

Socio-economic and Livelihood Related Issues of Cast Net Users in Koggala Lagoon Sri Lanka

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The study was conducted in the Koggala lagoon, Southern province in Sri Lanka to assess the basic socio-economic and livelihood related issues of cast net users. A cast net is one of the traditional, effective, environmentally friendly, fishing gear; the use of traditional fishing practices should be given priority to promoting sustainable fishing, better livelihood & socioeconomic wellbeing of fishers. Hence the current study of existing issues in cast net fishery provides baseline information that raises attention for appropriate management measures. The study has been carried out for four months. Sixty-six cast net fishermen were randomly selected as a sample and pre-tested and interviewed through a questionnaire survey. Variables related to socio-economics of the cast net users were collected and descriptive statistics employed to analyze the situation. Present cast net contributes 40% from total fish catch; 98% of male representation, 77% are old population & 73% have more than 33 years of experience among the lagoon fishermen. 80% have only primary education and 82% are doing fishing as the primary income method along with other fishing practices. 45% of fishermen have 4 - 5 family members. To cover monthly expenditure fishermen, take loans from various sources. Their monthly harvest ranged from 0 to 15 kg with an average of 7 kg. Lagoon mouth was a highly productive area for cast netting. Six livelihood issues were identified; crocodile attacks – 27%, low harvest – 20%, illegal fishing activities – 19%, mixing of fuel with water – 15%, net damage by oysters – 13%, chemicals from the factories – 6%. Crocodile attacks, low harvest, illegal fishing activities were the main issues prevailing for fishermen in Koggala lagoon. The current preliminary study upraised the necessity of proper surveillance of cast net fishery in Koggala lagoon in enhancing fisher livelihood and sustainable fishing which aid in proper management; however adequate attention should be paid in future studies in this regard.

Keywords: Cast net, Livelihood issues, Lagoon fishermen