

Navigating Distress for Fisher and Fish Farmers: Challenges and Solutions

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SUMMARY

Fishers and fish farmers often face various forms of distress, including environmental, economic, social, regulatory, technological, and health-related challenges. Understanding these distress factors is crucial for developing effective solutions to support these vital sectors. This article examines the different types of distress experienced by fishers and fish farmers, explores their impacts, and proposes steps to overcome them.

INTRODUCTION

The fishing and aquaculture industries play a significant role in global food security and livelihoods. However, fishers and fish farmers encounter numerous challenges that affect their well-being and sustainability. By addressing these challenges, policymakers, stakeholders, and communities can work together to create a more resilient and thriving fishing sector.

What do you mean by distress?

Distress: Defined as a condition of extreme adversity, suffering, or hardship that individuals, communities, or entities experience, often resulting from various factors such as economic challenges, environmental disasters, or social disruptions

Who are all known as fisher and fish farmer?

Fisher: Fisher is a **gender-neutral term** which is used to define an individual who takes part in fishing conducted from fishing vessel or who catch fish for living **as a primary income**. The terms fisher has different meaning in different parts of the world (*source-FAO*)

Fish farmer: A fish farmer is an individual who was engaged in the practice of aquaculture, which involves the breeding, rearing, and harvesting of fish and other aquatic organisms in controlled environments such as ponds, tanks, or pens for commercial purposes.

Types of Distress:



1. Environmental Distress:

Fishers: Due to depletion of fish stocks due to overfishing, pollution,
 Fish Farmers: Environmental degradation and pollution affecting cultured fish health.

2. Economic and Marketing Distress:

Fishers: Fluctuating market prices, rising costs, and reduced income during lean periods.
 Fish Farmers: Competition, market fluctuations, and increasing input costs impacting profitability.

3. Social and Cultural Distress:

Fishers: Isolation, conflicts within fishing communities, and disagreements over practices.
 Fish Farmers: Conflicts with local communities, lack of support, and cohesion.

4. Regulatory Distress:

Fishers: Catch quotas, restrictions, and ban periods affecting livelihoods.
 Fish Farmers: Challenges in obtaining permits and complying with regulations.

5. Technological Distress:

Fishers: Difficulty in adopting and affording new fishing technologies.
 Fish Farmers: Limited access to modern aquaculture technologies.

6. Health and Safety Distress:

Fishers: Work-related injuries, occupational hazards, and safety concerns at sea.
 Fish Farmers: Work-related stress, limited healthcare access, and occupational hazards.

Steps to Address Distress:

Policy Revisions and Assistance: Enact policies safeguarding the rights of fishers and fish farmers, and offer financial aid, subsidies, and insurance coverage to support the fishing community.

Enhanced Access to Technology and Training: Introduce modern technology to improve fishing practices sustainably, and organize regular training programs to enhance the skills of fishers and fish farmers.

Implementation of Sustainable Fisheries Practices: Adopt sustainable fishing methods to prevent overfishing and preserve marine ecosystems.

Community Involvement and Empowerment:

- Foster strong community ties and implement community-based management strategies involving local fishers in decision-making processes.
- Encourage the establishment of cooperatives and promote collaboration among policymakers, NGOs, and local communities to tailor interventions addressing the unique challenges faced by fishers and fish farmers in their respective regions.

Promotion of Alternative Livelihoods: Support the diversification of income sources for fishers and fish farmers, encouraging them to explore options beyond fishing such as aquaculture and related industries.

CONCLUSION

Addressing the distress faced by fishers and fish farmers requires a multi-faceted approach that involves policymakers, communities, and stakeholders. By implementing supportive policies, promoting sustainable practices, and fostering community engagement, we can build resilient fisheries and aquaculture sectors that benefit both people and the environment.

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