



## Investigation of Freshwater Food Fish Consumption Behavior in Uva Province, Sri Lanka

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### Abstract

Freshwater food fish consumption is a crucial factor among the people of land-locked Uva province in terms of supplying important protein and other nutrients. However, less knowledge on consumption behavior among people is a major issue to develop inland aquaculture for the uplifting of people's nutrient requirements among low-income Badulla and Monaragala districts in Uva province. Therefore, a questioner-based survey was conducted in the 2021-2022 period by randomly selecting 1000 consumers in each district to understand their consumption behavior. As per the results obtained, the highest preference for freshwater fishes was observed for Tilapi (*Oreochromis niloticus*) (53.85%) followed by Catla (*Catla catla*) (28.85%), Rohu (*Labeo rohita*) (11.54%), Mrigal (*Cirrhinus mrigala*) (3.85%), and other types (1.91%) in Badulla district. In the Monaragala district, the preference was recorded as Tilapi (65.22%) followed by Catla (27.54%), Rohu (2.99%), Mrigal (1.45%), and other types (2.80%). The factors affecting for purchasing of freshwater food fish were taste (28.23%), price (26.34%), nutritional value (14.57%), accessibility (12.11%), season (8.13%), social acceptance (6.23%), and nutrient requirement of people (4.39%) in the Uva province. Consumer's fish purchasing frequencies were identified as two (39.53%), one (29.07%), three (24.42%), four (5.81%), five (1.16%), and other higher (8.14%) times per week. The percentages of consumer's monthly expenditures for purchasing fish were 4%, 13%, 44%, 30%, and 9% under price categories of 0-200 LKR, 200-450 LKR, 450-1000 LKR, 1000-2000 LKR, and >2000 LKR respectively. However, the majority income level (35.79%) of consumers was in the 30,000-45,000 LKR category. Thus, the above findings would be highly important when preparing policy planning to develop the inland aquaculture industry and to ensure the supply of essential nutrients among the people of Uva province, Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Fish consumption in Badulla, Fish consumption in Monaragala, Protein supply by fish, Prominent edible fish types.

