PRELIMINARY STUDIES ON THE BOTTOM MACROFAUNA OF THE TUNGABHADRA RESERVOIR

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of bottom fauna in relation to their role in the trophic cycle of a body of water is now well recognised. The abundance and the distribution of the bottom living animals have a direct bearing on the fisheries. A preliminary appraisal of the nature of the bottom biota would help evaluate as to how best they are utilised as food by fish populations in the reservoir. Barring the work of Srivastava (1956, 1959), no detailed work has been done on the bottom fauna of any freshwater impoundment in India. Hora (1952) stressed the importance of molluscs in the control of human Schistosomiasis through the culture of *Pangasius pangasius*, which is reputed to be strictly a molluscan feeder. With the advent of large-scale stocking and cultivation of major carps in artificially impounded waters, the studies on the bottom biota have become adjunct to the hydrographic studies. It would be helpful to know as how best these bottom living animals are used as food by the indigenous and introduced varieties of fishes. With this in view, a sampling programme was undertaken on the bottom fauna of the Tungabhadra reservoir.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Fortnightly collections of bottom macrofauna were made along the stations noted in the map (Fig. 1) from the marginal areas to the deepest areas of the lake. The samples were obtained with the help of an Ekman dredge (25 cm sq.). The studies were initiated in April 1958 and continued up to the end of December 1959. Though a large number of hauls were made, only ninety-two samples could be made use of, for this

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