

F-16: Social organisation of St. John's fish market in Colombo

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St. John's fish market is the premier terminal for marketing of fish in the island. The objective of this study was to investigate the social organisation and fish trade in this market, with special reference to trade from other districts.

During the time of the study, there were 87 licensed wholesalers and 105 licensed retailers operating at this market. A total of 26 each of cycle and motor cycle vendors and 25 consumers were interviewed. The number of lorries and their district of origin was also monitored.

The results indicated that the motor cycle traders purchased a large quantity (average 25 kg) of fish and they travelled a further distance than push cycle vendors. Push cycle vendors purchased smaller quantities (maximum 18 kg)

and they sold their fish within Colombo and its suburbs. The consumers who bought fish from this central market were people living in Colombo and suburbs. Of the 25 consumers interviewed, 16 were from a distance of less than 14.4 km. The study revealed that most of the consumers visiting St. John's market came from a distance of 16-30 km and were employed in Colombo city. Only 8% consumers came from 32-38 km range to purchase fish, and that too was for a special function.

This study revealed that St. John's fish market has a wide marketing and social network connected with all the fishing districts in the Island.