



Evaluation of Social Perception and Quality of Bottled Drinking Water

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Abstract

Public perceptions and attitudes around a particular issue which is growing increasingly more important in this decade. Water is a field which involves governments, industry, and the public therefore a collection of data regarding the public's attitudes towards the drinking water will provide a better approach to evaluate the quality of drinking water and the accessibility to safe drinking water. Bottled drinking water use is showing a growing trend in Sri Lankan community at present. Current study was focused to collect public attitudes on bottled water use and its safety. Data collected by conducting a questionnaire and testing some water quality parameters of selected bottled drinking water samples in Galle city. Questionnaire was conducted among 150 people (n=150) for identifying their practices and attitudes in using bottled drinking water. Bottled drinking water is mainly consumed when they are travelling (50.4%) and when they are living in an unknown area temporarily (34.9%). In buying bottled drinking water, 65% of consumers concern about the details appears on the label, while 21% consider about the brand and 12% consider about the appearance. However, 79.6% of people aware of the issues recently reported about the contaminated bottled water, however, 62.2% of consumers assume that the bottled drinking water is safe to drink, while 17.3% believes that bottled drinking water is not safe to drink. Bottled water samples (n=44) were tested in order to find the range of pH, conductivity, nitrate concentration, total coliforms, total hardness, three major bottled water brands are included to above samples. However, the study reveals that irrespective of the recent issues raised on bottled drinking water people believe that bottled drinking water is a safe drinking water source. In the mean time chemical analysis of bottled drinking water samples also support above opinion since it is complying with standards.

Keywords: *bottled drinking water, social perception, quality*