



# Abstracts



COVID - 19 PANDEMIC :  
*Development Challenges & Opportunities*



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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**Annual Research Symposium- 2020**

**Faculty of Graduate Studies  
University of Colombo**

# **Annual Research Symposium - 2020**

**Faculty of Graduate Studies  
University of Colombo**

**COVID - 19 PANDEMIC: DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES  
ANNUAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM 2020**

# **Abstracts**

**15<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**Symposium Co- Chairs:**

Dr. Nirmali Wijegoonawardana

Dr. Pradeep N' Weerasinghe

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## REVIEW PANEL

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**Lockdown: Psychosocial impact on individuals, families and communities**

**Chair:** Professor Priyanjali De Soyza, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo

### Track Two:

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**Labour Relations and Human Resource Management in a Pandemic**

**Chair:** Dr. M.P.P. Dharmadasa, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo



## MESSAGE OF THE CHIEF GUEST

**Professor G.L. Peiris, Hon. Minister of Education**



COVID - 19 pandemic is a challenge for the development of all sectors and has become a massive challenge for all education institutes of the entire world. Transformation of teaching and assessment practices to a distant learning mode within a short period of time is not an easy task for the teacher. On the other hand, gaining knowledge and achieving the learning outcomes through an unfamiliar pathway while sitting on psychosocial impacts is a new beginning for a student. In this situation it is of utmost importance that all stakeholders in education sector develop positive attitudes towards revising our educational system to align with the evolving needs of the society. In this regard development of new educational, health and wellbeing policies and practices should be a vital component in planning the entire education framework.

State universities receive a substantial investment of treasury funds and World bank loans. They house highly qualified staff for dissemination of the knowledge through teaching, research and consultancy practices. In this context, Sri Lanka needs a diversified university system where each university specializes in certain areas and develop into a unique model, and I am sure that the academia is strong enough to successfully meet this challenge.

The government has already committed to support organizational curriculum and pedagogical reforms in education, particular in higher and professional education, develop students' skills, research capabilities, and increase exposure to private partnerships and global education practices. The COVID - 19 outbreak has been a stimulus to expedite the education transformations and I need your support and commitment in reviving the education system that will help to achieve the targets of the government policy 'Vistas of Prosperity and Splendor' and Sustainable Development Goals.

I am very pleased to be the chief guest in the inauguration ceremony of the Annual symposium of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo. This year the event has taken a novel approach to make use of a digital learning platform. I believe that this will be a start of a new era of sharing knowledge among the academia and students to fulfil the nations expectations.

I wish a very productive day to all of you and a prosperous future.

## MESSAGE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR

Senior Professor Chandrika N Wijeyaratne



It gives me great pleasure to felicitate the Dean and members of the Faculty Board, Course Coordinators and members of Boards of Study, postgraduate students and alumni of the Faculty of Graduate Studies of our university, on the occasion of the Annual Research Symposium 2020. Despite the multitude of challenges faced by all stakeholders in terms of the current pandemic, the Faculty of Graduate Studies has continued in its commitment to sustain the momentum of its admirable research environment and provide the appropriate forum for the dissemination of research results. Your prioritized focus on the many facets of the impact made on society and country by the COVID - 19 threat, with special emphasis on its effects towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, is very commendable. I am certain that the research findings presented at this forum will undoubtedly assist our policy makers and planners to translate your conclusions into meaningful action.

I also take this opportunity to recognize and commend every member of staff, for giving of your best attention, to maintain your faculty's eminence as the benchmark in scholarly outreach, quality teaching-learning, an evidence-based outlook and a strong commitment to research dissemination. Your capacity to upscale multi-disciplinary study and research is much admired. I am very happy to note your hard work in publishing the Colombo Journal of Multidisciplinary Research has borne fruit with rich dividends, and recognized by Sri Lanka Journals online (SLJOL), yet another step towards wider recognition. Many congratulations!

Our university is very humbled by the presence of Honourable Minister of Education, Professor G L Peiris, who is no stranger to us. We are very privileged by your presence and encouragement to shift our focus from being a teaching university to be a research-oriented institution with a holistic outlook. Your gracious presence is serendipitous, when the Faculty of Graduate Studies has made exceptional headway in research and scholarship in a multitude of fields of study and is indeed a jewel in the crown of our academic milieu.

I take this opportunity to wish all researchers fruitful deliberations that would help you achieve your high academic and career goals.

## MESSAGE OF THE DEAN, FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Senior Professor Nayani Melegoda



Each year we look forward to Annual Research Sessions of the Faculty with great expectations. Even amidst a pandemic and a challenge hitherto unknown to people of Sri Lanka, I am very happy to note the enthusiasm among our researchers of the Faculty, University of Colombo and the Universities of Sri Lanka that resulted in the submission of most up to date research papers for the 2020 Annual Research Symposium of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) on “COVID - 19 Pandemic: Development Challenges and Opportunities” on five different tracks to accommodate the different disciplines of postgraduate studies and research offered at FGS, Colombo.

Leading to showcasing research at FGS, it is with great pride I acknowledge that the *Colombo Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* (CJMR) recognition in the Sri Lanka Journal Online status by the National Science Foundation. The authors of the papers presented at the research sessions are welcome to submit your papers for the forthcoming publication of the CJMR in 2021.

The year 2020 saw Thirteen + Doctoral of Philosophy degrees earned in varying interdisciplinary themes from Sri Lanka’s Foreign Policy, Maternal Health Care, Information and Communication Technology, Organizational Culture , Flood Resilience, Sinhala language comprehension assessment for Aphasia, Auditing, Well -Being of married women in workforce, Indigenous Medicine, Language studies, British period in Sri Lanka’s history to name a few among others. In additions number of students qualified in the Master of Philosophy degree contributing immensely to new knowledge in respective fields of studies.

This is an occasion to share new knowledge, learn best practices in research and most of all a great opportunity to networking. For this reason, I am very thankful to Hon. Minister of Education Professor G.L. Peris who has known our work from the inception of this Faculty, for agreeing to be the Chief Guest and the keynote speaker at this event. Sir, Thank You. I must also thank the Vice Chairman, University Grants Commission Professor Janitha Liyanage, the Chairperson of the Postgraduate Standing Committee, who encourages the work of graduate faculties, and finally a big thank you to Vice Chancellor, University of Colombo, Professor Chandrika N. Wijeyaratne, Members of the Faculty Board, Boards of Studies for Development Studies and Board of Studies for Professional Studies for your continuous goodwill and support to make the FGS, Colombo great.



## MESSAGE FROM CO-CHAIRS OF ANNUAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

This abstract book includes all the abstracts of the papers presented at the Annual Research Sessions 2020, organized by the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo. In total there were over 60 papers and presenters. The conference was under the theme of COVID - 19 Pandemic: Development Challenges and Opportunities organized into five tracks that included areas such as the Psychosocial impacts on individuals, families and communities as a result of lockdowns, the effect of COVID - 19 on Human rights and vulnerability of conflict-affected populations, COVID - 19 and achieving SDGs etc. The Faculty of Graduate Studies was established in 1987 with a mandate to sponsor, coordinate and regulate postgraduate studies and specialized or multi-disciplinary research carried out within the University of Colombo. Our mission is to provide advanced knowledge at postgraduate level and create human capital for growth and development. To serve this purpose, conferences are organized along the lines of well-established and well defined disciplines. A Conference of this magnitude could not be realized without the tremendous and generous support of a multitude of individuals, special amongst which is Vice Chancellor Senior Professor Chandrika N. Wijeyaratne and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Senior Professor Nayani Melegoda, without whose wisdom, perseverance, guidance and encouragement this conference would not have been a possibility. We would also like to thank all the participants, the members of the organizing and academic committee and most importantly the administration staff of Faculty of Graduate Studies for putting this conference together.



**Dr. Nirmali Wijegoonawardana**  
**Co-Chair**



**Dr. Pradeep N' Weerasinghe**  
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# Track One: 01

**Lockdown: Psychosocial impact on individuals, families and communities**



**Accomplishing intimacy through the ordinary. Urban middle-class women's family  
relations during lockdown**

Asha L. Abeyasekera

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

This paper draws from weekly digital diaries that fifteen women residing in various locales in Colombo, Sri Lanka kept during April 2020. In response to the threat of COVID - 19, the Sri Lankan government imposed an island-wide curfew on 20<sup>th</sup> March, which lasted for eight weeks. The 24-hour curfew meant that, with the exception of those working in essential services, people could not leave their homes to buy groceries or even go for a walk. With people's lives literally confined to their homes, this study's primary objective was to understand the impact of the curfew/lockdown on people's daily lives. More specifically, the study aimed to explore in what ways our day-to-day lives, routines, and relationships have changed, and in what ways they have stayed the same. Using journal prompts of 4-5 questions the study collected stories and personal reflections about how people continued with their ordinary lives even in extraordinary times. Participants were recruited through the researcher's existing networks. Journal prompts in English were distributed via email on a weekly basis for four consecutive weeks to those who volunteered to participate. Participants were encouraged to respond in either English or Sinhala. The study used a co-diary keeping method, where the researcher shared her own diary entry with those who participated. The diaries were interpreted using a narrative analytical framework that explored ideological dilemmas, interpretive repertoires, and subject positions. The paper reflects on intimacies of dwelling and relating in new ways in the 'home' and 'family'. By asking people to record ordinary events and interactions, it explores how people defined and experienced the 'normal' and the 'ordinary' in a time described as 'extraordinary'. It examines new routines that people had to adjust to or consciously established and how they differed from 'old' routines. The paper also examines how women reflect on intimate relationships with husbands and children, parents, siblings, and in-laws, and in what ways they recorded changes in family relations and dynamics during this time.

**Keywords:** Intimacy, Gender relations, Ordinary life



## **Home country resistance against return migrants during COVID - 19:**

### **The case of return Sri Lankans from Italy**

Pavithra Jayawardena

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International migration is severely affected by the COVID - 19 pandemic in different ways. Many states have closed their borders to prevent from the spread of the virus. Sri Lanka started controlling her airport arrival gates from 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. During the last days before the border control, there was a significant increase of the demand by Sri Lankan labour migrants to come back to Sri Lanka. The key reason for this demand was their sense of insecurity to continue working and living in those countries where the COVID - 19 virus was spreading rapidly. However, this increased demand of labour migrants to return met with severe resistance from the Sri Lankan society, which was a new phenomenon. Even though Sri Lankan society has a prevalent hostility against certain types of Sri Lankan migrants, such as Tamil diaspora members and Sri Lankan dual citizens, hostility against labour migrants has never been visible before. In this paper, I attempt to understand whether this animosity against labour migrants is completely a new construction or whether it exists in the society unnoticeably but became visible during the pandemic times. Deeply understanding such responses of the Sri Lankan society towards another group of Sri Lankan citizens is important as it shows us how the society determines who is “us” and “them,” or “inclusion” and “exclusion.” I draw data for this study from three sources: observations, semi-structured interviews with migrants and discourse analysis of media reports. Analysing the data, the study found that the Sri Lankan society always has a contradictory approach towards labour migrants. On one hand, it is believed that those who leave the country (for any reason) are disloyal citizens. On the other hand, it is believed that the remittances they send contribute to the national economy positively. The first belief is usually over shadowed by the latter belief. However, the pandemic situation led the society undermine the economic contribution of emigrants to the national economy, and to view the labour migrants’ interest to return to Sri Lanka merely as an intentional attempt to spread the virus in their home country, because they are disloyal citizens. The study also found that the media reporting at the time significantly affected such social constructions.

**Keywords:** Sri Lankan migrants, Return migrants, COVID - 19, Resistance

**Impact of Internal Market orientation on Employee Customer oriented behavior:  
glancing over the literature.**

S.C. Nagahawatta<sup>1</sup>, K. Kajendra<sup>2</sup>

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In today's highly competitive business environment, organizations have compelled to use different strategies to react the challenges faced by the organizations. Internal Market Orientation (IMO) facilitates customer orientation through matching internal environment conditions with external marketing objectives. The role of IMO is enhancing the relationship between the company and its employees, as a prerequisite to effective relationships between employees and customers. This study examines the depth of understanding and the applicability of IMO through a systematic literature review based on journal articles published in Google scholar between 1990 and 2019 (inclusive). Despite the large number of publications and their assortment, the present study identifies three main research dimensions related to IMO; Antecedents, Tools and Practices and Consequences. Throughout the analysis number of research gaps were identified. Past studies addressed Internal market orientation as a mean of motivating employees to perform customer focused and market oriented behaviors (Gronroos, 1990; Lings, 2004; Gounaris; 2006; Boukis & Gounaris; 2014, Boukis, Gounaris, and Lings, 2017). However, there is lack of empirical evidence to support this claim (Lings and Greenley, 2010; Yu,Yen,Barnes & Huang, 2019). Also no empirical evidence has been conducted to examine the impact of internal market orientation on employee customer oriented behavior in the Sri Lankan hotel sector. Thus this research contributes to fill these gaps by proposing a framework integrating the concepts of internal market orientation and employee customer oriented behavior and open avenues for future research in the marketing discipline. The following definitions apply to the main key terms used in the study. Internal Market Orientation (IMO): is a culture ensuring a set of managerial behaviors necessary to get satisfied, motivated and customer conscious employees in order to deliver better services to enhance hotels' financial and non-financial performances (Lings, 2004; Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000, Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003 ; Lings &Greenley, 2005,2009; Lings et al., 2008, Kazakov, 2019). Customer oriented behavior (COB): Employees acts and ability to identify, evaluate, understand, resolve customer problems and meet customer needs guaranteeing the delivery of promises made by the hotel to its customers, ensuring customers' satisfaction and organizations' long term profitability (Saxe and Weitz, 1982, Ping and Ahmad, 2015, Hartline and Ferrell, 1996; Hartline, Maxham, and McKee, 2000, Shambayati, 2019).

**Keywords:** Internal Market Orientation, Employee Customer Orientation, Sri Lanka, Hotel Sector

## **The effect of social media during COVID - 19 lockdown in Sri Lanka**

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The evolution of media in recent years has changed the audience behavior around the world. After the arrival of digital media, the audience is changing their media habits with convergent media. It facilitates to share of information, ideas and any other forms of expression via convergent media content. Social media is the leading medium and specific tool which is used to communicate in the convergent media context. Social media is commonly referring to Web 2.0 Internet-based applications that facilitate sharing different information and build relationships with each other in a virtual community. Many people always connect with social media, because of its attractive context to contribute the human communication standards as the main specific tool of media convergence. It also plays a dynamic role in transforming people's lifestyles in modern society. After the World Health Organization (WHO) defined the COVID - 19 outbreak as a global pandemic and announced that it will affect every aspect of human life around the globe, many countries around the world took decisions such as impose a curfew, quarantines and closing non-essential stores, schools, universities and factories to control the health pandemic in their country. As a result of the isolations, individuals are spending more time with social media on their devices to get information and entertain themselves. The people of Sri Lanka also use social media to get updates about the current scenario and control the peoples' stress during the lockdown period. This study aims to determine the effect of social media during the COVID - 19 lockdown period in Sri Lanka. The study was conducted as a mixed research approach by using qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. To support this study, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp and Viber selected as the most popular social media platforms in Sri Lanka. Qualitative data got through from the observation method and questionnaire used as the quantitative data collection method. Questionnaire data collected through the online survey of the non-probability convenience sample method. Statistical and descriptive-analytical methods are used to analyze the data to determine the effectiveness of social media in Sri Lanka society. The research techniques are used to define the research question of "how to effect social media during the COVID - 19 lockdown period in Sri Lanka". Furthermore, findings reflected the influences of social media for the Sri Lankan society in the lockdown period.

**Keywords:** Social Media, COVID - 19 Pandemic, Lockdown, Sri Lanka, Society

**Prevalence of usage of smart phones and television among preschool aged children in  
selected urban and rural locations in Galle**

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This research study was planned to find out the prevalence of usage of Smart phones and Television among preschool aged children in selected Urban and Rural Locations in Galle. Now a days smartphones and televisions are excellent electronic equipment to make children busy and quiet, they can be an excellent instrument for bribery as well. In this study preschool children consider as age 2 to age 5 children who are already starting preschool. Galle suburbs select as urban area and Udugama select as rural area in Galle district. Cross sectional preschool base survey will be carried out and randomly selected five (5) nurseries from each category. Twenty (20) children were selected from each nurseries. Cluster sampling method was used to select the participants from the each nurseries. Interviewer administered pre-tested questionnaire was used to gather data. It was prepared in English and translated in to Sinhala and Tamil. Always to interviewed mother of the child or father or guardian. The confirmatory analysis was performed, statistical techniques such as Pearson's chi squared test and Measure of association were used. Then the multiple comparison tests were used to test whether the dependencies between the levels of dependent variables by comparing the expected and observed counts of the corresponding levels of variables. The strength among variables was also measured by Cramer's V. It was reviewed that 57.71% of rural children and 29.43% of urban children were used to watching television and there are 36.91% of rural children and 27.7% urban children show usage of smart phones. Expected values of rural and urban for smart phone is greater than observe values. There is a significant difference in-between rural expected value and urban expected value. But in –between observe values of urban and rural area there is no significant difference. It could be due to rapid popularity of smart phones even rural areas now a days. Moreover there is a considerable proportion of parents who believes there is no advantage but only disadvantages. Thus, 37% of the urban parents and 45% of rural parents strongly believes in less social skills of the child, negative effects on eye sight, and other health risks. According to this study both rural and urban children use some other smart devices. Results shows that, urban children were frequently use many kinds of smart devices than rural children.

**Keywords:** Children, prevalence, smart phone, television, sampling method

## **Role of Global Civil Society in Promoting New Social Contract during COVID - 19 Pandemic**

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In an increasingly globalized world, exclusivity of states as actors in international relations has been challenged by the emergence of a number of new social actors. Among such actors, Global Civil Society becomes more significant due to multiple reasons. Global Civil Society is a broad, dynamic and complex concept that seeks to advance collective responses based on common interests of the people. In the wake of the COVID - 19 global pandemic, the importance of the role of Global Civil Society in responding social emergencies and disseminating information for collective actions began to be reemphasized. However, Global Civil Society served as a powerful tool for shaping people's attitude and behavior through various collective means during the pandemic. Such collective means include sharing and distributing health information, providing mental health support, emergency responses and promotion of global resilience. It also promoted 'Practice Based Learning' through which the people could call for variety of collective actions leading to a new social contract. In the light of this idea, the paper argues that Global Civil Society has manifested a new social contract among the people during COVID - 19 pandemic through its communication channels and networks. Moreover, this study intends to examine how the Global Civil Society has manifested this new social contract by particularly looking at self-restricted behavior of individuals, voluntary agreements among the people and the diffusion of common norms during the pandemic. In order to answer this question, data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. The study adopts a qualitative approach and draws theoretical insights from Constructivism to sustain the key argument of the study. Finally, the results suggest that Global Civil Society has significantly affected the people's attitudes and thinking patterns through rapid dissemination of information during COVID - 19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** Global Civil Society, New Social Contract, Practice Based Learning, Global Resilience, Constructivism



## **The Impact of COVID - 19 on Tax Compliance Attitude of SME Taxpayers in Sri Lanka**

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The association between the taxpayer's attitude of adhering to tax law caused by COVID - 19 is unprecedented and has never been experienced before. The purpose of this paper is to study the impact of the COVID - 19 pandemic on the tax compliance attitude of Small and Medium Sector taxpayers in Sri Lanka. According to the World Bank's Innovations in Tax Compliance program (The World Bank, 2020), E-F-T (Enforcement, facilitation, and trust) allows the developing governments to maximize pandemic opportunities. Building a competent, fair, and accountable tax system will increase voluntary compliance attitudes among people. The Slippery-Slope Framework (Kirchler, 2007) that has not been tested in Sri Lanka used in this study to measure the influence of attitude on voluntary and enforced tax compliance. Thirty-two thousand one hundred seventeen registered small and medium taxpayers as of 31 December 2019 at Inland Revenue in Sri Lanka. Yamane's (1967) formula used to decide the sample size, and 408 Small Medium sector taxpayers were selected using a simple random sampling method. A structured questionnaire was e-mailed to participants to collect data, and a five-point Likert-scale was used to measure the taxpayer's perception of their tax compliance attitude. Further, to capture the effect and issues of taxpayer's attitude with COVID - 19, key informant interviews and focused group discussions were conducted. The focused group discussion was organized separately at each of the main industry, agriculture, manufacturing, service, trade, and construction, consists of eight members from each group. Information obtained at key informant interviews from opinion officials from the tax authority, Ministry of Finance, and Banks. Pearson's r was used to examine the relationships between the taxpayer's perspective on voluntary compliance, enforced compliance, and total tax compliance. The results suggest that the taxpayer's compliance attitude explains only 43 percent of tax compliance variation. The research findings delineate that the taxpayers from the Manufacturing and Trading sectors have strong positive relationships with their compliance behaviours. In contrast, the Service sector shows a positive but weak association. This research confirms that the COVID - 19 significantly influenced the attitude of the Manufacturing and Trading sector taxpayers because they received more benefits and relief from the government and the tax regime. The easy loan systems, tariff adjustments, tax concessions, re-scheduling default tax payment plans, and extensions for tax return submissions and the new business opportunities created during the period motivated the taxpayer's attitude towards more compliance. Contrary, a sudden decline happened in the Service sector due to lockdown, curfew, and the social distance practices implemented in the country. Noted a few limitations in this study as the results from this research are applicable for the small and medium sector taxpayers in the Sri Lankan context. Apart from attitude, other variables impact the taxpayer's compliance behaviour. This study provides insight to policymakers to develop coherent strategies to motivate taxpayers' compliance attitude considering all business sectors. Understanding the taxpayer's compliance attitude during adverse conditions contribute to academics and practitioners by serving as the first comprehensive taxpayer attitude change study during COVID - 19 in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Attitude, Business nature, COVID - 19, SMEs, Tax compliance

**Compliance to follow up and adherence to Ayurveda medication in Knee Osteoarthritis patients attended to Sri Lankan National Ayurveda Teaching Hospital during COVID - 19 pandemic lockdown period**

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The COVID - 19 lockdown encountered major difficulties to coping pain related to muscular skeletal disease conditions. Osteoarthritis is one of a synovial joint disorder characterized by pain, stiffness and restricted function. Social isolation with physical inactivity negatively impact on health and wellbeing of these patients. The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of Traditional Sri Lankan Medicine (TSM) to improve quality of life of Osteoarthritis patients during lockdown period in mid-March to end May 2020. Follow up interviews were taken every two weeks until the restrictions starts to ease. The study included 20 patients previously diagnosed as Knee Osteoarthritis (KOA), who has taken medicines from regular clinic of Kaya Chikitsa at National Ayurveda Teaching Hospital (NATH) before lockdown. Participants were interviewed through the telephone. Survey questions covered related to knee stiffness (Stabdahta) and pain (Shula), managing daily activities, weight, exercise and how they managed their pain. Results were analyzed according to their responses for the above questions. All the participants managed their pain satisfactorily with medicines but after two weeks without medicines and due to physical inactivity, all patients reported worsening of knee stiffness and pain and difficult to manage their daily routine activities. 80% asked for both external and internal medications for pain management and 20% asked advices for oil application and fomentation. 40% showed a fear of weight gain and asked advices for weight gain management and diet. 60% showed interest in yoga exercises for relieving pain and 75% of them had sleep disturbances due to pain and asked advices for it. It was noticed that 45% were received their medicines via post after one month and 55% able to purchased medicines from their area. Given advices for management of weight and sleep disturbances using yoga and meditation. Those who adhered to given instruction managed pain and capable to carry out their daily living activities without difficulty. 55% stated that they wished to continue STM with in new normal situation with their highest satisfaction. In addition all participants asked home remedies which can be used as protective measures to COVID - 19. This study explored that STM able to support to manage pain and other symptoms of KOA with herbal remedies. Through this study it was noticed that telephone based health follow up system should be implemented to STM in COVID - 19 pandemic situation to provide quality health guidelines for non-communicable disease conditions.

**Keywords:** Knee Osteoarthritis, COVID - 19 lockdown, Impact, Sri Lankan Traditional Medicine

## **Women, Domestic Violence and Psycho-Social Impacts of COVID - 19 Lockdown**

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Once the global pandemic COVID - 19 hits the world, many people have been sheltering at homes as a protective measure against the pandemic. As a negative consequence of that a shadow pandemic is growing, of domestic violence. Domestic violence includes all types of abuse which has serious psycho-social impacts on their lives. It's a pattern of abusive behavior in any intimate relationship that is used by one partner to maintain a sense of control over the other. More women have been subjected to domestic violence as spouses, daughters and female parents etc. Therefore, it's important to have insights on the research problem of "What is the nature of psycho-social impacts of COVID - 19 lockdown for the women who are being subjected to domestic violence?". "Examine the positive and negative impacts of COVID - 19 lockdown for the women who has being subjected to domestic violence" have been considered as the specific objective. This research has been based on a literature review. The Framework of Psychosocial Assessment of Development & Humanitarian Interventions has been used as the analysis methodology. Violence against women tends to increase during every type of emergency, including epidemics. Lockdown has been creating isolation of women who are subjected to domestic violence with violent partners or family members. domestic violence is one of greatest human rights violation. One main reason to being subjected to domestic violence of women is women's acceptance of traditional gender roles as a result of being raised in a patriarchal home. It has multiple impacts on women such as their wellbeing, sexual and reproductive and mental health, ability to participate and lead in the recovery of societies and economy. It has negative effects on social values, resilience and shared humanity too. Considering about the above literature in conclusion, it's significant to gather socio-mental health and legal professionals, authorities and organizations around the crisis management procedures to provide special prevention strategies for preventing domestic violence as one of main psycho-social outbreaks of COVID - 19. All stakeholders involved in COVID - 19 response need to be aware of and raise awareness about the potential impacts of physical distancing, stay at home and other measures. This pandemic is likely to have a notable negative impact on women who are subjected to domestic violence and their children. The most grievous violation of women's rights during COVID - 19 is the rise of gender-based violence, women and girls are at greater risk than men and boys.

**Keywords:** Gender, Patriarchy, Power, Values, Wellbeing



## Track Two: 02

**COVID - 19: Human Rights and vulnerability of conflict- affected populations**





## **Human rights challenges on vulnerable groups and COVID - 19: A study based on LGBTI people**

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Discrimination against LGBTI people undermines the human rights principles outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Human rights are key in shaping the pandemic response, both for the public health emergency and the broader impact on people's lives and livelihoods. Human rights put people center-stage. In this research study of the impact of COVID - 19 on LGBTI people. The primary research objectives are to study the potential human rights challenges of vulnerable groups in the COVID - 19 virus situation and investigate how the human rights of LGBTI people have been violated or challenged and whether there are human rights challenges for LGBTI people globally. The data triangulation method has been used to accumulate secondary data from multiple sources available in electronic and printed form including books, journals, web, reports, historical records, and treaties. Qualitative content analysis has been used since this is a documentary analysis and Content analysis evaluate document texts and to test theoretical relevance to understanding data more comprehensively and scientifically. It will test prevailing theories in different contexts when compare the categories of different settings. LGBTI people regularly experience stigma and discrimination in accessing health services, leading to disparities in access, quality, and access to healthcare. And Stigmatization, discrimination, hate speech, and attacks on the LGBTI community are confirmed to have occurred in the context of the COVID - 19 pandemic against LGBTI people. Many LGBTI youths are trapped in hostile environments with unsupportive family members or co-residents, which exposes them to violence, as well as increasing their anxiety and depression. Also, Access to work and livelihoods, LGBTI people are more prone to unemployment and poverty than the general population. Many works in the informal sector of the LGBTI community and has no access to paid sick leave, unemployment benefits, and coverage. Additionally, the human rights of LGBTI individuals have been violated based on paid leave policies with differences that do not cover all genders equally. Its people face discrimination and abuse across the class divide but the systemic nature of violence against poorer lesbians is linked to economic inequality, as well as identity. According to the research, it is clear that many human rights of LGBTI people have been challenged and violated in COVID - 19 pandemic situation.

**Keywords:** Human rights challenges, Vulnerable groups, COVID - 19, LGBTI people

## **COVID - 19: Impacts on human rights and gendered vulnerability in Afghanistan**

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COVID - 19 pandemic hit Afghanistan at an intersection of protracted social conflict, human rights challenges, high gender inequality, poor employment opportunities and limited infrastructure. These issues have already been negatively impacting Afghanistan's economic and social stability. The COVID - 19 crisis is aggravating pre-existing vulnerability to violence, and further limiting access to life-saving services in Afghanistan. Background to this study are those women and girls who face multiple forms of discrimination and deprivation, including internally displaced women and women living in conflict-affected areas in Afghanistan who are at particularly increased risk of experiencing violence and are less likely to receive the support they need. Socio-religious norms, including expectations that women and girls are responsible for doing domestic work and caring of sick family members can expose women and girls to a greater risk of COVID - 19. At the same time, women's ability to access healthcare is seriously diminished due to limited availability of female health workers and compounded by the exclusion of male health workers. This study examines the impact made by COVID - 19 on human rights in Afghanistan. Through the qualitative method of data collection from primary and secondary sources, it observes the aggravation of gendered vulnerability. Violence triangle of Johan Galtung is made use of to analyze gender violence which is depicted in three arms of a triangle, namely direct, cultural and structural. The implementation of Afghanistan's National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325—Women, Peace and Security (NAP 1325) is taken as an indicator when accessing the grass root level case study. In the conclusion of this study, it is envisaged to pursue further research on the perceived impacts of COVID - 19 on human rights and gendered vulnerability in Afghanistan.

**Key words:** Conflict, Gender, Human Rights, Violence, Vulnerability

**Justice after COVID - 19: An analysis of the challenges faced by the  
formal justice sector in Sri Lanka during a global pandemic**

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The formal justice sector in Sri Lanka is almost entirely reliant on physical interactions within the court room for the dispensation of legal decisions. Sri Lanka has committed to providing access to justice for all under the sustainable development goals. Unfortunately, substantive access to justice for all continues to elude the marginalized. The global pandemic which emerged in January 2020 has thrown a further challenge on this already burdened system. The litigants, lawyers and judges that relied on an already flawed system are now further physically distanced from the formal justice system. This means that these actors must now strategize to ensure that access to justice is restored, albeit without the full physical access to court rooms. The objective of this paper is understanding how COVID - 19 challenged the dispensation of substantive justice in the formal justice system in order to suggest ways to mitigate these challenges. To achieve this objective, this paper discusses the challenges faced by lawyers and litigants during the period 14 March to 15 November 2020. This includes how the physical aspects of dispensation of the day-to-day caseload were resolved, and the strategies that are practiced by lawyers, judges and litigants in order to circumvent these obstacles and challenges. Applying postcolonial feminist methodology, information gathered through both primary data (gathering of qualitative and quantitative primary data) and secondary data (desk review of laws, regulations and rules), the paper attempts to obtain insights into what challenges were experienced and how these challenges were mitigated by the justice sector. The author applies the strategies used by persons who engage with court rooms in the midst of COVID - 19, to the theoretical definitions of what justice should look like in an equal society. The paper arrives at an understanding of the manner in which the justice sector has adjusted itself to a post-COVID - 19 dispensation of justice, and what that means for Sri Lanka achieving Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals; that is, to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”.

**Keywords:** Justice, Human rights, Equality, Law, COVID - 19

## **COVID - 19: Microfinance and war-affected women in the North and the East of Sri Lanka**

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Women from North and East of Sri Lanka, predominantly Tamil, the most vulnerable groups among the victims of war have been struggling to resettle for more than a decade since the end of the civil war. They have been facing several civil, political, socio, economic and cultural human right issues which have severely affected their right to life. In this backdrop, microfinance companies have offered different kinds of credit facilities to many war-affected women in North and East, and it has been introduced as one of the best solutions to reduction of poverty and socio-economic crisis by improving the economic conditions. However, it created additional issues among these vulnerable women. Many of them have failed to handle the credit facilities considerably due to high and unbearable interest rates and lack of knowledge in management. Accordingly, some of the women who were not able to repay the loans committed suicide and fled their villages. Although, some women manage to repay the credit facilities with several difficulties, and it is reported that certain women do illegal and odd jobs for repaying the loans. The research primarily identifies the impact of COVID - 19 on mentioned women in the human rights point of view. Moreover, it studies the process of countering the issues by the respective authorities. The research follows the mixed methodology, including both doctrine and empirical methods such as document analysis, in-depth interviews to collect primary and secondary data. Fifteen victimized women have been interviewed non-directivity during the research and it provides a considerable quantity of qualitative data. As found by the researcher, COVID - 19 surges human rights violations of victimized women and makes additional issues on them. The pandemic created barriers on practicing some civil and political rights such as access to justice, right to privacy and right to movement. The impact on socio, economic rights, including the right to work, access to proper health care become severe, and it leads to a clear violation of the right to life of these women. In addition to that, they have not yet received any proper relief package on their long-suffering microfinance related issues. Accordingly, the researcher suggests an immediate intervention of the government to address the human rights violations of the women.

**Keywords:** Women, Sri Lanka, COVID - 19, Human Right issues, Microfinance

**Instrumentalizing ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ as a tool to protect human rights  
during the COVID - 19 PANDEMIC in Sri Lanka**

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Though the ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ spotlights the sustainability of the world economy, it extends its scope to address global challenges such as climate change, pollution, poverty, disease, and inequality. The spread of COVID - 19, the respiratory illness from the latest known variant of Coronavirus, drastically affected the world in different dimensions than was expected. Sri Lanka is also not an exception to this pandemic. Inevitable measurements of the governments, including Quarantines, Travel Bans, and Lock-downs placed to mitigate the severity and scale of this unfolded crisis. However, these measures placed several restraints on Human Rights. The disparity of resources and developments among the societies urged the protection of Human Rights in Sri Lanka during the crisis. Thus, in addition to the Government, Corporate sectors were often expected to play a larger role in helping the state to meet its objectives to protect human rights, even if they may not have a mandatory legal obligation to do so. This background idea outsets on the footing of CSR as UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) furnishes the expectation of businesses to undertake due diligence and assess impacts of their operations and conduct in terms of respect for all rights. Accordingly, the central objective of this research is to examine the present CSR regulatory framework of Sri Lanka and CSR trends during the COVID - 19 pandemic situations. The research primarily adopts a qualitative study. The author collected the data for this research from primary and secondary sources. Laws passed by the Parliament of Sri Lanka and other countries, international laws such as conventions, directives, treaties, resolutions and judicial decisions are the primary sources for the research. Furthermore, the journals, statistic reports and scholarly articles were referred to as the secondary sources through the library and digital databases. This research intends to draw attention to the CSR practices which were adopted by the Listed Companies towards its Consumers during the COVID’19 crisis in Sri Lanka. Further, the research analyses the effectiveness of the present CSR regulatory frameworks of Sri Lanka and as the prime objective, the paper suggests feasible steps on how best to accommodate CSR as a tool for protecting Human Rights during the COVID - 19 pandemic with international standards and globally accepted best practices of other jurisdictions.

**Keywords:** Corporate Social Responsibility, COVID - 19, Human Rights, Sri Lanka

**Online Violence against Undergraduate girls during COVID - 19 Pandemic in Sri Lanka:**

**Special reference to Three months from March to May 2020**

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Online violence refers to the use of online digital devices or services to engage in activities that result in physical, psychological, and emotional self-harm or cause harm to another person. The COVID - 19 pandemic quickly spread to all parts of the world, forcing people to stay at home and causing many social problems. As a result of the lockdown and police curfew in Sri Lanka, undergraduate girls are restricted to their families; it has led to increasing online violence against girls. The purpose of this study is to investigate online violence against female undergraduate students during the COVID - 19 pandemic in Sri Lanka, especially during the three-month period from March to May 2020. The study was a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The sample was chosen using the random sampling method; it consisted with fifty (50) undergraduate girls from University of Kelaniya. Primary and secondary data was used while the quantitative data were analyzed and presented through charts and graphs when necessary. Participants were informed that the participation was voluntary, and requested the informed consent of the participants after an explanation of the study objectives. The study has found that about 45% of the participants experienced online violence during the COVID - 19 pandemic in Sri Lanka, and 80% of them reported multiple times of exposure and the offenders were unknown for 80% of the victims. Annoying phone calls, insulting emails or messages, images or symbols with sexual content, indecent or violent images or videos, and offensive or humiliating photos are the common forms of online violence exposures, and the most commonly reported forms included 45% annoying phone calls. Blocking the offender's contacts was the most common victims' response among the responses were hiding the case from others, blaming the offender, getting support from family, blocking the offender's contacts, changing the victim's contact details, and disconnect from the online network. The majority of the victims (80%) experienced psychological effects more than other effects of social, physical, and financial during this lockdown period. The study concluded that there is a need for local activists to carry out a campaign on social media to educate girls to restrain this issue.

**Keywords:** Online violence, Exposure, Undergraduate girls, COVID - 19 pandemic, Sri Lanka

**Ethical practices of journalists: With special reference to newspaper articles on  
COVID - 19 that were published in national English newspapers in Sri Lanka**

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Journalists/ media persons should play a significant role in crisis situations. COVID - 19 is a crisis at the local and global level. There are several arguments that, media including the print media has not acted ethically in some causes related to COVID - 19 in Sri Lanka (Gunawardena, 2020). Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine the ethical practices of journalists in the context of COVID - 19 pandemic. The specific objectives are to identify the contemporary print media behavior and identify the role of print media in this pandemic. Some 30 articles that published in the national English newspapers in Sri Lanka from April to August 2020 were randomly selected for this study due to the time limitation since there are no research have been conducted based on the English newspaper articles. Because the content of the Sinhala newspapers has been analysed for several research in Sri Lankan context. The theories such as the Authoritarian theory, Social responsibility and Agenda setting which highlight that the media reality is a construction by the authority and public, are the main theoretical frameworks of this study. Qualitative approach has been used and the content analysis has been conducted thematically. As far as the results were concerned, it was found that some journalists reported the news ethically and objectively during COVID - 19 pandemic to empower and educate general public. As far as some of the other findings were concerned, reporting news without touching the depth of the issue, reporting fake news, representing personal agendas and ideologies through the content etc. were identified as issues. It was specially noted that, state owned print media highlighted their own activities related to COVID - 19. The private owned print media highlighted the activities and events organized by their media institutions. It was found that some journalists created news contents/ stories to get the publicity without respecting to the confidentiality, humanity, and privacy of people. In this context, the government and responsible authorities must make sure that media including print media should provide accurate, factual, and timely information in an ethical manner to empower and educate the general public in crisis situations like COVID - 19. Introducing the professional code of ethics for the journalists in Sri Lanka is the best solution for this critical issue.

**Keywords:** COVID - 19, Ethical practices, Journalists, National English newspapers, Sri Lanka



## **Impact of COVID - 19 on International Relations: Evidence from a Small State**

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Starting from early 2020, the global political order, unprecedentedly, started to decay. Amid the global pandemic, which was named as COVID - 19, closures of national borders and global lockdown caused a ripple effect on Western Hemisphere-centered socio-economic order and raised doubts about their ability to project power beyond its region. Furthermore, power status of emerging powers in Eastern Hemisphere were also threatened in the same way. The immediate outcomes were systemic uncertainty generated outside the states and the changes of hegemonic order, which equally raised threat and opportunities for small states within the existing multipolar order. The present research has examined the impact of the global pandemic on Sri Lanka, as a small state, through the Type III model of Neoclassical Realism introduced by Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell (2016). The theory incorporates interplay between international systemic influence and domestic variables by employing a qualitative methodology consisting of archival analysis. Preliminary findings suggest that the decline of systemic stimuli has increased political autonomy of small states. Conveniently, yet encountered with economic obstacles as a result of socio-economic interdependency. Even though virtual diplomatic summits have ensured progression of bilateral relations, it has reduced informal engagements among policymakers and possible power projection opportunities to political administration of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa at international arena. Nevertheless, an outstanding containment of global pandemic provided golden ticket to the administration of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to enhance Sri Lanka's security perspective in all aspects.

**Keywords:** COVID - 19 and Small States; Neoclassical Realism; Multipolarity; Threats and opportunities

## COVID - 19 Challenges: A Case of UN Peacekeepers in South Sudan

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Since the start of the 2019 coronavirus ( COVID - 19) pandemic in South Sudan, the COVID - 19 mortality monitoring team was set up by the Ministry of Health in partnership with WHO and collaborators to resolve the anecdotal reports of increasing unexplained community deaths that are currently not well examined. More than thirty-three million people worldwide were infected with the virus when this abstract is written, and more died, because of the pandemic. The deadly virus contracted mainly in Europe and America, where the most advanced and modern medical facilities are open. The COVID – 19 has had a significant effect on the UN organization as the new UN peacekeepers are stationed in regions where there are essential human needs. Healthcare services lag, while the COVID - 19 has forced the UN peacekeeping missions to be re-evaluated and reshaped so that their everyday activities are influenced by the local health authorities' precautionary steps. The essence of COVID - 19's accelerated exploitation has influenced many fields within society. The humanitarian crisis in conflict-ridden countries is also going to worsen. The lack of adequate medical facilities compounded the problem. Access to medical and educational services in those countries is minimal for the population. However, this study addresses the literature review as a research methodology, summarizes various reviews, and addresses common pitfalls and how to meet its objectives. South Sudan is one of the African region counties severely suffered from, lack of proper governance. This condition is threatening the fundamental human needs of society. Most affected civilians due to crimes against humanity committed by both government powers, Sudan People's Liberation Movement) and its adversaries, the Opposition Movement for People's Liberation in Sudan. The COVID – 19 has had a significant effect on the UN organization as the new UN peacekeepers are stationed in regions where there are essential human needs Roadway reconstruction has helped strengthen local people living in the region and has made it easier for humanitarian aid to reach them quickly. The United Nations peacekeepers collaborated with local authorities, offering different services and technical skills. The National Dialogue, however, offers an opportunity for peace and for South Sudan to be restored. The UN has seen some significant improvements from 2016 to today, such as a three-year truce and a two-year peace deal, and, since the beginning of this year, a revitalized transitional government that is working and moving forward. It is an improvement, and that should all be very impressive of what has been accomplished collectively. However, due to the present pandemic situation the study discusses the problems facing peacekeepers and offers realistic options for potential operations they are carrying out. At the end of the study, it intends to determine the challenges faced by UN peacekeepers in South Sudan and then examine the countermeasures to overcome COVID - 19.

**Keywords:** COVID - 19, UN Peacekeepers, Pandemic, United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

**The 'New Norm' of Intra State Conflicts in Sri Lanka:  
A Critical Study of the Post COVID - 19 changing Dynamics of the Sources of Conflict**

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The COVID - 19 pandemic has created a 'New Norm' in the dynamics of the sources of intra-state conflicts globally. 'New Norm' is defined in this paper as the new standard or the 'New Normal' on how a conflict can originate. COVID - 19 pandemic 'lockdown' in Sri Lanka has magnified the old disputes as well as created new sources of altercation. Thereby changing the dynamics of the origins of conflicts and creating a 'New Norm'. By using qualitative methodology we looked into local studies done on COVID - 19's effect on the economy, society and politics as well as international studies on the effect of the pandemic on Sri Lanka and the globe. Furthermore we used the social learning theories and Elaboration Likelihood Model to further analyse the data found through the secondary sources. Which led to the understanding on how the new attitudes and norms were created due to the pandemic. Through this analysis we identified four main sources of conflicts that has risen in Sri Lanka during and after the COVID - 19 lockdown; disruption to employment (unemployment / reduction of remuneration / demotions / reduction of working hours), increase in violence against women (due to lack of alcohol / limited alcohol / unemployment / frustration due to the lockdown caused a significant increase in domestic violence) and inability to connect to online education (lack of funds to buy internet data / no divides to connect to the online classes / insufficient devices for the whole family created situations where students were unable to keep up with their class work and lag behind, which added to their tension). The stresses mentioned have led to the increase of mental health issues that can further fuel conflict situations. Moreover the interconnection between the causation of conflicts were also established in this study. The web pattered of interdependence in the sources of conflicts, has shown a positive and negative correlation to each other, adding another dimension to the 'New Norm' of the sources of intra-state conflicts in Sri Lanka. The Island nation which is still recovering from the thirty year protracted armed insurgency and the 2019 easter bombing face greater challenges with the pandemic. These new issues will force Sri Lankan community to look towards a new direction in finding solutions for sustainable peace; creating a 'New Norm' for sustainable peace.

**Keywords:** 'New Norm', Changing Dynamics, Source, Conflicts , COVID - 19.

## Track Three: **03**

**Social Distancing: Challenges and Opportunities for Teaching and Research**



## **COVID - 19 Pandemic: An Opportunity to Generate Autonomous Learners**

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The concept of learner autonomy (LA) which was first introduced to the field of education by Holec in 1981 was about learner's ability to take charge of one's own learning. The concept attributes to the practicality in which the learner is moving from total dependency to more self-reliance learning. The shift of responsibility from teachers to learners in this process was not a phenomenon warmly welcome by both teachers and learners. Regardless of the propositions highlighting the importance of fostering LA for successful education, the system of education was smoothly functioning on traditional basis. March 2020 will be known in the education community as the month of shutting the doors of educational institutes due to the deadly COVID – 19 pandemic affecting 90% of the world's student population. The speed of the closures thrust the education system to a challenge that has been the urgent and unexpected request for previously face to face educational programmes to be taught online with a trivial planning and awareness on potential risks and opportunities. The study was carried out based on the assumption that the shift of face to face learning to online learning paved learners an opportunity to become autonomous. The research was carried out on qualitative method inquiry and the semi structured interviews for both teachers and learners were used as data collection instrument. The researcher conducted the interviews with the selected 20 students following Higher National Diploma in English at Advanced Technological Institute – Kurunegala and five 05 lecturers conducting lectures to the course. The discussed points at the interviews were based on two subjects: English Literature and Language Structure Usage and Linguistics. The interviews were held in nonacademic environment and each interview lasted maximum for thirty minutes. The gathered data was interpreted, coded and categorized using thematic analysis. Further the thematic analysis model developed by Miles & Huberman (1994) was used for the thematic analysis process. All the lecturers had stated that they had noticed that their students became more independent in the process of learning through online and 17 students out of twenty accepted that they had become more independent in the absence of face to face learning. This proves the major implication of the study, that process of online teaching and learning paves learners an opportunity to become autonomous.

**Keywords:** Learner Autonomy, Foster, COVID - 19, Face to face learning, Online learning

## **Factors Associated with Knowledge Sharing Capabilities of IT Professionals in Sri Lanka**

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Knowledge sharing capabilities are the abilities of the employees to share their knowledge with the other workers. IT professionals play a significant role as knowledge brokers in the organizations by sharing their knowledge among themselves as well as with users. Although a few scholars in the western context have discussed the organizational and technological perspective in knowledge sharing capabilities of employees, a vacuum remains to be filled on this subject matter in a Sri Lankan context. Currently there are very limited and obsolete studies on how both personal and organizational factors play an important role in knowledge sharing capabilities of IT professionals, where IT was chosen as a focused industry due to its crucial role in Sri Lanka's economic revival. Therefore, the authors investigated the role of the personal, organizational and technological factors in developing knowledge sharing capabilities of the employees in IT companies in Sri Lanka. The study used a self-administered questionnaire to collect data from 368 IT professionals in eight ICT companies in the Western province, Sri Lanka as a quantitative research. Convenience sampling technique was used for this study. Descriptive analysis, correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were used as the analyzing techniques. Among the 368 participants, 59.5% were male and majority of the respondents were in the age group of 31-40. 44.8% of the respondents have work experience between 11 years and 20 years while 54% of the respondents have obtained their postgraduate education. The findings revealed that the organizational factors and technological factors have positive influence on knowledge sharing capabilities of IT professionals in Sri Lanka. It also identified that top management support ( $p < 0.05$ ) and knowledge management system quality ( $p < 0.05$ ) are the important dimensions in developing the knowledge sharing capabilities of IT professionals in Sri Lankan context. It was revealed that organizational rewards ( $p > 0.05$ ) and knowledge management system infrastructure ( $p > 0.05$ ) were not significantly associated with knowledge sharing capabilities of IT professionals in Sri Lanka. The level of education and the years of working experience acted as moderating variables between the factors and knowledge sharing capabilities of IT professionals in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the study commented that the people those who have higher in education and experiences are utilized the opportunities to develop their knowledge sharing capabilities than others. In future, the study could be extended to other sectors such as academic and financial institutions, to nurture more efficient knowledge sharing best practices across Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Knowledge sharing capabilities, Knowledge sharing, Organizational rewards, Top management support, Knowledge management system

**A pilot study conducted in Faculty of Agriculture, University of Jaffna: An online learning  
to reconcile with the fall out effect of COVID - 19**

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The year 2020 is a landmark in which COVID - 19 brought about a paradigm shift in that, technology has taken over regular conventional teaching by way of online instruction. In Sri Lanka online teaching was introduced to engage students with instruction, when they, due to social distancing and personal isolation got into lethargy. Beginning with the first quarter of 2020 in Sri Lanka the Ministry of higher education with the intention to engage and support undergraduate students introduced online teaching as a substitute for the regular in-class learning they lost. Therefore, this research attempts to assess undergraduate student's preference for online learning as against regular conventional teaching. To this end questionnaire was distributed to the students belonging to the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Jaffna. Among them 162 responded irrespective of which year they were studying in of whom 84% were females. Their answers reveal 64% preferred both online and conventional methods combined while the remaining favoured in-class teaching method alone. Again, among the females 93% preferred combined teaching method. Whereas majority of the boys (71%) favoured online learning. To see more precisely students' preferences, a binary response Logistic Regression Analysis was carried out while performing the correction for the heteroscedasticity. The Wald chi<sup>2</sup> (5) was 72.62 and chi-square value 0.000 and the Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> equal to 0.3436 indicated the significance of the model. The variables gender (Dummy female or male,  $dy/dx = 0.04302$  and  $P > |z| = 0.043$ ) and location (Dummy urban or rural,  $dy/dx = 0.073228$  and  $P > |z| = 0.051$ ) of the students showed a significant result while other variables didn't. If the gender of the student is female then that favoured blended learning method. Irrespective of gender, students those who are living in the urban areas also revealed the same preference. Access to data, devices, and strong signal strength might have been the factors favouring the online learning of the urban students. In conclusion, students reveal that they could access support more easily in conventional learning than in online learning. In the meantime, students favour online learning for the personal experience, for the privacy it offers and self-motivated learning. Hence, this research recommends combining both online and conventional teaching thus addressing the shortcoming in the one compensated by the other, which will be more viable than either.

**Keywords:** COVID - 19 pandemic, Undergraduate students, Online learning, Conventional learning, Logistic regression.



**World Englishes in the classroom: A critical literature review of attitudes towards  
variation in English among teachers of English**

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The study of language attitudes has long been a significant area of research. Generally adopting social psychological approaches, language attitudes research at present is dominated by studies of attitudes towards World Englishes (AWEs) in English language teaching (ELT) contexts. Undergirded by the theoretical assumption that attitudes can determine successful language learning, these studies explore the attitudes of teachers and students of English in countries where powerful global pedagogical models, British and/or American English, compete with established local varieties within and outside the classroom. This critical literature review explores the contribution of recent research towards gaining an in-depth understanding of teachers' AWEs. Over fifty international and local studies conducted in pedagogical contexts, mostly published between 2011 and 2019, were reviewed. Findings revealed a dominant theoretical assumption about attitudes as a stable, measurable construct and the employment of two deductive methods, the language attitudes survey and the verbal-guise test. These approaches have produced quantitative, generalisable results that have succeeded in identifying global attitudinal trends such as the growing acceptance of local varieties alongside the persisting preference for Inner Circle pedagogical norms. Many studies also adopted a binary view of attitudes, affirming 'positive' attitudes while identifying 'negative' attitudes as deficient, with little attempt to explore ambivalence in attitudinal reactions. A silencing of teachers' individual voices which might have shed light on their own attitudes was also observed. The literature review concludes that a more nuanced understanding of current AWEs among teachers of English in Sri Lanka based on their own experiences and worldviews might make a more meaningful contribution to English education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century characterized by competing Sri Lankan Englishes, and regional and global WEs. For this, the study recommends social constructionist and narrative approaches that view concepts such as attitudes as unfixed, volatile, contextualised, and discursively constructed by individuals.

**Keywords:** Language attitudes; World Englishes; English language teaching; teachers of English; Sri Lankan Englishes

**Pandemic Pedagogies and Disadvantaged Learners:  
An Identity Approach to Online Learning during COVID - 19**

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Large-scale surveys of education during COVID - 19 identify learners who have poor digital resources and who are not proficient in the language of instruction as those among the worst affected by the exacerbation of disparities in learning opportunities caused by 'emergency online education'. In order to achieve 'inclusive education' as these surveys suggest, it is important to first understand the social and cultural factors causing such disparities. Research that explores learning as a social process that is closely tied to learner identities may be helpful for understanding the interrelationships between language learning, technology practices and the situatedness of learners. This conceptual paper examines how online learning shapes and is shaped by learner identities and how these in turn impact education and social trajectories of learners. The purpose of this paper is to review literature on identity, language learning and digital practices of learners. It also reviews poststructuralist and sociocultural theories of identity, language and learning. This paper adopts an identity approach that understands technology and language practices in terms of the individual learner who uses them and the contexts in which they are used. It specifically focuses on disadvantaged learners in English-medium higher education, who lack the social, economic and linguistic resources to harness digital tools. Based on literature, the paper establishes two propositions, namely, (1) unequal relations of power in the social world affect disadvantaged learners' access to social networks and thereby, meaningful learning through construction of identities, and (2) disadvantaged learners not only have different digital practices but also different preferences for technology use. The paper then proposes Pierre Bourdieu's *Theory of Practice* (1977) as a useful conceptual framework to explicate the deficient identities of disadvantaged learners and their differential digital practices and learning outcomes. It concludes with implications for policy and practice and recommendations for transformation of inequalities. This paper is timely as it considers how online learning exacerbates exclusion of disadvantaged learners at a time when less-resourced countries have identified online learning as an effective tool to broaden education opportunities and the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal 4: *to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all* by 2030 continues to be hampered by COVID - 19.

**Keywords:** Learner identity, Online learning, English-medium Instruction, Bourdieu's Theory of Practice, COVID - 19

**Perceptions of state university academics on digital pedagogy during  
the COVID - 19 pandemic in Sri Lanka**

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The outbreak of the COVID - 19 pandemic has a profound impact on all the higher educational institutions, making academic calendars futile. Sri Lankan university system is not an exemption of this but rushed to an online education system to keep on the continuity of teaching and learning. This initiative was a new experience for both students and academics as Sri Lankan higher education was traditionally based on on-site education. The impact of this on the academic community as the frontline providers of higher education are considerable. Hence, this article examines the perceptions of university academics on the newly initiated online education system as a response to COVID - 19. A qualitative research approach is used to capture the academics broad experiences, understandings, and opinions on the use of online education for the Sri Lankan university system. Twenty-six senior lecturers attached to all fifteen state universities in the country were called upon for face to face interviews. When the universities were re-opened after the COVID - 19 wave 01, academics who conducted lectures online during that period were identified through the purposive sampling method. Twenty-six qualitative interviews were conducted and no new information or themes generated after twenty-six interviews been conducted. Using manual coding and categorizing, two key themes emerged relevant to the purpose of the study; human resource development and development avenues for online education. Human resource development includes the advancement of both students' and lecturers' capabilities. Increasing student participation, student involvement, and self-discipline are discussed under the student category while content development and preparedness are crucial for academics. Development avenues identify the actions that could be taken to improve this initiative both in terms of micro and macro levels. They include identifying online education as a strategic component, infrastructure development, and training and education. Despite the barriers in online education, academics displayed a high enthusiasm to move on with the online education system as a hybrid model that contains both online and offline education. We believe there are ample opportunities to learn from international industry best practices on the pedagogical developments and the Sri Lankan government's timely investments on it to face the future demands of higher education.

**Keywords:** COVID - 19, Academics, Higher education, Online education, Digital pedagogy

**Impact of lockdown on education of students during COVID - 19 pandemic in Sri Lanka:**

**A special reference to Sri Pemananda Maha Vidyalaya, Kadawatha**

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The new coronavirus disease (COVID - 19) first discovered in Wuhan in 2019. But by the end of the first quarter of 2020, it has rapidly grown all over the world. Due to that Sri Lankan government also decided to close down all the educational institutions: schools and universities. The closures of the schools due to the outbreak of COVID - 19 lead to a massive impact on education. This sensation has led many implications for children. Thus, this research was carried out to evaluate the impact of lockdown amidst COVID - 19 on school students. A survey was done in Sri Pemananda Maha Vidyalaya, Kadawatha in late August. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the information from the students. Participants were provided full consent before participation in the survey. A total of 150 students were participated in this study. The simple descriptive analysis was carried out to understand the distribution of study sample. Simple percentage distribution was estimated to evaluate the learning status, mode of learning, and attitude on educational decisions, and problems related to study due to the lockdown. During the lockdown period, around 67% of students were participated in e-learning sessions continuously. 73% of the students who participated in e-learning sessions were used android mobile phones that belong to their parents. The rest of the students had to borrow mobiles from their neighbors. Students have been facing many difficulties related to poor internet connectivity, and uncomplimentary study atmosphere at home. Specially, the students from low income families faced massive challenges for the study during this pandemic. This study also found that many students face huge challenges in e-learning and a considerable proportion of students could participate in online classes. Students from remote areas mostly denied online learning due to the lack of steady electricity and internet connectivity. Therefore, this study recommends targeted mediations to create a positive atmosphere for education among students from the low income families. Policies and strategies are needed to create a strong education system in the country that will help to develop the proficiency for employability and the efficiency of the children.

**Keywords:** COVID - 19, Lockdown, E-learning, Children, Impact

**Factors affecting teaching and learning due to Social Distancing:  
A study based on post-graduate programs in higher educational institutions.**

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The main purpose of this research is to investigate the effectiveness in online teaching methodology from the point of view of students who are engaged in post graduate programs (particularly at Master's Degree Programs) in a selected Government University. The research hypothesizes that the effectiveness in teaching is affected by various factors viz-z-viz factors unique to lecturer, factors unique to students, factors relating to resources availability, environmental factors, most importantly techniques, tactics and facilities used in teaching etc. This research is focused on most affecting factors on teaching techniques and methodology used by lecturers, other factors affected by students with their engagement in lectures. The information findings are based on lectures conducted online, during lockdown period due to COVID - 19 pandemic. During the research period the student sample experienced swinging between assignments between two semesters and lecture sessions. Online education was not opted by the students and was not an ordinary experience. The researcher has selected the "convenient sampling method", and conducted a cross-sectional study. The population consisted of 30 Master's Degree programs students who are from different work environments with different industry specializations to collect information. Information were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews. The researcher interviewed five lecturers who are lecturing in post-graduate level educational programs to understand the practical side of the lecturing practices. Data analysis is done using appropriate quantitative and qualitative techniques. Research findings revealed that they prefer effective interactive small group sessions. All the students in the sample clearly expressed that continuation of lectures for 2 to 2 ½ hours is not effective. One major drawback of online education is missing opportunity to clarify unclear areas where online student group is more than 100. The surrounding environment of lecturer and students has made an impact on teaching methodology from lecturer's end and student engagement in student's end. Facilities and features available in pedagogical platforms such as Learning Management System (LMS) for interactive teaching will be a further research area.

**Keywords:** Effectiveness in teaching methodology, Student engagement, Resource availability

## **Utilization of online teaching for more productive knowledge transmission**

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Having emerged in a global context and evolved into a task that is now capable of confining humankind to homes, COVID - 19 virus has threatened the right to life of every human being in the world and posed a serious threat to all sectors, including education. The true meaning of the concept of education is to further develop persons' innate potential, their natural energy, creativity, leadership, imagination, aesthetic feelings, and spiritual powers. It should be possible to bring out some of the strengths or potential of the students through education and methodology that are in place in a country. Due to the phenomenon of COVID - 19 any geographical factor that was present in modernity has been transcended at this time because we have somehow been able to break free from the old geographical confinement and move on to some other forms of transmission of knowledge. COVID - 19 has forced us to reach an imagination we never imagined before so we are now free from the moral dilemma of the past. The communication imprisonment or practice imprisonment that has arisen through these COVID - 19 caveats can be used to transcend the boundaries students have so far been incarcerated in. The imprisonment caused by the COVID - 19 situation is one great opportunity to do in this cyber space some things that we could not do in the past. It is in this new global space that Sri Lankan society has made a great leap forward. This is a great opportunity if one decides to go for a student-centered education system instead of a teacher-dominated classroom teaching. In this research, the researcher is arguing that online teaching can be better used for more productive knowledge transmission.

**Keywords:** Potential of students, Online teaching, Transmission of knowledge, Cyber space, Student-centered education.

**The impact of COVID – 19 on Sri Lankan education system:  
Challenges and opportunities for teaching and research**

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A country's education system plays an imperative role in the overall progression of that country. But the spread of COVID – 19 has disrupted the whole education system in the world while making a huge downward spiral in the world economy too. As a result of this pandemic most of the schools and other higher educational institutions have closed temporarily causing havoc in world education system. Anyway, this sudden closure of educational institutions has done to reduce the transmission of COVID – 19 in face to face classes while enabling online learning systems. This closure of educational institutions and newly adopted digital technology in educational system has done a significant impact on learners in both good and bad ways while building up new challenges and opportunities among them. But most of the well-developed countries in the world have taken many steps to face those challenges. The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of COVID – 19 on Sri Lankan education system. Under this the research hopes to find out the challenges faced by the students, teachers and researchers during their teaching learning process as well as their research activities. In addition to that the study will explore the opportunities that they can be taken during such pandemics in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the objective of this research is to explore and describe the concerns of students, teachers and researchers related to the challenges they faced due to the COVID – 19 pandemic. In addition, the study hopes to collect ideas of students, teachers and researchers regarding the opportunities and solutions which they suggest for such pandemics. The research problem reveals that the impact of COVID – 19 pandemic has effected highly on world education system. The study would be adapted to qualitative research design. At there the researcher hopes to collect data from the teachers, students and the researchers who are engaged in educational activities and analyze their ideas to have a good qualitative result with those collected data. In the framework of this study SWOT analysis would be consisted with distribution of questionnaires and interviews among the ones for collecting data. In conclusion this research paper closely examines the impact of COVID – 19 on Sri Lankan education system: challenges and opportunities for teaching and research.

**Keywords:** COVID - 19, Education system, Challenges, Opportunities, Teaching and Research

## **Transforming from Traditional Learning to E-learn Platforms; Constraints Experienced by Undergraduates of Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL)**

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The COVID - 19 pandemic created many challenges in education as schools and universities had to be closed down. Therefore, students and teachers, had to explore new ways to disseminate knowledge minimizing delays in academic activities. Although Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) is a distance learning institution practising Open and Distance Learning (ODL) methodologies, there are many courses taught in the traditional mode i.e. face to face lectures, printed study material and in person exams. Due to the pandemic, all courses taught in the traditional mode had to be transferred to online platforms such as E-learn LMS. The primary objective of this study is to examine the constraints faced by second year undergraduates following a compulsory traditional course through E-learn LMS in the BA Degree in Social Sciences programme. Those students had to engage in their studies using E-learn LMS and online contact sessions through ZOOM due to the pandemic situation. Reflections of 85 students were gathered through written feedback where the researchers attempted to examine the constraints faced by them when learning through E-learn platform. The data gathered was coded and analyzed using the thematic analysis approach. The conceptual background for the study is based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) which is one of the most frequently used models for research in new information technology acceptance. Creating the mindset to engage in online learning in a course which was initially offered as a traditional course stood as the main constraint for the students. Some were of the view that inadequate IT skills and technical barriers were problems when learning through e-learn platforms. Also, many were of the view that low income groups did not have access to necessary equipment and internet facilities amidst a pandemic situation, although OUSL already has computer labs in its branch network. However, some students expressed that they managed with this new learning experience. In fact, some mentioned that for knowledge acquisition the traditional mode is the preferred option. The study suggests that there should be a proper institutional support to provide access to E-learn facility at a subsidized rate. Therefore, although internet-based learning is useful, such learning should be facilitated with proper training at the initial stage, adequate information and sufficient infrastructure.

**Keywords:** Constraints; E-learn platforms; Under-graduates; ODL; Pandemic



## Experience of 'Social Presence' in Task-oriented Mediated Communication

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This study examines how social presence is experienced by the members of a group via mediated communication in a task-oriented environment. Social presence indicates the degree to which one is perceived as a real person in mediated communication. Generating the feeling of social presence is a challenge for the teachers during a time of social distancing. They are faced with the difficulty of maintaining interaction and discussion effectively among the members of a study group working towards a common learning achievement. The current study addresses this with the assumption that pupils can effectively experience social presence in a collaborative, task-oriented group via mediated communication. Accordingly, the objective of the study is to investigate if students can experience social presence in online task-based activity by using mediated communication. The study was conducted with adult second language learners who were instructed to examine the primary materials used in the Sri Lankan school curriculum of English Language. They were exposed to a task-oriented situation where the goal was to produce a detailed account of the findings maintaining communication via email and social media groups. The study adopted a qualitative case study methodology with the participation of 14 students following the Higher National Diploma in English. Semi-structured interviews were employed as the fundamental method of qualitative data collection. The questions of the interview protocol were formed based on the social presence measurements of personal-impersonal, sensitive-insensitive, warm-cold, and sociable-unsociable features, that are consistent with affective, cohesive, and interactive indicators. Apart from the interviews, a discourse generated by a segment of communication among the participants was analyzed in order to comprehend the nature of pupils' involvement. Themes emerging from the findings of the study relate to emotional tie, comfort, privacy, acceptance, satisfaction, learning and retention, exposure, and contribution in experiencing the social presence by the members of the group. Factors causing the effective social presence are revealed to be the use of asynchronous methods than synchronous methods, approachability and online proximity of the teacher, willingness to interact, and the task-oriented environment that creates the need for the sense of accomplishment. The restraints identified are the lack of intimacy, lack of the feeling of contribution, and attitudinal deterrents to the use of technology. The research implications indicate that a task-oriented, mediated environment can provide an opportunity for teachers to improve the learning experiences of students during social distancing.

**Keywords:** Distant, Mediated-communication, Social presence, Task-oriented

## Track Four: **04**

**COVID - 19 and achieving Sustainable Development Goals**



## COVID - 19 and Challenges to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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Coronavirus disease (COVID - 19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus, which spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. This was originated in December 2019 from Hubei province of Wuhan, China. Sri Lanka confirmed its first case on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020. After a comprehensive assessment of the epidemic, World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global health emergency by 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020; and considering the significance of the situation it was recognized as a pandemic by 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020. As of 09<sup>th</sup> November 2020 total number of cases worldwide amounts to 50.6 million, out of which 33.1 million have recovered and 1.26 million deaths in total. Sri Lanka experienced the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of the pandemic by October 2020 and as of the said date total cases amounting to 14,611; out of which 8,880 was recovered and 36 deaths in total. COVID - 19 is a global challenge that demands researchers, policymakers and governments to address multiple dimensions that go far beyond the implications of this pandemic for health and wellbeing. In this backdrop, it is interesting to study United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. There are 17 goals in total; which are all interconnected and in order to leave no one behind it is important that achieving them all by 2030. Content analysis has been used as a methodology with a literature survey pertaining to challenges with COVID - 19 in the current scenario. Interestingly it was found several goals as challenging to be achieved in this pandemic period. The goals can be categorized as “No poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, and peace, justice & strong institutions”. The aforementioned factors can be considered as important and challenging among the 17 SDGs. Furthermore, considering the current context of COVID - 19 achievement of SDGs by 2030 needs to be further investigated by researchers and experts; and it can be proposed to have a proper mechanism to encounter this along with a strong leadership model such as transformational leadership needed for better sustainable development.

**Keywords:** COVID - 19, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Transformational Leadership

## **Good Agricultural Practices adopted by Tea Smallholdings self-sustained under climate variations**

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Being one of the primary sources of foreign exchange earnings, tea industry plays a key role in the economy of Sri Lanka. Tea production relies on suitable temperatures and well-distributed rainfall; thus, changes in the climate has posed a significant challenge on tea production, presumably influencing its quality which is being reflected by the price as well as the income of the farmer. About 70% of the green leaf raw material in tea industry is produced by smallholders, hence adhering to Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) by smallholder farmers is vital. The study was conducted to identify the farmers perception on GAP and the benefits they receive through GAP under changing climate in the Kandy area. Subjective sampling approach was used to select participants for one-to-one interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). A questionnaire survey and a KII with 40 smallholdings in Kandy area were conducted to capture information on field activities/practices by the tea smallholders, their income, production volumes for ten years, and quality control certifications they comply. A time series trend analysis were conducted between annual green leaf production and annual total rainfall, and average annual temperature (using interpolated station data) in Kandy area from 2008 to 2018. It was found that 24 farmers (60 %) followed the advice and training on agronomic practices received through extension officers and the internal control system of farmers society. Farmer's old age, time spent on farming, tea production not being the main income of the family were identified as reasons for not following advice and training systematically. Despite the decreasing trend in rainfall and warming of the atmosphere reported in the Kandy area, the yield of the farmers with GAP has not been decreased. The results showed that better-quality yield obtained from organic farming, diversifying crops, mulching, and training received by the farmers on good agricultural practices, and complying with certification systems, may act as vital strategies in being resilient to rainfall and temperature fluctuations providing an opportunity for the tea smallholders to self-sustain and overcome the losses due to climate-induced yield losses.

**Keywords:** Good Agricultural Practices, Organic, Tea smallholdings

## **COVID - 19 and achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

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Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has become a huge challenge to the entire world due to the COVID - 19 pandemic. For a speedy recovery from this global menace, it's essential to create a shared framework with the support of both developed and developing countries. The United Nations adopted SDGs in 2015 to improve the living conditions of millions of people around the world. However, due to this sudden pandemic, achieving SDGs has become a significant problem to all the countries in the world; unless we do not take immediate collective action. Increased poverty rate is one of the most prominent issues caused by the pandemic. United Nation has identified different manifestations of poverty; such as lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods, hunger and malnutrition, ill health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increased morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate housing, unsafe environments, social discrimination and exclusion. According to the Global Economic Prospects report published in June 2020, COVID - 19 could push 71 million people into extreme poverty in 2020 under the baseline scenario and 100 million under the downside scenario. This unforeseen situation has been affecting not only poverty, but also other areas such as unemployment, hunger, health, poor consumption and economic growth of countries. This research will explore an answer to the following research question; Marginalized populations, such as women and children, migrants, and low-income groups, in both developed and developing countries have been much more susceptible to the negative health and the economic effects of the COVID - 19 crisis. Therefore, what are some of the negative spillover effects that can cause if we do not take actions immediately to overcome poverty from grass root level? The objective of this study is to analyze the impact of this global menace to increase the poverty level of the people and its negative spillover effect on their socio-economic conditions. During this research, a mixed method approach has been used to analyze poverty related issues around the world by using a wide range of quantitative and qualitative information. According to the key findings, it was observed that a shared framework and collective action is needed to tackle the COVID - 19 pandemic successfully.

**Keywords:** Sustainable development goals, Poverty, Unemployment, Spill over, Collective action

## **COVID - 19 and its Impact on Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka: An Assessment of Selected Sustainable Development Goals**

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The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is confronting its biggest challenge yet – a fatal global pandemic. With only a decade left for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), countries across the world are forced to reprioritize their resources and policy goals to accommodate a new and evolving set of rules that include lockdowns, quarantine, social distancing, contact tracing, mask wearing, economic recovery and healthcare emergencies. The COVID - 19 pandemic, which has already infected more than 50 million people and affected directly and indirectly millions more, is rapidly weakening already fragile social protection mechanisms and increasing existing and new vulnerabilities. Sri Lanka was one of the first countries to institutionalize the implementation of SDGs with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Act. However, with the ongoing pandemic, the SDGs have been deprioritized raising concerns about Sri Lanka's commitment towards sustainable and inclusive development. This is further aggravated by some of the health guidelines adopted by the government, as per the advice of the World Health Organization, to curb the transmission of the virus. The rigorous measures taken for contact tracing potentially undermining the privacy of individuals, utilizing a military strategy to oversee quarantine centers and the decision to override religious rites over health guidelines have led to tension among vulnerable groups. If left unaddressed, this tension has the potential to grow into a much larger conflict that may even influence decisions regarding the equitable distribution of the COVID - 19 vaccine, if and when it is available. Recognizing the potential impact of the pandemic on peacebuilding in Sri Lanka and acknowledging the novel nature of this issue, a qualitative exploratory approach will be utilized to assess the goals and targets under People and Peace in the SDG framework to identify conflict risks and peacebuilding opportunities in Sri Lanka's response to the pandemic. The methodology will include primary research methods such as interviews of key personnel in state institutions and vulnerable communities affected by the outcomes of the pandemic. The interviews will seek to examine whether Sri Lanka's response has been conflict sensitive. The study will also include an extensive review of secondary literature which will analyze the status of the selected SDG goals and targets. The results of this study will be presented through a Research Paper which will be available for public consumption. The Paper will be disseminated among state and non-state actors that engage in the fields of peacebuilding and SDG implementation. It will offer recommendations on how the policy direction of the pandemic response can integrate SDGs for a more holistic and inclusive approach.

**Keywords:** COVID - 19, SDGs, Peacebuilding, Quarantine, And Inclusive Approach.

## **Effect of Major Elections on Domestic and External Debt in Sri Lanka**

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The main focus of the paper is to study the effect of major elections on domestic debt and external debt in Sri Lanka. United National Party (UNP) and Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) dominant governments ruled the country since independence in 1948. Major elections comprise Parliament and Presidential elections and researchers considered these elections as the major elections because of the possibility to change the existing government depending on the result of these elections. The research issue of the study is an empirical gap of studying major election effect on debt in Sri Lanka. Researchers applied CHOW breakpoint test used in the event study methodology. After the elections, structural shift of domestic and external debt has been analyzed in the study. The study found that parliament elections held in 1952, 1956, 1977, 2001, 2010 and 2015 have influenced significantly on domestic debt while 1970, 2000 and 2004 has created only a marginal effect on the domestic debt. The presidential elections in 1988, 1994 2010 and 2015 have influenced significantly on domestic debt. These results indicate that parliament and presidential elections are influencing significantly on structural shift of the domestic debt. Parliament elections held in 1989, 1994, 2001 and 2010 have significantly influenced on external debt but the influence was minor from the election held in 1970. Precedential elections that have also created significant influence on external debt made a structural change in the post event window. The overall study indicated that there is an effect from major election on domestic debt and external debt. Findings indicated that economies never eradicated political risk and elections are having large impacts on the long-term interest rates over the years. The announcement of election results reduces interest rates and politics provide powerful explanations of variation in the impact of elections on borrowing rates. Close elections increase uncertainty. Due to these evidences, structural break has been created by major elections.

**Keywords:** Major Elections, Domestic Debt, External Debt, Structural Shift



**The Challenges and Opportunities for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)  
under the COVID - 19 Pandemic.**

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Today we are living in such a highly interconnected and interdependent world system, any state cannot keep on isolated. The COVID - 19 pandemic has shown us a new world; one where the status quo no longer exists. The global pandemic is one of the non- traditional human security challenges in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Especially COVID - 19, as a pandemic, is challenging profoundly every sector in both national and international level. It affecting lives around the world creating challengers that cynical as the world are unable to face in the future. Especially creating economic shutdowns, social contracts restrictions, isolation of both education and health sector and etc. Its scope and economic dimensions also mean that it poses a major threat towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2015 the UNO adopted the SDGs as a Blue print to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. The global pandemic presents great opportunities for achieving the SDGs also. Because environment sector and climate segment are getting best advantages due to the COVID - 19 outbreak. The COVID - 19 is focusing whole world to how deeply connected we are to others and to the planet. The main research problem of this study is what are the challenges and opportunities for achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) under the COVID - 19 pandemic. The primary objective of this study is to understand the challenges and opportunities for SDGs under the COVID - 19 Pandemic. Apart from an examination of how to decrease challengers and increase opportunities of SDGs in post pandemic arena. The research methodology mainly based on interpretivism and epistemological philosophy, this help to build subjective reality, exploratory understandings and interpretations of real-world contexts. The qualitative research study by collecting both primary and secondary data for comparative analysis between challenges and opportunities. Furthermore, used entail an analysis of the literature and assessment of current world trends. As this study based on concept of human security and non-traditional security for describing research problem. Because the SDSs are a road map for humanity. They encompass almost every aspect of human and planetary wellbeing. Finally, researcher concerned key findings used comparative analysis and provided recommendations for achieving SDGs in minimize challengers and maximize opportunities.

**Keywords:** SDGs, COVID - 19, Challenges, Opportunities, Achieving

## COVID - 19 and Achieving SDGs

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The new corona virus ( COVID - 19) has caused damage to lives and livelihoods across the globe. COVID - 19 has developed an emergency environment. It has brought a distressing social, economic and political crisis to every citizen of the countries it touched, which will leave profound scars. Sri Lanka is also battling this emergency because in this time of crisis, the country's zeal for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seems to have taken a backseat. While COVID - 19 has well arisen to be a disaster, destroying more than a million people and bringing the economy and life to a halt almost everywhere globally. It affects life and health directly, with over ten million confirmed cases. Hundreds of million people and their livelihoods are affected by the different containment measures. The global and national impact will continue for a long time. COVID - 19 increased unemployment, poverty, and hunger as economic growth slowed down. It was projected that total production will decline by more than 5% in 2020, with a downside forecast of almost 10%, if lockdowns persist through the second half of the year. The global population of poverty was expected to grow by as many as 100 million people, while children, women, the elderly, and least developed countries (LDCs) and other vulnerable developing countries are likely to suffer from this malnutrition. The SDGs are the principles for creating a better and more sustainable future for those who resolve global problems, including poverty, injustice, climate change, destruction of the environment, peace, and justice. Although COVID - 19 has affected many people and SDGs for growth, it has positively affected SDGs related to the earth. The effect of COVID - 19 further raises the concern about achieving the SDGs by 2030. The response depends mostly on how human communities themselves react to and after the COVID - 19 crisis. The current SDO offers three methods to explain this; the pre- COVID - 19 benchmark, the negative and positive post- COVID - 19 scenarios. Besides, national governments and other stakeholders are being pressurised worldwide to deal with the COVID - 19 pandemic and its consequences. For potential crises such as COVID - 19 and the achievement of SDGs, greater cooperation between countries and all stakeholders within and across countries is essential. In the minds of each citizen of a country, a number of questions lie. The ties between health, the environment and the economy have been strengthened by the pandemic. The sector-specific health, education and infrastructure allocations in the recent budget have only collectively accounted for just a fraction of Sri Lanka's GDP, but the economy is now threatened by this latest global pandemic, COVID - 19.

**Keywords:** COVID - 19, SDGs, Economic growth, Poverty

## **The Impact of COVID - 19 on Reshaping the Global Order**

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COVID - 19 is an infectious disease caused by most recently discovered coronavirus which has been assessed as a pandemic by World Health Organization due to its quick infections and a large number of deaths in the worst-affected countries. However, the impacts of COVID - 19 indicate that it's much more than a global health crisis. The affected nations have been forced to adopt drastic measures such as social distancing and quarantine which isolating states from the international concert and created havoc among economic systems and markets reliant on connectivity, interaction, and network. Thus, the impacts of COVID-19 have manifested it has the potential to create protracted and devastating social, economic and political crises that will leave deep scars. In addition, the impacts of this pandemic are very significant for reshaping of existing global order. For instance, the internal policies of the United States and other European countries have driven the whole world into uncertainty, where China fills the vacuum to position itself as the global leader in pandemic response. Moreover, Regional powers also safeguarding their interest as the emerging powers by projecting humanitarian diplomacy in their immediate and extended neighborhood by providing public goods and medical assistance. Therefore, considering the global politics amid COVID - 19, the paper intends to investigate how COVID-19 pandemic will impact the existing balance of power in international system. By employing the qualitative research approach, the research is based on desk research method in order to get in-depth analysis of current global crisis amid COVID-19 and the role of leading state and non-state actors and their prospects. Both primary and secondary data such as analysis of reports, scholarly articles and publications from relevant governments, non-governmental organizations, research institutes, corporations and media with interest in impact of COVID-19 on International Relations were used as the materials for the study. However, though it is too early to predict the post COVID - 19 world order, the author argues that the impact of COVID-19 will reorder the global positions and shift the world epicenters from East to West.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Global order, International System, USA, China,

**Enthusiasm of Sri Lankan Agriculture with COVID - 19 and Self Sustaining Economy:  
Achieve Sustainable Development Goals**

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In 2019 COVID - 19 virus first reported from Wuhan, China on 31 December 2019. It is being spread around the world. World Health Organization declared as Epidemic on 11 March 2020. This led to shutdowns of countries and borders. In Sri Lanka, the first case of COVID - 19 was reported on 27 January 2020. When it was spreading Sri Lanka Government announced curfew and lockdown. In that season, Sri Lankan people realized importance of sustaining economy. Sri Lanka has rich agricultural history dating back more than 2500 years. But last decade most people stepped down from agriculture. According to reports of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 41.8% land area devoted to Agriculture. But 33.7% employed in agriculture. But lockdown season people looked new vision about Agriculture and enthused about Agriculture. This is a best opportunity to Sri Lanka, start to build up self-sustaining economy. This research paper is based on the findings of research conducted on analyzing enthusiasm of agriculture which help to build up self-sustaining economy. For this purpose, the study is designed as emphasis importance of self-sustaining economy on agriculture and data collection done through a survey of literature. Further Researcher would use qualitative research method to achieve objectives. The main objective is emphasis Importance about build up self-sustaining economy on continue enthusiasm of Agriculture. After an analysis of self-sustaining economy concept from agriculture before COVID - 19, enthusiasm of agriculture, build up self-sustaining economy and how to achieve sustainable development goals. Before come COVID - 19, Most of people in Sri Lanka try to join government sector or private sector jobs. Therefore, they have less interest to become entrepreneurs. According to that, Sri Lanka couldn't build up self-sustaining economy. But In COVID - 19, as Sri Lankan people realized importance of self-sustaining economy which it should be continue for buildup self-sustaining economy from agriculture. Then this enthusiasm should continue until Sri Lanka became developed country through Self Sustaining Economy. It will help to achieve sustainable development goals such as No poverty, Zero hunger, decent work and economy growth. Then the research was found out that importance about continue enthusiasm of agriculture.

**Keywords:** COVID - 19, Sri Lanka, Agriculture, Self- sustaining economy, Sustainable Development Goals.

## **A novel approach using binary logistic regression to determine multi-dimensional poverty index for Sri Lanka**

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There are two types of poverty: monetary poverty and non- monetary poverty. Monetary poverty is measured using income approach where it determines whether income of a person falls below the poverty line. Non - monetary poverty known as multidimensional poverty is measured using direct method where it measures whether a person satisfy a set of specified basic needs such as health, education, standard of living and deprivation of basic rights (Alkire, Santos, 2010). To implement direct approach in measuring multidimensional poverty, in 2010 the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) in collaboration with the United Nation's Development Program's Human Development Report Office developed Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). It measures poverty in multidimensional approach at household level considering three dimensions with ten indicators where each dimension is equally weighted and each indicator within the dimension is also equally weighted. The methodology of obtaining MPI known as Counting Approach was introduced by Alkire and Foster in 2007 and developed by Alkire and Santos in 2010. Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka provides MPI considering the concept of OPHI which does not show the real picture of poverty in the country as it takes into account the equal weighting system. In the context of Sri Lankan socio-cultural background more dimensions and indicators with an unequal weighting structure should be employed to obtain more accurate national and regional MPIs. The aim of this study is to introduce a new data-oriented weighting structure using the logistic regression statistical approach and construct a novel national and regional MPIs considering four dimensions and eleven indicators based on Counting Approach Methodology. The Household Income and Expenditure survey – 2016 data is obtained from Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka for the analysis. With the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID - 19) the economic activities of the poor got badly disrupted. Obtaining regional MPIs with the proposed new weighting system would enable policy makers to identify most desperate people in implementing efficient poverty reduction strategies covering all the districts in the country.

**Keywords:** Multidimensional Poverty, Monetary Poverty, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, Weighting Structure, Counting Approach.

**Leader Perceptions of Foreign Policy Executives:  
Sri Lanka's Relations with the Commonwealth in 2013**

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The foreign policy executive (FPE) of any country, may perceive systemic stimuli with surgical precision, hence positioning his country in a foreign policy trajectory, which in turn facilitates the realization of its goals and aspirations. In such a context, the FPE will further ensure that such a foreign policy trajectory does not jeopardize sovereignty and territorial integrity, and compliments national security. However, a small power, in the contemporary context, may confront diabolical political repercussions if the said systemic signals are perceived by the FPE with abject failure, thus plunging the country into a vortex of self – destruction. In this backdrop, this article attempts to examine whether Mahinda Rajapaksa (MR), in 2013, as the FPE with his chief diplomat Professor G. L. Peiris, were successful in grasping systemic stimuli hence exercising a rational foreign policy. The author shall further discuss the above with a particular emphasis on the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in 2013, in Sri Lanka. The summit, which was chaired by MR, was marked with boycotts and virulent protests by the West on Sri Lanka's human rights record and war crimes alleged to have been committed during the last stages of the protracted conflict in 2009. Amidst such chaos, MR as the FPE, under the aegis of his foreign minister, successfully navigated the turbulent waters of international politics. Hence the author intends to examine whether MR's pragmatic foreign policy was a consequence of successful comprehension of signals of the West. This is a qualitative case study which involves the deductive method. The author will analyze both primary and secondary data in the adoption of a qualitative approach. The research will derive its propositions from Neo – Classical Realism in the discipline of international relations, particularly in analyzing the correlation between foreign policy and the domestic intervening variable of leader images in Sri Lanka's foreign policy making.

**Keywords:** Sri Lanka, Foreign Policy, CHOGM, Mahinda Rajapaksa, Leader Image.

## **Marketing Tourism in the Web: From Web 1.0 to Web 5.0**

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The development of Information and Communication Technology with the invention of the internet and the World Wide Web has impacted consumer lifestyle, social interaction, and behavior. These changes have influenced the ways of how business firms approach consumers. In this context, tourism is a dynamic industry in which social networking plays a vital role in marketing tourism products. The invention of the World Wide Web and its extensions has significantly affected the marketing of tourism products. The light of literature in tourism marketing has highly focused on changes with the development of web 2.0, but little attention has been paid to the development of the World Wide Web from web 3.0 to web 5.0. Thus, this paper aims to highlight the changes in tourism marketing techniques in different passages of development from web 1.0 to web 5.0 and identifies the changes taken place in tourism marketing aligning to changes that happened to digital social networking. The literature identifies that Web 1.0 is the first generation of the World Wide Web and its extension to Web 2.0 identifies as an era of community web in which interaction commenced via the web among different parties and enabled the development of online travel platforms. Web 3.0 was developed to enhance the 'users' cooperation by introducing a language that computers can understand with the facilities of global processing, transforming, and act upon the information received. Web 4.0 has been identified as mobile web, which is with the feature of customized based on the personalized web, can be accessed via smartphones. Web 5.0 is recognized as a sensory and emotive web that allows a website to convey and share the emotional experiences of people. Hence exploitation of all these developments facilitates co-creation in tourism of destination by social participation, communication, and sharing knowledge. Thus, this study provides implications on the future strategic development of tourism during situations like the COVID - 19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** Marketing Tourism, Web 2.0, Web 3.0, Web 4.0, Web 5.0

**The responsiveness of the uterine fibroid symptoms for Ayurveda treatments:  
an early result of a single blind randomized controlled clinical trial**

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The purpose of the study was to assess the responsiveness of selected two Ayurveda treatment regimens for symptoms of uterine leiomyoma in randomized single blind clinical trial. Patients presenting with symptomatic uterine fibroids, in reproductive age, non-menorrhagia by Pictorial Bleeding Assessment Chart (PBAC) were recruited. Cases were randomly divided into a control and two experimental arms treated with Ayurveda drug regimens consist of 05 Ayurveda formulae in each regimen for 12 weeks. Response to fibroids symptoms as measured by the symptom severity score (SSS) of the Uterine fibroids Quality of Life instrument (UFS-QOL), menstrual bleeding by PBAC and pain related symptoms by Verbal Rating Scale for pain. The SSS, PBAC and Verbal rating scale were completed at baseline and 12<sup>th</sup> week. A total of 102 women, the mean (SD) age was 38.34 (6.25), 73.5% married and 86.3% Buddhist. Mean (SD) volume of the fibroid was 79.18 (161.17) cm<sup>3</sup>. The magnitude of improvement in SSS was with subjects having mean decrease in both the experimental arms but improved in control arm. SSS score deferent between control and experimental arms were significant (P<0.05). Mean change percentage of PBC score in each arm at 12<sup>th</sup> week was -44.31 (arm I), -33.73 (arm II) and -14.44 (arm III). All three groups reported maximum cases in normal bleeding range with no single case with amenorrhea. Percentage of patients complain severe to moderate dysmenorrhea, dyspareunia and non-cyclic pelvic pain, was reduced in 12<sup>th</sup> week compare to baseline values in treatment groups. There was no adverse events incidence detected. These early results of comparative clinical trial shown short-term symptom reduction for women with symptomatic uterine fibroids.

**Keywords:** Uterine fibroids, Symptomatology, Ayurveda treatment



## Harmonisation of Oceanic Niño signals on sea level change in Northern Indian Ocean

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2010 - 2020 was the warmest decade ever recorded including the second warmest year 2019, flashing the red light for the urgent action to conflict climate change and its impact as highlighted by the UN SDG's under "Climate Action" in 2015. Sea surface temperature anomalies was obtained from Radar Altimeter Data Base System (RADS) from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) during 1992 to 2018. Mean Sea Level (MSL) time series was extracted from 10 sampling location representing Bay of Bengal (BOB) and Arabian Sea using satellite data provided by Achieving, Validation and Interpretation of Satellite Oceanographic (AVISO). The Niño events were determined based on 5 consecutive overlapping 3 month period of running mean Sea Surface Temperature (SST) anomaly in Niño region 3.4 (5°N-5°S, 120°-170°W), at or above the +0.5 C° as warm (El Niño) event and at or below the -0.5 C° anomaly for cold (La) events. The amplitude of the Niña event was ranked based on the SST anomaly as very strong (≥Strong (1.5 to 1.9), moderate (1.0 to 1.4) and weak (0.5 to 0.9) as De-facto standers of NOAA. The most of recorded Niña events were compared with the MSL signals with positive peak during El Niña (Warm) while negative peak during La Niña (Cold). SST time series was showed 0.56 C° of permanent temperature deferent enhancing positive trends for El Niña during last 7 decades. The resulted individual energy density spectrum of sea level time series was indicated 4-6 years of periodical events harmonising with recorded Niña events in the sampling stations of Diego - Garcia : UK, Karachi : Pakistan, Male : Maldives, Zanzibar : Tanzania, Ko-Lak : Thailand, Padang : Indonesia, Chittagong: Bangladesh, Colombo: Sri Lanka within the Indian Ocean. The concentration of emitted greenhouse gases was reduced in 6% during COVID - 19 Pandemic due to travel ban and economic slowdown by giving true opportunity and possibility of achieving SDGs.

**Keywords:** Sea Level, El Niña, La Niña, Sea surface Temperature

## **Determination of Climate change impact on the Normalized Differential Vegetation Index (NDVI) in Northern Sri Lanka**

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The wildlife and the nature threatening and limiting into smaller fragments confined in the planet earth by the anthropogenic activities conducted during the industrial era, had been highlighted by the 15<sup>th</sup> sustainable development goals (SDGs) "Life on Land" by UN in 2015. Also, the changeability of the humanity is strongly pointed out with the pandemic COVID - 19, which is the strongest infected zoonotic disease are closely interlink with the health of global ecosystems. To respond and recover effectively from the current pandemic, extensive research on ecosystem conditions is required so that humanity could be protected by the nature. Assessing distribution and dynamics of vegetation has become important increasingly for ecologists to predict impact of anthropological or natural activities on degradation of habitat, deforestation or reduction of biodiversity. Being an index of greenness and widely applied for monitoring regional and global vegetation dynamics, the NDVI is a dimensionless index that quantifies vegetation by measuring the difference between near-infrared (which vegetation strongly reflects) and red light (which vegetation absorbs). The NDVI variation was done in the northern part of the Sri Lanka between latitude 80.8013098 N and 79.95005763 N and longitude 8.19499577 E to 9.200437018 E using LANDSAT data obtained by the earth explore programmer conducted by the united states of geological survey (USGS). The NDVI values were extracted in 112 points of selected sampling stations representing each 1km grid by data management tools of ArcGIS 10 during 1981 to 2006. Interpolated NDVI distribution curve within the all sampling point was generated by best fitting method of math lab editing property. The long-term variation of NDVI was computed as 0.01409 of total difference during 1981 to 2008 with an annual negative linear trend of 0.00054 in the study area. The monthly average variation of NDVI had exhibited seasonal fluctuation in-line with the monsoon rain pattern of Sri Lanka with higher NDVI during April, September and November while lower during June. The negative trend of NDVI shown is in accordance of 1.14 % of deforestation in the country during last 25 years as indicated by UNEP 2020. The long-term trend of NDVI was fluctuated periodically approximately comparing with Oceanic Nino Index (ONI) constructed based on the historical Niño event by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) during 1952-2018. The NDVI reduced in periodically with El Niño (warm) while increased during La Niño (cool) event in 4-6 years.

**Keywords:** Satellite, NDVI, Ecosystems



# Track Five: 05

**Labor Relations and Human Resource Management in a Pandemic**



## Understanding the sustainability of the electricity sector of Sri Lanka in a global pandemic

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The COVID - 19 pandemic has wreaked havoc and created a global health and economic crisis. Given the intrinsically entwined nature of the power systems in our daily lives, a study on the effect of the pandemic on the power systems is imperative. A few studies have been conducted on the impact of COVID - 19 on the energy sector, but no such study has been conducted in Sri Lanka. Hence, this research is developed through a case study approach. A detailed secondary data review was conducted to understand the existing scenarios and future development plans of the energy sector in Sri Lanka. Thereafter, a study, based on published information and academic research, was conducted to understand the implications of the COVID - 19 pandemic on the electricity system globally. The findings were then compared with the Sri Lankan electricity system to understand measures that can be considered for future planning purposes. This research was conducted under the conceptual framework of the Energy Trilemma of energy security, environmental sustainability and energy equity. The global studies done show that systems with a higher percentage of renewable energy-based power generation plants are better equipped to handle the sector in a pandemic situation as these projects use abundantly available, local, natural resources and provide the country required energy security during a crisis. As Sri Lanka is a net energy importer (for coal and fuel), this is to be strongly considered. With increased protectionists measures and de-carbonisation goals being pursued globally, dependency on external sources for fuel supply, with its potential price fluctuations and restrictions, can jeopardise the electricity system in a crisis. However, it is seen the oil price crash of 2020 might impact countries to use fuel-based power in the short-term, and delay the commissioning of newer renewable energy projects. Whilst there is no one-size-fits-all solution, a diversified energy mix is required for the long-term benefit of the system. Additionally, whilst countries operate with short-term fiscal measures, policymakers should use the momentum of this societal change to implement other policy measures such as demand-side energy efficiency management however avoiding the pitfalls of long-term planning in an ad hoc manner.

**Keywords:** Electricity, Renewable Energy, Energy Security

**Application of Work Life balance Strategies use in Information Technology industry in  
other work environments during a Pandemic: A review**

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Due to the modern multifaceted world facts such as global competition, renewed interest in personal lives/ family values, women participation to the work force and an aging workforce, work-life balance issues have been emerged. Information Technology industry is the flag bearing sector which generates considerable revenue in the world. However, IT employees' career life cause an imbalance in their work and life due to Lengthy working hours, work for tight schedules and deadlines, high concentration on the work, continuing same posture and exposing eyes to the computer screen for a considerable time. Those are the reasons to identify several work life balance strategies focusing IT employees. Apart from usual challenges, COVID - 19 pandemic in the year of 2020 is the newest challenge to the work environments. During the pandemic, people's mental, physical, social and spiritual wellbeing are challenged enormously. Although, practicing work life balance strategies are not familiar specially in the third world countries' working culture, COVID - 19 pandemic highlighted the requirement of using alternative flexible ways of working strategies which balance life and work as most of the people have to continue work from home due to the lockdown of cities time to time, transportation issues and social distancing requirements. As, the prior research basis for work life balance strategies can be studied thoroughly, published academic work which has been entered in google scholar from the year 2000 to 2020 has been considered to this review. Analyzed results indicated that, work life integration theory can be identified as a commonly use theory by IT sector organizations when planning their work life balance strategies. Flexi hours, working at home, yoga and exercise sessions, and time-off for learning have identified as commonly used strategies in IT sector which can use in other work environments during a pandemic situation.

**Keywords:** Work Life balance, Strategies, Work –life integration, Pandemic

**Employment protection legislation in Sri Lanka and its impact on human resource  
management during the pandemic: with reference to the hospitality and apparel  
manufacturing sectors**

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Sri Lanka has consistently been ranked high on rigidity of labour regulations in relation to the ease of doing business in various indices, mainly the “Doing Business Index” published annually (World Bank, 2017). These and other indices have categorised Sri Lanka as having employment regulations that are restrictive in relation to the right of employers in the private sector to manage their employees and the working conditions that employers are required to provide. However, employment in the government sector is excluded from such regulation and is characterised by almost complete job security, while the private sector is regulated by ‘a profuse and intricate set of labour regulations’ (Rama, 1994) that stipulate terms and conditions of employment, work-related benefits, and restrict non-disciplinary termination. While employers in the private sector have developed mechanisms to comply with or accommodate these employment protections, the COVID - 19 pandemic in 2020 has created unprecedented conditions which render such mechanisms irrelevant: the sheer magnitude and persistence of the pandemic, as well as the inability to predict its duration has added more layers of complexity to an already complicated legal and operational regime. This paper examines, through interviews of private sector organizations in two sectors, namely hospitality and apparel manufacture, how employment protection legislation has shaped the human resource management response to manage business operations during the pandemic; these two sectors have been selected as much of the available economic analysis indicates that these are the sectors that have been most adversely affected by the pandemic. The paper also briefly examines the response of employers in these two sectors to the Asian Tsunami in 2004 and the terror attacks in Sri Lanka in April 2019, to review whether the impact of employment protection legislation has changed over time. This analysis has been used to recommend possible short-term and long-term interventions to enable these two sectors in particular and the private sector in general to cope and continue to cope with pandemic conditions. A brief assessment of measures adopted in other countries is included to identify available options.

**Keywords:** Employment protection, Pandemic conditions, Employment rigidity, Restrictive legislation, Adaptability



**Prevalence of overweight and obesity among employed women and unemployed women  
in Moratuwa divisional secretariat area**

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We aimed to determine the prevalence of overweight and obesity among women in the Moratuwa divisional secretariat area and study associations and determinants such as employment, occupation related activities, dietary habit and leisure-related and home-based physical activity. A cross-sectional household survey was carried out among employed and unemployed premenopausal women between 20 and 45 years, 10 lanes were randomly selected in the suburb and 10 women for each group were chosen who were residing in the lane, with each group having 100 participants, by cluster sampling method. Interviewer administered pre-tested questionnaire was used to obtain sociodemographic data and anthropometric measurements. Height and weight used to calculate the Body Mass Index (BMI). Pearson's Chi squared test used to find the associations between dependent variables. WHO Asian cutoff of BMI application found among employed women a prevalence of overweight 44% and obesity 24%. In the unemployed group the observed prevalence of overweight was 33% and obesity 39%. Collated prevalence of overweight and obesity was 68% among employed women and 72% among unemployed women. Overweight and obesity showed a significant association ( $p < 0.05$ ) with the following factors; increased number of meals per day, interval snacks, adding sugar to tea, increased food intake in stressed conditions, Outdoor eating, awareness on healthy food, raking the yard, frequency of doing moderate physical activity, physical exercise, jogging, frequency of recreational physical activity, watching Television, time spare on entertainment activities, sleep during day time. Results showed sleep just after the meals, type of moderate activity doing at home, digging garden, cutting wood, frequency of drinking tea, skipping meals, use of smart devices and working hours at the work place were not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). Study did not show significant difference of distribution in overweight and obesity between employed and unemployed women (68% vs 72%). But obesity rate is higher in the unemployed women group and overweight rate is higher in the employed women group. Lifestyle behaviors and dietary factors which significantly influence on the body weight of the study population were identified. Two-thirds of the women in the studied population were overweight or obese. Urgent interventions should be done to curb the situation. Further studies are recommended to prove the findings.

**Keywords:** Unemployed women, Employed women, Overweight, Obesity, Prevalence

**Public Sector Interventions in a Pandemic:  
The Case of Sri Lanka during the first wave of COVID - 19**

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By the 3rd of June 2020 the outbreak of the COVID - 19 pandemic had affected over 180 countries, infected more than 6.5 million people and killed more than 383,000. In Sri Lanka where healthcare remains a public good, the shock of the COVID - 19 pandemic overwhelmed the public service and public servants demanding of them both the curbing its spread and managing its economic fallout. This unprecedented crisis called for swift interventions by the public sector, relying both on its bureaucracy and patronage networks to ensure the protection of its citizens as well as control the financial hemorrhage caused by the shutdown of its economy. By disrupting the status quo of public service delivery, the COVID - 19 pandemic triggered a need for the public sector to enforce creativity and innovation to their centuries-old, high functioning bureaucracy to ensure continuity of service delivery. This paper employs a desk study of news articles, and state documents (such as gazettes, circulars, and the parliamentary Hansard) to explore case of the Sri Lankan public sector during the during the first wave of COVID - 19 (March-June2020). The findings conclude that the Sri Lankan public sector's intervention in this period mainly utilized an amalgamation of bureaucratic and political patron networks to deliver the rapid response needed in an unprecedented crisis.

**Keywords:** COVID - 19, Pandemic, Public Sector

## **Impact of COVID - 19 Outbreak on Small and Medium sized Businesses in the Information Technology Industry**

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This study focuses on analyzing the impact of the COVID - 19 crisis on Smalls and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the Information Technology (IT) industry in Sri Lanka. SWOT Analysis of Albert Humphrey was used to conduct the situational analysis to outline the impact. This qualitative study is based on two experts' webinars conducted during April-May 2020. Expert sampling strategy under the purposive sampling technique was adopted. Sixteen experts who possess demonstrable experience and expertise in a particular area of study were selected by a group of experts in an IT industry association. Both meetings were conducted and recorded digitally using Zoom software. The thematic analysis was adopted and conducted manually. The study found that, pandemic had already caused massive interruption as well as opportunities for SMEs in the IT Industry. Less business opportunities in overseas markets, cash -flow management, top talent retention, were identified as threats. Increased demand for IT solutions in the areas such as work from home, e-government, cyber security, digital commerce, digital health, e-Learning, digital meeting, social media and networking were identified as opportunities created by the pandemic. Requirement of re-skilling and up-skilling workforces on ICT skills in cross sectors, boosting the local production and innovation due to global supply chain bottlenecks, demand increase for digital devises have become opportunities for IT companies. The flexibility, agility and ability to work remotely were identified as main strengths of IT industry while high focus on international markets was one of the weaknesses. It was concluded that, the IT is one of the industries which has relatively less impact from COVID - 19 compared to other industries such as Tourism. Exploring new business models prioritizing local demands and more profitable international destinations focus on more research and development activities were recommended for SMEs to survive in the pandemic.

**Keywords:** Small and Medium Enterprises, IT Industry, Challenges of SMEs, COVID - 19, Challenges and opportunities

### **Impact of COVID - 19 on Garment Sector Workers in Sri Lanka**

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The pandemic emerged in the world created many unhealthy environments for every causing 930,000 deaths as at today. Even though Sri Lanka was said to be under control in the first wave of COVID - 19, however there have been uncountable number of other socio- economic issues with this pandemic. There are 8.6 million of economically active populations in Sri Lanka which comprise of both formal and informal sector where both of them have been victims of COVID - 19 as they lost their income and jobs. One of the major industries affected by COVID - 19 is the garment and more than 45% to merchandised exports. There are 350 apparel manufacturers in the country catering more than one million workers, and uncountable number of ancillary services workers in the garment industry. Ten leading garment factories and few government and non- government trade unions were taken into consideration for the sample using the deductive approach. This study explored the issues of garment workers with the pandemic and how the employers took remedial actions to overcome the hardships. It revealed that the garment factories face many critical issues such as loss of revenue sources, cancellation of export orders, adhering to health guidelines, maintain a huge work force at zero revenue are some of them. The study is based on ten leading garment factories in the country that are established island wide based on the deductive approach using the qualitative data through a set questionnaire which were analyzed to answer the research objective. It is identified that many of the garment factories in the country reduce their work forces as they are not affordable at this juncture and continue the production operations at reduced wages. Trade unions argue that these employers have terminated their labour force with no proper compensation. Workers were forced to resign from the employment and wages were reduced which contracted their disposable income, while the workers employed under contract basis were subjected to terminate from the job. Trade unions declared that employers exploit the existing employees to run their production while a large community was away from the employment. Existing legislation is not adequate to protect all workers' issues and there should be an immediate structural change in every facet in the society ensuring a better working environment. The government should draw their immediate attention to fight for the rights of workers who had made Sri Lankan economy more impressive among other industries.

**Key words:** Garment Industry, Employment, Wage Reduction, Social Security Protection

## **Managing Human Resources in a Pandemic: Discourses and Norm Behaviour**

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In their early response to the COVID - 19 pandemic which has severely impacted businesses across various industries, leaders of many countries prioritized saving lives above saving the economy. Consequently, many organizations were forced to undergo unprecedented rethinking and transformation to adhere to new guidelines and operational procedures by permanently normalizing the use of technology for business operations and by (re)shaping human work for the foreseeable future. Against, this backdrop, societies around the world have had to adapt to a 'new normal'. This conceptual paper examines the impact of the COVID - 19 pandemic on the embedded work norms and human resource management (HRM) practices in an unpredictable environment rife with change one comparable to a pandemic. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to understand the construction of deviant behaviour of managers when managing human resources (HR) during the COVID - 19 pandemic. After an overview of the notion of deviant behaviour, the paper advances three propositions to examine the construction of deviant behaviour of managers amidst a pandemic based on the literature on deviant behaviour, social norms, and managerial and strategic discourses. As a result of the analysis and synthesis of the literature review, 'discourses' and 'norm behaviour' are proposed as sub-constructs involved in the construction of deviant behaviour of managers when managing HR in a pandemic. Moreover, incorporating discourses is proposed as a strategy of sense making and normalising new norms among organizational actors. The discourse of technology and the discourse of work-from-home were identified as the discourses linked to HRM in an organisation amidst the COVID - 19 pandemic. Changing organizational HR practices, changing technological infrastructure, and advancing the technological skills and knowledge of employees were identified as parts of change management within HRM of the organization in order to progress towards the 'new normal' which is the required condition amidst the COVID - 19 pandemic. This conceptualisation directs future research in managing HR in an unpredictable environment similar to that prevailing during a pandemic. It proposes to incorporate discourses into a conceptualisation which fosters smoother change management using sense making and normalising new norms by integrating a broad range of contextual and situational constructs that affect organizational change.

**Keywords:** Deviant behaviour, Discourses, HRM in a pandemic, Norm behaviour

## Transition to Work-from-Home Mode and Employee Perception of CSR during COVID – 19 Pandemic

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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is globally becoming an integral part of business strategies appealing to diverse stakeholders. Studies delve into CSR recognizes employee perceptions of CSR to have an effect on organizational rhetoric in the adoption of CSR activities and practices. Engagement in CSR activities characterized by altruistic motives found to be appealing to existing and potential employees seeking meaningfulness at work. Employees' choice of orientation for work from focusing on material rewards, career progression and contributing for the greater good, has a bearing on differences in perception of CSR. The literature on work-life balance provides further insights on how family plays a role in shaping employees' perception of CSR as an extra-organizational factor. Against the backdrop of COVID - 19 pandemic, employees are experiencing deviations to the traditional modes of work-life balance where Working From Home (WFH) has become a typical means of work. The literature further suggests that the effects of WFH on work-life balance are subject to differences in employee perceptions and circumstances. Recent literature on behavioural perspectives on CSR points out the importance of assessing the changes to employee perception, as a determinant of the effectiveness of CSR activities, especially in the wake of the pandemic. Consequences of adopting CSR activities with the engagement of employees found to be associated with positive outcomes (Embedded CSR) whilst the results to be adverse for CSR activities failed to consider employees' perceptions on how they make sense of CSR (Peripheral CSR). Even with the significance of employee perception on CSR, there is a lack of attention on the effects of work-life balance of employees shaped by WFH situation on the perception of CSR activities heightened during the COVID - 19 pandemic. The present study attempts to address this gap in the literature. The objectives of the present study are to identify the changes into work practices of employees with the adoption of WFH, identify the impact of WFH mode on employee work-life balance and to identify the impact of changes to work-life balance on employee perception on CSR activities. The study follows an interpretivist approach where data will be collected from employees identified through purposive sampling.

**Keywords:** Work-life balance, Working From Home (WFH), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Behavioural perspectives on CSR

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