

## POLICY DIMENSIONS FISHERIES, SOUTH ASIA – DR Y. S. YADAVA (BOBP-IGO)




### Policy dimensions of fisheries work in South Asia

**Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation**

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### Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation

- A four-country regional fisheries advisory body.
- Members: Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Sri Lanka.
- Institutionalized in 2003 from the erstwhile Bay of Bengal Programme of FAO.





### Policy dynamics in the region

### Where we were?

Historically, fisheries in the region was within the domain of the community. Government's role was limited to conservation of resources (e.g. Indian Fisheries Act, 1892).

Fisheries was regulated by social and religious codes and in a way these codes had concerns for both fisheries and environment.

### Post-colonial period

- Fisheries was identified as a strategic sector.
- However, no comprehensive policies were formulated. On most occasions, ad-hoc or stand alone policies were made for specific issues/sectors/periods.
- Emphasis was on increasing production.
- Low financial capacity of the community led the governments to capitalize the sector through funding support and private (non-fisher) initiatives.
- The government's role further strengthened but 'only' for developmental purposes.




### The game changers

- Emphasis on production led to mechanization of the fleet.
- The UN Law of the Sea expanded the jurisdictions of the coastal States and acted as a game changer.
- Countries enacted their EEZ Acts and comprehensive regulations regarding use of marine waters were enacted setting the stage for fisheries development.
- In the Bay of Bengal region, from 1979 onwards, the FAO's Bay of Bengal Programme also catalyzed the process by bringing in technology and new developments.



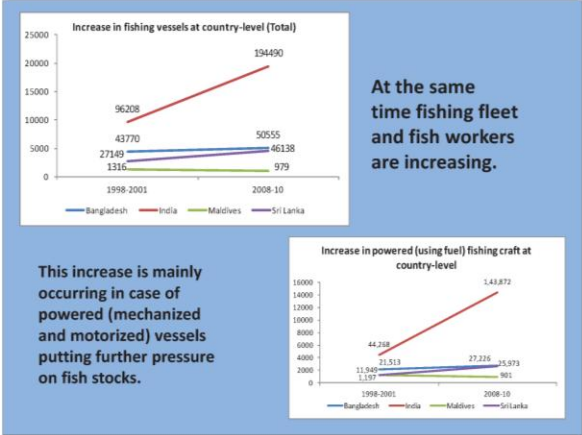
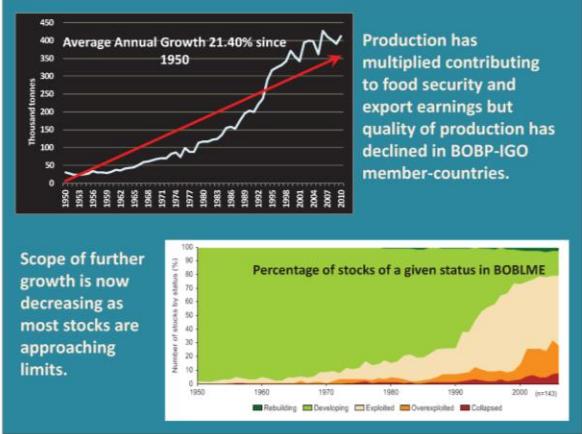

### Summing up

Fisheries policies in the region were by and large guided by the simple needs of enhancing production.

With the global debates on sustainability (Rio) and responsible fishing (FAO 1995 CCRF), countries started discussing about integrating environment and fisheries.

However, visible actions were to be seen only in the beginning of this century.

# Where we are?

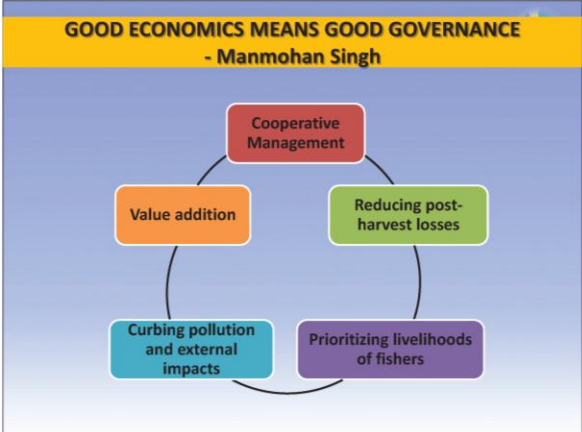


# Where do we want to go?

**Options are limited**

- Optimizing fishing effort. Strategic increase can take place after thoroughly reviewing the status of the stocks.
- Appropriating every dollar worth of fish landing. If we cannot increase our catch we need to increase it by value of the catch.
- Conserving/rebuilding stocks in the meantime.

# How do we go about it?



# The way we are going!



### Focus on regional approach to fisheries

- Countries have signed bilateral MoUs for setting up joint working groups in fisheries.
- Cooperative management of shared resources (*e.g.* Gulf of Mannar) and moving towards EAFM.
- Cooperative management of fish species/stocks (*e.g.* hilsa and sharks)
- Establishment of fisheries management organization (*e.g.* BOBP-IGO being considered as a possible RFMO by its member-countries).

**Thanks!**