

Main Issues in Inland Fisheries

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Freshwater fish production

- Freshwater fish production 6.6 million in 2014-15 (total production 10 million tonnes)—mainly from the eastern states (AP, WB, UP, Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Odisha accounted for over two-thirds of the total freshwater fish production)
- 5.2 million tonnes from freshwater aquaculture; 1.4 million tonnes from capture fisheries (80:20)



Livelihood Issues

- India has one million fishers in freshwater fisheries
- At least 11 million people--men, women and children—dependent on inland fisheries belonging mostly to backward classes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes
- Most of the jobs carried out in freshwater fish production systems are as full-time, part-time, seasonal, casual, short-term, occasional or as irregular fishers or fishworkers



Fish production systems

- Reservoirs, freshwater ponds, upland lakes, floodplain wetlands
- Seasonal and perennial capture fisheries systems in watercourses and wetlands, including coastal wetlands
- Culture-based fisheries systems in seasonal reservoirs and floodplain lakes
- Enhancement fisheries systems in permanent larger reservoirs and open floodplains
- Aquaculture systems (freshwater aquaculture and cage aquaculture systems; integrated culture systems; and coastal aquaculture systems)



Inland fish production and tenure systems

- Customary and informal tenure systems lack official recognition and protection
- Formal tenure systems (private tenure employing leasing, licensing, royalty, auctioning to contractors, fishers', including women's cooperatives and others; "designated" tenure for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes) to be made more equitable



Weakening of tenure systems

- Customary, informal and subsidiary tenure rights of fishing communities and private tenure rights, have weakened due to threats facing fishery-based livelihoods from other sectors



Invisibility of women in fisheries

- 270,000 women employed or engaged as full-time or part-time fishers (marine and inland combined); 367,000 women in fish processing and marketing (marine and inland combined)
- Although women participate far more actively in jobs related to freshwater fish production systems, their role largely remains invisible



Out-migration

- Riverine capture fisheries under tremendous stress due to several factors
- Freshwater capture fisheries witness an out-migration phenomenon due to push factors in Bihar and UP
- While gross employment in freshwater capture fishery production systems is higher, output per worker is the highest in freshwater aquaculture operations



Poor access to social services

- Vast majority of fishers and fishworkers in freshwater capture fisheries are denied proper access to health, education, sanitation, environmental protection, social security and social protection, savings, credit and insurance
- Lack of conditions to carry out fishery-related activities in an environment free from crime, violence and corruption
- Freshwater fishers and fishworkers are less organized into associations or unions



Water allocation policy

- Non-consumptive use of water to be recognized in water allocation policy
- Fishing and aquaculture to be given their importance under non-consumptive use of water
- Need to uphold the principle of equitable and reasonable allocation of freshwater resources



National Water Policy 2012

- Unified national perspective with river basin as the basic hydrological unit for planning
- Common integrated perspective across local, regional, state and national context
- Equity and social justice
- Good governance through transparent and informed decision-making
- Managing water as a common pool community resource held by the State under public trust doctrine to achieve food security, livelihood support and sustainable and equitable development for all



Inland fisheries legislation

- No national law at present dealing with inland fisheries (Indian Fisheries Act, 1897 is repealed in 2015)
- 18 states and one UT have inland fisheries legislation, mostly within the framework of the repealed Act
- Only Kerala Act, 2010, makes provisions for participatory management involving reps of fishing communities and protection of livelihood of fishers
- Leading fish producing states like AP, UP, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Assam, Telangana and Tamil Nadu do not have inland fisheries legislation



National inland fisheries policy 1

- National Policy to make visible the contribution of inland fish production systems to nutrition, public health, employment, food security, and poverty eradication and to gain support from the public to these systems



National Inland Fisheries Policy 2

- To promote conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources
- To control destructive fishing practices
- To bring about ecological restoration of watercourses and wetlands and their biodiversity
- To seek recognition of livelihood rights of fishers including their tenure rights to land and water
- To promote co-management



National Inland Fisheries Policy 3

- To enhance equitable allocation of freshwater resources, especially to benefit life and livelihood interests of poor and marginalized fishers and fishworkers, including women
- To contribute to decent work and social protection and to facilitate full integration into the 2005 National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
- To assist fishers and fishworkers to organize and form associations/coops/unions to bargain fair outcomes from other powerful user groups



Draft National Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy (NIFAP)

- Expert Committee set up under the Chairmanship of Dr. Dilip Kumar, Retired Vice-Chancellor, ICAR-CIFE, Mumbai, on 21 October 2016 with the report to be submitted by 31 January 2017
- A stakeholders' feedback questionnaire on inland capture fisheries is on the Government of India website (<http://dahd.nic.in/about-us/divisions/fisheries>)

An analysis of the Questionnaire 1

- sustainable development of inland fisheries is the overarching goal
- Recognizes the importance of engaging with water allocation policy (consumptive and non-consumptive)
- Significant emphasis on welfare of fishers and fishing communities

An analysis of the Questionnaire 2

- Flags working conditions of fishers, social security and social protection
- Emphasis on habitat restoration, conservation and management including with community participation

Outstanding Issues

- Inter-state fisheries development, conservation and management
- Importance of co-management
- Precautionary approach
- Ecosystem approach
- Gender-sensitive approach

Outstanding Issues 2

- Food security and poverty eradication
- Riverine and brackishwater fisheries, value chain
- Integrating inland fisheries into schemes under MGNREGA

Outstanding Issues 3

- Importance of human rights-based approach to development
- Importance of the right to life and livelihood
- Tenure rights (formal, informal, subsidiary, customary, traditional); preferential rights
- Migration from inland fisheries to other activities

Outstanding Issues 4

- Improving governance at all levels
(mechanisms, processes and institutions: state laws, central laws, autonomous council laws, customs, organizations)
- Addressing violence, rule of law and corruption

Thank you

