

## **An insight into livelihood aspects of Puttalam Lagoon fishery**

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Puttalam Lagoon is located in the North-western Province and approximately 3,2700 ha in extent. Out of the total estimated lagoon fishers, 5,500 and 450 were full time and part time fishers respectively. The objective of the study was to find out socio-economic and marketing status of the lagoon fishers. The data were collected using structured questionnaire during 2016 and stratified random sampling technique was used to collect data selecting each fisheries inspectors' division and each craft type of the lagoon. It was found that majority of fishers (58%) have more than 20 years of experience in fishing. The average monthly incomes per fisher who use OFRP, MTRB and NTRB crafts were Rs. 37,548.00, 29,150.00 and 25,117.00 respectively. Shrimp and crab nets are the major fishing gears used in the lagoon. The average incomes per day per fisher of a fishing trip of shrimp and crabs were Rs. 1800.00 and 1700.00 respectively. One-way ANOVA confirmed that there were significant mean differences of the income of fishers use OFRP, MTRB and NTRB crafts ( $p < 0.05$ ). There were close linkages between lagoon fishers and fish buyers. Fish buyers provide fishing equipment and other day to day fisher needs and in turn fishers dispose his catch to the respective buyer. Fishers perceive that the government involvement in the lagoon fishery management is very low. According to fishers (43%), the fyke net (kudu nets) is highly destructive fishing gear which destroys juvenile stages of fish and shell fish species of the lagoon. It is recommended to implementation of the fishery management plan established under 1772/29 Gazette with the fisher's participation to minimize the negative impacts of destructive fishing practices. Well functioned fishery management plan will secure fishers' welfare as well as the lagoon environment.

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