



## Research Note

# 'Tuka - Feka' Fishery- An Indigenous Fishing Practice to catch Indian Major Carps in Buxar-Balia Stretch of River Ganga, India

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Indian Major Carp (IMC) comprising of *Labeo rohita* (Hamilton, 1822), *Labeo catla* (Hamilton, 1822), *Cirrhinus mrigala* (Hamilton, 1822) and *Labeo calbasu* (Hamilton, 1822) are considered among the most valued fishes of river Ganga and therefore selectively targeted by fishers for high economic returns as observed lately through a unique hook and line technique termed as 'Tuka-feka' in Buxar stretch of River Ganga (29°35'05.75" N, 83°58'13.18" E). The oldest fishing gear was undefined in earlier studies on fishing gears of river Ganga (Hornell, 1934; Ahmed, 1956; Jones, 1959 and Saxena, 1964) and hence described explicitly as many such traditional fishing methods are going into oblivion for diverse reasons. Information on 'Tuka-feka' fishery was gathered employing several participatory tools including interviewing, group discussions and on-field observations. Buxar-Balia stretch of Ganga river sustain varied fish species spectrum constituting of carps, featherbacks, catfishes and small indigenous fishes (SIFs). Decadal landing during 1970s (3.07 tonnes), 1980s (49.18 tonnes) and 1990s (13.33 tonnes) indicated notable contribution of Indian Major Carps in the stretch (Anon, 1970-1990). Fishing with 'Tuka-feka' has gained popularity owing to its simple methodology to capture prized IMCs. In local dialects, the term 'Tuka' means the 'Ball shaped bait' while 'feka' implies 'throwing the device by hand'.

The fishing gear consists of an 'H' shaped bamboo structure unit installed at the mid river channel when water level recedes during winter (Fig. 1). Two bamboo poles of about 1.5 m height (as per water depth) remain fixed vertically at river bottom at about 1.2 m distance in between connected by a horizontal bamboo. Miniature cylindrical bamboo shafts (3-4 nos.) of pipe shaped structure (about 0.2 m length each) are inserted which can rotate freely around long nails fixed on the horizontal bar. Wires or line are coiled over such pipe which are responsible for storing, retrieving and paying out the line during fishing operation (Fig. 2). 15-20 numbers of such fishing units are installed along 100 m river stretch. Number of installations gets reduced during end of June due to increase in water depth and flow of the river.



Fig. 1. Installed H-shaped bamboo structure of 'Tuka-Feka' in river Ganga

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