

Lankans unwilling to pay higher food bill to protect local industry - Advocata Survey

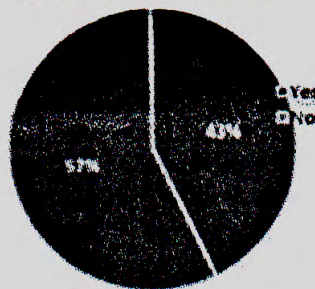
A survey commissioned by the Advocata Institute in April 2019 revealed that 57% of Sri Lankans were unwilling to pay extra for food, even if it meant that the local agricultural industry would be protected.

This survey covered 855 respondents in 18 districts within 8 provinces in Sri Lanka. The demographic variables considered were age, gender, educational qualification, socio-economic class, and monthly household income.

The survey also revealed that the lower the Socio-Economic Category (SEC), the less willing respondents were to pay extra for their food, to protect the local industry. SEC is the category an individual falls into based on their education and occupation. It was only in the highest SEC where 51% answered 'yes', agreeing to incur a higher cost of living at the cost of protectionist taxes. SECs following it were increasingly reluctant to pay more for food,

57% of people unwilling to pay extra for food at the expense of protectionist taxes

Would you pay more for your food, if it means that the local industry is protected?



Base: All Respondents (855)

Response by Demographic profile

	Yes	No	Base
By Gender			
Males	38%	72%	427
Females	48%	52%	428
By Age			
18-25 years	36%	64%	144
26-35 years	42%	58%	273
36-50 years	47%	53%	252
More than 50	46%	54%	158
By SEC			
SEC A	51%	49%	135
SEC B	43%	57%	245
SEC C	38%	61%	303
SEC D	43%	57%	125
SEC E	45%	55%	44

	Yes	No	Base
By Province			
Western	48%	52%	205
Southern	22%	78%	89
Central	43%	57%	133
North Western	24%	76%	87
North central	44%	56%	81
Sabaragamuwa	51%	49%	87
Eastern	41%	59%	96
Northern	33%	67%	76
By Income Group			
Less than 30K	32%	68%	232
RS. 30K - 70K	48%	52%	526
Above RS. 70K	45%	55%	80

even if it meant that local businesses were protected.

Lower-income households spend most of their income on food according to the Household Income and Expenditure (HISE) Survey. The lower the income level higher the proportion of their expenditure on food-related items. The survey also noted differences

across provinces. Respondents from the North Central and Sabaragamuwa provinces were more willing to incur higher food costs, with 64% from the North Central Province and 61% from the Sabaragamuwa Province answering 'yes'. In contrast, only 22% of respondents from the Southern Province and 24% from

the North Western Province answered 'yes'.

Interestingly, 72% of males were unwilling to bear the burden of a higher cost for food according to the survey. To put this into perspective, Sri Lanka has 4 million male-headed households (Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2016).