

The post-harvest sector and fisheries management—how can the links be strengthened?

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1. The post-harvest activities refers to activities such as smoking, salting, drying, and freezing -- mainly onshore activities undertaken by men and women including family and industrial enterprises. How could the link between these activities and fisheries management be strengthened or reformulated?
2. It was pointed out at the outset that the scale of harvest determined the scale of post-harvest activities. The linkage had to be strengthened and there was need to integrate post-harvest policy into fisheries management plan. In this context, attention was drawn to the need to regulate fish processing capacity towards improving fisheries management, as mentioned in the Statement from the Civil Society.
3. While strengthening the links between fisheries management and post-harvest activities, fisheries managers should protect the interests of small-scale fisheries. This raised the issue of whether you start from the fishing-end or from the post-harvest end. While strengthening such links attempts should be made to bring about greater coherence between the interests of fish producers and fish consumers.
4. Such coherence, it was pointed out, could be better maintained at the local level. However, it should be ensured that small-scale fishers are not denied their due benefits in the process of strengthening such linkages, especially when it involved large supermarket chains at the retail end of the value chain. From the fishing-end, such links could be better strengthened under co-management and community-based management regimes, therefore, building up human and organizational capacity-building at the local level was deemed important.
5. It was argued that from the post-harvest end, it was possible to ensure catch optimization, to minimize by-catch and discards, and to promote compliance with biological parameters for healthy fish stocks such as maintaining minimum size of fish caught and catch of juveniles.
6. The importance of providing adequate infrastructure facilities including clean landing centres and harbours, managed at different levels to maximize the value of fish output and benefit to actual fish producers, as well as to assure quality fish was highlighted in this context.
7. It was pointed out that better value addition and enhanced returns on fishing should become an incentive to comply with fisheries management measures, and that it should not act as an incentive to overfish. In some cases, markets recognized more

selective fishing gear and techniques, and it led to better compliance with fisheries management measures. However, markets in some other cases demanded juveniles and immature fish, or fish in closed seasons, and it could encourage overfishing of such resources.

8. The post-harvest regime should recognize the importance of local fish consumption particularly in the realms of food sovereignty, especially for the rural poor, it was pointed out, and it should not be seen only in terms of external demand, regional and international markets. Thus, post-harvest sector should not only play a role in relation to improving fisheries management it should also play a role in alleviating poverty and enhancing nutritional security of the poor at the local level.

9. Considering that small-scale fishers were often price-takers would not actually help them to benefit from better market prices, unless they engaged only at the local level. In this context, small-scale fisheries were better equipped to alleviate local poverty, it was argued.

10. The importance of capacity-building, especially at the local level, for consultation, dissemination of information, for establishing greater coherence between fisheries management and post-harvest activities was recognized. This would decide, for instance, what management plans were to be in place, and how small-scale fishing communities could manage fishing and post-harvest activities. However, such initiatives were to be more community-driven, it was argued. Co-operatives with the involvement women, especially from the post-harvest side, had a role to play, in this context. Fish consumers also had a role. The importance of developing a code of best practice to ensure that processing workers are better paid was also discussed.

11. There was need for effective co-ordination between different agencies engaged in fishing and post-harvest activities. It was also important to adopt an integrated approach to fishing and post-harvest activities. However, without political will it would be difficult to fully benefit from such an integration to the advantage of fishers and fishworkers. In this context, the role of advocacy to ensure support from State was highlighted.

12. In conclusion, it was noted that harmonization of fisheries management with post-harvest measures can improve the efficiency of fisheries management.

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