

**RETAIL AND WHOLESALE  
MARKETING ACTIVITIES AT THE  
CHILAW FISH MARKET**



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**SRI LANKA**

**DECEMBER 2017**

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## ABSTRACT

Fish is a major dietary component of food consumed by people in Sri Lanka. Many households buy fish whenever they visit a market for purchasing food items. Fish marketing in Sri Lanka is spread over the provinces with fish markets being located at the urban and rural areas for consumers to purchase fish for their daily use. This study had the objective of analyzing the Chilaw Fish Market, by studying the marketing operations of the retailers and wholesalers at the market, along with trends in fish prices sold and the marketing margins for selected fish varieties. The study was done using both primary and secondary data collected from September to November 2017. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires used on the randomly selected 50 retailers and 30 wholesalers. Also a structured schedule was used to collect information from the staff of the Chilaw Fish Market office, while secondary data were collected from various sources.

The study indicate that the majority of retailers and wholesalers were involved in fish marketing as a full-time occupation, and they came from various parts of Sri Lanka to Chilaw fish market. Although the market had moderately sufficient open space and stalls for fish marketing, it did not have adequate buildings and good cold storage facility. It also lacked in easy access road and good drinking water for market users. The most popular varieties were Salaya (*Sardinella gibbosa*), Hurulla (*Amblygaster sirm*) and Kumballawa (*Rastrelliger kanagartha*), while cheaper fish varieties were Sudaya (*Sardinella albella*) and Hurulla (*Amblygaster sirm*). Credit was obtained by retailers and wholesalers for their business activities from various sources. Wholesalers owned lorries or vans to transport fish to the market. Price fluctuations were observed both retail and

wholesale fish prices at the market, while the retail prices of Kellwalla (*Thunnus albacares*), Mora (*Isurus sp.*), Thora (*Scomberomorus commersoni*) and Hurulla (*Amblygaster sirm*) were high compared to other fish varieties. The Total Gross Marketing Margin was high for Hurulla (*Amblygaster sirm*), Balaya (*Katsuwonus pelamis*), Salaya (*Sardinella gibbosa*) and Mora (*Isurus sp.*). Wholesale GMM was high for Sudaya (*Sardinella albella*) and Thalapath (*Istiophorus platypterus*). Retailer GMM was also high for Balaya (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) and Thora (*Scomberomorus commersoni*).

Fish sold at the Chilaw Fish Market arrives from Chilaw itself, Mannar, Marawila, Puttala and Trincomalee. The marketing functions of retailers were restricted to only cooling of unsold fish, while wholesalers performed many functions such as storage, fish separation, fish cleaning, transport and cooling of fish. Majority of retailers and wholesalers stated there was not enough support from the Government in relation to infrastructure facilities and space and sanitary facilities are not enough at the market. Poor drainage facilities and lack of good drinking water was also some other problems faced by both retailers and wholesalers. Solid waste management of fish wastes were handled by a private firm hired by the Chilaw Municipal Council.

**Keywords:** fish marketing, retailers, wholesalers, marketing margin, price fluctuations, Chilaw.



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