Social Justice and Fisheries Governance: The View from India

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Key points

1. Indian marine fisheries are at an important transition: the end of production-driven development
2. Engagement with the sticky issues of allocation is now essential
3. A social justice perspective should inform the allocation process
4. Tamil Nadu and Gujarat are points of reference for the analysis
The blue revolution in Indian fisheries

- Origins in 1950s modernisation of the Indian economy
- Main focus has been increasing production through technological inputs
The blue revolution in Indian fisheries

Success of the Blue Revolution

Source: CMFRI
The blue revolution in Indian fisheries

Unforeseen results of blue revolution:

1. Creation of two main competing subsectors
The blue revolution in Indian fisheries

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2. Overfishing
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Unforseen results of blue revolution:
1. Creation of two main competing subsectors
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In this context, for sustainability, resource allocation has now become crucial
Social justice and allocation in Indian fisheries

• Socially just allocation depends on a general perception of fairness regarding:
  - What is being allocated
  - To whom it is being allocated
  - Who is allocating
  - How allocation occurs

• The perspectives of sociology and anthropology are valuable here
Social justice and allocation in Indian fisheries

Allocation of what?

- Rights to and responsibilities for resources
- Quotas?
Social justice and allocation in Indian fisheries

Allocation to whom?
- Individuals
- Men vs. women
- Groups: households; castes; communities; religious groups
- Classes
- Subsectors; Sectors
Social justice and allocation in Indian fisheries

Allocation by whom?

- Whose perspective counts?
- The *Emic* vs. *Etic* distinction
- There is no single optimally just allocation
- But the etic perspective gives meta principles for debate
Social justice and allocation in Indian fisheries

How to allocate?

- Distribution vs. allocation
- Allocation is an interactive, contested process
- Fundamental to socially just allocation is enabling participation in governance
The fisheries of Tamil Nadu and Gujarat
The fisheries of Tamil Nadu and Gujarat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monthly per capita fish consumption (kg)</th>
<th>Marine catch 2000 (mt)</th>
<th>Active marine fishers</th>
<th>Fishers per km² of continental shelf</th>
<th>Average catch per fisher in 2000 (mt)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>377,483</td>
<td>194,470</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>0.02 to 0.04</td>
<td>620,474</td>
<td>157,742</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The blue revolutions in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat

• Similar intent and general effect, different details:

  ➢ The historical legacy
    • The place of fisheries in the broader culture
    • The size of the subsectors
The fisheries of Tamil Nadu and Gujarat

No. of Vessels in 2000, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat

- Trawler sector
- Small-scale sector
The fisheries of Tamil Nadu and Gujarat

No. of Vessels in 2000, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat

Catch per subsector, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat 2000
The fisheries of Tamil Nadu and Gujarat

No. of Vessels in 2000, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat

Catch per vessel in tonnes, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat

Catch per subsector, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat 2000
The blue revolutions in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat

- Similar intent and general effect, different details:
  - The historical legacy
    - The place of fisheries in the broader culture
    - The size of the subsectors
  - Conflicts and role of the state
Perceptions of social justice

Emic
- Small-scale
- Trawlers
- State

Etic
- principles
Scenarios

Status quo
1. Business as usual
2. Technocratic
Radical
3. Trawler ban
4. Fisher joint action plan
5. Implementation of co-management process
Conclusions

- Irrelevance of narrow rights-based approaches to allocation
- The need for support to be given to indigenously defined alternatives
  - Such approaches need to be dynamic and flexible in the face of divergent perspectives on what is just
  - They also need to be attuned to relations of power