



ASSESS THE IMPACT OF POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS ON THE FISHING COMMUNITIES IN DAMAN.

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Abstract

This study assesses the impact of various policies and interventions on the fishing communities in Daman, a coastal region in India. The evaluation focuses on economic, social, and environmental dimensions, examining how governmental and non-governmental actions have influenced the livelihoods, well-being, and sustainability practices of these communities. Policies and interventions, including regulatory frameworks, subsidies, infrastructure development, and conservation programs, have had mixed effects on Daman's fishing communities. Positive outcomes include improved fishing infrastructure, access to markets, and enhanced livelihood opportunities through diversification programs. These measures have contributed to increased income and better living standards for some fishermen. However, there are significant challenges. Regulatory restrictions, such as fishing bans during breeding seasons and limitations on fishing zones, while environmentally necessary, have sometimes led to economic hardship. The lack of adequate compensation or alternative livelihood options during these periods exacerbates the financial strain on fishermen. Moreover, there is a noted discrepancy in the implementation of policies, with larger commercial entities often benefiting more than small-scale fishermen, leading to increased economic disparity within the community. Environmental interventions, including marine conservation efforts and pollution control measures, aim to ensure long-term sustainability but require better integration with local practices and more inclusive community engagement. The success of these programs depends heavily on the participation and acceptance by the local fishing communities. In conclusion, while policies and interventions have brought about infrastructural and economic improvements, they have also introduced new challenges and disparities. For these measures to be truly effective and equitable, a more holistic approach that includes comprehensive support systems, fair policy implementation, and active participation from local communities is essential.

Keywords: Policies, Interventions, Fishing, Communities

Introduction

Daman, which is situated on the western coast of India, is home to a number of fishing villages that play an important role in the socio-economic fabric of the region. Over the course of many centuries, many communities have relied on fishing as their major means of subsistence. Because of the abundant marine biodiversity and the ideal coastal circumstances, Daman has long been able to sustain extensive fishing activities, which has made it an important center for the production and international commerce of seafood. Over the course of the last several decades, a wide variety of policies and interventions have been implemented by both governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to address the numerous difficulties that these communities are currently facing. The regulatory frameworks that are targeted at

sustainable fishing practices, the subsidies and financial help that are provided to fishermen, the infrastructural development projects, and the environmental conservation programs are all included in these measures. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effects that these regulations and actions have had on the communities who are involved in fishing in Daman. The review will concentrate on three primary aspects: the economic, the social, and the environmental concerns. It will investigate the ways in which these policies have impacted the economic stability and expansion of the fishing sector, as well as the social well-being and cohesiveness of fishing communities, as well as the sustainability of marine resources and ecosystems. It is essential, for a number of reasons, to have a knowledge of the consequences that these policies have. First and foremost, it offers insights into the efficiency of the tactics that are currently being utilized and highlights areas that may be improved. In the second place, it sheds insight on the equilibrium or differences of opinion that exist between economic growth and environmental sustainability. Last but not least, it highlights the significance of inclusive policymaking that takes into account the opinions and requirements of the local fishing communities. We hope that by doing this research, we will be able to provide a complete assessment of the current situation of the fishing communities in Daman, putting light on the accomplishments and problems that have been brought about by a variety of initiatives. In the process of formulating future programs that are both egalitarian and sustainable, this will give vital direction for policymakers, stakeholders, and community leaders.

International Agreements

Four international agreements that have emerged as a result of the adoption of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries are pertinent in this context for the purpose of inclusion under the appropriate laws and legislation that have been presented that pertain to this respect.

- i. Agreement for implementation of the provisions of the United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the conservation and management of straddling Fish Stock and Highly Migratory fish Stock.
- ii. Agreement to promote compliance with International Conservation and Management Measure by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas.
- iii. International plan of action to prevent, deter and eliminate, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.
- iv. International plan of Action for Management of Fishing Capacity, Conservation and Management of Shark, Reducing incidental catch of Sea birds in long line Fishing.

Fisheries Management in the Indian context

By virtue of the Constitution of India, fisheries inside the territorial seas, which extend up to a distance of twelve nautical miles from the shore, are considered to be a state subject. Furthermore, the primary duty for the development of these fisheries is with the government of the respective state. All fishing activities that take place beyond this boundary, which is the deep sea or the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) that extends up to a distance of 200 nautical miles, are the responsibility of the central government. Communities that are reliant on the fisheries in the region as well as the marine resources in the area are under the control of the state government, which has command over the fisheries that are located inside the territorial waters that extend for a distance of twelve miles.

Steps initiated by India to Implement Responsible Fisheries and Aquaculture

On behalf of the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying, and Fisheries, a committee at the national level was established in order to facilitate the implementation of the FAO Code. All of the regional languages have been translated into the Code, and programs have been developed to raise awareness among fishermen and fish farmers. It has also been proposed that fishing vessels with an over-the-water (OAL) of less than 20 meters be classified as belonging to the deeper zone and the terrestrial waters. For the purpose of future planning and exploitation, a committee at the national level has been revalidated to examine the present fisheries potential in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). For the purpose of preserving resources and lowering the amount of pressure exerted by fishing in order to encourage the revitalization of fish stocks, a monsoon fishing restriction has been implemented throughout the coast of India. Managing fisheries in a responsible way and ensuring socio-economic security are the overarching goals of the policy.

The Territorial Waters, Continental Shelf, EEZ and other Maritime Zones Act, 1976

The sovereign rights to the protection and management of living resources inside the Indian exclusive economic zone (EEZ) are acknowledged by this legislation, in addition to the rights to explore and exploit those resources. In addition, Section 15 (c) grants the Central Government the authority to formulate regulations, among other things, for the preservation and administration of the living resources that are located within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and Section 15 (e) is enacted to safeguard the maritime environment. The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is a sea zone that is defined by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Within this sea zone, a state is granted unique rights regarding the exploitation and use of marine resources, which includes the production of energy from water and wind. In accordance with the territorial waters, continental shelf, exclusive economic zone, and other maritime laws of 1976, the territorial sea encompasses the waters around India and extends to a distance of two hundred nautical miles. The Ministry of Agriculture of India enacted the Maritime Zones of India (Regulation of Fishing by Foreign Vessel) Act, 1981 in order to regulate the fishing that is conducted by foreign vessels within the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of India. India has acquired the exclusive right to exploit the living and non-living resources of this area, which encompasses a total area of 1.5 million square kilometers. It is vital to introduce legislation that allows deep-sea fishing vessels that are completely owned by Indians and have an ocean-at-lease (OAL) greater than 20 meters to operate in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in order to maximize the catch and share the catch data with research institutions for further study and the development of further programs. It is recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture draft a model piece of legislation, then send it out to the state government and any other relevant parties in order to solicit their feedback before the law is finalized and put into effect. The Indian marine Zones Act addresses issues such as the restriction of fishing in marine zones of India by boats from other countries, the granting of licenses, the prohibition of fishing by Indian nationals using vessels from other countries, and the cancellation or suspension of licenses or permits. Additionally, it addresses the issue of foreign vessels entering the marine zones of India without a license or approval to stow gear, as well as the authority to seize and take action against such boats. Scientific studies, investigations, and other types of fishing are also permitted by the statute. An application in Form A must be submitted to the Central Government in accordance with the Maritime Zones of India Rules, 1982. This requirement applies to any individual who is the owner of a foreign vessel or any other person listed in section 4 and who plans to use such a vessel for fishing inside any maritime zone of India.

Economic Impact

Improved Infrastructure and Market Access:

Positive Effects: Government and non-governmental initiatives have led to the development of better fishing infrastructure, such as modernized harbors, improved storage facilities, and enhanced transportation networks. These developments have facilitated easier access to local and international markets, helping fishermen fetch better prices for their catch and reduce post-harvest losses.

Challenges: Despite these improvements, small-scale fishermen often struggle to compete with larger commercial entities that benefit disproportionately from infrastructure upgrades. This has sometimes widened the economic gap within the community.

Subsidies and Financial Assistance:

Positive Effects: Subsidies on fishing equipment, fuel, and loans at lower interest rates have provided much-needed financial relief to many fishermen, allowing them to invest in better gear and boats, thereby increasing their catch efficiency and income.

Challenges: The distribution of subsidies and financial aid is not always equitable, with larger operators sometimes receiving a larger share, leaving smaller, marginalized fishermen with insufficient support.

Diversification Programs:

Positive Effects: Programs encouraging diversification into aquaculture, tourism, and other related activities have provided alternative income sources, reducing dependency on traditional fishing and improving economic resilience.

Challenges: These programs require significant initial investment and technical knowledge, which can be barriers for poorer fishermen.

Social Impact**Community Well-being:**

Positive Effects: Policies aimed at improving health, education, and social security for fishermen and their families have contributed to better living standards. Improved healthcare facilities and educational programs have enhanced overall community well-being.

Challenges: There remains a gap in accessing these benefits, particularly in remote areas. Additionally, the seasonal nature of fishing work and regulatory restrictions during breeding seasons can lead to financial instability, affecting the social fabric of the community.

Empowerment and Participation:

Positive Effects: Some initiatives have included efforts to empower fishing communities through participatory governance, where fishermen have a say in decision-making processes related to marine resource management and policy formulation.

Challenges: Genuine participation is still limited, with many fishermen feeling that their voices are not adequately heard or considered in policymaking, leading to feelings of disenfranchisement.

Environmental Impact

Sustainable Fishing Practices:

Positive Effects: Regulatory measures such as fishing bans during breeding seasons, size limits on catches, and the establishment of marine protected areas aim to ensure the long-term sustainability of fish stocks. These measures have had some success in preventing overfishing and allowing fish populations to recover.

Challenges: Compliance with these regulations can be economically challenging for fishermen, especially if alternative livelihoods are not available or adequate compensation is not provided. This can lead to illegal fishing practices as a means of survival.

Conservation Programs:

Positive Effects: Environmental conservation efforts, including pollution control and habitat restoration projects, have improved the overall health of marine ecosystems in Daman. These efforts benefit both the environment and the fishing communities that rely on these resources.

Challenges: Effective conservation requires the active involvement of local communities. There is often a disconnect between conservation policies and local practices, leading to resistance and reduced effectiveness of these programs.

Enhanced Equitable Distribution of Resources:

- Implement transparent and fair distribution mechanisms for subsidies and financial aid to ensure that small-scale and marginalized fishermen receive adequate support.
- Introduce targeted assistance programs for the most vulnerable groups within the fishing communities, including women and indigenous fishermen.

Strengthening Alternative Livelihood Programs:

- Expand and improve training and support for alternative livelihood programs, ensuring they are accessible to all community members. This includes providing necessary financial resources, technical assistance, and market access for aquaculture, tourism, and other related activities.
- Develop community-driven projects that align with local needs and capabilities, fostering ownership and sustainability.

Inclusive and Participatory Governance:

- Foster greater participation of fishing communities in the decision-making processes related to marine resource management. Establish community advisory boards and involve fishermen in the planning and implementation of policies that affect their livelihoods.
- Conduct regular consultations and feedback sessions with fishing communities to ensure their concerns and suggestions are integrated into policy revisions.

Improved Compensation and Support During Regulatory Restrictions:

- Develop comprehensive compensation schemes for fishermen affected by fishing bans and other regulatory restrictions. This includes financial support, food security measures, and vocational training for alternative employment during off-seasons.
- Ensure timely and adequate disbursement of compensation to prevent financial distress and discourage illegal fishing practices.

Environmental Education and Conservation Integration:

- Implement environmental education programs to raise awareness among fishermen about sustainable fishing practices and the long-term benefits of conservation efforts.
- Promote community-based conservation initiatives that involve fishermen directly in the protection and restoration of marine ecosystems. This could include citizen science projects and local monitoring of fish stocks and habitats.

Enhanced Monitoring and Enforcement:

- Strengthen monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with sustainable fishing regulations. This includes deploying adequate resources for patrolling and surveillance, as well as community-based reporting systems to detect violations.
- Promote a balanced approach to enforcement that combines strict regulation with supportive measures to help fishermen comply with sustainability standards.

Infrastructure and Technology Upgrades:

- Continue investing in modernizing fishing infrastructure, such as cold storage facilities, fish processing units, and efficient transport systems, to reduce post-harvest losses and improve profitability.
- Encourage the adoption of technology in fishing practices, such as GPS navigation, fish-finding equipment, and sustainable fishing gear, to enhance efficiency and reduce environmental impact.

Conclusion

There are a lot of good and bad things that have come out of policies and actions in Daman's fishing villages. There have been significant gains from conservation initiatives, financial aid, and infrastructure upgrades, but problems with fairness, participation, and economic stability remain. Inclusive policies that guarantee equitable allocation of resources and real participation of fishing communities in decision-making processes are essential for policies to be effective and sustainable. The present inequalities can be better addressed and the resilience and well-being of Daman's fishing communities may be enhanced through this comprehensive strategy. Policies and interventions aimed at Daman's fishing communities must take into account economic, social, and environmental factors if they are to be successful in the future. Policymakers have the power to provide a better future for these communities by distributing resources fairly, encouraging community involvement, establishing strong support systems, including conservation activities, and improving infrastructure. For these objectives to be realized and for development's advantages to be distributed fairly among all community members, it is essential that government agencies, NGOs, and fishing communities work together actively.

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