

Climate Risks and Vulnerability: Is fishers' perception appropriate for their livelihood vulnerability?

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Abstract

With more than 22,000 ha of water surface, Tam Giang – Cau Hai (TG-CH) lagoon is known as the biggest brackish water in the South East Asia region. In the context of climate change and risks, the small-scale fisheries communities in this lagoon are estimated as one of the most vulnerable areas susceptible to the impact of climate risks in the Central Coast of Vietnam. Recent years have seen a rise in adaptive solutions to reduce the effect of climate risks, which can be implemented by local people, local government and policy-makers, however, their results and effectiveness are still controversial. The aim of this paper is to answer the question (1) How fishers perceive climate change and risks? (2) Is fishers' perception consistent with their livelihood vulnerability and (3) Do the adaptation solutions, includes the policy-making process based on fishers' perception? Climate change perception and livelihood vulnerability were assessed based on the results of 4 group discussions, 14 key informant interviews and information collected from accidentally selected 181 fisheries households to survey in TG-CH lagoon, Vietnam. This paper identified the vulnerability of fishers' livelihoods through seven major components that include socio-demographic profile, livelihood strategies, social networks, health, food, water, and natural disasters-climate variability.

Findings revealed that the fishers had a moderate level of livelihood vulnerability to climate change while their perception of climate risks was significant serious. Fishers had clear perceptions about changes in extremely cold, floods, droughts, and storms that had occurred over the last decade. The poor connection was found among the fisher's perception of climate change and adaptive solutions and policies. Key lessons for improving policymaking and adaptation practices is to enhance the participatory of fishers in all steps, especially focus on fishers' perception. This can help fishermen to actively and effectively implement policies and adaptation solutions promulgated to minimize the livelihood vulnerability due to climate risks in TG-CH lagoon particular and in the whole country in general.