Poverty in Small-Scale Fisheries: The Governance Perspective

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Abstract
Abstract In fisheries, alleviating poverty sometimes requires strategies that are inherently in conflict. When aiming to develop a fishery as a means to reduce poverty, its common pool resource basis might be undermined, resulting in greater poverty. But poverty in fisheries is also linked to, or a part of deeper social issues and processes, for instance, the marginalization and exclusion of certain communities. Poverty also has many factors— income, health, literacy, gender, power, security, etc.—all of which make poverty alleviation a particularly "wicked problem" that would require a broad process of political, social and institutional reform. In other words, poverty alleviation is not only an issue of sustainable resource management but also one of societal governance. Drawing from research in small-scale fisheries communities in Nicaragua, Tanzania, and Bangladesh, this paper describes how fishing people cope with poverty. The paper discusses what the governance implications are for alleviating poverty at individual, household and community levels, and argue that both the definition of poverty and poverty alleviation in small-scale fisheries must be rooted in real life experiences.