



Examination of Power Relations in Fishers' Resilience: Evidences from Wetland Fisheries in Bangladesh

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Abstract: Social relations of power influence fishers' access to wetland fisheries and their resilience to social-ecological disturbances to comanage fisheries in Bangladesh. This study deploys a survey and in-depth interviews to examine power relations and their effects on fishers' resilience drawing lessons from Boishgoan fishery of the northeastern wetland areas in Bangladesh. The results reveal that the sharing of power is characterized by disparities and inequities in fisheries co-management. Although co-management devolves fishing rights to fishers, the rich and powerful lease the fishery with the help of government officials (Department of Fisheries (DoF) and Local Government) and political leaders. The lack of political affiliations and resources mainly impede fishers' access to the fishery and their resilience to social-ecological disturbances in fisheries co-management. The existing power structure strengthens powerful persons' and hinders fishers' access to fisheries. The exclusion from benefits and management leads to fishers' marginalization and failure in co-management. Without reversing power asymmetries and inequalities, it is hardly possible to establish fishers' rights and resilience in co-management.

Keywords: Power relations, Co-management, Leasing process, Fishers' rights, Fishers' resilience, Bangladesh
