

## Mud bank fisheries at Chettuva

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A survey was conducted at Chettuva, Thrissur District, Kerala to observe the mud bank fishery in July 2016. Very low fish catch was recorded at Chettuva Fisheries harbour prior to the formation of mud bank. A sudden increase in catch after onset of mud bank formation prompted many fishers from nearby fishing villages such as Kalamukku (Ernakulam district); Chettuva, Azhikode and Thalikulam (Thrissur district) and Ponnani (Malappuram district) to temporarily migrate to these fishing grounds during the period reported. Ring seiners, motorised mini trawlers and non-motorised crafts were operated. Motorised wooden mini trawlers with either double or single outboard motor, with each boat having 9.9 hp power were also employed for fishing. Since mini trawl was operated with two attached crafts, it was locally known as double net. 50 fishing crafts were recorded during the survey which comprised 45 *Thanguvala*, 1 *Choodavala* (ring seine nets) and 4 double net (mini trawl) units. Fishermen went to fish in the early morning by 0430 hours and were involved in fishing about 4-5 hours daily. The fishing ground was reported at 2 km west of Chettuva Fisheries harbour with a depth range of 5-6 m. Landing of catch started from 0830 hours and continued up to noon. Catch was dominated by

shrimps, mainly *Metapenaeus dobsoni* whose size ranged from 200-300 numbers per kg. Pelagic fin fish was second largest component including *Rastrelliger kanagartha*, *Stolephorus* spp., *Opisthopterus tardoore*, *Dussumieria acuta*, *Tripauchen vagina*, *Thryssa* spp., *Megalaspis cordyla* and *Scomberoides* spp. Minor catch of *Johnius* spp., *Otolithes* spp., *Alepes* spp., *Ambassis* spp., *Lactarius lactarius*, *Alutera monoceros*, *Arius* spp. and *Lagocephalus* spp. was also recorded during the survey. Molluscan catch was absent, except small volumes of *Photololigo duvaucelii* with a size range of 5-6 cm. *Metapenaeus dobsoni*, *Opisthopterus tardoore* and *Escualosa thoracata* were the major catch of double net. The price of *Metapenaeus dobsoni* of 250-300 count varied from ₹ 190-200 per kg while *Rastrelliger kanagartha* was sold at ₹ 110 per kg. It was observed that price for all catches was higher than that of other seasons in same year.

Catch was less compared to previous mud bank fisheries. The heavy by-catch of jelly fish was a troublesome issue in net operation and affected time used for sorting and size grading of the fish catches in the harbour. All jelly fish were discarded after sorting the catch as it lacked local market demand, and caused hardship to the fishers.