

Participatory Fishing Crafts Building

What is Participatory fishing crafts building ?

Participatory fishing crafts building is a process which involves the participation of fishers in the fishing crafts building process from design stage to the fishing craft construction state.

Why?

This is because the specification/design of fishing crafts defers from area to area depending on the type fishing practice, nature of the sea/lagoon, beliefs and fishing habits.

What makes it different ?

This participatory fishing crafts building approach ensures the production of sea worthy, fishermen preferred fishing craft eventually.



A Case study from Sri Lanka

- The tsunami waves that hit Sri Lanka on the 26th December 2004 have decimated coastal fishing communities. Fishery in Sri Lanka is largely small scale and they are among the poorest communities in the country. Fishers have not only been affected by loss of lives or substantial damage to their shelter, but also to fishing crafts and fishing gear. It is estimated that one third of affected households were fishers. In some districts, it turned out to be far higher.
- The immediate steps taken to restore fisheries sector back was to replace and repair fishing gear and fishing crafts. Subsequently, the well meaning organizations and the government of Sri Lanka replaced fishing gear and crafts. But according to the fishers, about 40% fishing crafts replaced and repaired are unseaworthy. Unseaworthy means such fishing crafts can not be operated in the sea or lagoon.
- Yet, the fishers traditionally know how their fishing crafts should be built, according to the local conditions of the fishing area in the sea and the their usual fishing habits and technologies. Even so, consultation of fishers were not done in the immediate fishing crafts rebuilding and replacement process in Sri Lanka

Lessons

Participatory approach to building and repairing fishing crafts though takes longer time, ensures that fishermen's needs, likes, dislikes and specifications on the required types of fishing crafts are met, leading to a production of seaworthy, fishermen preferred, location specific, productive fishing crafts. Because participatory approach ensures the consultation of fishers from the design stage of the fishing craft to the construction stage.

