

Role of Fisheries Co-operative societies, Self- Help Groups (SHG's) and Non-Government Organization (NGO) in the Registered Natural fisheries of Sivasagar district in Assam

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Abstract

Fishery is the prospective sector of the country. It is an agriculture allied sector. More than 15 million people in the country are occupied fishery as a source of livelihood. As per Government act, the government leases the registered river and beel fisheries to the registered fisheries co-operative societies, Self-help Groups and NGOs for specific time period. The members of these organizations must be certified as hundred percent fishermen. These organizations play an important role in the national and state economy. So, the study examines the main role of fisheries co-operative societies, SHG's and NGOs in the study area.

Key words: fishery, cooperative societies, self-help group and NGO

Introduction:

Fisheries occupy an important role in supporting livelihoods worldwide and also form an important source of diet for over one billion people. The inland fisheries are of particular importance to the rural accounting as they comprise of 15 percent of the total global employment (*International Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Studies, 2015*). In Assam also fish is common food for majority population of the rural area. It is recognized as a major income source and employment generator among people of the scheduled caste and other minority community. The fish provide common nutritious food to the significant population of rural area because fish is found in the fishing area such as river, beels and some low lying areas. It has been observed that the people of the study area are not much aware about the nutrition, proteins and vitamins which are the most necessary for the health. As a common food the people consume fish and automatically they get physical support without knowing about it.

The river and beel fisheries in the state are run by the fisheries co-operative societies, SHG's and NGO's. All registered beel and river fisheries are leased by the government through tender process. As per the Government rule the registered fisheries are classified into 60 percent and 40 percent category fisheries. The 60 percent category fisheries are run by the cooperative societies, self-help groups and non-government organization. The co-operative societies, self-help groups and non-government organizations are eligible for appearing in the tender process while the members or shareholders must actual fishermen. The term 'actual fishermen' defined by the fishery department those fishermen who actually perfectly know the fishing in the river and beel fisheries. The government uses the term actual fishermen as hundred percent fishermen. These fishermen are certified by the fishery department of the state government. On the other hand, the 40 percent category of fisheries can run by individual fisherman. The same eligibility also requires for the individual fisherman (**Fishery, Government of Assam**). The government gives lease in the beel and river fisheries for the particular period 5 to 7 years to the registered fisheries co-operative societies, Self- Help Group and Non-Government Organization on the basic of the reliable documents and the higher bidding amount.

The paper has examined the role of fisheries co-operative societies, SHG's and NGO's on the fisheries.

Objective of the study:

The main objective of the study is to examine the role of fisheries cooperative societies, SHG's and NGOs in the government registered natural fisheries of Sivasagar district in Assam.

Methodology:**Method of the study:**

Through the study is explorative in nature nevertheless the study maintains the descriptive nature.

Universe of the Study:

The study covers the government registered fisheries in the Sivasagar district. These fisheries are run by the various fishery's cooperative societies, self-help groups and different nongovernment organizations. These organizations are government registered and the shareholders are fishermen. The study covers the 159 nos. of shareholders and respectively 19 nos. of fisheries cooperative societies, self-help group and NGO's. Source of data collection:

Basically, the primary source has been used in the study. The data is collected from the respondents of the study area. Sometimes in some cases the secondary data has also been taken for the study.

Sample Size:

The random sampling has been used in the study. There are 32 nos. of registered beel and river fisheries in the district. From these fisheries 159 nos. of fishermen has been selected out of which 525 nos. of actual shareholders. More than 30% sample has been selected for the study.

Tools and Technique:

Basically, questionnaires are the main tool of the study. A structured questionnaires has been prepared for collecting data from the respondents during the time of field survey. In the analysis of the study the percentage, bar diagram, pie diagram is used.

Analysis and Result:**Employment Opportunity:**

The fisheries provide employment opportunities to the rural folk of the study area. The respondents have their membership in their own fisheries co-operative societies, self-help group and non-government organization. The fishermen receive their membership in this fisheries organization on the basis of the government prescribe eligibility criteria of the actual fisherman which has been stated in the above.

The fishery co-operative societies play a vital role in the fishery sector of the state. These societies are able to involve a significant number of members or shareholders in the rural area. The study shows the district-wise existence of the co-operative societies and their members who get the employment opportunities. The following table shows the district-wise number of fisheries co-operative societies and their members.

Table No-1: Number of fisheries co-operative societies (district wise) of Assam

Sl. No	District	Nos.of Cooperative societies	Total Members
1	Barpeta	21	1697
2	Bongaigaon	10	1813
3	Cachar	10	2186
4	Darrang	6	586
5	Dhemaji	9	1593
6	Dhubri	7	424
7	Dibrugarh	8	1578
8	Goalpara	13	2455
9	Golaghat	14	1563
10	Hailakandi	6	1119
11	Jorhat	15	3792
12	Kamrup	28	4505
13	Karimganj	2	5188
14	Kokrajhar	3	358
15	Lakhimpur	23	1772
16	Morigaon	38	5645
17	Nagaon	51	766
18	Nalbari	4	761
19	Sivasagar	10	1432
20	Sonitpur	5	2878
21	Tinsukia	5	734
22	Udalguri	9	549

Source: FISHCOPFED

The above table shows that a significant number of co-operative societies with enormous number of members are involved in fisheries of the state. The Nagaon district has huge number of fishery co-operative societies. There are 51 nos. of societies and it has good numbers of shareholders are occupied. The Cachar and Sivasagar districts have each 10 nos. of co-operative societies. In the three districts the shareholders are respectively, 766 nos. (Nagaon), 1432 nos. (Sivasagar) and 21869 nos. (Cachar) district. From the study it is clear that the fisheries co-operative societies have a positive role on the state economy where a good number of people are able to get employment opportunity.

The study observes the involvement of shareholders in the selected fisheries co-operative societies, self-help groups and non-government organizations. These shareholders of the three organizations get opportunity for fishing at their lease fisheries (river and beel). The involvement or employment of fishermen at the co-operative societies, SHG's and NGO's in the study area as shown in the following table.

SI No	Table No-2: Respondents getting employment opportunity at different registered organization (District-wise)		
	Registered organization	District	
		Sivasagar	
		Nos.of rspnd.	%
1	Cooperative Societies	101	63.52
2	SHG's	40	25.16
3	NGO	18	11.32
Total		159	100

Source: Primary Survey

In the above table no-2, it is seen that the 63.52 percent respondents (fishermen) in Sivasagar district are engaged in cooperative societies, 25.16 percent in self-help group and 11.32 percent in NGO.

The fishery co-operative societies in Assam formed by actual fishermen belong to the Scheduled Caste, Mimal Community in Cachar district, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes are registered under the Assam Co-operative Societies Act, 1949 (Phukan, G.C. 2014). It has been running since long time where a good number of fishermen in the rural area are engaged and therefore the state government gives special status on fisheries cooperative societies for leasing the registered river and beel fisheries. The fishermen basically prefer the membership of the cooperative societies for getting some benefits. The majority of fishermen in the study area want to take the membership in fishery cooperative societies because:

- Among the people of the fishing community in the study area, the fisheries co-operative society is a very popular concept.
- The shareholders of the co-operative societies get much benefit because the shareholders can fish collectively in the particular lease beel and river fisheries with the full support of the co-operative societies. The co-operative societies provide some instruments like net, boat and other essential materials to the fishermen which are required for fishing.
- The co-operative societies get more preference for leasing than the individual lessee, SGH's and NGO's because a large number of shareholders (who are hundred percent actual fishermen) are engaged in the cooperative societies than the self-help group and non-government organization.
- As the shareholders of the co-operative societies the fishermen get their livelihood opportunity from the fishing.
- In the study it is found that most of the fisheries co-operative societies get some financial assistance from government concern department for welfare of the fishermen which fishermen get help for upliftment of their occupation.
- Fishery co-operative societies are supervised by the government authorities. There is a better coordination among the government authorities, committees of the co-operative societies and the shareholders.
- In the study area it is seen that most of the co-operative societies do not keep the government financial liabilities. They pay their revenue regularly to the state government and therefore the fishermen of the co-operative societies are free from the government financial liabilities.
- Most of the fishery co-operative societies repeatedly get its lease the fisheries due to nothing any government liabilities of the cooperative societies.

- Fisheries co-operative societies have been paid a good amount of revenue regularly to the state government.
- The shareholders of the co-operative societies pay fewer rates against the fishing to the authority comparatively less than the SHG's and NGO's.

From the above analysis it is clear that most of the people are occupied as fishermen in the co-operative societies for getting their source of earning and some assistance. The representation of the fishermen in fisheries co-operative societies of Sivasagar district is shown in the following figure.

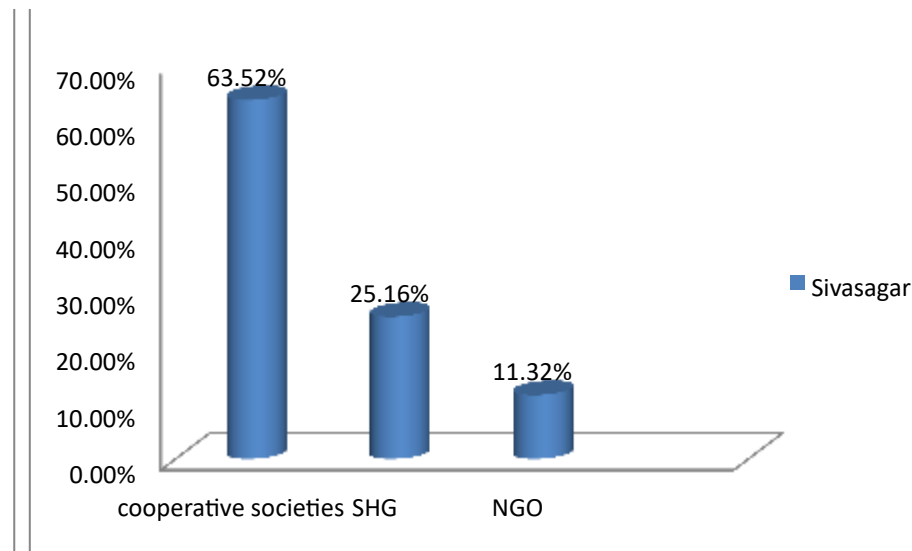


Figure-1

Contribution of Fishermen:

The fishermen contribution is the main source of earning in the fishery's cooperative societies, self-help group and non-government organization. The fishermen or shareholders of the fisheries co-operative societies, SHG's and NGO's provide good contribution to the state government. The shareholders of these organizations pay their share to the managing committee of the co-operative societies, SHG's and NGOs against the fishing in their lease river and beel fisheries. The shareholders are able to earn their income from fishing and they also contribute their share from their earning to the managing committee of these fisheries cooperative societies, SHG's and NGO's (fixed as per the committee decision). The committees pay annual revenue timely to the government authority from the earning of the fisheries. Sometime these organizations can pay the revenue timely and some time they are unable to pay in time because the fisheries are faced by different problems during the fishing time. In the present time the prices of the local or indigenous fish are increasing day by day due to greater demand and gaining popularity among the people in the state. Thereby, the fisheries owners are getting opportunity for earning more from the less quantity of fish. In the study it is found that as shareholders of the fisheries co-operative societies, SHG's and NGO's pay their share respectively 30 percent, 40 percent and 50 percent from their daily earning (against fishing) to their particular managing committees of the organization. The contribution of the shareholders in the co-operative society is less than the share of SHG, s and NGO, s.

The authority of SHG's and NGO's take 40 percent and 50 percent share (daily wise) from the fishermen against their fishing activities. This amount is higher paid by the shareholders of the SHG's and NGO's than the amount of the shareholders of cooperative societies. The main

causes for paying the huge amount of share (40%, 50%) by the shareholders to the authority of SGH's and NGOs are

- It is found that most of the SHG's and NGO's take lease the fisheries at higher amount of revenue from the government. Therefore, the shareholders of the SHG's and NGO's pay higher amount of money i.e.,40 percent and 50 percent to the authority.
- It is seen that the SHG's and NGOs did not come earlier to the fishery sector in the state than the co-operative societies. So, the members of the SHG's and NGO's do not have enough knowledge or experience for conducting the fishery in proper way.
- During the bidding time of the river and beel fisheries most of the SHG's and NGOs submit their tender papers for getting lease tenure in the fisheries. For getting the lease tenure of the fisheries, the SHG's and NGO's give higher rate at the tender papers before the authority. As a result, the SHG's and NGO's get lease the particular river or beel fishery at high rate of annual revenue. But the high rate of revenue is not possible to pay to the government by the SHG's and NGO's. Because the revenue amount is higher than the amount of fish production. Therefore, the SHG's and NGOs cannot pay the amount of annual revenue of the fisheries to the government.
- The SHG's and NGOs are not very much aware about the bidding process (tender process for leasing) of the government in the state because the shareholders are not the educationally advanced and they do not know how to study the bidding rule and regulation of the government authority.
- Due to higher expectation of profit from the lease fisheries and higher competition of bidding price among the self-help group (SHG'S), Non-Government Organization (NGO'S), co-operative societies and some individuals, ultimately the common fishermen have to suffer. Therefore, the shareholders of the NGO and SHG in the study area have to pay higher level of contribution from their earning and they are faced various problems.

Contribution of the Annual Revenue of the fisheries:

Annually (according to lease period) the Co-operative Societies, SHG's and NGOs of the registered fisheries provide a good amount of revenue to the state government. Every registered fishery has a particular lease period of time for running their fisheries. For running the fisheries the fisheries owner (co-operative societies, self-help group and non-government organization) have to pay a particular amount (amount fixed in bidding time) of revenue to the state government while the parties get lease for running the fisheries. Most of the registered fisheries have been providing a huge amount of revenue to the state government which is the big contribution of the state economy. The following table no.2 shows the revenue contribution of some registered fisheries of the state.

Sl. No	Name of the fisheries	Nature of the fisheries	Cooperative soc./SHG/NGO	District	Tenure	Amount of Revenue (yearly)
1	Brahmaputra Part-1	River fishery	Brahmaputra Part-1meen Samabai Samittee (Cooperative society)	Sivasagar	2010-17	47,520
2	Brahmaputra Part-2	do	Row mari Phukan fadia SHG	do	2018-22	12,05,000

3	Dikhow Part2	do	Dikhow meen Samabai Samittee	do	2016-19	1,00550
4	Diroy	do	Kamal Das	do	2015-20	1,13,000
5	Dishang Part1		Rajib Das	do	2016-22	32,000
6	Dishang Part-2	do	Dishang part 2 meen samabai samittee	do	2009-16	4,20,000
7	Demow	do	Dishang meen Samabai Samittee	do	2012-18	4,51,000
8	Dorika Part 2	do	Dighali bhagamur meen samabai samittee	do	2015-22	1,77,303
9	Dorika Part-3	do	Row mari Phukan fadia SHG	do	2019-2026	1,51,000
10	Teliadunga		SHG (Babul Das)	do	2014-2020	6,50,000
11	Mori Dikhow	beel	NGO	do		101000
12	Panikhathi	do	SHG	do	per year	40,000
13	Borchola	do	SHG, Garbhaga (TMPK)	do	per year	400,000
14	Mornoi panikhathi		Bhagamur meen samabai samittee	do	2015-22	26501
15	Jia Mitong	do	Rekibuddin Ali	do	2014-2015	100,000
			Tupidhar Das	do	2015-2016	1,70,000
			Kumolia Ali	do	2016-2017	192,000
			Dilip Hazarika and group	do	2017-2018	233570
16	Borgila	do	Anup Phukan Kumud Konwar Kumud Konwar	do	2014-2015 2015-2016 2016-2018	150000 199000 215000(per yr)
17	Dighali Bhagamur	do	Secy.Digheli Bhangamur Min SSL	do	2012-1013 to 2018-19	101,000/
18	Moridisang	do	Secy. Dhigali Singra MSS Ltd	do	2012-13 to 2018-19	53000/
19	Fulai Dighali	do	Secy. Dhigali Singra MSS Ltd	do	2015-16 to 2021-22	56000/

Source: Office report of Deputy Commissioner (Revenue Branch), Sivasagar, Nagaon and Cachar District Report of Fishery Development Corporation Guwahati 2016-17.

Increasing the Fish Productivity:

The fish production is a natural process. Although it is a natural process, the co-operative societies, SHG's and NGO's have significant role for increasing fish productivity in the river and beel fisheries. In the field study it is found that some of the co-operative societies, Self Help Groups and Non-Government Organizations take positive steps for increasing the fish productivity. The steps are stated in the following.

- Mainly the fishermen of the co-operative societies, SHG's and NGOs are aware on fishing at the breeding period of fish in the river and beel fisheries. Before 2005 (fish seed act 2005 was launched) most of the co-operative societies, SHG's and NGO's kept brood fish through obstruction the floating river by using big net and bheta (made by wood and bamboo). Then much quantity of brood fish was kept. In present time most of the cooperative societies, SHG's and NGOs are highly aware about the fish productivity in their concerned fisheries. They prevent the earlier fishing methods like obstruction of the river by net. The co-operative societies, self-help groups and non-government organization make aware in other fishermen also who are not aware about the fishing in breeding period. Therefore, fish can get more opportunities for breeding in the water bodies.
- The State Government is directed to implement some awareness programme, training programme and workshop to the co-operative societies, self-help groups and nongovernment organization through district fisheries offices for increasing fish productivity.
- The State Government passed regulation on some industries and units (who pullulated in the water bodies) for preventing the pollution in the water bodies where fish can move freely and safe. Therefore, gradually the pollution has been reduced and the death rate of the fish (due to pollution) is decreasing.
- The fisheries co-operative societies, SHG's and NGOs negotiate with their fishermen or shareholders for not fishing in the breeding period. This period has been considered by the government as banned period for fishing and even government adopt some legal action against the fishermen or shareholders of the three organizations who are fishing during that period.
- A positive sign is found in the study area that some of the nature-based NGO's and some local organization play important role in the breeding period of fish. During the period, the organizations keep in their eyes on the entire atmosphere and they make some awareness programme among the fishermen. Therefore, the fishermen cannot do fishing activities in the period and as a result fish productivity increase.
- The flood is considered as one of the main source of fish production in the natural fisheries. In the time of flood, the owner of these fisheries (co-operative societies, SHG's & NGO's) takes some steps for increasing fish productivity. The owner of the fisheries does not allow the fishermen to fishing at the entry part of the river and beel fisheries because during this period the fish can move freely from one place to other for breeding. Therefore, the fish get opportunity for breeding and automatically the fish productivity has increased.

Getting various opinions from the fishermen in the study it can be revealed that the flood is blessing for fish production and it has a positive role for increasing the fish productivity. When the flood rises more and frequently, then the quantity of fish production also increases and when the flood does not come frequently during the seasons then the fish production does not rise in the natural beel and river fisheries.

The representation been examined by using the statistical tool chi-square.

Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.636 ^a	2	.000

0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5.

Since the P- Value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The following figure is shown the Sivasagar district opinion on the blessing of fish production during the flood.

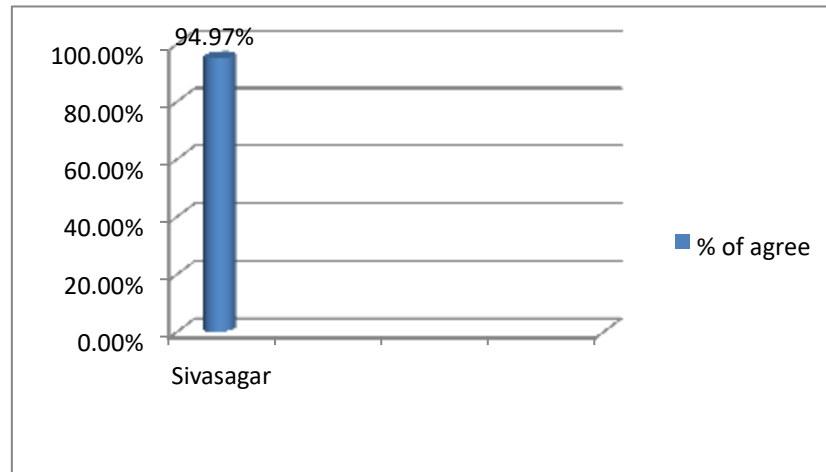


Figure-2

Conclusion:

From the above analysis it is stated that most of the rural people in fishing community are occupied in fishery sector by forming the co-operative societies, self-help group and nongovernment organization. Basically, it is found that majority of fishermen are able to get employment opportunity in the co-operative societies, SHG’s and NGO’s. It is clear that the fishery has been considered as blessing for rural economy of the state. According to this analysis most of the fishermen agree that flood is blessing for fish productivity in the natural fisheries. In the natural fisheries no investment is required for fish productivity. It is the natural process. This is the blessing for the fisheries co-operative societies, self-help groups and non-government organization. On the other hand, the state government collects a significant amount of revenue from the registered river and beel fisheries. The three organizations also play significant role for employment generation in the fishing community in the state. Therefore, it can be assertively said that the fisheries co-operative society play a significant role for enhancing the growth of the fishery sector in the state.

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