

**PROCEEDINGS**

**9<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMANITIES AND  
SOCIAL SCIENCES  
(ICONARTS 2023)**

**Faculty of Arts  
University of Colombo  
Sri Lanka**

The material in this publication has been submitted by the authors of the research papers as the final approved documents. Neither the Faculty of Arts of the University of Colombo nor the Organising Committee of the conference is responsible for any material produced in this publication.

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**Faculty of Arts**  
**University of Colombo**

**Our Vision**

*To be a centre of excellence in creative thinking, teaching, research, and  
community outreach in the South Asian region*

**Our Mission**

*To promote collectively scholarship, critical inquiry, competencies,  
and skills in the Social Sciences and Humanities  
in keeping with the highest academic and ethical  
standards in teaching, research, training, and evaluation*



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## MESSAGE FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR

**Senior Professor H. D. Karunaratne**

Vice Chancellor

University of Colombo, Sri Lanka



The International Conference of the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo (IConArts 2023), a flagship event in the Faculty's annual calendar, is held under a significant theme this year. I am glad to note that the Dean and Co-Chairpersons of IConArts 2023 have chosen "Research Excellence through Interdisciplinary Approaches in Humanities and Social Sciences" as the theme of the conference as it celebrates the salience of interdisciplinary research while emphasising research excellence which is the theme of the Annual Research Symposium of the University of Colombo. The theme is particularly relevant to today's global research environment as it showcases the breadth and depth of research possibilities, and highlights the impact of interdisciplinary research outcomes on policy development and strategic planning. It also presents the significant role that a Humanities and Social Sciences education plays in knowledge creation in the value-added learning that the 21<sup>st</sup> century demands.

I am encouraged by the enthusiasm and support provided by members of the Faculty of Arts in sustaining significant research projects, despite encountering multiple challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent political and economic crises in the country. It is your research output that has made this conference successful. I would also like to appreciate the services of the administrative and financial managers in supporting

teaching and research activities during the past year. Our university ranking has continued to rise with the upscaling of regional and international collaborations in research and academics, and for this I am grateful to the academic community of the university for their efforts in maintaining high standards in research.

I wish you well as you develop fresh ideas and networks, and take our research outreach to greater heights.

## MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

### **Senior Professor Lasantha Manawadu**

Dean

Faculty of Arts

University of Colombo, Sri Lanka



It gives me great pleasure to pen this message for the annual International Conference of the Faculty of Arts (IConArts 2023), the flagship event in the academic calendar of the Faculty. Held under the theme “Research Excellence through Interdisciplinary Approaches in Humanities and Social Sciences”, presentations at this year’s conference highlight the crucial role that an interdisciplinary approach to research advances. Raising critical questions, and probing research problems in new ways, this year’s conference becomes a platform for the recognition and celebration of interdisciplinary research. While Sri Lanka continues to face multiple, complex crises due to decades of structural inequalities and issues in governance, this year’s conference presents the significance of interdisciplinarity to the Sri Lankan context by engaging with the intersections of economic, political, and social issues while speaking to the post-pandemic global setting. I hope research presentations made at IConArts 2023 will help guide our responses to the contexts we live in.

This conference is the result of the contribution and commitment of numerous individuals. First, I would like to thank the Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo, Senior Professor H. D. Karunaratne for his support and guidance in making this event a success. I would also like to express my sincere

gratitude to the keynote speaker for graciously accepting our invitation to speak at this event. I take this opportunity to thank the organising committee and the sub-committees of IConArts 2023, competently led by the co-chairpersons of the conference. For their assistance in numerous ways I also thank the administrative, technical, and support staff of the Faculty of Arts. Finally, I wish to express my appreciation for those who submitted abstracts to the conference without which this event would not have been possible.

I extend my best wishes to presenters and participants, and wish IConArts 2023 all success.



## MESSAGE FROM CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE CONFERENCE

### **Dr. Shashithanganee Weerawansa**

Department of Economics

University of Colombo

Sri Lanka



### **Krishan Siriwardhana**

Department of Communication and Creative Arts

University of Colombo

Sri Lanka



Welcome to the annual International Conference of the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo (IConArts 2023). This year we decided to move beyond our comfort zones by adopting the conference theme to include “Research Excellence through Interdisciplinary Approaches in Humanities and Social Sciences”, where the fusion of knowledge and ideas transcends the boundaries of traditional disciplines. In an era where our understanding of society’s complex challenges often tends to be fragmented, the need of intellectual unity and holistic comprehension cannot be overlooked by a conference of this calibre. Education systems all over the world have long been compartmentalised, segregating knowledge into neat categories. Yet, the world’s problems rarely fit into such tidy boxes. To truly grasp the essence of contemporary societal issues, we must extend our reach beyond the confines of our individual disciplines. This is not a choice, but a necessity. A society fixated on the silos of its own expertise is a society destined to stagnate, unable to confront problems with the multifaceted perspective they demand.

In our daily lives, we encounter an array of challenges that demand solutions with many twists and turns. These problems are like winding rivers that require navigation through bends, curves, and zigzags. Attempting to tackle them with a one-dimensional approach is bound to sink the ship long before the island of solutions is in sight. Consider the current situation of Sri Lanka, for instance. We need a multifaceted and multidimensional approach to identify the intricate web of interconnected economic, social, political, technological, environmental, and legal factors at play, and to propose sustainable solutions. This conference serves as a call to action, urging us to break down the walls that divide our fields of study and research. Interdisciplinary approaches offer a gateway to understanding the multifaceted nature of our world's challenges. By bringing together diverse perspectives and methodologies, we can chart a course towards innovative and holistic solutions.

We wish to express our thanks to Professor Kalinga Tudor Silva for accepting our invitation to be the Keynote Speaker at the event, and Professor Mick Moore for attending the conference as a Guest of Honour. Given the interdisciplinarity of their research, the proceedings of IConArts 2023 are enriched by their participation. For the support extended to organising IConArts 2023, we express our sincere gratitude to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo, Senior Professor H. D. Karunaratne and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Senior Professor Lasantha Manawadu for their encouragement and guidance. We also thank session chairs and abstract reviewers for lending us their expertise. Members of the organising committee deserve special thanks for their untiring effort in putting the conference together. We also express our thanks to members of the non-academic staff and volunteers for their assistance with conference-related tasks. Finally, we

would thank the Social Scientists' Association (SSA) and GIZ-SCOPE for their generous contribution to the conference.

As we exchange ideas, share insights, and forge new intellectual connections through this conference let us embrace the power of synergising diverse knowledge. Let this be the first step of the journey to break down the barriers of compartmentalised learning and pave the way for a brighter and more enlightened future. George Stigler, the Nobel Prize winning economist once said: “The main insight learned from interdisciplinary studies is the return to specialisation”. We hope you will find the programme offered by IConArts 2023 stimulating and challenging!

## INTRODUCTION TO THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER

### **Professor Kalinga Tudor Silva**

Professor Emeritus  
Department of Sociology  
University of Peradeniya  
Sri Lanka



Kalinga Tudor Silva holds a BA from the University of Peradeniya and PhD from Monash University, Australia. He served as the Executive Director of the Centre for Poverty Analysis from 2001 to 2002, and the International Centre for Ethnic Studies from 2007 to 2008. He is Professor Emeritus (Sociology) at University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. Currently he is the Chief Editor of the Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences published by the National Science Foundation of Sri Lanka.

He is the author of *Decolonization, Development and Disease: A Social History of Malaria in Sri Lanka* published by Orient Blackswan in 2014, a joint author of *Checkpoint, Temple, Church and Mosque: A Collaborative Ethnography of War and Peace* published by Pluto Press in 2015, and the lead author of *The Impact of COVID-19 on Peace Building Activities of Local Faith Actors in Sri Lanka* published in 2021.

## **ABSTRACT OF THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

### **Why a transdisciplinary approach is needed for addressing the current crisis in Sri Lanka**

**Professor Kalinga Tudor Silva**

The current crisis in Sri Lanka is obviously multifaceted. It is economic, social, political, managerial and a lot more at the same time. Tinkering with it using a narrowly defined single perspective is likely to sink us further into an avalanche of problems. Many of the ongoing ideas about crisis management on the part of the state, donors, political parties, protestors and even social scientists are driven by one dimensional remedies whether in the form of cutting back welfare, resurrecting the welfare state, political devolution, anti-corruption legislation, attracting foreign direct investments or stimulating an unprecedented tourist boom. All these specific interventions may be needed in some measure within a larger scheme of post-crisis strategic planning, development and recovery.

However, what I would like to emphasise in this presentation is the need to package and implement these interventions in such a way that we have a handle on identifying, forecasting, and containing the social, political, environmental, motivational, and cultural fallout of the specific trajectories followed. As a country we may have produced some of the best minds in various fields including engineering, medicine, natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. What we have failed to achieve are sufficient crosstalk and institutional linkages among these disciplines with the country's best interests and long-term progress within an increasingly polarised and crisis-ridden world as the common guiding principle driving all these branches of knowledge. This is why transdisciplinary thinking and action are essential at this moment of grinding national crisis.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE GUEST OF HONOUR

### **Professor Mick Moore**

Professorial Fellow

Institute of Development Studies

University of Sussex

UK



Mick Moore is political economist specialising in applied research on issues of public policy and governance in poorer countries, above all taxation. He has extensive research and advisory experience in many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Having led many in-country advisory teams in Africa and Asia, he has more recently concentrated on the establishment and management of cross-country research networks and on contributing to high level policy debates around issues of taxation in poor countries. His specialist skills include leading multi-disciplinary international research teams; and writing clearly for academic, policymaking and more generalist audiences.

## **ABSTRACT OF SPEECH BY GUEST OF HONOUR**

### **Doppelganger? Governance Decay in Britain and Sri Lanka**

**Professor Mick Moore**

In 1950, Britain and Sri Lanka were countries to be envied and emulated. Compared to their neighbours, they were wealthy, democratic, politically stable, well-governed and generous in public welfare spending. Relatively stable political parties, to some extent aligned along a left/trades union and right/capitalist spectrum, competed for votes to a large extent on a programmatic basis. Since that time, both have become much more wealthy, but also close to anti-models in terms of political instability and polarisation, inadequate – and occasionally farcical – policymaking, low quality public services and political leadership, and ungenerous treatment of the less fortunate. Public trust in politics and politicians is low. The causes of this common trajectory of governance decline are complex and to some extent different between the two cases. The lecture will highlight the commonalities, and argue the central role of three related processes: (a) the decline in class-based voting that followed changes in occupational structures, with the consequent opening to identity-based politics; (b) the undermining of constitutional and legal constraints on the use of executive power under the guise of responding to the popular will; and (c) deterioration in the quality and competence of public service cadres in response to populist pressures. These twin stories reflect the more universal question of whether and how classic representative democracy can survive and thrive. What changes in governance institutions might make that possible?





## **PROGRAMME OF THE INAUGURATION CEREMONY**

- 08.30 – 08.35 am National anthem
- 08.35 – 08.45 am Welcome address by Dr. Shashithanganee Weerawansa  
Co-Chairperson, IConArts 2023
- 8.45 – 8.55 am Speech by Senior Professor Lasantha Manawadu  
Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo
- 8.55 – 09.05 am Speech by Senior Professor H. D. Karunaratne  
Vice Chancellor, University of Colombo
- 09.05 – 09.10 am Launch of the conference proceedings
- 09.10 – 09.15 am Introduction to the Keynote Speaker
- 09.15 – 09.45 am Keynote address by Professor Kalinga Tudor Silva  
University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
- 09.45 – 09.55 am Speech by Ms. Saranie Wijesinghe  
Advisor, Sri Lanka Barometer, GIZ - Strengthening Social  
Cohesion and Peace (SCOPE) in Sri Lanka (Event Partner)
- 09.55 – 10.00 am Introduction to the Guest of Honour
- 10.00 – 10.30 am Speech by the Guest of Honour – Professor Mick Moore  
Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK
- 10.30 – 10.35 am Handing over tokens of appreciation
- 10.35 – 10.40 am Vote of thanks by Ms. Nadeesha Jayatunga  
Co-Secretary, IConArts 2023
- 10.40 – 11.00 am Refreshments

Technical Sessions commence at 11.00 am

\*Times are listed in Sri Lankan Standard Time (UTC +5:30)



# **TECHNICAL SESSIONS**

## MORNING SESSIONS

<p><b>Session 1.A</b> (11.00 am - 01.00 pm)  <b>Venue:</b> Faculty Boardroom, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo  <b>Theme:</b> Dynamics of Economic Development and Poverty  <b>Session Chair:</b> Senior Professor Amala De Silva</p>	
<p>Analysing the reciprocal relationship between passenger satisfaction and demand-related factors: A case study of long distance bus services on the Southern expressway in Sri Lanka</p> <p>K. L. S. Abeywickrama, C. T. Danthanarayana</p>	p. 02
<p>Characteristics of Moonlighting in Sri Lanka and opportunities to combat poverty</p> <p>T. de Silva</p>	p. 12
<p>The impact of occupational stress on job satisfaction of employees with reference to the apparel industry in Sri Lanka</p> <p>M. H. S. Dilrukshi, I. W. Rathnayaka, J. M. I. S. Jayathunge, M. H. C. Dewinda</p>	p. 13
<p>Poverty and social exclusion in Sri Lanka: A study of a high-rise relocation housing project in Colombo</p> <p>Avanka Fernando</p>	p. 14
<p>Low level of tax ratio in Sri Lanka: Causes and consequences</p> <p>Kopalapillai Amirthalingam</p>	p. 05

<p><b>Session 1.B</b> (11.00 am - 01.00 pm)  <b>Venue:</b> Room 126, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo  <b>Theme:</b> Trends in Demographic Transformations and Migration  <b>Session Chair:</b> Professor Sunethra Perera</p>	
<p>Prevalence of cancer among children in Sri Lanka   B. Samudra Tharangani Bombuwalage</p>	<p>p. 09</p>
<p>Health and wellbeing of senior citizens: A medical sociological study with special reference to the Thenmaradchi Divisional Secretariat in the Jaffna District   G. Sarththiga</p>	<p>p. 36</p>
<p>Associated factors of unintended pregnancies at advanced reproductive age span in rural married women: A case study of the Kuruwita Medical Officer of Health area in the Ratnapura District   H. A. C. Darshanee</p>	<p>p. 11</p>
<p>Assessing the determinants of graduate migration decisions: A case study conducted in a state university in Sri Lanka   P. C. J. Nayanalochana, K. L. S. Abeywickrama, K. D. D. Hansani</p>	<p>p. 25</p>
<p>Menstrual stigma: An assessment of the Sri Lankan perspective   T. N. Wijewickrama</p>	<p>p. 43</p>

<p><b>Session 1.C</b> (11.00 am - 01.00 pm)  <b>Venue:</b> Room 128, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo  <b>Theme:</b> Trajectories in Second Language Teaching  <b>Session Chair:</b> Professor Dushyanthi Mendis</p>	
<p>Accent in varieties of English: A study of the degree of preference and intelligibility among ESL undergraduates at the University of Kelaniya</p> <p>G. G. C. Madushika</p>	<p>p. 23</p>
<p>Empowering language fluency: Unveiling challenges and forging pathways for proficiency in English speaking among students</p> <p>S. K. L. J. Ramanayaka</p>	<p>p. 33</p>
<p>Personal practice in an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom: A focus on teacher knowledge and reasoning</p> <p>R. S. Pothupitiya</p>	<p>p. 30</p>
<p>Enhancing learners' writing skills: The impact of formative assessment on Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)</p> <p>Vithuja Rajaram</p>	<p>p. 32</p>
<p>Attitudes of tertiary level language learners towards the use of first language in the English language classroom</p> <p>H. P. Amarasinghe</p>	<p>p. 03</p>

<p><b>Session 1.D</b> (11.00 am - 01.00 pm)  <b>Venue:</b> Room 302, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo  <b>Theme:</b> Inclusive perspectives on Gender and Disabilities  <b>Session Chair:</b> Professor Subhangi Herath</p>	
<p>The COVID-19 pandemic and transgender communities: A study of ICT-based social work intervention in Sri Lanka</p> <p>H. D. Kaluarachchi, K. K. H. Pavithra</p>	<p>p. 20</p>
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<p>Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) for sustainable peace: Insights from Sri Lanka's peacebuilding efforts (2000-2022)</p> <p>A. M. M. Ziyad</p>	<p>p. 45</p>
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<p><b>Session 3.C</b> (4.00 pm - 5.00 pm)  <b>Venue:</b> Room 128, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo  <b>Theme:</b> Revisiting Cinematic and Literary Approaches  <b>Session Chair:</b> Professor Saumya Liyanage</p>	
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# **ABSTRACTS**

# **Analysing the reciprocal relationship between passenger satisfaction and demand-related factors: A case study of long distance bus services on the Southern expressway in Sri Lanka**

K. L. S. Abeywickrama, C. T. Danthanarayana

*Department of Economics, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

The transportation sector plays a vital role in fostering economic growth, societal connectivity, and individual mobility. Long-distance bus services represent a vital component of the public transportation infrastructure in Sri Lanka, particularly along the Southern expressway, which serves as a critical conduit for both urban and intercity travel. As the satisfaction of passengers assumes a central role in ensuring the efficacy and attractiveness of such services, this study undertakes a comprehensive exploration of the demand-related factors that modulate passenger contentment. This study aims to identify the intricate relationship between passenger satisfaction and demand-related factors for long distance bus services operating on the Southern expressway. A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the sample to obtain reliable data relevant to the study from highly experienced passengers travelling by long-distance bus services on the Southern expressway. Based on the demand-related factors identified in the literature review, Pearson's Correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were conducted to analyse the data collected from the sample. In this study, 88.5% of the variance in passenger satisfaction is explicable through affordability, accessibility, comfort ability, and reliability. This study provides evidence that these four demand-related factors have a significant effect on passenger satisfaction. Moreover, affordability has a strong negative effect on passenger satisfaction and affordability is the most important factor that affects passenger satisfaction for long-distance bus services on the Southern expressway. This study also reveals that affordability is the most important dimension that needs to be focused on by long-distance bus service providers on the Southern expressway. As the public transport sector undergoes dynamic transformations and faces evolving challenges, understanding the complex relationship between passenger satisfaction and demand-related factors can lead to a more efficient and passenger-centric service delivery in this critical sector.

**Keywords:** demand-related factors, passenger satisfaction, Southern expressway, long-distance bus service



## **Attitudes of tertiary level language learners towards the use of first language in the English language classroom**

H. P. Amarasinghe

*Department of Multidisciplinary Studies, Faculty of Technology,  
University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka*

The ongoing debate surrounding the effectiveness of first language (L1) utilisation in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms has led to discussions on whether it enhances or hampers the acquisition of the target language. Researchers have extensively examined this issue, shedding light on its complex nature. One significant focus of investigation has been the attitudes of learners and educators toward L1 use in ESL settings. The present study aims to explore how university-level ESL learners in Sri Lanka perceive the use of L1 within ESL classrooms. This study employed a questionnaire adapted from Almohaimeed and Almurshed (2018). The questionnaire comprised 15 questions: 14 multiple-choice questions and one open-ended question. To ensure inclusivity and data accuracy, the questionnaire was crafted in Sinhala, English, and Tamil. Quantitative analysis was applied to the multiple-choice questions, while qualitative analysis was used for the open-ended question. The survey included 40 participants from the University of Ruhuna and the University of Moratuwa, with the majority responding to the Sinhala questionnaire and a few participants responding in Tamil. Findings suggest that students favour L1 use for practical reasons; however, they believe it may impede the acquisition of the target language. This study underscores the ambivalent attitudes of students toward L1 use in ESL classrooms. Despite the majority supporting L1 use and recognising its various benefits in aiding language learning, there remains a negative perception concerning its role in the classroom. Future studies could investigate teachers' viewpoints and conduct classroom observations. In light of the study's outcomes, it is evident that students' acknowledgement of the L1's diverse uses necessitates teachers' skillful integration of L1 to alleviate apprehension and lower students' affective filter.

**Keywords:** first language, ESL classroom, perceptions

## **From *Gamanaka Mula* to *Gamanaka Aga*: Revisiting the middle class of Sri Lanka through the lenses of Gunadasa Amarasekara**

Punsara Amarasinghe<sup>1</sup>, Nalaka Jayasena

<sup>1</sup>*Department of International Law, Faculty of Law,  
Sir John Kotalawala Defense University, Sri Lanka*

The development of Piyadasa's character in the series of fictions starting from *Gamanaka Mula* to *Gamanaka Aga* symbolises a large social-cultural and political picture of Sri Lanka in its postcolonial setting. If Martin Wickremasinghe tried to portray the rise of mercantile capitalism and its related problems through his trilogy of novels, this series of fiction further unveils the deeper issues of the middle class of Sri Lanka. At the same time, the development of Piyadasa's character questions the knowledge construction that Sri Lankan university systems produced by sheer emulation of the West. As he progresses, Piyadasa begins to deny or rather challenge the very system and ethos that he once revered. This study examines in depth, how the Sri Lankan middle class grappled with an array of complexities. Furthermore, "Buddhist socialism," the focal point of the series of novels, will be re-examined under the light of contemporary socio-political and cultural needs. The objectives of this paper contain a threefold analysis which relates to a critical examination of the socio-political and cultural developments that Amarasekara depicts in this series. First, this paper seeks to examine the ideological basis on which the author carves out the role of Piyadasa as the protagonist, whose life events ran parallel to significant incidents in postcolonial Sri Lanka. This objective underpins the relevance of *Jathika Chintanaya* propounded by Gunadasa Amarasekara, which appeared much later in his political discourse during the turbulent 80s. Secondly, revisiting the rise of the middle class of post-independent Sri Lanka generates a different picture of the social landscape of Sri Lanka. Thirdly, the psychological elements that pervaded this series with regard to the ups and downs of Piyadasa's character will be examined in this study.

**Keywords:** *Gamanaka Mula* novel, *Gamanaka Aga* novel, middle class of Sri Lanka, Gunadasa Amarasekara

## **Low level of tax ratio in Sri Lanka: Causes and consequences**

Kopalapillai Amirthalingam

*Department of Economics, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Though the fiscal deficit of Sri Lanka was 23 per cent in 1980, it averaged at 13 per cent during 1977-1991 and 8.1 per cent during 1992-2022. However, even an 8.1 per cent deficit can catalyse financial instability in the country (Woo, 2003). Several developing countries in the past underscored the importance of an adequate level of taxation as the main source of mobilising resources to pay for government spending (Mahdavi, 2004). Similarly, in Sri Lanka, tax collection is relatively low, and the country depends mainly on indirect taxes, which contribute to nearly 80 per cent of the total tax revenue. The objectives of this study are to examine the causes and consequences of low tax ratio on the Sri Lankan economy. In addition, this study suggests recommendations to increase the tax revenue in an efficient and equitable manner. This study primarily uses secondary data gathered from the annual reports published by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Performance Reports published by the Ministry of Finance and the Inland Revenue Department, and World Development Indicators published by the World Bank. Tabulation, graphical presentation and OLS regression have been used to analyse the data. Findings reveal that many factors contributed to the declining tax ratio, the main reason being the narrow tax base. Tax authorities in Sri Lanka are not in a position to bring potential taxpayers into the tax system due to poor digitalisation of the database of potential taxpayers. Several other factors, such as the slow progress of bringing informal economic activities into the formal economic system, lack of application of modern information technology, cash-based transactions, limited role of the banking sector and revenue-generating institutions, fragmented retail trade, poor accounting process, corruption, political influence etc. have contributed to a low level of tax collection in the country. As a result of the low-level tax ratio, Sri Lanka had to borrow heavily from domestic and foreign sources, which resulted in an unbearable increase in debt service payments in recent years, which limited Sri Lanka's ability to allocate sufficient amounts to education, research and development, technological development, health and economic infrastructure. This situation has created numerous challenges for the long-term socio-economic development of the country.

**Keywords:** tax ratio, direct taxation, indirect taxation, public debt, social expenditure, Sri Lanka

# **The women of the Aragalaya: Female representation at the Galle Face site during the Aragalaya 2022**

Tinaz Amit

*Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

This study attempts to understand the representation of women in the Aragalaya – a political mass protest – which took place in Sri Lanka in 2022. As a unique milestone in the country’s history of resistance, the Aragalaya saw a significant contribution of women from diverse socio-economic and political categories. The study looks at how the involvement of women was influenced by gender normative roles and stereotypes. It also examines if the Aragalaya was a subversive site, which enabled the women to question and push the boundaries of gender norms, or if it remained an inherently gendered space, influenced by the patriarchal gender norms from the wider society. In order to map the setting for the research, temporal and spatial boundaries were demarcated. The study focused on the period of occupation at Galle Face Green, commencing from 9<sup>th</sup> April, when the mass protest converged at Galle Face, until 10<sup>th</sup> August when the protestors voluntarily evacuated the site. Spatially, it is mapped within the Galle Face Green occupation site named as GotaGo Gama. A cross section of women representing different ages, professions, ethnicities and classes who were actively involved in the Aragalaya space were interviewed for the research. The responses were analysed to understand their reasons for joining the Aragalaya, the roles they performed within the space of Galle Face, and their perspectives as women within the political struggle. The analysis shows that gender stereotypes were present at the Aragalaya, but they were overridden by the collective political objective. The need of the protestors to project an ideal micro-society, in order to facilitate the demands for justice, ensured that the Aragalaya site remained unbiased in terms of gender to a certain extent. The narratives of the women also indicated that, while certain gender roles such as maternalism influenced their representation at the Aragalaya, they found a space which was empowering, supportive and productive for their political activism.

**Keywords:** aragalaya, gender representation, gender roles, subversive sites

**Economic reintegration challenges of ex-LTTE militants with conflict-related disabilities during the Sri Lankan economic crisis:  
A needs-based assessment in Cheddikulam Division, Vavuniya District**

M. S. Anees

*Department of Political Science and Public Policy, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

With the end of civil war in 2009, approximately 12,000 LTTE cadres either surrendered or were arrested; after receiving full rehabilitation, they were either released or reintegrated, depending on their performance throughout the rehabilitation process and the level of their engagement with the LTTE. A considerable number of these cadres were seriously injured, leaving them with lifelong impairment, a significant barrier to their ability to create livelihood opportunities and sources of sustainable revenue. However, these cadres now face more challenges in managing their daily lives with their dependents as a result of the nation's ongoing economic crisis. Though they received vocational training according to their physical and mental capabilities and interests as part of the government's program, it was strongly felt that economic reintegration was not carried out at a satisfactory level to cater to their needs and expectations. In this context, this study uses a needs-based assessment to briefly analyse how the recent economic crisis in Sri Lanka has doubled the economic burdens of ex-LTTE cadres with impairments. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses have been employed to gather data. 15 in-person interviews were conducted as case studies, whereas previous books, articles, research studies, and government statistics were utilised as secondary sources. Research revealed that the economic condition of ex-LTTE militants has deteriorated owing to the government's "security-first" approach in the reintegration programme that paid little attention to the contextual economic realities that have posed challenges for impaired ex-cadres. Furthermore, the government's monthly financial assistance is insufficient to meet their basic needs which include food, lodging and utility payments, children's needs, and lifelong medications. This study recommends that the government reassess the ex-militants' present economic condition, revise its support mechanisms, and develop additional strategies that target self-sufficiency. The government should also seek assistance from the international community, thereby lessening the government's financial burden as well as remedying the exclusion of the international community from the rehabilitation process.

**Keywords:** economic crisis, ex-cadres, needs-based assessment, physical impairment, reintegration

## **Sustainability and creativity: Exploring innovative approaches for a sustainable future**

Madusha Ariyasinghe

*LRN Resource, UK*

In the face of increasing environmental challenges and the pressing need for sustainable solutions, the interplay between sustainability and creativity has received considerable attention. The main aim of this project is to illuminate how creative thinking and innovative practices can co-exist to lead to a more sustainable future, while also exploring the symbiotic relationship between the two incompatible concepts. While traditional approaches to sustainability often focus on technological advances, policy reforms, and behavioural shifts, this paper argues that incorporating creativity into sustainability initiatives can introduce new visions and foster ground-breaking solutions. Through a comprehensive analysis of case studies, this study establishes that creativity can successfully intersect with sustainability, yielding results that transcend traditional boundaries. A key area to focus on is the role of interdisciplinary collaboration in integrating sustainability with creativity. By bringing together professionals from diverse fields such as art, design, engineering, and social sciences, a fertile ground for innovative ideas is cultivated. In these collaborations, a speculative future is envisioned by using various designs and biomimicry using several different fields to create a green environment and quality and nutritious food. This effort highlights different techniques and redefines problem-solving approaches that stretch the imagination. Furthermore, this paper examines the power of art and storytelling as powerful tools to create awareness and change human behaviour for sustainability. Creativity, visual arts, agriculture, etc. have the potential to evoke emotion, challenge perception, and stimulate action. Ultimately, it advocates a paradigm shift to how society perceives sustainability and approaches quality. As the world grapples with the complexities of environmental degradation, resource depletion, and social inequality, this project seeks to find and integrate resources through sustainability and creativity to shape a peaceful and renewable future.

**Keywords:** sustainability, creativity, innovation, art, storytelling, sustainable solutions

## **Prevalence of cancer among children in Sri Lanka**

B. Samudra Tharangani Bombuwalage

*Department of Demography, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Currently, cancer patients are on the rise, both globally and in Sri Lanka. Over the past 25 years, there has been a significant increase in deaths caused by cancer and a doubling of the number of cancer patients in Sri Lanka, making it the second most common cause of death. A group known to be more at risk of cancer is children (age group of 0–19 years). The main objective of this study is to examine the prevalence of cancer among children in Sri Lanka. The study was conducted using secondary data from the National Cancer Registry - Sri Lanka (NCR-SL), which is based on cancer incidence data reported to the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP), Ministry of Health of Sri Lanka, from 2005 to 2019. When examining the prevalence of cancer among children in the 0–19 year age group for the 14 year period from 2005 to 2019, more male patients have been reported every year. The highest percentages of male patients (56.5%) and female patients (50.9%) were recorded in 2009 and 2015, respectively. Leukemia accounted for the majority of cases among children. The highest number of cancer patients (918) was reported in 2016. Notably, Colombo District recorded the most number of patients throughout the five years from 2015 to 2019. The highest number of patients was reported from the Western Province, and the lowest number of cases were reported from Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu, and Vavuniya districts. In analysing the data from the last 14 years, it can be concluded that there is a clear increase in cancer among children.

**Keywords:** childhood, cancer, Sri Lanka, patients

# **Collaborative approach to prevent Islamic youth radicalisation in Sri Lanka: Integrating the role of religious actors in national policy and practice**

S. Chandran

*Department of Political Science and Public Policy, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

On Easter Sunday morning, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2019, a highly coordinated and well-planned suicide explosion by eight Muslim nationals of Sri Lanka occurred. It was heavily criticised that the local radical party, National Towheed Jamaat (NTJ), whose leader goes by the names Mohammed Zahran or Zahran Hashmi, intentionally misinterpreted Islam, the Quran, and Hadith to support its extreme ideology and involvement in violence. The youngsters involved in this were influenced by this propaganda promoted by the party. Following the attacks, the Sri Lankan government promptly ramped up security; however, it is yet to build de-radicalisation policies and programmes that can quickly adapt to the nation's emerging radicalisation patterns. Without a strong policy framework to counter radicalisation, Sri Lanka remains open to potential dangers in the future. It is essential to properly equip domestic mechanisms with de-radicalisation techniques in order to confront unprecedented challenges and counter and prevent youth radicalisation in the nation. This study identifies that a national de-radicalisation policy requires input from religious actors as they are an integral component of broader civil society, and that it could facilitate their primary role by providing counter-ideological messages or theological antidotes to extremist interpretations of religion. However, there are gaps in communication and trust between the government, security actors, and religious actors in Sri Lanka. Especially, where issues related to security are concerned, religion has become a particularly polarising topic of the government. The aim of this research is to explore the importance of mobilising or enlisting religious leaders and institutions in de-radicalisation processes, emphasising the point that governments are often ill-suited to directly address the religious dimensions of de-radicalisation. The study undertook extensive desk research, including gathering and analysing a wide range of primary and secondary documents. The research presents a collaborative approach where religious actors and security officials can work together effectively to counter and prevent radicalism. This approach also emphasises on how and when religious actors should engage, the significance of training such as skill-based training and training in religious literacy for religious actors and other parties, and the relationship between religious actors, the government, and security officials.

**Keywords:** collaborative approach, de-radicalisation, national policy, radicalisation, religious actors



# **Associated factors of unintended pregnancies at advanced reproductive age span in rural married women: A case study of the Kuruwita Medical Officer of Health area in the Ratnapura District**

H. A. C. Darshanee

*Department of Land Title Settlement, Ministry of Tourism and Land, Sri Lanka*

Unintended pregnancy is a widespread global health issue. Though fecundity reduces in late reproductive ages, the prevalence of unintended pregnancies and associated risks are high in advanced maternal age. Data demonstrate that the current increase of the Total Fertility Rate in Sri Lanka is mainly due to the increase of fertility of older women. Further, Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2006/07 data indicated that the percentage of unwanted births has significantly risen for women who are 35 years and older in Sri Lanka. Limited studies have focused on factors affecting the undesired pregnancies in older women. Therefore, this study sought to address the shortfalls with regard to assessing the factors influencing unplanned pregnancies among older women. The study sample was 29 women out of 105 in second reproductive age who were attending maternal and childcare clinics in four selected Public Health Midwife (PHM) areas in the Kuruwita Medical Officer of Health area (MOH) and who have experienced at least one unintended pregnancy at the survey period. Data collected through interviewer-administered questionnaires and in-depth interviews were analysed utilising SPSS software. This study revealed that the number of children ever born, fertility desire, and contraceptive behavior were important determinants of unintended pregnancy (chi-square test,  $p$ -value < 0.05). Older women in rural areas who had more children than they wanted were at a higher risk of unwanted pregnancies. The most direct cause of unintended pregnancy is the discontinuation and failure of contraception and the non-use of contraception. Most women in the latter part of childbearing age perceived that they are at a minimum risk of conception because they are infertile at those ages. Despite the risk of pregnancy and unintended pregnancy in this age group, about half of them used less effective contraceptive methods. Thus, family planning education, quality contraceptive counseling, and assistance in choosing the best-fit method with their individual characteristics will help the older women to have their desired family size, increase the uptake of contraceptives, and significantly reduce unintended pregnancies.

**Keywords:** older women, advanced reproductive age, contraceptive behaviour

## Characteristics of Moonlighting in Sri Lanka and opportunities to combat poverty

T. de Silva

*Department of Economics, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Moonlighting is an important feature of the labour market, as it could have a direct impact on the employment and earnings of the people. The incidence of moonlighting is frequent in developed countries where people engage in industries, part-time jobs, IT, finance, insurance, and legal consultancy as a secondary occupation. However, in developing countries, including Sri Lanka, moonlighting is prominent among low-income earners and those in the informal sector as an attempt at fulfilling their financial obligations. In this study, an in-depth descriptive analysis was carried out to illustrate the general characteristics of moonlighters in Sri Lanka, their motives of moonlighting, and the link between primary and secondary occupations. The analysis was done using the micro-data of the *Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2019* obtained from Department of Census and Statistics (DCS). The results of this study indicated that nearly 80% of moonlighters were males and that female engagement in moonlighting was lower than female participation in a primary job. The prevalence of factors such as being married and being head of the household suggests that the trend for moonlighting was driven more by financial motives than by career or interest-based motives in the Sri Lankan context. Even though the highest percentage of employment in primary occupations was in the services sector, 60% of moonlighting was concentrated in the agricultural sector. Thus, people from the rural and the estate sectors were more likely to engage in moonlighting compared to those from the urban sector. Moreover, moonlighting offered better returns for professionals and skilled workers in Sri Lanka while there was no real financial benefit of moonlighting for agricultural, sales-related, and unskilled occupations. They engaged in moonlighting for survival as their primary income was not permanent or very low. Although the lack of latest national data is a drawback when forming conclusions, moonlighting might have increased further at present to combat increasing poverty due to the current economic crisis.

**Keywords:** moonlighting, labour market, primary and secondary occupations, financial motive, occupation categories

## **The impact of occupational stress on job satisfaction of employees with reference to the apparel industry in Sri Lanka**

M. H. S. Dilrukshi<sup>1, 3</sup>, I. W. Rathnayaka<sup>2, 3</sup>, J. M. I. S. Jayathunge<sup>3</sup>, M. H. C. Dewinda<sup>4</sup>

*<sup>1</sup>Graduate School of Economics, Kyushu University, Japan*

*<sup>2</sup>School of Business, University of Southern Queensland, Australia*

*<sup>3</sup>Department of Economics, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

*<sup>4</sup>Global Business Program, University of West Scotland, Scotland*

The apparel industry in Sri Lanka is a significant contributor to the economy, employing over 15% of the workforce and being a key source of export earnings. However, high labor turnover and absenteeism due to job stress and job dissatisfaction hinder the productivity of employees. Numerous studies have examined the correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction, but only a few have delved into the impact of occupational stress on employees' job satisfaction within the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, the study focuses on analysing the effect of occupational stress on the job satisfaction of employees in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. The study administered a five-point Likert scale questionnaire to gather primary data on independent variables. Moreover, job satisfaction was assessed as a dichotomous variable, which is considered the dependent variable. Workload, role conflict, health and safety issues, and employee relationship with colleagues were used as predictor variables that reflect the occupational stress of the employees. The study employed a convenience sampling method to obtain a sample of 177 respondents employed in the apparel and textile factories in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. According to the Pearson correlation analysis conducted in the study, it was identified that there exists a weak but significantly negative correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction. The binary logistic regression model of overall job satisfaction of employees was significantly reliable (significant value - Omnibus test = 0.03,  $p < 0.005$ ) which was further proved by the Hosmer and Lemeshow test (significance value = 0.406,  $p > 0.005$ ). While the effect of workload, role conflict, and health and safety issues become insignificant, the employee's relationship with colleagues is identified as significant. The results indicate that those who were satisfied with the employee's relationship with colleagues were nearly two times as likely to have job satisfaction as an employee who is not satisfied with such relationships. The findings of the study emphasise the importance of effective management of employee relationships in reducing occupational stress and improving job satisfaction of employees.

**Keywords:** occupational stress, job satisfaction, employee relationship, apparel industry

## **Poverty and social exclusion in Sri Lanka: A study of a high-rise relocation housing project in Colombo**

Avanka Fernando

*Department of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

This abstract investigates the time frame immediately preceding the economic and social crisis of 2022 in Sri Lanka. This study explores disruption caused in lives of *watta* dwellers (Sinhala term for urban settlements) due to state-motivated urban regeneration projects. Whereas extant scholarship has emphasised vulnerability and precarity caused by regeneration projects, many previous studies also highlight coping strategies of the urban poor. This study employs a synthesis view and demonstrates that on one hand, those relocated are subject to vulnerability and precarity, while on the other hand, people are not passive victims, and exert differential strategies in constructing home and belonging in everyday life. While this research study contributes to literature on urban relocation, it presents an in-depth study of everyday life of the urban poor, investigating their homemaking experiences. The research methodology constitutes a household survey of two tower blocks, in-depth interviews, and intensive participant observation based on the researcher's lived experience in the housing project. While this ethnographic study was conducted from September 2019 to January 2021, the researcher continued intermittent contact with interlocutors till the present. This study elucidates that despite the focus on growing hunger, inequality, and undernutrition due to the economic crisis, this was also increasingly prevalent in the post-relocation context. This study argues that development projects, as well as multiple national and global crises exacerbated the precarious existence of the urban poor. Moreover, findings reveal that stark, structural inequalities within the Sri Lankan social structure are rarely absorbed into state discussions on development, poverty, exclusion, and inclusive growth. This paper demonstrates that socio-historical and political factors such as colonialism, historical discourses, state policy and urban planning, patronage networks, and clientelism contribute to poverty and social exclusion. In conclusion, the researcher argues that while structural inequalities and diverse factors cause poverty and social exclusion, homemaking strategies in the everyday lives of ordinary people should be considered in outlining plans for inclusive growth and development.

**Keywords:** urban poverty, inclusive growth, high-rise

## **The ideal feminine form: A historical analysis of the Sri Lankan female body as a social construct**

V. N. M. Fonseka

*Department of History, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Throughout history, women's bodies have been appreciated, particularly when utilised as an aesthetic object. In light of this knowledge, this study explores how the construction of the appreciation of the female body in Sri Lanka has contributed to the formulation of an ideal body type, resulting in patterns of body discrimination and concomitant socio-cultural implications. This study adopts a qualitative methodology to trace the historical appraisal of various body forms, and utilises the library method, visual observations, and web scraping for data collection. Visual analysis and comparative analysis are used to analyse the data in order to understand the impact of the ideal female body type by understanding the history of female body appreciation in Sri Lanka and its resultant discrimination. The study further aims to explore how this discrimination can be seen on social media platforms. To meet these objectives, this study firstly explores the ideal type of female body as a social construct shaped by social and cultural norms from the past by understanding the concept of ideal body type. Secondly, this study explores the notion of female figures by analysing the beauty standards of the Anuradhapura period. This analysis contributes to the broader endeavours of “doing history” through the lens of new historiography. This visual analysis challenges the dominant narrative and gives voice to those that were traditionally discriminated against. It explores the viewpoint of different groups and societies including women, which are historically underrepresented. Finally, this study explores the close interlink between ideal body type and body shaming, while uncovering the women who do not fit the ideal by historicising the context. The research concludes by exploring how the socially constructed epitome of the beauty of women often leads to discrimination if they fail to achieve such standards and how the Anuradhapura period laid the foundation for it.

**Keywords:** ideal body type, body appreciation, body shaming, discrimination

## **Reforms in India and Sri Lanka: A comparative analysis of policy change**

Rajni Gamage<sup>1</sup>, Harindra B. Dassanayake<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, Singapore*

<sup>2</sup> *Independent Researcher, Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Sri Lanka and India are going through a period of intense legal reforms. In August 2023, India's government moved three bills as substitutes for the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Indian Evidence Act. These were laws that originated during the British colonial era. These critical reforms come against a backdrop of debates on ambitious legal reforms for a unified civil code under the slogan 'One nation – One law', and reforms to tighten monitoring of non-government organisations. Sri Lanka too is going through an intense period of reforms, mainly in terms of the IMF bailout. However, the initial reforms are mostly institutional rather than economic. Key among these reforms are the anti-corruption law, the anti-terrorism bill, a central bank bill, and reforms in labour law, electronic media regulation, and voluntary social services act (regulation of NGOs). Sri Lanka also tried implementing a version of 'One Country – One Law'. These reforms have been selected based on their visibility (within public and political discourse) and immediacy on the lives of people. In this paper, based on a normative approach, we argue that Sri Lanka and India make use of policy windows opened by COVID-19, aggravated economic conditions, and global uncertainty, which facilitate centralisation of power by governments. There is a competing rather than complementary nature of the economies in South Asia to attract foreign investments. And it compels governments to engage and outperform one another in 'a race to the bottom', as they attempt to centralise their power. In this paper, we conduct a trend analysis, contextualising similar trends in policy reform within the region, from a political science perspective. The trends that enable certain policy windows have important implications for the nature and future of democratic systems. It also provides more clarity on what policies are likely to be prioritised, what interventions are possible and how they can be made more effective. This becomes significant in influencing policy that is more equitable, which protects the rights and interests of not just decision-makers, but also the welfare and rights of individuals on whose behalf these decisions are made.

**Keywords:** policy reforms, democracy, crisis

# **Social media and mental health: Exploring online support networks for marginalised communities in Sri Lanka**

I. G. Indurangala

*Department of Information and Communication Technology,  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka*

This study investigates the role of social media in empowering marginalised populations in Sri Lanka through the creation of online support networks for connection, experience exchange, and mental health resource access. The primary objective is to understand social media's impact on these networks, complemented by aims to define support types, assess their influence on mental health awareness, and scrutinise potential risks and ethical considerations. Using a netnographic approach blending qualitative and quantitative methods, the study explores social media accounts and groups focused on mental health issues in Sri Lanka, focusing in particular on individuals with mental health challenges within diverse marginalised groups. The research details the selection criteria for accounts and groups, the sample process, and the platforms under scrutiny while analysis encompasses posts, comments, interactions, and quantitative metrics. Preliminary findings underscore social media's transformative potential at fostering unity and understanding among underserved populations. Actively engaged participants contribute valuable insights to mental health practitioners and advocates. The study also addresses potential pitfalls, including misinformation and cyberbullying, and ethical concerns in online mental health support. These findings hold significance for mental health professionals, policymakers, and social media administrators. Understanding the positive influence of social media on mental health support allows practitioners to incorporate digital platforms into interventions, legislators to craft guidelines for responsible online behavior, and platform managers to enhance the safety and inclusivity of mental health support spaces. In conclusion, this research advances comprehension of how social media empowers individuals in marginalised communities, enhances mental health awareness, and advocates for responsible and ethical practices in online mental health communities, particularly in the Sri Lankan context.

**Keywords:** social media, mental health, online support networks, marginalised communities

## **A study on integrating Design Thinking into social work practice in Sri Lanka**

K. N. N. Jayathilaka

*Sri Lanka School of Social Work, National Institute of Social Development*

Design Thinking is a well-known approach that focuses on people and encourages innovative problem-solving around the globe. It provides a new way of addressing complex social issues. This study proposes Design Thinking principles for the field of social work in Sri Lanka and investigates the possibility and practicality of incorporating Design Thinking where such approaches have not been utilised before. This study aims to evaluate the applicability of Design Thinking in tackling social issues at the local level and to explore the potentially transformative impact of introducing Design Thinking to the social work landscape in Sri Lanka. It also explores the experiences and perspectives of social workers who actively engage in fieldwork through qualitative research methods. Moreover, it seeks to understand the challenges, benefits, and prospects associated with working with clients and their perspectives on utilising Design Thinking in the future. The expected results will offer valuable perspectives on transforming social work practices in Sri Lanka, benefitting practitioners, educators, and policymakers. Moreover, this research explores the potential of Design Thinking to transform the field of social work by venturing into new and unexplored areas and exploring innovative and creative methodologies in social work and their application to complex societal challenges, contributing to the broader discourse on this topic. It also seeks to identify contextually relevant strategies that can be implemented in this context.

**Keywords:** social work, design thinking, problem-solving, Sri Lanka



## **Facilitating intercultural transfer through cultural adaptation: Dubbing *Doctor Dolittle* in Sinhala**

H. K. D. S. S. Jayawardana, J. A. M. Hansani

*Department of Languages, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka*

Dubbing is a prominent form of Audio-visual Translation where translators frequently employ techniques such as adaptation to ensure a successful intercultural transfer. This study attempts to analyse the significance of cultural adaptation as a strategy in dubbing, with reference to the English cartoon *Doctor Dolittle* and its Sinhala adaptation *Dosthara Honda Hitha*. The main objective of this research is to analyse how cultural adaptation becomes an effective strategy when dubbing and translating culture-specific items from an English context to a Sri Lankan audience. This research analyses the adaptation strategy based on Assaqaf and Ali's (2016) definition. For the purpose of this study, the relevant data was gathered from the twelve episodes of *Doctor Dolittle* cartoon and its dubbed version *Dosthara Honda Hitha*, and open-ended interviews were conducted with a producer and a translator of the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation, the broadcasting authority of the Sinhala dubbed version of the cartoon. The analysis of the data indicated that most of the extracts had been dubbed into Sinhala by using cultural adaptation as a strategy. According to the findings, adaptation was the most frequently applied strategy to translate and dub culture-specific items to the target audience. Other than that, borrowing, equivalence, modulation, literal translation, addition and omission techniques were also employed as strategies in facilitating intercultural transfer. Highlighting the excessive use of cultural adaptation as a dubbing technique, the research encourages further studies assessing the effectiveness of adaptation as a translation strategy.

**Keywords:** audio-visual translation, cultural adaptation, dubbing techniques, culture-specific items

## **The COVID-19 pandemic and transgender communities: A study of ICT-based social work intervention in Sri Lanka**

H. D. Kaluarachchi, K. K. H. Pavithra

*Department of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

This study focuses on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected Sri Lankan society and explores the use of ICT-based interventions to support individuals' well-being. Through qualitative research, with a specific focus on interviews, the study looks at the challenges faced by transgender individuals during this crisis. This study, based on a non-random snowball sample of 25 individuals, looks at the impact of healthcare access, social exclusion, and stigma on a specific population. Interviews were done in both Sinhala and English. It also explores the potential use of ICT in social work. It looks at supporting transgender people in Sri Lanka by providing forums for networking, knowledge exchange, and motivation through ICT-based platforms such as online support groups, virtual meetings, and educational materials. Thus, social workers need to consider how technology can help oppressed and vulnerable people in this situation. This article highlights the importance of maintaining a good relationship between social workers and their clients, and the importance of using technology to effectively provide services. It suggests a plan developed in collaboration with ICT to help communities use technology and provide the necessary resources to meet their needs. Therefore, the strategy of providing necessary assistance to social workers, specifically in the context of ICT in social work, is crucial in providing the services needed by groups of people in many emergencies such as the pandemic. With this in mind, this study explores how technology can support communities, providing them with the necessary resources, goals, and hopes to maintain a high standard of living despite challenges, and how to respond to dangerous situations. This study provides insights into how community service interventions, particularly during emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic, can be improved. Sri Lankan policymakers, social workers, and other stakeholders need to be educated regarding the ways in which technology can empower transgender individuals.

**Keywords:** transgender, social work, ICT-based intervention, COVID-19

## **A study of the role of Buddhism in promoting peace and harmony in Sri Lanka: Challenges and opportunities**

N. W. M. K. T. Kavinda

*Department of Philosophy, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka*

This research explores Buddhist teachings on peace and harmony, as well as the practical difficulties in bringing about peace and harmony in Sri Lanka. Buddhism, which has been practiced in Sri Lanka for over 2,000 years, emphasises compassion, interconnectedness, and non-violence. The study employs a qualitative research approach, reviewing existing literature on Buddhism and peace in Sri Lanka, and conducting interviews with Buddhist monks and scholars involved in peace and conflict resolution work. The research highlights the relevance of Buddhist teachings on peace and harmony to face the challenges in Sri Lanka. Historically, Buddhism has played a significant role in promoting peace and continues to do so in contemporary times. However, achieving lasting peace and harmony in Sri Lanka is not without its challenges. The country's history of conflict, including a prolonged civil war, has left deep wounds and divisions among ethnic and religious groups. Despite efforts towards reconciliation, underlying tensions persist, hampering progress towards a unified and harmonious nation. Political factors also present obstacles to peace and harmony. The lack of adequate political will to address sensitive issues and actively promote peacebuilding initiatives hinders sustainable solutions to conflicts. Buddhism's teachings offer valuable principles for promoting peace and harmony in Sri Lanka. Emphasising compassion and non-violence, Buddhism can foster a more peaceful society. Acknowledging the challenges, including historical conflicts and political barriers, is essential in formulating effective strategies toward lasting peace. By drawing upon the wisdom of Buddhism and addressing practical difficulties, Sri Lanka can strive towards a future of peaceful coexistence among its diverse communities.

**Keywords:** Buddhism, conflict resolution, peace and harmony, Sri Lanka

## **Flood susceptibility mapping through analytical hierarchy process: A study from the Attanagalu Oya river basin**

G. N. Kaushalya<sup>1</sup>, T. W. M. T. W. Bandara<sup>2</sup>, V. P. I. S. Wijeratne<sup>3</sup>

*<sup>1</sup>Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences,  
University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka*

*<sup>2</sup>Department of Geography, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka*

*<sup>3</sup>Department of Geography, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Flooding is one of the most severe natural disasters in Sri Lanka. Flood susceptibility mapping and assessment are essential for identifying flood risk zones, flood prevention and mitigation strategies, as they identify the most vulnerable areas based on the physical factors that determine susceptibility to flooding. This study aims to define the flood susceptibility zones in the Attanagalu Oya river basin using a multi-criteria approach, especially the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) technique and the Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The secondary data used in this study was obtained from global open-source databases and institutions. Seven flood conditioning factors were chosen in this study, such as elevation, distance from the river, drainage density, rainfall, slope, soil type, and Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI). All factors were defined as raster datasets (30m resolution) and the AHP technique was used to calculate factor weights. Finally, the weighted overlay method in ArcGIS was used to create the final flood susceptibility map for the study area and it was classified to five classes based on the risk of flooding as very high risk, high risk, moderate risk, low risk, and very low risk. The total area of these classes is equal to 21.71 km<sup>2</sup> (very high risk), 172.99 km<sup>2</sup> (high risk), 440.73 km<sup>2</sup> (moderate risk), 194.40 km<sup>2</sup> (low risk), and 2.38 km<sup>2</sup> (very low risk). It has been found that the southwest area of the river basin is vulnerable to very high risk flooding. The AHP technique provides useful insights for flood susceptibility mapping when a higher number of parameters are used. Therefore, such studies will open new avenues for flood risk management, prevention, and mitigation in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** flood susceptibility, Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), weighted overlay method, flood management

# **Accent in varieties of English: A study of the degree of preference and intelligibility among ESL undergraduates at the University of Kelaniya**

G. G. C. Madushika

*Department of Marketing, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka*

Sri Lanka is considered as a country belonging to the Outer Circle (OC) in Kachru's concentric circles of English which was proposed in the mid-1980s. This model allocates the presence of English into three concentric circles: the Inner Circle (IC), the Outer Circle (OC), and the Expanding Circle (EC). The fact that English has become a second language or a foreign language among the countries in the world highlights that the students who learn English as a second language or foreign language are aware of the varieties of the English language. Hence, the study aims to examine the perception of ESL students in Sri Lanka towards the pronunciation of varieties of English. Kachru's world Englishes model is particularly selected for the study since it is one of the best representations that bring together all the existing varieties in one diagram. As for the methodology, listening tasks spoken by speakers in IC, OC and EC were presented to first-year students who enrolled in the course titled 'English for Humanities' which was offered by the Department of English Language Teaching, University of Kelaniya. The students rated accent preference and intelligibility after listening to British, Indian and Russian news readings from IC, OC, and EC respectively. Further, semi-structured interviews were conducted with random students for more in-depth information. The results revealed that the variety of English that was perceived as the most favourable accent by the participants was English spoken by the speaker from IC. However, English spoken by the speaker from the OC was perceived as the most intelligible. Conclusively, the findings indicate that it is important for English teachers to introduce their students to varieties of English and make them more aware of linguistic differences of the English language and the way English is used by non-native English speakers. This will help the students to develop a degree of mutual intelligibility.

**Keywords:** accent, intelligibility, pronunciation, varieties of English

## **Exploring conflict management through Buddhist perspectives: A path to peaceful coexistence**

Ven. B. Nandabodhi Thero

*Faculty of Graduate Studies, Buddhist and Pali University, Sri Lanka*

In a world of increasing social conflicts, this research investigates the applicability of Buddhist teachings as a means of resolving conflicts. By utilising primary texts and scholarly resources, the study outlines the diverse manifestations of conflicts and their origins, emphasising the relevance of Buddhist perspectives in resolving them. Employing content analysis, it evaluates primary and secondary sources, ensuring validity and reliability through comparison with theoretical standards. By considering historical context, the study contributes valuable practical insights to the field of conflict resolution. This scholarly analysis emphasises Buddhism's core message of non-violence and peaceful coexistence. Buddhism rejects all forms of conflict and advocates harmony, kindness, and understanding. The study delves into Buddhist teachings, examining key terms such as *kalaha* and *vivāda*, shedding light on the roots of conflicts, namely greed, aversion, and delusion. Buddhist teachings address human suffering, emphasising physical, mental, and social well-being, leading to ultimate spiritual happiness. These insights, drawn from *Majjhima Nikāya* and *Dhammapada*, are linked to contemporary psychological theories such as cognitive behavioural therapy. Buddhism's emphasis on conquering hatred with kindness and understanding is explored, offering profound wisdom for resolving conflicts and promoting lasting peace within oneself and society. The study's findings underscore the centrality of intention in shaping conflicts, exemplified specially in teachings. Buddhist teachings on ethical behaviour and cultivation of wholesome thoughts offer practical guidelines for conflict prevention and resolution. In conclusion, Buddhism's emphasis on compassion, mindfulness, and the Noble Eightfold Path, as demonstrated in the Buddhist canon, provides a robust framework for addressing conflicts at individual, interpersonal, and societal levels. These teachings, echoed in J. R. Jayewardene's diplomatic approach, affirm Buddhism's timeless relevance in navigating complex conflicts. This research underscores Buddhism's potential to inspire and guide humanity towards a more peaceful coexistence, fostering positive change in an interconnected world.

**Keywords:** Buddhism, conflict resolutions, Buddhist conflict management, peaceful coexistence

**Assessing the determinants of graduate migration decisions:  
A case study conducted in a state university in Sri Lanka**

P. C. J Nayanalochana<sup>1</sup>, K. L. S. Abeywickrama<sup>1</sup>, K. D. D Hansani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Economics, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Demography, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Migration is a key factor that affects the economic growth of a nation. The migration of graduates, who are an important part of the human capital, leads to brain drain which negatively impacts the socio-economic status of third world countries. This study aims to identify the factors that motivate graduates to migrate for employment. A sample of 180 graduates from a state-funded university was selected using the purposive sampling method. However, it was observed that 52 participants were unwilling to migrate, and hence, were excluded from the factor analysis. The research employed an exploratory factor analysis method to identify and investigate the various factors contributing to the decision to migrate. Based on the exploratory factor analysis, this study noted that in the context of the selected state university in Sri Lanka, job-related, economic development-related, social-related, social security-related, and fiscal policy-related factors have affected the migration decision of graduates. These identified factors account for around 67% of the total incident. Job-related factors had the most significant impact on the migration decision of graduates. Therefore, it is essential for the government and stakeholders to recognise the socio-economic burden posed by graduate migration and take necessary steps to minimise its impact on the national economy. This study highlights the need for effective policies that can provide opportunities for graduates to utilise their skills and knowledge in their home countries.

**Keywords:** migration, graduates, brain drain, exploratory factor analysis

## **Political participation of religious groups as a challenge to democracy in Sri Lanka: A sociological study**

K. K. H. Pavithra, H. D. Kaluarachchi

*Department of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Religious groups have always played a significant role in shaping societies and influencing political decisions. However, their increasing involvement in politics can also undermine the principles of pluralism and secularism that are essential for democratic governance. In Sri Lanka, a multi-religious and multi-ethnic state has led to the development of interrelationships between the two social institutions of religion and politics. Based on the analysis of secondary data, this study examines how the political participation of religious groups affects democracy in Sri Lanka through the influence they exert over political issues. According to the findings, one major concern is the potential for discrimination and exclusion when religious beliefs become intertwined with political decision-making, leading to the marginalisation of those who belong to different faiths, undermining equal representation and threatening social cohesion. Moreover, questions about accountability and transparency arise if policymakers prioritise the interests of specific religious groups over broader societal concerns, eroding trust in democratic institutions. Another challenge arises from the potential conflict between religious doctrine and human rights when religious groups advocate for policies that discriminate against certain populations based on gender or sexual orientation, posing a threat to the democratic principles of equality and justice. A healthy democracy requires a balance between protecting religious freedom and upholding secular governance, with strong safeguards against discrimination, transparency in political processes, and the basing of policy decisions on rationality rather than dogma. This study recognises that to preserve pluralism and uphold democratic values such as equality and fairness, it is essential to carefully navigate the intersection between religion and politics while safeguarding individual rights and maintaining the separation between religious groups and the state.

**Keywords:** political participation, democracy, religious groups, individual rights



## **An analytical study of Sinhala-Hindi Anusvaara pronounced as the class nasal**

H. I. Premathilake

*Department of Languages, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

Sinhala and Hindi languages are amateur languages that are inspired by Sanskrit and Pali. In the latter two languages, Anusvaara is a nasal sound lacking that closure of the organs required to make a nasal mute or class nasal or contact-sound; in its utterance, there is nasal resonance along with some mouth openness. Even though Sinhala and Hindi have the same consonant structure, there are also instances where the Sanskrit principle above is applied. However, it is invalid with Sinhala and Hindi semivowels, spirants, laterals, and trill consonants. Therefore, the objective of the present research was to identify other language rules related to the anusvaara-sandhi of Sinhala and Hindi languages and to identify the cases where they are similar and unequal. The research question was whether Sinhala and Hindi languages were born in Sanskrit, but the language rules related to Anusvaara were similar to each other in the two languages. For this study, words used in Sinhala and Hindi with Anusvaara were selected as the sample. Data was collected from interviews with academics from the Departments of Hindi and Sinhala of the University of Kelaniya as the primary source, and library sources served as secondary sources. Data analysis was carried out through the use of Sinhala and Hindi documented rules on the Anusvaara. One of the main findings identified by this study is that the rules related to Anusvaara of Sinhala and Hindi languages in terms of writing Sanskrit loan words are entirely different. Therefore, it can be concluded that for the ease of pronunciation of most of the words in the Sinhala language, Anusvaara is used in the following phoneme, some of the words that have replaced the Sanskrit language theory in the Hindi language are free from that basic principle, and there are words in both languages that are not subject to any Anusvaara rules.

**Keywords:** Anusvaara, Anusvaara-sandhi, class nasals, Sinhala, Hindi

## **Universal Buddhist pantheon and Buddhist purifying process in post-war Sri Lanka**

M. G. L. M. Premarathna

*Department of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

There have been various religious reformation movements to purify Buddhism throughout the history of Sri Lanka. Recent attempts at such forms of purification can be seen through popular and radical religious movements like Mahamevnawa Asapuwa (monastery) in post-war Sri Lanka. The aim of this paper is to analyse how the post-war religious movements purify popular Sinhala Buddhism in order to create a more pure and authentic form of Buddhism in contemporary Sri Lanka. This paper is based on ethnographic research that was conducted at the branches of the Mahamevnawa monastic movement including those located in Malabe, Polgahawela and Balangoda and other areas from October 2017 to October 2018. The informal interview method and the participant observation method were employed to collect data over a period of 12 months. The findings of this research present that Mahamevnawa Asapuwa has reformed the popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon and created a new universal Buddhist pantheon by excluding non-Buddhist deities from the Buddhist pantheon. This new universal Buddhist pantheon has been created based on the Buddhist sacred text, the *Tripitakaya*. Moreover, the universal Buddhist pantheon connects with the nature of social composition, social formation of the Mahamevnawa Asapuwa and its nationalist orientation. This paper argues that the contemporary Buddhist purifying processes are based on nationalist orientation, social composition, and social formation of contemporary Sinhala Buddhists.

**Keywords:** popular Sinhala Buddhist pantheon, religious nationalism, social composition, social formation, Mahamevnawa Asapuwa

## **Environmental crisis and the human: A philosophical study with special reference to Hua-Yen Buddhism**

R. P. C. H. Perera

*Department of Philosophy, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka*

The school of Hua-Yen Buddhism is one that emerged in a Chinese civilisation alongside Mahayana Buddhism. While Hua-Yen Buddhism is not limited only to discussing ecology, it is possible to build a logical view on the importance of nature based on the principles described in Hua-Yen Buddhism. Accordingly, the ecology implied by Hua-Yen Buddhism and how it can be used as a possible solution for environmental problems of the contemporary world will be presented here. This study further attempts to re-investigate the philosophical importance of Hua-Yen Buddhism and in particular, to prevent misunderstandings about the relationship between humans and nature, while offering clarity on the context and meaning of its position and motivating future studies in the interdisciplinary space between philosophy, geography, and Buddhist studies. This study used primary and secondary sources to analyse Hua-Yen Buddhism and its relation to ecology. Several methodologies of data analysis have been used to analyse the research problems including content analysis, discourse analysis, the critical method, and the analytical method. The analysis demonstrates that an essential approach for overcoming the contemporary environmental crisis has been described through Hua-Yen Buddhist discourse. Environmental problems are created as a result of the thought and action of the individual. Addressing the existing environmental crisis should be achieved by addressing the root of the issue which can be traced back to epistemological foundations. Thus, the distance between man and nature should be reduced, rather than targeting the actions of man against nature, allowing for human actions to be shaped in an environmentally-friendly manner. Hua-Yen Buddhism offers an epistemological basis for changing the status quo and an opportunity to shape modern opinion on environmental issues.

**Keywords:** Hua-Yen Buddhism, ecology, environmental crisis, inter-relativity

## **Personal practice in an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom: A focus on teacher knowledge and reasoning**

R. S. Pothupitiya

*Department of English and Linguistics, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka*

Pedagogical practice of in-class teaching of the Second Language teacher as intelligent decision-making of the emergent learning demands of a given learning situation achieves recognition in the current understanding of teacher cognition study. Therefore, an exploration of this phenomena in real teaching situations to better understand the pedagogy of Second Language teaching is a necessity. The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of relations between teacher reasoning and knowledge in selecting instructional and procedural strategies that make unique teacher practice forms, which could be identified as personal pedagogical practice forms in teaching Second Language. This study explored the phenomena of pedagogical thinking on teacher interactive knowledge in conjunction with one another in a qualitative multiple case study framework with three participating teachers teaching English, who were selected using a convenience purposive sampling method. Data collection and interpretation procedures were determined by interpretative phenomenological analysis and hermeneutics. Participant teachers' think-aloud oral protocol data gathered in short narratives and video-recorded teaching session data were used as primary data sources. These data were analysed using qualitative content analysis mechanisms to see the connections between teacher reasoning and decision-making while teaching. Findings are presented as thematic analysis and they confirmed a strong connection between reasoning on teacher interactive cognition in selecting teaching strategies, giving evidence for patterning personal forms of pedagogical practice in teaching. This manifestation was observed in two-fold condition of teacher interactive knowledge: in single and multiple arrangement conditions. Additionally, this flow of demonstration was observed both deliberate and incessant, confirming solid connections between reasoning on cognition in pattern-making related to Second Language teaching practice. These insights can be taken into account in Second Language teacher education, evaluation and professional practice. Further studies can be designed with many case participants who are novice and experienced to understand whether certain categories of cognition specifically appear in the pattern formation of pedagogical practice. Studies can also use the interpretive phenomenological framework and think-aloud method to survey and observe teachers' thinking.

**Keywords:** informed personal practice, interactive cognition, interpretive phenomenological analysis, stimulated think-loud oral protocol

## **Integrating AI technology in ESL instruction to foster self-regulated learning: Teachers' perceptions**

Luxika Raguram

*Department of English Language Teaching, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka*

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technology in English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction has gained increasing attention as a means of fostering self-regulated learning (SRL) among students. This study attempts to explore the perceptions of ESL instructors at state universities in Sri Lanka. A mixed-methods approach incorporating questionnaires and semi-structured interviews was employed to gather data from a sample of ESL instructors from eight state universities in Sri Lanka, after obtaining their consent. The questionnaire assessed ESL instructors' familiarity with and usage of AI technology in their instructional practices, as well as their beliefs and attitudes towards the integration of AI for SRL, whereas semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth insights into their experiences and challenges. In addition, recommendations for effectively incorporating AI technology into ESL instruction in order to enhance SRL among ESL learners were also obtained. Findings revealed that while ESL instructors exhibited varying levels of familiarity with AI technology, there was a general recognition of its potential benefits in promoting SRL. They acknowledged the ability of AI tools to provide personalised feedback, facilitate autonomous learning, and foster self-assessment skills. However, concerns were also expressed about technical barriers and ethical considerations associated with AI systems, including fear that the technology would replace human interaction. The need for professional development and support in utilising AI tools was also highlighted. These findings will contribute to the development of strategies and policies that promote the successful integration of AI technology in ESL instruction, ultimately enhancing students' self-regulated learning experiences.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence, ESL instruction, self-regulated learning, teachers' perceptions

## **Enhancing learners' writing skills: The impact of formative assessment on Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)**

Vithuja Rajaram

*Department of English Language Teaching, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka*

In ESL classrooms, teaching academic writing skills require appropriate scaffolding. Learners do not take necessary efforts to enhance academic writing skills unless they face examinations. Furthermore, they give priority to formative assessments as they consist of a certain percentage of marks in their summative assessment. Therefore, this research investigates the significant role of formative assessment in augmenting the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency of learners' writing skills. The study examines the intricate relationship between formative assessment strategies and the development of linguistic and cognitive skills essential for academic success. The samples for this study were chosen from the learners of the course Translation Studies offered in the Semester II of the Second Year at the Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna, within a period of three months, with ethical considerations. The data was collected by conducting a pre-test, post-test and informal discussions with the learners. The students were divided into two groups: a control group and an experimental group. SPSS statistical package and paired-sample T-test were used for data analysis. The experimental group was taught through conducting frequent content and language-based formative assessments, whereas the control group was taught through content-based formative assessments. Afterwards, a post-test was given to both groups to check significant differences. In the post-test, the experimental group outperformed the control group. At this juncture, the learners of the experimental group had improved Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency in their writing skills with regular feedback from the teacher. In addition, the learners developed learner autonomy and became self-regulated learners. Finally, the learners of the experimental group developed their meta-cognitive strategies of planning, selective attention, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation unlike the learners of the control group.

**Keywords:** writing skill, formative assessment, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, ESL learners

## **Empowering language fluency: Unveiling challenges and forging pathways for proficiency in English speaking among students**

S. K. L. J. Ramanayaka

*Language Department, Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management, Sri Lanka*

This research undertook an investigation of the challenges confronted by intermediate-level students (batch number 238) pursuing professional cookery disciplines when speaking in the English language at the Colombo Campus of the Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management (SLITHM). The primary objectives of the study encompassed scrutinising the hurdles faced by students concerning English language communication on a daily basis, identifying contributory factors responsible for these challenges, and proposing viable strategies to address them. The sample consisted of 20 students chosen through purposive random sampling. Structured interviews and observations served as the primary data collection tools, providing insights into the challenges these students encountered in everyday English conversations. The investigation revealed that students faced multifaceted issues stemming from both internal and external factors, including difficulties in comprehending grammatical structures, using incorrect pronunciation, and possessing a limited vocabulary. Other contributing factors that hampered their language proficiency included a lack of practice opportunities, a preference for their mother tongue, a fear of making mistakes, psychological challenges, and a lack of discipline. The diverse social backgrounds of the students also posed a challenge to them in utilising a foreign language daily. Consequently, this research suggests implementing a 3-week English immersion course for students before they commence their academic programmes. Additionally, students should be encouraged to participate in English language-related activities to revitalise their dormant capabilities. Moreover, feedback from students should be incorporated to continually refine the curriculum and develop innovative strategies for improving English speaking skills. This research not only highlights the challenges faced by intermediate-level students but also offers practical solutions to foster a learning environment that is conducive to ensuring their proficiency in spoken English.

**Keywords:** challenges, English language, speaking, strategies

## **The field affordance framework: How do social media platforms allow for activism in Sri Lanka?**

Craig Ryder

*School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK*

Social media affords manifold opportunities for Sri Lankan activists and platforms alike. While activists share content, interact, and organise collectively, platforms harvest data and steer users into profitable behaviours. The correlation between a social media's design architecture and the social outcomes they offer have been framed in the language of affordances (boyd, 2010, Hopkins, 2019), and platforms are broadly recognised as affording outcomes in relation to the subjective experience of the user (Davis, 2020). Yet, affordances studies have tended to focus specifically on what users *do*. Rarely do scholars consider what do platforms *allow* in the first instance, and how users challenge or ignore these structuring conditions. In this article, I argue that to get closer to fully comprehending social media affordances it is time to see platforms as digital fields. Field theory argues that power intersects with social environments in three distinct ways. Fields 1) force rules on agents inside a field, thereby dictating the acceptable modes of behaviour; 2) they are a "battlefield" for agents to exchange power through the accumulation and exchange of capital; and 3) fields compete against rival fields to ensure their own legitimacy and longevity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1993). I want to inaugurate social media platforms as digital fields that equally press behaviours on users, act as arenas of struggle for capital, and contest other platforms to maintain their own livelihood. The article introduces the *Field Affordance Framework*. By identifying four new categories of affordance, I will illustrate how the *expected*, *preferred*, and *ignored* affordances of a platform's design feature are markedly different in practice. Moreover, the *field* affordance will recognise the agential potential of digital technology, demonstrating how social medias actively participate in the battlefield for capital, by imitating competitor platforms and releasing rival design features.

**Keywords:** affordances, activism, social media, Sri Lanka



# **A study of the influence of digital technology on the visual quality of cinematic imagery**

L. G. S. U. Sandaruwan, Dinithi Tharushika

*Department of Drama, Cinema and Television, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka*

It is indisputable that digital technology has become a driving force that controls the world at present. Art is also rapidly adapting to this wave of digitalisation. Corresponding to the current times, many forms of art underwent revolutionary transformations due to the merging of art and technology. Even cinema, considered one of the world's youngest arts, could not be separated from this trend; meanwhile, the intervention of digital technology has elevated the motion picture of the past to a more attractive and influential level. The purpose of this research is to study the relationship between digital technology and image quality in cinema. The research problem investigates how digital technology has affected the quality of the cinematographic image. Here, visual quality refers to the progression of the external attractiveness and the high intensity of the visual information of the image that the viewer sees on the screen. This research will primarily study how digital technology practices have affected the overall visual quality of cinematic images. In this way, it is further aimed to build a continuous discourse about the convergence of cinema and digital technology, provide a precedent for creating new approaches in digital cinematography, and build knowledge and guidance for future digital cinematographers. A qualitative research methodology was used to conduct the study, and data was collected through books, research journals and reports, films, and discussions with authentic, knowledgeable scholars. Further, content analysis of three movies belonging to the horror genre, namely *The Nun*, *The Invitation*, and *Conjuring* was conducted. It was found that digital technology has significantly transformed the visual quality of cinematographic imagery and that this positive effect can be identified through four aspects that directly contribute to the visual quality of the image. Hence, it was concluded that digital technology contributes to enhancing the overall visual quality of a film by improving the four factors of colour accuracy, depth of field, resolution, and motion dynamics in cinema image resolutions.

**Keywords:** digital technology, visual quality, cinematography, impact

## **Health and wellbeing of senior citizens: A medical sociological study with special reference to the Thenmaradchi Divisional Secretariat in the Jaffna District**

G. Sarththiga

*Department of Sociology, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka*

Population aging is the dominant demographic trend of the twenty-first century. The study aimed to assess the health and well-being issues of senior citizens living in the Thenmaradchi Divisional Secretariat. A mixed method approach was adopted in this community-based study. Utilising stratified random sampling, 427 senior citizens were selected for this study. A questionnaire survey, key informant interviews, and case studies were used to collect primary data. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistical methods with the use of SPSS version 21 and the qualitative data was analysed thematically. The age range for the elderly was 60-98 years, with an average of 71.14 and a standard deviation of 7.462. Most of the participants (69.1%) had chronic diseases and among them, the vast majority of elderly (94.4%) received medical treatment for their diseases. Some of the elderly (27%) suffered from high blood pressure and a few (2.2%) had kidney disease. The majority of the elderly (97%) did not get geriatric medical services for their health issues. Also, results revealed that in the physical well-being scale of the elderly, 51.1% of participants responded as 'good' to the statement which suggested that they did not get tired very easily. In response to a statement on the psychological well-being scale, some of the elderly (29.5%) felt that they were often bored. In the social well-being scale, some of the elderly (29.5%) indicated their lack of satisfaction with their environment. Further, in the spiritual well-being scale, many participants (41%) moderately agreed to the statement that God loves and cares for them. And, 79.4% of elderly utilised coping mechanisms for their problems. The research concludes that senior citizens faced significant health and well-being issues. This study recommends that more health services should be provided to enhance the health and wellbeing of the elderly in this location.

**Keywords:** aging, health, life expectancy, non-communicable diseases

## **Election campaign financing and underrepresentation of women in local government authorities (LGAs)**

M. Senanayake, N. C. R. Silva

*Department of Political Science and Public Policy, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

This research attempts to explore the impact of election campaign finance provisions in Sri Lanka with special reference to the status of women's political representation at the local government authorities (LGAs). Most scholarly studies agree that poor election campaign financing adversely affects various unrepresented and underrepresented segments of society, such as women, youth, people with disabilities, and minority groups. The current political culture identifies such groups as non-winning horses with little competitiveness. While women represent more than 52% of the total population of Sri Lanka, the percentage of women in representative bodies is relatively low: 5% at the national and 15% at the local level. Against this backdrop, this study interrogates the problem of women continuing to be marginalised and underrepresented in local government bodies despite Sri Lanka introducing a 25% quota system for women's representation in LGAs in 2018. The methodological approach was qualitative, with 55 focus group discussions (FGDs) being conducted with local-level male and female politicians. Additionally, eight expert interviews were conducted with national-level politicians, officials, and activists across the country related to the electoral process in Sri Lanka. The findings of the research revealed that the reason for poor representation of women in political representative bodies does not solely depend on the monetary factor, but is influenced by deeper political, socio-economic, and cultural factors such as poor economic capacity, misperception of leadership capacity, lack of political interests of women, sociocultural barriers, practical/logistic barriers, exploitation, lack of awareness and political literacy, and mistreatment of women. The most challenging aspect for women in politics, especially self-motivated women, is their family or political background. Women with elite political and family backgrounds are more likely to run election campaigns smoothly when compared to other women candidates. Therefore, it is important to attempt to attitudinally accept women's political leadership while enacting formal legislation such as financial regulation to increase women's political representation.

**Keywords:** weak election campaigns, women's political representation, local government, underrepresentation

**An analysis of the portrayal of Black July, 1983 in Sri Lankan Tamil  
poetry with special reference to the poetry collection  
'Maranaththul Valvom'**

A. K. Sivalingam

*Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

This analysis examines the role of Sri Lankan Tamil poetry in addressing socio-economic, political, and cultural issues in the aftermath of the 1983 riots, also known as Black July. These riots were a series of organised, ethnically motivated attacks that targeted the Tamil minority, resulting in significant loss of life and property, and marking a critical turning point in the country's ethnic conflict. The selected collection of poetry 'Maranaththul Valvom' (*Let Us Live Amidst Death*), was the first and largest collection of its kind written by 31 poets and published in 1985. The analysis looks at how these poems connect to Black July, using Edward Said's theory of 'otherness' and the application of discourse analysis. The poems bear witness to the emotional journeys of the Tamil people as they navigated the aftermath of Black July, vividly recounting traumatic events such as the Welikada prison killings and distressing narratives of street murders in various regions of Sri Lanka. The poems also delve into the profound impact of the 1983 riots, emphasising the trauma experienced by those considered 'other' during this tumultuous period. They reflect a deep and sensitive understanding of human suffering and the societal dynamics of that era. Some poems address post-conflict events that originated in 1983, including an incident where the military intercepted a bus from Colombo, resulting in a tragic loss of lives. The analysis further discusses the silence maintained by leftist groups in responding to this crisis, highlighting the lack of investigations into these grievous occurrences, and exposing the harsh realities of unaddressed injustices. The poems also reveal the intricate political dynamics that surrounded Black July. This analysis underscores the pivotal role played by the 1983 Black July in triggering an identity crisis among Tamils. The poems effectively capture and convey the multifaceted aspects of the 1983 riots, shedding light on socio-political dynamics and their profound impact on the Tamil community.

**Keywords:** Black July, Sri Lankan literature, Tamil poetry, otherness in Tamil poetry

## **Taking a break from model building: A way forward for variety studies of English**

K. K. S. G. Sylva

*Department of English Language Teaching, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Englishes across the world have been studied, described, and classified according to various models. These models have at times presented hierarchised systems of classification, and of late, attempted to move away from such systems. Most often though, historically and contemporarily, these models use labels tied to geopolitical boundaries and to historical processes in order to develop categories, classifications, and explanations for linguistic phenomena. This conceptual study reviews selected existing models and classifications to examine their effectiveness in providing meaningful explanations of language change and variety formation in the case of English. Identifying some of the salient factors that gave rise to these models at various historical moments and recognising the need of that moment, this study explores the usefulness of these explanations in terms of one factor – capturing the richness of language production in the sites in which varieties of English are studied. In a world which defies restrictions on physical movement imposed by geopolitical realities through communication and technology, concepts such as contact, influence, proximity take on new meaning in terms of language change. Through an examination of these factors, the study identifies a need to resist the urge to offer English language models that take geopolitical regions and historical processes as the most significant bases for description and start describing the richness of language expressions that enhance communicative value in any given context. This requires resisting attempts at broad generalisations and understanding the nuanced interplay between and among languages especially in multilingual contexts in which English has found homes.

**Keywords:** English, variety studies, models

## **Dance as a holistic intervention for individuals with intellectual disabilities: A review of literature**

Ashoka Bandula Weerawardhana

*Center for Disability Research, Education, and Practice, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Dance, being a multifaceted art form, potentially offers a range of benefits to individuals with intellectual disabilities (IDs). This is a literature survey of studies that explore the impact of dance training on young adults with IDs. The articles for review were selected using the electronic databases, Scopus and ProQuest. The following keywords were used in the search “intellectual disabilit\*”, “danc\*”, “leisure activit\*”, “quality of life”. Out of 68 retrieved articles, 13 met the inclusion criteria, and six were selected for review. The selected articles were published between 2016 and 2022 and focused on exploring the impact of dancing on individuals with IDs. Three types of benefits – physical, social, and emotional – were identified from the survey. It was found that dance programmes enhance lower limb strength, mobility, and stability, highlighting its potential for improving physical health. Socially, dance fostered social competence, self-esteem, and communication skills, signifying its role in enhancing social interactions. Emotionally, dance facilitated emotional expression and self-awareness, positively impacting self-concept and body image. The review suggests that dance could serve as a holistic intervention to enhance the overall wellbeing and quality of life for persons with IDs. However, the review also identified methodological shortcomings and gaps in the selected research articles, highlighting the need for robust research in this area. Additionally, the lack of inclusivity, cultural diversity, and focus on mental health in the reviewed studies present opportunities for future investigation. In conclusion, the review emphasised the potential of dance to empower and enrich the lives of individuals with IDs, highlighting its ability to address physical health, loneliness, and emotional regulation. Future research should focus on developing and evaluating evidence-based dance interventions for individuals with IDs, while ensuring inclusivity and diversity.

**Keywords:** intellectual disabilit\*, leisure activit\*, quality of life, danc\*

## **Bridging the skills-employment gap in the ICT sector in Sri Lanka**

H. G. Wijesekera

*Department of Economics, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Sri Lanka's ICT sector currently stands as the third largest forex earner of the country. To sustain further expansion of the ICT sector, the dynamic capabilities of the ICT firms driven by an expanding talent pool will be a decisive factor. Sri Lanka, despite its relatively higher levels of human development and skilled labour, is facing a challenge in sourcing relevant skilled labour for its expanding ICT sector. This study explores the dynamics of the skills-employment gap in the ICT sector in Sri Lanka and attempts to quantify the gap, leading to the identification of potential reforms aimed at bridging this gap. The study depends on secondary data sources and publications to assess the gap. The analysis is based on graphical representation of a cross-tabulation to gauge the current state of employment and skills level in the ICT sector in Sri Lanka. The study further includes an evaluation based on secondary sources including journal articles, reports, and survey publications of different bodies on developments in the ICT sector of Sri Lanka. It was observed that Sri Lanka is facing an intensifying talent scarcity in the ICT sector emerging from multiple reasons such as skills mismatches in education output, labour shortages, traditional models of education and training, and educated youth unemployment, to name a few. It is important that industry stakeholders, policymakers and education providers adopt a consolidated effort to implement a plan that captures the future needs of the industry. Educational as well as labour market reforms – consistent and coordinated – will help address urgent concerns to a large extent. Sustaining and re-sharpening Sri Lankan labour to meet demands in the ICT sector through multidimensional, collective, and coordinated reforms will be crucial to the sustenance of growth and competitiveness of the ICT sector.

**Keywords:** skilled labour, skills-employment gap, ICT sector, multidimensional reforms

## The significance of *Sphoṭa* of Sanskrit grammarian philosophers in the verbal cognition (*Śābdabodha*) and use of the language

W. M. S. K. Wijesundara

*Department of Classical Languages, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka*

A sentence is the only entity through which language communication becomes possible, and this is called verbal cognition (*Śābdabodha*). *Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas* maintained that a sentence expresses only the accumulated primary meanings of its words. *Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas* held that secondary meanings for words in a sentence account for sentence meaning. *Bharṭṛhari* and some others claimed the sentence as a separate and independent entity (Vākyapadīya 1.77). *Sphoṭa* refers to the meaning bearing eternal entity of a sentence. It can have the form of either *śabda*, *dhvani*, *nāda*, *prākṛtadhvani*, and *vaikṛtadhvani* according to *Bharṭṛhari*. The semantic and metaphysical characteristics of *Sphoṭa* reveals its import on verbal communication. The theological significance of *Sphoṭa* in the early period seems to be given less attention subsequently, at the cost of its semantic significance. The *Sphoṭa* signifies meaning, what is signified is *artha*, manifesting itself without a temporal gap between them. *Sphoṭa* is revealed by cognitive forms of phonemes, not by phonic forms, is the view of later grammarian philosophers. Another analysis of *Sphoṭa* is called *svaparaprakāśa* i.e., it manifests itself and meaning. The term *Sphoṭa* is twofold: partly etymological (*yoga*) and partly conventional (*rūḍha*). The latter is predominant because *Sphoṭa* is not everything that bursts forth as etymology (*yoga*) indicates, but what becomes manifested and signified meaning (*rūḍha*). Speaker's encoding process and listener's decoding process in communication is related to the *Sphoṭa*. It is held that signifier (*śabda*) and signified (*artha*) are mutually caused and both are two forms of the intellect. Speaker's idea to be articulated is first in his intellect as a particular *Sphoṭa*. It goes to *vaikharī* through *madhyamā* and translates into a group of audible *Prākṛtadhvanis* smeared with his articulatory idiosyncrasies. Then the latter goes to the listener's sense of hearing. When the auditorily perceived *Prākṛtadhvanis* stimulate the cognitive *Prākṛtadhvanis* in the *madhyamā* stratum, they correspond to the conventionally established phonemic pattern which is already present in the listener's intellect. As a result of this process, the listener's cognition of *artha* arises.

**Keywords:** verbal cognition, *Sphoṭa*, signifier, signified



## **Menstrual stigma: An assessment of the Sri Lankan perspective**

T. N. Wijewickrama

*Department of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

In the context of Sri Lanka where societal attitudes often intertwine with cultural norms, this research delves into the realm of menstrual stigma – a potent blend of gender-based discrimination and cultural influence that casts a shadow over femininity and menstruation. Drawing from Goffman's concept of stigma and building upon existing studies, the research objective is to understand what perceptions the participants of the study hold about menstruation that potentially contribute to menstrual stigma. Utilising a mixed-methods approach, this research amalgamates secondary data from academic sources with primary data from interviews and questionnaires. The data, analysed quantitatively through STATA and qualitatively via thematic analysis, showed generational disparities in perception of menstrual stigma, with 58% of the participants under 40 believing it to be prevalent, compared to only 16% above 40. Findings also showed that male participants (18%) were more supportive of menarche celebrations than female participants (10%). Moreover, more male participants (33%) found it unacceptable for menstruating individuals to have mood changes compared to female participants (13%), revealing gender differences in the perceptions towards menstruation. Additionally, 43% of participants who have experienced or experience menstruation felt highly self-conscious during menstruation, while 32% reported feeling unattractive. Similarly, almost half of the participants (49%) sometimes made extra efforts to hide menstruation, and another 49% of the participants reported offering different reasons such as a headache or a stomach ache to excuse themselves from social situations due to painful menstrual cramps. This research underscores the ongoing efforts to challenge and transform societal perceptions of menstruation, particularly among the younger generation. It emphasises the pivotal role of continuous discourse and the evolving understanding in reshaping this fundamental facet of women's health within the Sri Lankan context. However, it is acknowledged that the findings of this study are derived from a sample consisting mostly of educated, English-speaking youth from the Western Province. Thus, the findings cannot be generalised to the entire population of Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** stigma, menstruation, women, health

## **Utilising community participation as an inclusive approach to the collaborative governance of flood management with special reference to the Bolgoda river basin**

W. G. K. Withana, R. U. K. Piyadasa

*Faculty of Technology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Frequent natural disasters, especially floods, have a significant impact on Sri Lanka, particularly in the Bolgoda Basin, which is a highly susceptible river basin. The effectiveness of Sri Lanka's Disaster Risk Management process faces challenges, particularly with community involvement. This study aims to comprehensively assess flood management awareness, attitudes, and practices within the Bolgoda floodplains while understanding local perspectives on flood management strategies. Using a mixed-methods approach that combines change acceleration programs and surveys, we explored community viewpoints across the study area. The investigation was guided by the Socio-ecological Production Landscape Baseline Assessment technique, rooted in United Nations principles. The collected information was analysed using bi-variate, univariate, and multivariate statistical tools, such as participatory mapping, historical timeline analysis, and NVivo analysis. Findings revealed a nuanced understanding among residents regarding various causes of flooding, including clogged drains, inadequate maintenance, landfills, land use changes, insufficient drainage, and algal proliferation. Dissatisfaction with government responses to flooding stems from inter-agency coordination issues, poorly planned urban development, and limited awareness of environmental laws. Moreover, the study highlights the limited community comprehension of Bolgoda Lake's protected status, riverbank boundaries, and relevant environmental legislation. The study offers critical recommendations, including strategic land allocation to prevent encroachments, strict safeguards for river reservations, waste management initiatives, awareness campaigns, engagement with environmental officers, repurposing canal banks for recreation, rejuvenating abandoned paddy lands, and aligning development projects with policies and laws. This study underscores the essential role of community engagement in flood management, acknowledging their insights into local flood causes and their pivotal contribution to effective flood management strategy formulation and implementation within a rights-based approach. This becomes possible through prioritising meaningful engagement as key stakeholders rather than a top-down approach. In conclusion, the study holds the promise of fostering enhanced resilience within the Bolgoda Basin, thereby mitigating the potential perils associated with future inundation events.

**Keywords:** community participation, flood management, collaborative governance

## **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) for sustainable peace: Insights from Sri Lanka's peacebuilding efforts (2000-2022)**

A. M. M. Ziyad

*PhD candidate at the Department of International Relations, University of Colombo,  
Sri Lanka*

This article critically examines the crucial role of the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) perspective in advancing justice within peacebuilding efforts to achieve sustainable peace, with a specific focus on the Sri Lankan context. This research draws from an extensive body of scholarly literature using a systematic review methodology spanning from 2000 to 2022. The article highlights the indispensable contributions of the GESI perspective in addressing socioeconomic disparities, ensuring equitable access to justice, and promoting enduring peace. Smith (2015) emphasises GESI's role in tackling structural inequalities that exacerbate conflict dynamics. Anderlini (2007) underscores the significance of inclusive and gender-responsive peace processes for transformative justice, crucial for addressing grievances and fostering reconciliation. The integration of these perspectives underscores GESI's centrality in promoting justice within peacebuilding. Siriwardhana and Wickramage (2021) emphasise the necessity of addressing gender-specific health needs in post-conflict settings, an integral aspect of justice. Johnson (2010) advocates for women's active participation in peace processes, a vital element in ensuring justice. Gupta (2017) illuminates the challenges faced by marginalised groups, further highlighting that social inclusion is a pivotal facet of justice. Collectively, this body of literature affirms that the GESI perspective is indispensable in the pursuit of justice within peacebuilding and fostering sustainable peace. The incorporation of gender mainstreaming, women's participation, and intersectionality remains crucial, as they address structural inequalities and promote justice. Anderlini (2007) underscores the transformative potential of gender-inclusive approaches to justice in post-conflict settings. In conclusion, empirical evidence strongly supports the assertion that GESI is fundamental for justice and sustainable peace in Sri Lanka and beyond. By adopting comprehensive approaches grounded in gender-responsive policies, community engagement, and inclusive participation, societies can ensure equitable access to justice, drive poverty reduction, and foster inclusive growth, ultimately leading to lasting peace.

**Keywords:** gender equality, social inclusion, peacebuilding, justice



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The Sri Lanka Barometer (SLB) is a research initiative aimed at deepening the understanding of how Sri Lankans perceive reconciliation and its most salient dimensions, as well as tracking progress in each of these dimensions, with the overarching objective to inform public discourse and policymaking in the country's pursuit of greater unity and inclusion.

The SLB initiative consists of three components:

- (1) A nationally representative public opinion survey implemented every two years
- (2) Complementary qualitative research
- (3) Communications and outreach

The SLB is steered and implemented by a consortium of partners that jointly take strategic decisions on the design and the direction of the initiative. Currently, the SLB Consortium consists of three partners: the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) in South Africa, which leads the quantitative research component; the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA), which leads the qualitative research component; and the Strengthening Social Cohesion and Peace in Sri Lanka (SCOPE) programme, which leads the communication and outreach component and is responsible for overall coordination.

SCOPE is co-financed by the European Union and the German Federal Foreign Office and implemented by GIZ, in partnership with the Government of Sri Lanka.







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