

Possibilities of Local Resource and Environmental Conservation

Led by Inland Water Fisheries Cooperative

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Key Words: River fisheries cooperative, Common fishery right, Resource increment obligation, Involvement of outsiders, Affinity for river.

1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Many environmental problems have been derived from river development such as dam and road construction, which was accepted by local people in exchange for economic benefit. This eventually has separated people's livelihood from river geographically, socially and psychologically. Furthermore, river development is accelerating the vicious cycle of development-isolation-environmental deterioration. In this study, I focus on inland water fisheries cooperative (IWFCo-op) as an actor for conservation of resource and environment. Objectives are to make its responsibilities and incentives clear, comprehend actual situations and discuss possible roles and functions of the IWFCo-op that may lead practical solutions.

2. BACKGROUND FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

IWFCo-op is founded by local people and has a common fishery right and obligation of resource increment. They oblige to manage fish resources. The way of increment is, however, limited to release young fish, which caused problems of intrusion of alien species, damage to local gene resource and spreading epidemic of cold water disease. Fishery right has often been bartered to receive compensation in return of river development, resulting in environmental deterioration. So, IWFCo-op has a heavy responsibility for the past. On the other hand, fishery right could be an effective power to claim limitation of developments. And now, decline of resource causes a deficit in IWFCo-op's income, which may be incentive for conserving resources and environment of river as their primary responsibility.

3. ACTUAL SITUATION —CASE : KOZA RIVER—

Findings of participatory observation suggest that activities of the Koza River Fisheries cooperative are not enough for conservation of environment and resources. Lack of member's awareness, lack of ability to cope with and constraint from local community with fussing over blood relationship and neighbors bring negative attitudes for proceeding activities (see Figure1). In contrast, local people place much value on their ownership and continuity, and this may encourage them to take consistent activities. Experiences and wisdom of elderly people can be helpful for designing conservation plan.

Lack of awareness		
Resource management	River conservation	Against degradation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishing for leisure and not suffer from decreasing. Elderly want to enjoy now. Believing fishing release is the only way to increment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking natural environment is not so bad. Believing that is not their task, but government should do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking no power to claim for limitation. Having got benefit from development. Avoiding to cause a struggle.
Lack of abilities		Constraint from local community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declining birthrate and a growing proportion of elderly people. Lack of scientific knowledge and skill. Less information. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fussing over blood relationship and neighborhood. Follow the idea said by loud voice. Interrupting to make new rule and act on precedent. Being ashamed to rely much on outsider.
Elder's experiences & wisdom can be helpful for designing conserving plan		Consistent activities by local people

Figure 1. Negative attitude for activity

4. ROLES AND POTENTIALS

From the cases of Kita and Tama River in comparative research, the co-ops hold some events which enable close contacts between people and river to raise awareness and involve outsiders, so that the co-ops can develop their activities forward conservation. Operating such events will be one of the most important roles of IWFCo-ops. In the case of Koza River, I implemented an event that designed to introduce scientific survey and involve local people, which brought about changes in attitudes and created further discussions. Outsider's participation will be an effective way to break through actual situations. Governments, companies and citizens are required to take a role and carry out their responsibility for river these days. It is possible to manage river and conserve nature by local people with IWFCo-op's leadership and outsider's participation.



Figure 2. Structural outline