likelihood of violence aboard fishing vessels. Violent crimes might occur due to unequal power dynamics and social relations on board, which are impacted by these factors (Mangubhai et al., 2023).

On the other hand, due to social and cultural norms stemming from gender stereotypes and inequalities that are persistent in the fishing industry, women are faced with challenges juggling work and family obligations. Further, women who want to go fishing frequently face setbacks like having to take on characteristics associated with men, conforming to gender norms or being insistent in order to fit in (Price, 2021). These expectations do not support inclusivity and diversity; they perpetuate gender disparities within the industry and limit individual chances (USAID|2017).

Men have historically controlled the fishing sector, which has significant gender discrepancies (FAO, 2015). The integration of a gender perspective in fisheries management

faces challenges due to societal conventions and cultural practices, especially in societies where traditional gender roles are deeply ingrained. Despite the fact that women account for a substantial share of the workforce in the fishing industry, gendered stereotypes about their duties and skills may prevent the involvement of women in leadership roles and decision-making processes within fishing communities. They are viewed as routine household tasks, their contribution is frequently overlooked and underappreciated despite their significant numbers (Zhao et al., 2013). This is frequently linked to cultural norms and prejudices that suggest some activities are more suited for men because, generally, men are defined as the providers for families and societies. As a result, women are marginalised in the fishing industry since their gender roles may prohibit them from participating in particular activities (Symkowiak, 2020) and so limit them to what society dictates for them.

2.1.2 Legal and Policy Gaps

Legal and policy gaps refer to the shortcomings and inadequacies in existing laws and policies that result in discrimination. This can manifest in various areas, including employment, education, healthcare and social participation. The National Premix Fuel Committee Regulations (L. I. 2233), the Fisheries Act (Act 625), and the Fisheries Regulations (L. I. 1968) provide the legal and regulatory framework for fisheries management in Ghana (Akpalu et al., 2018). One significant gap lies in the Fisheries Act. A review of the Act shows that there is no section on gender issues. The Fisheries Act is currently undergoing review, which will include, among others, gender mainstreaming as has been captured in the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy (2022).

A section under priority areas in the policy document addresses issues related to Gender and Youth Issues. It is acknowledged in the document that inequalities, especially concerning the role of women in fisheries and aquaculture, remain a challenge. Women's contributions to fisheries and aquaculture are frequently underestimated because they are poorly documented. As a result, the sector's ability to contribute to equitable development, sustainable resource use, poverty eradication, food and nutrition security, and development opportunities is compromised (Torell et al., 2019). Since young people are the future, they must actively participate in forming it. Youth are frequently impacted by unemployment and have restricted access to services and resources, so an approach to include their needs in policymaking cannot be overemphasized (MoFAD, 2022). This suggests that, in the review

of the Fisheries Act, a section should be dedicated to gender in order to address issues related to disparities and discrimination against all genders.

Low institutional capacity, insufficient funding, and a lack of awareness among key stakeholders hampered the effective enforcement of gender mainstreaming initiatives locally and nationally (Agri Links, 2021).

2.3 Summary

In summary, Chapter 2 reviewed Ghana's attempts to mainstream gender issues in the fishing industry, showing both successes and failures. The chapter sheds light on the difficult terrain of gender equality in the industry by examining present strategies and programmes and analyzing the barriers that prevent successful gender mainstreaming. Successes in women's participation and representation, institutional policies and training by donor partners and challenges such as institutional restraints, socio-cultural norms, and legal and policy gaps were identified. This chapter further emphasized how critical it is to deal with these challenges in order to guarantee more equal and inclusive growth in Ghana's fishing industry.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Chapter Three introduces the study's methodology, including the study design, setting, target population, instrument, data collection procedure, and statistical or data analysis. It also provides theoretical and conceptual frameworks that direct the enquiry, ethical issues that preserve the study integrity, and participant rights. This allows for a systematic examination of gender mainstreaming in Ghana's fisheries industry.

3.1 Study Design

In this study, a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) was applied to collect and analyse data on gender mainstreaming strategies in the fisheries sector. This design allows researchers to gather and analyze data from multiple sources to gain an in-depth understanding of the research topic. Integrating both quantitative and qualitative data means researchers can triangulate findings, validate results, and provide a more comprehensive interpretation of the research question (Carter et al.,2014).

A mixed-methods design offers a number of benefits to approaching complex research issues as it integrates philosophical frameworks of both post-positivism and interpretivism (Fetters, 2016) interweaving qualitative and quantitative data in such a way that research issues are meaningfully explained. It also offers a logical ground, methodological flexibility and an in-depth understanding of smaller cases (Maxwell, 2016) and enables researchers to answer research questions with sufficient depth and breadth (Enosh et al., 2014). A quantitative approach helps a researcher collect the data from a number of participants, thus increasing the possibility to generalize the findings to a wider population. The qualitative approach, on the other hand, provides a deeper understanding of the issue being investigated, honoring the voices of its participants (Johnson et al.,2007).

Whereas quantitative data bring breadth to the study and qualitative data provides depth to it. A mixed-methods design, therefore, offers the best chance of answering research questions by combining two sets of strengths while compensating at the same time for the weaknesses of each method (Johnson et al., 2004). Consequently, "mixed-method research designs are becoming increasingly relevant to addressing impact research questions" (Saville, 2012).

3.2 Study area

The research was conducted in Ghana focusing on fisheries and aquaculture sector. It targeted women along the fisheries value chain in selected communities. Figure 1 shows the sampling area for this study. Tema and Ashiaman in Greater Accra, Elmina in Central and Axim in Western Regions, respectively, represent areas of marine capture sampling, while Dzemeni in Volta and Akateng in Eastern regions represent areas of inland capture sampling.



Figure 1. A map of Ghana showing study area

Dzemeni is a community found in the South Dayi. The South Dayi District lies within latitudes 30 20'N and 3.50 05'N and on longitude 00 17 and 0 0 27'E. It shares boundaries with North Dayi and Afadzato South Districts to the north, Ho West District to the East and Asougyan District in the south, while the Volta Lake forms the western boundary. Agriculture is the dominant economic activity in the District and major agricultural activities are crop production, animal rearing and fishing. However, Aquaculture is gradually gaining grounds as fish farming is being done in the communities along the Volta Lake.

Akateng is a community located in the Upper Manya Krobo District. The district, with an altitude of 457.5m, is located at the northeastern corner of the Eastern Region of Ghana and lies between latitudes 6.2-6.50N and Longitudes 0.3 - 0.00 W of the Greenwich Meridian. Fishing is the main activity carried out by the people along the Volta Lake. The district has a vast untapped aquaculture advantage due to a long stretch of the Volta Lake, which acts as a boundary with the Afram Plains and Asuogyaman districts, respectively, from the north-eastern part of the district. In addition, the district is blessed with the Volta Lake as a reservoir for commercial irrigation, potable water projects and aquaculture.

Elmina is located in the Komenda/Edina/Eguafo/Abirem Municipality. The Komenda Edina Eguafo Abirem Municipality is bounded on the south by the Atlantic Ocean (Gulf of Guinea), to the east by the Cape Coast Municipality, to the north by the TwifoHemang-Lower Denkyira district and to the west by the Mpothor – Wassa East district in the Western Region. The Municipality is perched between longitude 10 20' West and 10 40' West and latitude 50 05' North and 150 North. Over 85% of the population is engaged in the production of cash or food crops and fishing for a living. Fishing activities are done along the coastal areas, and farming is done around the inlands.

Axim is located in the Nzema East Municipality and can be found on the southern end of the region between longitudes 20 05' and 20 35' west and latitudes 40 40' and 50 20' north. When it comes to marine fishing in the nation, the Municipality plays a significant role. The Municipality is home to 4 of the 90 landing beaches in the area. The main fishing season runs from July to September, with smaller seasons taking place in November and January. Fishing activities are still based on traditional techniques despite the potential to produce enough catch especially tuna and sardinella.

Tema is located in the Tema Metropolis, a beach area around 30 km east of Ghana's capital, Accra. The Metropolis is naturally endowed with a harbour because of its low-lying topography that extends into the sea and its closeness to the sea. The Tema Harbour, which has several fishing operations, is the focal point of the Metropolis's economic activity. It was formally inaugurated in February 1962. Smaller boats and canoes can also dock at the canoe beach. To facilitate sales, it has a fish market attached.

Ashiaman is located in the Ashaiman Municipal Assembly and covers a total land area of about forty-five (45) square kilometers. Residents in this area are involved in the agriculture sector (i.e., fishing, poultry and crop farming) small-scale construction, processing and manufacturing.

3.3 Sample size and technique

Table 1 provides a summary of the sample size and technique. A total of 43 respondents from the fisheries value chain were interviewed. Stratified sampling was used to divide the population into subgroups (strata) based on these criteria; regulators (senior management and staff of the Fisheries Commission, Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development) and actors (stakeholders from marine, inland capture, and aquaculture sub-sectors, and fish processors) along the fisheries value chain. Regulators comprised women heads of divisions/units and regional directors of the fisheries commission across the country. Actors (all women) along the value chain were sampled from associations across the country with specific interest in the coastal and inland belts in Ghana. The actors were sampled from the following associations:

1. Akrusu Fish Processing and Marketing Association- Akrusu
2. Blema Mawu Fish processing and Marketing Association- Akateng
3. African Confederation of Artisanal Fisheries Organization (CAOPA)
4. National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA)
5. Ghana Aquaculture Association (GAA)

Out of 43 sampled respondents, 5, representing 11.6%, were selected from the culture (Aquaculture) subsector, 11, representing 25.6%, were sampled from inland capture, 16, representing 37.2%, were from marine capture, and 11, representing 25.6%, were from regulators. Table 1 provides the locations of the actors.

Table 1: Study Population and sample size

		Actors			Total	Location
		Fish farmer	Fisher	Processor		
Subsectors	Culture	3		2	5	Eastern
	Inland capture	-	3	8	11	Volta North & Eastern
	Marine capture	-	2	14	16	Greater Accra, Central, Western
Fisheries Officers	Regulators (staff of MOFAD and FC)	-	-	-	11	Divisional, Units Heads and Regional Directors
TOTAL		3	5	24	43	

Regarding the actors, 7% were sampled from fish farmers, 11.6% as fishers and 55.8% as processors. A stratified, purposive, and simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting the representative among the stakeholders. A snowball sampling technique was employed in sampling respondents in the culture (aquaculture) subsector. Participants were selected based on specific criteria and then relied on referrals from initial participants to identify additional suitable participants in the marine and inland subsectors.

There were more processors sampled from the subsectors because more women are found in the fisheries sector. All women found among the regulators were also sampled for the study. The researcher used a web-based survey tool to reach the target population.

3.4 Study Instrument/ Data Collection Tool

Semi-structured questionnaires were developed for the regulators as well as the actors. The questionnaire for the actors and regulators was categorised into four (4) sections: Section A. presents the bio-data of the respondents, while Section B provides the extent of gender mainstreaming efforts in the organization of the respondents in the fisheries sector. Section C. identifies the factors contributing to successful gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector in Ghana, and section D. identifies the challenges and barriers that hinder effective gender mainstreaming.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaire was pre-tested to improve the quality of the questionnaire to streamline the questionnaire. Following feedback, changes were made to the original

designated data collection tools. An online structured questionnaire was created using KoboTool Box forms with a consent form appended to it. The questionnaire's link was shared with the enumerators to administer the questionnaire to the actors. Regulators were given the link to answer the questions. Literature/desk review and reports on the institution area and study area were gathered from relevant sources including online. Related articles were reviewed to inform the study.

3.6 Data Analysis

The analysis of the study focus on the actors and regulators in the fisheries sector. Statistical analysis was carried out using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to describe sociodemographic characteristics of the actors and regulators, the extent of gender mainstreaming efforts in the fisheries sector, factors contributing to successful gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector in Ghana and challenges and barriers that hinder effective gender mainstreaming. A cross-tabulation analysis was carried out to ascertain the association between bio-data and some categorical variables.

3.7 Theoretical framework

Gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector is an approach that entails incorporating a gender perspective into all policies and initiatives so as to address existing gender disparities and promote equality between men and women in decision-making, resource management, and livelihood possibilities. These initiatives include collecting sex-disaggregated data, formulation of gender-responsive policies and evaluation systems, and also enhance gender mainstreaming capacity among senior managers and staff (MOFAD, 2016). Gender mainstreaming is a key issue encountered in the fisheries sector so there is a need for a strategic gender equality framework that goes beyond just addressing the issues faced by women but addressing the underlying root cause of these inequalities in the sector. A theoretical framework based on feminist political theory can provide a better understanding of power dynamics, intersectionality, gender relations, and institutional constraints, allowing researchers to explore the successes and failures of gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector.

Mieke Verloo's analysis of gender mainstreaming and the politics of implementation clarifies that while gender mainstreaming is widely accepted as a means to advance gender equality across various policy sectors, its actual implementation often falls short of its stated

goals (Verloo, 2001). Verloo argued that the process of gender mainstreaming is not just a technical endeavor but a political one shaped by political goals, institutional structures, and socio-cultural norms. Understanding the politics of implementation, where the distribution of resources, policy goals, and administrative protocols are influenced by power dynamics inside both governmental and non-governmental institutions, is crucial (Verloo, 2001). Policies implemented by governments frequently mirror existing power dynamics, which marginalize the contributions and demands of women in fishing communities (Knott et al.,2022).

Nira Yuval-Davis's exploration of power, intersectionality, and belonging further highlights the complex ways in which many groups are subjected to marginalization and oppression (Yuval-Davis, 2011) within the fishing industry. Yuval-Davis's concept explains that to effectively promote gender equality in fisheries governance, gender mainstreaming efforts must address the interconnected nature of inequalities based on gender, ethnicity, class, and other variables that form and condition people's status and options. It stressed how politics of belonging draw attention to processes of inclusion and exclusion, which are influenced by power dynamics. Traditional theories of power overlook the ways in which privilege and oppression interact to influence people's lives, so to understand power dynamics fully, one must acknowledge how social identities overlap and how this intersection results in various types of privilege and marginalization or complex social hierarchies. Yuval-Davis emphasized the importance of the intersection of gender, race, and class and how these variables define and condition people's opportunities (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

Further, In "Nationalist Projects and Gender Relations," Nira Yuval-Davis explores the complex relationships between gender dynamics and nationalist ideology. She argues that nationalist movements frequently rely on gendered symbols and narratives to create and preserve national identities and uphold traditional ideas of masculinity and femininity (Yuval-Davis, 2003). Nationalist ideologies perpetuate patriarchal systems by portraying women as cultural bearers or protectors of cultural purity and males as providers and defenders. This explains how patriarchal systems prioritize the perspective of men over those of women, which leaves women out of decision-making, leadership and resource access. Yuval-Davis draws attention to the fact that, while women are praised as national symbols, they are frequently excluded from political involvement and decision-making further perpetuating gender inequality. She also stressed the ways in which nationalism combines with other facets of

identity, like race, class, and ethnicity, further complicating power relations and ideas of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2003).

Joan W. Scott's definition of gender as a social construct offers a basic understanding of the challenges associated with incorporating gender issues into governance. Scott (1986) argued that gender is a social phenomenon shaped by historical, cultural, and institutional structures rather than a natural term. The invisible nature of women's unpaid labor in the fishing industry becomes a major issue under this perspective because it represents larger trends of gender inequality that are supported by institutional practices and societal norms. This viewpoint challenges conceptions of gender and examines how power dynamics and social hierarchies impact the allocation of resources and decision-making authority in governance frameworks (Scott, 1986).

Drawing from the findings of Verloo, Yuval-Davis and Scott, the theoretical framework highlights the necessity of transformative change that goes beyond superficial reforms to address the underlying power inequalities and institutional barriers to gender mainstreaming. Feminist political theory argues for a participatory and inclusive approach to fisheries governance that prioritizes social justice and equality by emphasizing the experiences and views of marginalized people, notably women and gender minorities. It showed ways in which gender dynamics interact with larger narratives in society, upholding patriarchal structures that interfere with the attempts to achieve gender equality. In order to provide equal access to resources and acknowledge the expertise of women in fisheries management, gender mainstreaming must be implemented with an emphasis on inclusive governance structures and community engagement (Mohanty, 2003).

3.8 Conceptual framework

This study's conceptual framework considered three elements to explore the successes and failures of gender mainstreaming in Ghana's fisheries industry. It looked at institutional structures and policies, socio-cultural factors, and economic effects and how these factors impact women's empowerment and involvement in the sector.

The institutional structures highlight how important it is to examine how gender issues are taken into account in fisheries policies and programs and identify the gaps that exist in these policies. They also look at how these institutional structures promote or prevent women's participation in decision-making. This would help by providing a targeted intervention

(Torell et al., 2019). Furthermore, it is critical to assess how well institutional structures like governmental offices, organizations that oversee fisheries management, and community-based institutions support gender mainstreaming.

Socio-cultural factors identify norms, beliefs and practices which are common in the fisheries sector and how these practices inform traditional gender roles, power relations and the accessibility to essential resources that affect the striving of women in the industry. Traditional gender norms and cultures frequently dictate women's caregiving responsibilities, which can limit their access to opportunities and resources in industries where males predominate, such as fishing. This strategy would provide insights into the barriers to women's empowerment and challenge these gender norms.

Economic factors, such as opportunity and resource accessibility, cause gender disparities in the industry. Women's ability to readily access resources, including credit, fishing gear, and training, as compared to men impacts their ability to generate meaningful income (Torell et al.,2019). Taking into account each of these factors makes understanding the gender mainstreaming initiatives in Ghana's fishing industry easier (Figure 2).

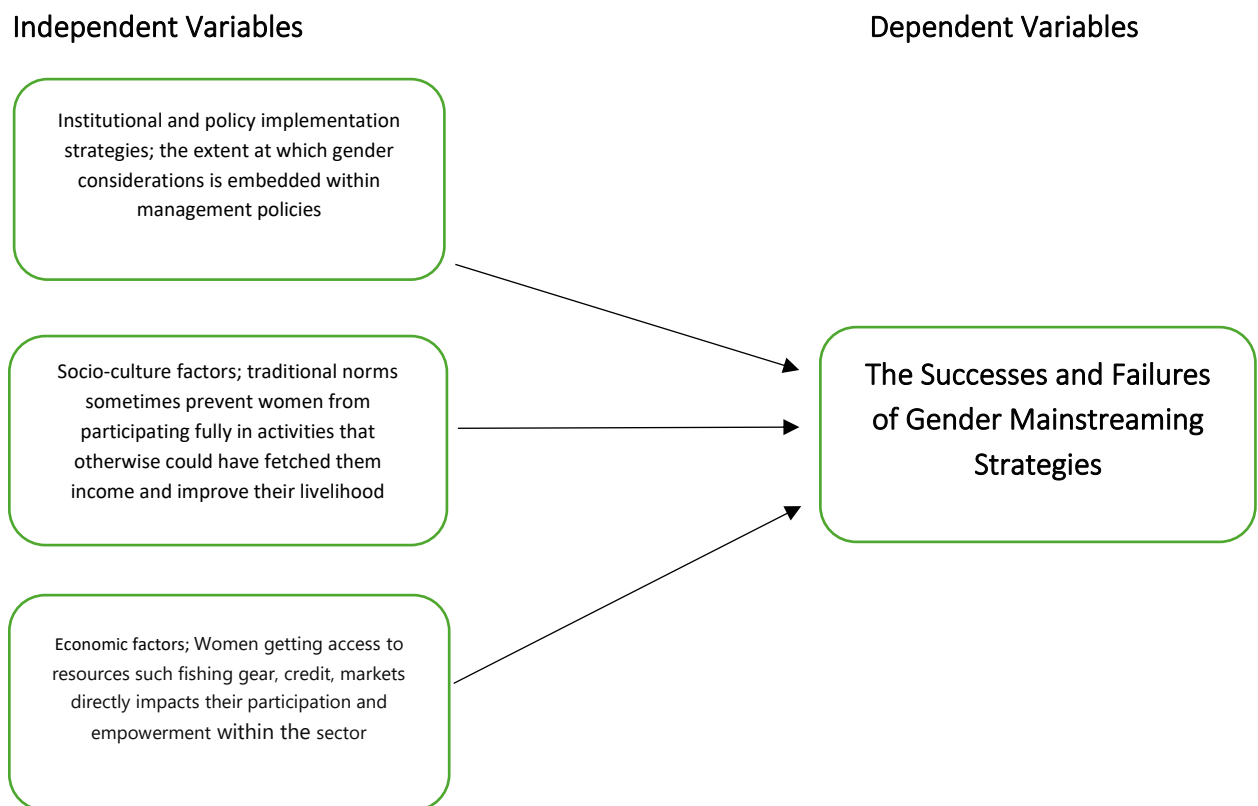


Figure 2: Conceptual framework

3.9 Ethical Consideration

3.9.1 Participants Consent

The respondents' full consent was obtained verbally prior to the research. The aims and objectives of the study were clearly explained to the respondents. They were also assured that the study was for academic purposes regarding gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector.

3.9.2 Risks and Benefits

The respondents were assured that participating in this study involved minimal risk. Their participation will help provide more knowledge and understanding regarding the successes and failures of gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector. The research aims to help introduce gender responsiveness in policy formulation and implementation in the fisheries sector.

3.9.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Respondents were assured that any information given was used solely for academic and research purposes and that their names or any personal identification would not appear in the thesis.

3.10 Limitation of research

During the data collection, a number of limitations were observed, mostly regarding the associations' makeup and language obstacles. It was found that few associations had mixed-gender members, with the majority consisting only of male or female members. Furthermore, it was clear that there were language barriers. Therefore, questions had to be translated into the dialects or tongues of the respondents in order to be understood. An additional challenge was finding the target groups on the first visits, which meant that certain groups, especially those with varied livelihoods and frequent travel, had to be visited more than once.

In addition, one noteworthy finding was how the men in the association were interested in taking in the study. They pointed out their discomfort with the study and raised concerns as to why it only targeted women. This suggests that to improve the inclusiveness of future research, it is necessary to carefully evaluate group compositions, provide efficient communication techniques, and ensure inclusive initiatives.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the successes and failures of gender mainstreaming strategies in the fisheries sector of Ghana. A total of 43 respondents were sampled for the study. This is made up of 32 actors and 11 regulators. The specific objectives were as follows: 1) the extent of gender mainstreaming efforts in the fisheries sector in Ghana, 2) the factors favoring gender mainstreaming and 3) the fisheries sector in challenges mitigating effective gender mainstreaming in Ghana. Following the findings are the discussions.

4.1 Biodata

Age can have various impacts on the fisheries sector, influencing both the workforce and fishing practices. Results show the breakdown of respondents by age category (Figure 3). Most of the actors and regulators fall within the age range of 41-50 and 31-40 respectively. The outcome of the study shows that 46.9% and 27.3% of the actors and regulators fall within the ages of 41-50 years, while 25.0% and 36.4% fall within the ages of 31-40 years, respectively. In all, 71.9% of the actors and 63.7% of the regulators fall between the ages of 31-50 years.

✓ Age of respondents

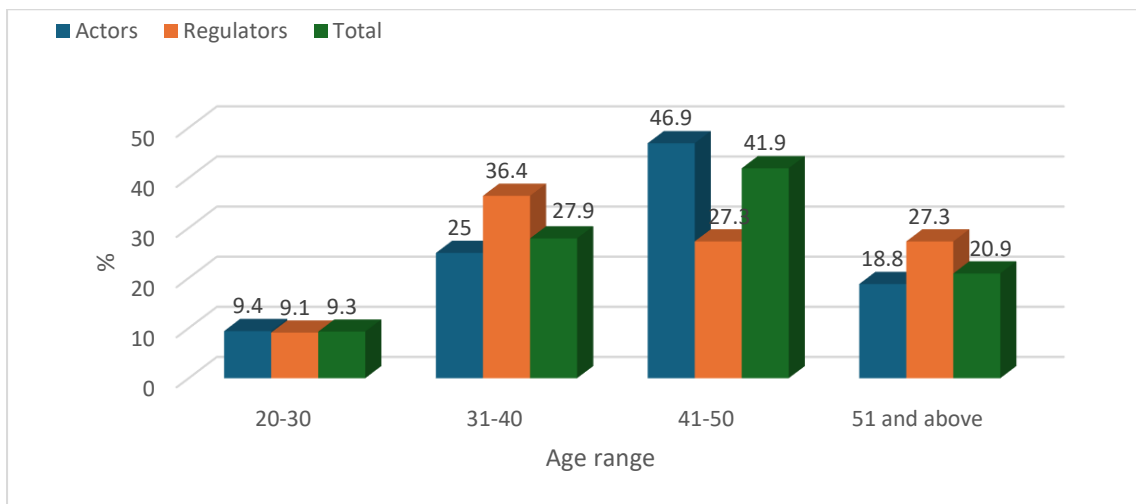


Figure 3: Age range of respondents

✓ Education

In the fishing industry, education is important for a number of reasons. This includes technological adoption, skill development, compliance, and economic expansion. The educational level of respondents is summarized in Figure 4. Most of the actors (34.4%) had

achieved a primary level of education, followed by Junior High School (31.3%). It implies that 65.7% of the actors had a basic level of education. Very few of the actors had accomplished tertiary education. Also, all the regulators interviewed had attained a tertiary level.

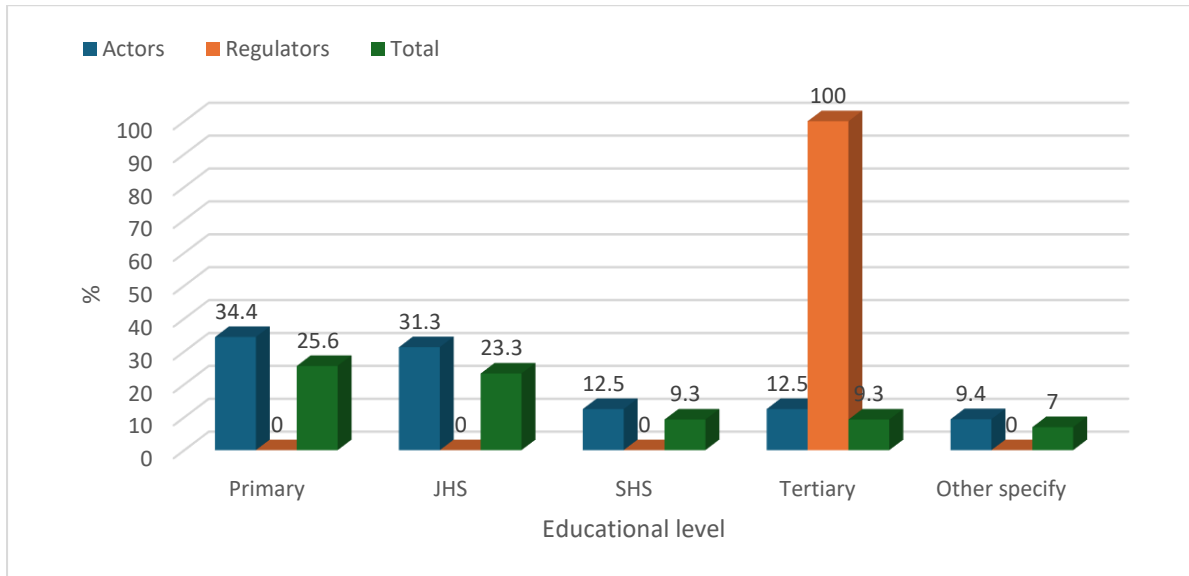


Figure 4: Educational level of respondents

✓ Subsector and profession

The results show a cross-tabulation between sub-sectors and the profession of the actors (Table 2). The actors are made up of those involved in culture (aquaculture) (60%), inland capture (27.3%), and marine capture (12.5%). The professions of the actors are fish farming (9.4%), fishing (15.6%), and processing (75.0%).

Table 2: Cross tabulation between Subsectors and What is your profession?

		What is your profession?			
		Fish farmer	Fisher	Processor	Total
Subsectors	Culture	3 (60.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	5 (100.0%)
	Inland capture	0 (0.0%)	3 (27.3%)	8 (72.7%)	11 (100.0%)
	Marine capture	0 (0.0%)	2 (12.5%)	14 (87.5%)	16 (100.0%)
Total		3 (9.4%)	5 (15.6%)	23 (75.0%)	32 (100.0%)

Furthermore, 90.9% of the regulators were public servants (Fisheries Commission), and one (9.1%) was a civil servant (Ministry).

✓ **Awareness of gender mainstreaming**

Understanding gender mainstreaming can benefit different fisheries subsectors in a number of ways, including policy development, workforce diversity, and women's empowerment. The respondents were asked if they were aware of gender mainstreaming. The results show that most of them responded affirmatively (87.5%) while (12.5%) said otherwise. The breakdown shows that 93.8% from the marine, 90.9% from the inland capture, and 60% from the culture sub-sectors affirm their responses (Table 3).

Table 3: Have you heard about gender mainstreaming

		Have you heard about gender mainstreaming		
		No	Yes	Total
Subsectorsgender	Culture	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)	5 (100.0%)
	Inland capture	1 (9.1%)	10 (90.9%)	11 (100.0%)
	Marine capture	1 (6.3%)	15 (93.8%)	16 (100.0%)
Total		4 (12.5%)	28 (87.5%)	32 (100.0%)

Furthermore, with the exception of one, almost all of the regulators surveyed (90.9%) are aware of and conversant with gender mainstreaming in the fishing industry.

4.2 Extent of gender mainstreaming efforts in the fisheries sector in Ghana

✓ **Gender quota**

The regulators were asked if there exist gender quotas in the country. Of the 11 regulators sampled, 36.4% believe there is a gender quota in the country, 9.1% thought otherwise and more than half (54.6%) had no idea of any quota in Ghana.

✓ **Does the fisheries sector have a mainstreaming gender strategy?**

The regulators were questioned whether the fisheries sector has a gender mainstreaming strategy (Figure 5). The majority (90.9%) responded affirmatively, while one (9.1%) stated they were unaware of such a strategy.

The actors were asked if gender mainstreaming has been integrated into the policy of their organizations or association's informal standard operating procedures. The findings revealed that a good number of the actors (56.3%) affirmed that gender mainstreaming is incorporated into the policy of their organizations (Figure 3). This is reflected in the responses of the subsectors, such as those about the culture, inland, and marine. Sixty percent (60%) of respondents sampled from the fish farmers, as well as 81.8% of inland capture, agreed that gender mainstreaming is incorporated into the policy of their organizations. There was less than half of the respondents from the marine capture (37.5%) agreed with the notion that gender mainstreaming is integrated into the policy of their organizations.

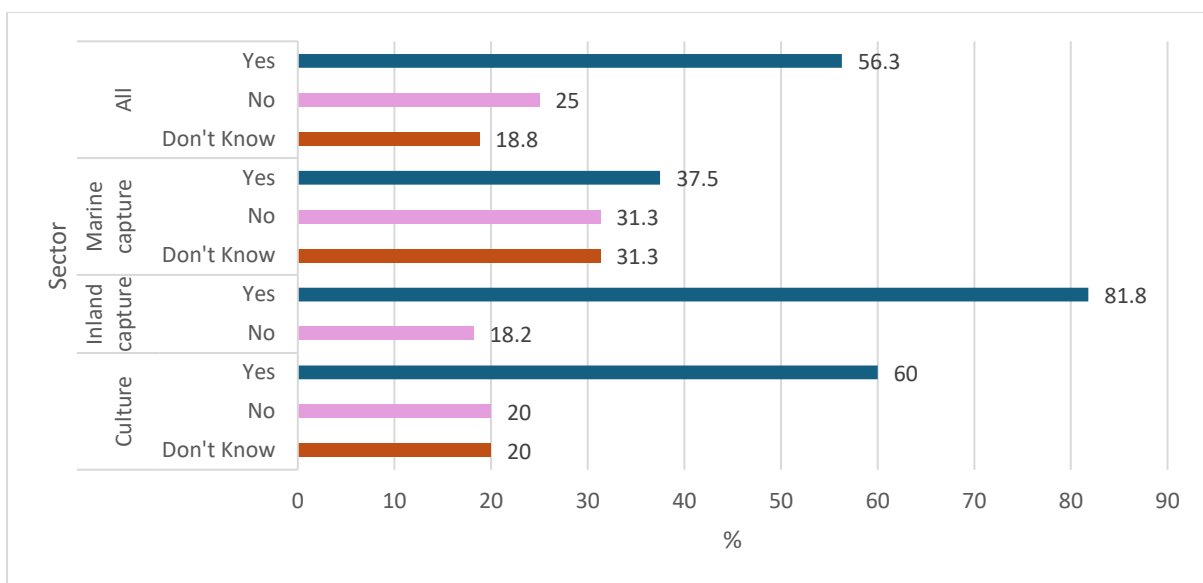


Figure 5: Is gender mainstreaming integrated into the policy of your organization in the informal standard operating procedures

Furthermore, when the regulators were asked whether the mainstreaming strategy had been integrated into their policy, 54.5% answered affirmatively, 9.1% said no, and a high percentage (36.4%) had no idea. Also, a little above half (54.5%) of the regulators believed that the strategy document was being reviewed regularly, 18.2% said no, and 27.3% had no idea.

The appointment of individuals to leadership roles in the fisheries sector can significantly impact the industry's governance, management strategies, and overall performance. The respondents were inquired about the process of appointing individuals to leadership roles within their organization, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: How is appointment to leadership position in your organization carried out

Subsectors		Frequency	Percent
Culture	Both	1	20.0
	Competence	4	80.0
	Total	5	100.0
Inland capture	Both	3	27.3
	Competence	7	63.6
	Gender	1	9.1
	Total	11	100.0
Marine capture	No response	1	6.3
	Both	2	12.5
	Competence	8	50.0
	Gender	5	31.3
	Total	16	100.0
All	No response	1	3.1
	Both	6	18.8
	Competence	19	59.4
	Gender	6	18.8
	Total	12	100.0

The result shows that appointment to leadership positions in the organization of sampled respondents is based mainly on competency (59.4%). Eighty percent (80%) of the actors from aquaculture (culture) revealed that appointments are mainly based on competencies. Furthermore, those from marine (50.0%) and inland (63.6%) capture expressed likewise. There were responses from others who believed that appointments are based on a blend of competencies and gender, hence not solely on competencies. When 59.4% of the actors were asked if measures were being put in place to improve the gender balance in leadership positions in their organization, 52.6% answered affirmatively, 15.8% had no idea, and 31.6% said no. An equal percentage of the regulators were of the view that appointments at both the Ministry and the Commission were based on competencies (45.5%), and a blend of competencies and gender (45.5%). Only one person (9.1%) had a divergent view that appointment is based on only gender. However, of the 45.5% of the regulators who responded that appointment is based on only competencies, 40% noted that measures are being put in place to improve gender balance, 40.0% said no, and 20.0% had no idea.

The actors were queried about the presence of gender mainstreaming methods within their organizations (Table 5). Gender mainstreaming methods are techniques or approaches used to include gender perspectives and concerns in various policies, programs, initiatives, and

activities. About half of the actors (46.9%) said no while a third had no idea if there is such a method. Some (28.1%) answered affirmatively that their organizations have gender mainstreaming methods. Results further point out that most of the women in capture (40%), inland (63.6%), and marine (37.5%) revealed that their organizations do not have gender mainstreaming methods.

Table 5: Does the organization have gender mainstreaming methods

Subsectors		Frequency	Percent
Culture	Don't Know	2	40.0
	No	2	40.0
	Yes	1	20.0
	Total	5	100.0
Inland capture	Don't Know	1	9.1
	No	7	63.6
	Yes	3	27.3
	Total	11	100.0
Marine capture	Don't Know	5	31.3
	No	6	37.5
	Yes	5	31.3
	Total	16	100.0
All	Don't Know	8	25.0
	No	15	46.9
	Yes	9	28.1
	Total	32	100.0

Additionally, a good number of the regulators (45.5%) stated that the Ministry and Commission have gender mainstreaming methods while others (18.2%) said there are no methods. About 36.4% had no idea of the existence of streamlining methods.

Training plays a significant role in promoting gender mainstreaming, which is the inclusion of a gender perspective into projects, programs and policies, programs to promote gender equality and empower all genders. Figure 6 presents a summary of the responses from the actors regarding whether members have received training on gender mainstreaming. Results show that about an equal percentage of the women answered positively (46.9%) and negatively (43.8%). A few (9.4%) did not know if members had been trained on gender mainstreaming. In addition, a high percentage of women involved in culture (60.0%) responded negatively, while those from inland capture answered positively. An equal percentage of women sampled from the marine (43.8%) gave both responses.

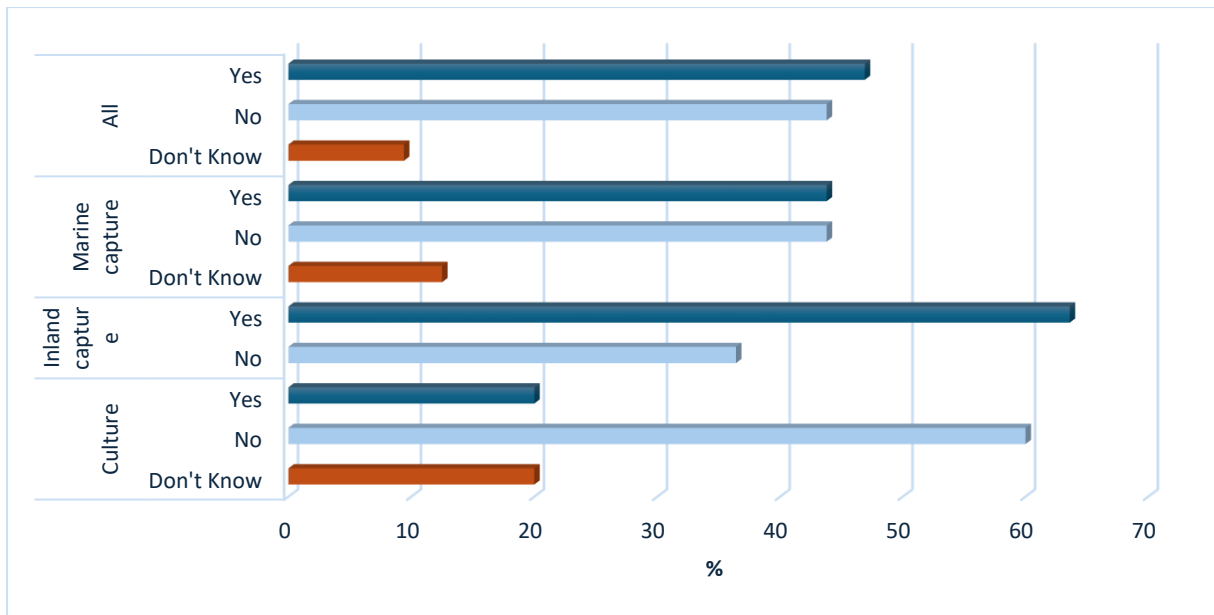


Figure 6: Have members been trained on gender mainstreaming

Also, most of the regulators (72.7%) stated that some staff had been trained on gender mainstreaming with the support of NGOs and donor-sponsored programs. In addition, 18.2% said none of their staff have been trained while 9.1% did not respond.

Financing gender mainstreaming is a strategic approach to integrating gender considerations into financial policies, practices, and decision-making processes. Financing gender mainstreaming successfully over the long run requires adopting comprehensive and ongoing initiatives across all dimensions. Results indicate that in all, most actors (84.4%) believed that financial resources allocated for gender mainstreaming in their organization are not sufficient to ensure long-term success while some (15.6%) were uncertain about the adequacy of the allocated financial resources (Table 6). The majority of those from the culture (80.0%), Inland (100.0%), and Marine capture (75.0%) attest that financial resources are inadequate to mainstream gender in their organizations.

Table 6: Are financial resources allocated for introducing gender mainstreaming sufficient in order to ensure long-term success

Subsectors		Frequency	Percent
Culture	Don't Know	1	20.0
	No	4	80.0
	Total	5	100.0
Inland capture	No	11	100.0
Marine capture	Don't Know	4	25.0
	No	12	75.0
	Total	16	100.0
All	Don't Know	5	15.6
	No	27	84.4
	Total	32	100.0

Furthermore, most regulators (54.5%) were of the view that the financial resources allocated for introducing gender mainstreaming to ensure long-term success are inadequate, and 27.3% had no idea if they were adequate. Quite a few (18.2%) said the financial resources are sufficient.

The respondents were asked if someone had been designated to implement the work plan and monitor gender mainstreaming strategy in their organizations (Table 7). Designating a person for the sole purpose of being responsible for implementing and monitoring gender mainstreaming can have a positive impact. This role, often referred to as a Gender Focal Point or Gender Coordinator, plays a crucial role in driving and overseeing gender mainstreaming initiatives. The outcome of the study shows that in all, most actors (50%) noted that there is no focal person responsible for carrying out the work plan and monitoring the introduction of a gender mainstreaming strategy in their organization. A third (25.0%) said yes or have no idea. Responses among the sub-sectors show a similar trend.

Table 7: Is someone responsible for implementing the work plan and monitoring the introduction of the gender mainstreaming strategy in your organization

Subsectors		Frequency	Percent
Culture	Don't Know	2	40.0
	No	3	60.0
	Total	5	100.0
Inland capture	No	7	63.6
	Yes	4	36.4
	Total	11	100.0
Marine capture	Don't Know	6	37.5
	No	6	37.5
	Yes	4	25.0
	Total	16	100.0
All	Don't Know	8	25.0
	No	16	50.0
	Yes	8	25.0
	Total	32	100.0

Moreover, the majority of regulators (45.5%) believed that there is a designated gender-focal person responsible for carrying out the work plan and overseeing the integration of the gender mainstreaming strategy within the institution. A portion did not know (36.4%), and a minority (18.1%) stated there was no designated individual.

The respondents were asked if their organizations have rules or procedures for gender-related and sexual harassment (Table 8). The response shows that most actors responded negatively (59.4%) while a few responded positively (18%). Findings further show that 21.9% had no idea of rules or procedures in their organizations. Of the numbers who reported affirmatively, about 70%, representing 12.6%, showed that instances of issues related to gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, child labor and trafficking, and patronizing women for sex, are reported. They were of the view that perpetrators of such crimes are reported to appropriate authorities, including leaders, executives, or traditional leaders within their organizations. Depending on the severity of the crime, actions taken against the perpetrators may range from warnings or suspensions within the organization to seeking legal redress. The matter is sometimes reported to religious leaders for further action. However, about 15% of them noted that the only type of crime typically reported to the police is theft.

The breakdown by subsectors shows that a greater percentage of the respondents from the aquaculture association (60%), inland capture (63.6%), and marine capture (56.3%) attest to the fact that their organizations do not have rules of procedures for responding to gender-related and sexual harassment (Table 8).

Table 8: Does the organization have rules of procedure on the response to gender-related and sexual harassment

Subsectors		Frequency	Percent
Culture	Don't Know	2	40.0
	No	3	60.0
	Total	5	100.0
Inland capture	Don't Know	2	18.2
	No	7	63.6
	Yes	2	18.2
	Total	11	100.0
Marine capture	Don't Know	3	18.8
	No	9	56.3
	Yes	4	25.0
	Total	16	100.0
All	Don't Know	7	21.9
	No	19	59.4
	Yes	6	18.8
	Total	32	100.0

When the regulators were also asked if their institutions have rules of procedure on the response to gender-related and sexual harassment, most (45.5%) said they do not know while 36.4% said no. A few (18.2%) answered affirmatively with the explanation that the organization's work is guided by regulations and code of ethics that require staff to work professionally. They emphatically noted that the organization's code of ethics this suggests a zero percentage 0% tolerance to sexual harassment, so in the situation that a crime is committed and reported, the issue is taken up to the Disciplinary Committee (DC) and handled accordingly.

4.3 Factors contributing to successful gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector in Ghana

Table 9 provides a summary of factors contributing to successful gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector in Ghana. Respondents (actors and regulators) were asked to respond to 10 items. Results depict that most of the women in the sub-sectors

agreed that the following factors listed in Table 9 contribute to successful gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector: an increase in women's participation in the decision-making process (75.0%) and a reduction in gender disparities in the fisheries sector by ensuring equal opportunities and benefits for both men and women (62.5%). Most respondents explained that equal benefits for men and women have reduced gender gaps in the fisheries industry and opened doors for access to funding, training, and educational possibilities. They further revealed that prejudice against women had considerably decreased and that women in the communities were appointed to participate in co-management committees while developing these policies and implementation. Again, women in associations or organisations receive encouragement and are assigned important duties. However, few of them noted that even though efforts are made to reduce the gender gap and involve women in decision-making, inequalities still exist in the sector due to existing cultural and traditional norms making it difficult for women to access subsidized fisheries inputs and funding.

The respondents affirmed that livelihoods for women involved in the fisheries sector have improved through increased access to resources (62.5%), increased access to training (75.0%), increased access to technology (62.5%) and increased access to market opportunities (59.4%). Respondents that agreed with these factors revealed that they have better access to resources, including inputs like fuel, wire mesh, and freezer credit, and access to training in the following: financial literacy, safe fish certification, fish handling, advanced processing techniques and marketing skills, resulting in increased income. Others stated that acquiring modern processing units like FTT and Aphoto ovens has reduced workload and produced high-quality, safe fish products with a high value. They emphasized that the Safe Fish Certification Programme has helped them develop better packaging of fish products, connecting with markets like supermarkets, and agreements with eateries and packaging fish goods. They profit from competitive pricing for their goods. The regulators also reported that women's groups had received training on enhanced technology for fish processing including raised racks for drying and different hygienic handling and processing methods.

In addition, both actors and regulators pointed out that promoting sustainable resource management practices in the fisheries sector by recognizing the role of women in conservation efforts and integrating their knowledge and perspectives (62.5%) was

considered a factor contributing to successful gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector in Ghana. The reasons provided were that women's contributions to conservation efforts and the incorporation of their viewpoints and knowledge have supported the fishing industry in various ways. For instance, they are able to notice changes in their working environment and act to the changes accordingly. They emphasized that they are associated with purchasing, preparing, and selling seafood; if they are not acknowledged, there is a risk of selling substandard fish. They added that men and women participate in the Closed Season and moratorium campaigns and collaborate with the men in the fight against IUU. Responses from regulators concurred with actors, stating that fish processors had received a sensitization campaign warning them not to buy fish captured with undersize mesh sizes, which are small fish sizes that promote the depletion of fisheries resources and ultimately jeopardize their livelihoods. They added that actors have some fisheries and techniques that could be improved and included in management plans.

Table 9: Factors contributing to successful gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector

SUCCESS FACTORS	Actors			Regulators		
	Yes	No	No Respond	Yes	No	No Respond
i. Increase in women participation in decision making process	24 (75.0%)	8 (25.0%)	-	9 (81.8%)	2 (18.2%)	-
ii. Reduction in gender disparities in the fisheries sector by ensuring equal opportunities and benefits for both men and women	20 (62.5%)	11 (34.4%)	1 (3.1%)	8 (72.7%)	3 (27.3%)	-
iii. Improved livelihoods for women involved in the fisheries sector, through increased access to resources	20 (62.5%)	10 (31.3%)	2 (6.3%)	7 (63.6%)	4 (36.4%)	-
iv. Improved livelihoods for women involved in the fisheries sector, through increased access to training	24 (75.0%)	8 (25.0%)	-	8 (72.7%)	3 (27.3%)	-
v. Improved livelihoods for women involved in the fisheries sector, through increased access to technology	20 (62.5%)	11 (34.4%)	1 (3.1%)	9 (81.8%)	2 (18.2%)	-
vi. Improved livelihoods for women involved in the fisheries sector, through increased access market opportunities	19 (59.4%)	12 (37.5%)	1 (3.1%)	8 (72.7%)	2 (18.2%)	1 (9.1%)
vii. Promoting sustainable resource management practices in the fisheries sector by recognizing the role of women in conservation efforts and integrating their knowledge and perspectives	20 (62.5%)	12 (37.5%)	-	8 (72.7%)	3 (27.3%)	-
viii. Influenced policy and legal reforms in the fisheries sector	15 (46.9%)	15 (46.9%)	2 (6.3%)	9 (81.8%)	2 (18.2%)	-
ix. Building the capacity of fisheries policymakers in gender mainstreaming	13 (40.6%)	13 (40.6%)	6 (18.8%)	7 (63.6%)	4 (36.4%)	-
x. Gender disaggregated - responsive data collection and analysis	7 (21.9%)	20 (62.5%)	5 (15.6%)	6 (54.5%)	4 (36.4%)	1 (9.1%)

The pattern of responses of the regulators follows a similar trend of the actors, except that most regulators responded affirmatively to the fact that influenced policy and legal reforms in the fisheries sector (81.8%) can promote successful gender mainstreaming. They noted that stakeholders contribute to the sector's policy and legislative reforms through their various groupings. Women are consulted when revisions are being made regarding fisheries laws, safe fish certification, and the medium-term growth plan for the fisheries industry. Women also participated in the development of the moratorium and closed-season policies and assisted in their execution. Finally, about half of the regulators (54.5%) and a quarter of the actors (21.9%) considered gender disaggregated responsive data collection and analysis as a factor contributing to gender mainstreaming. It implies that a higher percentage of both actors and regulators thought otherwise. Regulators who answered affirmatively stated that gender-specific statistics in the fisheries and aquaculture sector are broken down into gender responsiveness using sex-disaggregating attendance sheets at meetings and workshops. This will make assessing how equally and fairly policies are being implemented easier. However, some of the views suggested that more work has to be done by providing training on the relevance of keeping data and appointing an institution that would be responsible for collecting reliable data on gender.

4.4 Challenges mitigating effective gender mainstreaming in Ghana

Gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector faces various challenges and barriers that hinder the effective integration of gender considerations into policies, programs, and practices. Understanding these challenges is crucial for developing targeted strategies to overcome them. Table 10 summarizes some of these challenges identified by the respondents.

Most of the participants in the survey saw the following as challenges associated with gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector: limited resources (Actors-84.4%; Regulator-72.7%), limited awareness and understanding of gender issues (Actors-81.3%; Regulators-63.6%), as well as limited capacity and expertise (Actors-75.0%; Regulators-63.6%). The majority of regulators contended that the funds allotted to implement gender-responsive programming and activities, access to capital, fishing inputs, technology, and land, among others, are insufficient. Actors believed the fisheries sector is male-dominated, so men are generally privileged while women receive less credit and resources. The cost associated with these fishing and processing inputs makes it difficult for women to obtain loans. The responses

demonstrated that limited resources could lead to limited capacity and expertise, and limited awareness and understanding of gender issues. Their responses highlighted that few qualified individuals are working to raise awareness of gender issues among women and the general public. The players proposed that a lack of resources for support, non-prioritization of gender programs, and poor training and education had left them with limited capacity and experience.

Table 10: Challenges and barriers associated with gender mainstreaming in fisheries sector

BARRIERS	Actors			Regulators	
	Yes	No	No response	Yes	No
i. Limited resource	27 (84.4%)	3 (9.4%)	2 (6.3%)	8 (72.7%)	3 (27.3%)
ii. Limited awareness and understanding about gender issues	26 (81.3%)	6 (18.8%)	-	7 (63.6%)	4 (36.4%)
iii. Limited capacity and expertise	24 (75.0%)	8 (25.0%)	-	7 (63.6%)	4 (36.4%)
iv. Persistent gender inequalities	8 (25.0%)	24 (75.0%)	-	7 (63.6%)	4 (36.4%)
v. Resistance from individuals and institutions who may be unwilling to relinquish power	12 (37.5%)	18 (56.3%)	2 (6.3%)	4 (36.4%)	7 (63.6%)
vi. Insufficient data and research	20 (62.5%)	10 (31.3%)	2 (6.3%)	8 (72.7%)	3 (27.3%)
vii. Traditional gender roles and stereotypes can limit the participation and decision-making power of women	19 (59.4%)	11 (34.4%)	2 (6.3%)	9 (81.8%)	2 (18.2%)
viii. Limited access to and utilization of services	14 (43.8%)	16 (50.0%)	2 (6.3%)	5 (45.5%)	6 (54.5%)
ix. Inadequate funding to implement gender-responsive program and activities	27 (84.4%)	3 (9.4%)	2 (6.3%)	10 (90.9%)	1 (9.1%)
x. lack of coordination and collaboration, leading to fragmented efforts and duplication of work	11 (34.4%)	16 (50.0%)	5 (15.6%)	8 (72.7%)	3 (27.3%)
xi. Weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms	20 (62.5%)	12 (37.5%)	-	9 (81.8%)	2 (18.2%)

The various responses demonstrated how institutional and individual resistance (Actors-37.5%; Regulators-36.4%) may arise from traditional and religious beliefs that restrict certain genders' participation in leadership positions. The actors were of the view that it is believed that women cannot function well in certain roles hence excluding them from these roles. They also revealed that women often prefer to give these roles to men to avoid criticism and stigmatization of their social expectations of them. Again, according to them, men handle the fishing activities in certain fishing communities while women handle the processing. Certain roles may be inaccessible to women due to gender norms and roles. Gender concerns have historically limited the options available to women. Regulators claim that there is a perception that certain jobs are better suited for men than for women due to power dynamics and social relations.

Inadequate funding to implement gender-responsive programs and activities (Actors-84.4%; Regulators-90.9%) and weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (Actors-62.5%; Regulators-81.8%) were considered a challenge by the respondents. Most of the actors specifically mentioned that the execution of gender programs is impacted by funding constraints. They added that getting any support from the government or its authorities is difficult. The opinions of regulators suggested that the lack of logistics and monitoring tools makes it difficult to supervise programs and activities on gender, ultimately leading to weak monitoring. Furthermore, programs for monitoring and evaluation are typically not created with gender responsiveness in mind.

Respondents saw Insufficient data and research as a challenge (actors-62.5%; regulators-72.7%). They noted that most data collected were lumped together rather than broken down into gender data points in the past. The respondents also noted that there is inadequate data and research which does not target women but is biased toward men. This impacts the organisations' and institutions' policies; however, the Fisheries Commission is working to create a database on women's activities because it does not currently have enough information on them.

Most responses (72.7%) from regulators saw the lack of coordination and collaboration, leading to fragmented efforts and duplication of work as a challenge compared to the actors (34.4%). Even though the majority of the actors did not see that as a challenge, the few who

concurrent with the regulators stated that different partners and institutions undertake different gender mainstreaming programs, but they are unable to collaborate well to achieve shared objectives. They stated that numerous agencies operate in isolation, which leads to the duplication of effort causing the nation to regress. Budgets that are gender sensitive are typically not promoted through coordinated efforts to promote gender mainstreaming.

4.5 Discussions

A. Biodata of respondents

The findings of this study provide some information on women in the fisheries subsectors (marine capture, inland capture, and aquaculture) and women regulators (heads of divisions and units and regional directors from the Fisheries Commission) in Ghana.

Most women actors (46.9%) fall within the age range of 41-50 years, followed by 31-40 years, and a majority of the regulators (36.4%) fall within the age range of 31-40 years. Most of the actors sampled (65.7%) have achieved a basic level of education, while only a small percentage had attained tertiary education (12.5%). All regulators had attained tertiary education because that is the requirement for recruitment into the public service and the civil service as professional staff. The educational distribution can impact the fisheries sector by influencing the skill level, decision-making capabilities, and overall development of the workforce. Kleiber et al. (2015), were of the view that when women do not obtain formal education or training, they are not allowed to take part in important decisions that benefit themselves and the sector. With most actors having basic education, there may be limitations in accessing higher-skilled roles or engaging in more essential aspects of fisheries management, potentially affecting the sector's ability to adapt to changing demands and technologies. Hayford et al. (2021), in a study regarding women in oyster harvesting, stated that formal education is crucial for these women, especially because it could affect their capacity to learn how to read, write and use technology in their areas of work.

A higher percentage of the actors sampled are processors (75%) followed by fishers (15.6%). This is attributed to the large population size of the processing sector of the fisheries value chain. This is in agreement with Ameyaw *et al.* (2020) and Torell et al. (2019), whose findings revealed that most fish processors and fish marketers are women, and they frequently participate heavily in all postharvest activities while their presence in capture fields is merely

symbolic (Adjei, 2021). This also reveals how institutional barriers, power relations and socio-cultural norms can be attributed to gender roles portraying women as cultural bearers and males as providers. Yuval-Davis (2003) highlighted that, despite being praised as national symbols, women are frequently excluded from political involvement and decision-making, further perpetuating gender inequality. Furthermore, a study by Megbowon et al. (2010) revealed that Statistics from the European Union showed that, of the different fishing subsectors, fish processing had the highest percentage of female participation (number-wise), followed by marine aquaculture, inland aquaculture, and marine fishing. The involvement of women in the processing and marketing of fish is essential to the industry's functioning and the seafood supply to consumers, highlighting their indispensable position in the value chain of fisheries (FAO, 2022).

Additionally, the study shows that most respondents are aware of gender mainstreaming (regulators -90.9 % & actors 87.5%). Most of the regulators (72.7%) and actors (46.9%) revealed that some of their members had received training on gender mainstreaming. This suggests that there is a significant awareness raising of gender issues in the fisheries sector through training by donor partners and the Fisheries Commission. According to the FC Annual Report (2022), many stakeholders, including women and men, have undergone capacity-building programs in gender supported by these donor partners. This training provided the knowledge and abilities needed to advance gender equality and incorporate gender concerns into fisheries management procedures. Nevertheless, (Actors 43.8%) revealed that their members had not been trained in gender mainstreaming.

B. Extent of gender mainstreaming efforts:

The results from the study revealed that 36.4% of the regulators believed there is a gender quota in the country, and (9.1%) answered negatively. This suggests that more than half (54.6%) of respondents had no idea of any existing gender quota. The fact that over half (54.6%) of the respondents were unaware of any gender quota in place in Ghana suggests that there may be a general lack of knowledge about gender equality policies and initiatives in the nation, which could impede the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming initiatives and advancement of women's empowerment and gender equality (Verloo, 2001) in the fisheries industry and beyond. The National Gender Policy, (2015) of Ghana, under the Key National Development Frameworks and Actions Promoting Gender Equality and Women

Empowerment, states that an Affirmative Action Policy of 1998 stipulates a 40% quota for the representation of women on all public boards, commissions, councils, committees, and official bodies, such as the Council of State and the Cabinet.

A significant proportion (regulators—56.3%) of respondents affirmed the integration of gender mainstreaming in their organizations, while 52.6% affirmed that measures are being taken to improve the gender balance in leadership positions in their organizations. This indicates a foundation for gender equality efforts and the urge to respond to the Affirmative Action Policy of 1998.

Furthermore, the results show that a high percentage of regulators (36.4%) and actors (46.9%) had no knowledge regarding the existence of gender mainstreaming methods. This suggests the need for improved training, education, and communication regarding gender mainstreaming methods in Ghana's fisheries industry. A study by the OECD (2023) showed that there are several ways to measure gender mainstreaming, including the use of Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) as a tool. These methods aim to promote gender equality by addressing inequalities and ensuring that policies benefit women and men equally.

Additionally, with respect to whether there is a designated gender-focal person responsible for carrying out the work plan and overseeing the integration of the gender mainstreaming strategy within the institution, 45.5% of regulators answered affirmatively and 36.4% had no idea. The actors exhibited a similar trend, with 25% saying Yes and 50% saying No. The relevance of the Gender Focal Point or Gender Coordinator is to drive and oversee gender mainstreaming initiatives. The variation in the level of awareness and knowledge among the responses highlights a potential gap in knowledge and implementation, which is in line with findings from OECD (2023) stating that, while efforts are made to promote and integrate gender perspective into policies, challenges remain when it comes to its implementation and falls short of its intended goals (Verloo, 2001).

There appears to be a substantial gap in addressing and preventing gender-based violence and harassment within the industry, as revealed by the high percentage of respondents who expressed a negative response (actors 59.4% and regulators 45.5 %) or uncertainty (actors 21.9% and regulators 36,4%) regarding the existence of rules or procedures for addressing gender-related and sexual harassment in Ghana's fishing sector. Mangubhai et al., (2023) research on gender-based violence and inequality in fisheries brings attention to

existing gender-based violence. The intersections of elements, such as gender, race, socioeconomic class, and ethnicity, can increase the likelihood of violence and the culture of silence surrounding the understanding of sexual harassment at the workplace still persists despite all the efforts put in place to curb that, as highlighted by Spiliopoulou et al. (2023).

c. Factors contributing to successful gender mainstreaming

The high percentage of respondents (Actors-75%; Regulators-72.7%) affirming a reduction in gender disparities in the fisheries sector and acknowledging a notable trend towards increased women's participation in decision-making within the fisheries sector in Ghana (Actors-75%; Regulators-81.8%) suggests a positive shift towards gender equality and inclusivity within the industry. This trend suggests that endeavors to tackle gender disparities and advocate for equal opportunities for both men and women in the fisheries sector are advancing ultimately, translating to accessing and owning resources, education and funding for both men and women (FAO, 2023). According to FAO (2016), Gender equality in decision-making processes is being promoted more actively as a result of governmental and non-governmental organisations recognizing the contributions of women to aquaculture and fisheries.

Nonetheless, some respondents noted that challenges still exist and this is in line with a study by FAO, 2023 revealing that instead of fishing gear, the assets owned by women in the small-scale fisheries are related to fish processing and storage equipment and also collaborate with the findings of Fesanrey et al., (2020), whose findings revealed that the fisheries sector is built on a patriarchal structure and is deeply rooted in traditional and cultural norms with notable gender inequality.

Most of the respondents from the study revealed that addressing inequalities by providing opportunities for women to access resources (Actors-62.5%; Regulators-63.6%), training (Actors-75.0%; Regulators-72.7%), technology (Actors-62.5%; Regulators-81.8%), and markets (Actors-59.4%; Regulators-72.7%) opportunities ultimately improve their livelihoods. Women working in the fishing industry have benefited from specific training, including safe fish certification, hygienic fish handling, advanced processing techniques, leadership development, fisheries resource management and business skills development. These trainings have empowered them with the necessary skills and knowledge needed to enhance the value of their products through the use of improved and advanced technologies that reduce their

workload, minimise post-harvest losses, and access lucrative markets like global fish and fisheries product exports (FC, 2022; USAID/SFMP, 2015).

Well over half of the respondents (Actors-62.5%; Regulators-72.7%) agreed that promoting sustainable resource management practices in the fisheries sector by recognizing the role of women in conservation efforts and integrating their knowledge and perspectives is one of the main results of successful gender mainstreaming in the fishing industry. Women frequently play important roles in managing natural resources, including fisheries, but their contributions are usually disregarded (Alemneh, 2016). Results from the study showed that women in the fisheries sector have indigenous expertise in managing the fisheries resources because they are much closer to nature and so understand it better. This collaborates with Dankelman et al. (2008), in their study, revealing that to address unpredictable rainfall patterns and variations in the current flow that were affecting fish breeding, women in fisheries in the Volta Region depended on their acquired skills and perspectives. Torell et al. (2019) also stated that, due to their exposure to sustainable fisheries management, women possess greater knowledge and leadership abilities, enabling them to advocate for ethical fishing practices actively. Women can contribute significant knowledge and skills to conservation efforts and management plans can benefit from incorporating these perspectives to increase the efficiency of conservation and fisheries management (USAID/SFMP, 2016).

Gender-disaggregated data collection and analysis in fisheries was seen by (regulators-54.5% and actors-21.9%) as a factor contributing to successful gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector. Gender disaggregated data enables a better understanding of women's participation in the sector, which is often largely invisible and so not well represented in official statistics even though women make up roughly half of the population in the fisheries sector and are found to be present, especially in the post-harvest aspect of the value chain (FAO, 2016). Beyond the stereotypic thought of women as caregivers at home and fish processors in the fisheries sector, gender-disaggregated data can be used to identify the roles and relationships of men and women in the fisheries sector to help eliminate poverty and hunger, especially among female fishers (Kleiber et al., 2021). The views from the study revealed that effort is being put in place to improve data collection in the fisheries sector. Specific examples included the introduction of sex-disaggregated attendance sheets at meetings and statistics on the aquaculture sector broken out into genders to monitor men's and women's participation.

This is a crucial step in gathering data for easy assessment and also to promote gender-based policies and implementation.

Conversely, the study also revealed that quite a high percentage (actors-62.5% and regulators-36.4%) did not see Gender-disaggregated data collection and analysis in fisheries as a factor contributing to successful gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector. Gender biases in policies and management programs can result from insufficient disaggregated data, which can further marginalise women, especially in areas like decision-making and resource access. This is shown by Weeratunge and Snyder (2009) and WorldFish (2020), noting that due to the insufficient disaggregated data pertaining to fishing activities along the value chain, it is challenging to determine the precise profile of women in the fisheries sector hence they are always under-represented.

D. Challenges mitigating effective gender mainstreaming

Quite a high percentage of the respondents (actors-84.4%; regulators-72.7%) saw the lack of resources as a challenge and a barrier to gender mainstreaming. These resources, including available markets, credit facilities, knowledge and capacity development, are not readily accessible to women, which prevents them from being treated equally, ultimately drawing back their efforts. According to FAO, (2023); and FAO, (2022), inequality can be seen in a number of ways, including biases in favor of production dominated by men, unequal ownership and access rights to land and assets related to fisheries, differences in access to education, training, and credit, and restrictions on decision-making processes that give preference to men over women. In addition, women are restricted to less visible roles in the fishing industry and frequently lack control over the financial and economic resources they make from these activities.

This can impact the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment negatively, leading to persistent gender inequalities (actors-25%; regulators-63.6%), and the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and traditional roles. A study by Shang (2022) revealed that challenges such as traditional gender roles, cultural expectations, and inequalities with respect to access to resources and control of economic and financial opportunities for women continue despite efforts to promote gender equality. Torell et al., (2019) also revealed that, even with minimum barriers, many women in the fishing communities suffer from extreme personal poverty and, as a result, depend on their husbands for assistance in order to obtain

processing equipment due to the lack of these essential resources easily, nonetheless, a number of wealthy female post-harvest processors possess fishing boats or canoes, and many of them fund fishing trips by hiring men and contributing funds for fuel (Kyei-Gyamfi., 2022; FAO, 2023).

The study revealed that limited awareness and understanding of gender issues (actors-81.30%; regulators-63.6%), inadequate capacity building and expertise (actors-75%; regulators-63.6%), as well as inadequate funding to implement gender-responsive programs and activities (actors-84.4% and regulators-90.9%), are seen by the respondents as challenges and barriers to gender mainstreaming. The results showed that gender programs are not prioritized and, therefore, allocated limited funds. When policymakers, implementers and stakeholders lack the necessary capacity and expertise to understand gender issues comprehensively, there is a risk of overlooking the dynamics of power, intersectionality and institutional structures that pose obstacles in the fisheries sector and, therefore, fostering inequalities. Limited awareness and understanding can result in an exclusive concentration on women's issues, ignoring the wider range of gender-related difficulties that both men and women encounter in the industry as revealed by (Torell et al., 2019). FAO, (2023) further stated that fisheries policies should prioritize gender equality, promote women's participation in decision-making, and integrate gender mainstreaming across the fisheries value chain. This includes advocating for gender-responsive coordination, planning strategies, and raising awareness on gender issues.

Results from the study demonstrated how resistance from individuals and institutions who may be unwilling to relinquish power (Actors-37.5%; Regulators-36.4%) may arise from traditional gender roles and stereotypes in limiting the participation and decision-making power of women (Actors-59.4%; Regulators-81.8%) in the fisheries sector in Ghana. The results revealed that the fisheries sector is highly gendered with strict division of roles and responsibilities; certain roles may be inaccessible to women due to these gender norms and roles that are socially constructed. This aligns with Fesanrey et al. (2020), whose study revealed that the position and role of women fishers are very important because they form part of the patriarchal social hierarchy-based division of the labor system. This system, due to its power relations, prioritizes the views of men, and so creates a social class of who is in "charge" and who is to "obey". The result further pointed out that there is a perception that certain jobs are

better suited for men, leading to the exclusion of women from these roles. Additionally, women may opt to assign these roles to men to avoid criticism and stigmatization for not conforming to traditional and cultural expectations of them as stated by (FAO, 2023; USAID/SFMP, 2020).

Furthermore, a high percentage of regulators (72.7%) and few actors (34.45) saw the lack of coordination and collaboration as a challenge preventing the full realization of gender mainstreaming in the fisheries industry. A lack of coordination and collaboration among stakeholders and sectors is often the cause of fragmented methods of integrating a gender perspective into fisheries management. Results pointed out that most of the gender programs or activities within the fisheries sector remain isolated and may fail to fulfil larger gender equality objectives without multi-sectoral collaborations and stakeholders. Jie Lu and Leilei Zou (2023) stated that by addressing fragmentation and promoting integrated approaches, gender mainstreaming efforts can better advance gender equality and empower women in the fisheries sector.

Finally, the implications of weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (actors 62.5% and regulators 81.8%) and insufficient data and research (actors-62.5%; regulators-72.7%) due to the lack of logistics in Ghana's fisheries sector have significant challenges in terms of effective supervision of programs and activities related to gender issues. Inadequate data and research combined with a lack of thorough monitoring and evaluation mechanisms make it difficult to track the advancement of gender equality goals, evaluate the effects of gender mainstreaming programs, and make evidence-based decisions (FAO, 2018). The study reveals that the absence of adequate data and research limits the development and implementation of policies that are targeted since the interaction of elements such as power relations, institutional systems and intersectionality might not be understood fully, and the lack of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism would impede the ability to measure progress and identify areas for improvement. The lack of logistics and monitoring tools further impedes overseeing gender-related initiatives and collaborates with a 2017 assessment conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, revealing that, Ghana still does not have a national policy governing the collection of gender statistics with varying levels of gender policies or provisions across different ministries, departments, or agencies (MOGCSP, 2017).

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides conclusions and recommendations on Gender Mainstreaming Strategies, examining the successes and challenges in the Fisheries Sector in Ghana. Drawing from the findings, it offers conclusions along with pertinent recommendations.

5.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, gender inequality remains pervasive throughout the fisheries and aquaculture value chain, hindering women's involvement in economic opportunities and decision-making roles. Despite efforts to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programs, progress towards gender equality in the sector has been slow. The strict division of roles within the fishing industry is deeply rooted in the patriarchal system, significantly affecting the opportunities and experiences of men and women. This is influenced by power dynamics, institutional structures, traditional and sociocultural norms and how these elements interact to create social hierarchies.

To address these inequalities and recognize the crucial role of women in fisheries, this research examines the successes and challenges of gender mainstreaming in Ghana's fisheries sector. Through interviews with 43 respondents, including regulators and actors, findings revealed a high level of awareness of gender mainstreaming among respondents, with most recognizing its importance.

Factors contributing to successful gender mainstreaming have led to increased women's participation in decision-making, reduced gender disparities, and improved livelihoods through access to resources, training, technology, market opportunities and promotion of sustainable resource management practices. Nonetheless, challenges such as deep-rooted traditional norms, inadequate funding, weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and insufficient data and research persist, hindering effective gender mainstreaming efforts.

Addressing these challenges requires a transformative approach that goes beyond superficial reforms to address structural challenges. Concerted efforts from policymakers, representatives of traditional fisheries institutions and organizations are required to prioritize gender perspectives in fisheries policies and programs.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the outcomes of the study the following recommendations are been made to address the pervasive gender inequality in Ghana's fisheries sector and enhance gender mainstreaming efforts:

1. Provide enough funding to programs aimed at mainstreaming gender issues in the fishing industry. This covers financial support for initiatives that increase women's participation and empowerment, such as training programs, capacity-building exercises, and gender-responsive initiatives.
2. Organise workshops and awareness campaigns to inform stakeholders about the value of gender equality and mainstreaming in the fishing industry. This can promote a culture of tolerance and gender sensitivity, remove prejudices, and increase the capacity of women in this sector.
3. Work towards challenging and transforming traditional gender roles and stereotypes perpetuating inequality in fisheries. This may involve engaging communities in dialogue, promoting gender-sensitive education and awareness programs, and supporting initiatives that empower women economically and socially.
4. Enhance data gathering techniques to acquire information on several facets of the fishing industry that are broken down by gender. This will result in better knowledge of intersectionality, gender dynamics, opportunities, and problems, influencing the development of evidence-based policies and interventions.
5. Provide thorough monitoring and assessment systems to evaluate the effects of gender mainstreaming programs on women's empowerment and engagement. Regular monitoring and assessment will make it easier to find gaps and opportunities for improvement.
6. Strengthen existing policies to support women in leadership and decision-making positions within institutions and organisations that deal with fisheries. Implementing gender quotas, mentoring programs, and leadership development activities can empower women and boost their participation in leadership roles.

7. Encourage collaboration and coordination among stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, academia, and the private sector, to leverage resources and expertise for effective gender mainstreaming. This can involve establishing multi-stakeholder platforms and partnerships to share best practices, resources, and lessons learned.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Actors

GENDER MAINSTREAMING: EXPLORING THE SUCCESS AND FAILURE OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR IN GHANA

QUESTIONNAIRE: ACTORS

Section A: Bio-data

- 1) Age:
a) 20-30 [] b) 31-40 [] c) 41-50 []
d) 51 and above []
- 2) Educational level
a) Basic [] b) JHS [] c) SHS []
d) Tertiary [] d) Others specify []
- 3) Which of the sub-sectors do you operate?
a) Marine capture [] b) Inland capture [] c) Culture []
- 4) What is your profession
a) Fisher [] b) fish farmer [] c) Processor []
- 5) Have you heard about gender mainstreaming?
a) Yes [] b) No []

Section B: Assess the extent of gender mainstreaming efforts in your organization in the fisheries sector

- 6) Is gender mainstreaming integrated in the policy of your organization in the informal standard operating procedures?
a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []
- 7) How is appointment to leadership position in your organization carried out?
a) competency [] b) gender [] c) both []
- 8) If appointment is based on competencies, are measures being implemented to improve the gender-balance in leadership positions in your organization?
a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []
- 9) Does the organization have gender mainstreaming methods?
a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []
- 10) Have members been trained on gender mainstreaming?
a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []

- 11) Are financial resources allocated for introducing gender mainstreaming sufficient in order to ensure long term success?
 a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []
- 12) Is someone responsible for implementing the working plan and monitoring the introduction of the gender mainstreaming strategy in your organization?
 a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []
- 13) Does the organization have rules of procedure on the response to gender related and sexual harassment?
 a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []
- 14) If yes, what steps did the organization take?
 a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []

Section C: Identify the factors contributing to successful gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector in Ghana

15) What are the success to gender mainstreaming in fisheries sector?

16.1a Increase in women participation in decision making process

- a) Yes [] b) No []

16.1b If yes, explain:.....16.2a Reduction in gender disparities in the fisheries sector by ensuring equal

opportunities and benefits for both men and women

- a) Yes [] b) No []

16.2b If yes, explain.....

16.3a. Improved livelihoods for women involved in the fisheries sector, through increased access to resources

- a) Yes [] b) No []

16.3b. If yes, explain:.....

16.4a. Improved livelihoods for women involved in the fisheries sector, through increased access to training

- a) Yes [] b) No []

16.4b. If yes, explain.....

16.5a. Improved livelihoods for women involved in the fisheries sector, through increased access to technology

- a) Yes [] b) No []

16.5b. If yes, explain.....

16.6a. Improved livelihoods for women involved in the fisheries sector, through increased access market opportunities

a) Yes [] b) No []

16.6b. If yes, explain.....

16.7a. Promoting sustainable resource management practices in the fisheries sector by recognizing the role of women in conservation efforts and integrating their knowledge and perspectives?

a) Yes [] b) No []

16.7b. If yes, explain:.....

16.8a. Influenced policy and legal reforms in the fisheries sector

a) Yes [] b) No []

16.8b. If yes, explain:.....

16.9a. Building the capacity of fisheries policymakers in gender mainstreaming

a) Yes [] b) No []

16.9b. If yes, explain:.....

16.10a. Gender disaggregated -responsive data collection and analysis

a) Yes [] b) No []

16.10b. If yes, explain:.....

Section D: Identify the challenges and barriers that hinder effective gender mainstreaming

17 What are the challenges and barriers associated with gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector?

17.1a Limited resource

a) Yes [] b) No []

17.1b. If yes, explain:.....

17.2a. Limited awareness and understanding about gender issues

a) Yes [] b) No []

17.2b. If yes, explain:.....

17.3a. Limited capacity and expertise

a) Yes [] b) No []

17.3b. If yes, explain:.....

17.4a Persistent gender inequalities

a) Yes [] b) No []

17.4b. If yes, explain:.....

17.5a. Resistance from individuals and institutions who may be unwilling to relinquish power

a) Yes [] b) No []

17.5b. If yes, explain:.....

17.6a. Insufficient data and research

a) Yes [] b) No []

17.6b. If yes, explain:.....

17.7a. Traditional gender roles and stereotypes can limit the participation and decision-making power of women

a) Yes [] b) No []

17.7b. If yes, explain:.....

17.8a. Limited access to and utilization services

a) Yes [] b) No []

17.8a. If yes, explain:.....

17.9a. Inadequate funding to implement gender-responsive program and activities:

a) Yes [] b) No []

17.9b. If yes, explain:.....

17.10a.lack of coordination and collaboration, leading to fragmented efforts and duplication of work

a) Yes [] b) No []

17.10b. f yes, explain:.....

17.11a. Weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

a) Yes [] b) No []

17.11b. if yes, explain:.....

Gender mainstreaming Strategies: Exploring the success and failures WITH FOCUS ON THE FISHERIES SECTOR

QUESTIONNAIRE: REGULATORS

Section A: Bio-data

16) Age:

- a) 20-30 [] b) 31-40 [] c) 41-50 []
d) 51 and above []

17) Educational level

- a) Basic [] b) JHS [] c) SHS []
d) Tertiary [] d) Others specify []

18) Occupation.....

19) Have you heard about gender mainstreaming?

- a) Yes [] b) No []

Section B: To assess the extent of gender mainstreaming efforts in fisheries sector in Ghana

1) Are there gender quotas in Ghana?

- a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []

2) Does the fisheries sector have a gender mainstreaming strategy?

- a) Yes [] b) No [] c) don't know []

3) If yes, is the gender mainstreaming strategy integrated in the policy of your organization?

- a) Yes [] b) No [] c) don't know []

4) Is the gender mainstreaming strategy reviewed at regular intervals and adapted if necessary?

- a) Yes [] b) No [] c) don't know []

5) How is appointment to leadership position in your organization carried out?

- a) competency [] b) gender [] c) both []

20) If appointment is based on competencies, are measures being implemented to improve the gender-balance in leadership positions in your organization?

- a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []

21) Does the organization have gender mainstreaming methods?

- a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []

22) Have staff been trained on gender mainstreaming?

- a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []

- 23) Are financial resources allocated for introducing gender mainstreaming sufficient in order to ensure long term success?
 a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []
- 24) Is someone responsible for implementing the work plan and monitoring the introduction of the gender mainstreaming strategy in your organization?
 a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []
- 25) Does the organization have rules of procedure on the response to gender related and sexual harassment?
 a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []
- 26) If yes, what steps did the organization take?
 a) Yes [] b) No [] c) Don't know []

Section C: Identify the factors contributing to successful gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector in Ghana

14 What are the success to gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector?

14.1a Increase in women participation in decision making process

- a) Yes [] b) No []

14.1b If yes, explain:.....14.2a Reduction in gender disparities in the fisheries sector by ensuring equal opportunities and benefits for both men and women

- a) Yes [] b) No []

14.2b If yes, explain.....

14.3a. Improved livelihoods for women involved in the fisheries sector, through increased access to resources

- a) Yes [] b) No []

14.3b. If yes, explain:.....

14.4a. Improved livelihoods for women involved in the fisheries sector, through increased access to training

- a) Yes [] b) No []

14.4b. If yes, explain.....

14.5a. Improved livelihoods for women involved in the fisheries sector, through increased access to technology

- a) Yes [] b) No []

14.5b. if yes, explain.....

14.6a. Improved livelihoods for women involved in the fisheries sector, through increased access market opportunities

- a) Yes [] b) No []

14.6b. If yes, explain.....
14.7a. Promoting sustainable resource management practices in the fisheries sector by recognizing the role of women in conservation efforts and integrating their knowledge and perspectives?

a) Yes [] b) No []

14.7b. If yes, explain:.....
14.8a. Influenced policy and legal reforms in the fisheries sector

a) Yes [] b) No []

14.8b. if yes, explain:.....
14.9a. Building the capacity of fisheries policymakers in gender mainstreaming

a) Yes [] b) No []

14.9b. if yes, explain:.....

14.10a. Gender disaggregated -responsive data collection and analysis

a) Yes [] b) No []

14.10b. if yes, explain:.....

Section D: Identify the challenges and barriers that hinder effective gender mainstreaming

15 What are the challenges and barriers associated with gender mainstreaming in the fisheries sector?

15.1a Limited resource

a) Yes [] b) No []

15.1b. If yes, explain:.....

15.2a. Limited awareness and understanding about gender issues

a) Yes [] b) No []

15.2b. If yes, explain:.....

15.3a. Limited capacity and expertise

a) Yes [] b) No []

15.3b. If yes, explain:.....

15.4a. Persistent gender inequalities

a) Yes [] b) No []

15.4b. If yes, explain:.....

15.5a. Resistance from individuals and institutions who may be unwilling to relinquish power

a) Yes [] b) No []

15.5b. If yes, explain:.....

15.6a. Insufficient data and research

a) Yes [] b) No []

15.6b. If yes, explain:.....

15.7a. Traditional gender roles and stereotypes can limit the participation and decision-making power of women

a) Yes [] b) No []

15.7b. If yes, explain:.....

15.8a. Limited access to and utilization services

a) Yes [] b) No []

15.8a. If yes, explain:.....

15.9a. Inadequate funding to implement gender-responsive program and activities:

a) Yes [] b) No []

15.9b. If yes, explain:.....

15.10a.lack of coordination and collaboration, leading to fragmented efforts and duplication of work

a) Yes [] b) No []

15.10b. If yes, explain:.....

15.11a. Weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

a) Yes [] b) No []

15.11b. If yes, explain:.....