

Present status of the “Siraku Valai” Fishery in Jaffna Lagoon

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1. Abstract

Jaffna lagoon is a large lagoon situated between Jaffna and Kilinochchi Districts of Northern Srilanka. The Jaffna lagoon is a shallow water body and lies between $79^{\circ} 52^1$ E and $80^{\circ} 38^1$ E longitudes and $9^{\circ} 26^1$ N and $9^{\circ} 46^1$ E latitudes. Although it named as a lagoon, it is connected to the sea at Punnalai, between Karaitivu and Kytes and between Kalmunai and Mandaitivu. The total annual fish production (fish and shell fish) in Jaffna lagoon is 6600 mt and of which “Siraku valai” production is 3800 mt which will be around 58 %. “Siraku valai” fishery is a traditional fishery. This is one of the community based fishery management system. This is a passive type fishing gear, usually set in the night and is harvested in following morning. This method is popular in shallow and near shore areas. The present study designed to investigate the present status of the ‘Siraku Valai’ fishery in Jaffna lagoon. Kurunagar area was identified for sampling. This study was conducted in Kurunagar area in the period of May 2013 to August 2013. There is a community for “Siraku valai” operation in Kurunagar area which is called as “Kurunagar Siraku Valai Sangam”. Kurunagar Siraku Valai Sangam was founded in 1971. It has membership of 650. “Siraku valai” fishing gear is operated with a traditional fishing graft called as “vallam”.

Penaeus semisulcatus, *Metapenaeus monoceros*, *Penaeus latisulcatus*, *Penaeus indicus* and *Penaeus monodon* were identified. *Penaeus semisulcatus* is the major species (41%). Length distribution of shrimps was bell shape. There is a significant difference in weight (Kg) between target group (shrimp) and by-catch species ($\alpha=0.05$). Keeli have highest relative frequency among by-catch species (0.54). Owners get high income than crew members. “Siraku Valai Sangam” organized this fishery by rules and regulations.

Keywords: “Siraku Valai”, shrimps, Jaffna lagoon, by-catch species, length distribution