



## Traditional Medicine and Hand Medicine in the Devinuwara Area in the Southern Province: A Holistic Approach to Disease Cure

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### Abstract

Traditional and hand medicine have deep roots in Sri Lanka's history and culture. Sri Lanka has a long history of indigenous medicine systems. Traditional medicine can be identified as an intangible heritage of Sri Lanka. Hand medicine, also known as "hela wedakama" in Sinhala, is a specialized branch of traditional medicine in Sri Lanka that focuses on analysing the pulse, hand shape, lines and other features of the hands to diagnose and treat illnesses. Practitioners of hand medicine believe that different points on the hand correspond to different organs and parts of the body. By examining these features, they can identify imbalances or disorders in the body and recommend appropriate treatments, such as herbal remedies, dietary changes, and therapeutic techniques. This research investigates the value of using traditional and hand medicine as a disease-cure system. The Matara district in the Southern province was home to many people skilled in medicine and "yantras," "mantras," "gurukam," and sacrificial offerings. Local Sinhala medicine is also prominent among them. Field and literature study methods were used to collect the data for research purposes. The literature study paid special attention to primary and secondary sources. "Puskola poth" about local medicine was used as a primary source. Various books, articles and magazines were used as secondary sources. In a field study, data was collected through in-depth interviews with 34 people. The sample selection was conducted through the purposive sampling method. Moreover, open-ended questions and cross-cutting questions were asked for further clarification. A field study was conducted in the Devinuwara Divisional Secretariat (DS Code: - 3245) of the Matara district. It was revealed that there are treatments for many diseases related to the eyes, ears, phlegm and the mouth related to the traditional medicine system. Also, it was revealed that through Herbal medicines, visible diseases and the suppression of invisible forces that the eye cannot see are cured. It can be concluded that, during this time when Western medicine gained popularity, it was found that the people of Devinuwara were still stuck with traditional medicine and hand medicine.

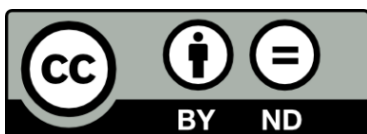
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### INTRODUCTION

Sinhala medicine, a traditional medicinal practice that is prevalent in Sri Lanka, is commonly referred to as *hela wedakama*, a term that symbolizes the medicinal techniques employed by the Sinhalese population. It encompasses a fusion of various medical systems, including Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, and *Desheeya Chikitsa*, which represent the indigenous medicine of Sri Lanka. The historical origins of Sinhala medicine can be traced back to ancient civilizations, with the practice receiving substantial support from Sri Lankan monarchs, who possessed extensive knowledge in the realm of medicine themselves. By utilizing a diverse range of natural herbs, minerals and animal-derived substances and incorporating spiritual rituals, Sinhala medicine aims to combat a multitude of ailments while simultaneously nurturing holistic physical and mental well-being. Sinhala medicine serves as an intangible heritage that is deeply ingrained within the cultural legacy, effectively preserving the unique Sri Lankan identity. The intangible cultural heritage of Sinhala medicine, which has been preserved through the utilization of their accumulated knowledge for numerous years, eludes physical contact while being ingrained within an individual's mental and physical capabilities. Furthermore, the continuity of this Sinhala medicine is contingent upon the degree to which it is imparted to successive generations

and the acknowledgment bestowed upon it. Likewise, the pace at which it faces demise is determined by the reliance of communities associated with this discipline on the existence of this intangible heritage. Consequently, Sinhala medicine can be perceived as an early human encounter, manifested through genetic endowment or transmission. This transformative societal and individual shift that has transpired over time has emerged as a formidable impediment to the preservation of this legacy known as Sinhala medicine (Wickramathilaka, 2001, p.4). The local medicine of Sri Lanka is Sinhala medicine. It can be understood through the historical and literary works of the country that Sinhala medicine has been practiced for about 2500 years without any errors during the transmission of the wealth of knowledge that has existed over a while due to the local wisdom being passed down through generations (Dharmasiri, 1998, p.37). The indigenous Sinhala medicinal practice encompasses distinct forms of therapeutic agents, with its unparalleled attribute being its reliance on botanical organisms. Nevertheless, despite its benevolent intent towards the welfare of humanity, transformations have gradually occurred within the realm of Sinhala medicine. Conventional wisdom dictates that the distinctive attributes of Sinhala Medical are regrettably disregarded due to the erosion of aspiration and the proclivity towards



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commercialization (Kariyawasam, 2002, p.56).

The Matara district in the southern province can be considered an area where many people were skilled in medicine and "yantras," "mantras," "gurukam," and sacrificial offerings. Among them, local Sinhala medicine also has a prominent place. Accordingly, the *Devinuwara* Divisional Secretariat Division of the Matara District was used as the study area. This research aims to study the value of using traditional medicine and handicrafts to cure diseases.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Various researchers deeply examine Traditional Medicine and Hand Medicine based on diverse Perspectives. Owolabi et al. (2007) observed that medical plants have been used for therapeutic purposes by humans since the dawn of civilization. Nature has been a source of medical agents for thousands of years, and an impressive number of modern drugs have been isolated from natural sources. Many of these isolations were based on the agents' traditional medical uses. Traditional plant-based medicine plays an important role in health care, with approximately 80% of the world's population relying on traditional medicines for primary health care. Wu & Hsieh (2009) observed that numerous historical accounts demonstrate traditional medicine's rich heritage. Traditional healing systems

incorporated herbal remedies, rituals, and spiritual elements in ancient civilizations such as the Chinese, Egyptian, Indian, and Greek. These practices laid the groundwork for modern traditional medicine and continue to impact complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practices today. Jain (1968) observed that the Atharva Veda mentions using several plants as medicine. The books on Ayurvedic medicine, such as " *Charaka Samhita* and *Susruta Samhita*," refer to more than 700 herbs.

The limited number of studies focused on Ethnobotanical Knowledge. Pieroni & Vandebroek (2007) observed that Ethnobotany is important in traditional medicine because plants are frequently the primary source of remedies. Traditional healers have amassed a vast knowledge of medicinal plants, their preparation and the proper dosage for various ailments. According to studies, biodiversity is important in traditional medicine because different cultures frequently use unique plant species for similar health conditions.

The limited number of studies focused on the Clinical Efficacy and Safety of Traditional medicine. Ekor (2014) observed that critics have expressed concern about the lack of scientific evidence for traditional medicine's efficacy and safety. However, a growing body of research has focused on validating the therapeutic potential of certain traditional remedies. Herbal medicines, acupuncture, Ayurveda, and traditional healing practices have



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shown promising results in treating various health conditions. It is critical to balance cultural practices and evidence-based healthcare.

Primary Health Care was launched on the international stage by the World Health Organization's Alma Ata Declaration of 1978. Jones & Liyanage (2018) unpack the concept of primary health care as it evolved following Alma Ata and then investigate its implementation in Sri Lanka, as well as the extent to which Ayurveda (a broad term for Sri Lanka's traditional medical systems) has been integrated into the government health care system.

South Asian countries are enriched with traditional medicine systems. India has a rich heritage in its traditional systems of medicine, including Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani. Thatte (2017) observed the contribution of Indian scientists to "Traditional Medicine" research from 2012 to 2017. Field surveys were identified in that paper to record traditional medicine practices, such as documenting all of the plants (and sometimes insects) used by tribes or recording the treatments used for specific diseases.

There are so many challenges and opportunities in the traditional medicine system. Bodeker et al. (2005) observed that traditional medicine faces several challenges despite its historical significance and anecdotal success stories. These include practice standardization, safety concerns,

indigenous knowledge, intellectual property rights, and potential exploitation by the pharmaceutical industry. However, embracing traditional medicine opens up opportunities for sustainable healthcare, cultural heritage preservation, and economic support for local communities.

We can better appreciate its contributions and address the challenges it faces by understanding its historical roots, ethnobotanical knowledge, and clinical potential. Integration with modern medicine, evidence-based research, and respectful collaboration among various healing systems can pave the way for a holistic approach to healthcare that benefits diverse populations worldwide.

Even though various researchers have observed traditional medicine systems based on diverse approaches, no prior research has been conducted thus far on the traditional medicine system based in the Devinuwara area. Still, certain Ayurvedic doctors are living in the area with valuable knowledge of traditional medicines. Also, it can be identified that there are rich hand medicine systems among various households in the area. However, there is no systematic investigation conducted to collect ground-level knowledge of this traditional heritage. Consequently, this area has been chosen as the focal research site in anticipation of uncovering original insights into the traditional medicine



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system. So, this research mainly expects to investigate the value of using traditional and hand medicine as a disease-cure system based in the *Devinuwara* area.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This inquiry employed the qualitative methodology. The principal data was gathered through a field study conducted in the *Devinuwara* Divisional Secretariat (DS Code: - 3245) of the Matara district. The qualitative techniques utilized in this research encompassed observations and interviews executed with key stakeholders about the conventional and manual medical systems, such as the *Grama Niladari* officer, five Buddhist monks, five ayurvedic physicians, and twenty-three elderly citizens. The selection of the sample was accomplished through the purposive sampling technique, ensuring that individuals possessed extensive expertise in the traditional and Ayurvedic medical system. This approach is expected to generate novel, dependable, and comprehensive data. All interviews were conducted at the respective residences of the participants. To ensure the precision of the information, one-on-one in-depth interviews were conducted, incorporating open-ended questions and cross-cutting questions for further clarification. The interview sessions were not guided by pre-established lines. However, the primary emphasis was centered on the intangible

approach based on the traditional and hand medical system. Furthermore, this study also drew upon literary sources, including books and articles that focused on the main research theme, with particular attention given to the *Devinuwara*, *Abeyundara* Generation's traditional *Puskola Potha*. The integration of qualitative methods facilitated a comprehensive and multi-dimensional analysis of the research questions at hand. Throughout the interview sessions, a voice recording device was utilized to document the responses, while the interviewer simultaneously made notations on paper to record any supplementary information. Consequently, after the interviews, all accumulated data underwent meticulous scrutiny using a comparative framework. The data analysis was concluded through the application of theoretical saturation. Following this, a sequence of codes and categories was established utilizing the grounded theory methodology. To commence the process of data analysis, the accumulated information was initially categorized following the primary research problem. During the process of data analysis, extraneous details that were not relevant to the research objectives were disregarded, and only the most pertinent data was incorporated into the final analysis. By contrasting and comparing the data collected from diverse sources, plausible conclusions were derived, thereby offering valuable insights into the traditional and hand medicine practices of the region.



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### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Study of Medicine Practice

Generally speaking, irrespective of the nation, individuals have rendered medical assistance for everyday crises. Pharmaceuticals have been accorded precedence as a crucial component in preserving one's existence. In instances of calamities and infirmity, the requisite care has been administered following the exigency (Kusumaratna, 1997, p.45). We can recognize the same condition not only among humans but also among animals. For example, it is a fact that we know that the cat eats "Kuppamania" leaves and grass when sick. Among the cattle, there is also a custom of eating the leaves seasoned for certain disorders (Dharmasiri, 1998, p.78). Local medicine also incorporates a specific section dedicated to the treatment of both humans and wild animals such as elephants and cows. Moreover, it is noteworthy to mention that within the realm of this medicinal practice, there exist distinct branches known as elephant medicine and cattle medicine. Additionally, it is a widely held belief among elderly individuals that certain trees serve as a resting place for snakes, which in turn alleviates specific ailments. Similarly, frogs have been observed to momentarily depart from aquatic environments and bask under the sun to alleviate unbearable disorders. Furthermore, it is postulated that ants congregate near urine as it serves as a beneficial source of hydration for their physiological well-being (Wickramaratna, 2001, p.57). This

way, how animals and humans use complementary and beneficial medicines for various diseases can be recognized. Those traditional medical treatments and Hand medicine were mentioned in a specific type of book called "Puskola Poth." Ancestors wrote those books and nowadays, they are preserved by Traditional healers.

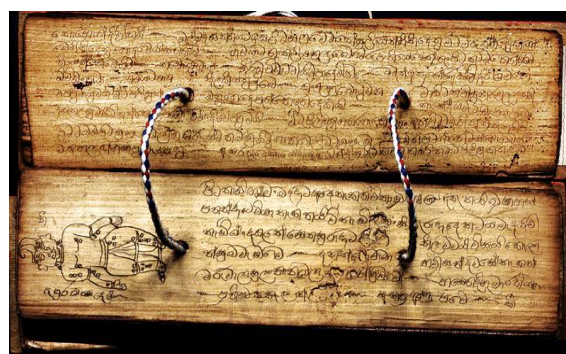


Figure 1: - The specific books that are written about traditional medicine (Puskola poth)

Source:

<https://images.app.goo.gl/s8S2EZkNZpXvu6mg7>

In this study, which was conducted in association with the Divisional Secretariat of *Devinuwara*, information about simple nursing could be obtained through in-depth interviews with the data contributors.

It was acknowledged that the administration of a minute quantity of extract derived from the "*vadakaha*" tea tree to the tongue of a young child would yield immediate advantages in terms of affection, thus establishing its efficacy as a verified remedy. It was determined that the local inhabitants firmly held the belief that the ailment of infant worm disease could be



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effectively impeded by the process of boiling the "Kudumbia" root and subsequently administering it to infants during both the morning and evening hours. In the event of an abrupt laceration on the hand or foot within the confines of the garden field, the cessation of haemorrhaging can be achieved by crushing the leaves of the "hulantala" plant directly onto the affected area. Furthermore, it was duly noted that in cases of work-related injuries or sores, uncomplicated treatment approaches like combining coriander seeds and leaves and consuming the resulting concoction in the morning have also been employed for remedial purposes. It was additionally brought to light that the ingestion of a ginger and coriander infusion is a customary practice for alleviating symptoms of the common cold. Moreover, it was discovered that the consumption of sour lime, the covering of limbs, and ensuring adequate rest during nocturnal hours are also adhered to when attempting to combat the aforementioned ailment.

Key informant interviews revealed that these people use several treatment methods, especially when bitten by an animal.

- Burning the animal bite by heating it with a gold ring or an earring.
- Burn a dry chilli pod, grind it with the ash, and rub it in the mouth.
- Take sesame oil and cotton leaf juice and grind it. *Key informant Interviews (28 May 2023)*

They explained that the treatments such as adding sugar and honey to the juice of the root of "Nil Katarolu," milk, "aguna" root, and "Ehela" root had been used and further, when the sting is old, rubbing the bark of "Dibul" with lime acid, rock salt, "Aralu" salt. It was the common opinion of the traditional healers around this area that the beneficial treatment methods such as grinding with water, grinding with "rak aguna" leaves, bark, and urine, boiling the "panchanga" of the wood-apple tree mixed with ghee and giving it to drink are the proven methods of treatment.

In addition, the in-depth interviews found that the following treatment methods were used to treat diseases such as diarrhoea during the rainy season.

- Add honey to ginger puree and give it to drink.
- Boiled water to drink.
- Boil rice and give it to drink.
- Giving tea, coffee, and ginger puree.
- Crush half the pepper in orange water and add a little honey.
- Crush cloves in orange water keep it closed for half an hour and give it to drink.
- Treatments such as adding honey to "beli" juice and drinking it could be identified as hand medicine treatments used among the ancient people in these areas. *Key informant Interviews (28 May 2023)*



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Source: Captured by the researcher in a Field Study (5/28/2023)

In the in-depth interviews conducted, it was revealed that these objects were based not only on personal experiences but also on the beliefs of "*Yantra Mantras, Kemkrama,*" and occult forces in this country.

During the comprehensive interviews, when inquiring about the therapeutic techniques employed in this particular research domain, particularly in the context of minor ailments such as a fever, common cold, sore throat, and ocular discomfort various treatment modalities such as bandaging and uncomplicated approaches like the administration of medicated oil or the application of plasters were reported. Moreover, remedies such as steam inhalation, herbal combustion, as well as diverse chemical interventions were mentioned, along with the utilization of occult forces for the amelioration of afflictions. It was further disclosed that these practices were prevalent in the local vicinity, while the employment of mantras and the collection of water

were identified as contemporary therapeutic measures in these regions. The

*Devinuwara* area is famous as a fishing village and because of this, many people in this area often suffer from headaches from being in the sun and tired. Therefore, it was revealed in the in-depth interviews that many external treatment methods are used to get rid of such headaches.

According to this,

- Hibiscus turmeric and ginger paste are applied on the forehead.
- Cut cucumber in two and rub it on both sides of the forehead.
- Grind olive leaves and lime juice, squeeze the juice with a spade plate, and put it on the stove when it is hot; add the juice to it rub it on both sides of the forehead and apply it to the head by mixing medicinal plants, garlic, curry leaves, red onion, cumin, put it in coconut oil and heat it to get rid of the head raw, take equal amounts of ginger, pepper, "*thippili,*" garlic, and peels and grind them with lime juice and rub them in a cloth and apply them on the forehead. Grind spinach leaves and apply plasters on the forehead.
- Grind sunflower flowers with the juice of the leaves and apply plasters.
- Rub white sandalwood water on the stone and apply a plaster on the forehead.
- Aloe Vera juice scalp relief.





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- Sitting with your feet in warm water and your head falling for a while.
- Holding an ice cube on the head.
- It was revealed that hand medicine methods such as dry turmeric powder and eating with ripe bananas are used, and some oil is rubbed on the head to get the scalp, and it was revealed that healing is also done by methods such as aphrodisiacs. Also, as with other treatments for head diseases, it was revealed that for the control of hair loss, treatment methods such as boiling myrobalan and curry leaves and washing the head, boiling lime knots in coconut milk, and rubbing them on the head was done indoors.

*Key informant Interviews (28 May 2023)*

One of the Key informants pointed out that when the disease is related to the ear, which is the main organ of the body, the disease affects not only the ear but also the head and teeth, and severe pain, swelling and pus can be identified in the acute stage of the disease.

It was revealed through in-depth interviews about the hand medicine that can be used for earaches at the same time it occurs.

- Put sesame oil in an eggshell, heat it with a bread screen, and pour two or three drops into the ear on low heat.
- Cut the leaves of this pod and pour a few drops of the juice into the ear. "Nikadalu" is ground with ale water

mixed with a drop of salt water, mixed and poured into the ear.

- "Heen bovitia" leaves are chopped and boiled in a pan, and its juice is mixed with honey and poured into the ear.
- When an animal-like beetle is in the ear, take mosquito leaves, lime leaves, and skin, grind them with cold water, and pour a few drops of the puree into the ear. \* Keep a piece of garlic in hot ashes and keep it in the ear while it is still warm.
- Spread cinnamon oil on a loose piece and put it in the ear.
- Pour a few drops of honey into the ear.
- Treatment methods such as pouring a drop of juice boiled and squeezed into the ear have been used in normal life. *Key informant Interviews (29 May 2023)*

The methods of treatment for any disease affecting the eye, another important organ of the body, could be revealed through the in-depth interview method.

They are,

- When something gets into the eye, pour a drop of breast milk into the eye several times
- Washing the face with boiled water of pomegranate leaves
- Washing the face with boiled water of jasmine leaves
- Washing the eyes with boiled water from tamarind leaves
- Washing the eyes with boiled water of "rasakinda" leaves



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- Due to the heat in the body, as a treatment method for the swelling, burn tamarind seeds, wash with salt water, rub around the swelling, and apply the foam of the rice cooker on the swelling. *Key informant Interviews (29 May 2023)*



Figures 3 & 4: - Sinhala's medical treatment for Backbone

Source: Captured by the researcher in a Field study (5/29/2023)

When asked about dental diseases, it was found from in-depth interviews that for diseases such as tooth decay, mouthwash with boiled jasmine leaves, mouthwash with boiled betel root, mouthwash with boiled "kumbuk" bark, guava leaves and bark with boiled water.

A key informant pointed out "*kem krama*" to heal the toothache. As he mentioned,

*"Without talking, go to a dry vine, face west, grab a root, and tie it on the big toe of the leg where the toothache is, and do all these things quietly."*

*Key informant Interviews (29 May 2023)*

According to the information provided by a key informant, it was found that the first thing that the puberty women in this area take a bath in is a medicine

pot in which very valuable medicines have been boiled.

It was revealed that these villagers believe that if there are any errors in the auspiciousness during puberty, all those errors will be removed by taking a bath in this medicinal water. Accordingly, it appears that Sinhala medicines are used not only for visible diseases but also to suppress invisible forces.

### Cultural and Intangible Heritage Aspects

The preservation and promotion of conventional medicine as an intangible legacy which holds significant value within the *Devinuwara* region. Such therapeutic methodologies are far from being a mere assortment of medicinal techniques but rather intricately interwoven into the cultural tapestry of the indigenous populace. The discourse accentuates the transmission of traditional and manual medicine across successive generations, where the transfer of knowledge and proficiency is facilitated amongst kin, venerable members of the community and skilled practitioners.

In the *Devinuwara* community, the perception of traditional medicine as a valuable legacy bestowed by forebears, encapsulating the sagacity and erudition of preceding cohorts, is frequently observed. The therapeutic techniques and curatives are regarded as sanctified knowledge vigilantly



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protected and transmitted as an integral part of the cultural bequest. Indigenous communities assume a pivotal function in conserving these customs, actively engaging in rituals, ceremonies and assemblies that serve to showcase and extol traditional remedial procedures.

Furthermore, the knowledge of traditional medicine and hand medicine is not confined to formal educational institutions; instead, it thrives within the community, where informal apprenticeships and mentorships facilitate the transmission of skills and wisdom. This aspect strengthens communal bonds and fosters a sense of collective responsibility toward safeguarding these ancient healing practices.



Figure 5: - Packets of herbal oils and herbal paste for selling

Source: Captured by the researcher in a Field study (5/28/2023)

## Challenges and Opportunities

Traditional and manual medical practitioners in the *Devinuwara* region encounter a multitude of obstacles in the process of modernizing and urbanizing. Among these challenges, a noteworthy one entails the waning enthusiasm among the younger populace to pursue traditional therapeutic methods as a vocation. As the youth gravitate towards contemporary professional trajectories, the peril of forfeiting invaluable wisdom pertaining to traditional medicine escalates.

Furthermore, the incorporation of Western medicine into established healthcare systems poses a challenge in terms of acknowledging and verifying traditional medicine. It is imperative to strike a balance between the preservation of cultural heritage and the assurance that these practices are substantiated by scientific evidence and adhere to safety protocols. The endorsement and assimilation of traditional medicine into the wider healthcare framework may face obstacles due to scepticism from certain segments of society and the medical establishment.

Amongst the various obstacles, there exist favourable prospects for cooperation between conventional medicine and Western medical systems. By blending the merits of both systems, integrative healthcare models can yield comprehensive and all-encompassing healthcare solutions for



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society. To illustrate, the preventative and holistic approaches emphasized in traditional medicine can supplement the focus of Western medicine on acute care and state-of-the-art medical technologies.

Collaboration can also lead to mutual learning and a deeper appreciation of each other's practices. By recognizing the cultural and intangible heritage value of traditional medicine, it becomes possible to create a more respectful and inclusive healthcare system that caters to the diverse needs and beliefs of the *Devinuwara* community.

The preservation and promotion of traditional medicine as an intangible legacy holds immense importance for the cultural identity and welfare of the *Devinuwara* region. Although there exist obstacles that need to be surmounted, prospects for cooperation with Western medicine provide a route towards a healthcare system that is more harmonious and efficacious. By embracing the cultural significance of traditional medicine and involving local communities in its safeguarding, the region can uphold its distinctive healing traditions and ensure their perpetuity for forthcoming generations.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout this investigation, an extensive examination was carried out on the utilization of conventional and

hand medicine in modern-day Sri Lanka, wherein Western medicine has acquired prominence. The discoveries underscore the remarkable importance of traditional medicine as an intangible legacy deeply ingrained in the historical and cultural fabric of the nation. The straightforwardness, cohesion, and dependence on natural flora and herbal remedies in medical treatment render traditional medicine a cherished component of the healing practices embraced by the populace.

Previously, customary medicinal remedies were bartered without any monetary dealings, thereby illustrating the selfless disposition of these age-old remedial customs. However, in contemporary society, the commodification of traditional heritage has regrettably led to the devaluation of these practices, as monetary gratuities have become a prevalent means of recompense for practitioners of traditional medicine. This transition towards commercialization poses a challenge to the genuine essence of traditional medicine, which was initially devoted to the unselfish pursuit of promoting the welfare of the community.

The declining usage of traditional and hand medicine in the country can be attributed to another significant factor, namely the introduction of advanced modern medical devices. The population's fascination with sophisticated technology and instant solutions has resulted in a waning interest in the age-old healing practices.



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Nonetheless, it remains of utmost importance to uphold the nation's identity by perpetuating traditional and hand medicine. In order to safeguard this invaluable heritage the following recommendations are put forth: firstly, it is crucial to foster the recognition and support of traditional healers, ensuring that they are duly appreciated for their expertise and valuable contributions to the field of healthcare. Additionally, conducting awareness programs and organizing campaigns can serve to highlight the cultural and medicinal significance of traditional practices, thus promoting their preservation.

Creating recognition of the value of indigenous knowledge: fostering an environment that acknowledges and celebrates the wisdom of traditional medicine as a valuable form of indigenous knowledge.

Providing government support: establishing policies and allocating resources to support preserving and promoting traditional medicine through research, training and infrastructure development. Encouraging people to cultivate medicinal plants: promoting the cultivation of medicinal plants within local communities, ensuring a sustainable supply of herbal remedies.

Raising the status of traditional doctors and healers: elevating the social status and recognition of traditional doctors and healers, encouraging the younger generation to pursue these professions

with pride. Despite the challenges and changes in healthcare preferences, it is heartening to observe that the residents of *Devinuwara* continue to place great faith in traditional medicine and hand medicine. Their continued reliance on these age-old healing practices demonstrates traditional medicine's enduring cultural value and efficacy.

In conclusion, the preservation of Sri Lanka's intangible heritage in traditional and hand medicine is of utmost importance in order to maintain the country's identity and cultivate a comprehensive and all-encompassing healthcare system. By embracing and advocating for these ancient healing traditions, Sri Lanka can commemorate its abundant cultural heritage and guarantee the welfare of its populace for future lineages. The endeavour to maintain traditional medicine as an essential component of Sri Lanka's cultural tapestry necessitates collective endeavours and resolute dedication to safeguarding this invaluable heritage for forthcoming generations.

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