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**Held in Conjunction With The
National Exhibition**

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ABSTRACTS

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**Palmyrah Research Institute
Palmyrah Development Board**

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Held in conjunction with the

National Exhibition 2026



“Palmyrah is the tree of life and the Prosperity of the Nation”

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Assessing the Market Potential of Value-Added Palmyrah Food Products among Consumers in Northern Sri Lanka

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Palmyrah Palm has more than 800 applications in food, drinks and fiber. Earlier studies have addressed the physiochemical, chemical, sensory acceptability and economic viability aspects of palmyrah-based products; however, market acceptability, consumer behavior and marketing problems have not been precisely covered, and there is a lack of literature dealing with the perceptions and experiences of Palmyrah Product Owners (PPOs) and Palmyrah Product Consumers (PPCs) on value-added palmyrah food products. This research aims to fulfill the research gap by assessing consumer acceptance, perceived value and purchase intention in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka regarding the market potential of four palmyrah-based food products. A qualitative study was adopted using purposive sampling to select 12 participants from Northern Province, based on two categories, PPO and PPC, collected from 7 and 5 participants respectively. The PPOs have an average of 20-35 years of working experience and PPCs have 5-15 years of consuming experience. In-depth interviews ranging from 25-30 minutes were conducted to analyze willingness to purchase, price sensitivity and substitution with existing alternatives, across four product categories: beverages, snacks, sweetener and flour, using the theory of planned behavior. Interviews were conducted in *Tamil* and analyzed thematically. The study used QDA Miner Lite only for organizing and coding the qualitative data. Five important themes emerged regarding consumer acceptance,

perceived value and purchase intention. ‘Premium on convenience’ found that consumers had a high demand for palmyrah beverages so long as the products were formulated as non-perishable and sugar-free varieties, indicating that modern consumers prioritize convenience and health attributes over traditional beverage forms. ‘Novelty-driven trial intent’ found that snack products having known flavors like spiciness and cheese showed high trial intention, acting as a “safe bet” entrance into the market. ‘Strategic positioning of product categories’ found that manufacturers should promote snack products as risk-free products, followed by ready-to-drink beverages, without entering any price war with conventional alternatives such as wheat flour and coconut sugar. ‘Price sensitivity in essentials’ indicated that consumer preference for palmyrah sweeteners was greatly influenced by price, being the traditional substitute for coconut sugar only when available at cheaper prices. ‘Culinary uncertainty and labeling confusion’ highlighted that palmyrah flour usage is limited by taste issues and labeling uncertainty, with consumers judging staple foods based on price and performance rather than assumed traditional quality, so improving labeling clarity and product information is needed to build consumer confidence. Value-added palmyrah products will be subject to obstacles in marketing due to consumer uncertainty and price sensitivity. This study is the first to simultaneously compare the consumer acceptance, perceived value and purchase intention of four categories of value-added products made from palmyrah. Further research could use conjoint analysis to find out the price and package mix for these products.

Keywords: Consumer acceptance, Palmyrah value addition, Product development, Purchase intention, Sri Lanka

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