

Socio-economics of the Fish Marketing System at the Victoria Reservoir

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Abstract

The fishery of the Victoria reservoir is an open access resource where property rights are absent. Fifty four fishermen and thirty fish traders were subjected to a comprehensive analysis using semi-structured questionnaires to determine their social and economic attributes as well as their potential contribution towards effective management.

Fishermen have taken to this vocation secondarily and have no intrinsic fishing skills and could therefore directly destabilize the fishery by overexploitation. The progressive decline in fish catches since 1990 made some of the fishermen carry their fish stocks directly to the consumer since their catch was poor, while others gave up fishing altogether. In the absence of alternative sources of income, traders are compelled to purchase small fish which are available in large quantities.

A major portion of fish at the reservoir is disposed of through the fishermen to the trader and then to the consumer. Interviews conducted during the same period with consumers revealed that apart from the freshness of the fish, the socio-economic status of the consumer is a key factor which determines the type of fish purchased.

The fishery of this reservoir has an immense potential as a biological resource. A participatory management approach directly involving the fishing community is necessary to enhance fish production through effective implementation of fishery regulations.