

F38 SOCIAL FEASIBILITY OF INTRODUCING AQUACULTURE TO COASTAL COMMUNITIES  
IN THE SOUTH WEST COAST OF SRI LANKA

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The coastal fishery communities mainly depend on capture fisheries and fish is the main source of their protein. Introducing the concept of raising fish to these communities needs consideration of the sociocultural and institutional setting of coastal communities and their interests.

The coastal belt of Sri Lanka is dotted with a complex of lagoon systems, estuaries and bays with a extent of 121,000 ha. In addition about 70,800 ha. of low-lying delta lands and mangrove swamps are also situated along the coastal belt. These are potential areas for the development of coastal aquaculture.

This study discusses the economic needs, cultural wishes of the coastal communities and the most suitable aquaculture systems for future development. A considerable proportion of the communities accept the concept of aquaculture as a part time operation. They prefer to supplement their fish protein requirement from aquaculture rather than growing fish for the market.

Inadequacy of resources for investment, lack of technical knowhow, difficulty in obtaining seed for growing, inability to identify suitable species, lack of organisations to provide financial assistance to small scale ventures and poor soil conditions have greatly affected the rapid expansion of aquaculture.

Although the government pond subsidy scheme has encouraged the people to construct fish ponds, the majority of the ponds are not functioning at present. In most of the supplementary fed systems, the total investment has exceeded the returns.

Most of the people traditionally practice some sort of animal husbandry. Introduction of small scale animal husbandry/prawn/fish/crop integrated systems will be more appropriate in developing aquaculture among coastal communities.