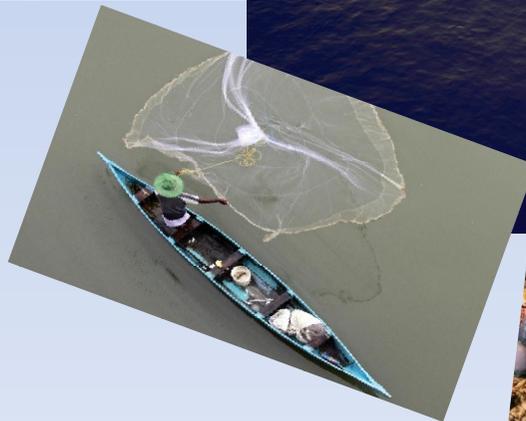


INLAND WATERWAYS & FISHERIES



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The Riverine Fish Resources

Rivers and canals: 173 287 km.

India has nearly 12% of the world's freshwater fish species,
in 65 Different families.

A significant number of these are endemic to the nation, including over 280
Freshwater fish and numerous turtle and terrapin species
found nowhere else on Earth.

The number of fishers per km of river stretch varied between 3.2 in Narmada
and 7.8 in Ganga, the average being 6.5. It is estimated that 190000 fishers are
presently engaged in riverine fisheries and the average catch per fisher
amounts to a meagre 150 kg/year. Local small scale fish vendors provide a
wide network of fish distribution. Together they make significant contribution
to the food security, nutritional status and employment of our country.

**The small scale fishing communities are by far the
largest primary non-consumptive stakeholders of our rivers
and water bodies and their natural custodians.**

GOOD FISH NEEDS GOOD WATER



National Waterways : Death Knell for Fish and Riverine Fishing Communities

- 111 officially notified Inland National Waterways, 106 were created in 2016.
- To cover 20,275.5 km.
- Handled 55 MT in 2017-18 and 72 MT in 2018-19 cargo respectively, and expected to reach 100 MT by fy 2021-22.

Large Scale Riverine Transport: Problems for Fish and Fishers

- Navigation of ships and boats: Damage to nets and boats
- Sudden turbulence: Drives away fish
- Shock Waves: Damage to nets and boats, contributes to erosion, increase turbidity
- Sound disturbance: Drives away fish and other water life
- Pollution from spillage - oil, coal dust, accidents: Reduce fish stock, contaminate fish
- Dredging: Destroy fish habitat, increase turbidity
- Land encroachments – Loss of accessibility and habitat of fishers

**Riverine fisheries is worst affected due to –
Water Allocation for Consumptive Purposes; Dams; Disastrous Watershed
Management and Pollution.
National Waterways are adding to the woes.**



Ecological Services of Rivers including Fisheries are most neglected

No assessment of possible impact of National Waterways on –

- Various river life including fish;
- Livelihood activities including fishing;
- River water allocation;
- Pollution;
- River bank erosion;

If there arise any conflict in so far as water use is concerned, apparently the priority of usage as stipulated in the National Water Policy would prevail (drinking, irrigation, industrial use, power generation & recreation and navigation in that order).

In the National Water Policy 2012 the words “Fisheries” or “Fishing Communities” cannot even be found.

NO CONCERN FOR FISHERIES



Infringement upon States' Jurisdiction

Once any waterway is declared as National Waterway the jurisdiction with respect to regulations and development of shipping and navigation and matters incidental thereto rest with IWAI. So, for every developmental activity the clearance from IWAI, Delhi would be required.



Resistance:

Presently NPSSFW(I) is involved with fisher organisations in the following areas to build up resistance -

West Bengal: Part of Haldia – Allahabad (Prayagraj) NW-1.

Goa: Mandovi, Chapora, Cumbarjua, Mapusa, Sal & Zuari.

Manipur: Loktak Lake.

Odisha: Talcher-Dhamra stretch of Brahmani River NW-5.

Bihar: Part of Haldia – Allahabad (Prayagraj) NW-1

Jharkhand: Sone



Way Forward

Ecological Services rendered by rivers with the importance of riverine fisheries in terms of Food Security, Nutritional Status and Employment to be assessed and stressed.

Fisheries to be incorporated in National Water Policy and Fishing Communities prior informed consent to be demanded for any proposal for allocation or use of river water.

- Publication : Awareness materials with case studies;
- Campaigns : In affected areas, especially with fishing communities. In society at large, with environmentalists, river scientists, students.
- Lobbying : With Central & State Governments.

