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Abstract

Socio-economic Structures and Fishing Practices of the Artisanal Fishers: A Perspective from the Sundarbans Mangrove Forest

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Abstract

Background and Aim: Artisanal fisheries, characterized by traditional and small-scale practices, are vital for sustenance, local markets, and socio-economic stability. This study focuses on the Sundarbans, aiming to understand artisanal fishing activities, socio-economic features, and the challenges faced by small-scale fishers in this unique ecosystem.

Method: The research covers the Sundarbans' extensive mangrove forest, investigating the socio-economic aspects of artisanal small-scale fishers. The study explores fishing activities, risks to livelihood, and strategies employed by fishers to adapt to changing situations. The research also assesses the threats posed by deforestation, illegal logging, climate change, and other anthropogenic factors impacting both mangrove biodiversity and fishery resources.

Results: The Sundarbans, with its rich floral and faunal diversity, is facing significant challenges from deforestation and habitat deterioration. The study reveals risks to fishers, such as attacks by dacoits, ransom situations, tiger encounters, river and coastal erosion, and natural disasters. Artisanal fishermen employ various strategies, including forming associations and violating regulations, to cope with these challenges. The investigation highlights the journey towards Sundarbans conservation and emphasizes the importance of local community involvement in co-management initiatives.

Conclusion: Despite the successes in co-management, challenges persist in the Sundarbans, including resource over-exploitation, changes in vegetation patterns, habitat degradation, invasive species, wildlife trafficking, extreme weather events, and pollution. The study calls for an urgent upgrade of existing policies and management strategies for sustainable mangrove resource extraction, emphasizing the improvement of artisanal fishermen's livelihoods. The findings contribute not only to Sundarbans management but also offer insights for mangrove ecosystems globally.

Keywords: *Socio-economic structures, Fishing practices, Artisanal fishers, Sundarbans mangrove forest*

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