

Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector: Is it just another Food Production System?

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Abstract

Fish is important for food security. This paper poses the question: Is fisheries and aquaculture just another food production system? It is highlighted here that fisheries and aquaculture sector is not just another food production system which is necessary for food and income but it is a system which has a number of other associated benefits. It is stressed that sector needs to be mainstreamed with broader development agenda so as to ensure widespread social and gender equity. Fisheries and aquaculture sector is presently viewed as a sector which meets food security, nutrition security and livelihood security. But sector has its role in wealth generation. Sector's importance in trade and as employment provider is also important. It increases entrepreneurship and is witnessing emergence of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in many Asian countries. It contributes for farming of other food production systems as feed in livestock and other products. Role of fishing communities in safeguarding local cultures, indigenous technical knowledge (ITK) systems, maintaining social/cultural identity and values is very important. If sector is well managed it can lead to protection and enhancement of environment, can also lead to innovation, new technologies and can promote green technologies. With proper policies access to an equitable share of benefits of greener fisheries and aquaculture can be widespread. Sector has economic, political, institutional, social and cultural issues attached to it thus there is a need that sector be linked with wider development agenda so as to ensure wider social and gender equity.