

Role of NGOs and SHGs in fisheries

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

Organizations that are independent of any government's involvement are called Non-governmental organizations. NGOs are usually non-profitable. A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary group which is organized on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions, bring citizen concerns to Governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information. Some are organized around specific issues, such as human rights, environment or health. NGOs are non-profit by definition, but may run budgets of millions or up to billions of dollars each year.

Types of NGOs

Two broad groups of NGOs are identified by the World Bank: operational NGOs, which focus on development projects (Examples : Organic Agriculture in Rural Development, One Acre Fund for creating networks to support smallholder farmers etc); and advocacy NGOs, which are organized to promote particular causes (Example: human rights, social justice, environmental movements etc). Certain NGOs may fall under both categories simultaneously.

A number of NGO variations exist, including:

- **ENGO:** environmental NGO (e.g. Greenpeace and World Wildlife Fund [WWF])
- **GONGO:** government-organized non-governmental organization (e.g. The International Union for Conservation of Nature). It is composed of both government and civil society organisations.
- **INGO:** international NGO (e.g. Oxfam)
- **QUANGO:** quasi-autonomous NGO (e.g. the International Organization for Standardization [ISO]). An organization or agency that is financed by a government but that acts independently of it.

How NGOs are Funded

As non-profit organizations, NGOs rely on a variety of sources for funding projects, operations, salaries and other overhead costs. Because the annual budget of an NGO can be in the hundreds of

millions (or even billions) of dollars, fundraising efforts are important for the NGO's existence and success. Funding sources include membership dues, the sale of goods and services, private sector for-profit companies, philanthropic foundations, grants from local, state and federal agencies, and private donations. Despite their independence from government, many NGOs rely heavily on government funding to function.

Role of NGOs in fisheries

- Organizing regular training programme where fisheries professionals can interact and discuss broad issues and specific topics related to the region
- Publishing a scientific journal of an international standard
- Providing financial and technical support to young scientists from developing countries to conduct quality research.
- Addressing important fisheries issues via workshops, symposia and publications.
- In the seafood industry, NGOs aim to influence policy by informing consumers about sustainability issues, often through awareness campaigns and product guides.
- Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) is an international NGO established to improve commercial fishing and aquaculture practices by working with those in the private sector that support sustainable seafood. SFP's mission is to engage and catalyze global seafood supply chains in reducing the environmental impacts of fishing and fish farming and regenerating depleted fish stocks. This involves providing up-to-date information on fisheries to major buyers and other fisheries stakeholders, and using that information to engage everyone along the supply chain in fisheries improvements that move toward sustainability.
- The World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF) is an international NGO representing 41 national organizations of traditional small-scale fishing communities across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America. It acts as a world body representing the concerns of traditional fishing communities whose livelihoods directly depend on the sustainable management of fisheries resources. WFF aims to empower small-scale fishers' organizations to influence both national and international policies that affect their rights of access, use and control, and sustainability of fisheries resources. WFF

promotes the recognition and upholding of small-scale and indigenous fishers' rights and the unique culture of fishing communities through advocacy and awareness campaigns.

Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

The concept of micro-credit or Self-Help Group was initiated by Prof. Mohammad Yunus of Bangladesh in establishing the Grameen Bank in 1983 which attempted at providing small amounts of loan to the poor. His theory was that if given help and training, poor people-especially poor women-could generate enough income to repay their loans. The concept of SHG in India was introduced in 1985 and consequently a pilot scheme was started on Self-Help Bank Linkage Programme (SBLP) by NABARD in 1992.

A/C to NABARD (1995) "SHG as a homogeneous group of rural poor voluntarily formed to save whatever amount they can conveniently save out of their earnings and mutually agree to contribute to a common fund from which to lend to members for productive and emergent credit needs".

Experiences and observations indicate that, for a group to be developed as a Self-Help Group, normally a period of 36 months (3 years) will be required. Within this gestation period when the group passes through three distinct phases, up to 4 months as the Formation Phase, up to 15 months as Stabilisation Phase, and up to 36 months as the Self Helping Phase. Afterwards, the group reaches the stage of a flourishing Self-Help Group.

Structure

A SHG (Self-Help Group) is a community-based group with 10-20 members. They are usually men/women from similar social and economic backgrounds, all voluntarily coming together to save small sums of money, on a regular basis. They pool their resources to become financially stable, taking loans from their collective savings in times of emergency or financial scarcity, important life events or to purchase assets. The group members use collective wisdom and peer pressure to ensure proper end-use of credit and timely repayment.

Functions

- The ideal size of an SHG is 10 to 20 members.
- From one family, only one member.
- The group consists of either only men or of only women.

- Members select group leader for effective functioning.
- It looks to **build the functional capacity** of the poor and the marginalized in the field of employment and income generating activities.
- It **resolves conflicts** through collective leadership and mutual discussion.
- It **provides collateral free loan** with terms decided by the group at the market driven rates.
- Consequently, Self-Help Groups have emerged as the most effective mechanism for **delivery of microfinance services** to the poor.

Role of SHGs in Fisheries Sector

In fisheries sector, for the upliftment of fisherfolk below the poverty line, some successful micro enterprises developed based on the location specific resource availability and experience and some alternate avocations as subsidiary entrepreneurial ventures successfully undertaken by Self Help Groups in coastal sectors and allied areas are identified. Value added fish producing units. Dry fish unit. Fish Processing unit, preparing ready to eat fish products & ready to cook fish products. Ornamental fish culture. Mussel culture, Edible oyster culture. Clam collection etc. are very important.