

**Socio-economic status of brush park fishing communities in Negombo Estuary
and Rekawa Lagoon in Sri Lanka.**

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Abstract

Brush Park is one of the traditional indigenous fishing methods practiced in Sri Lanka where branches of trees or bushes are stuck into the muddy bottoms of water bodies. In addition to the biological advantages, brush parks provide economic benefits such as income and livelihoods for communities who live around water bodies. Studies which investigate or analyze the socio-economic status of brush park fishery in Sri Lanka are rarely found. This study was therefore conducted to analyze the socio-economic status of communities who engage in brush park fishing in Negombo estuary and Rekawa lagoon in the Western and Southern Provinces of Sri Lanka respectively. Data and information on demography, income, livelihood activities and assets, resources use conflicts and socio-economic issues were collected for the socio-economic assessment, from secondary and primary sources. The results of this study are mainly qualitative. Brush park fishery in both sites is called as *Athu-Kotu* or *Mas-Athu* in local jargon. It is clearly visible in both sites that female counterparts of fishers i.e. wives have better education background than their spouses do. Children of fisher families have better education level than their parents. Fishers think that education is must for better life. About 80 percent of brush park fishers in Negombo do it as their major income earning fishing method. Brush park fishing is a part time or subsidiary level livelihood in Rekawa. Minimum level of resource use conflicts was occurred among fishers due to prevail of customary laws on management of lagoon fisheries.

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