

Sustainable Development of the Inland Fishery of Sri Lanka Under Environmental Constraints.

Abstract

There are no natural lakes in Sri Lanka and the native fish fauna is poor compared with many parts of Asia. There are two types of reservoir: perennial, on major rivers, built primarily to provide hydroelectricity and irrigation water, and small village reservoirs used for irrigation, whose water levels fluctuate seasonally. Fisheries in both these types of reservoir depend on introduced species of *Oreochromis* but their production is limited by a variety of constraints which are discussed. Fish production was increasing during the 1980s but has declined following withdrawal in 1990 of government subsidy and support. This has resulted in reduced enforcement of regulations. Overfishing of under-sized fish occurs more frequently in reservoirs where fishermen are not organized than where they belong to a cooperative society. Most reservoirs are in rural areas and such cooperatives could form the basis for a number of schemes which would improve the economic conditions of the rural poor as well as regulate sustainable fisheries through community participation. Fish production could also be increased by further development of culture-based fisheries in seasonal reservoirs but this needs more coordination between the various users of these reservoirs than there is at present, and increased capacity for production of seed and fingerlings