



Variety of Palm Leaves Used for Writing Manuscripts in Ancient Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Palm leaf manuscripts are among the most important historical documents in Sri Lanka, and there is a rich and long history of writing on palm leaves. However, it is extremely challenging to manufacture natural palm leaves suitable for writing. Not all kinds of leaves can be used for writing, choosing suitable leaves is not simple. Several factors must be considered when selecting suitable leaves for writing on manuscripts, namely ease of preparation, durability of the leaves, ease of handling the leaves, and ease of storage. There is evidence that various types of palm leaves were used to create palm leaf manuscripts from ancient Sri Lanka. These palm leaf manuscripts contain historical, cultural and religious information about Sri Lanka. Palm leaf manuscripts can be considered a means of preserving Sri Lankan knowledge. The main objective of this study was to investigate the variety of palm leaves used to write palm leaf manuscripts. The research was based on past and present documents related to this topic, and the desk research method was used. We conducted this study using published books, journal articles, conference papers, bibliographies, websites, and various studies on palm leaf manuscripts. We collected information on the variety of palm leaves used for writing. All the collected data was thematically analysed according to the variety of palm leaves used for writing. Three varieties of palm leaves were used for writing in ancient Sri Lanka, including the talipot palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*), the lonta palm (*Corypha utan*) and the palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*). However, this research revealed that the talipot palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*) and the palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) were most commonly used. This research identified special features that led to the use of palm leaves for writing. Furthermore, it highlights the traditional techniques of writing on palm leaves and their cultural value. The examination of various sources used for the research revealed that the manuscripts of Sri Lanka provide a deep understanding of their culture.

Keywords: Lonta palm, Palm leaf manuscripts, Palm leaf varieties, Palmyra palm, Talipot palm

1. Introduction

Palm leaves were a widely used and important writing material in South and Southeast Asian countries before the invention of paper. Palm leaves were one of the first writing materials used in coastal countries, including Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and especially Sri Lanka. Palm leaf manuscripts are the most important historical sources in Sri Lanka and can be found in temples, monasteries, the National Museum, the National Archives, the National Library, university libraries, and special libraries throughout the country (Kumara et al., 2024). These palm leaf manuscripts contain historical, cultural and religious information about Sri Lanka. Most of these manuscripts belong to various subjects, such as Buddhism, history, archaeology, traditional medicine, rituals, and astrology. These palm leaf manuscripts can also be considered a means of preserving Sri Lankan knowledge. Also, there are no reliable sources to determine when people started using palm leaves as a medium of writing. However, most of the palm leaf manuscripts found in various institutions in Sri Lanka date back to the 18th and 19th centuries. Palm leaf manuscripts written in the early 20th century are also found. It is rare to find palm leaf manuscripts written before the 18th century. There is no evidence of palm leaf manuscripts from the Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa periods. The *Chulla Vagga*, one of the oldest palm leaf manuscripts in Sri Lanka, was written in the 13th century AD (Alahakoon, 2006). The *Kotte* period was considered the “golden era” of Sinhala literature (Wijenayake, 1995). Many chronicles and *Sandeshas* were added to Sri Lankan history during this period. The largest collection of palm leaf manuscripts in Sri Lanka is held by the Department of National Museums, the University of Peradeniya, and the Department of National Archives (Alahakoon, 2001).

Cabral et al. (2018) mentions that palm leaf manuscripts have long been a distinguishing medium of traditional writing in Sri Lanka. According to historical sources, palm leaf manuscripts have been used as writing material in Sri Lanka since the third century BC. Palm leaf manuscripts were a prominent writing medium in several Asian countries at the time. Examples include India, Myanmar, Burma, and the Kingdom of Cambodia. Somananda and Weerasinghe (2021) expressed that palm leaf manuscripts, one of the earliest forms of written media, hold a prominent place among the historical sources on Sri Lankan national cultural heritage. According to Ranasinghe and Ranasinghe (2013), processed palm leaves have been the primary writing material in Sri Lanka, perhaps from 540 BC to the early 19th century. Limited use of palm leaves for writing letters, orders, and messages in the early period grew into a manuscript culture with the introduction of Buddhism to the country in the 3rd century BC. According to Alahakoon (2012), Sri Lanka is a land of rich heritage. Since ancient times, this island and its neighbouring countries have been rich in manuscripts. Compared to other countries in the world, Sri Lanka has one of the richest collection of palm leaf manuscripts. Palm leaf manuscripts are written records created by humans that served as a conduit for intellectual ideas, reflecting the wisdom and knowledge of ancestors during the mediaeval period. Therefore, Alahakoon (2012) says that ancient rare palm leaf manuscripts are a valuable asset for any country that has literary evidence in society to discover the cultural heritage of that nation.

According to the literature, palm leaves have made a significant contribution to the creation of ancient Sri Lankan manuscripts. However, a review of published research articles on this subject has revealed that there has been no discussion of the variety of palm leaves used in the writing of palm leaf manuscripts. These manuscripts are considered important sources of information for reconstructing the history and culture of a nation, as they preserve our ancient cultural heritage. The main objective of this research is to identify the variety of palm leaves used for writing palm leaf manuscripts. In addition, the other objectives of this research are to identify the factors considered when choosing suitable palm leaves, and explore traditional writing techniques and to examine the cultural value of palm leaf manuscripts.

2. Methods

This study is based on research papers related to palm leaf manuscripts published in both national and international sources. In particular, it includes research articles, books, conference proceedings, bibliographies, websites, and other scholarly works focused on palm leaf manuscripts in Sri Lanka. These resources, covering the period from 1888 to 2024, are available in both print and digital formats. During the literature search, subject-specific search terms such as “palm leaf manuscript” and “Sri Lankan ” were used to identify relevant literature. Additionally, selected databases and websites were used to access photographs of palm leaf manuscripts. This study used a desk research method. The literature reviewed is organised into four related themes on the basis of the thought content directly drawn from the literature and presented thematically within each category. The themes of the current study are as follows:

- Varieties of palm leaves
- Factors considered when choosing suitable leaves
- Traditional techniques of writing palm leaf manuscripts
- The cultural value of the palm leaf manuscripts

3. Results and Discussion

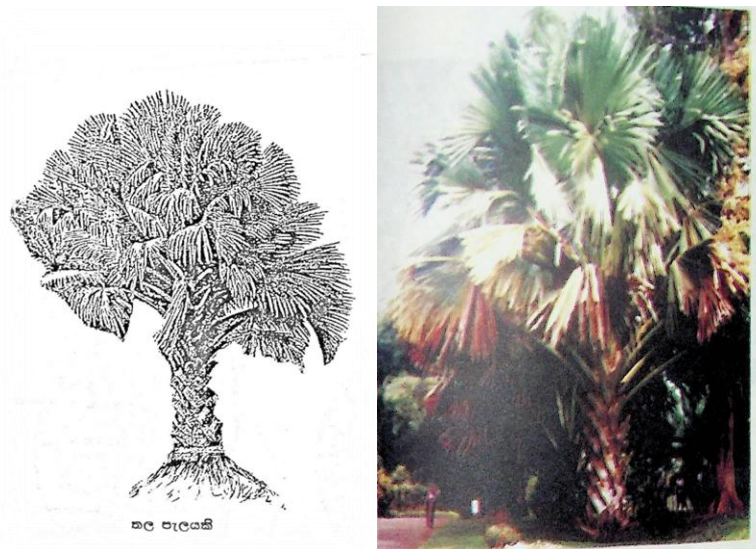
3.1 Varieties of palm leaves

Evidence suggests that ancient Sri Lankans used the leaves of various trees as writing material. Indika (2011) states that the creation of palm leaf manuscripts involves the use of young Talipot or Palmyra palm fronds or leaves. The Talipot palm is the subject of the majority of Sri Lanka's palm leaf manuscripts. The Talipot palm's frond is more than 10 feet long and has 80–100 sections. Alahakoon (2012) states that the palm tree *Corypha umbraculifera*, which is used for manuscripts, has 205 varieties and is referred to as "*pus-kola*" in Sri Lanka (as cited by De Silva, 1938). According to Cabral and Rathnabahu (2021), scientists in Sri Lanka prepare palm leaf manuscripts from refined *Corypha umbraculifera* leaves. Therefore, palm leaves are resistant and stable in the Sri Lankan tropical climate. According to Nishanthi and Wijayasundara (2022), ancient people used palm leaves to write meaningful, high-quality, and durable documents in various religious, linguistic, and royal fields. Nishanthi and Wijayasundara (2022) state that writers have obtained the leaves from three types of palm trees.

They are the Talipot palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*), the Palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*), and the Lonta palm (*Coryphautan*) (as cited by Lagamuwa, 2006). Talipot palm, Palmyra palm, and Lonta palm are three varieties of Talipot or palm leaf that are recognised on the Indian subcontinent, and the first two have been used in Sri Lanka (Hewamanage, 2022).

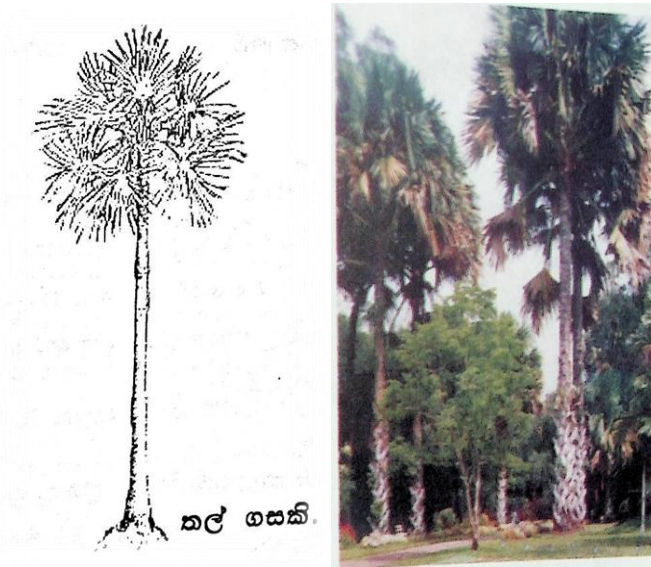
Lagamuwa (2006) mentions three types of palm leaf-producing trees: the Thalipot palm, the Palmyra tree and the Lonta palm. He states that of these, the Thalipot tree is more common in cold climates and the Palmyra tree is more common in hot climates. Bandara (2020) states that the leaves of two types of trees growing in Sri Lanka, namely the Talipot and the Palmyra tree, are used to make palm leaf manuscripts. Wijayawardena (2015) identified that the main reason for the origin of palm leaf manuscripts in Sri Lanka is the abundance of the Talipot palm. He also states that the Talipot palm grows well in the tropical zone. It is stated that a well-grown Talipot palm bud has a length of about 10-20 inches. The text also mentions that it possesses approximately 80-100 leaves. Alahakoon (2006) stated that Sri Lankans used two types of palm leaves for writing. The most popular in Sri Lanka since early times was the Talipot palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*). The second variety is the Palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*). Before 900 BC, Sri Lanka adopted the use of Talipot palm leaves for writing (Suvatabandhu 1962). Ferguson (1888) reported the existence of 400–500-year-old palmyra leaf manuscripts in Sri Lanka. De Silva (2021) points out the various types of palm trees used for writing since ancient times, and palm trees have also played an important role in writing in Sri Lanka, South Asian and Southeast Asian countries like India, Burma, Thailand, Taiwan, Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia, etc. He asserts that researchers have identified two types of palm trees used in Sri Lanka. They are the Palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) and the Talipot palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*).

Figure 1: Talipot palm (Corypha umbraculifera)



Source: Sri Lankave Puskola Poth Lekhana Kalava

Figure 2: Palmyra palm (*Borassus Flabellifera*)



Source: Sri Lankave Puskola Poth Lekhana Kalava

3.2 Factors considered when choosing suitable leaves

Finding suitable natural leaves for writing is a challenging task, and not all types of leaves can be used for it. Choosing the right type of leaf is also not simple. There are several factors to consider when choosing the right type of leaf for writing in manuscripts. Wimalakanti (2019) states that although palm leaf manuscripts had a rough surface, they became a popular medium for writing because they are easily found. Deepanjani (2007) noted that various factors have influenced the choice of palm leaves for creating palm leaf manuscripts, like palm leaves have become popular as a writing medium due to their easy availability, the ease of preparation for writing, their long durability, ease of mobility, ease of handling and ease of storage. Alahakoon (2006) states that people chose palm leaves for writing because they are wider, softer, high flexibility when dried, and more durable. According to Senadeera (1992), the original materials used for the palm leaf manuscripts were chosen based on the following factors: ease of writing, carrying, filing or using as a book, storage, and ease of finding the necessary writing materials.

3.3 Traditional techniques of writing palm leaf manuscripts

The creation of manuscripts from palm leaves is a traditional technique passed down from generation to generation for a very long time. It is associated with ceremonies and customs. This process ensured the long-term survival of the manuscripts without decaying due to environmental factors. Although the process of preparing palm leaf manuscripts shows slight regional variations, the steps followed by most writers are generally similar. However, natural palm leaf is not suitable for writing manuscripts. Preparing the palm leaf to make it suitable for writing is a challenging task. Creating a palm leaf for involves several steps. That is, to mark

the palm tree for palm leaves and to select the palm bud (*Thala Gobaya*), cutting the palm bud (*Thala Gobaya*), removing the ekels, and making rolls (*Vattu*), the rolls boiled in a pot with medicinal leaves, boiled leaves are dried in a cool place, seasoning the palm leaves (the leaf blade pulls up and down over the smooth surface of a cylinder of wood), the manuscript pages (folios) are cut from palm leaves, the edges of the pages were burnt with a hot iron to remove any irregularities, and the leaves are tied together and punched with holes, write in palm leaf using a steel point and blackened, this is done by rubbing oiled wax. Additionally, Dhammarathana (2019) suggests creating *Kamba* or covers, for the palm leaf manuscripts.

Indika (2011) states that people use young Talipot or Palmyra leaves to make manuscripts. They should be cut one or two days before the full dark or *Amavaka* Poya day. This procedure has a strong scientific basis, and it has been shown to help extend the longevity of manuscripts and reduce insect activity. Kulasuriya (1996) and Alahakoon (2012) state that preparing leaves for writing manuscripts is very challenging and that the most suitable material for this purpose is the young or unripe buds. The first step is to identify the correct palm tree and palm bud, which is done by a writer who knows of palm leaf writing. Before cutting the palm bud, people allow the selected palm tree to ripen to the appropriate size until the auspicious days arrive. The auspicious period falls two or three days prior to the monthly Poya day.

The people also think that if the palm leaf bud is clipped before nightfall, the leaves will sustain less damage. According to Alahakoon (2012), labour activities involve a sense of ceremonial purity. The person chosen to carry out the rites starts by offering the tree with flowers and lamps. Initiating the process by formally requesting "permission from the tree" and wearing white outfit, the individual observes the five precepts described in Buddhism and begins the next day at the auspicious time chosen by an astrologer. Buddhist monks recite sacred hymns during these events. Following this, Buddhist monks ceremoniously treat the palm leaf bud while playing traditional music on the kettledrum (*daula*), double drum (*tammättama*), and drums (*magul bera*). The Buddhist monk, astrologer, drummer, and layperson (*gihiya*) are important individuals in this ceremony. The ceremony is carried out according to Buddhist customs (Lagamuwa, 2006). Indika (2011), Bandara (2020), Dhammarathana (2019), and Lagamuwa (2006) affirm that worship precedes the veneration of the palm tree. Then the leaf bud is carefully cut from the top of the tree and carried down.

Indika (2011) explains that the midrib of each leaf is cut, resulting in flexible strips that roll up into concentric circles. 'Vattu' is the term for the circular shape formed by rolling the palm leaves with the midrib removed (Alahakoon, 2012; De Silva, 1969; Kulasuriya, 1996; Lagamuwa, 2006; Dhammarathana, 2019; Bandara, 2020; Gunawardena, 1997; De Silva, 2021).

Figure 3: "Vattu" made by rolling palm leaves



Source: Documentary program on the creation of the Palm Leaf Manuscripts— Historic Nagala Rajamaha Viharaya, Kurunegala

The text describes the traditional preparation process for rolled palm leaves (*vattu*). According to Alahakoon (2007, 2012), the leaves are boiled using a mixture of natural ingredients, including unripe pineapple leaves, papaya fruit and its leaves and its leaves, *beli* leaves and fruits, *kappetiya*, *pinna*, *bombu* leaves, paddy, pure water and firewood, usually in a copper pot. In support of this, Lagamuwa (2006), Dhammarathana (2019), and Indika (2011) describe soaking the leaf rolls in water with added botanicals, such as papaya, pineapple, bilin, and *kappetiya*. Bandara (2020) confirms the use of croton, papaya and pineapple leaves in the process.

Figure 4: Boiling rolled palm leaves (*vattu*)



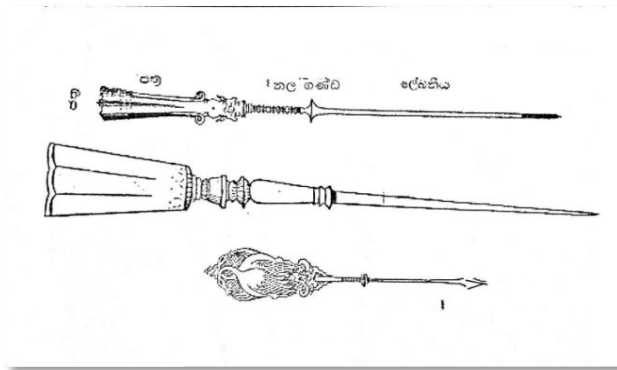
Source: Documentary program on the creation of the palm leaf manuscripts - Historic Nagala Rajamaha Viharaya, Kurunegala

According to Bandara (2020), Dhammarathana (2019), and Alahakoon (2012), after unrolling the palm leaves, they are hung out as single strips on a thread and dried under gentle sunshine for three or more days. Later, they are kept for three days exposed to the dew after wetting the palm leaf strips in the evening and washing them. The next stage in the manuscript preparation process is the polishing of the palm leaf strips. It is fixed to poles six feet above the ground. Stones weighing about two pounds are tied to both sides of the leaf strip. The leaf strip is placed on top of the wooden pole and rubbed up and down until it is flat. All the strips are flattened in the same way. During the polishing process, one end of the palm leaf is weighed down using a stone called a "*padi-gala*" or "polishing stone" (Piyadasa, 1985). "*Hema-kanda*" is the name of

the tree used to polish the palm leaves. When the palm leaves are polished, they have a smooth surface suitable for writing. Young monks in temples and monasteries enthusiastically participate in and support these activities (Alahakoon, 2023).

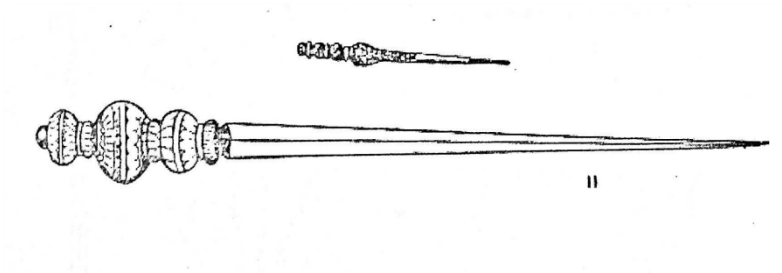
Another unique process is the creation of palm leaf strips. Leaf strips, which range from eight to thirty-two inches long and 2 to 2 3/4 inches wide, are cut to standard sizes appropriate to the subject to be written on, says Kulasuriya (1996). Traditionally, a hot iron rod is used to punch two holes in each leaf strip. After the leaf strips are pressed tightly together, a hot iron rod is used to singe their edges. This method not only guarantees consistent leaf size but also protects against pests and moisture. Once the empty palm leaves are finally prepared, writing is initiated at an auspicious time. These prepared palm leaves are written using two different types of styli. They are the sharp stylus (*panhinda*) and the blunt stylus (*ulkatuwa*) (Alahakoon, 2012).

Figure 5: *Panhinda*



Source: *Sri Lankave Puskola Poth Lekhana Kalava*

Figure 6: *Ulkatuwa*



Source: *Sri Lankave Puskola Poth Lekhana Kalava*

This stylus has a steel tip and a handle made of metal, wood, or ivory. Manuscript writing is a specialised craft, and the incising is done with the stylus's pointed edge. In the specialised art of manuscript writing, the scribe uses the pointed edge of a stylus to incise letters. The scribe holds the leaf strip in one hand and uses the left thumb, placed on top of the leaf, to guide the stylus along its natural lines. Beginners use the *ulkatuwa*, a relatively simple writing instrument without decoration, to practice writing (Bandara, 2020). A head Buddhist monk at a temple mainly instructs trainees on how to apply the blunt paper to a palm leaf and how deeply it should be placed on the leaf.

Indika (2011) and Dhammarathana (2019) claim that the letters engraved with the stylus are colourless, making them difficult to read. Therefore, a specific method is required to blacken them. It refers to this process as *kalumadeema*. Finely ground charcoal from the *Gaduma* tree is combined with resin or *kekunu* oil, and the engraved surface is cleaned with finely ground millet flour or rice bran. This procedure gives the palm leaf letters a dark, black colour and makes the words easier to read. Alahakoon (2012) suggests embossing the letters with black to enhance their legibility. Blackening improves the readability and durability of the manuscript. For blackening, various materials, including *Gaduma* charcoal and resin oil, are used. Bandara (2020) states that the writing on palm leaf manuscripts is illegible. Therefore, a mixture of *kakun* oil and gum (resin) oil turns them black. The procedure is called *nethra pinkama*. Dhammarathana (2019) and Alahakoon (2019) mention binding the folios together with a string through their openings. Then, they tie covers made of wood, metal, or ivory from palm leaf manuscripts, or *kamba*, to both sides of the manuscript using the same string. Finally, they wind the string using a traditional technique. During the wrapping procedure, Buddhist monks sometimes chant special verses. Manuscripts were carefully preserved and occasionally wrapped in fabric that had been soaked in herbal water. Manuscript boxes and cupboards were built from a special kind of wood that is resistant to insects.

Figure 7: Palm leaf manuscript storage in special cupboards



Source: Library, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

3.4 The cultural value of the palm leaf manuscripts

Palm leaf manuscripts are culturally significant in Sri Lanka because they preserve ancient knowledge, traditions, and literary heritage. Wimalajothi and Rajapaksa (2019) state that these sources, compiled using palm leaves, contain information on Buddhist teachings, history, Sinhala language and grammar, prose, verse, *Puravurtha*, *Yantra mantras*, astrology, architecture, and related subjects. Cabral et al. (2018) expressed that traditional knowledge of medicine, crafts and skills, astrology, etc., transmitted orally from one generation to another, was documented in these palm leaf manuscripts. This collection of palm leaf manuscripts is considered the country's intangible cultural heritage, containing traditional knowledge used before the 18th century AD. According to Alahakoon (2006), the manuscripts in the Colombo Museum Library and the University of Peradeniya are very valuable collections, and this collection consists of information on the Buddhist Tripitaka, Sinhala literature, history and tradition, grammar and lexicography, art, indigenous medicine and veterinary science, astrology, demonology, science, architecture and folklore, geography, mantras and spells,

prose and verse. Somananda and Weerasinghe (2021) mention that local knowledge, which was transmitted orally from generation to generation, was documented in the 1st century BC. The Kotte period is known as the golden age of writing palm leaf manuscripts. During this period, scholars wrote a new set of palm leaf manuscripts and copied a large number of existing ones. Among them were a large number of palm leaf manuscripts on various subjects such as religion, linguistic literature, medicine, veterinary science, astrology, yantra mantras, fiction, customs and festivals, law, borders (*kadima*), story (*vitthi*), history, taxes and revenue, agriculture, state administration, Buddhist education, world descriptions, and music and art. Cabral and Rathnabahu (2021) state that palm leaf manuscripts contain a vast amount of indigenous knowledge on various subjects such as Buddhism, history, archaeology, traditional medicine, folklore, and astrology. They also state that the heritage of palm leaf manuscripts goes back to their history.

Lagamuwa (2006) points out that these manuscripts contain information on religion, language, literature, medicine, veterinary science, astrology, yantra mantras, fiction, customs and ceremonies, law, discontinuities, annals, history, taxes and income, agriculture, state administration, Buddhist education, and world descriptions. He also states that there are many palm leaf manuscripts on various subjects, such as music and art. Veerabahu (2019) states that the writings of the palm leaf manuscripts include not only Buddhist literature and Sinhala literature but also a wealth of indigenous knowledge, such as indigenous medicine, astrology, and black magic. In the beginning, palm leaf manuscripts that recorded Dhamma became sacred objects, and later, the same notion seeped into other types of manuscripts as well (Ranasinghe, 2013).

According to Cabral (2024), these palm leaf manuscripts are a valuable source containing a massive storehouse of knowledge and wisdom that our ancestors have gained as a result of their experiences over thousands of years. It is stated that these manuscripts can reveal a vast amount of information about Buddhism, history, indigenous medicine, traditional agricultural methods, ancient technology, astrology, astronomy, demonology, language and literature, social conditions and the economic situation of the time. Palm leaf manuscripts are an invaluable source containing a great deal of knowledge and wisdom, which have been accumulated over thousands of years as a result of experiments and experiences. A large amount of information can be revealed from these manuscripts regarding Buddhism, history, indigenous medicine, veterinary science, ancient technology, astrology, astronomy, demonology, language and literature, social conditions, economic status, and so on (Indika, 2011).

Abayaratne (2018) points out that the culture of palm leaf manuscripts in Sri Lanka has a long history. According to Sri Lankan chronicles written around the 5th century AD, writing on palm leaves began in the 1st century AD. He states that during the reign of King Wattagan Abhaya (89-77 AD), Buddhist monks used palm leaves to inscribe the doctrine of the Buddha. In later periods, he points out that, in addition to religious texts, secular subjects were also written on palm leaves, like indigenous medical practices, astrology, palmistry literature, and various kinds of black magic. Nishanthi and Wijayasundara (2022) state that palm leaf manuscripts contain previously unpublished information about the history and culture of Sri

Lanka. They point out that palm leaf manuscripts are considered an invaluable cultural asset, especially within the Sri Lankan community.

4. Conclusion

This study attempted to gather information on the variety of palm leaves used for writing manuscripts in ancient Sri Lanka and examined published articles on palm leaf manuscripts. According to the published literature, the focus has been primarily on the creation of palm leaf manuscripts, the preservation of palm leaves, manuscript writing and writing styles, paintings on manuscripts and their characteristics, existing collections, palm leaf manuscript catalogues, and the temples and places where these manuscripts are stored. However, there is no existing written documentation or scholarly discussion regarding the variety of leaves used in manuscript writing, the factors that led to the selection of those leaves, the traditional techniques of writing on palm leaves, and their cultural value. This gap has been highlighted in this research as an area of focus. Therefore, the articles reviewed in this paper focus on aspects such as the variety of palm leaves used for writing manuscripts, the factors that led to the selection of those leaves, the traditional techniques of writing on palm leaves, and their cultural value. Accordingly, it has been possible to gain a broader understanding that Sri Lanka has a rich tradition of palm leaf manuscripts. However, although three varieties of leaves were mentioned in the manuscripts, most researchers have mentioned only two varieties: Talipot palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*) and Palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*). The Talipot palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*) is the most commonly used palm leaves for manuscripts. According to the literature analysis, it was clear that palm leaves were used for this purpose due to their easy availability, ease of preparation, durability, ease of handling, and ease of storage. The process of creating a palm leaf manuscript is very long, and it was clear from the literature analysis that traditional techniques were used for it. The process, from selecting the palm leaf bud to the completion of creating the palm leaf manuscripts, has a religious aspect, and the traditional techniques mentioned by many are similar. It was clear from the literature analysis that such traditional techniques were used to preserve the durability of palm leaf manuscripts. The literature analysis revealed that traditional techniques were used to preserve the durability of palm leaf manuscripts and to protect them from deterioration. This study demonstrates that palm leaf manuscripts are regarded as cultural heritage containing traditional knowledge on various subjects, including Buddhism, indigenous medicine, veterinary science, astrology, yantra mantras, legends, customs and ceremonies, law, continuities, annual reports, history, taxes and revenue, agriculture, astronomy, demonology, language and literature, social status, and economic status. Furthermore, these manuscripts are considered important sources of information for reconstructing the history and culture of a nation because they preserve our ancient cultural heritage. Thus, the whole range of studies reviewed in this paper provides a literature review examining the published literature, mainly on the variety of leaves used for writing palm leaf manuscripts, the factors that led to the selection of those leaves, the traditional techniques used to create palm leaf manuscripts, and the cultural value of palm leaf manuscripts.

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