

Preface

The aquatic resources of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and United Andhra Pradesh are enriched with a vast expanse of freshwater fisheries resources. The Western Ghats Mountains along the west coastal line, Eastern Ghats to the east coastal line and the Deccan plateau with the Sahyadri range to the north border are three major mountain ranges constitute extremely important life supporting ecosystems in the South India. These south Indian states cover about 22.9% length of perennial rivers and 40.72% of reservoirs resources of India which provides immense scope for inland fisheries development in the country. The fast flowing streams and rivers have been an excellent habitat and environment enabling evolution of rich fish diversity. The ironic appearance of freshwater fish diversity with high degree of endemism is met in the streams and major rivers of south India.

In spite of series of publications on the freshwater fishes of south India, consolidated list of freshwater fishes endemic to these regions has not been published so far. Hence forward we made the best use of available information on inland fish fauna of south India in developing this publication. This publication reflects restructured information on freshwater fish diversity of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and United Andhra Pradesh and estuarine fish diversity of Tamil Nadu and finfish diversity of Vembanad Lake in the Panangad-Kumbalam region of Kerala with note on systematic placement as per the latest taxonomic revisions of fish species, together with their environment, endemic and exotic status, maximum size, human use (existence or nonexistence of fishery, aquaculture, ornamental or game fish) and conservation status as per IUCN criteria. Adequate attention has not been paid for the sustainable utilization and conservation of endemic freshwater fish fauna of south India. Many endemic freshwater fishes of south India have been listed under threatened category now either due to attempts to promote aquaculture practices using transplanted Indian major carps or other exotic species, over exploitation, dynamite fishing or construction of dams, canals or barrages across the rivers.

Generation of proper database on fish germplasm resources reveals crystal facts necessary for the management, conservation and to evolve a plan for sustainable utilization of fishery resources. We look forward for suggestions and constructive criticism from our enlightened readers for additional enhancement of this publication. It is hoped that this book will provide basic information on the inland fish diversity of south India and offer better inputs for scientific management and utilization of the resources on the sustainable manner.

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