

Recent experience with regard to introduction of Fisheries Co-management in Tanzania mainland

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Abstract

The search for effective small-scale fisheries management regime, in Tanzania, has been an on-going process since independence in 1961. Different models were tried including centralized system of governance, use of cooperative groups and setting up of environmental committees in villages. Unfortunately, nothing much was realized and thus, over-capacity, over-fishing, illegal fishing practices and environmental degradation became prevalent. In view of this situation, the government adopted establishment of Beach Management Units in fishing villages. So far over 600 BMUs have been established in the country. The performance of many BMUs is mixed, however the lesson learned from the models developed in three districts; Rufiji, Mafia and Kilwa, provides frames of reference on requirements for successful introduction of fisheries co-management. The experience suggests that introducing fisheries co-management is a process moving through certain stages if the best results are to be achieved. First, threats or issues have to be identified followed by effective early action before focusing on group formation and dynamics. Other necessary dimensions are; education and training, resource management functions and extension service. The components have to be taken in combination rather than disjointedly. This paper outlines how the intervention works, arguing that an initial impression can cloud later perceptions. So it is important to consider the ways in which a favorable initial response can be achieved. In most of the fishing communities, dealing with livelihood issues such as facilitating introduction of micro-credit scheme could be an effective early action for conditioning fishers