The Case of Sri Lankan Fisheries Sector: Case Study Based on Selected Rural Fishing Areas and the Institutions Involved in Fisheries Sector

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Sri Lankan fisheries sector contributed nearly 2.5 per cent to the country©s national income which is a marginal increase by 0.6 compared to the GDP of negative 6.1% in 2003. Through out the Sri Lankan coastal line there are about 175,000 fishermen actively engaged in fishing industry, providing nutritious food, which comprises 57% of total animal protein (NARA 1998) consumed by the Sri Lankan.

In the current context the fisheries sector is faced with a greater challenge for it has lost almost 80% of its material resources. Over 24,000 boats were destroyed and generally hundred of small businesses and entrepreneurs were badly affected through damage to property, premises, stocks, machinery as well as employees who were displaced, injured or perished. Apart from the tsunami catastrophe there are other burdensome issues such as technological gap, improper management in all types of activities, economic recession, political changes, cultural and attitude changes pertaining to the fisheries sector.

It is clear that the fisheries sector is faced with new global challenges to uplift the livelihood of the devastated fishermen back to normalcy whilst increasing the level of its operations. Therefore, the research has been carried out to identify the appropriate technology and the key stakeholders of the fisheries sector to introduce a new framework with following objectives; Ascertain the history of technological development in Sri Lankan fisheries sector; develop a framework by integrating key stakeholders to eradicate poverty through technology in fisheries sector; identify future technology development directions in the fisheries with respect to ICT usage and find solutions to eradicate poverty through technology to improve the fisheries sector.

The data collection was mainly based on interviews conducted in NARA, Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and the questionnaire based interviews were done in rural fishing villages in Hambantota district. The research work enabled the identification of prevailing technology gaps in the Sri Lankan fisheries sector in comparison to the local and global best practices. Further, an investigation has been carried out to identify integration of key stakeholders to have smooth resource flow. Based on identified reasons, several strategies in overcoming the poverty of rural fishermen and conceptualized framework have been suggested.

Key Words: Fisheries Sector; Rural fishing areas; Technology developments; Fishermen; Resources

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