



The Journal of Nutrition and Food Sciences

Journal Home Page: <https://nutritionsof Sri Lanka.org/the-journal-of-nutrition-and-food-sciences-2/>

Sri Lankan Herbal Porridges –A Narrative Review

A.M. Muthalib*

Faculty of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received:

20.12.2024

Revised version received:

20.03.2025

Accepted:

25.05.2025

Available online:

01.11.2025

Keywords:

Herbal porridge

Kenda

Medicinal herbs

Sri Lanka

Traditional medicine

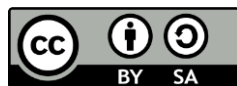
Citation

Muthalib, A. M. (2025)

Sri Lankan herbal porridges - A narrative review. *The Journal of Nutrition and Food Sciences*, 4(1), 12-27

*Corresponding author:

mujasha@fim.cmb.ac.lk



ABSTRACT

Traditional Sri Lankan herbal porridges, known locally as “Kola Kenda”, have been a staple in the country’s dietary and medicinal practices for centuries. This porridge is typically prepared using a combination of local grains such as rice and various indigenous herbs, reflecting the island’s rich agricultural diversity and cultural heritage. This review aims to explore the variety of herbal porridges in Sri Lanka, document their ingredients, evaluate their medicinal properties, and discuss their role in traditional health practices. A comprehensive literature review was conducted using both historical texts and recent scientific studies. Scholarly databases, including PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar were accessed to locate relevant publications in English from 2010 to 2024. The review focused on analyzing the nutritional profiles and known health benefits presented in these sources. Additionally, discussions with individuals possessing traditional knowledge contributed valuable insights to this condensed review. The review identified 23 herbs frequently used in herbal porridges, many of which are rich in antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals. The herbal porridge is often enjoyed as a comforting meal. It is frequently used as a natural remedy for various health issues, attributed to the medicinal qualities of the herbs involved. Herbal porridges are known for their detoxifying, immune-boosting, and anti-inflammatory properties. The findings indicate that these porridges play a role in addressing modern health issues associated with noncommunicable diseases. However, the shift towards Westernized diets has marginalized these traditional meals. Despite the growing influence of Western diets, herbal porridges continue to play a role in the daily lives of many Sri Lankans, particularly as a nutritious breakfast. This review emphasizes the need to preserve and promote the consumption of these porridges, given their potential as functional foods in modern dietary practices. Further clinical research on the specific health benefits of these porridges could enhance their acceptance and application in global health trends.

INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka, an island nation rich in culture and history, has long been admired for its diverse and unique culinary heritage. For centuries, the people of Sri Lanka have preserved their traditions through food for nourishment and its profound connection to health and healing. Each region of the island, influenced by a combination of indigenous practices and foreign interactions, has contributed to the intricate tapestry of Sri Lanka cuisine, which is a blend of vibrant flavors, aromas, and medicinal properties. There are various evidences such as written evidence, archaeological evidence, and folklore, which describe the history of foods and food patterns of ancient Sri Lanka. A refectory of the Buddhist monasteries and fragments of various potteries also describe ancient food practices. There is evidence to prove that ancient Sri Lankans had food items such as meat, eggs, fish, vegetables, herbal porridge, roti, thalapa, pittu, gruel, etc. Besides, Sri Lanka has indigenous food varieties that belong to the Vedda families' folk groups, and other indigenous communities inhabiting in various areas (Mihiranie et al., 2020).

In traditional diet of Sri Lanka, "Kenda" is a cereal-based porridge. Kola Kenda is herbal porridge prepared from the extraction of edible green leaves, rice, and coconut milk. Ancient Sri Lankans had herbal porridge made from fresh juice of one variety of green leaves or adding different varieties together, on an empty stomach, before breakfast. According to the ancient text like Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa consuming Kola Kenda originated with the Buddhist culture. It was consumed by Buddhist monks in the morning, as a means of sustenance (Ranaweera et al., 2014).

A comprehensive understanding of the nutritional and therapeutic benefits of local plants along with methods for safely preparing these ingredients, has shaped the traditional foods of this island, reflecting personalized, nutrition-focused consumption patterns rooted in indigenous medicine. In Sri Lankan cuisine, the emphasis is primarily on health benefits

and nutrition rather than sensory appeal, with both diet and lifestyle playing crucial roles in maintaining physical and mental well-being. Currently, traditional foods are often recognized more for their culinary variety. However, various socio-economic factors in this middle-income developing country hinder the appreciation of traditional foods and limit the transfer of traditional knowledge, even in rural households. Lifestyle changes, time constraints, a diminishing supply of traditional ingredients, the influx of multinational fast-food chains, and a general lack of knowledge about food preparation and traditional practices have overshadowed the importance of indigenous foods in Sri Lanka. Although not explicitly linked, the significant rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) over the past two decades raises concerns about the nation's food sources, consumption habits, and lifestyle. Approximately 25% of adults in Sri Lanka have metabolic syndrome, and one-fifth are pre-diabetic or diabetic, with one-third of those undiagnosed, despite a low obesity rate (only 3.7% with a BMI over 30) (Jayawardene et al., 2013). There is a growing demand among health-conscious consumers for healthy, indigenous, and traditional food products. It is essential to gather evidence-based data using modern scientific methods to safeguard Sri Lanka's traditional food knowledge, although progress in this area has been slow. A limited number of products utilizing traditional food concepts are available through public and private sector collaborations, offering convenient, ready-to-eat options in controlled portions. Herbal porridges are commonly consumed as a morning meal and are believed to promote general well-being, digestive health, and strengthen the immune system (Sirivardena, 2014). Despite their widespread use in Sri Lankan households, there is limited review of their nutritional value, therapeutic benefits, and cultural significance. The present review describes the essentials of indigenous and traditional herbal porridges of Sri Lanka, for the first time. This narrative review aims to explore the variety of herbal porridges in Sri Lanka, document their ingredients, evaluate their medicinal properties, and discuss their

role in traditional and modern health practices. The focus is on assessing how these porridges contribute to nutrition and health, highlighting their relevance in contemporary dietary trends, such as functional foods and natural remedies.

MATERIALS & METHOD

A comprehensive literature review was conducted using both classical texts and recent scientific studies. Scholarly databases, including PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar, were accessed to locate relevant publications in English from 2010 to 2024 using keywords herbal porridge, Kola Kenda, medicinal herbs, Sri Lanka, and traditional medicine. Articles which are not relevant to the studies, and articles which are published 15 years before were not included in the studies. Additionally, discussions with individuals possessing traditional knowledge contributed with valuable insights to this condensed review.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kola Kenda (herbal porridges)

Kola Kenda is an herbal porridge made from the juice of green leaves, rice, and coconut milk. The red *Nivudu* rice (Red Kekulu with bran), which is soaked for 30 minutes and then pounded in a mortar, is used. Small red onions, garlic, and ginger need to be finely chopped and boiled with the rice until cooked. The leaves must be thoroughly washed, cleaned, and pounded to extract their juice. After that, the

leaf extracts should be pounded with scraped coconut, and this juice should be combined with the previously extracted juice. Once the rice is well-boiled, add the combined juice along with thin coconut milk. To preserve the nutrition, it's best to turn off the cooker right after adding the leaf extract. Coconut is included in the broth to help retain the carotene levels from the leaves. Finally, add *diya lunu* (table salt) to the dish as required. Rice porridge is enriched with protein and fat from coconut milk, sweetened with palm jaggery or treacle, or spiced with onion, ginger, and garlic, with or without various pulverized/juiced green leaves having medicinal value. Green leaves are popular for porridges, which are known for their medicinal and therapeutic value in providing blood sugar control, anti-inflammatory, blood purifying etc. according to indigenous medical systems (Sugathadasa, 2017; Ayurveda Department 2019).

Table 1 (Figure 1-23) lists the green leaves popular for porridges and known for their medicinal and therapeutic values. There are *Kenda* types that vary with the type of herbal leaves used.

Other porridge varieties

There are other types of porridges available locally which also possesses therapeutic benefits for different health conditions (Table 2, Figures 24-28).



(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)



(5)



(6)



(7)



(8)



(9)



(10)



(11)



(12)



(13)



(14)



(15)



(16)



(17)



(18)



(19)



(20)



(21)



(22)



(23)



(24)



(25)



(26)



(27)



(28)

Figure 1. (1). *Abutilon indicum*; (2). *Hygrophila schulli*; (3). *Solanum melongena*; (4). *Centella asiatica*; (5). *Vernonia cinerea*; (6). *Solanum trilobatum*; (7). *Evolvulus alsinoides*; (8). *Asparagus falcatus*; (9). *Desmodium triflorum*; (10). *Osbeckia octandra* (11). *Limonia acidissima* (12). *Erythrina variegata* (13). *Nauclea orientalis*; (14). *Hemidesmus indicus*; (15). *Achyranthes aspera*; (16). *Achyranthes aspera*; (17). *Bacopa Monnieri*; (18). *Lasia spinosa*; (19). *Aerva lanata*; (20). *Clitoria ternatea*; (21). *Acalypha indica*; (22). *Psychotria sarmentosa*; (23). *Murraya koenigii*; (24). Kurakkan Porridge; (25). Yam Porridge; (26). Roasted Rice Porridge; (27). Kithul flour Porridge; (28). Odiyal kool.

1. *Kola Kenda* (herbal porridge) varieties

Table 1. Types of herbal porridges with their chemical constituents and therapeutic values

Herbal porridge	Chemical constituents	Therapeutic value
Indian mallow (<i>Abutilon indicum</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Beheth Anoda Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids: (abutilonine), Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol), Saponins, Tannins, Terpenoids and Phenolic compounds. (Rajeshwari & Sevarkodiyone, 2018; Bolleddu et al., 2021).	It has been extensively used as a traditional medicine as a laxative, analgesic, emollient, anti-inflammatory, blood tonic agent and anti-diabetic, and also in the treatment of jaundice, leprosy, urinary disease, piles, cleaning wounds and ulcers, vaginal infections, relieving thirst, pulmonary tuberculosis, diarrhoea, rheumatism, mumps, bronchitis, allergy, blood dysentery. Various studies on the plant extract have been performed to confirm the anti-bacterial, anti-oxidant, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, hepato-protective, immune-modulatory, anti-cancer, and larvicidal activities of the plant. And useful in heart diseases, <i>rathpith</i> disease (bleeding from external organs) conditions, uterine diseases, haemorrhoids, polyuria and excess body heat (Rajeshwari & Sevarkodiyone, 2018; Bolleddu et al., 2021).
Marsh Barbel (<i>Hygrophila schulli</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Neeramulliya Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids: (isoboldine), Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol), Saponins, Tannins, Essential oils and phenolic compounds. (Nissanka et al., 2023; Hintsa, 2020)	This plant has antimicrobial, antitumor, antioxidant, hepato-protective, anthelmintic, nephron-protective, anti-diabetic, anti-cataract, anti-inflammatory, anti-nociceptive, hematopoietic, diuretic, anti-urolithiatic, antipyretic, neuro-protection, and anti-endotoxin activities. Used for dysuria (burning urination), bleeding from external organs, for impotence, anuria, urinary tract infections, lactation insufficiency, <i>vatharaktha</i> (Gout) and <i>amavatha</i> (Rheumatic fever) and used as antioxidant (Nissanka et al., 2023; Hintsa, 2020).
Eggplant (<i>Solanum melongena</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Elabatu Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids: (solanine), Flavonoids: (quercetin, anthocyanins), Phenolic compounds and Saponins (Umamageswari & Maniyar, 2015; Sitap et al., 2015).	Increase appetite. Used for fever, whooping cough, and asthma. Anthelmintic. Good for digestion. Used in heart diseases. Acts as an expectorant in prolonged cough and phlegm. Anti-inflammatory (Umamageswari & Maniyar, 2015; Sitap et al., 2015).

Table 1. Cont.

Herbal porridge	Chemical constituents	Therapeutic value
Indian pennywort (<i>Centella asiatica</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Gotukola Kenda</i>	Triterpenoids: (Asiatic acid, madecassic acid, and asiaticoside), Flavonoids, Saponins, Essential oils, Vitamin A, B, & C, and minerals (calcium, magnesium, potassium) (Gohil et al., 2010; Chandrika & Kumarab 2015).	Improve memory and intelligence. Laxative. Increase appetite. Gives long life. Prevents premature deterioration of the body. Improves stamina and memory. Used in insanity, epilepsy, rashes, <i>pandu</i> disease (anaemia), dry cough and sinusitis. In vitro and in vivo studies have shown important health benefits like antidiabetic, wound-healing, antimicrobial, memory-enhancing, antioxidant, and neuro-protecting activities (Gohil et al., 2010; Chandrika & Kumarab 2015).
Ironweed (<i>Vernonia cinerea</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Monarakudumbiya Kola Kenda</i>	Triterpenoids: (vernodalin, vernolide), Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol), Phenolic compounds, Alkaloids, Essential oils, and saponins (Divya & Nirmala, 2023; Trang et al., 2024).	It is specially used in liver swelling. Used in alcoholic fatty liver disease. Removes toxins from the body. Very suitable in Jaundice condition. Used for blood purification. Used for prolonged cough. Used in treating diabetes, inflammation, infections, cancer and pain. Used to treat respiratory infections, skin conditions, and digestive disorders. Its anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties make it a potential candidate for treating various infections and inflammatory diseases. The plant contains flavonoids, alkaloids, and essential oils, which possess antimicrobial properties, making it a promising candidate for treating fungal and bacterial infections. Its anti-inflammatory properties have shown potential for managing inflammatory diseases like arthritis and dermatitis. Additionally, the plant's antipyretic and analgesic effects suggest its potential for pain management and fever reduction. Its antioxidant properties make it a potential candidate for preventing and treating oxidative stress-related diseases like neurodegenerative conditions and cardiovascular disorders (Divya & Nirmala, 2023; Trang et al., 2024).

Table 1. Cont.

Herbal porridge	Chemical constituents	Therapeutic value
Purple fruited Pea (<i>Solanum trilobatum</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Wel thibbatu Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids: (solasodine), Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol), Steroids, Triterpenoids, Phenolic compounds, and Saponins (Ranjith & Ranjithsingh, 2010; Ganesan et al., 2017).	Good for a cough and whooping cough. Further, it has anti oxidative property (Ranjith & Ranjithsingh, 2010; Ganesan et al., 2017).
Morning Glory (<i>Evolvulus alsinoides</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Vishnu Kanthi Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids: (vasicine), Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol), Triterpenoids, Phenolic compounds, Essential oils, and Saponins (Nithya et al., 2023; Yaday et al., 2019).	Good for heat and burning sensation in the body. Used in lack of sleep condition and brain tonic. To remove toxins from the body. It is considered a memory enhancer and has been used as a rejuvenator, anti-aging agent, stimulant, and sedative (Nithya et al., 2023; Yaday et al., 2019).
Wild Asparagus (<i>Asparagus falcatus</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Hathawariya Kola Kenda</i>	Saponins, Alkaloids, Flavonoids: (quercetin), Steroidal glycosides, Phenolic compounds, and essential oils (Gaviloncabicompndium, 2022 & Sirivardena 2014).	Reduce burning sensation in the body. Useful in whitish discharge from the vagina (Leucorrhoea) condition. Excessive bleeding during menstruation (Menorrhagia). Good for spleen swelling and liver swelling. Good in wounds and boils. Give energy to the body. Useful in renal diseases, particularly dysuria and haematuria (Gaviloncabicompndium, 2022 & Sirivardena 2014).
Three-flower beggarweed (<i>Desmodium triflorum</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Heen Udupiyaliya Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids: (isoflavones), Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol), Saponins, Tannins, and essential oils (Lai et al., 2010 & Shang Chih et al., 2010).	Useful in jaundice conditions. To remove toxins from the body. Useful in snake bite conditions. Good for eye diseases. For Amila-pittha conditions. Good in diarrhoea especially in children. It has antioxidant and antiproliferative activities (Lai et al., 2010 & Shang Chih et al., 2010).

Table 1. Cont.

Herbal porridge	Chemical constituents	Therapeutic value
Eight Stamen Osbeckia (<i>Osbeckia octandra</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Heen Bovitiya Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids, Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol), Phenolic compounds, Tannins, and essential oils (Madhusa et al., 2021, Bogahawaththa et al., 2021)	Most suitable herb for jaundice. Used in all types of liver diseases. Anti-fibrotic and anti-angiogenic (Madhusa et al., 2021, Bogahawaththa et al., 2021).
Wood-apple (<i>Limonia acidissima</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Divul Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids, Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol), Phenolic compounds, Tannins, and essential oils (Pooja & Tenguria, 2021, Thankgod et al., 2023)	Good for rat poison, dog poison, cat poison, and moose poison. Used in abdominal bloating. Useful in skin rashes. Anthelmintic (Pooja & Tenguria, 2021, Thankgod et al., 2023).
Sunshine tree (<i>Erythrina variegata</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Erabadhu Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids: (erythraline), Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol), Phenolic compounds, Saponins, and Tannins (Kumar et al., 2010; Suriyavathana et al., 2016)	Good for tapeworm (<i>Taenia saginata</i>), roundworm (<i>Ascaris lumbricoides</i>), and milk worm (<i>Bombyx mori</i>) diseases. Increase breast milk secretion. Good for lack of sleep conditions. Good for infertility-obese women. Further, it has anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties. Has been used for the treatment of patients with various conditions, such as liver trouble, convulsions, arthritis, etc. It has also been shown to have potential for treating patients with conditions such as fever, inflammation, bacterial infection, insomnia, helminthiasis, coughing, cuts, and wounds (Kumar et al., 2010; Suriyavathana et al., 2016).
Leichhardt (<i>Nauclea orientalis</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Bakmi Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids: (nauclefine), Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol), Phenolic compounds, Saponins, and Tannins (Raghavamma & Rao, 2010; Victor & Seukep, 2023)	Very good for jaundice and liver diseases. Good in urinary stone and anuria (lack of urination) conditions. Good for thirsty. Good in chronic diseases. Good for oedema and anthelmintic (Raghavamma & Rao, 2010; Victor & Seukep, 2023)

Table 1. Cont.

Herbal porridge	Chemical constituents	Therapeutic value
Indian sarsaparilla (<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Iramusu Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids: (hemidesmine), Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol), Saponins, Phenolic compounds, and Tannins (Das & Bisht, 2013; Swathi et al., 2019)	Used traditionally to treat a wide variety of illnesses including rheumatism, leprosy, impotence, urinary tract and skin infections. The antioxidant, anticancer, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antipyretic, cardio-protective, anti-microbial, anti-diabetic, immunomodulatory, hepatoprotective, renoprotective, and neuro protective properties. Used for Pitta Samana, energetic, increase appetite. Good for vataraktha conditions. Increase sperm maturation (Das & Bisht, 2013; Swathi et al., 2019).
Rough chaff (<i>Achyranthes aspera</i>) tree leaves porridge: <i>Rathkaralheba Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids: (achyranthine), Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol), Saponins, Tannins, and phenolic compounds (Ndhlala et al., 2015; Sanyogita et al., 2018)	Good for hemorrhoids. Very good for heart disease conditions. Good for abdominal bloating condition, lack of appetite and for dysentery. Used for treatments of wounds and ringworms (Ndhlala et al., 2015; Sanyogita et al., 2018).
Cuscut Grass (<i>Vetiveria zizanioides</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Savendara Kola Kenda</i>	Essential oils (vetiverol), Sesquiterpenes: (vetivene, vetiselinenes), Flavonoids, and tannins (Balasankar et al., 2013; Andreea et al., 2023)	Used for treating excess sweating and pitha conditions in the body. Removes bad smells caused by sweating. Removes poison from the body. Helps heart health. Eases headaches. Helps with skin issues (Balasankar et al., 2013; Andreea et al., 2023).
Coastal waterhyssop (<i>Bacopa Monnieri</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Lunuwila Kola Kenda</i>	Bacosides, Alkaloids: (brahminoside, herpestine), Flavonoids: (apigenin, luteolin), phenolic compounds, and triterpenoids (Walker & Pellagrini, 2024; Fathima et al., 2022)	It helps in blood purification. Good for the development of nerves, memory, and learning enhancer. Used to increase strength in the body. The main indications for using Bacopa in Ayurvedic medicine are memory improvement, insomnia, epilepsy, and as an anxiolytic. Many clinical studies have demonstrated improvements in delayed word recall, memory acquisition, verbal learning, and anxiety reduction with using <i>Bacopa Monnieri</i> . It has been described as a calming cognitive enhancer (Walker & Pellagrini, 2024; Fathima et al., 2022).
Lasia Spiny (<i>Lasia spinosa</i>) porridge: <i>Kohila kola/ Ala Kenda</i>	Saponins, Flavonoids: (quercetin), tannins, phenolic compounds, and alkaloids (Shahidul et al., 2021; Hossain et al., 2021)	Helps in issues related to food digestion/ digestive tract. Useful in the treatment of ulcers. Anti-helminthic, anti-cestode, and anti-nematode (Shahidul et al., 2021; Hossain et al., 2021).

Table 1. Cont.

Herbal porridge	Chemical constituents	Therapeutic value
Mountain knotgrass (<i>Aerva lanata</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Polpala Kola Kenda</i>	Saponins, Flavonoids: (quercetin and kaempferol), tannins, phenolic compounds, and alkaloids (Gunatilake et al., 2012; Goyal et al., 2011)	Helps in urine-related ailments, cough and wheezing. Dissolving of kidney stones. Removal of snake poison. Helps in preventing cancer (Gunatilake et al., 2012; Goyal et al., 2011).
Butterfly pea (<i>Clitoria ternatea</i>) leaves porridge: <i>White flower-bearing Ela katarolu Kola Kenda</i>	Flavonoids: (anthocyanins- cyanidin), Alkaloids: (indole), tannins, phenolic compounds, and terpenoids (Oguis et al., 2019)	Used for lung-related illnesses. Used for snake poison. It is good for urine-related ailments, joint swelling, and increasing memory power (Oguis et al., 2019).
Indian Acalypha (<i>Acalypha indica</i>) leaves porridge: <i>Kuppameniya Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids: cyathin), Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol), Tannins, phenolic compounds, and saponins (Senthilkumar, 2024; Zahidin, 2017)	Used for removal of poison from the body. Used for Lung/phlegm-related ailments, tonsils, asthma, and earache. Good for worm treatment. anti-inflammation, anti-bacterial, anti-cancer, anti-bacterial, anti-diabetes, and obesity. <i>Acalypha indica</i> possesses diuretic, purgative, anti-bacterial, anti- fungal, and anthelmintic properties. These medicinal plants traditionally used for treating intestinal worms, gum problems, stomachaches, hernia, rheumatism, bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia, scabies and skin diseases (Senthilkumar, 2024; Zahidin, 2017).
<i>Psychotria sarmentosa</i> leaves porridge: <i>Gonikka Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol), triterpenoids, phenolic compounds, and essential oils (Udumalagala et al., 2017)	Used for joint diseases as well as lower back pain. It has anti-inflammatory activity (Udumalagala et al., 2017).
Curry leaves (<i>Murraya koenigii</i>) porridge: <i>Karapincha Kola Kenda</i>	Alkaloids: (mahanimbine), Flavonoids: (quercetin, kaempferol, rutin), Essential oils: (β -caryophyllene, α -terpineol), triterpenoids, and phenolic compounds (Abeyasinghe et al., 2021; Balakrishnan et al., 2020)	Helps in lowering blood sugar level. Help in fighting infection. Improve heart function. Analgesic. Cure for piles. Body heat reducer. Reducing inflammation and itching. Further, it possesses antioxidant, antidiabetic, anti-inflammatory, and antitumor activities (Abeyasinghe et al., 2021; Balakrishnan et al., 2020).

Table 2. Other porridge varieties with their ingredients, method of preparation, and therapeutic value

Porridge	Ingredients	Method of preparation
Kurakkan Porridge (Fig. 24): <i>Kurakkan Kenda</i> (Sirivardena, 2014; Sigathadasa, 2017)	Kurakkan Flour Water Raw Ginger Garlic Plums Cashew Cardamom Salt	Kurakkan flour is mixed with water and boiled until it becomes porridge. Then all ingredients and coconut milk are added and boiled. Allowed to cool, and salt is added. It can be taken with sugar or jaggery.
Yam Porridge (Fig. 25): <i>Ala kenda</i> (Sirivardena, 2014; Sigathadasa, 2017)	Any yam variety Coconut milk Garlic Ginger Cardamom Salt	Yam is cleaned, cut into pieces and boiled. Boiled yams are smash and mixed with coconut milk. Pounded garlic, ginger, and cardamom are added and boiled. After cooling salt is added and served with sugar or jaggery.
Roasted Rice Porridge (Fig. 26): <i>Bedhi haal kenda</i> (Sirivardena, 2014)	Roasted rice Salt Water	Rice is washed well and roasted. Then water and salt are added and boiled. Water is drained and served.
Kithul flour Porridge (Fig. 27): <i>Kithul piti Kenda</i> (Sirivardena, 2014)	Kithul flour Sugar/ Kithul palm treacle Coconut milk Water Salt	All ingredients are mixed well and cooked on low heat until it thickens. Add water and cook runny.
Odiyal Kool (Fig. 28)	Palmyra flour Samba rice Crabs Prawns Drumstick leaf Jackfruit roughly chopped seeds reserved fillets, bones removed squid, skin removed, cleaned snake beans Salt/ pepper Tamarind	Palmyra flour is soaked in water for one hour. Water, rice, and jackfruit seeds are added to a pot and cooked. Add the jackfruit flesh to the rice mixture and stir and boil. When boiling, sea foods are added and stirred. Add the snake beans and chili paste. Cover and boil for a further 3 minutes. Remove all the seafood from the pot and set aside in a large bowl. Add tamarind water, 3 tbsp. of Palmyra flour paste to the soup and stir. Soup is boiled until it becomes thick. Return the seafood to the pot and stir. Add more tamarind water and chili paste.

CONCLUSION

Sri Lankan traditional herbal porridges, known for their deep roots in the island's Ayurveda and indigenous medical systems, offer a wealth of health benefits. They serve both as food and medicine, reflecting the holistic approach of Sri Lankan culture of healthy foods. These porridges continue to be valued for their ability to provide nourishment and prevent diseases, balance the body and connect people with their heritage and nature's healing power.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge the individuals who offered their expertise on traditional knowledge to compile in this narrative review.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There was no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Abeyasinghe, D. T., Alwis, D. D. D. H., Kumara, K. A. H., et al. (2021). Nutritive importance and therapeutic uses of three different varieties (*Murraya koenigii*, *Micromelum minutum*, and *Clausena indica*) of curry leaves: An updated review. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 5523252. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/5523252>
- Andreea, D., Anca, F., & Sonia, A. S. (2023). An overview of the chemical composition and bioactivities of *Vetiveria zizanioides* (L.) Nash essential oil. *Trends in Food Science & Technology*, 140, 104153. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tifs.2023.104153>
- Ayurveda Department. (2019). *Oushadhiya Saha Poshana Gunayen Anunavu Hela Aahara ha Paana vattoruwa* (2nd ed.). Government Publication Department.
- Balakrishnan, R., Vijayaraja, D., Jo, S. H., et al. (2020). Medicinal profile, phytochemistry, and pharmacological activities of *Murraya koenigii* and its primary bioactive compounds. *Antioxidants (Basel)*, 9(2), 101. <https://doi.org/10.3390/antiox9020101>
- Balasankar, D., Vanilarasu, K., & Preetha, P., et al. (2013). Traditional and medicinal uses of vetiver. *Journal of Medicinal Plants Studies*, 1, 191-200.
- Bolleddu, R., Venkatesh, S., Narasimhaji, C. V., et al. (2021). Pharmacognostical and phytochemical studies of Atibala (*Abutilon indicum* [Linn.] sweet) fruit. *Ayu*, 42, 138–142. https://doi.org/10.4103/ayu.AYU_264_20
- Bogahawaththa, S., Kodithuwakku, S. P., Wijesundera, K. K., et al. (2021). Anti-fibrotic and anti-angiogenic activities of *Osbeckia octandra* leaf extracts in thioacetamide-induced experimental liver cirrhosis. *Molecules*, 26, 4836. <https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules26164836>
- Chandrika, U. G., & Kumarab, P. A. K. (2015). Gotu Kola (*Centella asiatica*): Nutritional properties and plausible health benefits. *Advances in Food and Nutrition Research*, 76, 125-157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.afnr.2015.08.001>
- Das, S., & Bisht, S. S. (2013). The bioactive and therapeutic potential of *Hemidesmus indicus* R. Br. (Indian Sarsaparilla) root. *Phytotherapy Research*, 27, 791-801. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ptr.4788>
- Divya, T., & Nirmala, S. (2023). A review of *Vernonia cinerea* L. ethno-medicinal uses and pharmacology shows that it could be a useful plant for medical purposes. *Intelligent Pharmacy*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipha.2023.11.005>
- Fathima, U., Roy, S., Shahnawaz, A., et al. (2022). Pharmacological attributes of *Bacopa monnieri* extract: Current updates and clinical manifestation. *Frontiers in Nutrition*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2022.972379>

- Ganesan, K., Sukalingam, K., & Xu, B. (2017). *Solanum trilobatum* L. ameliorates thioacetamide-induced oxidative stress and hepatic damage in albino rats. *Antioxidants*, 6(3), 68. <https://doi.org/10.3390/antiox6030068>
- Gaviloncabicompendium, J. V. (2022). *Asparagus falcatus* (sicklethorn). *CABI Compendium*. <https://doi.org/10.1079/cabicompendium.6.6024954>
- Gohil, K. J., Patel, J. A., & Gajjar, A. K. (2010). Pharmacological review on *Centella asiatica*: A potential herbal cure-all. *Indian Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences*, 72(5), 546-556. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0250-474X.78519>
- Goyal, M., Pareek, A., Nagori, B. P., et al. (2011). *Aerva lanata*: A review on phytochemistry and pharmacological aspects. *Pharmacognosy Reviews*, 5, 195-198. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0973-7847.91120>
- Gunatilake, M., Lokuhetty, M. D., Bartholameuz, N. A., et al. (2012). *Aerva lanata* (Polpala): Its effects on the structure and function of the urinary tract. *Pharmacognosy Research*, 4, 181-188. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0974-8490.102259>
- Hints, G., Desta, A., Hiben, M., et al. (2020). Anti-nociceptive and anti-inflammatory activity of *Hygrophila schulli* leaves. *Journal of Inflammation Research*, 13, 497-505. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2147/JIR.S269717>
- Hossain, R., Quispe, C., & Herrera-Bravo, J. (2021). *Lasia spinosa* chemical composition and therapeutic potential: A literature-based review. *Oxidative Medicine and Cellular Longevity*, 28, 1602437. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/1602437>
- Jayawardene, R., Byrne, N. M., Soares, M. J., Katulanda, P., Yadav, B., Hills, A. P., et al. (2013). High dietary diversity is associated with obesity in Sri Lankan adults: An evaluation of three dietary scores. *BMC Public Health*, 13, 314-322. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-314>
- Kumar, A., Lingadurai, S., Jain, A., et al. (2010). *Erythrina variegata* Linn: A review on morphology, phytochemistry, and pharmacological aspects. *Pharmacognosy Reviews*, 4, 147-152. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0973-7847.70908>
- Lai, S. C., Ho, Y. L., Huang, S. C., et al. (2010). Antioxidant and antiproliferative activities of *Desmodium triflorum* (L.) DC. *American Journal of Chinese Medicine*, 38(2), 329-342. <https://doi.org/10.1142/s0192415x10007889>
- Madhusa, P., Sudarma, B., Rasika, P. I., et al. (2021). Leaf extract of *Osbeckia octandra* L. (Heen Bovitiya) suppresses human oral squamous cell carcinoma cells migration and induces cellular DNA damage. *Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Medicine, and Pathology*, 33(3), 215-220. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajoms.2020.09.003>
- Mihiranie, S., Jayasinghe, J. K., Jayasinghe, C. V. L., et al. (2020). Indigenous and traditional foods of Sri Lanka. *Journal of Ethnic Foods*, 7(42). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-020-00075-z>
- Ndhlala, A. R., Ghebrehewot, H. M., Ncube, B., et al. (2015). Antimicrobial, anthelmintic activities and characterisation of functional phenolic acids of *Achyranthes aspera* Linn.: A medicinal plant used for the treatment of wounds and ringworm in East Africa. *Frontiers in Pharmacology*, 6, 274. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fphar.2015.00274>
- Nissanka, M. C., Weerasekera, M. M., Dilhari, A., et al. (2023). Phytochemical properties of *Hygrophila schulli* (Neeramulliya). *Iranian Journal of Basic Medical Sciences*, 26, 979-986. <https://doi.org/10.22038/ijbms.2023.67965.14877>

- Nithya, K., Siddaraman, R., & Sheelajoice, P. P., et al. (2023). Nootropic activity of methanolic extract from *Evolvulus alsinoides* Linn. in mice with scopolamine-induced amnesia. *Bioinformation*, 19, 1212-1216.
<https://doi.org/10.6026/973206300191212>
- Oguis, G. K., Gilding, E. K., Jackson, M. A., et al. (2019). Butterfly pea (*Clitoria ternatea*), a cyclotide-bearing plant with applications in agriculture and medicine. *Frontiers in Plant Science*, 10, 645.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpls.2019.00645>
- Pooja, S., & Tenguria, R. T. (2021). Phytochemical properties and health benefits of *Limonia acidissima*: A review. *International Research Journal of Plant Science*, 12.
<https://doi.org/10.14303/irjps.2021.12>
- Raghavamma, S. T., & Rao, N. R. (2010). In vitro evaluation of anthelmintic activity of *Nauclea orientalis* leaves. *Indian Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences*, 72, 520-521.
<https://doi.org/10.4103/0250-474X.73932>
- Rajeshwari, S., & Sevarkodiyone, S. P. (2018). Medicinal properties of Abutilon Indicum. *Open Journal of Plant Science*, 3, 22-25.
<https://doi.org/10.17352/ojps.000011>
- Ranaweera, L., Kaewsutthi, S., Tun, A. W., et al. (2014). Mitochondrial DNA history of Sri Lankan ethnic people: Their relations within the island and with the Indian subcontinental populations. *Journal of Human Genetics*, 59, 28-36.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/jhg.2013.112>
- Ranjith, M. S., Ranjitsingh, A. J., Shankar, S. G., et al. (2010). *Solanum trilobatum* in the management of atopy: Through inhibition of mast cell degranulation and moderation of release of interleukins. *Pharmacognosy Research*, 2, 10-14.
<https://doi.org/10.4103/0974-8490.60581>
- Sanyogita, S., Ajeet, S., & Navneet, et al. (2018). Ethnobotanical and pharmacological benefits of *Achyranthes aspera* Linn.: An overview. *International Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences*, 48(2), 1-7.
<https://globalresearchonline.net/journalcontents/v48-2/01>
- Senthilkumar, R. (2024). A review on medicinal uses of *Acalypha indica* Linn. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 22, 320-323.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2024.22.3.1694>
- Shang-Chih, L., Yu-Ling, H., & Shun-Chieh, H., et al. (2010). Antioxidant and antiproliferative activities of *Desmodium triflorum* (L.) DC. *The American Journal of Chinese Medicine*, 38(2), 329-342.
<https://doi.org/10.1142/S0192415X10007889>
- Shahidul, M. I., Mamunur, M. R., Abu Ahmed, A. M., et al. (2021). The food ingredients of different extracts of *Lasia spinosa* (L.) Thwaites can turn it into a potential medicinal food. *NFS Journal*, 25, 56-69.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nfs.2021.11.002>
- Sirivardena, S. (2014). *Nirmanshika Aahara Paana Saha Deshiya Ath beheth*. Chathura publication.
- Sitap, M., Tilawale, S., Nadaf, N., et al. (2015). Antimicrobial activity of the leaf extracts of *Solanum melongena* L. (the green variety). *International Journal of Pharma Research & Review*, 4, 1-5.
- Sugathadasa, S. (2017). *Oushadhiya Saha Poshana Gunayen Anunavu Hela Aahara ha Paana vattoruwa* (1st ed.). Prini and Print Graphics.
- Suriyavathana, M., Subha, P., Senthilkumar, S., et al. (2016). Phytochemical profile of *Erythrina variegata* by using high-performance liquid chromatography and gas chromatography-mass spectroscopy analyses. *Journal of Acupuncture and Meridian Studies*, 9(4), 207-212.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jams.2016.06.001>

- Swathi, S., Amareshwari, P., Venkatesh, K., et al. (2019). Phytochemical and pharmacological benefits of *Hemidesmus indicus*: An updated review. *Journal of Pharmacognosy and Phytochemistry*, 8, 256-262.
- Thankgod, N., Ugwu, G., & Berezi, E. (2023). Nutritive and non-nutritive bioactive components of *Limonia acidissima* leaves. *Asian Journal of Microbiology and Biotechnology*, 8, 1-7. <http://dx.doi.org/10.56557/ajmab/2023/v8i28200>
- Trang, N. M., Vinh, L. B., Phong, N. V., et al. (2024). Traditional uses, phytochemistry, and pharmacological activities of *Vernonia cinerea* (L.) Less.: An updated review. *Nutrients*, 16, 1396. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu16091396>
- Udumalagala, G., Chandrika, K., Ratnayake, et al. (2017). Anti-inflammatory activity of *Psychotria sarmentosa* leaves. [Journal Name and Volume Not Provided], 35.
- Umamageswari, M. S., & Maniyar, Y. A. (2015). Evaluation of anti-inflammatory activity of aqueous extract of leaves of *Solanum melongena* Linn. in experimental animals. *Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research*, 9, FF01–FF03. <https://doi.org/10.7860/JCDR/2015/10777.5428>
- Victor, K., & Seukep, J. A. (2023). Phytochemistry and antibacterial potential of the genus *Nauclea*. *Advances in Botanical Research*, 107, 239-273. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.abr.2022.08.018>
- Walker, E. A., & Pellegrini, M. V. (2024). *Bacopa monnieri*. StatPearls. Treasure Island (FL). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK589635/>
- Yadav, M. K., Singh, S. K., Singh, M., et al. (2019). Neuroprotective activity of *Evolvulus alsinoides* & *Centella asiatica* ethanolic extracts in scopolamine-induced amnesia in Swiss albino mice. *Open Access Macedonian Journal of Medical Sciences*, 7, 1059-1066. <https://doi.org/10.3889/oamjms.2019.247>
- Zahidin, N. S., Saidin, S., & Zulkifli, R. M. (2017). A review of *Acalypha indica* L. (Euphorbiaceae) as traditional medicinal plant and its therapeutic potential. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*, 207, 146-173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jep.2017.06.019>