

Red Data Book?

Raavya Sashri Weerasekera

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Other books of the author

Collecting Feathers as a hobby, Fairey wren and Possum, Australian Aboriginal culture

Mahamaya Girls College, Kandy, Sri Lanka

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To
My Mother
Dr. Nadeeka Jayawardana,

Without whose unwavering love, devoted
encouragement, and constant support,
this book would never have been
completed.

Foreword



In an increasingly complex global future, the "Hemamala Upahara" book project, led by Mahamaya Girls' College, stands as a turning point in girls' education. Over a decade, it has successfully nurtured thousands of children to become young authors.

This year, by collaborating with other schools, we aimed to provide students with a wealth of new experiences. The goal was to develop multi-faceted skills, including communication, values, and creative growth. As a result, children have written books that pay tribute to Princess Hemamala, who brought the Sacred Tooth Relic—the supreme symbol of the Buddhist world—to the Hill Country (Kandy).

I extend my gratitude to everyone involved, including the students who contributed their creativity and the teachers who guided them.

Shashikala Senadhira

Principal

Mahamaya Girls' College

Congratulatory Message

It is a great honor for me, as the Governor of the Central Province, to send a congratulatory message for the launch of the books created through the Hemamala Tribute Book Creation Project initiated by Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy.

Education is the fundamental foundation for the progress of society, and it is further strengthened through books and literary creations. It is clearly commendable that students' talents, creativity, and intellectual abilities are emerging through projects such as this.

I believe that this book creation project will provide valuable knowledge and a precious literary contribution not only to the students but to the entire society. Furthermore, I hope that through such efforts, future writers who will bring pride to Sri Lanka will emerge.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation and blessings to the Principal, the academic staff, the students, and everyone involved who dedicated themselves to this successful endeavor. I wish this project and the book launch ceremony great success.

Sarath B.S. Abeykoon

Governor, Central Province

Emeritus Professor, University of Peradeniya

2026-05-10

Congratulatory Message

I highly appreciate the noble and outstanding effort of the Principal and the academic staff of Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy, the student daughters, the students of other participating schools, and everyone who dedicated themselves to plan and implement this book publication project. The project was organized under the leadership of Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy, with the participation of other schools in the Kandy Zone, with the aim of encouraging children toward book creation within the current school system, as a tribute to Hemamala Kumariya who brought the Sacred Tooth Relic to Sri Lanka.

For several decades, Sri Lanka has been committed to providing free, compulsory, quality, and equitable education to all children, thereby producing a future generation of intelligent and skilled citizens. In such a context, this book creation program for school children helps develop creative ability, critical thinking, and other positive qualities for a balanced and well-rounded personality, and contributes to building a future knowledge-based society.

May all activities of the Hemamala Tribute Book Creation Project be successful through the blessings of the Sacred Tooth Relic.

Pradeep Nilanga Dela

Diyawadana Nilame,

Sri Dalada Maligawa.

2026.05.10.

What is the Red Data Book?

Have you ever heard that some animals and plants are disappearing? The **Red Data Book** is a special book that tells us which living things are in danger.

Scientists study animals and plants and list them in this book to protect them. It helps people understand which species need urgent care.

The **Red Data Book** is like a warning sign: it says, "These species need help!"



Why is it Important?

The **Red Data Book** is very important because it gives us a warning.

It tells us:

- Which animals are rare
- Which plants are disappearing
- What we must protect

Without this book, many species could disappear without us even knowing!

Eg: Sinhalese Elephant

Elephas maximus sinhaleyus

Extinct - 1970s

Why is it Called "Red"?

The color **red** usually means danger. For example, a red traffic light tells us to stop.

In the same way, the **Red Data Book** uses red to show that some animals and plants are in danger. It reminds us to take action quickly before it is too late.



Who Makes the Red Data Book?

The Red Data Book is created by scientists and organizations that study nature.

One of the main organizations is the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). They collect information from all over the world.

In Sri Lanka, scientists also study animals and plants and help update the list.



Categories in the Red Data Book

The **Red Data Book** does not just list species. It also shows how much danger they are in. Scientists group species into different categories to explain their risk level.

Some important categories are:

- **Extinct (EX)** - No living individuals remain.
Example: Some frog species in Sri Lanka have already disappeared.
- **Critically Endangered (CR)** - Extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.
Example: Red Slender Loris
- **Endangered (EN)** - Very close to extinction if we do not protect them.
Example: Sri Lankan Leopard
- **Vulnerable (VU)** - At risk of becoming endangered in the future.
Example: Sri Lankan Elephant
- **Near Threatened (NT)** - Not in immediate danger, but may become threatened soon.
Example: Fishing Cat

These categories help scientists and people understand how serious the problem is and what actions are needed to protect these species.

Animals in Sri Lanka's Red Data Book

Sri Lanka is rich in wildlife, but many animals are in danger.

Some examples are:

- Sri Lankan Elephant - losing forests and facing human conflict
- Sri Lankan Leopard - threatened by habitat loss
- Purple-faced Langur - losing trees in forests
- Fishing Cat - wetland destruction
- Red Slender Loris - very rare and sensitive
- Nillu Rat - only found in Sri Lanka
- Jungle Shrew - a small insect-eating mammal
- Blue Whale - lives in Sri Lankan oceans
- Freshwater crabs - many species are threatened

Plants in Sri Lanka's Red Data Book

Not only animals, but many plants are also in danger.

Examples include:

- **Kokun** (*Kokoona zeylanica*) - a rare medicinal tree
- **Hora tree species** (*Stemonoporus* spp.) - found only in Sri Lanka

Some plants grow only in small forest areas and are disappearing due to deforestation.

Critically Endangered plants include:

- *Stemonoporus lanceolatus* - found only in one place
- *Stemonoporus gracilis* - very rare forest tree
- *Stemonoporus laevifolius* - lives in Sinharaja forest

Why Are Species in Danger?

There are many reasons why animals and plants become endangered:

- Cutting down forests
- Pollution
- Hunting and poaching
- Climate change
- Expanding cities

Humans are the main cause, but we can also be the solution.



Why Should We Protect Them?

Every animal and plant has a role in nature:

- Trees give oxygen and food
- Animals help spread seeds
- Predators keep populations balanced

If we lose species, nature becomes unbalanced and ecosystems may collapse.

What Can Students Do?

Even as students, we can help!

- Plant trees
- Protect animals
- Reduce plastic
- Save water
- Learn about wildlife
- Tell others about endangered species

Small actions can make a big difference.

Our Responsibility

The Red Data Book is like a message from nature:

"Please protect us before it is too late."

Sri Lanka is a beautiful country with many unique animals and plants.

We must protect them for future generations. Let us all work together to save our planet!

Afterword

With the approval of the Ministry of Education, this research-based project has empowered thousands of student authors for over ten years. Educationists recognize it as a program that significantly enhances the quality of school education.

In alignment with modern educational reforms, encouraging students to author a research work is a milestone in this journey. In this digital age of "Smart" technology, the modern school must demonstrate through research that books and technology should be used together. This is because the unique joy a child receives from a book cannot be replaced by anything else.

To prevent children from drifting away from books—which remain our primary educational tool and storehouse of human knowledge—Mahamaya Girls' College has spearheaded the "Hemamala Upahara" project for many years. Its primary objectives are to foster academic discipline, promote values, and pay tribute to Princess Hemamala, who fulfilled a historic mission to empower women.

We express our gratitude to the Principal, teachers, parents, alumni of Mahamaya Girls' College, representatives of other schools, the Diyawadana Nilame, and the staff of the Sri Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic) for their support.

Seneviratne Mahalekam

(Project Creator)



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