

Abstract

In Sri Lanka Puttalam and Batticaloa are the two main Shrimp farming districts. Shrimp farms are well established and concentrated in the Puttalam but in Batticaloa, shrimp farming activities have started recently and rapid expansion of the industry is anticipated in future. Karayakanthivu and Kawathamunai are the two main subzones in Batticaloa where higher proportions of shrimp farms are concentrated. In the Batticaloa district, presently 30 functioning shrimp farms have occupied 273.8 acres of land area. Thus, anticipating a rapid expansion of farms high concern is drawn for adhering to Better Management Practices (BMPs). According to many case studies BMPs in Shrimp farming ensures the environmentally sustainable and economically viable industry. Therefore, this study intended to find out the degree of farmers adhere to BMPs in both subzones and to evaluate the effectiveness of farmer educating on their environmental responsibility. The data and information were collected from shrimp farmers through questionnaires and informal discussions from April to August 2013.

Study revealed that most of the farmers in both subzones follow all the BMPs recommended by National Aquaculture Development Authority (NAQDA) but some of the BMPs were poorly adopted and observed further improvement in application. In addition, poor management practices used in two sub zones were also identified. Maintaining “a tank for water storage” and “fence for crabs” were least adhered practices in both the subzones. Lack of financial resources and inadequate knowledge transfer are the main identified problems which hamper implementation of BMPs. Though major disease out breaks were not observed in the Batticaloa district during the study period, with the expansion of industry, the poorly adopted BMPs may turn to be a threat to collapse the entire industry. Thus, there is a great urge to educate farmers for fully adapting to BMP for their farms; soil and fertilizers without delaying till the industry shows collapsing symptoms. Initial educational awareness trials conducted at both sub zones showed “on-farm demonstrations”; “discussions” and “seminars” seems to be effective tools in educating farmers together with close routinely monitoring.

Keywords: better management practices, shrimp farming, Batticaloa, Valichenai lagoon