

Evaluation of the Response to the International Resolution on Responsible Fishing: A Case Study on the Fishermen of Beruwala- Kalutara on Evidence of IUU Fishing

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Introduction

Increasing international demand for fish and fishery product has resulted more fisheries activity in many parts of the world in recent years and IUU fishing methods are also used for fishing. So long term sustainability and responsibility of fish stocks are affected and responsible fishing as well. This has been internationally agreed and countries should make sure to avoid IUU fishing in their respecting fishing zones. Regional resolutions related to IUU fishing is developed by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) an organization who is responsible for the international tuna fisheries activities in the Indian Ocean region. It is functioned for conserving, managing tuna fishery resources and reducing illegal, unregulated, unreported tuna fishing. Though these resolutions it is targeted to take the regional fishery industry to unique control level. Sri Lanka has to comply these resolutions as a member country of the IOTC.

Fisheries sector is one of the most significant industries in Sri Lanka which contribute about 2.5% to the GDP. Fisheries production is significantly increased over the years and total export earnings for year 2012 are about 22 Billion Rupees. However, when consider Sri Lanka fishery sector several difficulties occurred regarding IUU fishing activities over the years. When considering the hierarchy of fishery community, fishermen especially the Multiday Fishermen who are operating in international waters have the ultimate responsibility to comply these resolutions. Therefore, awareness of fishermen on the international resolutions is important. In 2010, the compliance rate of IOTC resolutions in Sri Lanka was 18% and it was increased up to 47% in 2013. Most of the fisheries administrative and management measures were extreme lined in order to achieve that. However, it is learnt that evaluating attitude and awareness level of the fishermen on these resolutions is essential for the further improving of this level.

Methodology

Beruwala Fishery Harbor which is one of the main harbor of Sri Lankan multiday boat operations situated in the Kalutara District was selected for the study sienc the harbor facilitates number of fishery activities and most of the fishery stakeholders are benefited from the services. Sample was selected from multiday boat owners, skippers, crew members and other related fisheries service providers in the multiday fishing sector by the stratified random sampling technique. Minimum sample size was determined by “moving average method”. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through the interviews and questionnaire. Secondary data were collected from Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. Data were analyzed by “Likert method” to identify the level of agreement of the fishermen on several statements related to the responsible fishing and one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on 95% confidence interval was used to compare the results within strata.

Results and Discussion

According to the results, the mean likert value is 3.61 ± 1.28 (Average responses level) which shows the knowledge as a community is relatively in average level about the international resolutions. However, ANOVA results has shown significant differences between the strata for some responses. Knowledge level of boat owners is significantly higher than others (skippers, crew members and other service providers). It may be due to their participation on several awareness programmes than others. Skippers and crew members are the ones who engage in fishing activities. Therefore, knowledge and attitude of skippers and crew members are rather at same level. However, it may be important to increase the awareness level of the skippers and crew members who are directly engaging in fishing activities as well as other service providers in order to increase the level of non-compliance and partial compliance issues in Sri Lanka which requires more attention.

The necessity to improve attitude, awareness and behaviors of fishermen on the international resolutions further has been identified. The need of more attention for responsible fishing could make as a common knowledge among the people through mass media to get more attention and create awareness to make fishery industry of Sri Lanka a sustainable one.

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