

Lessons from Traditional fisheries Management

Relentless overfishing, illegal and unreported catches, environmentally damaging fishing methods and unwanted by-catches are some of the challenges to fisheries management. Community based fisheries management and co-management are believed to be effective methodologies to bring about sustainable utilization of fisheries resources. Interestingly, indigenous resource management practices among small scale fishers, at certain sites, have been able to protect the natural eco-systems and achieve higher levels of livelihood security in the face of changing social, economic and biological contexts since ancient times.



Two case studies from Sri Lanka

1. Beach seine fishery in Waduruppa
2. Kraal prawn fishery in Rekawa

Beach seine fishery in Waduruppa

24 beach seine fishing nets are operated in the landing centre and about 150 fishing families benefit from the beach seine operations. Fishers themselves have set up a lottery system to allocate the dates for each net. In a day only 4 fishing nets are operated and each fishing net has four chances of fishing for the fishing period. But all 4 chances of fishing operations are not allowed to be operated at once, rather it is done on a rotating bases, which ensures equal distribution of fishing resources given one particular time among the fishers. Even though, 4 fishing nets can be operated in one day, it is decided on the availability of fishing resources, which is defined by traditional knowledge such as the number of fishing gulls.

Kraal/Trap fishery in Rekawa

25 fish kraal are currently operated in Rekawa lagoon in the current community based fisheries management system. Based on the personal communications with some aged fishers, in ancient times, there were only fish kraals, not any other fishing method operated in the lagoon. There were about 100 fish kraal/traps in the lagoon, which are believed to have been following the same rotational base above-mentioned at that time. But in the case of traps, they are fixed permanently in the lagoon during the prawn season. So fishers had demarcated fishing ground areas and the rotating system was followed in each demarcated area among the number of fishing traps that had been set up. However, currently, this system is not running due to the small number of fishing kraal or traps.

Beach seine net/trap management system

Day 1

Chances	F.Net/trap
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4

Day 2

Chances	F.net/trap
1	2
2	3
3	4
4	1

Day 3

Chances	F.net/trap
1	3
2	4
3	1
4	2

Day 4

Chances	F.ne/trap
1	4
2	1
3	2
4	3

.....

Day 5

Chances	F.ne/trap
1	5
2	6
3	7
4	8