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Fishery sector and its contribution to economic development of Assam

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Abstract

Fishery sector is an important contributor to the economic development of India. India's rank third in fisheries production and second in aquaculture. Fishery sector employs a large section of Indian population and a major contributor to India's GDP. Assam, the land of mighty river Brahmaputra is one of the major inland fish producing state in India. This sector contributes more than 2% of Gross State Domestic Product. Assam is predominantly an agrarian economy, therefore fishery sector can play an important role in employment generation and poverty alleviation which will further lead to economic development of Assam. This paper examines the status of fishery sector of Assam with the help of secondary data. The analysed data shows that proper utilisation of the aquatic resources will boost the fish production and help the state in attaining self sufficiency.

Keywords: Fishery Sector, Inland, Assam, Economic Development

1.0 Introduction: India is one of the largest fish producing country in the world. The share of India in the world fish production is around 6%. According to Ministeries of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, fish production increased from 7.52 lakh tonnes in 1950-51 to 125.90 lakh tonnes in 2018-19. This sector employs about 14.5 million people in the country.

Fisheries of India are broadly categorized in two- marine fisheries and inland fisheries. Marine fisheries is the culture of capturing fishes in oceans and seas. Inland fisheries included the activity of capturing fish from inland water resources like rivers, lakes, ponds, canals etc. Assam is a landlocked state and is devoid of marine water resource. Fishery resources of the state is limited only to inland water bodies.

Assam, the land of red river and blue hills is vastly endowed with natural resources including aquatic resources suitable for pisciculture. The vast water resource includes the majestic rivers Brahmaputra and Barak along with their 53 tributaries covering a water spread area of 4820 sq km. Apart from this, there is a presence of wetlands, low lying area, beels, ponds etc covering an area of 2.86 lakh hectares of water resources.

Assam is the highest fish producing state in the North – East region of India. In 2018-19, Assam produced 3.31 lakh tonnes of fish which is comparatively much higher than other north-eastern states. In the same year Arunachal Pradesh produced 0.05 lakh tonnes of fish, Mizoram produced 0.07 lakh tonnes, Manipur produced 0.32 lakh tonnes of fish, Meghalaya produced 0.13 lakh tonnes of fish, Nagaland produced 0.09 lakh tonnes of fish and Tripura produced 0.76 tonnes of fish.

2.0 Objectives: The main objective of this research includes-

1. To study the trend of fish production in the Assam.
2. To study the contribution of fishery sector in the economic development of Assam.
3. To highlight the future prospect of the fishery sector in the state.

3.0 Methodology: This paper is in the form of explanatory study in analyzing the contribution of fishery sector in the economic development of Assam. The study is purely based on secondary data collected from authenticated

government data source like Assam Economic Survey, NEDFi Databank , Handbook on Fisheries Statistics etc. Moreover research publications, journal articles, newspaper articles have been studied for this paper.

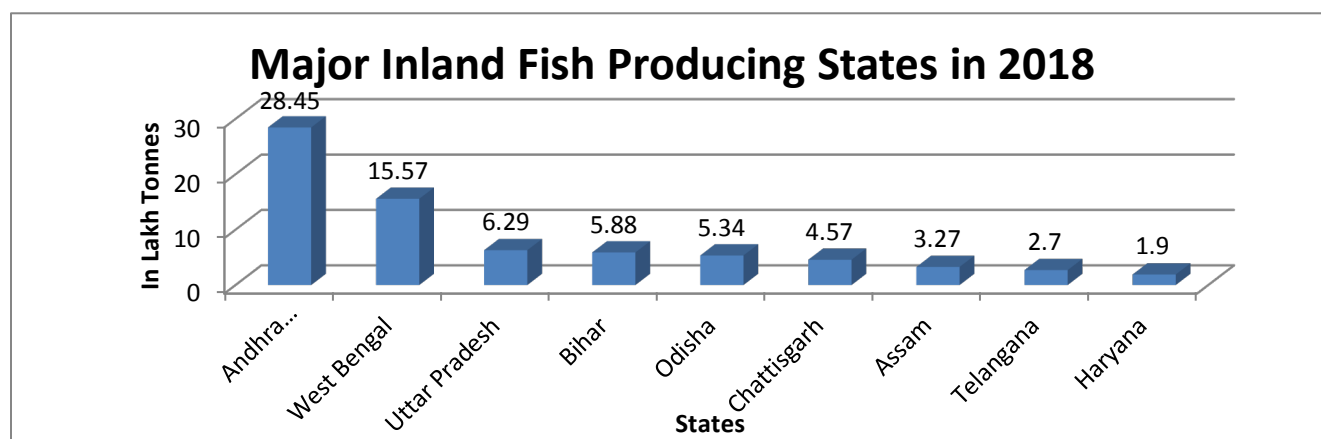
4.0 Findings and Discussions:

4.1 Major Inland Fish Producing States of India (2018):

Table 1

States	Fish Production (in lakh tonnes)
Andhra Pradesh	28.45
West Bengal	15.57
Uttar Pradesh	6.29
Bihar	5.88
Odisha	5.34
Chattisgarh	4.57
Assam	3.27
Telangana	2.7
Haryana	1.9

Source: Handbook on Fisheries Statistics,2018



From table 1, it is clear that although Assam is one of the leading inland fish producing state in India. But its share is comparatively low than many other states. In 2018 .Andhra Pradesh was the largest inland fish producer state by producing 28.45 lakh tones of fish whereas Assam was in the eight position of the list by producing 3.27 lakh tones of fish. Although, Assam has immense potential in this sector, the share of Assam is comparatively low as compared to many other states of the country. This is mainly due to improper utilization of the vast water resources available in the state.

4.2 Statistics of Fisheries on Inland Water Bodies in Assam,2018-19

Table -2

Type of Fisheries	Number	Water Spread Areas
River Fisheries i.Main River(in km) ii.Tributaries(in km)	2 53	4820
Registered Beel and Un-registered Beel(Hect.)	1907	63019.8
Forest Fisheries(Hect.)	441	4784.80
Derelict Water Bodies / Swamp (Hect.)	3973	94044.60
Reservoir Fisheries (Hect.)	1	996
Ponds and Tanks (Hect.)	455122	75183.90

Source:Statistical Handbook Assam,2019

Table 2 shows the vast water resources available in Assam. It includes river fisheries, beels, forest fisheries, swamps, reservoir fisheries, ponds and tanks. The river fisheries covering the large area of 4820 sq km .And reservoir fisheries covers a small area of 996 hectares.

4.3: Assam and India Inland Fish Production from 2011-12 to 2018-19(In Lakh Tonnes)

Table -3

Year	Assam(in lakh tonnes)	India(in lakh tonnes)
2011-12	2.29	52.95
2012-13	2.54	57.20
2013-14	2.67	61.36
2014-15	2.83	66.91
2015-16	2.94	71.62
2016-17	3.07	78.06
2017-18	3.27	89.02
2018-19	3.31	95.82

Source: Department of Fisheries, State Government/ Union Territories

From the table 3, it is clear that the total share of Assam in India's overall inland fish production is very small. In the year 2018-19 state's share was only about 3.45% in the total fish production of the country. Although Assam has rich water resources it has not been able to make proper utilization of it because of many infrastructural problems. The fish production of the State has increased from 2.29 lakh tonnes in 2011-12 to 3.31 lakh tonnes in 2018-19.

4.4. District wise Fish Production, Fish Imported and Registered Fish Market in Assam (2018-19)

Table-4

District	Fish Production (in tonnes)	Fish imported from other States (in tonnes)	Nos. of Registered Fish Markets
			Raw Fish
Kokrajhar	6820.48	132.60	8
Dhubri	10681.05	250.00	16
Goalpara	8527.43	412.00	15
Barpeta	21304.57	20.19	16
Morigaon	16765.91	425.00	5
Nagaon	43969.55	138.00	31
Sonitpur	12541.30	435.50	13
Lakhimpur	12989.80	525.00	10
Dhemaji	5240.41	209.60	5
Tinisukia	14150.90	210.00	9
Dibrugarh	14465.49	118.65	10
Sivasagar	11040.41	380.00	8
Jorhat	18779.29	904.00	5
Golaghat	8097.60	81.30	9
Karbi-Anglong	2974.95	290.00	5
Dima -Hasao	362.70	45.00	5
Cachar	32277.00	950.00	5
Karimganj	13018.64	738.00	5
Hailakandi	11948.55	1705.00	6
Bongaigaon	7900.00	180.50	7
Chirang	1242.00	92.00	-
Kamrup	22124.61	3515.00	36
Nalbari	13421.00	26.10	14
Baksa	6905.00	140.00	
Darrang	11415.70	608.00	20
Udalguri	2135.00	110.00	
Assam	331099.34	12641.44	263

Source: Statistical Handbook Assam-2019

The table 4 depicts the district wise total fish production ,total fish imported by different districts and number of registered fish market in various districts of Assam in the year 2018-19. Nagaon district of Assam produces 43969.55 tonnes of fish which is highest production among the other district of Assam in 2018-19. Again, the contribution of the district Dima –Hasao in fish production is lowest by producing only 362.70 tonnes of fish. The total fish production in Assam in the year 2018-19 was 331099.34 tonnes.

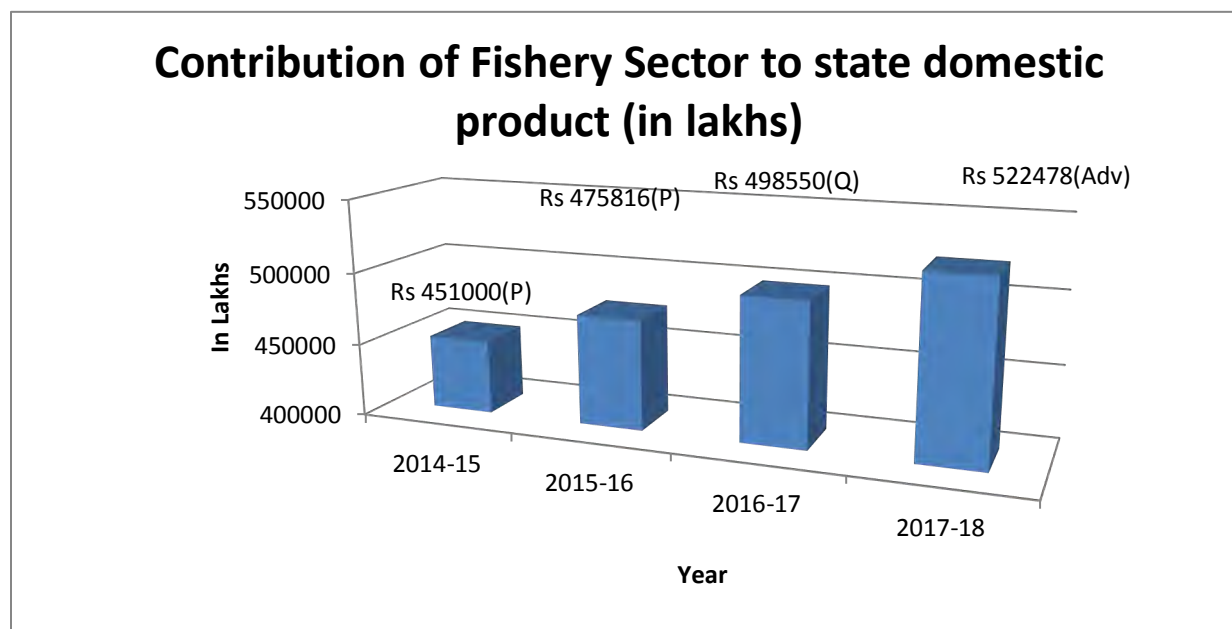
Again ,the table 4 also shows that the total amount of fish imported from other states by Assam in 2018-19 is 12641.44 tonnes. Kamrup district is the largest importer of fish by importing 3515.00 tonnes of fish.

The table 4 shows that in 2018-19 the total number of registered fish markets in Assam is 263. Kamrup district has 36 registered fish markets followed by Nagaon and Darrang districts with 31 and 20 registered fish markets respectively.

4.5: Contribution of Fishery Sector to Assam’s Domestic Product :

Fishery sector contributes a major share to state domestic product. This sector has tremendous capability for further development .The state government is focusing in this sector to achieve the objective of self sufficiency in fish production as well as economic prosperity.

At constant 2011-12 price ,the contribution of this sector to state domestic product was Rs 451000 lakhs in 2014-15 as per provisional estimates ,Rs 475816 lakhs in2015-16 as per provisional estimates, Rs 498850 lakhs in 2016-17 as per quick estimates and Rs 522478 lakhs as per advanced estimates in2017-18.

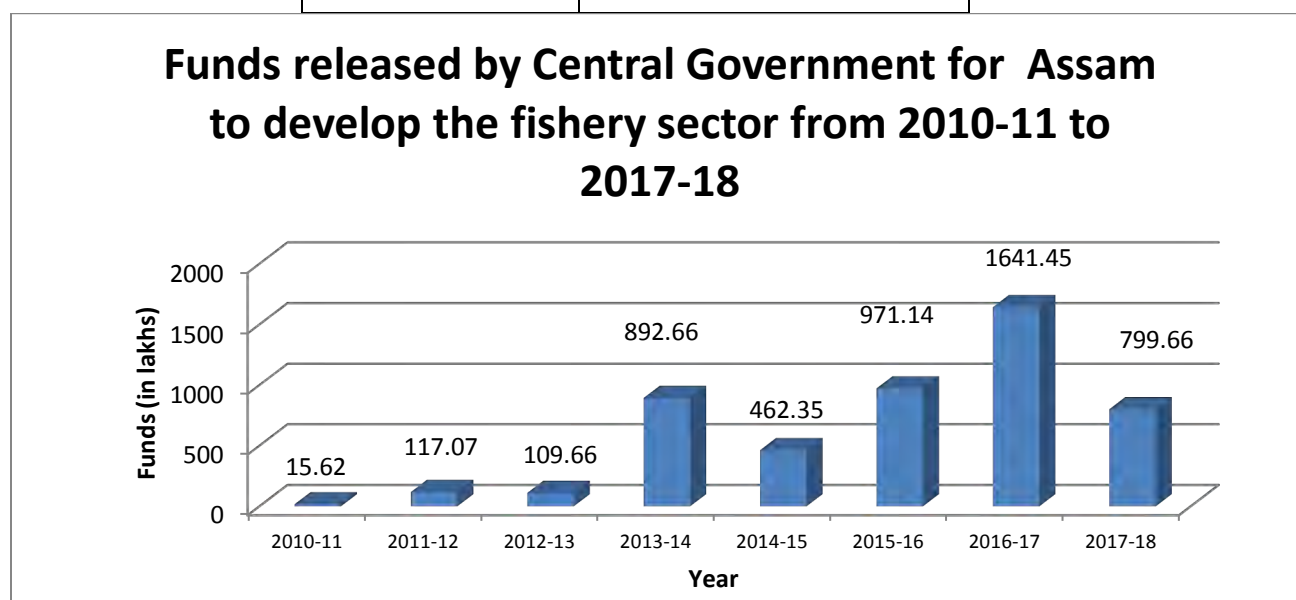


Source: Assam Economic Survey (2016-17 and 2017-18)

4.6: Funds released by Central Government for Assam to develop the fishery sector from 2010-11 to 2017-18:

Table -5

Year	Funds(Rs. In lakhs)
2010-11	15.62
2011-12	117.07
2012-13	109.66
2013-14	892.66
2014-15	462.35
2015-16	971.14
2016-17	1641.45
2017-18	799.66



Source: Handbook of Fisheries Statistics, 2018

From the table 5 ,it is clear that the funds released by central government for the growth of the fishery sector is gradually increasing. In the year 2016-17, the fund released by the central government was Rs 1641.45 lakhs which is the highest amount released by government in these years. In 2017-18 the fund released was around 799.66 lakhs.

5.0.Problems faced by this sector:

Although fishery sector has great potential for development,yet the development of this sector is very slow as compared to other states of India.Some of the main reasons behind this problem are-

- 1.Lack of proper scientific training on fish farming
2. Problem of overfishing which leads to overexploitation of fishery sector.
- 3.Problem of flood which adversely affects the inland fisheries and the aquaculture sector
- 4.Lack of adequate funds necessary for development of this sector.
- 5.Absence of leadership and entrepreneurship quality among people.

6. Presence of corruption in various state government department which acts as barrier in proper implementation of schemes adopted by state government for development of fishery sector .

6.0 .Future Prospects of the Fishery Sector in Assam:

Fishery sector is of huge importance for the economy of Assam. Assam is still considered economically backward as compared to other states of India due to lack of industrial development. Unemployment rates of Assam are quite high. In this situation , the fishery sector can play a remarkable role in employment generation. In post covid situation, where millions of people lost their jobs, fishery sector can play the important role of tapping the unemployed youths of Assam. Assam is a fish eating state, with more than 90% of people prefers fish in their diet. There is a huge demand for fish in Assam and in order to meet this demand ,the state government import tonnes of fish from states like Andhra Pradesh. If the state government focuses on the development of this sector by giving proper scientific training to fish farmers, there is huge possibility that fish production can be increased in Assam. As a result of it, Assam will not only be able to meet its own domestic demand for fish but also export and capture the large market outside the state. The State Government should also focus on educating the fish farmers and other stakeholders who are involved in the process of fish production on harmful side effects of the use of chemicals like formaline. It is not only important to increase quantity but the increased production of fish must meet the required quality standard.

7.0: Conclusion: Assam is naturally endowed with vast fishery resources. But these resources are not yet properly utilized. Proper utilization of these vast aquatic resources by carefully adopting scientific farming techniques can play a significant role in improving the economic conditions of the people engaged with this profession. Proper initiatives for the development of this sector will not only boost fish production but also ensure nutrition and food security. This will ultimately help in reducing inequality by socio economic upliftment of the poorest of the poor. Hence, central and state government should intervene in bringing modern scientific technologies to fish farmers and other stakeholders for overall improvement of this sector.

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