

KRAAL FISHERY OF 'BOLGODA LAKE' AND STRATERGIES FOR CO-MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Community Based Resource Management (CBRM) systems have been successfully adopted as a solution for the 'tragedy of the commons' or 'open access' of fisheries. However, most of these CBRM strategies have gradually began to fail due to the mechanization of world fisheries. Therefore, management strategies initiated by the government with a centralized top-down control approach were used to manage the declining fishery resources, but they too, were largely unsuccessful in the Asia-Pacific region. Now, the fisheries experts recognize that resource conflicts can be minimized and the resources could be better managed when the fishers, the government and the other stakeholders of the resources are actively involved in the fisheries management process. This process is known as the co-management of fisheries.

Until the 1920s, the kraal fishery of Bolgoda Lake was managed through a traditional CBRM system. Since 1931, the existing CBRM system was reinforced by the regulations made by the local authorities and the central government. However, these government formulated regulations are not functioning well due to the lack of awareness about them, socio-economic problems and the improper and inadequate intervention of the government. As such there have been sustained conflicts among the resource users there.

In the present study, kraal fishers and all the other persons related to the kraal fishery of Bolgoda Lake were interviewed with a view to assess the existing fisheries management

system there. In addition, the shrimp harvest of some randomly selected kraals were evaluated with respect to the salinity, distance from the sea, the depth of the lake and the phases of the lunar cycle for a period of five months starting from January to May 2008. These data were analyzed in order to propose an effective co-management strategy to the Bolgoda Lake.

According to the analysis the harvest was significantly affected by the lunar phases of the lunar cycle, but not by the salinity, depth and the distance from sea. Kraal fishers have not defined a methodology to rotate the fishing grounds for equity sharing of the shrimp fishery resource, possibly due to the reason that the total shrimp harvest in each kraal remains more or less equal to each other. The Bolgoda Lake kraal fishery faces many other challenges such as increase in the number of illegal fishers, tourism, industrialization and urbanization around the region. As such, kraal fishers and the other stakeholders deriving economic benefits are seriously affected. These information were used to propose a proper co-management plan to Bolgoda Lake.

It appears that a reinforced effective co-management system will be the only opportunity for all the stakeholders including the kraal fishers for the sustainable utilization of resources in the Bolgoda Lake. This proposed co-management system should be comprised of representatives from all the government agencies holding any responsibility for lake management and other stakeholder groups deriving economic benefits from the lake.