

Study on Rights of Fishing Community in the lance of Access to Justice



Prepared
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Background:

- Fisheries sector plays an immensely important role on the socioeconomic development of Bangladesh
- Fisheries sector contributes about 3.00% of the total export earning,
- Total inland fish production in Bangladesh 2.95 Million MT among this .96 Million MT are from capture fisheries including .39 Million MT are hilsa.
- Around 5 lakh fishermen are involve in capture Fisheries
- But almost are in extreme poverty despite

Study Objective:

A. Examine demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the fishers

B. Examine problems, risks and vulnerability, from rights, justice and sustainable livelihood perspective

C. Identify the issues needs policy support in favor of fisher communities

D. Prepared recommendations to address problems encountering



Methodology

- Data obtained both from primary and secondary sources.
- Reviewed relevant documents
- Discussed with various key informants
- Primary data obtained through FGDs with fishers' communities
- Interviewed Fishers Association, UNO, UFO, UP Chairman, and COAST Trust field Staff etc.
- The study restricted to coastal fishing in the Bhola district in particular.



The importance of coastal fisheries

- The coast creates livelihood opportunities for different groups
- Coastal fishing supports many different forms of livelihoods
- Providing huge contribution to the national economy each years (Roughly BDT 15-16 thousand core)
- But the community since the majority fishers are very poor

Importance of Bhola District coastal fisheries

- Bhola is an Island district isolated from main land surrounded by estuarine rivers
- Bhola district blessed by its strategic location each year
- The rivers and its branches surrounded the Bhola are important breeding and nursery grounds for Hilsa.
- 160,808 Metric Tons of fish including 114,686 Metric Tons Hilsa that is 1/3rd of the total catch worth about BDT 5000 core



Livelihood of the fishermen

- Coastal fishers live in most dynamic and contested parts of the country where risk is a part of their livelihood strategies. This creates opportunities for poor but it also creates threats to life, assets, income and savings
- Different socio-economic and livelihood study papers revealed that the socio-economic and livelihood context of the small scale fishers are more or less same in the entire coastal line in the country with almost no difference in parameters.



Variables examined

Age structure, education, health facilities, family size, housing condition, drinking water facilities, sanitary facilities, electricity facilities, income, credit facilities, training facilities, risks, vulnerabilities, problems etc.

Risk & Vulnerability perception

- Highly exposed to frequent natural calamities
- High risk for life during the extreme climatic events.
- Risk of piracy in the sea
- Food insecurity
- Uncertainty to income
- Climate change effect



Fishers inclusive key problems

- Lack of Credit Access
- Governance related Issues
- Frequent incident of natural calamities
- Lack of alternative Income Generating Activities
- Lack of Community Organization
- Lack of Infrastructure
- Lack access to rights and justice
- Unconducive legal, institutional and policy framework for coastal fishery

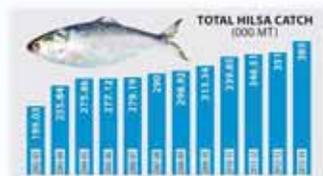


Livelihood strategy Constraints

- All hilsa sanctuaries are not demarcated accurately
- Many genuine fishers are not registered
- Without NID, registrations is not possible
- Food and cash both are delivered after the fishing ban period
- Incentives are given regardless of family members



The Linkages among Policy Processes, fishermen rights, and their survival Strategies



A. Hilsa conservation & economic incentives

- Acknowledged only due to policy process Hilsa production increased but causes suffering for small fishers.
- Incentives providing to the fishers in terms of food and cash
- Due to fishing ban production has been increased 34 K MT worth about BDT 1000 core in 2013-14
- But incentive has given worth about BDT 125 core
- Clearly, it is injustice to the poor fishers



B. Fishers Livelihood strategy to survive

- Adoption as survival strategy the poor people are being forced to fishes jatka or brood hilsa even with current jaal during ban period
- Lack of alternative, and immediate survival is the natural priority for the poor, getting involved in destructive fishing
- As a result, the inadequate policy process not only criminalizes the poor, it also further marginalizes
- However this sort of policy process not only criminalizes the poor, it also criminalizes the policy implementers as well as the well-off business persons
- However, in the absence of sustainable alternatives, this type of policy will have an adverse impact on the livelihoods of the poor.
- Last but not least it needs to be highlighted that the small fishers of coastal communities have only very limited access to justice



Recommendations for Policy Implementation

1. A fishers' household database including their household geo location
2. A review and redesign of micro-credit; more emphasis, need to be placed on savings
3. In order to reduce fishing pressure, it is need to be prevented becoming more fishers in the sector
4. Community empowerment & Leadership base govt or donor funded projects needs to be enhanced.
5. Strengthening of a responsive agricultural extension systems is required
6. Information dissemination and access facilities need to be created
7. Improvement of infrastructure needs to remain a Government priority.
8. A fair distribution of khas / char land to the poor needs to ensure
9. CBO based Advocacy activities by press, NGOs, and local communities need to be encouraged



Conclusion

- The current suffering and poverty of small scale fisher is caused by a single factor i.e. their contribution to national economy is not valued or recognized by policy formulators or the importance not known to them
- Coastal fisher communities would have sustainable livelihood if their basic rights are guaranteed and their entitlement to a standard of living is secured
- CBO is a platform from where leaders coming from small scale fisher households will generate and grow with professional guidance
- The coast Trust therefore could develop a donor funded program in this line for establishing CBOs and empowering small scale fisher households to lead the shouting their rights and justice to have a sustainable livelihood for them



Thank you