

LIVESTOCK AQUACULTURE INTEGRATED FARM – IS A SOLUTION FOR THE UPLIFTMENT OF LIVELIHOOD.

Entire fisher folk who lived in the coastal belt of Batticaloa District became Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and are living in welfare centres. It will take long time to restore their livelihood as not only their valuable equipments, but also the mental condition of these people should also be rebuilt. Unlike other districts in Sri Lanka, Batticaloa district is blessed with both marine and inland water resources. People from this region consume both marine and freshwater fishes, which is rare in other coastal areas where people mostly prefer to consume marine fish than fresh water fish. Till 26th of December 2004, before the Tsunami, this region was self sufficient in fish protein sources. Fish protein, rich in essential amino acids was comparatively cheaper than other animal protein sources available in the region. Tsunami swamped entire coastal belt of this district and whole marine fish industry was affected. Since the marine fish industry was fully affected and there is an immediate need of fish protein source, the fresh water fish is getting popular attention. Furthermore, people of this area do not prefer to eat sea and lagoon fishes as there is a fear of diseases and harmful chemicals. Fresh water fishing which is being practiced in this area is mainly capture based in irrigation and seasonal tanks. The species captured were mostly indigenous. The culture of improved fish species is seldom practiced and people involved in this industry do not have enough knowledge about aquaculture practices.

Inland of Batticaloa district is endowed with plenty of major irrigation tanks, and seasonal minor irrigation tanks. *This district has fourteen major tanks and 193 minor tanks figure in the management of water in the agriculture sector (Agriculture Extension, Batticaloa District, 1991).* Major fresh water tanks situated in the inland of Batticaloa district were unaffected by tsunami. *It is also found that Batticaloa district is rich in livestock resources consisting of 121,181 cattle, 44,492 goats and 341,274 poultry birds (Dept. of Census and Statistics, 2003).* As such there is a potential for integrated livestock aquaculture systems. This system reduces an unemployment problem, environmental pollution, and secures regular income for improving food security of households. In this context, immediate objective of the agricultural sector in the region is to restore food production to pre-tsunami levels and to reduce food aid dependency of IDPs by providing them training in good farming practices and aquaculture skills as most of the IDPs' livelihood depends on agricultural activities. As a consequence, there is a need to restore above IDPs' livelihood and to reduce their food aid dependency by providing them with emergency relief of fishing inputs and training in livestock aquaculture integrated farm practices in fresh water tanks. *Therefore it is proposed to have an integrated livestock aquaculture farm in the vicinity of few major irrigation tanks in the Batticaloa region.*

Work plan

The integrated livestock aquaculture farm will be constructed in the bank of irrigation tanks. This integrated farm can be used to generate income by the IDPs in this region through integrated livestock aquaculture farming system. Fingerlings can be released in the selected tanks and the livestock species available in the villages will be integrated. Since ducks are having more potential in this integration a duck pen will be constructed over the pond or close to the pond. Pond dyke can be used to plant leafy crops such as *Centella asiatica*, *Amaranthus* etc. this can reduce the soil erosion as well as generate regular income. Suitable species of fish and duck will be introduced. To utilize the resources maximum the poly culture of will have to be practiced. This can regulate the income throughout the year. *Centre for Aquatic Resource Management (CARM) functioning in the Eastern University, Sri Lanka* is involving in the project for rearing of fingerlings of popular aquaculture fishes and *Dept. of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture; Eastern University, Sri Lanka* is having expertise in the integrated Livestock aquaculture farming system. This will be strength this project

This project will be implemented using community based approach involving local community structures as well as International Non-Governmental Organizations. This plan will therefore contribute to recovery and transition to normalcy by supporting the restoration of livelihood of fisher folk affected by tsunami.

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