

PREFACE

Participatory approaches to renewable resource management, especially with regard to biological resources that are exploited by people, have been received attention throughout the world. The driving force for this trend is that there has been an increased recognition of the importance of resource-users in making decisions on resource exploitation. Traditional practices for resource management are not rare in the tropical countries, and community-based fisheries management mechanisms can be found in various parts of the world, where fishery resources are traditionally exploited. However, with the influence of structural adjustments of national economics on the rural sector, these traditional mechanisms of resource management tend to disappear.

Being a sub-sector with a high rate of growth, inland fisheries of Sri Lanka require effective means of management. Due to the construction of artificial habitats such as reservoirs, introduction of exotic fish species, and habitat alteration in inland areas as a result of various development activities, etc., there has been a great need for defining effective mechanisms for the management of inland fisheries. Resource-oriented approaches are, however, not adequate for effective management of inland fisheries especially due to the reason that the role of social component that makes use of the inland reservoir resources for multiple purposes such as irrigation, domestic uses, animal husbandry etc. needs to be properly identified and incorporated in the management plans.

Under the “Fisheries Community Development and Resource Management Project” which was carried out in Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources under the auspices of German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), various aspects of participatory approaches to reservoir fisheries management have been investigated. Furthermore, there has been a great accumulation of information pertinent to this discipline through various research projects funded by the European Commission and Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research. There were 57 participants from 26 institutions in 8 countries at the “Symposium on Participatory Approaches to Reservoir Fisheries Management: Issues, Challenges and Policies” which was held in Dambulla, Sri Lanka on 3-6 October 2004, where the experiences of scientists on the subject were shared in order to draw-up tangible recommendations for reservoir fisheries management.

This monograph consists of a collection of presentations made at this symposium and the set of recommendations deliberated. As these papers are essentially based on comprehensive scientific studies, the findings are of immense importance to researchers, academics and students working in the field of reservoir fisheries management. Most importantly, symposium recommendations are useful not only in the national context but also in the global scenario, to policy makers and managers of the inland fisheries sector especially because reservoir fisheries and inland aquaculture constitute a great potential for food security of rural communities in the low income, food deficit countries.

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