



Using guns: Anti-British fights in Sri Lanka

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බ්‍රිතාන්‍යයන් යනු 19 වන සියවසේ දී ලොව බලවත්ම යටත්විජිත නිර්මාපක ජාතියකි. 1796 දී බ්‍රිතාන්‍ය යටත්විජිතවාදීහු ශ්‍රී ලංකාවට පැමිණියහ. 1815 මාර්තු 10 වන විට ඔවුහු ශ්‍රී ලංකාව යටත් කර ගත්හ. ඔවුන් සතුව වඩාත් දියුණු ආයුද පැවති අතර යුදමය තාක්ෂණයක් ද පැවතිණි. 1796 සිට ක්‍රමයෙන් වර්ධනය වූ යටත්විජිත පාලනයට එරෙහිව ශ්‍රී ලාංකිකයෝ ආයුද භාවිතයෙන් සටන් කළහ. මෙකී සටන්වලදී ශ්‍රී ලාංකිකයෝ විවිධාකාරයේ යුද්ධායුද භාවිත කළහ. සාම්ප්‍රදායිකව භාවිතා කරන ලද පංචායුදයන්ට (ආයුද පහට) අමතරව ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ සටන්වලදී තුවක්කුව නව ආයුදයක් ලෙස භාවිතා වීම දහසයවන සියවසේ සිට ඉස්මතු විය. ශ්‍රී ලාංකිකයන්ට තුවක්කුව සම්බන්ධයෙන් පැවතියේ ප්‍රාථමික දැනුමකි. විදේශීය අවියක් වන තුවක්කුව ශ්‍රී ලාංකිකයන් භාවිත කළේ කවරාකාරයෙන් ද යන්න පිළිබඳ ඓතිහාසික තොරතුරු විරල ය. ඓතිහාසික පර්යේෂණ ක්‍රමවේදය අනුගමනයෙන් සාහිත්‍ය මූලාශ්‍රයන්හි තුවක්කුව පිළිබඳව වන අන්තර්ගතයන් විශ්ලේෂණාත්මක අධ්‍යයනකට ලක් කිරීම මෙම ලිපිය මගින් සිදු කර තිබේ. තවද, මෙම අධ්‍යයනයෙන් සටන්කාමී ඉතිහාසයක් සහිත ශ්‍රී ලාංකිකයන් සතු වූ තුවක්කු භාවිතයේ ස්වභාවය පිළිබඳ තොරතුරු ගෝලීය ප්‍රජාව දැනුවත් කිරීම සඳහා ගැඹුරු සමාලෝචනයක් සිදු කරන ලදී. අද්විතීය වේදිකකරණයකින් යුක්තව බ්‍රිතාන්‍ය හමුදාවන්ට එරෙහිව සටන් කිරීම සඳහා විදේශීය තුවක්කු භාවිත කිරීමේ හැකියාවක් ශ්‍රී ලාංකිකයන්ට පැවති බව ලිපිය තහවුරු කරයි. අතපත්තු ලේකම් මහත්තයා, වෙඩිකර ලේකම්, වඩනතුවක්කු ලේකම් මහත්තයා, කොඩිතුවක්කු ලේකම් මහත්තයා, බොන්ඩික්කුල ලේකම්, රනාවුද මඩුවේ ලේකම් මහත්තයා, අතපත්තු මඩුවේ මුහන්දිරම් නිලමේ, ආවුදගේ වනක්කු නිලමේ, අතපත්තු මඩුවේ කන්කානම් නිලමේ, රනාවුද මඩුවේ කන්කානම් නිලමේ සහ ආවුදගේ කන්කානම් ලෙස ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ තුවක්කු භාවිතය හා බැඳී

පැවති තනතුරු එකොළහක් මෙම අධ්‍යයනයෙන් අනාවරණය විය. මස්කට්, පිස්තෝලය, කාලතුවක්කුව (බොන්ඩික්කල), ගිණි තුවක්කුව, පින්තල තුවක්කුව, පවුන්ඩර්, යකඩ තුවක්කු, කොඩිතුවක්කු/ජිත්ගල් (ජිත්ජල්/තණකොළ පෙත්තා) සහ වඩනතුවක්කුව ලෙස තුවක්කු නිෂ්පාදන ප්‍රභේදයන් හඳුනා ගනු ලැබිණි.

මූලාසඳු : බ්‍රිතාන්‍ය, සටන්, යටත්විජිතවැසියා, තුවක්කුව, තනතුරු, ශ්‍රී ලංකාව

### 1. Introduction

In Turkish, the term ‘Gun’ is used to refer to what is called a ‘thupak’ (Sri Sumangala Dictionary, 2006, p.412). It is a matter of controversy as to when and how the gun had been used in Sri Lanka and by which nation it was introduced. There was a Bamboo Tube, a tool used with gunpowder, marks as the world’s first weapon (Buchanan, 2006; Kelly, 2004; Lee, 1981 & Needham, 1986), which was found in China in 1000 AD. There is evidence of a weapon called ‘Nach jambuwa’ or ‘Jambu Bataya’ in ancient Sri Lanka (Daraniyagala, 1942, pp.122-123). Both ‘Bamboo Tube’ and ‘Nach jambuwa’ weapons were used to shoot poison. A poisonous arrow was shot using the ‘Jambu Btaya.’ Both weapons had the same technology. It is generally believed that the oldest gun in the world was manufactured by the Chinese, and later, this technology spread throughout the Middle East and Europe.

It is pertinent to mention that the weapons were developed parallel to social advancement when investigating the historical evolution of any country, including Sri Lanka. In ancient Sri Lanka, a wide variety of weapons were used, such as Asisatti, Thomara, Hendiwala, Karavaalarda-Chandravanka, Key Bows, Machine Rock, and various other weapons (Saddarmalankaraya, 1962, p.48). According to historical sources, in addition to the human-made weapons, natural objects were sometimes used as protective equipment<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, there is no clear evidence that the ‘gun’ was used until the Portuguese arrived in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka was invaded before the 16<sup>th</sup> century only by Asians. But the situation changed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with European invasions. Sri Lankans began to use European firearms to fight back with Europe. As a result of European invasions, Sri Lankans focused on producing guns in addition to the existing weapons since the ancient kingdoms in Sri Lanka from the 16th Century (Davy, 1821, pp. 264-265; Marshall, 1846, p.31; Daraniyagala, 1942, pp.100-101; Vimalananda, 2010, p.420). Powell, noted that Sri Lankans set aside

1 ‘හතී ගහෙඬා රථ චක්කං-මිතතෝ සකට පඤ්ජරං  
නාළිකෙර තරං ගොඨො -නිම්මලෝ ඛග්ගමුත්තමං’’

The elephant took a chariot wheel, a wheel of a carriage was taken Nandimitra, Gotaimbara took a coconut tree, Suranimala taken a noble sword.

‘‘කාලරුක්ඛං මහාසොණො-ථෙරපුත්තෝ මහා ගදං-විසුං විසුං විටී ගතා-දමිලෙ තපු  
වුණ්ණයුං’’ Mahasona warrior took a palm tree and Theraputtabhaya took a mace destroyed  
Tamils (Saddarmalankaraya, 1962, p.50)

the bows and arrows and fought with the gun against the British (Powell, 1984, pp. 89; 90; 96; 160). Sources reveal that Sri Lankan fighters used many guns against the British during 1803-04 (Ingreesi Hatana, 155; 180; 245 Poems; Powell, 1984, p.141). During the reign of King Sri Wikreme Raja Singha, several new administrative divisions and appointed positions were formed that relate to the gun (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, p.24). "The Bondikkulla Lekam was the head of a department instituted by the King Sri Wikreme Raja Singha, to take charge, as the word implies, of the iron cannon belonging to his majesty" (Davy, 1821, p.150). After the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom some of these gun related designations were continued by the British Government (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, p.226). These positions and administrative divisions fought against the British rule under the King Sri Wikreme Raja Singha in 1803-1804 battle and Vilbawa in 1817-1818 battle. There was a peasant's battle in 1848. Sri Lankans used guns to attack the British forces in all those battles. Therefore, it is essential to disclose the nature of the gun-based approach against the British invaders in Sri Lanka.

## **2. Problem Statement**

King Rajah Singha I used his know-how to obtain firearms into his possession and wanted the blacksmiths across the country to manufacture efficient fire locks and good quality gun powder in Sri Lanka (Marshall, 1846, p. 31). From 1796 until the second independence battle in 1848, Sri Lankans fought three decisive battles against the British government. The war of 1803-04 were won by the Sri Lankans (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, pp. IV-V). The Battle of 1818 began in September 1817 and continued for more than a year until execute of Kappitapola and Madugalle on 25<sup>th</sup> of November (C.O 54/73 No. 317; Vimalananda, 1970, p. 314; Powell, 1984, p.198; C.O 54/66 No. 248; Vimalananda, 1970, pp.99-101). It is reported that the battle of 1848 lasted for eleven months (Vimalananda, 1976, p.80). The fighters used the gun in all these battles against the British (Bussche, 1817, pp.170; 24; Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, p.15; Powell, 1984, pp.138; 96; 160). i.e. Sri Lankans located six Koodituakoo<sup>2</sup>(Figure 02) and six Kaalathuwakkoo in Balana gravet (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, pp. 22;30). When the British troops marched to Ganetenna from Attaapitiya, Sri Lankan fighters shot the British soldiers at five locations using guns (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, p.192). Such facts confirm that the Sri Lankan fighters used the gun in all these battles against the British including the sources written by Bussche (1817), D'Oyly (1917), Powell (1984) and (Vimalananda, 1976). At the same time aforementioned evidence suggests that the locals were able to get familiar with a new weapon, which even supported them to win against the British troops. Therefore, the study found that it is important to disclose the nature of the gun-based approach against the British invaders in Sri Lanka. Thus, the study intended to answer the following research questions such as: what are the facts revealed by historical evidence about the gun used by the Sri Lankan militants in anti-British fights? What were the new positions and duties related to firearms, and what was the nature of the use of Guns by Sri Lankans?

2 The word "Kodituakoo" is written according to John Davy's (1821) source.

### **3. Objectives of the Research**

The objectives of this paper are to review available historical evidence about the Guns that were used by Sri Lankan militants in anti-British fights, to identify the new positions and duties formed that relates to firearms, and to explain the nature of the use of Gun by Sri Lankans.

### **4. Research Methodology**

A historical research methodology was used for this research. Thus, primary, and secondary sources of literature were used to investigate the above-mentioned research problems. Some of the primary sources used in the study were Diary of John D'Oyly, Kuveni Sihaba and Dambadeni Asna, Saddarmalankaraya, Ingreesi Hatana, The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon, An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of Its Inhabitants with Travels in That Island. A Sketch of the Constitution of the Kandyan Kingdom, Ceylon, Sri Sumangala Dictionary and Rajavaliya. Secondary sources such as The Kandyan War, Medieval Ceylon Society, gunpowder, Explosives and the State: A Technological History, Sinhala Weapons and Armour, gunpowder: Alchemy, Bombards, and Pyrotechnics: The History of the Explosive That Changed the World, Introduction to Battlefield Weapons Systems and Technology, Science and Civilization in China, Tri Sinhala the Last Phase 1796-1815, Sinhala Hatan Kavi, The Great Rebellion of 1818 and Sinhala Anduwa were also referred to achieve the purpose of the study. Later, the information revealed by the sources were verified using archaeological evidence. Discovery of data related to both the Gun and particular phenomenon during the Sri Lankans' fought against the British was the sole focus of this study.

### **5. Results**

This section reveals the answers obtained on the following questions. What are the facts revealed by historical evidence about the gun used by the Sri Lankan militants in anti-British fights? What were the new positions and duties related to firearms, and what was the nature of the use of Guns by Sri Lankans?

#### **5.1 The facts revealed by historical evidence about the gun used by the Sri Lankan militants in anti-British fights:**

The Sri Lankan militants used many guns in the War of 1803 and 1804 (Ingreesi Hatana, 2001, 155; 180; 245 Poems; Powell, 1984, p.141). MacDowal points out that while a British soldier may have seen Sinhala military power as "truly contemptible", the battle against the Sinhalese army was very catastrophic because in the past, their ancestors had fought so bravely under their commanders (Peiris, 1939, p.26). Powell reports that Sri Lankans used guns, instead of bow and arrows (Powell, 1984, pp.89; 90; 96; 160).

Pilimatalauwe, once informed the British that every man in the Kandyan Kingdom was armed with a weapon for war and that the only ones who did not were the goldsmiths, trailers, and drummers (Peiris, 1939, pp.22-23). Guns were fired for the Dissava's safety, the Buddhist temples' safety, and for the rituals. D'Oyly (1917) reported that there was a trench dug before the Maluwa in a temple and 25 Cannon were mounted on it (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, p.28). It is evident that private guns were present at this time and were used in wartime with the purpose of the firing. Order has been given to the people to come up with the Guns to fire at the festival which was held in Maniyangomuwa temple (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, p.41). Sri Wikrama Raja Singha erected a battery and amounted with cannon on the side of the river at Geytabe in 1815 (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, p.198)

During the Battle of 1815, the king organized an artillery force on a side of the Getambe River and installed artillery (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, p.198). Among the 400 people returning to Kandy Perahera, there were 06 Matchlocks and 32 Muskets (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, p.2). These people belong to Sabaragamuwa. Once Sabarugamu Dissava secretly urged his men to obtain Dutch guns if they did not have Dutch guns (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, p.3). Thus, it is evident that the Sri Lankans also owned Dutch guns. There were 3 Matchlock gunmen and 25 Muskets gunman with the Tunkorale Dissava on the way to the Ruwanwella (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, p.2). Also, there were guard deployed with Matchlocks and Kodituakkoo near the inns. (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917; 3; 25).

Soldiers of the Kandyan Kingdom, who worked at a Rest House, regularly worked around the royal palace day and night, carrying handguns (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, p.25). The insurgents were armed with guns when the Dissava traveled. The Elapatha Nilame possessed a large number of guns, hoes, and iron goods. The British discovered that there were 62 antique rifles buried among the King's possessions during the battle of 1815. By the Battle of 1818, the guns called musket, pistol (Figure 01), and ginjals use of Sinhalese were at an optimum level. Powell's following words confirm this point. "...At the start of the revolt, the people of Vellassa were armed with little more than bows and arrows, but as the war spread to the richer provinces, more and more of the insurgents were found to be armed with muskets or gingals. Soon every other Kandyan fighting man was seen to be carrying a firearm, and the number captured during the war, or surrendered afterward, seems to confirm that this was so; the British recovered over 8000 muskets, pistols or ginjals" (Powell, 1984, p.148). According to Ehelepola, the number of firearms that the Sinhalese had in 1818 war period was as follows:

**Table 01:  
Firearms Classification**

S/n	Where the Guns were	The type of Gun	Figures
01	Kadawata of Nalanda in Matale	Cannon	02
02	Balani Kadawata in Yati Nuwara	Cannon	02
03	In the village Diwela in Four Korles	Gun	01
04	In the village Hatoluwa Four Korles	Guns	02
05	At Giriagama Kadawatha in Harasiya Pattu	Guns	02
06	Kandy	Guns	09
07	Baṭugedara	Small Gun	01
08	Belongs to the Koodituakoo Lekam	Matchlocks or Ginjalls	22
09	In the Dissavani of the Four Korles	Guns	18
10	In the Dissavani of the Seven Korles	Guns	16
11	In the Dissavani of Uva	Guns	09
12	In the Dissavani of Matale	Guns	08
13	In the Dissavani Saparagomu	Guns (Eight of the thirteen guns were distributed in Seetawaka, and Ehelepola tells D'Oyly that he does not know where the other five are located in the country's middle.)	13
14	In the Three Korles	Koodituakoo	07
15	Uḍa paḷata	Koodituakoo	05
16	Walapane	Koodituakoo	06
17	Nuvara kalaweya	Koodituakoo	05
18	Thaman kada	Koodituakoo	05
19	Wellasse	Koodituakoo	05

*Source: Peiris, 1939*

Ehelepola revealed that in addition to this amount mentioned above, there are no firearms. And the number of handguns in the King Palace (Mahawasala) were 2,000 or 3000 (Peiris, 1939, pp.187-188). Those guns were belonging to Dutch, French, English, and Sinhalese. Further, Ehelepola said that even though some gun powder and pellets are distributed among the several citizens across the country, those are not enough for a month-long war. Also, there was some sulfur in Bimthanna.

1818 Governor Brownrigg proclaimed that once the additional troops from India had landed Sri Lanka and, militants could not expect any pardon and that they would be pardoned to surrender to the British army with all their firearms, gun powder, balls, and sulfate (Powell, 1984, p.262). Accordingly, the Sri Lankans had guns in abundance. O'Neil mentions that the allies of the Sinhalese leaders had fled, leaving behind 20 factories and many armors at the end of the 1818 battle. These indicate that the fighters still used many of the munitions. According to the letter written by O'Neil to Captain Fraser from Parrawahegama "...The whole of their followers run off leaving 20 stand of excellent Arms and a quantity of Ammunition—which I will destroy, there was taken a small bag of Sulphur

which I will bring on with the Arms...” (C.O. 54/71 No. 315; Vimalananda, 1970, p.308). This part of the letter explains that until the final stage of the 1818 battle there was a huge quantity of ammunition and arms belonged to the Sri Lankan militants.

## 5.2 The new Position and duties related to firearms:

It can be found there was an organisational system related to firearms. Considering the John Davy’s (1821), John D’Oyly’s (1929), and Ralph Pieris’s (2012) writings about the military information in Kandy, this study could create a table as follows on the classification of the designation, states, and responsibilities or duties of the persons who were related with the firearms.

**Table 02:**  
**Classification of Positions, States and Responsibility or Duties**

S/N	Designation of the Position (Spelling in <i>Sihala</i> Language Rendering of John Davy, 1821)	English Term and States of the position	Responsibility or Duty relate the position
1	<b><i>Attepatuay lekam mahatmeya</i></b>	Secretary of the <i>Attepattoo</i> Officer of the King’s Palace	Commander of the <i>Attapattoo</i> -people, Body-guard of the <i>Dissave</i>
2	<b><i>Wedikkara lekam</i></b>	<i>Wedikkara</i> Secretary	Head of the cannon battalion
3	<b><i>Wadenatuakkoocava lekam mahatmeya</i></b>	Secretary of the <i>Wadenatuakkoocava</i> Officer of the King’s Palace	Bringing the <i>Wadenatuakkoocave</i> in front of the King when his journey
4	<b><i>Koodituakoo lekam mahatmeya</i></b>	Secretary of the <i>Koodituakoo</i> Officer of the King’s Palace	Charge of the ordnance department of the district and of the low-caste ‘ <i>Paduas</i> ’. commanded the people who carried <i>Jingalls</i>
5	<b><i>Bondikkulla lekam</i></b>	Secretary of the <i>Bondikkulla</i> Officer of the King’s Palace	Protect iron cannon belong to the King, Keep the account of guns
6	<b><i>Ranauda-madoowe lekam mahatmeya</i></b>	Secretary of the Golden Armory Officer of the King’s Palace	Keep a register of the royal arms, preserve arms in good order by the deferent kinds of smiths attached to the department

7	<b>Attepattoo-madoowe mohandiram nilami</b>	<i>Attepattoo Muadoowe Mohandiram</i> Officer of the King's Palace	Carrying King's 'golden arms' in public
8	<b>Audage-vannakoo nilami</b>	<i>Vannakoo nilami</i> of the Armory Officer of the King's Palace	Superintendence of all king's muskets and swords, and all his iron and brass instruments
9	<b>Attepattoo-madoowe Cancawnam nilame</b>	<i>Cancawnam Nilame</i> of <i>Attepattoo Maduwa</i> Subordinate Officer of the Palace under the Secretary of the <i>Attepattoo</i>	Work under the <i>Attepattoo lekam</i>
10	<b>Ranaude-madoowe Cancawnam nilame</b>	<i>Cancawnam Nilame</i> of the Golden Armory Subordinate Officer of the Palace under the Secretary of the Golden Armory	Work under the <i>Ranaude-madoowe lekam</i>
11	<b>Audage Cancawnam</b>	Helper for collecting of revenue Subordinate Officer of the Palace under the Secretary of the Armory	collecting of revenue

Sources: John Davy (1821), John D'Oyly (1929), and Ralph Pieris (2012)

'Attepattoo'<sup>3</sup> was the Royal Security Forces (Wimalakitti, 2499BE, p.166). 'Atapattu Arachchila' is the leading officer of the Attepattoo Army (Sri Sumangala Dictionary, 2006, p.37). The worker who engraved yathuru thuwakku with gold and silver is called as Atapattukara (Sri Sumangala Dictionary, 2006, p.37-38; Pieris, 2012, pp. 24; 60; 93). The villages given to the troops of the Attepattoo army are known as Atapattugam, the watchtower where the Attepattoo army is stationed is called Attepattoo Madu, the chief of Attepattoo is called Attepattoo Mudali or Mohottala, the person who writes the affairs of Attepattoo is known as Atapattu lekam and the functional board that belongs to Attepattoo is called as Attepattoo Vasam. 'Maha Attepattoo' which was the key Attepattoo among four Attepattoo (Maha Attepattoo, Disa Attepattoo, Rata Attepattoo, and Kottal Badda Attepattoo) which protected 'Mahawasala'. Small flags, guard weapons, document bundles, and Koodituakoo storage were protected by 'Dissa Attepattoowa' (Rajavaliya, 1976, p.234; Wimalakitti, 2499BE, p.166; Perera, 1930, pp.419, 439). The Kottal Badda Attepattoowa, which was the technical department, consisted of people from the Navandana caste.

3 The word "Attepattoo" is written according to John Davy's (1821) source.

“යුද්ධයට නොව පටු වා - ලෙසින් සුරසෙන් කී වා  
ඉස්සරට කැටු වා - මහත් අනපත්තු සෙන් සිටුවා” (Silva, 1964, p.118)



Abayasinghe (1957) explain that the word call 'Attepattoo' derived from the Tamil ward call 'Ātuppaattu' meaning 'Protector'. But, Ariyapala (1962) notes that the word 'Attepattoo' might be derived from the word 'Attawudo'. With reference to the army and the officers associated with the army at Dambadeniya, there was a name called 'Attawudo' among people who served the King (Kuvani Sihaba and Dambadeni Asna, 1960, p.34). They were the King's personal guards. In Tamil, 'teewai' means deed, purpose, necessity, and slavery. The word called 'atha' is 'hand' in English, 'Awuda' is 'Arms' in English. Thus, 'Atawudo' means 'those who took arms' (Ariyapala, 1962, p.150). Some people believe that the name "Patta, Patuwa, Pattuwa" refers to the stick, the bludgeon, or "Mugura." In this manner, "Pattu" was the origin of the word "Attepattoo". It is also believed that the truncheon (Baton) used by a policeman today is an evolution from 'Patta.' The names of the commanders of the Attepattoo regiment have been mentioned since the days of King Wimaladharmasuriya and its first secretary was Arave Samaradivakara Adhikaram (Perera, 2009, p.36). Accordingly, the post of Attepattoo Secretary and the Special Battalion of Attepattoo can be traced back to the time of King Wimaladarmasuriya.

'Attepattoo Mohottale' was the ruler of the Attepattoo people. The Attepattoo district was made up of members of the peasant clan. Attapattuwa was also the personal guard of a district. Attepattoo Mohandiram ruled 48 Appuhamis. Their task was to carry out the King's orders and to remain in the Attepattoo shed in order to bear the Gold Arms (Ranaude). Attepattoo was made up of the 'Govigama' people, a noble caste (Pieris, 2012, p.24). People under the Attepattoo Department called 'Attepattoo Minisun' (D'Oyly, 1929, p.7) and Koodituakoo people called as 'Koodituakoo Minisun' or 'Attepattoowaru'. Attepattoo people from the families of the upper peasant clan were in the private security forces of Dissava. John D'Oyly reports that the 'Padu' men received weapons training at a village called Deewala. (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, 05; 38). The majority of the artillerymen belong to the Padu caste (D'Oyly, 1829, p.10; Pieris, 2012, p.100). 8 Muhandiarams were attached with the Attapatu Lekam and eight Muhandiarams were attached with the Weddikkara Lekam (Pieris, 2012, pp. 32-33).

According to the Davy's writings 'Golden Arms' is a common oriental court expression (Davy, 1821, p.152). The Secretary of the Gold Arms shed, with the help of 48 noble men, kept a register of golden arms and he was in charge of keeping weapons in good condition using the service of various technicians of this bureau. The Appuhamies belongs to the 'Ran Auda Mankape' were about 100 (D'Oyly, 1929, p.134). All the guns, swords, iron and brass instruments belonging to the King were kept in charge under two secretaries and two Wannaku Nilames who were assisted by two Cancawnam<sup>4</sup>.

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4 The Cancawnam were mainly minorities who were employed to collect revenue. Those who ruled on the advice of Maha Hathapenage Muhandiram who served the king were known as Cancawnam Guarding the store, opening and closing its doors were included in Cancawnam's duties.

In addition, John D'Oyly's (1929) description reveals the planned operations of the Atapattu<sup>5</sup> checkpoints. "1Mohandiram 2kankanams Atapattu Appuhamillage at the Peyteyti Wahalkada, where 4 Peyti (sic) are always kept. The Atapattu Appuhs. Watch it and strike the Bell by Day and also for the... Mangalya, altho' by night. The Wahalkada Eytto, of whom 2 from Uda Bulatgama are always on Mura... The Wahalkada People carry the Peyteytiya and a smaller Minigediya, when the...The Day and the Night are divided each into 4 Jama, at the end of...Mura of 2 Persons is changed at all the Murapala. The 1st Jama of the Day is from Daylight to the end of the 8th hour. The 2nd—from the end of the 8th to the End of the 15th or Noon. The 3rd—from Noon to the End of the 7th Hour. The 4th—from the End of the 7th Hour to the End of the 15th or Nig{ht}. The 4 Jama of the Night are in like manner of 8-7-7 and 8 Hrs. Duration. According to this Division, the Hours are struck from 1, 2, 3 etc. to 8 and 7...There were formerly between 50 and 60 Atapattu Appuhamis, but the number... by the last King to 48. Those of 4 K. 7 K. Uduwure Yatinuware. They are expected all to remain constantly in Kandy on Duty, except when...acct. of Sickness or other Occasion they go with Leave to their Villages... not more than from 15 to 30 remain for service. Half of the Number sleep at the Murapala alternately every night...2 are constantly watching. By day, not more than 1 or 2 or 3 remain. When the King goes abroad, all in Kandy attend of whom 10 or 12 half the number carry Su {se}... with broad Blades 7 or 8 Ft. high) and are relieved by the other half. The Suse and all other arms are kept at the Ranawuda Mandape<sup>6</sup>" (D'Oyly, 1929, pp.133-134).

Lekam was the Chiefs of the Department (D'Oyly, 1929, p.01). Lekam was the head person had been granted the responsibility of his position, people under him, and the security. The Ranauda-madoowe lekam mahatmeya, kept a register of the royal arms, and took care that they were preserved in good order by the different kinds of smiths attached to the department (Davy, 1821, p.152). The Audage-vannakoo nilami, was the superintendence of all the king's muskets and swords, and of all his iron and brass instruments. He was helped by two Lekam and two Cancawnam nilamis were under him (Davy, 1821, p.153).

Guns and gun related designations were also used for religious festivals in Kandy. The Perahera is one of the four national annual festivals of the capital. According to the composition and order of Perahera, The second component was Jingalls with the Koodituakkoo-lekam; third component was the people of the Four Korles carrying jingalls, muskets, and flags; sixteenth component was the people of the Maha-lekam department carried muskets and flags; seventeenth component was the people of the Attepatuay<sup>7</sup> department, similarly equipped, followed by the Attepatuay-lekam<sup>8</sup> and by the Rate-mahatmeyas of Udoonuaara, Yatinuara, Tumpane, Harisea-pattoowe, Doombera, and

5 The word "Kodituakkoo" is written according to John Davy's (1821) source.

6 D'Oyly spelled Ranauda-madoowe instead of Ranawuda Mandape (Davy, 1821)

7 Attepatuay also known as Attapattu/ Atapatu (D'Oyly, 1929)

8 Attepatuay-lekam also known as Attapattu lekam; Attepattoo lekam

Hewahatte; eighteenth component was the people of the Wedikkara department; nineteen component was Wadena-tuakkoo department (Davy, 1821, p.172). The new appointments were given on March 5, 1815, after the British conquest of the Kandyan Kingdom, also reveal that certain positions in this service will continue to be made by the appointment of Fire Secretary (Doorenagoda), Wadenatuakkoo Secretary (former Ridigama Disava), Koodituakoo Secretary (Halangoda). As the British acted to maintain it (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, 226).

### **5.3 The nature of the use of Guns by Sri Lankans:**

There were many weapons in the palace of Sri Wikreme Raja Singha of Kandy. In the journal of the proceedings of the Trincomalee detachment, commanded by Lieut. Co. Barbut gives a detailed account of those weapons. "...Many brass guns were founded, two three pounders, the carriages of which were most curiously ornamented, and a number of ginjalls commonly called grass-hoppers; these are small iron guns carrying a ball of six to ten ounces, and mounted on three wooden legs, exactly like a common stool; these they carry from one bush to another with great celerity as occasion requires." (Peiris, 1939, p.170). Peiris quoted Schweitzer (1676). "Their Artillery is only a short Muskets, which stand upon a frame with three Feet, of which the hindmost is broad and shorter than the two foremost; Having no Lead they shoot with Iron Bullets. These Muskets, the Nobility, which serve the King, carry with them in Fights" (Peiris, 1939, p.121). Sri Lankan used Iron and steel to make gun barrels (Pybus, 2011, p.15)

Going by Knox's statement, Henry Marshall explains that the Sri Lankans in the war were capable. "There is but little valour used, —although they do accomplish many notable exploits,—for all they do is by crafty stratagem. They will never meet their enemies in the field, to give them a repulse by battle and force of arms; their usual practice is, to waylay their enemy, and stop up the ways before him. Here they lie lurking, and plant their guns between the rocks and trees, with which they do great damage to their enemies before they are aware. Nor can they suddenly rush in upon them, being so well guarded with bushes and rocks before them, through which, before their enemies can get, they flee, carrying their great guns (ginjals) upon their shoulders, and are gone into the woods, where it is impossible to find them, until they come themselves to meet them after the former manner" (Marshall, 1846, p.209). Ingreesi Hatana (2001, 241 Poem) mentioned that the Sri Lankan militants shot at the enemies by harshly following them with guns. Based on Herbert Beaver's remarks on the use of guns by Sinhalese, Powell (1984) states: "The Cingalese lie concealed till you come close upon them, then they give one regular fire, and fly; this is the general case, and I suppose I was about six yards from their grasshopper, the balls of which are about an inch in diameter, when they let them off..." (Powell, 1984, p.138).

Sri Wikreme Raja Singha, as the leader of the 1803 war, ordered the people to look into the available weapons and equipped them when necessity. There were occasions when a person was asked whether a sword, a spear, or a gun had been prepared, and if they were

not prepared, the person would be punished and deprived of their land (Diary of John D’Oyly, 1917, p.21). There was a Bureau of Artificers consisting of people from Kottalbadda (D’Oyly, 1929, p.12). These Kottalbadda people must be well-taught-blacksmiths to manufacture and handle arms. At the time of the battle of 1803, Sri Wikreme Raja Sinha left Kandy after firing in the direction of the enemies of Nekatha<sup>9</sup> (Ingreesi Hatana, 2001, 122 Poem). The battalion also left with the courage to kill thousands of people by continues shooting at them.<sup>10</sup> Marshall (1846) and Powell (1984) quotes Corporal George X Barnsley, quoted by Major Arthur Johnston on assaulting them with guns and throwing them at their enemies until their throats are slit “...That immediately after, they took the European soldiers two by two, and leading them a few yards along the road, Knocked them down with the butt ends of their pieces, and beat out their brains...” (Marshall, 1848, p. 246; Powell, 1984, p. 280).

## 6. Discussion

This section discusses the interpretations that can derive using the results of the study based on the objectives of the study.

### 6.1 Historical evidence about the gun used by the Sri Lankan militants in anti-British fights:

Sri Lankan have achieved a gradual development in the field of military tactics as anti-British fights progressed. The British did not take lightly the warlike behavior of the Sri Lankans against the British. Sri Lankans have been involved in wars since ancient times. Once, McaDowel stated that military power of the Ceylonese should not be underestimated based on his military experience in the 1803 war (Peiris, 1939, p.26). Apart from the goldsmiths, tailors and drummers, it has been revealed that there were guns among other people in the Kingdom of Kandy and it can be pointed out that the majority of the people in the Kingdom of Kandy had guns (Peiris, 1939, pp.22-23). Based on the sources (John Davy, 1821; John D’Oyly, 1929; and Ralph Pieris, 2012), it is pertinent that the positions of the headmen and departments related to the firearm and position related to the counting of the guns impacted on a good management in the use of guns by Sri Lankans.

There were gunmen for the security of the Disaves and the rest houses (Diary of John D’Oyly, 1917, p.28; Diary of John D’Oyly, 1917, pp.3; 25). Thus, it is clear that guns were used even at the inns as there were nobles including Disave who were protected with high security. Artillery is mounted in front of the temple (Diary of John D’Oyly, 1917, p.41). Artillery was also used to guard the temple. The guns in the temple were either fitted for security or for lighting on Pinkam occasions. It is clear that private guns were prevalent in

9 “වෙඩිල්ලක් තැබුවේය නැකතට”

10 “එවිට සෙන හඬ සේ-නොයෙක් සමුදුර ගොස සේ පෙළොව පෙරළෙන සේ-දහස් වෙඩි හඬ නඟා එක සේ”  
“සතුරන්ට නොව ඉඩ-සිය සෙන් හරින වෙඩි හඬ  
යුගත සිඳු ගොස මැඩ-ඇසෙයි ගනගුම් විලස නොව කඩ” (Ingreesi Hatana, 2001, 125-126 Poems)

the era of 1810-1815, with people being asked to bring guns to fire for the Pinkam festival (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917, p.41). It further confirms the existence of private guns. It is clear that Sri Lankans used the guns not only during wars but also during Pinkam. The Kandian administration might have taken steps to provide gun protection at both the temples and the rest houses. Perhaps these two places were government-sponsored.

There were different types of guns in places such as Nalanda, Balani, Diwela, Hatoluwa, Giriagama, Harasiya Pattu, Kandy, Baṭugedara, Four Korles, Seven Korles, Uva, Matale, Saparagomu, Three Korles, Uḍa palata, Walapane, Nuvara kalaweya, Thaman kada and Wellasse by 1818 (Table 01). Therefore, it can be assumed that guns were deployed across the whole Kingdom including Sathara Korale, Thun Korale, Sath Korale and Nuvara Kalaawiya. During the battles against the British, Sri Lankans used muskets, pistols, Pounders, ginjalls, brass guns, and iron guns (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917; 2; 3; 25; Powell, 1984, p. 148; Peiris, 1939, p.170). Hence, it can be confirmed that there were an abundant number of muskets and gings in the possession of Sri Lankans in 1818.

Sri Lankans had guns from Britain, France, and the Netherlands (Peiris, 1939, pp.187-188). These may have been used during battles against the British in Sri Lanka. Some of these guns may be traced foreign pronunciation such as Gun, musket, pistol, cannon (Artillery), Matchlock, and Pounder. However, there were many names used to identify different types of guns based on Sinhala language such as Koodituakoo, Pittala tuakku (Brass gun), Yakda tuakku (Iron guns), Wadenatuakkoocava, Bondikkulla. Some guns were named (i.e. brass gun, iron gun) based on the local materials that had been used to produce the gun. There are further studies needed to investigate whether the local names for guns in Sri Lanka derived based on the Sinhala language. At the last stages of the Battle of 1818, the British discovered a large quantity of guns and ammunition (C.O. 54/71 No. 315; Vimalananda, 1970, p.308). Accordingly, it can be said that firearms were in the possession of the Lankans until the end of the Battle of 1818. According to the Ehelepola's reveal (Peiris, 1939, pp.187-188) it can be imagined the spectrum of the strength of the firearm power that the Sri Lankans had.

## **6.2 The new Positions and duties related to firearms**

It can be suggested that a well-organized gun-based defense system was established in Sri Lanka when the British was in the coastal area in Sri Lanka. It is also revealed that there is an abundance of evidence to support the existence of the gun and related weapons. The importance of firearms in Kandy during the Kandyan period is evident from the fact that there were several official posts that were involved in the gun-making process during the Sinhala monarchy.

According to the classification (Table 02) eleven positions could be found. From them four positions are directly related with the gun-based activity as literally. They are 1, Wedikkara lekam, 2, Wadenatuakkoocava lekam mahatmeya, 3. Koodituakoo lekam

mahatmeya, 4. Bondikkulla lekam. There were four departments under the control of these for head leaders. Kodituwakkoo people were recruited from the caste of 'Padu' (D'Oyly, 1829, p.10; Pieris, 2012, p.100). Therefore, it hints how caste is considered when admitting people to gun-related bureaus as a part of managing human resources. The study could find out about the existing social hierarchy attached to the gun related appointments. i.e. The positions from number one to eight in Table 02 were given to a higher social class compared to other positions. The other three possessions are labeled as petty posts.

At the provincial or bureau level in Kandy, there was a system of counting the number of guns in the possession of the people in connection with the gun process John Davy (1821), John D'Oyly (1929). Atepattoo was the main force in the defense of the country. Atepattoo Lekam, Atepattoo Arachchi, Atepattoo Village, Atepattoo Army, Atepattoo Maduwa, Atepattoo Mudali or Mohottala are the names associated with the Atepattoo security process (Rajavaliya, 1976, p.234; Wimalakitti, 2499BE, p.166; Perera, 1930, pp. 24; 60; 93; 419; 439; Sri Sumangala Dictionary, 2006. p.37; 38). Atepattoo security has been divided into hours throughout the day to ensure the security in Kandy. Accordingly, the day was divided into four shifts and Pethetiya and Minigediya were used to communicate about the time shifts (D'Oyly, 1929, pp.133-134). Such all facts lead to assume that there was a good administration system related to the gun bureau.

The association of the Guns with religious activities is unique feature to consider. Perahera is one of the most important cultural events in Sri Lanka. Guns and gun related departments may have been added to the procession to show off the weapons possession of the Sri Lankans or to beautify the procession. Jingalls, muskets, Wadena-tuakkoo were used in the Kandy Perahera (Davy, 1821, p.172). Thus, it is safe to interpret that for religious ceremonies a collection of guns were used. The amalgamation of the gun-related departments as part of a religious ceremony reveals the importance and recognition given to those departments. The use of the gun of foreign origin in the main religious ceremony illustrates the extent to which Sri Lankans have integrated it with the local culture and further confirms that Sri Lankans used the gun for Pinkam occasions.

### **6.3 The nature of the use of Guns by Sri Lankans**

Guns were used against the British indeed. The existence and use of guns became common among the elite and the public. The words Gingal, Ginjall, grass-hoper and Kodituakkoo were used to describe the same gun. Koddituwakkoo was easily moved on the battlefield. This gun looked like a tripod. Sri Lankan militants used rocks and trees when they fired. They were well talented for the silent attack. Sri Lankans used Gingalls smoothly, in their battlefield in addition to light weapons such as bow, sword, and knives. In the aftermath of the disposal of King Sri Wikreme Raja Singha, gun training was diminished. However, the use of guns for national battles were not reduced. Sri Lankans could handle the gun so as they could become very tactical in using guns even as their main weapon.

Sri Lankans would attack the enemy at a distance of six yards (Powell, 1984, p.138). Thus, it is known that the militants took into consideration the distance of a gun towards its target in case of an attack. Sri Lankans had the same ability to use guns as they did with bows. This can be identified by the fact that guns were used while bows and arrows were on the side during ground fighting (Powell, 1984, pp. 89; 148). Sri Lankans were able to chase and shoot at enemies (Ingreesi Hatana, 2001, 241 Poem). It is harder to chase than to position oneself in front of them. It is difficult to get the right target when chasing. But the Sri Lankans had the ability to pursue and attack. On the other hand, the pursuit reveals that the Sri Lankans used light guns on the battlefield. The Kodithuwakku is a three-legged weapon. These legs can be removed and reassembled. The Kodithuwakku was quickly shifted from one bush to another, and its legs were fastened and struck at the enemy (Peiris, 1939, pp.121; 170). Accordingly, this weapon seems to be a weight that a person can carry. These factors further confirm that Sri Lankans used light weapons on the battlefield and the military capacity of Sri Lankans.

This study also states that the Sri Lankan concerned about auspicious times. At the beginning of the fighting, the shooting took place according to astrology (Ingreesi Hatana, 2001, 122 Poem). On the battlefield, the Lankans used indirect methods of combat, not direct combat. Guns were fired between rocks and trees. When the enemy approached, Sri Lankans fired the enemy and ran with the Jingal gun on their shoulders (Marshall, 1846, p.209). Thus, Sri Lankans used natural geographical locations to set gunpoint and attack. Also, it confirms that Sri Lankans might carry a light weighted customised Jingal. There were brass and iron guns in Sri Lanka (Diary of John D'Oyly, 1917; 2; 3; 25; Powell, 1984, p. 148; Peiris, 1939, p.170). To Manufacture the Guns Sri Lankan used wood, Iron, Steel, brass (Marshall, 1846, p.209; Pybus, 2011. P.15). The details confirm that wood, Iron, Steel, brass were major production materials of guns in Sri Lanka. And blacksmiths in Sri Lanka might have taken the lead in making guns. Some of the king's guns were beautifully carved (Figure 03). Wood and brass materials were often used to make the body of the gun. The large number of guns made of brass indicates that manufacture of brass. These facts confirm that Sri Lankans had exceptional skills of carving on metals such as brass and iron. Blacksmiths in Sri Lanka might be skillful enough to adjust the guns so that it could be easily moved on the battlefield with a light weight. And all these literary sources of the gun weapon used during the anti-British fights can be confirmed through archeological evidence in the National museum in Sri Lanka. These archeological evidences verify the creative characteristics and technological advancement of Sri Lankan guns.

## **7. Conclusion**

During the British colonial era, the Gun seems to be the most popular weapon among the Sri Lankan fighters. The use of guns was a new war concept to the Sri Lankan

society. The use of guns became a new attacking weapon in addition to sword and bow. Titles and duties were also created in relation to the gun. A formal defense system based on Attepattoo existed during the period of Sri Wikreme Raja Singha against the British. Sri Lankans had used different types of Guns during the British colonial era, such as Musket, Pistol, Cannon (Artillery/Bondiakkula) and Matchlock, Pounder, Koodituakoo/Ginjal (Ginjall/Grass-hopper), Wadenatuakkoocava, Brass gun, and Iron guns. There was a variation of Guns used against the British by Sri Lankans. Also, Guns were deployed in different locations for security purposes. Guns had been used to honor dignitaries and for Buddhist rituals and ceremonies or protection of the temples. Several positions, states and duties have been created in the Kandyan Kingdom based on the Gun Weapon. Forming of 11 positions related to the Gun provides a sound background to confirm that Gun was considered as an important weapon. The findings of the study intensified that the Gun became one of the most unique weapons and the Sri Lankans were capable enough to localise the mechanism of using Gun to protect the national security of the country.

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**Figure 01:**  
**Single Drain Pistol, Double Drain Pistol and Heavy Gun**

*Source: National Museum, Colombo*



**Figure 02:**  
**A Koodituakoo**

*Source: National Museum, Colombo*



**Figure 03:**

**Large arm of a silver engraved gun, found from King  
Sri Wikreme Raja Singha's Armory, Kandy**

*Source: National Museum, Colombo*