



## Value Chain Analysis of Food Fish in the Village Tank Cascade System (VTCS) of North Central Province, in Sri Lanka

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**Abstract:** Sri Lanka's North Central Province harbours a unique network of interconnected Village Tank Cascade systems (VTCs). This research investigates the food fish value chain within the VTCs of the North Central Province. The analysis explores key actors, stages, and challenges within the chain, aiming to identify opportunities for improvement. The study sheds light on the role VTCs play in supporting food fish production and sustaining livelihoods in the region. Value chain analysis was conducted qualitatively to map the existing value chain for food fish and identify the main actors, channels, and constraints along the value chains. Additionally, value addition and gross profit margins were calculated to determine the profit gain by each actor for the value addition. A total of 40 actors of fishermen, wholesalers and retailers were selected purposively at the Bellankadawala VTC and interviewed through face-to-face and telephone conversations using open-ended semi-structured questionnaires to collect the necessary primary data. Fishermen, as the primary actors in the value chain, added substantial value to their catch and achieved the highest gross profit margins by selling directly to the consumers. Wholesalers enhance the value through bulk purchasing and transportation, while retailers further contribute by directly interacting with consumers. The finding highlights the importance of each actor's role and suggests several improvements. This study recommends subsidizing raw materials to reduce costs, forming a Fishermen's Union to enhance collective bargaining power, and improving safety measures and equipment to mitigate risks and increase efficiency. By implementing these recommendations, the VTCs can better support food fish production and the livelihoods of those involved in the value chain. The study underscores the significance of VTCs in bolstering food security and improving economic conditions for local communities.

**Keywords:** Food fish, Value chain, Village tank cascade system.