

Title: **Role Of Institutions With Regard To Fisher Livehoods And Resource Conservation: Small-Scall Craff Fishery in Sri Lanka**

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Abstract: This paper identifies economic institutions related to the small-scale craft fishery in southern Sri Lanka, and assesses their importance for the livelihood of the fisher households as well as for resource conservation. Income from small-scale craft fishing is generally uncertain because of seasonality and uncertainty of the marine fish resource, which, in this geographical area, is also being overexploited. The government imposes regulations on fishing activities with the intention of solving the resource problem. The fishers themselves also impose social constraints related to fishing. The simultaneous enforcement of different institutional systems is said to be leading to confusion unless they are complementary to one another. The primary data on institutional compliance were collected over a one year time period from 64 fishers in Kalametiya and 21 fishers in Welipatanwila landing centers in Hambantota District. Methods used include informal discussions, participatory observations and formal discussions using a structured questionnaire. The secondary data were collected from relevant state documents. Other information was collected from the Department of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. The authors distinguish four types of institutions related to small-scale craft fishery: behavioral norms, informal contracts, community rules and state regulations. All institutions seem to be important in solving resource conservation problems and livelihood problems. The institutions imposed by fishers themselves are, however, generally argued to be more effective than those introduced by the state.