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**Deploying, monitoring and promoting the use of low cost small scale Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) in near shore areas for small scale fishers**

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Three small scale (8' x 8') Fish Aggregation Devices were constructed using bamboo sticks. FADs were deployed at three locations near shore and two locations close to the river mouth (Talwila moya) in Chilaw at a depth of 12-15 m. Construction and deployment of FADs were done with community participation. Positions of the FADs were recorded using a hand held GPS. Fishermen and Fisheries societies of the respective area were consulted to decide on the exact locations to place the FADs. Weekly visits were done to collect information on catch, effort and income from each FAD location. During the period, fish catches associated with the FADs were recorded from eight Teppam and three 17'-19' footer fiber glass boats, although hand line and trawling lines are recommended fishing gear types to harvest fish around FADs. FAD No. 1 and FAD No. 2 were deployed close to the river mouth-sea area and FAD No. 3 was deployed away from the river mouth. Catch composition of the fish closer to the FADs consist of 3.2 % *Coryphaena hippuris* (Dolphin fish), 21.6 % *Elagatus bipinnatus* (Rainbow runners) and 35.8 % *Lates calcarifer* (Barramundi). Near the sea mouth area FADs recorded a high percentage of Barramundi catches. It is noted that, using FADs near the river mouth areas can harvest economically high value species like Barramundi very easily. It was observed that the longevity of the FADs were more than 90 days. When the FADs are too small, the buoyancy of the FADs was reduced due to absorption of sea water in to their cavities. Therefore, buoyancy of the FADs should be considered thoroughly. To avoid this problem additional buoyancy control devices should be attached to the small scale FADs.

Fish aggregated around FADs helped fishermen to increase their catch rates and in the meantime to save fuel and searching time. FADs helped fishermen to get an understanding about their fishing gear (hand line and trawling lines) setting positions. FADs helped fishermen to harvest so far underutilized resources such as Dolphin fish, Rainbow runners and Barramundi, Carangidea. Fishermen operating Teppam earned an average of Rs 2983 per day and FRP boats fishermen earned Rs 1590 per day. It was found that, the Teppam operating fishermen's income was raised substantially after deploying the FADs. Thereby, they are able to catch more fish with the use of the FADs without wasting time.

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