
A Literature Review on Gruel Preparation Used in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Gruel is an ancient traditional food preparation commonly used in Sri Lanka. Mainly liquid part is water or medicinal based liquid and as cereals rice, millet or any other legume is used. It has rich variation with the region and purpose of use. This preparation demonstrates the huge knowledge of using medicinal plants in health protection and as medicine for diseases. There are certain lacunas on published data on Sri Lankan gruel preparations. Hence this study was designed to fill the gap by collecting information of Sri Lankan Gruel preparations. Aims of this study is to explore the historical evolution, cultural relevance, and nutritional and medicinal values of gruel preparations in Sri Lanka. Hand search was done on collect details from in scripts, Ola leave books, and books related to traditional medical system, Buddhist history and common history related to Sri Lanka to prove the inheriting value of gruel. Data on gruel being reported from 1st century BC in archeology and literature sources, reveals this gruel system is used broadly under the buddies' culture, food culture and traditional medical system. Gruel is a prescribed food for monks, nutritional supplement for the body according to the age, health condition to improve immunity, boosting health, cure diseases, as *Sansarjana Karma* after *Vireka* or *Vamana* treatments, improves the immunity to prevent communicable diseases as well as the purpose of prevention non communicable diseases. The gruel system in Sri Lanka is deeply rooted into traditional medical system and the Buddhist food culture. As nutraceutical which has food and medicinal value it highlights the importance of preserving and studding about this gruel system in Sri Lanka.

Key words: Buddhist culture, gruel preparations, Sri Lanka, Traditional medical system

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Introduction

Gruel is cereal based liquid to semisolid food product specially used in traditionally within Sri Lanka. Normally liquid part is water or medicinal based liquid and as cereals rice, millet or any other legume is used. It is a well-known meal and medication among Asians. It has rich variation with the region and purpose of use (Srishan,2023). At the past Sri Lankan also used to take gruel as a morning drink (Silva,2009). The use of gruel reflects dietary habits and medicinal practice of the time where grains were staple and herbal remedies were utilized for various ailments (Mihiranie,2020).

Gruels have properties of easily digestible, highly nutritious, delicacy, cost effective, easy to prepare and medicinal value. Due to its soft texture and nutritional value commonly consumed by the infants, the elderly and individuals recover from illness.

According to "*Bojana sangrahaya*" In ancient people in Sri Lanka dislike to even say that they are unhealthy. So, they used to take medicated gruels to protect their body from diseases (Wikramarachchi,2003).

Gruels are the preparations which can be called as "nutraceuticals." Dr.

Stephan De Felice coined this term in 1989 and defined as "a food (or part of food) that provides medicinal or health benefits including the prevention and /or treatment of disease.

Commonly used cereals are rice, sago, finger millet, millet. They are rich in complex carbohydrates, fiber, vitamins and minerals providing essential nutrients for the body (Dalupotha,2020). The importance of plant-based diets are emphasized by the recent global health perspectives. According to the World Health Organization's Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (NCD's), the inclusion of plant-derived foods is crucial for reducing the risk of chronic conditions such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and cancer (WHO,2020). The mortality associated with NCD's can significantly reduce by the plant-based diet according to the epidemiological studies (Kim,2021) (Thompson,2023).

There is evidence use of numbers of gruel preparation by Sri Lankan community in ancient days. The knowledge of gruels remains scattered across ancient traditional medical texts, Buddhist manuscripts, inscriptions, and ethnographic reports. Systematically review these sources

to realize the historical context, methods of preparation, composition, and health benefits of traditional gruel are needed. While promoting sustainable food practice and health and preserving intangible cultural heritage, documenting this knowledge takes an important place.

The present study aims to explore the historical evolution, cultural relevance, and nutritional and medicinal values of gruel in Sri Lanka. It also seeks to highlight their potential to contribute to modern functional food development and disease prevention.

Methodology

Comprehensive literature review was conducted through details collected from in scripts, Ola leave books, and books related to ancient Sri Lankan food culture, traditional medical system and Sri Lankan Buddhist history. Data was mainly collected from *Thalpathe Piliyam* book series, *Swadesheeya Baisajya Vishwa Kosha*, *Bhojana Sangraha*, *Desheeya Chikithsa Sangraha*, *Saddharmalankaraya*, *saddharma rathnavaliya*. As this was data gathered from historical sources, hand search was the main method used. Data was collected by the main author with the knowledge

in the capacity of government Ayurveda medical practitioner.

Collected data was compiled, analyzed and presented in meaningful manner to highlight the historical evolution, cultural relevance, nutritional and medicinal values of gruel.

Results and Discussion

1. Definitions on gruel

Gruel (*Yāgu/Kenda*) is traditionally defined as a semi-solid dietary preparation made by cooking rice, other grains, or their flour with water or milk. The term also refers to the liquid obtained after cooking and filtering rice. In traditional Sri Lankan practice, gruel is further prepared by combining rice or roasted paddy (*Pori*) with medicinal plants, coconut milk, or other therapeutic ingredients, thereby serving both nutritional and medicinal purposes (Wijethunga, 1982).

2. Synonyms for gruel used in Sri Lankan literature

'Gruel' is word used in English language. In Sri Lanka popular used word for Gruel is "*Kenda*" (Ghannavimala,1959), (Kannangera,1984) (Malalasekara,2011). Depending on the recipe and the ingredients,

certain prefix was added; e.g. *Kola Kenda*, *Kiri Kenda* etc. In ancient Sri Lankan documents certain names being used for the Grueling preparations. Which gives several meanings.

Several terms have historically been used in Sri Lanka to refer to gruel. The term *Yāgu* is mentioned in *Kadthba vitharana* and *Bodivansha Geta Padaya*, where *Yāgupāna* denotes the consumption of gruel, while *Yāgu Bhājaka* refers to a person responsible for serving gruel among monks (Senadeera, 2008; Yapa, 2000). *Yāvagu* refers to a type of gruel, also known as *Huluken* or *Lunu Kenda*, prepared using six times the quantity of water relative to rice (Ghannavimala, 1959). Other synonymous terms recorded in literary and historical sources include *Hambu*, *Huluken*, *Tharal*, *Peya*, and *Amu* (Ghannavimala,

1959; Kannangara, 1982; Perera, 2010; Thompson, 2023). These terms reflect the diverse linguistic and cultural traditions associated with gruel in Sri Lankan society.

The synonyms of the gruel are derived from certain languages, religion and cultures. The words '*Yagu*' and '*Yavagu*' has come to *Sinhala* from *Pali* Language specially through the Buddhism. The *Sinhala* dictionaries give the meaning of *Yagu* and *Yavagu* as '*Kenda*' which is the *Sinhala* word for gruel (Ghannavimala, 1959). Further *Peya*, *Tharal* are of Sanskrit derivatives which are still in use in Ayurveda texts. It shows gruel being used by both Buddhist and Hindu people in ancient Sri Lanka. Further it being a food preparation used by Indian society from the days back in *Samhita* period.

3. Historical evidence on Gruel preparations

Table 1- Historical references relevant to gruel in Sri Lanka.

Time duration	Reference	Description
2 nd century BC	<i>Saddharmalankaraya</i>	<i>Sulugulu Yavagu</i> (Rev Prngghaloka, 2012) gruel prepared with 11 spicy ingredients for <i>Maliyadeva Thero</i> (<i>Sulugulu Upasak</i>); also known as <i>Ekadasa Yavagu</i> (Damayanthi, 2017).

1 st Century BC	<i>Tripitakaya</i>	Gruel (<i>Yavagu</i>) prescribed by Lord Buddha with 10 benefits: <i>Ayusha</i> (longevity), <i>Varna</i> (complexion), <i>Sepa</i> (health), <i>Bala</i> (strength), <i>Pragnana</i> (intelligence), relief from hunger/thirst, <i>Vatanulomana</i> (carminative), <i>Vastishodhaka</i> (urinary cleansing), and digestive properties. Gruel (<i>Yavagu</i>) has been a common food preparation among the Buddhist monks (Rev.Dammakusala,1957). <i>Thekatula Yaguva</i> (sesame, rice/mung bean, ghee, jaggery, sugar cane, bee's honey) indicated for <i>Udara Shoola</i> (abdominal pain) (Lankananda,1981). Monks contemporaneously with Lord Buddha consumed gruel routinely (Perera,2010). Lord Buddha himself prescribed the liquid filtrate of rice gruel and heated green gram, with following <i>Virechana Karma</i> (medical purgation) (Rev.Dammakusala,1957). The <i>Yagudayaka Sthaviravadanaya</i> (<i>Surta Pitakaya, Buddhaka Nikaya, Apadana paliya</i>, Vol.II), the meritorious offering of gruel to monks was believed to result in rebirth in <i>Tusita</i> heaven and the attainment of <i>Nibbana</i> (Perera, 2010).
398 – 426 AC	<i>Sarartha Sangrahaya</i>	Multiple gruel recipes documented by the king <i>Buddhadasa</i> (Kumarathunga,1987).

3 rd century BCE - 11 th century BCE	<i>Maharatmale</i> rock inscription	References of “ <i>Payasa</i> ” (cooked rice) and “ <i>Yavagu</i> ” (gruel) (Kumari,2010).
	<i>Thonigala</i> <i>Parvata Lipi</i>	“ <i>Payasa</i> ” and “ <i>Yavagu</i> ” (Kumari,2010).
3 rd century BC to 11 th century CE	Anuradhapura <i>Kudamvila</i> rock inscription	Documented preparation and consumption of gruel. (Kumari,2010).
3 rd century CE	<i>Mihinthale</i> ancient Ayurveda hospital archeology site	The term “ <i>Hambo bath</i> ” indicates the consumption of both gruel and rice. Archaeological evidence from <i>Mihintale</i> includes large stone vessels (<i>Kenda Oru</i>) used for communal gruel storage, one of which remains near the <i>Mahapali Dangeya</i> . An inscription from the same site references a designated officer; <i>Yavagu Bhajaka</i> , responsible for gruel distribution (Yapa, 2000)
10 th century	Inscriptions found in Anuradhapura archaeological site	Large stone troughs, known as “Gruel Boats” (<i>Kenda Oru</i>) These troughs were used to distribute gruel in large quantities. (Kumari,2010).
1055 to 1110 CE	<i>Mahavamsa</i>	King Vijayabahu, I distributed alms, including gruel, to the people.
13 th Century	<i>Saddharma</i> <i>Rathnavaliya</i>	“ <i>Kirikenda</i> ” is a gruel preparation made using rice and coconut milk (Srishan,2023).

	Buddhist Cultural Center 2004	The <i>Mahavamsa</i> records that porridge (<i>Kirikenda</i>) was offered to the monks during the <i>Anuradhapura</i> period (Srishan,2023).
15 th Century	<i>Saddharmalankaraya</i>	The book notes that it was common at that time to consume a special porridge shortly before the main meal to increase appetite (Srishan, 2023).
1770 AC 1 st Ed. 2012, 2 nd Ed.	<i>Yogadharanaya</i>	A gruel made from 50 g of dried ginger and coriander and 10 g of <i>Sahidalunu</i> (rock salt) was prescribed as a remedy for fever after <i>Langana</i> (fasting) (Juvan,1770).
13 th century	<i>Prayoga Rathnavaliya</i>	The preparation of a medicinal gruel for <i>Prameha</i> (a urinary disorder) using a decoction of <i>Kohila</i> rhizome (<i>Lasia spinosa</i>). The rhizome was boiled in 16 parts water and reduced to 4 parts, after which the resulting decoction was used to prepare a gruel with rice, green gram, and milk.
1872 AC	<i>Yogamukthaharaya</i>	A gruel was recommended for consumption at the onset of fever (Yogamukthaharaya,1770).
1892 AC	<i>Bhaisajya Sangrahava</i>	<i>Laja Peyava</i> for gruel (Perera,1892).
1893 AC	<i>Aushada Mukthaharaya</i>	The properties of rice gruel and its liquid component (Ponseka,1892).
1896 AC	<i>Rahas Aushada chinthamani</i>	Indications of rice gruel (Wikramasingha,1886).
1898 AC		" <i>Ulukan</i> " and " <i>Huluken</i> ": a gruel traditionally used for dysmenorrhea (Randunu,1898).

1930 AC	<i>Yogarathnakara</i>	For fever gruel prepared with ginger and root of <i>Bebila</i> . For gynecological disorders the gruel prepared with <i>Mudupala</i> (Randunu,1898).
1916 AC	<i>Prayoga Samuchchaya</i>	Gruel consumption in fever (Arachchi,1916).
1934 AC	<i>Yoga kauthukaya</i>	Gruel for emaciation and asthma (Premachandra,1934).
1943 AC	<i>Baisajyarathana Sangrahaya</i>	Gruel suitable for <i>Ama</i> (indigestion) and during pregnancy (Mudiyanse, 1943).
1948 AC	<i>Prayoga Rathnavaliya</i>	Gruel for <i>Kapaja Prameha</i>
1954 AC	<i>Ehelepola Adikaram Tumage Athvedapota</i>	A medicinal gruel was prepared using one handful each of the leaves of <i>Olinda</i> (<i>Abrus precatorius</i>), <i>Siyabala</i> (<i>Tamarindus indica</i>), <i>Ehela</i> (<i>Cassia fistula</i>), <i>Rasakinda</i> (<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>). The leaves were ground together and boiled with two <i>Nelli</i> (<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>) (approximately 960 ml) of water until the volume was reduced to <i>Pata</i> (approximately 240ml). The decoction was then filtered, after which rice flour was prepared from one handful of rice and one <i>Pata</i> (240 ml) of milk were added. Finally, four <i>Palam</i> (approximately 240 g) of sugar was incorporated. This gruel was prescribed as a <i>Virechana</i> (therapeutic purgation) preparation for the treatment of constipation (Adikaram, 1954).
1970 AC, 3 rd Ed.	<i>Vaidyaka Hasthasaraya or</i>	A medicinal gruel was prepared using the decoction of the roots of <i>Bebila</i> (<i>Sida cordifolia</i>) and the stem

	<i>Sinhala Atvedapota</i>	scrapings of <i>Velpenela</i> (<i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i>). This preparation was prescribed for the treatment of all types of hernia (Vaidya Hasthasaraya, 1970).
1961 AC	<i>Deshiya Asvedakama</i>	A medicinal gruel prepared with mung beans (<i>Vigna radiata</i>) and red onion (<i>Allium cepa</i> var. <i>aggregatum</i>) was prescribed for the treatment of yellow discoloration of the sclera (jaundice) (Gunasena, 1961). A gruel prepared with <i>Yakinaran</i> (<i>Atalantia ceylanica</i>) was prescribed for the treatment of fever, hepatomegaly, and swellings (Gunasena, 1961).
1963 AC	<i>Swadeheeya Baisajya Vishwakoshaya</i>	The gruel prepared with rice <i>Heenati</i> (a traditional rice variety) and the juice of leaves, root, bark, flowers, and fruit of the <i>Yakinaran</i> plant (<i>Atalantia ceylanica</i>) (Somasiri, 1963).
1971 AC	<i>Slipada Chikithsavahevat h Barava Prathikara.</i>	The gruel prepared with the leaves of <i>Kuppameniya</i> (<i>Acalypha indica</i>), <i>Thora</i> (<i>Senna tora</i>), <i>Velpenela</i> (<i>Cardio spermum halicacabum</i>), <i>Ela Katarolu</i> (<i>Clitoria ternatea</i>), <i>Ranavara</i> (<i>Senna auriculata</i>), <i>Niramulliya</i> (<i>Hygrophila auriculata</i>), <i>Polpala</i> (<i>Aerva lanata</i>), <i>Elabatu</i> (<i>Solanum melongena</i>), <i>Velthibbatu</i> (<i>Solanum trilobatum</i>), <i>Bebila</i> (<i>Sida cordifolia</i>) was used for filariasis (Gunasekara, 1971).
1987 AC	<i>Piyusharnava</i>	The gruel prepared with <i>Asvenna</i> (<i>Alysicarpus vaginalis</i>), <i>Polpala</i> (<i>Aerva lanata</i>), <i>Elabatu</i> (<i>Solanum melongena</i>), <i>Katuvelbatu</i> (<i>Solanum virginianum</i>), <i>Gokatu</i> (<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>) and <i>Olida</i> (<i>Abrus</i>

		<i>precatorius</i>) was used for heart diseases (Kannangera,1987).
2001	<i>Visaveda Muthuhara</i>	The gruel prepared with <i>Thanahal (Setaria italica)</i> and the flowers of <i>Indi (Phoenix pusilla)</i> , <i>Thal (Borassus flabellife)</i> , <i>pol (Cocos nucifera)</i> , <i>Kithul (Caryota urens)</i> which are in the capsule (before come out of) and <i>Indi, Kithul, Thal, Pol "Bada"</i> (growing part inside the stem of the tree) without salt, used for snake bite. (<i>Polon Visha</i>) (Liyanarachchi,2001).
2001	<i>Sri Lanka Desheeya Chikithsa Samgrahaya</i>	The gruel prepared with the leaves of <i>Heen Bovitiya (Osbecakia octandra)</i> was used as a liver protectant. (Kumarasingha,2001).
2003.	<i>Bhagna Chikithsa Hewath Purana Handi Veda pota</i>	The filtered portion of the gruel prepared with the bark of juice <i>Gambiriya (Gmelina arborea)</i> , and <i>Thanahal (Setaria italica)</i> was used for internal hemorrhage and pain resulting from a fall from a tree (Rev.Girimananda,2003).

Literary sources, archaeological findings, and other historical evidence clearly demonstrate that the use of gruel has been incorporated into Sri Lankan food and medical traditions since at least the 1st century BC. This long-standing continuity provides strong evidence for the sustained use of this dietary formulation over several centuries, extending uninterrupted to the present day. Initially, gruel functioned primarily

as a basic dietary and nutritional source, prepared using readily available cereals such as rice varieties and other locally cultivated grains. Early formulations occasionally included cow's milk or coconut milk, along with natural sweetening agents such as jaggery or bee's honey, enhancing both palatability and nutritive value.

Over time, the functional role of gruel evolved beyond basic

nourishment, acquiring distinct medicinal significance within traditional medical practices. As therapeutic knowledge expanded, gruel formulations were adapted to address specific disease conditions through the incorporation of medicinal herbs, spices, and plant-based ingredients selected according to the nature of the ailment. These medicinal gruels were prepared in alignment with

4. Common indications of gruel

traditional diagnostic principles and were used both as supportive dietary therapy and as primary therapeutic interventions. This gradual transformation from a simple dietary preparation to a targeted medicinal formulation highlights the dynamic integration of food and medicine in Sri Lanka's traditional healthcare system (table 1).

Table 2- Different purposes and indications of gruel

Purpose of using gruels	Example
To increase immunity	A porridge which is prepared using <i>Monarakudumbiya</i> plants (<i>Cyanthillium cinereum</i>), leaves of 'Mussaenda' (<i>Mussaenda frondosa</i>), and <i>Kokmota</i> (<i>Eriocaulon ceylanicum</i>) is prescribed by traditional practitioners (Srishan,2023).
To detoxify the body	Wood apple (<i>Limonia acidissima</i>) leaves porridge (<i>Divul kola kenda</i>) Purple Fruited Pea Egg Plant's (<i>Solanum trilobatum</i>) leaves porridge (<i>wel tibbatu kola kenda</i>) and yellow cheese wood (<i>Nauclea orientalis</i>) leaves porridge (<i>Bakini kola kenda</i>) are also given to destroy toxins in the blood (Srishan,2023).
Nourish the body	Gruel of <i>Kurakkan</i> (<i>Eleusine corocana</i> L) (Kumari,2020).
Nourish pregnant mothers	Gruel prepared with <i>Undu</i> (<i>Vigna mungo</i>) and addition of several medicinal plants (Obeysekara,1981).

“ <i>Bada nivena kenda</i> ” which is used to reduce the excessive heat in stomach, intestine and rectal area and prevent pills.	Gruels of <i>Alukesek ala</i> (<i>Musa paradisiaca</i> rhizome)/ <i>Gotukola</i> (<i>Centella asiatica</i>) / <i>Rathulunu</i> (<i>Allium cepa</i>)/ <i>Kohila ala</i> (<i>Lasia spinosa</i> rhizome) / <i>Siyabela kola</i> (<i>Tamarindus indica</i>) / <i>Ehela kola</i> (<i>Cassia fistula</i>) / roots of <i>Hathavariya</i> (<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>)/ leaves of <i>Hathavariya</i> (<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>) grind with coconut and take juice and prepare a gruel and take with bee honey or Juggery of <i>Kithul</i> (<i>Caryota urens</i>) (Perera,2010) (Wickramarachchi, 2003).
Reduce the acidity of urine and purification of urine.	The gruel prepared rice red <i>kekulu</i> with grinded juice of leaves of <i>Penera</i> (<i>Cardiospermam halicabam</i>)/ <i>Polpala</i> (<i>Aerva lanata</i>) / <i>Karalheba</i> (<i>Achyranthes aspera</i>) / <i>Rasakinda</i> (<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>) and red onion (<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>) with coconut. (Wickramarachchi, 2003).
Purification of blood	The gruel was prepared with <i>Lunuvila</i> (<i>Bacopa monnieri</i>), <i>Gotukola</i> (<i>Centella asiatica</i>), <i>Iramusu</i> (<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>) (Wickramarachchi, 2003).

Gruel being used by the Sri Lankan society for prevent and control common health conditions. That is not directly indicated as dietary supplements rather than medicinal recipes. Those health claims are

identified according to the Sri Lankan Traditional Medicine knowledge which was the popular medicine system in ancient Sri Lanka (Table 2).

Table 3 - Categorization of gruel mentioned in 22 book series of *Thalpate Piliyam*

Health issue	No. of recipes	Health issue	No. of recipes
Snake poisoning	73	Post natal period disorders	06
Diarrhea	27	Improve eye site	05
Indigestion	23	Thirst (<i>Thrushna</i>)	05
Tumors (<i>Granthi Arbuda</i>)	18	Piles and constipation	04

Disorders in pregnancy	12	Hernia (<i>Anda vruddhi</i>)	03
Fever	11	Liver disorders (<i>Pandu kamala</i>)	03
Epilepsy (<i>Sanni Roga</i>)	10	All types of poisoning	03
Swellings (<i>Shotha</i>)	10	Wounds	03
Cough	09	IBS (<i>Grahanī</i>)	02
Excessive urination (<i>Prameha</i>)	08	Anal fissures (<i>Parikarthika</i>)	01
Asthma	07	Hiccough	01
Dysuria	07	Ascites (<i>Udara</i>)	01
Vomiting	07	Moving circular thing in woman's abdomen (<i>Gulma</i>)	01
Nerves system abnormalities (<i>Vataroga</i>)	06	Burning sensation (<i>Rat pith daha</i>)	01
Skin disorders	06	Disorders of the head	01

Uses of gruel as medicine seems as common among countries. Number of recipes are included for almost all health conditions. It being clear Sri Lankan traditional medicine

treatment protocols include not only medicines and treatment procedures but also dietary advisers specific to the disease conditions.

1. Ingredients used in gruel preparations

Table 4 - Common ingredients which use to prepare gruel according to *Thalpate Piliyam*

Type of grains	Liquid	Form of Medicines	Salt	Anupana
Rice <i>Heenati</i>	Water	Juice	With salt	With <i>Anupana</i>
<i>Tana hal</i>	Juice or <i>Swarasa</i>	Decoction	Without salt	Without <i>Anupana</i>
<i>Tanahal</i>	Decoction	Powder		
<i>Vi pori</i>	<i>Kadi</i>	<i>Kalka</i>		

<i>Mun eta</i>	+/- coconut milk	Swarasa powder	+		
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Use of varieties of *Heenati* rice (*Kalu Heenati*, *Sudu Heenati*, *Goda Heenati*, *Weda Heenati* etc.), a traditional variety of rice on gruel recipes are valued for their nutritional and medicinal qualities. Most of these recipes included these varieties by considering the medicinal importance as *Thalpathe Piliyam*

book series is a collection of Ola leaves which being written on Sri Lankan traditional medicine recipes. Intended specific medicinal property is incorporated in the form of Decoction, powder or past form. *Anupana* being used for further adding value.

Table 5 - Collection of gruel recipes of different preparation methods

Method of preparation	Example
Twelve <i>Kalan</i> (12x5g) of ingredients, added to four parts of water, and heated until reduced to one part, and a fistful of rice added to the decoction to prepare the gruel.	<i>Aralu</i> (<i>Terminalia chebula</i>), <i>Belimul</i> (<i>Aegle marmelos</i>), <i>Thippilimul</i> (<i>Piper longum</i>) indigestion and flatulence (Talpathe Piliyam Vol. 4,1992).
Twelve <i>Kalan</i> (12x5g) of ingredients added to one <i>Nelli</i> (960ml) of water, and heated, then one <i>Pata</i> (60 g) of <i>Vilada</i> added to prepare the gruel.	The gruel prepared with <i>Iriveriya</i> (<i>Plectranthus zeylanicus</i>), roots of <i>Sevvenna</i> (<i>Chrysopogon zizanioides</i>) and <i>Beli</i> (<i>Aegle marmelos</i>) (Talpathe Piliyam Vol. 8,1993).
Five <i>Kalan</i> (5g x3) of each herb added to four <i>Nelli</i> (960mlx 4) of water, heated until reduced to one <i>Nelli</i> , filtered, and the gruel prepared and administered with <i>Deekiri Moru</i> .	The gruel prepared with the root of <i>Thovella</i> (<i>Trichadenia zeylanica</i>), root of <i>Demata</i> (<i>Gmelina arborea</i>), and <i>Shata Patra</i> (<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i>) (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 9, 1993).

Six <i>Kalan</i> of ingredients ground into fine powder, added to two <i>Nelli</i> (960 ml × 2) of water, heated until reduced to one <i>Pata</i> (240 ml), filtered, and ¼ <i>Kalan</i> each of <i>Bedihal</i> powder (roasted rice) and <i>Kaluduru</i> powder added as <i>Prativapa</i> .	The gruel prepared with root of <i>Beli</i> (<i>Aegle marmelos</i>), root of <i>Bebila</i> (<i>Sida cordifolia</i>), dried <i>Siddhiguru</i> (<i>Singiber officinale</i>), <i>Koththamalli</i> (<i>Coriandam sativam</i>) one and a half <i>Kalan</i> (Talpathe Piliyam Vol. 9,1993).
Twelve <i>Kalan</i> of dried herbs added to two <i>Nelli</i> (940 ml × 2) of water, heated until reduced to one <i>Pata</i> (240 ml), filtered, and ¼ <i>Kalan</i> of <i>Bedihal</i> (roasted rice) powder added.	The gruel prepared with <i>Sevandara</i> (<i>Vetiveria zizanioides</i>), <i>Belimul</i> (<i>Aegle marmelos</i>), <i>Bebilamul</i> (<i>Sida cordifolia</i>) dried <i>Siddhiguru</i> (<i>Singiber officinale</i>) <i>Kottamalli</i> (<i>Coriandam sativam</i>) take each one two <i>Kalan</i> and eight <i>Madata</i> (Talpathe Piliyam Vol. 2,1992).
Twelve <i>Kalan</i> (60 g) of dried ingredients added to two <i>Nelli</i> (960 ml × 2) of water, heated until reduced to one <i>Nelli</i> , one <i>Pata</i> of <i>Vilada</i> added and heated until reduced to one <i>Mana</i> (480 ml), filtered, and administered orally.	The gruel prepared with and decoction of <i>Savandara</i> (<i>Vetiveria zizanioides</i>), <i>Irivariya</i> (<i>Plectranthus zeylanicus</i>) root of <i>Beli</i> (<i>Aegle marmelose</i>) twelve <i>Kalan</i> (60g) added to two <i>Nelli</i> of water (960ml x 2) heated into one <i>Nelli</i> (<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>) and add one <i>Pata</i> of <i>Vilada</i> and heated until reduced to one <i>Nelli</i> , one <i>Pata</i> of <i>Vilada</i> added and heated until reduced to one <i>Mana</i> , filtered, and administered for vomiting in pregnant mothers (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 8, 1993).

Recipes of gruel preparations are mentioned in different forms. The

common fact is when gruel being prepared initially, herbs or dry

ingredients are boiled with water then rice or cereal is added and boiled till cooked. This rice is also included in different forms; raw rice, roasted rice, popped rice etc.

Table 6 - Classification of *Yavagu* according to method of preparation in *Thalpathe Piliyam*

Type of gruel	Examples	Indications
<i>Yavagu</i> prepared using <i>Kalka</i> (paste) of medicine	The gruel prepared with <i>Heenati</i> rice and ground <i>Trivarga</i> (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>), <i>Kaluduru</i> (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) <i>Thippili</i> (<i>Piper longum</i>), <i>Vilada</i> (roasted paddy), <i>Iguru</i> (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>), and <i>Asamodagam</i> (<i>Trachyspermum roxburghianum</i>).	Indigestion and stomachache (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 4, 1992); vomiting (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 8, 1993).
<i>Yavagu</i> prepared using <i>Kwatha</i> (decoction)	The gruel prepared with the decoction of <i>Kohila</i> (<i>Lasia spinosa</i>) rhizome and leaves.	<i>Prameha</i> (urinary disorder) (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 1, 1992).
	The gruel prepared with the decoction of <i>Siviya</i> (<i>Piper chuvya</i>), <i>Katukarosani</i> (<i>Picrorrhiza kurroa</i>), root of <i>Thippili</i> (<i>piper longum</i>), <i>Rathnetul</i> (<i>Plumbago indica</i>), <i>Iguru</i> (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)	Diarrhea (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 2, 1992).
<i>Yavagu</i> prepared using <i>Swarasa</i> (juice)	The gruel prepared with the juice of <i>Rasakinda</i> (<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>) creeper.	To facilitate delivery of a dead fetus (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 4, 1992).
	The gruel prepared with juice of <i>Udupiyali</i> (<i>Desmodium gangeticum</i>), <i>Thanahal</i> (<i>Setaria italica</i>), and coconut milk.	to stop vomiting (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 1, 1992).
<i>Yavagu</i> prepared using <i>Kwatha</i> + <i>Swarasa</i>	The gruel prepared with decoction of leaves of <i>Dehi</i> (<i>Citrus cordifolia</i>), leaves of <i>Dodam</i> (<i>Citrus aurantium</i>), leaves of <i>Bo</i> (<i>Ficus religiosa</i>), <i>Andarapothu</i> (<i>Andrographis paniculata</i>) with <i>Thanahal</i>	Diarrhea with indigestion (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 3, 1992).

	<i>(Setaria italica)</i> and powder of <i>Kaluduru</i> , <i>(Nigella sativa)</i> <i>Suduru</i> (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>), <i>Asamodagam</i> (<i>Trachyspermum roxburghianum</i>), <i>Karabuneti</i> , (<i>Syzygium aromaticum</i>), <i>Vasavasi</i> (<i>Myristica fragrans</i>), <i>Sadikka</i> (<i>Myristica fragrans</i>), <i>Sudulunu</i> (<i>Allium sativum</i> L.).	
<i>Yavagu</i> prepared with using <i>Swarasa</i> + <i>Choorna</i>	The gruel prepared with juice of leaves of <i>Dehi</i> (<i>Citruscordifolia</i>), leaves of <i>Dodam</i> (<i>Citrus aurantium</i>), leaves of <i>Bo</i> (<i>Ficus religiosa</i>), <i>Andarapothu</i> (<i>Andrographis paniculata</i>) with <i>Thanahal</i> (<i>Setaria italica</i>) and powder of <i>Kaluduru</i> , (<i>Nigella sativa</i>) and powder of <i>Suduru</i> (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>), <i>Asamodagam</i> (<i>Trachyspermum roxburghianum</i>), <i>Karabuneti</i> , (<i>Syzygium aromaticum</i>)	Cough and asthma (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 11, 1993).
The gruel prepared with powder of <i>Bedihal</i> (roasted rice)	The gruel prepared with root of <i>Beli</i> (<i>Aegle marmelos</i> l), root of <i>Bebila</i> (<i>Sida cordata</i>), dried <i>Siddhiguru</i> (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>), <i>Koththamalli</i> (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) one and half <i>Kalan</i> (7.5g) and ground into fine powder and added two <i>Nelli</i> (940 ml x 2) of water and heated until reduced to one <i>Pata</i> (240 ml), filtered, and $\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Kalan</i> of <i>Bedihal</i> powder (roasted rice powder) and $\frac{1}{4}$ <i>Kalan</i> of <i>Kaluduru</i> (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) powder added as <i>Prativapa</i> .	Stops vomiting (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 2, 1992).
Gruel prepared with powdered rice	The gruel prepared with powdered <i>Heenati</i> rice and juice of <i>Thiressavalu</i> (<i>Hewittia malabarica</i>) and <i>Velmee</i> (<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>), applied topically over the entire body.	To reduce edema (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 4, 1992).
	The gruel prepared with water heated with <i>Hiressa</i> (<i>Cissus quadrangularis</i>), to which castor oil, <i>Miris</i> (<i>Piper nigrum</i>), <i>Sudulunu</i> (<i>Allium sativum</i>), and <i>Perunkayan</i> (<i>Ferula assa-foetida</i>) were added.	To reduce all types of edemas (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 2, 1992).

Gruel prepared using a <i>pottani</i> (bolus) of medicine	The gruel prepared with <i>Heenati</i> rice water, with a cloth-wrapped bolus of rough powder of <i>Uluhal</i> (<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i>), <i>Koththamalli</i> (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>), <i>Duru</i> (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>), and <i>Sudulunu</i> (<i>Allium sativum</i>) immersed and dripped into it, followed by the addition of <i>Vilada</i> (roasted paddy). Finely cut leaves of <i>Penela</i> (<i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i>) were added and cooked; the preparation was then filtered and ghee added before consumption.	To increase appetite (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 2, 1992).
Gruel prepared with using <i>Kadi</i>	The gruel prepared with <i>Kadi</i> (Vinegar) heated with rough powder of bark of <i>Sirila</i> (<i>Sonerila lanceolata</i>), <i>Vagapul</i> (<i>Piper longum</i>), root of <i>Siviya</i> (<i>Piper chuvya</i>), root of <i>rathnitol</i> (<i>Plumbago indica</i> L.), <i>Siddiguru</i> , (dried <i>Zingiber officinale</i>) leaves of <i>Kindi</i> (<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>), and filtered and combined with <i>Heenati</i> rice.	<i>Idimum udara</i> (edema and ascites) (Talpathe Piliyam, Vol. 6, 1992).
Gruel prepared by frying with oil	The gruel of <i>Heenati</i> rice is prepared with a fistful of finely cut <i>Welpenela</i> (<i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i>), <i>Kohila</i> (<i>Lasia spinosa</i>), and <i>Daluva</i> (<i>Impatiens balsamina</i>). Castor oil was heated in a vessel, five finely cut garlic cloves added, and the mixture incorporated into the gruel before consumption until satiated.	Fever, flatulence, cough, vomiting, and stomachache in pregnant mothers (Yapa, 2000).

Thalpathe Piliyam, one of the leading classical book series in Sri Lanka, compiles extensive knowledge on ancient traditional medical practices originally recorded on *Ola leaf* manuscripts. This collection includes a substantial number of gruel (*Kanda*) recipes documented for

both nutritional and medicinal purposes. Medicinal value is incorporated through herbal infusion in the form of decoction, powder, juice, infused oil etc. The presence of these formulations within *Thalpathe Piliyam* highlights the importance of gruel in the traditional healthcare system of Sri

Lanka and provides valuable textual evidence for their long-standing use in disease prevention and management (table 06). But authors

could not find any relevancy on indication, ingredients with method of preparations.

Table 07 - Common varieties of Rice gruel in Sri Lanka (Kannangara,1987) (Wijethunga,1988).

Type of gruel	Method of preparation	Uses
<i>Lunukenda</i>	Prepared using rice, water and salt.	Use fever and other diseases as food.
<i>Polkiri kenda</i>	To prepare this gruel add milk of coconut to the <i>Lunukenda</i> .	Use as breakfast in villagers.
<i>Kirikenda</i>	After separation of oil part from heating coconut milk some liquid part remains. Using it and rice this gruel is prepared.	Use as breakfast.
<i>Bedihal kenda</i>	The gruel is prepared with roasted rice, water and salt.	Indigestion with watery stools.
<i>Vilada kenda</i>	The gruel prepared with “ <i>vee porry</i> ” (popped paddy)	easy to digest, used in conditions of fever, thirst, vomiting, diarrhea.
<i>Kolakenda</i>	The gruel is prepared using medicinal leaves.	Action is according to the variety which used.
<i>Ambila yavagu/ embul kenda/ embul hambu</i>	The gruel prepared with using shaver taste	To reduce the heat in the gut. (Kumarathunga,1987); (Juvan,1770).
<i>Rasaulu ken</i>	Add sweets such as ghee, honey	As tasty food (Perera,2010).
<i>Somked diya</i>	Gruel tempered with butter or ghee	As tasty food (Perera,2010).

<i>Kudu hambu</i>	The gruel is prepared with broken rice.	1 st rice meal for the infants (<i>Hambu powana mangalya</i>)
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These facts are collected from *Sinhala* encyclopedia, The book *Kendata Upan Thuru Lata* which was written by gathering published

newspaper articles written by the Sri Lankans (Mudiyanse,1943) (Adikaram,1954) (Vaidya hasthasara).

Table 8 – Compilation of herbal gruel commonly used by present Sri Lanka

Type of gruel	Description
<i>Polpala</i> plant (<i>Aerva lana</i> Linn)	Disorders of urinary system, Burning sensation of the body, white vaginal discharges. (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Ranawara</i> (<i>Cassia auriculata</i> Linn) and <i>Hatavariya</i> (<i>Asparagus racemosa</i> Wild) leaves	<i>Rakta-Vaata</i>
<i>Velpenela</i> (<i>Cardiospermum microcarpum</i>) plant	Weakness of <i>Dhatu</i> , <i>Swetha pradara</i> (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Olinda</i> (<i>Arbus pectorius</i> Linn) leave	Poisoning of blood (<i>le vishata</i>), Contution (due to fell down), liver diseases, <i>Sengamalaya</i> , heart diseases.
<i>Gotukola</i> (<i>Centella asiatica</i> Urb) plant	Good for <i>Peenasa</i>
<i>Monarakudumbiya</i> ((<i>Vernonia cinera</i> Linn) plant	Worm infections of small children. <i>Sengamalaya</i> (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Diyahabarala</i> (<i>Monochoria vaginlis</i>) and <i>Kohila</i> (<i>Lasia spinosa</i> Linn) ala.	Patients of <i>Arshas</i> (piles). Constipation (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Saw</i> , <i>Hulankeriya</i> , <i>Araluppity</i> , <i>Rulan</i> , (<i>Maranta arundinacea</i>) <i>Meneri</i> (<i>Panicum miliaceum</i>), rice <i>Heenati</i> , <i>Barly</i> (<i>Hordeum vulgare</i>), <i>Kokmota</i>	Mentioned as famous gruel.

<i>(Eriocaulon ceylanicum)</i> , <i>Mussanda(Mussaenda philippica)</i>	
<i>Sevendara(Vetivaria zizanoids</i> Linn) leaves	<i>Sengamalaya</i> (Hepatitis) (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Lunuvila</i> plant (<i>Bacopa monnieri</i>).	Diseases releted to blood. (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Niramulliya (Asteracantha longifolia</i> Linn) plant	Urinary disorders (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Elakatarolu (Clitoria ternate</i> Linn) leaves	<i>Sengamalaya</i> (Hepatitis) (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Kuppameniya (Acalypha indica</i> Linn) plant	Good for cough (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Vatake (Pandanus tectorus</i> Linn) and <i>Yakinaran (Atlantia zeylanica</i> Linn) leaves	<i>Sengamalaya</i> (Hepatitis) (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Anoda (Abutilon indicum</i> Sweet) leaves	Good for piles (Wijethunga,1982).
Bark of <i>Bo (Ficus religiosa</i> Linn)	Bleeding piles, bleeding due to snake bites (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Erabadu (Erythrina variegata</i> Linn) leaves	Good for thread worms (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Diyaberaliya (Eichhornia crassipes)</i> leaves	Urinary burning, burning sensation of the body, <i>Sengamalaya</i> (hepatitis) and Gynecological disorders (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Heen bovitiya (Osbeckia octandra)</i> leaves	<i>Sengamalaya</i> (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Heen udupiyaliya</i> plant (<i>Desmodium</i> <i>triflorum</i>)	<i>Sengamala</i> , eye disorders, poisons in the body, diarrhea, increase the strength of the body (Wijethunga,1982).

<i>Divul</i> (<i>Feronia limonia</i> Linn) leaves	Poisoning due to bite of rat, dog, cat, mongoose and crocodile (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Wel thibbotu</i> (<i>Solanum trilabatum</i> Linn) leaves	Whooping cough, cough and <i>Kasha</i> (Tuberculosis) (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Elabatu</i> (<i>Solanum surratense</i> Burm) leaves	Cough (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Hatavariya</i> (<i>Asparagus racemosa</i> Wild) leaves	<i>Rath pita</i> , excessive body heat, urinary burning, <i>somarogaya</i> , <i>Sweta pradar</i> (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Mukunuvenna</i> (<i>Alternanthera sessilis</i> Linn) plant	Eye disorders (Wijethunga,1982).
Leaves and bark of <i>Rathmal.</i> (<i>Ixora coccinea</i>)	Reduce <i>Rathpita</i> , Excessive body heat, poisons in the body (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Kithul bada</i> (<i>Caryota urens</i>)	Reduce excessive <i>Pitta</i> (Wijethunga,1982).
Leaves of <i>Ranavara</i> (<i>Cassia auriculata</i> Linn)	Reduce of burning sensation of urine, <i>Vatarakta</i> , <i>Madumeha</i> , improve the complexion of the skin (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Vishnukranthi</i> (<i>Evolvulus alsinoides</i> Linn) leaves	Poisons in the body, insomnia, excessive body heat (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Karipincha</i> (<i>Murraya koenigii</i> Spreng) leaves	Poisons in the body
<i>Rath karalsebo</i> (<i>Achyranthus aspera</i> Linn) leaves	Piles (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Kiriaguna</i> (<i>Dregea volubilis</i> Linn) leaves	Poison of Rabies (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Sudu pitavakka</i> (<i>Phyllanthus debilis</i>).	<i>Pinasata</i> , Broncheal asthma (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Kikiridiya</i> (<i>Eclipta prostate</i> Linn) leaves	Eye disorders (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Kotadimbulla</i> (<i>Ficus hispida</i> Linn) leaves	Snake bites (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Ruk aguna</i> (<i>Alangium salviifolium</i> Linn) leaves	Snake bites (Wijethunga,1982).

<i>Gonika (Psychotria sarmentosa)</i> leaves	Contusions of the body and <i>Madumeha</i> (Diabetic) (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Velkohila (Syngonium podophyllum)</i> leaves	Piles (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Hatavariya ala (Asparagus racemosa</i> Wild)	<i>Sukra meha</i> and improve <i>shukra</i> (sperms) (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Kahabiliya</i> leaves (<i>Tragia hispida</i>)	Bronchial asthma (Wijethunga,1982).
<i>Iramusu (Hemidesmus indicus</i> Linn) leaves	Urinary burning, <i>Rathpita</i> (Wijethunga,1982).

Current gruel preparations are popularly focused on herbal gruel preparations (*Kola Kenda*) which being commercialized as roadside marketing, home scale business etc. The traditional belief on its medicinal value, high nutritional properties and meal which conceded as less calories are the attractive features which make this natural preparation popular. As a tropical county which still with enough freely available plant resources throughout the year make the diversity of the recipes of herbal gruel.

Conclusion

Traditional gruel preparations are an important aspect of the Sri Lankan culinary and medicinal heritage. Evidence is found in archaeological sources, literature sources and folklore on traditional gruel preparation and gruel culture. On providing recommendations

with define and clear identity on the ingredients, preparation methods, consumption, with indigenous knowledge being incorporated in this field detailed and comprehensive. It was clear this traditional formula being used in the country even before the 1st century BC. Archaeological, literary, and historical evidence demonstrates the continuous consumption of gruel from as early as the 1st century BC to the present day. Initially, rice-based gruel predominated; however, over time, formulations expanded to include milk, natural sweeteners, medicinal herbs, and plant-based additives selected according to Ayurveda principles.

This study reveals this gruel system is deeply rooted into traditional medical system and the Buddhist food culture, is used broadly under the buddies' culture, food culture and traditional medical system.

Gruel is a prescribed food for monks, nutritional supplement for the body according to the age, health condition to improve immunity, boosting health, cure diseases, as *Sansarjana karma* or supportive measures in *Panchakarma* treatments, improves the immunity to prevent communicable diseases as well as the purpose of prevention non communicable diseases. As nutraceutical which has food and medicinal value it highlights the importance of preserving and studding about this Sri Lankan gruel preparations and its scientific values. It is also value to seeks their potential to contribute to modern functional food development and disease prevention. The findings highlight the need for further interdisciplinary research to preserve, validate, and integrate this traditional knowledge into contemporary healthcare practices.

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