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A STUDY ON THE PRESENT STATUS OF FISHERMEN AT THE KANDALAMA RESERVOIR

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INTRODUCTION

In the dry zone of Sri Lanka, a significant number of people are poor and malnourished (Chandrasiri, 1986). Thus there is a high demand for cheaper and locally available inland fish. Kandalama reservoir (800 ha), which is located in Matale district and Mahawelli "H" region contributes a considerably to the inland fish production. Since inland fisheries are not a sustainable livelihood, fishermen have to trend for different economic activities. In this context for the upgrading of the status of the fishermen and to solve their problems, a study on the present status of the fishermen is essential. This information could be the rationally used for solving the management problems in order to achieve a sustainable fishery.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Kepella, Yakudagoda North and Yakudgoda South, Wilhatha and Kandalama villages located around the Kandalama reservoir. Primary data were collected from a prepared structured questionnaire and holding, formal and informal discussions with 104 families living in those villages. Catching data were obtained from Fisheries Co-operative Society. The total catch (kg), average weight of fish (kg), average total weight of fish/ boat (kg), number of boats in operation were monitored for two months. Species-specific fish yield per unit effort (CpUE as kg/boat/day) was estimated. Total catching data of year 2003 were collected from the Fisheries Society. Fish stocking data were obtained from National Aquaculture Development Authority, Dambulla (NAQDA). SPSS was used for statistical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

They have poor education and moderate monthly income. Over 50% (67.6%) of fishermen get a monthly income lower than Rs. 5000 (Table1). Most of them only get the primary education (Table 2).

Table 1. Distribution of monthly income level

Income level (Rs.)	No. of fishermen
<2500	26
2501-5000	45
5001-7500	12
>7500	21

Table 2. Fishermen education level

Education level	No. of fishermen
Grade 1-5	37
Grade 6-10	53
O/L	12
A/L	2

Average total weight of fish / boat from Sorowwa area was found to be over 10 kg (Table 3) with a CpUE value of 1.78 kg/boat/day in July 2004.

Table 3. Catching data from Sorowwa area- in July 2004

Weeks	1	2	3	4
No. of boats	6	8	8	5
Total catch/week (kg)	73.25	95.50	82.50	78
Avg. wgt of fish (kg)	0.75	0.7	0.8	0.75
Avg. total wgt of fish/boat/week (kg)	12.20	11.9	10.3	15.6

In addition to fishing, within income generation activities were farming, labour, permanent jobs and mixed activities (Table 4). Analysis of data revealed that age did not significantly ($P>0.05$) affect their occupation.

Table 4. The relationship between age group and the occupation level.

Age group	Only Fishing	Only Farming	Only Labour	Permanent Jobs	Mixed	Percentage (%)
<25	5	4	0	3	3	14.4
26-35	8	7	1	7	15	22.1
36-45	10	10	0	3	19	40.38
46-55	3	3	1	2	16	26.9
<55	1	1	1	0	3	4.8

Improper management conditions, unavailability of modern technology, lack of capital were the main problems faced by the fishermen. For the development of Fisheries Society monetary and management assistance, fixing of time for fishing, minimizing environmental pollution has become mandatory.

CONCLUSIONS

Majority of fishermen at Kandalama have low level of education and moderate-income level. Age did not affect their occupation. However, results indicate that present management of the reservoir is poor and not sustainable.

REFERENCE

Chandrasiri, J.K.M. (1986). *Socio Economic condition of inland fishermen in Sri Lanka*. Agrarian Research and Training Institute. pp. 9-23.