

**Role of Fish Farming in Improving Livelihood of Artisanal Fish Farmers in Busega District, Tanzania**

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This study was conducted to assess the role of artisanal fish farming in improving livelihood among fish farmers in Busega District. Specifically, demographic factors of artisanal fishers were examined, fish production and techniques, contribution of fish production to the improved livelihood as well as assessment of the challenges facing artisanal fish producers. With the help of members of staff from the Department of Fisheries, seventy-seven respondents from five wards were randomly selected and administered with semi structured questionnaires and personal interviews. Data were collected by the use of questionnaires, interview and Focus Group Discussions. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS, while graphs and charts were done in Microsoft Excel. Results have shown that an artisanal fishing has immensely contributed towards improved livelihoods of many households in Busega. It has provided employment, income and food security, both to the local people and the nation at large. The study revealed that, 94% of them derived their livelihood from fishing, which provided them with the much needed income and employment. Other fishers especially women, over the years developed fishing skills such as net mending, fish processing and boat making. The money realised from fishing was used to build houses, buy fishing equipment and household needs, and pay for their children's school fees and health care, which thus contributed to their improved livelihood and food security. The study further revealed that all the fishers ate and shared some of the fish they caught amongst their kinsmen. In the same vein, fish was the most abundant, cheap and readily available source of protein amongst the consumers. It can therefore, be concluded that artisanal fisheries, contributes significantly towards livelihoods and food security among communities of Busega District.