

## **Microbiological Quality of Street Vended Ready-to-Eat Foods in Gangodawila, Nugegoda Area**

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Street foods are very popular among people, mainly the tenants and borders who live in Gangodawila, Nugegoda area, due to the low price and convenience. However, the microbiological quality of these street foods is questionable because of seemingly poor adherence to good manufacturing practices by street food vendors. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to investigate the microbial quality of five popular ready-to-eat (RTE) street food types sold in Wijerama junction area, Gangodawila, Nugegoda. Total of 19 food samples (5-fruit juice, 4-wade, 4-Dosai, 3-fruit salad and 3-string hopper) were tested for total plate count (TPC), total yeast and mold count (TYMC), total coliform count (TCC), presence of fecal coliform, *E.coli*, and *Staphylococcus aureus* using the standard microbiological procedures. TPC and TYMC values in all the samples varied between 3.4 – 6.3 log CFU/ml and 3.8 – 6.4 log CFU/ml, respectively while the highest TPC (6.3 log CFU/ml) and TYMC (6.4 log CFU/ml) values were detected in fruit salad and Dosai samples, respectively. Seven food samples (36.8%) were recorded having TCC higher than 10 MPN/ml. Of the samples tested, 84.2%, 47.4%, and 33.3% were found positive for fecal coliform, *E.coli*, and *S.aureus*, respectively. The results showed that the street vended foods in Gangodawila, Nugegoda area are of poor microbial quality. Moreover, the presence of fecal coliform, *E.coli*, and *S. aureus* indicated that fecal contamination and inappropriate handling of these foods during processing and vending. Therefore, there is an emerging need for imposing monitoring measures to improve the microbial quality of street foods sold in this area by the relevant authorities.

**Keywords:** Microbial quality, Food contamination, Food quality, Hygiene, Street foods