

INVESTIGATION OF THE “JA-KOTU” FISHERY OF MADU GANGA ESTUARY WITH AN EMPHASIS ON CO-MANAGEMENT

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Community-based resource management (CBRM) systems are operated successfully over generations around many parts of the world, which are identified as a possible solution to the “tragedy of the commons.” Presently CBRM systems of many fisheries especially in the South-east Asian region have disappeared due to various reasons such as institutional restrictions under the colonial administration, technological modernization, rise of socio-economic stratification, unequal concentration of power and wealth within local communities. It is understood that for effective management of fisheries, both user groups and the government have to be actively involved in making management decisions. This process is known as fisheries co-management. In Madu Ganga estuary, there is a productive shrimp fishery in which “Ja-kotu” are used as fishing devices. In this fishery, there was a CBRM system, which had been become almost non-functional in 1970s. Since recently, Balapitiya town council has attempted to introduce a co-management strategy using remaining features of the CBRM system and centralized management mechanisms and this strategy helped revitalizing the “Ja-kotu” fishery in Madu Ganga estuary.

In the present study, status of the “Ja-kotu” fishery of Madu Ganga estuary was investigated with a special emphasis on co-management strategies in the fishery. The shrimp yield of “Ja-kotu” fishery is found to be influenced by lunar pattern, closure of sea mouth and distance from the sea mouth. However as a whole, shrimp yields in individual “Ja-kotu” remain more or less constant so that fishers have not defined special mechanisms to ensure equity sharing of the resource in the co-management strategy of this fishery. Based on the existing settings of fishery, it can be seen that strengthening of the co-management of the “Ja-kotu” fishery is possible through the development of linkage between the fisheries societies, local NGOs and government agencies.