

Microhabitat plays an important role in indigenous fish production

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Published at 10:53 PM January 10, 2018

Last updated at 10:22 AM January 11, 2018



Panelists at the third day of the Gobeshona 4 conference at IUB on Wednesday, January 10, 2018 Mahmud Hossain Opu/Dhaka Tribune

'When trying to increase nutrient rich indigenous fish production, biodiversity, income and consumption, microhabitat can play an important role'

The conservation of ecological and biological diversity, coupled with natural resource management, can aid in keeping track of nutrition and relevant indicators in fish production, said speakers on Wednesday at the third day of the Gobeshona 4 conference.

The session, titled “Natural Resource Management,” was chaired by M Anisul Islam, director of Centre for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS), and moderated by senior research fellow from Middlesex University in the UK Paul Thompson, where researchers talked about water resource management and ways to resolve conflicts that were stemmed from local consumption of rights on natural resources.

Emdad Hossain, project leader (CCAFS-Smart Farm) of World Fish, said new intervention techniques could increase fish production.

“When trying to increase nutrient rich indigenous fish production, biodiversity, income and consumption, microhabitat can play an important role in the enhancement of indigenous fish production in seasonally flooded rice fields,” he said. “Furthermore, cultivation in rice fields also increases women’s involvement.”

Panelist Fatima Tuz Zahra, research assistant at the Institute of Water and Food Management in Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), said: “While mitigation is a complex process, its adaptation remains difficult because of lack of discipline in the methodologies that are applied. For instance, as far as adaptation is concerned, in grass roots levels everyone wants to become political scientists, without having any of its theoretical or methodological discipline and training. This is why adaptation remains a challenge.”

She further said: “If we only think about farmers and not about fishers, then it’s not going to work. We have to optimize both demands and make sure we conserve biodiversity and ecological diversity.”

Dr Parvin Sultana, senior research fellow at Middlesex University, talked about the swamp forests of haor areas in Bangladesh: “Swamp forests contribute to climate change mitigation, resilient ecosystems, fisheries and protection of villages from waves and floods.”

Parvin pointed out that influential locals were imposing their consumption rights on the forests, creating conflicts with tourists accessing those areas.

“To resolve these conflicts, communities need to become more involved in the restoration of swamp forests, planting trees and improve the process of thickening reed swamps as well as, better handle long term tenure rights and responsibilities,” said Parvin.

“Mosques are the easiest arbiters in the country because their authority is more signified and they control access which leads to further conflict,” she added.

M Anisul Islam, director of CNRS, said: “We have reached most of the indicators, but not all. Studies done on indicators of nutritional needs have found that people are solely depended on natural resources. We need socio-ecological resilience.”

Originally this article was published on January 10, 2018 at [Dhaka Tribune](#). The author Afrose Jahan Chaity.