

**GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY-INITIATED ASSOCIATIONS AND
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN BUNDELKHAND, MADHYA PRADESH**

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INTRODUCTION

Local Rural communities and institutions are never mutually exclusive. Where communities interact to each other or with the environment, the resources surrounding them, the socio-economic and politico-cultural milieu and the body of conscious/ unconscious innovation diffusers (mostly alien), the institutions necessarily create or being created. Especially the community-initiated institutions or those that the people actively participate in, have surprisingly a formalized set of organizational structures. Many of these institutions are most inclined to have and to use local knowledge, to respond quickly to changes, to handle conflicts and to create conditions of opinion influencing behavior (Uphoff, 1992). Such institutions offer a value to the concerned communities, and an opportunity to regulate the use of crucial resources, to apply local knowledge, to understand and correlate the ecological history of the surrounding, and to develop more sustainable alternatives in modern context. Therefore, it is worth to state that the institutions let the communities develop ways of working which are culturally sensitive, maintaining a balance with power structures that could otherwise destroy them.

Villages presently survive with a variety of institutions/ associations taking care of different kinds of management functions. Apart from constitutionally created panchayat institutions, there are the associations emerged out of communities' endogenous needs, interests, beliefs & values and innovations. Frequently observed are such institutions/ associations like religious bodies, *mandals*, entertainment groups (traditional), traditional councils (class or caste based), community reform groups, occupational societies (fish rearing samitis, Karigar panchayat, etc.), community resource user/ management groups, and other forms of associations. Together with this, the participatory paradigm of development and resource management gave rise a trend of new organizations, either promoted by specialized project or by the line departments. Sometimes a competition is seen among the external development agencies to create separate organizations for a set of tasks or different organizations for different tasks, irrespective of the presence of previously existing community-initiated or externally promoted organizations. This has caused the plural associations make multiple layers with complex inter-linkages. Meant for varied development related functions these overtaking organizations/ associations could be in the form of a self-help group, credit-thrift society, *mahila mandal*, forest protection committee, village forest committee, village education committee, *pani* panchayat, village watershed committee, village health committee, EGS management committee, farmers group, cooperative, labour society, rural development society, fish society, and so on.

Although the amount of research focusing the community institutions or associations involved in tank based fisheries is less enough, a body of literature witnesses the anatomy of fisherfolk associations in cases of coastal and marine fisheries. Artisanal fishermen in the coastal areas of India, for instance, form their traditional panchayats that have two main functions: the redressal of ritual lapses connected to norms of purity and defilement, and the settlement of civil disputes (Mandelbaum, 1970). Several Indian cultural ecologists (Gadgil, 1985; Gadgil and Iyer, 1989; Gadgil and Guha, 1992; Gadgil and Malhotra, 1994) contend that collective management of common resources is actually grounded in the fabric of Indian society. Bavinck (2001) investigated on the fishermen panchayats in Coromandel Coast of Tamil Nadu, India. He found that the panchayats govern over groups of people and define the physical territories in the sea for sustainable harvesting of the fish.

In India the government has promoted countless fishermen cooperatives to manage the inland aquatic resources in the tanks and reservoirs that are mostly ineffective and defunct. The traditional fisherfolk samitis, however, at some places have been managing sustainably these aquatic resources and maintaining the tanks and reservoirs.

Uphoff (1995) lamented that the traditional institutions function according to shared understandings of common objectives, roles, expectations, responsibilities, sanctions, etc. rather than being determined by explicit, codified rules and regulations. These traditional institutions have the echoes of indigenous beliefs and values.

Present paper is the outcome of an empirical study conducted in Bundelkhand region of central India on the traditional fisherfolk samitis that have actually been managing the aquatic resources and restoring hydro-ecological ecosystems of tanks in three villages. These samitis had been studied intensively to look into various institutional attributes like functions, accountability of representatives, institutional governance and its implications, people's participation and development impacts and sustainability. It has been concluded from this study that these traditional associations were the most viable and sustaining local institutions. This is attributed to the institutions being a tradition and resources for delivering social liabilities, for providing social justice, for equitably distributing the benefits, and so on. These associations have emerged out of community's self-initiatives and endogenous demands.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

Bundelkhand region, where the villages under study lie, has well been a feudalistic state characterized with tall inequity and unprecedented exploitation. The multi-caste society with dominant Hindu cultural strata eventually behave in accordance of resources distribution, power positions, caste privileges and political dynamics. Such a social behaviour is also reflected in various existing village institutions, and the institutions are quite often influenced by the caste/ community dynamics, the power balance and the distribution/acquisition and availability of resources in the villages. In Bundelkhand, the present study covered Kakaoni, Birorakhet and Darretha villages of Tikamgarh district of Madhya Pradesh.. Tikamgarh district was selected on the grounds that it has largest number and wet area under tanks in the entire region, on which communities depend for fish culture, the prominent source of local economy. Villages were selected randomly.

Research tools

Tools used in this social research include direct observation, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, informal discussions, key informants and focussed group discussions. Some facts regarding the governance pattern and the magnitude of peoples' participation in varying associations were also assessed while having directly participated the meetings of respective associations. Target population of the given three villages were involved in the research after being the permission granted by the corresponding leaders or representatives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With the advent of *zamindari* system in India during the British era, the common property resources within the boundary of villages came in the virtual control of feudal lords. Tanks in the villages of Bundelkhand gradually turned from 'commons' to the state property or, to some extent, private property. In Tikamgarh district, for example, majority of the tanks is in the clutches of feudal lords or the contractors who relish political patronage. They in order to acquire the lease of the tank from gram panchayat, janpad panchayat or zila panchayat employ illegitimate means and methods. They manage

to form an idle cooperative society of the individuals belonging to fisherfolk community (hereinafter the Dhimar community) who later work on wage basis for the contractor. The legal papers of the cooperative society remain in the custody of the contractor. With his influence and power he then also manages to acquire the lease of the tank/ reservoir for a certain period of time. Subsequently, he puts in the fish seed in the water body and keeps the same members of the cooperative society as labourers to look after the fish rearing. Right from obtaining the lease to the fish marketing the investment is made by the contractor only. So entire harvest goes to the contractor only except the wages he spares for labourers (usually the members of cooperative society). In this whole process the actual owners of the aquatic resource viz. the members of cooperative society, are kept marginalized and deprived of knowing anything. But interestingly the contractor does not have any weakness on legal front. He enters into a legal 'agreement' with the cooperative society he himself architected that he would invest on fish culture; and in return he will take out share of the harvest. In reality what happens the entire harvest goes to him. This agreement is also not conscious agreement between the two parties. The members of the said cooperative society even do not know if they are the members of any society although they sign the papers. Thus under this illegitimate 'agreement system' the entitlements of the fisherfolk communities onto the common aquatic resource are seized by the powerful and politically connected feudals in Bundelkhand region.

As a result of illegitimate control of feudal lords and contractors over the water commons, the communities especially Dhimar and tribes dependent on the inland aquatic resources started facing a new crisis of livelihood. Amid all this in the past decade, particularly the Dhimar community started to re-organize themselves to respond to this situation. In order to repossess their sovereignty over the aquatic resources of tanks, the communities used traditional knowledge, adapted institutional settings, responded adequately to manage crises and maintained or rebuilt social ecological resilience.

In the villages under study fisherfolk community was found having fisherfolk samitis namely Machhuara Samiti in Kakaoni village, Machhua Matsya Udyog Sahakari Samiti Maryadit in Birorakhet and Ganga Sagar Machhua Samudaya in Darretha village. The communities in response to their inherent and endogenous demands formed these formal/ informal associations. They were not imposed upon from outside.

Functions of fisherfolk associations

The prime goal of the fisherfolk samitis in all three villages was to rear the fish in the respective village tank. In three villages the samitis were found performing the pisciculture independently that included the preparation of the tank, water harvesting, seeding, feeding, netting, catching, marketing, etc. These samitis not merely deliver the functions of fish rearing but a distinguished culture actually seems nourished within the community institutions. An artistry and culture that was once dying as a consequence of long-feudal dominance and government's negligence revived and replenished.

Fisherfolk samitis in these three villages also take care of the function relating to restoration. It was noticed that the objectives of restoration and the local technologies of restoring varied markedly. For example, Machhuara Samiti of Kakaoni works hard in the monsoon season to maintain water levels in the tank, and Ganga Sagar Machhua Samudaya of Darretha manage a huge wet area by looking after the inflowing water stream from a big catchment area and maintaining the outlets to control the overflow. This samiti also removes every year the floating colonies of the aquatic weeds in order to keep the aeration proper for aquifauna.

Tanks in two villages, Birorakhet and Darretha, have their historical significance too. These were built during the reign of Chandela Kingdom, almost 400 years ago. The fisherfolk samitis apart from standing with the last historical signs in the villages help the recharge of groundwater regime. The relationship between the groundwater and water reservoirs is rather approving. These tanks occur on permeable soils overlying aquifers, allowing water to recharge the underground aquifer directly. The increased water level in the open wells or tube wells might have brought irrigation benefits to many farmers.

Machhua Matsya Udyog Sahakari Samiti Maryadit of Birorakhet reconstructed and renovated the tank when it damaged couple of years ago due to excessive rains. Although the maintenance of the tanks was the responsibility of gram panchayat as the panchayat rested the ownership of the tank and gave lease to the fisherfolk samiti. However, the fisherfolk samiti at the time of emergency took initiative and saved the enormous amount of waters from going waste.

Representation in the associations

It was an obvious finding that all the traditional associations studied were homogeneous and constituted by a single social group, the Dhimar community, known for artisanal fish rearing and other forms of aquaculture in north and central India. Representation of women in Machhuara Samiti of Kakaoni village was though less than one fourth of total size of membership, but the actual participation in the functions and decision-making process of the samiti was considerably high (Table-1). Despite the women's representation in the membership of Machhua Matsya Udyog Sahakari Samiti appeared to be very low, the association was discovered best performing in relation to women participation and gender equity. Representation of women is not visible because the head of family was to represent the samiti at the time of its formation. Later the membership could not be changed because this samiti had to get registered as cooperative due to inevitable government procedures involved in acquiring the official benefits. In Darretha village, Ganga Sagar Machhua Samudaya was also having the women representation little less than one fourth (Table-1). Of all, the Dhimar community of Darretha was most sensitive to the women.

cf. Green (1993) argued that the community based decision making requires that the population in question be represented in an accountable manner. Representation must be ensured for the diverse interests of communities, which are generally highly stratified along gender, age, class, livelihood, lineage, etc. (Painter, Sumberg and Price, 1994), Ribot (1999) stressed on the attributes of representation to be responsive to the whole community. Qualitative information on accountability of the leadership indicates that these fisherfolk samitis were perfectly accountable to the members of the respective samitis in particular and Dhimar community in general. Representatives of particularly the two samitis, Machhuara Samiti of Kakaoni and Ganga Sagar Machhuara Samudaya of Darretha, were found one step ahead of what required for the maintenance of accountability and transparency. The leadership of these two samitis was committed and dedicated to the extent that the leaders had driven up the social, economic and politico-cultural status of Dhimar community at par with the dominant castes in the respective villages.

Institutional governance and its implications

In every group, there are the elements, external or internal, who govern the election or selection of members, organization of meetings, decision-making processes, the functioning, the flow of benefits and the actual control over the powers. Governance in the three organic associations i.e. fisherfolk samitis was assessed on the following variables: election of members (E), meeting of institution (M), decision making process (D), benefit sharing (B) and who actually controls the institution? (C).

Field observations and the direct participation in some of the meetings unveil that Machhuara Samiti of Kakaoni, Machhua Matsya Udyog Sahkari Samiti of Birora and Ganga Sagar Machhua Samudaya of Darretha were having the members/ representatives elected democratically on common consensus (E-3) (Table-2). At the time of the constitution of Machhuara Samiti (Kakaoni), whoever contributed equally to the lease amount, was deemed as member. Lease was taken in the names of 7 members who then elected the president and treasurer. Similarly, the members were elected verbally by community's consensus when the Machhua Matsya Udyog Sahkari Samiti, Birora was being formed. This peaceful democratic election of members/ representatives based on community's common consensus indicates the internal strength of the respective communities that is also reflected in institutionalization process.

Meetings of these 3 community-initiated associations confirmed M-1, M-3, M-5 and M-7 parameters of governance (Table-2). M-1, M-3, M-5 and M-7, respectively, signify that meeting is called regularly, intimation of meeting is given to all the concerned members, the members attend the meeting in majority, and all the members are given chance to express their opinion/ views and participate in the discussion. Similarly, in case of Machhuara Samiti (Kakaoni) all members reside together in a hamlet, hence all attend the meeting. All Dhimars live like a family for they are descendants of 3 forefathers. An information call is announced for a meeting and it is organized. In the meeting, being a homogeneous social group the equity and freedoms of expression are maintained. No dominance of a single person was reported. Women also do participate in meetings.

These community-initiated associations wonderfully exhibit the best type of decision making in its governance processes. All of 3 associations were recorded to have D-1 (all members participate in decision-making) and D-6 (the decisions serve common/ community needs) parameters involved in the samitis' decision-making process (Table-2). Democratic decision process ensuring the participation of members, for instance, gave rise to a set of decisions that are as follows:

- (1) 5 persons in a group have to take care of the fish in pond on rotational basis;
- (2) Fish seed is to be bought from Jhansi, nearby city, in the quantum of 0.1 million per annum;
- (3) Clearing and maintenance of pond is a collective duty; and
- (4) Dam repairing by *shramdan* (contribution by labour) was undertaken.

Fisherfolk samitis thus are characterized by relatively a good governance system. Decision-making and benefit sharing particularly in fisherfolk samitis were recorded to be fully participatory. These community-initiated associations are substantially controlled and actively participated by women. The status of transparency and equity is high coupled with the accountable and committed leadership. This good governance has allowed these institutions to imbue immense internal strengths. Despite the heavy congestion of anti-knocking forces, these associations are eventually well shaped and strong. Everyone of the community the associations belong to gets equitable benefits. Data in Table-2 demonstrates that the community and the representatives actually control these institutions. It is pertinent in particular context of the dominance of feudalism in the villages and around. Most of such fisherfolk samitis elsewhere are actually controlled by contractors or powerful elite of the area.

The changing socio-political environment and developed powers through decentralization has affected the local power relations in the villages. There is a growing awareness to demand rights from the panchayats, which is a closer and legitimate institution. The opportunity of the weaker sections to come in power either through reservation or dominance of their number of votes in *gram sabha* has significantly affected governance system of the panchayats. The ongoing processes of democratization in panchayats are threatening the existing locally established leadership. This in fact is broadening the base of leadership at the local level proving opportunities to many more especially women who would

have otherwise got no opportunity in their life to demonstrate their leadership abilities. Contextual here is the representation of Dhimar community in panchayats. Drawing few members of a fisherfolk samiti go in the representation of panchayat body, the elected Dhimar members influence the governance functions of panchayats in favor of their common interests. This phenomenon was observed in case of Kakaoni and Darretha villages. In Birora, only one member of Dhimar community represented in panchayat who could not mobilize the panchayat body in favor; resultantly the fisherfolk samiti of Birora could not establish healthy relationships. Thus, it is pertinent from the angle of bringing efficiency in the functioning and governance of fisherfolk samitis, that the members of such institutions should also go to represent other coexisting institutions in the village.

People's participation in institutional processes

Field investigations revealed that the fisherfolk samitis acquire the high degree of people's participation, that too, an absolutely functional participation. Women also participate actively in the governance and functioning of these samitis. Narrow gender gap in Dhimar community favorably influenced the participation of women in management and governance functions of fisherfolk samitis. Another important factor behind the success in people's participation has to be the evolution of institution rooted in the inherent traditional, cultural and occupational needs, values and ethos of the community in question. Livelihoods are also linked with these institutions. Actually, the fact that an NGO, the Bikalp, backed up the deliverance of Dhimar community from feudal contractors' mess, who later created these associations, should not be overlooked. The said NGO though facilitated the fisherfolk samitis in Birora and Kakaoni villages, but these were the associations constituted far before the entrance of NGO in the villages. The fisherfolk samitis cannot be called as absolutely NGO-promoted because the community in question in all three villages has been much an initiative taking. More often the ensured livelihood (in traditional occupational mode) is possibly the prime factor behind the viability of these institutions. Such organic institutions (traditional fisherfolk samitis) differ from the government-promoted fish cooperatives or samitis in the way that the later are usually imposed upon the people. Internal capacities of the people generally do not build and develop in the externally promoted associations.

Behind the success of achieving high degree of people's participation there were several positive factors identified which are mentioned below:

- The samitis have brought people together.
- Samitis work for the community honestly and transparently.
- These are homogeneous institutions.
- Samitis work within the traditional frame of occupations.
- These institutions arrange the livelihoods of representing communities, and respond to the people's needs.
- Leadership in these institutions is active, committed and accountable.
- These institutions have been strengthening and enhancing the traditional occupation, the folk culture and the socio-economic status of the community.

Development impacts and sustainability of fisherfolk samitis

Community-initiated associations were particularly found consisting of the abilities to unify the people or groups of people, avoid sowing dissension, and actively resolve conflicts that emerge as valued constructive attribute. In Kakaoni village, Machhuara Samiti united together the dissociated communities. Dhimar community specially has organized and unified to the extent that they now address the issues relating to their social, political and cultural development.

Social disruption and dispossession going on unabated all across the villages in feudalistic states like the one that has been studied have further marginalized the poor. An association pouring in bit of empowerment in the deprived and disadvantaged communities is perceived as real people-centred institution. The caste specific associations among the community-initiated associations have substantially empowered the respective community to enable them ensuring control over their lives and resources, taking decisions, attaining social justice and responding to local political changes. Fisherfolk samitis of Kakaoni, Birora and Darretha brought a considerable change in the behaviour of Dhimar community. This unprivileged caste has now been gradually acquiring more space in the village's socio-political profile, more regard and recognition, and more voices against exploitation.

Feudal societies are rendered with a distinctive feature of gender inequity. It is true especially in context of Bundelkhand where gender gap is huge. Close observations in the villages under study reveal an interesting phenomenon. On caste hierarchy the gender gap widens as the community moves up on caste band. The lower the caste the least the gender gaps. The tribal communities had minimal gender breach, therefore. Revelations from field studies reinforce the above notions in the way that the Dhimar community belonging to lower social horizon comprises lesser gap in comparison to other coexisting caste communities. Thus among the fisherfolk samitis examined in 3 villages, the gender sensitization, narrowing gap and functional participation of women were the common occurrences.

Clearly visible are the politico-cultural impacts appeared around the community-initiated institutions. Fisherfolk Samitis, for example, in Kakaoni, Birora and Darretha villages accomplished immense political and cultural recognition. Dhimar community, which has a history of social neglect and economic dispossession, has been injected with the political empowerment by means of organizing the people in destitute. It is unique opportunity this community enjoyed as a result of fisherfolk samitis that the eroding culture of artisanal fishery is considerably preserved. As long as the samitis will work, the culture of pisciculture — unique to the Dhimar community — would survive. With the emergence of the fisherfolk samitis as viable associations, the community is getting empowered to the extent that female members from Kakaoni and Darretha have got elected in panchayat, and one female from Birora came in to the panchayat body. A committed and fully capable leadership is emerging out in all these three cases that may in the future turn into strong political/community leadership.

Most of the poor in villages who are not involved in agriculture seek to acquire their livelihoods in informal employment. In the villages under study a crisis of adequate food and availability of employment prevails all across. So in a state when poor people hit hard to excavate two times bread, the demands for livelihood arrangements are obviously high on the existing associations. But the question to keep it significant is that whether given association is satisfying livelihood needs and aspirations of the community. Facts indicate that the fisherfolk samitis of Kakaoni, Birora and Darretha were encountered having brought up changes in the livelihood/economics of the participating families. In Kakaoni village, the members although incurred losses in past years due to dry up of the pond, but prospects are better provided the pond is deepened or monsoon remain inerratic. Most visible best achievement in the cases of Birora and Darretha is that the poor Dhimar community escaped from vicious cycle of indebtedness and the dependence. They now take breath of freedom from bondage of one kind or the other.

It is apparent from field experiences that community-initiated associations have wonderful capacity to sustain because the people or communities concerned have full control over the institutions, and the associations work exclusively for the fulfillment of community/ people's needs. Needless to doubt the sustainability of the fisherfolk samitis as because they have totally internalized system of inputs and

the institutional mechanism. However, the Machhuara Samiti of Kakaoni runs at risk due to tenural lease of fish rearing in village pond and the losses incurred to participant families last year. The village pond also has no perennial water supply. This samiti can surely sustain if the village pond is deepened and renovated properly so as to store more and more water.

CONCLUSIONS

Even if Bundelkhand region in central India was once a State with feudal dominance, of which the ruins are still alive, but there existed a culture of forming the institutions and associations, which was a distinguished characteristic of multi-caste rural society. Beginning from water conservation and management to the village infrastructure and resource development, and community affairs, people managed forming the associations. As the socio-political and economic profile changed the behaviour of communities also changed; and this happened across the country. Over the decades, there is a significant change in the socio-political and economic relations in rural societies. This has also transformed the nature and designs of the local institutions.

The findings of this empirical study call us to accept that the traditional communities, hereinafter Dhimar community, yet have capabilities, values and innovations to mutually organize, make livelihood arrangement and survive with age-old traditions. The representing associations of these communities have also better adjusted in the modern regimes of development and governance. For instance the fisherfolk samitis have got 2-5 years lease for fish rearing in *nistar* ponds from corresponding gram panchayat that actually owns the pond. It also got registered as cooperative or under the fisheries department. This reflects the flexibility of the community-initiated institutions to cope with the changed environments and the challenges to survive. This study of fisherfolk samitis leads us to understand that the community-initiated institutions, mainly based on livelihood, development or social justice related functions, could better bargain with the panchayat bodies and or the government-promoted associations and NGO-promoted groups. The community-initiated associations can also build pressure upon the coexisting panchayat bodies and or government-promoted associations as to perform the tasks in people's interests. Summarily, the local people built the case that only the community-initiated associations have been created by the people themselves and evolved as the manifestations of their inherent needs, collective demands, livelihood or spiritual needs and or the need to self-govern and ensure social justice.

On the other hand, it is commonly observed that the government-promoted associations not only comprise narrow framework but also have limited space for the people. It are inspired by power acquisition (even by representatives) and founded more on material culture. With heavy influx of resources the government-promoted associations negatively impacted village societies in terms of worsened caste dynamics, declining collectivism and mutualism, loosened internal confidence of self-reliance, increasing inter-community or inter- & intra-institutional conflicts, peoples debilities to cope with changing environments and eroding traditional/customary management systems. These rather colonizing institutions in the beginning appear to reconcile literally each and every problem of the villages, but having their limited focus and capacities and short life span, they fail to address completely even a fraction of problems. Sometimes problems either create afresh or intensify. This paradox of institutionalization might bring serious repercussions in the process of making our villages self-reliant and poverty-free. Plight of the erosion of communities' endogenous abilities, skills, knowledge and values is a distant theme to think over. However, in the times when massive dispossession and disenfranchisement of local communities have already occurred, the diminutive

efforts of these externally promoted organizations or groups to reorganize and re-empower the people should be supposed as oasis in the desert. All together, the fact should not be overlooked that such multiplicity, diversity, overlapping (sometimes), etc. help emerge another set of typical situations like confusion in the people, complexities in social shape of villages, competitive demands for participation, internal rifts in the families, creation of new values, hopes and despairs, and so on. Too often much energy and resources dissipate for developing newer compatible institutions.

So the popular beliefs that community-initiated associations can no more work in the present era of globalization and open market economy may prove to be fatal in long run not only for the village system but also for broad development policy framework. Therefore, in spite of routinely neglecting such functional or defunct organic institutions, the agencies or individuals involved in development and resource management planning and policy making should have to address the appreciation, promotion, revitalization or empowerment of such institutions.

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Table-1: Membership structure and the representation in fisherfolk samitis (in parenthesis is the percentage)

Name of Institution	Size of Membership	Male Members	Female Members	Members in Hierarchy			
				President	Secretary	Treasurer	Total
Machhuara Samiti (Kakaoni)	17	13 (76.5%)	4 (23.5%)	1	0	1	2
Machhua Matsya Udyog Sahakari Samiti (Birorakhet)	29	28 (96.6 %)	1 (3.4 %)	1	1	1	3
Ganga Sagar Machhua Samudaya (Darretha)	35	27 (77.1 %)	8 (22.9 %)	1	0	0	1

Table-2: Status of the governance system within fisherfolk samitis

Governance Parameter	Indicator	Indicator Code	Matsya (Fisherfolk) Samiti	Machhua Matsya Udyog Sahkari Samiti	Ganga Sagar Machhua Samudaya
Election of members	By transparent and authentic voting	E-1			
	By pseudo voting;	E-2			
	Democratic election of members/ representative on common consensus (not by formal voting)	E-3	✓	✓	✓
	Top down election of members/ representatives by the authorities/promoters/ powerful elites	E-4			
	Randomly or deliberately putting names of the people on membership list	E-5			
Meeting of institution	Meeting is called regularly	M-1	✓	✓	✓
	Meeting is called occasionally/irregularly	M-2			
	Intimation of meeting is given to all the members	M-3	✓	✓	✓
	Intimation of meeting is given to identified members only	M-4			
	The members attend the meeting in majority	M-5	✓	✓	✓
	Only few members are given chance to express their option/views and participate in the discussion	M-6			
	Only few members are given chance to express their option/views and participate in the discussion	M-7	✓	✓	✓
	Only few dominating members or representatives speak and conduct the discussion	M-8			
	Meetings are held on paper only	M-9			
	Meetings is only called for namesake	M-10			
Decision making process	All members participate in decision-making	D-1	✓	✓	✓
	Only few members/take decisions	D-2			
	Decisions are taken by promoter	D-3			
	An outsider takes decisions	D-4			
	Decisions serve the interest of few members/ representatives/ promoter	D-5			
	Decisions serve the common/community needs	D-6	✓	✓	✓
Benefit sharing	Entire community/ village gets benefits	B-1			
	All members get benefits	B-2	✓	✓	✓
	Only the representatives get benefits	B-3			
	Promoter gets benefits	B-4			
	A third person (i.e. a resourceful, powerful or elite) gets benefits	B-5			
Who actually controls the institution?	Local community/ members	C-1	✓	✓	✓
	Specific class or person of the village	C-2			
	Representatives	C-3		✓	
	Promoter	C-4			
	An outsider	C-5			