

Stakeholder views from the workshop in Dhaka - how can poor people's access to self-recruiting species in aquaculture be improved?

A workshop organised by ITDG in Dhaka in August 2001 was an opportunity both to assess what had been achieved in a participatory appraisal of communities in five parts of Asia, but also to begin the process of interaction with secondary stakeholders and the dissemination process.

A total of 138 representatives from a host of Government and non-government agencies attended. The workshop gained a good deal of local attraction from policy makers and the general public, and featured in both English and local language daily newspapers.

Comments from workshop participants included;

- We need a better understanding of the types of aquatic systems that the poor have access to
- Most participants highlighted the need to address the wider aquatic system in an integrated way (covering migratory pathways, flood plains, beels, ponds, rice-fields river connections)
- Many participants emphasized the need to understand aquaculture and management of wild fish/other organisms in flood plains where many SRS breed
- A better understanding of how habitat alteration and over fishing affect SRS
- How can alternative livelihood options for poor farmers and fishers be developed to minimise damage to SRS broodstock and fry
- Relating SRS production in household managed systems to community-based fisheries management that can ensure access by the poor
- Mechanisms of institutional and financial support for ensuring continued access to public ponds and water bodies
- How can greater use of SRS in aquaculture enhance benefits to the poor
- In leased large water bodies(open water /flood plain) can the poor negotiate retained access to SRS through use of certain gears with the lease holders
 - Effects of using irrigation water and water for SRS broods in ponds and open water
- Improve legal framework to support pro-SRS management
- The role of sanctuaries for SRS(seasonal and perennial)
- Any approach to increasing the abundance of SRS in farmer managed systems will require community involvement, negotiations and perhaps physical changes to migration routes linking them to the floodplains
- How can the breeding sites of SRS be best protected from impacts of pesticide use and habitat destruction

A Biometrical View

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Design of the surveys in the SRS project is crucial for three reasons.

First the project is multidisciplinary and data must be collected on all aspects of people's livelihoods-economic, environmental, social, legal and biological.

These components interact in complex ways and at different times in the study their respective pressures may be very different. Thus free access to a community pond may exist. But if a law is created to bar certain people having access, their income and thus livelihoods will deteriorate unless they can find another source of money.

Second, a broad selection of households must be found to include those where ponds are both managed and not managed against this complex background of interacting components. The achievement of any degree of replication of any unit is very unlikely and only those major sources of variability must be taken into account in an analysis.

Third, the information that is supplied by the local communities is not always precise. It may be recalled information, or it may be what the local people think the researchers want to hear! This all adds very much to the variability in the data and its ultimate complexity.