AN ACCOUNT OF BIVALVE FISHERY RESOURCES OF SOUTHERN TAMIL NADU

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Abstract

Bivalve resources comprising of clams, cockles, oysters and mussels are distributed throughout the Indian coast and are exploited by the local fisher groups for their sustenance and livelihood. A study on bivalve exploitation and its diversity was carried out from three coastal districts of Southern Tamil Nadu namely, Thoothukudi, Ramanathapuram and Kanyakumari during 2017. The estimated bivalve exploitation was 3325 tonnes contributed by clams (68%) and mussels (32%). Among the three districts, Ramanathapuram contributed 61% of the total catch followed by Kanyakumari (32%) and Thoothukudi (7%). In all the centres, bivalve exploitation is being carried out by hand picking method. In Thoothukudi district, bivalve exploitation was studied in detail from four centres, viz Karapad bay, Korampallam creek, Punnaikayal and Pazhayakayal. The total estimated bivalve exploitation of Thoothukudi was 236 tonnes. Meretrix casta, Meretrix meretrix, Paphia malabarica and Marcia opimacasta are the major species with average percentage composition of 84:11:4:2. At Ramanathapuram district, the study was carried out in Athankarai estuary and Chinnapalam bay. In Athankarai estuary M. casta was the only species supporting the clam fisheries and the total catch was 1940 tonnes. The estimated catch of bivalve in Chinnapalam was 84.6 tonnes comprised of Gafnarium pectinatum (40%) and Donax sp. (60%). In Kanyakumari district, mussels were the major resource corroborate bivalve fishery at Colachel, Kadiapattinam, Kodimunai, Kurumpanai and Enayam. The mussel exploitation from Kanyakumari was 1064 tonnes contributed by Perna indica (98%) and Perna viridis (2%). The exploited clam shells are primarily used as a raw material for lime industry and substantial quantity is used as a poultry feed supplement and lobster feed as well. Chinnapalam has good scope for shell craft industry and mussels exploited from Kanyakumari are used for human consumption.

Keywords: Clams, Mussels, Exploitation, Shell craft industry, Lime industry

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