Reviving Forgotten Traditions



Pride International, a pioneer in the bottled water industry has transformed the once foreign concept of consuming bottled water by linking it with local traditions. Today, it aspires to move forward with brand new environmentally friendly products, reviving both the company and forgotten local traditions for a healthier living.

Bottled water was an alien notion when Pride International brought in the concept and trade to Sri Lanka in the early 1990s. Having begun his career serving the government sector Anura Kumarasinghe the Founder and Chairman of Pride International brought with him into this small family business a wealth of invaluable experience. This has given him the strength to battle the tough challenges behind creating a positive image and market for purified water bottles and water cooler

dispensers in the country. In 1995 after visiting the USA he formed American Premium Water Systems the current market leader of five gallon bottled water in Sri Lanka of which he is the Vice Chairman. He is also President of Sri Lanka Bottled Water Association and the Vice President of Asia and Middle East Bottled Water Association. “This is my 20th year in the bottled water industry, when I started nobody knew about bottled water and people laughed at me, now I’m the pioneer in the industry,” stated Kumarasinghe reminiscing his modest beginnings.

Speaking on the importance of consuming purified water, Anura Kumarasinghe highlighted how drinking boiled water is vital in some areas of the country. “Sometimes even if you boil the water you can see the sediments forming at the bottom of the container affecting liver, bowel and kidney function. But now people know the value of purified water,” explained Kumarasinghe.

Yet, the purification of water and the practice of bottling entail a heavy price. It brings with it the complicated process of importing goods so much so that consuming purified water becomes a costly affair. This according to Anura Kumarasinghe, often results in the importation of cheaper products into the country which in turn are low quality and short-lived. Certain components of water dispensers corrode easily, especially when used in coastal areas. They also need electricity to function and thereby involve burning energy and a recurring cost. Also, the tubes inside these develop a bio film through time and if not serviced regularly, bacteria would settle in. All these issues had inspired Anura Kumarasinghe to ‘think green’ and come out with the solution: the ‘Gurulethhuwa’ (a traditional jug made out of clay) concept.

“I thought we should go back to what our ancestors did,” Kumarisinghe expressed explaining how water was traditionally stored in clay pots to keep it naturally cool. With this idea he revived Pride International in 2010 and worked towards developing a novel product based on a traditional concept and material. After carefully pursuing the idea for a few months and arranging a manufacturer for the terra cotta pots Kumarasinghe developed his new ‘naturally-cool’ water dispenser evolving through the traditional Sri Lankan ‘Gurulethhuwa.’

Describing its manifold benefits the founder of Pride International explained how

some people avoid drinking cool water following medical advice, for such people and for the elderly who need to drink more natural purified water, this new dispenser is ideal to keep water only moderately cool – about three degrees below room temperature – through natural means. Furthermore, no electricity is required so that it involves less energy consumption; and being made from clay it is also biodegradable making it 100 percent environmentally friendly. Moreover, these natural dispensers can be cleaned at home and do not require any technicians unlike the imported ones. Containing its original terra cotta colour it is also resistant to any form of discolouration.

This new terra cotta creation, which comes as desktop dispensers and floor top dispensers can be used with five gallon purified water bottles and would be an ideal alternative for hotels and other institutions that are bent on environmentally friendly practice.

Predicting the company’s vision in a future world where water would become a precious scarcity Kumarasinghe further stressed the significance in bringing back lost traditions of local water purification methods, and coming out with 100 percent Sri Lankan products; also he expressed the importance of conducting business through the promotion of sustainable environment for a greener, healthier future.

