CURRENT STATUS OF EDIBLE BIVALVE PRODUCTION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF EDIBLE BIVALVE FISHERS IN TRINCOMALEE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays popularity and demand for edible bivalves had increased substantially hotel industry. In Sri Lanka edible bivalves are highly available in Trincomalee and Mannar. However data availability of status of edible bivalve production in Sri Lanka is limited. Kinniya DS division of Trincomalee district is the only potential area for the production of edible bivalves when compare with other DS divisions of Trincomalee. Therefore, a study was conducted to assess the present status of edible bivalve production in Trincomalee district with the objectives of identifying the edible bivalve species in Trincomalee district, analyzing the present status of edible bivalve production in Trincomalee district and preparing a document on the socioeconomic status of edible bivalve fishers in Trincomalee district. This study was conducted in Kinniya DS division of Trincomalee district. A pre-tested structured questionnaire was used to collect the information. Stratified random sampling was used to select the bivalve fishers and a total number of 120 bivalve fishers were interviewed during the field investigation. The collected data were analyzed by using SPSS 16.0 statistical software. The edible bivalve species were identified by visual observation.

The edible bivalve fishers in Kinniya depended mainly on bivalve collection and fishing for their livelihood. Majority of the bivalve fishers' main occupation was fishing while they collected bivalves in specific season as part-time job. Wild collection method was used by the bivalve fishers to collect the bivalves. The bivalve fishers had good indigenous knowledge about edible bivalve fishing. March to September is the peak fishing season for edible bivalves. Majority of the bivalve fishers involved in collection of oysters, cockles and clams. Clam was the highly

produced bivalve in Kinniya. Mussel was collected by few bivalve fishers. Among the edible bivalves, cockle was the most expensive one. However the marketing knowledge of the bivalve fishers was very low. A big propotion of the collected bivalves sold at niche market in Kinniya. The functions of fishery co-operative societies in Kinnya were not satisfied by bivalve fishers. The level of extension services reached to the study area was very low. The main constraint in edible bivalve production was adverse climate. Other problems of the bivalve fishers were lack of equipment, low selling prices for bivalves and fish, problems in getting credit, low extension services, poverty and various physical affects due to the bivalve collection and shucking. The research revealed that there is a potential for edible bivalve export from Trincomalee. Market facilities, export facilities, extension services, credit facilities and community empowerment programs should be given to the edible bivalve fishers in Kinniya to improve their income and living standard.

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