

Title: **Exploring Wellbeing in Fisheries - A New Insight on Poverty and Sustainable Fisheries Research and Policy**

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Abstract: At first, a paper which explores "wellbeing" in fisheries might seem misplaced. Our attention is more often focused on the poverty with which fisheries are so inherently associated and the threat of growing poverty as fishers, worldwide, face depleted fish stocks and a rapidly changing coastal environment. As this panel, quite rightly, contends the poverty of fisheries needs to be given a higher prioritization in world debates on the future of fisheries. The overall aim of this paper is to apply the wealth of research on poverty and development to the context of sustainable fisheries. We do this through the concept of "wellbeing" which has been progressive in understanding the multiple facets of poverty and reconnecting the different strands of development thinking on poverty. Based on a substantial programme of empirical research Gough and McGregor (2007) arrive at a definition of wellbeing as "a state of being with others, where human needs are met, where one can act meaningfully to pursue one's goals, and where one enjoys a satisfactory quality of life". This paper works closely with their definition and illustrates its relevance by discussing two fisheries in India: a small-scale fishery in Tamil Nadu and a modernized fishery in Gujarat. We conclude that wellbeing provides a well-timed concept with which to challenge some of the assumptions behind fisheries and poverty and we argue that for fisheries policies to work, they must be built on a better understanding of the wellbeing of people in fishing communities.