



**PROXIMATE COMPOSITION OF CLUPEIDAE AND ENGRAULIDAE  
INHABITING THENGAITHITTU ESTUARY PUDUCHERRY- SOUTH EAST  
COAST OF INDIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Estuarine fish are commercially valuable species and easy to cultivate in coastal areas. The biochemical composition is the yard stick to measure and assess the nutritional quality of food sources. Consumption of marine and estuarine fish provides an inexpensive source of protein with a high biological value, essential mineral and vitamins. Clupeidae (*Sardinella longiceps*, *S. gibbosa*, *Nematalosanus*, *Ilishamelastoma*) and Engraulidae (*Stolephorus indicus*, *S. commersonni*, *Thryssamystax* and *T. malabarica*) are dominant in Thengaithittu estuary are examined for proximate composition for their nutritional value. The average moisture content ranged from 67 to 73% and the majority of the fishes had protein contents between 14 to 21%. *T. mystax* and *S. commersonni* had high protein content 21.3% and 19.2%. Lipid content varied widely from 2.4 to 6.3% with *S. longiceps* had high lipid content (6.3%). Ash content varied from 1.42% to 4.9% and carbohydrate from 0.8% in *S. commersonni* to 4.82% in *N. nasus*.

**Keywords:** estuary, finfish, proximate, protein, carbohydrate, lipids

## INTRODUCTION

Fish is a major source of food for human nutrition providing an important amount of dietary protein and lipid diet in many countries. Fish flesh is easily digestible because it contains long muscle fibres. Furthermore, it has been linked to health benefits, such as the prevention of cardiovascular diseases and some types of cancer, including colon, breast and prostate [1,2]. Polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) is also reported that n-3 PUFA have been recognized as important substances with beneficial properties for the improvement of visual function [3] and also for the prevention of atherosclerosis and thrombosis development [4]. Fish meal is the main dietary protein source in aquaculture feeds [5]. Several studies deal with the proximate composition of biochemical components of many commercially important fishes [6-10]. Variation of biochemical composition of fish flesh may also occur within same species depending upon the fishing ground, fishing season, age and sex of the individual and reproductive status. The spawning cycle and food supply are the main factors responsible for this variation [11]. Fish has long been an important source of food for people all over the world. The importance of fish as a source of high quality, balanced and easily digestible protein, essential amino acid and nutraceuticals like Polyunsaturated Fatty Acid is well understood and it has historically been more readily available to the poor, especially in the rural areas of many developing countries like India.

India has a rich estuarine and other brackish water resources along the west and east coasts formed by the Ganges, Mahanadhi, Brahmaputra, Godavari, Krishna, Cauvery, Narmadha and Tapati rivers and smaller coastal rivers along the west coast, mainly in Kerala, Karnataka and Goa. The various estuarine systems of India has 2.7 million ha combined area with an estimated yield of 45-75 kg/ha [12]. Estuarine fish provide high quality protein with all the dietary essential amino acids for maintenance and growth of the human body [13]. As the world population is growing, the per capita consumption of seafood is also increasing rapidly. Because of health consciousness, the modern day man is interested in taking seafood more in view of its nutritional superiority than all other sources of food accessible to him. There remains no considerable study on selective estuarine fishes with regard to their nutritive value. Though estuarine fishes are being consumed in inland and other country, in India there is no evidence to support the estuarine fishes as edible. Hence, the present work was planned to study the proximate composition of estuarine fishes from two families namely Clupeidae and Engraulidae were dominant in Thengaithittu estuary for estimating their major proximate components such as total protein, carbohydrate, lipid, moisture and ash content.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Fishes samples from two families namely Clupeidae (*Nematalosanus*, *Sardinellagibbosa*, *Sardinellalongiceps* and *Ilishamelastoma*) and Engraulidae (*Stolephorusindicus*, *S.*

*commersonii*, *Thryssamystax*, *Thryssamalabarica*) are collected during 2009 – 2012, using cast net from the study area Thengaithittu estuary is located in (Lat 11°59'N long 79°50'E) South region of Puducherry and 162km South from Chennai. Specimens brought immediately to the laboratory for further studies. The estuarine fishes were kept in glass trough in tap water for 24 hours, for emptying and cleaning the gut. The scales were removed and the entire body tissue was dried at 55°C (constant temperature) for 24 hours in the hot air oven. Then, the dried meat was powdered and the required quantity of powder was taken for the estimation of total protein, carbohydrate, lipid, moisture and ash.

### **Estimation of total Protein:**

The Folin-Ciocalteu Phenol method of [14] was adopted for the estimation of total protein in the tissue.

### **Estimation of total Carbohydrate:**

The estimation of total carbohydrate content, the procedure of [15] using phenol-Sulphuric acid was followed.

### **Estimation of total Lipid:**

The chloroform-methanol extraction procedure of [16] was used for extracting lipid from the various body parts.

### **Moisture content:**

The moisture content of the fish was estimated by drying a known weight (1g) of fish tissue in a hot air oven at 105°C for 24 hrs. The differences in weight before and after drying are the amount of moisture present and the results are expressed in percentage of wet weight of the tissue [17].

### **Ash content:**

The ash content was estimated by burning oven-dried sample in a muffle furnace at 550°C [17].

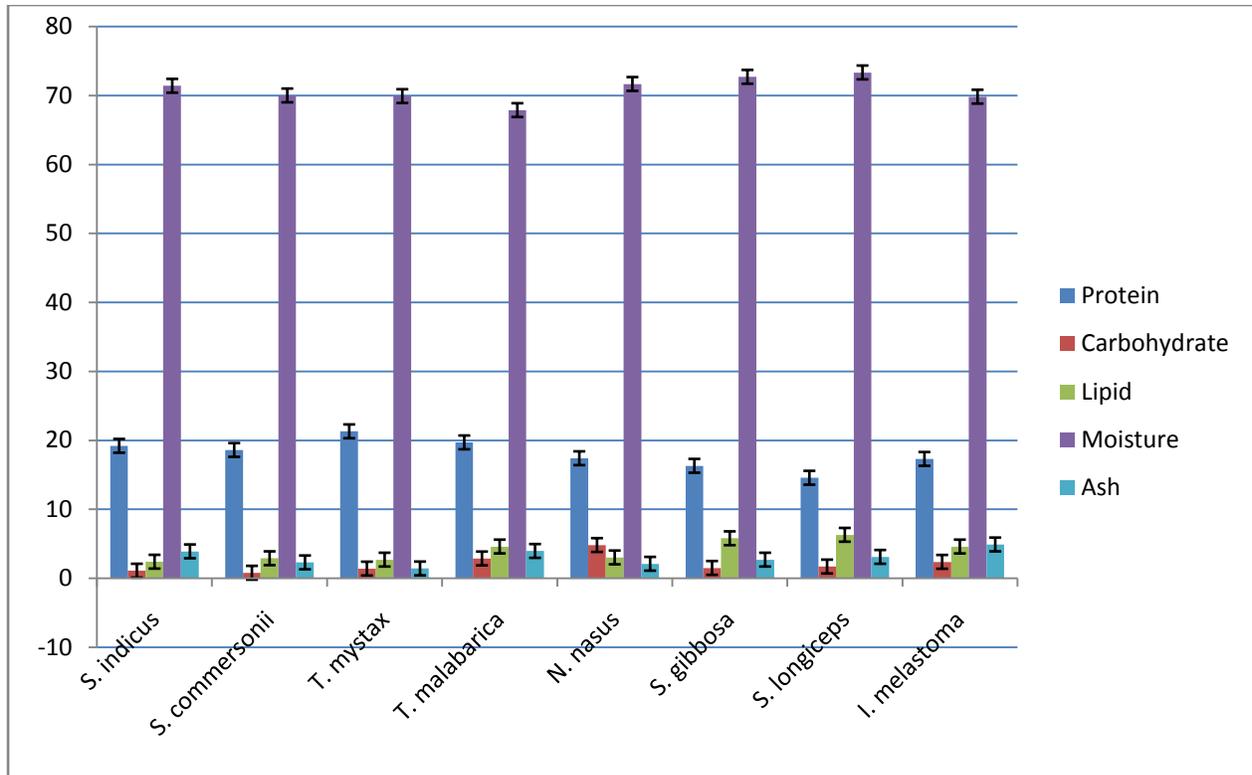
## **RESULTS**

The proximate composition (%) such as protein, carbohydrate and lipid contents of *Stolephorus indicus*, *S. commersonii*, *Thryssamystax*, *T. malabarica*, *Nematalosanus*, *Sardinella gibbosa*, *S. longiceps* and *Ilisha melastoma* are represented in Table 1. The results of the present study revealed that the protein composition were high (19.2, 18.6, 21.3, 19.7, 17.4, 16.3, 14.57, & 17.3 %) followed by carbohydrate (1.1, 0.8, 1.4, 2.87, 4.82, 1.5, 1.7, & 2.38 %), lipid (2.4, 2.9, 2.7, 4.6, 3.02, 5.8, 6.3, & 4.6 %) moisture (71.4, 70,

69.9, 67.87, 71.66, 72.7, 73.33, & 69.82 %) and ash (3.9, 2.3, 1.42, 3.96, 2.1, 2.7, 3.1, & 4.9 %). Minimum protein (14.57 %) in *S. longiceps* was recorded and the maximum (21.3 %) was obtained in *T. mystax*. Minimum carbohydrate (0.8 %) in *S. commersonii* was recorded and the maximum (4.82 %) was noticed in *N. nasus*. Minimum lipid (2.4 %) in *S. indicus* was observed and the maximum (6.3 %) was recorded in *S. longiceps*. Minimum moisture (67.87 %) in *T. malabarica* and the maximum (73.33 %) was recorded in *S. longiceps*. Minimum ash (1.42 %) in *T. mystax* was recorded and the maximum (4.9 %) was recorded in *I. melastoma*.

Fishes	Protein	Carbohydrate	Lipid	Moisture	Ash
<i>S. indicus</i>	19.2±0.31	1.1±0.24	2.4±0.04	71.4±0.28	3.9±0.06
<i>S. commersonii</i>	18.6±0.42	0.8±0.9	2.9±0.05	70±0.42	2.3±0.08
<i>T. mystax</i>	21.3±0.08	1.4±0.21	2.7±0.64	69.9±0.3	1.42±0.47
<i>T. malabarica</i>	19.7±1.05	2.87±0.05	4.6±0.14	67.87±1.06	3.96±0.21
<i>N. nasus</i>	17.4±1.08	4.82±0.28	3.02±0.5	71.66±0.01	2.1±0.07
<i>S. gibbosa</i>	16.3±0.56	1.5±0.07	5.8±0.8	72.7±0.69	2.7±0.36
<i>S. longiceps</i>	14.57±0.24	1.7±0.06	6.3±0.6	73.33±0.78	3.1±0.78
<i>I. melastoma</i>	17.3±1.87	2.38±0.64	4.6±0.31	69.82±1.8	4.9±0.57

**Table 1:** Proximate composition of Clupeidae and Engraulidae species in percentage (%)



**Graph 1:** Graphical representation of proximate value (%) of Clupeidae and Engraulidae

## DISCUSSION

### Changes in Protein content:

The results of the present study revealed that the protein composition were 19.2, 18.6, 21.3, 19.7, 17.4, 16.3, 14.57, & 17.3 % (Table 1) & (Graph 1). The lowest protein content was recorded in *Sardinellalongiceps* 14.57%. Highest protein 21.3% were recorded in anchovies genus namely *Thryssamystax* 21.3%. Similarly [18] obtained a higher value in protein content in same genus namely *T. hamiltoni* 19.43% and [6] also obtained similar value 21.79% in *T. mystax* from Parangepettai waters and [19] recorded higher value in *T. mystax* 18.77% from Ratnagiri coast. [20] recorded protein value ranged between 20.68 to 22.06% in anchovy *Engraulisencrasicolus* from Central Adriatic. [21] discussed protein value ranged between 14.71 to 16.95% in anchovy *Stolephoruscommersonii* from kerala coast. [22] had recorded minimum protein content 7.50% in Bombay duck, *Harpodonnehereus*. Such lower values were not recorded in estuary of east coast in India. Majority of fishes had protein content ranged between 17 to 19%. In Pakistan, protein values of Sardine ranges between 14.11 to 18.78% [23]. [24] reported that the biochemical composition of the Indian Shad, *Ilishamelastoma* (Schneider) was showed a decrease in muscle-protein from 24.5% to 17.5% is in agreement with our present study *I. melstoma* shows similar results

17.3%. Again *Sardinellalongiceps* 14.57% coincides with [19] has protein content 16.50% from Ratnagiri coast. *Nematalosanus* had protein content 17.4% is accordance with the studies of [25] obtained protein value 17.25%. In present study *S. gibbosa* has protein value 16.3% agreement with [26] they recorded protein value 14.64% wet weight in dark muscle of *S. gibbosa* caught from Thailand. The present study shows anchovies (Engraulidae) families had high protein content when compared to Clupeidae families. Amount of proteins in fish are influenced by the fat and water content. There is inverse relationship exists between the fat and protein contents of the edible part of one and the same fish. Proteins are not only necessary for enzyme and hormonal development [27] but also an important source of energy [28].

### Changes in lipid content:

The average lipid content of fishes ranged between 2.4 to 6.3% (Table 1) & (Graph 1). Highest lipid content was recorded in *Sardinellalongiceps* 6.3% and lower value 2.4% in *Stolephorusindicus* of anchovies. [23] also recorded high lipid values for sardine from Pakistan ranges from 5.59 to 15.45%. Generally fish species are grouped into four categories based on their fat contents namely lean fish (<2%), low fat (2-4), medium fat (4-8%) and high fat (>8%) [29]. About 50% of fishes were identified as low fat content and 50% are comes under medium fat fishes. Fish species of genus clupeidae shows wide range of lipid content from 3.02 to 6.3%. High fat content were recorded for sardinella spp. ranged from 5.8 to 6.3%. Similar results were obtained by [30] in *Sardinellagibbosa* of 1.9 to 8.4% from Karachi coast. [26] also obtained high value of lipid in *S. gibbosa* 4.77% from Thailand. The average lipid content of *Stolephorus*spp ranged between 2.4 to 2.9%, but slightly lower values were recorded by [22] for those species in their studies. Different authors reported high variations in fat content in the edible part of anchovy, with ranges from 0.94 % to 33.30 % wet weight [31-34] The fish species of the family, clupeidae had medium fat contents ranged between 3.02 and 6.3% including *Sardinellalongiceps*. *Sardinellalongiceps*, being a fatty fish was reported to contain even 11.70% fat [22] and 8.45% [8] in earlier studies and such high values were not obtained in the same species examined in the east coast of India as well as in our study. [35] demonstrated that changes in fat content vary as the sardines drain or replenish their fat reserves in response to the spawning cycle, availability of food and other factors in the sea. Some authors have mentioned that the fat content is inversely proportional to the moisture content [36,37]. In fish species variations in the fat contents are significantly higher than that of other parameters. Reason could be due to the inherent differences in the species, seasonal as well as geographical variations. Variations in age as well as maturity within the same species were also contributed to the differences in the fat contents [38]. Basically fat content affects the flavour and sensory characteristic features of seafood products. So, relatively low fat content (<5%) of the fillet makes anchovy a better choice of raw material, thus not as submissive to lipid deterioration as other small pelagic fish with more pronounced seasonal variations [20].

### Changes in carbohydrate content:

Carbohydrate in the tissues exist as glycogen, free sugars and protein bound sugars, which serve as energy reserves for various metabolic processes. They are the major source of energy in animals, rapid depletion of stored carbohydrates primarily in tissue are used for the metabolism. Polysaccharides occur both in free and in bound states along with proteins. The stored glycogen content in tissues is released by anaerobic glycolysis and is utilized to meet the energy requirement when needed [39]. The study thus supports the view that carbohydrate plays an insignificant role as energy reserve in aquatic animals [40]. The results of the present study revealed that the estuarine finfishes carbohydrate composition was in 1.1, 0.8, 1.4, 2.87, 4.82, 1.5, 1.7, & 2.38 % (Table 1) & (Graph 1). Minimum carbohydrate (0.8 %) in *S. commersonii* was recorded and the maximum (4.82 %) was recorded in *N. nasus*. [13] on finfishes from vellar estuary shows carbohydrate ranges from 2.43 to 4.43%. Carbohydrate content in clupeidae species were ranged between 1.5 to 4.82% and engraulidae between 0.8 to 2.87%. [41] recorded carbohydrate value in *S. longiceps* a fatty fish were 6.41%. *Ilishamelastoma* in the present study had carbohydrate content 2.38% is in agreement with [41] in the same species recorded 2.24% from parangepettai coastal waters. Engraulidae species *S. commersonii*, in the present study has 0.8% carbohydrate value and similar results were obtained in the same genus namely *S. devisi* shows 0.11% [42]. [6] recorded 0.41% and 0.40% carbohydrate value in *S. commersonii* and *T. mystax* from parangepettai waters. The carbohydrate level varies from species to species mainly due to availability of food and feeding habitat of the species and seasonal distribution. Both carbohydrate and lipids serve as source of energy, but these compounds contain different capacities of energy storage. Each gram of carbohydrates store four calories of energy [43].

### Changes in moisture content:

The results of the present study revealed that the estuarine fishes moisture content was 71.4, 70, 69.9, 67.87, 71.66, 72.7, 73.33, & 69.82 % (Table 1) & (Graph 1). Moisture content was within previously reported range in other fishes [44]. Usually, moisture and lipid contents in fish fillets are inversely related and their sum is approximately 80% [45]. A linear relation between water and lipid content was determined for other marine fish species [46]. Moisture content has reported earlier by [22] shows 60-80% of moisture content in marine fishes of Indian coast and the present study also recorded similar values. In the present study *N. nasus* shows 71.44% moisture content has coincides with the findings of [25] they recorded 71.53% in their studies. Anchovy species namely *T. mystax* and *T. malabarica* has recorded 69.9 to 67.87% respectively. *T. hamiltoni* the same genus contains moisture value 77.76% [18]. Similarly *T. vitrirostris* also has moisture content 71.2% reported by [42]. *Stolephorus commersonii* and *S. indicus* has moisture content ranges from 70 to 71.4% in our studies. [21] reported moisture content in *Stolephorus commersonii* ranges from 76.47 to 80.65%. *Sardinella gibbosa* shows 72.7% is in accordance with [26] recorded 78.88 to 81.51% moisture content from Thailand waters. Clupeoid fish namely *Ilishamelastoma* and *Sardinella longiceps* has moisture content 69.82% to 73.33% and similar results were recorded by [41] in *I. melastoma* 69.32% and [19] in *S. longiceps* recorded 78.95%. [22] and [8] also had reported 67.01% and 70.02% moisture content

respectively in oil sardine. Although the water content in many fishes is reported to increase in mature specimens with fall in muscle-protein and fat [40]. The moisture content varies not only from species to species but also from specimen to specimen and between different tissues.

### Changes in ash content:

Ash is the measure of mineral content of any food including fish [47]. The ash content results of the present study of estuarine fishes were 3.9, 2.3, 1.42, 3.96, 2.1, 2.7, 3.1, & 4.9 % (Table 1) & (Graph 1). Highest ash content was recorded in Clupeoid fish namely *Ilishamelastoma* 4.9% and lowest value seen in Engraulidae species *T.mystax* 1.42%. Similarly [18] obtained ash value 1.42% in the same genus but different species namely *T. hamiltoni*. In the present study clupeidae ash content ranges from 2.1 to 4.9% and similar values are recorded in *S. longiceps* 3.94 to 1.77% [48]. *N. nasus* the gizzard shad has 2.1% ash, a reduced value 1.54% were recorded in *N. nasus* from Arabian Gulf by [25]. *Stolephorus*spp has 2.3 to 3.9% ash in our study. [21] given out the value ranges from 2.40 to 6.63% for the species *S. commersonii* in accordance with our results. [20] recorded value ranges from 1.34 to 1.49% in the same genus but different species of anchovy namely *Engraulisencrasicolus* in central Adriatic. The concentration of trace elements and minerals that contribute for the total ash contents are known to vary in fish depends on their environment, behaviour of feeding, ecosystem and migration even within the same locality [49-51].

## CONCLUSION

The present study reveals that biochemical composition varied considerably for all the fishes. The protein content was highest in anchovy species, *Thryssamystax*. Clupeidae species like *Sardinellalongiceps*, *Ilishamelastoma* and *Nematalosanus* are having high moisture, lipid, ash and carbohydrate contents respectively. From the above observation it is clear that the estuarine fishes with rich nutritive value can be used for alternate source as a regular sea food which supplies nutrients for the growing children, pregnant women and people suffering from malnutrition.

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