

LARGE STAKE NET FISHING METHOD IS A NEW THREAT IN SOUTHERN MANNAR ISLAND AREA

A.S. Sosai

Abstract

Using illegal fishing methods in the form of dynamite, stupefying substance, other noxious, harmful materials or substance and bottom trawling methods are common practice throughout the coastal areas of Sri Lanka, especially in the northern Sri Lanka. As a result, marine resources especially, corals, mangroves, mammals the marine organisms of the sea bed and aquatic resources have not only been destroyed but also disrupted. In addition, valuable human life has been lost in these illegal processes. On the whole, it affects the entire fishing community. The fisheries act 1996 of ministry of Fisheries and aquatic resources strongly prohibits the above mentioned illegal fishing methods. Further, the department of fisheries in Mannar has also taken action to prohibit illegal fishing methods, such as tree logs, concrete logs, stones, car bodies, monofilament nets, and tree branches for cuttlefish (squid) fishing in the district since 2010. There was an urgent need for identifying the prohibited or illegal fishing activities and the use of dangerous or harmful substances in fishing. The present study was carried out in Mannar coastal area from June 2013 until the later part of December 2013. Such identification was focused on the major threats and impacts on the fishing community and the socio, economic and ecological impacts through case studies, field surveys and library methods. The study targets to find out appropriate planning and remedies to minimize illegal fishing and to save the coastal fishing community.

Keywords: *Illegal fishing, Northern Sri Lankan waters, Fishing industry, Depletion of marine resources, Fishing community.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Fisheries is the main source of income in the Mannar district. According to the Fisheries and Aquatic Resource and Development of Mannar district, fishing population in Mannar consisted of 29,506 persons from 8,052 fishing families and 36 fishing villages, approximately 16% of the population of the district. When compared with the other parts of Sri Lanka, the sea of

Mannar has remarkable marine environmental resources suitable for fishing. Two types of fishing methods are identified in Mannar, traditional and modern Kaddumaram (theppam), vallam, are the boats used in traditional fishing. Set nets or Stake nets beach-seine, cast net, trap diving and hand line. These methods are used by 30% of the fishing industry in