



Spatial management approaches in fisheries and environmental conservation: Experiences from selected Asian countries

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Spatial mgmt approaches

- Commonly used by traditional communities harvesting fisheries resources in India and other parts of Asia, such as Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka
- Served to deal with and resolve conflicts around resource use and, in cases, to ensure equitable and sustainable resource use.
- Enjoyed social legitimacy
- Many such customary regulations, norms and practices, and the social institutions that were their proponents not recognized.



Current practices

- Fisheries management and environmental conservation in India and several other Asian countries (Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand....) are handled by different ministries/ department, with different mandates
- Both use spatial management approaches, with other tools



SM approaches: Fisheries

- Artisanal trawl-free zones declared in several countries (India, Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia...)
- Several spatial-temporal approaches such as closed seasons and areas (monsoon ban in India, closed seasons for protecting hilsa and shrimp in Bangladesh)
- Some measures, such as closed seasons, have proved effective. Some not well enforced (eg. artisanal zones)

SM approaches: Conservation



- Establishment of MPAs preferred by environment ministries, for conservation of habitats/ species.
- Often under general environmental legislation—may be influenced by terrestrial models of conservation (design issues)
- Implementation often top down. Level of effectiveness variable



Gahirmatha sanctuary, India





Gahirmatha sanctuary, India

- Orissa is one of India's poorest states, with 47.5 per cent population below the poverty line.
- About 50,000 fishermen affected by the sanctuary and associated regulations
- No compensation or livelihood support provided
- Trawling, that is in any case prohibited under fisheries legislation, is the primary cause of turtle mortality
- Many debates on design of the sanctuary...
- Other development (eg ports) not regulated



Key issues

- Often coordination between departments/ ministries weak, though jurisdictions overlapping
- Measures sometimes poorly designed in relation to proposed objectives
- Weak on participatory and consultative processes
- Do not pay adequate attention to socioeconomic issues/ issues of equity/ social legitimacy/ traditional knowledge



Key issues

- Legal frameworks
- Enforcement
- Often efforts cannot be considered effective from the perspective of conservation and sustainable use, or ensuring social justice and equity



Way forward

Need to recognize that:

- Better coordination between agencies responsible for fisheries management and environmental conservation essential (Debates and appreciation of respective mandates needed)
- Objectives of conservation and sustainable use can be achieved through a range of spatial mgmt and other tools
- What is most appropriate may differ in different contexts, for different objectives (design of measures)



Way forward

Need to recognize that:

- Measures are best decided through consultative processes that promote social acceptance and legitimacy, combining scientific and experiential/traditional knowledge
- Measures need to be nested within broader ecosystem approaches
- It is essential to adopt a human rights approach—both as an end in itself and as an essential prerequisite for sustainable development, and of conservation and sustainable use of resources into the longer term.



Thank you