

Development of Finger Food Incorporated with Rathu Heenati Rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) Flour, Chickpea (*Cicer arietinum* L.) Flour and Mung Bean (*Vigna radiata* L.) Flour for Toddlers

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In the Sri Lankan context, proper nutrition among toddlers is a very crucial problem due to less consumption of nutritious foods. Therefore, finger foods with high nutritional composition and acceptable sensory attributes can be introduced to increase their consumption. Legumes such as; mung bean (*Vigna radiata* L.) and chickpea (*Cicer arietinum* L.) are rich sources of protein. Rathu heenati rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) is a traditional rice variety that contains a high nutritional and medicinal value. The main objective of this study was to develop value-added finger food which can fulfill the nutritional requirements of toddlers to a considerable level. Finger food was prepared by changing the levels of rathu heenati rice flour, germinated chickpea, and mung bean flour in the percentages of 60:10:30, 60:25:15, 60:30:10, 60:15:25 and 60:20:20, respectively. Treatments were subjected to sensory analysis to select the best finger food formulation. Finger food formulated with 60 of wheat flour: 20 of mung bean: 20 chickpea flour served as control. Finger food with rathu heenati rice flour, chickpea flour and mung bean flour in 60:25:15 treatment was chosen as the best sample ($p < 0.05$) and tested for proximate composition (protein, fat, ash, fiber and moisture), colour, texture, pH, Brix value and TPC over one month in seven days interval. Results showed that selected finger food sample had the highest protein (21.85%), fat (22.11%) and ash (3.27%) content compared to the control which showed protein (16.52%), fat (19.83%) and ash (1.84%) content, ($p < 0.05$). During the storage, pH was decreased while TPC values were increased in both samples. The hardness of both samples was decreased within the storage. *E. coli* was absent in both samples. In conclusion, finger food incorporated with rathu heenati rice flour, chickpea flour, and mung bean flour at 60:25:15, showed high nutritional composition as well as acceptable sensory attributes for toddlers.

Keywords: Rathu heenati rice, Mung bean, Chickpea, Finger food, Toddlers