

## **Influence of socioeconomic heterogeneity on culture-based fisheries in non-perennial reservoirs of Sri Lanka**

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### **Abstract**

For culture-based fisheries (CBF) development in non-perennial reservoirs of Sri Lanka, importance of integration of economic, socio-cultural, political/institutional and ecological domains needs to be recognized. Farmer communities of 47 randomly selected non-perennial reservoirs in five districts were chosen for the present study. Reservoirs were stratified into three groups on the basis of the interest expressed by communities (i.e., disagree, somewhat agree and fully agree to get involved in CBF) during a preliminary questionnaire-survey. Attempts were then made to examine the significance of socioeconomic heterogeneity for decision-making in CBF activity with particular emphasis on the group characteristics and attitudes of communities towards state-sponsored services for the development of CBF.

The community groups, which are in full agreement to take part in CBF are small in size (23) compared to those which disagreed (42). Level of education in office bearers also influences the decision-making process for involvement in CBF. Leadership qualities of members of communities positively influenced decision-making. The functional groups in CBF in various reservoirs are either all members of the farmer organization (FO), a sub-group of FO, community based organizations (CBO) or participation on individual basis. In reservoirs where FO or a sub-group of FO is involved in culture-based fisheries, socioeconomic heterogeneity influences the decision-making. Mean equality percentage of the active members of the fully agreed group is the highest (80%) when compared with the other two groups (< 73%). Homogeneity of the age, caste, kinship, political ideology also positively influenced decision making in these communities. Communities with high proportions of younger (<40 years of age) members have a positive attitude towards development of CBF. Farming communities with several sources of income in a household are highest in the

group of full agreement, which perhaps indicates an attitude of each community to maximize household income. Level of satisfaction about the government services varied among the communities. The group of communities, which disagreed with CBF development, is more satisfied with the existing government services than the other two groups indicating their poor attitude towards social uplifting. The present analysis shows that homogeneity of the group characteristics facilitates the collective decision-making. As such, socioeconomic heterogeneity in communities has an important impact on collective decision-making as regards to this development activity.