

**A CASE STUDY: MANAGING RISK OF CATCH FLUCTUATIONS BY FISHERMEN
IN A SMALL PERENNIAL RESERVOIR (IBBANKATUWA) AT DAMBULLA**

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People living in difficult environments often develop complicated systems and strategies to minimize or cope with fluctuations in food entitlement. Of the different types, Adjustment Strategies have become one of the main methods adapted by fishermen.

This study aimed at finding the strategies adopted by fishermen to cope with fluctuations of monthly income. Field studies were carried out in Ibbankatuwa, Pohoranwewa and Tennakoonpura villages, around the Ibbankatuwa reservoir, Dambulla.

Data on monthly income, income position, credit, and activity diversification of all the fishermen were collected. There are 42 fisher families living around the reservoir in the three villages.

After fishing during the daytime fishermen cultivate crops (paddy, vegetables, onions, chillies and other cash crops) and involve in animal husbandry. This revealed that non-fishing sources have contributed significantly to the family income. Over 50% of the fishermen cultivate paddy solely for domestic consumption.

Fishing is mainly by non-motorized outrigger canoes and with gill nets. Detailed study of income pattern revealed that none of the fishermen in this perennial reservoir is full time. Irrespective of the type of techniques employed, all fishermen confront very high catch fluctuations, which give rise to variations in food entitlement. Engagement in different agricultural activities, ability to involve in diverse skilled and unskilled work as labourers, the close link fishermen have with money lenders or lending organizations and the ingenious methods developed to solve food security problems are the important precautionary steps adopted by fishermen to manage risks of frequent fluctuations in fish catches.