

## **Exploring the wellbeing factors and pathways for improving the wellbeing of Mannar fishing populations of Sri Lanka**

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Despite looking the possible ways to increase the technical efficiency very few researches have been carried out to find means of improving the wellbeing of the fishing communities in Northern Sri Lanka. As the majority of the population is engaged in fishing activities either full time or part time, improving the fisheries wellbeing is of paramount importance. Hence a study was undertaken, which focused on finding out the factors affecting the wellbeing of the Northern fishing communities, the impact of conflicts on their wellbeing and strategies needed to be adopted to improve their wellbeing. This study was carried out (during 2015) in Pesalai, a fisheries village in Mannar District of Northern Sri Lanka. Methodology employed consisting of a pretested structured questionnaire administered to a sample of fishers and focus group discussions with selected groups of men and women from the fishing community. Results indicated that good income, ownership of a house and maintaining good social relations were the most significant wellbeing factors of women while food, maintaining good physical health and having a good wife was the most important wellbeing factors of men. Use of drugs by the spouse, impact of communication technology on children's education and poor facilities in hospitals were the main problems faced by the women in the study area while illegal fishing by Indian trawlers, the use of destructive fishing techniques and drug addiction were the major problems faced by the men in the particular study area. Further results revealed that their expected changes include banning alcohol, collecting centers and increasing the job opportunities in different sectors. Shifting to new employment, facilitating professional education for their children and temporary transformation to another sector were the suggestions to recover the wellbeing loss and banned Indian trawling, controlling destructive fishing techniques usage and controlling price of fish were the expected changes. The study provides insights for loss of wellbeing of fishing communities can be minimized through bottom-up approach and distribution of inputs among them in Northern Sri Lanka when making appropriate policy changes to uplift their wellbeing.

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