

Securing post-harvest economic benefits: The role of cooperatives and other forms of organization

TYPES and ROLE of organizations

- There are a variety of organizational forms – cooperatives, fisherfolk associations, fisher groups
- An important distinguishing issue raised was that whatever form it is, it **MUST** be initiated by the community and BE independent
- Many cooperatives have been imposed by government and used as channels for political ends and this has created a negative perception of cooperatives
- Roles include: provision of credit, inputs such as bulk buying of nets, fuel, ice, marketing and training
- These organizations can play a potential role in Community Based Resource Management – some are involved in managing access, controlling, buying and selling the catch
- Cooperatives are meaningful if they can redistribute value in favour of the fishers along the value chain

But government **MUST create an enabling environment for securing post harvest benefits**

Securing benefits for whom?

- Firstly, fishermen, women and families and the fishing community
- Secondly, the domestic fish consumer.
- Thirdly, the resource
- Finally, it should benefit the national economy, BUT the local village economy should enjoy the benefits before the national economy
- Fishing community – this includes all ‘fishworkers’ – all those stakeholders in the community who are involved in the fish chain, not just in the harvest of fish
- All are stakeholders but does this then include the ‘middleman’? There are many different meanings and group members had different understandings and experiences – some ‘middlemen’ add value and some exploit. We want to avoid those owners/traders or loan providers who exploit.

What are the post harvest benefits we want to secure?

- Economic, empowerment and social benefits are interlinked
- Securing a higher price for the producers
- Increasing the value of the catch/ Value adding along the chain
- Reducing post harvest losses through improving quality, increasing preservation and reducing bycatch
- Collective organization
- Fishers' capacity to secure control over the first point of sale
- Securing and strengthening women's roles, their participation and benefits - these are particularly threatened by industrial sector
- Employment and income generation
- Maximizing the benefits that flow from economies of scale
- Strengthen fishers' negotiating capacities
- Securing food sovereignty and access to fish for local sale
- Improve the quality of life