

ORL-AAQ-13 Overview of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Nepal

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Nepal's fisheries sector, rooted in historical practices, is a vital component of the nation's natural wealth, driven by diverse geographical features and abundant water resources. Nepal is home to 252 fish species, including 16 endemic ones, representing about 1.6% of global freshwater aquaculture diversity. Fish production from capture fisheries currently stands at 21,000 MT, contributing about 18% of total fish production, with the majority of this volume coming from rivers and lowland irrigated paddy fields. This sector in Nepal faces the challenges of overexploitation, loss of aquatic bio diversity and ignorance during the development activities like the construction of dam, reservoir, irrigation canal etc.

Aquaculture in Nepal began around seven decades ago and has seen significant growth over the last decade. Presently, total fish production from aquaculture stands at 92,736 MT, with pond fish culture contributing 72.3% of the production. The terai belt, with its favorable climate, plays a pivotal role in fish production, constituting 88% of the total pond area. The landlocked geography compels the aquaculture subsector to focus on inland finfish farming, and is supported by government initiatives like the One Village One Product, Fish Mission Program and Prime Minister Agriculture Modernization Project.

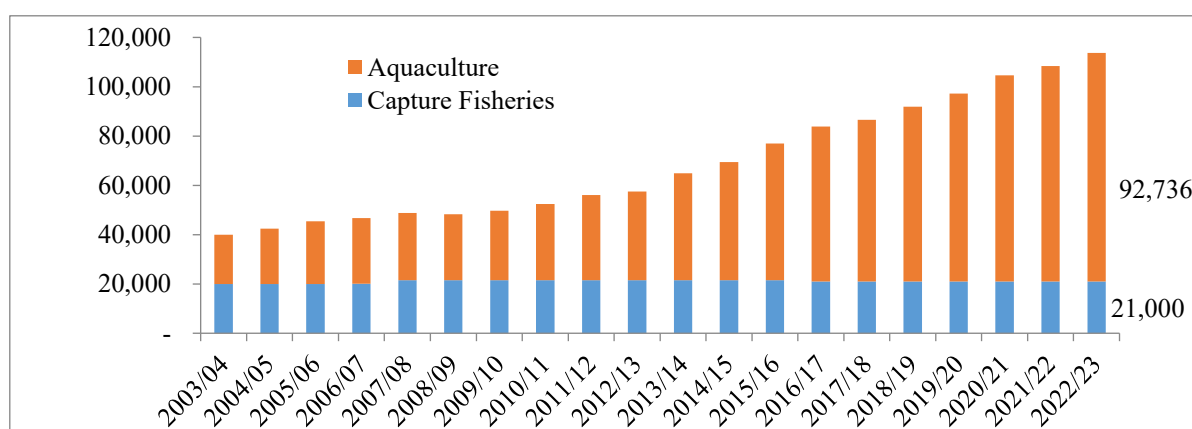


Figure: Fish production trend from capture fisheries and aquaculture.

National Fisheries Development Policy, 2079 is guiding document for overall fishery and aquaculture sector development in Nepal in coming days. Fish insurance policy, agricultural soft loan, Youth focused program, subsidy on aquaculture program, promotion of aqua tourism, aquaculture diversification, research to adapt with climate change, inclusive aquaculture is some of the initiatives from government for sustainable growth of the sector. However due to the lack of technical linkage between three tiers of Governments, insufficient technical manpower with very low extension coverage, poor aquatic health management system, weak coordination between related stakeholders, unavailability of quality input on time, poorly established fish value chain and marketing system, insufficient market infrastructure and machinery, the sector has not grown as expected. Although challenges in marketing systems persist, live fish marketing gains momentum with government support. While fish imports decrease, export faces challenges. Nevertheless, targeted efforts through government initiatives, private sector engagement, and sustainable practices are essential to unlock Nepal's fisheries sector's full economic, employment, and food security potential.