

**ASSESSING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF SALT AND SUGAR
CONTENT DISCLOSURE IN FOOD PRODUCTS: A STUDY IN
THE AMBALANTOTA AREA**



By

W.M.W. Harsha Kumara



FTC171

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Main Library, Eastern University, Sri Lanka

Department of Biosystems Technology

Faculty of Technology

Eastern University, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The consumption of an unhealthy diet is a major risk factor for non-communicable diseases. Sugar provides energy and enhances food's flavor, texture, color, and shelf life, with some products offering essential micronutrients. This study assessed the knowledge and practices related to sugar and salt consumption among people age between 18-50 at the Ambalantota area in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka, aimed to determine the level of awareness and understanding among consumers regarding salt and sugar content disclosure in food products and to identify demographic factors, socio-economic status that may shape consumer awareness and perceptions of salt and sugar content disclosure. Descriptive cross-sectional study was done by administering a pre-tested structured self-administered questionnaire, which was prepared after a literature search. All the people who live in Ambalantota area especially 18-50 age people were focused, and a total of 200 subjects participated. Compared to the female participation, more male participation was observed in this study. The majority was age distribution as, 80 responses (40%) aged 18-24. Most respondents had an Advanced level education at 49% (98). Family monthly income showed that, 41% (82) of families earned Rs 25,000-49,999 per month. A majority (68%) acknowledge that the level of education influences their dietary decisions. The present study found that there was a significant association ($p < 0.05$) between knowledge regarding salt and sugar consumption and age group and household income. Further significant association ($p < 0.05$) between awareness of salt and sugar-added food product purchasing and age group, gender, household income, and education level. There was a significant association ($p < 0.05$) between sugar and salt intake daily and household income and educational level were observed. There was a significant association ($p < 0.05$) between awareness about health impact of sugar and salt consumption and age groups, household income, and educational level. Further significant association ($p < 0.05$) between awareness about consumption patterns and age group, household income, and educational level. These findings highlight the potential for targeted educational programs to enhance nutritional awareness and health.

Keywords: *Ambalantota, Awareness, Consumption, Salt, Sugar*

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