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Role of downstream value chain actors on upgrading the *Moringa oleifera* value chain of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Moringa oleifera cultivation for commercial purposes has recently been promoted in Sri Lanka. Though Sri-Lanka is still at an infant stage, understanding the nature of the available value chain will aid in continuous improvement of the business eliminating its bottle necks. Therefore, the study intended to identify the value chain profile of the upstream, midstream, and downstream actors in order to identify their roles and functions in the *Moringa* value chain and to find out the involvement of downstream actors on value chain upgrading. Focus group discussions, non-participatory observation and interviewer administered structured telephone interviews were instrumental in gathering data. Data were gathered during the first quarter of 2021 using snowball sampling technique. Focus group discussions and non-participatory observations were conducted with the participation of 42 stakeholders (20 farmers, 05 collectors, 02 processors, 05 retailers, 05 wholesalers, and 05 exporters) distributed island wide. Results revealed the existence of *Moringa* growers, input suppliers, training-cum institutions, governmental institutions, and NGOs that act as supportive and regulatory institutions as the upstream actors. Collectors and processors recognized as the mid-stream actors while retailers, wholesalers, exporters, and importers/buyers represented the downstream value chain actors. Upstream actors' main role concluded by producing a quality *Moringa* leaf harvest. Midstream actors' role span from the point of reception of the fresh harvest and ended up with producing a value-added product. Downstream value chain actors involved in distributing the final product and bridging the value-added product with the end market. Up-stream actors' share of profit was 6% while mid-stream actors' share of profit was 5%. Down-stream actors recorded the highest share of profit; 89%. From the study it was revealed that value chain fairness in terms of sharing the monetary returns is an issue. Further the value chain is demand driven. Thus, the study recommends government and the related institutions' mediation in receiving bulk orders from foreign countries and popularizing Ceylon *Moringa* as a unique brand. Furthermore, value chain re-structuring by incorporating novel technologies such as block chain enabled traceability will enhance the accountability and transparency in the value chain.

Keywords: Downstream, Mid-stream, Moringa, Upstream, Value chain

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