

## **Importance of Indigenous knowledge in aquaculture for development**

P.P.G.S.N. Siriwardena<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>National Aquatic Resources Research And Development Agency, Colombo 15

Indigenous knowledge is the knowledge that people in a given community have developed over time, and continue to develop and it is based on experience, often tested over centuries of use, adapted to local culture and environment and it is dynamic and changing. Indigenous knowledge covers a wide range of subjects and is a valuable resource for development. It can be equal to or even be superior to the know-how introduced by outsiders. It is not confined to rural people. Rather, any community possesses indigenous knowledge. Although more and more development professionals have come to realise the potential of indigenous knowledge, it remains as a neglected resource. A key reason for this is the lack of guidelines for recording and applying indigenous knowledge.

This paper records some of the experiences of author in recording indigenous knowledge in aquaculture for development. Indigenous knowledge has been used to develop sustainable technological interventions in rural aquaculture development and to formulate micro-credit programmes for rural poor to enter into aquaculture practices. Some of the useful approaches to tap indigenous knowledge are observation and interviews, working with groups, using diagrams and use of audio-visual media.

After recognising the value of indigenous knowledge, one should take a step further to assess the specific aspects of indigenous knowledge for application in development projects. For development out-dated and harmful indigenous knowledge should be rejected while promoting the useful indigenous knowledge.