

Locals Left Behind – Participatory Approaches to Coastal Shrimp Aquaculture

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Abstract

In many tropical countries, coastal zones have been transformed and exploited for the purpose of export oriented shrimp aquaculture. In Sri Lanka, this development is justified as a means for poverty alleviation and acceleration of national economic growth. However, investments are increasingly being made by outsiders, and few workers are recruited from the local population. Thus, benefits at local level are low. Furthermore, Sri Lankan aquaculture is currently facing great difficulties due to continuous disease outbreaks and environmental degradation. Therefore, national authorities have implemented Best Management Practises (BMP's). Despite these measures, entire yields of shrimp have been lost on many locations. One of many reasons for these setbacks is the use of intensified (i.e. semi-intensive) production systems, in combination with poor compliance to BMP's. On certain locations, e.g. in Vietnam and the Philippines, where less intensive systems are used, these problems are less frequent. This PhD project therefore examines whether less intensive production systems would reduce risks and facilitate local people involvement and thus be a more appropriate alternative for Sri Lankan aquaculture. Spatial distribution of benefits from shrimp farming is analysed on two locations with different characteristics; (1) semi-intensive aquaculture in Sri Lanka, and (2) low intensive aquaculture in Vietnam or the Philippines. The two cases are studied and compared by using Participatory Learning and Action methodology and Geographical Information Systems. The results illustrate how benefits change in space, in relation to production intensity. This way, the project aims to explore ways for achieving sustainable aquaculture and facilitating economic development at local level in Sri Lanka.