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Reliability and policy framing for fisheries statistics in SAARC region

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World fisheries production have remarkably increased since 1950 and with present annual 167.2 million tonnes fish production (FAO, 2016), fisheries and aquaculture became the potential contributors to food and nutrition security and livelihoods at global level. Almost 90% of aquaculture production takes place in Asia, most of it in the tropical and subtropical countries. The two South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries, India and Bangladesh with the annual production of over 10.0 and 3.55 million tonnes in 2016, respectively rank the 2nd and 5th largest fish producers in the world. The sector employs 56.6 million people globally of which India and Bangladesh alone share 32 million people. In South Asian region, at present hardly one third of the existing freshwater ponds and water bodies are engaged in aquaculture. Most of the rural people in the region depend on their backyard ponds and seasonal ponds for their house hold fish requirement throughout the year. These fisheries catches contribute substantially to the national fish production data. However, these production data are never included in the respective nation's fish statistics data base. Therefore, there is underestimation of fish production data for any particular country in SAARC region. At present, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) maintains global fisheries statistics by collecting data from the member countries. Past experience shows FAO sometimes encountered with incorrect data. Therefore, fisheries data may be scrutinized by the various regional bodies before sending them to world data pool. In this regards, SAARC can play the leading role for regional data pulling and scrutinisation. Also, review of existing methodologies for fish production estimation from diverse water bodies need serious attention. Based on the outcome, necessary policy may be framed at SAARC regional level for fisheries data collection and accurate reporting. Without reliable statistics, effective fisheries management and policy-making are impossible in the region, the major contributor to global fisheries production.

Biography

S M Bokhtiar was born in Chapai Nawabganj district, Bangladesh on 1 January, 1963. He graduated and achieved B.Sc. Ag (Hons.) from Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), Mymensingh in 1985. MS in soil science from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University (BSMRAU), Bangladesh and Ph.D degree from the United Graduate School of Agricultural Science, Ehime University, Japan in 1999 and 2006, respectively. Dr. Bokhtiar worked as post doctoral research fellow at Guangxi Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Guangxi, China for two years and studied on silicon nutrition of sugarcane crop. He started his carrier as a Scientific Officer in Farming Systems Research and Development Project (FSR & D) at Bangladesh Sugarcane Research Institute (BSRI), Bangladesh in 1989. During his service period at BSRI, Dr. Bokhtiar was promoted as a Senior Scientific Officer and also performed as a heads of division of Soils & Nutrition Division, BSRI till December 2010. Dr. Bokhtiar was appointed as a Principal Scientific Officer at Soils Unit of Natural Resources Management Division of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Bangladesh in 10 January 2011 and assigned for programme planning, execution, evaluation and monitoring of soils programme of National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in Bangladesh. Currently Dr. Bokhtiar serving as a Director, SAARC Agriculture Center (SAC), Dhaka, Bangladesh and involved in policy planning, formulation and implementation of the activities in the SAARC member states assigned by SAARC Secretariat Katmandu Nepal. Dr. Bokhtiar has 60 research papers in his credit with total citations of 253 and author of two books. Dr. Bokhtiar attended several international seminars and training programme in home and abroad. Dr. Bokhtiar visited several countries like Japan, Thailand, China, Egypt, Philippine, Malaysia, Mongolia, South Korea, Pakistan, New Zealand and India. Dr. Bokhtiar is actively associated with the International Association of Professionals in Sugar and Integrated Technologist (IAPSIT) based in Nanning, China since the very beginning of its formation in 2004. Dr. Bokhtiar also served as a Member-Secretary of Exchange and Cooperation Consortium for Agricultural Science and Technology, China- South Asia (ECCAST-CSA) Bangladesh part.

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