



SWOT Analysis of Marine Ornamental Reef Fishery Sector in Trincomalee District of Sri Lanka.

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ABSTRACT

Marine Ornamental Reef (MOR) Fishery largely relies on the coral reef ecosystem and highly contributes to the global economy. Although MOR fishery in Trincomalee is being carried out from the beginning of the industry in Sri Lanka, comprehensive studies on the internal and external factors that affect the sector are scarce to date to establish proper management system. The present study analysed Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of the MOR fishery in Trincomalee focusing fisher communities fishing in Sampur, Kuchchaweli and Pulmodai reefs over two years period from February 2019. Data were collected from full-time fishers (n=90) and other stakeholders of the value chain (n=36) through direct interviews, focus group discussions and participant observations. The data on average income and cost were gathered by monitoring the harvest of fishers at landing sites and using fishers' logbooks, respectively. The monthly average gain per fisher were 101278 LKR and 114524 LKR while incurring 27172 LKR and 27367 LKR per month in 2019 and 2020, respectively. The strengths to gain such an income were Pigeon Island National Park, plenty of reefs for fishing and high biodiversity while lack of proper pricing mechanism, lack of training and knowledge, poor management system and post-harvest mortalities due to poor storage facilities were the weaknesses. In contrast, the fishers were having opportunities including global marine aquarium trend, higher income level than food fisheries and sharing knowledge & experience with researchers. Moreover, the risky nature of the occupation, coral reefs destruction through illegal fishing methods, the low market price at fishers level, lack of financial supports from the government, absence of legal background for registering fishers or operational license issuing system, collection of very small & extra-large individuals and Covid 19 pandemic situation were the threats to the MOR fishery. A proper management system and pricing mechanism of MOR fishery should be implemented to overcome the weaknesses and threats, while enhancing opportunities of the industry with the help of their strengths.

Keywords: *Coral reefs, Ornamental reef fishery, SWOT analysis, Trincomalee*