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A Social Anthropological Study of Social Change in Fishing Communities in Sri Lanka (with reference to Gampaha District)



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The social change of fishing community is an important issue in current social anthropology and Sociology. Fishermen are social group and fishing is always the main employment for the people in the world. Sri Lanka a lot of people engage with fishing. Most of the men spend long hours fishing off the island surrounding the settlement. Women also engage some activities. For an example: collecting fish, holding nets and delivering fish for the markets and house to house. Fishermen have magical activity and their behavior adopted with their environment.

Sri Lanka's fishing community is concentrated mainly along the coastal belt and consist approximately one hundred thousand who are actively engaged in fishing. When their families are also included the total fishing community adds up to a total of about five hundred thousand. Contrary to the commonly held belief that the fishing community lives in extreme poverty in terms of income levels its members compare well with middle and upper middle class income group despite these high income levels however its members are caught up in a vicious circle of extremely depressed social and environmental conditions and low standards of living.

The rapid change that characterizes in many coastal areas opportunities , but ability of different group of people to respond to these opportunities are variable while better-off may benefit, the coastal people have limited access to new technologies, do not have the skills , knowledge, confidence or education to use them. They have little time to invest in their development and few reserves to enable them to take the risk associated with their adoption. Typically they also lack the net works to access the new knowledge, skills, technologies, finance and markets. They would need to take advantage of change. The problem of this study is whether the fishing communities have been changed with the changes of new technologies using in fishing communities in two villages which have been studied in this study.

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