**Comparative Assessment of the Effectiveness of Fresh Coconut Paste over**

**Conventional Coconut Milk for Domestic Usage**

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A study was carried out to explore the suitability and consumer acceptability of fresh coconut paste (FCP) as a coconut milk substitute compared with conventional coconut milk (CCM), to reduce the consumption of coconuts in Sri Lankan households and increase the availability of nuts for the coconut-based industry. FCP was produced by scraped coconut meat into a fine particle paste through a colloid mill. The proximate composition of FCP was determined and the sensory evaluation was carried out with dhal curries prepared with FCP and CCM by using a five-point hedonic scale. The consumer survey was conducted with 150 consumers from the Gampaha and Colombo districts, instructing them to prepare dhal curry using FCP packets. The storage stability of FCP at refrigerator condition, coconut savings, and cost-benefit of using FCP over CCM was evaluated. Moisture, fat, crude fiber, protein, ash, and carbohydrate of the FCP were 67.46 ± 0.72%, 27.89 ± 0.40%, 1.29 ± 0.04%, 1.27 ± 0.01%, 0.73 ± 0.08%, and 2.63 ± 0.44%, respectively. There was a significantly high crude fiber content in FCP compared to coconut cream (undiluted coconut milk) (0.01%). The sensory evaluation resulted in higher scores for the appearance, color, mouthfeel, and overall acceptability of CCM compared to the FCP curry. However, the taste and odor of CCM and FCP curries were not significantly different (p>0.05). According to the consumer survey, 61% preferred to buy FCP if it is in the market. The most preferred quality of the product was the ease of usage. FCP can be stored in low-density polyethylene for up to 2 weeks at 4° C. The actual amount contained in 50g of FCP is 16.27g, and when using 150g of FCP per day per household, 274 of nuts and Rs. 28,680/= can be saved per year compared to hand-squeezed coconut milk.

**Keywords:** *coconut milk, coconut saving, consumer acceptability, fresh coconut paste*