

PROCEEDINGS

PGIHS Annual Research Congress

2025

Humanity in Transition:
Social Justice, Global Wellbeing and
Environmental Changes



Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of Peradeniya
Sri Lanka



Proceedings of the Research Congress - 2025
PGIHS

Humanity in Transition:
Social Justice, Global Wellbeing and
Environmental Changes

ABSTRACTS

09th July 2026

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

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Message from the Director



It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Seventh Research Congress of the Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (PGIHS-RC-2025), held on 09th July 2026 at the University of Peradeniya.

The PGIHS Research Congress has become a premier annual academic event that brings together postgraduate students, academics, researchers, and professionals to share knowledge, exchange ideas, and foster collaboration in the Humanities and Social Sciences. It provides an important platform for disseminating high-quality research that contributes to both academic advancement and national development.

The theme of this year's Congress, "Humanity in Transition: Social Justice, Global Wellbeing and Environmental Changes," reflects the complex challenges facing societies today. We were encouraged by the excellent response to our call for papers, receiving 183 research abstracts, of which 83 were selected through a rigorous peer-review process. These studies represent diverse disciplines and demonstrate the commitment of researchers to addressing contemporary social, economic, and environmental issues.

For countries such as Sri Lanka, the value of research extends well beyond academic publication. Effective public policies and sustainable development depend on reliable evidence, rigorous analysis, and innovative thinking. As governments, institutions, and communities confront increasingly complex challenges, research must play a central role in informing decisions, shaping policies, and evaluating their outcomes. At the same time, researchers have a responsibility to communicate their findings effectively so that knowledge generated within universities reaches policymakers, practitioners, industry, and the wider public. Strengthening this connection between research and decision-making is essential for achieving inclusive and sustainable national development.

This Congress provides an ideal forum to promote policy-relevant research, encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, and strengthen partnerships between academia and society. By sharing new knowledge and engaging in meaningful dialogue, we can enhance the impact of research on policy and practice while addressing the evolving needs of our nation.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the organizing committee, reviewers, keynote speakers, presenters, participants, and the entire PGIHS staff for their dedication and commitment in making this Congress a success. I also congratulate all authors whose research contributes to these proceedings and to the advancement of knowledge.

I wish you all a stimulating, productive, and rewarding Congress.

Prof. P.P.A. Wasantha Athukorala

Director

Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (PGIHS)

University of Peradeniya

Message from the Chairperson



It is my pleasure to present the Proceedings of the Research Congress 2025, held on 9th July 2026. At the outset, I wish to express, on behalf of the Organizing Committee, our sincere regret for the inconvenience caused by the postponement of the Congress, which had originally been scheduled for December 2025. This unavoidable rescheduling was necessitated by a natural disaster.

The theme of this year's Congress, "Humanity in Transition: Social Justice, Global Wellbeing and Environmental Changes" has provided a timely platform for researchers to explore some of the most pressing challenges confronting contemporary society. The abstracts presented in these proceedings reflect a selection of scholarly research undertaken in the fields of the humanities and social sciences under this broad and significant theme.

The Research Congress continues to serve as an important annual forum that enables researchers from our Institute, other academic institutions, and independent research initiatives to present their findings, engage in scholarly dialogue, and exchange ideas with fellow researchers. It gives me great satisfaction, as Chairperson of the Research Congress, that we have once again been able to uphold this academic tradition and provide a vibrant platform for intellectual engagement and the dissemination of research.

The successful organization of this Congress is the outcome of a truly collective effort. On behalf of the Organizing Committee, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to making this event a success. I take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Peradeniya for their invaluable guidance and unwavering support. I am especially grateful to our Keynote Speaker, Professor Clevo Wilson of the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Australia, for graciously accepting our invitation and making himself available for this rescheduled event despite his demanding commitments. My sincere thanks also go to our Guest of Honour, His Excellency Qi Zhenhong, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Sri Lanka, for kindly accepting our invitation and honouring the Congress with his presence.

I also take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to Prof. Wasantha Athukorala, Director of the PGIHS, for his invaluable guidance and steadfast support throughout the organization of this Congress. I am equally indebted to the Chief Editor, the members of the Editorial Committee, reviewers, chairpersons, discussants, and coordinators of the technical sessions and researchers who presented their research for their generous scholarly contributions. As Chairperson of the Research Congress, I also wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to all members of the Organizing Committee for their dedication, teamwork, and unwavering commitment, which were instrumental in the successful planning and execution of this event. My sincere thanks are further extended to the entire staff of the PGIHS, whose tireless efforts and wholehearted cooperation were essential in bringing this Congress to a successful conclusion.

I sincerely hope that this Congress will inspire fruitful scholarly discussions, foster enduring academic and professional collaborations, and facilitate the exchange of innovative ideas among the national and international research community and other stakeholders. May the knowledge shared through this gathering make a meaningful contribution to advancing social justice, promoting global wellbeing, and fostering environmental sustainability.

Dr. WMSK Wijesundara

Chairperson

PGIHS-RC-2025

PREFACE

I am very pleased to present the Proceedings of the Postgraduate Research Congress, held on the ninth of July 2026 at the University of Peradeniya. This volume brings together ninety-seven abstracts representing the scholarly endeavors of our postgraduate researchers across nine tracks. This Research Congress is proof of the intellectual enthusiasm, academic precision, and research excellence nurtured within our institution.

Research is the cornerstone of higher education, providing opportunities for the generation of new knowledge, critical inquiry, and innovative solutions to contemporary challenges. The abstracts included in the proceedings reflect a diverse range of disciplines, methodologies, and perspectives, demonstrating the breadth and depth of postgraduate scholarship. They address significant issues within their respective fields while contributing to ongoing academic and professional conversations both at national, and international levels.

The Research Congress serves as a key platform for emerging scholars to disseminate their findings, engage in interdisciplinary dialogue, and receive valuable feedback from peers and experts. The abstracts published in this volume showcase not only the dedication and perseverance of the researchers but also the guidance and support provided by their supervisors, academic departments, and research communities.

As Editor-in-Chief, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all contributors including the Director of PGIHS and his team in the institution whose work has made this publication possible. I am equally grateful to the Chairman and members of the Board of Study in Religious and Cultural Studies for taking the lead organizing this academic endeavor, to the fellow academics and also to the academic support staff for their contribution as reviewers, members of editorial team, and as the members of organizing committees for their commitment to maintain the quality and integrity of the congress and its proceedings. Their collective efforts have ensured that this publication meets the standards expected of a scholarly academic forum.

I hope that the research presented in these proceedings will inspire further inquiry, foster collaboration across disciplines, and contribute meaningfully to the advancement of knowledge. May this volume serve not only as a record of the congress but also as a valuable resource for researchers, academics, professionals, and students who seek to engage with current postgraduate research.

On behalf of the editorial team, I congratulate all authors on their contributions and wish them continued success in their academic and professional pursuits.

Senior Professor Chandima S. M. Wickramasinghe

Editor-in-Chief

Proceedings of the Postgraduate Research Congress 2025

Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences

University of Peradeniya.

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PROGRAMME

TIME	TECHNICAL SESSION
8.30 a.m. – 10.20 a.m.	Inauguration Ceremony
10.20 a.m. – 10.45 a.m.	Refreshment
10.45 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.	Technical Sessions I
12.30 p.m. – 1.30 p.m.	Lunch
1.30 p.m. – 3.15 p.m.	Technical Sessions II
3.15 p.m. – 3.45 p.m.	Tea
3.45 p.m. – 4.15 p.m.	Closing Ceremony

INAUGURAL CEROMANY

AGENDA

Research Congress - 2025, PGIHS 9th July 2026

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 Dean / Faculty of Arts Dr. E.M.P.C.S. Ekanayake
09.15 a.m.	Address by the Chief Guest Vice Chancellor/University of Peradeniya Professor Terrence Madhujith
09.30 a.m.	Keynote Address <i>“Humanity in Transition: Global Wellbeing, Social Justice, Environmental and Market Changes”</i> Professor Clevo Wilson Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Australia
10.05 a.m.	Vote of Thanks by the Chairperson-RC 2025 Dr. W.M.S.K Wijesundara
10.15 a.m.	National Anthem
10.20 a.m.	The End of Inaugural Ceromany
10.20 a.m. — 10.45 a.m.	Refreshment

CLOSING CEREMONY

Research Congress - 2025, PGIHS

- 3.45 p.m. Concluding Remarks
**Chaired by Professor Ranjith Pallegama,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
University of Peradeniya.**
- 3.55 p.m. Awarding Certificates for the best presenters
- 4.05 p.m. Vote of thanks
by the Director/ PGIHS
- 4.15 p.m. The End

PARELLEL TECHNICAL SESSIONS

Technical Session I

Track : Aesthetics, Culture, and Heritage
Venue : Room 306, Third Floor, PGIHS Building
Time : 10.45 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.
Chairperson : *Prof. Sudesh Mantillake*
Discussant : *Dr. M.S.B. Alawathukotuwa*
Coordinator : *Mr. Priyantha Fonseka*

Paper ID	Presentation
57	Echoes of heritage, horizons of justice: Sigiriya and humanity in transition <i>Medha de Alwis</i>
93	An archaeological study of ancient human culture in the Kivuleyaya area, Siyambalanduwa <i>R.D.D. Pushpa Kumara</i>
102	Aesthetics, Culture, and Heritage: A colonial re-inscription of sacred space in Trincomalee Harbor, 1622 A.D.-1948 A.D. <i>R.M.N.C.B. Ariyaratne</i>
124	Re-narrating cultural violence against the queer community through media: A case study of ‘Vīduru Tira’ teledrama and its social media impact <i>R.A.H.S. Jayamini</i>
129	Ritual diplomacy: The role of ceremonial practices in ancient China–Sri Lanka relations <i>H.M.N.M. Ekanayaka</i>

Technical Session I

Track : Demography, Economics, and Management

Venue : Room 207, Second Floor, PGIHS Building

Time : 10.45 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Chairperson : *Prof. Sri Ranjith*

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

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

Paper ID Presentation

- 21** Bridging inequality in a changing world: Pathways to justice, resilience, and sustainable futures
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- 22** Strategic leadership for resilience and growth in a VUCA environment. A study based on best performing startups in Sri Lanka
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- 82** Conflict resolution in Sri Lanka–India fisheries management: Legal and diplomatic perspectives in the blue economy
S.Lakshana
- 83** Comparative study of the changes in consumption patterns in rural and urban areas in the face of economic crisis
K.M.S.L. Bandara
- 95** Circular economy practices in community-based tourism: A case study from Sri Lanka’s central highlands
N.S. Siriwardhana
- 184** Balancing the blue economy: Tourism expansion and small-scale fisheries in Kalpitiya, Sri Lanka
A.H.M.F Nifla

Technical Session I

Track : **Education Studies**
Venue : Room 106, First Floor, PGIHS Building
Time : 10.45 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Chairperson : ***Prof. Sakunthala Yatigammana***
Discussant : ***Mr. Theekshana Athukorala***
Coordinator : ***Mr. W.W.M.R.G.K.S.B. Wijethunga***

Paper ID **Presentation**

- 29** Adapting Chinese educational practices for the modernization of Pirivena education in Sri Lanka.
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- 64** Community participation in school management: A study in the Morawewa educational division
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- 85** From solo teaching to collaboration: The role of team teaching in undergraduate ESL classrooms
E.M.G.K. Neththipola, S.T. Delpachithra
- 120** Challenges in implementing positive discipline in schools: Evidence from the Kegalle zonal education division, Sri Lanka
H.M.J.V. Herath
- 125** Flagged as AI-generated: Exploring the perceptions and attitudes of first-year undergraduates on AI plagiarism detection tools
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Technical Session I

Track : Human Rights and Multiculturalism

Venue : Room 103, First Floor, PGIHS Building

Time : 10.45 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

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

Discussant : Dr. Malini Balamayuran

Coordinator : Mr. N. Sivakumar

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- 2** Towards compliance with UNTOC: Strengthening Sri Lanka's legal framework to combat human trafficking
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- 87** From displacement to coexistence: A historical study of Tamil – Muslim relations in post war- Jaffna (2009 -2025)
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- 103** The effectiveness of school-based Human Rights Education (HRE) in building human rights culture in Sri Lanka
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- 122** Neglection of the best interests of the child in the Sri Lankan child protection system: A case study analysis
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Technical Session I

Track : Language and Literature Studies I

Venue : Room 301, PGIHS Auditorium, Third Floor

Time : 10.45 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Chairperson : *Prof. Saliya Kularathne*

Discussant : *Dr. D. Ariyawansa*

Coordinator : *Mr. K.M.D.L. Kariyapperuma*

Paper ID Presentation

- 19** Semantic differences of the loanwords from Sinhala to Tamil: A comparative linguistic study (based on data from Deniyaya, Matara District, Southern Province)

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- 40** When sounds meet spelling: A qualitative case study on phonology-driven writing errors among ESL undergraduates in a Sri Lankan state university

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- 44** Integrating social media into creative writing in ESL classroom: Action research on using Facebook to improve writing among the state university undergraduates.

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- 61** The contribution of aging women to labor in contemporary Korean Literature

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- 180** Bhartṛhari's interpretation of the *Ātmanepada* in the *Upagraha* section of the *Vākyapadīya*

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- 185** Beyond symbolism: Reassessing linguistic hierarchies in international organizations in the age of AI

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Technical Session I

Track : Psychology and Philosophy

Venue : Room 105, First Floor, PGIHS Building

Time : 10.45 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

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

Discussant : *Dr. Saman Pushpakumara*

Coordinator : *Dr. Samantha Hlangakoon*

Paper ID Presentation

- 17** Nutritional status and its association with psychological distress and socioeconomic determinants in a rural post-conflict community of Eastern Sri Lanka

R.S. Akshana, P. Sothiraj, A. Chandrasekara

- 42** The correlation between social media addiction and life satisfaction among undergraduate students

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- 53** Influence of parenting styles on adolescents' emotional regulation and academic performance

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- 118** A study of the experiences and attitudes of early-career women regarding mental health counseling (with special reference to human resource professionals in organizations operating within the Maharagama urban council area)

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Track : Politics, Law, Governance, and Administration I

Venue : Room 208, Second Floor, PGIHS Building

Time : 10.45 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

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Discussant : *Dr. S Baskaran*

Coordinator : *Prof. H.M.K.S. Wanninayake*

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- 46** The erosion of checks and balances: A critical analysis of the 19th and 20th amendments to the Sri Lankan constitution
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- 52** The tax system of the Jaffna kingdom: A historical perspective
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- 62** The musical apparatus of politics: Songs as a tool of political Communication in Sri Lanka.
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- 72** Systemic pressures and domestic constraints: A neoclassical realist analysis of the Israel–Iran conflict
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- 74** Capitalism’s dual engine: Interdependence of state and transnational forces in Sri Lanka
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- 94** The NPP foreign policy and USA–Sri Lanka relations: A critical assessment
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Technical Session I

Track : Politics, Law, Governance, and Administration II

Venue : Room 104, First Floor, PGIHS Building

Time : 10.45 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Chairperson : *Prof. Sarjoon Athambawa*

Discussant : *Dr. Kaushalya Madugalla*

Coordinator : *Ms. Hasini Disanayaka*

Paper ID Presentation

- 4** Right to seeking the truth: Compatibility of the Sri Lankan transitional justice framework with international standards
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- 23** National jurisdiction over trans-boundary waters: Legal Comparison with maritime delimitation principles
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- 48** The constitutional design of judicial appointments: A comparative study of the United States and Sri Lanka
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- 54** Enhancing Sri Lankan legal response to infant abandonment: Comparative insights from the United States and India.
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- 130** Beyond state action: A jurisprudential analysis for extending fundamental rights liability to actions of private individuals and corporate actors in Sri Lanka
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Technical Session I

Track : Society, Environment, and Spatial Development

Venue : Room 102, First Floor, PGIHS Building

Time : 10.45 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Chairperson : Prof. Vijitha Nanayakkara

Discussant : Prof. T.W.M. Tilak Wijethunga Bandara

Coordinator : Ms. Dinushika Yapa Abeywardhana

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- 27** Sperm retrieval and lineage: A case study of men experiencing infertility in Colombo, Sri Lanka
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- 43** Spatial distribution patterns of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMES) in Kandy district
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- 117** Children's experiences and parental attitudes towards corporal punishments: The role of parenting education programs in the Galigamuwa divisional secretariat, Sri Lanka
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- 177** Challenges faced by parents of youth with disabilities in Chilaw: Implications for social work practice
H.N.P.K. Hettiarachchi, H.D.P Premarathne
- 178** Sacred care versus structured transaction: Institutionalizing Buddhist material practices in Sri Lanka's health sector
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Technical Session II

Track : Aesthetics, Culture, and Heritage

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Time : 1.30 p.m. – 2.10 p.m.

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Discussant : *Prof. Sudarshana Bandara*

Coordinator : *Ms. Piyumi Embuldeniya*

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- 10** Zen eco-aesthetics in global documentary cinema: A critical study of Baraka (1992)
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- 45** The conceptual use of *Stupas*’ ability to attract lightning and clouds
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- 56** Colonial encounters and Buddhist aesthetics: Visual strategies of reconciliation and confrontation
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- 112** The establishment of the *Navagraha* and the *Rāśi Chakraya* as a reconciliation tool in the Buddhist image house with reference to several selected southern temples.
Rev.P. Dhammasiri
- 127** The importance of teaching art and aesthetics to engineering technology students
G.K. Gamage

Technical Session II

Track : Demography, Economics, and Management

Venue : Room 301, PGIHS Auditorium, Third Floor

Time : 1.30 p.m. – 3.15 p.m.

Chairperson : Prof. J.M.A Jayawickrama

Discussant : Dr. T.N. Vidanage

Coordinator : Dr. B.A.N. Eranda

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- 97** Impact of board diversity on corporate social responsibility: Evidence from listed bank in Colombo stock exchange in Sri Lanka
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- 115** Tourism to strengthen indigenous communities in Batticaloa: A case study in *Kunchankalkulam*
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- 126** Moderating role of financial anxiety on the relationship between financial literacy and investment decisions: Evidence from Sri Lankan individual investors
M.I.M. Riyath
- 160** The role of health insurance in promoting equitable healthcare access and financial protection in Sri Lanka: A systematic review
J.M.H.N Jayasinghe
- 169** Achieving value for money in the public procurement of Sri Lanka
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- 172** The impact of the nature and discipline of degrees on graduate human capital utilization in Sri Lankan commercial banks.
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Technical Session II

Track : Education Studies

Venue : Room 306, Third Floor, PGIHS Building

Time : 1.30 p.m. – 3.15 p.m.

Chairperson : *Prof. Pushpa Vitharana*

Discussant : *Mr. Theekshana Athukorala*

Coordinator : *Mr. K. Balasritharan*

Paper ID Presentation

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- 90** Challenges faced by students in studying practical Geography at the Advanced Level : A study based on 1C Tamil medium schools in Dehiowita education zone
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- 138** From maladaptive to adaptive perfectionism: Insights from Buddhist teachings for gifted students
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- 139** Sources of academic anxiety among undergraduate students in state universities in Sri Lanka
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- 175** Bridging the gap: Exploring skill-separation and integration in ESL instruction in a Sri Lankan state university
S.T. Delpachithra

Technical Session II

Track : Human Rights and Multiculturalism

Venue : Room 104, First Floor, PGIHS Building

Time : 1.30 p.m. – 3.15 p.m.

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

Discussant : Dr. Malini Balamayuran

Coordinator : Dr. S. Baskaran

Paper ID Presentation

- 3** Cultural pluralism and human rights: Challenges of inclusion in India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh
D.M.U.D. Dissanayaka, Y.S.H.S.K Silva
- 49** Access to justice for persons with disabilities: An analysis of the national policy on disability for Sri Lanka, 2003
M.A.K.A. Medagoda
- 70** Distinctiveness of *Thesawalamai*: A comparative study with *Marumakkathayam* and Hindu law
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- 96** Human rights challenges in the social inclusion of children with disabilities: A case study of Sri Lanka
H. M. J. V. Herath

Technical Session II

Track : Language and Literature Studies I

Venue : Room 106, First Floor, PGIHS Building

Time : 1.30 p.m. – 3.15 p.m.

Chairperson : *Ms. Nishani Jayaweera*

Discussant : *Mr. Mangala Dissanayaka*

Coordinator : *Mr. K.M.D.L. Kariyapperuma*

Paper ID Presentation

- 65** Collaborative reading, confident speaking: The role of literature circles in enhancing the speaking skills of literature circles in enhancing the speaking skills of undergraduate ESL learners in a Sri Lankan state university.
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- 84** Teacher attitudes towards the use of ChatGPT by undergraduates in English Language writing at a Sri Lankan states university
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- 89** Reducing cognitive overload in English language learning: The role of AI and workload management in Sri Lankan universities
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- 107** Translanguaging as a cognitive and communication strategy in discipline-specific learning: A case study of ICT and computer science undergraduates at university of Kelaniya
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- 135** Fostering linguistic competence, creativity, and critical thinking through literature in Sri Lankan university ESL classrooms
J.M.B.K. Jayasekera
- 141** The causes of the Trojan war: The economic and political rivalry
K.M.I.U.K. Kangara

Technical Session II

Track : Language and Literature Studies II

Venue : Room 103, First Floor, PGIHS Building

Time : 1.30 p.m. – 3.15 p.m.

Chairperson : *Dr. Varunadatta Edirisinghe*

Discussant : *Prof. Chandima Wicramasinghe*

Coordinator : *Mr. K. M. B. N. Konara*

Paper ID Presentation

- 159** Passive constructions and academic writing of undergraduates: A common issue
K. M. Dissanayake
- 174** A traumatic psychological perspective of the drama “*Anna Itta Thee*”
S. Suvistan
- 186** Language justice in a globalized world: Toward equitable multilingual futures
H.M.L.V. Wanninayake
- 187** From reading to speaking: An action research in improving speech test performance through idea mapping at a Sri Lankan university ESL classroom
M.T. Randeniya, H.M.M.P. Wijerathna, J.M.J.P. Gajanayaka

Technical Session II

Track : Politics, Law, Governance, and Administration

Venue : 105, First floor, PGIHS Building

Time : 1.30 p.m. – 3.15 p.m.

Chairperson : Prof. Gamini Samaranayake

Discussant : Mr. N. Sivakumar

Coordinator : Ms. I.U Gunarathne

Paper ID Presentation

- 58** Statutes of change: Law, heritage, and justice in an uncertain world
Medha De Alawis
- 104** Strengthening environmental law as a governance mechanism for social justice and sustainable well-being in Sri Lanka
S.H.D. Mandini
- 106** Sino-Indian relations and the future of the Asia-led world order
H. Wijesinghe
- 143** Appeal of far-right populist narratives to Generation Z in Europe (2022-2025)
H.R.L Perera
- 176** A critical analysis of the judicial approach to procedural and substantive legitimate expectations in Sri Lanka.
B.B.S.R Fernando, D.S.A Perera, W.L.S. Wickramaarachchi, S.D. De Silva
- 179** An analysis of the application of consideration and *justa causa* in Sri Lankan electronic contracts
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Technical Session II

Track : Psychology and Philosophy

Venue : Room 102, First Floor, PGIHS Building

Time : 2.30 p.m. – 3.15 p.m.

Chairperson : *Prof. Asanka Bulathwatta*

Discussant : *Dr. Kanthi Hettigoda*

Coordinator : *Ms. Nethmie D.J. Liyanage*

Paper ID	Presentation
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Venue : Room 207, Second Floor, PGIHS Building

Time : 1.30 p.m. – 3.15 p.m.

Chairperson : Prof. Rev. M. Gnanananda

Discussant : Prof. R.M. Abey Rathnayake

Coordinator : Dr. D.M.K. Dharmasiri

Paper ID Presentation

- 30** The role of religious understanding in counseling: Lessons from the *Sandaka sutta* and *Kālāma sutta*
Rev. Wellane Ananda, Rev. Kotte Upananda
- 39** Integrating Buddhist ethical, cognitive, and reflective practices for sustainable mental wellbeing and ethical living
Sumedha Viraj Sripathi Ukwatta, Dr. Mohan Mishra, Prof. Danesh Karunanayake
- 140** Debunking the myth: The reality of *polygyny* in Islam and its misrepresentation in Sri Lankan society
K.M.M. Azam, A.R.I. Rauff, M.H. Hanan
- 142** Buddhist temple-based mental health programs: A conceptual framework for addressing Sri Lanka's 90% treatment gap
Ven. B.D. Dharmaprabha
- 147** Inequalities, climate justice, and human rights: Ethical insights from the *Dīgha Nikāya*
Sakunthala Weerasinghe
- 163** Buddhist perspectives on environmental sustainability and global wellbeing
B.S. Ekanayaka

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Track : Religious Studies II

Venue : Room 208, Second Floor, PGIHS Building

Time : 2.30 p.m. – 3.15 p.m.

Chairperson : ***Prof. P.D. Premasiri***

Discussant : ***Rev. Dr. Indarathana***

Coordinator : ***Rev. Dr. J. Dhammaloka***

Paper ID Presentation

- 36** Anatta: is it a relative negation or an absolute negation?
Ven. Bui Xuan Hai
- 41** How attachment (*Upādāna*) becomes a psychological cause for the emergence of conflict: A study based on early Buddhist teaching
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- 108** Śāntideva's view on the transformation of human behavior for the promotion of global wellbeing
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ABSTRACTS

ZEN ECO-AESTHETICS IN GLOBAL DOCUMENTARY CINEMA: A CRITICAL STUDY OF BARAKA (1992)

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This study critically examines Zen eco-aesthetics in global documentary cinema through a focused analysis of *Baraka* (1992), Ron Fricke's non-narrative masterpiece that interweaves breathtaking images of natural landscapes, religious rituals, and scenes of urban modernity. Positioned at the interdisciplinary crossroads of film studies, environmental humanities, and Zen philosophy, the research identifies the problem of insufficient scholarly engagement with how Zen-inspired aesthetics shape ecological perception and ethical awareness in non-verbal cinema. Despite the growing attention to environmental documentaries, there is a notable lack of studies exploring how meditative cinematic techniques, informed by Zen principles, cultivate deeper engagement with the natural world. The objectives of this study are threefold: first, to explore how Zen principles such as impermanence, stillness, simplicity, and harmony with nature are embedded in *Baraka*'s visual and rhythmic strategies; second, to assess how these strategies foster ecological and spiritual awareness across diverse international audiences; and third, to situate the film as a model of global eco-aesthetic pedagogy that transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries while offering insights into contemplative cinematic experience. Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative critical film analysis informed by eco-aesthetic theory, Zen Buddhist philosophy, and intercultural communication studies. It involves close readings of recurring visual motifs, spatial-temporal compositions, and cinematic techniques including slow motion, time-lapse, panoramic framing, and minimalistic editing. Findings indicate that *Baraka* transforms its meditative visual grammar characterized by silence, repetition, cyclical imagery, and contemplative pacing into an ecological discourse that challenges conventional separations between human and non-human realms. Its deliberate rejection of narrative closure resonates with Zen's embrace of openness and impermanence, encouraging viewers to engage reflectively rather than interpret linearly. The conclusion asserts that *Baraka* functions simultaneously as a transcultural artwork, an ecological meditation, and a philosophical text, illustrating the capacity of non-narrative cinema to foster environmental ethics, mindfulness, and cross-cultural dialogue through aesthetic experience. By framing the film within Zen eco-aesthetics, this study contributes to global cinema scholarship, environmental thought, and contemplative media studies, demonstrating the potential of visual form as a vehicle for ecological consciousness, spiritual reflection, and the cultivation of a shared ethical sensibility in the contemporary era.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Baraka, Cinema, Documentary, Zen

THE CONCEPTUAL USE OF STUPAS' ABILITY TO ATTRACT LIGHTNING AND CLOUDS

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This research investigates the potential rain-inducing and fertility-enhancing properties of ancient Sri Lankan stupas, exploring their architectural, environmental, and spiritual significance. Historical observations indicate that the cultivated lands surrounding stupas are notably fertile, suggesting a relationship between stupa construction and water availability. Fertility is intrinsically linked with water, and ancient builders appear to have intentionally integrated stupas with hydrological systems. Evidence from Anuradhapura reveals that large stupas were constructed in close proximity to tanks, often surrounded by a ring of reservoirs, highlighting a deliberate connection between these sacred monuments and water management. A key objective of this study is to examine whether stupas possess structural or electrostatic properties that attract lightning and influence rainfall. Tall structures naturally attract lightning, and the sharp metal-plated pinnacle of stupas known as *chuda manikya* may have served to direct electrical discharges safely underground. Unlike modern lightning strikes that damage structures, no ancient records describe destruction to stupa towers, suggesting advanced architectural knowledge in dissipating electrical energy. References to a device termed *Vajrachumbaka* further support the idea of an intentional mechanism for harnessing atmospheric electricity. Mahayana scriptures also attest to the spiritual and natural powers of stupas. Traditional verses, such as *Angaratravuka Chaitya Sevanu Shanvadana* describe worshippers gaining access to the waters of the heavenly river (*Akas Ganga*), symbolically linking stupa or rather chaitya worship with celestial water. Contemporary research conducted by computer engineer Janaka Imbuldeniya proposes that stupas generate electrical attraction in the atmosphere, stimulating nitrogen fixation and catalysing rainfall. In this sense, stupas may have functioned as ancient atmospheric conductors, encouraging the release of positively charged ions from clouds and triggering precipitation into nearby tanks. This study positions the stupa as more than a religious monument: it is a multifunctional construct, serving as a spiritual centre, a hydrological regulator, and a catalyst for environmental fertility. The ancient Sri Lankan system of integrating the tank, the stupa, the temple, and the village reflects a holistic approach to civilization, blending devotion with ecological sustainability. Thus, stupas may be considered the Kalpa Tree of Sri Lankan culture that fulfil spiritual, environmental, and agricultural needs through an advanced yet harmonious architectural tradition.

Keywords: Stupa, Rain Induction, Lightning Attraction, Fertility, Sri Lanka, Vajrachumbaka, Water Management, Anuradhapura

COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS AND BUDDHIST AESTHETICS: VISUAL STRATEGIES OF RECONCILIATION AND CONFRONTATION

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The visual culture of ancient Sri Lanka provides crucial insights into past civilizations, uncovering their political and social frameworks, cultural exchanges, attire, ethics, ideologies, and institutional systems. This research focuses on political representations in Kandyan temple murals, with reference to Subadraramaya temple in Thotagamuwa and Purwaramaya temple in Kathaluwa, and investigates how colonial visual depictions were integrated into Buddhist mural traditions in the Low Country. Colonial-era Buddhist murals meld the classical Buddhist aesthetic with adaptations informed by colonial influence and missionary activity, as well as revivalist movements. Thus, they constitute spiritual resilience, cultural continuity, and creative negotiations of modernity. While incorporating selected Western visual elements, they maintain core Buddhist values such as compassion, moral beauty, meditative calm, and symbolic purity, sustaining a distinctly Sinhala-Buddhist visual identity under colonial pressure. In the 19th century, especially in the colonial period, the spread of Western ideologies and social conventions encouraged low-country (*Pahatharata*) artists to depict Western garments, emblems, coats of arms, portraits of Queen Victoria, and the Royal Family in their paintings as a strong critique of these cultural intrusions. Those depictions were intended to inspire resistance against colonial authority within the Sri Lankan society of that period. Political and fashion imagery of this era is basically surrounded in historical, cultural, political and social settings, which were influenced by colonial dominance, anti-colonial movements, and decolonization processes. From the early decades of the 19th century up to 1880, colonial political motifs and symbols were represented in murals, especially in the front doorways of temples, to display allegiance to the British administration. Yet, from 1880 to 1920, a major transition occurred, where the same imagery began to assert Buddhist authority and challenge colonial power. Consequently, depictions of emblems and clothing served as a subtle channel of resistance and opposition, conveying concealed visual narratives. For instance, in Subadraramaya temple Thotagamuwa, there are portraits of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, naming them as characters in Buddhist philosophy in Sinhala letters, questioning double identity. The study further demonstrates that adopting Western dress signified elite identity, strengthening Eurocentric values while simultaneously questioning and undermining colonial hierarchies. This study primarily adopts a qualitative research methodology and applies an analytical framework to critical conclusions. As primary data sources, observations of temple murals, museum examinations, and interviews with artists and art historians were implemented, while books, magazines, and scholarly articles provide secondary support.

Keywords: Reconciliation, Colonial Era, Temple Murals, Political Depictions

ECHOES OF HERITAGE, HORIZONS OF JUSTICE: SIGIRIYA AND HUMANITY IN TRANSITION

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Heritage reflects humanity's collective memory and its evolving response to environmental, social, and cultural transformation. At Sigiriya, Sri Lanka's UNESCO World Heritage Site, the dialogue between preservation and progress unfolds within a complex legal framework that balances national sovereignty, international obligations, and sustainable development. This study examines the legal foundations of tangible cultural heritage management at Sigiriya through a doctrinal and comparative legal analysis, supported by systematic review of statutory, constitutional, and international legal texts. The primary data comprised Sri Lankan heritage-related statutes, including the Antiquities Ordinance (as amended), the Central Cultural Fund Act, and the Sigiriya Heritage Foundation Act, which were examined alongside global instruments such as the 1972 World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines (2019). Secondary data included official commentaries, scholarly works, and UNESCO policy documents analysed thematically. The analysis employed interpretive and comparative techniques to identify overlaps, inconsistencies, and lacunae within Sri Lanka's legislative framework in relation to international standards. Findings indicate that while Sri Lankan law provides robust statutory protection for heritage sites, these provisions remain fragmented across multiple acts with limited coordination mechanisms. Legal authority is dispersed among agencies, and enforcement is constrained by regulatory duplication. Conversely, the World Heritage Convention offers a holistic legal vision linking conservation with sustainable human development, yet its domestic integration remains incomplete, particularly regarding community engagement and climate resilience. The cross-analysis reveals that Sigiriya's legal governance operates within a dual structure: national legislation ensures site-specific protection, while international obligations impose broader duties of sustainability and equity. The discussion interprets these findings to argue that heritage law, when approached as empirical legal data, reflects both a normative commitment and a practical challenge in achieving justice for cultural landscapes under environmental stress. Sigiriya's framework exemplifies how tangible heritage can be safeguarded through coherent legal harmonization rather than reactive management. The study concludes that humanity's transition toward global wellbeing and environmental balance requires law to evolve beyond custodianship into a proactive structure that unites heritage, justice, and sustainability. Grounded in verified legislative analysis, this research contributes a data-driven understanding of how heritage law can serve as a stabilizing force within broader human transitions.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage Law, Justice, Sigiriya, Sustainability

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY OF ANCIENT HUMAN CULTURE IN THE KIVULEYAYA AREA, SIYAMBALANDUWA

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This research area is situated in the Kivuleyaya Grama Niladhari Division of the Siyambalanduwa Divisional Secretariat Division within the Monaragala District of the Uva Province. To study ancient human culture, the research sampled the *Mandagala* temple, rock shelters suitable for human habitation, prehistoric cave paintings, and inscriptions. The archaeological area is located in the Hada Oya valley, which enables the acquisition of crucial information regarding past human culture. The objective of the research is to study the ancient human culture in the Kivuleyaya area of Siyambalanduwa using archaeological evidence. The research problem is to what extent the relevant research area is important in interpreting the ancient human culture of the Hada Oya valley. The research methodology used a qualitative approach, and a literature review was conducted that incorporated primary, secondary, and previous research. Formal archaeological exploration methods were utilized to systematically record the rock shelters, cave paintings, and inscriptions; this involved taking photographs, sketching the rock shelters and obtaining eye copies and stamp pages of the inscriptions. The Haththigiri rock shelter, located within the Mandagala temple archaeological site, contains notable findings such as pottery fragments, faunal remains and microliths. Quartz manufacturing site, likely used for the manufacture of stone tools, was discovered during an investigation of the woodland around the cave. Although they have mostly been destroyed, there is evidence of multiple prehistoric cave paintings inside the rock cave. There is an inscription on a rock close to the cave. This inscription is a unique source for researching ancient human culture because it has never been published before. About five lines are plainly discernible, and the letters in this inscription exhibit traits of the late Brahmi script. According to the letters, the inscription was written in the first or second century A.D. It is challenging to ascertain the inscription's original shape, nevertheless, because portions of it have been obliterated and removed. The inscription's language indicates that the Mandagala temple was formerly known as *Galataraka Viharaya*. A regional chieftain, *Ratiya*, is also mentioned in the inscription. According to the research's findings, the study area was home to a number of well-developed cultures. The creation of stone tools, cave art, literacy, and a Buddhist complex—possibly the Mandagala temple—are all indications of their rise. Therefore, the results are extremely important for understanding the Hada Oya valley's ancient material culture.

Keywords: Ancient Human Culture, Hada Oya Valley, Late Brahmi, Mandagala Temple

AESTHETICS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE: A COLONIAL RE- INSCRIPTION OF SACRED SPACE IN TRINCOMALEE HARBOUR: 1622AD-1948AD

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This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the aesthetic, cultural, and heritage transformations in Trincomalee Harbour, Sri Lanka, under Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonial administrations between 1622 and 1948. The harbour represented a deeply significant pre-colonial sacred landscape, primarily centred on the Hindu Koneswaram Temple complex, while historical evidence also indicates the presence of the Toopul Sri Murugan Buddhist temple on Swami Rock, establishing a complex multi-religious spiritual geography. The study specifically investigates how colonial powers engaged in systematic spatial re-inscription to erase indigenous sacred identities and impose a utilitarian, military-strategic identity. Methodologically, this research employs qualitative historical-archival analysis, using the theoretical framework of the palimpsest to interpret successive physical and symbolic layers that constitute the harbour's contested history. Data collection involved critical analysis of diverse primary sources including colonial records, military reports, travelogues, and historical maps, supplemented by architectural analysis of fortification remains. Research findings demonstrate that colonial powers consistently dismantled sacred sites, most notably the initial destruction of the Koneswaram Temple by Portuguese forces who repurposed sacred materials for military constructions like Fort Fredrick. Subsequent Dutch and British administrations further consolidated this military imprint through expanded fortifications and cartographic revisions. These actions fundamentally transformed the harbour's aesthetic character and cultural meaning in an attempt to erase its spiritual significance. Despite these colonial efforts, Trincomalee's sacred identity demonstrated remarkable resilience through community memory, oral traditions, and religious practices, culminating in cultural revival initiatives during the twentieth century, including the temple's reconstruction. The study concludes that Trincomalee Harbour endures as a powerfully contested heritage site, a palimpsest where colonial and pre-colonial histories visibly intersect and conflict, creating ongoing tensions between archaeological preservation, modern development projects, and contemporary identity politics. This research underscores the necessity for multi-layered heritage management approaches that recognize both tangible and intangible cultural values, contributing to academic discourses on post-colonialism and cultural resilience in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Cultural Heritage, Spatial Re-Inscription, Trincomalee Harbour, Koneswaram Temple, Colonialism, Sacred Geography, Palimpsest

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE *NAVAGRAHA* AND THE *RĀŚI CAKRAYA* AS A RECONCILIATION TOOL IN THE BUDDHIST IMAGE HOUSE WITH REFERENCE TO SEVERAL SELECTED SOUTHERN TEMPLES

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Several Buddhist temples built in the Southern province can be identified during the late 18th and early 19th centuries in Sri Lanka. The fact that these temples were created for social and political purposes beyond religious purposes is evident from the paintings painted in those temples. The basic background of this study is the paintings of the *Navagraha* (nine planets) and the *Rāśi Cakraya* (zodiac) in the vinthalas of the Sapugaskanda Viharaya and the Shailabimbaramaya temples in Southern province. During this period, mural paintings in Southern temples were created based on new themes. Strikethrough, the research problem of this study is why the Hindu-rooted *Navagraha* and the zodiac were incorporated into the Buddhist image house. In this research the qualitative research method was primarily used as research methodology, under which archaeological field observations were conducted. In collecting data, books, magazines, and internet articles were used as secondary sources. According to astrology, there are nine planets and twelve zodiac signs. Since the Vedic period, humans have been inspired to revere and deify the natural forces that influence their lives. As a result, inanimate celestial bodies were personified and endowed with divine qualities. However, the evidence that this concept was established in Buddhist image house is found in Southern temple murals, which can be considered a result of the social conflict that existed during that period. That social conflict was created through the missionary movement carried out by the British. The missionary movement launched by the British for political stability led to people moving away from the temple. It changed the existing social organization and caste hierarchy. As a tool for reconciling this social conflict, a metaphysical concept of God influencing individual well-being, similar to that found in missionary churches, was established in the Buddhist temple. The wealthy lowland people who sponsored this were advised by a group of people who are trained in astrology and *Yantramantra* (occult practices) with Indian influences and were not monks but claimed to be virtuous (*Ganinnanse*). The result was that they brought a metaphysical concept of God through paintings. The idea that worshipping the nine planets and the zodiac signs would provide relief from the dangers they posed was a way to refocus people back to the temple. Through this, the temple also gained back the privileges it had lost, indirectly.

Keywords: Reconciliation, Southern temple, Navagraha, Rashi Chakraya, Missionary Movemen

RE-NARRATING CULTURAL VIOLENCE AGAINST THE QUEER COMMUNITY THROUGH MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF ‘*VIDURU TIRA*’ TELEDRAMA AND ITS SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT

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Discrimination and violence against people in the queer community remain widespread across the world. At present, sixty-four countries still criminalize same-sex relationships, and Sri Lanka is among them. Sections 365 and 365A of the Sri Lankan Penal Code, inherited from colonial rule, criminalize consensual same-sex sexual relations. These legal and cultural norms contribute to an atmosphere in which hostility toward queer people is treated as acceptable. As a result, queer individuals in Sri Lanka experience social stigma, harassment, and exclusion, leaving them highly vulnerable to discrimination and violence. Within this environment, media significantly shapes audience perceptions of gender, sexuality, and social identity. It affects public understanding through the circulation of information, the framing of stereotypes, and the shaping of cultural narratives. Among different forms of media, television holds significant power. Repeated messages and imagery in television programming can shape viewers' perceptions of social norms, behaviors, and events, often leading them to form opinions based on what they see rather than on personal experience or information. In this sense, media can either reproduce cultural violence or re-narrate it in ways that promote awareness and inclusivity. This research investigates how media re-narrates cultural violence against the queer community in Sri Lanka through the case study of the teledrama *Viduru Tira*. The study explores three key research questions: Media's potential and power to re-narrate cultural violence against queer communities, the representation of queer identities and experiences in *Viduru Tira*, and audience reactions to these portrayals on social media platforms. Methodologically, the research adopts a qualitative approach. A content analysis of the teledrama was conducted to examine the representation of queer characters and themes of discrimination, stigma, and resilience. In addition, thematic analysis of Facebook comments and related online discussions were carried out to capture audience responses and engagement with the drama. The theoretical framework is grounded in Johan Galtung's (1969) concept of cultural violence, which explains how cultural norms and practices legitimize or challenge structural and direct violence. The findings of this research were shared to demonstrate the significance of media in re-narrating cultural violence and to emphasize the importance of using cultural texts to foster awareness, inclusivity, and social change.

Keywords: Queer Community, Cultural violence, *Viduru Thira*

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING ART & AESTHETICS TO ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS

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Engineering Technology was introduced in 2013 as a GCE Advanced Level subject in Sri Lanka, serving as a cornerstone of the technology education stream. This subject covers a diverse range of disciplines, including Civil Technology, Mechanical Technology, and Electrical and Electronic Technology. Its primary goal is to equip students with both theoretical knowledge and hands-on technical skills essential for the modern workforce. However, the subject's broad scope and demanding content present considerable cognitive and emotional challenges for students. The intensive workload and high level of complexity can often result in stress, reduced motivation, and mental fatigue. Considering these challenges, this study explores the educational and psychological benefits of integrating Art and Aesthetics into the Engineering Technology curriculum. The core objective is to investigate whether incorporating creative and aesthetic elements into the technical learning process can contribute to students' psychological well-being, improve classroom engagement, and support the development of soft skills such as emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and creativity. The underlying assumption is that exposure to artistic practices can provide mental relief and stimulate students' innate abilities, leading to more well-rounded personal growth. A mixed-methods research approach was used, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. Data collection involved questionnaires and interviews conducted with 18 teachers, 36 students, 18 principals, and 07 educational officials across 18 schools from nine provinces where Engineering Technology is currently taught. The data were analysed using percentage-based tabulation methods to identify trends and patterns. The findings revealed that the integration of art and aesthetics significantly improved students' attitudes toward learning. Increased participation, higher attendance rates, and enhanced enthusiasm were noted in schools where aesthetic activities were incorporated. A special module combining Engineering Technology with practical aesthetic exercises was developed and implemented in three schools in the Western Province, showing a clear positive impact on students' personality development, motivation, and creative thinking. In conclusion, the study affirms that the inclusion of art and aesthetics within the Engineering Technology curriculum offers a more balanced, engaging, and student-centred educational experience. It not only supports academic performance but also nurtures the emotional and creative dimensions of student development.

Keywords: Engineering Technology, Art and Aesthetics, Personality Development, Curriculum Integration

RITUAL DIPLOMACY: THE ROLE OF CEREMONIAL PRACTICES IN ANCIENT CHINA–SRI LANKA RELATIONS

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The historical dynamics of ritual diplomacy between China and Sri Lanka from the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) to the Ming dynasty (1368–1644 CE) reveal how ceremonial practices shaped enduring relations across the Indian Ocean world. This study examines ritualized interactions such as envoy receptions, gift exchanges, temple dedications, and the transfer of sacred relics as political instruments and conduits of cultural and religious exchange. The research employs thematic and comparative textual analysis of Chinese dynastic records and Sri Lankan chronicles to uncover the symbolic and functional dimensions of these practices. Results indicate that ceremonial acts affirmed mutual respect, legitimized authority, and strengthened religious ties by aligning with shared traditions of Buddhism and Confucian ethics. Ritual diplomacy thus provided a common language of international conduct, where symbolic acts transcended material transactions and enabled sustained interaction over long distances. Situating China–Sri Lanka relations within broader Asian diplomatic traditions, the study shows how intangible practices reinforced maritime connectivity, fostered trust, and contributed to stable political relations despite geographical separation. The conclusions emphasize that rituals were not peripheral to diplomacy but central mechanisms through which states expressed power, cultivated affinity, and maintained stability. By highlighting the significance of ritual diplomacy in shaping pre-modern international relations, this research contributes to discussions on intangible cultural heritage in world history and suggests directions for comparative inquiry into ceremonial dimensions of diplomacy across the Indian Ocean, where cultural practices functioned as early forms of global diplomacy, bridging diverse systems and fostering cooperation.

Keywords: Ceremonial Practices, Envoy Rituals, Ritual Diplomacy, Religious Exchange

BRIDGING INEQUALITY IN A CHANGING WORLD: PATHWAYS TO JUSTICE, RESILIENCE, AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

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Amid accelerating global transformations driven by climate change, economic instability, and growing disparities in health and wealth, addressing inequality has become a critical global priority. This study explores integrated pathways to justice, resilience, and sustainability, emphasizing how inequities in one domain—social, economic, or environmental—intensify vulnerabilities in others. This research aims to identify strategies that promote inclusive and sustainable development, particularly for marginalized populations disproportionately affected by ecological and economic crises. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining a critical literature review, comparative policy analysis, and case studies from both the Global South and industrialized nations. This methodology enabled the identification of global trends alongside context-specific insights. The analysis revealed that while structural inequalities remain deeply rooted, transformative change is achievable through policies grounded in equity, environmental ethics, and participatory governance. Key findings highlight successful examples such as community-led climate action, inclusive public health initiatives, and equitable policy reforms that balance economic growth with ecological stewardship. The discussion underscores that resilience extends beyond survival and it entails creating social, cultural, and institutional conditions that enable communities to thrive amid uncertainty. The study concludes that bridging inequality demands more than redistributive measures; it requires cultural transformation toward solidarity, ethical responsibility, and intergenerational justice. The paper recommends cross-sector collaboration among governments, academia, civil society, and grassroots movements to build a just and sustainable global future.

Keywords: Social Justice, Resilience, Sustainability, Global Wellbeing

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP FOR RESILIENCE AND GROWTH IN A VUCA ENVIRONMENT: A STUDY BASED ON BEST-PERFORMING STARTUPS IN SRI LANKA

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In the current globalized world, rapid technological breakthroughs, changing demographics and growing global interconnectedness are transforming traditional business paradigms. Since organizations are increasingly working in contexts that are characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity (VUCA), their long-term sustainability is a major challenge. This study explores the adoption of strategic leadership across best-performing start-up organizations functioning in a VUCA environment with a particular focus on the Sri Lankan context. Accordingly, this study aims to explore how strategic leadership practices are used by best-performing start-up organizations in Sri Lanka to maintain resilience in a VUCA environment. The study is based on the Interpretivist research philosophy and aims to understand individuals' subjective experiences and leadership strategies in start-up business environments. The research adopted an inductive approach to produce insights in a field with limited theoretical knowledge. Hence, ten of the best-performing start-up businesses, as determined by the startup ranking website, are the unit of analysis of this qualitative case study. The Startup Rank Web score of a startup rise as more websites, especially those from high-quality sources, link to its webpage. Based on this ranking, the best-performing start-up organizations were selected for this study. Interviews, pictures, videos, newspaper articles and field notes were employed to collect data. The findings of this study reveal that adaptability is a core proactive strategy, open communication is crucial for building stakeholder trust, and mindfulness contributes to both personal and organizational resilience. In addition, the findings show that visionary thinking, adaptability, emotional intelligence, communication skills, and the capacity to foster innovations are the key skills of successful strategic leaders. Start-up businesses are able to quickly pivot, innovate continuously and navigate uncertainties due to their proactive adaptability, which converts potential disruptions into opportunities. Furthermore, this research offers implications that, a focus on innovative and human-centred leadership is indispensable to maintain the growth and competitiveness in a VUCA environment. Start-up organizations enhance resilience and turn challenges into opportunities by promoting collaborations and continuous learning, with strategic leadership being a critical enabler of adaptability in a VUCA environment. A further key takeaway is that to develop resilience in a VUCA environment, start-up business leaders must embrace adaptable and innovative leadership practices

Keywords: Resilience, Startups, Strategic Leadership, VUCA Environment

CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SRI LANKA-INDIA FISHERIES MANAGEMENT: LEGAL AND DIPLOMATIC PERSPECTIVES IN THE BLUE ECONOMY

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The fisheries sector, a vital component of Sri Lanka's Blue Economy, has historically been a source of tension between Sri Lanka and India due to overlapping maritime boundaries, seasonal fishing in shared waters, and disputes over resource access. These conflicts affect local livelihoods, bilateral relations, and regional maritime stability, highlighting the complex interplay of economic, environmental, and diplomatic concerns. Despite existing bilateral agreements and international frameworks, persistent disputes reveal challenges in sustainable marine resource governance. This study aims to examine and evaluate the conflict resolution mechanisms employed by both countries, focusing on their effectiveness in mitigating tensions and promoting sustainable fisheries management. Guided by a qualitative research methodology, the study analyses treaties, government reports, official communications, regional fisheries commission documents, and scholarly literature, supplemented with case studies of joint patrols, dialogue platforms, and community-based conflict mitigation programs. This approach provides critical insights into negotiation processes, stakeholder perceptions, compliance challenges, power asymmetries, and the role of community engagement in reducing conflicts. Findings indicate that cooperative strategies including negotiated fishing quotas, joint monitoring systems, early-warning dispute resolution frameworks, and adherence to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982) have enhanced sustainable fishing practices, minimized conflicts, and strengthened diplomatic ties. Major insights derived from the qualitative analysis include the importance of participatory decision-making, the impact of local stakeholder perceptions on compliance, the need for continuous diplomatic dialogue, and the significance of adaptive institutional coordination in dynamic maritime contexts. Nevertheless, challenges remain in regulatory enforcement, equitable resource distribution, safeguarding local fisher communities, and balancing immediate economic needs with long-term legal and strategic obligations. The study demonstrates that effective conflict resolution in the context of Sri Lanka-India fisheries requires an integrated, multilevel approach combining legal instruments, diplomatic engagement, and institutional coordination to support sustainable development and regional maritime governance.

Keywords: Sri Lanka-India Relations, Fisheries Conflict Resolution, Blue Economy, Maritime Law, Indian Ocean Diplomacy

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CHANGES IN HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION PATTERNS IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS OF SRI LANKA IN THE FACE OF ECONOMIC CRISIS

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The economic crisis in Sri Lanka has continued on three main fronts: the apparent crisis, the foreign exchange reserve crisis, and the crisis stemming from the 1977 economic policies. The economic decline that occurred in the country from 2019 to 2023 across these three dimensions is defined in this study as the economic crisis. This research was conducted to examine the nature of the relative impact of the economic crisis (2019–2023) on rural and urban household consumption patterns. Accordingly, the main objective of this study was to comparatively examine the changes in the consumption patterns of rural and urban households in the categories of food, health, education, and transportation during the crisis. The sub-objectives included identifying the reasons underlying these changes in household consumption patterns, and proposing solutions based on the findings. Primary data were collected from 15 rural households and 15 urban households through a questionnaire, while secondary data were obtained from the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (2019–2023). Quantitative data were analysed using the t-test method, and qualitative data were analysed through thematic analysis. Key findings indicate that during the economic crisis, fast-food consumption decreased by 36% in rural areas but increased by 50% in urban areas. In rural regions, 83% of households stopped consuming powdered milk, and 56% shifted to public healthcare, whereas 93.3% of urban households turned to private healthcare. Rural households increased their use of public transport by 26.6%, while its use in urban areas declined by 20%. Overall, the study found that rural households tended to shift towards natural food, government healthcare, and public transportation, while urban households increasingly depended on fast food and private medical services. The reasons for these changes, as identified in this study, included rising commodity prices, the growth of home gardening, changes in medicine consumption, fuel price hikes, increased maintenance costs for institutions such as orphanages and apartments, and the transition to online education. These factors collectively explain the changes in rural and urban consumption patterns during the economic crisis.

Keywords: Consumption Patterns, Economic Crisis, Household, Rural, Urban

CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM: A CASE STUDY FROM SRI LANKA'S CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

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Tourism remains one of the major economic contributors of Sri Lanka, yet it has simultaneously generated serious environmental problems including pollution, littering, and the overexploitation of natural resources. While previous studies have emphasized the importance of sustainability in tourism, there remains a clear gap in the existing literature regarding how Circular Economy (CE) principles are operationalized within Community-Based Tourism (CBT) initiatives in developing-country contexts. This study examines the integration of CE practices within CBT programmes in Sri Lanka's Central Highlands, focusing specifically on eco trails, organic farm visits, and zero-waste hospitality initiatives managed by local communities. The case study encompasses selected CBT sites across the Central Highlands between 2018 and 2024. A qualitative research design was employed, drawing upon fifteen documented CBT-related case studies from academic publications, government reports, and NGO sources. Data were synthesized using thematic analysis, with key themes developed through iterative coding and cross-case comparisons, enabling an evaluation of environmental, economic, and social outcomes associated with CE strategies. The findings indicate that practices such as food-waste composting and biogas production, local organic sourcing, greywater reuse, solar energy adoption, and community-owned tourism enterprises significantly reduce environmental pressure while enhancing community livelihoods, social wellbeing, and cultural heritage preservation. These CE strategies improve resource-use efficiency, encourage environmentally conscious tourism behaviour, and foster innovative tourism products that strengthen the resilience of host communities. Despite these positive outcomes, several constraints hinder the large-scale diffusion of CE practices, including limited financial resources, inadequate technical knowledge among small-scale operators, inconsistent policy implementation, and cultural reluctance toward behavioural change. The evaluation demonstrates that the Central Highlands offer a strong example of how CE principles can transform tourism into a regenerative and inclusive sector. For broader national adoption, the study recommends policy reforms, targeted financial incentives, comprehensive capacity-building programs, and strengthened collaboration among government institutions, private stakeholders, and local communities. Embedding CBT within a circular economy framework positions Sri Lanka to advance responsible, sustainable, and resilient tourism development within the region.

Keywords: Circular Economy, Community-based Tourism, Sri Lanka, Sustainability

IMPACT OF BOARD DIVERSITY ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: EVIDENCE FROM LISTED BANKS IN THE COLOMBO STOCK EXCHANGE IN SRI LANKA

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This study analyses the impact of board diversity on corporate social responsibility (CSR) of the listed banks of the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE), as the increasing importance of CSR has played a key role in strengthening corporate governance and accountability of stakeholders. Despite its widespread success across the globe, the adoption of CSR in emerging economies remains to be closely explored, particularly the contribution of board composition to the outcomes of CSR. The primary objective of the research is to establish whether gender, ethnic background, and career history of members of boards are the determinants of the quality and volume of CSR disclosures in banks. A quantitative research design was adopted to achieve this objective. The study employed a longitudinal content analysis of annual reports to systematically examine CSR disclosures over a five-year period from 2020 to 2024. CSR indicators were coded using a structured checklist based on recognized disclosure dimensions, providing measurable scores for each bank. Board characteristics, including diversity indicators, were extracted from corporate governance sections of the same reports, enabling statistical assessment of relationships between board attributes and CSR outcomes. This research design allowed for an objective evaluation of disclosure patterns using numerical data. The sample consists of 12 licensed commercial banks that remained continuously listed on the CSE during the study period. Banks were selected based on the criteria of uninterrupted listing status, availability of complete annual reports for all five years, and consistency of governance and CSR reporting formats that permit reliable comparison. All data were collected from the official Colombo Stock Exchange website and the published annual reports of the banks, ensuring credibility and reliability of the secondary data sources. The key variables of the study include gender diversity, ethnic diversity, and directors' career history as independent variables, CSR disclosure level as the dependent variable, and board size and board independence as control variables. The analysis concluded that female directorship exerts significant positive pressure on CSR disclosures, reflecting the centripetal role of gender diversity in promoting social and environmental accountability. However, board independence and board size did not show statistically significant relationships with CSR, indicating that representation and inclusivity may matter more than structural board features. These findings are significant within the broader Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) context. The study demonstrates that board diversity contributes meaningfully to the social and governance pillars of ESG performance and highlights the importance of adopting standardized CSR and ESG reporting frameworks in the Sri Lankan banking industry to enhance stakeholder trust, transparency, and comparability.

Keywords: Board Diversity, Corporate Social Responsibility, Global Reporting Initiatives, Banking, ESG

TOURISM TO STRENGTHEN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN BATTICALOA: A CASE STUDY IN KUNCHANKALKULAM

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An indigenous Coastal Veddha (Muhudu Adhivasi) community, one of the three major indigenous groups in Sri Lanka, resides in scattered villages throughout the Batticaloa District, with their head settlement in Kunchankalkulam, Mankerny. Their traditional ways of life have suffered severe disruption due to forced displacement, cultural assimilation, restricted land access, and economic marginalization, effects largely stemming from the civil war and ongoing development pressures. In the context of tourism growth in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, sustainable community-based tourism (CBT) is proposed as a strategy to build socio-economic resilience while preserving cultural identity. Existing literature highlights strong eco-tourism potential in the Eastern Province, yet substantial challenges still remain. Furthermore, work on the coastal Veddha community specifically documents acculturation pressures that may commodify or dilute cultural heritage unless precautions are taken. However, there is a gap in research regarding *the perspectives, capacities, and readiness* of younger generations in indigenous coastal Veddha communities to engage in sustainable tourism, particularly in the context of CBT. Addressing this gap, this study aims to explore the views and existing capacities of the community members before enabling conditions for CBT in Kunchankalkulam. This qualitative study uses in-depth interviews with community members who were selected from purposive sampling of youth and other age groups, and direct observation of cultural, infrastructural and logistical assets and gaps. Interviews suggested openness to introducing tourism as an economic opportunity, with willingness to share cultural practices, including traditional honey-collecting, fishing, seasonal rituals, food customs, and sacred indigenous beliefs. However, community members showed awareness of the possible disturbance tourism may cause to their traditional practices, based on several previous failed attempts at establishing local guest houses. They also identified key requirements to support tourism, including improved basic infrastructure and sanitary facilities, language and visitor-engagement assistance, and marketing or promotional support to attract responsible visitors. Observational data revealed strong intangible cultural heritage, but also critical shortcomings in water, sanitation, proper shelter, and access roads. Accordingly, tourism in Kunchankalkulam appears feasible provided it is implemented in stages that include community capacity-building, infrastructure development, and ongoing monitoring. If managed with sensitivity to cultural integrity and led by the community itself, tourism has the potential to improve livelihoods and sustain the heritage of the Coastal Veddha community without sacrificing their identity.

Keywords: Community-based Tourism, Coastal Veddhas, Capacity Building, Batticaloa, Sustainable Development, Socio-economic Resilience

MODERATING ROLE OF FINANCIAL ANXIETY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FINANCIAL LITERACY AND INVESTMENT DECISIONS: EVIDENCE FROM SRI LANKAN INDIVIDUAL INVESTORS

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This study investigates key determinants of individual investment decisions in Sri Lanka, focusing on the roles of knowledge of financial products, knowledge of investment options, and experience with financial products, with financial anxiety as a moderating factor. Despite high literacy rates, Sri Lanka exhibits a substantial financial literacy deficit, with only 35% of individuals demonstrating basic financial knowledge and 80% of them being unaware of available financial tools. This gap hampers effective financial decision-making and limits economic participation. To address this issue, a quantitative survey employing stratified random sampling was administered to 389 individual investors across urban and rural regions, with the sample size determined using G*Power analysis. A structured questionnaire was designed and shared to capture the levels of financial literacy, financial anxiety, and investment decisions. Financial literacy was measured using a validated 23-item multidimensional scale ($\alpha = 0.928-0.949$), financial anxiety or rather psychological distress concerning one's financial situation using a 5-item scale ($\alpha = 0.899$), and investment decisions using a 4-item scale ($\alpha = 0.886$) and all scales were developed and adapted from prior literature and validated through Item Response Theory. Data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling to assess direct effects and moderating influences. Results indicate that greater knowledge of financial products significantly enhances investment decision quality ($\beta = 0.165$, $p < 0.001$), reflecting investor ability to understand product features and risks. Similarly, knowledge of investment options positively influences decision outcomes ($\beta = 0.191$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating the importance of understanding diverse asset classes and market mechanisms. Experience with financial products also exerts a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.183$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that practical exposure fosters confidence and informed judgment. Financial anxiety negatively moderates the effect of knowledge of financial products on investment decisions by weakening this positive link, while its interactions with knowledge of investment options and experience with financial products are not statistically significant; psychological barriers therefore reduce the benefits of specific financial literacy pathways rather than all pathways. The structural model explains 61.4% variance in investment decisions ($R^2 = 0.614$), confirming strong explanatory power. Findings emphasize the necessity of targeted financial education initiatives and anxiety-reduction interventions to improve investor outcomes. Policy recommendations include integrating comprehensive financial literacy curricula in educational institutions, implementing nationwide public awareness campaigns on financial tools, and developing accessible digital platforms for experiential learning.

Keywords: Financial Literacy, Investment Decisions, Financial Anxiety, Sri Lanka, Structural Equation Modelling

THE ROLE OF HEALTH INSURANCE IN PROMOTING EQUITABLE HEALTHCARE ACCESS AND FINANCIAL PROTECTION IN SRI LANKA: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Achieving Universal Health Coverage is a sustainable goal of Sri Lanka. However, rising non-communicable diseases and an increasing elderly population add a burden to the health sector. Out-of-pocket expenses for medicines, diagnostics, and private consultations remain a major financial burden for households, despite the provision of free public healthcare. As a developing country facing persistent budget deficits, providing free healthcare remains challenging. Health insurance is frequently cited in the literature as an effective tool for improving healthcare financing and enhancing health coverage. Existing studies on health insurance in Sri Lanka are fragmented, limiting a full understanding of its impact, particularly on vulnerable groups. This systematic review summarizes the role of health insurance in enhancing healthcare access, providing financial protection, and supporting government spending in the Sri Lankan context. Following PRISMA guidelines, peer-reviewed studies, policy reports, and relevant documents published between 1997 and 2025 were reviewed for this study. A total of 50 records were identified, of which 30 studies met the inclusion criteria. The findings, drawn from quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research, were synthesized narratively to provide a clear and integrated understanding of the evidence. The review indicates that insured individuals have improved access to preventive and curative care and are less vulnerable to catastrophic health expenditures, enabling them to receive timely diagnosis and treatment. Health insurance covers the healthcare costs of individuals, allowing the government to invest in the health improvement of vulnerable groups. Health insurance can be considered a safety net, as insured individuals are less likely to fall into poverty due to medical expenditures and do not have to sacrifice basic needs or savings to obtain necessary healthcare. Limited awareness, affordability, policy complexity, inefficiencies, and low coverage were identified as barriers to purchasing health insurance, which create delays in timely treatment and result in poorer health outcomes and long-term financial hardships. Lower-income groups, marginalized communities, and uneducated individuals are less likely to purchase health insurance, whereas educated, wealthier, and formally employed individuals are more likely to invest in it. The expansion of inclusive health insurance schemes, enhanced policy flexibility, and increased public awareness are essential to strengthen financial protection and equity in healthcare access. By lowering financial risks and ensuring timely care, health insurance helps maintain a healthy workforce and supports Sri Lanka's progress toward Universal Health Coverage.

Keywords: Financial Protection, Health Insurance, Healthcare Access, Out-of-pocket Expenses, Universal Health Coverage

ACHIEVING VALUE FOR MONEY IN THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN SRI LANKA

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Value for Money (VfM) in public procurement refers to achieving the optimal balance between financial and non-financial considerations throughout the life cycle of procured goods, works, and services. It serves as a fundamental guiding principle that must be integrated into every stage of the procurement process. The Sri Lanka Procurement Guidelines in 2025 identify VfM as the primary principle governing public procurement. Despite this, concerns have been raised by the general public and international funding agencies, including the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), regarding whether government construction projects and acquisitions truly deliver VfM outcomes. This study aims to examine the extent to which public sector institutions in Sri Lanka apply the VfM concept in their procurement processes. The specific objectives of this study are to assess the level of knowledge among public sector officials regarding VfM in procurement, identify key elements contributing to the achievement of VfM, and evaluate the current procedures used to ensure VfM in public procurement. The study employed a purposive sampling method, involving 72 executive-level officials engaged in procurement activities within public sector entities in the North Central Province. This province was selected due to its accessibility for data collection and its relatively high allocation of capital expenditure in recent years. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale and analysed using descriptive statistical techniques, including averages, percentages, tables, charts, and graphs. The findings indicate that all participants possess a general awareness of the VfM concept in procurement. Respondents identified integrity, confidentiality, and transparency as essential factors in achieving VfM. Concerning procedural aspects, the study found significant attention given to the preparation of bidding documents, bid opening practices, and adherence to existing rules and regulations, with mean values ranging between 3.367 and 4.107. However, notable deficiencies were observed in areas such as procurement audits, bidder debriefing, and the enforcement of sanctions for non-compliance. In conclusion, the study underscores the need to strengthen and institutionalize mechanisms that ensure VfM in public procurement. It recommends enhancing the knowledge and capacity of procurement officials, conducting regular procurement audits, and establishing standardized procedures that foster accountability, transparency, and integrity throughout the procurement cycle.

Keywords: Public Procurement, Value for Money, Integrity, Debriefing

THE IMPACT OF THE NATURE AND ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE OF DEGREES ON GRADUATE HUMAN CAPITAL UTILIZATION IN SRI LANKAN COMMERCIAL BANKS

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In the commercial bank of Sri Lanka, many graduates hold positions unrelated to their academic masteries, pointing to an issue of underutilization of specialized Human Capital (HC). This study examines how the nature of degree, academic discipline, and Postgraduate (Pg) or professional credentials influence the effective utilization of Graduate Human Capital (GHC) in the banking sector. This situation raises unresolved questions regarding the use of academic knowledge and discipline-specific skills of these graduates, whether this knowledge eventually unsuccessful to recall, unused, or indirectly contributing to their performance in unrelated fields, as well as the effects on national development when a large pool of specialized HC remains underutilized. This study tested three hypotheses which propose that the nature of the degree has a major impact on GHC utilization (H1), academic discipline notably affects GHC utilization (H2), and Pg or professional qualifications much influence HC utilization (H3). A cross-sectional quantitative survey was conducted with a target population of 450 executive employees working in commercial banks in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. Using a purposive sampling method, data were collected from 52 graduate employees representing both public sector banks (namely People's Bank and Bank of Ceylon) and private sector banks (namely Sampath Bank and Hatton National Bank). The questionnaire contained demographic and academic background information and included multiple Likert-scale items designed to assess knowledge, skills, and education-based HC utilization. Cronbach's alpha coefficient confirmed excellent reliability of the questionnaire. Composite scores were computed and analysed using one-way ANOVA and t-tests to evaluate the three hypotheses. Descriptive statistics showed moderately high levels of perceived utilization across all respondents (Knowledge: $M=3.82$, Skills: $M=3.70$, Education-based HC utilization: $M=3.79$, and overall HC Utilization: $M=3.77$ on a 1–5 scale). For H1, an ANOVA comparing internal, external and private degree holders revealed no statistically significant differences in HC utilization ($F=0.43$, $p=.66$), although mean scores were slightly higher among external ($M=3.96$) and private ($M=3.98$) degree holders than for internal ($M=3.69$). For H2, the dataset lacked sufficient variation in coded academic disciplines to perform meaningful group comparisons, and manual recoding of disciplines is advised for future research. For H3, an independent-samples t-test showed that respondents with Pg qualifications ($n=4$) had higher mean utilization scores ($M=4.15$) than the others ($M=3.72$), but the difference was not statistically large ($t=0.98$, $p=.39$) due to the small Pg subgroup. These findings suggest that among the respondents, the majority held internal degrees and were mostly female and less than 40 years of age, with many employed in private banks even though external and private degree holders tended to report slightly higher levels of utilization. This reveals that the nature of degree did not play a large role in shaping HC utilization although internal graduates were the largest group. Pg or professional qualifications normally denoted higher levels of HC utilization. This shows that while advanced qualifications may increase understanding of knowledge and skill use, their effect could not be clearly established in this study.

Keywords: Human Capital Utilization, Academic Discipline, Banking Sector

BALANCING THE BLUE ECONOMY: TOURISM EXPANSION AND SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN KALPITIYA, SRI LANKA

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Tourism and small-scale fisheries are key pillars of Sri Lanka's Blue Economy, supporting livelihoods and local development. Kalpitiya, located in the Northwestern Province, has emerged as a major tourist hub offering dolphin and whale watching, coral reefs within the Kalpitiya Marine Sanctuary, snorkelling, diving, and lagoon-based kite surfing. To promote this growth, Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) introduced the Kalpitiya Tourism Zone (KTZ), the largest tourism development project in the Indian Ocean. While this expansion has opened new economic opportunities, it has also created pressure on small-scale fisheries that traditionally depend on the lagoon and coastal waters. This study examines how tourism development affects small-scale fisheries in the Kalpitiya Lagoon and explores the conflicts that arise between these two sectors. Data were collected using purposive sampling, including semi-structured interviews with 15 small-scale fishers and 10 tourist hotel owners. Key informant interviews were conducted with officers from the Kalpitiya Tourism Department and local authorities. Field observations, secondary data from research articles, and official reports were also used for data collection. Although the fisher sample size is relatively small, it is suitable for qualitative exploratory research, and the total population of small-scale fishers in Kalpitiya is estimated to be over 2,000. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings show that tourism activities such as kite surfing, dolphin and whale watching, snorkelling, diving, and lagoon boat tours disturb marine habitats, damage coral reefs, and disrupt breeding grounds for key fish species. These impacts reduce fish stocks and interfere with traditional fishing operations, leading to unpredictable catches and economic challenges. Some fishers have shifted to unsustainable or illegal methods due to livelihood insecurity. Younger generations increasingly abandon fishing, causing the gradual loss of traditional knowledge. Conflicts have intensified due to coastal hotel development and the operation of tourism boats, resulting in restricted access to fishing grounds, damaged gear, and displacement of fishers from customary areas. These combined pressures weaken the sustainability of small-scale fisheries and increase the vulnerability of fishing communities that rely on these resources for income and cultural identity. The study concludes that rapid tourism expansion significantly affects the resilience of small-scale fisheries in Kalpitiya. It highlights the urgent need for integrated management strategies that balance tourism growth with the protection of fisheries and marine ecosystems to ensure long-term sustainability within the Blue Economy framework.

Keywords: Blue Economy, Tourism Development, Small-scale Fisheries, Sustainable Fishing.

ADAPTING CHINESE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF *PIRIVENA* EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA

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Education has always been a powerful tool for shaping societies and sustaining cultural identities. In Sri Lanka, *Pirivena* education holds a unique place as a system designed to educate Buddhist monks and lay students, while preserving language, values, and traditions. For centuries, it has contributed to safeguarding the spiritual and cultural heritage of the nation. However, in the context of globalization and rapid technological change, *Pirivena* education faces the urgent challenge of modernization. Students who complete *Pirivena* education often struggle to integrate into the national and global job markets, highlighting the need for reform. In this regard, exploring foreign educational practices can offer valuable insights. China provides a particularly relevant model, as its education system successfully combines traditional foundations with modern strategies. Chinese practices that promote discipline, creativity, and technological integration can offer insights and lessons for strengthening the *Pirivena* education system. Moreover, this research aims to achieve three key objectives; to explore how selected Chinese educational practices can be adapted to modernize *Pirivena* education in Sri Lanka while preserving its cultural and religious essence, to investigate potential pathways for *Pirivena* graduates to pursue higher education opportunities in China, and to examine the role of Chinese language proficiency in empowering *Pirivena* students to share Buddhist teachings internationally. To achieve these goals, the study will draw upon diverse resources, including books, academic journals, Sri Lankan government policies, and official reports from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. Furthermore, insights will be sought through practical engagement with Chinese lecturers, teachers, and students. By integrating these perspectives, the research seeks to propose a practical and culturally sensitive framework for modernizing *Pirivena* education. Ultimately, this discussion aims to establish a new pathway for aligning *Pirivena* education with contemporary global realities while retaining its spiritual foundations.

Keywords: Buddhist Education, China, Modernization, *Pirivena* Education, Sri Lanka

FROM SILENCE TO STANDARDIZATION: TOWARDS EQUITABLE SPOKEN ENGLISH EVALUATION IN SRI LANKAN EDUCATION

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This study examines a critical dearth in Sri Lanka's English language education system: the systematic exclusion of spoken English assessments from school curricula and national examinations. While literacy skills receive regular evaluation, oral proficiency remains unassessed, creating a significant disparity with international standards exemplified by high-stakes tests like IELTS and TOEFL. This oversight disadvantages Sri Lankan students in global academic and professional contexts where communicative competence is essential. At the tertiary level, where speaking assessments are implemented, three key challenges such as subjective examiner bias, inconsistent grading standards, and inflexible scoring systems that prevent post-assessment review compromise validity. These methodological flaws undermine both reliability and fairness in evaluating oral proficiency. This qualitative study draws on thematic analysis of in-depth interviews conducted with ten randomly selected, experienced ESL teachers. Grounded in the critical pedagogical frameworks of Markee, Canagarajah, and Freire, the research reveals systemic weaknesses in current assessment practices. The study identifies two primary areas for improvement. First, it advocates for standardized analytical rubrics that explicitly assess multiple dimensions of spoken English, including fluency, accuracy, and communicative effectiveness. Second, it proposes panel-based assessment models to enhance objectivity through multiple evaluator perspectives. These evidence-based recommendations align with international best practices while remaining feasible within Sri Lanka's educational context. Findings demonstrate that current assessment methods fail to adequately prepare students for real-world communication demands. The research concludes with pressing recommendations for policy reform, emphasizing the need to integrate structured speaking assessments from secondary education onward. Such curricular realignment would develop the communicative competencies required for both domestic and international success. This study contributes to broader discourse on language assessment reform in postcolonial educational contexts. By addressing the gap between local practices and global standards, it offers a replicable framework for improving oral proficiency evaluation in similar English as a Second Language environments. The proposed solutions balance academic rigor with practical implementation, providing a pathway for systemic improvement in Sri Lanka's English education system.

Keywords: English Education, ESL, Speech Exams, Testing and Evaluation

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: A STUDY IN THE MORAWEWA EDUCATION DIVISION

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A school plays a vital role in producing good citizens who contribute positively to the society. Effective school management is essential for achieving this purpose. In Sri Lanka, School-Based Management (SBM) was introduced through the Programme for School Improvement to empower schools with decision-making authority and to enhance the quality of education, with particular emphasis on community participation. Recognizing its significance in promoting efficient community participation and democratic decision-making, this study aimed to investigate the extent and nature of community participation in the management of schools in the Morawewa education division in Trincomalee North education zone. The specific objectives were to examine the circulars issued to obtain community participation in school management, analyse the strategies adopted by schools to foster such community participation, explore the ways in which the school community contribute to school activities, identify the challenges faced in the participatory management process in schools, and propose strategies to strengthen community participation in school management. A convergent parallel mixed-methods research design was employed, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected from six schools in the Morawewa education division of the Trincomalee North zone, involving 102 participants comprising six principals, 36 teachers, and 60 parents selected through random sampling. Data were gathered using questionnaires, interviews, and documentary analysis. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics with Microsoft Excel software, while qualitative data were analysed through thematic analysis and content analysis of documentary sources. The findings revealed that although the Ministry of Education had issued circulars to promote democratic administration and community participation, awareness of these circulars was limited to principals in most of the schools. Questionnaire data revealed that 58% of teachers and 88% of parents were not aware of the community involvement in school management process. Participation of parents in school planning and teaching and learning activities was found to be minimal which was 33%. Several challenges of community participation in effective school management were identified including weaknesses in the shared vision among principals, teachers, and parents regarding participatory management, reluctance of committee representatives to voice opinions, and the dominance of principals in decision-making. The study concludes that inadequate communication and limited awareness have restricted the success of community participation in school management process in rural schools. To address these issues, the research recommends strengthening awareness of educational circulars among all stakeholders, fostering a participatory decision-making culture within schools, and initiating community programs that actively engage parents and local stakeholders to build sustainable collaborative practices.

Keywords: Community Involvement, Empowering the Programme for School Improvement, School Based Management

FROM SOLO TEACHING TO COLLABORATION: THE ROLE OF TEAM TEACHING IN UNDERGRADUATE ESL CLASSROOMS

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Team teaching has increasingly been recognized as an innovative pedagogical strategy in English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, offering learners diverse teaching perspectives, enhanced support, and more engaging classroom experiences. Although international research has documented these benefits, the approach remains underexplored in Sri Lankan higher education, where national university diagnostics have highlighted persistent gaps in first-year students' functional English skills, underscoring the need for more collaborative and responsive instructional models. Accordingly, this study aimed to examine the impact of team teaching on undergraduate learners enrolled in a Basic Level English course and to evaluate how collaborative instruction supports learner engagement, confidence, and classroom interaction. Using an action research framework, the study involved 120 first-year undergraduates representing varied English-language backgrounds. Data were gathered through classroom observations, learner questionnaires, reflective teaching journals, and informal discussions, with ethical clearance obtained and informed consent secured. Questionnaire responses were analysed using descriptive statistics, and qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. Findings indicated that team teaching contributed to noticeably higher student engagement; for example, 72% of students reported increased confidence in participating in class, and observations recorded a 30–40% rise in voluntary contributions compared to earlier solo-taught sessions. Learners also described feeling less anxious using English, as the presence of two instructors with complementary strengths created a more supportive and inclusive environment. Teachers similarly reported improved lesson delivery and classroom management, though they faced challenges such as limited co-planning time and occasional differences in instructional styles. Overall, the study highlights the potential of team teaching as a valuable approach to ESL instruction in Sri Lankan universities, particularly for first-year undergraduates transitioning to academic study in English, and recommends actionable institutional support, especially, protected co-planning time to strengthen its implementation. Further exploration of collaborative teaching models within higher education ESL contexts is encouraged to advance both learner outcomes and teacher development.

Keywords: ESL, ELT, Team Teaching, Undergraduates

CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENTS IN STUDYING PRACTICAL GEOGRAPHY AT THE ADVANCED LEVEL: A STUDY BASED ON TYPE 1C TAMIL MEDIUM SCHOOLS IN DEHIOWITA EDUCATION ZONE

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Practical Geography serves as a critical bridge between theoretical knowledge and applied skills, enabling students to develop spatial reasoning, analytical competence, and field-based problem-solving abilities. However, despite its academic and professional significance, students frequently encounter obstacles that limit effective engagement with the subject. The study aims to identify the key challenges that hinder the effective teaching and learning of Practical Geography among Advanced Level Students in the Dehiowita Educational Zonal Division. The data were collected through Focus Group Discussions with students and a structured questionnaire administered to 15 Geography teachers in Type 1C Tamil medium schools in the Dehiowita Education Zone and were analysed using descriptive analysis. Findings reveal that two primary barriers significantly hinder learning: lack of adequate resources (57.1%), and limited opportunities for fieldwork (42.9%). The shortage of essential materials, including maps, instruments, and laboratory facilities, restricts students from gaining hands-on practice in cartographic techniques, data analysis, and geographical measurement. Equally critical is the insufficient provision of field-based activities, which denies students experiential exposure to geographical environments, thereby reducing their ability to contextualize theoretical knowledge in real-world settings. These constraints have broader implications on both students' performance and long-term academic motivation. The absence of resources undermines accuracy and practice in skill-based tasks, while limited fieldwork weakens observational capacity and critical thinking. Addressing these gaps requires systematic reforms, including improved resource allocation, school-level collaborations to share facilities, and curriculum adjustments that prioritize field-based learning. Furthermore, teacher training programs should emphasize innovative methods of conducting low-cost fieldwork and integrating digital tools to compensate for material shortages. By enhancing access to resources and strengthening experiential learning opportunities, institutions can ensure that Practical Geography realizes its intended role of preparing students for higher education and future careers in spatial sciences.

Keywords: Practical Geography, Lack of Resources, Fieldwork Opportunities, Educational Challenges, Student Learning

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS: EVIDENCE FROM THE KEGALLE ZONAL EDUCATION DIVISION, SRI LANKA

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Corporal punishment persists as a common classroom management strategy in Sri Lankan schools, contrary to legal mandates and child protection policies. The objective of this study is to explore the barriers faced by teachers in the Kegalle Zonal Education Division when attempting to adopt positive discipline as an alternative to punitive practices. This research utilized a mixed-methods approach involving purposive sampling of 50 teachers across 10 government schools in both urban and rural areas. Data were collected via questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations, and were analysed combining descriptive statistics and thematic analysis methods. Findings indicate that a high proportion of teachers still rely on punitive measures, with 78% admitting to using corporal punishment at least occasionally. Paradoxically, 62% of teachers recognized that corporal punishment negatively impacts students' interest in schooling and weakens teacher-student trust. However, only 30% reported confidence in using positive discipline techniques, citing barriers such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of training in child psychology, strong cultural acceptance of punitive practices, and parental expectations. These systemic constraints highlight a gap between policy awareness and practical implementation skills. The study concludes that while teachers acknowledge the harmful effects of corporal punishment, systemic barriers compel its continued use. Effective implementation of a rights-based learning environment requires that teachers should be proficient in positive discipline, necessitating comprehensive teacher skill improvement and the strengthening of the existing legal framework in Sri Lanka to prohibit corporal punishment and enforce rights-based alternatives.

Keywords: Corporal Punishment, Positive Discipline, Child Protection, Child Rights, Education Policy

FLAGGED AS AI-GENERATED: EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF FIRST-YEAR UNDERGRADUATES ON AI PLAGIARISM DETECTION TOOLS

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The growing integration of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in academic settings has led to widespread adoption of AI plagiarism detection tools in universities. The research problem centres on the concern that although a considerable number of undergraduates produce original work using their skills, some still face instances where their assignments are flagged as AI-generated, raising concerns of academic credibility, emotional stress, and institutional trust. This study examined the perceptions of first-year undergraduates toward AI plagiarism detection tools, as well as their attitudes regarding institutional practices involving these tools in assessing assignments. A quantitative approach was employed, with data collected purposively through a structured questionnaire from 200 first-year undergraduates enrolled in English-medium degree programs at the Faculty of Social Sciences of two state universities in Sri Lanka. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics through SPSS. The results indicated that 58% of participants reported having at least one assignment flagged as AI-generated despite producing it independently. 72% of participants perceived AI plagiarism detection tools as lacking consistency and reliability in assessing assignments, leading to emotional stress. Moreover, 59% of respondents highlighted the lack of institutional communication about AI-flagged assignments, emphasizing the need for clearer guidance and explanations. Further, 18% of participants acknowledged the potential of AI tools to uphold academic integrity, but the prevailing perception was that overdependence on such tools could compromise fairness. A majority of participants suggested incorporating human moderation in evaluating assignments to mitigate inaccuracies. These findings suggest that students' confidence in plagiarism detection tools is undermined by issues of reliability and transparency. The study recommends the development of institutional policies and staff training initiatives, while maintaining a balanced approach that avoids exclusive reliance on AI-based plagiarism detection tools and promotes fair, and reasoned evaluation of assignments without automatically designating them as AI-generated.

Keywords: Academic Integrity, AI-flagged Assignments, AI Plagiarism Detection Tools, Undergraduates

FROM MALADAPTIVE TO ADAPTIVE PERFECTIONISM: INSIGHTS FROM BUDDHIST TEACHINGS FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

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Perfectionism is a prevalent trait among gifted students, characterized by an intense drive to achieve exceptionally high standards. Educational psychology categorizes students with this tendency into two major types: adaptive perfectionists, who pursue high standards in a healthy manner, and maladaptive perfectionists, whose striving is accompanied by significant negative consequences such as rigid thinking, a debilitating fear of failure, and an avoidance of new challenges. The research problem addressed in this paper is exploring the extent to which Buddhist teachings can be applied to mitigate the problem of maladaptive perfectionism in this specific student population. Modern educational theory identifies several causes for this maladaptive perfectionistic drive, including the students' own lofty internal expectations, external pressure from parents or teachers, and a critical disparity between their advanced intellectual capabilities and their emotional maturity. Furthermore, constant social comparison with peers intensifies the need to excel and be the best. These underlying causes create a need for interventions that address the root mindset, which Buddhist teachings are well-suited to provide. This research, grounded in the sutta explanations provided by the Buddha, identifies several potent Buddhist solutions. Chief among them is the Middle Path or *Majjhima Patipada*, a principle advocating for balanced effort that avoids the extremes of frantic striving and passive laziness. Just as a lute only produces beautiful music when its strings are neither too tight nor too loose, success arises from steady, balanced effort, not frantic force. This understanding directly helps to alleviate the core fear of failure. Beyond the Middle Path, other Buddhist concepts offer significant therapeutic potential. Equanimity or *Upekkha* fosters mental stability, allowing students to face both success and failure with composure. Developing a Growth Mindset through the lens of impermanence or *Anicca* reframes mistakes as transient opportunities for learning rather than permanent flaws. Establishing Mindfulness or *Sati* creates a non-judgmental awareness of perfectionistic thoughts, reducing their emotional grip. Finally, cultivating altruism channels the student's drive away from self-centred achievement and towards compassionate action for others, naturally subduing egocentric perfectionism. In conclusion, the Buddhist approach offers a comprehensive and compassionate framework for transforming maladaptive perfectionism. By guiding gifted students towards mindful and balanced effort, emotional equanimity, and altruistic purpose, it paves the way for a more harmonious, resilient, and ultimately more fulfilling path into personal and academic growth.

Keywords: Gifted, Perfectionism, Middle Way, Concept of Impermanence

SOURCES OF ACADEMIC ANXIETY AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN STATE UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA

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Academic Anxiety (AA) is a critical concern in higher education. The aim of this study is to examine the sources of academic anxiety among undergraduate (Ug) students in state universities in Sri Lanka. The study specifically aimed to discuss the levels of AA caused by different sources among male and female Ug students, to investigate the association between gender and the sources of AA, to analyse the academic year-wise distribution of sources of AA among Ug students, and to identify the association between the academic year and the levels of AA across different sources. The study was guided by the positivist paradigm and employed a quantitative, descriptive, and cross-sectional design. A total of 270 Bachelor of Education Ugs were selected from three state universities using Krejcie and Morgan's sample size table. Data were collected through a structured, self-administered questionnaire adapted from validated tools followed through a pilot study. Analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, and Chi-square tests of independence. The results indicated that study-related tasks and language-related concerns emerged as universal sources of high anxiety across genders, reflecting heavy workloads, assessment pressures, and communication challenges. Significant gender differences were observed in emotional and social sources of anxiety. Female Ugs reported excessively higher levels of emotional anxiety with over half of them experiencing high levels of emotional anxiety compared to less than one-third of males ($\chi^2 = 10.101$, $p < 0.01$). Social anxiety also showed a strong gender effect, with females reporting significantly higher levels of social anxiety than males ($\chi^2 = 39.731$, $p < 0.001$). Study-related, language-related, and family-related sources did not show significant associations with gender, although males reported higher family-related anxiety. Academic year analysis revealed consistently high levels of anxiety across all sources. Language-related anxiety increased steadily from first year (67.7%) to third year (87.7%), highlighting growing challenges in communication ($\chi^2 = 11.152$, $p = 0.025$), while study-related, emotional, social, and family-related sources did not show significant differences across years. These findings suggest that study-related tasks and language-related stressors are commonly experienced, whereas emotional and social stressors exert a greater influence on female students, and language-related difficulties increase with academic progression. The results emphasize the need for institution-wide support systems, including gender-sensitive counselling, social support mechanisms, and structured language development programs, to lessen AA and promote student well-being in Sri Lankan state universities. Focusing only on Bachelor of Education Ugs from three selected state universities limits its generalizability and its cross-sectional design prevents analysis of changes over time. The study recommends that future research adopt a longitudinal mixed-methods approach, incorporating a wider range of disciplines and universities to develop a more comprehensive understanding of AA among Ugs in the state universities in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Academic Anxiety, Gender Differences, Language Anxiety, Sources of Academic Anxiety, Undergraduate Students.

BRIDGING THE GAP: EXPLORING SKILL-SEPARATION AND INTEGRATION IN ESL INSTRUCTION IN A SRI LANKAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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The teaching of reading, writing, listening, and speaking remains a central concern in English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. However, whether these four skills should be taught separately or through an integrated approach continues to be debated within the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). Across Sri Lankan state universities, diverse pedagogical models are in place: while some institutions promote integrated skills instruction, others teach these skills in isolation through separate courses or semesters. The present study focuses on a selected state university where reading and writing are taught in one semester, followed by listening and speaking in the next. Despite the prevalence of such skill-separation practices, limited empirical research has examined their effectiveness from the perspectives of learners and instructors in the Sri Lankan higher education context. Against this backdrop, the study aimed to investigate students' and teachers' perceptions of the current skill-separation model in comparison with integrated approaches to ESL instruction. The study sample comprised approximately 200 first-year undergraduates from the selected university. Data were collected through student surveys and semi-structured interviews conducted with both learners and instructors attached to the English Language Teaching Unit. The findings revealed a range of perspectives. While many students appreciated the focused practice offered by skill-specific courses, a considerable number reported difficulties in transferring knowledge and strategies from one semester to another. These students expressed a preference for more integrated instruction that would allow them to apply receptive and productive skills in complementary ways. Teachers shared similar sentiments, acknowledging that skill-focused courses are easier to design and assess, yet recognizing their limitations in promoting holistic language competence and authentic communication. The study concludes that a hybrid model—combining focused skill development with integrated communicative tasks—may provide a more effective framework for ESL instruction in higher education. The findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on ESL pedagogy in Sri Lanka and offer valuable implications for curriculum development, instructional design, and teacher training across state universities.

Keywords: ELT, ESL, Integrated Skills, Undergraduates

TOWARDS COMPLIANCE WITH UNTOC: STRENGTHENING SRI LANKA'S LEGAL FRAMEWORK TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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Outsourced human trafficking organization deeply challenges Sri Lanka's legal and policy system. Sri Lanka is a member through ratification of the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and therefore is obligated to take comprehensive preventive measures for trafficking in persons, aid in victim protection, and prosecution of offenders. In principle, Sri Lanka has created some laws and policies, however, there is a lot of unmet substantive compliance, practical enforcement, and institutional capacity. Sri Lanka's legal system in regard to the prescribed Articles of UNTOC (5-8, 10-23) and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons is the focus of the research carried out in a doctrinal method. By critically analyzing the constituent elements that define human trafficking, the study evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the legal framework in Sri Lanka. A comparative legal analysis of Pakistan and Canada is undertaken to contextualize the approach in Sri Lanka and identify normative and institutional best practices. The research discovers that although Sri Lanka has enacted relevant legislation and adopted some protective mechanisms, there are critical deficiencies in victim identification, prosecution effectiveness, inter-agency coordination, and international cooperation. Additionally, the limited implementation of protective and preventive measures undermines the capacity of the state to completely meet its obligations. The study concludes that Sri Lanka must move beyond formal compliance and adopt a more robust, victim-centered, and integrated legal strategy. Recommendations include amending domestic laws to reflect precise and extensive definitions of trafficking, strengthening victim assistance and witness protection schemes, enhancing prosecutorial awareness, and institutionalizing cross-border cooperation. Focused on comparative analysis, the research proposes a national anti- trafficking framework that harmonizes legal clarity with practical effectiveness, aiming to enhance compliance with international norms and improve the domestic response to human trafficking.

Keywords: Human Trafficking, UNTOC, Transnational Crime, Victim-Centered Approach

CULTURAL PLURALISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS: CHALLENGES OF INCLUSION IN INDIA, SRI LANKA, AND BANGLADESH

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South Asia, as a deeply multicultural region encompassing diverse ethnicities, religions, languages, and indigenous groups, presents significant challenges to the enforcement of universal human rights. This study examines how cultural identity intersects with human rights protection in three South Asian countries: India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. While cultural pluralism enriches social life, it also produces structural tensions in these societies, where entrenched customs, religious norms, caste- and class-based hierarchies, and patriarchal traditions frequently undermine universal human rights standards. These tensions disproportionately affect women, minorities, and indigenous communities, whose equal participation in political, economic, and social spheres is often restricted. Using a qualitative methodology, this research draws on secondary data, including academic scholarship, governmental publications, UN reports, and policy documents. The study focuses on key areas where rights violations are most prominent: gender equality and women's rights, religious and linguistic freedoms, and access to education and healthcare among marginalized and indigenous groups. Although all three countries are signatories to major international human rights treaties, the lack of robust regional human rights mechanisms in South Asia reveals a critical institutional gap. The findings indicate that despite formal legal protections, the effective realization of rights is frequently hindered by persistent social hierarchies, political expediency, and cultural relativist arguments that prioritize tradition over universality. This study argues that responding to cultural relativism requires an approach that respects cultural identity while firmly upholding fundamental human rights. Meaningful inclusion therefore demands culturally sensitive policymaking, stronger representation of minority groups in governance, and community-led mechanisms that promote participation and accountability. Ultimately, the research concludes that harmonizing cultural identity with universal human rights is essential for building equitable and inclusive societies in South Asia. Policymakers, civil society actors, and international agencies must adopt a collaborative and context-specific framework that ensures diversity becomes a source of empowerment rather than an obstacle to human rights protection.

Keywords: Human Rights, Cultural Identity, Cultural Relativism, South Asia

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: AN ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL POLICY ON DISABILITY FOR SRI LANKA, 2003

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Access to justice is a cornerstone of equality, human dignity, and the rule of law. For persons with disabilities, it represents both a legal entitlement and a substantive human right, affirmed in Sri Lanka's Constitution, the National Policy on Disability for Sri Lanka, 2003 and international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Despite this policy framework, many people with disabilities face exclusion from judicial processes, raising concerns regarding the effectiveness of existing protections. Although the National Policy on Disability 2003 outlines clear commitments to accessibility, gaps remain between policy and practice. There are barriers persist at multiple levels: physical obstacles such as inaccessible court buildings, procedural deficiencies including the shortage of sign language interpreters and accessible legal materials, and institutional limitations arising from insufficient training and pervasive ableist attitudes among legal professionals and practitioners. These challenges question the extent to which Sri Lanka has achieved meaningful access to justice for persons with disabilities. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with persons with disabilities, policymakers, and legal practitioners, while quantitative data were drawn from court records, accessibility audits, and policy reviews. This combination enabled triangulation of perspectives and strengthened the reliability of findings. Results indicate a persistent gap between statutory recognition of disability rights and their practical realization. Compliance with accessibility regulations is inconsistent, procedural accommodation is limited, and institutional support remains inadequate. The landmark Supreme Court case *Ajith C. S. Perera v. Attorney General and Others* (2011) affirmed accessibility as a constitutional guarantee under Articles 12(1) and 12(4). However, weak enforcement mechanisms, fragmented inter-agency coordination, and limited resources continue to undermine its impact. The study highlights the urgent need for Sri Lanka to operationalize the principles of the National Policy on Disability 2003. Recommended measures include stricter enforcement of accessibility standards, appointment of accessibility officers in judicial institutions, expansion of disability-sensitive legal aid services, integration of disability rights into legal and judicial training, and enhanced legal literacy for persons with disabilities. Addressing structural, procedural, and attitudinal barriers through coordinated inter-agency collaboration will strengthen access to justice and promote a more inclusive legal system.

Keywords: Justice, Equality, Non-Discrimination, Disability

DISTINCTIVENESS OF THESAWALAMAI: A COMPARATIVE STUDY WITH MARUMAKKATHAYAM AND HINDU LAW

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Though Jaffna culture aligns more closely with coastal Tamil Nadu, it is frequently attributed to Kerala. Colonial administrators often referred to the Tamils as “Malabars” and used the term during the codification of local customs, creating a lasting perception that the *Thesawalamai* was derived from Kerala’s *Marumakkathayam*. Initially compiled by the Portuguese, codified by the Dutch, and reinforced by the British, *Thesawalamai* was shaped by colonial interpretations and later framed as a hybrid of *Marumakkathayam* and Hindu Law. However, few studies have systematically examined its originality, while leaving comparative analysis within the respective cultural contexts insufficient. This study employs a literature-based comparative approach to re-examine *Thesawalamai* within its lived cultural and historic contexts, specifically focusing on the gendered dimensions of the family system. The findings reveal significant differences across the three legal systems. While Hindu Law regarded marriage as a sacramental union and *Marumakkathayam* as a socio-religious practice, in Jaffna, marriage was historically a civil and economic contract that was later religiously institutionalised through Sanskritisation. Unlike Hindu and Kerala practices, consummation was not part of Jaffna marriage rituals. Cross-cousin marriage, prohibited in Hindu Law, was accepted in Jaffna as well as in South India. While *Marumakkathayam* allowed both polygamy and polyandry, and Hindu Law accepted polygamy, *Thesawalamai* denied legitimacy to both by revoking spousal property rights once another marriage was contracted. Residence patterns further distinguished the systems: Hindu Law emphasised patrilocality; *Marumakkathayam* was duolocal, whereas Jaffna society was predominantly matrilocal. Inheritance and property systems also diverged: both men and women in Jaffna could own property, while *Marumakkathayam* prioritised women’s property rights, and ancient Hindu Law denied women’s independence in ownership. Moreover, custody of children in Jaffna belonged to women, contrasting with male-dominated custody under Hindu Law and matriarchal custody in Kerala. The comparative evidence demonstrates that although *Thesawalamai* reflects certain similarities with Kerala’s *Marumakkathayam* and Indian Hindu Law, it embodies distinct socio-cultural adaptations contextualised in Jaffna. Thus, it cannot be reduced to a borrowed system but should be recognised as a simultaneously evolved, indigenous legal tradition rooted in Dravidian culture and shaped by local social structures, gender relations, and residence patterns.

Keywords: Customary Law, *Thesawalamai*, *Marumakkathayam*, Hindu Law

FROM DISPLACEMENT TO COEXISTENCE: A HISTORICAL STUDY OF TAMIL – MUSLIM RELATIONS IN POST WAR- JAFFNA (2009 -2025)

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This study investigates the transformation of Tamil–Muslim relations in the Jaffna District of Sri Lanka during the post-civil war period from 2009 to 2025, with a particular focus on the trajectory from displacement to coexistence. Historically, Muslims migrated from Arabia and Malabar as traders and gradually established permanent settlements in Sri Lanka, where Tamil served as a shared language and medium of cultural integration for a long time. This long-standing coexistence was severely disrupted in 1990 when the LTTE forcibly expelled Muslims from the region, displacing them to Puttalam, Anuradhapura, Batticaloa, and the hill country, leaving enduring scars on inter-communal relations. The end of the civil war in 2009 facilitated the gradual resettlement of Muslims in Jaffna and the revival of mosques, schools, and commercial networks, reshaping the landscape of interethnic interactions since the end of the civil war. There have been complex relationships between Muslims and Tamils in Jaffna, with some groups on the side of coexistence and others advocating for divisive politics. The present study aims to analyze the evolving features of Tamil–Muslim relations in the post-war period, identify the challenges of reconciliation and reintegration, and assess the wider political, economic, and cultural implications of these processes. Methodologically, the study adopts a historical and qualitative approach, utilizing primary data from field surveys, focus group discussions, interviews, village-level statistics, divisional secretariat reports, and contemporary press sources, supplemented by secondary literature and the data were analyzed thematically. Findings reveal that post-war Tamil–Muslim relations are marked by strong economic interdependence, particularly in trade and commerce, accompanied by the gradual reestablishment of social trust and cultural coexistence, despite lingering memories of displacement. The study concludes that these relations exemplify resilience and adaptability, offering a microcosmic model for reconciliation and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka. By situating the process of reintegration within a historical framework, the research underscores the importance of grassroots interactions in shaping sustainable ethnic harmony and contributing to broader national unity in the post-conflict era. It is recommended that measures should be taken to build coexistence between these communities in addition to structural changes that ensure justice for both parties with the proportionate participation of both ethnic groups.

Keywords: Tamil–Muslim Relations, Jaffna, Reconciliation, Post-War Coexistence

HUMAN RIGHTS CHALLENGES IN THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES: A CASE STUDY IN SRI LANKA

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This study investigates the systemic barriers undermining the civil, political, and economic rights of children with disabilities in Sri Lanka. Despite national and international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), deep-seated cultural stigma and institutional neglect compromise their fundamental dignity and social inclusion. This research employs a qualitative case study approach. As such, the primary data source is a single critical case file from the Anuradhapura District, which was identified during the author's direct field experience as a Child Protection Officer. This specific case is leveraged as a robust example of systemic discrimination and neglect. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to extract and categorize recurring patterns of rights violations. The case analysis centers on a child born with a disability whose family faced immediate institutional exclusion. This was exemplified by the local funeral society attempting to amend its constitution to deny the family benefits. Furthermore, the child and siblings endured severe social isolation and restrictions on play due to pervasive cultural myths within the village, illustrating a profound violation of the child's right to development and social participation. The study concludes that cultural myths, institutionalized discrimination, and a lack of awareness as the primary factors of human rights violations against children with disabilities. A rights-based approach, community sensitization, and inclusive policy reforms are urgently required to safeguard dignity, equality, and social participation for children with disabilities in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Child Rights, Disability, Human Rights, Discrimination

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL-BASED HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION (HRE) IN BUILDING HUMAN RIGHTS CULTURE IN SRI LANKA

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The primary objective of the Sri Lankan education system is to produce knowledgeable and socially responsible citizens. Human Rights Education (HRE) inculcates certain values to recognize human dignity, respect others' rights and enable individuals to actively contribute to protect Human Rights. This research examines how HRE influences school students' understanding, attitudes, behaviors, and the development of a human rights culture. HRE has been recognized as a vital mechanism for building democracy, peace, and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. Since the conclusion of the civil conflict in 2009, HRE has been given a significant importance in promoting justice, social cohesion, harmony, and sustainable peace. Drawing from international and national reports and programs, this study argues that HRE should be an essential component of the Sri Lankan school system. A mixed-methods approach is adopted in this study. Qualitative data were collected from interviews with teachers, students, and officials, focus groups, classroom observations, and document analysis. Quantitative data are gathered through structured questionnaires to measure students' knowledge and attitudes on Human rights education. The study is framed by active citizenship theory, social learning theory, and critical pedagogy, investigating how HRE fosters openness, encourages critical examination of social issues, and motivates participation in social change. Specific human rights issues such as equality, children's rights, social justice, and freedom of expression are integrated within school programs. Additionally, this study evaluates current HRE practices and explores the potential of digital platforms to enhance HRE, while emphasizing the integration of environmental citizenship and sustainability into overall civic education. Initial findings indicate that teachers' lack of sufficient competency and formal training in teaching civic education is a limitation, resulting in relatively static teaching practices and no observable shifts in students' attitudes or behaviors. The preliminary analysis shows that although HRE is implemented to some extent, teachers often have limited opportunities for training in practical aspects of HRE, and challenges remain in delivery methods and learning environments. Accordingly, this research aims to lay the foundation for the successful advancement of HRE in Sri Lanka. It also provides critical insights into the challenges and practical strategies necessary to foster a human rights culture through schools. Strengthening human rights in post-conflict societies, in turn, contributes to a broader debate on social justice, equity, and civic engagement.

Keywords: HRE, School Education, Active Citizenship, Digital Platforms, Sustainability

NEGLECTION OF THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD IN THE SRI LANKAN CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM: A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

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The principle of the best interests of the child is internationally recognized as a cornerstone of child rights protection. It is one of the four principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and further elaborated in General Comment No. 14. In Sri Lanka, Article 5(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights also affirms this principle as a primary concern in all matters affecting children. Despite these legal commitments, violations remain widespread, raising concerns about the effectiveness of the child protection system. This study examines how the best interests of the child were compromised in three case studies, all of which involved legal proceedings and psychosocial support interventions and were formally reported to the National Child Protection Authority. The three cases involved a child who had been sexually abused, a child who had been subjected to cruelty by a teacher, and children who experienced physical and psychological abuse and neglect within a family affected by domestic violence. The research adopts a qualitative case study methodology, relying on case files and field experiences as primary sources of evidence. Data were analyzed using thematic qualitative content analysis, enabling the identification of patterns, tracing of institutional responses, examination of decision-making processes, and evaluation of how children's rights were addressed in practice. The findings reveal that in the studied cases, children experienced exposure to violence and neglect without timely protection, were excluded from decisions affecting their lives, and were denied access to basic needs and essential services such as health, education, and safe care. Adult- and institution-centered decisions often overrode children's rights and welfare, leading to revictimization and leaving vulnerabilities unaddressed. Legal and psychosocial interventions were inadequate, and institutional weaknesses, including poor coordination, delays, and lack of accountability, compounded these breaches, further undermining protection. The study concludes that meaningful reform requires structural and professional strengthening of the child protection system. Legal measures must be reinforced to ensure equality before the law and consistent protection, but legal reform alone is insufficient. A professional social work approach improved institutional roles, higher professional standards, stronger inter-agency coordination, and the inclusion of psychosocial support mechanisms are essential to safeguarding the best interests of the child in practice.

Keywords: Child Protection, Child Rights Violations, Child Vulnerability, Social Work

SEMANTIC DIFFERENCES OF THE LOANWORDS FROM SINHALA TO TAMIL – A COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS STUDY (BASED ON DENIYAYA, MATARA DISTRICT, SOUTHERN PROVINCE)

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The main languages spoken in Sri Lanka are Sinhala and Tamil, and these two languages are official languages in Sri Lanka. This study investigates the semantic variations of Sinhala loanwords (specifically nouns) in the Sinhala and Tamil languages. While Tamil has historically contributed a significant number of lexical items to Sinhala, the meanings of these borrowed terms have not remained static. Using a comparative linguistic approach, the research analyzes a selected corpus of Sinhala loanwords in both languages, identifying shifts such as semantic narrowing, broadening, and change. Data was collected from bilingual dictionaries, literary texts, and spoken language corpora, and analyzed qualitatively to determine patterns of semantic divergence. The findings reveal that many loanwords have undergone notable shifts in meaning within Tamil, influenced by sociolinguistic and cultural factors. This research contributes to the broader understanding of language contact phenomena and the dynamics of meaning evolution in multilingual contexts. The objective of this research was to study about loanwords specially nouns, which are taken from Sinhala to Tamil. This research will be conducted in the Southern province, Deniyaya of Matara district. The problem of this research is whether there are any semantic differences in the loanwords (nouns) which are taken from the Sinhala language to the Tamil language. The research was done according to the comparative linguistics method. A sample of individuals was selected from both sides and the data collected through direct observation were aligned and balanced according to linguistics whether their semantic disparity and data was analyzed considering the descriptive method, which facilitates the understanding of any semantical differences. For instance, terms such as *pol sambōla*, *paṇsāla*, *pōrāṇuvā* do not possess semantical variations while terms such as *oluvā*, *miḍulu*, *varāka*, *muṭu* possess semantical variations. This research is very useful for Tamil linguists who study Sinhala as a second language.

Keywords: Sinhala, Tamil, Lexical, Loanwords, Semantics, Linguistics

WHEN SOUNDS MEET SPELLING: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY ON PHONOLOGY-DRIVEN WRITING ERRORS AMONG ESL UNDERGRADUATES IN A SRI LANKAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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Phonological errors refer to inaccuracies in sound production that may alter meaning or affect intelligibility. While such errors are often discussed in relation to oral communication, they can also appear in writing when learners write what they hear, or what they believe they hear, without adhering to their target language orthographic conventions. This study investigates phonology-driven writing errors among English as a Second Language (ESL) undergraduates in Sri Lanka, with particular attention to the ways in which subtle phonological variations influence spelling practices. Adopting a qualitative discourse analysis framework, the study draws upon 50 writing samples produced by lower-basic (30) and lower-intermediate (20) Humanities undergraduates at a state university. To enrich the analysis, focus group interviews and classroom observations were also conducted to capture learners' reflections on their writing practices and to contextualize the written data within their classroom behaviours. The findings reveal that although the participants pronounce words accurately, they often display inconsistencies in their writing. Typical examples include *concoider* for *consider*, *screem* for *stream*, *oppochunity* for *opportunity*, *serve* for *survive*, and *parth* for *path*. These errors point to a divergence between oral and written language performance, where learners' reliance on auditory impressions of words results in orthographic inaccuracies. The analysis further indicates that students possess a reasonable understanding of word roots, however, phonological distinctions often trigger inappropriate grapheme substitutions. For example, the /ch/ in *opportunity* is replaced with the /ch/ in *chair* or *chess*, while the /aa/ in *path* is replaced with /ar/. The study concludes that effective interventions should avoid overemphasis on phonetic transcription systems, rigid pronunciation drills or rote memorization of words. Instead, it recommends context-based teaching strategies that highlight the nuances embedded in these commonly confused words. Creative pedagogical approaches, such as word card games, Bingo, hangman, and puzzles are proposed to encourage learners to actively notice and internalize spelling differences in meaningful contexts. Such an approach has the potential to reduce phonology-driven writing errors while simultaneously enhancing learner engagement and autonomy.

Keywords: Creative pedagogy, ESL, Phonology-driven writing errors, Spelling errors

INTEGRATING SOCIAL MEDIA INTO CREATIVE WRITING IN ESL CLASSROOM: ACTION RESEARCH ON USING FACEBOOK TO IMPROVE WRITING AMONG THE STATE UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES

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In the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom, among the four skills taught; reading, writing, speaking and listening, the students tend to be less motivated in writing tasks. They show less enthusiasm towards the writing tasks and even when they do, their writing shows less creativity. This action research was conducted as an intervention to find a solution for the lack of motivation and creativity in writing among students. Facebook, a social media platform, was used as a pedagogical tool to enhance creative writing among the students who were studying in group 25 in the basic competency level in a state university in Sri Lanka. The action research was conducted in three cycles. In cycle 1, a class-specific Facebook page was created where the students were assigned weekly creative writing topics and were encouraged to comment on their peers' posts to motivate peer learning. At this stage, students engaged in weekly postings, however, it was visible that there was less peer interaction in the posts. Thus, the second intervention was initiated, where the students were required to provide comments on their peers' posts, which is expected to improve their writing. This resulted in an increase in participation and more varied writing. However, the quality of comments remained superficial and confined to one or two words. Consequently, the third interference was initiated, which is providing students with a simple feedback framework (one strength and one suggestion). This intervention encouraged more constructive interaction, and student writing showed noticeable improvement in creativity, fluency, and depth. Findings indicate that the use of Facebook created an interactive and supportive learning environment, motivating students to write more consistently while also fostering collaborative learning. The study highlights that social media, when used purposefully with structured guidance, can effectively complement traditional writing instruction. It suggests that digital platforms not only enhance learner engagement but also provide opportunities for students to develop critical writing and peer-review skills.

Keywords: Creativity, Peer learning, Social media, Writing

THE CONTRIBUTION OF AGING WOMEN TO LABOR IN CONTEMPORARY KOREAN LITERATURE

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This study explores the contributions of aging women to labor that are often marginalized or overlooked in both literature and society. Although women's labor has been widely discussed in feminist scholarship, the contributions of aging women particularly in Asian contexts remain underexplored. Contemporary Korean fiction offers a critical space to analyze how older women contribute to society through unpaid familial labor or professional engagement. This study examines the contributions of aging women to labor in two contemporary Korean novels: *Please Look After Mom* by Shin Kyung-sook and *The Old Woman with the Knife* by Gu Byeong-mo. It aims to explore how these texts resist cultural narratives that combine aging with decline and invisibility while also challenging gendered assumptions that devalue women's labor in both private and public spheres. This research uses a comparative analysis to examine how the older female protagonists confront invisibility and marginalization by redefining notions of value and productivity beyond traditional portrayals. The study identifies two distinct portrayals. *Please Look after Mom* portrays an aging woman whose unpaid physical labor supports the productivity and success of her family members while erasing her own visibility and worth. Conversely, *The Old Woman with the Knife* portrays an aging woman who actively resists social invisibility and asserts her independence by being competent in a field dominated by youth and men. Together, these portrayals expand the boundaries of what constitutes a meaningful contribution to labor by foregrounding both invisible domestic work and professional engagement. The study highlights the profound roles played by aging women within private and public spheres, reimagining aging as a stage of growth, agency and redefined value. Ultimately, this study calls attention to literary and social discourses to acknowledge the diverse contributions of older women, aiming to foster a more inclusive understanding of work, productivity and value.

Keywords: Aging, Contribution, Labor, Women

COLLABORATIVE READING, CONFIDENT SPEAKING: THE ROLE OF LITERATURE CIRCLES IN ENHANCING THE SPEAKING SKILLS OF UNDERGRADUATE ESL LEARNERS IN A SRI LANKAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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Incorporating literature into ESL curricula has long been a subject of debate, primarily due to the traditional perception of literary texts as structurally complex materials, laden with figurative language and culturally specific details that may confuse language learners. Nevertheless, literature as a pedagogical resource has attracted increasing interest in recent scholarly discourse. This study posits that the strategic integration of literature into English as a Second Language (ESL) curricula enhances speaking competency and, consequently, positively influences learners' cognitive, psychological, and motivational domains. This study examines ESL undergraduate learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of literature circles in improving their speaking skills. In this context, literature circles refer to small, peer-led discussion groups in which learners collaboratively engage with a written text to facilitate discussion. The study was conducted in the Science Faculty of a state university in Sri Lanka, involving 48 first-year students who achieved average marks on the Faculty's English placement test corresponding to an intermediate proficiency level. A total of twelve short stories were selected for the discussions, guided by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) framework. The students were invited to participate in literature discussions, with a different text assigned each week, totaling 12 two-hour sessions. Before each session, all 48 students were reorganized into smaller clusters of six students each. The discussions were student-centered and teacher facilitated. Upon the completion of the twelve discussion rounds, semi-structured interviews were conducted. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, and the data were analyzed thematically using a qualitative approach. The findings indicated that literature circles significantly enhanced ESL learners' speaking skills by promoting memory enhancement, self-scaffolding, and unconscious learning, while also boosting speaking confidence, aesthetic engagement, and intrinsic motivation through collaborative reading and discussion. The study further highlighted the need to prioritize science-related themes in text selection, reduce the use of L1, and integrate targeted tasks into literature circles to boost participation and learning outcomes.

Keywords: Collaborative Reading, ESL Learners, Intrinsic Motivation, Literature Circles, Speaking Skills

TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE USE OF CHATGPT BY UNDERGRADUATES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE WRITING AT A SRI LANKAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) marks a significant transformation in tertiary education, reshaping pedagogical approaches and student engagement. In the context of English Language Teaching (ELT), the usage of AI tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot have become increasingly prevalent/popular among undergraduates. With the growing presence of these tools in academia, it is crucial to understand the views of the educators on implications of AI in ELT classroom contexts. This study aims to investigate the University English teachers' attitudes towards the use of ChatGPT by undergraduates for all the writings in the ELT classrooms, in a state university in Sri Lanka. Further, the study explores challenges and concerns teachers have faced in relation to ChatGPT and the degree to which they are willing to integrate ChatGPT as a supplementary writing tool in ELT classrooms. A mixed-method research design was employed to collect data to explore deeper perceptions and experiences. Sample of the study consists of English language teachers from the Department of English Language Teaching (DELT), at a state university, Sri Lanka. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed among purposively selected staff members while the qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted among the teachers with more than ten years of teaching experience. Google form was used to analyze quantitative data, and thematic analysis was employed to analyze qualitative data. It was discovered that most of the teachers have positive attitudes towards integrating ChatGPT into English language writing lessons. However, the teachers from Arts faculty and the Medical faculty had different opinions regarding the use of ChatGPT in English writing. Arts faculty teachers emphasized that ChatGPT has hindered the students' creativity and logical thinking whereas the medical faculty staff stated that the students are not allowed to use ChatGPT in any circumstance because of the Code of Medical Ethics, even in writings. Still, respondents stressed concerns regarding plagiarism and students' over-reliance on AI, noting that ChatGPT deters creativity and critical thinking. Nevertheless, the majority confirmed that ChatGPT contributes to improve writing skills, vocabulary, grammar and sentence structures of English language. The study concludes that teacher training should be prioritized focusing on the awareness of the ethical limitations associated with ChatGPT. This can be integrated into classroom writing practices to keep pace with the technologically dynamic world for effective and responsible usage of technology in language classrooms.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), ChatGPT, English Language Teaching (ELT), Writing Purposes

REDUCING COGNITIVE OVERLOAD IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: THE ROLE OF AI AND WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT IN SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITIES

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This study examines how heavy academic workloads influence English language learning among undergraduates in Sri Lankan universities and whether artificial intelligence (AI) can support workload management to reduce cognitive overload and enable meaningful learning. The purpose was to identify the mechanisms through which concurrent assignments, dense reading lists, and overlapping deadlines shape study behaviour and language outcomes, and to assess the perceived benefits and risks of AI-supported study aids. A qualitative design was adopted. The population comprised undergraduates in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Peradeniya, together with lecturers responsible for English-language-related courses. Using purposive sampling, the study selected 60 undergraduates across academic years and 6 lecturers as key informants (n = 66). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, Direct Classroom observations, and document analysis of course outlines, assessment briefs, and reading lists. Data were analysed using thematic analysis with iterative coding and constant comparison; documents were subjected to directed content analysis to map workload features and their alignment with language-learning tasks. Analysis showed that heavy workloads produce cognitive overload that narrows attention, reduces time on deliberate practice, and leads to surface-level engagement with English. Three recurrent challenges were identified: workload-related stress that limits experimentation with speaking and writing and weakens long-term retention; reliance on survival strategies such as rote memorisation that conflict with communicative competence; and unequal access to supportive technologies which widens outcome differences. Students and lecturers reported that selected AI tools, including grammar and style checkers, summarising tools, and adaptive practice platforms, can help manage routine demands and reduce cognitive strain when used with clear guidance. Concerns focused on overdependence, academic integrity, and possible erosion of self-regulated learning if AI is used without pedagogical scaffolding. The study concludes that workload policies which limit unnecessary task duplication and appropriately sequence assessments, combined with structured and equitable AI integration in language classes, can support deeper engagement and more stable progress in English. Institutions should review course design for workload balance, provide access to approved AI tools with usage guidelines, and train staff and students in responsible practices so that technology complements rather than replaces active learning.

Keywords: Cognitive overload, English language learning, Artificial intelligence, Workload management

TRANSLANGUAGING AS COGNITIVE AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY IN DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF ICT AND COMPUTER SCIENCE UNDERGRADUATES AT UNIVERSITY OF KELANIYA

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In multilingual higher education contexts, ICT and Computer Science undergraduates frequently encounter challenges in understanding complex technical content delivered solely in English. Addressing this challenge, the present study examines translanguaging, the strategic integration of students' first language (s) with English, as a cognitive and communicative tool to enhance understanding and collaboration in discipline-specific learning. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the contexts, purposes and functions of translanguaging as employed by undergraduates to support their comprehension of core computing concepts, acquisition of programming skills and engagement in technical problem-solving tasks. A qualitative research design was adopted using purposive sampling, involving structured interviews with 45 third-year ICT and Computer Science undergraduates at the Faculty of Computing and Technology, University of Kelaniya. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns, functions and learner perspectives on translanguaging practices. Findings revealed that participants regularly use translanguaging to decode technical terminology, scaffold abstract concepts such as algorithms, data structures and clarify programming syntax during coding exercises. Some participants demonstrated that translanguaging was utilized in peer-led discussions, collaborative debugging, technical presentations and report writing. Translanguaging enabled undergraduates to formulate precise reasoning during code planning and algorithm design stages. Translanguaging facilitated precise reasoning during code planning and algorithm design and supported troubleshooting during lab sessions as students discussed errors and logic in their L1 before articulating solutions in English. Additionally, some participants relied on translanguaging to interpret English-dominant documentation and online programming tutorials, especially when faced with unfamiliar jargon or fast-paced explanations. Moreover, a few participants engaged in collaborative translation of lecture content notes into L1 to aid retention and later revision. The study concludes that translanguaging functions as an effective cognitive and communicative strategy that enhances both content learning and learner participation. It recommends integrating guided translanguaging practices within technical curricula to bridge conceptual understanding and academic language development.

Keywords: Translanguaging, ICT and Computer Science, Undergraduates, Discipline-specific language

FOSTERING LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE, CREATIVITY, AND CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH LITERATURE IN SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITY ESL CLASSROOMS

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The teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) in Sri Lanka has traditionally prioritized linguistic accuracy, often neglecting the role of literature in fostering creativity and critical thinking. In today's educational context, where communicative competence is inseparable from higher-order skills such as creativity and critical thinking, the integration of literature into ESL pedagogy offers new possibilities and supports learners' engagement with diverse perspectives. This study explores how literary texts- poetry, short stories, plays, and films- can simultaneously enhance linguistic competence and nurture creativity and critical thinking among Sri Lankan undergraduates studying English as a Second Language. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining classroom interventions with reflective analysis. ESL learners engaged in literature-based tasks involving interpretive reading, creative writing, and group discussions. Quantitative data were drawn from pre-and post-intervention language assessments, while qualitative insights were derived from classroom observations, student portfolios, and focus group interviews with students. The findings indicate measurable improvements in learners' vocabulary acquisition, grammatical accuracy, and fluency. More significantly, literature-based tasks encouraged learners to engage with texts beyond surface meaning, prompting them to question assumptions, reimagine narratives, and develop original responses, such as creating alternative endings, composing bilingual versions of poems, or critically debating character decisions in different literary texts. The analysis further revealed that creative literary tasks fostered collaboration and intercultural awareness, while critical discussion sharpened learners' evaluative and problem-solving skills. The integration of literature also demonstrated its unique ability to bridge cognitive and affective skills, supporting learners' linguistic growth while simultaneously fostering imagination, empathy, and reflective thinking. This study concludes that literature has unexplored potential as a holistic resource in ESL classrooms. By engaging with literary texts, learners are not only acquiring language but also developing creativity and critical thinking- skills essential for academic and professional success in multilingual societies. For educators, the findings call for a reorientation of ESL pedagogy that positions literature at the heart of language teaching, thereby aligning language education with the cognitive, cultural, and creative demands of the contemporary world.

Keywords: ESL, Literature, Competence, Creativity, Critical Thinking

THE CAUSES OF THE TROJAN WAR: THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RIVALRY

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The study was conducted to investigate the causes of the Trojan War. The main objectives of this study were to uncover the political and economic rivalry between Troy and Greece, and to investigate whether it had served as a root cause for the war, while the traditionally accepted cause of the war, the abduction of the Spartan Queen Helen by Paris, a Trojan prince, became the immediate cause. The Trojan War was a legendary battle that happened between the ancient Greeks and the Trojans in the 13th century BCE. The main source of information about this war is the Homeric Epics, composed in the 8th century BCE by Homer. Since the day they were composed, Helen became the sole reason for the war. Homer accuses her of bringing destruction to both nations. Even though he has never focused on the other possible reasons behind the battle, hints of political and economic rivalry between the Western Anatolians and the Mycenaeans can still be gleaned from his poems. Political unrest, and commercial rivalry are common implications that led to the war in Homeric poems (primary sources) and modern scholarship (secondary sources). Many secondary discourses have accepted the commonly believed factors of the war, while a few were concerned about the ongoing conflict between the two nations, prior to the war. Yet, no study has analyzed both the traditional cause and other causes, such as commercial rivalry and political unrest, standing in the middle ground. Thus, it is important to investigate this matter thoroughly. A qualitative research design is employed to gather data. Homeric poetry, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, Herodotus' *ιστορίαι*, and Thucydides' *Πελοποννησιακός Πόλεμος* served as the primary sources, while the scholarly discourse became the secondary data for the study. The research findings reveal plausible political and economic causes of the war that Homer has failed to mention. Through the exploration of the matter, it is highlighted that economic and political rivalries have become a major cause of the Trojan War, while the traditionally accepted cause has become a mere immediate cause.

Keywords: Helen, Economic Rivalry, Political Rivalry, Trojan War, Homeric Poems

PASSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS AND ACADEMIC WRITING OF UNDERGRADUATES: A COMMON ISSUE

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Academic writing is an indispensable skill required for higher studies. The most formal writing style adopted in academia is based on passive constructions. A considerable number of undergraduates who pursue their content subjects in English medium are unable to build correct passive constructions to express results, processes, methods, introductions and conclusions in written passive form. Their sentences are awkward, vague and lack clarity. Learners struggle and are confused with selecting and using correct passive constructions even in their second academic year. Many learners suffer from grammatical aphasia in writing reports projects and their dissertations. Therefore, their academic performance is far behind their counterparts at examinations. The objective of this study is to investigate effectiveness of a specially designed remedial course of study in response to the learners' claim that passive voice constructions are more difficult and hence they score low marks in academic writing activities. This study which uses convenient sampling is a quasi-experimental research design consisted of a sample of twenty-five second year students who follow their second-year management degree courses in English medium in a Sri Lankan state university. The relevant data was generated through a pre and post test conducted for both control and experimental groups after and before the language remedial treatment. The treatment included teaching logical structure of passive voice, different forms of 'be' verbs, past participle and the spellings of past participle. Gathered quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS statistical package. Results indicate that the given proper language remedial treatment to weaker learners with special emphasis on passive voice is significant. This study suggests that academic writing of such weaker students who stay behind their counterparts regarding academic performance due to lack of knowledge in using passive voice appropriately, can be upgraded by designing similar remedial courses.

Keywords: Passive constructions, Academic writing, Performance, Remedial treatment

A TRAUMATIC PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE DRAMA “ANNAI ITTA THEE”

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Human health, behaviour and activities are deeply influenced by society and the surrounding environment. These influences often create psychological wounds within individuals and the study that examines such impacts and possible remedies is known as Trauma psychology. Traumatic psychology is multidimensional, as the events that occur at the individual, family and social levels affect human emotions, eventually turning into psychological traumas. During times of war, displacement, loss of life and destruction of property create severe trauma among the people living in affected communities. Thus, trauma psychology becomes a significant aspect of war literature. Kulanthai M. Shanmugalingam is a pioneer of modern Tamil theatre in Eelam and he has produced powerful dramatic works centered on the wartime context of the Sri Lankan conflict. His wartime play, *Annai Itta Thee* reflects various forms of trauma experienced by individuals and society. Previous studies related to this play by S. Ganeshan (1997), S. Pathmanathan (1997), Somasundaram (1997), A. Jesurasa (1997) and P. Mohanathas (2006) have focused primarily on its thematic and aesthetic dimensions, but none have examined it from the perspective of trauma psychology. This gap in research forms the basis of the present study. This study takes *Annai Itta Thee* (1990) by Kulanthai M. Shanmugalingam as its primary source and aims to analyse the manifestations of trauma depicted in the play through the lens of trauma psychology. As a qualitative study, it employs content analysis and psychological interpretation based on trauma theory to examine the text.

Keywords: Trauma, *Annai Itta Thee*, Psychology, War Context

BHARTṚHARI'S INTERPRETATION OF THE *ĀTMANEPADA* IN THE *UPAGRAHA* SECTION OF THE *VĀKYAPADĪYA*

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This paper investigates the philosophical and linguistic implications of Bhartṛhari's interpretation of the *Ātmanepada* in the *Upagraha* section of the *Vākyapadīya*, demonstrating how a grammatical category becomes a medium for ontological, cognitive, and soteriological reflection. The research problem addressed in this study is how Bhartṛhari transforms what is traditionally treated as a mere morphological distinction—between *Ātmanepada* and *Parasmaipada*—into a profound expression of his ultimate philosophical principle, *Śabda-Brahman*, thereby linking grammatical form with metaphysical insight. In the Pāṇinian tradition, *Ātmanepada* denotes verbs whose results return to the agent, while *Parasmaipada* indicates outward-directed action; Bhartṛhari, however, reinterprets this distinction within a non-dual linguistic philosophy, transforming the reflexivity of *Ātmanepada* into a reflection of the reflexivity of consciousness itself. The study examines how verbal endings (*tīn*-affixes) function not merely as morphological markers but as *upādhis*—conditioning factors that shape the manifestation of meaning by mediating the interrelation of agent, action, and result, thereby encoding subtle epistemic and ontological dimensions within linguistic form. The methodology involves a careful textual and comparative analysis of the *Upagraha-samuddeśa*, integrating Bhartṛhari's discussion with his broader psycholinguistic theory of *Pratibhā*. Comparative reference to *Mīmāṃsā* and *Nyāya* is made not for chronological purposes but to illuminate the conceptual distinctions among classical Indian theories of sentence-meaning: while *Mīmāṃsā* and *Nyāya* interpret linguistic cognition in analytical and compositional terms, Bhartṛhari advances a holistic, non-dual account grounded in the unity of *śabda* and *jñāna*. This contextual contrast clarifies how his reinterpretation of the *Ātmanepada* transcends grammatical description to convey his vision of linguistic reflexivity as a manifestation of consciousness. The analysis reveals that *Ātmanepada* verbs encode self-referential action where the agent, act, and result coincide, exemplifying the indivisibility of sentence and meaning (*akhaṇḍa-vākyasphoṭa*) and the inward-directed cognition that Bhartṛhari associates with *śabda* and *Vāc* as *Śabda-Brahman*. This reflexivity not only underscores the integration of grammar and metaphysics but also anticipates modern cognitive and transformational linguistic perspectives, in which deep semantic structures guide surface linguistic expressions. The study concludes that Bhartṛhari's treatment of *Ātmanepada* in the *Upagraha* section bridges grammar, cognition, and metaphysics, demonstrating that linguistic forms can function as reflections of consciousness and agency, and that grammatical analysis may serve as a pathway to understanding the unity of action, cognition, and meaning.

Keywords: *Ātmanepada*, *Vākyapadīya*, Reflexivity, *Pratibhā*, *Śabda-Brahman*, *Śābdabodha*

BEYOND SYMBOLISM: REASSESSING LINGUISTIC HIERARCHIES IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE AGE OF AI

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Multilingualism is often celebrated as a hallmark of equality, inclusion, and cultural diversity in international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), and the World Health Organization (WHO). Yet, behind this language of inclusivity lies a more complex political and practical reality in which languages do not function equally across all communicative spaces. While English and French historically held disproportionate influence, contemporary practices, recruitment policies, and technology-driven communication have begun to shift these dynamics. This study examines how multilingual policies within these organizations reflect evolving global power relations, influencing who is heard, who participates, and how decisions are made. Using Norman Fairclough's framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, the research adopts a qualitative desk-based approach to examine institutional documents, legal frameworks, and foundational charters, including the UN Charter, the Treaty of Lisbon, and the WHO Constitution. It also considers policy statements, language use guidelines, official communication practices, and academic and policy literature. Through this layered analysis, the study uncovers how institutional discourse and practice may still sustain certain linguistic hierarchies, even amid reforms aimed at inclusivity. Findings indicate that although multilingualism is prominently promoted in official rhetoric and upheld through strict translation and interpretation regimes, its implementation can take on a symbolic dimension, particularly in informal and administrative communication not captured in official texts. In these contexts, English frequently emerges as the dominant working language, shaped as much by administrative efficiency and technological convenience as by historical structures of power. This linguistic centrality can inadvertently privilege certain communicative norms and limit fuller participation by speakers of less widely used languages, despite the formal right of member states to communicate in their own languages with translation support. However, the study also recognizes significant technological and institutional developments such as machine-assisted translation systems (for example, EU e-Translation and UN language technology initiatives), equity-oriented hiring practices, and open-access translation projects that aim to democratize linguistic input and challenge traditional hierarchies. The study argues that achieving true linguistic equity requires more than policy declarations. It calls for enforceable legal instruments, adequate funding for translation and interpretation, and the continued recruitment of multilingual professionals who represent the linguistic diversity of member states. The thoughtful integration of AI-supported translation systems, paired with human oversight and acknowledging that such systems are already widely used, could further promote accessible and inclusive interaction. By highlighting the deep connection between language, power, technology, and governance, this research contributes to ongoing debates on linguistic rights, justice, and institutional reform. It emphasizes that multilingualism must evolve from symbolic expression into a lived reality, enabling all linguistic communities to participate meaningfully in shaping global decision-making processes.

Keywords: Multilingualism, Language policy, International law, Discourse analysis, Linguistic equity

LANGUAGE JUSTICE IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD: TOWARD EQUITABLE MULTILINGUAL FUTURES

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In today's globalized world, language remains both a connector and a divider. While globalization has enabled unprecedented cross-cultural communication, it has also reinforced deep linguistic hierarchies that privilege dominant languages, especially English, while silencing or sidelining minority and indigenous languages. This study explores the concept of language justice, understood as the fair and equitable treatment of all languages and their speakers, and the guarantee that every individual can access communication, education, public services, and legal processes in a language they understand. It approaches language justice as both a human right and a legal necessity, emphasizing the need to ensure equitable access to communication, education, and governance for all linguistic communities. The study seeks to examine how international treaties, constitutional frameworks, and policy mechanisms protect or fail to protect linguistic rights, and to propose strategies for establishing more inclusive multilingual futures. Adopting a desk-based methodology, the research analyzes constitutional language provisions, international human rights instruments, and multilingual policy frameworks, drawing on a critical discourse perspective to reveal the tension between legal recognition and practical enforcement. Primary sources include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as national constitutions and regional charters. By systematically examining these documents, the study identifies how linguistic diversity is often recognized symbolically but rarely operationalized within governance structures. Findings reveal that, despite widespread acknowledgment of linguistic equality, institutional and legal mechanisms remain weak. Dominant languages continue to control access to justice systems, higher education, and public services, thereby perpetuating social inequality. Minority and indigenous language speakers frequently encounter barriers in legal proceedings, public administration, and education, leaving them excluded from active civic participation. The study argues that achieving language justice requires embedding enforceable linguistic protections within national and international legal frameworks. This includes ensuring standardized translation and interpretation services in courts and public offices, developing inclusive multilingual education programs, and creating platforms that allow minority communities to express their voices in policymaking. Furthermore, the integration of digital technologies, such as AI assisted translation and accessible online communication tools, must be guided by ethical and inclusive principles rather than market convenience. Ultimately, this research underscores that language is not merely a medium of expression but a foundation of identity, dignity, and democracy. It calls for a global reimagining of linguistic equity, where languages are not ranked by power but respected for their cultural and human worth, transforming language from a barrier into a bridge for inclusion, justice, and participation.

Keywords: Language Justice, Linguistic Rights, Human Rights Law, Multilingualism, Constitutional Reform

FROM READING TO SPEAKING: AN ACTION RESEARCH IN IMPROVING SPEECH TEST PERFORMANCE THROUGH IDEA MAPPING AT A SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITY ESL CLASSROOM

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Speech tests play a significant role in evaluating the English as a Second Language (ESL) learners' communicative abilities, building their confidence, creating opportunities for feedback, checking their fluency and pronunciation while encouraging their use of English language. However, it has been observed that most of the ESL learners studying Humanities and Social Sciences in a state university lack the knowledge of pre-speaking strategies and they rely fully on a written script which contains the whole speech. Additionally, these students do not meet the minimum expected time duration of speech which eventually affects the speech content, and lacks creativity and persuasiveness as their imagination is not well stimulated during the "script reading" rather than delivering their speeches. Therefore, this action research was conducted to support these ESL learners to overcome such issues they face during speech tests. Accordingly, this study was conducted focusing on a first-year basic level ESL classroom with 35 students and two interventions were conducted. The first intervention was conducted as a pair activity where the learners were taught a pre-speaking strategy: guided thematic mind mapping with scaffolded brainstorming related to the given speech topic. This was done after the students did the first speech test practice session. The second intervention: peer feedback using peer-feedback forms, was then conducted. Data was collected through classroom observations, assessments and peer-feedback forms and were analyzed qualitatively. The students showed vast improvement in their second speech test practice session: They hardly relied on the written script, and they exceeded the given speech test time duration. Furthermore, they achieved comparatively higher marks for the major aspects of speech such as content, delivery, creativity and persuasiveness. Moreover, the students performed more confidently and engagingly compared to the first speech test practice session. Finally, these action research results imply the need for the teachers to utilize brainstorming and scaffolding strategies to improve the learners' language production skills in the ESL classroom.

Keywords: Pre-Speaking Strategies, Guided Thematic Mind Mapping, Scaffolded Brainstorming, Speech Performance

RIGHT TO SEEKING THE TRUTH: COMPATIBILITY OF THE SRI LANKAN TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE FRAMEWORK WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

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Right to truth and the advent of seeking for the same has become an important right under international law, especially in societies which have been ravaged by conflict and war. Sri Lanka, which ended three decade long civil war has come under fire for its lack of enthusiasm or the indifference shown to establish mechanisms for truth seeking for those who claimed to have faced atrocities during the times of war. In the discourse of the post 2009 period with aims of achieving transitional justice and as a major component of such an endeavour, this paper by using the doctrinal methodology adopting desk-based research seeks to investigate the compatibility of the existing legal regime on right to seek the truth in comparison with the international standards and best practices. It engages in a critical evaluation of the mechanisms that were introduced, such as Office on Missing Persons and the Office for Reparations, to assess the extent of the progress and success achieved by the country thus far. While these measures have generally been implemented by the country, they reveal only partial compatibility, as shortcomings relating to independence, inclusivity, enforceability and transparency continue to persist as unresolved issues. Results reveal a lack of political will on the part of the government to provide a full-fledged commitment to establishing and promoting these rights, owing to their sensitive nature. Furthermore, achieving a social consensus that is conducive to engaging in a meaningful discourse on this issue also appears challenging, given the deep divisions in opinion among different ethnic groups which were among the root causes that led to a war that lasted for three decades. Therefore, this study suggests that the right to truth should be comprehensively formulated in Sri Lanka to promote reconciliation, provide hope to those seeking the truth, and to initiate and support such an endeavour in the Sri Lanka's transitional justice roadmap.

Keywords: Right to Truth, Transitional Justice, Sri Lanka

NATIONAL JURISDICTION OVER TRANS-BOUNDARY WATERS: LEGAL COMPARISON WITH MARITIME DELIMITATION PRINCIPLES

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‘Water binds and lands divide’ connotes that despite the political boundaries of States; water bodies naturally transcend borders. River Rohini dispute between Koliyas and Sakyans in ancient India manifest water conflicts since ancient times, meanwhile, at present, water conflicts claim national jurisdiction over the trans-boundary waters to urge State sovereignty. In this backdrop, the objective of the research is to explore the differences in determining national jurisdiction over trans-boundary waters (freshwater bodies) *versus* maritime water demarcations. The research problem focuses on identifying the methods adopted in delimiting trans-boundary waters in comparison to maritime delimitation principles, and to discover the possibility of applying maritime delimitation principles to the delimitation of trans-boundary waters. The methodology adopted was doctrinal methodology to evaluate the legality with relevant international laws, conventions and judicial decisions, where the case studies confined to India, i.e. Rivers of Cauvery, Krishna, Beas and Godavari inter-State disputes and international water conflicts over Indo-Bangladesh Farakka barrage and Teesta barrage, Indo-Nepal issues over Mahakali River, Indo-Pakistan tensions over Indus River, as well as India-Bangladesh maritime delimitation in 2014. According to research outcomes, as per articles 74 and 83 of UNCLOS III, maritime delimitation endeavours in division of overlapping seabed and water columns of EEZ and continental shelf by equidistance (median-line) and equity principles whereas trans-boundary waters have referred UNECE Water Convention 1992, UN Watercourses Convention 1997 and other legal principles underlined in relevant sources, i.e., Water Treaties signed between India and neighbouring states, Inter State River Water Disputes Act 1956 of India, *State of Karnataka v. State Of Tamil Nadu* (2017) 3 SCC 362. Accordingly, while maritime delimitation is governed by legal principles such as equidistance and equitable solutions, trans-boundary water bodies are instead based on principles of equitable and reasonable utilization, no significant harm, and duty to cooperate have been emphasized. It was also divulged that equity principles are applied in both trans-boundary and maritime delimitations. In addressing the problem statement, it can be observed that, although equidistance delimits national jurisdiction in the sea, no such straight-forward method is feasible for trans-boundary waters. This is because trans-boundary watercourses are dynamic and the position of a median line may shift due to erosion and accretion, making it challenging to maintain a fixed boundary.

Keywords: National Jurisdiction, Trans-boundary Waters, Maritime Delimitation, Equidistance, India

THE EROSION OF CHECKS AND BALANCES: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE 19TH AND 20TH AMENDMENTS TO THE SRI LANKAN CONSTITUTION

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Sri Lanka's constitutional history reveals a persistent struggle to balance strong executive leadership with democratic accountability. The 19th and 20th Amendments to the 1978 Constitution represent two sharply contrasting approaches to this problem. This paper analyses how these amendments reshaped checks and balances within the constitutional framework, focusing on their implications for the separation of powers, independence of state institutions, and the quality of democratic governance. The 1978 Constitution established a powerful executive presidency, reducing parliamentary oversight and judicial control. Responding to widespread demands for reform, the 19th Amendment (2015) curtailed presidential powers, reintroduced term limits, strengthened independent commissions, and enhanced judicial review. In 2020, however, the 20th Amendment reversed many of these reforms by restoring wide-ranging presidential powers, weakening independent commissions, and reducing parliamentary control. These contrasting amendments illustrate the country's ongoing tension between centralization of power and constitutional democracy. This study aims to compare the main provisions of the 19th and 20th Amendments, assess their effects on the separation of powers and institutional independence, evaluate their overall impact on Sri Lanka's system of checks and balances and discuss the broader implications for constitutional reform and political stability. A qualitative, doctrinal approach is adopted, drawing on primary and secondary materials. Primary sources include the texts of the 19th and 20th Amendments, parliamentary debates, and relevant judicial decisions. Secondary sources include scholarly articles, legal commentaries, civil society reports, and international assessments. Comparative analysis is used to identify key changes introduced by each amendment and to evaluate their practical impact on governance. The 19th and 20th Amendments demonstrate how constitutional amendments can either strengthen or erode checks and balances. While the 19th Amendment sought to restrain executive dominance and reinforce independent institutions, the 20th Amendment largely reversed these gains, raising concerns about democratic backsliding. Sustainable constitutional reform in Sri Lanka requires a balanced distribution of powers, robust institutional safeguards, and a renewed commitment to democratic principles.

Keywords: Amendments, Constitution, Governance, Separation

THE CONSTITUTIONAL DESIGN OF JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE UNITED STATES AND SRI LANKA

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Judicial independence is a fundamental pillar of democratic governance, ensuring that courts operate impartially and uphold the rule of law. The process of judicial appointments is central to maintaining this independence, as it determines the quality, credibility, and autonomy of the judiciary. The United States and Sri Lanka offer contrasting constitutional frameworks for appointing judges, reflecting their unique legal traditions, historical developments, and political contexts. The U.S. system emphasises executive nomination combined with legislative confirmation, designed to maintain a balance of powers while ensuring accountability. Sri Lanka's system has evolved through constitutional amendments to reconcile executive influence with judicial autonomy, often sparking debates over politicisation and transparency. A comparative study of these frameworks offers critical insights into the relationship between constitutional design and judicial independence. Despite their importance, both systems face challenges that affect judicial credibility. The study employs a qualitative, doctrinal, and comparative approach. Primary sources include the U.S. Constitution, Sri Lanka's 1978 Constitution, and subsequent amendments concerning judicial appointments. Secondary sources comprise of academic articles, judicial commentaries, case law, and government reports. Comparative analysis is applied to examine procedural structures, institutional checks, and political influences, aiming to identify patterns, divergences, and best practices that support judicial independence and accountability. The research finds that the U.S. system provides a structured appointment process with checks and balances but is susceptible to political pressures, particularly during polarised periods. Sri Lanka's framework demonstrates ongoing attempts to balance executive authority and judicial autonomy, though frequent amendments have sometimes eroded public confidence. Factors such as transparent procedures, independent commissions, and legislative oversight are crucial in ensuring credible judicial appointments. Constitutional design plays a decisive role in shaping judicial independence and legitimacy. Lessons from the U.S. and Sri Lanka highlight that robust institutional safeguards, transparency, and procedural consistency are essential for maintaining an impartial judiciary. Comparative insights from these frameworks can guide constitutional reforms aimed at strengthening judicial autonomy and accountability in diverse governance contexts.

Keywords: Constitution, Governance, Independence, Judicial

THE TAX SYSTEM OF THE JAFFNA KINGDOM: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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The Kingdom of Northern Sri Lanka, historically known as the Kingdom of Jaffna (Yaalpanam), had a unique history shaped by its cultural, religious, and political developments. According to historical and archaeological evidence, it was established in the 13th century under the Aryachakravarti dynasty and lasted until the early 17th century. The Jaffna Kingdom thrived as a hub of Tamil culture and Hindu worship, centered around its capital, Nallur. During this period, the kingdom developed a distinctive taxation system that reflected both South Indian influences and localized practices. A notable feature of its economy was this structured tax system, which not only ensured stable revenue which is the basis for the growth of the kingdom but also reinforced administrative authority and organized social institutions. This research is primarily based on literature with a historical approach. This study explores the tax systems which were operated in the Northern Sri Lanka during the Jaffna Kingdom, its development, and the benefits the kingdom earned through it. This research paper is based on both primary and secondary literary sources. However, the scarcity of reliable contemporary primary evidence, particularly archaeological materials pose a significant challenge to reconstructing a complete historical picture. Therefore, this study relies extensively on later scholarly works, historical chronicles, and interpretative analyses produced by both academic and non-professional researchers. The examination of the tax systems reveals revenue collection was one of the central pillars of the Jaffna Kingdom's economy. State income was primarily derived from imposition of land taxes and the profitable exportation of pearls, alongside other trade-related revenues. Agriculture, animal domestication, and overseas commerce served as the principal sources of sustenance and economic growth during this period. The administrative machinery of taxation functioned through multiple channels, encompassing land tax, personal tax, officer tax, and various wage related levies. Drawing upon primary records such as the Yalpana Vaipava Malai, temple and land documents, inscriptions from Nallur Kandaswamy temple, and Portuguese and Dutch archival sources (Early Colonial Transcriptions), this study seeks to analyze the intricate nexus between taxation, governance, and social organization.

Keywords: Jaffna Kingdom, Tax System, Economy, Pearl Harvesting

ENHANCING SRI LANKAN LEGAL RESPONSE TO INFANT ABANDONMENT: COMPARATIVE INSIGHTS FROM THE UNITED STATES AND INDIA.

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Infant abandonment constitutes a critical legal and social challenge in Sri Lanka yet remains insufficiently addressed within the national legal framework. Despite numerous cases being reported island wide, the current legal framework in Sri Lanka has proved inadequate in tackling the challenge of infant abandonment in a precise, effective manner, through strategic legal implications. While a substantial body of academic work engages with issues relating broadly to child welfare, considerably less attention has been given to infant abandonment, leaving significant gaps in scholarly and policy discourse. Therefore, the objective of this research is to address the current gap in the literature by critically analysing the legal framework governing infant abandonment, identifying prevailing legal gaps and exploring barriers to legal development, thereby evaluating possible reforms. Methodologically, the research was carried out as a doctrinal, qualitative research by analysing primary and secondary resources. Existing laws and policies were closely analysed to demonstrate the current legal framework surrounding the issue and to identify the gaps and loopholes in law. Additionally, the study entails a comparative analysis between the laws and practices implemented in the United States of America and India, primarily due to their converging approach. The United States of America is one of the few countries to adopt Safe Haven Laws which provide parents with legally sanctioned means of relinquishing infants anonymously at designated facilities. By contrast, India—a country sharing significant similarity to the society and culture of Sri Lanka, has approached the issue by successful infant counters. By juxtaposing these approaches, the research evaluates the potential adaptability of such mechanisms in Sri Lankan context. Recommendations therefore emphasise both responsive mechanisms such as introduction of new laws and regulations and preventative mechanisms addressing underlying causes such as poverty, social stigma, postnatal depression, and cultural factors along with unwanted pregnancies, lack of resources, and single motherhood. Ultimately, the research affirms that like the focus given in establishing programmes for safe abandonment, legislature must inevitably focus on laws and programmes which would safeguard both women's and infant's lives.

Keywords: Infant abandonment, Safe surrender, Sri Lankan legal framework, Safe Haven laws, Infant counters

STATUTES OF CHANGE: LAW, HERITAGE, AND JUSTICE IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

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In a world marked by accelerating transitions, law emerges as a central framework for guiding humanity through the interlinked challenges of social justice, global wellbeing, and environmental change. This research positions law as both guardian and architect of cultural heritage, using Sigiriya, Sri Lanka's UNESCO World Heritage site, as a case study to examine how legal frameworks shape the preservation of the past while responding to the demands of the present. Employing a doctrinal legal methodology, the study analyses Sri Lankan heritage statutes alongside international conventions, particularly the World Heritage Convention, to investigate how legal structures balance preservation with development pressures. Findings reveal that Sri Lanka's statutes provide comprehensive mechanisms for safeguarding tangible heritage but often fail to integrate heritage law into broader environmental governance or social policy frameworks. Heritage remains siloed, with legislation primarily oriented toward custodial protection rather than dynamic responses to climate risks, social equity, or intergenerational justice. International conventions articulate a broader vision, linking heritage to sustainable development and collective wellbeing, yet their incorporation into domestic practice is partial and inconsistent. The discussion demonstrates that law does not merely regulate heritage; it actively constructs its meaning, determines access, and mediates responsibilities between communities and the state, between the national and the global, and between the present and the future. Sigiriya illustrates how law can frame a cultural site simultaneously as a national symbol and a global responsibility, embedding heritage within broader discourses of human transition. The study concludes that the future relevance of heritage law lies in its capacity to evolve from a static model of preservation into a proactive architecture of justice and sustainability. In this reimagined role, law becomes a bridge between cultural continuity and social transformation, offering pathways to resilience in the face of environmental change and contributing to global wellbeing. By highlighting the legal dimensions of humanity's shared heritage, the research contributes a distinctive perspective to interdisciplinary debates, reaffirming law's role as both safeguard and innovator in navigating the uncertainties of a world in transition.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage Law, Justice, Sigiriya, Sustainability

THE MUSICAL APPARATUS OF POLITICS: SONGS AS A TOOL OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN SRI LANKA

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This study examines how political propaganda songs in Sri Lanka, including those created for nation-building, political campaigns, and counter-hegemonic movements, serve as vehicles for embedding and contesting political ideologies. In Sri Lanka, music is widely used in political campaigns and nation-building narratives, particularly during election periods, to shape public opinion. These practices reinforce patriotic and nationalist ideologies, making it vital to examine the underlying factors driving this influence. The three core objectives of this research are to examine how political propaganda songs convey specific political meanings, to identify the musical and technical strategies employed in these songs to shape emotional responses and collective consciousness, and to investigate how such songs reinforce or challenge hegemonic narratives in Sri Lanka's political sphere. The theoretical framework draws on Louis Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses and Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, enabling a critical examination of how music functions as both a hegemonic and counter-hegemonic force. The study employs a qualitative approach, foregrounding content analysis and discourse analysis of three nation-building songs, eight campaign songs, and a selection of both older and contemporary counter-hegemonic songs to capture shifts and continuities in resistance discourses. Attention is paid to musical structures, lyrical and visual narratives, and audience responses, to demonstrate how these elements collectively construct emotional resonance and shape ideological alignment within Sri Lanka's political culture. Findings indicate that nation-building and campaign songs use high-pitched melodies, major chords, and hybrid local-rock styles to evoke pride, nationalism, and loyalty, while counter-hegemonic songs draw on protest traditions to mobilize resistance and articulate alternatives. Audience responses on digital platforms demonstrate how these musical forms both reinforce dominant narratives and open space for oppositional voices in Sri Lanka's political culture. Overall, this research contributes to the broader understanding of music as a tool of political communication in Sri Lanka, highlighting how propaganda songs not only reflect but actively shape ideological struggles, emotional attachments, and the contested terrain of nationhood in contemporary Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Hegemony, Musicology, Nation-Building, Political Propaganda, Political Communication

SYSTEMIC PRESSURES AND DOMESTIC CONSTRAINTS: A NEOCLASSICAL REALIST ANALYSIS OF THE ISRAEL-IRAN CONFLICT

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Israel-Iran is one of the most important and multifaceted geopolitical rivalries in the Middle East. Since the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, this conflict has intensified and continues to impact regional affairs, influencing allies, security frameworks, and power dynamics. From Ayatollah Khomeini's ideological shift in Iran to the prevailing nuclear politics and proxy conflicts, Israel and Iran have been bitter adversaries. The rivalry extends beyond the two nations' bilateral relations and encompasses their ability to influence major world powers, shape broader regional tensions, and affect the stability of the international system. While classical realist perspectives emphasise human nature and the pursuit of power as inherent in state behaviour, neorealism, or structural realism, attributes rivalry primarily to systemic factors such as the distribution of power and external threats within the international system. However, such perspectives alone fail to sufficiently account for the variations in foreign policy behaviour exhibited by both countries. Hence, the primary objective of the study is to analyse the Israel–Iran conflict through the framework of neoclassical realism, focusing on how systemic pressures and domestic political dynamics interact to shape and influence state behaviour. This research employs a qualitative approach, utilising secondary data, and addresses the research question through the theoretical framework of neoclassical realism. A descriptive-analytical method is applied to interpret and evaluate the collected data. The findings reveal that systemic pressures, including Tehran's nuclear ambitions, Israel's pre-emptive security posture, shifting regional alliances, and the strategic role of the United States, define the broader external environment of rivalry. However, these external constraints are filtered through internal dynamics that transform them into concrete policy choices. In Israel, leadership narratives consistently frame Iran's nuclear program as an existential threat, shaping public opinion and legitimising preventive or defensive action. In Iran, revolutionary ideology, regime survival imperatives, and the institutional power of the Revolutionary Guard sustain a confrontational posture and reliance on proxy warfare. Overall, the study emphasises the necessity of integrating structural and domestic levels of analysis, emphasising that the integration of these variables is crucial to analyse the complexity and persistence of contemporary international conflicts.

Keywords- Foreign Policy, Iran-Israel Conflict, Neoclassical Realism, Systemic Pressures

CAPITALISM'S DUAL ENGINE: INTERDEPENDENCE OF STATE AND TRANSNATIONAL FORCES IN SRI LANKA

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This study investigates the complex interplay between the state and transnational forces. It draws on two case studies: the Ceylon Tobacco Company, representing corporate transnationalism, and the Movement for Land and Agricultural Reform, reflecting activist transnationalism. Data were gathered from secondary sources such as organisational reports and scholarly literature, along with primary data collected through semi-structured interviews with workers from the tobacco industry, barn owners, farmers involved in tobacco cultivation, and officials affiliated with the activist movement. Although the empirical focus is on Sri Lanka, selected due to the accessibility of data, the research aims to contribute to broader discussions on state sovereignty, transnational influence, and capitalist dynamics. The selected cases demonstrate that while the tobacco company reinforces capitalist production in alignment with state interests, the activist movement, despite its oppositional stance, also relies on state mechanisms and international networks to pursue its objectives. The findings highlight that capitalism does not simply accommodate contradiction but actively thrives on it. The state and transnational forces, rather than functioning as adversaries, often engage in ways that ensure the continued existence of one another. However, the study emphasises the importance of avoiding generalisations about transnational actors, as their goals and strategies can differ significantly. Some may aim to dismantle capitalist structures, while others work to uphold them. This complexity calls for a contextual and nuanced analysis of the relationship between transnational forces and the state. By examining Sri Lankan case studies within a broader political economy framework, this research provides a deeper understanding of how capitalism shapes and sustains both state power and transnationalism. It contributes to the body of literature that complicates the dichotomous view of states and transnational forces, arguing that both the state and transnational actors function in mutual dependence within capitalism's global structure. As such, it encourages scholars to reconsider the nature of opposition and cooperation in governance, recognising that both are frequently rooted in the same systemic foundation.

Keywords: Capitalism, Transnational Forces, Nation-States, Mutual Dependence

THE NPP FOREIGN POLICY AND USA–SRI LANKA RELATIONS: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

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This study critically examines the foreign policy of the National People's Power (NPP) government and its implications for the contemporary trajectory of USA–Sri Lanka relations. Sri Lanka's foreign policy has historically fluctuated between non-alignment, selective Western engagement, and strategic cooperation with regional powers, shaped by domestic political transitions and global power reconfigurations. In this context, the emergence of the NPP has generated debate regarding whether its ideological framework represents continuity or departure from previous administrations. The objectives of this research are to examine the historical evolution of USA–Sri Lanka relations, to identify how the NPP's foreign policy principles differ from those of earlier governments, and to assess how these principles are likely to influence future bilateral engagement. The study employs a qualitative methodology relying exclusively on secondary data sources, including academic literature, government policy statements, official diplomatic documents, and analyses from international financial institutions. A thematic content analysis was conducted to explore key areas such as economic cooperation, development assistance, debt restructuring, governance expectations, and strategic dynamics in the Indo-Pacific. The findings indicate that while the NPP maintains Sri Lanka's traditional non-aligned posture, it places stronger emphasis on transparency, institutional reform, and financial sovereignty. These priorities shape its approach to managing structural vulnerabilities linked to debt dependency, IMF involvement, and geopolitical competition. At the same time, the United States continues to function as Sri Lanka's largest export destination and a critical partner in development cooperation and maritime security. However, tensions persist in areas such as governance standards, human rights concerns, and strategic alignment pressures. The study concludes that the long-term stability of USA–Sri Lanka relations under the NPP will depend on the government's ability to balance its sovereignty-focused agenda with pragmatic engagement. This requires navigating great-power competition, advancing economic recovery, and aligning foreign policy with national development needs. The research contributes to the broader literature on small-state diplomacy by demonstrating how ideological repositioning by a new political actor can recalibrate bilateral relations within an increasingly multipolar international system.

Keywords: USA–Sri Lanka Relations, National People's Power, Foreign Policy, Financial Sovereignty, Geopolitics

STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AS A GOVERNANCE MECHANISM FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABLE WELL-BEING IN SRI LANKA

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This study explores the intersection of environmental law, social justice, and global disparities within the realm of environmental law. As a country, Sri Lanka faces urgent environmental and social challenges, including climate vulnerability, deforestation, urban pollution, and widening socio-economic inequalities. While national legislation has historically addressed ecological protection, the role of law as a governance mechanism to advance social justice and global well-being is often overlooked. Understanding this intersection is critical for designing policies that promote sustainability while ensuring equity in transitional societies like Sri Lanka. The central research question asks: How effectively does Sri Lanka's environmental legal framework integrate ecological protection with social justice objectives? Despite the presence of constitutional provisions, statutory measures, and judicial interventions, gaps in enforcement, institutional coordination, and public participation persist, limiting the impact of environmental law in promoting equitable outcomes. Employing a doctrinal legal methodology complemented by qualitative analysis, the study examines constitutional provisions, statutory instruments, and judicial precedents alongside policy documents and scholarly literature. Comparative evaluation of international instruments, including the Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, provides a global benchmark for best practices. Supplementary qualitative analysis of policy documents, administrative reports, and scholarly literature assesses the practical implementation and impacts of legal frameworks on social and environmental outcomes. These findings suggest that environmental law in Sri Lanka can evolve from a protective framework into a transformative governance mechanism that promotes equity and accountability. Legal instruments have facilitated public interest litigation, policy reform, and environmental accountability. However, persistent challenges in enforcement, transparency, and multilevel governance constrain the realization of fully integrated social and ecological objectives. Building on the identified enforcement and coordination gaps, the study concludes that realizing the potential of environmental law requires holistic integration of legal, administrative, and policy frameworks with principles of equity, sustainability, and transparency. Enhancing institutional capacity, participatory decision-making, and alignment with international standards will be critical for achieving these outcomes. By positioning environmental law at the nexus of governance and social justice, Sri Lanka can advance sustainable development pathways that are both equitable and resilient in the face of global ecological transitions. The bridging of human rights with environmental law can offer a robust foundation for social justice and global well-being.

Key Words: Ecological Law, Social Justice, Sri Lanka, Urban Pollution

SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS AND THE FUTURE OF THE ASIA-LED WORLD ORDER

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While various projections have underscored the unprecedented economic growth of Asia and its gradual emergence as the most powerful region in the world, the complex and highly unpredictable nature of Indo-Chinese relations continue to challenge the realisation of the Asian century. India and China have already challenged the West-dominated world order. This study examines the impact of the growing Sino-Indian rivalry on the realisation of the much-anticipated Asia-led world order. This study is a qualitative desk study based on secondary data sources. Main sources of data collection include indexed journals, magazine articles, and websites. The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in the Realist tradition of International Relations, and it studies the Sino-Indian relationship from a realist perspective. Realism in international relations is very much concerned with the failure of states to cooperate. Realists consider interstate relations a zero-sum game rather than a positive sum. In other words, realists suggest that the state, as the main and most influential actor in international relations, is very much concerned about what its counterpart achieves through cooperation. This mutual suspicion often restricts cooperation and provokes conflicts. One of the game theories- the Prisoner's Dilemma- could explain this mutual suspicion. The prisoner's dilemma explains why actors often hesitate to cooperate, even though cooperation yields a higher payoff for both parties. Thus, this game theory can effectively explain the nature of Sino-Indian relations. The study observed that ideological differences, expansionist intentions, and existing border disputes have made it highly challenging for both countries to pursue a common agenda that benefits not only these two countries but also the rest of Asia. According to the study, this rivalry has created a new kind of Cold War. The study concludes that the future of Asia, to a greater extent, would be determined by the level of cooperation between India and China. However, mutual distrust and lack of cooperation have raised questions about the future of Asia. This ongoing rivalry has taken the shape of a new Cold War, posing a significant threat to the rest of Asia. Thus, the realisation of the Asian Century would only be possible if, on the one hand, these two giants realise the cost of antagonism, and on the other hand, the rest of Asia forms a third force to create a conducive background that makes Asia powerful.

Keywords: Asian Century, China, India, Prisoner's dilemma, Realism

BEYOND STATE ACTION: A JURISPRUDENTIAL ANALYSIS FOR EXTENDING FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS LIABILITY TO ACTIONS OF PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS AND CORPORATE ACTORS IN SRI LANKA

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Fundamental rights constitute the cornerstone of constitutional governance, embodying the essential principles of liberty, equality, and justice. In Sri Lanka, the development of fundamental rights protection reflects a progressive strengthening of individual liberties, from its absence under the 1947 Soulbury Constitution, to its formal recognition in the 1972 Constitution, and its substantive expansion under the 1978 Constitution. Articles 17 and 126 of the present Constitution establish the primary legal mechanism for individuals to seek remedies for infringements or imminent infringements of their fundamental rights. However, the textual scope of these provisions confines liability exclusively to executive or administrative actions, thereby limiting their protective reach. Recent judicial trends demonstrate a gradual departure from this narrow interpretation. Landmark decisions, including *Faiz v. Attorney General* [1995] 1 Sri L.R. 372, *Samson Roy v. Marasinghe* (S.C. (F.R.) 405/2018, S.C.M. 20.09.2023), and *Weheragedara Ranjith Sumangala v. Bandara and Others* (S.C. (F.R.) 107/2011, S.C.M. 15.12.2023), illustrate the Supreme Court's tendency to extend liability to private individuals when their actions are under the authority, or are closely connected to, executive or administrative action. Despite this progressive judicial approach, a significant lacuna remains: when fundamental rights are infringed or eminent to be infringed by private corporate entities or companies that do not fall within the ambit of 'executive or administrative' authority, no constitutional remedy is currently available. Available remedies for such violations are limited and insufficient to address such situations. The gap undermines the full realisation of fundamental rights and weakens the overall efficacy of constitutional protections. It is contended that corporate entities are also bound by the constitutional commitment to respect and protect fundamental rights, as reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy and Fundamental Duties. Accordingly, this paper proposes the amendment of Articles 17 and 126 to explicitly include violations committed by private individuals acting under or in connection with state authority, and to extend liability to corporate bodies for fundamental rights violations. Complementary legislative and institutional measures are further proposed to strengthen enforcement and procedural mechanisms.

Keywords: Fundamental Rights, Private Individual Actions, Corporate Bodies, Jurisprudential Theories, Fundamental Duties

APPEAL OF FAR-RIGHT POPULIST NARRATIVES TO GENERATION Z IN EUROPE (2022-2025)

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The resurgence of far-right populism has become one of the most controversial topics in contemporary Europe. It has been showcased in the recent elections held in most European states as well as EU elections held last year. One significant factor in this development is that Far-right politics has been more appealing to youth in European states than before. Although Generation Z (Gen Z) is generally portrayed as supportive of progressive politics, recent elections across Europe have revealed that the Gen Z community supports far-right political movements such as France's Rassemblement National, Germany's Alternative für Deutschland, and Italy's Fratelli d'Italia. The research problem addressed in this study concerns the need to understand how far-right populist narratives on migration are reframed as identity issues that resonate with Gen Z and why these narratives are effective. This research adopts a qualitative methodology, analyzing secondary sources such as media reports, political Speeches, and scholarly literature published between 2022 and 2025. The method of analysis combines content and discourse analysis; recurring frames were coded and examined. The study yielded several significant findings. First, far-right narratives consistently frame migration as a cultural threat, resonating with young voters who experience concerns regarding identity and belonging in increasingly diverse societies. Furthermore, populist leaders implement simplification strategies that portray migrants and elites as threats to sovereignty, allowing Gen Z to channel their frustrations into identity-based antagonisms. Digital platforms such as TikTok have emerged as arenas where Far-right political movements use emotional content to capture the appeal of the youth, thereby normalizing far-right discourse among Gen Z. Cross-national comparison demonstrates that France's far-right has achieved success through youth-oriented champions and charismatic leadership, while Germany's far-right has relied more on digital strategies to reach the younger generation. These findings also suggest that Gen Z's appeal towards far-right populism is a constructed matter through discourse as an identity threat rather than a structural factor that exists in society. It has also been simplified through digital platforms as a common feature of populist politics. In conclusion, the study argues that the appeal of far-right movements among European youth is sustained by cultural and communicative strategies that effectively engage Generation Z through digital platforms, emotional resonance, and identity-based messaging. The study recommends promoting democratic and pluralist values through progressive political discourse, alongside stronger EU digital governance to counter far-right online mobilization.

Keywords: Far-right Populism, Generation Z, Identity Politics

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE JUDICIAL APPROACH TO PROCEDURAL AND SUBSTANTIVE LEGITIMATE EXPECTATIONS IN SRI LANKA.

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This paper provides a critical analysis of the doctrine of legitimate expectation within the administrative law framework, with special emphasis on how procedural and substantive expectations have been treated by the court. Though procedural legitimate expectation based on natural justice and the doctrine of *audi alteram partem*, it has been treated with some ease by Sri Lankan courts, substantive legitimate expectation has not found as much favour with the judiciary. Therefore, the objective of this research is to identify the reasons behind the judicial reluctance to recognize substantive legitimate expectations. By using doctrinal research methodology, the study analyses statutes, judicial decisions and comparative jurisprudence, particularly from Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom. Using examples drawn from adjudicated cases concerning university appointments, immigration, housing, and public sector practices, the paper demonstrates that procedural justice has taken firm root in Sri Lanka's legal order, whereas its substantive rights have been applied cautiously. The discussion also considers the merits and demerits of legitimate expectations and considers the factors including judicial overreach, separation of powers and executive discretion. Ultimately, the study concludes that Sri Lanka has established a progressive yet conservative approach, improving procedural fairness without venturing judicial review into substantive domains of administrative decision-making.

Keywords: Legitimate Expectation, Administrative Law, Procedural Legitimate Expectation, Substantive Legitimate Expectation

AN ANALYSIS OF THE APPLICATION OF CONSIDERATION AND *JUSTA CAUSA* IN SRI LANKAN ELECTRONIC CONTRACTS

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In the Sri Lankan legal framework, the law of contract has evolved through the combined influence of Roman Dutch Law (RDL) and English Law traditions. These dual influences are evident in the doctrines of *consideration* and *justa causa*, which are essential for forming valid contracts under English and Roman Dutch law respectively. This research analyses the effectiveness and applicability of these concepts within the Sri Lankan context, focusing on their relevance in the formation of electronic contracts governed by the Electronic Transactions Act No. 19 of 2006 and its amendments. The main objective is to examine whether *consideration* and *justa causa* continue to be effective in ensuring validity in modern digital transactions. This study employs a doctrinal research methodology, drawing on judicial decisions, statutory provisions, including the Bills of Exchange Ordinance and the Sale of Goods Ordinance, as well as scholarly literature on Sri Lankan contract law. The study finds that courts in Sri Lanka have recognized the presence of *consideration* when required by statute, while also upholding contracts based on the existence of *causa* even in the absence of financial exchange. The findings suggest that *justa causa*, being a broader and more adaptable concept than *consideration*, is particularly suitable for addressing challenges in electronic contracts where consent and intention are often digitally expressed. Therefore, it is concluded that Sri Lankan courts should continue to interpret and apply *causa* flexibly to ensure fairness and validity in evolving digital contractual relationships.

Keywords: Consideration, *Justa Causa*, Electronic Contracts, Sri Lankan Contract Law

NUTRITIONAL STATUS AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AND SOCIOECONOMIC DETERMINANTS IN A RURAL POST-CONFLICT COMMUNITY OF EASTERN SRI LANKA

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In post-conflict settings, socioeconomic disruptions and psychological stressors can compromise both nutrition and mental health, yet evidence in such communities is limited. A cross-sectional study was conducted among 130 consenting adults in Kathiraveli, Vakara, Batticaloa, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka. Psychological distress was assessed using the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), and nutritional status was evaluated through anthropometry and bioelectrical impedance analysis (BIA). Associations between psychological distress (likely to be well, likely to have a mild disorder, likely to have a moderate disorder, likely to have a severe disorder) and selected factors (nutritional status, household income, smoking, alcohol consumption) were examined using Chi-square tests and Fisher's Exact Test where appropriate. The majority of participants were obese, followed by those with normal weight and overweight, while the smallest group was underweight, indicating a high prevalence of elevated body mass index in this population. Most participants were likely to be psychologically well, although mild and severe distress were also relatively common, highlighting the heterogeneous mental health profile within the community. No significant association was found between nutritional status and psychological distress ($\chi^2(9) = 3.196$, $p = 0.956$). However, psychological distress was significantly associated with household income ($\chi^2(12) = 24.088$, $p = 0.020$), smoking ($\chi^2(12) = 24.088$, $p = 0.020$), and alcohol consumption ($\chi^2(9) = 22.447$, $p = 0.008$). Individuals with lower income, smoking habits, or alcohol consumption were more likely to report moderate to severe psychological distress. While nutritional status was not significantly associated with psychological distress, socioeconomic and lifestyle factors, including income, smoking, and alcohol use, were strongly linked. These findings emphasize the importance of addressing psycho-social and behavioral risk factors alongside nutritional interventions to improve overall health and well-being in post conflict communities.

Keywords: Nutritional Status, Post-conflict Region, Psychological Distress, Public Health, Socio-economic Factors

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS.

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This study presents an overview of social media addiction and life satisfaction among university students, including a discussion of how and why this concept has become significant and impactful within the educational context. The purpose of this cross-sectional study was to evaluate the level of social media addiction and life satisfaction among university students in the Western Province and to explore the potential relationship between these two variables. Social media addiction was considered the independent variable, while life satisfaction was treated as the dependent variable. The sample consisted of 100 university students residing and studying in the Western Province, selected using the consecutive sampling technique. Data was collected using a demographic questionnaire, the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS), and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). The findings revealed that participants exhibited a moderate level of social media addiction (Mean = 118.28). The mean score for the SWLS is 22.72 and it indicates that students are not fully satisfied, and their life satisfaction is moderate to slightly low. Furthermore, a statistically significant negative correlation was found between social media addiction and life satisfaction ($r = -0.479$; $p = 0.002$, $p < 0.01$). When paired with the moderate social media addiction and the negative correlation ($r = -0.479$), this suggests that higher social media use may be contributing to reduced life satisfaction. Qualitative data were also collected through semi-structured interviews from 15 students, and thematic analysis revealed key themes regarding the impact of social media addiction on life satisfaction: emotional exhaustion and overwhelm, time displacement and academic distress, social comparison and self-esteem, and isolation despite connectivity. These findings provide valuable insights into how social media usage patterns can influence students' psychological well-being and satisfaction with life, with implications for educational and mental health interventions.

Keywords: Social Media Addiction, Life Satisfaction, Undergraduates

INDIAN PHILOSOPHY: RELEVANCE IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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Indian philosophy, with its millennia-old traditions, provides profound insights into morality, ethics, and human conduct. Schools such as Vedanta, Buddhism, Jainism, and Nyaya have explored concepts like dharma (duty), ahimsa (non-violence), karma (action and consequences), and moksha (liberation), emphasizing the ethical dimensions of human life. In today's rapidly evolving world, marked by technological advancements, globalization, and social challenges, the need for ethical frameworks that guide personal and societal conduct is increasingly critical. Indian philosophical thought, with its holistic approach to moral responsibility and human welfare, offers valuable perspectives for addressing contemporary ethical dilemmas. Modern society faces complex ethical challenges, including environmental degradation, corporate malpractice, political corruption, and social inequity. Despite various regulatory frameworks, ethical lapses persist, raising questions about the applicability of traditional ethical systems in contemporary contexts. This research addresses the problem of understanding whether the ethical principles derived from Indian philosophy can provide practical guidance and solutions for contemporary societal and individual moral issues. The study employs a qualitative, doctrinal research methodology, analyzing primary sources such as classical philosophical texts (Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Dhammapada) and authoritative commentaries. Secondary sources include academic papers, journals, and reports that discuss the ethical applications of Indian philosophy in modern contexts. The study finds that key concepts of Indian philosophy, such as dharma, ahimsa, karma, and Satya (truth), retain significant relevance in guiding ethical behavior in modern society. Principles like ahimsa provide a framework for non-violence and social harmony, while dharma emphasizes responsibility and moral duty in professional and personal life. Karma underscores accountability for actions, promoting ethical decision-making. Moreover, Indian philosophical ethics encourage a holistic view, balancing personal well-being with societal welfare, making them adaptable to contemporary challenges in governance, business, and environmental stewardship. Indian philosophy offers timeless ethical guidance that is highly relevant to contemporary society. The study highlights the importance of revisiting traditional ethical frameworks to address the moral complexities of the 21st century, demonstrating that ancient philosophical wisdom remains a valuable resource for promoting ethical awareness and responsible action in today's world.

Keywords: Challenges, Indian Philosophy, Modern Society, Political

INFLUENCE OF PARENTING STYLES ON ADOLESCENTS' EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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Adolescence is a transitional period where a child becomes emotionally mature and academically challenged, facing rapid emotional, cognitive, and social changes. Studies indicate that this stage is highly influenced by parenting styles and family relationships. Though previous researchers have found the influence of parenting styles on adolescents' development, limited studies have examined this relationship in the context of Sri Lankan adolescents. The primary objective of this research was to understand how different parenting styles, such as authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive, have an important effect on both emotional and academic development among adolescents. This research is a quantitative correlational study with a sample of 187 adolescents with their parents from a selected private school in Kurunegala district, Sri Lanka. Participants were students from Grades 9 and 10, representing both male and female adolescents from different religious backgrounds. Ethical clearance was obtained by the IMBS Green Campus and permission from the school principal and informed consent from parents and students. This study used convenience sampling to select participants, and they completed a questionnaire on parenting style and emotional regulation. The questionnaires used standard 5 & 7-point Likert scales with the Parenting Style and Dimension Questionnaire (PSDQ) to measure parenting styles and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) to measure emotional regulation. Academic performance was evaluated from the average marks of the term exams. Printed questionnaires were distributed among students, and Google Forms were sent to parents. Analysis was done using IBM SPSS (Version 26), with Pearson correlation and ANOVA. Authoritative parenting showed a very strong positive correlation with academic performance ($r = 0.791$, $p < 0.01$), with parenting style explaining 62% of the variance in academic performance ($R^2 = 0.62$) and 40% of the variance in emotional regulation ($R^2 = 0.40$), indicating a moderate to strong influence. Adolescents with authoritative parents were higher with emotional regulation and academic performance compared to those with permissive or authoritarian parenting styles. Also, Emotional regulation and academic performance were positively correlated ($r = 0.635$, $p < 0.01$). The results highlighted the value of supportive, structured, and warm parenting behaviors, such as authoritative, for the betterment of adolescents' academic as well as emotional growth.

Keywords: Parenting Styles, Emotional Regulation, Academic Performance

A STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES AND ATTITUDES OF EARLY-CAREER WOMEN REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HUMAN RESOURCE PROFESSIONALS IN ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING WITHIN THE MAHARAGAMA URBAN COUNCIL AREA)

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Mental health is increasingly acknowledged as a crucial aspect of overall employee wellbeing, yet many early-career women continue to experience significant challenges in accessing professional psychological support. Prior studies in South Asian contexts also show that stigma and limited-service access discourage women from seeking formal help. This study focuses on understanding the experiences and attitudes of early-career women toward mental health counseling, with particular emphasis on Human Resource (HR) professionals employed in organizations within the Maharagama Urban Council area. The objectives were to explore their perceptions of counseling, identify key barriers that hinder help-seeking behavior, and examine the coping strategies women adopt in place of professional counseling. Qualitative research design was employed, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten purposively selected HR professionals who were in the early stages of their careers. Thematic analysis, based on Braun and Clarke's framework, was used to interpret the findings. The analysis revealed four major themes: awareness and attitudes toward counseling, workplace barriers to help-seeking, stigma and cultural influences, and coping strategies and alternative support. Results demonstrated that although participants recognized the importance of counseling, they often avoided seeking such services due to fears of judgment, confidentiality concerns, organizational silence, professional identity pressures, and traditional family expectations. Even HR professionals, who are formally responsible for promoting employee wellbeing, reported feeling both personally and professionally unsupported in managing their own psychological needs. The findings highlight a critical gap between organizational advocacy for mental health and the actual behaviors of employees when it comes to seeking counseling. This study concludes that integrated, confidential, and culturally sensitive workplace counseling services are essential, alongside broader systemic efforts to reduce stigma in both professional and cultural contexts. By situating the findings within the South Asian context, the research adds meaningful contributions to the limited body of literature on women's mental health help-seeking and offers actionable insights for policymakers, employers, and mental health practitioners to develop inclusive and sustainable support systems that encourage early intervention and long-term wellbeing.

Keywords: Counseling, Early-career Women, Human Resource Professionals, Mental Health

THE IMPACT OF ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES ON THE OCCURRENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

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Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including physical, emotional, and psychological abuse or neglect, can have profound long-term effects on individuals. The ACEs pyramid illustrates how early exposure to trauma can lead to disrupted neurodevelopment, social-emotional difficulties, engagement in risky behaviors, and adverse adult outcomes. These vulnerabilities may manifest in maladaptive interpersonal behaviors, including conflict, aggression, and domestic violence. The purpose of this study is to examine how ACEs contribute to the occurrence and perpetuation of domestic violence in adulthood. A qualitative case study approach was employed, examining five cases through detailed case files and interviews with key informants. The key informants included the District Psychosocial Officer, the Divisional Child Protection Officer, and the Probation Officer, who each provided contextual and professional insights into the cases. Analysis was structured according to the ACEs pyramid, examining how early traumatic experiences were reflected in adult behaviors and relationship patterns. Findings indicate that individuals with a history of ACEs were more vulnerable to domestic violence, both as victims and, in some instances, as perpetrators. Early exposure to abuse and neglect were associated with difficulties in emotional regulation, low self-esteem, and maladaptive coping strategies, which contributed to conflict and aggression in intimate relationships. Patterns of intergenerational violence were observed, with trauma and abusive behaviors recurring across generations. Limited access to psychosocial support, social stigma, and inadequate institutional responses further exacerbated these outcomes. The study concludes that addressing domestic violence requires recognition of the role of ACEs in shaping adult relationship behaviors. Recommendations include integrating trauma-informed social work interventions, promoting positive parenting strategies, using positive teaching methods to support children's psychosocial development, implementing coordinated interventions at family, school, and community levels, and strengthening legal frameworks to prevent violence against children. These measures are essential to disrupt cycles of trauma, reduce the occurrence of domestic violence, and protect children's well-being.

Keywords: Adverse Childhood Experiences, Domestic Violence, Psychosocial Intervention, Positive Parenting, Positive Teaching Methods

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AND NETWORKS ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IN SRI LANKA THROUGH A SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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The global aging population is increasing rapidly, with the World Health Organization (WHO) reporting that nearly 1 billion people aged 60 years and above in 2020, a number projected to reach 1.4 billion by 2030 and 2.1 billion by 2050. Sri Lanka is recognized as the fastest aging country in South Asia, with its elderly population expected to double by 2040. This demographic shift highlights the urgent need to understand factors influencing the quality of life of older adults, particularly their psychological wellbeing. The central problem addressed in this study is the limited understanding of how social support and networks contribute to the psychological wellbeing and overall quality of life of elderly people within the Sri Lankan socio-cultural context. Although global research emphasizes the positive impact of social relationships on wellbeing in old age, systematic studies examining these dynamics in Sri Lanka remain scarce. Therefore, this study aimed to explore how different forms of social support and networks influence the quality of life of elderly people in Sri Lanka and to identify the underlying socio-cultural factors that shape and sustain these support systems. A qualitative research design was employed, using semi-structured interviews with 15 elderly participants aged 65 and above, selected through convenience sampling. Participants were drawn from Kandy, Naula, and Nikaweratiya to capture urban, semi-rural, and rural perspectives, providing socio-cultural diversity. Inclusion criteria required participants to be physically and mentally healthy, capable of independent living, and free from major mental health conditions. This approach allowed an in-depth exploration of lived experiences within varied cultural contexts. Thematic analysis of participants' narratives revealed several recurring themes, including strong family ties, supportive neighbors and friends, religious and community involvement, and engagement in volunteering and public service. Psychological wellbeing was assessed through participants' self-reported experiences and expressions of emotional balance, purpose, and satisfaction with life. These forms of social support and networks were found to enhance wellbeing by fostering meaning, optimism, reduced stress, and overall life satisfaction. The study also identified distinct socio-cultural factors that reinforce social connectedness in Sri Lanka, such as strong family bonds, the collectivist nature of society, neighborhood relationships, community-based religious activities, and food-sharing traditions. Moreover, traditional concepts like *gammadha* and *aththam*, though less formal today, remain evident as enduring cultural values that promote mutual help and communal unity. These findings resonate with global research on aging, such as the Blue Zones framework by Dan Buettner, which highlights similar protective themes like "Right Tribe," "Family First," and *moai* in Okinawa, while also reflecting Sri Lanka's unique cultural expressions. Overall, this research underscores the critical role of social support and culturally rooted practices in promoting psychological wellbeing and quality of life among the elderly, offering insights for both policymakers and practitioners in elder care.

Keywords: Aging, Social Support, Psychological Wellbeing, Sri Lanka

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING IN COUNSELING: LESSONS FROM THE *SANDAKA SUTTA* AND *KĀLĀMA SUTTA*

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Counseling is not only a psychological process but also one that involves moral, ethical, and spiritual dimensions, and Buddhist teachings offer valuable guidance in this regard. The *Sandaka Sutta* and *Kālāma Sutta* provide lessons that can enrich counseling practices by emphasizing rational inquiry, ethical clarity, and compassionate understanding. The main objectives of this study are to analyze the philosophical teachings of these two *suttas* that are relevant to counseling, to evaluate how religious understanding can enhance ethical decision-making within the counseling process, and to propose a practical model of counseling that integrates Buddhist principles of inquiry and compassion. Previous literature highlights that Buddhist psychology, through mindfulness and ethical reflection, supports autonomy and resilience, while the *Sandaka Sutta* warns against blind adherence to tradition or authority and encourages rational examination, and the *Kālāma Sutta* promotes individual evaluation of teachings based on experience and moral outcomes. These ideas suggest that counseling rooted in Buddhist principles empowers individuals to think critically and make decisions that lead to well-being. Methodologically, this work employs qualitative textual analysis of the two *suttas*, supported by comparative studies from counseling psychology, in order to draw thematic parallels. From this emerges a new method of counseling that combines reflective inquiry from the *Sandaka Sutta* with evaluative reasoning from the *Kālāma Sutta*, where counselors guide clients to question inherited beliefs, analyze their consequences, and adopt practices that reduce suffering and cultivate inner peace. This approach respects religious and cultural contexts while encouraging personal autonomy, responsibility, and resilience. In conclusion, the *Sandaka Sutta* and *Kālāma Sutta* present timeless guidance for counseling by fostering rational inquiry, ethical responsibility, and compassionate engagement, and integrating their lessons into modern counseling can create a spiritually grounded yet practical model that addresses both psychological needs and deeper existential concerns.

Keywords: Counseling, Buddhist teachings, Rational inquiry, Ethical decision-making, Compassion

ANATTA: IS IT A RELATIVE NEGATION OR AN ABSOLUTE NEGATION?

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As opposed to the soul theory of the *Upaniṣads*, Buddhism postulates the doctrine of *Anatta*, commonly understood as “Not-self” or “Non-self” in Buddhist sources. Consequently, Buddhist scholars such as Buddhaghosa, Collin (1982), Gombrich (2009), and Harvey (2013) have often interpreted Buddhism as denying the existence of the Self. At this point, the crucial question is whether this denial represents a relative negation or an absolute negation. If it is understood as a relative negation, then the self may exist in the sense of alternative or conditional possibilities. In contrast, if it is taken as an absolute negation, then there is no self at all. From the ontological standpoint, this would mean that nothing could possibly remain for impermanence (*Anicca*) to affect. In such a case, there would be no subject that operates within impermanence. Consequently, impermanence itself could not be defined, and thereby the statement that “what is impermanent is *Anatta*” becomes illogical. This paradox can be illustrated by a mathematical structure: consider a function $f(x)$: if the variable x does not exist, then the function $f(x)$ cannot be defined; in the same way, without a definable subject, then the concept of impermanence loses its referent and becomes meaningless. Therefore, interpreting *Anatta* as a relative negation becomes indispensable. Otherwise, there arises a philosophical tension between *Anatta* and impermanence (*Anicca*) at the ontological level. This study interprets how the Buddhist teachings elucidate the doctrine of *Anatta* as a relative negation. Such an interpretation allows impermanence and *Anatta* to be mutually reinforcing, without contradiction. To support this interpretation, the discussion proceeds as follows. First, it examines the linguistic form of *Anatta*. Second, it analyzes properties or features associated with the doctrine of *Anatta* such as impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and dependent arising. Third, it proposes a mathematical model to express the doctrine of *anatta* in a concise and coherent manner.

Keywords: Anatta, Relative negation, Absolute negation, Ontological, Mathematical model

INTEGRATING BUDDHIST ETHICAL, COGNITIVE, AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICES FOR SUSTAINABLE MENTAL WELL-BEING AND ETHICAL LIVING

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The modern world is characterized by rapid socio-economic advancement and increased social pressures which contribute to significant psychological challenges. Conventional mental health approaches often focus on symptom management and pharmacological interventions, neglecting holistic strategies that integrate emotional, ethical, cognitive and social dimensions of human life. Buddhist teachings, with their comprehensive emphasis on ethical conduct, mental discipline, wisdom, compassion, and reflective practices, offer a time-tested framework for establishing sustainable mental well-being and ethical living. Despite extensive research on mindfulness-based interventions, loving-kindness meditation, and other select practices, there is a significant gap in systematic studies that integrate multiple doctrinal dimensions—including the Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path, Five Hindrances, Seven Factors of Awakening, *Brahmavihāras*, Dependent Origination, the Middle Path, Impermanence, Recollection practices, and Contemplation of death—into modern mental health and lifestyle applications. This study addresses the research problem: How to establish sustainable mental well-being and ethical living in the modern world through the application of Buddhist teachings? It hypothesises that a comprehensive, multi-dimensional application of these Buddhist principles can enhance resilience, emotional regulation, ethical living, social cohesion, and overall life satisfaction. The research methodology combines qualitative textual analysis of *Pāli* Canonical sources with applied case studies illustrating contemporary implementation. Findings of this research indicate that Buddhist teachings can be utilized effectively for the management of emotional instability, interpersonal conflicts and cognitive distortions while fostering mindfulness, compassionate behavior and ethical conduct. Thus, this study concludes that these principles provide a sustainable, preventive, and integrative model for modern mental well-being and ethical living. Future research may empirically evaluate the efficacy of multi-dimensional Buddhist interventions across diverse populations and cultural contexts, comparing their outcomes with conventional psychological and therapeutic approaches to determine optimal integration strategies for enhancing contemporary mental health and holistic well-being.

Keywords: Buddhism, Mental well-being, Ethical living, Mindfulness, Counselling psychology

HOW ATTACHMENT (*UPĀDĀNA*) BECOMES A PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSE FOR THE EMERGENCE OF CONFLICT: A STUDY BASED ON EARLY BUDDHIST TEACHING

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The emergence of conflict from the early Buddhist point of view can be illustrated through the lens of attachment, anger and delusion. The term conflict from early Buddhist point of view is conceptualized in two forms: internal (*Ajjhatta*) and external (*Bahiddha*). These two factors play a leading role whenever people engage in evil behavior. As Buddhism teaches, evil behavior and its emotional outcomes are identified as unwholesome (*Akusala*). Furthermore, early Buddhism suggests that when a person's behavior is sullied with evil impurities and when those evil emotions release to the human society, the entire society will be fallen into problematic situation and such situations are widely illustrated in Buddhist discourses through the numerous words: quarrels (*Kalahā*), disputes (*Viggahā*) and contentions (*Vivāda*). All these *Pāli* terms explain the nature of conflict from a psychological ground. Hence, Buddhism explains that the root cause of all evil either internal or external relates to the cause of clinging (*Upādāna*) whereas the Buddha presents fourfold clinging: Sensual pleasure (*Kāmapādāna*), Clinging to views (*Diṭṭhupādāna*) and Self-Doctrine (*Attavādupādāna*), Clinging to Rites/Rituals (*Sīlabbatupādāna*). All these forms of clinging (*Upādānas*) present the different degree of attachments. Ultimately, such attachment will be a leading cause for the emergence of internal and external conflict. Thus, the objective of this research is to explore how *Upādānanirodhā* (the cessation of clinging) serves as a primary method to manage and to cease both internal and external conflicts. In order to explore this matter, from the early Buddhist point of view, the researcher expects to apply qualitative and content analytical methods with reference to primary *Pāli* sources such as the *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, and *Dīgha Nikāya*.

Keywords: Attachment, Conflict, Internal, External, Buddhism

THE IMAGE OF ISLAM IN SAPPORO: PERSPECTIVE FROM A MULTICULTURAL CONTEXT

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Nostalgia for Islam often arises in places where its presence is limited yet quietly growing, and Sapporo is one such city. Known for its relatively homogeneous culture, Sapporo is gradually opening to new identities through globalization, education, and tourism. Although Islam remains unfamiliar to many residents, signs of its presence—mosques, halal businesses, and cultural exchanges—are slowly shaping public awareness. This research aims to explore how Islam is perceived in Sapporo and how cultural and social factors influence these perceptions, with a particular focus on the roles of education, media, and personal interactions. A qualitative approach was used, grounded in experiences from a six-month exchange program at Hokkaido University, where data were gathered through participant observation, informal interviews, and personal encounters with locals, students, and professionals in both central and suburban areas. In total, 20 interviews were conducted, providing rich insights into local perspectives. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which allowed identification of recurring patterns and themes such as awareness of Islam, curiosity, misconceptions, the role of media, educational influence, and intercultural interaction. This approach helped to interpret how social and cultural contexts shape individual perceptions and how personal interactions mitigate stereotypes. Findings show that central Sapporo displayed greater awareness of Islam, supported by visible Muslim communities and frequent intercultural engagement, while suburban areas reflected limited knowledge but genuine curiosity to learn. Misconceptions and stereotypes, often shaped by global media or lack of exposure, still persist, yet personal exchanges and cultural programs were found to bridge gaps of understanding. The study highlights the importance of education and positive media portrayals in reducing stereotypes and promoting harmony. Moreover, the growing presence of halal-certified businesses and mosques in Sapporo provides avenues for intercultural exchange and inclusivity. In conclusion, although Islam remains relatively new to Sapporo's society, globalization and multicultural experiences are paving the way for acceptance and respect. Strengthening interfaith dialogue, cultural awareness, and policy support can help foster a more inclusive and multicultural city.

Keywords: Interfaith Dialogue, Multiculturalism, Nostalgia, Perception

ŚĀNTIDEVA'S VIEW ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR FOR THE PROMOTION OF GLOBAL WELLBEING

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The contemporary world, characterized by interconnected crises such as environmental degradation, geopolitical conflict, and profound social inequality, underscores an urgent need for a fundamental transformation in human behaviour and ethical paradigms. Existing frameworks, often rooted in secular humanism or economic incentivization, have proven insufficient in addressing the deep-seated cognitive and affective drivers of unsustainable and harmful conduct. This research posits that the 8th-century Mahāyāna Buddhist philosopher Śāntideva offers a profound and systematic blueprint for such a transformation, directly relevant to the global wellbeing. The central research problem addressed is the gap between the intellectual aspiration for a better world and the consistent, compassionate action required to achieve it. The study investigates how Śāntideva's thought, particularly in his seminal texts the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, moves beyond mere ethical prescription to provide a practical psychotechnology for rewiring human motivation, perception, and interpersonal engagement. The primary methodology employed is a qualitative textual analysis and philosophical exegesis of these core works, interpreting his classical doctrines through the lens of contemporary global challenges. This involves extracting and synthesizing his core principles—such as *bodhicitta* (the mind of awakening), *pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent origination), and *parātmasamata* (equality of self and other)—to construct a coherent model for behavioural change. The research yields several significant findings. Firstly, it demonstrates that Śāntideva locates the root of harmful behaviour in cognitive delusion (*avidyā*) and self-grasping (*ātma-grāha*), arguing that sustainable external change is impossible without this internal transformation. Secondly, it elucidates his graduated methodology: the cultivation of *bodhicitta* reorients ultimate motivation towards universal wellbeing; the practice of exchanging self and other (*parāparasamvṛti*) directly counters the innate bias of the ego; and the profound understanding of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) deconstructs the reified boundaries that foster indifference and conflict. These are not abstract ideals but are operationalized through daily mindfulness and introspective practices. This study argues that Śāntideva's framework provides a critical and often overlooked complement to institutional and policy-driven approaches to global wellbeing. His system offers a science of the mind that empowers individuals to become agents of sustainable peace and compassion by addressing the source of destructive behaviour. The findings suggest that integrating Śāntideva's transformative psychology into modern discourse on ethics, education, and conflict resolution can foster the resilient, altruistic, and globally conscious subjectivity necessary for navigating the complexities of the 21st century.

Keywords: Śāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, Behaviour, Global Wellbeing

DEBUNKING THE MYTH: THE REALITY OF POLYGyny IN ISLAM AND ITS MISREPRESENTATION IN SRI LANKAN SOCIETY

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Polygyny is the practice of having more than one wife or permanent female sexual partner at the same time, is a form of polygamy that has existed throughout history across various cultures and religions. It is not unique to Islam and has been practiced in ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, Africa, and among Hebrews and early Christians. Even though Islam permits polygyny adhering to strict social and ethical standards, it has been portrayed among the Sri Lankan public as a factor for misunderstanding. This study aims to explore how polygyny is represented in Sri Lankan media and how public perception shaped by these portrayals influences broader social, political, and economic dynamics in the country. In order to collect data for this study, a mixed method was adopted with observation, data collection from media, and reviews of scholarly articles and research articles. Findings from the study indicate that the way polygyny is presented in Sri Lankan media has a significant impact on inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations. Media data was analyzed to understand the common misinterpretations surrounding polygyny in Sri Lanka. Both primary and secondary sources supported a deeper contextual understanding. The findings reveal that misrepresentation of polygyny in Sri Lankan media contributes to societal division and increases inter-community tensions. Misunderstandings of Islamic law not only cause social anxiety but also lead to widespread distrust toward Muslims, affecting their involvement in areas such as politics and the economy. To address this issue, open, respectful dialogue and accurate public education on Islamic teachings are essential. The media, in particular, must ensure the dissemination of correct and balanced information. It is important to highlight that while Islam permits polygyny, it does so under strict ethical conditions, an aspect often overlooked. Emphasizing the point regarding the conditions can help reduce misconceptions, encourage peaceful coexistence, and promote mutual respect between religious and cultural communities.

Keywords: Polygyny, Islam, Misrepresentation, Media

BUDDHIST TEMPLE-BASED MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING SRI LANKA'S 90% TREATMENT GAP

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Sri Lanka faces a critical mental health crisis intensified by economic collapse, pandemic trauma, and post-conflict legacies. The National Mental Health Survey (2021) reveals that one in four adults experiences mental health issues, with depression affecting 6.7% and anxiety disorders 5.5% of the population. Suicide rates remain among Asia's highest at 14.6 per 100,000 people. Yet Sri Lanka allocates only 0.3% of its health budget to mental health, far below the WHO's recommended 5% while maintaining just one psychiatrist per 500,000 people in rural areas. With pervasive stigma, minimal community-based services, and a treatment gap exceeding 90%, conventional infrastructure has failed to meet population needs. This research proposes a conceptual framework for Buddhist temple-based mental health programs as culturally appropriate, scalable solutions to bridge this gap. Drawing on Buddhist philosophical texts, Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (foundations of mindfulness), Mettā Sutta (loving-kindness), and Kālāma Sutta (wise discernment), the framework integrates mindfulness meditation (sati), compassion practices (mettā), and community support (sangha) with evidence-based interventions documented in contemporary mental health research. The theoretical foundation applies the Four Noble Truths as a diagnostic model: recognizing distress (dukkha), identifying causes (samudaya), affirming recovery possibility (nirodha), and implementing therapeutic pathways (magga). The Noble Eightfold Path informs intervention design, where Right Understanding addresses cognitive distortions, Right Intention cultivates motivation for healing, Right Speech promotes healthy communication, and Right Mindfulness develops present-moment awareness for anxiety reduction. The paper proposes a three-tiered integrated care model. Tier 1 utilizes Sri Lanka's 6,500+ temples as community mental health centers providing meditation, peer support, and psychoeducation for mild-to-moderate cases. Tier 2 establishes referral networks linking temple programs with professional counselors for moderate cases. Tier 3 provides psychiatric channels for serious disorders. Implementation considerations consist of monk training curriculums, quality assurance systems, cost-effectiveness review, and sustainability mechanisms. By using religious infrastructure, this approach provides policymakers a practicable mechanism to strengthen access, de-stigmatize, and foster holistic well-being in all of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Mental Health, Buddhism, Mindfulness, Community Care

INEQUALITIES, CLIMATE JUSTICE, AND HUMAN RIGHTS: ETHICAL INSIGHTS FROM THE *DĪGHA NIKĀYA*

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One of the most urgent global challenges today is climate change, a crisis that has deepened existing social and economic inequalities, especially in the global South. Its consequences- rising food insecurity, large-scale loss of livelihoods, increased health burdens, and forced displacement- demonstrate that climate change functions simultaneously as an environmental emergency and a critical human rights issue. Buddhist teachings, particularly those preserved in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, offer ethically grounded perspectives on environmental responsibility, social justice, and governance that can enrich current climate justice discourse. This study examines how the philosophical principles articulated in the *Dīgha Nikāya* can meaningfully contribute to contemporary debates on human rights and climate justice. Although modern policy frameworks emphasize sustainability and equity, they often neglect the wisdom embedded in indigenous and spiritual traditions. This absence constitutes the central research problem of the paper. The study, therefore, aims to analyze selected suttas that discuss social welfare, just governance, and environmental care; to explore their relevance to present-day challenges of inequality and climate disruption; and to demonstrate how Buddhist ethics can strengthen global discussions on justice and responsibility. The research draws on secondary literature in Buddhist social and environmental ethics and employs textual analysis of key suttas, including the *Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta*, *Aggañña Sutta*, *Kūṭadanta Sutta*, *Sigālovāda Sutta*, and the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*. A comparative review of climate justice and human rights frameworks, such as the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, further contextualizes the analysis. Findings show that the *Dīgha Nikāya* presents a comprehensive ethical model that links social justice and environmental sustainability. Its teachings emphasize that unjust governance, inequitable resource distribution, and moral decline directly contribute to social instability and ecological degradation. Conversely, redistributive justice, ethical livelihoods, and collective responsibility foster both social harmony and environmental resilience. Core Buddhist values, compassion (*karuṇā*), non-harming (*ahiṃsā*), and interdependence (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), closely parallel contemporary principles of human rights and climate justice. Integrating these ethical insights into modern climate-policy frameworks demonstrates the continued relevance of Buddhist thought in addressing the intertwined challenges of inequality, human rights, and environmental change.

Keywords: Climate Justice, Human Rights, *Dīgha Nikāya*, Social Inequality, Environmental Ethics

RACISM: AN ANALYSIS OF WESTERN AND BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVES AND THE ROLE OF BUDDHIST TEACHINGS IN RESOLVING IT

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The objective of this study is to examine the concept of racism from Western and Buddhist perspectives, proposing a Buddhist-inspired framework to address this complex issue. The research problems are to: (1) analyze how early Buddhist teachings deconstruct racial hierarchies and discriminatory ideologies, and (2) propose a scale of Buddhist elevated qualities and an ethical framework to foster anti-racism at individual and communal levels. Currently, the concept of racism is understood as a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses biology, culture, color, and social structure. Throughout human history and into the present, racism has fractured the unity of human beings and the humanity of humans. Early Buddhist teachings offer moral guidance through discourses such as the *Assalāyana Sutta*, the *Vāseṭṭha Sutta*, etc., to strengthen social bonds among people. These key discourses demonstrate the futility of racism as it appeared in early Indian society and highlight early Buddhist perspectives on racial discrimination. To expand the exploration of this topic, this study utilizes a qualitative and descriptive methodology based on early Buddhist scriptures. Additionally, it aims to challenge the racial ideologies prevalent Western societies during the 17th and 18th centuries, primarily on factual and ethical grounds. To address issues related to racism, the researcher applies core Buddhist concepts such as the Five Precepts, the Ten Wholesome Deeds, and the Four Sublime States (loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity) applicable to the enhancement of social equity. Overall, this study presents a Buddhist ethical framework for fostering individual transformation for societal justice, at the multiple levels as such families, schools, and communities.

Keywords: Racism, Western sociology, Social justice, Buddhist ethics, Communities

BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND GLOBAL WELLBEING

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Today, environmental degradation including climate change, deforestation, air and water pollution, along with the loss of biodiversity, has a severe impact on human well-being. These challenges are not merely scientific or political; they also carry moral and ethical dimensions that influence how people live and shape the planet's future. Environmental sustainability refers to the responsible use of natural resources to maintain ecological balance and ensure the well-being of all living beings. It is therefore closely linked to human survival and global well-being. Modern approaches often focus on technology and policy, yet these alone are insufficient without ethical and spiritual awareness. This study explores how three core Buddhist principles mindfulness (*sati*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and non-violence (*avihiṃsā*) can contribute to environmental sustainability. These principles were selected as they form the foundation of Buddhist ethics and directly relate to human and environment relationships. Mindfulness helps individuals recognize how their actions affect the environment and cultivate responsible habits in daily life. Compassion extends concern beyond human beings to animals and the natural world, while non-violence encourages avoiding harmful practices and promoting the precise use of natural resources. Together, these insights foster ethical environmental behavior and an eco-spiritual perspective rooted in harmony and respect for all forms of life. To explore how Buddhist ethical principles can contribute to environmental sustainability and global well-being. This study is based on qualitative analysis of Buddhist scriptures and contemporary environmental research to identify relevant ethical perspectives. In conclusion, integrating Buddhist ethics with technological and policy-based efforts can enhance sustainable practices, ensuring ecological balance and the well-being of current and future generations.

Keywords: Compassion, Mindfulness, Non-Violence, Environmental Sustainability

A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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The discourse on human rights, though rooted in modern Western moral, virtuous, and legal thought, finds profound resonance in Buddhist ethics and social philosophy. Early Buddhism, while not employing the language of “rights,” articulates a moral framework in which the dignity and worth of every being are upheld through responsibility, compassion, and moral restraint. The Buddha’s teachings emphasize ethical duties that implicitly affirm others’ rights to life, property, truth, and fidelity. Scholars such as Damien Keown, Sallie King, H. Saddhatissa, and Asanga Tilakaratne argue that these duties contain a proto concept of rights embedded within reciprocal obligations between individuals and social groups. Buddhism situates human beings within a web of interdependence (*paṭicca-samuppāda*), grounding moral responsibility in relational rather than atomistic terms. Individual morality, guided by the natural law of *Kamma*, ensures self-accountability, while social morality, founded upon conventional norms, safeguards mutual welfare. Ethical precepts, such as the five precepts and the *attūpanāyikadhamma*, along with canonical suttas like the *Aggañña*, *Kālāma*, and *Rāhulovāda* Suttas, illustrate that human dignity, freedom of conscience, and tolerance are inherent in the *Dhamma*. The tradition explicitly condemns discrimination based on birth (*jāti*) and upholds pluralism, anticipating modern ideals of equality, inclusivity, and social justice. Contemporary Buddhist thinkers, including Sulak Sivaraksa and Phra Dhammapidok, extend these principles to broader social and structural contexts, emphasizing that the protection of human rights is inseparable from the alleviation of *dukkha* (suffering) at both personal and societal levels. The *Vinaya*’s attention to communal harmony and the Noble Eightfold Path’s cultivation of ethical and mental discipline provide enduring foundations for human freedom, equality, and peace. Moreover, Buddhist moral theory highlights that rights cannot exist in isolation from responsibility; one’s ethical restraint and compassionate action directly ensure the flourishing of others and the integrity of social life. Ultimately, the Buddhist vision of liberation (*vimutti*) and contemporary human rights discourse converge in their shared goal: the cessation of suffering and the realization of human flourishing within an interdependent moral community. Buddhism offers a non-metaphysical, relational foundation for human dignity, equality, and freedom, showing that the assurance of rights arises naturally from the cultivation of virtue, empathy, and mutual respect rather than from legal imposition alone. By emphasizing interdependence, compassion, and moral self-transformation, Buddhism not only anticipates many ideals of modern human rights but also provides a practical ethical framework for sustaining them in daily life and governance.

Keywords: Buddhism, Human rights, Ethics, Interdependence, Compassion

SPERM RETRIEVAL AND LINEAGE: A CASE STUDY OF MEN EXPERIENCING INFERTILITY IN COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

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Procreation is a natural imperative for any heterosexual couple, ensuring the notion of lineage continuity. This allows infertile couples to seek Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) since adoption does not meet the societal expectation of lineage. Moreover, male partners with infertility-related conditions encounter limited options for continuing their bloodline, including the Sperm Retrieval (SR) method. SR entails acquiring sperm from either the male partner or a donor to fertilize an egg. Owing to the social stigma and the influence of profit-driven medical practices, the local medical culture tends to discourage patients from questioning medical treatment plans, ascribing infallibility to medical practitioners. To examine these experiences, twenty-five men with non-fertility conditions who consented to allow their wives to undergo ART with retrieved sperm, followed by Intra-Uterine Insemination (IUI) at Castle Street Hospital for Women, Colombo 8 (CSHW), were selected, of whom twenty were recruited through purposive sampling and five through snowball sampling. Using a mixed-methods analytical approach, the findings from the semi-structured survey and in-depth interviews revealed that the SR and IUI procedures were conducted confidentially, agreed upon by the spouses, and driven by parental demand. 56% of these men used sperm from their brothers, while 39% used sperm from their paternal cousins, reflecting the need to continue the lineage that shoulders the existing patriarchy in Colombo. In addition, these men had experienced trilateral victimization: psychological inferiority, financial exploitation, and the stigma of sterility within their nuclear and extended families. This results in reluctance to accept the child as their own due to a perceived loss of belongingness, and to reduced marital intimacy with the wife after undergoing IUI with donor sperm. Prior consultation with private medical agencies has resulted in these men being economically destabilized, as the culturally constructed medical monopoly has prevented them from questioning the cost or suggesting alternatives that challenge the recommended procedure by the specialists. Consequently, anthropocentricity has created conflicts due to the bypassing of natural laws in the use of SR, thereby disrupting marital harmony and peace. Such situations often lead to the infertile man's alienation, not only from himself but also from his wife and child, culminating in social issues related to inclusivity and acceptance. This suggests valuing spousal intimacy as pinnacle of marriage over biological parenthood while normalizing both adoptive and biological parenthood as socially inclusive.

Keywords: Sperm Retrieval (SR), Anthropocentricity, Natural Law, Male Sterility

***Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee of Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya*

SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION PATTERNS OF MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMES) IN KANDY DISTRICT

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Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a central role in Sri Lanka's economy, contributing to employment, livelihoods, and local economic resilience. However, most research has primarily focused on their economic contributions, while paying limited attention to their spatial heterogeneity and the locational factors shaping their distribution. This study addresses that gap by examining the spatial patterns of MSMEs in Kandy District using a combined methodological framework of proximity-based buffer analysis and hotspot analysis. This study applies Central Place Theory (Christaller, 1933) to examine how enterprise concentration and service diversity decline with distance from the central business district (CBD). Using the Kandy Clock Tower as the central node, 24 concentric buffers extending up to 36 km were mapped to capture urban, peri-urban, corridor, and rural dynamics of MSME distribution. While Central Place Theory guides the analysis, it also recognizes influences from corridor-based growth and peri-urban agglomeration shaping Kandy's evolving economic landscape. The results reveal six distinct MSME zones: Central Business District Core, Inner Urban Fringe, Peri-Urban Transition Belt, Corridor Intensification Zones, Outer Rural Transition and Deep Rural Hinterland. Hotspot analysis further identified statistically significant high-density clusters in the CBD and along major transportation corridors and rural hinterlands. Service enterprises dominate both the CBD and rural service hubs, while manufacturing activities peak in peri-urban belts due to land availability and suburban expansion and trading activities concentrate along corridors, reflecting accessibility and market connectivity. These observed patterns are strongly influenced by structural drivers including accessibility, land-use constraints, location of anchor institutions, and heritage-driven tourism. This study highlights the importance of spatially explicit MSME data for guiding effective planning and policy in secondary cities. By identifying zones and clusters, policymakers can design targeted interventions such as strengthening CBD service hubs while managing congestion, supporting peri-urban industrial clusters, formalizing corridor-based trading, and extending financial, digital, and training support to rural enterprises.

Keywords: Hot spot analysis, Kandy, MSME, Spatial Heterogeneity

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**CHILDREN’S EXPERIENCES AND PARENTAL ATTITUDES
TOWARDS CORPORAL PUNISHMENTS: THE ROLE OF
PARENTING EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE GALIGAMUWA
DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT, SRI LANKA**

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Corporal punishment remains a prevalent disciplinary method in Sri Lankan households, despite its well-documented negative impacts on children’s emotional and psychological well-being. From a social work perspective, this study examines parental practices, children’s experiences, and the effectiveness of a parenting education program in promoting positive, non-violent discipline in the home environment. This action research study employed purposive sampling, selecting 15 families involved in cases reported to the Child Protection Authority in the Galigamuwa division. The study utilized pre- and post-intervention questionnaires for parents, alongside semi-structured interviews with children and parents. The parenting education programme consisted of four weekly, two-hour sessions conducted over one month by Child Protection Officers from the National Child Protection Authority. Data were analysed through thematic analysis, supported by descriptive summaries of parental responses. Findings revealed that 12 out of 15 parents (around 80%) admitted to using corporal punishment at home, and children consistently expressed feelings of fear, sadness, and anger as a result. While many parents were aware of child protection laws, they lacked practical knowledge of alternative discipline strategies. Following the program, nearly all parents reported a willingness to adopt non-violent approaches such as reasoning, time-out, and positive reinforcement, which children strongly preferred, highlighting improved parent–child relationships. In conclusion, positive parenting programs demonstrate significant potential to reduce harmful disciplinary practices and strengthen child protection at the household level. Thus, continuous community workshops, peer support groups, and follow-up visits are recommended to sustain positive change and ensure the long-term protection of children’s rights.

Keywords: Corporal Punishment, Positive Parenting, Child Protection, Sri Lanka, Positive, Discipline

CHALLENGES FACED BY PARENTS OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN CHILAW: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

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This research explores the complex, multi-dimensional challenges faced by parents of youth with disabilities in Sri Lanka, with a particular focus on the emotional, social, financial, and institutional strains they experience. This community-based study in Chilaw was conducted with the support of a Catholic organization serving youth with disabilities. A mixed-methods research design was adopted for this study, with a total sample size of 35 families. Families who had a child with a disability and consented to participate were included in the study, whereas families without a child with a disability or those unwilling to participate in the study were excluded. Quantitative data were collected through a cross-sectional survey of randomly selected families, while qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with purposively selected families using a topic guide. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, with all procedures adhering to ethical standards. The findings revealed widespread experiences of psychological distress, financial strains, social stigma, and inadequate support services for family caregivers. Quantitative data indicated that 88% of parents reported feelings of stress or hopelessness, while 75% experienced disruptions in their livelihoods and employments. These findings were further reinforced by qualitative narratives that highlighted isolation, self-blame, and the limited involvement of professional service providers. Parents primarily relied on religious faiths and informal social networks for emotional support, underscoring a gap in culturally appropriate psychosocial services. Despite the presence of some such services, the access to them was limited and parents expressed low satisfaction with the services offered by them. The study concludes that there is an urgent need for culturally sensitive, community based social work interventions that are tailored to the realities of caregivers. It calls for better service delivery models, enhanced awareness, and targeted support programs to promote the dignity, inclusion, and well-being of both parents and youth with disabilities.

Keywords: Disabilities, Parental Challenges, Social Work, Family Wellbeing, Psycho-social Support

SACRED CARE VERSUS STRUCTURED TRANSACTION: INSTITUTIONALIZING BUDDHIST MATERIAL PRACTICES IN SRI LANKA'S HEALTH SECTOR

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This study investigates how Buddhist material practices are embedded and reshaped within cancer care in Sri Lanka. While *dāna* and offerings are rooted in spiritual merit-making, they increasingly operate within organized systems of healthcare support. The research focuses on three different models of practice: Apeksha Temple near the National Cancer Institute, which provides accommodation, food, and funeral services; Indira Cancer Trust, which supports pediatric cancer patients through meals, medicine, and accommodation; and the virtual network Volunteer Sri Lanka, which mobilizes online fundraising and coordinates donations of essential items. A qualitative exploration design was used. Data were collected in Colombo and Maharagama through semi-structured interviews with Buddhist monks, administrative officers, and virtual platform administrator. On-site observations at Apeksha Temple, supported by photographs and field notes, documented the religious rituals, donation mechanisms, and communication strategies that structure giving in each setting. Findings show that Buddhist rituals such as *pirith* chanting and merit-sharing continue to provide comfort and emotional resilience for patients and caregivers. At the same time, institutional practices increasingly rely on fixed sponsorship packages, standardized pricing for *dāna*, and digital transactions. These strategies ensure continuity and accountability yet shift Buddhist generosity toward a more transactional mode that blurs the boundary between sacred care and consumer-oriented systems of support.

Keywords: Buddhism, Material Practices, Cancer Care, Sri Lanka, Institutionalization

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