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# Drone Technology in Fisheries and Aquaculture

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**Pratik Yadav, Sandesh Patil & Ketan Chaudhari**

[1]Ph. D. Scholar (Fisheries Extension), College of Fisheries, Shirgaon, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra

[2]Associate Professor, College of Fisheries, Shirgaon, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra

[3]Principal and Associate Dean, Fisheries Engineering Polytechnic, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra

## ABSTRACT

Drone technology has emerged as a transformative tool in fisheries and aquaculture, offering innovative solutions for monitoring, management and conservation. This article provides an overview of UAV applications, including detecting illegal fishing, conducting non-invasive stock assessments and automating farm management tasks like water sampling and biomass estimation. While drones enhance operational efficiency and facilitate detailed habitat mapping, significant challenges remain, such as technical limitations in flight duration, complex data processing requirements and the need to mitigate adverse faunal responses. Successful adoption is supported by evolving regulatory frameworks, such as India's 2021 drone rules and institutional capacity-building initiatives aimed at training stakeholders for sustainable aquatic resource management.

**Keywords:** Drone Technology (UAVs), Precision Aquaculture, Fisheries Management

**INTRODUCTION:** Drone technology has emerged as a transformative force in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, offering innovative solutions for monitoring, management and conservation. This article provides a comprehensive overview of drone applications, challenges and the evolving regulatory landscape based on current research and institutional findings.

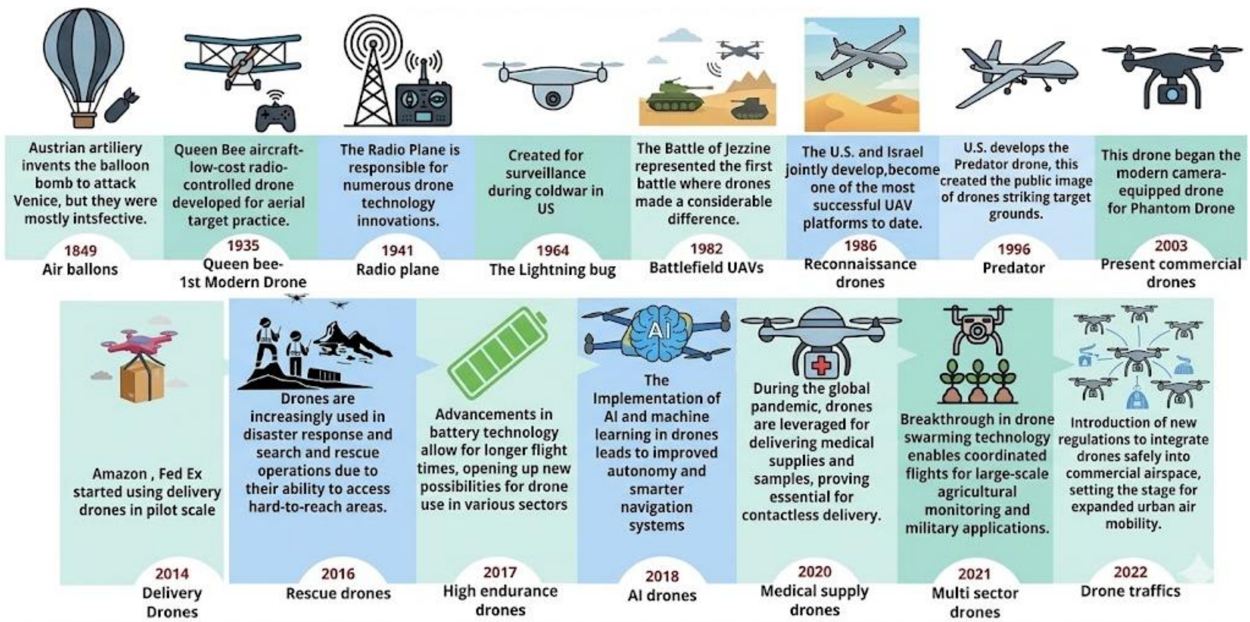


**Fig. 1: Evolution of drones (Iburahim *et al.,* 2025)**

## Applications in Fisheries and Aquaculture

Drones, or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), provide multifaceted benefits that enhance operational efficiency and sustainable practices.

- **Surveillance and Monitoring:** Drones are pivotal for detecting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities and identifying abandoned traps (Iburahim *et al*., 2025). In Maharashtra, for instance, additional 10 drones have been deployed to boost coastal surveillance and crackdown on illegal LED fishing.
- **Stock Assessment:** Drones integrated with high-resolution cameras and advanced sensors are essential for estimating fish school sizes, tracking movements and identifying species while ensuring minimal disturbance to wildlife. Notably, research has highlighted the efficacy of these platforms in monitoring large marine animals, such as whales and sharks, without disturbing them (Ganie *et al.,* 2025).
- **Aquaculture Management:** In fish farms, drones automate monitoring by assisting with water quality analysis, biomass estimation, and net cleaning (Wu *et al.* 2022). These aerial platforms streamline farm management by facilitating water sampling, disease identification, and the precise dispensing of feed and fertilizers through intelligent systems (Imai *et al.,* 2019), that reduce waste. Furthermore, drones support the transportation of live fish (ICAR-CMFRI, 2024), which minimizes human involvement and reduces stress on the livestock.

- **Habitat Mapping Environmental Monitoring:** Drones meticulous map coastal and aquatic habitats, identifying critical breeding and feeding grounds. Techniques such as structure-from-motion photogrammetry are used to create 3D images of coral reefs (Harris and Nelson, 2019) and seagrass habitats. Drones enable researchers to predict fish distribution and migration by monitoring variables like sea surface temperature, chlorophyll levels, and ocean currents, deepening our insight into fish behaviours (Toonen and Bush, 2020).

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## Regulatory Framework and Education:

Adoption is heavily dependent on a conducive regulatory environment.

- **India's Initiatives:** Regulatory bodies like the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) provide the framework for safe drone operation. Government programs like "Bharat Drone Shakti" and the liberalization of drone rules in 2021 have catalyzed growth. (Iburahim *et al.,* 2025).
- **Capacity Building:** Institutions like the Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE) and various ICAR institutes offer specialized courses and workshops to train students, faculty and fish farmers.
- **International Standards:** In the United States, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulates commercial and scientific operations for Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) weighing less than 25 kg under the Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems Rule, commonly known as Part 107 (FAA, 2016).

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## Challenges and Limitations:

Despite their benefits, several hurdles remain to fully harness drone technology.

- **Technical Limitations:** Flight duration, payload capacity and sensor accuracy under varying environmental conditions (e.g., strong winds, high turbidity) can hinder efficacy. (Harris and Nelson, 2019).
- **Data Processing:** The voluminous data collected requires efficient processing and interpretation methods, often involving complex machine-learning algorithms.
- **Faunal Response:** Researchers must exercise caution to prevent drones from becoming a source of disturbance for wildlife, especially marine mammals.

## CONCLUSION:

In summary, the integration of drone technology is fundamentally reshaping the fisheries and aquaculture landscape by bridging the gap between traditional practices and modern, data-driven management. While the applications ranging from IUU surveillance to precise biomass estimation offer clear benefits for operational efficiency, the technology's long-term success hinges on overcoming technical and faunal response challenges. Through the continued support of regulatory frameworks like India's 2021 Drone Rules and specialized institutional training, UAVs are poised to become an indispensable pillar of sustainable aquatic resource management and conservation.

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# FISH SPOILAGE: CAUSES, DETECTION AND PREVENTION

Article id: FS 10001

**Sachin Dnyanoba Chavan[1*], Saismita Swain[1], Poornima M B[1], Gowrisankar S. N[1] & Prapti[1]**

[1]Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University, Bidar, College of Fisheries, Mangaluru, Karnataka

## ABSTRACT

Fish is one of the most nutritionally valuable yet highly perishable food commodities. Spoilage begins immediately after harvest due to a combination of enzymatic degradation, microbial activity, and lipid oxidation. These processes lead to undesirable changes in texture, odor, appearance, and nutritional quality, ultimately rendering fish unsuitable for consumption. This article provides a comprehensive overview of the causes of fish spoilage, the methods used for its detection, and the strategies employed for its prevention. Emphasis is placed on understanding the biochemical and microbiological mechanisms involved, along with practical preservation approaches such as temperature control, hygienic handling, and packaging technologies. A clear understanding of these aspects is essential to reduce post-harvest losses, ensure food safety, and improve the shelf life of fish and fishery products.

## INTRODUCTION

Fish plays a crucial role in global nutrition by providing high-quality proteins, essential amino acids, and health-promoting omega-3 fatty acids. Despite its importance, fish is highly susceptible to rapid spoilage compared to other animal-derived foods. This is largely due to its intrinsic properties, including high moisture content, near-neutral pH, and the presence of endogenous enzymes that remain active even after death (Huss, 1995). In addition, fish muscle is structurally delicate and contains less connective tissue, making it more vulnerable to physical damage and enzymatic breakdown. The natural microbial flora present on the skin, gills, and intestines further accelerates spoilage once the fish is harvested. Understanding spoilage mechanisms is therefore essential for ensuring safety and extending shelf life.

## Causes of Fish Spoilage

Fish spoilage is a multifactorial process involving autolytic, microbial, and oxidative mechanisms that occur simultaneously and interact with each other (Figure 1).

- **Autolytic (Enzymatic) Changes**

Autolysis begins immediately after the fish dies due to the action of endogenous enzymes. In the absence of oxygen, cellular metabolism ceases, and enzymes such as proteases and lipases degrade muscle proteins and lipids. This results in softening of the flesh, loss of firmness, and the formation of smaller compounds like peptides and amino acids. Although autolysis does not directly produce strong odours, it significantly weakens tissue structure and facilitates subsequent microbial activity (Huss, 1995).

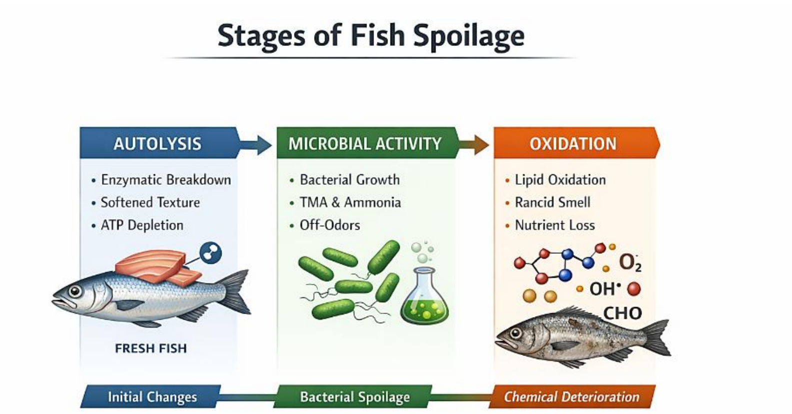


***Figure 1 Stages of Fish Spoilage***

- **Microbial Spoilage**

Microbial activity is the most important factor in fish spoilage during storage. Fish naturally harbor microorganisms, particularly in the gills and intestines. After death, these microbes multiply rapidly and invade muscle tissue. Bacteria such as *Pseudomonas*, *Shewanella*, and *Vibrio* degrade nitrogenous compounds, producing trimethylamine (TMA), ammonia, and hydrogen sulfide. These compounds are responsible for the characteristic foul odour of spoiled fish (Gram & Dalgaard, 2002).

- **Lipid Oxidation**

Lipid oxidation is a major cause of spoilage, especially in fatty fish. Fish lipids are rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids, which are highly prone to oxidation. This process leads to the formation of peroxides and secondary oxidation products such as aldehydes and ketones, resulting in rancid flavours and reduced nutritional value (Shahidi & Zhong, 2010).

- **Factors Influencing Spoilage**

The rate of spoilage is influenced by several external factors, including temperature, handling practices, oxygen exposure, and fish species. Higher temperatures accelerate both microbial growth and enzymatic reactions, while poor handling can cause physical damage and increase contamination. The role of these factors in accelerating deterioration is summarized in Table 2.

## Detection of Fish Spoilage

Detecting spoilage is essential to ensure fish quality and consumer safety. Various methods are used, ranging from simple sensory evaluation to advanced analytical techniques.

- **Sensory Evaluation**

Sensory evaluation remains the most widely used method due to its simplicity and effectiveness. Fresh fish typically has a mild, sea-like odour, clear eyes, bright red gills, and firm flesh. As spoilage progresses, the odour becomes sour or ammonia-like, the eyes turn cloudy, the gills darken, and the texture becomes soft and mushy. Although subjective, this method is highly reliable when conducted by trained personnel.

- **Chemical Indicators**

Chemical analyses provide objective measures of spoilage. Total Volatile Basic Nitrogen (TVB-N) indicates protein degradation, while Trimethylamine Nitrogen (TMA-N) reflects bacterial activity. Lipid oxidation is commonly measured using the Thiobarbituric Acid (TBA) test. The acceptable limits and significance of these indicators are presented in Table 1 (Connell, 1990).

**Table 1. Key Indicators of Fish Spoilage**

| Parameter | Significance | Acceptable Limit |
|---|---|---|
| TVB-N | Protein degradation | 25–35 mg/100 g |
| TMA-N | Bacterial spoilage | 10–15 mg/100 g |
| TBA | Lipid oxidation | ≤ 2 mg MDA/kg |
| TPC | Microbial load | ≤ $10^7$ CFU/g |

- **Microbiological Analysis**

Microbial quality is assessed through total plate count (TPC), which estimates the number of viable bacteria present in fish. Fish is generally considered spoiled when bacterial counts exceed $10^7$ CFU/g (ICMSF, 1986). These microbiological limits, along with chemical indicators, provide a comprehensive evaluation of fish freshness as summarized in Table 1.

## Prevention and Control of Fish Spoilage

Preventing fish spoilage requires a combination of proper handling, storage, and preservation strategies.

- **Temperature Control**

Temperature control is the most critical factor in preserving fish quality. Chilling fish at 0–4°C slows microbial growth and enzymatic activity, while freezing at -18°C effectively halts microbial proliferation. Immediate icing after harvest is essential for maintaining freshness (FAO, 2022).

- **Hygienic Handling**

Maintaining hygiene during processing and handling reduces contamination and spoilage. This includes using clean equipment, proper sanitation, and careful handling to prevent tissue damage. Prompt gutting and washing also help reduce microbial load.

- **Packaging Techniques**

Packaging plays a vital role in extending shelf life. Vacuum packaging removes oxygen, thereby reducing oxidation and inhibiting aerobic microorganisms. Modified Atmosphere Packaging (MAP), which uses gases such as carbon dioxide and nitrogen, further enhances preservation by slowing microbial growth (Sivertsvik et al., 2002). These preservation approaches are also outlined in Table 2.

**Table 2. Common Preservation Methods**

| Method | Principle | Benefit |
|---|---|---|
| Chilling | Low temperature | Slows spoilage |
| Freezing | Very low temperature | Stops microbial growth |
| Vacuum packaging | Oxygen removal | Reduces oxidation |
| MAP | Gas modification | Extends shelf life |
| Drying/Salting | Moisture reduction | Long-term preservation |

- **Use of Preservatives**

Preservatives such as salt, organic acids, and natural plant extracts can inhibit microbial growth and oxidative reactions. Recent advances also include edible coatings and natural antioxidants that improve shelf life without compromising safety.

## CONCLUSION

Fish spoilage is an inevitable, yet manageable process driven by enzymatic, microbial, and oxidative mechanisms. Due to its high perishability, fish requires immediate and effective post-harvest handling to maintain quality. Among all preservation strategies, temperature control remains the most effective, while hygienic practices and modern packaging technologies further enhance shelf life and safety. Early detection using sensory, chemical, and microbiological methods is essential to prevent the consumption of spoiled fish. Similarly, the application of appropriate preservation techniques can significantly extend shelf life. The overall spoilage process, as depicted in Figure 1, highlights the need for timely intervention at each stage.

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# Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) in Fisheries and Seafood Safety

**Article id: FS 10002**

**Kushi N.[1], Sachin Dnyanoba Chavan[1], Vijit[1]**

[1]Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University, Bidar, College of Fisheries, Mangaluru, Karnataka

## ABSTRACT

The fisheries sector is an important part of global food supply and nutrition, but ensuring the safety of fish and seafood remains a major challenge due to their highly perishable nature. The Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system provides a preventive and practical approach to food safety by identifying possible hazards and controlling them at key stages of production. This article explains the role of HACCP in fisheries, focusing on its seven principles and their application in seafood processing. By controlling biological, chemical, and physical hazards, HACCP helps in producing safe and high-quality seafood products. Although there are some challenges in implementation, especially in developing regions, HACCP continues to be one of the most effective systems for ensuring food safety and supporting international trade.

**Keywords:** HACCP, Fisheries, Seafood Safety, Hazard Control, Contamination

## INTRODUCTION

Fish and seafood are highly valued because of their rich nutritional content, including proteins, omega-3 fatty acids, and essential vitamins. However, these same qualities also make them highly perishable. If not handled properly, fish can spoil quickly and become unsafe due to microbial growth, chemical contamination, or poor hygiene practices (Huss, 1995). This makes food safety a serious concern in the fisheries sector. Earlier, food safety mainly depended on testing the final product. But this method is not always reliable because contamination can occur at any stage, from catching the fish to processing and storage. To solve this problem, the HACCP system was introduced as a preventive approach that focuses on controlling hazards before they become a problem (FAO, 2003).

In fisheries, this approach is especially important because fish passes through many stages such as harvesting, landing, transportation, processing, and distribution. Any mistake at these stages can affect the safety of the final product. Today, HACCP is widely accepted across the world and is even mandatory for seafood exports in many countries (Fig.1), following standards set by international bodies like the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex Alimentarius Commission, 2020).

## HACCP Principles and Their Application in Fisheries

### Principle 1: Conduct Hazard Analysis

The first step in HACCP is to carefully identify what could go wrong. This means looking at all possible hazards that may affect seafood safety. In fisheries, common biological hazards include harmful bacteria like *Vibrio*, *Salmonella*, and *Listeria*. Chemical hazards can come from polluted water, heavy metals, or toxins like histamine, while physical hazards include things like fish bones or metal pieces. If fish is not kept at the right temperature, histamine can form, especially in species like tuna, which can cause food poisoning (FDA, 2022). Understanding these risks helps in planning how to control them.

### Principle 2: Determine Critical Control Points (CCPs)

Once hazards are identified, the next step is to find the most important points where these hazards can be controlled. These are called Critical Control Points. In fisheries, this could be the stage where fish is immediately chilled after catching, or when it is cooked or packed. By focusing on these key points, it becomes easier to prevent hazards before they affect the product. This makes the system more effective (Codex Alimentarius Commission, 2020).

### Principle 3: Establish Critical Limits

At each critical point, there must be clear limits that define what is safe and what is not. These are called critical limits. For example, fish should be stored below 4°C to slow down bacterial growth, and cooking temperatures should reach at least 75°C to kill harmful microorganisms. These limits are usually based on scientific research and food safety guidelines (FAO, 2003).

### Principle 4: Establish Monitoring Procedures

Monitoring means regularly checking whether everything is under control. This could involve measuring temperature, checking processing time, or observing hygiene conditions.

In fisheries, temperature monitoring is very important because even small changes can lead to spoilage or contamination. Continuous monitoring helps in identifying problems early and taking quick action before the situation gets worse.

## Principle 5: Establish Corrective Actions

Sometimes, things may not go as planned. If a critical limit is crossed, corrective actions must be taken immediately. This ensures that unsafe products do not reach consumers. If fish is stored at a higher temperature than allowed, it may need to be discarded or reprocessed. Taking the right corrective action at the right time is very important for food safety (FDA, 2022).

## Principle 6: Establish Verification Procedures

Verification is like double-checking the system to make sure it is working properly. This may include testing samples in the lab, checking equipment, or reviewing records. Verification helps confirm that the HACCP plan is effective and that all safety measures are being followed correctly. It also builds confidence in the system.

## Principle 7: Establish Documentation and Record Keeping

Keeping proper records is an essential part of HACCP. It helps in tracking what is happening at each stage and provides proof that safety measures are being followed. These records can include temperature logs, inspection reports, and corrective actions taken. Documentation is especially important for export purposes and quality assurance.


**Figure 1: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) Principles**

## Application of HACCP in Fisheries

HACCP is applied at every stage of the seafood supply chain. During harvesting and landing, maintaining cleanliness and using safe ice and water are important steps. In processing plants, hygiene, temperature control, and avoiding cross-contamination are key practices. During storage and transportation, maintaining the cold chain is critical. Fish must be kept at low temperatures to prevent spoilage and bacterial growth. Proper packaging and insulated transport systems help in maintaining these conditions. HACCP also plays a major role in international trade. Many countries require seafood products to follow HACCP standards before they can be imported. This makes HACCP not only a safety tool but also an economic necessity (FAO, 2003).

## CONCLUSION

HACCP is one of the most effective systems for ensuring food safety in the fisheries sector. Instead of waiting for problems to occur, it focuses on preventing them at every stage of production. By following its seven principles, seafood producers can control hazards, maintain quality, and protect consumer health. In today's world, where food safety is a top priority, HACCP is not just an option but a necessity for the fisheries industry.

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# Masmin – Traditional Smoke-Dried Tuna Product

## Article id: FS 10003

**Gowrisankar. S. N[1*], Poornima. M. B[1], Saismita Swain[1] & Sachin Dnyanoba Chavan[1]**

[1] Dept of Fish Processing Technology, College of Fisheries, Mangaluru, KVAFSU, Bidar, Karnataka, India

## ABSTRACT

Masmin is a traditional smoked-dried tuna product primarily prepared from skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) and widely produced in the Lakshadweep Islands, Maldives, and other Indian Ocean coastal regions. It is one of the oldest indigenous fish preservation products, developed to extend the shelf life of tuna in tropical climates where refrigeration was historically unavailable. Masmin is highly valued for its long storage stability, concentrated protein content, unique smoky aroma, and cultural significance in island economies. Explores the traditional processing methods of masmin, its proximate nutritional composition, and the unique preservative compounds that allow it to be stored for over a year. Additionally, it highlights the inherent health risks associated with traditional processing-such as heavy metal accumulation, microbial contamination, and the generation of carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) from heavy smoking.

**Keywords:** Fish, Masmin, Skipjack Tuna, Smoked products, Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons

## INTRODUCTION

Masmin is a traditional smoked and dried fish product made mainly from tuna (Fig.1), especially skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*), and has been produced for centuries in island regions such as Lakshadweep, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. In Lakshadweep, masmin represents one of the most important value-added tuna products, where nearly 88–90% of landed skipjack tuna is converted into masmin due to its economic importance and preservation advantage (Mohammed *et al*., 2025). Similarly, Patel and Haldar (2019) reported that nearly 90% of tuna landings in Lakshadweep are utilized for masmin production, generating substantial income for island fishing communities. It is a dietary staple that meets a major portion of the protein demands of the islanders, supporting the livelihood of nearly 65,000 residents (Mohammed *et al*., 2025).

Masmin is unique because it combines thermal cooking, smoke curing, and dehydration into one preservation system. Unlike ordinary dried fish, masmin develops a dense wood-like texture, dark brown-black color, and highly concentrated umami flavor. Its uniqueness lies in:

- Long shelf life (1–2 years under proper packaging)
- High protein density
- Distinct smoky aroma
- No refrigeration requirement
- Export value in regional seafood trade

Globally, masmin-like products are comparable to Japanese *katsuobushi*, Indonesian *keumamah*, and Maldivian cured tuna products, making masmin part of a broader international smoked seafood heritage (Mohammed *et al*., 2025).

**Figure 1**: Masmin

**Figure 2:** Skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*)

## Species Used for Masmin Production

The principal species used is Skipjack Tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) (Fig. 2). Occasionally, Yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) may also be used.

Skipjack tuna is preferred because:

- It is abundant in tropical Indian Ocean waters.
- Flesh is firm and suitable for repeated smoking/drying.
- Moderate fat content supports smoke absorption.
- Strong muscle fibers maintain structural integrity after drying.

Skipjack tuna is particularly ideal because it withstands prolonged drying without disintegration and develops superior texture compared to softer fish species (Patel & Haldar, 2019).

## Preparation of Masmin

**Cooking:** The fillets are cooked in large vessels containing seawater for 2 to 3 hours (sometimes up to 5-6 hours) and subsequently allowed to cool in the very same water overnight or for several hours (Patel & Haldar, 2019).

**Smoking:** Following the boiling process, the cooked tuna loins are split and subjected to heavy smoking for 2 to 5 hours (Mohammed *et al*., 2025; Nithin *et al*., 2016), primarily coconut husks and leaves, for 2 to 4 hours until it reaches a golden-brown colour.

Smoke imparts:

- Flavour compounds,
- Phenolic antioxidants,
- Antimicrobial compounds.

**Drying:** The final and most extended stage is sun drying, where the smoked fish are left in the open sunlight for 10 to 15 days. The drying process continues until the moisture content is drastically reduced, turning the meat brittle, hard, and wood-like (Mohammed *et al*., 2025). Finally, the dried masmin is packed into airtight polythene or suitable bulk packaging, enabling it to be transported and stored for 1 to 2 years without spoilage (Nithin *et al*., 2016).

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## Proximate Composition

Masmin is a nutritionally dense product that remains largely equivalent to fresh tuna even after intensive processing.

- **Protein**: It is exceptionally high in protein, ranging from 58.78% to 78.75%, which concentrates as moisture is lost during drying.
- **Lipids**: Fat content varies between islands, ranging from 1.35% to 10.3%, often influenced by the intensity of the drying process where fat may "ooze out".
- **Ash and Salt**: The ash content (6.06% to 7.79%) reflects the mineral richness, partly due to the salt absorbed during cooking in seawater.

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## Preservative and Harmful Compounds

The extended preservation of masmin is guaranteed by a combination of factors. The total phenolic content (TPC) generated from the coconut husk smoke (which contains up to 16.51 mg GAE/g) acts as a powerful antimicrobial and antioxidant agent (Mohammed *et al*., 2025). Additionally, the high salt content (3.13% to 7.13%) absorbed from the seawater boiling process, combined with a lower pH and extremely low moisture, creates an environment entirely inhospitable to spoilage microorganisms (Mohammed *et al*., 2025).

Smoke deposits phenols such as:

- Guaiacol,
- Syringol,
- Cresols.

These compounds inhibit bacterial growth, Delay lipid oxidation, Improve aroma

## Harmful Components and Health Risks

Traditional masmin production unfortunately introduces several harmful components (Table 1).

- **Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs):** Heavy and uncontrolled smoking using coconut husks leads to the accumulation of PAHs, which are carcinogenic environmental contaminants formed during incomplete combustion (Nithin *et al*., 2016). Dangerous heavy PAHs like Benzopyrene (BaP) are a major health concern in traditionally smoked foods (Nithin *et al*., 2020).
- **Newer Technology: Liquid Smoking:** To address the health risks of traditional smoking, researchers have developed liquid smoking as a safe alternative. This involves applying a commercial or indigenous smoke condensate (often derived from coconut husk) through spraying, soaking, or blending.

## Health Risks:

- Carcinogenicity,
- DNA damage,
- Long-term cancer risk.

PAHs form when smoke temperature is too high, fat drips into flame, Combustion is incomplete.

**Table 1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Liquid Smoked Masmin Flakes (Nithin *et al.*, 2020)**

| Category | Details |
|---|---|
| **Advantages** | ***Lower PAH Content***: Significantly reduces carcinogenic compounds while maintaining flavour.<br>***Convenience***: Developed as ready-to-use flakes, removing the need for labour-intensive scraping.<br>***Consistency***: Allows for standardized quality and flavor profile. |
| **Disadvantages** | ***Flavour Sensitivity***: Improper application or over-dilution can lead to a bitter flavour or a slight burning sensation.<br>***Economic Feasibility***: Depending on imported commercial smoke can be costly; indigenous production is needed for sustainability. |

## CONCLUSION

Masmin is an outstanding example of indigenous fish preservation that combines nutritional richness, cultural heritage, and economic value. Its importance in island food systems remains immense due to its protein density, long storage life, and trade significance. However, modernization is essential to reduce PAH hazards, improve hygiene, and standardize quality. Emerging technologies such as liquid smoke processing and controlled drying offer safer pathways for preserving masmin's heritage while expanding its global market potential.

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# Reservoir Fisheries Management in Maharashtra

## Article id: FS 10004

[1]Tekale Vaishnavi Balaji, [2]Arjun Karamsingh Choudhary & [3]Dr. Umesh Suryawanshi,

[1]Department of Fisheries Resource Management, College of Fisheries, GADVASU, Ludhiana, Punjab

[2]Department of Aquaculture, College of Fisheries, GBPAUT, Pantnagar, Uttarakhand

[3]College of Fishery Science, Nagpur, Maharashtra

## ABSTRACT

Maharashtra's large network of reservoirs, which were originally built for irrigation, water storage, and hydropower generation, has slowly become an important resource for food security, fisheries, and food security. Spread across approximately 2.7 lakh hectares, these water bodies support inland fisheries that are highly essential for rural communities. These reservoirs maintain a wide variety of fish species, including commercially important carps and ecologically valuable native species such as the Deccan Mahseer. These include poor availability of quality fish seed, pollution, and lack of coordinated management or weak management practices, overfishing, invasive species, and declining water quality with better planning and collaboration, Maharashtra’s reservoirs can significantly enhance fish production while conserving biodiversity, ensuring long-term ecological and economic benefits. This paper provides a comprehensive examination of Maharashtra's reservoir fisheries from several perspectives such as the productivity patterns they support, management frameworks, both governmental and community-based

**Keywords:** Reservoir fisheries, Maharashtra, fish production, biodiversity, inland fisheries, invasive species, fish seed, fisheries management, sustainability, community-based management

## INTRODUCTION

India is the world's highest producer of inland capture fisheries. Reservoirs form a vital part of this achievement. Maharashtra's reservoir water area covers roughly 2,73,750 hectares (Bhendarkar et al., 2020). Maharashtra, one of India's largest and most economically significant states of man-made reservoirs. For communities living primarily near their banks, Maharashtra's reservoir fisheries have evolved into a crucial source of income, food, and rural employment—especially in rain-shadow regions, where low rainfall threatens alternative agricultural livelihoods (Sugunan, 1995; Jhingran, 1988).

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**Geographic and Hydrological Profile of Maharashtra's Reservoirs:** Maharashtra's river systems drain in three principal directions: the rivers of the Konkan coast—including the Ulhas, Vashishti, and Savitri—flow westward into the Arabian Sea, while the major rivers of the Deccan plateau—the Godavari, Bhima, and Krishna, and their tributaries—flow eastward into the Bay of Bengal. The Western Ghats, spreading north to south through the state, act as the main watershed divide (Sugunan, 1995). Jayakwadi (39,777 hectares), Ujjaini (29,000 hectares), Shivsagar (11,216 hectares), Yeldari (9,472 hectares), Darna (7,500 hectares), Itiadoh (7,345 hectares), and Girna (5,420 hectares) are major reservoirs of Maharashtra.

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**Fish Species Diversity and Ichthyofaunal Composition:** Maharashtra's freshwater bodies, including its reservoirs, that reflects the state's two major biogeographic zones—the peninsular Indian region and the Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot. Studies on Maharashtra's freshwater fish diversity have revealed a number of species with the family Cyprinidae regularly leading fish assemblages in terms of species richness and species abundance (Sarwade & Khillare, 2010; Pawar 2014). A study of the Ujani reservoir—the third-largest reservoir in Maharashtra—documented 56 freshwater fish species belonging to 39 genera and 18 families, including 41 endemic species (Sarwade et al., 2025).

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**Impact of Reservoir Creation on Fish Composition:** Pre-impoundment riverine fish assemblages—dominated by rheophilic (current-loving) species such as Mahseer, hill-stream loaches, and members of family adapted to fast-flowing, well-oxygenated conditions—give way to lacustrine communities tolerant of lentic (still water) conditions. Studies on Maharashtra's reservoirs frequently identify the dominance of the Cyprinidae family in reservoir captures, matching national patterns described by Sugunan (1995) and the FAO's comprehensive analysis of Indian reservoir fisheries. The Maharashtra Department of Fisheries has implemented stocking policy for newly constructed reservoirs, with fingerlings stocked at 100% of optimum stocking capacity in the first two years, reducing to 75%, 50%, and 25% in subsequent years (Department of Fisheries, Government of Maharashtra, n.d.).

**Production Potential and Current Yields**: One of the most constant findings of reservoir fisheries research in Maharashtra—and indeed across India—is the inverse link between reservoir size and fish productivity per unit area. Small reservoirs (< 1,000 ha) record the highest average fish yields, approximately 28.68 kg $ha^{-1}$ in Maharashtra, compared to 14.44 kg $ha^{-1}$ in medium reservoirs and 10.21 kg $ha^{-1}$ in large reservoirs (Bhendarkar et al., 2020).

## Problems and Constraints in Reservoir Fisheries Management

- **Invasion by Exotic Fish Species:** The spread of invasive exotic fish species, which endanger the richness and productivity of local fish communities is affecting Maharashtra's reservoir fisheries. The identified invasive species, including Tilapia (*Oreochromis mossambicus*), African catfish (*Clarias gariepinus*), Suckermouth armored catfish (*Pterygoplichthys paradalis*), and Pacu (*Piaractus brachypomus*) have been found to pose serious threats to native fish diversity in the Ujani reservoir, which may be the most striking recognized case. (Sarwade et al., 2025, Patil & Patil, 2020).

- **Overfishing and Poaching:** Sustainable reservoir fisheries management in Maharashtra is severely hampered by uncontrolled and excessive fishing activity, including widespread poaching by unlicensed fishermen. At the Itiadoh reservoir in the Gondia area, where no restriction period had been put, the lack of a formal closed season was specifically recognized as a management deficiency (Keshave et al., 2014).

- **Fish Seed Quality and Supply Deficit:** Maharashtra's reservoir fisheries potential is a persistent lack of quality fish seed. As mentioned before, the state's hatcheries can produce approximately 35% of the fish seed required to replenish its reservoirs at desired densities, with the balance imported from other states (Sonone et al., 2020).

## Conservation Imperatives and Strategies:

- **Protection of Native and Endemic Species:** The experience at Ujani reservoir, where BNHS has proposed the introduction of native species from the Venna, Koyna, and Krishna rivers and the establishment of Deccan Mahseer breeding hatcheries, exemplifies the type of species-specific recovery programming needed (BNHS & Fisheries Department, 2025).

- **Control of Invasive Species:** The control, elimination, or long-term suppression of invasive fish species from Maharashtra's reservoirs, especially tilapia, African catfish, and suckermouth catfish. Strict enforcement of current bans on the release of ornamental and aquaculture-destined exotic species into natural water bodies is one of the most important regulatory measures to stop the continued entrance of exotic fish species into open water bodies (Sandilyan, 2022).

- **Community-Based Co-Management:** The best way to conserve and manage reservoir fisheries is through co-management frameworks. Evidence from the Upper Wardha reservoir cooperative, the BNHS-fisheries department-Cipla Foundation partnership at Ujani, and other similar community-managed reservoir fisheries in India shows that communities with secure, long-term rights to reservoir resources have strong reasons to manage them sustainably (Gautam et al., 2021).
- **Policy and Regulatory Reforms:** The National Fisheries Policy 2020 and the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) offer a national framework to support and fund these reforms in Maharashtra.

**CONCLUSION**: Maharashtra's reservoir fisheries represent an immense natural asset that has thus far been managed well below its biological and economic potential. However, the sector is constrained by a merging set of challenges: insufficient fish seed production, uncontrolled species growth, inadequate governance of fishing activity, poor water quality, limited adherence to conservation legislation, and institutional fragmentation. The most promising trajectories for change combine scientific rigor with community-based management practices. Evidence from reservoirs such as Upper Wardha— from the ecological restoration initiative at Ujani demonstrates that transformative improvement is achievable when the right combination of governance, science, and community engagement is in place (Gautam et al., 2021; Down to Earth, 2026). Scaling these models of best practice to the full spectrum of Maharashtra's reservoirs, while simultaneously strengthening the conservation infrastructure needed to protect the state's remarkable freshwater biodiversity, represents the central challenge and opportunity for reservoir fisheries management in Maharashtra in the coming decades.

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# The River's Pulse: Understanding and Protecting India's Fish Diversity

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**Khuleshwar, Hari Prasad Mohale, Yagnesh B. Motivarash and N. Sarang**

Department of Fisheries Resource Management, DSVCKV, LSPN, College of Fisheries, Kawardha, Chhattisgarh

## ABSTRACT

India's rivers, lakes, wetlands, and streams form some of the richest freshwater ecosystems in the world, supporting a wide range of unique fish and aquatic species. These ecosystems are closely linked to human life, providing food, income, and cultural value to millions of people. However, they are increasingly threatened by pollution, habitat loss, overfishing, invasive species, and climate change, which are disrupting ecological balance. To address these challenges, conservation efforts such as protecting key habitats, promoting sustainable fishing, and involving local communities are being encouraged. Protecting freshwater biodiversity is essential for maintaining both ecological health and human well-being for future generations.

**Keywords:** Aquatic ecosystems, Conservation, Freshwater biodiversity, Fish diversity

## INTRODUCTION

India boasts one of the world's richest freshwater ecosystems thanks to its amazing network of rivers, lakes, wetlands, and mountain streams. These waters, which range from the powerful Ganga–Brahmaputra river system to the snow-fed rivers of the Himalayas and the crystal-clear streams of the Western Ghats, are home to a diverse range of fish and other aquatic species, many of which are unique to the planet. Millions of families rely on freshwater resources for food, income, and everyday living, and rivers and fish have cultural and historic value in many communities, making this rich biodiversity not merely a part of nature but also closely related to human life.

However, pollution, habitat loss, overfishing, and climate change are putting more and more strain on this priceless natural resource. Therefore, preserving fish and rivers is just one aspect of protecting these freshwater ecosystems; another is ensuring the livelihoods, customs, and future well-being of people throughout India. Effective river management and conservation methods targeted at maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services require an understanding of the complex effects of pulsed high flow episodes (Arthington et al. 2010; Arthington et al. 2024).

## India's Aquatic Richness: A Biodiversity Treasure

India's freshwater ecosystems are among the world's richest and most diverse, shaped by major river systems like the Ganga–Brahmaputra, Indus, Godavari, and Krishna, along with numerous lakes, wetlands, and hill streams. This wide range of habitats supports a high diversity of fish species, many of which are endemic, especially in biodiversity hotspots such as the Western Ghats and Eastern Himalayas. Freshwater fishes, from large species like the golden mahseer to smaller native species, play a key role in maintaining ecological balance by regulating food webs and recycling nutrients. These ecosystems also support millions of people through food, livelihoods, and cultural value, making their conservation essential for both environmental sustainability and the preservation of India's natural heritage.

Wetlands and freshwater habitats are under growing pressure globally, making it difficult to maintain such high biodiversity. Since 1970, an estimated 35% of the world's wetland areas which include marshes, swamps, bogs, and fens have vanished (Biswas et al. 2022). Wetlands are essential for preserving and boosting regional biodiversity because they are vital to biological cycles and ecological balance. Wetland biodiversity protection still necessitates robust execution, increased knowledge, and active community participation despite a plethora of government regulations, international agreements, and conservation projects (Joosten 2016). The environment has been crucial in preserving biological cycles and fostering high species diversity, making its conservation essential for sustaining freshwater ecosystems.

## Diverse Habitats and Unique Fish Species

India's freshwater ecosystems contain a wide variety of habitats—from fast-flowing Himalayan rivers and monsoon-fed Indo-Gangetic floodplains to the shaded streams of the Western Ghats, lakes, and wetlands which create highly diverse living conditions for fish species. Each habitat supports species with unique adaptations, such as streamlined fish in swift hill streams and others adapted to calm, nutrient-rich waters. Seasonal changes, especially the monsoon, further shape breeding and feeding patterns, leading to high species diversity and endemism, including iconic fish like the golden mahseer (Tor tor) and endemic species such as

*Sahyadria denisonii* and *Sahyadria chalakkudiensis*. This interconnected system of habitats and species is ecologically delicate, making its conservation essential to maintain biodiversity and ecological balance. Additionally, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN, 2018) found that population size losses, which are frequently linked to decreased genetic diversity, are a contributing factor to growing conservation concern.

## Economic and Cultural Importance of Freshwater Fisheries

Freshwater fisheries in India are closely linked to people's livelihoods, nutrition, and cultural traditions, especially in rural and river-dependent regions. Millions of people rely on inland fishing, fish farming, and related activities such as processing and market trade for their income, while freshwater fish also serve as an affordable and important source of protein that supports food security. Beyond their economic value, fisheries are deeply embedded in cultural and spiritual life, with rivers often regarded as sacred and fishing practices passed down through generations as part of community heritage. Species like the golden mahseer (Tor tor) also hold special significance for anglers and nature enthusiasts, reflecting the strong connection between people and freshwater ecosystems. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2014), lakes, rivers, streams, canals, reservoirs, and other land-locked water bodies are considered inland waterways. Although freshwater is typically associated with the term "inland," some landlocked saltwater bodies, including the Caspian Sea, are also included (FAO 2014).

**Production Potential and Current Yields**: One of the most constant findings of reservoir fisheries research in Maharashtra—and indeed across India—is the inverse link between reservoir size and fish productivity per unit area. Small reservoirs (< 1,000 ha) record the highest average fish yields, approximately 28.68 kg $ha^{-1}$ in Maharashtra, compared to 14.44 kg $ha^{-1}$ in medium reservoirs and 10.21 kg $ha^{-1}$ in large reservoirs (Bhendarkar et al., 2020).

## Threats to Freshwater Ecosystems

India's freshwater ecosystems are increasingly threatened by human activities and environmental change. Pollution from domestic sewage, agricultural runoff, and industrial waste reduces water quality and oxygen levels, harming aquatic life. Habitat destruction caused by dam construction, sand mining, deforestation, and altered river flow disrupts breeding and migration routes; while overfishing and destructive fishing practices further reduce fish populations. Invasive species also compete with native fish for resources, and climate change adds additional stress through altered rainfall patterns, rising temperatures, and changing river dynamics. Together, these pressures are leading to a serious decline in freshwater biodiversity and ecosystem health. If left unchecked, these concerns can lead to long-term biodiversity loss in these delicate ecosystems and severe conditions for freshwater animals. Fresh water from streams, rivers, and lakes sustains life and provides necessary services for human well-being (Aylward et al., 2005; Vörösmarty et al., 2005; Carpenter et al., 2011).

## Conservation Efforts and Sustainable Practices

India is using a range of conservation strategies to protect and restore its freshwater ecosystems, including the creation of protected areas such as fish sanctuaries and regulated river stretches where fishing is restricted to allow natural recovery of fish populations. Sustainable fishing practices like avoiding juvenile catch, using selective gear, and enforcing seasonal bans during breeding periods are also being promoted. Local communities and fishermen play an important role in conservation efforts, while government policies help reduce pollution and habitat loss. In addition, scientific research supports better management of fish populations and ecosystems. Together, these combined efforts aim to conserve freshwater biodiversity while ensuring the sustainable use of water resources. According to certain research, attempts to regulate environmental conditions which are crucial for preservation may also indirectly contribute to long-term environmental problems if they significantly rely on energy usage (National Museums Directors, 2010). Simply said, employing energy-intensive techniques to uphold stringent environmental regulations may occasionally increase the hazards associated with climate change that impact natural and cultural heritage sites (Elizabeth Pye and Dean Sully, 2007).

## The Way Forward: Protecting Our Aquatic Future

Future protection of India's freshwater ecosystems depends on collective action, as rivers, lakes, and wetlands are closely tied to human life, livelihoods, and the environment. Rising pressures from pollution, habitat loss, overfishing, and climate change require cooperation between the government, scientists, and local communities. Stronger laws and enforcement, along with scientific research on fish and ecosystems, can improve conservation outcomes, while community participation ensures better protection at the local level. Practical steps such as restoring degraded rivers, maintaining natural water flow, and promoting sustainable fishing can strengthen ecosystem resilience. Ultimately, conserving freshwater biodiversity is essential not only for protecting fish but also for securing clean water, livelihoods, and cultural heritage for future generations. Under some circumstances, even "replacement" or substitute ecosystems may be preferable to no ecological restoration at all in urban environments (Crowther et al., 2022).

**CONCLUSION**: India's freshwater ecosystems are an important part of its natural heritage, supporting rich biodiversity and the livelihoods of millions of people. Rivers, lakes, wetlands, and streams provide habitat for many unique fish species and help maintain ecological balance. However, these ecosystems are increasingly threatened by pollution, habitat loss, overfishing, invasive species, and climate change. Protecting them requires sustainable practices, strong conservation efforts, and active participation from communities and authorities. Safeguarding freshwater resources is essential to ensure they continue to support both nature and human well-being in the future.

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# Phytotherapy in Aquaculture: A Sustainable Approach to Fish Disease Management

**Article id: FS 10006**

**Funde Aniket Raghunath[I]* & Isha Kumari[I]**

[I]M.F.Sc., ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Education, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

## ABSTRACT

Aquaculture is a rapidly expanding sector that plays a crucial role in global food security and economic development. However, the increasing incidence of infectious diseases poses a major challenge to sustainable fish production. Conventional disease control methods, particularly the use of antibiotics and chemicals, have led to problems such as antimicrobial resistance, environmental pollution, and drug residues in aquatic products. In this context, phytotherapy has emerged as a promising and eco-friendly alternative for fish disease management. This approach utilizes plant-derived products rich in bioactive compounds such as alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, and terpenoids, which exhibit antimicrobial, antioxidant, and immunostimulatory properties. Phytotherapy enhances fish immunity, inhibits a wide range of pathogens, reduces stress, and promotes growth performance. It can be applied through various methods including feed additives, bath treatments, and water applications. Despite its advantages, challenges such as variability in efficacy, lack of standardized dosages, and limited large-scale validation remain. Overall, phytotherapy represents a sustainable and cost-effective strategy for improving fish health and reducing dependency on synthetic drugs, thereby supporting environmentally responsible aquaculture practices.

## INTRODUCTION

Aquaculture is one of the fastest-growing food-producing sectors globally and plays a vital role in ensuring food security, nutrition, and livelihoods. However, the rapid intensification of fish farming has led to increased outbreaks of diseases caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites. These disease problems not only reduce productivity and profitability but also pose serious challenges to sustainable aquaculture. Traditionally, antibiotics and chemical treatments have been widely used to control fish diseases. However, their excessive and indiscriminate use has resulted in issues such as antimicrobial resistance, environmental contamination, and the presence of drug residues in fish products.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in alternative and eco-friendly approaches for disease management in aquaculture. One such promising strategy is phytotherapy, which involves the use of plant-derived products such as herbs, extracts, and essential oils for therapeutic purposes. Medicinal plants are rich in bioactive compounds like alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, and terpenoids, which possess antimicrobial, antioxidant, and immunostimulatory properties. These properties make phytotherapy an effective tool for enhancing fish health, improving disease resistance, and reducing dependence on synthetic drugs. Therefore, phytotherapy is emerging as a sustainable and cost-effective approach in fish disease management, aligning with the principles of environmentally responsible aquaculture.

## Disease Prevention (Immunostimulation)

Many medicinal plants play a significant role in disease prevention in fish by acting as natural immunostimulants that enhance the innate immune system. These plant-derived compounds help strengthen the fish's first line of defence by improving key immune responses such as phagocytic activity, which enables immune cells to engulf and destroy pathogens, and lysozyme activity, which helps break down bacterial cell walls. In addition, they boost the production of antioxidant enzymes that protect fish from oxidative stress caused by environmental factors and infections. This overall enhancement of immune function increases the ability of fish to resist diseases and maintain better health under culture conditions. For instance, garlic (Allium sativum) is widely recognized for its antimicrobial and immune-boosting properties, helping fish resist bacterial infections, while tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) is known to enhance immune responses and improve disease resistance. Therefore, incorporating medicinal plants into aquaculture practices offers a safe, effective, and eco-friendly approach to preventing diseases and promoting fish health.

## Diverse Habitats and Unique Fish Species

India's freshwater ecosystems contain a wide variety of habitats—from fast-flowing Himalayan rivers and monsoon-fed Indo-Gangetic floodplains to the shaded streams of the Western Ghats, lakes, and wetlands which create highly diverse living conditions for fish species. Each habitat supports species with unique adaptations, such as streamlined fish in swift hill streams and others adapted to calm, nutrient-rich waters. Seasonal changes, especially the monsoon, further shape breeding and feeding patterns, leading to high species diversity and endemism, including iconic fish like the golden mahseer (Tor tor) and endemic species such as *Sahyadria denisonii* and *Sahyadria chalakkudiensis*. This interconnected system of habitats and species is ecologically delicate, making its conservation essential to maintain biodiversity and ecological balance. Additionally, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN, 2018) found that population size losses, which are frequently linked to decreased genetic diversity, are a contributing factor to growing conservation concern.

## Antimicrobial Activity

Freshwater fisheries in India are closely linked to people's livelihoods, nutrition, and cultural traditions, especially in rural and river-dependent regions. Millions of people rely on inland fishing, fish farming, and related activities such as processing and market trade for their income, while freshwater fish also serve as an affordable and important source of protein that supports food security. Beyond their economic value, fisheries are deeply embedded in cultural and spiritual life, with rivers often regarded as sacred and fishing practices passed down through generations as part of community heritage. Species like the golden mahseer (Tor tor) also hold special significance for anglers and nature enthusiasts, reflecting the strong connection between people and freshwater ecosystems. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2014), lakes, rivers, streams, canals, reservoirs, and other land-locked water bodies are considered inland waterways. Although freshwater is typically associated with the term "inland," some landlocked saltwater bodies, including the Caspian Sea, are also included (FAO 2014).

**Alternative to Antibiotics**: Phytotherapy serves as an effective alternative to antibiotics in fish disease management, helping to overcome many of the challenges associated with conventional drug use. The excessive use of antibiotics in aquaculture has led to serious issues such as the development of antibiotic-resistant pathogens and the accumulation of drug residues in fish products, which can pose risks to human health and limit export potential. In contrast, plant-based treatments are natural, biodegradable, and generally safer for both fish and the environment. By reducing reliance on antibiotics, phytotherapy not only minimizes the risk of resistance development but also ensures cleaner and safer fish products. Therefore, the use of medicinal plants supports sustainable and eco-friendly aquaculture practices while maintaining fish health and productivity.

## Stress Reduction and Growth Promotion

Herbal additives play an important role in reducing stress and promoting growth in fish, thereby improving overall aquaculture productivity. The inclusion of plant-based supplements in feed has been shown to enhance feed intake and digestion, leading to better nutrient utilization and increased growth rates. In addition, many medicinal plants possess adaptogenic properties, which help fish cope with environmental stressors such as temperature fluctuations, poor water quality, and handling stress. By improving stress tolerance, these plants help maintain physiological balance and reduce the negative impacts of stress on immunity and growth. As a result, the use of herbal additives not only promotes healthier and faster-growing fish but also contributes to more stable and efficient aquaculture systems.

## Mode of Application

Phytotherapeutic agents can be applied in aquaculture through several methods, depending on the type of disease and management strategy. The most common method is the use of herbal extracts as feed additives, where they are incorporated into fish diets to improve immunity, growth, and overall health. In cases of external infections, bath treatments are often used, allowing fish to absorb the active compounds directly through their skin and gills. Plant-based formulations can also be added directly to the water as water additives to control pathogens present in the culture environment. In certain situations, injectable extracts may be used for targeted treatment, although this method is less common due to practical limitations in large-scale aquaculture. These diverse modes of application make phytotherapy a flexible and effective approach in fish disease management.

## LIMITATIONS

Despite its many advantages, phytotherapy in aquaculture also has certain limitations that restrict its widespread application. One of the major challenges is the variability in effectiveness, which depends on factors such as the plant species used, the part of the plant, and the method of extraction, leading to inconsistent results. Additionally, there is a lack of standardized dosage protocols, making it difficult for farmers to determine the optimal and safe concentration for use. Scientific validation at large-scale or commercial levels is still limited, as most studies are conducted under laboratory conditions. Moreover, although plant-based products are generally considered safe, the use of high doses may lead to toxicity or adverse effects in fish. Therefore, proper standardization, dosage optimization, and further research are essential to ensure the safe and effective use of phytotherapy in aquaculture.

**Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Phytochemicals and Antibiotics in Fish Disease Management**

| Parameter | Phytochemicals (Plant-based) | Antibiotics |
|---|---|---|
| **Source** | Natural (plants, herbs, extracts) | Synthetic or semi-synthetic |
| **Mode of Action** | Multiple (antimicrobial, immunostimulant, antioxidant) | Specific (targets bacterial cell processes) |
| **Spectrum of Activity** | Broad (bacteria, fungi, parasites) | Mainly bacteria |
| **Resistance Development** | Low risk of resistance development | High risk of antibiotic resistance |
| **Residues in Fish** | Minimal or no harmful residues | Residues may remain in fish tissues |
| **Environmental Impact** | Eco-friendly and biodegradable | Can cause environmental contamination |
| **Safety** | Generally safe at proper doses | May have side effects and toxicity |
| **Cost** | Usually low and locally available | Often expensive |
| **Standardization** | Limited standard protocols | Well standardized dosages |
| **Effectiveness** | Variable, depends on plant and extraction method | Highly consistent and targeted |
| **Regulation** | Less regulated | Strictly regulated |
| **Application** | Feed additives, baths, water treatment | Mainly oral or injectable |

## CONCLUSION

Phytotherapy has emerged as a promising and sustainable approach for fish disease management in modern aquaculture. The use of plant-derived products offers multiple benefits, including enhanced immune response, effective antimicrobial action, reduced stress, and improved growth performance in fish. Unlike conventional antibiotics, phytochemicals present a lower risk of antimicrobial resistance, minimal residual effects, and reduced environmental impact, making them a safer and eco-friendly alternative. However, despite these advantages, certain challenges such as variability in efficacy, lack of standardized dosages, and limited large-scale validation need to be addressed for its wider adoption. With increasing research, proper standardization, and scientific validation, phytotherapy has the potential to play a key role in achieving sustainable and responsible aquaculture practices. Thus, integrating phytotherapy into fish health management strategies can significantly contribute to improved productivity, fish welfare, and long-term environmental sustainability.

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# Planktonic Organisms as Bioindicators of Pollution in Aquatic Environments

**Article id: FS 10007**

**[1]Sheethal K. U, [2]Umesh Suryawanshi, [3]Jayashri Mathpati & [2]Vaishnavi Lodhe**

[1]College of Fisheries, Mangalore, Karnataka

[2]College of Fishery Science, Nagpur, Maharashtra

## ABSTRACT

Planktonic organisms play a pivotal role in aquatic ecosystems and are highly sensitive to environmental changes, including pollution. This review paper provides a comprehensive examination of the use of planktonic organisms as bioindicators of pollution in aquatic environments. We delve into the diverse assemblage of planktonic taxa, including phytoplankton, zooplankton, and bacterioplankton, and explore their responses to various pollutants, such as nutrient enrichment, chemical contaminants, and microplastics. Through interdisciplinary perspectives, we assess the utility of planktonic bioindicators for monitoring pollution levels, evaluating ecosystem health, and informing management strategies. Additionally, we discuss methodological approaches for plankton sampling, data analysis, and interpretation in pollution assessment programs. By synthesizing current knowledge and identifying research gaps, this review aims to advance our understanding of the ecological consequences of pollution on planktonic communities and promote the integration of planktonic bioindicators into holistic approaches for aquatic ecosystem management and conservation.

## INTRODUCTION

Plankton, comprising a diverse array of microscopic organisms, play a vital role in the functioning of aquatic ecosystems worldwide. From the vast expanses of the open ocean to the intricate networks of freshwater lakes and rivers, plankton serve as the foundation of aquatic food webs, fueling productivity and supporting the myriad life forms that depend on them. Planktonic organisms represent a diverse assemblage of microscopic organisms that inhabit aquatic environments, including both marine and freshwater systems. This diverse group encompasses three main categories: phytoplankton, zooplankton, and bacterioplankton. Phytoplankton, consisting of microscopic algae and photosynthetic bacteria, serve as primary producers, harnessing solar energy to convert inorganic nutrients into organic matter through photosynthesis (Stanley et al., 2016). Zooplankton, comprising small animals and protozoans, graze on phytoplankton and serve as important links in aquatic food chains, transferring energy from primary producers to higher trophic levels. Bacterioplankton, consisting of diverse bacterial and archaeal taxa, play crucial roles in nutrient cycling, organic matter decomposition, and biogeochemical transformations in aquatic ecosystems (Xu et al., 2001).

Planktonic organisms are highly sensitive to changes in their environment, making them valuable indicators of water quality and ecosystem health. Due to their short generation times and rapid responses to environmental stressors, plankton can serve as early warning indicators of pollution and ecosystem degradation (Salmaso, 2005). Various pollutants, including excess nutrients, chemical contaminants, and microplastics, can exert detrimental effects on planktonic communities, disrupting their composition, abundance, and ecological functions (Jansson et al., 2010).

We will evaluate the utility of planktonic bioindicators for assessing pollution levels, evaluating ecosystem health, and informing management strategies. Additionally, we will discuss methodological approaches for plankton sampling, data analysis, and interpretation in pollution assessment programs. Finally, we will identify research gaps and future directions for advancing our understanding of the ecological consequences of pollution on planktonic communities and promoting the integration of planktonic bioindicators into holistic approaches for aquatic ecosystem management and conservation.

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## Planktonic Responses to Nutrient Pollution

- **Eutrophication Dynamics and Phytoplankton Blooms**: Eutrophication, a phenomenon characterized by excessive nutrient inputs, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus, can lead to the proliferation of phytoplankton blooms in aquatic ecosystems. The increased availability of nutrients fuels the growth and reproduction of phytoplankton, leading to rapid increases in their abundance and biomass. These blooms can have significant ecological consequences, including reduced water clarity, oxygen depletion, and alterations in ecosystem structure and function (Karl, 2023).

Phytoplankton blooms are often dominated by certain species, such as diatoms, dinoflagellates, or cyanobacteria, depending on environmental conditions and nutrient availability. Some species of phytoplankton, particularly cyanobacteria, have the ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen, further exacerbating nutrient enrichment in eutrophic waters. Additionally, the rapid growth and senescence of phytoplankton blooms can lead to fluctuations in nutrient concentrations, with potential implications for ecosystem dynamics and biogeochemical cycling (Sommer & Lengfellner, 2008).

Management strategies for mitigating eutrophication and phytoplankton blooms often focus on reducing nutrient inputs from anthropogenic sources, such as agricultural runoff, wastewater discharges, and urban stormwater runoff. These strategies may include nutrient management practices, such as buffer strips, cover crops, and nutrient management plans, as well as the implementation of wastewater treatment technologies and stormwater management measures (Edwards and Brendley, 1999).

- **Zooplankton Grazing and Trophic Interactions**: Zooplanktons play a crucial role in regulating phytoplankton populations through grazing and trophic interactions in aquatic ecosystems. Grazing by zooplankton can exert top-down control on phytoplankton abundance and biomass, thereby influencing the dynamics of phytoplankton blooms and eutrophication processes. Zooplankton feeding preferences, grazing rates, and population dynamics are influenced by various factors, including phytoplankton species composition, nutrient availability, temperature, and predation pressure (Dhooge *et al*., 2003).

Certain species of zooplankton, such as copepods, cladocerans, and rotifers, are voracious grazers of phytoplankton, effectively consuming large quantities of algae and regulating their population growth. However, the effectiveness of zooplankton grazing as a mechanism for controlling phytoplankton blooms can be influenced by factors such as zooplankton abundance, size-selective feeding behavior, and the presence of alternative food sources (Ramchandra *et al*., 2006). Understanding zooplankton grazing dynamics and trophic interactions is essential for predicting and managing phytoplankton blooms and eutrophication in aquatic ecosystems. Integrated approaches that consider both top-down (predation) and bottom-up (nutrient availability) controls on phytoplankton dynamics are necessary for developing effective management strategies for mitigating eutrophication and maintaining ecosystem health.

- **Bacterioplankton Community Shifts and Biogeochemical Cycling**: Bacterioplankton, comprising diverse assemblages of bacteria and archaea, play critical roles in biogeochemical cycling and nutrient transformations in aquatic ecosystems. In eutrophic environments, shifts in bacterioplankton community composition and metabolic activity can occur in response to changes in nutrient availability, phytoplankton biomass, and organic matter inputs. The decomposition of organic matter, including phytoplankton-derived detritus, by bacterioplankton drives key biogeochemical processes, such as carbon and nutrient cycling, in aquatic ecosystems (Church *et al*., 2000). Bacterioplankton are responsible for the remineralization of organic carbon and nutrients, releasing inorganic forms (e.g., $CO_2$, ammonia, phosphate) that are readily available for uptake by phytoplankton and other primary producers.

Eutrophication-induced shifts in bacterioplankton community composition and activity can have cascading effects on ecosystem functioning and water quality. Changes in bacterial diversity, metabolic pathways, and functional traits may alter the efficiency of organic matter decomposition, nutrient cycling rates, and the production of greenhouse gases (e.g., CO2, methane) in eutrophic waters. Integrated approaches that consider the interactions between phytoplankton, zooplankton, and bacterioplankton are essential for developing holistic management strategies that address the complex drivers of eutrophication and promote ecosystem resilience and sustainability.

## Planktonic Responses to Chemical Contaminants

- **Organic Pollutants: Pesticides, PCBs, and PAHs:** Organic pollutants, including pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), are ubiquitous contaminants in aquatic environments, originating from agricultural, industrial, and urban sources. These compounds can enter aquatic ecosystems through runoff, atmospheric deposition, and direct discharges, posing risks to planktonic organisms and ecosystem health (Arrhenius *et al*., 2004).

Pesticides, such as herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides, are commonly used in agriculture to control pests and enhance crop yields. However, pesticide residues can contaminate surface waters and exert toxic effects on planktonic organisms, including phytoplankton, zooplankton, and bacterioplankton. Some pesticides may interfere with photosynthesis, respiration, and cellular metabolism in phytoplankton, leading to reduced growth rates and photosynthetic efficiency. Zooplankton may be directly exposed to pesticides through ingestion or dermal contact, resulting in mortality, reproductive impairment, and altered population dynamics.

PCBs and PAHs are persistent organic pollutants that can accumulate in aquatic ecosystems and biomagnify through food webs, posing long-term risks to planktonic organisms and higher trophic levels. These compounds are highly lipophilic and can bioaccumulate in plankton tissues, potentially reaching toxic concentrations in organisms at higher trophic levels. PCBs and PAHs have been associated with developmental abnormalities, reproductive impairments, and immune system dysfunction in planktonic organisms, with implications for ecosystem structure and function. Mitigating the impacts of organic pollutants on planktonic communities requires integrated approaches that address pollution prevention, remediation, and monitoring. Best management practices, such as reducing pesticide use, implementing buffer zones, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices, can help minimize contaminant inputs into aquatic ecosystems. Additionally, advanced treatment technologies, such as activated carbon filtration and phytoremediation, may be employed to remove organic pollutants from contaminated waters and sediments.

- **Heavy Metals: Mercury, Lead, and Cadmium:** Heavy metals, including mercury (Hg), lead (Pb), and cadmium (Cd), are toxic contaminants that can accumulate in aquatic ecosystems and biomagnify through food chains, posing risks to planktonic organisms and human health. These metals are released into the environment through natural processes, such as weathering and volcanic activity, as well as anthropogenic activities, including mining, industrial emissions, and waste disposal.

Mercury is a particularly concerning heavy metal due to its neurotoxicity and ability to bioaccumulate in aquatic organisms. Methylmercury, the organic form of mercury, can be produced by microbial methylation in sediments and water columns, leading to its accumulation in planktonic organisms, particularly at higher trophic levels. Methylmercury exposure can impair neurological development, reproductive success, and immune function in planktonic organisms, with cascading effects on ecosystem structure and function. Lead and cadmium are also toxic metals that can adversely affect planktonic organisms in aquatic ecosystems. Lead can interfere with enzymatic processes, cellular function, and membrane integrity in planktonic organisms, leading to metabolic disruptions and physiological impairments. Cadmium is a known carcinogen and reproductive toxicant, with deleterious effects on growth, development, and survival in planktonic organisms.

Controlling the inputs of heavy metals into aquatic ecosystems requires source reduction, pollution prevention, and remediation measures. Efforts to mitigate mercury contamination may include regulating industrial emissions, implementing pollution control technologies, and reducing mercury use in consumer products. Similarly, lead and cadmium pollution can be addressed through pollution abatement strategies, such as phytoremediation, soil amendments, and contaminated site cleanup (Sbihi *et al*., 2012).

Plankton community composition and diversity metrics serve as valuable indicators of pollution impacts in aquatic ecosystems. Taxonomic diversity indices and species richness metrics quantify the richness and evenness of plankton species, reflecting changes in community structure and ecosystem health in response to pollution stressors. Functional diversity and trait-based approaches provide insights into the ecological roles and adaptive strategies of planktonic organisms, considering functional traits related to feeding strategies, reproductive modes, and tolerance to pollution (Rodgher *et al*., 2012). Molecular techniques, including DNA sequencing, PCR, and metagenomics, offer powerful tools for assessing planktonic communities and their responses to pollution, enabling the identification of key taxa and functional genes involved in pollutant degradation, nutrient cycling, and ecosystem resilience. Integrating these approaches enhances our understanding of pollution impacts on plankton communities and informs management strategies for mitigating pollution effects and preserving aquatic ecosystem health.

## Integrating Planktonic Bioindicators into Pollution Monitoring Programs

Several case studies demonstrate the effectiveness of integrating planktonic bioindicators into pollution monitoring programs. For instance, in the Baltic Sea, plankton community composition changes have been linked to nutrient pollution, guiding management strategies to mitigate eutrophication. Similarly, in freshwater ecosystems, phytoplankton responses to chemical contaminants have informed regulatory decisions to improve water quality. These case studies highlight the utility of planktonic bioindicators for assessing pollution impacts and guiding management actions in diverse aquatic environments (Thakur et al., 2013).

Despite their effectiveness, planktonic bioindicators face several challenges and limitations in pollution monitoring programs. Taxonomic identification can be time-consuming and require specialized expertise, limiting the scalability and applicability of plankton-based assessments. Additionally, plankton communities exhibit natural variability, making it challenging to distinguish between natural fluctuations and pollution-induced changes. Furthermore, plankton responses to pollution can be influenced by multiple stressors, such as climate change and habitat alteration, complicating interpretation and management efforts (Holt and Miller, 2010).

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## Future Scope & Spotlight

Future research should focus on addressing key challenges and advancing the integration of planktonic bioindicators into pollution monitoring programs. Developing rapid and cost-effective molecular techniques for plankton identification can enhance the scalability and efficiency of plankton-based assessments. Additionally, incorporating multi-stressor approaches into monitoring programs can improve our understanding of complex interactions between pollution and other environmental factors. Long-term monitoring efforts are needed to track trends in plankton communities and assess the effectiveness of management interventions over time. Furthermore, interdisciplinary collaborations between researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders are essential for integrating planktonic bioindicators into holistic approaches for aquatic ecosystem management and conservation. By addressing these research priorities, we can enhance the effectiveness of plankton-based pollution assessments and promote sustainable management of aquatic environments.

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## CONCLUSION

Planktonic organisms serve as invaluable bioindicators of pollution in aquatic ecosystems, reflecting changes in water quality and ecosystem health. Through this review, we have synthesized key findings and insights regarding the responses of planktonic communities to different types of pollution, including nutrient enrichment, chemical contaminants, and microplastics. The role of plankton diversity metrics, functional traits, and molecular techniques in assessing pollution impacts and guiding management strategies has been discussed. Plankton-based pollution assessments have significant implications for pollution management and conservation efforts, informing targeted actions to reduce pollutant inputs, restore ecosystem health, and promote sustainable management practices. Future research should focus on addressing key knowledge gaps and advancing methodologies for plankton-based pollution assessments, including long-term monitoring efforts, interdisciplinary collaborations, and investigations into the interactions between pollution stressors and other environmental factors. By prioritizing the protection and restoration of planktonic communities, we can preserve the biodiversity, productivity, and resilience of aquatic ecosystems for future generations.

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# Role of Benthos in Bioturbation and Reclamation

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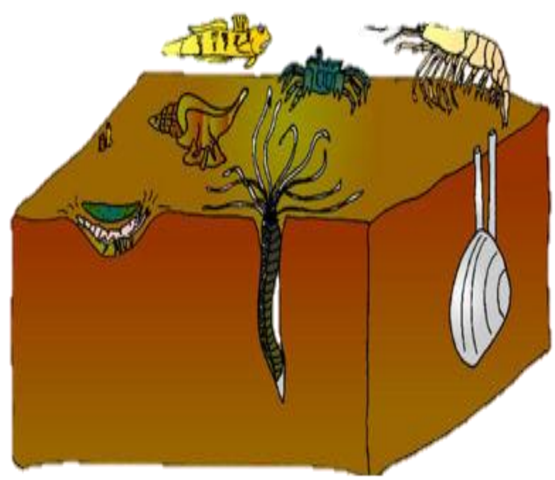
[1]Aitwar Vaijnath*, [2]Suryawanshi Umesh, [1]Madhavi K., [1]Usharani A., [1]Chamundeshwari B., [1]Prasanna [1]Laxmi U., and [1]Neha P.
[2]College of Fisheries, Narsapuram, West Godavari (Andhra Pradesh)
[1]College of Fishery Science, Nagpur (Maharashtra)

## INTRODUCTION



Bioturbation is defined as the reworking of soils and sediments by animals or plants. It includes burrowing, ingesting, and defecating sediment grains by living organisms. The formal study of bioturbation began in the 1800s when Charles Darwin experimented in his garden. Disrupting aquatic sediments and terrestrial soils through bioturbating activities provides significant ecosystem services. These include the alteration of nutrients in aquatic sediment and overlying water, shelter to other species in the form of burrows in terrestrial and water ecosystems, and soil production on land. The benthic organisms play a crucial role in bioturbation and reclamation processes. Here's an overview of their roles:

**Sediment re-mixing:** Benthic organisms such as burrowing worms, molluscs and crustaceans actively move through the sediment, creating tunnels and burrows. As they burrow and feed, they disturb and re-mix the sediments, bringing fresh organic matter from the surface into deeper layers and mixing different sediment particles. This reworking process enhances sediment porosity and oxygen diffusion, making the habitat more favourable for other living organisms.

**Bioturbation:** Benthic organisms are vital drivers of bioturbation, which refers to sediments' physical and biochemical alteration through their activities. It plays a significant role in sediment mixing, nutrient cycling, and the distribution of organic matter. Benthic organisms actively move through the sediment, burrowing, feeding and excreting waste. These activities mix and churn the sediment layers, enhancing oxygen and nutrient exchange and promoting the breakdown and recycling of organic matter.

**Sediment oxygenation:** Bioturbation by benthic organisms helps to oxygenate the sediments. As they burrow and mix the sediment layers, they create pathways for exchanging oxygen between the water column and the deeper sediment layers. This oxygenation is vital for the survival of aerobic bacteria and other organisms residing in the sediment and for various biogeochemical processes, including the decomposition of organic matter.

**Nutrient Cycling:** Benthic organisms influence nutrient cycling in sediments. Burrowing and ingesting sediment particles enhance the release of nutrients trapped within the sediment matrix. Additionally, their excretion and decomposition of organic matter contribute to the recycling of nutrients, making them available for other organisms. The process helps to distribute nutrients more evenly throughout the sediment, supporting the growth and productivity of benthic and pelagic organisms.

**Sediment Stability:** Benthic organisms, particularly burrowing species, play a role in sediment stability. Their burrowing activities disrupt sediment particles, making the sediment structure looser and more permeable. This can positively affect sediment stability by increasing water infiltration and reducing the likelihood of sediment erosion during currents or wave action.

**Benthic-Pelagic Coupling:** Bioturbation creates a vital link between the benthic and pelagic (water column) habitats. The activities of benthic organisms influence nutrient availability and particle dynamics in the water column, affecting phytoplankton growth and distribution. In turn, phytoplankton serve as the base of the marine food web, influencing the abundance and distribution of higher trophic levels.

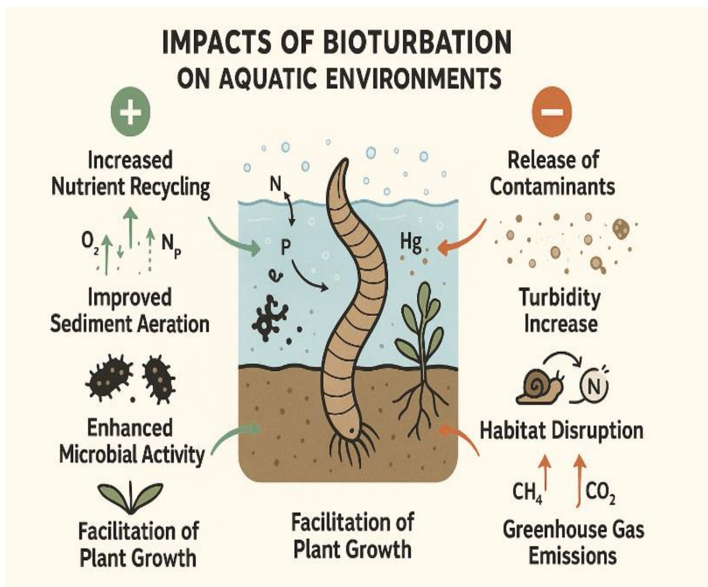
**Reclamation and Restoration:** Benthic organisms can aid in the reclamation and restoration of degraded ecosystems. In areas impacted by human activities or natural disturbances, the presence of benthic organisms can accelerate the recovery process. Their burrowing and bioturbation activities help break up compacted sediments, enhance sediment oxygenation, and promote nutrient cycling, facilitating the recolonization of other benthic and pelagic organisms.

## Impacts of bioturbation on aquatic environments

Bioturbation changes preserved in the rock record enable the recognition of 3 significant events in the evolution of aquatic ecosystems: the colonization of infaunal habitats in shallow marine settings, the colonization of the deep sea and the colonization of freshwater environments. The infaunal activity was negligible in the Precambrian. Still, the Cambrian radiation of marine invertebrates led to a 'substrate revolution' (Bottjer et al. 2000).

Through burrowing, feeding, ventilatory and locomotory behaviour, infauna altered biochemical and diagenetic reactions profoundly. It facilitated a radical redistribution of sediment particles and pore water across the sediment-water interface.

While the impact of bioturbation is species-specific and context-dependent, it directly alters critical ecosystem processes, including organic matter remineralization and decomposition, nutrient cycling, pollutant release, sediment resuspension and microbial activity (Rhoads 1974, Aller 1982, Krantzberg 1985). As bioturbating organisms evolved, a temporally and spatially dynamic mosaic of microenvironments was created, enabling the exploitation of new eco-space and the development of more complex and diverse benthic communities.




## CONCLUSION

Understanding the roles of benthic organisms in bioturbation and reclamation is crucial for effective ecosystem management and habitat restoration. By recognizing the importance of these organisms, conservation efforts can focus on preserving and restoring benthic communities to support the overall health and functioning of aquatic ecosystems.

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# Seaweed Farming in Maharashtra: Building a Resilient Livelihood for Coastal Communities

## Article id: FS 10009

[1]Bhosale Rameshwar Venkatrao & [2]Umesh Suryawanshi

[1] Regional Business Development Consultant, Konkan Region, Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal, Thane, Maharashtra
[2]Assistant Professor, College of Fishery Science, Nagpur, Maharashtra

## INTRODUCTION

Maharashtra’s 720-kilometre coastline has long been the backbone of livelihoods for thousands of fishing families, supporting not only traditional fishing but also allied activities such as fish processing, drying, and local trade (Deshmukh, V. D. (2013). Districts such as Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg are deeply dependent on marine resources for income and employment, with entire village economies revolving around the sea. For generations, fishing has been both a cultural identity and a primary source of sustenance for these communities (Karnad, D. 2017).

However, in recent years, this dependence has become increasingly fragile. Declining fish catch due to overfishing and environmental changes, rising fuel and operational costs, seasonal fishing bans during monsoon months, and the growing impact of climate variability have significantly reduced income stability (Islam et al,.2020). Many fishing households now face irregular earnings, debt cycles, and limited alternative livelihood options, especially affecting women and youth who often remain underemployed.

In this challenging scenario, the need for diversified, sustainable, and locally adaptable livelihood options has become critical. Seaweed farming is emerging as one such promising solution. It offers a low-risk, eco-friendly, and economically viable alternative that can be practiced alongside traditional fishing. With short cultivation cycles, minimal investment requirements, and increasing market demand, seaweed farming has the potential to provide regular income, reduce livelihood vulnerability, and enhance resilience among coastal communities (Krishnan et al., 2019). As adoption grows, it is increasingly seen as a transformative activity capable of reshaping the socio-economic landscape of Maharashtra's coastal regions.

## A Shift Towards Sustainable Livelihoods

The need for livelihood diversification in coastal areas has never been greater. Fishing, once a stable source of income, is now affected by multiple external factors (Brugère et al.,2008). Seaweed farming provides a practical solution by offering:

- Regular and short income cycles (30–45 days)
- Low operational costs and minimal risk
- Year-round livelihood opportunities
- Reduced dependence on fishing activities

This shift not only strengthens household income but also builds resilience against environmental and economic shocks.

## Understanding Seaweed and Its Economic Value

Seaweed refers to marine macroalgae that grow in coastal seawater. It is rich in nutrients and widely used across industries. The most commonly cultivated varieties in India include *Kappaphycus alvarezii* and *Gracilaria*, which are processed into valuable compounds like agar and carrageenan (Mantri, V. A. 2025).

Seaweed has diverse applications in:

- **Food industry** (stabilizers, health supplements)
- **Pharmaceuticals** (medicinal extracts)
- **Cosmetics** (skin care products)
- **Agriculture** (organic fertilizers and bio-stimulants)
- **Industrial products** (bioplastics, packaging materials)

The increasing global demand for natural and sustainable products ensures a strong and growing market for seaweed, making it a commercially viable crop.

**Simple and Scalable Cultivation Process:** Seaweed farming is relatively simple and does not require advanced technical skills. It can be adopted quickly with basic training:

1. **Site Selection:** Shallow coastal waters (1–3 meters depth) with clean water and low wave action
2. **Infrastructure Setup:** Bamboo rafts or nylon rope longlines anchored in the sea
3. **Seeding:** Small cuttings tied at intervals on ropes
4. **Growth Phase:** Natural growth using sunlight and seawater nutrients
5. **Harvesting:** Ready within 30–45 days
6. **Post-Harvest:** Cleaning, sun-drying, and packaging

The simplicity of this process makes it highly suitable for community-based implementation, especially through SHGs and fisher groups.

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### Strong Livelihood and Income Potential

Seaweed farming offers a reliable and attractive income model for coastal households. With short cultivation cycles of 30–45 days, it ensures regular and predictable cash flow throughout the year (Ginigaddara et al., 2018). Unlike traditional fishing, which is seasonal and uncertain, seaweed cultivation provides a steady supplementary income, especially during lean periods and fishing bans. The activity requires low investment and minimal inputs, reducing financial risk. It also supports group-based approaches like SHGs, enhancing overall earnings. As farmers gain experience and expand operations, income can increase significantly, making seaweed farming a sustainable and scalable livelihood option for coastal communities (Tamang, and Chattopadhyay, 2025).

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### Women-Centric and Inclusive Livelihood

One of the most impactful aspects of seaweed farming is its suitability for women. It promotes inclusive participation and empowerment:

- Activities are simple and labour-friendly
- Work can be managed near coastal areas
- Encourages group-based operations through SHGs

Women can actively engage in:

- Seed preparation
- Rope tying and maintenance
- Drying and value addition
- Packaging and marketing

This leads to financial independence, improved decision-making power, and enhanced social status within communities.

## Role of SHGs, FFPO and Community Institutions

Seaweed farming thrives under a cluster-based approach. Institutions such as SHGs, Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs play a crucial role in:

- Mobilizing and organizing community mem bers
- Facilitating training and exposure visits
- Supporting access to government schemes
- Aggregating produce for better market prices

Such collective models reduce risk, improve efficiency, and ensure sustainable scaling of the activity (Meghla et al., 2024).

## Policy Support and Government Initiatives

The Government of India is actively promoting seaweed cultivation under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, which aims to enhance fishery-based livelihoods and promote the blue economy.

Key support includes:

- Capital subsidy (40%–60%) for infrastructure
- Training and skill development programs
- Seed supply and technical assistance
- Support for processing and market linkage

State fisheries departments and research institutions are also encouraging pilot projects and cluster-based farming in coastal Maharashtra.

## Market Linkages and Value Addition

Seaweed has a well-established market due to its industrial applications. Buyers include:

- Agar and carrageenan processing units
- Cosmetic and pharmaceutical companies

- Organic agriculture input manufacturers

Beyond selling raw dried seaweed, communities can explore value addition:

- Seaweed powder and flakes
- Liquid bio-fertilizers
- Nutritional and food products

Value addition can significantly increase income, turning seaweed farming into a micro-enterprise model (Langford, et al., 2023).

## Challenges and Opportunities

Despite its potential, certain challenges need to be addressed:

- Limited awareness and technical knowledge
- Initial resistance to adopting new practices
- Market access in remote areas
- Regulatory permissions for coastal use

However, these challenges can be overcome through:

- Training and capacity building
- Demonstration farms and exposure visits
- Strong institutional support and partnerships

## Environmental and Social Benefits

Seaweed farming contributes positively to the environment:

- Absorbs carbon dioxide and reduces ocean pollution
- Improves marine biodiversity
- Requires no chemical inputs
- Reduces migration
- Creates local employment
- Strengthens community resilience

## Future Potential in Maharashtra

India is aiming to become a global hub for seaweed production, and Maharashtra has immense untapped potential. With increasing government support, private sector participation, and community involvement, seaweed farming can become a mainstream livelihood activity along the state’s coastline (Qureshi et al., 2025).

## CONCLUSION

Seaweed farming is more than just an alternative activity-it is a pathway to sustainable livelihood transformation in coastal Maharashtra. With its low investment requirements, quick returns, and strong market demand, it offers a practical solution to the challenges faced by fishing communities. By promoting seaweed cultivation through SHGs, FFPO, FPO, and government initiatives, Maharashtra can build a resilient, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable coastal economy, ensuring better livelihoods for thousands of families.

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# Management of Ichthyofaunal Fish Biodiversity of Reservoirs through Appropriate Gear

**Article id: FS 10010**

**Umesh Suryawanshi**
College of Fishery Science, Nagpur, Maharashtra, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University, Nagpur, India

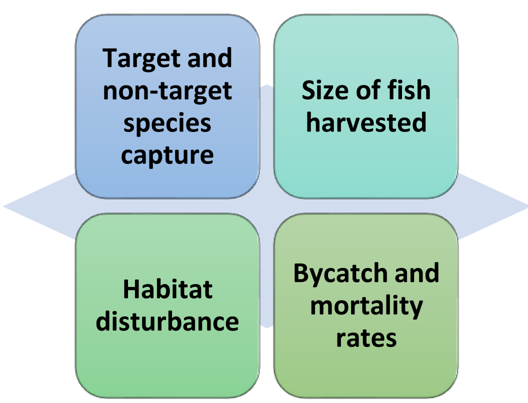
## ABSTRACT

Reservoir ecosystems support rich ichthyofaunal diversity and contribute significantly to inland fisheries. However, unregulated fishing practices and inappropriate gear use threaten fish biodiversity, leading to habitat degradation, juvenile mortality, and species imbalance. This article discusses the role of fishing gear in biodiversity management and highlights strategies for sustainable reservoir fisheries through selective and eco-friendly gear practices.

## INTRODUCTION

Ichthyofaunal diversity refers to the variety and abundance of fish species in aquatic ecosystems. Reservoirs act as important freshwater habitats supporting commercial and subsistence fisheries. However, anthropogenic pressures such as overfishing, habitat alteration, and destructive fishing practices are major threats to fish diversity.  Fishing gear plays a crucial role in shaping fish community structure, as it determines species selectivity, size selectivity, and bycatch levels. Proper regulation of fishing gear is therefore essential for maintaining ecological balance and ensuring sustainable fisheries.

### Fishing gear directly influences:



Studies show that inappropriate gear, such as small mesh nets or trawls, often results in high juvenile catch and biodiversity loss. Additionally, abandoned or lost fishing gear (ghost gear) continues to trap aquatic organisms, posing a serious threat to biodiversity.

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## Types of Fishing Gear Used in Reservoirs

- **Gill Nets**

Gill nets are the most commonly used gear in reservoirs. Different mesh sizes selectively capture fish based on body size. In reservoirs gill nets of varying mesh sizes are widely used for harvesting multiple species. The net is set vertically in the water (like a wall). Fish swim into it and get caught when their gills get stuck in the mesh as they try to back out. The mesh size is chosen so only certain sizes of fish get trapped.

**Types of gill nets**

- ✓ Drift gill nets – float freely with currents
- ✓ Set gill nets – anchored in one place
- ✓ Encircling gill nets – surround fish schools

**Impact:**

- ✓ Selective but harmful if mesh size is too small
- ✓ Leads to juvenile fishing if unregulated

- **Cast Nets**

Cast nets are manually operated and used in shallow areas.The net is spread out in a circle and thrown over the water. As it lands, it opens like an umbrella and sinks. Small weights around the edges pull it down quickly. When you pull the rope, the net closes at the bottom, trapping fish inside.

**Impact:**

Less destructive

Suitable for small-scale sustainable fishing

- **Seine/Drag Nets**

These nets capture large quantities of fish but disturb the bottom habitat. A seine net is a long, rectangular net with: Floats on the top edge (so it stays at the surface)Weights on the bottom edge (so it sinks and forms a vertical wall in water)

**How it works?**

- ✓ The net is spread out in the water, often in a semicircle or circle.
- ✓ Fish get surrounded by the net.
- ✓ The ends are slowly pulled (dragged) toward shore or into a boat.

The fish are trapped and collected.

- **Types of Seine Nets**
  - ✓ Beach seine – dragged from the shore
  - ✓ Boat seine – operated from boats
  - ✓ Purse seine – bottom is drawn together like a purse to trap fish completely

**Impact:**

- ✓ High bycatch
- ✓ Habitat degradation

- **Hooks and Lines**

Selective fishing gear targeting carnivorous fish.

**Impact:**

- ✓ Minimal habitat damage
- ✓ Useful for maintaining trophic balance

- **Indigenous and Traditional Gear**

In many parts of India (e.g., Assam wetlands), bamboo traps and eco-friendly gears are widely used.

**Impact:**

- ✓ Sustainable
- ✓ Low environmental impact
- ✓ Species-specific capture

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### Gear-Based Management Strategies

✓ **Mesh Size Regulation**

- Enforce minimum mesh size to avoid catching juveniles
- Promotes recruitment and stock sustainability

✓ **Seasonal Restrictions**

- Ban destructive gear during breeding seasons
- Protect spawning populations

✓ **Zonation of Reservoirs**

- Designate fishing and conservation zones
- Restrict harmful gear in biodiversity-rich areas

✓ **Ban on Destructive Fishing Methods**

- Strictly prohibit
- Poison fishing

- Electric fishing
- Explosives

These practices cause indiscriminate killing of fish and non-target species.

✓ **Promotion of Selective and Eco-Friendly Gear**

- Encourage traditional gear (traps, hooks)
- Reduce bycatch and habitat disturbance

✓ **Control of Fishing Effort**

- Limit number of nets and fishing units
- Prevent overexploitation

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### Integrated Reservoir Fisheries Management

Gear regulation should be combined with:

- Stock enhancement programs
- Habitat restoration
- Monitoring of fish diversity
- Community-based fisheries management

Such integrated approaches improve both biodiversity conservation and fish production

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### Benefits of Appropriate Gear Management

- Conservation of native and endangered species
- Reduction in juvenile mortality
- Maintenance of ecological balance
- Sustainable livelihoods for fishermen

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## CONCLUSION

Fishing gear management is a critical tool for conserving ichthyofaunal biodiversity in reservoirs. By adopting selective, regulated, and eco-friendly gear practices, it is possible to minimize ecological damage while ensuring sustainable fish production. Effective policies, scientific monitoring, and stakeholder participation are essential for long-term success.

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# Chemical warfare underwater: A deep dive in fish toxicology

## Article id: FS 10011

[1]Sheethal K U, [1]Binal Khalasi, [1]T.S Annappaswamy & [2]Umesh Suryawanshi

[1]College of Fisheries, Mangaluru, KVAFSU, Bidar, Karnataka, India

[2]College of Fishery Science, Nagpur, Maharashtra

### INTRODUCTION

Toxicology is a multidisciplinary scientific discipline encompassing the intricate investigation, meticulous analysis, and comprehensive elucidation of the deleterious repercussions. The meticulous elucidation encompasses the delineation of mechanisms, pathways, and modes through which such chemical entities perturb and undermine physiological, biochemical, and cellular homeostasis. This approach helps to understand the detrimental consequences incurred upon biological entities, both macroscopic and microscopic, arising from exposure to exogenous chemical agents, wherein the meticulous elucidation encompasses the delineation of mechanisms, pathways, and modes through which such chemical entities perturb and undermine physiological, biochemical, and cellular homeostasis.

Underwater contamination, denoting the ingress of deleterious substances into aqueous ecosystems, manifests a grave concern for marine biodiversity across oceans, rivers, and lakes. This surreptitious introduction of contaminants emanates from diverse sources, notably industrial effluents, agricultural runoff replete with pesticides and fertilizers, and the inadvertent discharge of hydrocarbons during oil spill incidents.

Industrial emissions, characterized by the efflux of heavy metals, chemical compounds, and nutritive elements, engender perturbations in the chemical milieu of aquatic domains, thereby compromising the ecological equilibrium. Agricultural efflux contributes to this intricate scenario through the introduction of biocides, nutrient-rich fertilizers, and sedimentary influx, precipitating nutrient imbalances and catalyzing of harmful algal proliferation. The disruptive impact of oil spills on marine ecosystems is typified by the introduction of hydrophobic compounds, culminating in profound ecological ramifications.

With the intrusion of pollutants into underwater environments, a cascade of chemical changes ensues, profoundly influencing the composition and dynamics of aquatic ecosystems. Organic pollutants, often stemming from industrial discharges or sewage effluents, contribute to an augmented Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD), indicating an elevated demand for oxygen and potential oxygen depletion detrimental to aquatic life. Simultaneously, acidic or alkaline substances, prevalent in certain pollutants and acid rain, induce fluctuations in pH levels, influencing nutrient solubility and metal availability. Agricultural runoff laden with excess nutrients, primarily nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizers, can incite nutrient imbalances, fostering eutrophication and the subsequent overgrowth of algae. This overgrowth, upon decomposition, exacerbates Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), intensifying microbial activity and further depleting oxygen levels. Industrial discharges may introduce heavy metals, initiating various chemical transformations that accumulate in sediments, posing toxicity risks to aquatic organisms. Additionally, pollutants, such as oil spills, undergo microbial degradation processes, forming intermediate compounds that can have toxic implications. This intricate interplay of chemical changes underscores the importance of understanding the multifaceted consequences of pollution on underwater ecosystems for effective water quality management and environmental preservation.

Embarking on the intricate interplay between water pollution and fisheries, it becomes imperative to scrutinize the multifaceted dynamics shaping aquatic ecosystems and the vital fisheries they sustain. Within this nexus, bioaccumulation and biomagnification cast shadows on the safety of harvested seafood, while the formation of transformation products introduces a layer of complexity to the assessment of potential risks. Microbial communities, integral to fish habitats, become a focal point as pollutants disrupt their balance, influencing fisheries productivity. Emerging contaminants, with their enigmatic presence in seafood, underscore the evolving challenges faced by fisheries. Moreover, the synergistic effects of pollutants pose nuanced threats to fish populations, urging a comprehensive understanding.

The inflow of pollution into aquatic environments significantly impacts fish through a spectrum of toxicological effects. Exposure to contaminants can result in various adverse consequences for fish species, influencing their physiology and overall well-being. The major impacts of inflow of polluted water on fisheries are as follows:

1. **Bioaccumulation**: Contaminants such as heavy metals, pesticides, and persistent organic pollutants have a tendency to accumulate in fish tissues through a process known as bioaccumulation. This accumulation occurs as fish absorb these substances from their surroundings or through their diet. Over time, the concentration of these pollutants can reach levels that pose risks to the health of individual fish and, subsequently, to the organisms that consume them.

2. **Genotoxicity and Mutagenicity**: Some pollutants in water have genotoxic and mutagenic effects on fish, meaning they can induce damage to the genetic material of cells. This damage may result in mutations, chromosomal abnormalities, or alterations in the DNA structure of fish, potentially leading to adverse genetic consequences within populations.
3. **Endocrine Disruption**: Certain pollutants, particularly endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs), interfere with the hormonal systems of fish. This disruption can lead to abnormalities in reproductive and developmental processes. For example, exposure to EDCs may cause changes in fish reproductive organs, disrupt the reproductive success of populations, and lead to skewed sex ratios.
4. **Behavioural Changes**: Pollution can induce alterations in fish, affecting their ability to feed, reproduce, and evade predators. Substances like pharmaceuticals or industrial chemicals may impact fish behaviour by altering neurotransmitter systems, leading to impaired sensory perception or altered swimming patterns. These behavioral changes can have cascading effects on fish populations and ecosystem dynamics.
5. **Respiratory and Metabolic Impacts**: Some pollutants can affect fish respiration and metabolic functions. For instance, exposure to certain chemicals may lead to oxygen depletion in water, impacting the respiratory capacity of fish. Additionally, contaminants can interfere with metabolic processes, potentially compromising the energy balance and overall fitness of fish.
6. **Immunotoxicity**: Pollution-induced immunotoxicity can weaken the immune systems of fish, making them more susceptible to diseases and infections. This compromised immunity can lead to increased mortality rates and decreased resilience of fish populations to environmental stressors.
7. **Reproductive Impairment**: Reproductive toxicity is a significant concern, with pollutants affecting fish reproduction at various stages. Contaminants may disrupt the development of fish embryos, reduce reproductive success, or lead to abnormalities in larval stages. These effects can have long-term implications for fish populations and overall ecosystem health.

The intricate journey of pollutants from fish to humans is governed by the transformative processes of biotransformation within aquatic ecosystems. Commencing at the lower trophic levels, pollutants make their entry into the aquatic realm, becoming assimilated by primary producers. As herbivorous fish engage in consuming these primary producers, the intricate dance of biotransformation unfolds within their physiological systems, potentially giving rise to metabolites that alter the chemical composition of the original pollutants. This sets the stage for the progressive transfer of pollutants up the trophic levels, as larger predatory fish consume herbivores, with each trophic level potentially modifying contaminants through biotransformation.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the interplay of biotransformation within aquatic ecosystems illuminates the path of pollutants from fish to humans, emphasizing the complexities inherent in the transfer of contaminants along the food chain. As pollutants undergo transformation within fish, the resulting metabolites contribute to a dynamic and ever-evolving narrative of environmental impact. While biotransformation can, at times, mitigate the toxicity of pollutants, the potential retention or enhancement of harmful effects warrants careful consideration. Human exposure to these bio-transformed pollutants through seafood consumption underscores the need for comprehensive risk assessment and management strategies. Recognizing the variability in biotransformation efficiency among different fish species, coupled with the influence of environmental factors, is imperative for accurately evaluating potential health risks. Regulatory measures, sustainable fisheries management, and ongoing monitoring efforts are vital components of safeguarding both aquatic ecosystems and human well-being. In navigating the delicate balance between environmental health and human consumption, fostering a deeper understanding of biotransformation processes becomes paramount. This knowledge not only informs responsible fisheries practices but also guides regulatory frameworks aimed at ensuring the safety of seafood consumption. As we move forward, the ongoing pursuit of scientific insights into biotransformation mechanisms will be instrumental in navigating the complex web of pollutant dynamics, contributing to the sustainable coexistence of aquatic ecosystems and the well-being of global populations.

# Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management: A Comprehensive Framework for Sustainable Governance of Marine Resources

Article id: FS 10012

Pallabi Mohapatra, Hari Prasad Mohale, Yagnesh B. Motivarash and N. Sarang
Department of Fisheries Resource Management, DSVCKV, LSPN, College of Fisheries, Kawardha, Chhattisgarh

## INTRODUCTION

Coastal communities have depended on marine fisheries for jobs, cultural traditions, and food security for a long time. Controlling the harvest levels of individual species was the main focus of fisheries management for the majority of the 20th century. Controlling fishing mortality, determining the maximum sustainable yield, and estimating stock size were the main scientific goals. Although this method pushed forward quantitative fisheries research, it soon became clear that managing fish stocks without considering the surrounding ecological and social systems was not enough. Global declines in fish stocks, habitat damage, bycatch problems, and loss of biodiversity have demonstrated that marine ecosystems are not isolated entities. They are interdependent systems. These constraints gave rise to the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF). It acknowledges human aspects, ecological relationships, and environmental variability as essential elements of management rather than focusing only on target species. The strategy signifies a change from optimising extraction to long-term maintenance of ecosystem resilience, structure, and function.

## The Ecosystem Approach's Conceptual Foundations

Principles of sustainability and global environmental governance form the foundation of the ecosystem approach. Coastal states are accountable for protecting marine life within their borders, according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The preservation of ecosystems and the sustainable use of biological diversity were later highlighted by the Convention on Biological Diversity. In order to effectively manage highly migratory and straddling stocks, the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement strengthened precautionary management and collaboration. The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, which urged states to take habitat preservation, ecosystem impacts, and ethical harvesting practices into consideration, further clarified operational guidelines. When combined, these frameworks offered the legislative basis for incorporating ecological factors into the management of fisheries. As explained by Garcia and Cochrane (2005), the ecosystem approach builds upon traditional fisheries science rather than replacing it. The goal is to make decisions that take social systems, trophic relationships, and ecosystem processes into account without giving up on tried-and-true stock assessment techniques. Therefore, it is better to think of EAF as a broadening of the scope as opposed to a total paradigm shift.

## Ecological Interactions and Indirect Effects

Fisheries have various impacts on marine ecosystems. In addition to the direct effects on biomass, it can change predation pressure, size distributions and fecundity. Elimination of apex predators can result in trophic cascades that reorganize food webs. Habitat-disturbing gears like bottom trawls can cause damage to benthic ecosystems that influences recruitment and biodiversity. Caddy and Griffith, 1995) It has also been stressed that fisheries impacts cannot be assessed in their own right, but must be considered along with other human pressures (e.g. coastal pollution, modification of watersheds, loss of habitats). Marine systems are affected by multiple stressors and integrated management is crucial. Environmental variability also complicates assessment. Other climatic and oceanographic factors drive recruitment variability more than fishing pressure. Csirke and Sharp, 1984 described high levels of variability in small pelagic resources associated with ERS.

## Ecosystem Services and Sustainability

The marine environment provides a diverse set of ecosystem goods and services including food, nutrient recycling, nursery habitat for aquatic species and assistance in maintaining the climate. Costanza et al. (1997) emphasized that ecosystem services have large economic values worldwide, and thus the importance of preserving ecological functions over commercial harvest. Fisheries are managed within an ecosystem context and the goal is long-term ecological production capacity t- rather than short-term economic productivity. Preserving the functions of these ecosystems and conserving biological diversity, while avoiding over-exploitation is central to ensuring that ecosystem services are secured for future generations.

## Implementation Framework

A systematic procedure on the deployment of EAF was suggested by FAO (2003). This is initiated with defining the ecosystem boundaries and involving participants. Clear operational goals are set, after which measurable indicators and benchmarks are defined. Surveillance and adaptive management permit policy changes as new information emerges. Stakeholder involvement is a central factor. Fishermen have tacit knowledge that can supplement data gathered by scientists, and participatory governance increases adherence and credibility.

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## Managing Uncertainty Through Precaution

Ecosystem processes are complex and not entirely predictable. Cochrane and Starfield (1992) argued that fisheries management systems should be resilient to uncertainty instead of relying on precise forecasts. The precautionary principle encourages cautious harvest strategies when information is lacking. Adaptive management, which involves ongoing learning and feedback, allows managers to adjust their strategies as ecological conditions change. This adaptability is increasingly crucial due to climate-driven shifts in distribution and productivity.

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## Socioeconomic Integration

Fisheries management must not focus only on ecological outcomes. Coastal communities rely on fisheries for income, nutrition, and cultural identity. Holling (1994) noted that historical governance often favoured short-term socioeconomic stability over ecological sustainability. The ecosystem approach aims to balance these aspects. Diversifying livelihoods, fairly allocating access rights, and building community capacity can ease pressure on resources while enhancing community resilience.

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## Spatial Tools and Governance Innovation

Marine protected areas (MPAs), seasonal closures, and spatial zoning are increasingly part of ecosystem-based management. Well-designed MPAs protect critical habitats and biodiversity hotspots. However, spatial measures must be combined with effort controls and monitoring systems to work effectively. Fletcher et al. (2002) pointed out that moving toward ecosystem-based governance needs gradual changes in institutions. Successful implementation relies on political commitment, scientific knowledge, and coordination across different sectors.

## CONCLUSION

The ecosystem approach to fisheries offers a practical and future-focused framework for managing marine resources. By blending ecological science, socioeconomic realities, and cautious principles, it tackles the shortcomings of traditional single-species management. Although challenges in implementation remain—especially in areas with little data and developing regions—this approach provides a path toward long-term sustainability and resilience. In a time of environmental uncertainty and climate change, preserving ecosystem integrity is essential for supporting fisheries and the communities that rely on them.

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# Change the Phase Through Technological Intervention

## Article id: FS 10013

**Jyoti Ganachari**

**Ph.D. Scholar, College of Fisheries, Dept. of Fish Processing Technology, Mangalore**

Indian agriculture need not to engross special practices, instead explore the specialities of our regular practices like "instead of doing different things concentrate on doing things differently". A simple way to educate the agriculture is through bring out all the agricultural technologies in a single frame which helps the farmers to choose the best practice most suitable for their specific work. Also, an interdisciplinary approach through integrated farming should be the motto for our future agriculture.

Produce processing is a general term applicable in major sectors like, agriculture/horticulture, animal (dairy, poultry, sheep/goat etc.) and fisheries. It is such a universal activity for agriculture that must be effectively used to increase the productivity which helps in reducing the poverty that would change the whole world. Safety and reduction in losses are the major concerned fields of after harvesting. Implementation of better postharvest practices certainly helps in following ways,

- ✓ Increase the yield of food production by reducing the losses during crop harvesting.
- ✓ Increase the food supply which indirectly reduces the food scarcity.
- ✓ Increase the profit to the farmers which attracts/influence the stakeholder participation to get involved in the agriculture/farming.
- ✓ Increase in productivity influence the growth of food and seed industries that inturn increase the country's GDP and reduces the unemployment problems in rural areas.
- ✓ Attracts the global markets through our improved post-harvest process that reduced post-harvest losses which helps in improving the country's status worldwide.

Increase in the income of the consumers and also rapid growth towards urbanization of the country is the indicators for the rate of food consumption and its pattern. Many technologies have been under use to achieve the safe and convened supply of food materials including refrigerated and controlled atmospheric storage and transportation systems, improved handling techniques are also in use to avoid the losses during transportation and storage. But, still the producers are not in a position to make the country free from starvation and poverty. The only way to achieve starvation free country is by reducing the postharvest losses both quantitatively and qualitatively. The postharvest losses could be reduced by different ways, among those the best way is by educating the farmers through extension activities and live demonstrations about the biological and environmental factors cause deterioration of food. This helps in reducing the losses at the grass root level. Hence, the reduction in losses indirectly boost the productivity of the country thus helps in reducing the necessity to intensify the crop production in the country.

As per the current data available through different sources about the status of postharvest losses it is very difficult to precise the amount and nature of the losses at different stages of postharvest operations. This is because of lack of uniformity in agricultural practice as well as method of measuring the type and extent of losses. Hence, each report carries different figures about the losses at different stages of postharvest operations. Hence, as we discussed earlier there is need to patch-up the losses from the beginning itself, that only happens by educating the farmers.

Here, several biological and environment factors contribute for losses in the field and off the field but majority of them are closely related to one or the other postharvest practices. But, by involving suitable postharvest technology certainly helps to control these biological and environmental factors successfully. Postharvest technology usually refers steady control and storage of unprocessed/partially processed agricultural produce originates from the time of harvest till the final preparation that reaches the consumers. Temperature control, gentle handling, use of preservatives, control of humidity, proper packaging, providing suitable market facility, maintaining hygiene and food safety are the major alarms of postharvest practices. The standardization of system from farm to fork definitely helps in improving the quality of the food and also reduces the quality and quantity losses.

Losses could be minimized in many ways by involving farmers at the harvesting site itself for example, rotting/bruising could be controlled by careful handling, on-farm packaging helps in fulfilling its function of protecting the quality and freshness and safety of the foods. Educating the farmers about temperature abuse on the fresh food produce which are very perishable in nature like fruits and vegetables or milk shows its significant impact on its postharvest quality loss. Developing knowledge about pre-cooling, proper handling at transfer points, storage, proper distribution certainly reduce the post-harvest deterioration. In practical, many of the postharvest activities including, sorting, grading, cleaning, packing and packaging usually done off the fields, either in the market or in retail shops. An, attempt to start creating facilities for above postharvest practices in the farm itself by providing local cold storage facilities, refrigerated transport, packing/bulk handling houses, apparently find its way towards reduction in postharvest losses.

Use of desirable packing or packaging material specific to certain commodities shows its considerable effect on the quality abuse. Establishing different packaging stations in and around the growing areas certainly helps the farmers to fetch more prices for their commodities. To bring out a steady phase in the agricultural commodities price, we need to concentrate more on distribution channel of agriculture produce. Divide the distribution area into different segments and study the consumption pattern at each segment for specific period. Here, one can easily predict the requirement of an individual for that period. This helps in providing guidance for the farmers to grow specific produce as per the requirement. Hence, the over production and sudden drop/shoot up in price of agricultural produce could be conquered.

Providing better infrastructure creation at the rural areas, through developments in information technology, roads, quick access to the local markets, information on the market price for their goods at their villages, providing collection centres at different places at Taluk and Hobli levels, providing access to the farmers for market negotiations through trade association web sites are major fields yet to be concentrated to bring the digitalization at the farm level.

Application of suitable post-harvest technologies is a very tedious job than doing the research and developing technologies in the research laboratories. Many complex parameters are involved during the application process which affects the level of acceptance of any postharvest technologies by the farmers. The reasons could be due to, non-availability of sufficient knowledge on postharvest innovations, non-familiarity or non-popularization of certain available technologies because of deprived extension activities, difficulties in adopting the available technologies usually happens due to high cost or capital investment/ social and cultural believes.

These problems could be addressed be taking the necessary actions which must be implemented at rural levels to achieve the development of adequate postharvest knowledge among farmers include education, extension, popularization, hands-on training, on-farm demonstrations and technology sharing. By considering the limited resources available at the farm level, it is the duty of NGO's, state/central agricultural universities, and state agricultural departments to meet the farmers at their farms and educate them through the live demonstrations of the postharvest technologies available specific to their farms and the subsidy facilities provided by the government upon implementation of such practices by the farmers.

The research institutions instead of doing research in their respective laboratories they must start selecting the research topics based on the requirement of the farmer's specific to particular area. In addition to the fields, the research organizations must co-ordinate with the industries which are involved in the processing the agricultural produce and must help in developing a new process/procedure/protocol for processing the food products which definitely have significant impact on the quality/quantity loss. Further, these type of co- ordinating activities helps to building a relationship between farmers and industries through these research organizations/institutes.

Marketing of the agricultural produce is one of the major fields need to be addressed to avoid the transit loss. Now days, E-kart's is ruling the digital world in distribution of goods to the door steps of consumers. In the idea of digitalizing the post-harvest distribution channels from the farm level itself, there is need of developing "Crop Cafe" in the rural areas where, farmers are free to auction their goods/produce through the internet by fixing their own price. Here, crop café will link the buyer sitting in the urban areas with the farmer at the villages. Also, the transportation must be bared by the consumer/buyer where the transportation facility would be provided by the crop café by charging the nominal service charges and helps to reach the produce to the consumer from the farm itself. The price for each commodities fixed by the farmers will be approved by quality checking at the farm level through the government approved agency. Here, the middle man or agent is completely swiped out of the agricultural goods exchange process.

Although postharvest is not a new and fresh discipline in the field of agriculture, there is still lot to study and bring the innovations in the post-harvest practices. Many technologies which are implemented for specific crop in other countries/abroad cannot be adopted to our fields due to small/medium land holdings or cost point of view. Hence, those technologies need to be fabricated/re-designed as per our requirement and field conditions so that many post-harvest practices could be brought and implemented without any fail. Collaboration of research institutions with the private industries in the development of these types of technologies helps in two ways i.e. by fulfilling the corporate social responsibilities of the industries, and by providing desired technologies to our farming communities. Involvement of experts in different areas during the development of these innovative technologies positively helps in fetching a useful technology to the rural areas.

## CONCLUSION

There is excellent potential for improving the technologies and to create awareness among the farmers to adopt the developed technologies in our country. Application/adoption of postharvest technologies and collaborative research and development activities by the industries and research institutions are the pillars for rural agricultural development in the country. In addition to establishing new post-harvest processing areas the proper maintenance and management is also necessary to achieve the desired goals. Quality standards and quality control measures must be strengthened in the rural areas at the farm levels to make sure our agricultural produce reach the international markets. Lack of necessary information and communication facilities must be reinforced to educate the farmers for choosing the suitable postharvest practice specific to their crop requirement. Availability of qualified scientific and technical person at the village level certainly improves the on-farm knowledge of the farmers and also helps in the implementation of preferred technology at the farm level. All these practices definitely improve the productivity and prosperity in the rural areas. Involving suitable technologies certainly helps in feeding the growing population of the country otherwise days are not too far to download and eat the food from the internet. Hence, this is the right time to create the awareness among each individuals of the country to save the food from losses and save the world.

# Fish By-products: Utilization and Value Addition in Fisheries

## Article id: FS 10014

**Poornima. M. B., Gowrishankar. S. N., Saismita Swain & Sachin Dnyanoba Chavan**

Department of Fish Processing Technology, College of Fisheries, Mangaluru, KVAFSU, Bidar, Karnataka, India

## ABSTRACT

Fish processing industry generates a huge quantity of waste such as heads, skin, bones, scales, and viscera. Sustainable utilization of this waste can result in the number of by-products. By-products are now recognized as valuable resources rich in proteins, lipids, minerals, and bioactive compounds. Proper utilization of fish by-products leads to the production of high-value products such as fish meal, fish oil, collagen, gelatin, enzymes and fertilizers (Fig. 1). This not only reduces environmental pollution but also enhances economic returns and sustainability in the fisheries sector.

**Keywords**: Fish, By-products, Fishery Waste, Value Addition

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of the fisheries and seafood processing industry has resulted in the generation of significant quantities of waste materials. Traditionally, this waste was being discarded, leading to environmental and economic issues. However, recent advances in technology have highlighted their potential as valuable raw materials. Fish waste includes all parts of the fish that are not used for direct human consumption, such as heads, fins, scales, bones, skin, and internal organs.

## Composition of Fish By-products

Fish by-products are rich in nutrients similar to edible fish portions. They contain high levels of protein, essential fatty acids, minerals, and vitamins. Studies show that fish waste may contain approximately 49–58% protein, along with significant amounts of fat and ash content. Fish skin is particularly rich in collagen, bones are a major source of calcium, and internal organs contain valuable lipids and enzymes (FAO, 2021).

## Major Types of Fish By-Products and Their Uses

- **Fish Meal:** Fish meal is one of the most important products derived from fish waste and low-value fish. It is produced by cooking, drying, and grinding fish or fish processing residues. Fish meal is widely used as a high-protein ingredient in animal feed, poultry, and aquaculture due to its balanced amino acid composition (Fig. 1).
- **Fish Oil:** Fish oil is extracted from fish tissues and processing waste and is rich in omega-3 fatty acids such as EPA and DHA. It is used in aquaculture feed, pharmaceuticals, and as dietary supplements for human health (Table 1) (Sahana *et al*., 2023).
- **Collagen and Gelatin:** Collagen and gelatin are different forms of the same macromolecule. Gelatin is the partially hydrolyzed form of collagen. Fish skin, bones and scales are excellent sources of collagen and gelatin. These are widely used in food, cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries due to their functional and health benefits. Fish collagen is gaining popularity as a safer alternative to mammalian collagen (Table 1).
- **Fish Protein Hydrolysates and Concentrates:** These are produced by enzymatic or chemical breakdown of fish proteins. They are used in food fortification, animal feed, and nutraceuticals because of their high digestibility and nutritional value (Wangkheirakpam *et al*., 2019).
- **Enzymes and Bioactive Compounds:** Fish viscera and internal organs are rich sources of enzymes such as proteases, which are used in food processing and biotechnology. By-products also contain bioactive compounds with medicinal and industrial applications.
- **Fertilizers and Other Products:** Fish waste can be converted into organic fertilizers and silage. These products improve soil fertility and are widely used in agriculture (Fig. 1) (Table 1).


**Fig.1: Fish Processing Waste Utilization and By-products**

## Importance of Fish By-product Utilization

Utilization of fish by-products plays a key role in reducing waste and environmental pollution. It improves the overall efficiency of the fisheries sector by converting waste into valuable products. Additionally, it generates employment opportunities and increases income for fish processors and industries. The use of by-products also supports sustainable development by ensuring full utilization of marine resources.

**Table 1: Fish By-products and Their Value-Added Products (Jayathilakan *et al*., 2012)**

| Fish By-product | Major Components | Value-Added Products | Uses |
|---|---|---|---|
| Head | Protein, fat | Fish meal, fish oil | Animal feed, Aquaculture feed |
| Skin | Collagen | Collagen, gelatin | Food, Cosmetics, Pharmaceuticals |
| Bones | Minerals (Ca, P) | Bone powder, gelatin | Nutritional Supplements, Food Fortification |
| Scales | Collagen, minerals | Collagen, chitin | Cosmetics, Biomedical uses |
| Viscera | Enzymes, oil | Fish oil, enzymes | Industrial processing, Feed |
| Whole waste | Mixed nutrients | Fish silage | Livestock and Fish feed |
| Processing waste | Organic matter | Fertilizer, compost | Agriculture |

## CONCLUSION

Fish by-products are no longer considered waste but valuable resources with immense potential. Through proper processing and technological advancements, these materials can be transformed into high-value products used in food, feed, pharmaceuticals, and agriculture. Effective utilization of fish by-products is essential for sustainable fisheries management and economic growth.

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# Impact of Marine Heatwaves on Indian Fisheries Resources

**Article id: FS 10015**

**Pallabi Mohapatra, Hari Prasad Mohale, Yagnesh B. Motivarash and N. Sarang**
Department of Fisheries Resource Management, DSVCKV, LSPN, College of Fishereis, Kawardha, Chhattisgarh

## ABSTRACT

Marine heatwaves (MHWs) are increasingly recognised as short-term but intense warming events that can strongly disrupt marine ecosystems. In recent decades, both the frequency and intensity of marine heatwaves have risen worldwide, with the Indian Ocean emerging as one of the most rapidly warming regions. The Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, which support the majority of India's marine fisheries, have experienced repeated warming events with noticeable ecological and fisheries-related consequences.

**Keywords:** Arabian Sea; Bay of Bengal; Climate change; Fisheries resources; Indian Ocean; Marine heatwaves

## INTRODUCTION

Climate change among the different factors affecting marine ecosystems ranks first and is now considered the main reason for the transformations in marine ecosystems (IPCC, 2021). Rising ocean temperatures and increasing climate variability are widely recognized outcomes of global warming, both of which are now evident in marine systems worldwide., which until now has only been the subject of controversy and dispute among the scientific community. However, the scientists' attention has now shifted towards marine heatwaves, which are extreme warming events that last for a very short period of time (Hobday et al., 2016). The latter entails a sudden increase in temperature that marine organisms suffer and as a result, tropical species often die or their habitats are severely altered.

The rapid occurrence and short duration of marine heatwaves distinguish them from gradual warming of the oceans and sometimes even surpass the thermal tolerance limits of marine species (Oliver et al., 2018). As per records, the Indian Ocean has been undergoing the most accelerated temperature increase which is even more than the global ocean average, particularly in its northern regions (Roxy et al., 2014). Since fishing is a key player in India, it contributes to food security, employment and earning foreign exchange; thus it is crucial to study marine heatwaves and their implications for fisheries resources (ICAR-CMFRI, 2024).

## Marine Heatwaves in the Indian Ocean Region

**Major marine heatwave events reported in the Indian Ocean and associated impacts**

| Region | Period | Key Characteristics | Reported Ecological / Fisheries Impacts | Reference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabian Sea | 2010–2011 | Prolonged SST anomaly; weakened monsoon winds | Reduced phytoplankton productivity; altered pelagic fish distribution | *Roxy et al. (2014)* |
| Arabian Sea | 2015–2016 | High-intensity marine heatwave | Shift in oil sardine and mackerel distribution; increased variability in landings | *Saranya et al. (2022)* |
| Bay of Bengal | 2016 | Long-duration warming event | Enhanced stratification; reduced nutrient mixing | *Oliver et al. (2018)* |
| Bay of Bengal | 2019–2020 | Recurrent heatwave episodes | Potential decline in fish larval survival; altered plankton composition | *Sarker et al. (2023)* |
| Lakshadweep Sea | 2010, 2016 | Extreme SST anomalies | Coral bleaching and reef degradation affecting reef fisheries | *Hughes et al. (2017); ICAR-CMFRI (2024)* |

## Ecological Impacts of Marine Heatwaves

Marine heatwaves cause the transformation of fundamental oceanographic processes, like stratification and nutrients dispersion, thus directly affecting the primary production (Oliver et al., 2018). The increased stratification reduces the transfer of nutrients upwelled from the deeper water to the euphotic zone, resulting in less phytoplankton growth in those areas where seasonal mixing is the main source of phytoplankton (Sarker et al., 2023).

The changes in phytoplankton communities caused by marine heatwaves can eventually reach the entire marine food web through the alteration of zooplankton and fish larvae populations (Hobday et al., 2016). It is also likely that the warm water might be a contributing factor in triggering harmful algal blooms, thus being an indirect cause of the decrease in ecosystem productivity and negatively impacting fishing and health. Moreover, continuous warming can bring about the creation of hypoxic conditions in coastal waters considered stressful for marine organisms (IPCC, 2021).

The coral reef ecosystem is among the most vulnerable ones to marine heatwaves since high temperatures disrupt corals, which in turn leads to bleaching and other problems (Hughes et al., 2017). Indian seas are home to recurrent bleaching and degradation of the reefs in Lakshadweep, which not only lowers the quality of fish but also the variety of fish (ICAR-CMFRI, 2024).

## Impacts on Indian Fisheries Resources

**Potential impacts of marine heatwaves on different components of Indian marine fisheries**

| Fisheries Component | Observed / Expected Impact | Implications for Fisheries | Reference | Fisheries Component |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Phytoplankton | Reduced biomass due to stratification | Lower primary productivity | *Oliver et al. (2018)* | Phytoplankton |
| Zooplankton | Changes in species composition | Reduced food availability for fish larvae | *Hobday et al. (2016)* | Zooplankton |
| Small pelagic fish | Shifts in distribution and seasonal availability | Unstable landings and income | *Roxy et al. (2014); ICAR-CMFRI (2024)* | Small pelagic fish |
| Demersal fish | Habitat stress due to warming and hypoxia | Decline in benthic-associated catches | *IPCC (2021)* | Demersal fish |
| Coral reef fisheries | Habitat degradation from bleaching | Loss of reef-associated fish diversity | *Hughes et al. (2017)* | Coral reef fisheries |

### Management and Adaptation Strategies

Incorporating climate data into fisheries management policies is almost for dealing with the consequences of marine heatwaves (Hobday et al., 2016). The use of early warning systems, marine heatwave monitoring, and adaptive spatial management are ways through which economic losses can be minimized. Besides, ecosystem-based fisheries management and livelihood diversification are the two important resilience building measures for the fisheries-dependent communities (ICAR-CMFRI, 2024).

## CONCLUSION

In Indian waters, marine heatwaves have become a significant climate-related stressor for fisheries and marine ecosystems. Recent research shows that the distribution of commercially significant fish species, biological productivity, and oceanographic processes are already being impacted by the increasing frequency of these extreme warming events. The sustainability of Indian fisheries is seriously threatened by these developments, especially for artisanal and small-scale fishermen who are less able to adjust to the swift changes in the environment. Stronger integration of climate data into fisheries research and management, long-term monitoring, and region-specific adaptation plans are all necessary to mitigate the effects of marine heatwaves. As ocean warming persists, protecting India's fisheries resources and livelihoods will require improving scientific knowledge and governance responses.

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# Carbon Dioxide ($CO_2$) Emitters in Active Packaging for Fishery Products

**Article id: FS 10016**

**Gowrisankar. S.N., Sachin Dnyanoba Chavan, Kavinesh. E & Jenisha. D**

[1]College of Fisheries, Mangaluru, KVAFSU, Bidar, Karnataka, India

## ABSTRACT

Active packaging for fishery products incorporates functional components that interact with the food environment to extend shelf life and ensure safety. Among these, carbon dioxide CO2 emitters are specifically designed to maintain high concentrations of CO2 within the package headspace, compensating for gas absorbed by the fish tissue. These systems are especially important in fresh fish, shellfish, and minimally processed seafood products where modified atmosphere conditions are needed but gas dissolution into fish muscle reduces package headspace $CO_2$ over time. Carbon dioxide emitters compensate for gas loss and stabilize internal package atmosphere, thereby improving microbial safety, sensory quality, and storage life.

## INTRODUCTION

In the global food industry, health, nutrition, and convenience are major drivers of consumer demand. Fish and fishery products are globally recognized as vital sources of high-quality proteins, essential vitamins, minerals, and polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) (Mohan et al., 2010). However, fish is highly perishable because its high moisture content and oxidizable PUFAs make it vulnerable to rapid microbial and biochemical deterioration. Traditional modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) flushes a package with CO2 to suppress bacterial growth, but the CO2 concentration inevitably drops over time as the gas dissolves into the product or permeates through the film (Mohan et al., 2010; Yildirim et al., 2017).

Carbon dioxide (CO2) emitters solve this issue as a form of active packaging. These systems deliberately incorporate components that release CO2 into the environment surrounding the food, maintaining altered optimal conditions throughout the storage period (Vermeiren et al., 1999; Yildirim et al., 2017).

## What is Carbon Dioxide Emitter Active Packaging?

Carbon dioxide emitter packaging is an active packaging system designed to generate and release $CO_2$ continuously or gradually inside food packages.

Unlike passive modified atmosphere packaging (MAP), where gas is introduced only during sealing, $CO_2$ emitter systems release carbon dioxide to replace gas lost during storage.

This technology helps maintain:

- Stable antimicrobial atmosphere,
- Reduced oxygen availability,
- Lower bacterial growth rates.

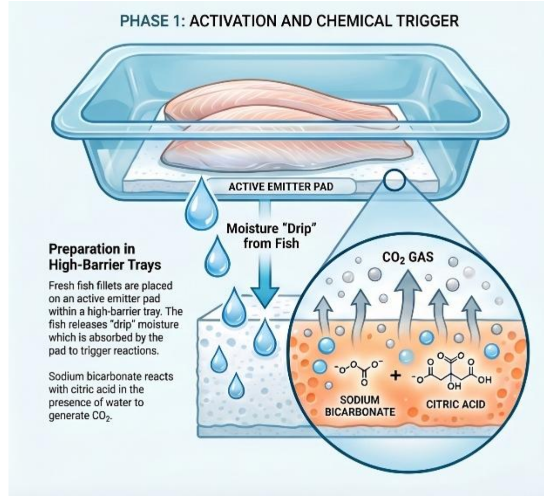


**Figure 1: Activation mechanism of $CO_2$ emitters**

According to Vermeiren *et al*. (1999), $CO_2$ emitters are among the most important active packaging innovations for highly perishable refrigerated foods.

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## Importance of $CO_2$ in Fishery Products

Carbon dioxide is highly effective in seafood preservation because it inhibits spoilage microorganisms such as:

- *Pseudomonas* spp.
- *Shewanella putrefaciens*
- *Photobacterium phosphoreum*

In fish muscle, $CO_2$ dissolves into tissue water forming carbonic acid:

$$CO_2 + H_2O \rightarrow H_2CO_3$$

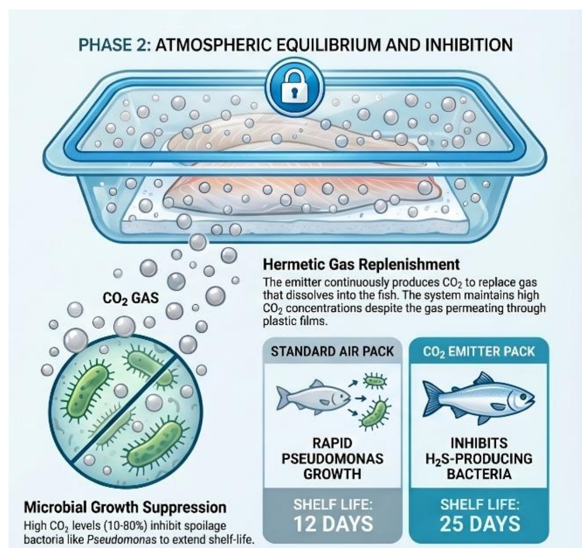


**Figure 2: benefits of $CO_2$ emitters**

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## Mechanisms of Action

$CO_2$ emitters rely on specific active chemicals within the packaging substrate. The most used active ingredients to generate $CO_2$ are sodium bicarbonate combined with citric acid or ascorbic acid as explained in fig. 1 (Vermeiren *et al*., 1999; Yildirim *et al*., 2017). Another compound used is ferrous carbonate (Mohan *et al*., 2010).

When $CO_2$ is emitted and dissolves into the fish, it enacts a powerful bacteriostatic effect through four primary preservative mechanisms:

- **Membrane Alteration**: It alters the bacterial cell membrane functions, inhibiting nutrient uptake.
- **Enzyme Inhibition**: It decreases the rate of crucial microbial enzyme reactions.
- **Intracellular Acidification**: $CO_2$ penetrates bacterial cell membranes, leading to lethal intracellular pH changes.
- **Protein Modification:** It induces changes in the physio-chemical properties of bacterial proteins (Mohan *et al*., 2010).

They have been most successfully and extensively tested on commercially valuable fish species such as Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), cod (*Gadus morhua*), and seer fish (*Scomberomorus commerson*) (Mohan *et al*., 2010; Yildirim *et al*., 2017). successfully extending the shelf life of cod from 7 to 11 days, and seer fish from 12 up to 25 days mentioned in fig:2 under chilled conditions (Mohan *et al*., 2010; Yildirim *et al*., 2017).

## CONCLUSION

$CO_2$ emitter active packaging is an effective method to preserve fishery products by slowing microbial spoilage and extending shelf life. It maintains stable carbon dioxide levels inside packages, improving freshness and safety. This technology helps reduce spoilage losses during storage and transport. Although cost and packaging complexity are challenges, its benefits are significant. It is becoming an important innovation in modern seafood preservation.

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# Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS): A Sustainable Approach to Modern Aquaculture

**Article id: FS 10017**

**Subhash Kumar, Varun Mishra, S.K. Jatav, Ranju Kumari & Pragya Mehta**

Narayan Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Gopal Narayan Singh University

Jamuhar, Sasaram, Bihar

## ABSTRACT

Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) represent an innovative and sustainable method of fish production that minimizes water usage while maximizing control over environmental conditions. Unlike traditional aquaculture, which relies heavily on natural water bodies, RAS operates through a closed-loop system where water is continuously filtered, treated, and reused. This technology significantly reduces the environmental footprint of aquaculture by limiting effluent discharge, conserving water, and preventing the spread of diseases to wild populations. RAS enables high-density fish farming in controlled indoor environments, making it suitable for regions with limited water resources or harsh climates. Key components include mechanical filtration, biological filtration, oxygenation, and waste removal systems, all working synergistically to maintain optimal water quality. This article explores the principles, components, advantages, challenges, and future prospects of RAS, highlighting its potential to address global food security while ensuring environmental sustainability. The growing adoption of RAS reflects a shift toward more efficient and responsible aquaculture practices in the face of increasing global fish demand.

**Keywords**: Recirculating Aquaculture System, Sustainable Aquaculture, Water Reuse, Fish Farming Technology, Biofiltration, Aquaculture Engineering, Environmental Sustainability, Intensive Aquaculture, Waste Management

## INTRODUCTION

Aquaculture has become one of the fastest-growing food production sectors globally, driven by increasing demand for fish protein and declining wild fish stocks (FAO, 2022). Traditional aquaculture systems, however, often face challenges such as water scarcity, environmental degradation, disease outbreaks, and inefficient resource utilization (Timmons & Ebeling, 2010). In response to these challenges, Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) have emerged as a transformative technology that enables intensive fish farming with minimal environmental impact (Martins et al., 2010).

RAS operates by continuously circulating water through a series of filtration and treatment processes, allowing for reuse and maintaining optimal water quality conditions (Summerfelt & Penne, 2008). This system reduces dependence on natural water bodies and enables aquaculture operations in urban or arid regions where traditional methods are not feasible (Badiola et al., 2012). By offering precise control over environmental parameters such as temperature, oxygen levels, and waste concentration, RAS enhances fish growth, health, and productivity (Malone & Pfeiffer, 2006). The importance of RAS is further amplified by global concerns over sustainability and climate change (FAO, 2020). As water resources become increasingly limited, the ability to produce fish using less water and land becomes critical (Verdegem & Bosma, 2009). Despite its advantages, RAS also presents economic and technical challenges that must be addressed to ensure widespread adoption (Badiola et al., 2012).

## Principles of Recirculating Aquaculture Systems

The fundamental principle of RAS lies in the continuous reuse of water through mechanical and biological treatment processes (Timmons & Ebeling, 2010). Water from fish tanks is filtered to remove solid waste and dissolved toxins before being recirculated back into the system (Summerfelt & Penne, 2008).

Mechanical filtration removes uneaten feed and fecal matter using screens or sedimentation units (Malone & Pfeiffer, 2006). Biological filtration, often carried out by biofilters, converts toxic ammonia excreted by fish into less harmful nitrate through nitrification (Martins et al., 2010). This process is essential for maintaining water quality and preventing fish mortality (Timmons & Ebeling, 2010).

**Components of RAS:** RAS consists of several integrated components that work together to maintain a stable aquatic environment (Timmons & Ebeling, 2010):

- **Fish Culture Tanks** – These are the primary units where fish are reared under controlled conditions (Summerfelt & Penne, 2008).

- **Mechanical Filters** – Remove suspended solids from the water (Malone & Pfeiffer, 2006).
- **Biofilters** – Facilitate nitrification by hosting beneficial bacteria (Martins et al., 2010).
- **Pumps and Piping Systems** – Ensure continuous water circulation (Badiola et al., 2012).
- **Aeration and Oxygenation Systems** – Maintain dissolved oxygen levels (Timmons & Ebeling, 2010).
- **Disinfection Units** – Control pathogens using UV or ozone (Summerfelt & Penne, 2008).
- **Heating and Cooling Systems** – Regulate temperature for optimal fish growth (Badiola et al., 2012).

Each component plays a critical role in maintaining system stability and ensuring fish health (Martins et al., 2010).

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## Applications of RAS

RAS is widely used for farming high-value species such as salmon, tilapia, shrimp, and ornamental fish (Martins et al., 2010). It is also employed in hatcheries and research facilities where precise environmental control is essential (Timmons & Ebeling, 2010). Urban aquaculture is another emerging application, where RAS enables local fish production close to consumers, reducing transportation costs and carbon footprint (Badiola et al., 2012). Integration with hydroponics in aquaponics systems further enhances resource efficiency (Verdegem & Bosma, 2009).

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## Advantages of RAS

RAS offers numerous benefits compared to conventional aquaculture systems:

- **Water Conservation** – Uses up to 90–99% less water than traditional systems (Verdegem & Bosma, 2009).
- **Environmental Protection** – Minimizes effluent discharge and pollution (FAO, 2020).
- **High Productivity** – Supports high stocking densities and increased yields (Timmons & Ebeling, 2010).
- **Location Flexibility** – Can be established in urban or inland areas (Badiola et al., 2012).

- **Disease Control** – Reduces exposure to external pathogens (Martins et al., 2010).
- **Year-Round Production** – Independent of seasonal variations (Summerfelt & Penne, 2008).

These advantages make RAS a promising solution for sustainable aquaculture development (FAO, 2022).

## Challenges and Limitations

Despite its benefits, RAS faces several challenges:

- **High Initial Investment** – Infrastructure and technology costs are significant (Badiola et al., 2012).
- **Energy Consumption** – Continuous operation requires substantial energy input (Martins et al., 2010).
- **Technical Complexity** – Requires skilled management and monitoring (Timmons & Ebeling, 2010).
- **Risk of System Failure** – Mechanical or biological failures can lead to rapid fish mortality (Summerfelt & Penne, 2008).
- **Economic Viability** – Profitability depends on species, scale, and market conditions (Badiola et al., 2012).

Addressing these challenges is crucial for broader adoption of RAS technology (FAO, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

Recirculating Aquaculture Systems represent a significant advancement in aquaculture technology, offering a sustainable and efficient alternative to traditional fish farming methods. By enabling water reuse, reducing environmental impact, and supporting high-density production, RAS addresses many of the challenges faced by conventional aquaculture. Although the system requires substantial investment and technical expertise, its long-term benefits in terms of sustainability, productivity, and resource conservation are considerable. With continued innovation and supportive policies, RAS has the potential to play a vital role in meeting global seafood demand while preserving natural ecosystems. The transition toward RAS reflects a broader shift toward sustainable and responsible food production systems in the 21st century.

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# Profitable Fish Nutrition & Management

## Article id: FS 10018

**Mritunjay Kumar, Varun Mishra, Ranju Kumari, Pragya Mehta, S.K. Jatav**

Narayan Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Department of fisheries science, GNSU, Jamuhar Sasaram, Rohtas, Bihar

### ABSTRACT

Aquaculture has emerged as avital component of global food security, necessitating advancements in fish nutrition and feed technology efficiency. Fish nutrition encompasses the study of essential nutrients including proteins, lipids, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals- and their roles in metabolism, immune function, and reproductive performance. Feed technology involves the formulation, processing, and delivery of nutritionally balanced diets that maximize feed utilization while minimizing environmental impacts such as nutrient leaching and water pollution. Innovations such as alternative protein sources, functional feeds, probiotics, and nutraceuticals are transforming traditional feeding strategies, improving sustainability and reducing reliance on fishmeal. This review highlights current trends and challenges in fish nutrition, advances in feed formulation and processing techniques, and the integration of precision feeding approaches to enhance aquaculture productivity and fish welfare. The development of cost-effective, environmentally friendly, and nutritionally optimized feeds is critical for the sustainable expansion of lobal aquaculture.

### INTRODUCTION

Fish nutrition and feed technology form the foundation of successful aquaculture. As the global demand for fish and aquatic products continues to rise, the need for efficient, sustainable and cost-effective feeding practices has become increasingly important. Proper nutrition is essential for maintaining optimal growth, reproduction, health, and survival of fish.

### Characteristics of Fish Nutrition:

- ✓ **Protein:** Crucial for growth and tissue repair; the most important component of fish feed
- ✓ **Lipid (fats)**: Provide energy and essential fatty acids for development.
- ✓ **Carbohydrates:** serve as an energy source, through fish use them less efficiently.
- ✓ **Vitamins:** essential for metabolism, immunity, and growth.

**Important vitamins:**

- ✓ Vitamin c (immunity, healing)
- ✓ Vitamin D (bone formation)
- ✓ Vitamin E (antioxidant)

**Minerals**

- ✓ Needed for bone formation and physiological functions.
- ✓ Fish absorb some minerals directly from water (e.g., calcium), reducing dietary need.

**Energy Balance:**

- ✓ Proper balance between protein, fat, and carbohydrates is crucial.
- ✓ If energy is insufficient, protein is used as energy reduces growth efficiency.

**Species-Specific feeding habits**:

- ✓ Carnivorous fish – high protein, low carbs
- ✓ Herbivorous fish – more plant-based feed
- ✓ Omnivorous fish – flexible diet

**Role of fish nutrition**

- ➢ **Promotes growth and Development**: Proper nutrition ensures fast and healthy growth by supplying essential nutrients like proteins, lipid, vitamins, and minerals.
- ➢ **Improve feed Efficiency:** Balanced diets help achieve a better feed conversion Ratio (FCR), meaning less feed is needed for more weight gain- reduces cost**.**
  - **Enhances Fish Health:**
    - ✓ Strengthens immune system
    - ✓ Reduce disease outbreaks

- ✓ Improves survival rate

- **Supports Reproduction**
  - ✓ Gonadal development
  - ✓ Egg quality
  - ✓ Larval survival
- **Maintains Physiological functions**
  - ✓ Metabolism
  - ✓ Enzyme activity
  - ✓ Hormonal balanced

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## IMPORTANCE

- Improves fish growth and survival
- Reduces feed waste and production costs
- Enhances disease resistance
- Supports sustainable fish farming

## CONCLUSION

In short, fish nutrition ensures that fish get the right nutrients, while feed technology ensure those nutrients are delivered effectively. Together, they play a vital role in successful and sustainable aquaculture.

# Exploring Seaweed Farming as a Sustainable Bio-Resource for Therapeutic and Nutritional Applications

**Article id: FS 10019**

**Krishna Kumar, Varun Mishra, S.K. Jatav, Pragya Mehta, Ranju Kumari**

Narayan Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Fisheries Science

GNSU, Jamuhar, Sasaram, Rohtas, Bihar

## ABSTRACT

Seaweed farming has emerged as a promising and sustainable sector within modern aquaculture, significant potential for both human health and economic development. Seaweed commonly also known as marine algae are cultivated in sallow coastal waters. In recent years, increasing attention has been given to their therapeutic and nutritional properties making them an important component in the fields of medicine and functional foods. Seaweeds are currently becoming more and more popular around the world due to their superior nutritional value and medicinal properties. This is because of rising seaweed production on a global scale and substantial research on their composition and bioactivities over the past 20 years. This review also highlights the potential of seaweeds in the development of nutraceuticals, with a particular focus on their ability to enhance human health and overall well-being. Seaweed are rich in essential nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, fibers and bioactive compounds while contribute to high nutritional value.

## INTRODUCTION

Seaweed farming is rapidly emerging as a premier sustainable bio-resource, offering a "zero-input" solution for nutritional and therapeutic applications that requires no freshwater, arable land, or fertilizers. As a highly productive aquaculture sector-with some species growing up to 60 cm a day-seaweed provides a nutrient-dense food source (rich in iodine, vitamins, and protein) and a source of bioactive compounds used for treating chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular disorders. The demand for food, chemicals, and energy is rising along with the world's population growth. Since land resources cannot be fully utilized for agriculture, the world is now turning its attention to the potential of the ocean to meet these needs. Aquaculture inputs when grown using cutting-edge cultivation techniques based on their pigmentation, seaweeds (macroalgae) are generally classified as Chlorophyta, Rhodophyta, and Phaeophyta. Green seaweeds, called chlorophyta, have chlorophyll a and b as their principal pigments. Red seaweeds belonging to the Rhodophyta class predominately contain phycobiliprotein. The third is Phaeophyta, a type of brown seaweed that predominately includes fucoxanthin.

- **Eco-Friendly Agriculture**: Seaweed extracts serve as biostimulants to improve crop yield, soil health, and drought resistance. They also provide raw materials for biodegradable pesticides.
- **Bioenergy & Materials:** Seaweed can be converted into fuels (biodiesel, bioethanol, biohydrogen) and biodegradable bioplastic packaging, offering a low-impact alternative to fossil fuels.
- **Environmental Benefits:** As a fast-growing biomass, seaweeds act as significant carbon sinks, sequestering atmospheric and providing a bioremediation solution for nutrient runoff (eutrophication).
- **Food & Health:** Seaweed is a nutrient-rich food source and provides high-value nutrients for pharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals.
- **Industrial Applications:** It is a key source of hydrocolloids (carrageenan, agar, alginate) used extensively in food, cosmetic, and pharmaceutical products.
- **Carbon Sequestration:** Seaweed absorbs dissolved $CO_2$ from the ocean, combating acidification and reducing carbon footprints.
- **Nutrient Biofiltration:** It absorbs excess nitrogen and phosphorus from the surrounding water, helping to prevent harmful algal blooms and improve water quality.
- **Rapid Growth:** Seaweed grows 60 times faster than land plants and can be harvested multiple times per year, offering a reliable, renewable source of biomass.
- **Low Resource Dependence:** It is known as "zero-input" food, as it requires no land, freshwater, pesticides, or fertilizers to grow.

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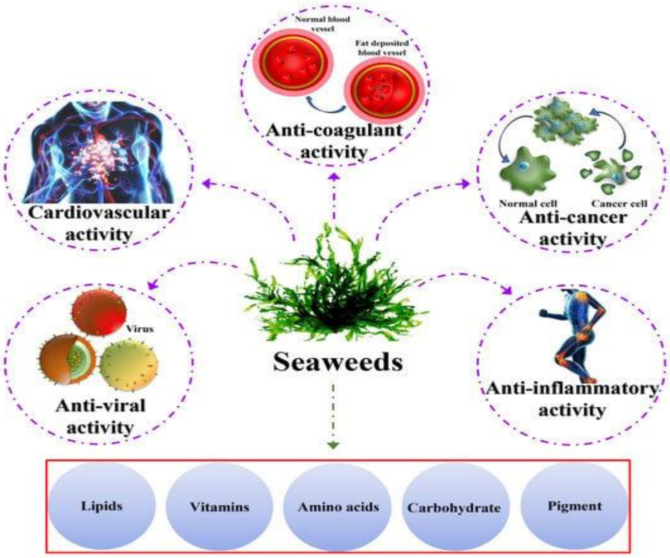
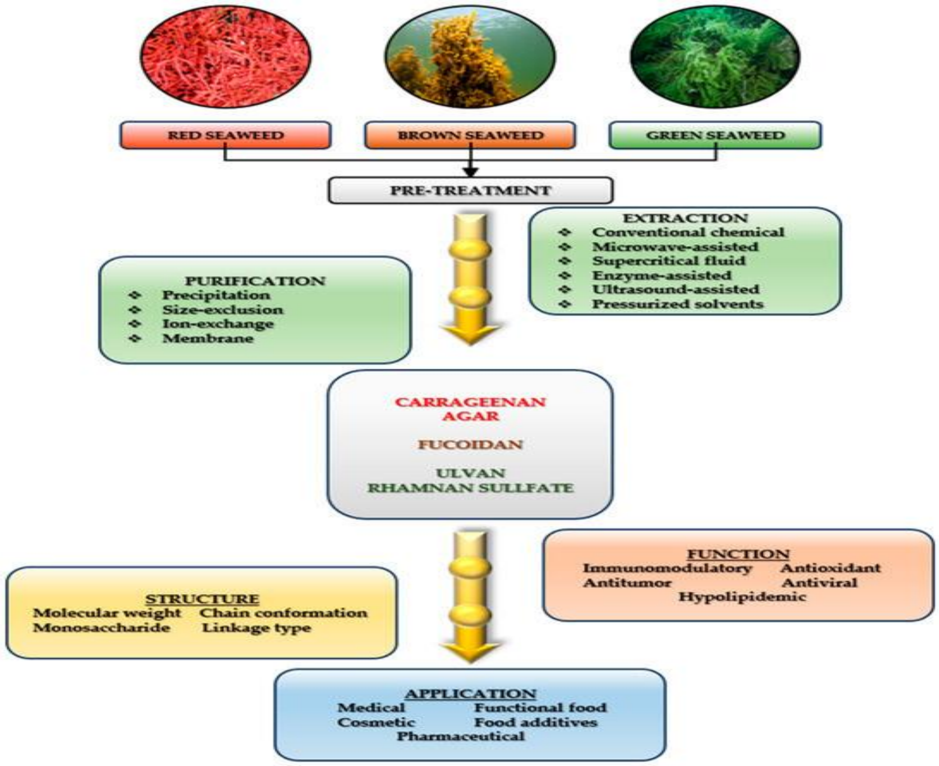
**Seaweeds as a Source of Nutrients and Metabolites:** A growing population with a high risk of health issues necessitates the development of functional foods that can food security issues while also providing a rich source of bioactive compounds. seaweeds have piqued the interest of researchers due to their natural source of bioactive compounds with the potential to be nutraceuticals Seaweeds are a rich source of macrominerals (K, Mg, Ca, and P) and microminerals (Fe, Mn, Mo, Ni, Se, and Zn). Seaweed is considered a functional food and a "superfood," containing 54+ trace elements, essential nutrients, and high-quality of protein (71%). Seaweeds are nutrient dense marine macroalgae containing high quality proteins, essential amino acids, iodine, vitamins (A, $B_{12}$, C, E), and essential minerals, acting as a functional food source. They are rich in bioactive metabolites like sulphated polysaccharides, polyphenols, and pigments (fucoxanthin), which provide antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-obesity health benefits.




## Importance of seaweed

Seaweed is a vital marine resource that supports oceans health providing oxygen, habitat, and nutrient cycling. It is sustainable source of food, medicine, and industrial material, while offering high value economic opportunities for coastal change mitigation by sequestering carbon and reducing coastal acidification.

- **Environmental Benefits:** Seaweed is a sustainable crop that requires no land, freshwater, or fertilizers. It acts as a carbon sink, sequestering atmospheric and can reduce ocean acidification and nutrient pollution (eutrophication).
- **Nutritional Value:** Seaweed is a "superfood" packed with minerals, vitamins, amino acids, and iodine, which is essential for thyroid function. It is used in numerous foods (sushi, snacks) and dietary supplements.




## Classification of seaweed

1. **Green Algae (Chlorophyta):** This group includes seaweeds like Ulva (sea lettuce), which are often found in a variety of marine and freshwater environments. Example:- cholorella etc.
2. **Brown Algae (Phaeophyta):** This group contains kelp, which is a common seaweed found in coastal regions, along with other species like Fucus (rockweed). Example:- Kelp, fucales etc.
3. **Red Algae (Rhodophyta):** This group includes seaweeds like Nori, Dulse, and Gracilaria. Example:- rhodella,compsopogon, stylonema etc.



Green algae

Brown algae

Red algae

## Seaweed farming techniques

Shallow coastal water of maritime states. Bamboo raft are used for the seaweed culture. Stable sea water and salinity not less than 30 ppt. Ideal temperature 26 to 30 Degree Celcius. Minimum 1m water depth and low tide. Seaweeds are plant-like protists that has been farmed and cultivated for centuries in Asia. In recent years, as its popularity has spread, seaweed farming has expanded rapidly around the globe.

- Area with mile currents
- Rafts size 3:3m
- Bamboo poles 3/3
- Free floating and fixed type of rafts
- 45 to 60 days seaweed crop duration
- 50 to 60 Kg per rafts.
- 250 Kg per rafts harvest

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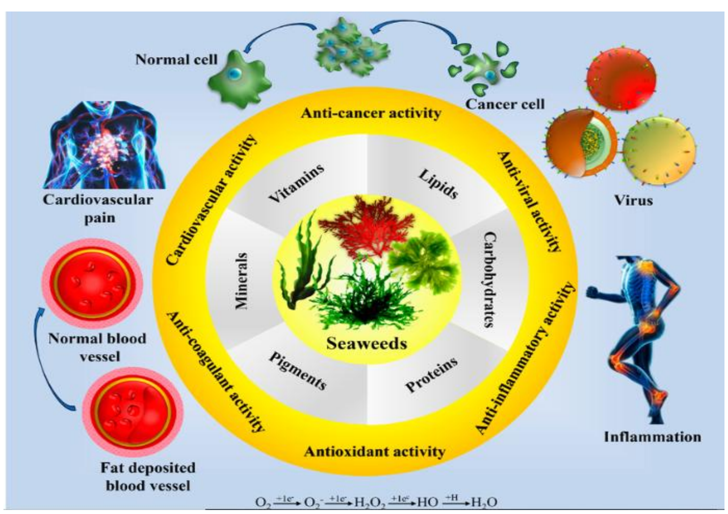
## Seaweed as an Immune Booster

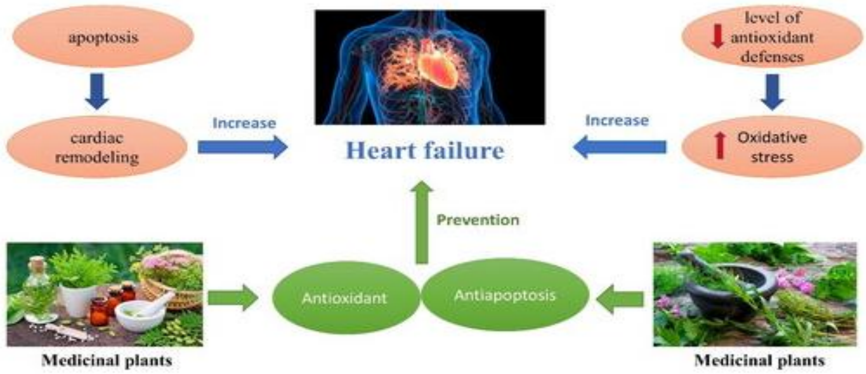
Seaweed's chemical composition is similar to that of human plasma and plays an excellent role in the purification of blood and regulating it is Eventually, it helps to alkalinize human blood and neutralize the over-acidic effect. Several studies confirm that chlorophyll-rich seaweed is more influential as a natural detoxifier, usually facilitating the removal of waste products from the bloodstream. Seaweed-derived bioactive compounds have a decent activity promoting good health for several years, and they seem to be a good bioactive nutrient component




**Biological properties of seaweed**

## Medicinal therapeutic applications

Seaweed farming drives medicinal applications by cultivating algae rich in bioactive compounds (polysaccharides, phlorotannins, peptides) used in nutraceuticals, pharmaceuticals, and animal health. Major applications include creating anti-obesity pills, drug delivery systems, and aquaculture feed additives. Seaweed contains bioactive compounds with antibacterial and antiviral properties.




**Seaweed used for human heart transplant**

## Hair and skin care (cosmetic use and benefits)

Seaweed provides significant hair care benefits by deeply hydrating, strengthening, and nourishing the scalp with essential vitamins (A, B, C, E) and minerals like; iron, zinc and iodine. It boosts hair growth by stimulating follicles, reduces dandruff via anti-inflammatory properties, and adds shine while protecting against environmental damage. Deep Hydration and Moisture, Strengthens and Reduces Breakage, Promotes Growth and Reduces Hair Loss, Scalp Health and Dandruff Control, Nutrient-Rich Nourishment, Natural Protection. Seaweed is a powerhouse ingredient in cosmetics and skincare, valued for its high concentration of minerals, vitamins, and antioxidants. It provides anti-aging, moisturizing, anti-inflammatory, and UV-protective benefits, making it ideal for treating acme, reducing wrinkles, and soothing irritated skin.

Seaweed used in hair

Seaweed used in skin and cosmatics

## Environmental benefits

- ✓ **Carbon Sequestration:** Seaweed farms pull massive amounts of carbon from the water, reducing acidity and helping restore marine ecosystems.
- ✓ **Water Purification:** Seaweed removes excess nutrients and pollutants from the water, improving water quality.
- ✓ **Habitat Creation:** It provides vital food and shelter for marine life, supporting biodiversity.
- ✓ **Plastic Replacement:** Seaweed can be used to make sustainable, biodegradable packaging alternatives to plastic.
- ✓ **Sustainable Agriculture:** Seaweed-based biostimulants improve soil quality and crop yields while reducing the need for chemical fertilizers.
- ✓ **No Land Resources Needed:** Because it grows in the ocean, it requires no freshwater or fertilizer to cultivate.

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# Applications of GIS and Remote Sensing in Fisheries

## Article id: FS 10020

**Siddharth Kumar Jatav, Pragya Mehta, Varun Mishra and Ranju Kumari**

Department of Fisheries, Narayan Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Gopal Narayan Singh University, Jamuhar, Rohtas, Bihar

## INTRODUCTION

Fisheries play a vital role in providing food, nutrition, employment, and income to millions of people across the world (FAO, 2022). Marine, coastal, and inland fisheries are important components of many national economies, especially in developing countries. However, increasing pressure on fish resources, habitat destruction, pollution, and climate change have created serious challenges for the sustainable development of this sector (World Bank, 2021). To address these issues, modern scientific tools such as Geographic Information System (GIS) and Remote Sensing have become highly valuable. GIS and Remote Sensing are transforming fisheries management by providing accurate, timely, and large-scale information about aquatic environments (Jensen, 2015). These technologies help in identifying fish-rich areas, monitoring water quality, conserving habitats, planning aquaculture farms, and improving decision-making. Their use has made fisheries more efficient, profitable, and sustainable.

## Understanding GIS and Remote Sensing

A Geographic Information System (GIS) is a computer-based technology used to collect, store, manage, analyze, and display geographically referenced data (Burrough & McDonnell, 1998). It allows users to combine maps with different layers of information such as fish distribution, water depth, temperature, breeding grounds, and fishing routes. Through GIS, complex spatial relationships can be understood easily, helping authorities and researchers make informed decisions.

Remote Sensing is the science of collecting information about the Earth’s surface from a distance using satellites, aircraft, drones, or sensors (Lillesand, Kiefer & Chipman, 2015). It helps observe oceans, rivers, lakes, wetlands, and coastal areas without direct contact. Remote sensing can provide data on sea surface temperature, chlorophyll concentration, turbidity, sediment levels, and shoreline changes. This information is extremely useful for fisheries management.

## Importance of GIS and Remote Sensing in Fisheries

Traditional fisheries management methods often rely on field surveys and manual data collection, which can be expensive, time-consuming, and limited in coverage. GIS and Remote Sensing overcome these limitations by offering faster and more reliable information over large geographical areas (Pettorelli et al., 2014). These technologies help improve fish production, reduce risks, conserve ecosystems, and support sustainable resource use.

## Applications in Marine Fisheries

- ***Identification of Potential Fishing Zones:*** One of the most successful uses of Remote Sensing in marine fisheries is the identification of Potential Fishing Zones (PFZs). Satellite data on sea surface temperature and chlorophyll concentration help scientists locate areas where fish are likely to gather (Solanki et al., 2005). These areas are rich in plankton and nutrients, making them ideal feeding zones for fish. PFZ advisories are communicated to fishermen through mobile phones, radio, and navigation systems. This helps reduce fuel costs, save time, and increase fish catch efficiency.
- ***Monitoring Oceanographic Conditions:*** Remote Sensing helps monitor ocean conditions such as currents, temperature changes, upwelling zones, and salinity patterns. These environmental factors strongly influence fish migration and abundance (Bakun, 2010). By studying such changes, scientists can predict fish movement and seasonal availability more accurately.
- ***Control of Illegal Fishing:*** GIS integrated with satellite surveillance, GPS, and vessel tracking systems helps authorities monitor fishing vessel movements. It becomes easier to detect fishing in restricted areas, crossing maritime boundaries, or fishing during banned seasons. This supports efforts to control Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing (FAO, 2020).

## Applications in Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture

- ***Site Selection for Fish Farming:*** GIS is widely used for selecting suitable sites for aquaculture projects such as ponds, hatcheries, cage culture, and shrimp farms. It analyzes multiple factors including soil type, water availability, temperature, land slope, water quality, and access to markets (Kapetsky & Aguilar-Manjarrez, 2013). By selecting scientifically suitable sites, farmers can reduce risks, improve productivity, and ensure better returns on investment.
- ***Reservoir and Wetland Fisheries Management:*** GIS helps map reservoirs, lakes, wetlands, and rivers for inland fisheries development. It provides information about water spread area, seasonal water fluctuation, fish habitat zones, and productivity potential. This supports better stocking programs, harvesting schedules, and habitat improvement measures.
- ***Monitoring Water Quality in Farms:*** Remote Sensing can detect changes in water quality parameters such as temperature, turbidity, and algal blooms (Klemas, 2011). GIS combines this information with farm data to identify areas vulnerable to disease outbreaks or oxygen depletion. Early warning helps farmers take preventive action and avoid fish mortality.

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## Habitat Mapping and Biodiversity Conservation

- **Mapping Sensitive Ecosystems**: Many fish species depend on ecosystems such as mangroves, coral reefs, estuaries, seagrass beds, and wetlands for breeding and nursery grounds. Remote Sensing helps map these habitats and monitor changes over time (Mumby et al., 1999). GIS is used to analyze habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation.
- **Conservation Planning**: By identifying biodiversity-rich areas and fish spawning grounds, GIS supports the creation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), fish sanctuaries, and habitat restoration projects. Protecting these ecosystems contributes to long-term fisheries sustainability.
- **Role in Coastal Zone Management**: Coastal areas are often affected by urbanization, tourism, industries, and natural hazards. Remote Sensing helps monitor shoreline erosion, mangrove destruction, sediment deposition, and saltwater intrusion (NOAA, 2021). GIS combines environmental and human-use data to support integrated coastal

zone management. This is particularly important for protecting fishing communities and maintaining productive coastal fisheries.

- **Climate Change and Fisheries**: Climate change is affecting fisheries through rising sea temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events (IPCC, 2022). Remote Sensing provides long-term environmental data that help scientists study these trends. GIS models are used to predict future changes in fish distribution, breeding behaviour, and habitat suitability. Such information is valuable for planning climate adaptation strategies in both marine and inland fisheries.

## CONCLUSION

GIS and Remote Sensing have become indispensable tools in modern fisheries management. They are helping scientists, policymakers, and fishing communities understand aquatic environments more clearly and use resources more wisely. From identifying fishing zones to protecting habitats and managing disasters, their applications are wide and highly impactful. As demand for fish continues to rise and environmental pressures increase, the use of these technologies will become even more important. Their wider adoption can ensure sustainable fisheries development, improved livelihoods, and healthier aquatic ecosystems for future generations.

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# Role of Biotechnology in Modern Fisheries

## Article id: FS 10021

**Ravi Baghel[1], Anjuman Sameem[1], Vishal Sakar[2] & Narendra Singh Bhardwaj[3]**

[1]M.F.Sc. Department of Fish Biotechnology, Faculty of Fisheries, SKUAST Kashmir

[2]M.F.Sc. Department of Aquatic environment management, Faculty of Fisheries, SKUAST Kashmir

[3]M.F.Sc. Department of Aquatic Animal Health Management, Faculty of Fisheries, SKUAST Kashmir

## ABSTRACT

Biotechnology has become a potent resource in contemporary fisheries, greatly aiding in enhanced productivity, better fish health, and sustainable aquaculture methods. It combines cutting-edge methods from genetics, molecular biology, and microbiology to improve fish breeding, disease management, nutrition, and environmental regulation. Genetic enhancement and transgenic methods have led to the creation of rapidly growing and disease-resistant fish varieties. Molecular diagnostic tools and vaccines have enhanced disease identification and prevention, lowering mortality rates and reliance on antibiotics. Furthermore, biotechnology has improved feed quality by utilizing probiotics, enzymes, and alternative protein sources, resulting in enhanced growth performance and less environmental impact. Reproductive technologies guarantee a steady seed supply, whereas bioremediation protects water quality in aquaculture systems. Additionally, biotechnology aids in the preservation of aquatic biodiversity and guarantees food safety through improved quality control practices. In general, biotechnology is essential for converting fisheries into a more efficient, sustainable, and financially viable industry.

**Keywords:** Biotechnology, Aquaculture, Genetic Improvement, Transgenic Fish, Fish Health Management, Disease Diagnosis, Vaccines, Fish Nutrition, Probiotics, Reproductive Biotechnology, Cryopreservation, Bioremediation, Biodiversity Conservation, Food Safety

## INTRODUCTION

Biotechnology significantly impacts contemporary fisheries by utilizing sophisticated methods from genetics, molecular biology, microbiology, and biochemistry to enhance fish production, well-being, and ecological sustainability. It has emerged as a crucial resource in aquaculture to satisfy the growing need for fish as a key protein source while promoting effective and environmentally friendly methods.

A key contribution of biotechnology in fisheries is the enhancement of genetics. By means of selective breeding, hybridization, and molecular techniques like marker-assisted selection, researchers can create fish strains that grow more rapidly, use feed more effectively, and exhibit enhanced resilience to diseases and environmental pressures. Sophisticated techniques such as genetic modification enable the insertion of particular genes into fish, leading to transgenic varieties with increased growth rates and better adaptability. These advancements greatly boost productivity and decrease the duration needed for fish farming.

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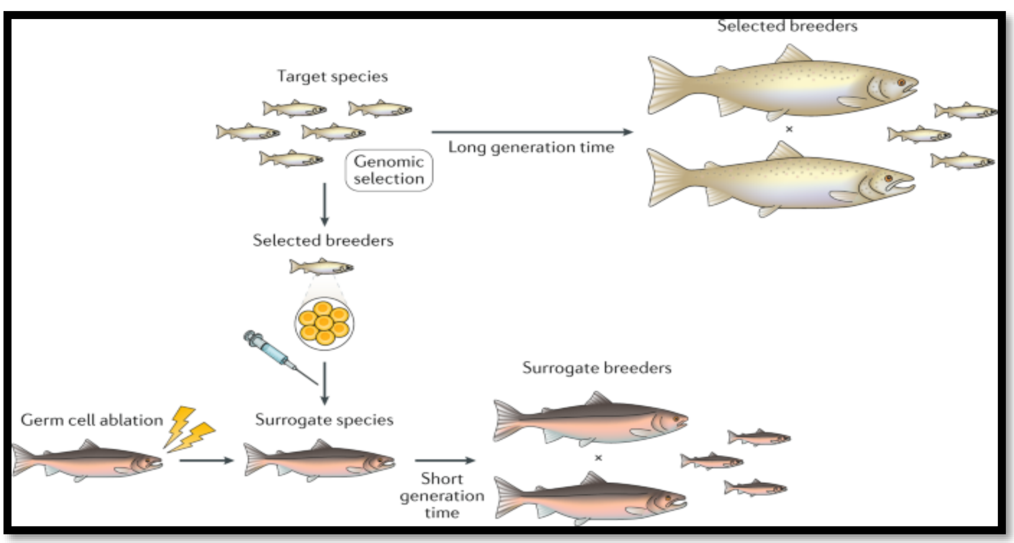
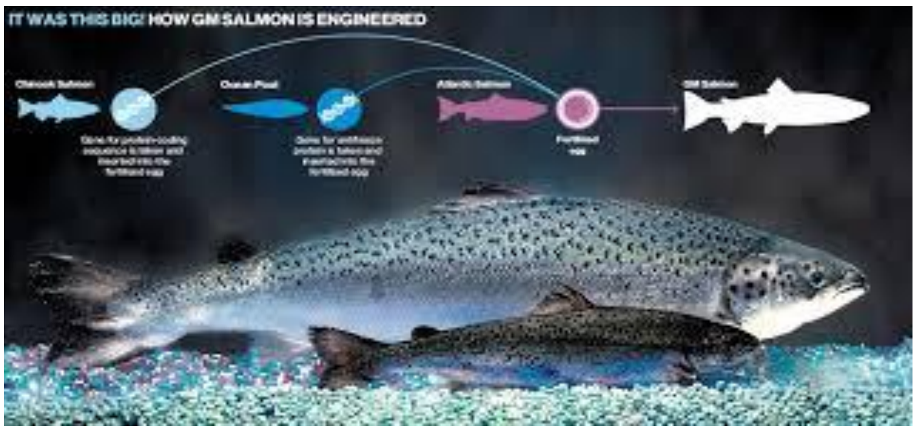
**Genetic Improvement and Molecular Breeding:** Genetic improvement and molecular breeding in fisheries involve the use of advanced biological techniques to enhance desirable traits in fish populations. Through selective breeding, individuals with superior growth, disease resistance, and adaptability are chosen and bred over successive generations to produce improved strains. Molecular breeding techniques such as marker-assisted selection allow scientists to identify specific genes responsible for these traits and select broodstock more accurately. This results in fish that grow faster, utilize feed more efficiently, and survive better under stressful environmental conditions, thereby increasing overall productivity in aquaculture systems.




Houston, *et al.*, (2020).

## Genetically Modified Fish Technology

Transgenic fish technology involves incorporating foreign genes into the fish genome to improve certain traits. This is accomplished through methods like microinjection or gene modification. The added genes might code for growth hormones or other advantageous traits, allowing the fish to grow more quickly or withstand harsh environmental conditions. Although this technology provides considerable benefits in production and efficiency, it also brings up issues regarding environmental safety, ethical implications, and the possible effects on natural ecosystems if these fish were to escape into the wild.




Connor, (2012).

**Management of Fish Health and Control of Diseases:** Managing fish health is essential in contemporary fisheries, and biotechnology has significantly enhanced the capability to identify and regulate diseases. Sophisticated diagnostic instruments like molecular assays facilitate early and accurate identification of pathogens, enabling prompt action. Biotechnology aids in creating vaccines that enhance the immune response of fish, offering defense against multiple illnesses. This lessens the reliance on antibiotics, lowers death rates, and encourages more sustainable aquaculture methods, ultimately resulting in increased yields and superior-quality fish.

**Biotechnology in Aquatic Nutrition and Feed Innovation:** Biotechnology has greatly improved the formulation and quality of fish feed. Feeds are enhanced in digestibility and nutritional balance through the inclusion of probiotics, enzymes, and microbial proteins. These advancements enhance the effectiveness of nutrient use, resulting in quicker growth and improved health of fish. Moreover, employing biotechnology in feed manufacturing decreases dependence on conventional fishmeal, rendering aquaculture more sustainable and economical while also lowering environmental pollution from leftover feed and waste.

**Biotechnology in Reproduction:** Reproductive biotechnology aims to enhance breeding effectiveness and maintain a steady availability of fish fry. Methods like induced breeding utilize hormones to encourage spawning in fish within regulated environments, surpassing the constraints of natural reproduction. Cryopreservation enables the long-term preservation of sperm and eggs, safeguarding important genetic material for utilization in the future. Alternative techniques like sex reversal allow for the creation of monosex groups, which are commonly favoured in aquaculture because of their consistent growth and increased productivity. These developments guarantee dependable and effective fish farming systems.

**Environmental Biotechnology (Bioremediation):** Environmental biotechnology is crucial for ensuring water quality in aquaculture systems. Beneficial microorganisms are utilized in bioremediation to decompose organic waste and harmful compounds like ammonia and nitrites in fish ponds. This procedure aids in sustaining a healthy water environment, lessening stress on fish, and averting disease incidents. It encourages sustainable aquaculture methods by reducing the ecological footprint of fish farming operations.

**Conservation and Biodiversity Protection:** Biotechnology plays an important role in preserving aquatic biodiversity. Methods like DNA analysis and genetic profiling are utilized to recognize species and evaluate genetic diversity in populations. Gene banking and cryopreservation assist in safeguarding the genetic material of threatened species, securing their existence for future generations. These techniques aid conservation initiatives and contribute to ecological stability by safeguarding important and endangered fish species.

**Fish Preparation and Food Hygiene:** In fish processing, biotechnology guarantees the safety and quality of fish products. Molecular methods are employed to identify pathogens, toxins, and contaminants, guaranteeing that fish is safe for human consumption. Biotechnological techniques further aid in prolonging the shelf life of fish by utilizing natural preservatives and enhanced storage methods. This is especially crucial for preserving quality during transport and complying with global food safety regulations.

**New Frontiers in Fisheries Biotechnology:** New fields like genomics, proteomics, and bioinformatics are broadening the horizons of biotechnology in fisheries. These areas focus on examining and interpreting genetic and protein information to enhance knowledge of fish biology and develop better breeding and disease management techniques. Developments in nanobiotechnology are also being investigated for precise drug delivery and enhanced health management in aquaculture. These advancements are influencing the future of fisheries by offering more accurate and effective responses to current issues.

## CONCLUSION

Biotechnology has become a crucial aspect of contemporary fisheries by offering sophisticated tools and methods to boost productivity, enhance fish health, and promote environmental sustainability. Its uses extend to breeding, nutrition, disease management, conservation, and food safety, establishing it as a robust method to satisfy the increasing worldwide need for fish while protecting aquatic ecosystems.

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# Gender Inclusion in Marine Fisheries: Challenges and Opportunities

## Article id: FS 10022

**Prapti, Mayurkumar Tandel & Sachin Dnyanoba Chavan**

College of Fisheries, Mangaluru (Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University, Bidar), Karnataka

## ABSTRACT

Gender inclusion has become an important focus in the development of Marine fisheries, particularly in the context of sustainable livelihoods and equitable growth. Although women contribute significantly to the fisheries sector, their roles remain largely concentrated in post-harvest activities, with limited participation in capture fisheries and decision-making processes. This article examines the existing challenges that restrict gender inclusion and highlights emerging opportunities that can support greater participation. Strengthening inclusion through targeted interventions can improve not only equity but also overall sectoral efficiency and sustainability.

**Keywords:** Fisheries, Gender Inclusion, Fisherwoman Role, Deep Sea Fishing

## INTRODUCTION

Marine fisheries are a vital source of food, employment, and income for millions of people, especially in coastal regions. The sector is inherently labour-intensive and involves a wide range of activities, from harvesting to processing and marketing. Women have always been an integral part of fisheries, contributing significantly to post-harvest operations such as sorting, drying, processing, and selling fish. Despite this, their contributions are often under-recognized, and their participation in capture fisheries and leadership roles remains limited (ICSF, 2018). In recent years, there has been increasing attention toward gender inclusion in Marine fisheries, driven by the need for equitable development and better utilization of human resources. Understanding the barriers and opportunities associated with gender inclusion is essential for creating a more balanced and resilient fisheries sector.

**Current Role of Women in Marine Fisheries:** Women's involvement in marine fisheries is largely concentrated in shore-based activities. These include fish processing, value addition, and marketing, which play a crucial role in maintaining the supply chain and supporting local economies. However, participation in capture fisheries, particularly offshore and deep sea fishing, remains limited. This uneven distribution of roles reflects long-standing social norms and structural constraints within the sector (FAO, 2020).

## Barriers to Gender Inclusion

**1. Social and Cultural Constraints:** Traditional perceptions about gender roles continue to influence participation in fisheries. Fishing, especially offshore operations, is often considered a male-dominated activity, which discourages women from entering these roles (World Bank, 2019).

**2. Limited Access to Resources and Training:** Access to fishing equipment, financial support, and technical training is often restricted for women. This limits their ability to expand beyond traditional roles and participate in more technical or operational aspects of fisheries (Government of India, 2021).

**3. Infrastructural Limitations:** Fishing vessels, landing centres, and related infrastructure are generally not designed with gender inclusivity in mind. Lack of basic facilities such as sanitation and safe working spaces can act as a barrier to participation.

**4. Underrepresentation in Decision-Making:** Women are often underrepresented in fisheries governance, cooperatives, and policy-making bodies. This limits their ability to influence decisions that directly affect their livelihoods (ICSF, 2018).

## Opportunities for Enhancing Gender Inclusion

**1. Capacity Building and Skill Development:** Training programs focused on fishing techniques, safety practices, and fisheries management can enable women to take on more active roles in the sector.

**2. Policy Support and Institutional Initiatives:** Government schemes and development programs aimed at empowering women can play a significant role in promoting inclusion. Financial assistance, subsidies, and targeted policies can improve access to resources.

**3. Technological Advancements:** In field conditions, it is often observed that improved fishing technologies and mechanization have reduced the physical intensity of certain operations, making them more accessible to a wider workforce.

**4. Changing Social Perceptions:** Increased awareness and visibility of women's contributions in fisheries are gradually changing societal attitudes. This shift can encourage more women to explore diverse roles within the sector.

## Benefits of Gender Inclusion

Promoting gender inclusion in marine fisheries has multiple benefits. A more diverse workforce can lead to improved productivity, better resource management, and increased innovation. Inclusion also contributes to social equity and enhances the resilience of coastal communities (FAO, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

Gender inclusion in Marine fisheries is both a necessity and an opportunity. While women continue to play a crucial role in the sector, their full potential remains underutilized due to various social, economic, and infrastructural barriers. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes policy support, capacity building, and awareness generation. Creating an enabling environment for women to participate across all levels of fisheries can strengthen the sector and contribute to sustainable development.

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# Marine Products for Healthcare: Functional and Bioactive Nutraceutical Compounds from the Ocean

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Kushi N. & Sachin Dnyanoba Chavan

College of Fisheries, Mangaluru (Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University, Bidar), Karnataka

## ABSTRACT

Marine resources are not only a source of food but also a rich reservoir of bioactive compounds with significant health benefits. Fish, shellfish, algae, and other marine organisms contain functional compounds such as omega-3 fatty acids, bioactive peptides, collagen, and polysaccharides, which are increasingly used in nutraceutical and pharmaceutical applications. These compounds exhibit antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and disease-preventing properties. This article explores the importance of marine-derived bioactive compounds in healthcare, particularly in relation to fisheries and seafood resources. It highlights their role in improving human health, preventing chronic diseases, and promoting sustainable utilization of fishery by-products. With growing interest in natural health products, marine nutraceuticals offer promising opportunities for the future.

**Key Words:** Marine bioactive compounds, nutraceuticals, fisheries, omega-3 fatty acids, functional foods, seafood, healthcare

## INTRODUCTION

The fisheries sector has long played a vital role in global food security and nutrition by supplying high-quality protein and essential nutrients. In recent years, however, the focus has expanded beyond basic nutrition to the discovery of bioactive compounds that provide additional health benefits. Marine organisms represent a vast and largely untapped source of biologically active substances due to their immense biodiversity (Ashraf et al., 2020).

Fish, algae, and marine invertebrates produce a wide range of compounds with therapeutic potential, which are now widely used in nutraceuticals and functional foods. Importantly, even fish processing by-products such as skin, bones, and viscera are recognized as valuable sources of these compounds, transforming waste into high-value products and supporting sustainability in fisheries (Mutalipassi et al., 2021).

## Marine Bioactive Compounds: A Hidden Treasure from Fisheries

Marine organisms contain a diverse array of bioactive compounds including lipids, proteins, polysaccharides, vitamins, and minerals, all of which contribute to human health (Fig. 1). Among these, omega-3 fatty acids such as eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) are particularly important. These fatty acids are abundant in fish and are known for their role in maintaining cardiovascular health, brain function, and immune response (Swanson *et al*., 2012).

Marine proteins are also a significant source of bioactive peptides, which exhibit antioxidant, antihypertensive, antimicrobial, and anti-inflammatory activities. These peptides are often derived from fishery by-products, making them both sustainable and economically valuable (Harnedy and FitzGerald, 2012).

In addition, structural proteins such as collagen and gelatin obtained from fish skin and bones are widely used in healthcare and cosmetic industries for wound healing and tissue regeneration. Compounds like chitin and chitosan, derived from crustacean shells, have shown antimicrobial and drug delivery properties (Ngo *et al*., 2015).

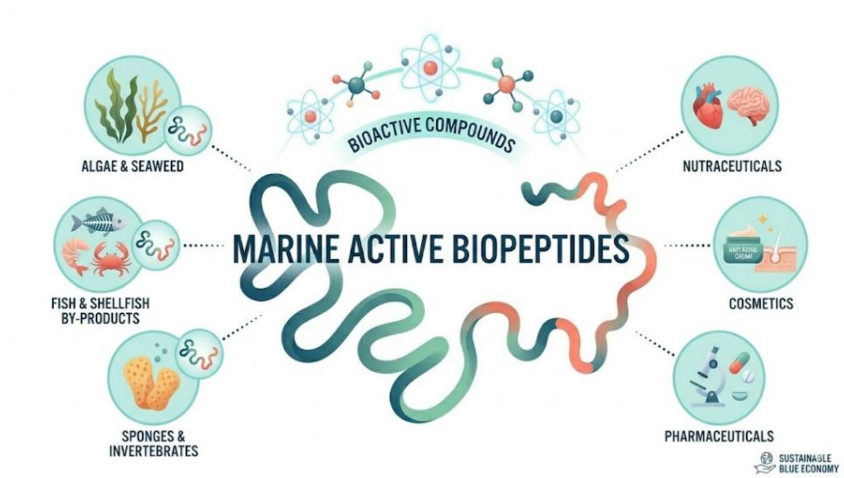


**Fig. 1: Marine Bioactive Compounds**

## Functional and Nutraceutical Importance

The growing demand for functional foods has led to increased interest in marine-derived nutraceuticals. These compounds offer health benefits beyond basic nutrition and play a role in preventing chronic diseases (Fig. 2). Marine bioactive compounds are known for their antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, which help reduce oxidative stress and inflammation—key factors in many diseases (Kim and Wijesekara, 2010).

Omega-3 fatty acids have been extensively studied for their ability to reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases, improve brain health, and regulate lipid metabolism (Swanson *et al*., 2012). Similarly, bioactive peptides derived from marine proteins have been shown to help manage hypertension by inhibiting angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) activity (Harnedy and FitzGerald, 2012).

Marine polysaccharides, such as those obtained from algae, also possess immunomodulatory and anti-cancer properties, making them valuable in nutraceutical and pharmaceutical applications (Kim and Wijesekara, 2010).

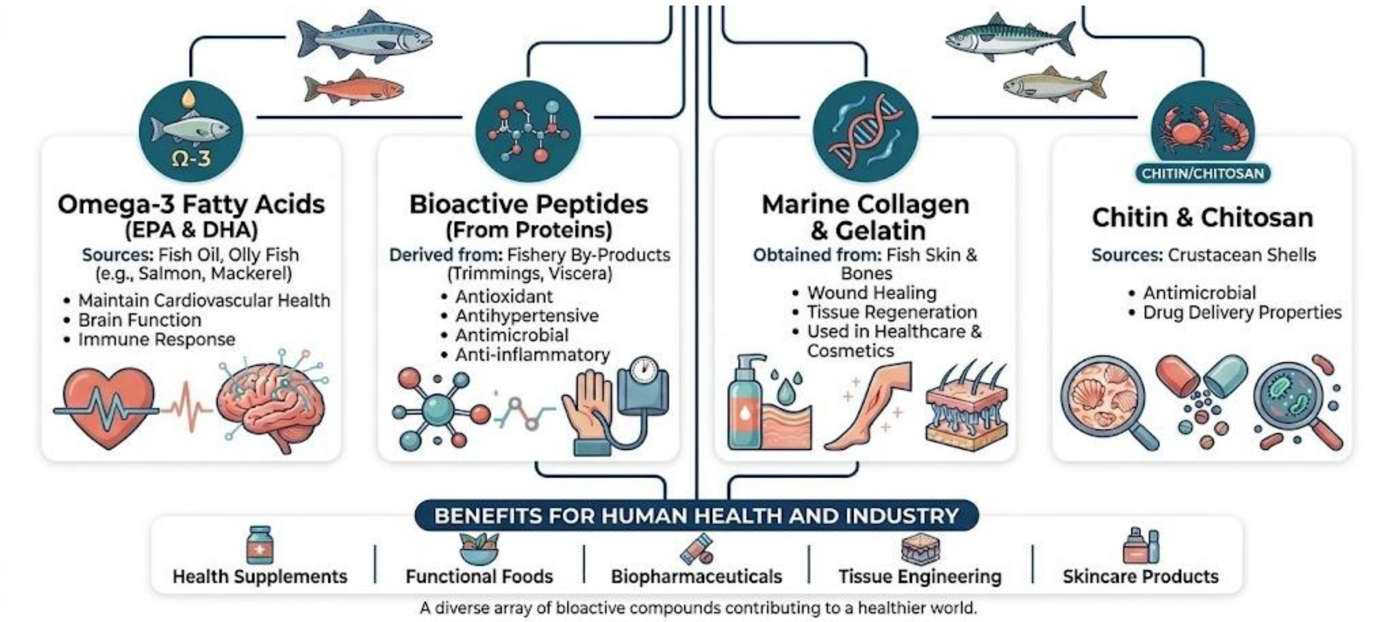


**Fig. 2: Functional and Nutraceutical properties of marine resources.**

## Role of Fisheries By-products in Healthcare

A significant portion of fish processing results in by-products, often considered waste (Fig. 3). However, studies have shown that up to 50–75% of fish biomass can be utilized for extracting valuable compounds such as proteins, lipids, and collagen (Mutalipassi *et al*., 2021). The utilization of these by-products not only reduces environmental pollution but also adds economic value to the fisheries sector. This approach aligns with sustainable development goals and promotes a circular economy in which waste is converted into valuable health products.

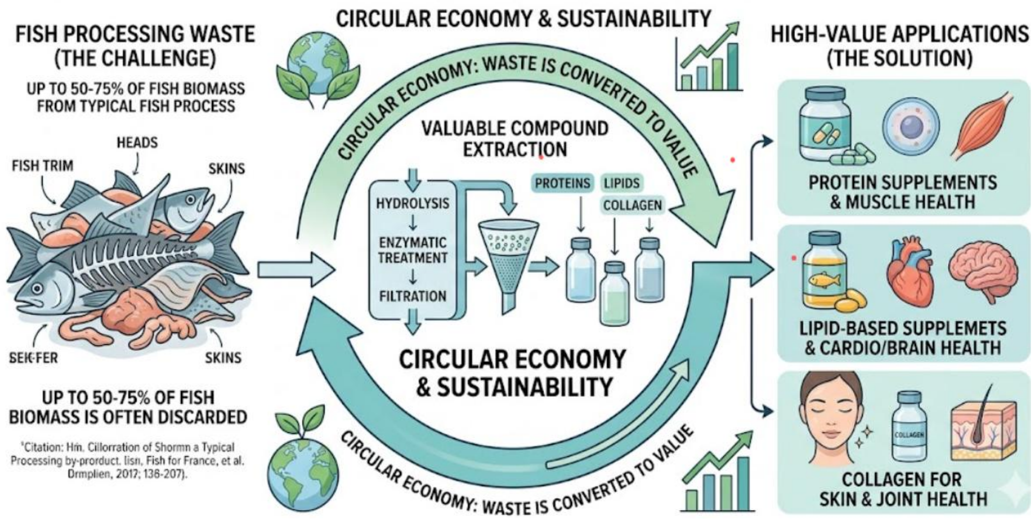


**Fig. 3: Utilisation of fishery by-products in health care**

## Health Benefits and Disease Prevention

Marine bioactive compounds contribute significantly to disease prevention and overall health improvement. Regular consumption of fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids has been associated with reduced risk of cardiovascular diseases, improved cognitive function, and better immune response (Swanson *et al*., 2012).

Bioactive peptides and polysaccharides from marine sources have shown potential in controlling diabetes, reducing cancer risk, and enhancing antioxidant defence systems (Kim and Wijesekara, 2010). Additionally, these compounds exhibit antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties, making them useful in both preventive and therapeutic applications.

## Challenges and Future Prospects

Despite their benefits, the use of marine bioactive compounds faces several challenges, including variability in composition, potential contamination, and limited clinical validation. Environmental factors and species differences can affect the quality and quantity of bioactive compounds.

However, advancements in biotechnology, aquaculture, and processing techniques are helping overcome these challenges. With increasing demand for natural health products, marine nutraceuticals are expected to play a major role in future healthcare innovations (Ngo *et al*., 2015).

## CONCLUSION

Marine products offer a unique combination of nutrition and health benefits through their rich content of bioactive compounds. These compounds not only support human health but also provide opportunities for value addition in the fisheries sector. By utilizing fishery by-products and adopting sustainable practices, the industry can contribute significantly to healthcare and economic growth. As research continues to explore marine biodiversity, the ocean will remain an invaluable source of nutraceutical compounds for the future.

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