



Fisheries Management Options in the Indian context

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Some Background Information on Indian Marine Fisheries

- **Produces about 2.5 million tonnes (53% from the West Coast)**
 - **Keralam and Gujarat on the West Coast and Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh on the East Coast are the lead states**
- **2/3rd of mechanized fishing vessels on the West Coast (including 70% of the trawler fleet)**
- **Majority of motorized and un-motorized vessels on the East Coast**
- **60% of full-time fishers on the East Coast**
- **Last 25 years – marine fish production and total number of marine fishers doubled; significant increase in the fleet size of mechanized and motorized fishing vessels; and decline in the size of un-motorized fleet (five-fold increase in trawl fleet; four-fold increase in purse seine fleet; six-fold increase in gillnet fleet, etc)**
- **Growth in active fishers' population more on the East Coast (and Gujarat)**
- **Expansion of fishing capacity commensurate with available fisheries resources?**
- **Are marine ecosystems negatively impacted by fisheries?**



Fisheries Management

- All of the rules, regulations, conditions, methods, and other measures, which are required to rebuild, restore, or maintain any fishery resource and the marine environment, as qualified by relevant environmental, economic and social factors, including the livelihood and food security needs of fishing communities, and taking into account fishing patterns and the interdependence of stocks and any generally recommended international minimum standards



Current Fisheries Management Regimes in India for Domestic Fishing Vessels

- Marine Fishing Regulation Act under the aegis of State govts (Goa to Gujarat): conflict mitigation, fishing effort control, conservation and safety of fishers:
- Licensing and registration requirements for all vessels
- Mesh size regulations
- Closed season/closed area
- Safety at sea
- Maritime Zones of India (Regulation of Fishing and Fisheries Act), 2005 (to be finalised)



Problems with Current Fisheries Management Regimes

- Top down, lack of legitimacy
- Poor institutional arrangements (paucity of technical skills and financial resources)
- Lack of enforcement capacity even in harbours and fish landing centres
- *De facto* open access in territorial waters? Economic over-fishing? Biological over-fishing?

Could Participatory Fisheries Management Regimes be Better?

- Community/coop/association/trade union participation in planning and implementation of fisheries management
 - (Importance of capacity-building)
- Decentralization (Panchayat Raj institutions)?
- Co-management or shared management responsibility between the government and the community or other parties (the issue of power, hierarchy, scientific knowledge vs. traditional knowledge, costs, etc)



What about rights-based fisheries?

- A formalized system of allocating individual fishing rights to fishers, fishing vessels, enterprises, cooperatives or fishing communities? (EC)
- What about the process of establishing fishing rights in fishing economies with large number of participants? What criteria would be adopted to allocate rights? Catch history? Historical involvement? Fishing caste-based? How best would it meet the goal of better conservation? How to allocate equitably with social justice?

Other Options?

- A combination of 'top down' and 'bottom up' approaches? Flexibility
- Freeze on existing fleet? Distribution of access rights to EEZ to the existing fleet?
- In the long run, promotion of responsible and selective small-scale fishing techniques and practices primarily through fishers' organizations?
- A form of trusteeship where intra- and inter-generational equity are taken into account, and also adopting a 'precautionary approach'?



Shift in Focus

- Need to meet development goals and to address poverty and food insecurity within the framework of conservation and management of fisheries resources and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems



Thank you
