



Present status of beach seine fishery in southern coast of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Beach seine fishery is one of Sri Lanka's oldest fishing methods. The study aims to assess the status of beach seine harbors and fisheries activities, direct and indirect involvement of people, target species, management strategies, and factors influencing the status of the beach seine fishery in Matara, Tangalle and Galle fisheries administrative districts. Data was collected from October to November in 2023 by using standard ethnographic methods. Galle district has the majority of beach seine harbors (62.5%) on the southern coast while Matara district has the least (6.25%). Tangalle district has the highest number of active beach seines (62.41%), followed by Galle (30.08%) and Matara (7.52%). Anchovies were identified as the main target species and 75% of beach seine harbors primarily use cod ends with mesh size of 5 mm. Beach seine sites typically have 10-15 skilled crew and 20-40 temporary laborers. Ninety percent of harbors are impacted by the southwest monsoon restricting fishing activities from October to April. Beach seine operations follow a rotational sequence, either on a daily basis or through a time-based method. The catch on the southern coast includes various coastal pelagic and demersal fish species, such as those from the families Engraulidae, Clupeidae, Carangidae, Trichiuridae, Sphyraenidae, Lactaridae and Scombridae. Profits are divided equally, with one half is given to the owner and the other half to permanent workers, while a portion of the yield is given to temporary workers. Most of the interviewed fishermen believe that purse seine fishing activities negatively affect beach seine harvests leading to the decreased interest among the younger generations. Further studies and management strategies are vital to prevent the collapse of this traditional fishing method. Proper analysis of coastal constructions should consider local community opinions as well. Addressing illegal fishing methods, and providing reliable fishing equipment and government subsidies are recommended for maintaining the sustainability of this fishing method.

Keywords

Beach seine fishery, southern coast, management strategies