



Bridging Ideas, Shaping Tomorrow:

Research Frontiers 2024

**Proceedings of the PGIHS Research Congress
PGIHS-RC 2024**

ABSTRACTS

19 December 2024

**Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (PGIHS)
University of Peradeniya
Sri Lanka**

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Message From the Director



It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Seventh Research Congress of the Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (PGIHS-RC-2024), held on December 19, 2024, at the PGIHS premises, University of Peradeniya. The PGIHS Research Congress is a prestigious annual event that serves as a dynamic platform for postgraduate students, academics, and researchers from Sri Lanka and beyond to present their valuable work

in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

The theme of this year's Congress, *"Bridging Ideas, Shaping Tomorrow: Research Frontiers 2024,"* reflects our commitment to fostering collaboration, nurturing innovation, and inspiring research that addresses contemporary challenges. This year, we received an overwhelming response with 135 research abstracts, of which 76 abstracts have been selected for presentation. These works span a wide array of disciplines, offering a wealth of perspectives that contribute to shaping a more informed and inclusive future.

This Congress is enriched through the collaboration of UNICEF and CEPA, organizations whose support underscores the importance of research in driving policy and social change. We anticipate the participation of more than 350 scholars from around the world, creating a unique opportunity for dialogue, networking, and knowledge dissemination. Importantly, this conference provides a platform to emphasize policy-oriented research outputs and their potential to create meaningful societal impact.

As we gather to celebrate and share research, it is also essential to reflect on two pressing issues in Sri Lanka's research culture. Firstly, there is a general reluctance to actively promote and market our own research findings. Secondly, insufficient attention is given to policy-relevant research that addresses real-world challenges. These are areas where collective effort is needed to unlock the full potential of academic inquiry in our country.

Your participation in this Congress not only enhances its success but also highlights your dedication to advancing education and research in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Together, we can work towards bridging ideas and shaping a better tomorrow for Sri Lanka and beyond.

In conclusion, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the PGIHS team, UNICEF, CEPA, the presenters, participants, reviewers, and all those who have contributed their time and effort to make PGIHS-RC-2024 a success. Your dedication and support are invaluable in ensuring the continued excellence of this annual event.

Thank you, and I wish you all a stimulating and fruitful Congress.

Prof. Wasantha Athukorala

Director

PGIHS

University of Peradeniya

Message From the Chairperson



I welcome you to the Seventh Research Congress of the Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (PGIHS-RC-2024), scheduled for December 19, 2024, at the PGIHS premises, University of Peradeniya. This annual event showcases the forefront of research across the humanities and social sciences. *“Bridging Ideas, Shaping Tomorrow: Research Frontiers 2024”*, the theme of this year’s Congress, reflects that you may discover cutting-edge findings that will inspire and inform your understanding of critical societal issues.

As the chair of this event, I am excited to witness the exchange of knowledge and ideas that will occur during our sessions. This conference brings together experts and professionals from diverse fields, and I encourage each of you to engage, collaborate, and explore new perspectives.

On behalf of the organizing committee, I take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and the Dean-Faculty of Arts of the University of Peradeniya for extending their fullest support and guidance for this event. My special thank goes to the Keynote Speaker, Dr. Chandranath Amarasekara, Assistant Governor, Central Bank of Sri Lanka for kindly accepting our invitation to deliver the Keynote Speech in the Congress. I thank Mrs. Erine Tanner, Chief of Education, UNICEF, Sri Lanka, for kindly accepting our invitation to participate as the Guest of Honor at the Congress. I would like to extend my thanks to the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) for accepting our invitation to participate in the special session on Poverty.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Prof. Wasantha Athukorala, the Director, PGIHS, for his insightful guidance and cooperation extended to us to organize this event. I am truly grateful to the Chief Editor and members of the editorial committee, reviewers, chairpersons, and discussants of the technical sessions. My special thank goes to the committed staff at the PGIHS, including the Congress Secretary for their whole-hearted cooperation to make this event a reality.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the collaborators of the PGIHS-RC 2024, the Center for Poverty Analysis (CEPA), and UNICEF, Sri Lanka. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who has dedicated their time to making the PGIHS Research Congress a success. I warmly welcome the national and international research

community, as well as representatives from industry, international organizations, and government, to discuss contemporary challenges, foster networking and collaborations, and promote knowledge dissemination.

Thank you for your participation, and I look forward to a successful and enriching experience for all.

Dr. Thushari N. Vidanage

Chairperson

PGIHS-RC-2024

PREFACE

The Research Congress 2024 (RC-24) at the Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (PGIHS) is poised to be an enriching platform for postgraduate students, scholars, researchers, and practitioners to converge and share their research experiences.

In alignment with its vision, the PGIHS at the University of Peradeniya offers a range of postgraduate degree and diploma programs and short courses across 22 disciplines organized under five Boards of Study. Additionally, the institute provides interdisciplinary and professional programs that further enhance opportunities for postgraduate students. To meet its students' evolving needs, interests, and abilities, the programs and course content are regularly updated through comprehensive curriculum reviews that focus on modernizing teaching methods, course material, and evaluation modes.

At the PGIHS, the primary language of instruction is English; however, many students express a strong interest in pursuing degree programs in Sinhala or Tamil. A significant number of students have completed their undergraduate studies in these languages. As a result, the annual research congress often represents the first opportunity for these students to present their research in English in a formal academic environment. This Research Congress serves as a vital platform, encouraging postgraduate students to advance their studies and share their findings with increased confidence in English, the universal language of science.

The PGIHS-RC 2024 provides a forum to present postgraduate students' research in a wide range of disciplines within the Humanities and Social Sciences, where they can interact and establish research networks and collaborations with academics of different disciplinary backgrounds and both local and international researchers. In an increasingly complex world, the Humanities and Social Sciences play a crucial role in shaping our understanding of culture, society, and the myriad factors that influence human behavior. The works presented here reflect a rich tapestry of inquiry, from historical analyses and philosophical discourses to sociological studies and cultural critiques. Each contribution exemplifies the intellectual rigor and creativity that define our community of scholars. The research you will encounter in this proceeding is not merely academic; it is a mirror reflecting the complexities of our society and a call to action for future generations.

A total of 135 abstracts were submitted for the PGIHS-RC 2024, all of which underwent a desk review process conducted by experts in the relevant academic fields aligned with the congress themes. From these submissions, 76 abstracts were selected for oral presentations at the congress and included in the Congress Proceedings. This year, the event featured fourteen technical

sessions organized around eight key themes, enabling authors to present their latest research findings in their respective areas. The day included eight morning sessions and six afternoon sessions, focused on themes i) Demography, Economics, and Management, ii) Aesthetics, Culture, and Heritage, iii) Politics, Law, Governance, and Administration, iv) Society, Environment, and Spatial Development, v) Philosophy and Psychology, vi) Education, vii) Religious Studies, and viii) Language and Literature Studies. Each session is facilitated by a Chairperson and a Discussant who will evaluate the oral presentations. A plenary session after each technical session invites audience members, including peers and senior academics, to ask questions and offer constructive feedback on the research presented. Additionally, a certificate will be awarded for the best presentation in each session during the closing ceremony of the congress.

The Inaugural Session of the Research Congress will take place at PGIHS with the esteemed participation of Chief Guest Professor Terrence Madhujith, Vice Chancellor of the University of Peradeniya. Mrs. Erin Tanner, Chief of Education at UNICEF Sri Lanka, will serve as the guest of honor. Other distinguished attendees include Professor Ranjith Pallegama, Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Peradeniya, Directors of Postgraduate Institutes, Deans of Faculties, Members of the Board of Management, and the Boards of Studies of the PGIHS. The occasion will feature a Keynote Address delivered by Dr. Chandranath Amarasekara, Assistant Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

I firmly believe that the PGIHS-RC 2024 will offer an academically enriching and enjoyable experience for all authors, presenters, and participants. I look forward to the stimulating discussions during the technical sessions, which will foster new ideas and open up opportunities for collaborative research in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Dr.Thamali Kithsiri

Editor-in-Chief

PGIHS-RC-2024

19 December 2024

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PROGRAM

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10.20 a.m. – 11.00 a.m.	Tea
11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.	Technical Sessions I
1.00 p.m. – 2.00 p.m.	Lunch
2.00 p.m. – 3.00 p.m.	Session by CEPA
3.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.	Technical Sessions II
5.00 p.m. – 5.15 p.m.	Tea
5.15 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.	Closing Ceremony



AGENDA

PGIHS RC – 2024

19 December 2024

Inaugural Session

08.30 a.m.	Arrival of Guests
08.40 a.m.	Lighting of the Oil Lamp
08.50 a.m.	Welcome Address by the Director/PGIHS Professor Wasantha Athukorala
09.05 a.m.	Address by the Acting Dean / Faculty of Arts Mr. Mangala Dissanayake
09.10 a.m.	Address by the Chief Guest Vice Chancellor/University of Peradeniya Professor Terrence Madhujith
09.20 a.m.	Address by the Guest of Honor Mrs. Erin Tanner Chief of Education UNICEF, Sri Lanka
09.35 a.m.	Keynote Address <i>“Sustaining Stability and Boosting Growth: The Sri Lankan Economy at Crossroads”</i> Dr. Chandranath Amarasekara Assistant Governor Central Bank of Sri Lanka
10.05 a.m.	Vote of Thanks by the Chairperson-RC 2024 Dr. T.N. Vidanage
10.15 a.m.	National Anthem
10.20 a.m.	End of Inaugural Session

CLOSING CEREMONY

PGIHS RC – 2024

- 5.30 p.m. Concluding Remarks
Chaired by Professor Ranjith Pallegama
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
University of Peradeniya
- 5.40 p.m. The Role of Policy-Oriented Research by
Dr. H.M. Gunatilake
- 5.45 p.m. Awarding Certificates for the best presenters
- 5.50 p.m. Vote of thanks
by the Director/ PGIHS
- 6.00 p.m. **PGIHS Research Congress 2024 End**

Theme: Demography, Economics, and Management

Technical Session I

Venue: 104

Time: 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Chairperson: **Dr. S.S.K.B.M Dorabawila**

Discussant: **Dr. S. Maheswaran**

Coordinator: **Dr. A.D.H.K. Kankanamge**

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- 78 Barriers to Realizing Tourism Potential: Insights From Sigiriya, Sri Lanka
T.P.U.M. Gunawardhana, J.G. Sri Ranjith
- 58 Effective Positioning Strategies in the Non-Alcoholic Beverage Industry in China: A Comparative Analysis of Two Multinational Beverage Companies
H. M. S. P. Herath
- 50 Key Determinant of Social Media Marketing Adaption: Empirical Evidence From Tourism SMEs in Sri Lanka
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- 93 Infrastructure Investment and Economic Growth in Sri Lanka: Foreign Influence and Pathways to Sustainability
R. Gangahagedara, W. Athukorala, S. Subasinghe, T. Bandara, M.B. Ranathilaka



Theme: Aesthetics, Culture, and Heritage

Technical Session I

Venue: 208

Time: 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Chairperson: **Prof. Sumathy Sivamohan**

Discussant: **Dr. Manoj Alawathukotuwa**

Coordinator: **Mr. Priyantha Fonseka**

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Theme: Language and Literature Studies

Technical Session I

Venue: PGIHS Auditorium

Time: 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

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Discussant: **Dr. Sunanda Premasiri**

Coordinator: **Dr. Mahinda Rathnayake**

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Theme: Politics, Law, Governance and Administration

Technical Session I

Venue: 103

Time: 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Chairperson: ***Prof. G.D.R.U. Abeyrathne***

Discussant: ***Dr. S. Baskaran***

Coordinator: ***Dr. Ramasamy Ramesh***

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Theme: Society, Environment, and Spatial Development

Technical Session I

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Theme: Philosophy and Psychology

Technical Session I

Venue: 102

Time: 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

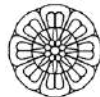
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Discussant: **Dr. Ramila Usoof-Thowfeek**

Coordinator: **Dr. Susantha Rasnayake**

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Theme: Education

Technical Session I

Venue: 207

Time: 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

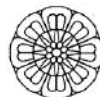
Chairperson: **Dr. Subhashini Wijesundara**

Discussant: **Prof. Pushpa Vitharana**

Coordinator: **Dr. Kanthi Hettogoda**

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Theme: Religious Studies

Technical Session I

Venue: 106

Time: 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Chairperson: ***Prof. H.M. Mahinda Herath***

Discussant: ***Dr. D.M.K. Dharmasiri***

Coordinator: ***Ven. Dr. Jambugahapitiye Dhammaloka***

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***Crisis Driven Poverty in Sri Lanka:
Issues and Solutions***

**Special Session Organized by the Centre for
Poverty Analysis (CEPA)**

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
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H.M. Gunatilake |
| 2.10 p.m. – 2.20 p.m. | Impact of Higher Electricity Prices on Women
N. Najab, H. de Alwis |
| 2.20 p.m. -2. 30 p.m. | Poverty Measurement: Using Electricity Consumption
for Reducing Poverty
V. Ratwatte |
| 2.30 p.m. – 2.40 p.m. | Poverty Measurement: Does Multidimensional Measure
of Poverty Capture Poverty Dynamics during Economic
Crisis?
S. Amarasinghe, V. Ratwatte, H. de Alwis |
| 2.40 p.m. -3.00 p.m. | Discussion |

Theme: Demography, Economics and Management

Technical Session II

Venue: 104

Time: 3.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Chairperson: **Dr. Arularasi Balakrishnan**

Discussant: **Ms. S. Rajendran**

Coordinator: **Dr. P.K. Seelagama**

Paper ID Presentation

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Theme: Aesthetics, Culture, and Heritage

Technical Session II

Venue: 208

Time: 3.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Chairperson: **Dr. Maduranga Kalugampitiya**

Discussant: **Dr. Kanchuka Dharmasiri**

Coordinator: **Dr. Nimal Wijesiri**

Paper ID Presentation

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Theme: Politics, Law, Governance and Administration

Technical Session II

Venue: 103

Time: 3.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Chairperson: ***Prof. Athambawa Sarjoon***

Discussant: ***Dr. Ramasamy Ramesh***

Coordinator: ***Dr. S. Baskaran***

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Theme: Society, Environment, and Spatial Development

Technical Session II

Venue: 105

Time: 3.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Chairperson: ***Prof. P. Wickramagamage***

Discussant: ***Dr. R.M.K. Kumarihamy***

Coordinator: ***Mr. Shantha Jayakumara***

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Theme: Education

Technical Session II

Venue: 207

Time: 3.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Chairperson: ***Prof. Walter Senevirathne***

Discussant: ***Prof. D.D.K.S. Karunanayake***

Coordinator: ***Dr. H.M. Samarakoon Banda***

Paper ID Presentation

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Time: 3.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Chairperson: **Dr. D.M.K. Dharmasiri**

Discussant: **Ven. Dr. Muthukeliyawe Indarathana**

Coordinator: **Ven. Dr. Jambugahapitiy Dhammaloka**

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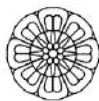
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ABSTRACTS

THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP IN A VUCA (VOLATILITY, UNCERTAINTY, COMPLEXITY, AMBIGUITY) SITUATION

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The extant literature demonstrated that an organization is unprepared for the constraints that come with a crisis and may experience complexity within that organization. The chief executive officer and the top management set the organization's policies for acquiring and integrating resources. Hence, reducing uncertainty, increasing stability, increasing resources, and reducing competition are a few of the goals of the top management. In VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) environments, complexities arise from interconnected factors and rapid changes. Strategic leaders can analyze complex situations, break them down into manageable parts, and develop strategies that address multiple dimensions simultaneously. They prioritize initiatives and resources to tackle the most critical challenges. Therefore, strategic leadership is particularly important in VUCA situations because it provides the necessary framework and capabilities to navigate such challenging environments effectively. This study uses a qualitative research approach to explore strategic leadership in top-performing startups in Sri Lanka that operate in VUCA conditions. A purposive sampling technique is used to find top-performing startups in Sri Lanka recognized on the startup ranking website. Semi-structured interviews are used to collect primary data from the senior leadership team. Additionally, researchers collected data using secondary sources related to the visionary leadership, adaptability, and innovative approaches of leaders. Recurring themes and patterns in the interviews were identified using thematic analysis. The findings show that successful leaders create a culture of collaboration and continuous learning, enabling their startup organizations to adapt to the changing market conditions. Furthermore, it is highlighted that data-driven decision-making and technology integration are critical success factors in achieving competitive advantage. Hence, the study emphasizes how effective strategic leadership contributed to overcoming short-term obstacles while securing long-term success. Accordingly, this study offers insightful information about successful leadership practices in a VUCA setting for entrepreneurs and organizational leaders in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Crisis, strategic leadership, VUCA environment

A LITERATURE REVIEW ON ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES AND DIGITAL MARKETING ORIENTATION

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Digital technology has become integral to society, impacting the global economy and greatly affecting businesses. Businesses are adapting and employing digital technologies (DTs) to identify consumers' needs, wants, and preferences and satisfy them using effective digital marketing communication. Adopting DTs is instrumental and has influenced astonishing opportunities, whether businesses are large or small. Literature indicates digital marketing orientation (DMO) of Small & Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) is subject to the intensity of entrepreneurial competencies (ECs). Scholars accept that SMEs should have an intense understanding and empirical knowledge of DTs to reach competitive advantages against rivals; however, they show major failures in embracing marketing against corporate entities. This has created a great loss of opportunities, competitive advantages and it also hinders growth potential. This is a less researched existing problem. This study scrutinizes related literature on ECs and DMOs of entrepreneurs while testifying to their actual use. The research problem can be stated as the factors influencing ECs and their orientation toward digital marketing usage and actual use. The main objective was to understand the factors that impact ECs and their orientation towards digital marketing applications using literature. Forty-four Journal articles were examined, and the results indicate that the basic global digital adoption is over seventy-five percent; however, the actual use for marketing is much lower. Sixty-four percent of SMEs have adopted email technology; nevertheless, they do not use it effectively for marketing initiatives. Seventy-two percent of SMEs have websites, whereas regular updating and using marketing indicates less. More than ninety percent use social media, but do not use tools and techniques optimally. Only twenty-five SMEs in developed countries employ advanced digital technologies like AI, AR, VR, LLM and DA. The deficiency of competencies causes these insufficiencies. There are three key outcomes from the study. First, it gives an opportunity to highlight major trends, themes, and patterns in the modern marketing domain while providing an opportunity to recognize research gaps. Second, the study makes a significant contribution to entrepreneurial marketing theory and SME's marketing literature. Finally, it consolidates and summarizes existing knowledge, offering an obvious picture of the problem.

Keywords: Entrepreneurs' competencies, digital marketing orientation, marketing, SMEs

BARRIERS TO REALIZING TOURISM POTENTIAL: INSIGHTS FROM SIGIRIYA, SRI LANKA

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Tourism is a global economic and cultural exchange, fostering socio-economic development and cross-border understanding. Sri Lanka holds immense potential in international tourism due to its rich biodiversity, cultural heritage, and historical landmarks. However, this potential is constrained by barriers, particularly at Sigiriya, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its cultural significance. The challenges visitors encounter at Sigiriya provide a basis for evaluating barriers in Sri Lanka's tourism sector and examining factors influencing tourist satisfaction. Based on this background, the primary objective of this research is to identify obstacles faced by foreign tourists visiting Sigiriya. A sub-objective includes analyzing tourist satisfaction. Primary data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and participant observations, while secondary data included tourist arrivals and revenue at Sigiriya from 2018 to 2023. The sample comprised 200 foreign tourists, who were selected via random sampling. Descriptive statistics and econometric analyses, including Pearson correlation and a Probit model, were used to evaluate the relationships among key variables influencing tourist satisfaction. Findings reveal significant issues such as overcrowding, difficulties in accessing the destination, high costs of tour guide services, and challenges with sanitation and waste management. Pearson correlation analysis indicated a strong association between tourist satisfaction and factors such as accommodation costs, food and beverage expenses, transportation fees, tour guide charges, security, hospitality, and hygiene. Among these, hygiene standards ($r = 0.71$, $P < 0.01$), accommodation costs ($r = 0.63$, $P < 0.05$), and transportation expenses ($r = 0.81$, $P < 0.05$) were significant. Probit model results indicated that sanitation facilities, waste disposal, and transportation costs significantly affect tourist satisfaction. Additional barriers include limited banking services and restricted online payment options complicating international tourists' experiences, especially with public transport and purchases. Recommendations include implementing a visitor limit time slot entry system to manage overcrowding, upgrading infrastructure, and incentives for off-peak visits. Prepaid travel cards, local mobile payment apps, and enhanced cash accessibility for the areas without electronic payment options are proposed. An eco-friendly cable car system connecting Sigiriya to Pidurangala is suggested to reduce overcrowding and vehicle congestion, while also saving tourists' time. Strengthening the informal sector, improving rural public transport, and promoting culinary tourism through food festivals and local recipes can further enhance accessibility and sustainable tourism growth in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Tourism barriers, potentials in tourism, tourist satisfaction, sustainable tourism

EFFECTIVE POSITIONING STRATEGIES IN THE NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE INDUSTRY IN CHINA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TWO MULTINATIONAL BEVERAGE COMPANIES

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China owns the second-largest non-alcoholic beverage industry in the world, with potential growth forecasting for the coming years. The market size of the sector was USD 158.3 billion in 2023. Therefore, it shows significant changes in customer behaviors and the requirement of market strategies to sustain the market and gain a competitive advantage. The primary aim of this study was to compare and contrast the key positioning strategies of two multinational beverage companies, especially those that align with the 7Ps marketing mix. The chosen approach of the research design was a positivist one, where a deductive method was followed. The data were collected from secondary sources, and comparative analysis derived the main findings from a descriptive summary and thematic analysis. There is a lot of research on the marketing strategies of both companies. Still, several considerable gaps remain in the academic literature that address the effectiveness of the 7Ps marketing mix in the Chinese non-alcoholic beverage industry. The product portfolio of the first company is mostly based on a variety of beverages as an emotionally connected brand, while the second company focuses on a diversified portfolio with snacks, footwear, and clothing as a young and fun brand. A comparison of positioning strategies of the first company and the second company generates critical insight into how far their marketing strategy is helpful. Both companies heavily invest in promotional activities to enhance their market share and competitive advantage. Comparatively, the first company highly follows traditional and digital advertising methods, whereas the second company mostly follows celebrity endorsements and sponsors. Both companies have extensive distribution networks to reach every corner of the country. The first company practices both premium and affordable pricing strategies, while the second company mostly follows affordable pricing strategies. A diversified product portfolio is much needed to meet the dynamic preference of customer demand, and healthier products are vital to meeting the preferences of health-conscious customers in the beverage industry. The comparative analysis of both companies' positioning strategies in China explains how both can co-exist within the dynamic market environment by implementing highly varied and innovative approaches. The first company has a strong foundation of brand heritage. Diversifying the product portfolio is recommended to meet the continuously changing consumer preference profile. More health-oriented and functional beverages could better capture this growing health-conscious segment. Digital engagement should be further enhanced using personalized markets and e-commerce platforms.

Keywords: Positioning strategies, 7ps marketing mix, non-alcoholic beverage industry, multinational beverage companies

KEY DETERMINANT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ADOPTION: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM TOURISM SMEs IN SRI LANKA

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Digital technology (DT) has become decisive for businesses worldwide, and social media has become an integral part of the contemporary marketing domain. The adoption of social media marketing strategies (SMM) has materialized as a significant instrument for businesses to engage with existing and potential customers, promote products and services, and enhance brand visibility in the competitive marketplace. However, the literature indicates a need for digital technology adoption for marketing initiatives among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and the situation impacts reaching the fullest potential in competitive advantages. It hinders the growth potential. This is a noticeable problem in the SME marketing domain. This research study identifies the key determinants influencing the adoption of SMM strategies among tourism SMEs. It is particularly relevant to academic researchers, marketing professionals, and SME owners in the tourism sector. The study explores the factors and adopts the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Technology, Organization, and Environmental (TOE) model. A quantitative methodology was employed, using a structured questionnaire to gather data from 120 SMEs in accommodation, particularly owners and managers around Sri Lanka, including peers and competitors. Findings suggest entrepreneurs' perceived ease of use and usefulness significantly impact the decision to adopt SMM. Organizational context, mainly physical and human resources, is critical in determining whether SMEs are geared up with SMM initiatives. Technological infrastructure also has a significant influence on SMM adoption among SMEs. In Addition, the external business environment and fear of competition in the marketplace stimulate SMEs to adopt SMM to remain competitive. All entrepreneurs accept that SMM is crucial to customer reach, engagement, and retention. Conversely, privacy issues, lack of proficiency, and rapidly changing technologies hinder SMM adoption. The study indicates that SME accommodations require an appraisal of their individual, organizational, and technological readiness while maintaining sound knowledge of digital marketing trends, patterns, and customer preferences to execute SMM strategies effectively. The key determinants identified in this study facilitate SMEs' swift transition to a targeted marketing approach to reach potential tourists worldwide.

Keywords: Digital marketing, social media marketing, tourism industry, SME

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN SRI LANKA: FOREIGN INFLUENCE AND PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABILITY

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Sri Lanka is a lower-middle-income country situated strategically in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The country's population appeared to be 22.03 million people and a per capita income of USD 3,830 in 2023. While the country demonstrated significant potential in its early years, its growth has been curtailed by fiscal deficits, political instability, and a series of external and internal challenges. Key events, including the prolonged civil war, the 2004 tsunami, the 2019 Easter attacks, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, have all posed substantial setbacks. With fiscal vulnerabilities persisting over the years, numerous factors have continued to impede its social and economic progress. Given this background, the main objectives of this study is to understand the long-term fiscal sustainability issue in Sri Lanka and to examine the pivotal role of infrastructure investment, public and private sector participation, and foreign direct investment (FDI) in Sri Lanka's economic development. This study employs both quantitative and qualitative approaches using time series data from 2000 onwards to analyze the 'crowding-in' and 'crowding-out' effects of public investment, the sustainability of fiscal policies, and the dominant role of foreign factors, particularly China, in infrastructure development. The study reveals that while foreign-funded infrastructure projects have supported post-war economic recovery, they have also heightened fiscal vulnerabilities and raised interest costs over the past decade. Additionally, it highlights that public-private partnerships (PPPs) have positively impacted critical sectors like healthcare, education, and telecommunications. However, inconsistent policies and high public debt have constrained more comprehensive economic growth. The study concludes with recommendations for improving fiscal management, fostering high-value industries, and promoting sustainable growth through balanced public-private partnerships and strategic foreign investments.

Keywords: FDI, PPP, crowding-in, crowding-out

**REPRESENTATION OF MEN AND MASCULINITY
IN MODERN SRI LANKAN CINEMA:
FILMS PRODUCED AND RELEASED BETWEEN 2016 - 2022**

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Since 1947, Sri Lankan cinema has evolved to reflect a wide array of themes, with early films prominently representing traditional notions of masculinity. This concept of masculinity encompasses a set of attributes, behaviours, and societal roles assigned to individuals based on their biologically assigned sex at birth. Traditionally, in Sri Lankan society and culture, masculinity has been closely associated with strength, assertiveness, and leadership qualities, often reinforcing rigid gender roles. These early representations of masculinity were largely unchallenged and accepted as the societal norm. However, contemporary Sri Lankan cinema has aimed to present a more nuanced and complex understanding of masculinity, recognizing that it is not a monolithic concept but one that encompasses the multifaceted aspects of human identity. This study examines how modern Sri Lankan cinema represents masculinity and its evolving meaning in society through selected films produced and screened between 2016 and 2022, such as Sansaraye Dadayakkaraya, Alborada, and Saho. By conducting a comprehensive analysis of these films and engaging in in-depth discussions with their respective directors, this research seeks to uncover a balanced and informed understanding of the portrayal of masculinity in contemporary Sri Lankan cinema. Secondary sources, including books, online materials, and academic journals, were also used to support film analysis and director interviews. The findings of this study reveal that modern Sri Lankan cinema presents masculinity with a certain level of sophistication and depth. Through nuanced storytelling, character development, and the exploration of complex themes, these films challenge the traditional interpretations of masculinity that have long been prevalent in society. By exploring various aspects of male identity, contemporary Sri Lankan cinema offers a more comprehensive, inclusive, and progressive representation of masculinity, reflecting the ongoing shifts in societal attitudes and values.

Keywords: Men and masculinity, modern Sri Lankan cinema, Sri Lankan clutter, representation

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ENHANCING STUDENT MOTIVATION AND LIFE SKILLS THROUGH THEATRE ARTS: A CASE STUDY OF A SCHOOL DRAMA FESTIVAL

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The traditional education system is often criticized for its focus on exams, heavy syllabi, and rote memorization, frequently leaving limited space for cultivating essential life skills such as teamwork, leadership, and creativity. This research investigates the impact of theatre arts on student motivation, engagement, and skill development through a case study of a school drama festival involving 130 students from Grades 6 to 12. The festival, which showcased five theatre productions, proved to be a significant success, highlighting the potential of artistic activities to engage students in meaningful ways. Students attended drama practices eagerly, even rising early for school on festival days, marking a significant change in attitude from their typical reluctance toward routine school activities. Parents noted this shift with surprise, observing that their children, who generally needed encouragement to attend school, were now motivated to participate actively in drama-related activities. The festival also notably impacted isolated and introverted students who were more willing to collaborate and engage positively with their peers. The research problem addressed in this study is the educational gap left by traditional teaching methods that often overlook the development of practical, real-life skills. This study explores how integrating artistic activities like theatre can bridge this gap and foster both personal and social development among students. A qualitative methodology was employed, including participant observation, 12 interviews with parents, and three (03) focus group interviews with student participants. The findings reveal that theatre arts transform students, enhancing skills often neglected in conventional education systems. Participation in drama increased student motivation and improved their ability to work collaboratively, lead effectively, and apply creativity in real-world contexts. In conclusion, the research underscores the potential of theatre as a powerful pedagogical tool, advocating for more artistic programs in schools to provide a holistic educational experience. The success of the drama festival illustrates that theatre can complement traditional learning by equipping students with vital skills for personal growth and real-life application, thereby addressing the limitations of an exam-focused system.

Keywords: Theatre arts, student motivation, skill development, educational innovation

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REVIVING HEROISM: A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE PORTRAYAL OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLES AGAINST IMPERIALISM IN INDIAN CINEMA

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The interaction between cinema and history is crucial because history is not merely a record of past events but a means of understanding and influencing the present and future. One key aspect of this interaction is the portrayal of historical events on screen, highlighting cinema's dual role as a social and artistic medium. This research depicts the Indian freedom struggle against British colonial rule in cinema. The research problem examines how the Indian freedom struggle against British colonial rule has been portrayed in Indian cinema within an anti-imperialist framework. The study aims to explore the impact of these films on the glorification of the freedom fighters who led the struggle, the depiction of India's socio-cultural context during the colonial period, and the preservation of national pride and collective historical memories. The study employs a qualitative approach, analyzing primary sources, including the films *Mangal Pandey: The Rising* (2005), *Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi* (2019), and *Khelein Hum Jee Jaan Sey: We Play with Our Lives* (2010). These films dramatize crucial moments of the freedom struggle. The analysis involves content scrutiny of these films, supplemented by secondary sources, such as books and research reports on the history of Indian resistance. The findings reveal that Indian filmmakers have made considerable efforts to portray and honor the heroes of the freedom struggle authentically. These films highlight the sacrifices made during the struggle and emphasize the broader fight against imperialism, while there are variations in how these struggles are depicted. The films consistently focus on themes of anti-imperialism, resilience, and heroism. They also offer insights into the social and cultural environment of colonial India, depicting the erosion of indigenous cultural practices and the social pressures of religious and cultural stigmatization. In conclusion, Indian cinema has effectively captured and preserved the essence of the anti-imperialist struggle, maintaining a crucial link between past sacrifices and current freedom. This portrayal not only reinforces historical pride and continuity but also ensures that the legacy of the freedom struggle remains both vibrant and relevant.

Keywords: Freedom struggles, heroism, Indian cinema, imperialism

**AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON SINGING, DRUMMING,
AND DANCING OF KANDYAN RITUAL
*SOONIYAM SHANTHI KARMA (UDARATA TOWILAYA)***

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This study investigates the singing, drumming, and dancing practices associated with the Kandyan *Sooniya Shanthi Karma* (healing ritual), also known as *Udarata Towilaya*, within the context of Sri Lankan traditional healing ritual literature. While the *Yak* healing rituals of the Low-Country tradition are widely recognized, knowledge of the Kandyan *Yak* healing rituals has significantly diminished. In contrast to the *Khombakankariya*, the most prominent healing ritual in the Kandyan tradition, the Kandyan *Sooniya* ritual exhibits distinct features. The objectives of this study are to identify the specific features of singing, drumming, and dancing in the *Udarata Towilaya*, analyze the similarities and differences between the *Khombakankariya* and the *Udarata Towilaya*, explore the reasons for the declining popularity of the Kandyan *Towilaya*, and examine the historical practices and contemporary applications of the *Udarata Towilaya*. Employing a qualitative approach, the study integrates interviews with traditional practitioners and experts in healing rituals to gather primary data. Secondary data are sourced from academic papers, books, videos, and library materials, with ongoing data collection through direct observation of the ritual practices. Despite the prominence of the *Sooniya* healing ritual in Low-Country traditions, the Kandyan *Sooniya* ritual remains underexplored, with a diminishing number of practitioners and limited academic inquiry. This research, framed within the discipline of dance anthropology, aims to provide a comparative analysis of the Kandyan *Udarata Towilaya*, contributing to the understanding and preservation of this cultural heritage. Although commonly referred to as the Kandyan *Sooniya* healing ritual, the correct name is Kandyan *Towilaya*. Two well-known generational families perform this ritual in the Kandy district: the *Palipana* and *Pilawala Thennakoon* lineages. Practitioners from these families are renowned for their expertise in astrology, traditional medicine, and the performance of *Towilaya*. A distinctive feature of the Kandyan *Towilaya* is *Hathpada*, a specific type of verse, sung during the ritual's dance performances. Additionally, the drumming styles *Angarampada Wadanaya* and *Abhinapada Wadanaya* play a pivotal role in the execution of this ritual, enhancing its rhythmic and symbolic dimensions.

Keywords: *Udarata, Sooniya, Towilaya*, singing, drumming, dancing

THE RELEVANCE OF ARTS AND CRAFTS FOR THE ADVANCED LEVEL CURRICULUM IN CONTEMPORARY SRI LANKA

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This study aims to clarify the path to establish Arts and Crafts as a subject in the Advanced Level curriculum, which has been limited to the curricula of Grades 10/11 only. A primary objective of the study is to logically justify the educational and economic needs to establish Arts and Crafts as a Technology subject with the Advanced Level Technology Stream which was introduced in 2013, or to introduce it as a subject in the Arts Stream. While research was conducted using the survey method, data collection was done through questionnaires and interviews. Twenty-seven schools where the subject was taught were selected as the sample for data collection, while 27 teachers, along with 54 students, and 27 principals were chosen for the survey. In addition, ten subject experts who were involved from the inception, giving leadership to the introduction of 'Arts & Crafts' to the school curriculum, participated in the survey through questionnaires and direct interviews. While the information gathered was presented using percentages, data was presented using tables and percentages. According to the information gathered, it has been clearly revealed that the current period is the most appropriate time to establish Arts and Crafts as a subject in the Advanced Level curriculum as the necessary subject competencies have already been developed. While the development of the teaching–learning process must take place as per the competencies that have been identified, what the collective study has revealed is the clarification of the process to be followed to add Arts and Crafts to the Advanced Level curriculum. In this study, it was revealed that in addition to the use of textbooks and teacher's manuals, it is very useful for students to go to the field for external activities such as conducting training camps, organizing field expeditions, etc. Since the subject content is very much related to the world of work, it was revealed that the subject was identified as a guide to enter self-employment, even for students who did not have the privilege of studying the subject for the general and advanced levels. Finally, according to the findings of this research, the Arts and Crafts subject should be included in the Advanced Level curriculum in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Aesthetic studies, arts and crafts, technology education, curriculum development

IDEOLOGY OF POWER: REFLECTIONS THROUGH MOSAIC ART IN SRI LANKA

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Art is a powerful medium for reflecting and expressing various aspects of society, culture, and the past. Art does not only serve an aesthetic purpose but also holds significant religious and cultural meanings, embodying the power and devotion of the community that created them. Mosaic art is an art form of decorating a surface by closely placing pieces of hard materials. The main objective of this research is to identify how the ideology of power reflects through the mosaic art form in Sri Lanka. This qualitative research was conducted on the data collected through field research and library survey methods. In Sri Lanka, mosaic art can be seen at the Buddhist temples (*Karagampitiya Subodharama Viharaya*, *Rankoth Viharaya* at *Panadura*, *Vijayananda Viharaya* at *Galle*, *Narendrasighe Viharaya* at *Kundasale*, *Diwurumwela Viharaya*), and elite houses (*Richmond Castle*, *Maduwanwela Walawwa*). Figures of animals, flora, household objects, English letters, numeric emblems, geometric designs, and decorative motifs were depicted in mosaic art in Sri Lanka. This research focuses on the significance of material evidence used for mosaic art and its iconography through archaeological and art historical aspects. Mosaic art in Sri Lanka can be seen as a reflection of the country's diverse cultural heritage and influences. Creating mosaic art reflects a powerful expression of human creativity and resistance. Many of the ceramic and porcelain products used to create mosaic art were imported from Britain and Holland, and these products were popular among Sri Lanka's elite class during the 19th and 20th centuries. This research reveals that mosaic art functioned as a tool for resistance, reflecting social hierarchies and religious perspectives shaped by this art form in 19th and 20th century Sri Lanka. Elite homes used this art form as a flooring method to emphasize social prestige, while Buddhist temples used mosaic flooring to symbolize resistance to colonial power, aligning with the Buddhist renaissance that occurred during the colonial period. Buddhists visually expressed their resistance by incorporating ceramic and porcelain products. Through its designs and symbolic imagery, mosaic art embodies tangible and intangible values, connecting the power of artistic expression to convey complex memories and visualize the ideology of power.

Keywords: Ideology, mosaic art, power, resistance, visualization

DRESSING THE FEMALE BODY: [DE]CONSTRUCTING WOMEN'S SAREE FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

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Gender-specific clothing expectations in professional settings are a common phenomenon in Sri Lanka which came into the discussion with the changes in the attire of female judges, attorneys at law, and female officers in public service. Compared with these occupations, the suggestion of changing the dress code for female teachers in government schools was confronted with numerous debates. The study's objectives were to understand social expectations of women's professional attire, the impact of wearing sarees on the gender identity of women in professional settings, and society's reaction to the teachers who resisted wearing sarees. This study highlights the importance of understanding the gendered culture of a workplace and the challenges that women face regarding their clothing choices by investigating the complex interplay between the saree, gender, and identity, with a focus on how the saree's construction and interpretation contribute to the [de]construction of gender roles and representations in the workplace. For this, qualitative study data collecting techniques were used, such as semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, visual and textual data sources, secondary data, and social media analysis. The study population was female state school teachers, and the sample size of 15 was determined through the purposive sampling method, where the participants would be selected based on their gender, occupation, and ethnicity. In addition, snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants were selected from other participants' social media networks. The data was analyzed through content analysis. The findings revealed the disadvantages of wearing a saree, such as the cost of the attire, material weight, wearer comfort, the tendency for accidents to occur while using transportation, and the physical and psychological comfort related to employee performance and productivity. Cultural expectations of gendered attire significantly influence the embodiment and body image of female teachers supported by the traditional dress code. In conclusion, Women in Sri Lanka face objectification and sexualization based on their physical appearance in workplaces like schools, and it interplays between culture, gender, attire, and the self in Sri Lankan society affected through forms of "symbolic violence" wherein there is an element of complicity on the part of the embodied subject.

Keywords: Gender, identity, performativity, culture

AN INVESTIGATION OF CLAUSES IN ESSAY WRITING BY ESL UNDERGRADUATES AT A STATE UNIVERSITY IN SRI LANKA: A CRITICAL STUDY FOR ENHANCING TEACHING PEDAGOGY

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Essay writing is crucial in Sri Lankan education, especially in the state examinations such as the GCE Ordinary and Advanced Levels. The essay is a compulsory question which typically carries fifteen marks based on specific criteria: content, five; language, five; format and organisation, two; and writing mechanics, three marks. These benchmarks emphasise the significance of essay writing in evaluating students' writing skills from a scholarly perspective. It is a mandatory assignment, assessment, and evaluation practice across all levels of education in Sri Lanka. Despite a decade of learning English as a second language (ESL) in school, first-year students at the University of Vavuniya continue to face significant challenges in correctly using finite and non-finite clauses in their essay writing. Students are expected to demonstrate an academic-level formal writing style typical to universities and scholarly contributions since they follow the degree programme in English in addition to ESL courses. Students often rely on simple, clichéd constructions to lower proficiency levels as they lack knowledge of a variety of clauses. The structural complexity expected in university writing is habitually absent, preventing students from demonstrating the sophistication required in academic essays. Using clauses is a challenge for ESL students, even for those who scored better overall marks. Previous studies have focused on other aspects of improving essay writing, but little attention is given to the complexity of using non-finite clauses in Sri Lankan contexts. This study examines the extent to which second language learners use clauses in English essay writing to help teachers refine their teaching methods. The study signifies the necessity for greater emphasis on syntactic complexity in essay writing at the tertiary level. The thirty-three essays were randomly selected from sixty students enrolled in the Faculty of Business Studies, and mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative, were used to analyse the data. The findings reveal that *if*-clause 14%, *that*-clause 14%, *wh*-clause 24%, *to*-infinitive 42% were used while participial and bare infinitive clauses were not used; 87.3% relied on simple sentences, and 12.3% used complex sentences. Errors in using clauses were observed, providing insights into challenges the students faced and how to improve the structural knowledge to enhance the quality of essay writing. The study recommends that the proper use of clauses improves academic essay writing, language maturity and authenticity of the text. It emphasises training students on operating the process with deliberate learning of Chomsky's transformations, setting the goals for raising their analytical and higher-order thinking skills, as Bloom's Taxonomy outlines.

Keywords: Academic essay, ESL, clause complexity, undergraduates

THE NEED FOR A NEW TRANSLATION CULTURE: AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA TRANSLATIONS IN SRI LANKA

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Translation, the process of converting words or text from one language into another, can be considered an intimate act of reading. Today, the effortless accessibility of technology allows for rapid and easy translations. However, this has led to deviations from the literal and metaphorical meanings of the original text, resulting in an inevitable shift from ‘straightforward’ translation to broader, sometimes distorted, and inaccurate adaptations. This qualitative study aims to investigate the gaps and problems in short, direct, and inverse translations on Sri Lankan social media platforms. It proposes recommendations for fostering a new translation culture. A sample of public Facebook posts, advertisements, and notices symptomatic of distortion, inaccuracy, and lack of accountability has been selected for analysis. These examples have been examined through theoretical lenses, including those of scholars such as Gayatri Spivak and Susan Bassnett. The analysis reveals that many translations are crude, rigorously distorting the original meaning. In terms of language and idiom, a sense of technicality and flippancy undermines the central idea. This is particularly evident in how idioms, metaphors, and expressions that convey the essence of the original language are translated. Moreover, clear signs of the use of Google Translate and other online translation tools were observed. The study concludes that direct and inverse translations are currently seen as a quick, easy way to communicate on platforms like social media, with little regard for accountability to the original text. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a new translation culture: one that prioritizes intimacy, accuracy, and accountability and that engages deeply with the challenges posed by linguistic and cultural differences, going beyond the established norms of ‘successful translations.’

Keywords: Accuracy, translation culture, intimacy, accountability, social media

A CRITICAL STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF *RAGUVAMISAM* ON THE EDUCATIONAL HERITAGE OF SRI LANKAN TAMILS

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The *Raguvamisam*, one of the Tamil epics in Sri Lanka by *Arasakesari*, was composed during the period of the kings of Jaffna. It was written by adopting the major epic *Raguvamsam* by *Kalidasa* in Sanskrit. *Arasakesari* is believed to be a descendant of the *Aryachakravarthy* Dynasty that ruled the Kingdom of Jaffna. This epic consists of three cantos, twenty-six chapters, and two thousand four hundred and four verses in *Virtutham* meter. The history, valor, and generosity of the twenty-nine kings who belonged to the Solar dynasty are expounded in this epic. Among them, the history of the Kings *Ragu*, *Ayan*, *Thileepan*, *Dasarathan*, *Raman*, and *Kusha* are elaborately related in this epic. The challenging diction and the style utilized in this epic would demand deep contemplation even for scholars who are well-versed in traditional poetry. However, this epic secured importance during the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth centuries. It was ardently studied and discussed among traditional scholars and students. Besides, it was included as a textbook in the traditional educational heritage. Therefore, it is necessary to study the reason for the in-depth learning of this epic and its influence on the educational and literary heritage of Sri Lankan Tamils. But so far, only a few primary and introductory studies have been conducted on *Raguvamisam*. They just deal with the background of its composition and structure. This study aims to comprehend the impact of the first Tamil epic, *Raguvamisam*, on the educational heritage of Sri Lankan Tamils. This study is based on the descriptive methodology encompassing the analytical and comparative methods to identify and evaluate the impact of this epic. The epic *Raguvamisam* and its commentary are taken as primary sources. Literary appreciation notes and articles on *Raguvamisam* and previous studies on the educational heritage of Sri Lankan Tamils are taken as secondary sources. The findings indicate that the inclination to prioritize the first Sri Lankan Tamil epic, sound knowledge of Sanskrit, and the influence of the epic *Ramayana* are the prominent reasons for the intensive reading of this epic. Therefore, *Raguvamisam* was included in the curriculum of the traditional educational heritage of Sri Lankan Tamils, and commentaries and appreciation notes were written abundantly. Besides, it was paraphrased by some scholars in prose, and its influence could be traced to the subsequent literary compositions composed in the following years.

Keywords: *Raguvamisam*, *Arasakesari*, kings of Jaffna, Tamil educational heritage

ENHANCING UNDERGRADUATE SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH A BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH

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The present study investigates the effectiveness of the Blended Learning approach combined with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles in developing undergraduate students' speaking skills in Sri Lanka. CLT emphasizes meaningful communication and interaction during the process of language learning, and blended learning is an approach that combines traditional face-to-face mode of instruction with online modes of learning. A mixed-method research design was followed, involving quantitative and qualitative data collection. Further, pre- and post-speaking test marks were used for the quantitative data collection, and the tests were conducted for 50 undergraduates from the University of Kelaniya to measure their speaking proficiency. The undergraduates were divided into two groups, which consisted of 25 participants per group. The traditional teaching method was used for the control group, and the blended learning approach and CLT followed the experimental group. The qualitative data was obtained from published and unpublished articles and semi-structured interviews with 10 ESL lecturers on their perceptions of how this blended learning approach enhanced speaking skills among the students. Moreover, classroom observations were conducted for an entire month to explore the progression of the experimentation group. The results showed that the proposed blended learning approach with CLT principles remarkably improved undergraduate students' speaking ability, and they had positive attitudes towards the new learning method in the Sri Lankan university context. The two modes of instruction, including face-to-face and online, facilitated the acquisition of plenty of authentic practice opportunities and feedback by the learners where they have improved their communicative skills. The interviews of the lecturers further supported this approach. They stressed that such an approach has immense potential in increasing the engagement, motivation of the students, and overall development of the language skills. In conclusion, it can be mentioned that the results obtained from this study will contribute to the literature on language teaching methodologies and blended learning. Hence, it is expected that integrating CLT and blended learning can be useful in higher educational settings in developing speaking skills. In addition, further research is needed to test the effectiveness of this approach and to see its applicability in diverse language learning contexts.

Keywords: Blended learning, communicative Language Teaching (CLT), speaking skills, university context

The author expresses her sincere gratitude to all the participants and advisors, whose invaluable guidance, support, and contributions were instrumental in completing this research.

“I DON’T UNDERSTAND, HAMADORU”: JUNGLE LAW VS COLONIAL LAW IN LEONARD WOOLF’S *VILLAGE IN THE JUNGLE*

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The legal cases storied in Leonard Woolf’s *A Village in the Jungle* (1913) represent the imbalances of power between the colonizer and colonized during the British colonial period. Woolf’s novel has been previously explored, primarily focussing on its critique of empire and its representations of (hostile) nature. The objective of this paper is to study the courtroom scenes of the trials in the novel – for theft and murder – for the ways in which they depict the power dynamics between the colonizer and colonized and the inequities in the colonial system from an interdisciplinary perspective of law and literature. Thus, this paper closely reads the courtroom scenes, informed by the texts’ overarching narrative, together with Woolf’s diaries and autobiography, through a postcolonial perspective. The analysis of the trials in the novel reveals the judiciary’s alienation from/of the people, voiced by the accused men’s frequent assertions that they do not understand the legal proceedings. Thus, the alienation of the marginalized within the colonizers’ courtroom demonstrates the inequities and imbalances of power during the British colonial period. The narrativity of law – explicit in its dependence on storying – leads the judiciary to be manipulated by those in power, as when the magistrate is forced to apply the law even whilst unconvinced of the story offered in court. The novel demonstrates how the judicial system imposes particular narrative identities on the protagonists, divorced from their lived realities, in line with Paul Ricoeur’s theory of narrative identity, of individual identity being constructed through storying. Reading the courtroom scenes through Ricoeur’s concept, the analysis highlights the disjuncture between the colonial judicial process and peoples’ lived realities. While *Babun* and *Silindu*’s narratives are appropriated and manipulated by the headman in the first trial, the judiciary fails to consider the realities leading up to the murder in the second trial, captured in the magistrate’s suspicion of protracted provocation. These demonstrate how judicial authority was manipulated and the powerless subjugated by those in power. Thus, the court is represented as a(nother) tool of colonial oppression rather than an arbiter of justice. Moreover, Woolf’s critique of the judicial system echoes his anti-imperial stance through his representation of the trials. Finally, this paper’s analysis highlights the literature’s capacity to both narrate the complexities and inequities of the colonial judicial system as well as humanize legal actors through the novel’s exploration of the colonial judicial process.

Keywords: Law and literature, narrativity, colonial, identity, judicial process

THE INFLUENCE OF “LANDSCAPE POETRY” ON THE CEYLONESE ENGLISH LITERARY IMAGINATION OF THE LATE-COLONIAL PERIOD

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The present paper examines the influence of “landscape poetry” – a sub-genre and form that appears to widely engage the imagination of nineteenth century travelers and amateur writers in Ceylon – on the evolution of English poetry in that country during the first decades of the twentieth century. The discussion is anchored on a compendium of poems by Benjamin Bailey, *Poetical Sketches of the Interior of Ceylon* (1841), used in this study as a prototype for nineteenth century “landscape poetry” and works by Walter Senior and R.L. Spittel, especially, Senior’s *Vita Magistra* and Spittel’s collected poems in *Fallen Leaves*, which were composed between the 1910s and 1940s. The discussion makes connections between these poems and those composed by emerging writers – such as, for example, school students and contributors to magazines – who presumably drew inspiration from “landscape poetry” of the defined type and, in their search of themes and style, studied them as models. As such, the examination takes into account college magazines with a continuous history in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s – such as, for example, *The Aloysian* and *Our Boys* – and also the work of subsequent writers who in their work yet demonstrate a continuing influence of nineteenth century “landscape poetry”. As a method of inquiry, the exploration is based on a textual analysis of relevant poetry, and critical and historical literature within the framework of early-twentieth century Ceylonese/Sri Lankan writing. The study foregrounds the role of nineteenth century poetic influence on the shaping of early-twentieth century English poetry in the country, and the significance of nineteenth “landscape poetry” as a site of study: an area that has not received sufficient attention, despite its popularity and range.

Keywords: Early-twentieth century writing, influence in poetry, landscape poetry, Sri Lankan literature, Sri Lankan studies

EXPLORING TAMIL LEXICAL BORROWINGS IN ANGLOPHONE LITERATURE: A CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

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Language contact leads to the mixing of languages, resulting in borrowings. World Englishes emerge when British English interacts with local languages, and borrowing is considered a strategy by bilingual and multilingual writers in postcolonial contexts. This research investigates Tamil lexical borrowings in Anglophone literature in the Asian context. The study aims to identify the patterns and contexts of Tamil lexical borrowings in English literature from Sri Lanka, India, and Malaysia as expressed by different researchers. This study critically analyzes Tamil lexical borrowings in selected literature in the Asian context to determine how various types of borrowings with their linguistic features express different implications in Anglophone literature. The research method applied in this literature synthesis involves a systematic review of existing studies and scholarly articles related to Tamil lexical borrowings. Inclusion criteria for selecting literature encompasses peer-reviewed articles, books, dissertations, and conference proceedings published in Asian contexts. Data extraction and synthesis involve systematically organizing and analyzing key findings, themes, and patterns across selected studies related to Tamil lexical borrowing. By employing a systematic and rigorous approach to literature synthesis, this research method enables the synthesis of diverse perspectives and empirical evidence on lexical borrowings in Anglophone literature. This study contributes to a nuanced understanding of various theoretical frameworks applied, challenges, and implications for practice. The analysis of Tamil lexical borrowings holds remarkable linguistic and social significance. In examining Tamil lexical borrowings in Anglophone literature, this study demonstrates how these borrowed words function as markers of cultural distinctiveness, symbolizing a community's traditions, values, and social practices. Through its findings, the study illustrates that Tamil lexical borrowing operates not merely as a linguistic adaptation to fill the lexical gap but as a deliberate strategy to articulate a unique socio-cultural identity. By mixing Tamil words into Anglophone literature, authors express cultural implications and solidarity and assert a distinct identity within a globalized literary landscape.

Keywords: Anglophone literature, language contact, lexical borrowing, Tamil

**NAMING, TRANSLATION AND TRANSFORMING
SINHALA MIDDLE-CLASS WOMANHOOD:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECTED TEXTS
AND THEIR TRANSLATIONS INTO SINHALA**

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The present study engages in a comparative textual analysis of selected texts to unpack their portrayal of naming practices as role-players in shaping Sinhala middle-class womanhood. The selected texts are Marie Musaeus Higgins' *Stories from the History of Ceylon for Children* and *Leela's Dreams*, and their selected Sinhala translations. The study recognizes naming and renaming as acts that translate womanhood in relation to contemporary Sinhala nationalisms of the early 20th and early 21st centuries. The purpose of the study is to explore the significance of naming practices in reconfiguring, expanding, or shrinking the category of the Sinhala middle-class woman. The study identifies Sinhala nationalism as the main force that guides the naming of Sinhala middle-class women. Sinhala nationalism engages in a clever play with naming, and the literature such as Higgins' work produced during the time endorses such play. It recognizes the importance of naming in initiating women as authentic subjects of an emergent modern Sinhala nation. Therefore, through comparative textual analysis of the selected texts and their translations, the study explores how names act as signifiers of ideal Sinhala middle-class womanhood in the backdrop of Sinhala nationalism. It also recognizes the shades of class and race that influence this act of naming the Sinhala middle-class woman. The study is interdisciplinary, as it draws from Translation Studies, Language Studies, Poststructuralism, and Feminism to provide a broader understanding of the cultural, political, and ideological factors that determined naming practices in the early 20th and early 21st centuries and how those influenced the narration and translation of names and naming by Marie Higgins and the translators of the selected texts. The analysis highlights the dominance of Sinhala nationalistic thoughts in the early 20th and early 21st naming practices of the Sinhala community. It also recognizes the presence of some residues of Anglophilia or Eurocentrism embedded in some of the naming practices of the community. The names of the period also carry culturally specific senses or meanings related to the ideal qualities and attributes that the Sinhala middle-class woman must embody. Therefore, this study concludes that naming constellates women within frameworks of tradition and authenticity that align with the Sinhala nationalist projects.

Keywords: Woman, naming, translation, authenticity

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COORDINATING SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL MOBILITY

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Globalization has transformed the global landscape, fostering economic, cultural, and social integration. One critical area affected by globalization is the provision of social security benefits for individuals who move across borders. Ensuring the portability and coordination of social security benefits has become essential in a world where mobility is increasingly common, especially for countries like Sri Lanka with significant migrant worker populations. The primary objective of this study is to analyze how globalization has influenced cross-border social security systems, with a specific focus on Sri Lanka. It aims to identify the mechanisms through which countries, including Sri Lanka, coordinate social security benefits and to assess the effectiveness of these mechanisms in protecting the rights of mobile individuals. Collaborating with government agencies responsible for social security and labor, as well as NGOs focused on workers' rights and migration, will enhance the depth and relevance of the research. This research adopts a secondary-based qualitative approach, relying on existing literature, policy documents, and case studies. The study involves a comprehensive review of bilateral and multilateral social security agreements, reports on Sri Lanka's social security policies, and data from international organizations. The study finds that globalization has prompted the development of various bilateral and multilateral agreements to ensure the portability of social security benefits. In Sri Lanka, initiatives to protect migrant workers' social security rights have been established, but challenges persist. Key challenges include the lack of awareness among migrant workers about their rights and benefits, and gaps in the coordination of social security systems between countries, which can lead to delays and disputes in benefit claims. Consequently, policymakers must continue to innovate and adapt social security systems to the evolving demands of globalization, ensuring that social protection keeps pace with increasing global mobility.

Keywords: Cross-border, globalization, social security, Sri Lanka

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SRI LANKA: A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

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The fact that the European Union recognized Ceylon cinnamon as a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) raises the issue of whether the Sri Lankan legal framework regarding Geographical Indications (GIs) can help achieve sustainable development in the country. A GI is an intellectual property right conferred to a product with characteristics that can be ascribed to its geographic origin. A PGI is a European Union scheme that provides legal protection to its GI products. The objective of this research is to analyze whether the Sri Lankan law regarding GIs has the potential to contribute towards achieving sustainable development in the country. The research questions are: what is the local and international legal context in which GI protection is granted to Sri Lankan products; how is the connection made between GI law and sustainable development; is the GI law in Sri Lanka equipped to promote sustainable development in the country? This research adopted the qualitative research method, where a range of primary and secondary materials were referred to. Primary materials such as statutes and judicial decisions from Sri Lanka and other jurisdictions and secondary materials from Sri Lanka and overseas jurisdictions were used in this research. The research results revealed that the protection of GIs at the domestic level is important for its protection at the international level. It was also revealed that the local legal framework regarding GIs in Sri Lanka has some potential to contribute towards achieving sustainable development in Sri Lanka. It is because of the features in the Sri Lankan intellectual property law, such as the definition of GIs in the Intellectual Property (Amendment) Act No 8 of 2022 and the collective nature of entitlements conferred under the certification marks regime. These features also indicate the potential of the Sri Lankan GI law to empower producers, such as by protecting producers who meet the standards stated in the GI specification. The connection between GI law and sustainable development also emerges from the fact that GIs help to achieve rights-based sustainable development. In conclusion, it was identified that paying more attention to the interconnection between GI law and sustainable development in Sri Lanka is necessary.

Keywords: Geographical Indications, sustainable development, intellectual property law, Sri Lanka

GRANTING LEGAL PERSONHOOD TO ECOSYSTEMS: A NEW APPROACH TO COMBATING ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION IN SRI LANKA

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Environmental pollution remains a critical challenge in Sri Lanka, threatening the country's rich biodiversity and the well-being of the people. This paper explores the concept of attributing legal personality to natural ecosystems as a potential solution to mitigate pollution and enhance environmental protection. Granting legal rights to ecosystems such as rivers, forests, and wetlands could empower them to be represented in courts, hold polluters accountable, and enforce regulations more effectively. It can also be pointed out that the lack of ability to face the current challenges of some existing environmental laws is a strong reason for highlighting such a concept. Drawing on global examples where legal personhood has been granted to natural entities, this paper analyzes the potential benefits, challenges, and practical implications of applying such a framework in Sri Lanka. It argues that recognizing ecosystems as legal entities could provide a robust legal mechanism to safeguard the environment, promote sustainable development, and support the island nation's cultural and ecological heritage. It is also intended to focus on why this approach is no longer a prevalent concept in most countries of the world, the flexibilities that need to be created in applying that approach, and the extent to which this approach will work in the institutional structures of justice in practice. One of the aims is to discuss the examples Sri Lanka can take from states like New Zealand and Ecuador as international model states for this concept. The necessity, practical ability, and limitations of implementing this concept in Sri Lanka will also be discussed with examples from the *Kelani* River, which was polluted due to improper urbanization. The study further examines the role of local communities, policymakers, and legal practitioners in operationalizing this approach, ultimately proposing that legal personhood for ecosystems could be a transformative step toward reducing environmental pollution in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Environmental pollution, legal personality, ecosystem rights, Sri Lanka

The author expresses gratitude to all who contributed to the development of this paper, especially those providing insights into environmental law and policy. Special thanks to the local communities and experts whose experiences and perspectives have been invaluable in shaping this study.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA: CONSTITUTIONAL BLINDNESS AND JUDICIAL BLIND ALLEYS

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Sri Lanka takes considerable pride in its free education system, largely attributed to the Kannangara reforms and subsequent legal measures that mandate compulsory education from the ages of five to sixteen. These reforms have significantly improved enrolment rates and literacy levels, positioning Sri Lanka as a leader in educational performance within South Asia. Sri Lanka has also been a signatory to several international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which recognizes the right to education as an inherent entitlement of every human being. These instruments hold state parties accountable for ensuring the availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability of education to realize the full development of the human personality. Nonetheless, it is ironic that the Fundamental Rights Chapter of the Sri Lankan Constitution has not yet recognized education as an enforceable right. Despite this constitutional gap, the Supreme Court, in a series of cases, has used Article 12 -the 'Right to Equality' to incorporate the 'Right to Education' as an enforceable right of the citizens of Sri Lanka. This paper critically examines the judiciary's interpretation of the right to education and evaluates how judicial intervention has constrained this right relative to international standards. The analysis argues that judicial interpretation has reduced the right to merely 'Equal Access to Education' rather than encompassing a more comprehensive right that includes all its dimensions. This limited interpretation has, in effect, eased the state's legal obligations regarding essential aspects of the Right to Education, such as acceptability referring to the quality and relevance of education—and adaptability addressing the need for education to respond to societal changes. Through doctrinal research methods, this study employs qualitative data from primary and secondary legal sources. It assesses the judicial stance by analyzing Supreme Court decisions on the Right to Education since the 1978 Constitution, compared with the broader scope of the right outlined in international instruments to which Sri Lanka is a signatory. Through comparative analysis, the paper emphasizes the necessity of thoroughly incorporating the right to education, to fully develop the human personality.

Keywords: Right to education, right to equal access to education, right to equality, educational objectives

ANTHROPOGENIC IMPACTS AND CONSERVATION STRATEGIES FOR THE SPARROW JUNGLE WETLAND ECOSYSTEM IN JAFFNA, SRI LANKA

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The Sparrow Jungle Ecosystem in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, is located between approximately 9.7213° to 9.7392° N latitude and 80.1705° to 80.2030° E longitude. This critical habitat supports diverse flora and fauna, including endemic and migratory bird species and various aquatic species. Due to these unique habitats and species, the Sparrow Jungle Wetland is a popular recreational site, attracting educational trips and tourists across Jaffna. However, wetland ecosystems and sanctuaries are underrepresented in the Jaffna Peninsula despite its ecological importance. Anthropogenic pressures have disrupted the ecosystem's balance and compromised its essential services. This case study aims to identify these critical threats and propose effective conservation strategies to preserve the ecosystem's integrity and ensure long-term sustainability. The study was conducted over three months, from March to May 2024, in the designated study area. Primary data were collected through direct field observations, structured questionnaires administered to 50 randomly selected households, five face-to-face interviews with residents from the surrounding area, and discussions with relevant government agencies, including the local council, Environmental Authority, Department of Wildlife Conservation, and Northern Province Tourism Board. The secondary data were gathered from books, research papers, statistics, annual reports of relevant departments, and authorized websites. This data was analyzed using SPSS Statistics Computer software. Descriptive statistics was used to determine the percentages. The results indicate that 33% of respondents identified illegal waste dumping as the primary threat, followed by agricultural expansion (20%), development projects (17%), and livestock grazing (15%). Additional activities, such as hunting, firewood harvesting, and sand mining, were also observed. These human activities contribute to habitat loss, the reduction of mangrove forests, and wetland contamination. Urgent conservation actions are needed to protect the Sparrow Jungle Wetland Ecosystem from human-induced threats. A holistic approach, integrating local knowledge, sustainable practices, and strict regulations, is key to preserving its ecological integrity. Designating protected zones will reduce habitat destruction, while community involvement enhances stewardship. Stricter waste and pollution controls are vital for water quality. Collaboration between national and local councils is essential to declare the area a wetland sanctuary and promote eco-tourism.

Keywords: Migratory birds, wetland sanctuary, endemic species, eco-tourism

GEOMORPHOLOGICAL MAPPING AND LANDFORMS CLASSIFICATION IN ATTANAGALU OYA RIVER BASIN

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Geomorphological mapping and landform classification are essential for understanding the processes shaping the Earth's surface, managing natural resources, planning land use, and assessing natural hazards. Previous research studies stated that the Attanagalu Oya River basin is a vulnerable area for geomorphological changes. This work aims to present a geomorphological mapping and landform classification of an area in the Attanagalu Oya River Basin, based on morphometric analysis of Digital Elevation Models (DEMs), and terrain analysis while classical methods focus on photo interpretation. Further, the study focused on identifying the geomorphologically changing hotspots in the river basin and exploring the factors contributing to the changes in geomorphology using spatial analysis. All the analysis and digitized maps for the years 1981, 2001 and 2021 were generated using ArcGIS 10.8 and Google Earth Pro software. The secondary data used in this study were obtained from global open-source databases and institutions. Maps, data tables and analytical diagrams were used to interpret the findings. Total area of the Attanagalu Oya River basin is 839 Km². Based on the analysis, five primary types of geomorphological landforms by their origin were identified in the Attanagalu Oya River Basin area. They are structural origin landforms, denudational origin landforms, fluvial origin landforms, coastal origin landforms and anthropogenic origin landforms. Geomorphological classification was developed based on these main types of origins. Fluvial origin landforms and anthropogenic origin landforms are the main dynamic types of geomorphological landforms in this area. The hotspot areas of geomorphological changes were located in the middle and lower Attanagalu Oya sub basin along with coastal areas. Rainfall, slope, disaster impact and land use and land cover changes were identified as physical factors that contribute to the changes in geomorphology in this area. The contribution of those factors are higher in the middle and lower Attanagalu Oya sub basin along with the coastal area when compared to other areas. Moreover, human factors such as population growth, urbanization, infrastructure development, and disaster management practices were identified as factors that contribute to the changes in anthropogenic geomorphology in the Attanagalu Oya River basin. This kind of study enables us to explore the landscape dynamics to effective watershed environmental management for sustainable development practices.

Keywords: Geomorphological mapping, landforms classification, environmental management, geomorphological changes

THE INFLUENCE OF CENTRAL HIGHWAY ON URBAN HEAT ISLAND INTENSITY: A CASE OF MIRIGAMA DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT DIVISION

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The urban heat island (UHI) effect is where urban areas exhibit higher temperatures than their surrounding rural regions. This study investigates how the Central Highway has impacted the intensity of the UHI in the Mirigama area. Landsat satellite image-based analysis detected the UHI for 1997, 2010, and 2023. Further, land use and land cover (LULC) changes were analyzed and classified through the Random Forest algorithm, an advanced machine learning method. The results indicated that with the introduction of the Central Highway, urban thermal conditions have intensified, correlating with an increase in built-up areas detected through LULC changes. Maximum and surface temperatures (LST) in the area were 26°C, 27°C, and 28°C in 1997, 2010, and 2023 respectively. This is a 2°C increase from 1997 to 2013. These changes have resulted in urban areas becoming more heated than rural ones, with areas containing more buildings experiencing greater heat. In the meantime, the LST has increased along the central highway and its surroundings. Specifically, over the years, the forest area has reduced significantly. It covered 101.9 km² in 1997, decreased to 98 km² in 2010, and dropped to 57.8 km² in 2023. The total reduction is 44.1 km². This deforestation is closely linked to infrastructure expansion, including the Central Highway, which has contributed to both the UHI effect and ecosystem degradation by increasing LST. It highlights the need for better planning to minimize environmental impacts, connecting to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities and 13 - Climate Action. Addressing these challenges could also mitigate adverse effects on local ecosystems and public health. Overall, this research contributes to understanding the UHI effects of the area, and LULC changes that urban planners and policymaking authorities in the country should consider in their development initiatives.

Keywords: UHI, SDG, remote sensing, urbanization

IMPACT OF SRI LANKA'S ECONOMIC CRISIS ON THE PUBLIC HEALTHCARE SYSTEM: CASE STUDIES IN SELECTED TOWNS IN SRI LANKA

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Sri Lanka's public health sector has achieved significant progress, particularly in reducing infant and maternal mortality, child malnutrition and increasing life expectancy, positioning it favorably among developing nations regarding health outcomes. However, the economic recession precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2022), followed by a prolonged financial crisis since 2022, has severely strained the healthcare system. The resultant reduction in government healthcare spending has intensified preexisting vulnerabilities and restricted access to essential services, placing considerable pressure on Sri Lanka's healthcare infrastructure. As a result, Sri Lanka's healthcare system is now under substantial pressure. In this context, an important research question arises: to what extent has the economic crisis affected Sri Lanka's healthcare sector? This study investigates the impact of the financial crisis on healthcare delivery, specifically focusing on the availability of medical resources and the challenges faced by healthcare providers and patients. The study was conducted in selected towns in Sri Lanka, categorized by healthcare facility levels: Colombo and Kandy (high), Puttalam and Galle (moderate), and Nuwara Eliya (lower). Using qualitative methods, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 75 individuals through snowball sampling and 26 Key Informant Interviews were conducted with healthcare professionals. Data were transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed to elucidate the relationship between the economic crisis and healthcare delivery. The findings reveal five key areas of healthcare disruption due to the economic crisis: shortages of essential medicines and equipment, forcing patients to seek private options; compromised care quality and treatment delays from resource limitations; decreased public healthcare utilization, imposing financial strain on low-income families; reduced access to specialized services, affecting marginalized populations; and widening healthcare disparities, especially for those unable to afford private care. Immediate interventions are necessary to reinforce the healthcare system, secure essential services, and promote public-private partnerships and international collaborations.

Keywords: Economic crisis, public health sector, healthcare disparities

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THE IMPACT OF FOOD ON THE MIND AND MENTAL HEALTH: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BUDDHIST AND WESTERN NEUROPSYCHIATRIC PERSPECTIVES

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This research explores the impact of food on mental health, comparing Buddhist teachings with Western neuropsychiatry. Buddhist scriptures, including the *Bhojana sutta*, *Besajjakkhanda*, *Mahāvagga Pāli* and *Kosala Samyutta*, emphasise the importance of mindful eating and how certain foods influence mental well-being. The research problem centers on understanding the connection between specific foods and mental health in Buddhist perspective, a subject increasingly relevant in modern neuropsychiatry. The hypothesis posits that particular foods and nutrients, such as dark green vegetables, fruits and honey etc., have significant effects on mood, cognitive function, and emotional stability, aligning with both Buddhist insights and scientific studies. The methodology involves a comparative analysis of Buddhist texts and neuropsychiatric research. The *Besajjakkhanda* of the *Vinaya* highlighted the food's role as medicines and discussed the five medicines for its medicinal properties which nourish the body and support mental clarity. The *Bhojana Sutta* underscores the importance of mindful eating to prevent mental agitation and promote emotional balance. The *Mahāvagga Pāli* details ten benefits of porridge, including improved digestion, strength, and mental alertness. In the *Kosala Samyutta*, the dangers of overeating are discussed, linking it to sluggishness, distraction, and mental dullness. The *Mahāsīhanāda Sutta* further elaborates that viewing food as merely a necessity, rather than a source of pleasure, helps reduce craving and fosters mental clarity. Findings justified in relation to the data that mindful eating, as emphasized in Buddhism, fosters mental clarity and spiritual progress, while Western neuropsychiatry confirms that vitamins such as B6, B12, Omega-3s, and Vitamin D play crucial roles in neurotransmitter production, affecting mood and cognitive health specially reducing of mental stress, anxiety, depression and other mental unrest situations. These nutrients facilitate the synthesis of key neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine, which are crucial for mood regulation and emotional well-being. Similarly, vitamin B12 is vital for neurological function and DNA synthesis, with its deficiency associated with cognitive impairment and psychiatric symptoms. Vitamin D influences serotonin synthesis and has been linked to various neuropsychiatric disorders, emphasizing the interdependence of these nutrients in supporting brain health. The research concludes that integrating Buddhist wisdom on mindful eating and the medicinal value of food with neuropsychiatric insights into the biochemical impact of diet offers a comprehensive approach to mental health, promoting balance and mental well-being through conscious food choices.

Keywords: Buddhism, food, neuropsychiatry, mental well-being

ESTABLISHING THE CONTENT VALIDITY FOR NEWLY DEVELOPED BUDDHIST SPIRITUALITY SCALE: A DELPHI STUDY

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Spirituality is a psychological construct with no universally accepted definition. According to existing literature, spirituality is identified in relation to both religious and secular practices. However, most experts in the field discuss spirituality in relation to religiosity. As a result of this consensus, different types of spiritualities based on various religions have been identified: Christian spirituality, Hindu spirituality, Islamic spirituality, and Buddhist spirituality. Buddhist spirituality is grounded in the teaching of the Noble Eightfold Path. Additionally, the *Mahā-cattārīsaka Sutta* in the *Majjhima Nikāya* explains two ways of practicing the Noble Eightfold Path: the mundane and the supramundane. In this newly developed scale, the mundane level of practicing the Noble Eightfold Path was considered Buddhist Spirituality, and items were devised to measure it. Psychological constructs can be evaluated through quantitative measurement, a mental or psychometrics field. One of the psychometric properties of such measurement is validity. The objective of this study was to establish the content validity for the newly developed Buddhist Spirituality Scale based on the teachings of the Noble Eightfold Path. Initially, forty-one (41) items were developed based on the teachings and literature on the Noble Eightfold Path. A two-round Delphi survey was then conducted to examine expert consensus on the proposed items in the scale. The sample included nine (9) experts in the fields of Buddhism (n=4), psychology (n=4), and philosophy (n=1). Data analysis was conducted by calculating the Item Content Validity Index (I-CVI) and the Scale Content Validity Index (S-CVI). In addition to these calculations, items were revised based on the experts' feedback. In the first round of the Delphi survey, twenty (20) items were refined, and one item was added before the second round. In the second round, I-CVI and S-CVI were calculated. The S-CVI for the judged components were relevance 0.97, clarity 0.89, simplicity 0.90, and cultural appropriateness 0.96, demonstrating satisfactory content validity for the newly developed Buddhist Spirituality Scale.

Keywords: Buddhist spirituality, content validity, scale, Noble Eightfold Path

GIRIMĀNANDA SUTTA AS AN AUDIO-VISUAL AND MINDFULNESS BREATHING THERAPEUTIC TOOL FOR REDUCING PAIN AND ANXIETY OF DISEASES

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Diseases are alarming issues and cause tremendous pain and suffering in living beings in the world. Box breathing is a powerful Western relaxation technique that helps relax the body's unbeatable mind and reduce anxiety. Emerging research is exploring non-invasive and low-cost interventions for diseases. The purpose of reciting *Pirith* is to protect living beings from all disasters, all pains, and all fears. It is believed that the recital of *Pirith* verses is soothing to the nerves and induces mental and physical balance using the six senses of humans. The *Girimānanda Sutta* of the *Āṅguttara Nikāya* contains '*Dasa saññā*' which includes mindfulness of in-breathing and out-breathing, called *Ānāpānasati*. *Girimānanda* Thera was cured of grave illness after engaging in virtuous behaviour. The objective of this study was to determine the Buddhist ritual performance in healing and promoting physical and mental health issues. The research methodology is a quasi-experimental intervention. Ethical approval was obtained from the research council of the University of Kelaniya. The sample size was 40 subjects who were diagnosed with 2nd and 3rd-stage oral cancer. Oral cancer patients were recruited from oral and maxillofacial units in District General Hospital - Gampaha. Participants were facilitated to hear *Pirith* verses in Low frequency (70Hz-150Hz) using headphones for 35 minutes. Sinhala and English meanings of *Pirith* verses and pictures were displayed on a screen simultaneously. Pain relief reduction of anxiety levels in the individuals was assessed after exposing them to repetitive *Pirith* sounds and vowel sounds (control group) in three sessions (before the intervention, immediately after, three days after, and one week after). Anxiety and stress were assessed using visual analog, DASS, and biological parameters such as blood pressure, pulse, and respiration. Moods were measured using a Mood Baro-meter in which they were asked to rate their mood (0-10). Results showed a significant improvement in mood (2 to 7) and a reduction in subjective pain (6 to 3) after the intervention. These findings imply that repetitive *Pirith* blessings could be utilized as an effective, non-invasive, non-pharmacological, low-cost audio-visual and mindfulness of inbreathing and out-breathing therapeutic tool.

Keywords: Disease, *Girimānanda Sutta*, reduction of pain and anxiety, therapeutic tool

**BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE
ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ECONOMIC HAPPINESS:
A REFRESHING ALTERNATIVE TO THE DOMINANT ECONOMIC
MODELS PRIORITIZING GROWTH AND CONSUMPTION**

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This research investigates the Buddhist perspective on achieving economic happiness, emphasizing the integration of spiritual fulfillment and material well-being through ethical economic practices. It examines the notion of Right Livelihood outlined in the Noble Eightfold Path. It investigates the ways in which Buddhist principles assist individuals and societies in achieving a balance between the pursuit of wealth and moral behavior. Buddhist economics presents significant importance on the ethical acquisition, use, and conservation of wealth, advocating for satisfaction and benevolence as fundamental measures of genuine happiness. The paper also comprehensively examines the correlation between wealth and happiness within the Buddhist framework, therefore questioning traditional perspectives on economic prosperity. The objective of this research is to provide a Buddhist philosophical framework to facilitate the comprehension of the correlation between economics and happiness. This study promotes the development of moderation, non-attachment, and compassion in economic activities as a viable alternative to materialism, both at the individual and societal levels. Specifically, this work examines the Noble Eightfold Path and the notion of Right Livelihood as outlined in early Buddhist canonical texts. A textual examination of fundamental Buddhist teachings and ethical principles concerning economic activity is used, together with a thematic investigation of how Buddhism addresses wealth accumulation, consumption, and preservation. Additionally, the present research contrasts these teachings with modern economic practices to highlight the potential of Buddhist economics for fostering happiness and social well-being. This research presents an alternative to the current economic theories emphasizing consumption and growth by analyzing early Buddhist teachings thematically and textually. An economic system grounded on Buddhist principles would foster a society prioritizing well-being above riches by highlighting sustainability, ethical conduct, and inner satisfaction. Promoting contentment, compassion, and mindfulness cultivates a sustainable and balanced approach to personal and communal well-being by encouraging individuals and society to pursue happiness.

Keywords: Buddhist economics, well-being, wealth, right livelihood, Noble Eightfold Path

THE ROLE OF PLAY IN COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Play is a fundamental aspect of childhood recognized as essential for children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. The study focuses on how different forms of play, such as free play, imaginative play, and structured activities, contribute to children's cognitive and social developmental progress. Researchers thoroughly review the empirical research on play, showing how free play, imaginative play, and structured activities support cognitive advancements, such as memory and problem-solving, and social skills, such as empathy and conflict resolution. The purpose of this research is to investigate the role of play in promoting cognitive and social development in early childhood. The study employs a qualitative approach to examine the relationship between play activities and cognitive and social development outcomes. It also employs the quantitative approach to analyze semi-structured interviews. A sample of 60 children aged 3 to 5 was selected from four preschools in urban and suburban areas to provide diverse insights into the developmental impacts of play. The methodology included participant observation and semi-structured interviews with both parents and teachers. For four months, children were observed during their regular play activities. Researchers noted interactions, behaviors, and engagement in various types of play. Cognitive development was measured through teacher assessments of problem-solving, memory, and language skills, while social development was evaluated based on observed interactions such as sharing, cooperation, and conflict resolution. Findings revealed that imaginative and cooperative play was strongly associated with cognitive and social advancements. Children involved in imaginative play showed greater creativity and language development as they engaged in storytelling and role playing scenarios. Cognitive tasks, like puzzles and building blocks, helped improve problem-solving abilities. Socially, children who frequently participated in group play activities demonstrated enhanced empathy, better communication, and more effective conflict-resolution skills. The study highlights the significant role of play in early childhood development. The findings suggest that play is not only a means of entertainment, but a critical process for cognitive and social growth. Incorporating diverse play opportunities in early education settings can support holistic development in young children, providing them with the necessary tools to succeed in academic and social environments.

Keywords: Play, cognitive and social development, early childhood

EXPLORING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES AMONG SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: KEY FACTORS AND TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS

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The rising prevalence of mental health issues among Sri Lankan university students, including high rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts, significantly impacts academic performance. High rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts have led to alarming trends, including course dropouts and severe mental health crises. This study aims to identify key factors associated with mental health among Sri Lankan university students and propose IT-related solutions to address them. A structured survey was conducted with a sample of 1,905 students from Sri Lankan local universities. A self-administered questionnaire is used to collect data on demographics, attitudes, academic performance, mental health coping mechanisms, the impact of technology, and future recommendations. The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) and Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) were included in the questionnaire to assess mental health. Data was analyzed using R software. The majority of respondents were female (68.24%), with significant representation from the University of Peradeniya (38.63%), the University of Moratuwa (24.82%) and the University of Jaffna (14.54%). Analysis revealed that 33.59% of students reported low mental health, 33.96% moderate, 27.82% high, and 4.62% extreme distress. Factors contributing to poor mental health included future uncertainty, family pressure, financial stress, academic challenges, relationship issues, and the influence of technology. Additionally, 90.13% of respondents reported dissatisfaction with their GPA, with 38.83% holding a GPA between 3.00 and 3.39, indicating that even relatively high-performing students are affected. Significant correlations were found between mental health status and department($p=0.0001$), as well as year of study($p=0.0312$). Notably, 7.5% of the respondents reported suicidal thoughts, highlighting the severity of the issue. The study emphasizes the need for mental health interventions in universities, including awareness programs, counseling services, stress management, and peer support systems. Proposed solutions include creating a mental health chatbot integrated into university websites to provide accessible support and guidance. Future studies could develop predictive models to identify at-risk students early based on behavioral and academic indicators.

Keywords: Coping mechanisms, IT solutions, mental health, undergraduates

EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF GCE O/L AND A/L EDUCATION ON SELECTED LEARNING SKILLS: PERSPECTIVES OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SRI LANKA

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This study investigates the impact of GCE Ordinary Level and GCE Advanced Level education on specific learning skills, as perceived by university students in Sri Lanka. The learning skills under examination include critical thinking, reflective judgment, higher-order thinking, and self-directed learning. The research aims to understand how Sri Lankan university students reflect on their experiences at the GCE Ordinary Level and GCE Advanced Level and how these formative educational stages shape the learning skills required for success in higher education at the university. A sample of twenty-eight final-year university students was selected. Data were gathered through structured interviews conducted in both English and Sinhalese and were recorded for accuracy. Subsequently, the recorded interviews were translated, transcribed, coded, and analyzed using the constant comparative method to draw meaningful insights. The literature review traced the historical development of Sri Lanka's education system, highlighting the influences of Buddhism and Christianity. It examined the initial challenges faced by higher education in Sri Lanka and the ongoing discourse among educators regarding the necessity for systemic reform. The review underscored the need for an educational approach that fosters essential learning skills and competencies. Additionally, it was noted that international educators also emphasize the importance of these skills for effective learning. The study's findings reveal that university students often struggle to distinguish between learning activities and skills. A noticeable gap exists between students' theoretical understanding of learning and their practical experiences. Furthermore, differences were observed in how learning skills are perceived by students from government versus private institutions. Another key finding was the disparity between the language of instruction at the GCE Advanced Level, Sinhala, and the use of English in Sri Lankan universities. As stated in this paper's literature review, the reforms educators proposed over the years to enhance students' learning skills appear to have had limited success. The study concludes with a call for further research to address factors hindering the implementation of educational reforms, to explore the relationship between the education system and national development, to assess the impact of religion and culture on education, and to investigate the pedagogical curricula needed to support a developing nation.

Keywords: Critical thinking, reflective judgment, higher-order thinking, self-directed learning

INVESTIGATING TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY AMONG NCOE-TRAINED TEACHERS IN EASTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

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This study examines the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers trained at Sri Lanka's National Colleges of Education (NCOEs) currently employed in the Eastern Province. The study employs a survey research design using a quantitative approach. Utilizing the stratified sampling technique, 230 trained teachers were selected from 2332 trained teachers in the Eastern Province. The study utilized the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) to assess self-efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Analysis revealed interesting patterns. Teachers reported the highest mean score (7.21) for self-efficacy in classroom management, indicating a moderate to high level of confidence in this area. Scores for student engagement (5.62) and instructional strategies (5.84) suggest teachers are "somewhat confident" in these domains. This suggests that NCOE programs effectively equip teachers with classroom management skills, but there may be room for improvement in fostering student engagement and implementing diverse instructional strategies. Furthermore, the study found no statistically significant differences in self-efficacy beliefs based on teacher gender. These findings regarding gender are noteworthy as they differ from some previous research. Further investigation is needed to understand the reasons behind this discrepancy and explore the factors influencing self-efficacy beliefs among male and female NCOE-trained teachers in Sri Lanka. This research contributes to a better understanding of teacher self-efficacy in the Sri Lankan context. Based on these findings, the study recommends tailoring NCOE programs to address student engagement and instructional strategies, establishing mentorship and professional development opportunities, and highlighting successful teachers as role models. By implementing these recommendations, teacher training institutions can empower teachers with the confidence and skills needed to create a more effective and engaging learning environment for students in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province. Therefore, it is recommended that teacher training programs incorporate strategies to enhance self-efficacy beliefs, particularly among female teachers. Training institutions like NCOEs focus on developing teachers' self-efficacy in teaching specific subjects, and continuous professional development initiatives should be implemented to support and strengthen teachers' self-efficacy beliefs.

Keywords: Teacher, self-efficacy beliefs, instructional strategies, student engagement, classroom management

EXPLORING THE DETERMINANTS OF ACADEMIC ANXIETY AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: A COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

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Academic anxiety is an inescapable issue across various educational levels, including elementary, secondary, and tertiary institutions, with a growing number of students reporting stress, worry, and distress related to their academic performance. Different research demonstrated that academic anxiety adversely impacts both the mental well-being and academic success of adolescents. Indicators of this anxiety often include difficulties with concentration, information retention, and exam performance, which can lead to broader mental health challenges such as depressive symptoms and diminished self-esteem. Additionally, academic anxiety is associated with disrupted sleep patterns, the development of eating disorders, and physical and mental exhaustion. This systematic review aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of academic anxiety among undergraduate students. It uses a thematic analysis within the systematic framework to analyze existing studies on academic anxiety, thereby identifying prevalent factors and their implications for mental health in academic settings. The review targeted journals based on inclusion and exclusion criteria; the researcher focused on articles published from 2010 to 2024. Recent publications were prioritized to ensure relevance. A systematic search was performed using Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Scopus, and Tandfonline with keywords such as ‘academic anxiety,’ ‘stress academic,’ and ‘undergraduate students.’ Out of the journals identified, 35 met the criteria for discussing factors affecting academic anxiety. The selection process involved filtering based on titles, abstracts, and the inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative research. The review involved a five-week search for relevant articles written in English. The findings revealed that academic anxiety extends to various dimensions of educational institutions in the form of academic stress, low self-efficacy, and gender differences, and is a primary driver contributing to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Low self-efficacy is closely associated with increased anxiety as students with reduced confidence experience heightened stress. Gender differences indicate that female students generally report higher levels of anxiety compared to their male counterparts. Additional factors, such as bullying, technology use, and poor sleep quality, further worsen the anxiety level among undergraduate students. This review underscores the need for further research and the evaluation of intervention strategies to effectively address the complexities of academic anxiety, particularly among junior high school adolescents and university undergraduates.

Keywords: Academic anxiety, impact, undergraduates, performance

**OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY PATTERNS
AMONG GRADE 10 STUDENTS
IN THE *MENIKHINNA* MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH AREA**

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In Sri Lanka, the prevalence of overweight and obesity has also been increasing, mirroring global trends. Urbanization, changes in dietary habits, and reduced physical activity levels contribute to this phenomenon. According to national surveys, the prevalence of overweight and obesity among adolescents in Sri Lanka has risen alarmingly over the past decade. This poses significant challenges for the country's healthcare system and public health initiatives. In that context, this study seeks to understand the contemporary patterns of overweight and obesity among Grade 10 students in the *Menikhinna* Medical Officer of Health (MOH) area. The study adopted a qualitative methodology using secondary data from 2019 to 2023 gathered through the electronic Reproductive Health Management Information System (eRHMS) and a web-based data system managed by the Family Health Bureau under the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka. The results reveal varying prevalence rates across different schools (government-private and Sinhala-Tamil) within the area. Although the *Menikhinna* MOH area is considered rural, 20 schools in this area indicate a considerably higher risk for overweight and obesity. Both male and female students in Grade 10 show a significant prevalence of overweight (" \bar{x} " 7.38%) and obesity (" \bar{x} " 3.51%) in *Menikhinna* MOH area. Hence, this study concludes that ethnicity and gender do not affect overweight and obesity primarily, but the dietary practices and lack of physical activities do. Further, the research implemented four comprehensive awareness programs promoting nutrition and physical activity across four selected schools: Pilawala Maha Vidyalaya, Kandy Model College, Loyal Ladies Muslim Girls College, and Walala A. Rathnayake Central College for Grade 10 students, along with a Training of Trainers (TOT) program for teachers to support sustainable health-promoting behaviors.

Keywords: Obesity, overweight, *Menikkinna* MOH, dietary practices, physical activities

THE INTEGRATION OF THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING: PRACTICAL APPROACHES AND INSIGHTS

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This paper explores the application of the Noble Eightfold Path—a central teaching in Buddhism—to sustainable living, emphasizing the integration of ethical conduct (*sīla*), mental culture (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*) into practices that support environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic viability. The study provides a comprehensive overview of how the Noble Eightfold Path guides individuals and communities toward harmoniously enhancing the quality of living with the environment while fostering inner peace, ethical integrity, and sustainable development. The primary objective of this study is to investigate how the ethical, mental, and wisdom-based elements of the Noble Eightfold Path can be pragmatically applied to enhance sustainable living. Moreover, the researcher examines the relevance of Buddhist ethical concepts to sustainable practices and highlights the role of mental concentration (*samādhi*) in building resilience and composure. In addition, this research investigates how the concept of wisdom (*paññā*) promotes sustainable behavior of individuals. The study adopts a qualitative research approach by integrating textual analysis with contemporary works on sustainability and ethical living. In particular, Buddhist ethical concepts such as *kusala/akusala* and *puñña/pāpa* shall be examined in seeking practical applications. The benefits of mental concentration (*samādhi*) and the role of emotional intelligence in sustainability are analyzed through a literature review and comparative analysis. This research concludes that the Noble Eightfold Path provides a powerful and actionable guide for achieving sustainable living. By weaving ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom into everyday life, individuals and communities can be fostered to make a sustainable and harmonious world from personal to spiritual well-being. Thus, the paper advocates the aforementioned Buddhist concepts for the potential growth of a harmonious society in the pursuit of sustainability.

Keywords: Ethical values, cultivating mental composure, managing emotions, emotional intelligence

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND *BURMESE* BUDDHIST MONKS IN THE *KONBAUNG* PERIOD IN MYANMAR

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As Buddhism was considered the state religion of Burma (now Myanmar) in the *Konbaung* period (1752-1885 C.E.), the *Burmese* Buddhist monks played a crucial role not only in spiritual guidance but also in social service. For instance, education in that period was mainly based on monastic institutions. Sources reveal that there were two types of monastic institutions: one taught students only religious text, and the other provided not only religious but also secular education in areas such as medicine, astrology, music, art of war, etc. In return, the lay society also provided the four requisites and other necessary things to the members of *Saṅgha*. However, the question of whether there were any challenges for *Burmese Saṅgha* in social relationships with lay society remains to be answered. The central aim of this research paper is to shed light on the relationship between the *Burmese Saṅgha* and the lay community. In order to investigate their relationship, the data for this research were collected from various old historical records such as *Burmese* chronicles, inscriptions, manuscripts, and other historically related research publications. This research explores that the *Burmese Saṅgha* in that period served as spiritual leaders, translated not only Buddhist texts but also other secular texts such as medicine, and law into *Burmese*, and compiled several types of texts. In addition, due to the situation, they were involved in social activities such as peace-making, serving as state counselors, and providing guidance to administration, and providing judgment. Although the kings in the *Konbaung* dynasty highly supported the members of *Saṅgha*, such as conferring religious titles and giving royal patronage, there were records to show that monks were suppressed. This paper suggests that although *Burmese* monks served as religious leaders and social workers for the lay community, they faced several challenges in their relationship with them. Moreover, *Burmese Saṅgha's* contributions still affect Myanmar's current society.

Keywords: *Burmese Saṅgha*, social service, social relationship, monastic education, texts

BUDDHIST APPROACH TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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While various forms of conflict are interdependently connected with human existence, they can be briefly understood in two types: internal and external. Buddhism fundamentally recognizes that all forms of conflict are a part of suffering. Buddhism explains that the concept of suffering, or *dukkha*, is the nature of human existence. Some critics tend to think that this emphasis on suffering makes Buddhism a kind of pessimism. Since the Buddha talked about suffering with the ultimate aim of eradicating it, one cannot call Buddhism a pessimism. Nevertheless, one has to accept the centrality of the concept of *dukkha* in the teaching of the Buddha. The nature of conflict, which is a manifestation of *dukkha* in Buddhism, arises from both internal and external causes, according to *Kamma* theory. This understanding is framed within the doctrine of dependent co-origination (*Paticcasamuppāda*), which considers that all phenomena are interdependently connected. Any conflicts caused by internal and external conditions lead to unstable and unpleasant conditions in life. Human beings are drawn to a pleasant life rather than to an unpleasant one full of conflict. The Buddha introduced the Four Noble Truths (*Cattāri Ariyasaccāni*) to address these conflicts, which outlines a practical framework for conflict resolution. The Buddhist way is to understand the main cause of any conflicts or problems, to remove it, to realize the way to the cessation of it, and finally to practice the way that leads to its cessation or true happiness. However, a critical question arises: does the Buddha's teaching provide a comprehensive theory and practice for resolving all conflicts? This inquiry necessitates a thorough examination of the nature of conflict and exploring Buddhist theories and practices aimed at conflict resolution. Therefore, the present paper will undertake a qualitative and descriptive analysis to investigate the nature of conflict, examine the theoretical frameworks provided by Buddhism, and assess their practical applications for conflict resolution. By illustrating relevant data from Buddhist scriptures, this study aims to deepen the understanding of conflict resolution within a Buddhist context. Ultimately, this paper seeks to illuminate the Buddhist theoretical framework and its applications for resolving conflicts; thereby, highlighting the path to peace that Buddhism offers. Through this exploration, we hope to demonstrate the relevance and efficacy of Buddhist teachings in addressing the nature of conflict and its resolution.

Keywords: Conflict, dependent co-origination, Fourth Noble Truth, peace

A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF FEMINISM IN RESHAPING RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES FOR GENDER EQUALITY

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The present study investigates the function of feminists and the ways in which religious beliefs impact the pursuit of gender equality. Social and cultural life has been greatly affected by feminism, and the relationship between feminism and religious doctrines offers important opportunities for research. Accordingly, this study's research problem investigates how feminist ideologies contrast with religious beliefs and practices to reframe religious attitudes toward gender equality. It explores the extent to which feminist movements challenge or influence traditional religious doctrines that often reinforce gender roles. The aim of this research is to analyze the impact of feminist ideologies on religious discourse and examine how these ideologies contribute to the pursuit of gender equality in religious contexts. The research objectives are to investigate how feminist movements affect religious practices and gender-related attitudes and to examine how religious texts and principles contribute to the construction and interpretation of gender equality in religious institutions. The methodology of this research consisted of semi-structured interviews with 20 participants, including religious leaders, feminist scholars, activists, and religious communities. Moreover, the collected data will be analyzed using a thematic approach. The responses were categorized into several sub-themes. These sub-themes shall be reinterpreted from a religious and gender role point of view. In this research study, the influence of feminist movements on religious practices and feminists' resistance to religious institutions will be taken into account. The study concludes that feminism has made progress in promoting gender equality within religious movements. It also expects to examine how religious texts construct the concept of gender equality. Accordingly, this research contributes to understanding the dynamic relationship between feminism and religion.

Keywords: Feminism, gender equality, religion, institution, gender role

A CONTEMPORARY EXPLORATION OF BUDDHIST NUNS FROM A FEMINIST POINT OF VIEW

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Buddhism is considered a religion of non-discrimination, and it provides an excellent platform for gender and empowerment. However, the development and perception of women within Buddhism, especially nuns, has been susceptible to cultural factors resulting in sex discrimination. In recent decades, the Buddhist feminist movement has grown to address these issues. Within this trend, the present paper highlights the mutual dynamics of Buddhist doctrine and feminism in addressing the concerns of oriental Buddhist nuns in Myanmar and other countries. Fundamentally, Buddhist feminism recognizes that although the basic teaching of Buddhism affirms that women and men possess the capacity for enlightenment, the decline of the Bhikkhuni order in many Theravada Buddhist countries over centuries exemplifies how patriarchal influences have sidelined women's roles within the Sangha. Nonetheless, the more recent trend of the revival of Bhikkhuni ordination in Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Western countries indicates a change in gender hierarchy. Hence, this paper investigates the achievements of feminists in addressing the defining issues of women's liberation in a Buddhist context. Feminists in Buddhism further reformulate the revival of ordination rights to women and address the systemic exclusion of women. In specific terms, the examples taught by Ayya Khema, Bhikkhuni Dhammananda, Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo, and DawKetumala show how Buddhist nuns have emerged to the occasion as spiritual leaders although they faced oppressive gender roles. Beyond ordination rights, the empowerment of Buddhist nuns is also reflected in their increasing involvement in social work, education, and meditation teaching. Nuns are leading social justice initiatives, promoting mental health, and offering spiritual guidance to both lay and monastic communities; thus, extending the boundaries of traditional roles ascribed to them. This paper expects to argue that equality between men and women is sought after in Buddhist feminism. It is concluded that Buddhist feminism, as well as the empowerment of women in Buddhism, is quite an effective approach to the examination of women's place in Buddhism today. The study illustrates the struggle towards gender equality and the struggle to create a positive change in the community, as women practicing Buddhism strive for attention in the monastic and lay order structure.

Keywords: Feminism, equality, empowerment, patriarchy, Buddhism

A GENDER PERSPECTIVE ON EXPLORING THE FACTORS AFFECTING UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUNG FEMALES IN SRI LANKA

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Youth unemployment in Sri Lanka is a significant challenge to sustainable development, with young females disproportionately affected. Despite the studies and government interventions, there still needs to be a concrete answer for this socio-economic issue, and females are more vulnerable in the face of youth unemployment. In such a context, this study was conducted with the primary objective of exploring the factors that hinder the employability of young females in Sri Lanka while identifying potential strategies and interventions to enhance their employability. The study also aimed to investigate the current landscape of youth unemployment in Sri Lanka and examine the impact of unemployment on the well-being and social status of young females. This qualitative research employed an ethnographic method with thirty female respondents aged 15-24 from the *Sooriyawewa* Grama Niladari Division selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The findings revealed that domestic chores, harmful experiences of sexual harassment at workplaces, social norms, patriarchal social structure, and gender stereotypes are significant hindrances to women's employability. Issues such as lack of infrastructure, wild elephant conflicts, early marriages, school dropouts, and lack of English literacy and computer skills also contribute to this problem. Moreover, the study uncovered the profound effects of female youth unemployment, including domestic violence due to lack of proper income, drug dealing, inability to fulfill basic needs, health issues, depression, suicidal ideation and attempts, dependency on marriage for employment, and social exclusion. Accordingly, the research proposes implementing awareness-raising campaigns on women's human rights, job prospects within specific industries that offer decent job opportunities, and digital entrepreneurship covering all the settings, implementing support systems such as incubation centers, industrial parks, and zoning with the proper monitoring and evaluation system to promote the youth female participation in small and medium enterprises, policy reforms in education and establishing paternity leave system to strength the work-family balance, and a proper mechanism to identify sexual violation at the workplace. In conclusion, the study recommends opening a broad social discourse regarding female youth unemployment and related labor law reforms to reduce female unemployment in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Employability, policy reforms, youth unemployment, young women

GENDERED LABOUR MIGRATION AND CHANGING GENDER ROLES IN *MOCHA* GN DIVISION, MASKELIYA: BACK TO SQUARE ONE?

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In the tea plantation estates of Sri Lanka, labor migration outside the country, particularly among women, has become increasingly prevalent due to economic necessity and social change. Women from the tea plantations have long been engaged in internal labor migration. However, during the past two decades, women's labor migration to Middle Eastern countries has become a rising trend challenging the patriarchal social fabric of the tea plantation estates. Migration has triggered significant shifts in household dynamics, reshaping gender roles and family responsibilities. Through a mixed-methods approach, the research analyzes qualitative and quantitative data collected from surveys, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and *Mocha* GN division's statistical handbook and labor migration records. This study explored the transformative impact of labor migration on gender roles in the *Mocha* GN division of Maskeliya, focusing on how migration alters traditional gender roles and unfolds new challenges and opportunities. The study employed the conceptual frameworks of productive and reproductive roles to understand the changes. The findings revealed a predominant trend of female migration in the estate, which has altered traditional gender roles. While women work abroad and send remittances, men in these households are compelled to take on roles typically associated with women, such as cooking, childcare, and household management. This shift has increased men's involvement in domestic responsibilities, temporarily challenging the established gender norms within their community. At the same time, migrant women, who become the primary breadwinners through remittances, experience enhanced autonomy, financial independence, and stronger household decision-making roles. Despite these temporary shifts toward more equitable gender roles, narratives of returnee migrants showed these changes are often temporary. Upon return, with time, female migrants resume their traditional roles and men revert to financial providers. This finding highlights unsustainable gender role transformations in migrant-sending communities, where economic necessity prompts temporary change, but cultural norms continue to dictate everyday life. The research highlights the need for policy interventions to reduce gender bias and support sustainable gender equality through social and economic empowerment programs for returnee women.

Keywords: Labor Migration, gender roles, gender equality, Mocha GN Division, household responsibilities

RESPONSE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS TO THE CHANCES IN ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM FACTORS IN SRI LANKA

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Women entrepreneurs significantly contribute to a country's economic growth. However, when analyzing women entrepreneurship deeply, it is obvious that there are different types of women entrepreneurs, and their contribution to economic growth is varied. Although entrepreneurial development policies are implemented in general, the responses of different types of entrepreneurs to the changes in entrepreneurial ecosystem factors are different. As women's entrepreneurship has been recognized as a new engine of economic growth, it is important to analyze the response of women entrepreneurs to those changes. Then, this study focuses on analyzing the responses of different types of women entrepreneurs to changes in entrepreneurial ecosystem factors. Three types of women entrepreneurs, Stagnant, Progressive, and High-growth, categorized by the annual growth rate of turnover, were considered in the analysis. Entrepreneurial ecosystem factors such as attitudes, ability, aspiration, and alertness which are considered individual factors, and inputs and markets, supportive facilities, taxes and charges, and cultural barriers, which are considered institutional factors were used as entrepreneurial ecosystem factors to find answers to the research objective. This study is based on primary data collected from a sample of 367 women entrepreneurs applying the stratified sampling method and Ordered Logistic Regression was applied to analyze data. The results revealed that the favorable changes in alertness, inputs, markets, taxes, and charges affect Stagnant women entrepreneurs and push them out of that type. As a result, they may become either progressive or high-growth women entrepreneurs. Also, those three main factors affect high-growth women entrepreneurs to hold them further in that type. High-growth women entrepreneurs are the ones who highly contribute to economic growth. However, the results exhibit no effect on the Progressive type, confirming that the type does not respond to the changes in entrepreneurial ecosystem factors. Progressive women entrepreneurs are the largest type among all three types. The study concludes that all types of women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka do not respond to the changes in entrepreneurial ecosystem factors driven by entrepreneurship policies.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurs, different types, ecosystem, policies

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**ABANDONING THE GAP:
ANALYZING THE DECLINE OF MALE STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY
ADMISSIONS IN SAMMANTHURAI EDUCATION DIVISION**

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The underrepresentation of male students in university admissions within the *Sammanthurai* Divisional Education office has emerged as a significant educational challenge, raising concerns about gender disparities in academic achievement. This study investigates the multifaceted factors contributing to the decline in male university enrollments through a mixed-methods research approach, integrating quantitative analysis of admission data with qualitative insights from interviews and focus groups. Focusing on seven mixed-gender schools within the *Sammanthurai* Division, the research study conducted separate interviews with school principals, counselors, and male students and had independent discussions with parents. A total of 70 male students were surveyed, with insights gathered from ten students from each school. Additionally, 30 female students from the same schools were surveyed to explore gender dynamics in educational aspirations. Independent interviews with the Divisional Education Director, local religious leaders, and parents provided further context to the findings. The analysis reveals that economic pressures and entrenched family responsibilities significantly deter male students from pursuing higher education. Many feel compelled to seek immediate employment to support their families, prioritizing short-term income over long-term academic pursuits. Cultural perceptions regarding the value of vocational training compared to university education, urbanization, and peer influences also contribute to this trend. Interestingly, female students often pursue higher education in search of limited job opportunities, highlighting a significant gender dynamic within the region. Quantitative data indicates a 25% decrease in male university admissions over the past five years, underscoring the widening gender gap in educational attainment. By identifying these contributing factors, the research seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, educators, and community leaders to boost male student retention and promote equitable educational outcomes in the *Sammanthurai* region. Ultimately, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of the socio-economic and cultural factors influencing educational dynamics.

Keywords: Male university admissions, gender disparity, socio-economic factors, educational attainment, *Sammanthurai* division

EFFECTS OF MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES: A CASE OF SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Employee performance and productivity of workers are crucial for personal and organizational success and, thereby, economic growth. In the case of education, the job satisfaction of teachers is a key to effective teaching. A motivated and content teaching workforce leads to better educational outcomes, which translates into a country's employable, productive labor force. This has long-term economic benefits, including higher innovation, skills, and productivity. The theoretical perspectives of this research show that workers decide how much labor to supply based on both financial and non-financial factors relating to job satisfaction. The main factors include salary, promotion, insurance, pension, job security, professional development, social recognition, and working environment. If teachers are satisfied with these aspects, they are likely to work in the profession; otherwise, they may leave or retire early. Thus, job satisfaction is a major determinant of labor supply. Although there is a volume of literature on job satisfaction, no adequate research on the effects of different vectors of motivational factors on job satisfaction for school teachers is found in particular. Hence, this research study has explored several new financial and non-financial motivational factors for different types of schools. This study surveyed 90 teachers from nine selected schools in the Kurunegala district using stratified random sampling and simple random sampling methods. Based on a mixed-method approach designed to incorporate both qualitative responses and quantitative data, a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale was used to collect data for the study. The data was analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics using Python and SPSS version 16.0. The regression results reveal that both the selected financial and non-financial motivational factors significantly enhance job satisfaction. Notably, non-financial motivational factors have a more profound impact ($r = .570$ at a 0.000 significant level) on job satisfaction compared to financial motivational factors ($r = .0543$ at a 0.000 significant level). Additionally, public school teachers reported higher job satisfaction levels (mean rank=36.93) than their private school counterparts (mean rank=24.07) as determined by the Mann-Whitney U test. Also, school teachers' different demographic and socioeconomic characteristics were tested against employment performance and explored important insights for policymakers. Major recommendations include increasing financial and motivational factors for school teachers to maintain their living standards satisfactorily.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, non-financial motivational factors, public and private school teachers, employment performance

THE EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM FACTORS ON GENERATING HIGH-GROWTH WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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A strong positive relationship between women's entrepreneurship and economic growth has been recognized worldwide. Due to this positive relationship, women's entrepreneurship has been given a prominent place by preparing policies, especially in developing countries. These policies directly address the entrepreneurial ecosystem factors. Generating High-growth women's entrepreneurship can occur either by transforming non-high-growth women entrepreneurs into High-growth or by increasing the growth of women's enterprises. This study analyzes the effect of entrepreneurial ecosystem factors on transforming non-high-growth women entrepreneurs into High-growth ones and the effect of entrepreneurial ecosystem factors on women's High-growth enterprises. The analysis is based on primary data from a sample of 367 women entrepreneurs selected by the stratified sampling method. Binary Logistic and Quantile regressions were used to analyze the data. Entrepreneurial ecosystem factors, including four individual factors: Attitudes, Ability, Aspiration, and Alertness in short form 4A and four institutional factors: Inputs and Markets, Supportive Facilities, Taxes and Charges, and Cultural Barriers in short form 4I were used to find answers for research objectives. The annual growth rate of the turnover is used to divide women entrepreneurs into types. According to the findings, the combined average of 4A and the combined average of 4I both affect the transformation of non-high-growth women entrepreneurs into High-growth ones. However, the most effective one is the combined average of 4A. The same results were confirmed when analyzing the effect of combined averages on women's High-growth enterprises. Further, Alertness, Inputs and Markets, and Taxes and Charges individually confirmed their effect on High-growth enterprises led by women. Then, this study concludes that generating high-growth women's entrepreneurship is a result of both types of ecosystem factors, individual and institutional, not only institutional factors. This implies that women's entrepreneurship policies should address both factors equally and in parallel.

Keywords: Women's entrepreneurship, ecosystem, factors, high-growth

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A GENDER-ARCHAEOLOGICAL READING ON *HENAKANDA BISO BANDARA* CULT

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This study undertakes a gender-archaeological reading of *Henakanda Biso Bandara*, a god/goddess from Sri Lanka's late medieval pantheon, to explore the complexities of gender identity in the Gampola kingdom. The primary purpose of this study is to explore the significance of *Henakanda Biso Bandara*'s gender identity for our understanding of gender and sexuality in Sri Lankan history and culture and to examine how her/his non-conformity to traditional gender norms challenges and complicates our understanding of gender identity in Sri Lankan society. Gender archaeology is a relatively modern archaeological trend that emerged after the post-processual archaeological movement, leading to a more qualitative approach to understanding the past by incorporating insights from other disciplines. This approach, rooted in gender archaeological theories, enables a more holistic understanding of gender identities and behaviors in the past. The cult surrounding *Henakanda Biso Bandara* is shrouded in mystery, with rumors and folklore surrounding her/his life and character. This study employs a qualitative approach to identify *Henakanda Biso Bandara*'s gender identity and contemporary society's ideology. Iconographic data, folklores, and literary data were collected from selected temples and *Devalas* in the *Udunuwara*, *Yatinuwara*, and *Kothmale* regions, where the cult is still alive, as well as through interviews with local communities, devotees, and expatriates on gender and gender archaeology. Mainly, iconographic analysis was employed to analyze the data, informed by Roberta Gilchrist's gender archaeological theory, which served as a guiding framework for understanding the phenomena. The study also drew upon contemporary literature sources and iconographic analysis of statues and paintings from the *Gampola* period to understand masculinity and femininity in the *Gampola* period, with a special reference to the *Henakanda Biso Bandara* cult. The *Henakanda Biso Bandara* statues and paintings found in shrines primarily depict the figure as male. While this may reflect the gender norms of the divine concept during that period, there were a number of female goddesses in Sri Lanka prior to this time. The findings suggest that *Henakanda Biso Bandara* did not conform to traditional gender norms in the *Gampola* society but rather defied categorization as male or female.

Keywords: Gender-archaeology, gender identity, *Henakanda Biso Bandara*, Sri Lankan history and culture

INFLUENCE OF *NURTI* MUSIC ON SRI LANKAN MUSIC CULTURE

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Diverse musical traditions and elements have fostered the history of Sri Lankan music culture. One such traditional art form is *Nurti*, which was influenced by musical dramas that originated in Bombay during the last decades of the 19th century. *Nurti* captivated Sri Lankan audiences with its melodramatic style, featuring plots based on myths and imagination, as well as new dramatic techniques, stage designs, costumes, and songs with melodies rooted in Hindustani music. C. Don Bastian was the dramatist who staged the play called '*Rolina*' (a story of a heroic princess who saves her prince's life) in 1877, following the melodramatic style. Soon after this, these plays became known as *Nurti* among Sri Lankans and gained popularity with local audiences. *Nurti* could be seen as the first milestone that led to the taste for Hindustani Ragadhari music launched among Sri Lankan listeners. It also introduced the first structured song form to Sinhala music, basically the *Sthai* and *Antara* structure. *Nurti* melodies were soon incorporated into the hitherto national music tradition. The objective of this study is to analyze the promotion of the *Nurti* tradition in Sri Lanka and its effects on the sphere of Sri Lankan music in light of the perspectives of Buddhist Nationalism. In this abstract, we argue how the social, cultural, and historical contexts of musical practice in Sri Lanka may lead to the growth of some perceptions through the *Nurti* art form by analyzing various opinions and statements about the meaning of musical behavior. This study aims to provide a more detailed picture of the cultural relationships that are nurtured and practiced in Sri Lankan music and to support the development of academically driven music criticism in Sri Lanka. Qualitative musical analysis has been used as the primary approach for this study. Data was collected through academic sources, grey literature, open-ended interviews, participant observations, and auto-ethnography.

Keywords: *Nurti*, music, Sri Lanka, Buddhist nationalism

BRIDGING CULTURES THROUGH RITUALS: ANALYSIS OF *AINU* INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S CEREMONIAL BOWS IN HOKKAIDO, NORTHERN JAPAN

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Indigenous cultures are significantly different from the public in that they are always deeply committed to their nature, regardless of how difficult it may be to be a minority in certain countries. Throughout history, the *Ainu* hunted, fished, and gathered and brought together people who inhabited Hokkaido, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Archipelago. *Ainu* indigenous ritual practices have their origins in rich cultural, historical, and spiritual traditions that are diverse among nations in Japan. Bridging cultures through rituals is a focal point of this analysis of *Ainu* indigenous people's ceremonial bows, which is an advanced continuation of my research publication in 2021, *Ethnoarchaeology of Indigenous Material Culture: A Comparative Study on Hunting and Fishing Tools with reference to the Sri Lankan and Japanese indigenous people*. Republic of Moldova, Europe: Eliva Press. Ethno-archaeological findings are often collected far from their original sites, especially the perishable materials like bows and arrows, making interpreting their functional, ideological, and symbolic meanings challenging. The purpose of this analysis is to compare hunting bows and ceremonial bows regarding the cultural rituals and their entertainment on a border basis rather than the analysis of archery. This will investigate the insights that can be obtained from bridging indigenous cultures through ritual practices like *Iyomante*, a ceremony to send the spirits of bear cubs to the divine world, to identifying and applying modern cultural practices and customs which are more inclined analogies for historical behavioral patterns. Cultural bridging shapes collaborative content and enhances social bonding, mutual understanding, and trust between distinct cultures by disseminating cognitive, emotional, and behavioral relationships. Therefore, by analyzing the form and construction of bows, this study investigates how this ceremonial bow is distinct from other bows, and how the *Ainu*'s material culture relates to the political, philosophical, economic, or social events and how it bridges cultures of the globe. The study considers applying the ethnographic analogy that uses anthropological data to reconstruct uncertain human societies, combining imaginative thinking with formal analogies to constrain archaeological interpretation.

Keywords: *Ainu*, ethnoarchaeology, ceremonial bow, ethnographic analogy

The author acknowledges Professor Katsunori Takase, Laboratory of Archaeology, Graduate School of Humanities and Human Sciences, Hokkaido University, Japan.

**SPECTRAL PROPERTIES OF RELIGIOUS CHANTS:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GREGORIAN CHANT, *VEDIC* CHANT,
AND *PARITTA SAJJHĀYANĀ***

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Religious chants play a significant role in various spiritual traditions across the world. Religious chants, such as Gregorian, Vedic, and *Paritta Sajjhāyanā*, are integral to the spiritual practices of various cultures, each exhibiting unique acoustic properties. This study aims to explore and compare the spectral characteristics of these chants, focusing on the variation of spectral centroid, variation of pitch, and variation of energy. By comparing these chants, the paper aims to provide a deeper understanding of their unique spectral characteristics and their cultural significance. A total of 170 chant recordings were analyzed, including 100 Gregorian chants, 20 Vedic chants, and 50 *Paritta Sajjhāyanā*, which were recorded at a sampling frequency of 44100Hz and were used as a primary source. Each prescribed sound sample was divided into one-second segments, estimated using a computer program, and plotted onto a feature space. Further, the results obtained through the computer program have been considered for spectral analysis. The results indicated that the spectral properties of religious chants are closely linked to their cultural and spiritual significance. With its narrow pitch range and low spectral centroid, Gregorian chant creates a calm and meditative atmosphere. Vedic chant, with its complete pitch structure and higher spectral centroid, reflects the precision and complexity of the rituals they accompany. *Paritta Sajjhāyanā*, with their variable spectral properties, are versatile and adaptable to different spiritual contexts. Overall, it can be examined that Gregorian chant, Vedic chant, and *Paritta Sajjhāyanā* represent three distinct religious music traditions, each with its unique acoustic characteristics. The study's implications extend to fields such as music therapy, acoustic modeling, and cultural preservation, where these chants' unique spectral and energy characteristics can be utilized for therapeutic and analytical purposes. Finally, this research has provided a comparative analysis of the spectral properties of Gregorian, Vedic chants, and *Paritta Sajjhāyanā*, highlighting the unique acoustic characteristics that define each style. Understanding these properties enhances our appreciation of the role of sound in spiritual practices and offers insights into the cultural significance of these chants.

Keywords: Gregorian chant, Vedic chant, *Paritta Sajjhāyanā*, spectral properties

URBANIZATION VS HERITAGE PRESERVATION: ASSESSING THREATS TO KANDY'S UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE STATUS

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UNESCO's World Heritage status to Sri Lanka has become prestigious today, bringing tourism revenue. By 2024, 1223 sites were World Heritage listed, with 56 in danger and three (03) delisted. The main objective of this study is to assess the factors affecting the World Heritage status of the Sacred City of Kandy, the capital of the last Kingdom of Sri Lanka, which was inscribed in the World Heritage list in 1988, based on UNESCO-identified 14 factors affecting the World Heritage properties. Using ArcGIS Survey 123, this study surveyed the current condition of 494 heritage monuments in Kandy, listed by the Central Cultural Fund in 1992, and identified the factors affecting them negatively. By function, 67% of these monuments are commercial, 15% are residential, 5% are shophouses with both residential and commercial character, 5% are religious, 4% are institutional, and the rest are of other categories. While 81% date back to the colonial period (1815-1948), 19% are Kandyan period monuments (1597–1815). Modern developments are the key factor affecting these monuments and the historic city as a cultural landscape. The study revealed that 86% of listed monumental buildings have been modernized due to ongoing urbanization in the city. While 11% of them have been fully modernized despite the strict heritage regulations, the rest are partially modified. Pollution, climate change, and natural hazards affect the historic city to a lesser extent. The developments of transportation infrastructure—especially the proposed USD 200 million underground tunnel project consisting of four tunnels—will have a positive impact on monuments and the historic city due to the ease of traffic congestion in the sacred area and the city center, resulting in less noise and air pollution, with increasing visitor safety. According to our GIS survey, the proposed developments will not affect the listed monuments. Despite no critical threats to the World Heritage status of Kandy, the findings emphasize the need to preserve the historic city's typical Kandyan streetscape and architectural integrity. The findings of this study are important for guiding urban conservation efforts and balancing modern developments with heritage preservation in Kandy. We here emphasize the need for protective measures, including community-friendly heritage regulations, to maintain the historic city's architectural integrity. These insights are relevant for safeguarding other World Heritage historic cities facing similar threats.

Keywords: Conservation, Kandy, streetscape, urbanization, world heritage

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AN INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ON *MANDIYA* IN KANDIYAN DANCE TRADITION

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This research focuses on the *Mandiya* posture in Kandyan dance and adopts an interdisciplinary approach. The disciplines utilized in this study include human anatomy, geometry, history, and anthropology. The main objective of the research is to develop theoretical knowledge about Kandyan *Mandiya*. The research problem is: what knowledge can be gained from an interdisciplinary study of the *Mandiya* of Kandyan dance tradition? This exploratory research incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data. The data sources include the experiences of Kandyan dancers, interviews, researchers' personal experiences as professional Kandyan dancers, relevant research articles, books, and videos. The study employs various theories and methods, including general body-friendly posture according to human anatomy, the Bodily Archive theory, the Fibonacci sequence, the Golden Ratio, the Body Mass Index (BMI), and the Rapid Entire Body Assessment (REBA) theory. According to the disciplines mentioned above, it is recognized that the Kandyan *Mandiya* posture was originally a natural human posture used to balance the body against gravity, even before it was adopted as a dance posture. This pose has changed over time but is still in use today. The relationship between the different parts of the body in the Kandyan *Mandiya* pose, or the height from the ground to the knees, the length of the trunk, and the distance between the legs is close to the golden ratio. This creates a harmonious appearance. It contributes to the visual appeal of the pose. Kandyan dancers are at risk for back and leg injuries due to prolonged periods spent in the *Mandiya* posture during practice. Through an interdisciplinary study of Kandyan *Mandiya*, many facts were revealed from the historical uses of that posture to the present day. This analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of various aspects associated with *Mandiya*, including gravitational dynamics, muscular strength, internal bodily functions, core stability, balance, and geometric proportions. Kandyan *Mandiya* serves as a cultural practice that reflects a natural human posture. It is recommended that students studying Kandyan dance engage in a more in-depth exploration of this subject.

Keywords: Kandyan *Mandiya*, geometry, anatomy, history, ethnography

DIGITAL DIPLOMACY FOR SMALL STATES: COMPARATIVE INSIGHTS FROM ESTONIA AND SRI LANKA

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This study explores how Estonia, a small Baltic state with a population of just over 1.3 million, has effectively employed digital diplomacy to expand its influence in international relations. The primary objective is to examine Estonia's strategic use of digital tools, including its advanced e-governance platform, pioneering cybersecurity measures, and solid online diplomatic presence. These initiatives have allowed Estonia to enhance its global standing and project soft power despite its limited size and resources. This research employs a qualitative case study approach to achieve these aims, drawing on a thorough analysis of Estonia's digital diplomacy initiatives. Sources include official documents, various digital platforms, and Estonia's active participation in international forums. In addition to focusing on Estonia, this study compares Sri Lanka, a South Asian nation, which although less advanced in digital adoption than Estonia, has made significant strides in digital governance. Sri Lanka aims to strengthen its international profile through increased digital engagement and outreach. By contrasting Estonia's e-residency program, digital identity initiatives, and advocacy for global digital rights with similar emerging efforts in Sri Lanka, this research provides valuable insights into how small states across different regions can strategically utilize technology to attract foreign investment, build international partnerships, and enhance their diplomatic influence. The findings of this study reveal that Estonia has successfully leveraged its digital capabilities to overcome the traditional diplomatic limitations of smaller states. Estonia's proactive approach has established it as a key player in international discussions on cybersecurity, enabling it to influence policy and set standards that align with its national interests. While Sri Lanka operates at a different developmental stage, its initiatives further underscore the potential for digital diplomacy to empower small states. Ultimately, the study concludes that Estonia's innovative approach to digital diplomacy serves as an inspiring model for other small states, including Sri Lanka, seeking to increase their influence on the global stage. By strategically embedding digital tools into their foreign policies, small states can not only participate effectively in international affairs but also take on leadership roles in shaping global relations.

Keywords: Cybersecurity, digital diplomacy, e-governance, Estonia, small states

THE OUTCOME OF CHINA'S ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF AID AND LOANS ON SRI LANKA'S DEVELOPMENT SINCE 2005

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Foreign aid has long been a complex and debatable issue in the context of economic growth for developing countries, especially regarding sustainable development. This study highlights the hidden dimensions and the strong influence of China's economic diplomacy on Sri Lanka's development since 2005, focusing on foreign aid, debts, and long-term investment. Since establishing diplomatic relations between China and Sri Lanka in 1957, China has gradually emerged as Sri Lanka's key creditor and most prominent development assistant, strategically shaping Sri Lanka's economic landscape. China has advanced its national goals by patiently enhancing Sri Lanka's domestic development. This research explores whether Chinese foreign aid and loans have promoted sustainable economic growth or fostered massive aid dependency in Sri Lanka. Using a mixed-method approach, especially qualitative, this study draws on policy documents, in-depth interviews with policy experts and academics, as well as government and non-governmental reports, to provide a profound analysis of Sri Lanka – China relations and their financial implements. Key indicators such as the debt-to-GDP ratio, loan disbursements, foreign aid inflows, and major development outcomes are examined to clarify and help understand China's crucial role in Sri Lanka's economic progress. The research findings reveal that China's foreign aid and loans have contributed magnificently to infrastructure and mega-development projects, but they have also created economic dependency, shattering Sri Lanka's economic sovereignty. This study concludes by recommending strategic policy adjustments and advocating for economic policy reforms in Sri Lanka's international relations, governance, and economic diplomacy to reduce aid dependency and ensure sustainable growth.

Keywords: Foreign aid, economic diplomacy, loan intervention, aid dependency

REVITALIZING SRI LANKAN TOURISM: A POLICY ANALYSIS FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

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Tourism plays an imperative role in contributing to Sri Lanka's domestic economy. As an island nation rich in biodiversity and scenic beauty, the country naturally attracts a substantial number of tourists annually. However, the lack of proper policies and guidelines set aside to regulate the tourism industry in the country has been a prominent reason behind the comparatively low growth it experiences. Even though a national policy framework on tourism has been drafted, the industry is still governed under the Tourism Act No 38 of 2005. Refined and updated policies relevant to the country's current economic and social conditions must be introduced, and the study highlights the importance of reforming the current tourism policy by citing examples from a few other countries, including Thailand, Malaysia, and Hawaii. While the current tourism policy aims to create a sustainably developed industry with improved infrastructure and more involvement of the government agencies, the study suggests that attention should be given to improving and introducing new components such as smart tourism with rich digital infrastructure, cultural heritage preservation, improvement of community-based tourism and marketing and promotion targeting a global community. Examples would be drawn from Thailand's tourism tax policies, Malaysia's national ecotourism policy, and the Malama Hawaii program in Hawaii, where local resources have been smartly incorporated into policy formulation to provide a better visitor experience. Accordingly, the study proposes that Sri Lanka implement a policy focusing on community-based tourism for high-value tourism. Local capacity building, niche marketing, and regional connectivity should be given attention. *Meemure*, *Panama*, and *Habarana* are used as model locations to discuss the feasibility of implementing a community-based tourism plan in the country. Moreover, a literature review referring to tourism policy documents and related publications from Thailand, Malaysia, and Hawaii is used to collect data for the research.

Keywords: Tourism, policy, community, development, sustainability

ASSESSING THE EVOLUTION OF URBAN LAND USE AND LAND COVER: A CASE STUDY OF MATARA CITY, SRI LANKA

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Urbanization is a multidimensional phenomenon significantly influencing Land Use and Land Cover (LULC) dynamics in cities worldwide. This study focuses on Matara City, Sri Lanka, a rapidly urbanizing area with limited previous research on LULC changes. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing (RS) techniques, including Maximum Likelihood Classification (MLC), accuracy assessment, and change detection, we analyzed and quantified LULC variations in the years 1996, 2007, 2016, and 2023. Landsat 6 (TM) and Landsat 8 and 9 (OLI) satellite images, which are less than 10% or completely cloud-free, were downloaded from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) website. Four images were captured during the dry season. Satellite imagery enabled us to visualize and quantify changes in land cover, focusing on built-up areas, vegetation, water bodies, and homesteads. The overall accuracy rates for the four years consistently surpassed 90%, indicating a reliable classification of LULC with a strong correlation between the reference Google Maps and the classified maps. The overall accuracy for 1996, 2007, 2016, and 2023 was 92%, 97%, 91%, and 94%, respectively. The corresponding Kappa coefficients were 0.89 in 1996, 0.96 in 2007 and 2016, and 0.92 in 2023. Our findings indicated notable changes in built-up areas from 1996 to 2023, characterized by a 12.21 km² (48.8 %) increase over the entire period. The most significant expansion occurred between 1996 and 2016, with built-up areas growing by 11.82 km² (50.02 %). However, there was a slight decrease of 0.35 km² (4.72 %) from 2016 to 2023. In contrast, vegetation cover steadily declined throughout the study period, resulting in a total loss of 9.94 km². Homestead areas saw a notable decrease of 2.55 km² (10.21%) from 1996 to 2023. In contrast, water areas experienced a net increase of 0.27 km² (1.08%) despite an overall decline of 0.68 km² (2.87%) from 1996 to 2016. This category saw a significant recovery with a 0.95 km² (112.8%) increase between 2016 and 2023, indicating a partial reversal of earlier losses. These results underscore the significant impact of urban expansion on local ecosystems. To mitigate these impacts, we recommend adopting sustainable urban planning strategies, including green belts and urban agriculture, enhancing environmental quality and ecosystem services. This research provides a valuable framework for urban planning in Matara City and similar contexts, highlighting the need for updated land use regulations and sustainable development practices.

Keywords: Urbanization, land use and land cover, remote sensing, GIS, Matara, sustainable urban planning

LANDSLIDE EXPOSURE ANALYSIS IN THE *GANETHANNA* GRAMA NILADHARI DIVISION (GGND) OF THE KEGALLE DISTRICT

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A landslide is a common and critical disaster in Sri Lanka, devastatingly impacting human activities and the physical environment. As a developing country, identifying landslide risk and vulnerability in Sri Lanka is crucial as it can influence future development activities and disaster mitigation programs. This study analyses landslide vulnerability in the GGND within the *Mawanella* divisional secretariat division of the Kegalle district. The study's main objectives are to examine the risk and vulnerability of landslides in the Pahala Kadugannawa area and to identify existing structural and non-structural mitigation practices. Primary data were collected through interviews with different stakeholders, including exposure families and field observations, while secondary data were obtained from the Disaster Management Centre and the National Building Research Organization. Digital thematic maps were produced based on the most significant causative factors: slope, soil, and land use. A landslide hazard map for GGND was created using the Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis method, which assigned weightage to each factor and ranked them. According to this map, lands classified by landslide hazard in the *Ganethanna* are categorized as safe slopes (19%), areas with low likelihood of landslides (23%), moderate landslide hazard (22%), and areas where landslides are expected (36%). A significant portion of the land is classified as "areas where landslides are expected." The *Pahala Kadugannawa* and *Hingula* areas are highly vulnerable to landslides due to their high settlement and road densities. The NBRO and Road Development Authority are implementing both short-term and long-term mitigation measures in *Hingula*. Short-term measures include covering cracks in the upper slopes, introducing surface drainage systems, and construction of horizontal drains on the downslope of unstable zones. The long-term measures involve building a retaining wall, soil nailing, horizontal drains, and chemical blasting significantly in the lower part of the *Paramitha* International Buddhist Meditation Centre and the upper part of the tourist viewpoint. These mitigations are implemented by *Finex Engineering Pvt. Ltd.* and *RR Constructions Pvt Ltd.* under the guidance of Kegalle NBRO. The study recommends initiating reforestation, and preserving vegetation in the upper parts of the exposure area, enhancing community awareness, and conducting community-based mapping. Performing landslide hazard assessments with exposure families, local businesses, and other communities helps to identify vulnerable zones, protected areas from landslides, and safe evacuation routes. These mitigation measures help prevent human and physical environmental damage from landslides in *Ganethanna*.

Keywords: Landslide, vulnerability, mitigation measure

ANALYSING CHANGES OF WETLAND COMPONENTS USING GEOSPATIAL TECHNIQUES: A CASE OF SRI JAYEWARDENEPURA KOTTE WETLAND COMPLEX, SRI LANKA

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The Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte Wetlands Complex is a distinct urban wetland in the Colombo region. Due to rapid development and population growth in the region, wetlands are losing their components and becoming a terrestrial landscape. GIS and RS technologies provide an excellent platform for investigating changes in the above features. Since there are not many studies on this subject, the study uses NDVI, NDWI, and NDMI to examine how wetland vegetation, moisture, and water content changed between 1997 and 2023. The research used primary data, including field observations and interviews with village officials, and secondary data sources, including previous studies, satellite imagery, books, and articles. The satellite imagery study used Landsat 5 images from 1997, 2005, and 2008, as well as Landsat 8 images from 2017 and 2023. To better understand the variability of the data, the indicators were reclassified using the mean and standard deviation into three groups: low (mean-standard deviation), moderate (between low and high), or high (mean + standard deviation). The image difference technique was used to detect pixel-wise changes in wetland components in reclassified images. Based on the results, the NDVI value range was -0.384 to 0.735 in the study area in 1997, which changed from -0.001 to 0.437 in 2023. Similarly, the NDWI value ranged from -0.366 to 0.740 in 1997, which varied between -0.379 and 0.049 in 2023. The NDMI value range was -0.428 to 0.5 in 1997, which reduced to -0.101 to 0.315 in 2023. The study area's low category saw the highest percentage of NDVI, NDWI, and NDMI due to land encroachment for urban expansion. According to the change detection analysis, the total change from the high to low conversion category was shown by the NDVI at 2.31 Km² (6.46%), the total change from the NDWI at 1.20 Km² (3.36%), and the total change from the NDMI at 3.05 Km² (8.52%). The study underscores the concerned parties taking additional steps to strengthen conservation of wetlands.

Keywords: Change detection, NDVI, NDWI, NDMI, wetland components

ANALYSING DECADAL CHANGES IN FOREST COVER AND LAND USE PATTERNS IN *SIYAMBALANDUWA*, SRI LANKA

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Forest cover is a natural resource that functions as the Earth's lungs and safeguards against detrimental environmental conditions. The global trend of forest depletion is alarming, with estimations indicating a net reduction of 5.2 million hectares annually over the past decade. Regions like the dry zone of Sri Lanka have witnessed intensive clearing of forested areas for agricultural expansion, slash-and-burn cultivation, overgrazing, and industrialization over the last few decades. This study centers on analyzing the fluctuations in forest cover within the *Siyambalanduwa* Divisional Secretariat Division, located in Sri Lanka's dry zone, from 2013 to 2023. Utilizing Landsat 8 imagery and employing supervised classification with support vector machines in ArcGIS Pro, LULC maps were developed from 2013 to 2023. The accuracy of the analysis, exceeding 80%, was validated through confusion assessments. The results of this study reveal significant changes in land use and land cover (LULC) in *Siyambalanduwa* from 2013 to 2023. Developed areas increased steadily from 3.8 km² in 2013 to 10.43 km² in 2023. Barren land saw considerable fluctuations, decreasing from 324.82 km² in 2013 to 183.42 km² by 2023, reflecting substantial conversion to other land uses, particularly cultivated and forested areas. Forest cover initially declined from 479.70 km² in 2013 to 354.99 km² in 2017 but recovered to 424.20 km² by 2023. Planted and cultivated areas expanded from 255.95 km² in 2013 to a peak of 453.45 km² in 2022, with a slight decrease in 2023. With this study, the planted and cultivated area has significantly changed the current land use pattern. At the beginning of the study, the forest area was larger in extent than the other land use types, but then forest areas were affected by the plantations, and planted areas have become a major land use type within the study area. With deep consideration, first, the planted area has affected both forest and barren areas, but then it mainly affected the barren areas. Therefore, now, it shows a continuous decline, and in the future, that impact could also happen again in the forest area. Thus, the study underscores the urgent need for sustainable land management practices due to the possible significant threat posed by the depletion of forest cover in *Siyambalanduwa* to improve the safeguarding and environmental health of the ecosystem.

Keywords: Forest cover, land use, *Siyambalanduwa*, land cover dynamics, GIS

A SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL DYNAMICS OF SHORELINE CHANGE ALONG THE WESTERN COAST OF SRI LANKA

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Sandy coasts are extremely dynamic geomorphic systems, experiencing continuous changes at various spatial and temporal scales. Over the decades, many locations along the western coast of Sri Lanka have suffered severe coastal erosion due to both natural and anthropogenic activities. Continuous investigation of shoreline changes is crucial for coastal protection and disaster management. The study assessed shoreline changes from 2005 to 2021 along the western coast, from Maha Oya to Kalu Ganga. The Digital Shoreline Analysis System in ArcGIS was used to calculate changes, utilizing WorldView2 satellite images for selected locations: Maha Oya, Kapungoda, Dikkovita, Kelani River mouth, Galle Face, Wellawatta, Mount Lavinia, Panadura, Pothupitiya, and Kalu Ganga mouth. Two statistical techniques, Net Shoreline Movement (NSM) and End Point Rate (EPR), were used to quantify the changes. The NSM measures shoreline distance, while EPR calculates the rate by dividing NSM by the time period. The study reveals that accretion predominates over erosion during the specified period. From Galle Face, the southward coast shows accretion, except at Kalu Ganga North, while the northward coast is mostly eroded, except at Kelani River South, Kapungoda and Dikkovita. Specifically, the northern section of Kalu River mouth recorded NSM of -72.46 m and EPR of -4.51 m per year, indicating significant erosion. In contrast, the southern section showed NSM of 107.32 m and EPR of 6.68 m per year, reflecting substantial accretion. Thus, the northern area is highly eroded, and the southern area is experiencing very high accretion. Meanwhile, Maha Oya South, Dikkovita, and Kelani River North (NSM of -0.4m, 0.85m, and -0.76m, and EPR of -0.02m/yr, 0.05m/yr, and -0.05m/yr, respectively) indicate shorelines in equilibrium. Furthermore, it was observed that northward River mouths of Maha Oya and Kelani River have a potential for erosion. The availability of sand, conservation measures such as beach nourishment, hard engineering structures along the coast, and regional morphology significantly impact erosion and accretion on the western coast. In conclusion, coastal management measures have played a significant role in shoreline shifts. However, these measures seem ineffective in mitigating coastal erosion and maintaining shoreline stability due to their significant impact on sediment supply.

Keywords: Shoreline changes, western coast, DSAS, conservation measures

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**LEVERAGING FACEBOOK
AS A SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATIONAL TOOL
IN ADVANCED LEVEL COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES:
A CASE STUDY OF TWO STUDENTS**

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Integrating social media platforms into educational contexts presents promising opportunities to enhance teaching and learning experiences. This research explores the effectiveness of using Facebook, alongside artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as Natural Radar software and video tutorials, as supplementary resources for advanced-level (A/L) communication and media studies. Through a case study involving two A/L students (a first-time candidate and a repeat candidate), this study investigates the impact of the “University of Communication Sri Lanka” Facebook page on student engagement, interaction, and learning outcomes in communication and media studies education. Facebook, as a widely accessible social media platform, facilitates communication, collaboration, and knowledge dissemination. It extends learning beyond traditional classroom settings in educational contexts, fostering dynamic interactions between students and educators. A literature review highlights the potential benefits and challenges of incorporating Facebook into A/L communication and media studies. Benefits include increased engagement and peer interaction within a familiar and user-friendly environment, while dedicated groups or pages provide asynchronous communication and continuous learning opportunities, enhancing digital literacy. However, challenges such as privacy concerns, digital distractions, and unequal access to technology necessitate strategic mitigation. This study addresses three key research questions: 1) How do students perceive the integration of the “University of Communication Sri Lanka” Facebook page into their studies? 2) How does this integration impact their engagement and comprehension of subject content? 3) What challenges and opportunities arise from this integration? Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the research incorporates qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including surveys, interviews, and an analysis of student interactions on the Facebook page. Data analysis employs thematic analysis for qualitative insights and descriptive statistics for quantitative findings. The results provide valuable insights into best practices for leveraging Facebook, AI tools, and video tutorials in A/L communication and media studies education, offering strategies to enhance student engagement, comprehension, and overall learning outcomes.

Keywords: Facebook social media, supplementary education tools, AI, digital literacy

LINGUISTIC EQUITY AND PRACTICES IN THE SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM OF MULTILINGUAL MYANMAR

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This research explores the concept of linguistic equity in Myanmar's school education system, focusing on how language practices impact students in a multilingual society. Myanmar is home to over 100 languages, yet Burmese dominates as the main medium of instruction in schools. This creates challenges for ethnic minority students whose native languages are often excluded, raising concerns about fairness in education and the preservation of their cultural identities. Despite the government's efforts to reform the education sector and promote inclusivity, there remains a significant gap between policy intentions and their actual implementation, particularly in ethnic minority regions. The research problem centers on the disparity between the country's language policies and the educational realities faced by students from non-Burmese-speaking communities. These students often experience educational disadvantages due to the limited use of their native languages in classrooms, which hinders their academic performance and engagement. The objectives of this study are to examine how linguistic equity is addressed in schools, evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies, and identify the key challenges that prevent equitable educational opportunities for all linguistic groups in Myanmar. The research employs a qualitative methodology and documentary approach, with data collected in high schools across Myanmar. Data collection instruments focus primarily on published works by various authors and include in-depth interviews based on open-ended questions conducted with teachers and students. The data analysis involves thematic coding to identify recurring themes and patterns related to linguistic equity and its impact on educational outcomes. The findings indicate that while some schools have adopted bilingual or mother tongue-based education models, these initiatives face numerous challenges. Schools often lack the necessary resources and teacher training, and political or administrative barriers further hinder progress. As a result, students from ethnic minority backgrounds continue to face disadvantages in accessing quality education and achieving academic success. The study concludes that there is an urgent need for more comprehensive and contextually appropriate educational policies that genuinely promote linguistic equity. Improving teacher training, providing adequate resources, and fostering stronger cooperation between local and national authorities are essential steps toward creating a more inclusive and fair education system in Myanmar.

Keywords: Linguistic equity, multilingualism, educational reform, Myanmar

CHALLENGES OF IMPROVING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF SRI LANKAN LEARNERS IN A HETEROGENOUS SETTING WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE GAMES

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Student heterogeneity is a major concern in Sri Lankan English classrooms. Due to this factor, both the teacher and the student face difficulties in English language development as a Second Language (ESL). Language games have been helpful in English classrooms in developing student interest. However, student heterogeneity has not yet been considered when addressing the challenges of using English language games in Sri Lankan ESL classrooms. This study evaluated the challenges both the students and teachers encounter in developing English language proficiency in a heterogeneous classroom in an underprivileged setting. The researcher (as part of a PhD study) conducted semi-structured interviews with five teachers. These teachers interviewed were involved in teaching English to 250 students from Grade 6, using a task-based game approach. The study sample was selected from an educational zone in the Colombo district. The data was analyzed by the researcher, using Thematic analysis. The researcher identified seven themes as findings: (1). Language processing difficulties of the students (2). Time constraint (3). Technology (4). Use of English in the classroom (5). Inconsistency in student participation (6). Individual student heterogeneity (7). Teachers' knowledge in lesson preparation related to task-based games. The findings revealed that the students in this area have an "above average" level of heterogeneity, which makes it challenging for the English language teachers to teach them using a task-based approach. It was also observed that early exposure to the English language from the Primary level is essential to minimize this problem. Similarly, the other challenges also have a significant impact on the English language development process of the students. It is also recommended that the content taught in the syllabus be reduced in these types of schools. Further assistance from all governmental and non-governmental well-wishers is needed to address the gravity of these challenges.

Keywords: Challenges, task-based learning, language games, ESL, heterogeneity

IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION HELPFUL WITH CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER?

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Although there is an 'education for all' policy, it is essential for policymakers, educational ministries, and other governing bodies to ensure effective implementation. According to the Annual School Census of Sri Lanka 2020 Report by the Ministry of Education, there are 1,195 special education units in the Colombo district, but specifics about their inclusive programs remain unclear. The "Towards a New Education Act" report estimates that around 20% of school-aged children have special educational needs. Globally, it is estimated that 1 in 160 children has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), with prevalence increasing over the past 50 years (Epidemiology Unit, SL 2019). This qualitative study examines the educational experiences of students with ASD aged 6 to 16 years (grades 1- 11) within the inclusive education setting. The research involved 30 teachers with experience in inclusive educational settings for students with ASD, and data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed including coding and thematic analysis. This research aimed to determine whether inclusive education in mainstream classrooms is effective for students with ASD. In Sri Lanka, challenges in implementing inclusive education include limited resources, insufficient teacher training, and inadequate infrastructure. Teachers often lack the necessary skills and support to effectively cater to diverse learning needs, impacting the quality of education for students with special needs (Gunawardena & Perera, 2021). Additionally, societal attitudes and perceptions about disability can further hinder the successful integration of students with ASD into mainstream classrooms. The findings highlight an urgent need for reform in the education system to better accommodate students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Seven themes have been identified as features affecting inclusion of students with ASD into mainstream classrooms such as severity of ASD, age of student with ASD, features of educator, classroom set-up, support from school, the relationship between the student and the school, and the question whether Inclusive Education is helpful. The coding process was carried out after the interviews, making it an inductive coding method, wherein the codes were decided on only after the data was gathered. These factors are explored in detail to understand the gap between the theoretical framework and practical implementation of inclusive education.

Keywords: Inclusive education, children with ASD, teachers working with children with ASD

THE IMPACT OF AI-ASSISTED TOOLS ON POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSIGNMENT PREPARATION

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have emerged as a disruptive force in the new normal condition, significantly transforming various aspects of higher education. This study aims to explore the impact of AI-assisted tools in assignment writing in higher education, focusing on a state university. The main objectives were to identify the AI tools used for assignment preparation, understand how these tools were applied in writing assignments, find out the students' and teachers' views on using AI tools for assignment writing, and find out implications for assessment practices in postgraduate studies. A case study approach was adopted, focusing on postgraduate students from a state university. A sample of 100 postgraduate students was selected from a single program in two consecutive years, and 15 lecturers were selected. Data were gathered through questionnaires, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive methods, and the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The study's findings emphasized that the primary purpose of assignments is to evaluate how far students have acquired the learning outcomes of a specific course, foster self-learning, and offer practical opportunities to apply theoretical concepts. At the university, students were assessed through written assignments, presentations, and videos. In preparation for these tasks, students use AI-assisted tools such as writing and editing tools, research and note-taking tools, presentation and visualization tools, and creative tools (ChatGPT, Quill Bot, Grammarly, Jenny AI, Gemini, Tutor AI, Microsoft Copilot, Canva). The findings of the study revealed that 93% of students were using AI-assisted tools in writing assignments and preparing presentations and videos. The students were of the view that the use of AI-assisted tools had shown positive effects, enabling them to collect information efficiently, demonstrate language fluency with grammar checkers, and synthesize or paraphrase content with ease. Moreover, they believed that assignment writing is tedious and time-wasting. As a result, they depend on AI-assisted tools for assignment preparation. However, 12 lecturers expressed concerns about the negative impact on students' critical thinking and creativity. Therefore, the lecturers faced critical issues in evaluating those assignments. In conclusion, while AI tools can enhance efficiency, improper usage can hinder students' intellectual development. Therefore, lecturers should try to evaluate Higher Order Thinking (HOT) skills when designing assignments. Students should be advised on the appropriate ethical use of AI-assisted tools, and AI detectors should be introduced to the university to mitigate the negative impact on fair and accurate assessment of students' work.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, AI detectors, AI-assisted tools

DIGITALIZING FOOD HANDLING ESTABLISHMENTS' GRADING PROCESS IN THE NARAMPANAWA PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR AREA

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Traditionally, the H-800 form, which assesses sanitary and hygienic standards, is a paper-based tool used by Public Health Inspectors (PHIs). It evaluates food factories, hotels, restaurants, groceries, supermarkets, tea kiosks, and bakeries based on the grades obtained in the H-800 form. This particular documentation is time-consuming, less efficient, and challenging to maintain. Therefore, this study explored the potential of digitalizing Food Handling Establishments (FHEs) to replace the H-800 form. Hence, the objective of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of an Android application (H - 800 Food Premises Grading) in the Narampanawa PHI area. Using a participatory approach, the authors designed and developed the app. Then, as its initial phase, the app has been tested for four months, from April to August 2024. The descriptive analysis of results shows that the application now allows real-time data collection and automates the grading process into four categories based on inspection scores: A grade 75-100, B grade 50-74, C grade 25-49, and D grade 0-24. The app enables PHIs to easily create and update the H-800 form by adding the location, automatic scheduling for future inspections, and real-time grading results, which can be sent as a PDF report to the FHE owners. Furthermore, through this app, users are able to add feedback, including written reviews and photos, and submit complaints directly to the area's Public Health Inspector (PHI). Although the initial stage was successful, it had challenges like network issues and limited geographical coverage.

Keywords: Food Handling Establishments (FHEs), digitalization, Android Application, real-time data collection, Public Health Inspector (PHI)

A COMPARATIVE INVESTIGATION OF *SAMATHA* AND *VIPASSANĀ* IN THE *VISUDDHIMAGGA* AND *THE ŚRAVAKABHŪMI* OF THE *YOGĀCĀRABHŪMI-ŚĀSTRA*

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The *Pāli* term "*samatha*" (Sanskrit: *śamatha*) is meditation focused on cultivating deep concentration and mental tranquillity, and the *Pāli* term "*vipassanā*" (Sanskrit: *vipaśyanā*) is meditation aimed at gaining profound insight into the nature of reality and achieving liberation. Both the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Śrāvakabhūmi* section of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* serve as manuals of practice on *Samatha* and *Vipassanā* for *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, respectively. This research attempts to explore the similarities and differences in the theoretical basis and specific practice methods of the two classics on *Samatha-vipassanā*. The research adopts a comparative textual analysis, focusing on the doctrinal and practical aspects of *Samatha-vipassanā* as delineated in these two texts. In examining the *Visuddhimagga*, the results reveal that the analysis focuses on the systematic and detailed exposition of the seven kinds of purification and sixteen aspects of insight knowledge, which integrates both *Samatha* and *Vipassanā* as essential components of the Buddhist path to liberation. The results reveal that the *Śrāvakabhūmi* is examined for its unique contributions to the *Yogācāra* school's understanding of meditative practices, particularly in its nuanced treatment of consciousness and cognitive processes, such as the seven mental contemplations, nine stages of mental abiding, four types, three gates and six entities of *Vipassanā*. Additionally, the *Śrāvakabhūmi* provides an in-depth analysis of the objects of meditation (*ālambana*), which play a crucial role in guiding the practitioner through different stages of *Samatha* and *Vipassanā*. Both texts combine systematic doctrinal exposition and introspective analysis. They are not merely products of speculative or theoretical construction, but reflect a close and perceptive analysis of introspective experience. This introspective methodology differs fundamentally from the empirical methods of modern science, which focus on external observation and analysis of the biological organism. In contrast, the Buddhist analysis prioritizes the inner processes of experience and recognizes the profound significance of introspective observation in understanding the mind and its workings. This research offers a more diversified perspective on contemporary meditation practice through a comparative study of two texts on the *Samatha* and *Vipassana* comparison.

Keywords: *Samatha*, *Vipassanā*, *Visuddhimagga*, *Śrāvakabhūmi*, *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*

**BRIDGING ANCIENT WISDOM AND MODERN PSYCHIATRY:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TEN FETTERS
IN EARLY BUDDHISM AND THEIR CORRELATION WITH
CONTEMPORARY MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSES**

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The study aims to draw parallels between the Ten Fetters (*Samyojana*), such as sensual desire, ill will, and ignorance—and specific psychological disorders, such as anxiety, depression, and personality disorders, to uncover common patterns of mental hindrances. Additionally, it seeks to investigate the fusion of Buddhist practices, such as mindfulness and ethical conduct, with modern psychotherapeutic approaches like cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) to create innovative psychotherapeutic methods. Finally, it presents a comprehensive mental health treatment framework incorporating ancient Buddhist wisdom into contemporary clinical practice. The anticipated psychological outcomes include a more profound comprehension of maladaptive thought patterns associated with modern mental health disorders through the perspective of the Ten Fetters. Furthermore, by integrating Buddhist practices with contemporary psychotherapies, this research has the potential to pave the way for novel psychotherapeutic strategies aimed at addressing the foundational causes of mental illness. Mindfulness-based interventions may enhance emotional regulation, cognitive control, and symptom reduction, offering new avenues for psychological well-being and overall healing.

Keywords: Mental health, *Samyojana*, mindfulness-based interventions, psychotherapies, Buddhist practices

THE STUDY OF *DUKKHA* (SUFFERING) WITH REFERENCE TO THE PALI BUDDHIST TRADITION

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This research aims to establish a connection between the greatest level of *dukkha* and *taṇhā* (craving). Therefore, the study strongly emphasizes that the utilization of *dukkha* serves as a solid foundation for the practice of *vipassanā*. This study provides information on the practice of *vipassanā* meditation for individuals seeking the ultimate truth and the cessation of suffering. Moreover, the objective of this study is to demonstrate how Buddhist teachings address the concept of suffering from a soteriological point of view. The early Buddhist concept of *Dukkha* within Pali Buddhist tradition is categorized under the Fourth Noble Truth (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*); at this point, it is said that “Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not getting what one wants is suffering; in a nutshell, the five aggregates that are subject to clinging are suffering.” Moreover, to practice meditation about *dukkha*, the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* proves three kinds of *dukkha*: an unpleasant feeling (*dukkha*), an unpleasant feeling of the flesh (*sāmisa-dukkha*), and an unpleasant feeling not of the flesh (*nirāmisa-dukkha*). Contrary to the above statement, which is posited in the *Dhammacakkappa-vattana Sutta* and the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the *Visuddhimagga* further illustrates three aspects of suffering: *dukkha* as ordinary suffering (*dukkha-dukkha*); *dukkha* as produced by change (*vipariṇāma dukkha*); and *dukkha* as conditioned states (*saṅkhāra-dukkha*). In this case, the question that needs to be answered is: “What kind of *dukkha* (suffering) needs to be generated to break out of the cycle of rebirth?” and to realize the path, fruit, and *Nibbāna*. To answer this question, the current study will adapt qualitative and descriptive analysis within the theoretical framework of Buddhist teaching.

Keywords: *Dukkha, Taṇhā, Vipassanā, Nibbāna,*

**A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION
OF THE CONCEPT OF CONCENTRATION
PRESENTED BY VENERABLE LEDĪ SAYARDAW**

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Venerable *Ledī Sayardaw* was a highly respected scholar and meditation master for his deep understanding of the teachings of Buddha. Significantly, his treatises have become famous in Myanmar and other nations owing to his scholarly writing and literary thoroughness. He dedicated much of his life to studying, writing, and practicing Buddhist teachings promoting *vipassanā* meditation for the monks and lay people. His meditation technique emphasizes breathing in and out (*ānāpāna*). It is difficult to know his meditation method because we rarely see it in his several treatises; however, his exact instruction on the concentration level for insight meditation can be traced through his well-known treatises. Based on mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānassati*), Venerable *Ledī Sayardaw* spoke of different levels of concentration, and he categorized seven stages. It is from the level of the fourth *jhāna* to the level of the counting stage (*gaṇanā*). Accordingly, the meditator can cultivate insight meditation through the level of *jhana*; moreover, through the stage of access concentration (*upacārasamādhī*), the stage of connection (*anubandana*), and the stage of counting (*gaṇanā*). He recommended that the fourth *jhāna* is the best way to commence insight meditation. If the meditator is not capable of practicing to attain the fourth *jhāna*, the meditator can commence insight meditation through the lower *jhānic* levels or at least the level of counting stage. This study expects to examine whether the stage of connection and the stage of counting can suppress the hindrances sufficiently enough to develop insight. This issue will be investigated based on Theravada exegetical literature under the qualitative method as a textual base study to determine the concentration level required for developing insight.

Keywords: *Ledī Sayardaw*, concentration, counting, connection, *Cittavisuddhi*

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF BUDDHIST ETHICAL TEACHINGS TO OVERCOME SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN THE MODERN SOCIETY

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Ethics is a subject system based on social actions, social interactions, and psychological factors. This subject is rationalized based on principles of morality. Morality and values can be identified as two concepts that cannot be abstracted from each other. Mainly, sociological, psychological, and religious issues are intertwined here. There have been many philosophical ideas about ethics worldwide, but Buddhist philosophy has a special place among them. Buddhism has reserved space for individuals to solve their problems through practical actions. The ethical teachings regarding lay and clergy have been shown under two main parts. After getting rid of the traditional social pattern and entering the present one, the individual, the individual's actions, and the relationship between society and the individual have undergone extensive changes. The moods and goals of the person have undergone a great transformation. Society is expanding based on the main factors of the money-based economic system, busyness, industrialization, and modernization. It is a common fact that various problems in society are created in this context. The main objective of this study is to find out how Buddhist ethics can be used in practice to solve social problems. This study utilized a qualitative research design, and the data is analyzed under a thematic approach. In analyzing the data, the aim is to select some of the main Buddhist ethical teachings, and some current social problems and analyse how they can be connected in practice. Several Buddhist Canonical teachings are used under ethical teachings. The study analyzes how ethics relate from the individual to the social level. The findings of this study are expected to provide a clear interpretation of how successful the practical application of Buddhist philosophy is in reducing current social problems.

Keywords: Buddhist philosophy, ethics, social problems

**THE INTERSECTION OF BUDDHIST EPISTEMOLOGY
AND COGNITIVE COUNSELLING:
A DEEP DIVE INTO THE *BRAHMAJALA SUTTA*'S
CRITIQUE OF PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS**

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The *Brahmajāla Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* offers profound insights into cognitive distortions that shape wrong views, leading to psychological unrest. It outlines 62 wrong views arising from fundamental cognitive misperceptions of reality, resulting in individuals confusing untruths with truths and vice versa, causing mental confusion and distress. This research investigates how the *Brahmajala Sutta* addresses cognitive errors and proposes corrective measures through the Buddhist concept of right understanding (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). The primary research problem is exploring how *Sutta*'s critique of wrong views can be applied to modern counseling theories focusing on cognitive distortions. The hypothesis posits that *Sutta*'s cognitive aspects can serve as tools for counseling by addressing the root causes of wrong views and psychological unrest, ultimately leading to clearer perceptions and mental well-being. Using a textual analysis methodology, this study examines *Sutta*'s content through the lens of cognitive counseling theories, comparing it with modern practices such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). *Sutta*'s counseling theory emphasizes correcting wrong views, similar to CBT's approach of identifying and rectifying faulty thinking patterns. However, while Western cognitive approaches focus on alleviating mental distress and improving daily functioning, the Buddhist approach in the *Brahmajala Sutta* aims at a deeper transformation—leading individuals to ultimate liberation from suffering (*Nibbāna*). The Western cognitive approach, pioneered by Aaron Beck and Albert Ellis, primarily targets cognitive distortions related to individual well-being, such as anxiety and depression, aiming to restructure thoughts for healthier cognitive functioning. In contrast, the Buddhist approach addresses the nature of existence itself, aiming to transcend suffering by eliminating the root causes of cognitive distortions—craving, aversion, and ignorance. Thus, while both approaches address cognitive errors, the Buddhist method seeks a profound transformation toward enduring mental liberation. The *Brahmajala Sutta*, by emphasizing right understanding, provides a timeless framework for integrating Buddhist and modern cognitive counseling practices to address both psychological and existential concerns.

Keywords: *Brahmajala Sutta*, cognitive counseling, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Buddhism

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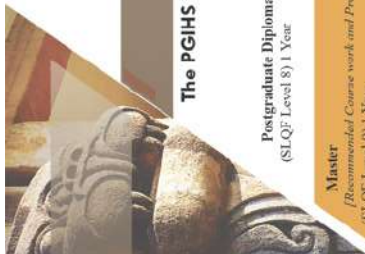
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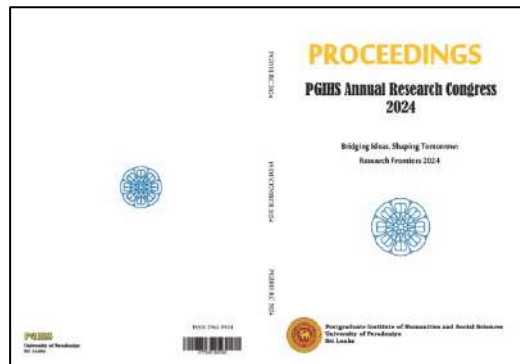
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The University of Peradeniya reflects a blend of modern and traditional Sri Lankan designs in its architectural structures. The Senate and the Arts Faculty at Peradeniya feature various architectural elements and designs incorporating lotus motifs, which hold significant cultural and symbolic meanings in Sri Lanka. In the context of postgraduate education, the blue lotus* on the proceedings' cover page signifies the idea of rising above ignorance to attain knowledge. This journey often requires perseverance, critical thinking, and a commitment to lifelong learning. The vibrant blue color in the lotus inspires creativity and imagination in students and researchers, encouraging them to explore new ideas and approaches to their studies. The term 'Proceedings' inscribed in gold represents the achievements of students and researchers derived from the blue lotus, symbolizing the transformative nature of education. It emphasizes the richness and beauty of knowledge acquired through commitment and exploration. This beauty and depth of expertise inspire awe and respect, constantly reinforcing the importance of education in our lives.

**A 2D design of the lotus motif in the Arts Faculty Main Building.*

