

Yesteryears' wild confectionary

Most of the present generations' after-school eatery is generally fast-food. Ever wondered what the yesteryears' children ate?? Lots and lots of wild fruits, rarely washed but with mandatory addition of salt-chilli powder! The most common fruits around Bengaluru were Bikke-hannu (*Gardenia gummifera* L. F.) (appears like a very young coconut where only the pulp could be scraped and consumed), Bellada-hannu (*Acacia leucophloea* (Roxb.) Willd.) (a berry, supposedly tasted 'as sweet as honey'), Elache-hannu (*Ziziphus mauritiana*) (small reddish brown berry that was sour-sweet to taste), Karibev-hannu (*Murraya koenigii*) (fruit of the Curry tree, dark purple/black coloured berry, sweet taste), Eechala-hannu (*Phoenix pusilla* Gaertn.) (orangish-red elongated berries), Kaare-hannu (*Canthium coromandelicum* (Burm. f.) Alston) (black berries that grew on wild bushes, sour-sweet taste), Majjige-hannu (whitish berries that tasted sour-sweet), Hippnerale/Kambli-hannu (*Morus nigra*) (fruit of the Mulberry plant), Gerr-hannu (*Anacardium occidentale* L.) (fleshy part of cashew, could be sour or sweet) and, Paneer-hannu (*Syzygium jambos*) (yellow fruit, enclosing a large seed; sweet to taste), to name a few. In addition to these were Nerale (*Syzygium cumini*), Gooseberries (*Phyllanthus embelica*), Guavas (*Psidium guajava*), Raw mangoes (*Mangifera indica*) Jackfruit (*Artocarpus hirsutus* and *Artocarpus gomezianus*) and Figs.

There were confections available too, such as the Kamar-kattu, (a mixture of coconut and palm jaggery rolled into a small sphere and would take a long time, often a whole day to melt!) and chikki (a mixture of peanuts and jaggery, either in the form of a sphere or slabs). These foods were not only nutritional but also ensured conservation of local biodiversity, adhering to the simple philosophy of 'eat to conserve'. These fruits were collected from the wild vegetation that grew around the village/town. This not only created an opportunity for the unemployed without an investment but also came at a low energy cost. In the present day, unfortunately, urban sprawl has taken away those spaces. It is a pity that candies and toffees today come with an extra burden of a weighted carbon footprint.

Photo: Madhupreeta Muralidhar

Collector: Madhupreeta Muralidhar



Bellada hannu



Bikke hannu



Hippnerale hannu



Eechala hannu

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