

**A critique of the Sinhala language U-Tube broadcast by
Dr. Anuruddha Padeniya, entitled:
Western Doctor gives a thundering slap to Western Methodology.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvfXzXXvgRU>

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<https://dh-web.org/green/padeniyamay21Sinhala.html>

We recognize that Dr. Padeniya, being a medical trade union leader, is also a consummate politician. So, it is not surprising that he comes forward to “reveal” various conspiracies and alleged corruption in some government departments. His explosive claim is that such corruption made Sri Lankans to eat poison in their food since 1960, and that they are still continuing to do so. He says that “we must go back to **“traditional Knowledge, and traditional ways of producing food”**, and that we must NOT EAT POISON. It is part of the Sri Lankan culture to take at face value what a doctor says, and say “Saadhu, Saadhu”, what a good, socially concerned doctor!

However, how much of what Dr. Padeniya says is true? How much of it is fiction? We must determine if Padeniya is capable of critically evaluating information. After all, we know of so-called “specialist Western doctors” who are turning to **“traditional knowledge”** to sell doubtful products that are claimed to fight even viral diseases. We know of doctors in Kurunegala who supported the “Dhammika Paeniya”, a concoction made by a devotee of the Hindu Godless “Kali Amma” following a “vision”. We know of “Western doctors” from Karapitiya who falsely claimed that they were backed by the Karapitiya Hospital, and the Ruhuna University, in marketing an untested anti-Covid concoction. We also know of “western” doctors who invoke God Natha to market their smoke pot (“dum hattiya”) and other “traditional” treatments claimed to cure Covid in 3-4 days!

We discuss Dr. Padeniya's false propaganda, treated in three parts in the foregoing.

Part I: Does Dr. Padeniya have any capacity for critical thinking?

Dr. Padeniya begins his U-tube talk by citing history, a subject where he is a layman. Reviewing what he says here is a strong test of his capacity for critical thinking.

Dr. Padeniya tells us that in ancient times Lankans lived to 140 years of age. This type of claim is used by Dr. Padeniya to tell us that the diet of the ancients ensured their longevity.

To support his belief he claims that Pliny the Elder who wrote an encyclopedia in the 1st century has said so. He also claims that Pliny's Encyclopedia is the best in the world. Pliny has also said that in these tropical countries people had one leg that they could use as an umbrella against the sun's heat. He also claims that some people had dog heads. So, does Dr. Padeniya believe that ancients Lankans were like that? That Pliny's encyclopedia is an uncritical collection of information and mis-information current at the time is well recognized not only today, but even in 1646, by Sir Thomas Browne who made a study of Pliny's work

Dr. Padeniya tells us that King Pandukabhaya lived to an age over 100 years, and that King Mutaseeha reigned for 70 years, and that any one who died at 100 was a “young man” dying. That very little is known with any certainty regarding the period of Pandukabhaya and Mutaseeha is the view of

respected Historians like Prof. K. M. de Silva. Dr. Padeniya should at least learn something of Sri Lankan history by reading, say, Prof. K. M. de Silva's History of Sri Lanka, Penguin Edition.

Is this the kind of “evidence” that the “specialist” doctor Padeniya has to prove that the diet of the ancient Lankans ensured a long life? He could have considered archaeological material like bones and teeth, fossilized feces etc., of the ancients to show what type of diseases they had, and even what they ate.

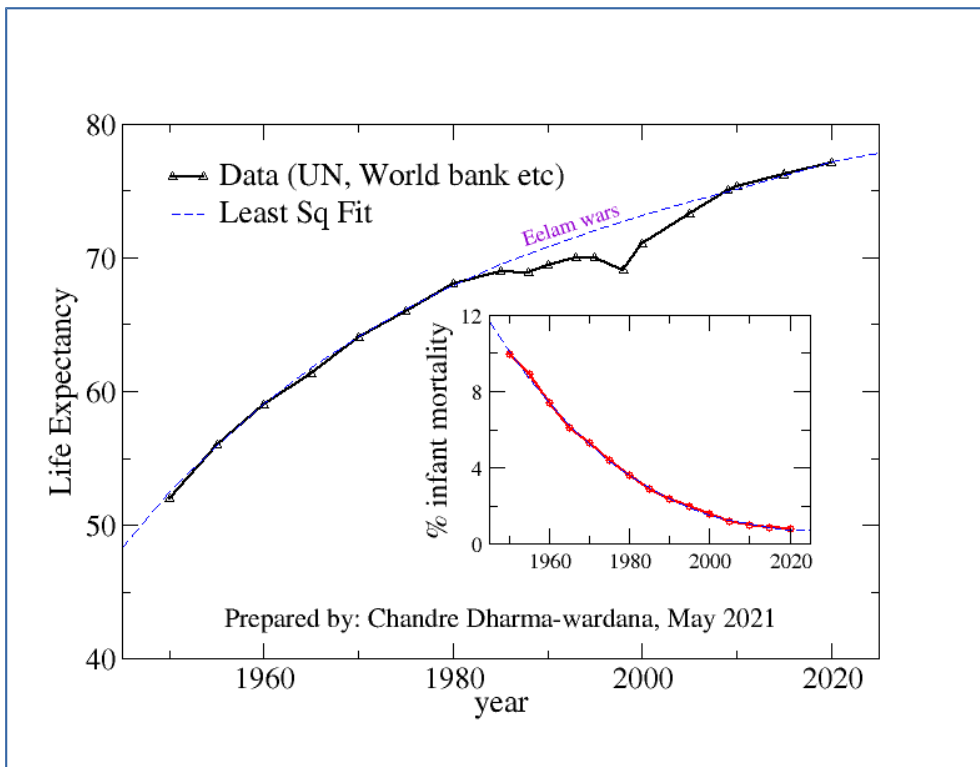


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In contrast, it is said perhaps more truthfully that the Buddha died in his eighties. On the other hand, the Bible says that Methuselah lived to 969 years. So Dr. Padeniya should advocate that we return to the diet of the ancient Jews; after all, if he can accept Pliny the Elder without question, why not the Bible, accepted by billions of people?

Miraculous increase of life expectancy of people who eat poison!

Dr. Padeniya says that the multinationals and scientists of the agriculture department have conspired to feed poison to the Sri Lankans since 1960. Hence we examine the life expectancy of Lankans from 1950 onwards.



So, Dr. Padeniya, **if Lankans have been eating toxins since 1960, by what miracle can their life expectancy increase?** If the food has poison, **how can the percentage infant mortality (deaths per 100 births of infants) for pregnant mothers decrease drastically, as seen in the red curve?**

Recollect the Jataka story of the hare who, lacking any critical ability, frightened all the animals in the forest by claiming that the sky is falling. As in the Jataka, we extend our compassion to Dr. Padeniya.

Part II: The Green Revolution, and Western Medicine

Dr. Padeniya claims in an “Ayubowan Lanka U-tube that Lankans have been eating poison since 1960. And yet, as the accompanying graph shows, the life expectancy **increased**, while the infant mortality drop from 1950 onwards, steadily?

There were two main reasons, among others for this miracle!

- (1) The **Green revolution in agriculture that Dr. Padeniya condemns**, demanding a return to “**traditional**” Practices and seeds.
- (2) “**Western**” **medical treatment and public health**. Dr. Padeniya gives them a **thundering slap**. His resort to violence fits with his wish to go back to “traditional methods”!

Agriculture and Fertilizers.

In earlier times, farmers used composted farm refuse, bone-meal, sulphur, and added oxides of arsenic and lead as pesticides. A farmer was lucky to get over 1.5 tonnes of harvest per hectare. When the **Harber-Bosch** method of converting atmospheric N into Urea became industrial in the 1930s, the compost-bonemeal & sulphur agriculture was discarded. For the first time a majority of people, at least in the industrial world vercame malnutrition. Their life expectancy began to rise steadily..

But there was imminent famine in the poor countries that had just gained independence. The Indian government that faced a desperate death of millions accepted Dr. Norman Borlaug's proposals and adopted modern N, K, P fertilizers, and modern high-yielding seeds that needed less water. This spectacularly successful agricultural transformation was named the "Green Revolution". It replaced the dangerous pesticides of traditional farming, (i.e., oxides of arsenic, lead, sulphur) with much safer chemical pesticides.

So, even in Sri Lanka, from 1950 on-wards, methods of the green revolution were steadily applied, and the “**Mother of All Illnesses**”, namely “**Malnutrition**” was increasingly avoided, leading to increased life expectancy etc., as shown in the graph. Lankan scientists developed new rice hybrids. They are heroes of this Green Revolution though slandered by the like of Dr. Padeniya.

Dr. Padeniya wants to return to old, low-yielding grain like “Suvanael, Kalu-Heenati” etc., even though they take more water and more time to grow. He thinks they have medical properties! **This is an unproven conjecture, with no double-blind experiments to prove it.** A slightly lower glycemic index proves nothing as that depends on the level of “polishing” of the grains used. Interestingly, Dr. Padeniya admits that no one really knows the aetiology of high blood pressure or diabetes, while recommending traditional rice in the same breath!

If organic fertilizers were exclusively used, following Dr. Padeniya, the harvests will fall to 1/5 of conventional farming. If traditional grains are used, it will drop even further, bringing back the famines, malnutrition and short life expectancy, and high mortality that preceded the green revolution.

Some politically powerful Sri Lankans support an exclusive organic agriculture, and brashly say that they can provide ALL the food needed organically. Why the current world production of organic food (2% of the total food needed) cannot be jacked up to 100% as need is explained in the following web document. It is a review of the research article by Dr. Adrian Mueller, a leading agricultural authority and supporter of organic agriculture.

<https://dh-web.org/place.names/posts/CD-Mueller-OrganicL.pdf>

The Green Revolution is just the early dramatic effect of the launch of modern agriculture. But it has evolved to generate Good Agricultural Practice (GAP), artificial intelligence-based Smart Farm technology (SFT), grow-tower technology, GM foods etc. Modern agriculture has extended and superseded the Green Revolution. Carotene contains Golden Rice, a GM product opposed by Luddites like *Vandana Shiva*, epitomizes the Hippocratic dictum that food is also medicine. Dr. Padeniya also utters Hippocratic quotes, but to justify the unjustifiable objective of creating a wasteful food system catering to the frightened rich.

In any case, what fertilizer should be used, and how much N, K, P and humus matter (organic matter) must be used should be determined by a soil analysis, and not by the dicta of Dr. Padeniya or Ven. Ratana. Almost a decade ago the Agriculture Department issue booklets for each district, giving recommendations of how much mineral, or organic fertilizer should be used for the optimal mixture.

But the problem faced by the Lankan farmer is not whether to choose mineral fertilizer, organic fertilizer, or an optimal mixture. His problem is, once he has farmed using what ever fertilizer that he can find and grow his crop, he has nowhere to sell his product and get a fair price. After successive build up of debt, many farmers simply committed suicide. Dr. Padeniya has nothing to say about the central problem of the typical Sri Lankan farmer who cultivates a few hectares for his perilous living.

Western medical system.

The “Western Medical system” evolved from the old traditional herbal medical systems of earlier times. Western medicine in Lanka led to the control of most infectious diseases caused by pathogens. This task was beyond the capacity of traditional indigenous medicine. The latter is strong on treating other physiological ailments, but not diseases caused by pathogens.

So, infectious diseases like smallpox, measles, mumps, whooping cough, typhoid, diphtheria, dysentery, cholera, polio, TB, leprosy, as well as hookworm, tape worm, malaria etc., have all been put down thanks to “Western Medicine”. It is these successes that increased the life expectancy and reduced infant mortality. So, is Dr. Padeniya giving a thundering slap to “Western medicine” to please the “desheeya vedakam-Ayurveda” lobby?

Dr. Padeniya says that some members of the GMOA prescribe a whole handful of pills when a slight change in diet suffices. So, the fault is not in Western medicine, but in the practitioners who collect commissions from every blood test done, every X-ray, and from every prescription filled. Even today 40% of rural children come to school hungry, and so, the prevention of disease still needs to target food production for the poor, and NOT organic food for the Elite who will still need those pills, needles and vaccinations..

Many members of Dr. Padeniya's GMOA prefers making money to disease prevention or even simple humanity to patients, or even to the dead. The following link, where a doctor recounts how the practitioners play their game is illuminating.

<https://dh-web.org/place.names/posts/kafkaesque-SL-CoronaDeath1.html>

Part-III: Chronic Kidney Disease

Dr. Padeniya claims that the chronic kidney disease now endemic in the Rajarata is caused by the use of imported fertilizers and agrochemicals. He claims that unless we exclusively use organic fertilizer, a new pandemic of Kidney disease more dangerous than Covid-19 will engulf the country soon. Dr. Padeniya supported the “Natha Deviyo click” who claimed that arsenic and glyphosate in fertilizers caused the Rajarata Kidney disease. One of the “Natha Deviyo” people even became a minister, and Dr. Padeniya maybe keeping that in mind.

If Dr. Padeniya cannot sort out the chaff from the grain of historical accounts or in Pliny the Elder, he is unlikely to sort of the complexities of the aetiology kidney disease or keep abreast of research. As the following link shows, Dr. Padeniya went directly counter to cutting edge research even prior to this::
<http://www.dailynews.lk/2018/04/19/features/148615/glyphosate-ban-has-gmoa-studied-research>

Initially every one thought that Kidney Disease in the Rajarata must be connected to the run off of agrochemicals that flow down various rivers into agricultural areas. If that is so, those who consume the water in rivers, canals and tanks should be getting the disease. They did not, but those who live on high ground away from these agricultural waters, and drink water from their dug wells on higher ground are the ones who contract kidney disease!

The wells used by affected people **contained an excess of fluoride and magnesium ions, of geological origin.** Furthermore, the well water did NOT contain any agrochemical pollutants. This

was confirmed by experiments on laboratory rats conducted at the Institute of Fundamental studies and the Peradeniya University who fed rats with hard water containing fluoride. It was shown that the Mg ions in the hard water was implicated.

<https://arxiv.org/abs/1704.07906>

Analytical work on the pollutants collected by reverse-osmosis plants in endemic areas by Tokyo University, research from the Kidney Unit of the Kandy Hospital all confirmed this origin of chronic kidney disease in the Rajarata., and **showed that agrochemicals are NOT linked to this disease.**

So, Dr. Padeniya is invited to brush up his knowledge of Kidney disease to avoid disseminating false information.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12403-019-00340-w>

Dr. Padeniya's proposal to install oxen-powered stone mills or “Sekku”!

Dr. Padeniya attacks use of Palm oil, and wants Lankans to install “Kekku” (traditional stone mills for extracting oil, see Figure) in every village to extract oil using artisanal methods..

A false prophet is admonishing the people to grow coconut without modern fertilizers or pesticides against beetles and other pests. People are to harvest the coconut, dry the flesh in the sun and then in use a “sekkuwa” to make oil. Shouldn't the GMOA establish a model village and show how to do it. If the model does not produce enough coconut, do you plan to import from Malaysia? This way of drying in the sun is sure to encourage the formation of the fungus *Aspergillus* which generates aflatoxins. If even a bit of poonack gets trapped inside the crevices of the Sekkuwa that becomes a center for infection. Just because the ancients ate contaminated food as they were unaware of all these, why should we revert to these primitive and unsafe methods of oil extraction that leave half the oil in the poonack.'

Dr. Padeniya is seemingly unaware of the shortage of coconuts in the country. Palm oil is a safe inexpensive vegetable oil which is far better than animal fats or most other oils, and is the oil most used in the food industry. Professor Rajapaksa of Peradeniya University, Chemistry, wrote as follows.

“Padeniya is condemning palm oil without any scientific reason. ... Coconut oil has the highest amount of saturated fat and palm oil is next. Sunflower oil and olive oil have the highest amounts of unsaturated fats....Sunflower oil and olive oil are the best if not heated to high temperatures. However, for deep frying they are the worst because of the conversion to the trans form and carcinogenicity associated with reactive oxygen species production. These oils should not be used for deep frying. As regard to deep frying coconut and palm oils are the best.”.



[credits: Google Images]

What Prof. Rajapaksa says is well established. While saturated fats are toxic to insulin producing cells, unsaturated fats like Oleic acid may even be protective at normal temperatures. But the Lankan consumer needs a safe, inexpensive oil and they do a lot of frying. So, palm oil and coconut oil qualify. But coconut oil may be 5-10 times more expensive than palm oil. In extracting oils, low temperature methods, e.g., centrifugal extraction under sanitary conditions should be used. The artisan mills (Sekku) are open to dust, acid rain, insects, even mice that come to eat ponnack residues. They leave their droppings in the mill. The miller comes next morning, ties the ox, and with the same hands roughly wipes the interior of the “Sekku” and proceeds to extract oil. Even the mouse droppings wash into the oil, and that is the quality of Dr. Padeniya's traditional sekku oil!

Some “environmentalists” object to palm oil claiming that palm plantations have destroyed virgin forests in, e.g., Indonesia. But such objections do not apply to converting derelict rubber plantations to palm plantations, esp. in Lanka where an inexpensive frying oil is needed.

Conclusion.

Dr. Padeniya is falsely claiming that Lankans have been eating poison since 1960. He predicts an epidemic of Kidney disease more frightening than the Covid pandemic, although he clearly knows nothing about the statistics, or the causes of the disease. Just as for the hare in the Dadabbha Jataka, this very naive Dr. Padeniya earns our compassion. However, because he is a “Doctor” some people may accept his falsehoods at face value