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**Baseline study for Fisheries Development in Telangana state**

Sector related policies

* **Policies on resource access**

Like in any other states, the Indian Fisheries Act, enacted on 4th February, 1897 forms the base for most of the Acts and policies of the state in order to ensure sustainable development of sector. The rights on water bodies of the state have witnessed control by local water user institutions/Associations, PWD, Irrigation, Forest, Revenue department etc during different phases. The development of fisheries in all the public water bodies was later transferred to DOF with conditions of safeguarding the irrigation sources from damage (G.O.Ms.No.879 dated 09/04/1964).

Based on ayacut, the tank water bodies with <40 ha have been transferred to Gram panchayat (G.O.MS.No .288 dated 27/06/1983) and the rest with DOF for the development of scientific fisheries, enhancement of fish production, community income, generation of employment, food and nutrition security. Similarly, the Gram Panchayats were entrusted with responsibility for development of fisheries in minor irrigation tanks and or other sources (vested in or belonging to them) by leasing to FCS or Rajaka Seva Sangham or develop directly by purchasing seed from the Fisheries Department or lease-out annually to public through open auction (G.O.Ms.No.343 dated 10/04/1978).

The state has a policy of leasing all public water bodies (irrigation tanks, reservoirs, canals, swamps, back waters, river courses, drains etc.) excepting water bodies identified by district collector for drinking water purpose and washer men’s use or non –ayacut tanks), wild life conservation (ex. Kinnersani reservoir in Bhadradri Kothagudem) to Fishermen Co-operative Societies registered under the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh Co-operative Societies Act on reasonable rental fixed by the District Collector (G.O.Ms.No.98 dated 22/01/1964). Same policies as issued during United AP are being followed. Later, the state adopted a policy of constituting new Fishermen Coop. Societies, bifurcation of existing societies and weeding out of fictitious/and those with negligible members from existing Fishermen Coop. Societies and made provisions for admission of new members in the existing Fishermen Coop. Societies through skill tests and adopting guidelines as contained / provided in G.O. 74 , 2011.

Based on expert committee suggestions in 1986, that revisited development of resources for fisheries activities, several changes were brought out to facilitate technology led development. Licensing of major reservoirs (about 17 of them) including some river barrages to individual fishermen on annual license fee basis and the rest were leased out to FCS. The DOF is complying with the terms specified in G.O.Ms.No.186 dated 25/11/1995 related to licensing, obligations/mandatory role of license holders to bring fish catch to specified landing spots, sharing of actual catch data, non use of motorized craft for fishing, non use of motors for bailing out water, handing over of fish catch to DFSC/ Apex bodies/ authorized agency at the rates fixed by the DOF.

First preference in allotment of tank water bodies is given to genuine FCS in consultation with the Dept. of Fisheries and the lease period is for 3 years with an optional clause for extension by two years to those FCS who satisfy GP with rentals that may be revised from time to time (G.O.RT.No. 41 dated 24/10/2014). In case of water bodies for which FCS have no interest/willingness, only then, next preference will be for the departmental exploitation through development by gram panchayat /municipalities or else such resources are disposed for

fisheries development through open auction for rental price/upset price fixed by Committee comprising RDO, DPO, MDO & Sarpanch of GP ADF/FDO) based on resource productivity as fixed by DOF/based on average income of past 3 years, seasonality of water body, nature of culture practice, actual WSA, previous lease amount, fish seed stocking for the last 5 years and other potentials of such water bodies (as specified in G.O. Ms NO. 499 dated 25/11/1998). The viability norms based on productivity, seasonality and nature of tanks prevailing in newly formed Telangana State has been developed to fix up the unit economics of the tanks in support of lease / rent cost.

The productivity of resource is being assessed in technical consultation with concerned DOF officers. The authority to confirm lease/open auction is vested with concerned ADF, Revenue Division officer and District Collector for Leasing out of Departmental Tanks for Fisheries for three years period Fasli 1425 to 1427 from 1.7.2015 to 30.6.2018 as per Fisheries Policy by enhancing rental rates by 10% over the previous year, except in the drought -declared Mandals as per G.O.RT.No. 48 dated 20/02/2016).

At present due to the construction of various projects under Jalayagnam and Mission Kakatiya, every water body has changed its seasonality and potentiality, facilitated adopting Good Management Practices by the fishers, the productivity of all water sources is perceived as increased by several folds. Apart from this, the increased cost of fish has also brought considerable change in the livelihood of fishermen. Considering this, new norm of one acre water spread area to each member in case of perennial /canal fed water sources; and (ii) Two acres water spread area to each member in case of all other water sources (rain fed) has been made during the last year to accommodate new members into FCS (G.O.MS.No. 6 dated 24/03/2016).

The lease / auction revenue receipts is remitted to treasury, and is later shared by apportioning 25% of amount accrued for fishermen welfare fund, extending subsidy for craft and gears issued to fishers etc. The rental realized on lease/auction of fishing Rights in the tanks / reservoirs is presently being shared between Gram Panchayat 30%, Water users Association, 50% and Development of Fisheries 20% (for development of Fisheries and the programs connected with it) as per GO 23 (2003).

The state follows G.O. Ms .NO. 776 dated 31/12/1990 that deals with Inland Fisheries Review on Allotment of Fishery Rights in the water sources and the DOF has come out with a manual for all relevant orders.

***New Initiatives***

*Recently, the DOF has submitted a proposal to the govt. to consider transferring of all minor irrigation tanks and other sources vested with the Grama Panchayats to the Fisheries Department for the purpose of leasing of fishery rights and fisheries development except those tanks earmarked for drinking water and washing of clothes. It is a welcome move in the interest of scientific development of available resources in the state. The proposal has also suggested modifications to the existing GO in terms of transferring lease amount to concerned GP, fixing of uniform lease amount on scientific basis and allocation of tanks to FCS of same mandal in the absence of FCS in the village.*

*Efforts are also on to bring amendments to the existing lease period increasing to 10 years from the existing 5 years, revising lease amount to Rs. 565/ha in respect of perennial tanks, Rs. 248/ha of seasonal tanks and increasing every year by 5% over the previous year rentals except* for the tanks which had dried up during preceding year and bringing uniform lease amount policy.

*Efforts are also going on bring changes by way of cancellation of orders issued earlier for apportionment of rentals among Water Users’ Association, Grama Panchayats and Fisheries Department in the ratio of 50:30:20.*

* **Initiatives for input support**

In order to enhance fish production in the State and to ease out FCS from the exploitation of merchants, under fish seed stocking program, GOT extended total grant support to facilitate 100% free supply during the year 2016-17 for (G.O.Rt.No.77, dated 23.06.2016). Process of floating National tenders for procuring of fish seed (fingerlings) for stocking in tanks and reservoirs of Telangana Districts under various schemes such as Reservoir Fisheries Development Programme of the National Fisheries Development Board / Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana/Project Preparation & Management Unit / Water Sector Improvement Programme (WSIP) and other Government Schemes is being followed.

Related to supply of crafts and Nets to Fishermen, the DOF has come out with Operational Guidelines for implementation of components of Fisheries Development Scheme G.O.Rt.No.29, dated 6.9.2014 and G.O.Rt.No.176 dated 19.10.2015, amendment G.O.Rt.No. 60 Dated: 05-05-2017**.** The net material purchased by the beneficiaries is paid through eLaabh (Online DBT system).

The members of FCS are also being supported through various inputs, accessories etc under different developmental schemes and welfare programs. GO’s on set of guidelines for extending support under various programs are also positioned in this regard (GO 29, 2014).

Declaration and Notification of *Channa striatus* (Murrel Fish) as State Fish of the newly created State of Telangana was made (G.O.MS.No. 20 Dated: 20-07-2016).

* **Guidelines on aquaculture**

Initially the state adopted the revised G.O.Ms.No. 24 dated 09/04/2010 of erstwhile undivided AP in order to regularize and also to register new aqua farms. Later comprehensive and consolidated instructions and guidelines were developed to consider the cases for regularization of existing unregistered freshwater aquaculture farms and also for registering of new freshwater aquaculture farms in the State (G.O.Ms. No. 7 dated 16/03/2013).

Registration of private aquaculture farms already functioning in the state is receiving attention in recent years. Registrations of new farms are made prerequisite for availing scheme benefits under the govt. programs. Guidelines for regularization and new registration of aqua farms is in position and followed by constituting State Level and district level committees to consider all such fresh / new cases and permit the district level committee to regularize the existing unregistered units and forward eligible cases with recommendations to the State level Committee in respect of new applications. As per the policy of Government, the irrigated land should not be permitted to be converted as freshwater aquaculture units. The farm registration is valid for three years and renewable for a further period of 3 years (G.O.MS.No. 15, dated 26/05/2015). New guidelines, making provisions to suit the requirements of the state facilitating development of aquaculture in suitable areas have been positioned during last year (G.O.MS.No. 28 Dated: 02-09-2016).

* **Promoting cage fish farming**

In support of promoting cage fish farming in the state, the DOF positioned cage Implementation Committee and Survey Committee for effective implementation of Cage Culture Scheme during 2016-17 in order to enhance fish production and also fixed the share contribution of different institutions and beneficiaries viz., 40% State share, 40% NFDB share and 20% Beneficiary contribution (G.O.RT.No. 33, dt. 17/03/2016).

Guidelines on cage culture: Guidelines of NFDB is being followed for the development of the activity in the state. A memo was issued on 1.9.2017 to extend the Cage culture scheme for families displaced by the project with same pattern of assistance that is being extended to members of fishermen cooperative society or license holders who have fishing rights in the water body and private entrepreneurs as per Memo No 2708/V&F/F/A2/2017.

Guidelines and instructions for Tilapia Fish Hatchery/ Breeding/ Nursery/ Grow out Farming of Vannamei in Freshwater/ Inland farms located outside the jurisdiction of the Coastal Aquaculture Authority (CAA).(GO 19 & 20; 2014).

* **Regulations on exotic fish culture**

The state has imposed ban on all activities of African catfish including production, marketing, transportation etc. destroying stocks etc, to curtail unauthorized entry. Efforts are being to prevent entry of big head fish also (GO 54, 2005). Similarly restrictions and regulation of exotic fish culture and monoculture of exotic species viz., Tilapia (Oreochromis mossabicus) and others to conserve the indigenous aquatic diversity in the water bodies of Telangana through Guidelines (G.O.RT.No. 97; Dated: 20-07-2016 has been initiated.

* **Conservation of fishery resources**

In order to limit the harvest of small size fish from the natural eco-systems, use of nets with mesh size below 25 mm from knot to knot is banned. Further each individual fisher is restricted to use gill nets not more than 450 feet length. Similarly, ban is imposed on use of drag nets (shore seine) without the permission of concerned Fisheries officer. No fishing in specified river stretch within 30. 48 mts. lower down of masonry construction of river are being adopted as per erst while G.O.Ms.No.1012 dated 29/05/1967.

The state is adopting enforcement of fishing ban in reservoirs for 2 months from 1st July to 31st August every year to facilitate breeding and nursing of juvenile.

Non use of prohibitory fishing methods, no- fishing in 100 mts below sluice gate of reservoirs and channels up to 5 kms in the upstream of reservoirs during close season; avoiding catching of fish (IMC, CC, fimbriatus) that are < 20 cm size, use of only craft viz., Theppam, coracle/putti/Arige , similarly use of gears viz., only gill net of >100’- upto 150’ size, cast net, long line with hooks up to 100 ft etc. In case of reservoirs fishing has been permitted only beyond one km from the dam/ barrage site **(**G.O.MS.No.839 dated 05/10/1989**).**

* **Governance, convergence and conflict resolution**

In order to ensure that genuine fishermen are organized into societies, weeding out fictitious members efforts are on for identifying and ejecting ineligible members. Instances of FCS denying membership to genuine fishermen have been complained. Hence a three-man committee for conducting skill-test to identify the genuine fishermen from time to time has been positioned and exclusive comprehensive guidelines on skill test has also been positioned (G.O.Ms.No.74, Dated:21.10.2011.and G.O.RT.No. 11 Dated: 12-1-17).

The department has also requested govt. to amend the existing government orders enabling the department to organize Fishermen Cooperative Societies for those people engaged in fishing activity but hailing from fishermen castes in scheduled areas so that the resources in these areas hitherto not used, can be fully utilized for the development of fisheries and enhancement of livelihoods of local BPL families belonging to fishermen castes.

Establishment of **Project Monitoring Unit** to monitor and evaluate the schemes and projects of the Fisheries Department in Telangana State has been taken up vide recent G.O.Rt.No. 42 Dated: 14-03-2017. Regular field level monitoring of progress both in implementation and the out put is very much lacking. Amending of guidelines/ policy to make them more relavant, fisher friendly on the basis of feed back, ground level performance and in house learning is not happening.

Empowerment of Panchayat Raj Institutions in sector performance review

In order to bring system improvement and foster better relations between the stakeholders and service departments and take steps to achieve **convergence** of schemes/activities for filling the gaps in delivery of services efficiently, the Panchayat Raj Institutions were also empowered to review, inspect and monitor the institutions of the Department of Fisheries (except statutory, regulatory and scientific functions), suggest improvements on Beneficiary Oriented Schemes (BOS) and implementation of Welfare schemes for fishermen. Responsibility has also been fixed to concerned DFO officers to send Action Taken Report. Provision is made for the DOF to organize relevant trainings, provide training materials regarding the schemes under implementation and build capacity of personnel working in Panchayat Raj Institutions (G.O.Ms.No. 105 dated 31/12/2007). Leading transformation in sector by DOF through bringing in additional products and services, strengthening relationship with stakeholders, integrated efforts towards supply to ensure ramp up are limited.

***New initiatives***

*Recently, the DOF has positioned a system to address issues for early settlement of the Cooperative disputes by positioning District Fisheries Cooperative Committee at District level with Joint Collector as Chairman, District Cooperative Officer and Local Revenue Divisional Officer as members and District Fisheries Officer as Member Convener (G.O.Rt.No. 58 dated 05-05-2017).*