

Social implications of capacity reduction

Small-scale fisheries perspective



Chandrika Sharma

International Collective in Support
of Fishworkers



Overcapacity in Asian fisheries

- ✍ Problems of overfishing, overcapacity and overcapitalization recognized in several Asian fisheries
- ✍ Need to look into the structural aspects of overcapacity to focus debate on where it is a major, and where is it a minor, problem.
- ✍ Problems of estimating capacity exists in all fisheries—so far no elegant method of estimation. Need to develop better methodologies, including for small-scale fisheries



Addressing overcapacity: Social issues

- ✍ Important to address overcapacity where it exists. Efforts to tackle the problem so far limited
- ✍ Important, as well, to keep in mind social implications of capacity reduction, given large numbers of people in Asia dependent on fisheries
- ✍ Fisheries provide an important source of employment, food security, income and revenue, and are part of tradition and culture



Addressing overcapacity: Social issues

- ✍ Nearly 88 per cent of an estimated 41mn people (or 36.28 mn) working full-time or otherwise as fishers in the world are in Asia (FAO 2007).
- ✍ Vast majority employed in small-scale and artisanal fisheries.
- ✍ These figures likely to be underestimates.



Addressing overcapacity: Social issues

- ✍ Do not include those involved in other fisheries-related activities, such as marketing, processing, net-making, supplying ice, boat building, and so on (in which women often play important roles)
- ✍ Likely to be about 108 mn people engaged in fisheries and related activities (assuming a ratio of about 1: 3)
- ✍ The total number of people dependent on the sector in Asia would be much higher.



Addressing overcapacity: Social issues

- ✍ Need to keep in mind direct and indirect social implications of efforts towards capacity reduction, given lack of social safety nets, of employment opportunities in coastal areas, and of skills to find other employment...
- ✍ Social impacts of loss of jobs in the production, processing, marketing and associated sectors could include social conflict, stress on families/ women, collapse of rural economies, outmigration to urban areas, loss of cultural identity, ...)



Addressing overcapacity: Basic problem

Regulating Fishing Capacity: (FAO Website):

✍ *“The existence of overfishing, overcapacity, and overcapitalization are symptomatic of the same underlying problem – namely, the absence of well-defined property or user rights. A key feature of these rights that can prevent overexploitation is the exclusivity of use of the resource (or part of the resource)”.*



Addressing overcapacity: Basic problem

✍ *“Throughout the world, there is an emerging consensus about the successes of using rights-based fisheries management. The many types of rights-based management approaches - including community development quotas (CDQs) or other group fishing rights, territorial use rights (TURFs), cooperatives, and individual fishing rights (IFQs) or individual transferable quotas (ITQs) - internalize the market failures, cause fishers to re-think their production decisions, and work to reduce or prevent the occurrence of overcapacity”.*



Addressing overcapacity: SSF perspective

- ✍ Drawing from Cambodia workshop (2007) and Indian Ocean workshop (2001), of ICSF
- ✍ Participants of Cambodia workshop came out strongly against privatization of resources, particularly individual property rights
- ✍ *“There is thus no need for the blind adaptation of fisheries management models from the temperate marine ecosystems, which stress individual rights and do not fit the collective and cultural ethos of Asian countries.”*

ICeland, **A**ustralia, **N**ew zealand

United states, **CAN**ada

But we can't!!!





Addressing overcapacity: SSF perspective

- ✍ Participants rejected the notion that the sea could be owned or privatized, including by communities (the sea and its resources a common resource and heritage).
- ✍ The demand rather was for equitable and responsible sharing of fisheries resources for sustaining life and livelihood, particularly of small-scale and artisanal fishing communities.
- ✍ Demand also for guaranteeing preferential access rights to small-scale fishing communities



Addressing overcapacity: Co- mgmt and CBM

Siem Reap Statement stressed on:

- ✍ Co-mgmt and comm-based mgmt (CBM)
- ✍ The role of the State, in developing the broad framework for fisheries management, in MCS, in supporting efforts of small-scale in checking illegal/ destructive fishing etc
- ✍ Increasing the accountability of national and provincial governments to fishing communities, devolving power to fishing communities, and enhancing the capacity of communities in fisheries management



Addressing overcapacity: Co- mgmt and CBM

Siem Reap Statement stressed on:

- ✍ Use of fisheries conservation and management measures appropriate to the multi-gear, multi-species fisheries of the region (such as compulsory licensing/ registration of vessels, restriction of size of boat or type of gear, prohibition of certain types of fishing gear and practices, rotational access...) in combination with effective MCS, and enforcement measures, developed in consultation with fishing communities



Addressing overcapacity: Small-scale model

Proposals from Siem Reap and IO Statement :

- ✍ For social, economic and ecological reasons, the capacity of the industrial fleet that engages in the same fisheries as the small-scale sector should be minimized as a matter of priority;”
- ✍ Fishing vessels that are larger in size should be considered for waters under national jurisdiction only after progressively exhausting the possibility of employing smaller fishing units, in conjunction with the use of selective fishing gear and practices (with decent labour conditions).



Addressing overcapacity: Small-scale model

Proposals from Siem Reap and IO Statement :

- ✍ “The development of relatively small boats with long endurance capabilities and using selective fishing methods has demonstrated that large industrial fleets, often from non-riparian States, can be superfluous for the exploitation of all highly migratory resources”.
- ✍ “States should phase out destructive gear, such as bottom trawling, and assess and reduce overcapacity, in accordance with the FAO’s IPOA for the Management of Fishing Capacity.

**Mother Pumpboat with *kawa-kawa*
(auxiliary boats) carried on the
outrigger (The Philippines)**



Multi-day boats of Sri Lanka





Addressing overcapacity: Proposals from a SSF perspective

- ✍ A small-scale model of fisheries, that redistributes resources in favour of the small-scale, has potential to address issues of overcapacity, while minimizing potentially significant social implications of capacity reduction



Addressing overcapacity: Proposals from a SSF perspective

- ✍ Need to ensure preferential access to resources to the small-scale, subject to compliance with key measures (limits on size of the vessel, gear, fishing time, season, etc)—through dialogue/negotiation
- ✍ Need to put in place co-mgmt and CBM systems, building on existing institutions, that encourage social control on overcapacity/ gears considered destructive



Addressing overcapacity: Proposals from a SSF perspective

- ✍ Need participatory studies, exploring options for capacity reduction, starting from community-end, exploring role of traders/markets
- ✍ Need reliable data on numbers involved, vessel registration, gears used, landings, status of stocks etc.



Addressing overcapacity: Proposals from a SSF perspective

- ✍ Need to phase out fishing methods and gear (such as bottom trawling) that contribute substantially to overfishing/ overcapacity/ export of capacity/ (human rights violations), backed by legislation
- ✍ Need to provide social safety nets, particularly for crew of vessels affected by capacity-reduction measures, and retraining opportunities for re-employment within, or outside fisheries
- ✍ Need to improve basic services—health, education, housing—to ensure expansion of opportunities for communities in the longer term



Addressing overcapacity: Proposals from a SSF perspective

- ✍ Need for effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures, regional coordination, particularly to control the illegal operations of foreign fleets in waters under national jurisdiction
- ✍ Need for appropriate, enabling legislation for all the above, consistent with international obligations (fisheries management, decent work ...)



Thank you