

An Anthropological Study on Contemporary Fishing Community in Sri Lanka with Special Reference to *Weligama* Divisional Secretariat Division in *Mathara* District

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Fishing has traditionally been one of the major incomes in Sri Lanka. A basic feature of fisheries society is maintaining its own subculture associated with the fishing industry. The social, economic, and cultural problems of the contemporary fisheries community have been taken as the research problem. The main objective is to identify social and cultural values in the contemporary fishing community. From the judgmental sampling method, *Weligama* Divisional Secretariat in the *Mathara* district was selected. The applied anthropological study randomly selected 50 fishery village households as primary respondents. The fishing industry is the main livelihood of 84% of households. In the religious and social context of the peasantry beliefs and rituals dominate. It was revealed that the dialect associated with the fishing industry is not actively associated with the industry at present. In the contemporary, fishermen use boat outriggers and fishing boats. There is a new trend in fisheries society. Not only that stilt fishing, as well termed *Ritipanna* in Sinhala, is a traditional fishing method practised by the southern coast still present. In their contemporary economic situation, they are living a challenging life. The reason given by the fishermen is a lack of proper income from fishing. An unorganized economy and debt from loans or mortgages can realize 24% of families, and they express characteristics of a culture of poverty. Accordingly, it was revealed that the poverty of these people has become intertwined with their lives at present, and they are not trying to get rid of it. But 66% of families have tried to develop their economy. It is seen that most people are working hard to make their future successful in this way. The research also exposed that the culture of poverty, a cultural characteristic of the fishing subculture, is currently being eliminated from the fishing society.

Keywords: Applied Anthropology, Culture, Culture of poverty, Fishing, Subculture