

Printed from

**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

---

# New tech to produce palm sugar in 6 hours

TNN | Jun 8, 2016, 12.21 AM IST

Madurai: Before the advent of cane sugar and mass production in factories, palm jaggery or palm candy used to be the local sweetener. But then, it lost sheen as it was unable to match the production of cane sugar.

One of the major impediments was that there was no mechanised method to produce like cane sugar. But, that tide is fast changing again as with its lower glycemic index is in demand over cane sugar.

Considering its huge potential, Thassim Beevi Abdul Kader College for Women has come out with a technology to produce with machines. This new technology was discussed during the international conference on food, nutrition and health organised by the college in Madurai from June 6 to 8.

Few pockets like Udangudi, Vembar in Tuticorin district, Sayalkudi in Ramanathapuram district and Srivilliputhur in Virudhunagar district are still famous for making palm jaggery from the sap of palm trees. They also make in conventional method by boiling palm sap for many hours to remove its impurities and store it in anaerobic containers where crystals are formed on threads tied inside the container. It takes 45 to 60 days to get in this manner.

The technology invented by the college provides in powder form within six hours.

Explaining the technology, S Muthumariswari, assistant professor, department of home science and research centre, said there is enormous demand for not just in India but from abroad as well. She has created the technology as part of her PhD research.

"In many places of Ramanathapuram district, people still make or powdered palm jaggery whenever there is a need. Considering the huge potential, we are making using machines," she said.

The college has tied up with Coimbatore-based Dinu Technology to create the machine. J Dinesh from Dinu Technology said

that similar to conventional method, in this technology too, palm sap is boiled and crystallised.

"Unlike 45 to 60 days, machine processing takes only six hours and sugar content may vary depending on the region. For instance, palm sap in Ramanathapuram district will have more sugar content than other places," he explained.

It is said that there used to be five to eight crore palm trees in Tamil Nadu. After toddy tapping was banned, palm trees have seen a steady decline and there are only three crore now.

When demand for is said to revive palm cultivation, modern technology to manufacture it will be a great boon. But the machine cost is quite higher for poor palm farmers to afford, says Dr S Sumayaa, principal of the college urging government's support in this regard.