



TRADITIONAL KITHUL JAGGARY : VALUE ADDITION WITH SRI LANKA SPICES

A.M. Bandara

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SRI LANKA SPICES***

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*I will Offer
this Book to all
my teachers
who were always
behind me.*



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.

Introduction

Now a days global travel industry seeks authentic and unique experiences and tourism has been a major source of foreign income for Sri Lanka. Therefore, my project, "Traditional Food Recipes; How does it can be Used as a road to develop tourism in Sri Lanka?" aims to bridge the gap between traditional food processing arts with value addition by modern and creative methods.

My interest was focused on Kithul-related products as I have witnessed those food-making processes in my grandmother's village. She is from a small and beautiful village known as Katu-Kithula which was located in Kothmale, Nuwara Eliya district. The name of the village was due to the habitats of many Kithul trees in the good old days and people were used to do traditional Kithul farming and production of Honey, Jaggery, Kithul flour and toddy from the plants.

I searched for more information about the Kithul tree on the internet and saw several videos on YouTube related to the process of the Kithul flower, extraction of nectar, making honey and finally the traditional way of making Kithul Jaggery. I learned many things from the people in my grandmother's village about this Kithul-related production and their secrets. I used that knowledge to make some value additions to Kithul Jaggery's thinking going beyond the traditional ways.



1. Kithul tree

This is a solitary-trunked tree that can measure 18 meters (59 feet) in height and up to 30 centimeters (12 inches) wide (Fig. 1,2,3). The scientific name of the tree is *Caryota urens* and it is a species of flowering plant in the palm family, native to Sri Lanka, India, Myanmar, and Malaysia. This species is called Kithul (කිතුල්) in Sri Lanka. It is best known as the source of Kithul treacle, a liquid jaggery. The sap of the tree is boiled for many hours until it turns into the thick, dark treacle, unique to Sri Lanka. Kithul treacle is used as a sweetener in both Sri Lankan and Western cooking .



Fig. 1 Kithul Plant



Fig. 2 Kithul Tree



Fig. 3 Mature Kithul Flower

Process of Kithul Jaggery making.

I would like to describe how I made this whole process in three steps. Firstly, the process of making Kithul honey from Kithul nectar. Secondly, the process of Kithul Jaggery making process from Kithul honey. Finally, the process of value addition to Kithul Jaggery by adding various spices by myself. I selected the following spices which include **Cinnamon, Cardamom, Cummins, and Clove**. My grandmother is from Kothmale village which is one of the main places where traditional Kithul products are made. I took her help in this process as an expert to get her knowledge on these projects.

1. Process of making Kithul Honey from Kithul nectar

Kithul nectar is drained from processed Kithul flowers and collected in containers that are fixed to those flowers overnight. In the morning village men collect these pots from the trees. (Fig. 4,5)

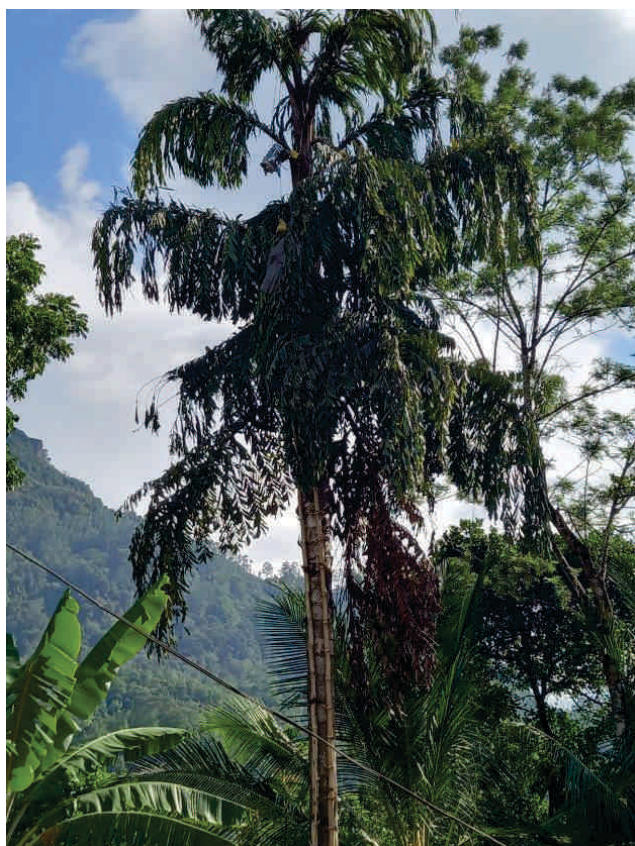


Fig. 4 Pots on the Kithul tree



Fig. 5 Kithul nectar pot

The collected nectar is boiled slowly over time to make Kithul honey. This should be done very gently over a few hours and my grandmother did it for me. After a few hours of boiling, a light brown-colored honey was made. (Fig. 6,7,8)

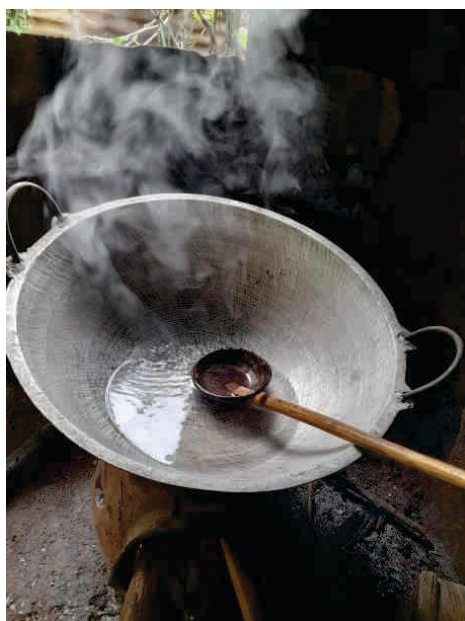


Fig. 6 Boling nectar



Fig. 7 Boling honey



Fig. 8 Honey in a bottle

2. Process of making Kithul Jaggery from Kithul honey

The next day my grandmother took the bottle of honey and poured it into a boiling pot. Then she slowly boiled the honey very patiently and looked to change the texture. After a few hours of slow boiling, the honey becomes thicker and ready to make Jaggery. (Fig. 9,10)



Fig. 9 Boling honey

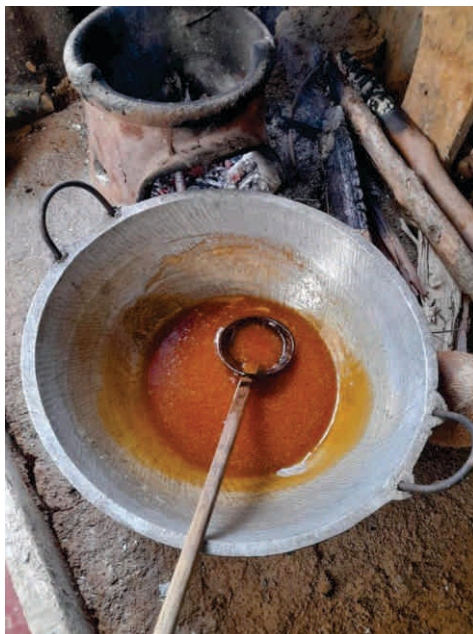


Fig. 10 Thick Jaggery pulp

3. The process of value addition to Kithul Jaggery by adding various spices.

Traditionally we stop from the step of making jaggery by Kithul honey and store it in coconut shells. However, I thought of adding some extra taste to this Jaggey by adding various Sri Lankan spices. I selected Cinnamon, Cardamom, Cummins, and Clove to be added at the time of poring these jaggery into small containers made of Jack leaves. (Fig.11, 12,13)



Fig. 11 Poring jaggery pulp into containers



Fig. 12 Mixing with Cinnamon

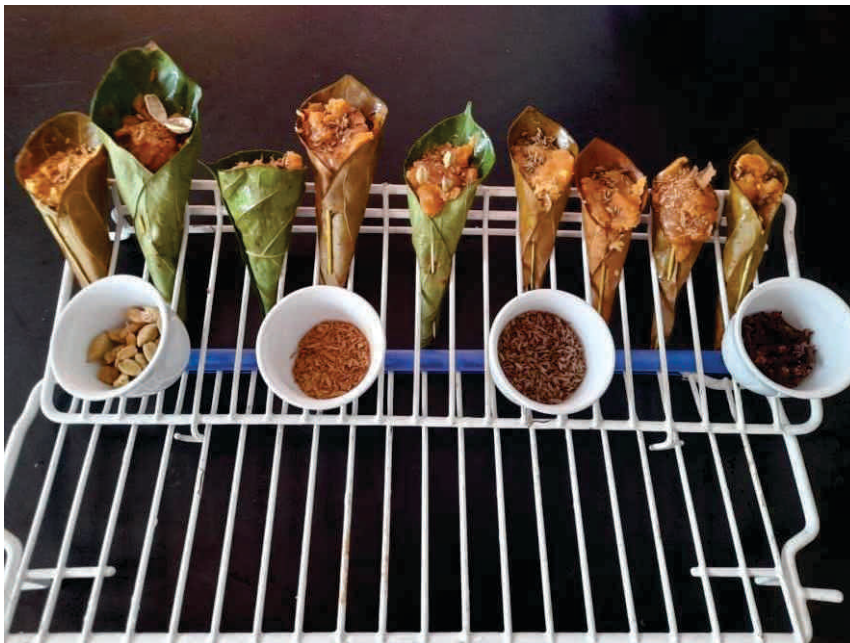


Fig. 13 Jaggery mixed with Cardamom, Cinnamon, Cummins, and Clove respectively

Packing methods

Generally, Kithul jaggery is poured into a coconut shell. So I thought to change the traditional way and use some different creative containers that can accommodate small portions of Kithul jaggery. Initially, I tried to make a container with Kithul leaves by itself. However, it was difficult to make the container as Kithul leaves are not strong enough for that purpose. (Fig.14)



Fig. 14 Failed attempts of containers made by Kithul leaves

Because of that, I tried it with jack leaves with a coconut stick as follows and it was successful.



Though these containers are adequate for place Kithul Jaggery, it might not be smart enough to send their products to some of the far away countries. Therefore, I have looked for some of the used wedding cake boxes from my relatives' houses and looked for their suitability for the above purpose. (Fig.15)



Fig.15 Possible ways of packing using commercially available containers for export



Serving methods

I have planned out different attractive ways of these modified Kithul jaggery products for the customers. I have used tea leaves to decorate Ceylon cup of tea, coffee leaves to decorate Ceylon black coffee, and Nilkatarolu flowers and leaves to decorate one of the infusions made from Nil Katarolu. Finally, I made a lime juice which was further colored with Nil Katarolu extract which gave an amazing color combination to the lime juice. Here, I would like to introduce a new concept in the presentation of traditional Kithul jaggery in a different manner to the customers, especially the tourists who come to Sir Lanka searching for authentic flavours. (Fig 16,17,18,19)



Fig. 16 Cinnamon Jagger with Ceylon Tea



Fig. 17 Cardamom Jaggery with Black Coffee



Fig. 18 Cummin Jaggery with Nil Katarolu Infusion



*Fig.19 Colve Jaggery with Lime Juice
decorated with Nil Katarolu extract*



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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