MALAYSIAN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT FISHERIES INDEX (M-WEFI): A CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

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Poverty is a socioeconomic impact of climate change, to which women are typically more vulnerable than men. This paper shares a proposal for a Malaysian Women's Empowerment in Fisheries Index (M-WEFI), with the aim of seeking feedback from experts and practitioners. The M-WEFI is an adaptation of the Women's Empowerment in Fisheries and Aquaculture Index (WEFI) and Abbreviated Women's Empowerment in Fisheries and Aquaculture (A-WEFI) tools for Malaysian fisheries communities. In Malaysia, women may be directly or indirectly involved in fisheries activities or may not be involved at all. Nevertheless, they may reside in climate vulnerable environments, especially close to water bodies and coastal areas. One of the important reasons for M-WEFI is that Malaysia is a coastal country with 1,972 km of coastlines (Peninsular Malaysia) and 4,809 km in total coastlines, and 189 river basins, with a total area of 80km2. These geographic indicators make Malaysians highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, especially coastal and riverine communities, and within them, women and marginalized groups. Thus, understanding empowerment indicators through the M-WEFI essential. Gender informed program and policy interventions can mitigate poverty risks or support women in escaping poverty soon after climate disasters. The M-WEFI's main indicators are the same as those of the A-WEFI: production, resource, income, time and leadership. However, M-WEFI has eight (8) sub-indicators compared to the original six (6) in the A-WEFI. M-WEFI sub indicators are input in productive decisions, asset ownership, access to and control over decisions on financial services, income autonomy, work-life balance, time use, CSO membership, and leadership. The M-WEFI also uses different measures of adequacy adapted to the Malaysian context.