

Socioeconomic Issues Related to the Spiny Lobster Fishery in Mirijjawila Village, Hambantota District, Sri Lanka

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Spiny lobster fishery is a well-established reef associated income generating fishing activity in the southern coast of Sri Lanka. As there is a high demand on spiny lobsters in local and export market they faced to a high risk of overexploitation. As such suitable management plans are needed to ensure the sustainability of this spiny lobster fishery. In order to develop a proper management plan, it is compulsory to have a clear understanding of the socioeconomic issues faced by the lobster fisher folk in the area. With this point of view, a survey on the reef associated fisher folk was carried out at Mirijjawila Village, Hambantota district from 16th of January 2020 to 16th of January 2021, in order to obtain their views on the current socioeconomic issues and trends related to spiny lobster fishery. Data were collected via pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire formal and informal discussions and field observations. Results indicated that the major socio-economic issues related to this industry were the lack of a fixed price system for spiny lobsters, lack of a well-defined existing property right for fisher folk in the area and illegal activities done by fishermen and collectors, access of unauthorized people to the fishery, prevailing COVID 19 situation, alternative livelihood during the spiny lobster fishery. This study suggests that these issues are needed to be addressed to formulate a local level sound fisheries management plan with continuous monitoring studies.

Keywords: Spiny lobsters; Socio-economic issues; Fisheries management; Sri Lanka