

Fisheries and its implications on fishing community in Deduru Oya of Sri Lanka

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Deduru Oya originates from the Central hills of Sri Lanka and it mainly runs through the North Western Province and is fed by a catchment of over 2600 km². It emerged as a venue for fisheries due to the construction of the Deduru Oya reservoir in the recent past. Although fisheries were newly introduced to the reservoir, it plays an important role in the village economy. This study explores the fisheries and its implications on fishing community in Deduru Oya reservoir. The total sample size was 21 fishermen who registered in fisheries cooperative societies. Data were collected using semi-structured questionnaire and interviews and analysed using SPSS software package. Inland fishing activities were operated using non-mechanized fiberglass canoes which were approximately 6 m in length. Out of the total sample, 81% of fishers had fiberglass fishing crafts and 57.1% of them were received free from the government for the establishment of the fishing industry in the reservoir. Two fishermen were on board at a time. Gill net was the main fishing gear of the reservoir and fishermen were able to use 6-12 net pieces per craft. Tilapia (*Oreochromis mossambicus*), Nile Tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*), Catla (*Labeo catla*), Rohu (*Labeo rohita*) and freshwater prawn (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*) were the major species in the catch composition. The average catch per fisher/day was in the range of 13-16 kg and the monthly mean income of a fisher was LKR 44,047. Fisheries cooperative society plays an important role in the industry by engaging in different activities related to fisheries management and marketing. All fishers have to engage in a minimum of 15 days per month to activate their membership in fisheries cooperative society. Scavenger problem, lack of technical know-how and training were major issues with fishers. It is important to strengthen the fisheries cooperative societies for the sustainable management of fishing community in the Deduru Oya reservoir.

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