

AN EVALUATION OF THE PROGRESS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME OF DAMBULUOYA FISHING COMMUNITY

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A significant number of people living in the rural inland areas of the dry zone of Sri Lanka are poor. Dambuluoya reservoir (400ha), which is in Matale District, contributes to the inland fish production. This paper presents the impacts on socio-economic standards of resource users after completing one year of the Development Programme, which was funded by Regional Economic Development Project, Matale.

This study was conducted in the Pohoranwewa, Thennakoonpura and Ibbankatuwa villages, which surround the Dambuluoya reservoir. All the members of the fishing community (60 numbers) were in the sample. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire with formal and informal discussions with all the members of the Fisheries Co-operative Society. Fish catching data were obtained from Fisheries Co-operative Society. Contingency Data Analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to determine the relationships between variables.

Most of the society members who are engaged in paddy and livestock farming in addition to fishing are aged below 50. Intensive dairy cattle, swine and organic paddy farming, cut foliage and co-operative management programmes were conducted. Monthly income and monthly expenditure have significant interaction ($P < 0.05$) with their occupation. Before starting this development programme they earned around 3000/= per month. Monthly income has increased significantly after the implementation of the programme.

Majority of fishermen got their credit facilities (loans) from commercial banks due to limitation of funds in the Fisheries Co-operative Society. By the end of 2003, 64% of fishermen live under satisfactory living conditions (water and electricity). The statistical analysis revealed that there is no significant association ($P > 0.05$) between cast and occupation. As a result of this programme, number of fishermen involved in alcohol consumption and smoking has significantly decreased. Increase in teetotalers in the fishing community was 18% by the end of one year. Even though they had low education the number of teetotalers also increased. Low education level, insufficient knowledge in modern technology and the capital are the major problems facing the fishermen. By the end of 2003, monthly income level has increased in the fishing community. Providing assistance and guidance for proper management, introducing new crop varieties and cropping methods, conducting appropriate farmer training programmes, improving education level and minimizing environmental pollution were some of the main activities performed by the programme.

As a result of this programme living standards of fisher folk around the Dambuluoya reservoir has significantly increased.