

Scope and practice of fisheries Co-Management approaches in SACEP Region.

Small scale inland and coastal fisheries are very important sectors in the South Asian region, making enormous contributions to the nutrition and livelihood of the people in this region. It is also now increasingly recognized that fisheries is the important contributors to the national economies of some Asia Pacific member countries, especially those in the Asian region. This sector is providing jobs for the millions of people. Bangladesh is one of the world's leading inland fisheries producer which is presently stands fourth in producing inland water fish in the world. All over the world, local commons are facing more and more complex situations due to changing socio-economic, political, ecological and cultural conditions of their livelihood. Conventional fisheries management approach has been widely called part of the problem rather than of the solution of resource exploitation and management. Ineffective centralized fisheries management is the need to change the structure of governance. Fishers can no longer depend on government to solve their problem. The crisis in fisheries and coastal community is pressuring national governments to look for alternative management strategies. Earlier, public fisheries sectors were managed through leasing system or by the fisheries agencies to take full responsibility of managing the resources in some Asian countries. Co-management in fisheries comes as the approach that allows fishers to fully participate in a shared decision-making process with fisheries agencies, for the sustainable management of fisheries resources, though it is slight differences in different countries. More attention should be given to fishers and fisher communities to enhance their full participation in the management of the fisheries

resources. Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are the leading countries in South Asian Region in coastal and inland fisheries sector. These countries are also very rich in public inland and coastal water bodies which is the important fisheries sector of these countries. In Bangladesh, lakes, canals, rivers and estuaries covering an area of 4.56 million ha (DoF, 2005). Inland fisheries



development activities in Sri Lanka began in early twentieth century and total inland water bodies in Sri Lanka is 163,172 ha (Source: Irrigation Register and the Mahaweli Authority). Fishing communities in India, are not homogenous, as they belong to different castes. These communities have their distinct social, cultural governance structures and traditional practices, depending on the coast and location where they inhabit. Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal, Gujrat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala are very rich in inland fishers comprises rivers, canals, lakes, wetlands, pond and estuary (Books: Anthropological resources). Aquaculture is a rather recent activity in Pakistan and is still in its infancy; nevertheless there is immense potential for development of the sector. According to the latest estimates, the total area covered by fish ponds across all provinces is about 60 470 ha and about 110 000 ha comprise the warm water natural lakes (FAO). The implementation of co-management is costly, complex and long and it will not necessarily work in every community. South Asian Countries are practicing fisheries co-management and have many successful stories for sustainable fisheries management. These region also have huge scope and potentials to practice co-management strategy in the public inland and coastal water bodies.

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