



Estimation of proximate composition (moisture and ash content) of some economically important fishes of the valley

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I INTRODUCTION

Kashmir waters form important fish habitat, the fish found here make up a significant part of diet for many thousands of people living here in Kashmir valley. The main species are the common carp, rosy barb, mosquito fish, nemacheilus species and other species especially snow trout. The snow trout include *Schizothorax longipinus*, *Schizothorax labiatus*, *Schizothorax curvifrons*, *Schizothorax plagiostomus*, *Schizothorax niger*, *Schizothorax esocinus* and these contribute about 60 percent of total fish in Kashmir. The world's demand for aquatic source of foods is on the rise not only because of its growing population, but also because of preference for healthier foods for human beings [1]. Over 800 million people in the world are chronically malnourished as per the united nation's statistics. To ensure nutritional security, increased availability of diverse types of foods of animal origin such as milk, meat and fish besides cereals are essential. Fishes are also a valuable source of vitamin A and D. Fatty fishes in Kashmir are a prime source of vitamin D. All fishes contain several of the B complex vitamins. It is also a top source of minerals too. In addition to proteins, vitamins and minerals, fish oils contain polyunsaturated fats. In spite of high preferences for fish and fishery products, the per-capita consumption of fish in India is still very low. Globally, fish and shellfish account for about 16 % of animal protein consumed [2]. In some countries figure is as high as 50%. Protein content of raw fish flesh is 18-22%. Therefore, aquatic food can in some ways be the medical food of 21st century. Fish is an excellent source of protein and other elements for the maintenance of healthy body [3]. In addition, it is very good source of polyunsaturated fatty acid (PUFA). An increasing amount of evidence suggests that due to its high content of PUFA fish flesh and fish oil are beneficial in reducing the serum cholesterol