



'Using Transdisciplinarity for Fisheries Policies and the SSF Guidelines Implementation in India'

Report from a virtual workshop

April 12-14th, 2021

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RESEARCH

POLICY

MOBILIZATION

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Disclaimer: *The views expressed by the moderators and the participants during the discussion are those of individuals (some of whom were government officials, and some concerned citizens, students, professionals from non-governmental organizations and institutions), and do not necessarily reflect the position of FAO or member countries, or TBTI.*

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List of Acronyms

COFI – Committee of Fisheries

CSO – Civil Society Organization

EEZ – Exclusive Economic Zone

FAO – Food and Agriculture Agency of the United Nations

ICSF – International Collective of Fishworkers

ITQ – Individual Transfer Quota

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

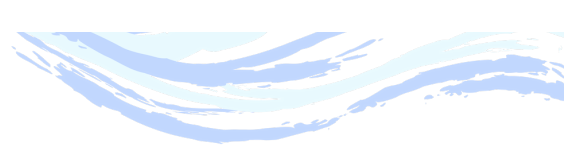
SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

SSF – Small-Scale Fisheries

SSF Guidelines – The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication

TBTI – Too Big To Ignore research network

TD – Trandisciplinarity/transdisciplinary



Summary

The transdisciplinary (TD) approach argues that the problems and priorities in fisheries and ocean governance, especially when concerning small-scale fisheries (SSF), require a broadening of perspectives that cut across academic disciplines, bridge division between scientific and local knowledge, and bring about innovation in teaching and learning. The TD perspective is particularly important when dealing with the 'wicked problems' in SSF governance, due mostly to insecure tenure rights, lack of livelihood options, poor access to markets, and marginalization of small-scale fishers in decision-making. This approach is also required to facilitate the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The virtual workshop titled 'Using Transdisciplinarity for Fisheries Policies and the SSF Guidelines Implementation in India' workshop, which took place during April 14-16th 2021, was organized by the Too Big To Ignore project (TBTI, <http://toobigtoignore.net/>) in collaboration with two other global research partnerships: Dried Fish Matters (DFM; <https://driedfishmatters.org/>) and From Vulnerability to Viability (V2V, <https://www.v2vglobalpartnership.org/>). While the workshop was supported by FAO as part of the FAO-TBTI joint agreement on 'Transdisciplinary capacity building to support the implementation of the SSF Guidelines', it was not an official international meeting organized by the UN. Participants were those responding voluntarily to the open call for participation and were invited on an individual basis, not to represent India or government institutions in India.

This special workshop was run in conjunction with the on-going TBTI Transdisciplinarity (TD) Online Training Program. Unlike the regular, 14-week long training program designed for anyone who wants to 'deep-dive' into the concept of TD, the special workshop was a blended course, with live sessions and a condensed version of the online course.

The purpose of the workshop is to introduce participants to the concept and approaches in TD for fisheries and ocean governance, and how they can be used to facilitate the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in India. The target audience included policy and decision-makers, researchers and practitioners, as

well as leaders of regional and national fisherfolk organizations and community-based organizations.

The live portion of the workshop was organized as three 2 hour-long sessions that took place on Monday – April 12th, Wednesday – April 14th, and Friday – April 16th. Each of the three sessions consisted of presentations and several rounds of discussion period. Session 1 covered big questions & wicked problems in small-scale fisheries while Session 2 focused on ways to unlock legal & policy frameworks in SSF. The last session focused on the implementation of the SSF Guidelines & the SDGs, paying particular attention to gender equity and social justice.

The workshop participants had access to the TD Online Learning Platform, which contained relevant TBTI training materials discussed in the live sessions, in the form of video presentations, discussion forums and exercises. The platform was also used for sharing of information and exchanging ideas among participants.

The following pages provide the highlights and feedback from this special workshop, which brought together about 25 people from India, including policy/decision makers, researches, practitioners and others involved in or responsible for SSF management and governance.

Agenda

DAY 1: Monday, April 12th	
<i>Session 1: Big questions & wicked problems</i>	
Welcome & Projects presentation	Ratana Chuenpagdee, on behalf of DFM, V2V and TBTI Global
<i>Short presentations</i>	
Wicked problems (in the context of dried fish economy and SSF vulnerability)	Svein Jentoft (UiT – The Arctic University of Norway / TBTI Global)
Why TD: The principles and the practices	Prateep Nayak (U. of Waterloo / V2V, Canada)
<i>Discussion questions</i>	
(1) What are the big questions facing SSF in India?	
(2) What makes SSF vulnerable and how to make them viable?	

DAY 2: Wednesday, April 14th	
<i>Session 2: Unlocking legal & policy frameworks</i>	
<i>Short presentations</i>	
SSF Guidelines: what they are and why we need them	Joseph Zelasney (FAO, Italy)
Unlocking legal and policy frameworks for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines	Tara Nair (Gujarat Institute of Development Research, India)
<i>Discussion question</i>	
(1) How well are SSF governed in India? What are the strengths and weakness?	
(2) What is being done in India with respect to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines?	

DAY 3: Friday, April 16th	
<i>Session 3: Implementing the SSF Guidelines & the SDGs</i>	
<i>Short presentations</i>	
Broadening the perspective about fisheries and ocean sustainability	Derek Johnson (U. of Manitoba / DFM, Canada)
Gender equity and social justice from lived experience in the context of TD and SSF	John Kurien (Azim Premji University, India)
<i>Discussion period</i>	
(1) What are the key challenges in achieving gender equity and social justice?	
(2) What capacity is required to implement the SSF Guidelines and how to build it?	

Key readings

Chuenpagdee, R., and Jentoft, S. (2013). Governability assessment for fisheries and coastal systems: A reality check. *Human Ecology* 37:109-120.

Chuenpagdee, R., and Jentoft, S. (2018). Transforming the governance of small-scale fisheries. *Maritime Studies* 17(1): 101-115

FAO (2015). *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication*. Rome, Italy: United Nations. <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/l4356EN>

Jentoft, S. (2004). Institutions in fisheries: what they are, what they do, and how they change. *Marine Policy*. 28 (2004) 137–149.

Jentoft, S. (2018). *Life Above Water*. TBTI Global Publication Series. <https://tbtiglobal.net/life-above-water/>

Jentoft, S., and Chuenpagdee, R. (2009). Fisheries and coastal governance as a wicked problem. *Marine Policy* 33: 553-560.

Jentoft, S., and Chuenpagdee, R. (2015). Assessing Governability of Small-Scale Fisheries. In Jentoft and Chuenpagdee (eds.) *Interactive Governance for Small-Scale Fisheries: Global Reflections*. Springer, Switzerland.

Said, A., and Chuenpagdee, R. (2019). Aligning the sustainable development goals to the small-scale fisheries guidelines: A case for EU fisheries governance. *Marine Policy* 107 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2019.103599>

Monday, April 12th

Session 1: Big questions & wicked problems

The session started with a quick introduction by Ratana Chuenpagdee in which she presented the scope and activities of the three global research partnerships that jointly organized the workshop, including Too Big To Ignore Global (TBTI), Dried Fish Matters (DFM) and From Vulnerability to Viability (V2V). Following that, Svein Jentoft introduced the concept of 'wicked problems' and explored why it is important to treat many of the big questions in SSF as 'wicked problems' and what this means for the SSF Guidelines implementation. The last talk in the session, presented by Prateep Nayak, showcased his personal TD career path and explained how TD approach can help in addressing the wicked problems in SSF.

1) Wicked problems: What they are and how to solve them

Presented by: Svein Jentoft, UiT – The Arctic University of Norway & TBTI Global

A wicked problem generally refers to a complex problem for which there is no simple solution and for which there may be no clear stopping rule. In TBTI, we think of the concept of wicked problem as a way of talking about and defining the very essence of the challenge in SSF. We know that the challenge of making SSF more secure and sustainable are complex and demanding, but it is not always clear how and why. Rittel and Webber (1973) argue that wicked problems need to be addressed and solved through a participatory, democratic, and deliberative process that we would associate with the concept of governance. This was largely how the SSF Guidelines were developed — through consultations with thousands of SSF stakeholders around the world. This is also how the SSF Guidelines would need to be implemented, because they involve a number of wicked problems, like poverty eradication.

Additional material:

- Lecture (video): *Wicked problem in Small-Scale Fisheries*:
<https://youtu.be/OM4uCjWuFR4>

- Lecture (video) *Small-Scale Fisheries Governance – Conceptual Clarifications*: <https://youtu.be/EILEhQ1HfFE>
- Rittel, H.W.J., Webber, M.M. (1973) Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy Sciences* 4:155–69.

2) Discussion

While there are many challenges and wicked problems associated with SSF, it does not mean that nothing can be done. With this in mind, participants were asked to think about the big questions facing SSF in India.

- **Comment:** While wicked problem is a useful concept it can also be seen a 'lazy' one. It's a way out of a difficult situation as if saying: I can't handle it anyway, so why bother? Some problems are only difficult problems, which also involves making difficult but not necessarily wicked choices.
- **Feedback:** By saying something is a wicked problem, we don't automatically presume that this problem is impossible to solve. On the contrary, we're only saying that the solution requires different approach. Problems are complex and difficult but the kind of argumentation that Rittel and Webber are advancing in their 1973 paper places emphasis on the "WHY are they difficult?". They set us on a course of investigation where we need to look at in what sense are the problems wicked and to use their criteria in our own research. Then we can see that what we thought was the main problem is not the actual main problem and that there may be other societal problems. The main assumption we should fight against is that wicked problems are technical problems. If a problem is really complex it's important to recognize that we need a new tool to solve it. Not all problems are wicked, not even all problems in SSF. Problems can be more or less wicked: it's not either or.
- **Comment:** A part of the 'problem' is that the word 'wicked' means evil or morally wrong. But the issues we face in SSF are not of that genre!
- **Feedback:** Rittel and Webber discuss in their article why they chose to use the word wicked, well aware of the connotations it may have. It is important to check their criteria and then decide whether or not they are part of the predicament of SSF.

- **Question:** What kind of reconfiguration is required for the traditional departmental approach (like the one present in India) to solve such complex, wicked problems?
 - **Answer:** You should not have a solution until you have a good understanding of the problem. An outsider from another country, particularly one from the Global North, is not best suited to provide solutions to a problem in India. Wicked problem can't be treated as a technical problem and a societal problem cannot be treated as a tame scientific problem. The definition of the problem is often a reflection of our own definition of the solution. We are looking for a problem in which to apply a particular solution. Let's look at Blue Economy and ITQs that are all over the world — this is part of the globalization when we're applying the same solutions in different context. A resource crisis does not need to be an example of a 'tragedy of the commons' — we need to understand the political, historical, socio-economical context and it is this what distinguishes natural from social sciences.
- **Question:** Addressing SSF in different way requires transformations. What is the first and foremost change the governments should do?
 - **Answer:** Let's look at this from the wicked problem perspective. Wicked problems are often symptoms of a bigger problem (e.g. corruption), which makes the system incapable of addressing the problem. You cannot find solution if you are just dealing with symptoms. We must at least find where the problems sits; these problems can very often be found in the 'governing system', not so much in the 'system to be governed'.
- **Comment:** Solution of problems cannot be done by the official departments alone. It has to be obtained through participatory co-management approaches involving the fishing communities, co-operatives and other fisher organizations.
- **Comment:** Wicked problems can only be solved when the fishers feel that the "sea is ours", and not when the solutions are coming from the top. The Indian government officials usually call meetings unannounced and while they may invite NGOs, the fishers are rarely involved. The fishers don't want to cooperate as they feel their position is unsecured, that they are being pushed from the sea. What they need is to feel that the government and NGOs work for them and the fishing communities.

- **Question:** Why do governments talk about SSF when people only understand the term 'artisanal' fisher? We talk about socio-economic management, the SSF Guidelines and other tool but, essentially, we talk about the same issues we used to talk in the past (e.g. ecosystem-based resource management etc.). We are inventing new terms but the language NGOs and government use does not speak to the situation on the ground.
- **Answer:** Each country needs to define the SSF on their terms. It is true, there is this very nice language that the governments use but the reality is that this is just a gloss while nothing changes. Part of the wickedness is that language is sometimes used to cover up certain relationships, which is a significant governance issue.
 - Whatever we do in SSF governance, we are depended on language and language is used to conceal things. However, we cannot define issues without the language and sometimes we need to use language that is outside a particular context. We agreed that the term SSF works best globally but we must be aware that there are all kinds of concepts out there so we have to have global concepts as well as a local language. In addition, we need to be open to changing the way we talk about fisheries. We need to constantly be able to adapt — we have to learn new language.

3) Why TD: The principles and the practices

Presented by: **Prateep Nayak, U. of Waterloo / V2V, Canada**

Not all problems are wicked but if we don't address the problems, all problems are potentially wicked problems. So then, what do we do? This presentation explains how the TD approach can help solve the wicked problems. By showcasing three personal stories from his TD journey, the presenter illustrates the TD practice and its leading principles, including transcendence, problem/issue solving and transgression. A TD approach embraces complexity of SSF and governability challenges in achieving sustainability, including the diverse viewpoints and priorities of different stakeholders. We need to bring passion, courage, novelty, and collaboration — only then will a TD approach be useful for solving problems.

4) Discussion

- Question: Is TD something that individuals embody? How can you move from multi or inter-disciplinarity approach to doing TD in a group?
 - Answer: Part of it is you, how you see yourself. It's about your interests and expertise you bring to the table and how you look at a problem. TD is a mix of both who we are individually and what can we learn from others in the group. It is an intense collaborative process. For some people it can be a transformative process — you may need to leave certain restrictions behind you and learn that overcoming these things comes with personal struggle. It is not easy but it is possible.
- Question: How can TD approach help in securing livelihoods of SSF communities?
 - Answer: You need to understand anything and everything that is related to livelihoods. You need to study anything that is connected to the livelihood issues, and do a full circle of seeking multiple issues that relate to livelihoods. By looking at the interconnected problems, you start seeing the solutions.
- Comment: Mangrove forests
 - There is a study being done about social issues driving the deforestation of mangrove resources by local communities. The cutting of trees for fuel may affect the mangrove regeneration, so it's important to learn why would these people harm their own homeland. The researcher conducting the study started from the point of political ecology and is now looking into-interdisciplinary to TD approach, which has been very useful. The plan is it to integrate the natural and social systems to show the difficulty of these people's livelihoods.
 - Indeed, there is an attachment between large mangrove forest and people, which could be emotional, social, and cultural attachment. This multi-sectorial attachment has been nurtured and has co-evolved over time. To properly understand this symbiosis, we have to explore the relationship between the actors, nature and network.
- Question: We hear people are aware what we need to do more. But we know this is not easy to achieve so how we go from vulnerability to viability from a TD perspective?

- **Answer:** By looking at the interconnected problems, you start seeing the solutions. Do we look at vulnerability as a wicked problem or do we look at viability as a wicked problem? We combine them and the process becomes a problem and through that you seek the solution. This is a step towards TD — you achieve TD in how you analyse and address problems.

- **Question:** Are we loosing disciplinary (scientific) rigour when we shift towards TD?
 - **Answer:** We are actually increasing rigour. But tensions do exist; do you completely move out of your scientific domain, from your specialization? It helps to have specific disciplinary knowledge before you apply TD but don't think that going outside a discipline creates a disadvantage. It's more uncomfortable, for sure, but you must cross these limits.

- **Question:** We are underestimating the difficulties of creating the TD philosophy. It's not easy for practitioners to shed their disciplinary limits. Do we have an approach to delineate methodological and epistemologically principles of the TD philosophy? We have a deep philosophical debate so can we document experience that we go through TD and share this in order to create common TD principles and language?
 - **Answer:** There are so many other things that are part of TD and the idea is not to discount individual disciplines. TD can be achieved in many ways; we can still keep the dominance of disciplines in applying TD. This is a continue struggle and there is no doubt that discipline still matters.
 - What is the 'trans' in TD? By adding different disciplines and degrees to your name you still remain in the ivory tower. Real TD means going beyond the ivory tower and meeting people from other sectors to collaborate. Trans has to do with getting and sharing knowledge, when you work with different people in the fieldwork. We must work with lay people even though we don't have the same languages and we don't share the same philosophy. This is not easy to resolve but we need to concentrate on the problems rather than on the philosophy. Above all, be practical!

Wednesday, April 14th

Session 2: Unlocking legal & policy frameworks

The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) are the most comprehensive instruments designed to support and promote sustainable SSF. They contain key principles that speak to the nature and the characteristics of SSF. With human rights-based approach as a foundation, the SSF Guidelines call on governments and all relevant stakeholders to look at SSF issues along the entire fish chain (pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest), including those related to tenure rights, gender equality, involvement of fishers in management, social development, labour rights and capacity development. The challenge for all governments is about how to operationalize and implement the SSF Guidelines.

SSF Guidelines embody the TD perspective — what possibility do they hold to change the landscape of SSF in India? The first talk in the session provided a quick overview of the SSF Guidelines, followed by a presentation by Tara Nair that offered a historical overview of the fisheries legislation and policies in India. After each of the talks, the participants were invited to speak about the situation in India with respect to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines.

1) Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication

Presented by: Joe Zelasney, FAO, Italy

The SSF Guidelines were adopted in 2014 by the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI). They are a global consensus on principles and guidance for SSF governance and development, all within the context of sustainable livelihoods, food security and sustainable development. The SSF Guidelines are based on internationally accepted human rights standards, and are to be interpreted and implemented in accordance with those standards and by using a human rights-based approach. This approach seeks to ensure the participation of small-scale fishing communities in nondiscriminatory, transparent and accountable decision-making processes by putting particular emphasis on the needs of vulnerable and

marginalized groups and on gender equality. The implementation of the SSF Guidelines is on-going in many countries around the world, through various processes and mechanisms. More needs to be done, however, to mainstream the SSF Guidelines and draw on them to help address SSF issues, challenges and concerns.

Additional material:

- The SSF Guidelines [full text]: <http://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/en/>
- Webinar: *From Words to Action: Using the SSF Guidelines and Human Rights for Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries*: <https://youtu.be/oxRfA9Zx5rE>

2) Discussion

Participants were asked the following questions:

(1) How well are SSF governed in India? What are the strengths and weakness?

(2) What is being done in India with respect to the implementation of the SSF Guidelines?

➤ Question: There are two words in India for fisheries: artisanal and mechanised. In which category do SSF fall into with respect to the SSF Guidelines? It's unclear what SSF term means in Indian context.

- Answer: There is a number of different ways a state or governing institution can go about delineating what's going to be within and outside of SSF, should they choose to do so based on things like boat length, operational characteristics of the fishery, economic importance etc. However, the SSF Guidelines sort of purposefully leave that question unanswered and so it ultimately comes down to what the policy objectives in national or local context are. These objectives set the stage for who should be included in whatever the rule/decision/ program that they're developing.
- In Indian National Policy (2017), there is a reference to both SSF and artisanal fisheries. Artisanal stands for non-motorized fishing and SSF would include all others. Still, there is a lack of clarity about what exactly are SSF. Looking at the Indian submission to the World Trade

Organization, the claim is that vessels below 24 meters in length are all small-scale so it's obvious that the definition changes based on different conventions and trade negotiations. There can also be difference in perceptions at the local and state level. Marine Fishing Regulation Act only refers to those who are working on traditional fishing craft/people and there is no mention of small-scale or artisanal fisheries. Instead of picking on what is SSF and what artisanal, the focus should be on community that you want to see benefiting from social and economic development. Are they benefiting or are they ignored, as they are not being seen as SSF? This is why definitional issues are not very relevant. We need to see who is not being included and then bring people who are excluded based on definitions into some kind of scheme. In reality, there are no cases of exclusion because there is no clarity on the definition of what is SSF and artisanal. This is basically an academic question; what is much more important is to see who are the vulnerable and marginalized who need the protection of the SSF Guidelines.

- **Question:** While women are engaged in fishing and selling by the water body or in the village market, usually men form part of decision making at the cooperative society. Also, men mostly handle the cash. Low literacy is another challenge impacting SSF. **How do we achieve equality and gender equity?**
 - **Answer:** The decision-makers in traditional fishing are women, not men. The women are the finance ministers in terms of fishing and family maintenance. At least this is the case in Tamil Nadu although it may vary from state to state.
 - In some regions of India women have major roles and handle money matters from auction to sales (e.g. Maharashtra).

Additional comments

- **Rights:**
 - With multiple sectors involved in coastal regions and multiple stakeholders in fishery, even 'tenure rights' suggestion is tough in Indian context. Then the quantifying issues of rights, to what level, what stakeholders etc. also need to be considered.
 - 'Tenure rights' for SSF in the Indian context are a contested political topic and viewed through different lenses. But does this mean that we should do away with the 'tenure rights' perspective?

- We can't move away from the rights. The ground realities in coastal regions have become highly volatile in recent years with religions and politics playing bigger roles with low political will in policy or developments.
- **Governance:**
 - Governance in India is based on cast, community, and voting power. We need to take into consideration local power dynamics and polycentric governance and not just the formal governance.
 - Good governance comes from wholehearted involvement of policy makers and implementers but not with haltered hearts and personal benefits that rise out of regulations.

3) Unlocking legal and policy frameworks for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in India

Presented by: Tara Nair, Gujarat Institute of Development Research, India

This talk provided an overview of historical policies by looking at the way policies have been developing and the way these policies are aligned with the development strategies in the country and the individual states. The fisheries sector is part of larger development thinking of the state. Indian Fisheries Act is very limited and colonial. Today, what is being promoted is aquaculture/mariculture and a financialization of fisheries instruments as governments need lots of private money to fund development. We can see the centralization happening as states are no longer defining their agendas — the power is going to those who are providing the funding, and this will only intensify in the future. The same is true for SSF as the capital intended to empower SSF will be more and more coming from the non-governmental sources.

4) Discussion

- **Comment - Paying close attention to other legal instruments and policies:**
 - Along with the horizontal legislative regimes, it will be interesting to look at the upcoming policy on blue economy as well as other issues including: coastal regulatory zone and their impacts the fishing community; coastal infrastructure ports and roads (*sagar mala* type of developments); wildlife

management legislation (turtle conservation). There is a gamut of other types of legal instruments (e.g. marine protected area type of arrangements) or emerging policies that have a role to play. We need to look at some of those types of regimes and how are they further compromising the SSF sector.

➤ **Comment - Declining confidence in fisheries profession and unsustainable fishing practices:**

- There is a significant shift of human psychology, especially in the coastal people/fishers. These traditional fishers have been fishing or engaging in fishing over the last 50-60 years. The present generation, those in the 35-45 age group are not interested in fishing; they are interested in others professions in which they can earn money more easily. How can the middle age generation engage with fishing so that there will be a balanced livelihood in the coastal region, which is now missing? On top of a declining confidence in fisheries profession, there is also no sustainability in current fishing practices — how do we deal with that?

➤ **Comment – External drivers causing additional pressure:**

- In the context of macro-issues and household perspective, there are many external drivers that complicate the situation (e.g. employment). Skill-based programming in India, social protection framework — all of these issues need to be considered. In places like Odisha things are moving in a positive direction with fishers being recognized as a special category under relief code in the social protection program but this protection program is too generic and not specific to fisheries. Many people are driven away from the fisheries, which is weakening the fisheries system. In states like Odisha the bigger issue is to look at the problems outside the sector. How to deal with this kind of issues? Secondly, government placed a lot of emphasis on aquaculture and they are bringing a lot of project-based investments into the sector and these projects come with certain objectives (e.g. World Bank), which is in turn shifting the priorities of entire states. How do we properly address these issues?

➤ **Comment - Finding points of entry that could support SSF:**

- When we consider the broader context, there is a wide variety of changes that are taking place, which are further complicating the situation. There is a deficiency of knowledge institutional architecture and a raft of new

interventions that are taking place in the coastal and fisheries sphere. It is a complex picture, with the overall weight of things moving strongly against SSF. Still, there may be some possibilities for finding points of entry that could support SSF.

- This is the reason the SSF Guidelines are very relevant since they strongly emphasize the human rights base approach. So, if there are traditional rights, which can be protected, livelihood interests to be protected, spaces to be guarded against an encroachment from other activities — the best protection can come from adopting a human rights-based approach.
- India has the national human rights commission and the commission participated in the fisheries meeting organized by ICSF. There is a national periodic review that the government is reporting to the UN human rights council so perhaps the reporting framework can include what is happening in the SSF sector and fishing communities. This is a way to make sure that these rights are not extinguished but are further empowered and it reiterates the importance of the human rights-based approach of the SSF Guidelines, not only in terms of the principles that were talked about earlier, but from a point that they provide an approach that protects SSF interests and rights (e.g. conflicting uses of fisheries resources in large-scale/mariculture operations; traditional/community rights, socioeconomic development, education, health, sanitation, women empowerment, food security dimension etc.)
- The massive inland fisheries are not part of this discussion. Nearly 8 million tons of fish are coming from the inland sector, 4 million tons from the marine sector; fish in India represents one of the cheapest sources of protein anywhere in the world. We have to use the SSF Guidelines, to establish the value of SSF and its contribution to food security, culture, local food and livelihoods in remote areas. There are so many ways one can connect with the SSF Guidelines and try to use that perspective to defend the SSF of India.

➤ **Comment - Mechanized sector encroaches on SSF:**

- The 2019 Marine Regulation Bill is going to ruin artisanal fishers. The bill will bring additional pressure to the artisanal fishers from the mechanized sectors. Earlier, the artisanal fishers never brought lots of trash fish onshore but that is not the case anymore; this is happening because they have switched over to bottom fishing. Most of the fishers prefer to go for bottom fishing rather than the mid-water/surface fishing because the mechanized sector is pushing the artisanal fishers towards the shore.

Hence, they depend on the bottom fishing that brings in a lot of trash fish. The bill is going to ban the mechanized sectors from entering the territorial waters as they will need to get more legal certificates to go there. These restrictions will mean increased pressure on artisanal fishers. In addition, in Tamil Nadu, the mechanized sector with engines of 450 horsepower are known to show only 270 horsepower on the records, which is the allowable limit for territorial water fishing. The mechanized sector is not bothered about the environmental, ecological or societal impacts.

➤ **Question:** There is a challenge in reconciling a real sense of gloom about the future of SSF in India. We need a continued effort to try to find those places within the broader context of both the Indian and international policy instruments like the SSF Guidelines that will continue to offer possibilities for hope and engagement. **How do we sustain our commitment to this sector that many of us have been working on years in the face of a very grim scenario? Isn't declining confidence rooted in a lack of secure tenure and in competition from all sides?**

- **Answer:** It's not all doom and gloom. There are several way in which we can intervene: there are parallel movements in India such as mobilization of women in the grassroots organization. Other smaller groups are also starting to claim their spaces in fisheries (e.g. primitive tribal community, other marginalized people) and these represent real possibilities.
- Fisheries are enmeshed with large economic sectors; SSF are only one of the players and are being squished out which is why it is very important that the SSF protect their identity. In addition, the architecture of the maritime zones of India indicates the extensive internal waters. There is a baseline area, territorial sea, exclusive economic zone (EEZ) but there is also a huge swathe of sea in-between the baseline and land, which is not something properly addressed in any policy discussion. There was constant push to highlight the importance of internal waters (e.g. Gulf of Kambhat, West Bengal has 60 miles of internal waters within the baseline parts of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu). There are so many examples of internal waters, which can actually be protected as a fishing zone where only certain kind of fishing practices are allowed. This can bring many benefits not only in economic terms, but also in ways of protecting culture, tradition, intergenerational equity perspective — we can bring in SDGs, sustainable development concept along with the identity of the community, and take into consideration the safe type of fishing gear and operations. All of this combined can help establish an identity of the small-scale fishers.

- It's not about fisheries alone. Lives of fishing people are no longer compartmentalized. They encompass a lot of other things outside. One example is blue economy/revolution that has been ongoing for decades and which brought new challenges to fisheries. Fisheries sectors needs to confront these issues in order to create a sustainable and viable SSF in a local context. The capacity development needs to focus on how people can deal with non-fishery challenges.
 - It is about the moderate confidence. Are we moving up from a low confidence to moderate confidence historically or are we moving from high confidence to moderate confidence? What is the real trend? Along with interacting and getting involved in fisheries communities, the fluctuations between low to medium confidence levels tells us that there is something to be explored.
 - Although things are gloomy, there are still a million mainly SSF fishers in India, not counting women, children and others in the sector!
 - Tenure, social development, cooperatives, right of first sale of fish, gender parity etc. — these are the ways to keep the SSF sector vibrant.
 - There is a proverb "To safeguard the locker, give the key to thief". This is not saying that traditional fishers are thieves but there is a feeling among outsiders that the resource is ruined because of traditional fishers. Therefore, we need to recognise and empower the village panchayat (village court) as they can take care of the coastal health.
- **Comment – Tackling issues at the mezzo-level:**
- We need to be cautiously optimistic about the future of SSF. While there is a lot of hope of what can be achieved, the reality is that we have 5 million tons of renewable resource in the ocean that is there for free as nature's gift. So many livelihoods are dependent on it. We have traditional communities that have been fishing from time immemorial and it's not their fault if they don't wish to continue fishing. Nevertheless, there is still the possibility to match the resource with the human resource.
 - There is no point pushing too much at the national level because fishery means nothing at the national level. Likewise, it is not adequate to work at a village level because the scale is too small. Issues need to be tackled at another level. The mezzo-level, the lowest level of formal governance in India is the municipality, *panchayat*, and this is the level at which we must tackle this issue. This is the realm where fishery makes sense (e.g. employment, revenue, nutrition), and everything is recognized and can be quantified in terms of data.

- Unfortunately, we don't give enough emphasis to the mezzo-level. More emphasis in terms of planning a bottom-up processes is required to look at the fishery, along with other coastal uses at the panchayat/municipality level. We need to extend our alliances beyond just the fisherfolk unions to a class of ocean or coastal citizens who earn their livelihood from the sea. It can be in the form of community tourism or an emerging host of people whose livelihoods are going to depend on the ocean at that mezzo-level and these groups need to cooperate. This is why the SSF Guidelines are important as they situate the fishery in the larger context. We are too often focused on fisheries alone.

➤ **Comment – Local interventions and local institutions:**

- The challenges of SSF cannot be cleared overnight; we cannot transform SSF to a sector with modernized equipment/vessel or push them to the deep sea. For example, looking at urban or rural SSF, there are clear-cut differences between them as one is being pushed to the sea and the other is feeling pressures from other industries. When we look at Indian SSF, it will be better to have local interventions and local institutions along with support from other agencies.

➤ **Question: In her talk, Tara mentioned the deficiency of knowledge institutional architecture. Do we see positive developments in this respect?**

- **Answer:** There is a challenge in reconciling a real sense of gloom about the future of SSF but we need to work with local institution or help them build their capacity. There are many young people in these institutions with whom we can work with, and who are bring modern philosophy.

Friday, April 16th

Session 3: Broadening the scope: Implementing the SSF Guidelines & the SDGs

SSF are not an isolated sector, and they face many threats and challenges, including climate change, globalization, competition from industrial fisheries, rapid market shifts, and coastal and ocean development, some of which are part of the Blue Growth/Blue Economy initiatives that might result in displacement and further marginalization of SSF. The Covid-19 pandemic adds the stress and vulnerability to many SSF around the world, with the full consequences yet unknown. This calls for a broadening of discussion about SSF in order to achieve, not only SDG 14 but many other SDGs. This is also why it is important to consider gender in the broad context, by looking not only at the women involved in fisheries but also at the different gender roles in the community and society.

1) Broadening the perspective about fisheries and aquatic sustainability

Presented by: Derek Johnson, U. of Manitoba / DFM, Canada

The presentation focused on three major terms for broadening the perspective: *implementation, broadening and sustainability*. The task of this workshop is to reflect together on the prospects for implementing the SSF Guidelines with the proposition that a TD perspective offers relevant and useful guidance for how to do so. Implementation, however, is a weak word for this aspiration because it suggests a simple rolling out of the SSF Guidelines in a given context. Instead, we must reconfigure implementation in TD terms as a much more laborious and energy and resource-intensive process. The SSF Guidelines are not innocent and will be seen as threatening in many quarters; we must be prepared for pushback and cooptation; we need a vigorous understanding of implementation. TD itself is about broadening in its concern to transcend disciplinary knowledges but that broadening must also involve a political broadening; a recognition of the non-neutral contexts within which we seek to advocate for SSF. There are structural factors in the Indian context that constrain broadening: a) the technical orientation

of policy; b) the top down mode of governance; and c) the peripherality of fisheries. Sustainability illustrates the importance of broadening TD to include the politics of fostering dialogue across knowledges and among SSF knowledge holders. The bright side of sustainability is similar to the promise of TD: the aspiration that different knowledges can be brought together for human betterment. The dirty side of sustainability, however, is that it has so often been used to justify all manner of business as usual practices; it has become a cheap and often meaningless signifier of neo-liberal approaches to development.

The SDGs are the meta-terrain of moral debate – they are a set of reference points, of principles that legitimize action and governments have to be held to them. However, they are loose and contradictory signifiers, so we have to be very careful when using them — we have to be precise about our definitions, our methods, and for whom we speak. The SSF Guidelines have a similar legitimacy function as the SDGs but they are more finely tuned to SSF, they have a clearer moral grounding in justice, recognizing structural inequality, and they are specific about action.

2) Discussion

➤ Comment – Critical look at SSF Guidelines and SDGs:

- We need to look at the SSF Guidelines and SDG from a critical perspective and see them as useful tools for action and mobilization. These tools are part of large knowledge on resource management that can be used against SSF; SDGs in particular can be dangerous as there are many interests from various actors that may be dangerous for SSF. SSF Guidelines are geared for SSF and they go completely against the current Blue Economy; they are a very powerful tool for us, in terms of working with SSF to best support their interest.

➤ Comment – Reinterpret the core concepts:

- When we look at state-led mechanization, we should try compare it with a non-state led mechanization and realize that it is not always state versus us — let's think how we can balance the two. We don't have many tools we can engage with, it's important we fill these concepts such as sustainability with right meaning. CSO groups can be too critical of the concepts; we need to ensure the right kind of values are supported by these instruments. We need to think how best to reinterpret the sustainability concept; let's not bring new concepts as we need to engage with the larger, national and

global community. When it comes to implementations, we need to reflect on what is already there in the SSF Guidelines and then we need to strengthen the SSF Guidelines and its outcome; strengthen the weaker elements of the SSF Guidelines.

- Bottom line: it is important that we fill core concepts (e.g., implementation, broadening, and sustainability) with the right meaning to support SSF.
- Researchers can help communities engage with core concepts and fill them with the right meaning (as opposed to bringing new ones); How can researchers help communities negotiate these formal spaces?.

➤ **Comment – The government's failure:**

- There are new policies coming up India, giving the impression that the government is doing something when in reality this is just a show-off; the policy they are coming up with are not helpful at all. In addition, the lack of trust is very important; there is immense distrust at the various levels of government. The government is presenting a reality in which small-scale fishing people are happy when the real story is quite the opposite. Eco-tourism plans in West Bengal will only marginalize as the plan sees SSF as a threat to their plans.

➤ **Comment – Obstacles for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines:**

- In Tamil Nadu, government is not interested in conservation of marine sources. These are some of the main things that prevent the implementation of the SSF Guidelines: 1) the government is not aware of what is going on the field; 2) there is a strong competition among the fishers; 3) new people are coming to fishing communities; traditional fishing will be replaced, which raises the question of who has the right to fish?; 4) safety at sea is not protected through the government.

➤ **Comment – The SSF Guidelines as a lever for inclusion of SSF in the Blue Economy discourse:**

- SSF Guidelines stand out like the landmark achievement; it's almost a miracle that the countries reached consensus over such a progressive text. One would think that now would be the time of implementation and that countries would do what they promised. Yet, we see that there are documents/strategies where fisheries, especially SSF, are hardly mentioned (e.g. Blue Economy). How is this possible? How can we forget about SSF? How sincere were countries when they negotiated the SSF Guidelines?;

- If we look at the SSF Guidelines at the end point, then we can say how they didn't achieve what they set out. Instead, let's look at the SSF Guidelines as the beginning, as a meaningful achievement. SSF are not part of Blue Economy discourse and the SSF Guidelines provide that lever, the foot in the door in the Blue Economy discourse.

3) Gender equity and social justice from lived experience in the context of TD and SSF

Presented by: John Kurien (Azim Premji University, India)

➤ Gender and Division of Productive Labour in Fishing

One way to look at the gendered division of labour in fishing communities in India is to say that men's labour 'creates the value by converting the stuff in nature into a resource'. Women's labour on the other hand, usually quite immediately, 'converts that resource into monetary value'. How do we equate or calculate the worthiness of these different activities and roles, of men and women, in the realm of productive labour, when one form of labour cannot happen without the other? The issue of gender equity in the activities of the fish economy is therefore a matter of how we perceive them and the attributes we assign to them in the process of assessing all the forms of labour which are undertaken in the productive activities of the fish economy. No form of labour is any less/or more worthy than the other.

➤ Understanding Gender Equity

Gender is not about the body which nature has gifted us. It is more about the mind and attitude, which we acquire by the manner in which we are nurtured. Gender, and gender equity, is not about including women in every activity which men are involved in — or the other way around, as many may think. Specific human societies have evolved to assign particular roles for women and men in different economic, social, cultural and re-productive activity. To an outsider of a particular society, this assignment may seem strange, unfair or even a matter without choice. But in most societies, these assigned roles also evolve, and at times change

radically. This is a function of many factors that may be endogenous or exogenous to the society in question. This can be so in fishing communities as well.

➤ Gender Equity and Social Justice

The greater inter-dependencies between women and men in the fishery activities, and their dual roles in protection of the eco-system in which they are placed, provides greater opportunities to raise the issue of gender equity and create a more gender-equal fish economy and community. The strategy to achieve this must be multi-pronged and deal with creating more inclusive workplaces, educational opportunities, re-skilling, health and care systems, possibilities for more equal participation in leadership positions in economic and political bodies (cooperatives, trade unions, local political structures etc.) and the freedom and opportunities to be argumentative. There is need for planning and embedding greater gender parity initiatives in all the realms to ensure a more just, participatory, self-reliant and sustainable future. We may never reach the perfect situation but must work towards it with hope.

➤ Role of SSF Guidelines

SSF Guidelines, as an advocacy plank for achieving gender equity and social justice is considerable but will vary depending on the economic, socio-cultural and political context of the country.

➤ No equity and justice without constant struggle

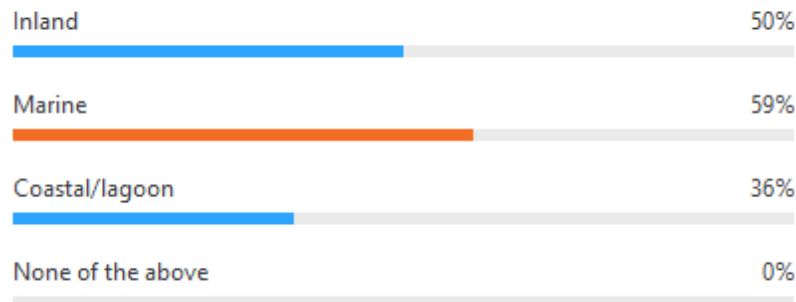
Legal provisions, participatory guidelines, trans-disciplinary workshops and the several other means which we, academicians and practitioners, are demanding and bidding for, are by no means one important way towards achieving gender equity and social justice. In our efforts to 'understand, interpret and reinterpret' the world do we stubbornly remain as 'inert catalysts', and in this process, unknowingly delay the efforts of the people to 're-envision and change' the world? What is most needed is our true empathy in fostering and supporting the struggles of the women and men in the communities as they negotiate their approaches and tactics in creating the spaces, alliances and networks which will result in a true liberation from the forces which constrict and constrain them.

4) Discussion

- TD is really about helping people to mobilize;
- Policies claim to be gender neutral but they are gender blind;
- Understanding gender can be done through people's lived experience. The problem with policy is that there is not grounding in the lived experience;
- Women across the country face difficulties in every professional field. It is important to think beyond metrics into the TD process (e.g., women's leadership, engagement in processes, etc.). Sometimes projects are too short in duration and too short sighted to make an impact;
- How might some relationships we see in communities change when changing the broad socio-economic context as we move from one production-logic to another?

Shorts surveys taken during the live sessions

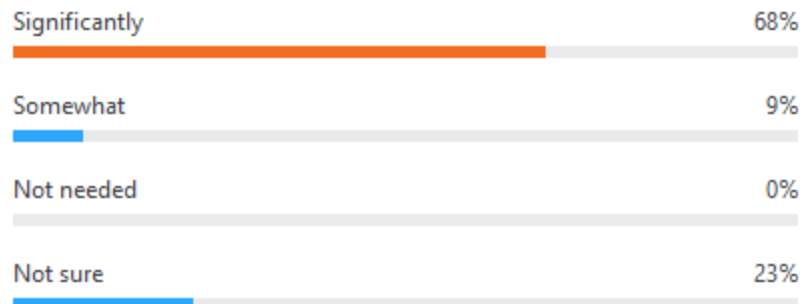
1. What kind of fishery are you working in? (Multiple choice)



2. What organization do you represent?

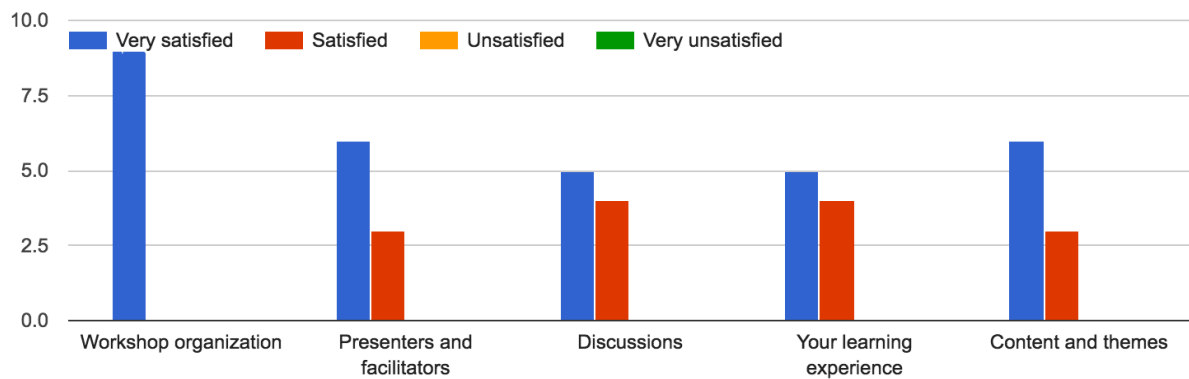


3. To what extent is a TD approach required to address the problems facing SSF in your case?



Participants' feedback (post-workshop survey)

1. How satisfied were you with the organization of the event?



2. What topics or aspects of the workshop did you find most interesting or useful?

- Gender and SSF
- Transdisciplinarity, gender equity, SDG
- Human rights and especially policy aspects
- TD approach in SSF
- Policy and governance issues, scopes of transdisciplinary approach
- Wicked problems, gender equality.
- The discussions after the talks were constructive
- TD approach

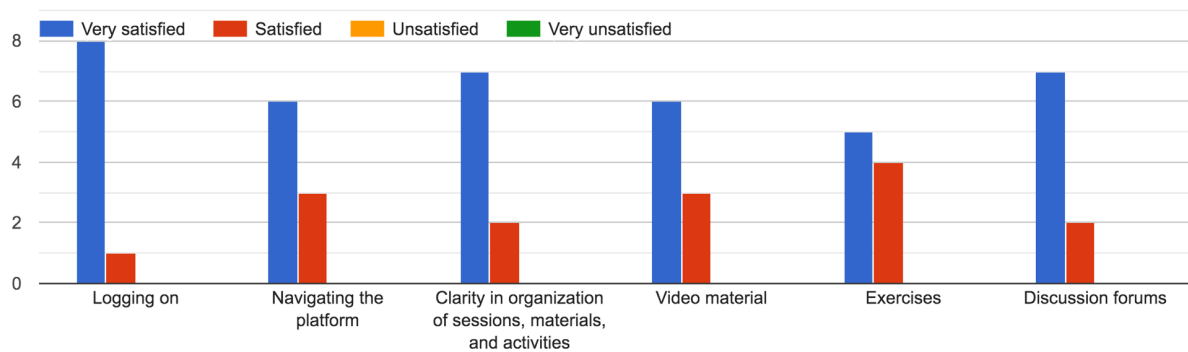
3. Can you provide some comments and suggestions to strengthen the workshop (including activities or initiatives you think would be useful, for the future)?

➤ Online platform

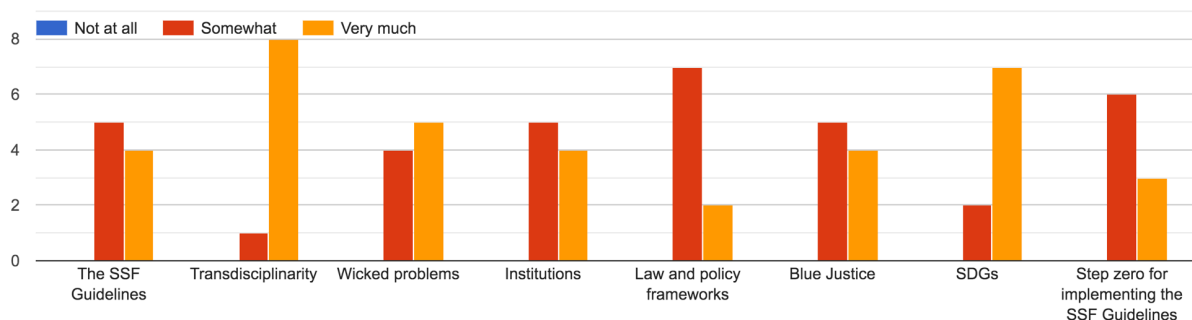
- Discussions were good. Some practical examples on TD research outputs may be helpful;

- Initiatives to align the knowledge into axiology through various meaningful ways;
- Engaging participants into quick writing sessions; discussions on pertinent methods and methodologies to analyze issues in transdisciplinary ways;
- More time for discussions; and
- Presentation of participants own research in a session will enrich the program.

4. How satisfied were you with the TBTI Learning Platform?



5. Did your knowledge improve?



List of participants

Facilitators

Name	Affiliation
Evan Andrews	Memorial University, Canada
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Ratana Chuenpagdee	Memorial University, Canada
Navya Nair	University of Waterloo, Canada
Prateep Nayak	University of Waterloo, Canada
Sisir Pradhan	University of Waterloo, Canada

Presenters

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Tara Nair	GIDR, India
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RESEARCH

POLICY

MOBILIZATION