

**THE PRESENT STATUS OF FISHING COMMUNITIES AT
NACHCHADUWA, NUWARAWEWA AND MAHAWILACHCHIYA
TANKS IN ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT**

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The present study was focused on identifying the current socioeconomic status and problems of the fishing communities in the three tanks and make suitable recommendations to uplift their socioeconomic status. A survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire and formal and informal discussion with 422 members of the Fisheries Co-operative Societies living in villages around these three tanks. Nachchaduwa is a semi city tank which has the highest membership and the largest tank capacity (about 45150 Ac. ft.). However, the mean catch per unit effort (CPUE) is lower compared to other two tanks and the average income by fishing is Rs.4979.79/ Person/ Month. The literacy level of the Nachchaduwa fishing community is lowest with highest family size since most of the fishermen are Muslims (65%). The Fisheries Co-operative Society is not well organized and had the lowest capital of Rs. 20,000. Punishments and fines for illegal fishing activities are not operational by this society. Mahawilachchiya is a rural tank and the tank capacity is lowest (about 31500 Ac. ft). However, CPUE in this tank is highest and the average income by fishing is Rs. 7388.88 / Person / Month. Only one *thotupola* society exists in the tank which is well organized due to its active leadership with the highest fixed deposit of Rs. 20, 00,000. Punishments and fines for illegal fishing are operational. Nuwarawewa is the only city tank in

Anuradhapura and the tank capacity is 36049 Ac. ft. CPUE is higher than that of Mahawilachchiya tank and the average income by fishing is Rs. 6054.05 / Person / Month. The fishermen have many other income sources in addition to fishing. The housing conditions are also better than others and most of them use wooden crafts. Although there are six *thotupola* societies, the rules & regulation for fishing are not operational. The amount of fixed deposit is Rs.50, 000. Punishment and fines for illegal fishing activities are not operational. To overcome existing problems of these tanks, it is suggested to activate and reorganize fishing societies and implement co-management system. In addition, control of illegal fishing, punishment for the possession of illegal craft and improved fishing methods should be introduced.

Key wards: Fishing Communities, CPUE, Nuwara wewa, Nachchaduwa, Mahawilachchiya