

CONSUMER LIFESTYLE AND VALUE ADDITION: SPICES AND CONDIMENTS IN AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SYSTEM

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Changing pattern of consumer involvement in different marketing functions has contributed to the growth of agricultural marketing system. Spices and condiments play an important role in Sri Lankan way of cooking. Although changes in marketing system of this commodity group are being observed, systematic studies are lacking. Objectives of this study were to identify the pattern of sources of spices used for preparation of meals by households and to understand factors affecting consumer decisions in choosing the source of spices. Data were gathered from 90 randomly selected households from Kurunegala area. A pre-structured survey schedule was used to gather data on consumption, market dependency and demographic variables. Data were analyzed using descriptive methods. Three consumption patterns based on the degree of dependence on marketing system for spices were identified, as (a) totally depend on the market (b) depend on the market for some types of spices and (c) totally depend on home processed products. Forty seven percent of households depended totally on the market and 39% depended on the market for only turmeric and pepper, while 14% prepared all spices at home. Purchasing pattern revealed that majority of households bought spices from nearby grinding mills. Consumers consider easiness and time constraint as major reasons to depend on the market. Processing under low hygienic conditions, usage of low quality ingredients and un-preferred taste of market products were the main reasons for the consumers to prefer home processed products. Value of resources used by home processed chili powder was 57.97 SLR/ 100g. But, average price of chili powder purchased from the market was 37.03 SLR/1 00g. Higher resources use for home base preparation and reasons mentioned by consumer is an indicator for agricultural marketing system to concentrate on value addition to fulfill consumer expectation.

Key words: Agricultural marketing system, Consumption pattern, Lifestyle, Value addition