



# Marine Protected Areas and Fisheries Management: The Human Dimension

Ramya Rajagopalan



International Collective in Support of  
Fishworkers



# Marine protected areas (MPAs)

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- ❑ Often used as a tool to regulate extractive use to conserve natural resources, biodiversity, and historical and cultural features
- ❑ Area/place based management tools used at different levels, for implementing “ecosystem approach” and “precautionary approach”
- ❑ Design of MPAs involves managing pressures from human uses, adopting a degree of protection ranging from strict protection with no activity allowed to multiple use areas where different activities are allowed and regulated
- ❑ In recent years, there has been tendency to designate large “*no-take*” areas, often fish sanctuaries/refugia and closed areas used for fisheries management, are not included as MPAs



# MPAs and fisheries management

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- ❑ Twenty-sixth session of COFI, members agreed
  - “ ...the use of MPAs as a fisheries management tool should be scientifically-based and backed by effective monitoring and enforcement and an appropriate legal framework...”
  - Important to recognize MPAs as only area based managed tools – geographically and temporally specific in nature
- ❑ MPAs should be used in combination with capacity control measures for effective fisheries management
- ❑ MPAs are often seen from biological perspective, but not as social spaces, socially conceived and perceived by fishing communities



# MPAs and fishing communities

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- ❑ Numerous studies have focused on the biological implications and ecological effects (spill over effect, increase in species diversity etc.,)
- ❑ MPAs are often “social failures” devoid of broad participation of fishing communities in management, sharing of economic benefits and conflict-resolution mechanisms
- ❑ Few studies look at the social implications of MPAs especially on communities and other stakeholders
- ❑ ICSF case studies documented experiences and views of local communities particularly fishing communities to various aspects of MPA design and implementation



# Social dimensions of MPAs

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- ❑ Six case studies were initiated with specific objectives:
  - Provide an overview of the legal framework for, and design and implementation of MPAs;
  - Document and analyze the experiences and reviews of local communities, particularly fishing communities with respect to various aspects of MPAs
  - Suggest ways to which livelihood concerns can be integrated into the MPA programme, with fishing communities as equal partners in the MPA process



# Case studies: Social dimensions of MPAs (contd.,)

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## □ India

- Inadequate consultation and ineffective participation of fishing communities in management and conservation decision-making process
- National legislation has significant provisions supporting the rights and responsibilities of communities, but implementation is challenged by institutional capacity and coordination between different institutions
- Communities demand for better implementation of existing legislation for fisheries management, before imposing MPAs as management measures
- Community conservation initiatives require support and legal recognition
- Long term, functional and sustainable alternative livelihood options need to be developed



# Case studies:

## Social dimensions of MPAs (contd.,)

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### □ Thailand

- Genuine participatory approaches are still limited
- Communities do not perceive benefits particularly from tourism in MPAs
- Inadequate institutional capacity, lack of co-ordination and insufficient funding for MPA management

# Case studies:

## Social dimensions of MPAs (contd.,)

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### □ South Africa

- Five case studies highlight traditional, small-scale fishing communities living in, or adjacent to, MPAs bear costs of conservation with few benefits
- Contributes to exclusion of communities and undermines livelihoods
- “Science” dominates MPA agendas

### □ Tanzania

- Communities rights over access and ownership of resources are contested, when conservation pressures increase
- Management interventions do not consider the socio-cultural context of communities, especially the diverse and changing relationship of people with their lives and resources



# Social dimensions of MPAs (contd.,)

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## □ Mexico

- Participatory processes are still ineffective, indigenous and local communities play limited roles in decision-making and/or policymaking
- Resource users not confident on government's management of natural resources, conservation and MPAs are viewed as threat to livelihoods, due to lack of involvement
- Lack of appropriate alternative livelihood options

## □ Brazil

- New category of MPAs: marine extractive reserves (MERS) and reserves for sustainable development (RSDS), established only when demanded by communities
- MERs create equitable, community-led conservation
- Implementation is still a challenge: insufficient managerial capability; lack of strong and well managed community organizations



# Human dimension of MPAs

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- ❑ Loss of livelihood
  - Expulsion from traditional fishing grounds and living spaces, leading to violation of basic human rights
  - Alternative livelihood options do not provide adequate support to communities
- ❑ Ineffective process
  - Quest to meet the 10 per cent quantitative target of the CBD, leads to no effective community participation and compromise on governance process
- ❑ “Science” plays crucial role, does not include social issues
- ❑ Ineffective implementation of legislation and poor institutional capacity
- ❑ Economic and socio-cultural benefits do not go back to fishing communities



# Recommendations:

## Human dimension to MPAs

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- ❑ Adapt a human rights approach
  - democratic, transparent, bottom-up, consultative, process-oriented MPA implementation supported by fishing communities
- ❑ Fishing and other marine resource-dependent communities and their organizations themselves, should be starting point for MPA management
- ❑ Traditional and recent community conservation initiatives should be recognized as conservation initiatives in their own right
- ❑ Traditional social institutions and the traditional knowledge of local fishing communities, should be part of MPA designation and management phase
- ❑ Move towards effective coastal and marine biodiversity conservation from a livelihood and poverty alleviation perspective



*“...social and environmental conditions are deeply and inextricably linked, it is time to address social impacts as a first step in conservation...”*

*... need is to balance conservation and livelihoods, it is not conservation or livelihoods...*



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*Thank you*