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EDITORIAL

To be a Contributor in the Broad Field of Humanities and Social Sciences with a Democratic Ethos

We of VISTAS defend value centered production of literature in Humanities and Social Sciences inspired by a Democratic Ethos. This is needed in moving away from the traditional moral order which was autocratic and regressive in character, to a modern society that cherish 'Openness'. We believe that value centeredness in this time and age help writers to win both credibility and respect, as many had been at the receiving end of forces that undermined their status and dignity in society. We of VISTAS advocate the principle that cultural goods cannot and should not be neither here nor there. To be "value neutral" is counterproductive as it only undermines the purpose of democratic communication which should set people free. It is wholesome to scrutinize constraints to development of social science literature in transitional societies, with a critical assessment of the concept of Public Sphere¹ in new nations with a postcolonial background. Developing countries should gain inspiration from the Radical Democratic Approach that is cherished by free societies as seen in the West, as against the autocratic culture of communication that prevails in Transitional Societies.

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

Addressing issues connected with this broad theme would be intellectually stimulating, only if we are mindful of the potential of the democratic spirit that gives birth to progressive literature. As contributors, we are thankful for the opportunity to deliberate on diverse issues. On these issues I see the need to be "value centered" and not "value neutral", as freedom of expression cannot be propagated or defended by the autocratic minded.

¹ Arising from Habermas's thesis the aspect that is considered here for discussion is the Western practice of free and open exchange of views relating to issues of public significance. As explained by Boyd Barret (1995) the formation of a sense of public not as an abstract principle but as a carefully embedded social practice (p.230).

We as scholars could agree or disagree on how we perceive issues before us, depending on where we honestly stand regarding freedom. However, it is only with free and uninhibited expression with moral responsibility that would enable a community to gain strength naturally and spiritually. Also, we need to have a broad imagination and not one that is insular, as that will prevent us from imposing our will down the throats of others.

Furthermore, we who aspire to build a South Asian region constructively with respect for highest democratic ideals, should unite against elements of divisive thinking, rooted in fear, distrust, jealousy, hatred, and forms of insanity that often leads to character assassination and finally culminating in the murder of those who communicate. With this moral crisis, let us resolve to be a stronger people with a sober and moderate imagination. It is my appeal therefore, if anyone has come to seek opportunities to disagree, let them remember what Voltaire said. To quote "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say".

TO BE INSPIRED BY THE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY

From a communication standpoint, we either express ourselves through literature to edify one another, or to kill the spirit of another with increasing cynicism and skepticism. This deals with the spirit of communication in literature, and John Dewey articulates what this would mean in line with the democratic ethos as follows:

"The foundation of democracy is faith in the capacities of human nature, faith in human intelligence and in the power of pooled and cooperative experience. It is not the belief that these things are complete but that if given a show, they will grow and be able to generate progressively to the knowledge and wisdom needed to guide collective action. Every autocratic and authoritarian scheme of social action rest on a belief that the needed intelligence is confined to a superior few, who because of inherent natural gifts are endowed with the ability and the right to control the conduct of others; laying down principles and rules and directing the ways in which they are carried out". [Excerpted from John Dewey, "Democracy and Educational Administration," *School and Society* 45 (April 3, 1937); 457-67]

In Aristotelian terms what is of significance in communicating through literature is its ethos, or the grand principles that drive the communicator to take a position on what is before him or her. One could even argue that it is much better to be silent than using democratic freedom wildly to kill the spirit of freedom.

We in Sri Lanka talk about the Buddhist literary tradition based on the teachings of Gautama Buddha, the noble son of India, who advocated the need for right mindfulness in communication. Cynthia Kane, contributing to the Washington Post, on the Buddhist Ethos states as follows:

“Mindful communication is the practice of bringing our attention to our words. It means we are aware of what we are saying, while we are saying it. It is a practice of observation and not evaluation. It is paying attention to others on purpose with a moment-to-moment awareness. And because it is a learned skill, anyone can apply it to his or her life”.
[Cynthia Kane, Washington Post, September 2, 2015]

The present-day crisis as we see is that people take for granted what they communicate. They pretend not to know, what was taught from their childhood days, having lived in a region where great teachers have not only taught great precepts, but also lived honorable lives in line with the principles they advocated. As for us today, can there be a greater sin or crime in willfully negating what we know, by what we communicate, whenever we get an opportunity?

Dr. Mahim Mendis
Editor in Chief- Vistas Journal

POST WAR RECONCILIATION IN SRI LANKADr. Joe William¹**ABSTRACT**

Even though the war ended in 2009, post-war tensions and rhetoric remain even after twelve years. Despite being scarred by a bitter civil war for nearly three decades, the country failed to reap the benefits that should have accrued to all Sri Lankans in an equitable manner. The report of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission appointed by President Mahinda Rajapakse concluded that the root cause of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka lay in the failure of successive governments to address the genuine grievances of the Tamil people and recommended that the government should take the lead in delivering a political solution. However, this recommendation yet largely remains unfulfilled. The Yahapalanaya government that followed appointed a Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation in January 2016 due to lack of progress on many of the government's commitments to reconciliation and accountability. District Reconciliation Committees established in 2017, were expected to be one of the government's main channels for the implementation of national reconciliation process at district level, which comprised key influential individuals in the area. Following changes in the government ministries after the political unrest from October to December 2018 and ensuing political power struggle meant that people in power seemed to have other interests than to engage in activities focusing on reconciliation. When the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2015 with Sri Lankan participation, Goal 16 was seen as truly transformative, formally linking, for the first time at the United Nations, development, peace, justice, and good governance. By 2030 will Sri Lankans be able to contain our differences to live together with mutual respect, enjoying equal treatment and opportunities, living with dignity, equal before the law, and avoid violence focusing on reconciled relationships?

Key words: Reconciliation, Accountability, Political Solution, Grievances, SDG Goal-16

¹ *Chairman, National Peace Council of Sri Lanka and Executive Director, Centre for Communication Training*

INTRODUCTION

It is not the intention of this essay to analyze Sri Lanka's civil war, which has its roots in the previous three decades of postcolonial state building and related policies of democratization and development. The growth of polarized identity politics resulting from Sinhala and Tamil nationalisms was fueled by the actions of a political elite intent on building ethnolinguistic vote banks as they jostled for power and resources within a highly centralized state system. The civil war is over, but the trajectory of the island's post-civil war politics is still in the process of being realized. Post-LTTE Sri Lankan politics, deep contradictions within the Sinhalese power elites are still being played out in the open. Sri Lanka's civil war ended unilaterally and by military means alone. The state emerged as the victor. Taking the state machinery's dominant mindset built on the glorification of victor's peace is actually hard and challenging. However, a sustained ideological campaign is necessary to shift the victor's peace paradigm to generate a vision for reconciliation and thus finding a way to live with former adversaries.

Since the civil war in Sri Lanka ended in 2009, successive governments have taken a variety

of measures to advance the process of reconciliation. In 2011, the Sri Lankan Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) drafted its initial recommendations on how to tackle the fundamental causes of the long-running conflict and coming to terms with the past. In 2016, the Government convened a Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanisms (CTF) and tasked it with undertaking nationwide consultations to identify the views of the Sri Lankan population on a range of reconciliation mechanisms and processes. In 2017, based on the Cabinet Memorandum submitted by President Maithiripala Sirisena in his capacity as a Minister of National Integration and Reconciliation, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to establish District Level Reconciliation Committees (DRCs) to address the incidence of inter-religious and inter-ethnic tensions and to promote national integration and reconciliation in all 25 districts. The new Government elected in November 2019, headed by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his brother Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, announced a critical review of the existing reconciliation policy. However, following the Parliamentary elections in 2020, when ministries

were assigned for a range of subject areas, reconciliation did not feature in any of them. It remains to be seen whether new political priorities and practical initiatives on reconciliation will follow.

2009 TO 2014: POST WAR RECONCILIATION PROCESS PHASE 1

The report of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) appointed by President Mahinda Rajapakse was one of the most important official documents to emerge from any Government in recent times. It was based on the observations made after the war by some of Sri Lanka's most eminent public figures who traversed the country, listened to submissions made by individuals and organizations, and witnessed the ravages of war. The LLRC Report was presented to the President and was made public in December 2011. Despite its restricted mandate, especially regarding accountability, war crimes and human rights issues, it was a valuable educational tool especially when ethnic and inter-religious tensions were on the rise despite the end of the war. The final LLRC Report contained nine chapters, which focused on a range of important issues. A summary of Chapter 8 on Reconciliation is given in *Appendix 1*.

The LLRC took a positive view for need for peacebuilding and good governance as pre-requisites for national reconciliation. The dominant discourse of the Sri Lankan government after May 2009 has been that the conflict is now solved and that hence there is no need for reconciliation. The problem—terrorism—was eradicated with the LTTE. While the military might of the LTTE made them a key actor at the negotiation table in the 2002 peace process, the annihilation of the LTTE also to a large extent annihilated the interest of the Sri Lankan government to listen to and negotiate Tamil demands. (Kristine Höglund & Camilla Orjuela (2011)

The LLRC concluded that the root cause of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka lay in the failure of successive governments to address the genuine grievances of the Tamil people and recommended that the government should take the lead in delivering a political solution. It urged the North and East be returned to civilian administration and that more action to be taken to help internally displaced persons rebuild their lives. It also called for civil society participation in the reconciliation process. (National Peace Council, *The Rule of Law, Not the Rule of Men*, 2013, p. 62)

Even though the war ended in 2009, post-war tensions and rhetoric, many imagined, remained even after five years. Despite being scarred by a bitter civil war for nearly three decades, the country failed to reap the benefits that should have accrued to all Sri Lankans in an equitable manner after the end of the war. This led to a continuing trend of centralization of power and the use of the security forces to ensure national security, which was positioned above human security.

According to the UNDP formulation, human development and human security are two preconditions for peace and are mutually reinforcing. Defining human development as “a process of widening the range of people’s choices”, it argues that human security denotes people’s ability to exercise those choices safely and freely- and with the relative confidence that those choices would sustain (UNDP 1994:22). UNDP stresses two aspects of human security: safety from such chronic threats as hunger, diseases and repression; and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life (UNDP 1994, p.23). The concept of human security, as UNDP develops, is built on four essential characteristics: universalism, interdependence of components, prevention rather

than protection, and centered on people.

From a national reconciliation perspective, it would seem more appropriate if human security takes precedence over national security. In an article titled Reconciliation will enhance national security, President Rajapakse makes the following statement:

“Ultimately, the best way to ensure that Sri Lanka remains safe and strong in the future is for its citizens to put aside the differences of the past, unite as Sri Lankans, and work toward a better future for themselves and their fellow people.” (Gotabaya Rajapaksa, 2014)

2015 TO 2019: POST WAR RECONCILIATION PROCESS PHASE 2

The government that was elected in January 2015 was unique in that it saw the two main parties and historic rivals in Sri Lankan politics-- the United National Party (“UNP”) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP)-ensconced in office together for the first time, by choice. The leader of the former, Ranil Wickremasinghe, became the Prime Minister. Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, who, like Rajapaksa, was a member of the

SLFP as well as a member of his government, broke away to contest Rajapaksa in the Presidential election and emerged the victor. The platform of the new government was one of greater democratic freedom, governance including constitutional reform, independent oversight commissions, and right to information legislation and accountability.

The Consultation Task Force (CTF) of 11 members drawn from civil society was appointed by the Prime Minister in late January 2016, to seek the views and comments of the public on the proposed mechanisms for transitional justice and reconciliation, as per the October 2015 UN Human Rights Council resolution on Sri Lanka, co-sponsored by the Government of Sri Lanka. The consultations were not restricted to these mechanisms and encompassed discussion of other mechanisms and processes for reconciliation the public wished to propose. CTF was to conduct public consultations on the design of the four mechanisms that would advance truth, justice and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. These four mechanisms were: an Office on Missing Persons, an Office for Reparations, a Judicial Mechanism with a Special Counsel, and a Truth, Justice, Reconciliation and Non

Recurrence Commission. Apart from this, the CTF also welcomed submissions on alternative suggestions related to the four pillars of transitional justice (TJ). Zonal Task Forces (ZTFs) were established island-wide to conduct consultations in 15 zones. A Panel of Experts and a Panel of National Representatives were also appointed to contribute in an advisory capacity to the CTF. (Executive Summary and the Recommendations. Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanisms, 2016)

The CTF hoped and argued for advocacy and championship at the highest levels of Government of the rationale for transitional justice in Sri Lanka and the mechanisms proposed by the Government. This however did not materialize and the predominant focus of the consultations at the community level was on the narratives and experiences of people in their search for loved ones and in seeking redress for grievances, including through appearances and submissions before a number of Presidential Commissions of Inquiry and Investigation in the past. Nevertheless, awareness-raising by the ZTFs and media had some effect in focusing consultations on the four main mechanisms and in eliciting other suggestions related to transitional justice. Consequently, though

submissions directly on the more technical aspects of design, process of appointment, powers and functions of the four mechanisms were limited, a high level of public interest, debate and participation at the hearings was generated and views on key issues ascertained. Marking a first step in ensuring participation and public ownership of the overall process, some individuals expressed amazement at being asked for their views. In light of the above, the CTF recommends continuing communication and outreach on transitional justice by the Government and at the highest levels with the public at large. (Ibid, p, 85)

It should also be noted that there were submissions, including from the security forces and Police, warning that this process of reconciliation would be counter-productive, compromise national security, deepen wounds and open new ones as well as exacerbate inter-ethnic and religious division. All Security Forces personnel categorically rejected international involvement in the accountability mechanism in particular. However, in most submissions made by the Security Forces and Police, there was unequivocal support for the Government's reconciliation initiatives and for a restorative as opposed to retributive approach, with a call by

them for the involvement of religious leaders to enhance the former. They were of the view that reconciliation and reparations should be given priority to ensure non-recurrence, urged constitutional reform and requested greater information sharing by the government with their personnel at all levels, to dispel doubts and misinformation. (Ibid)

The Army representatives also stated that although they had achieved the Government's objective under its political direction and in difficult and challenging circumstances, they felt a lack of solidarity and support at present. They stated their support for a truth seeking process and if there is any evidence of criminal activity, for the prosecution of the guilty. Given that as far as they were concerned, no criminal activity had been undertaken, they saw no need for amnesty either. Whilst they insisted that civilians were not deliberately targeted and that a policy of zero-civilian casualties was followed, they conceded the possibility of civilian deaths on account of civilians being caught in the crossfire. They also denied that sexual violence was used as a weapon of war. The Air Force reiterated that no crimes were committed and no illegal weapons

used. (Ibid p, 86)

The final report of the CTF and the approval of a National Policy for Reconciliation and Coexistence in 2018 led to the establishment by the Government of an Office on Missing Persons and preparations for a new Office on Reparations. A key measure paving the way for these initiatives was the creation of the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR) in 2015, chaired by the former president Chandrika Kumaratunga.

During its meetings with the President in 2017, the Task Force was informed that many of the recommendations in its report were not politically feasible. This was the same argument that the government made at the international level. The government did not do the political work because there was no support within the government for it. Only a handful, such as the Foreign Minister, were committed to the views of CTF. Those in whom it rang hollow were a small minority, which is the problem even today. It was clear that the government was not doing the political work necessary to actually make the reconciliation measures politically feasible at the local level. The fact that the leadership was not willing to take that step and push the political conversation was

the real tragedy of the new regime. (<https://lki.lk/publication/reconciliation-accountability-and-international-human-rights-in-sri-lanka/>)

At the ground level in the north and east, the report of the CTF was received quite well. The Zonal Task Forces and the participating representatives of affected persons were satisfied with how the CTF represented what was said at the consultations. What made the CTF process into a meaningless exercise for the north and east, however, was the lack of progress on many of the government's commitments to reconciliation and accountability. (Ibid) On the other hand, in the south of the country there was a feeling that recommendations that had been made that they had not advocated. e.g. Hybrid court.

As much as justice should be tempered by mercy, it is also conditioned by politics. And in this regard, there is no substitute for the government of the day informing its citizens as to its policy choices and intentions – even if it is to be in terms of the possible over the desirable, the best not being the enemy of the good. Most importantly, the voices of victims must be heeded in a truly national conversation if there is to be a durable national unity based on meaningful reconciliation and

democratic governance. (<http://harvardhrj.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2017/10/Saravanamuttu.pdf>)

DISTRICT RECONCILIATION COMMITTEES

Based on the Cabinet Memorandum submitted by the President Maithiripala Sirisena in his capacity as a Minister of National Integration and Reconciliation, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to establish District Reconciliation Committees (DRCs) in 2018 to address the incidence of inter-religious and inter-ethnic tensions and to promote national integration and reconciliation in all 25 districts. The DRCs were to be convened by the District Secretary of the relevant District with representation of inter-religious leaders, the Superintendent of Police, Retired Judges, School Principals and other relevant officials.

The functions of the DRCs were to undertake study on the background and causes of religious and ethnic tensions in the locality; formulate suitable strategy and approach to mediate the problems; provide rapid response to resolve conflicts and tensions; invite the perpetrators and victims and mediate conflict resolution; maintain database on incidence of

tensions and attacks on religious places; mediate, negotiate and resolve conflicts and prevent hate speeches.

The DRCs were expected to resolve problems amicably, and where necessary, submit recommendations on unresolved matters to the National Reconciliation Committee through the Ministry of National Integration and Reconciliation. The Cabinet Memorandum also recommended that this mechanism should not in any way disturb the law and order arrangements and rights in the country. The DRCs and the proposed institutional mechanism were to help address isolated pockets of incidents of religious and ethnic extremism and help to sustain a durable peace in the country.

The DRC network was expected to be one of government's main channels for the implementation of national reconciliation process at district level comprising of key influential individuals in the area. Improving DRC members' knowledge, skills and attitude on post-war reconciliation and pluralism as well as relationship with general public was expected to enhance their active contribution to reconciliation and further strengthen their legitimacy.

Following changes in the

government ministries and local level government officials after the political unrest from October to December 2018 and ensuing political power struggle meant that people in power seemed to have other interests than to engage in activities focusing on reconciliation. The DRCs were tasked to resolve problems amicably, and where necessary, submit recommendations on unresolved matters to the National Reconciliation Committee through the newly constituted *Ministry of National Integration, Reconciliation and Official Languages*. With further political uncertainties with regard to anchoring DRCs under a specific Ministry, it was confirmed that DRCs will come under the purview of the *Ministry of National Integration, Official languages, Social Progress and Hindu Religious Affairs*. It was evident that very little progress was made in operationalizing the DRC process.

At this point it must be stressed that Presidential candidate, Mr. Sajith Premadasa in his manifesto under the section on National Unity and Equality and sub section Reconciliation and Reconstruction stated as follows:

We will review and update the National Policy on Reconciliation and Coexistence of 2017 that will be applied to all levels of

governance to prevent the emergence of conflicts at community levels. We will utilize the already established District Reconciliation Committees to promote values of diversity, manage tensions, reduce risk of future violent conflicts, promote social integration, facilitate forward-looking reconciliation initiatives and build a pluralistic and inclusive society. We firmly believe that decisions must be made by those who live and work among the citizens they are serving.
(Premadasa, S, 2019)

However, following the victory of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the DRC process was scuttled permanently.

RECONCILIATION CHALLENGES IN SRI LANKA

Reconciliation in Sri Lanka has been a subject of intense political debate prior to and after the war ended in May 2009. It appears that there is no general or shared understanding of what reconciliation means in Sri Lanka. This is not a problem common to Sri Lanka alone. However, there is no widely recognised understanding either among academics or among practitioners

of what reconciliation encompasses, what it excludes and how it is linked with other post-war initiatives. (Bloomfield, 2006) Different approaches to reconciliation are often competing and confusing. In addition, there also seems to be no consensus on what the necessary conditions are that allow reconciliation to occur. However, the following statement captures the essence of what reconciliation would mean or look like:

There is no handy roadmap for reconciliation. There is no short cut or simple prescription for healing the wounds and divisions of a society in the aftermath of sustained violence. Creating trust and understanding between former enemies is a supremely difficult challenge. It is, however, an essential one to address in the process of building a lasting peace. Examining the painful past, acknowledging it and understanding it, and above all transcending it together, is the best way to guarantee that it does not – and cannot – happen again. (Tutu, D, 2003)

Despite a widely acknowledged understanding of what reconciliation is lacking, there seems to be agreement of some

aspects of it.

Firstly, reconciliation is not a one-size-fits-all concept. It needs to be highly context specific. In fact, each society has to tailor its own approach, processes and set of tools based on the country-specific conflict and post-conflict dynamics.

Secondly, reconciliation aims at developing social cohesion in which people whose relationships have been destroyed by war and violence, (re-)establish interaction, cooperation, trust and coexistence. This means the (re-)building of relationships not only among people and groups of people (with their identities, histories and ideologies etc.) but also between the citizens and the state. (Lederach, J, 1997) This is true in the North in particular. Those people in the virtually 100% Tamil area have no problems with the Sinhala people whom they do not interact with, but with the state. The state needs to build its relations with the people of the North.

Thirdly, reconciliation is a multitrack process. It involves diverse approaches on multiple levels (institutional, community, inter-personal, intrapersonal etc.). Different tools and methods should be applied at the different tracks. For instance, on Track-1,

reconciliation mechanisms are political in nature and need to address the transformation of state structures, security sector reform, vetting and accountability to name just a few. On Track-2, approaches are needed that lead to collective healing, rehabilitation of victims and offenders etc. On Track-3, reconciliation requires the healing of traumatic experiences of individuals, reparations, memorialisation, apologies etc.

Reconciliation requires both *political will* at the top level as well as *public momentum* from the grassroots level up. (Rosoux, V, 2015) All initiatives should complement each other and build on one another in a cumulative long-term process. It is agreed upon that leadership is critical for reconciliation. How that leadership is established is again context specific. Leadership can be established not only from the political arena but also from the society as a whole. Often leaders in reconciliation emerged from religious, academic, civil society or other sectors. (Sánchez, E & Rognvik, S, 2019)

From a spiritual perspective, reconciliation is an almost magical capacity of the human system:

Reconciliation embodies the possibility of transforming

war into peace, trauma into survival, hatred into forgiveness; it is the way human beings connect with one another, against all odds. It exemplifies the potential for virtually limitless strength and generosity of spirit that is also immanent in human nature. (Sarkin, J & Daly, E, 2009)

Reconciliation is also thought of as both a preventative and restorative remedy as Lederach states:

Reconciliation...represents a place, the point of encounter where concerns about both past and the future can meet...Space for acknowledgment of the past and envisioning of the future is necessary ingredient for re-framing the present. For this to happen, people must find ways to encounter themselves and their enemies, their hopes and their fears. (Lederach, J, 1997)

Lederach points at the tension inherent in reconciliation. Reconciliation works on three time scales: *the past, the present, and the future*. This means reconciliation looks backwards at the violence that occurred and the consequences it inflicted on the society and its individuals. At the

same time, reconciliation needs to address the present grievances, needs and emerging conflicts of the people and build trust and coexistence. Looking forward, reconciliation needs to establish a national dialogue on how the shared future should look like. Each aspect demands different approaches and courses of action. Such actions might be interdependent in some cases. However, often they are also in tension with each other. For instance, how do you develop a shared vision for the future while uncovering the violence of the past? There seems to be a lot of scepticism about the value of reconciliation especially among victims' representatives who often perceive reconciliation efforts either as lip-service or as a rhetoric to diminish the suffering endured and move forward.

In a workshop organised by the UN, practitioners of reconciliation processes from different parts of the world came to the conclusion that:

A balance needs to be struck between initiatives that look exclusively toward the past and those trying to look forward and create sustainable processes that lead to more peaceful interactions. Although uncovering the truth and

providing accountability for the crimes committed are critical for the process of healing, nonetheless institutional reforms, conflict prevention and future-oriented dialogue might be as critical if we want to create a space where all groups can live together peacefully. (Sánchez, E & Rognvik, S, 2019)

Most of the approaches that are commonly listed in the literature belong to the backward-looking aspect of reconciliation. These include, but are not limited to, trauma healing, truth-telling, accountability, reparations, forgiveness, trust-building and dialogue, eliminating the use of violence as a political tool, addressing ethnic, social, and identity-based cleavages and discriminations, etc. Also, part of but rarely named in the literature on reconciliation is the need to develop new mechanisms to handle conflicts in the future.

Sri Lanka's reconciliation process seems to be in line with this trend. Most of the mechanisms established and debates and requests brought forward in terms of reconciliation focus on the classical transitional justice aspects of looking into the past violence and providing justice to the victims.

Despite the end of the war twelve years ago, there is strife in our country between the ethnic and religious communities. The Easter Sunday attacks, and subsequent developments, have been a negative manifestation of this tragic reality. These incidents have sharpened the fears and suspicions that each community has of the others. The prerequisite for the success of reconciliation process is the leadership provided by state actors in working towards effective governance and accountability. Reconciliation programs need to respond to this development and implement measures aimed in particular at preventing the recurrence of the violence of the civil war.

POSSIBLE WAYS FORWARD

First and foremost, there is a need to introduce a National Reconciliation Policy that will be applied at all levels of governance to prevent the emergence of conflicts at community levels. This policy to be considered as a way of life for all Sri Lankans with religious, political and civil leadership set the right example, and mobilize support across all shades of political opinions. Besides LLRC recommendations highlighted in the earlier section, a few more options are highlighted in the following paragraphs:

Promote Pluralism to stop Polarization: Even after seven decades, an inclusive Sri Lankan national identity (composed of its natural plurality) has not emerged due to the preeminent focus of the state on the ethnic and religious majority. Therefore, it is important that a shared national identity should be balanced by an emphasis on equality-based plural thinking for its citizens. Such a paradigm needs to be accompanied by trust building between communities by setting up platforms for such mechanisms to be established enhancing and expanding the space for positive interaction and the dispelling of divisive and demonizing narratives of each other based on prejudice and misinformation. In this respect, please see *Charter for a Pluralistic Sri Lankan Society* developed by the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka and launched in January 2018 in *Appendix 2*.

Sri Lanka is a country that is divided in many ways. It has divisions along ethnic lines and religious lines. These divisions have manifested themselves in violent conflict, sometimes continuous, and sporadic at other times. Underlying the physical violence are long held prejudices, suspicions and fears. Even where there is no actual conflict, there is tension simmering beneath the surface, which can easily be

harnessed to unleash violence. Much of the prejudice and attendant hate and suspicion is either sowed or fueled by politics. Since independence, the principal political platform has been and continues to be one that is framed on ethnic nationalism.

I would also like to refer to the sixth chapter in the latest Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis – *Fratelli Tutti* (fraternity and social friendship, Oct.2020), in which he suggests that a pluralistic society encourages dialogue; respects the dignity of others in all circumstances; integrates differences thus guaranteeing a genuine and lasting peace; and recognizes other peoples' right to be themselves, maintaining an atmosphere of friendliness. "No one can possess the whole truth or satisfy his or her every desire, since that pretension would lead to nullifying others by denying their rights."

(<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/fratelli-tutti-popefrancis-calls-for-unity-in-newencyclical-19783>)

Coexistence in Sri Lanka is on the basis of tolerance and not on engaged understanding and active nurturing of inter community relations. While communities live side by side, they do not necessarily engage with each other meaningfully. Rights are

understood not in absolute and fundamental terms, but in relative terms. There are established hierarchies on the basis of race and/ or religion and the function of rule of law is impaired to that extent. Therefore, there is a need to embrace pluralistic values within a framework of enshrined laws and values.

Multi-Partisan approach: The present political environment is one of growing political polarization that is dividing the country in heart and mind, even while its territory has been unified. It would be appropriate to call for the adoption of the principle of "sufficient consensus" as articulated in the South African peace process in decision making regarding the political solution. Decisions were taken on the basis that all main parties to the conflict agreed with the proposals that were on the table.

Power-sharing: One of the goals of the devolution of power is to give people the power to make decisions concerning their own lives. This is especially important for the minority communities who feel they can be shut out of major decisions at the will of the ethnic majority. The closer that people are to those who make decisions regarding their lives the more impact are they likely to have on those decisions. There is a need

for the reform of the system of devolution of power, which will be done taking the concerns of all communities into consideration and taking into account the basic principles of subsidiarity. This could also encourage the political representatives of the ethnic minorities to join with the state in governing the country together. In this respect, please see the National Peace Council's Proposals for Constitutional Reforms focusing on the Establishment of a Pluralism and Equal Rights Commission submitted to the Experts Committee to Draft a New Constitution appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers in *Appendix 3*.

UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In conclusion, I would like to deviate from the specific areas highlighted above and draw attention to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by 193 Member States, including Sri Lanka, at the historic UN General Assembly in September 2015, which came into effect on January 1, 2016. The SDGs are a bold, universal agreement to end poverty in all its dimensions and craft an equal, just and secure world for people, planet and prosperity by 2030. The SDGs have been developed through an unprecedented

consultative process that brought national governments and millions of citizens from across the globe together to negotiate and adopt the ambitious agenda.

There are 17 SDGs which have been divided into 5 Ps, (*People* – End poverty and hunger in all forms and ensure dignity and equality; *Prosperity* – Ensure prosperous and fulfilling lives in harmony with nature; *Peace* – Foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies; *Partnership* – Implement the agenda through a solid global partnership; *Planet* – Protect our planet's natural resources and climate for future generations. (Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Sri Lanka, www.lk.one.un.org)

While all the 17 goals are equally important, Goal 16, *Peace, Justice and strong Institutions*, is crucial as the other goals are unlikely to achieve their objectives if this goal is not treated with all seriousness. The official wording is: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". SDG 16 cannot be achieved by governments alone. It requires a "whole-of-government" and "whole-of-society" approach. Most significantly, SDG 16 aims to focus on addressing some of the

key drivers of conflict and violence.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_Development_Goal_16)

Strengthening human rights institutions in line with international standards is critical to address exclusion and discrimination. This includes support on implementing the principle of leaving no one behind. (<https://ourworld.unu.edu/en/sdg-16-peace-justice-and-strong-institutions>)

Taken together, justice, rule of law, and accountable and inclusive institutions are the linchpin of shared social progress and our ability to realize human flourishing. The success of all the SDGs rests on ensuring that we unlock the full potential of Goal 16 to catalyze social transformation.

(<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2015/10/01/how-can-we-implement-sustainable-development-goal-16-on-institutions/>)

CONCLUSIONS

As per the LLRC recommendations, the process of reconciliation requires a full acknowledgement of the tragedy of the conflict and a collective act of contrition by the political leaders and civil society, not only Sinhala

and Tamil but all communities. The conflict could have been avoided had the southern political leaders of the two main political parties acted in the national interest and forged a consensus between them to offer an acceptable solution to the Tamil people. The Tamil political leaders were equally responsible for this conflict which could have been avoided had the Tamil leaders refrained from promoting an armed campaign towards secession, acquiescing in the violence and terrorist methods used by the LTTE against both the Sinhala and Tamil people, and failing to come out strongly and fearlessly against the LTTE, and their atrocious practices.

The core of our National conflict is our inability to contain our differences in such a way that we may live together with mutual respect. All Sri Lankans need to be treated equally, all should receive equal opportunities, all need to live with dignity, all need to be equally free before the law and that all should avoid violence and stay in right and reconciled relationships. Here then, in essence, is the solution; but it needs to be written into a political proposal and constitutional framework by the experts. These are values that all our religions can identify with and which have potential to direct our shared Sri Lankan journey away

from war and violence, towards integration and reconciliation.

The reconciliation process initiated by the former government has now come to virtually a dead stop especially after the withdrawal by the present government of Sri Lanka's commitments made in terms of the co-sponsored UN Human Rights Council resolution 30/1. At the time of its withdrawal the government promised to come up with a nationally-led reconciliation process to replace the previous one which was denounced as an internationally-led one. However, so far there is nothing that is publicly visible of this national reconciliation process. Instead there are questions being asked on the government side whether it is necessary at all to have a reconciliation process when the country is at peace. On the other hand, in the North and East, there is a sense of being hemmed in and encroached on by the government, which is taking over land and building Buddhist temples in the North and East in places where the remains of ancient Buddhist shrines are discovered.

When the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted, Goal 16 was seen as truly transformative, formally linking, for the first time

at the United Nations, development, peace, justice, and good governance. Some of its more ambitious targets include significantly reducing all forms of violence, ending abuse and violence against children, promoting the rule of law, reducing illicit financial flows and corruption, and developing accountable and transparent institutions. SDG gives another opportunity for Sri Lanka to stay engaged with the UN system to achieve these global objectives so crucial for an effective reconciliation process. Judging from where we are today twelve years after the end of the war, there is a need for the government, which has committed itself to accomplishing the UN Sustainable Development Goals, to develop a road map on how SDG Goal 16 can be achieved by us in 2030. This is a challenge for all Sri Lankans to grapple with in all seriousness and commitment.

War does not end with military victory; it only ends with reconciliation.

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APPENDIX 1

Summarized Chapter 8 on Reconciliation. (National Peace Council - LLRC Report Summary 2013)

- The Commission was reminded that despite the lapse of two years since the ending of the conflict, the violence, suspicion and sense of discrimination are still prevalent in social and political life;
- The Commission recommends the phasing out of the involvement of the Security forces in civilian activities and use of private lands by the Security Forces; (9.171)
- The development of a vision of a shared future requires the involvement of the whole society; (9.173)
- The root causes of the ethnic conflict lie in the failure of successive governments to address the genuine grievances of the Tamil people; (9.187)
- A political solution is imperative to address the causes of conflict; (9.185)
- Failure to give effect to the Rule of Law – The Commission note the failure of law enforcement officers to investigate offences and bring offenders to book where the offences are committed by persons with political connections. The Commission noted continuing acts of extortion, abductions, disappearance, robberies by armed groups and political violence accompanied by the use of firearms. The Commission recommends that the Government takes immediate action to disarm persons in possession of unauthorized weapons and prosecute such offenders; (9.204)
- The Commission states that the Police Department should be separated from military institutions; (9.214)
- An independent Police Commission should be established; (9.215)
- Issues of governance – The Commission noted that there are deficiencies in the system of administration and lack of good governance that affect all citizens regardless of ethnicity. The Commission stated that these require concerted action by all stakeholders. However, specific action is needed where system functions particularly to the disadvantage of the

minorities; (9.216)

- Institutions to deal with citizens' grievances – The Commission recommended that the Government should establish an independent institution to address grievances of all citizens, in particular the minorities, arising from the abuse of power of public officials and other individuals involved in the governance of the country. This mechanism should be invested with a strong investigative arm in order to effectively discharge its functions; (9.218)
- Inter faith Reconciliation and Peace Committees that may be established at District and Provincial levels could function as a feeder mechanism to support the functions of the Special Institution, in particular, by providing grass root level inputs in the implementation of measures aimed at inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony; (9.221)
- The Commission recommends the establishment of an Independent Public Service Commission without delay to ensure that there is no political interference in the Public Service and that recruitment and promotions in the public

service are in conformity with the equality provisions in the Constitution; (9.226)

- Devolution of Power – The Commission makes a recommendation that the Government should provide leadership for the purpose of establishing a framework for ensuring sustainable peace and security in the post-conflict environment taking into account the rights of all communities, including those who have been members of the LTTE. To this end, a political settlement based on devolution of power must address the ethnic problems as well as other serious problems that threaten democratic institutions; (9.230)
- The Commission proposes the establishment of a Second Chamber comprising of Representatives from the Provinces; (9.232)
- Language Policy - The Commission found that the proper implementation of the language policy ensuring trilingual (Sinhala, Tamil and English) of future generations is vitally important. No district or province should be categorized in terms of language. Officers in government services should possess language skills to serve

in any part of the country. It should be compulsory that all Government offices have Tamil-speaking officers at all times; (9.241) (9.243)

- Diaspora – The government, along with the relevant stakeholders, especially civil society should develop a comprehensive approach to harness the potential of the expatriate community. There should be a proactive diplomatic initiative with the international community to constructively engage the diaspora to work with development partners particularly in areas of such as housing, schooling, healthcare and livelihood activities; (9.263)
- Inter Faith Activities/Role of Religions – All religious leaders must unitedly provide leadership by emphasizing religious commonalities and

focusing on factors that contribute to a shared vision and unity of actions; (9.268)

- Art and Culture – Creating greater awareness of linguistic and cultural affinities among the different communities would be an effective instrument for promoting greater reconciliation. This must be given the highest priority of the State; (9.274)
- Need for Political Consensus – The process of reconciliation requires a full acknowledgement of the tragedy of the conflict and a collective act of contrition by the political leaders and civil society of both Sinhala and Tamils communities. The Commission recommends that there be a separate event on the national day to express solidarity and empathy with all victims of the tragic conflict; (9.285)

APPENDIX 2

CHARTER FOR A PLURALISTIC SRI LANKAN SOCIETY

Introduction

This national symposium is the culmination of a major initiative of the National Peace Council that will see the launch of a Pluralism Charter embodying the distillation of three years of consultations with multi religious and multi ethnic communities mobilized through work at the ground level. In discussions leading to drafting this charter, we have focused on best international experiences.

Over the past decade NPC has focused its attention on the creation of inter religious groups bound together by universal values of their religions and by shared experiences. At the symposium today we have representatives of new groups that were forged in the course of the project, and brought into active civil society life. These include local politicians, journalists, those differently abled, women and youth in addition to religious clergy.

The main problem, as we see it, is the unwillingness to shift from a focus on our own community and

the exclusion of other communities. We see the other's gain as our loss. Our country has experienced severe ethnic and religious conflicts because members of each community tend to look at their own problems only. Most engage little with those of other communities. They do not get their point of view.

There is a need for a shift in thinking to one in which equal rights, equal citizenship and equal justice become the norm in our society.

The ideas of multi religiosity and multi ethnicity are necessary not only at the national level, but also at the provincial and local levels. At the National Peace Council, we believe that the experiences, hopes and aspirations of our different communities will be known to each other through engagement. We must not work only for the rights and privileges of our own community. We believe that leaders should lead and transcend what divides us. They need to take the people along with them and provide them with inspired thoughts and actions that unify and not divide.

When this initiative commenced, the people of Sri Lanka had only recently voted in a government

that committed itself to address post war issues of reconciliation. Accordingly, we intended this initiative to widen and broaden the band of civil society leaders who would bring about a more plural ethos amongst the general population to support the national reconciliation process.

Today, once again our country is in the grip of a political crisis. Elections are looming and voices are being raised that focus more on

the fear and mistrust of those of other communities. It is important that leaders should rise from our society, at the national, provincial and local levels, to meet the challenge. Those gathered here are a representative sample of the plural leadership of our country in which diversity blooms and unity prevails.

Jehan Perera

Executive Director

January 2019

Joe William

Chairman

VISION:

To evolve a Sri Lankan society that acknowledges, accepts and upholds its diversity, enabling the multiple communities that live within its boundaries to coexist within a framework of inclusion and mutual respect.

We hope to share and advocate the contents of this Charter with political leaders, officers of the State, members of civil society and the public to collectively build a society that respects the rights of all and uphold the inclusion of all.

PURPOSE:

Sri Lanka is a country that is divided in many ways. It has divisions along ethnic lines and religious lines. These divisions have manifested themselves in violent conflict, sometimes continuous, and sporadic at other times. Underlying the physical violence are long held prejudices, suspicions and fears. Even where there is no actual conflict, there is tension simmering beneath the surface that can easily be harnessed to unleash violence.

Much of the prejudice and attendant hate and suspicion is either sowed or fueled by politics.

Since independence, the principle political platform has been and continues to be one that is enframed in ethnic nationalism.

Coexistence in Sri Lanka is on the basis of tolerance and not on engaged understanding and active nurturing of inter community relations. While communities live side by side, they do not necessarily engage with each other meaningfully. Rights are understood not in absolute and fundamental terms, but in relative terms. There are established hierarchies on the basis of race and/ or religion and the function of rule of law is impaired to that extent.

Therefore, the purpose of this document is to highlight the need to embrace pluralism within a framework of enshrined laws and values.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The National Peace Council (NPC) carried out consultations from October 2016 to December 2018 with multiple groups in eight districts countrywide. These groups were religious leaders, community leaders including local politicians, media, women, youth and persons with disabilities. The geographic focus was Galle,

Matara, Nuwara Eliya, Puttalam, Mannar, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Ampara.

The consultations were carried out through a two-tier process – local and national. The contributors, approximately 800 were representative of diverse ethnic, religious, age and interest groups. The consultation was carried out on two themes – factors debilitating meaningful pluralistic coexistence and changes necessary to promote, uphold and nurture pluralism.

FACTORS DEBILITATING AND LIMITING PLURALISM

This section has been presented on sub themes, evaluating impact and identifying particular limitations.

Ethnicity: Sri Lanka is in its 71st year of independence, but it is challenged by its inability to evolve a cohesive Sri Lankan identity. The primary reason for this is the continued contestation for dominance and hierarchy instead of equal citizenship based on pluralistic values. Pluralism has been articulated as being the cornerstone of a binding Sri Lankan identity. However, the failure to instill an ethos of mindful coexistence strengthened by the protection accorded through Fundamental Rights, has pushed meaningful pluralistic

coexistence to the far future. Key observations are:

- Ethnic communities live separately with little interaction.
- Ethnic, social and personal limitations to interactions between and/ or among ethnicities.
- Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims have unaddressed prejudices against each other.
- Treating one race as being superior and others as being inferior with the attendant failure give equal recognition to all ethnicities and the failure to accord respect to all.
- Contestation over the ownership of the country, based on the concept of historic homelands.
- Frequent conflicts between ethnicities and the failure to uphold the law in equal terms.
- State policies that further and fuel ethnic divisions.
- Fomenting ethnic divisions as part of political strategy.

Religion: The contestation for space and identity is a key element of religious conflict. There is a hierarchical acknowledgement of religions resisting equal space to all. There is also little structured,

focused effort to enable different communities to understand and appreciate each other's religious teachings. Key observations are:

- Failure to understand or accept religious and ethnic diversity.
- Religious diversity is primarily viewed through a prism of hierarchy and dominance.
- Religious groups live in fear and suspicion of each other in the enframing environment for dominance.
- People have insufficient awareness of all religions or their clergy and therefore often fail to accord respect to clergy of religions that are not their own.
- Negative attitudes and outlook of religious leaders lead to violent conflict.
- Unethical conversions.
- Limitations affecting certain groups in the practice of their own religion.
- Religious leaders and community leaders presenting false analysis of their own religions and others.

Language: Language discrimination or insufficient affirmative action in relation to minority languages continues to be

a key factor in the ethnic conflict. Non-equal recognition for Tamil in practical terms and its impact on the recognition given to the Tamil ethnic identity significantly debilitates pluralism. Key observations are:

- The failure to effectively implement the National Languages Policy, undermining service delivery in State institutions, hospitals, police etc.
- Limitations in both the public and private sectors serving minority populations in their own language, even in areas where they are the majority.
- Populations speaking only in Tamil feeling vulnerable and living in fear during conflicts based on religion or ethnicity.

Culture: Culture is also a sphere where there is contestation for predominance. This is linked to the establishment of a hierarchy based on ethnicity. Key observations are:

- Greater likelihood of conflict due to contest for superiority in terms of culture.
- Lack of awareness of each other's culture and consequent lack of respect, sometimes leading to insult.
- No structured programme by

the State to create awareness about the diversity of cultures.

- Certain cultural practices limit the space for cultural coexistence.

Political: Ethnically divisive politics has pervaded public life from the time of independence. Even today, political platforms are centered on fear and hate leading to increasing ethnic division and contest. Key observations are:

- People are divided on party political lines and in some instances, political parties have taken on the mien of religions leading to fevered support resulting in frequent conflict.
- Political parties and affiliates having distinct religious and/or tribal identities, work towards the benefit of particular groups and communities eroding the space for pluralism.
- The status of kings and even deities is accorded to political leaders creating a following so enslaved that they can be manipulated to conflict with other groups, where it is deemed to be politically advantageous.
- Promoting ethnic and religious strife to increase political support.

- Political leaders who promote ethnic nationalism/ racism as their principal political ideology do not promote pluralism and related values when elected to govern.

Casteism: Caste is still a divisive factor in society and determines the progress or stagnation, especially through service ranks in the State sector. Even in social transactions like marriage caste is still very much factored in. Key observations are:

- Caste is still a factor among Sinhalese and Tamil ethnicities. It is especially evident in social transactions and promotions in the State sector.
- Those considered to be of lower castes are discriminated against and sometimes marginalised.
- The insurgencies of 1971/ 88/ 89 were due in some part due to caste discrimination, according to social scientists.

Law: There are many lacunae in the legal structure that have to be addressed if Sri Lanka is to be meaningfully pluralistic. It is also concerning that on issues of ethnic or religious differences, people act in violation of basic laws. Key observations are:

- There is a conflict between Fundamental Rights and provisions of specific personal laws.
- Conflict between general laws of the country and specific provisions of personal laws.

Kandyan Law – inheritance rights and provisions for divorce etc.

Thesawalamai Law – ownership of land and contract law.

Muslim Law – age of consent for marriage, number of legal marriages, divorce and maintenance and commercial contracts.

- Archaic provisions in the law that target particular groups.
- The prevalence of multiple legal traditions can lead to distortion of rights and misinterpretation of legal provisions.
- Legal provisions that discriminate against women.
- Lack of equality on account of multiple legal systems.
- Lack of uniformity in provisions of personal laws leads to a lack of cohesion among communities.
- Lack of faith in the legal system due to the biased application of the law.
- Inadequate laws to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Inadequate laws to protect the rights of persons with diverse sexual orientation - lesbians, gays, bisexuals, intersex and questioning.
- Failure to implement provisions of the Constitution which give recognition to ethnic pluralism in the country – some provisions of the 13 Amendment.
- Failure to uphold the rule of law leads to conflict.
- The legal system gives inadequate recognition to pluralism.
- Lack of awareness of fundamental laws and legal provisions that uphold rights in absolute terms.

Literature: Literature is a primary source in understanding the facets, particular to a community or a culture. Literature can address the heart and build bridges across mental divides. However, in Sri Lanka insufficient importance is given to literature as a source for bridge building between communities. Key observations are:

- No formal policy on teaching or promoting cross cultural literature.
- Within the sphere of peace building and also education, literature is not given sufficient recognition as a tool for reconciliation and understanding. There is a devaluing of literature in general as being of 'no practical use'.

History: History is at the center of contestation for dominance by the major ethnicity. The history that is taught is limited to one tradition and ethnicity and has been interpreted to support the preeminence of the majority group in the country. Key observations are:

- Distorting history and presenting it in favour of one community.
- Insufficient teaching of minority history.

Archaeology: The Sri Lankan State has largely focused on the archaeology of Sinhala history. There is evidence to suggest that Sri Lanka was cosmopolitan and diverse in terms of ethnic composition since ancient times given its location as a maritime hub. Key observations are:

- Destruction of archaeological

sites.

- Conflict over ownership of archaeological sites.
- Conflicting interpretation of archaeological evidence.

Regional: A practical detriment of the ethnic conflict is that certain regions have been over resourced while others are under resourced. There has been an ethnic dimension to the unequal allocation of resources.

- Equality of citizenship as embedded in pluralism is not reflected in the distribution of resources. There is an evident regional/ ethnic bias.
- Minority areas receive less State support than majority areas.

Persons with Disabilities: PWDs represent a fair portion of society on both sides of the divide – Sinhala and Tamil, given the 30-year long civil war. There are policies in place to support PWDs. However, their delivery on the ground remains limited. Therefore, the reintegration of PWDs, especially in former war zones is an uphill task.

- There is little mainstream discussion on the needs and issues of PWDs.
- There is a stigma around

disability that leads to discrimination and marginalization.

- Failure to give equal recognition to PWDs has meant that they have inadequate facilities in public places and limited access to resources.
- PWDs face difficulties in accessing State services like education, health etc. and are also unable to find employment.
- The State provides inadequate protection to PWDs.

Persons with diverse sexual orientations: LGBTIQ rights are receiving increased attention in Sri Lanka. There are influential and committed lobby groups working towards the decriminalization of certain sexual practices and legitimization of rights of these groups. However, the discourse remains very much in the margins and there is no formal effort or recognition of their right to choice.

- Discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation including criminal punishment.
- Social ostracization.
- Limited space for mainstream public discourse on LGBTIQ rights and the failure to accord

them dignity before the law.

- Although there has been some attention given to the rights and problems of these groups, State response has been negative.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING A PLURALISTIC SRI LANKA

1. Political leaders and State officials have a key role to play in building a pluralistic society in which there is equal voice irrespective of number and in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups maintain and develop their traditional culture or special interest within the sphere of a common citizenship.
2. It is important that the state acts with justice and equity at all times in serving the people.
3. Religious leaders have a key role to play in embedding the concept of pluralism in the larger community. They necessarily need to be trained in the idea of pluralism so that they in turn can share their learning through the lens of social cohesion and religious coexistence.
4. Review existing laws and introduce necessary amendments in alignment

with pluralistic values.

5. Minimise regressive provisions in traditional laws, aligning them with accepted fundamental principles, international standards and provisions in the Constitution.
6. All provisions in the Constitution for power sharing should be implemented in full without favour to any particular religion/ community or region.
7. Ensuring equity in the distribution of resources and equality in delivering services – all State services including police, health, education etc.
8. Strengthening Independent Commissions established through the 19th Amendment to the Constitution to ensure that the public sector acts without fear or favour.
9. The State should create sufficient awareness concerning the powers and functions of the Independent Commissions among State officials, the private sector and members of the public to maximise their effectiveness and create the environment necessary for them to function freely.
10. The State should create sufficient awareness on laws and policies that relate to the protection of ethnic identities, diversity and the administration of justice, among State officials, the private sector and members of the public to ensure that fundamental freedoms are upheld.
11. Ensuring there are adequate legal frameworks at district and provincial level to enable the sharing of marine resources, drinking water, and land equitably across populations.
12. All ethnicities should enjoy freedom of expression equally. It is especially important that equal space is ensured in mainstream discourse.
13. Sufficient laws should be introduced to bar hate speech or expression inciting violence against a particular group or community. Article 14(1) (a) of Chapter 3 of the Constitution guarantees the right to free speech and expression. However, if it is to be enjoyed in the intended spirit of the provision, it is necessary for the State to ensure safe space.
14. Punish all politicians, religious leaders or any other groups or individuals inciting religious and/ or ethnic hate, without exception.

15. Legal action against hate speech should be swift and adequate. Social media has become a principal source of information for the public. There is both positive and negative aspects to the role of social media as a primary news and information platform.
16. The State should ensure that all media hold to principles of objectivity in disseminating news and information. The public should also be made aware to consider news and information with sufficient critical evaluation.
17. The State should adopt an effective process to identify and proscribe political parties or organisations that promote divisions along religion or race.
18. Early warning mechanisms should be a necessary element of government and administration to pre-empt possible conflict and to proactively deal with problems. The existing practice of the Sri Lankan State is reactive where action is taken once the problem has grown to the point of tension or conflict. The State leadership, policymakers and State institutions should be trained in the use of the early warning tool.
19. Including pluralism in the school curriculum. It is necessary for Sri Lankans to understand the values that underpin pluralism if it is to consciously take root as an effective response to ethnic divisions.
20. The State should abandon the practice of setting up education institutions on the basis of ethnicity or religion, which vitiates efforts to create a more engaged, cohesive and reconciled society.
21. The State should necessarily educate the public on the values and cultural practices of all communities and the need to respect diversity.
22. Elevating the Police service to be more sensitised and effective in the performance of its duties. The Police force should have sufficient awareness of the cultural practices and sensitivities of the communities that it serves and also the ability to communicate in Sinhala or Tamil, as necessary. The police force should be sufficiently diverse, in its ethnic composition to serve all populations equally.
23. The State should make it compulsory for all Sri Lankan citizens to learn Sinhala and Tamil. It should be ensured

that the language skill is of sufficient functionality to serve meaningfully, in the search for pluralistic reconciliation.

24. Recruiting trilingual – Sinhala, Tamil and English, officers to the health sector to ensure an effective service. This falls within the broader category of deficiencies in the implementation of the Official Languages Policy. Part of the action to remedy this would be the recruitment of doctor/ patient-interpreters locally.
25. Adopting special mechanisms to include youth in the country's development process. Youth were the primary victims of the insurgencies of 1971-72, 1987-1990 and the ethnic war from 1980-2009. There is a need to include youth through an equitable process that takes

into account education and skills.

26. Affirmative action should be taken in terms of Article 12(4) of Chapter 3 of the Constitution to empower those with special needs. There should be adequate provisions to include matters particular to them in development plans at sub national level – provincial and district.
27. Adequate resources should be provided to enable persons with special needs to fulfill their basic needs. Institutions should be established at district/ provincial level to strengthen education, health and welfare services to these sectors. A special cadre of trained officers should be introduced to support this community.

Establish a Pluralism Commission on the lines of the Independent Commissions, whose members would be appointed by the Constitutional Council, and whose mandate would be aligned to the observations and recommendations sketched out above.

ISSUES RELATED TO WEED CONTROL FACED BY PADDY FARMERS IN HAMBANTOTA DISTRICT OF SRI LANKA

J.H.D Chamara¹, C.S De Silva²

ABSTRACT

Rice is the most important staple crop in Sri Lanka but farmers face several problems in cultivating their crop and achieving a profitable yield. Weeds are a major problem in paddy cultivation since time immemorial. Farmers use many weed control methods in their rice cultivation- herbicides are the main factor for weed control. However, poor weed control, newly emerging weeds, herbicide-resistant biotypes of weeds, environmental and human health issues related to herbicide use, have become major drawbacks to rice cultivation in Sri Lanka.

This study was conducted to examine the problems faced by farmers in paddy cultivation in Beliatta, Walasmulla and Okewela Agrarian Service Divisions in the Hambantota District of Sri Lanka. In total, 300 farmers were used to complete the questionnaire and field experiments to study weed abundance and types. According to the results, even though majority of the farmers (52%) were under major irrigation schemes, they have not used water for weed control. Majority of the farmers were using Rotary plough for land preparation even though Mould board plough is the most effective equipment to control weed during land preparation.

Only 50% of the farmers keep a 5-14 day gap between the 1st and 2nd land preparation which is important to control weeds. Most of the farmers have used self-seed paddy and broadcasting methods for sowing the seeds which makes effective weed control difficult. Majority of the farmers use chemical weed control and used Clomazone 200g/l+Propanil 400g/l EC (23.3%) and Pretilachlor 300g/l EC (32.3%) in higher percentages. Farmers used to tank mix Carfentrazone-ethyl 240g/l EC (43.3%) with another herbicide without proper knowledge on active ingredients and mode of action which may lead to health hazards.

Therefore, this study recommends that awareness programmes need to be introduced to Agricultural officers and farmers before the commencement of cultivation on effective weed control from land preparation stage and effective usage of herbicides.

Key words: Rice, weeds, cultural practices, herbicides

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INTRODUCTION

Rice (*Oryza sativa* L) is a major staple food in Sri Lanka. It is also an important food in Asia and the world, where approximately 90% of the rice is produced and consumed and where 60% of the Earth's people live (Khush, 2004). Rice accounts for over 70% of the daily calorie intake in countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar (Anchal *et al*, 2017) which consists of three billion Asians.

Rice is planted in about 148 million hectares annually, or 11% of the world's cultivated land. Rice is the only major cereal crop that is consumed almost exclusively by humans. The world's rice production was 728 million tons in 2018. China, the largest producer, produced 203 million tons followed by India (163 million tons).

Weed is considered as one of the biotic factors and it is a major problem in rice cultivation. Weed cause serious yield losses in rice production in the range of 30% - 40% (Ratnasekara, 2015). Rice yield loss due to weed, depends on the weed species and dominant nature.

There are few dominant weed species found in rice fields in Sri

Lanka such as, *Echinochloa crusgalli*, *Ischaemum rugosum*, *Isachne globosa*, *Cyperus iria*, *Cyperus difformis* and *Cyperus rotundus*. Weed distribution is the result of a compound influence of ecological and human factors. The composition of the weed flora may differ depending on location (Shannon, 1998), water supply cultural practices (Peng *et al*, 2004), the inherent weed flora in the area and the type of crop grown.

Weed management strategies can be categorized into cultural, mechanical, biological and chemical practices. Weed control using herbicide is the most popular method among farmers. Globally, herbicides have become dominant in the market where they contribute to 60% of total agro chemical imports (Ampon and De Datta, 1990). However, dependence on herbicide increases the cost of production, enhances environmental pollution and accelerates the process of evolution of herbicide resistant weeds.

Especially, in direct seeded rice cultivation, effective weed control requires proper herbicide application techniques which are often not met, resulting in poor weed control. Most farmers were using this method for controlling weeds in rice cultivation. Rice cultivation in Sri Lanka mainly

depends on major, minor and rainfall irrigation systems.

In a herbicide dominant system, overall weed control efficacy could be improved by selecting suitable herbicides with a combination of proper usage practices. Some grasses are resistance to some herbicides.

As an example, low land rice cultivation in Sri Lanka was reported to have developed a resistance to propanil (Herath, 2017). However, information on herbicide use and herbicide resistance is limited and awareness on such is not satisfactory in Sri Lanka. More attention is required for proper herbicide usage in rice to achieve effective weed control while minimizing the development of herbicide resistant weeds.

Most farmers do not have sufficient knowledge about herbicides. Most of the time, the choice of herbicides are made by Agrochemical retailers in the area who run chemical shops. Thus, farmers usually don't pay much attention in reading the label regarding modes of action and recommendations of the herbicides. Therefore, it is important to examine the level of understanding and the current knowledge of farmers in the practices of herbicide usage and

weed diversity pattern.

This information is very important for effective weed management in rice eco systems. Further, it is important for directing future research and educational priorities. Thus, a survey was conducted to study the current problems faced by farmers in rice cultivation such as practices on herbicide usage, their awareness on herbicide usage and recommendations, land preparation, sowing and water management methods to control weeds.

In addition, field surveys were conducted to identify the weed diversity pattern of farmer's fields such as the most abundant weed variety. It was noted that they mostly used herbicide for controlling weeds. Based on the findings, the most important aspects for future research were the health issues faced by humans. Further, recommendations for farmers will also be developed.

METHODOLOGY

Location

The study was conducted in three agrarian service divisions (ASDs) namely Beliatta, Okewela and Walasmulla from Hambantota District. The ASDs have major, minor and rain-fed water systems for the cultivation of paddy. The

paddy land extent in Beliatta ASD is 1581ha, Okewela is 771.4ha and Walasmulla is 1191ha (Department of Census and Statistics, 2019). This area was located in the IL1B agro ecological region.

Sampling

The survey was divided into two parts, in the first part a primary survey was conducted among farmers on herbicide usage in these three ASDs and in the second part, it was to quantify the weed diversity in rice fields.

The primary survey was conducted using 300 randomly selected farmers during the 2019 *yala* season. 100 farmers were selected in one Agrarian Division for the questionnaire survey.

The secondary survey was to quantify the weed diversity of farmer's fields. For that, 10 farmers were randomly selected from the above 100 farmers in one agrarian division. This was done in all three agrarian divisions.

Data sources and method of data collection

Primary data was collected using a questionnaire, this questionnaire contained structured and semi-structured questions and pre-tested

to achieve the set objectives. Data was collected through a farmer survey by face to face interviews. Collected data included date of application, herbicides in use, type of herbicides, information on application of two or more herbicides together and their combinations, dose and frequency of herbicides applied, type of equipment used for application, most problematic weed flora in the system, remaining weed species after herbicide application and finally, weed control efficacy of herbicides.

The secondary survey was in farmer fields during the 2019 *yala* season. For these, 100 farmers in one agrarian division were randomly selected. In one farmer's field, one square meter plot was randomly marked. A one square meter wood frame was used to mark the plot. The frame was thrown away from the middle of the farmer's field and all weeds were collected from the falling point of this field. Then, weeds were separated in to grasses, sedges and broad leaves. The weeds dried weight was taken after drying for 10 days. In one field, three plots were surveyed as replicates by this method. Finally, the average dry weight was measured.

Data analyzing

Data was analyzed using SPSS data

analyzer. Descriptive analysis was used to examine the different socio-factors of paddy farmers in Beliatta, Okewela and Walasmuula ASDs about weeds and the use of herbicide. Chi square(χ^2) tests were used for quantitative data analysis to show associations.

support the rice production in this area. Most of the farmers were living in the village, so that they can easily cultivate their land and maintain the cultivation. Farmers could conduct field practices at any time in the day such as water management.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE FARMERS

Gender

According to the data presented in Figure 1, 98% of farmers were male and only 2% were female in the study area. Males mostly

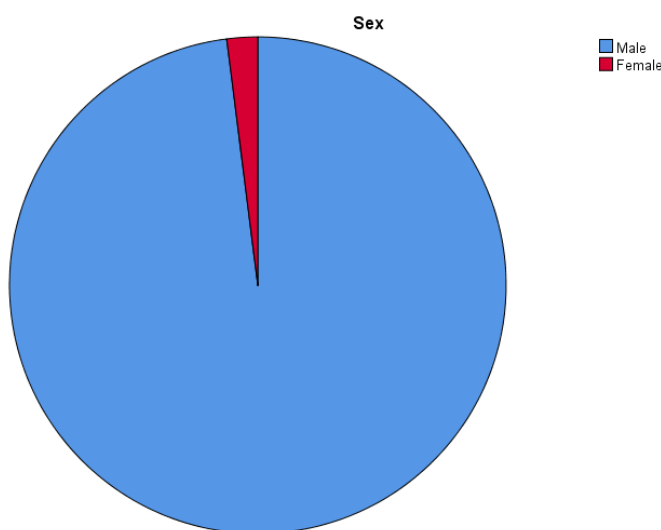


Figure 1: Distribution of Male and Female farmers in the study area.

Age of the farmers

According to the data presented in Figure 2, the largest age group is 61 – 70 years (30%) and smallest

age group is 81 – 90 years (0.7%). The farmers involved in cultivation, in the study area were from the 61 – 70 years' age group.

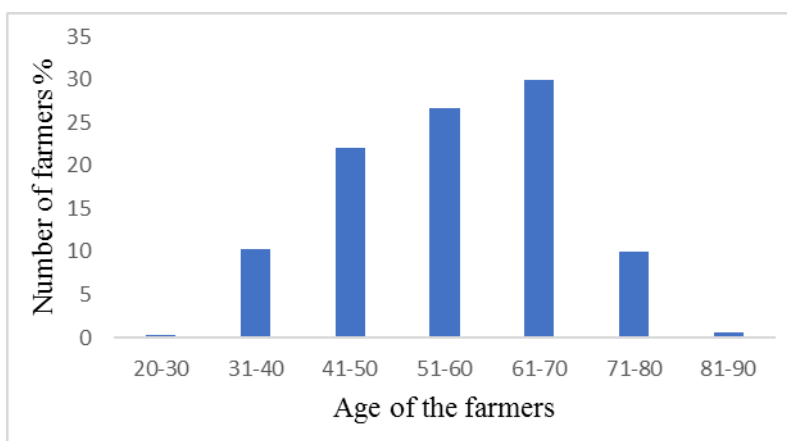


Figure 2: Age level of the farmers in the study area.

Educational qualification of the farmers

According to the data presented in Figure 3, farmer education levels were different. Majority of the farmers have studied up to grade 5 (30.7%). Education level of the farmers with no education was 7%, grades 6 – 10, 24%, O/L's,

21.3%, A/L's, 14.3%, Diploma, 1.7% and Degree, 1%. Majority of the farmers had education until 1 – 5 grade level. Educated farmers were less in the study area. Therefore, they were not using any new technologies for rice cultivation and weed control.

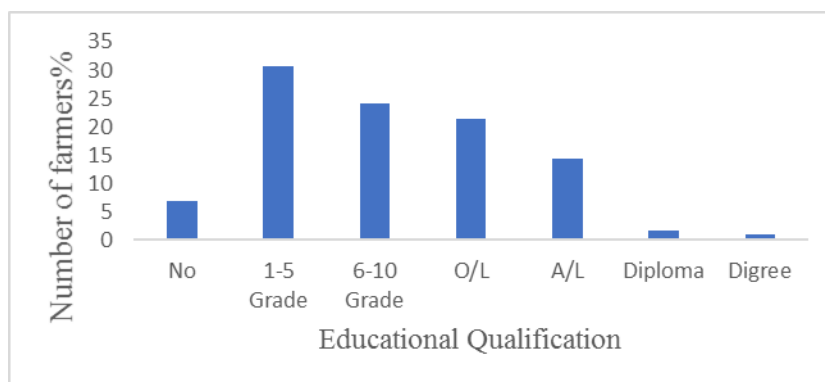


Figure 3: Education qualifications of the farmers in the study area.

INFORMATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

Irrigation system of the rice cultivation

According to data presented in Figure 4, it is clearly seen that the largest number of farmers (52.3%) was under major irrigation

schemes in this area. Only 34.7 % were under minor irrigation schemes. The remaining 13% were rain-fed farmers. Under the major irrigation scheme, water was available and farmers used it for weed control. However, most farmers did not use water for weed control because of poor knowledge.

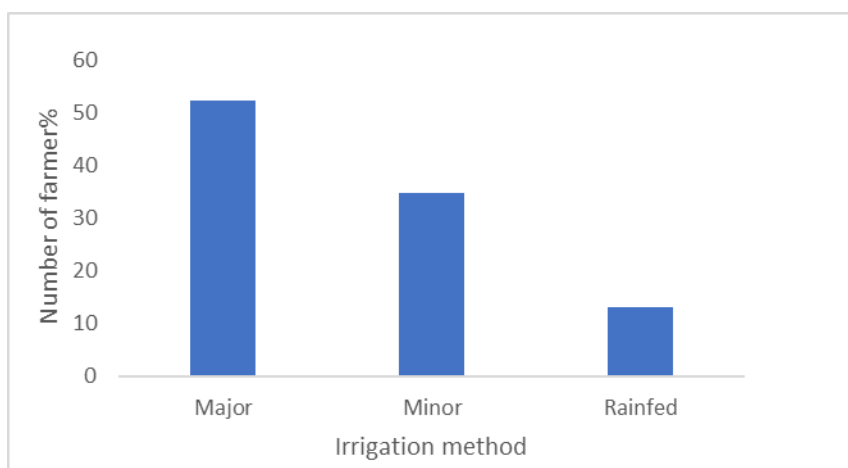


Figure 4: Irrigation system of rice fields in the study area

Land preparation

According to the data presented in Table 1, around 236 farmers used rotary ploughs for the first land preparation in this study area. However, it is not considered a good practice for first land preparation- mould board ploughs are the most suitable equipment for this preparation. Only 59 farmers used mould board ploughs

for first land preparation. Out of 300, only 141 farmers kept a 5 to 14 days gap between the 1st and 2nd land preparation. This is the most suitable method for controlling weeds in rice fields. One of the main problems observed in the study area was not using the correct plough in rice fields because mould board ploughs are the more effective tool in controlling weeds during land preparation.

Table 1: Information on type of tractor, type of plough and Gap between of 1 and 2 land preparation

Gap between 1 st and 2 nd Land Preparation	Type of Tractor	Type of plough			Total
		Rotary	Spike tooth harrow	Mould board	
up to 5 days	Two-wheel tractor	5	4	4	13
	Four-wheel tractor	11		0	11
	Total	16	4	4	24
between 5 -14 days	Two-wheel tractor	44		42	86
	Four-wheel tractor	140		1	141
	Total	184		43	227
between 15 -21 days	Two-wheel tractor	15	1	12	28
	Four wheel tractor	21	0	0	21
	Total	36	1	12	49
Total	Two-wheel tractor	64	5	58	127
	Four-wheel tractor	172	0	1	173
	Total	236	5	59	300

Use of seed paddy

According to the data presented in Table 2, majority of the farmers (210) were using At 362 (3.5 month) paddy variety and 55 farmers were using 4 month At 362 variety. Only 35 farmers used

other paddy varieties for their cultivation. Further, only 72 farmers used government seed paddy where 119 and 109 farmers were using self-seed paddy and private company seed paddy, respectively. Self-raised seed paddy may contain more weed seeds than government certified seed paddy.

Table 2: Information on source and variety of seed paddy and duration of crop.

Source	Variety of seed paddy	Age(Month)			Total
		3.5 month	4 month	4.5 month	
Self Seed paddy	At 362	112	0	0	112
	Bg 366	3	0	0	3
	Bg 379/2	0	1	3	4
	Total	115	1	3	119
Private	At 362	98	0	0	98
	Bg 366	7	0	0	7
	Bg 379/2	0	3	1	4
	Total	105	3	1	109
Government	At 362	0	55	0	55
	Bg 300	1	3	0	4
	Bg 366	0	11	0	11
	Bg 379/2	0	0	2	2
	Total	1	69	2	72

Land preparation and sowing method

According to data presented in Table 3, wood levelers were used by a majority of farmers (98.7%) and is considered a good practice in paddy cultivation. According to Table 4, sowing was done by

broadcasting, by 98.3% of farmers for paddy cultivation in the study area. Usually the weed population is very high in broadcasted paddy cultivation. Transplanting is the best method of controlling weeds because removal of them is easier by using weeder.

Table 3: Method of land leveling.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No response	3	1.0	1.0	1.0
Wood leveler	293	97.7	97.7	98.7
Not leveling	4	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Table .4: Method of cultivation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Sowing	295	98.3	98.3	98.3
Transplant	1	0.3	0.3	98.7
Parachute	4	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

INFORMATION OF THE WEEDS

Major weeds species in Study area

Weeds are the major problem in this area. According to data

presented in Figure 5, weed's species *Echinochloa crus-galli* (75%) is the highest grass in the field. Second most problematic weeds are sedges, *Ischaemum rugosum* (73.7%) followed by *Isachne globosa* (64.7%). These weeds are grass type.

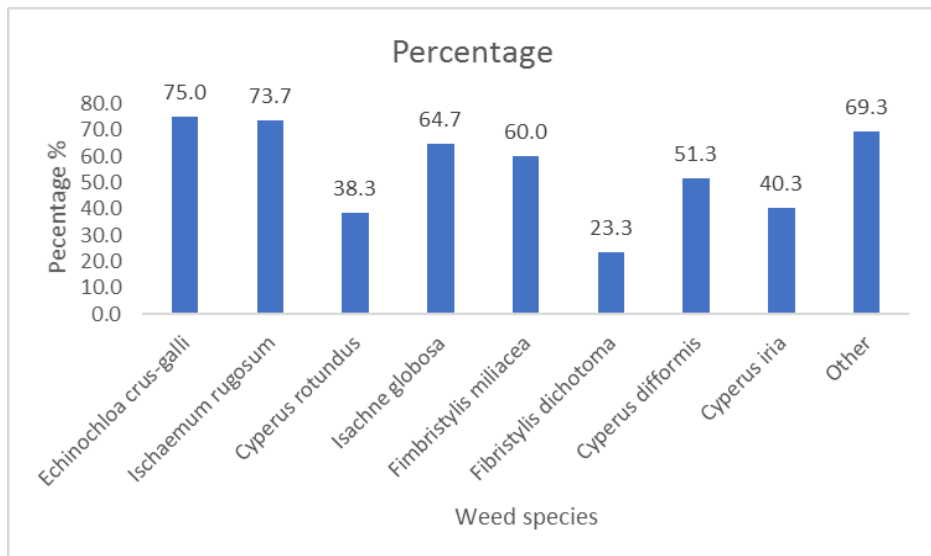


Figure 5: Major weed species in Study area

Weed control methods

According to data presented in Figure 6, most of the farmers (96%) use herbicides for weed

management. Most of them do not use other weed controlling methods. Therefore, herbicide usage was high in this study area.

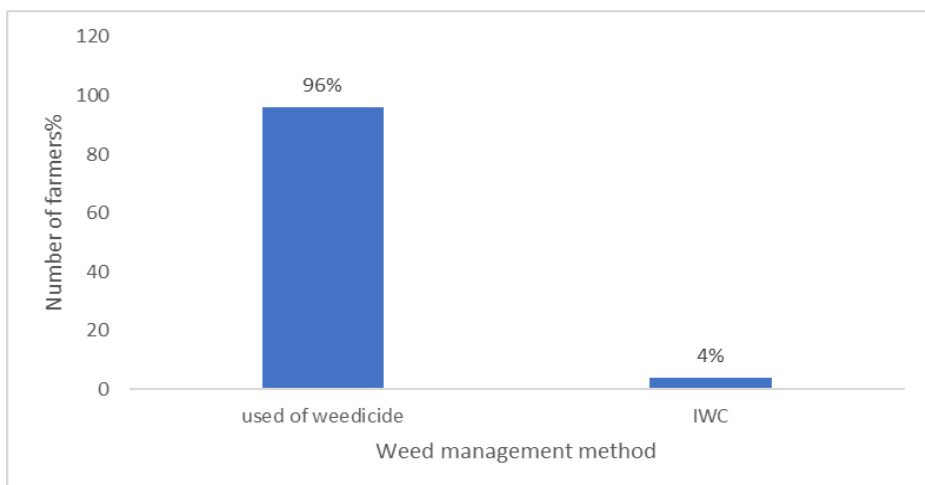


Figure 6: Weed control methods

Herbicide usage

According to the data presented in Figure 7, farmers used more than six herbicides to control the weeds in their paddy fields. Pretilachlor 300g/l EC was used by 32.3% of the farmers while Clomazone 200g/l+Propanil 400g/l EC was used by 23.3% of the farmers.

According to data presented in Figure 8, majority of the farmers are tank mixing herbicides with another herbicide (58.7%). Mostly, Carfentrazone-ethyl 240g/l EC is mixed with many chemicals in rice cultivation. But 43.3% of the farmers used Carfentrazone-ethyl 240g/l EC alone and 18.7% of farmers used MCPA 600g/L SL. Only 4.3% of farmers use other herbicides.

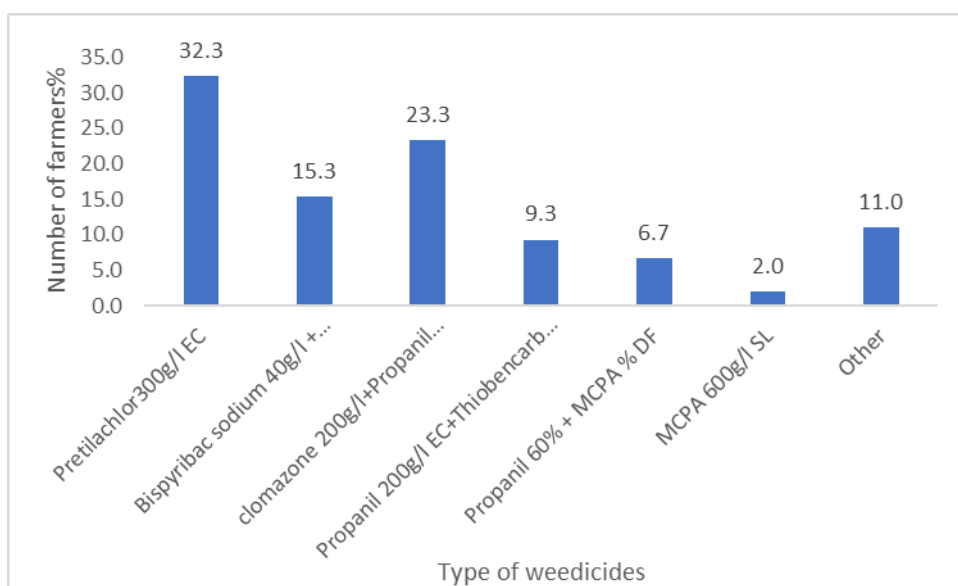


Figure 7: Herbicide usage

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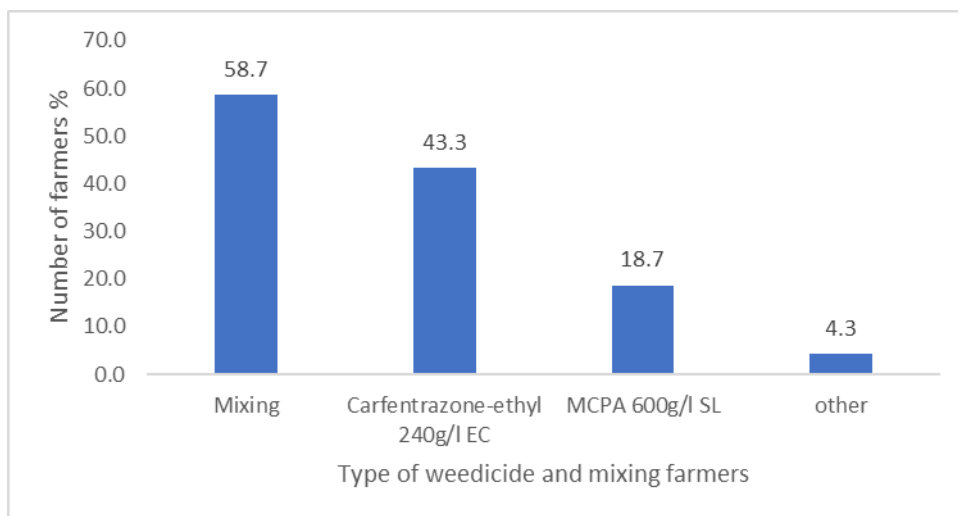


Figure 8: Herbicide usage and Tank mixing

Inefficiency in weed control

According to data presented in Figure 9, there are two types of weeds which are not controlled by herbicides. These weed species are *Ischaemum rugosum* (57.3%) and *Echinochloa galli* (49%) which are major grasses in the field. The second most problematic weeds are sedges which are seen in a higher percentage in this study area. Most of the farmers use a lot of herbicides and mixtures of herbicides but are unable to control these two types of weeds, in this study area. This may be due to the poor efficacy of herbicides and/or due to the combining effect of the selection of proper herbicides, misuse, mispractices

of herbicides and other management practices adopted by the farmers (Herath *et al* 2017).

broadcasting method of sowing

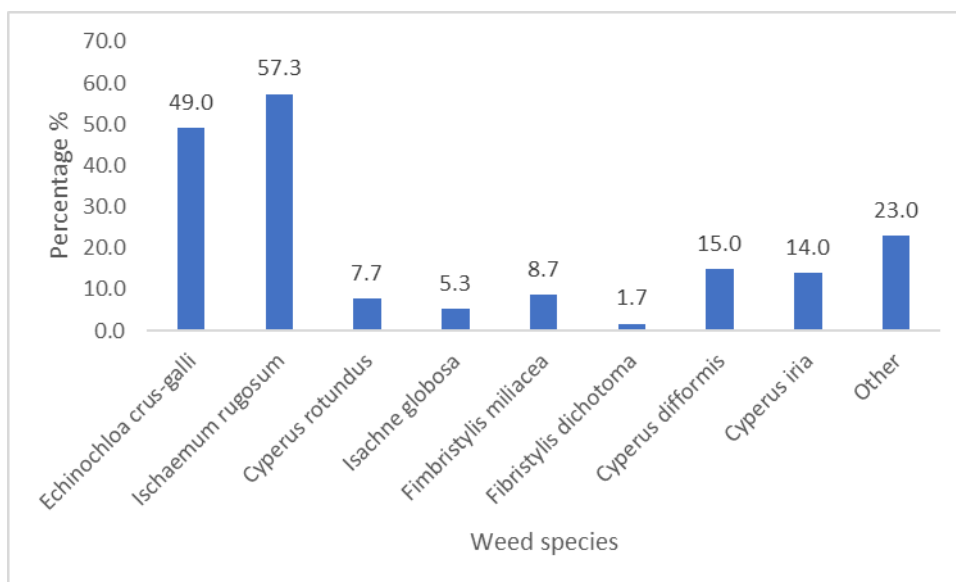


Figure 9: Inefficiency in weed control.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Weed control is a major problem in paddy cultivation in the Hambantota District. A study conducted in farmer's fields revealed that the farmers are not using water for weed control even though most of the farmers are under the major irrigation scheme.

Further, a majority of the farmers are using self-raised seed paddy which tend to have more weed seeds. A majority of farmers also use the rotary plough which is ineffective compared to the mould board plough to control weeds.

Majority of the farmers use

and weed control is made more difficult than in transplanted paddy cultivation. *Echinochloa crus-galli* and *Ischaemum rugosum* are the most abundant weeds in these three ASDs in the Hambantota district. These are the two types of weeds which are the most problematic in this area.

A Majority of farmers use chemical herbicides to control weeds. Most of the farmer's tank mix two or three type of herbicides to destroy weeds. However, most of them have poor knowledge about weeds and herbicide. They mix the herbicides due to their poor knowledge on the active ingredients of these chemicals. Farmers are unaware about the mode of action of the herbicides and what types of weeds are destroyed by a particular type of

herbicide.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to conduct awareness programs for all field level agriculture extension officials and farmers on the proper usage of herbicides.

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THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL FOLK MEDIA IN EMPOWERING RURAL COMMUNITIES IN SRI LANKA

Dr. G.T. Madhubhashini Galagedarage¹

ABSTRACT

Media play a significant role in educating and motivating people, providing information and entertainment. Traditional folk media as one of the communication media can also play an effective role in empowering, especially rural communities in developing countries. Traditional folk media is created from its rural surrounding through the creativity, cultural beliefs and practices of rural communities. In this context, the main problem of this study is how to use traditional folk media in empowering rural communities in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine the role of traditional folk media in empowering rural communities in Sri Lanka. Development communication is the main conceptual and theoretical framework of this study. The geographical location of this study is Billewa in Mahavilachchiya Divisional Secretariat in Anuradhapura district, North Central Province. This study used a qualitative approach to obtain data using Focused Group Discussions (FGD) and interview method. The purposive sampling method was used to select respondents. The personal interviews were conducted with four key people from the same community and the qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The results show that as an effective communication media, traditional folk media has made a tremendous impact on the socio-cultural and economic setup of these rural communities. The interactivity, creativity, liveliness and effectiveness of folk media are also clearly shown through this form of media. It's also proved that traditional folk media plays a significant role in empowering these rural communities to find the solutions for their socio-cultural and economic needs and issues. It's also suggested that there are some implications to improve the efficiency of the traditional media usage. Therefore, some responsible authorities like the Department of Cultural affairs can promote the different forms of folk media which are unique to this community throughout the country. The responsible authorities should provide internet coverage to this area. Combining traditional media with mainstream media and new media is another alternative solution to empower these rural communities. The most important thing is that the responsible authorities should also take necessary action to find solutions for the problems faced by these communities such as elephant- human conflict, lack of clean water, post war challenges, low income, childhood marriages, illegal marriages and extramarital affairs, etc.

Key words: Traditional folk media, rural communities, empowering, Sri Lanka

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1. INTRODUCTION

Media plays a significant role in society. Several scholars in communication studies emphasize that the main purposes of mass media are education, motivation, entertainment and information. Dwivedi and Pandey (2013) note that media play a significant role in educating and motivating people, providing information and entertainment. Furthermore, media are very powerful tools in empowering people with its own capacities and strengths. There are different types of mass media such as old media like TV, radio, newspapers; traditional media like folk drama, songs, tales, etc. and new media such as social media, etc.

Traditional folk media also plays an effective role in empowering, especially rural communities. Chapke (2003) notes that puppet shows, folk drama, story-telling, the community tea-house, open markets and village meetings etc. can be considered as effective traditional folk media in villages. Folk media plays a vital role in educating rural people who are the majority of many Asian countries. Folk media originates within the community with their creativity, cultural values, beliefs and

practices.

Some researchers have found that traditional folk media play an effective role in empowering rural people while mainstream media like broadcast, print and new media play a significant role in society. Dissanayake (1985) notes that traditional folk media can be seen in every part of the country as there is a proximity between communities and these communication forms such as folk songs, drama, ritual performances, drumming and all other folk communications. Furthermore, folk media is created from the rural surrounding through the creativity, cultural values, beliefs and practices of rural communities. Folk media has its own interactive communication skills and capacities which helps to find ways out for the needs and issues faced by the community. Folk media have not been alienated from their rural setting and media literacy is not essential to use folk media compared to mainstream media. Folk media are also effective tools in educating and motivating people, providing information and entertainment to make rural communities stronger in facing their day-to-day struggles, needs and issues. In this context, the main problem of this study is how

to use traditional folk media in empowering rural communities in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine the role of traditional folk media in empowering rural communities in Sri Lanka.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 TRADITIONAL FOLK MEDIA

Scholars and researchers in the field of communication studies define traditional folk media in different ways. "Traditional folk media is any form of endogenous communication system which by virtue of its origin from, and integration into a specific culture, serves as a channel for messages in a way and manner that requires the utilization of the values, symbols, institutions, and ethos of the host culture through its unique qualities and attributes" (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1998: P 3). "Folk media are the indigenous means of communication. The folk performing art forms are used for moral, religious, and socio-political ends from the time they originated" (Kodavath, 2015: P:1). This shows that folk media are the symbols of a particular culture. Moreover, folk media emerges based on the cultural practices, beliefs, values etc. of communities. Therefore, traditional folk media communication plays an effective

role among rural communities.

There are different forms of traditional folk media depending on the cultural uniqueness of different rural communities. Ansu-Kyeremeh, (1998) notes that storytelling, puppetry, proverbs, visual art, drama, role-play, concerts, gong beating, dirges, songs, drumming, and dancing are the folk media which play an effective role in Ghana in Africa. Prasad (2013) notes that folk theatre, folk songs, predominantly narrative forms, including ballads, folk tales, and other story telling forms, religious discourses, puppet shows are the main forms of traditional folk media in India.

Jinadasa (2011) notes that there are different forms of traditional folk media in Sri Lanka such as folk songs (*Pel kavi, Paru kavi, Patal kavi, Karatta kavi, Babara kavi, Nelum kavi*), folk singings (*Adaharapema, Teeka siupada, Viridu gee*, lamentational songs, *kavikolaya*), drumming (*Adaberaya, Hevisi drumming, temple tevawa, Pin beraya, Mala beraya, kandyen geta beraya (magul beraya), low country yak beraya (devol beraya), sabaragamu daula, tammettama, uddakkiya, bummediya, maddalaya, rabana, dolaya, dolkiya*), folk dances (*Lee keliya, Pot dance, Kulu dance, Suvisi dance*), folk tales and riddles, proverbs (*tale of*

Hotabuwa, tale of Andara, tun teeravili), rites and rituals (*Kandyan Kohobayakkankariya, Kandyan gammadu, Kandyan sokari, Udarata baliya, lowcountry; Devolmaduwa, dahaatasanniya, Kolammaduwa, Mahasohonsamayama, Riddiyagaya/ratayakuma, Baliyagaya, Suniyamsanthiya, Sabaragamuwa, Kirimaduwa, Pahanmaduwa, Baliya, Uvewellas Baliya, Nuwarakalaviya Baliya, Aluth sahal mangallaya, muttimangallaya*). Apart from these different forms of folk media, chattering, gossips, *Kavikola, Kelapaththara, Pethsam* (petitions), ceremonial occasions, idioms, etc. can also be considered as effective folk media among rural people in Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is clear that Sri Lanka also has its unique culture consisting different forms of traditional folk media.

The characteristics of these traditional folk media can also be identified depending on the nature of the folk media, objectives of using or conducting them, etc. The traditional folk media have its own uniqueness and strengths to fulfil the needs of the communities as an effective communication tool. Jinadasa (2011) identifies several characteristics of folk media as follows:

- Folk-media is created from the

rural surrounding.

- The signs and the symbols of folk media have not been alienated from their village.
- Folk media needs very little media literacy to understand it better than mainstream mass media.
- The proximity between the community and traditional folk media.
- Folk-media has interactive communication skills.
- Changeable, creativity and liveliness of traditional folk media.
- Folk media has not distanced itself from the community.

As far as these characteristics are concerned, it shows that the traditional folk media are different from mainstream media such as TV, radio, newspaper, social media etc. People use their creativity to maintain interactivity between each other in using these folk media for their socio-cultural and economic needs and requirements. But no field research has been conducted to identify these characteristics of folk media communications in a theoretical and methodical manner. The findings of this research identify some more characteristics of folk media while examining the role of traditional folk media in a boarder

manner which is discussed under the section titled, “Results and Discussion” in this paper. Furthermore, a definition for traditional folk media is identified according to the findings of this study. In broad terms, the traditional folk media has emerged from socio-economic, cultural, moral and religious beliefs, practices, values and available resources within a unique social setting or a community, to fulfil the needs and issues faced by its own communities. Moreover, traditional folk media are effective forms of communication which have unique characteristics such as interactivity, creativity, liveliness, simpleness, affordability, not requiring media literacy, etc.

2.2 TRADITIONAL FOLK MEDIA FOR RURAL EMPOWERMENT AT THE LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

It's important to identify the role, use and impact of traditional folk media in empowering rural communities at the local and international level. It's discussed that, communication media including traditional folk media play a significant role in society to empower rural communities. “The real meaning of empowerment of rural communities can be understood as a process of increasing the capacity utilization of the autonomy of every

individual for utilizing local resources in a productive and creative way in the rural community” (Santosa. 2014: P: 194). Therefore, traditional folk media can be used to empower the rural communities since the strengths of folk media depend on the cultural beliefs, practices, creativity of people and resources available within the geographical location.

Panford et al (2001) note that Mexico, the Philippines, and Nigeria, as well as Ghana use folk drama to educate rural communities about various health issues, such as family planning, breast-feeding and HIV/AIDS. In rural Ghana, these folk dramas and songs are used to educate people about a wide range of health and social issues. These folk media are useful in educating people about these specific issues as the health messages are given to the public with creativity and entertainment.

Being a multi-religious and multi-cultural country, India has different forms of traditional folk media unique to different regions and parts in the country. Mathiyazhagan et al. (2015) note that folk media vary from place to place, culture to culture and region to region. For instance, *Nautanki* is one of the popular theatre performance traditions in northern India. This is used to empower

people about health, HIV/AIDS, women's empowerment, dowry, immigration, and family planning. *Harikatha* is unique to Andhra and Karnataka in the southern region in India while *Jarta* is a popular folk theatre in Bengali. All these folk media are used to empower and educate the general public with contemporary issues.

As far as Sri Lanka is concerned, the people in various parts of the country use different folk media based on their socio-cultural, economic and political issues, beliefs, practices, creativity, etc. According to the department of Census and Statistics, 81% of the population are rural people in Sri Lanka. Jinadasa (2011) notes that rural communities have their unique traditional folk media compared to urban people. The different cultural identifies can also be identified in different regions in Sri Lanka. As far as the cultural Bali ceremonies are concerned, *Kirimaduwa*, *Pahanmaduwa* are unique to Sabaragamanuwa, *Baliyagaya*, *Mahasohonsamayama*, *Dahaata sanniya*, *Gara yakuma*, *Riddiyagaya*, *Suniyam Santhiya* (*Manik pala santhiya*) are specific to the low country while *kohaba Kankariya* is unique to the up country. The research conducted in Unale and Kudamithawa in Rasnayakapura Divisional Secretariat in Nuwaraeliya District show that folk songs, drama and

Kavikolaya are effective folk media in empowering rural communities in these areas.

Pasquel (2015) notes that *Natyamaya Pelapali* which is a traditional dramatic performance in the 'ceremonial dance' in Sabaragamuwa region such as *Pahan Maduwa*, *Kiri Maduw* and *Kumara Samayama* is mainly conducted to bring prosperity to the people and provide some great hope for development in the Sabaragamuwa province. Kumari and Sadamali (2013) also state that *Kirimaduwa* ceremonial dance is a specific folk-dance confined to the Sabaragamunwa province which has unique traditions and rituals. The main purpose of having this ceremonial dance is to get rid of diseases and epidemics and for the protection of crops.

According to the literature review, it's clear that no field research has been conducted in the Sri Lankan context to identify the traditional practices, beliefs, rite, rituals, folk media, ceremonial occasions, food etc. and to examine the interactivity, creativity, liveliness and effectiveness of traditional folk media and the proximity between the community and traditional folk media, as well as the socio-economic, cultural impact of folk media on a particular rural community. Furthermore, no research has been conducted in

Monaragala district or Pelwatta to cover this specific research area. In order to fill in this gap and achieve these aims and objectives, this research was conducted.

Therefore, development communication can be considered as the main conceptual and theoretical framework of this study. In simple terms, development communication is the use of communication for development purposes. "Development communication is the science of human communication linked to the transitioning of communities from poverty in all its forms to a dynamic, overall growth that fosters equity and the unfolding of the individual potential" Quebral (1971: P:1). Gupta (2015) notes that 70% of rural communities live in developing countries and almost 80% of India's population are from rural areas. Thus, folk media can play a vital role within the community since folk media is based on ceremonial rituals, beliefs of the society, religious and social values. This folk media communication helps in taking people from poverty to prosperity culturally, socially, politically, economically and spiritually. In other words, the main purpose of using the traditional folk media is to empower the rural communities culturally, socially, politically, economically and spiritually. Therefore, it's also expected to find

solutions for their own socio-cultural, spiritual, economic, political needs and issues using the available resources, cultural practices, beliefs, values, creativity etc. Therefore, this study is also carried out in a rural setting to examine the role of traditional folk media in empowering rural communities.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The geographical location of this study is Billewa in Mahavilachchiya Divisional Secretariat in Anuradhapura district, North Central Province. Billewa is rural in a geographical sense, which is known as one of the Wew gama (a tank-based village) or a Kele gama (a jungle-based village). The North Central province has the highest rural population (1,266,663- 96%) compared to the other nine provinces in Sri Lanka according to the population statistics of the Department of Census and Statistics in 2011. The same report emphasizes that in the Sri Lankan context, Municipal Council, Urban Council and Town Council areas are "urban", while Village Councils are "rural".

Dissanayake (1985) notes that Gama in a rural setting (Rural village) is defined as a small settlement having between 1000 to 3000 inhabitants which is smaller

than a town and larger than a hamlet. Billewa has a population of 2012 according to the Department of Census and Statistics in 2011. The Department of Archaeology has found that Billewa also has a historical background with a number of historic places like *Barata Naga Lena* and *Billewa wewa*, etc. It's also reported by the Archaeology department that the rural communities in this area use folk media based on their cultural practices, beliefs, values etc. The location of this study was selected based on the above-mentioned criteria, statistics, facts and justifications.

This study used a qualitative approach to obtain data using Focused Group Discussions (FGD) and interview method. FGD is a structured discussion used to obtain in-depth information (qualitative data-insight) from a group of people about a particular topic (Omar, 2018). Therefore, the Focus Group Discussions were conducted with 20 people in Billewa. The purposive sampling was used to select the respondents. The personal interviews were conducted with four key people in the same community: a Buddhist monk in *Barata Naga Len Viharaya*, a Grama Seva officer, a *Wedamahattaya* (traditional Ayurvedic doctor), a graduate Teacher from Billewa Vidyalaya

and the main *Kapu Nona in Naga Paththini Dewalaya* (a lady who is the head of this Dewalaya). The data was collected in September 2020 with the support of three research assistances during the 2nd wave of Covid after following all the health guidelines and instructions. The qualitative data was analyzed thematically.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As far as the results/ findings are concerned, the aim and objectives were achieved and the problem was answered in this study. In other words, traditional practices, beliefs, rites, rituals, folk media, ceremonial occasions, food of these rural communities as well as the interactivity, creativity, liveliness and effectiveness of the traditional folk media were identified. Apart from these, the proximity between the community and the traditional folk media as well as the socio-economic, cultural impact of folk media on rural communities were also discovered. While achieving these objectives, the main problem of the study was answered by finding out the role of traditional folk media in empowering the rural communities.

Before identifying the traditional practices, beliefs, rite, rituals, folk media, ceremonial occasions, food of these rural communities, it's

important to identify the socio-economic and cultural background of the people in Billewa. Almost all the people are Sinhala Buddhist and the majority are attached to *Rada cast (Dobhi, Hena)*. Apart from these Rada people, *Berawaya, Govigama and Vanni* (people who are coming from the *Kuveni* family) are also there. Rada people including other low cast people have changed their surnames, assigned jobs and duties since their identity cannot be revealed to others. In fact, low cast people are ill-treated by society, especially when it comes to marriages. Riswan (2014) also notes that *Hena or Rada* people are traditional washer-men and women who are supposed to provide laundry services to other communities. Rada People live in different parts of the country but caste issues are considered a key problem when it comes to marriages. Rada people have some unique cultural practices and beliefs specially when it comes to food.

An interesting finding is that low caste people like to treat *Govigama* people, which is the highest cast and government servants with hospitality. In this context also, the traditional forms of communication play a significant role in building harmony and interactivity between the people. Moreover, Rada people use their

unique traditional food patterns and culture to communicate and show respect and friendliness towards these high cast people and government servants who work in this village. For instance, these people like to prepare and offer *Pasmaluwa* which is a unique cuisine to this area prepared by adding five different food types: *Hoddak* (Gravy), *Mellumak*, *Niyabalawak*, *Abulak* and *Badumak* (fried food) and *Wellawebum* (a kind of traditional pancake) and *Kee roti* (a kind of traditional sweet hopper) to *Govigama* people and government servants.

Language also plays a significant role in communication. Some differences can be identified in the same language. In other words, different varieties of slang and jargon in the language can be identified based on the cultural differences and variances (Riswan 2014). Madhubashini (2021) notes that Language and its jargon, slang, etc. can vary from country to country, community to community and region to region. Language is also a symbol of a culture, of a community as well as the main communication tool for interactions between people. As far as the Sinhala language is also concerned, different language identifiers can be found in different sub-cultural settings throughout the country. For

instance, the people in Billewa also have their unique jargon and slang such as *Aiyappa- Aiya* (brother), *dahabadurawe yanawa- naraka dewal karanawa* (engaging in bad things), *Atangediya -Ibul kiribat pettiya* (the box used to put sour milk rice).

As far as media usage of the people is concerned, the results show that mainstream media such as television, radio and newspapers are used by these people but traditional folk media is more effective and closer to these people compared to mainstream media. When it comes to the use of new media, internet signal coverage is very poor in this area and about 365 students in Billewa did not have online learning opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Billewa Vidyalaya is the only school which is available for the children in this area.

As far as their professions are concerned, the majority of people engage in paddy cultivation and chena cultivation. Some are in civil security service and engage in bees' honey hunting and animal hunting. The people face various issues in their day-to-day lives such as the elephant-human conflict, a lack of clean water, post war challenges, low income, childhood marriages, illegal marriages and extramarital affairs, etc. The people in Billewa had gone through the

civil war for more than 30 years and are now struggling with the above mentioned socio-cultural and economic issues. In order to find out the solutions for these main issues, the people use traditional folk media. As a result, a petition culture and a *Kelepaththara* culture have emerged to raise their voice against the injustices happening to their communities. For instance, people in Billewa have to buy clean water from bowsers but the water is not provided daily as well as not distributed equally among the communities. It was also reported that when it comes to the elephant-human conflict, relevant government officers behave in an irresponsible manner. Petitions are sent to the relevant authorities asking them to look into these specific issues and provide justice for the community. This is because officers who work in these areas take revenge if people directly make complaints to the relevant authorities. It was reported that in several instances, responsible authorities investigated and took necessary action to rectify the socio-cultural and economic issues faced by these people. These examples show that traditional media like petitions, play an effective role in empowering these people. Jinadasa (2011) also notes that folk media tools like *Kelepaththara*, *Pethsam* (petitions), *Kavikola*, etc. can be used as

effective communication media in rural areas.

The results show that *Kelepathtara* play an effective role within this community. The *Kelepathtara* is written and designed in a creative and simple manner to discuss real issues faced by people such as extramarital affairs, childhood marriages, illegal marriages, etc. It was found that some extramarital affairs ended after pasting the *kelepathtara* in common places in the village. This is an example to show the community empowerment in different ways through traditional folk media.

Likewise, traditional folk media are also used by communities for their professional needs. In paddy and chena cultivations, some folk media and cultural beliefs are used to find the solutions for some of the issues faced by communities. Using *Ali Mantra*, *Ali Wedi* (thunder flashes) and *kem* (a type of traditional rituals) are some of the cultural practices and beliefs used to prevent issues created by animals destroying crops. *Pal Kavi* are effective, creative and interactive folk songs used by farmers in the night to ward off sleepiness. This becomes more interactive when other farmers also reply to *Pal Kavi*.

These rituals and ceremonial occasions are also based on the

socio-cultural practices, values and beliefs. The beliefs in gods and rituals in Hinduism influenced Buddhism and created a new religious tradition in society (Gombrick & Obeysekara, 1988). This study also shows that communities used to obtain blessings from gods for their day-to-day activities based on their cultural practices, values and beliefs though these people are Sinhala Buddhists. For instance, *Mutti Mangalaya (kiri Ithuruvime Mangalya)* is conducted after getting the first harvest to obtain holy blessings from God *Aiyanayake* for the prosperity of the whole community. Apart from this practice, people in Billewa used to obtain blessings from Goddess *Muthumari Amman*. The purpose of hanging a small branch of a milk oozing tree in a *nuga ruka* (Banyan tree) situated near to Billewa *wewa* (Billewa tank) before leaving for a good journey or commencing good work is to obtain the blessings from the God *Pulleyar (Gana Deviyo)*. It was also reported that some practical evidence can be shown to prove that Goodness *Paththini (Paththini Maniyo)* gives her holy blessings to people bitten by snakes. Moreover, the people usually go to *Naga Paththini Dewalaya* in Billewa if a person is bitten by a snake since *Kapu Maniyo* (female head of the *dewalaya*) provides some holy medicine. It's reported that none

of the affected people in Billewa died after taking this holy medicine. This shows that people expect some kind of moral support along with mental and spiritual relaxation from the beliefs they practice within their community. In other words, traditional folk beliefs and practices also support in empowering rural communities spiritually.

There are also some beliefs associated with the agricultural practices in this area. The tank is a direct Sinhala translation of the word *Wewa*. Water is collected in these tanks for paddy and chena cultivations in rural areas in Sri Lanka (Bandara, 1985). People in Billewa also consider *Billewa Wewa* (water tank) as a god gifted property in their village as this tank mainly supplies water for their agricultural needs. According to some folktales which are considered as traditional forms of media, *Billewa wewa* resembled a huge well a long time ago, and it was said to be a caused deaths of people. Therefore, it's believed that the name of the village and name of the tank emerged with this big well which existed in the village a long time ago (*Biligath wala-billewa*). This big well became Billewa tank after a renovation during the Anuradhapura kingdom many centuries ago. There are some other folk tales and beliefs among the communities in several

things related to this area. There is only one Buddhist temple in Billwea which is *Baratanaga len Viharaya* situated close to Billewa tank. It's believed that a person from *Naga cast (Naga Kula)* has donated this cave (*Lena*) to Buddhist monks many decades ago.

It's evidenced that being the people in Billewa, the people got some kind of Hindu exposure during the Kingdom of Anuradhapura many decades ago. Though these people are Buddhists, they still believe in gods and obtain blessings for their social, cultural and economic needs. Water is the main need of these communities for their chena and paddy cultivations. Therefore, *Wahi Paritha* (a kind of *pirith sutra* for obtaining rain) is used by the communities during dry weather in Billewa.

In this context, this shows that culture and the profession of the communities are mainly connected with the jungle, tank, beliefs in gods and Buddhism. While obtaining some solutions for their unique issues and needs, it's also expected to provide some kind of entertainment and relaxation using these folk media by the rural communities. The best example for this kind of folk drama is *Jahuta Natima* which is a unique dramatic occasion among these

communities. The interactivity, creativity, liveliness and effectiveness of folk media are clearly shown by this folk drama. Furthermore, this is held annually in the temple or a playground in the village at night. *Dolki* drums are mainly used for this performance and actors are also selected from the community. *Jataka* stories in Buddhism and related songs written by the communities, are used to discuss the issues faced by the communities in a sarcastic manner. This shows the proximity between the community and traditional folk media. In other words, folk media is created from its rural surroundings to find solutions to their own issues.

On the other hand, development communication as the main theoretical framework of this study supports to examine the role of traditional media in empowering these rural communities. In other words, it's proved that as an effective communication media, traditional folk media has made a tremendous impact on the socio-cultural, moral, spiritual and economic setup of rural communities.

5. CONCLUSION

According to the findings of the study, traditional folk media plays a significant role in empowering

rural communities. It was found that *Jahuta Natima* is a unique folk drama in this community. Therefore, some responsible authority like the Department of Cultural Affairs, should promote this form of folk drama throughout the country rather than only promoting the main popular folk dramas like *Kolam*, *Nadagam*, *Sokari*, etc. As a result, other communities can also use this form of folk drama for their development purposes.

The results show that the different forms of folk media are being used by the communities to find out solutions for their day to day needs and problems such as the elephant-human conflict, a lack of clean water, post war challenges, low income, childhood marriages, illegal marriages and extramarital affairs etc. Therefore, the responsible authorities should take necessary action to find solutions for the problems faced by the communities.

It's also found that there is no internet coverage in this area at least to engage in e-learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, responsible authorities should provide internet coverage to this area. Combining traditional media with mainstream media and new media is another alternative solution to empower these rural communities. Chapke (2003)

notes that combining folk media and other media is the best way of empowering the rural communities. A drama division was established under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to specially promote folk drama unique to different areas in India. The ministry facilitated to telecast programmes on folk songs, dramas, tales etc. on several television channels. It was also promoted to produce some movies on the cultural beliefs, folk culture and practices. Facilitating to establish community radio services in different regions also helps in empowering rural communities as the management, sustainability, ownership and funding are managed by the communities. In some situations, new media like internet has been introduced to community radio services to empower rural communities with new technology. The purpose of having these initiatives is to promote folk media to empower rural communities.

The suggestions given by Chapke (2003) can also be applied to the Sri Lankan context. It's a reality that some movies, TV, radio programmes and print media provide some space for folk cultural practices, beliefs and creativity of communities but the problem is that these opportunities and spaces are limited and

inconsistent.

There are some community radio services in Sri Lanka like Uva community radio and one internet-based community radio in Kotmale. Unfortunately, these are not currently functioning due to issues connected to the management, funding, ownership etc. In this context, responsible government and non-governmental organizations should provide the space for different cultural practices, beliefs, values etc. by combining folk media with mainstream media responsibly and consistently. However, the main important thing is to find long term solutions to overcome these issues.

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**STATUS OF RECONCILIATION: A CASE STUDY OF
SARVODAYA MOVEMENT IN BUILDING ETHNIC HARMONY
THROUGH HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY IN NORTHERN
PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA**

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ABSTRACT

This study explores to what extent humanitarian diplomacy is used by Deshodaya Forums attached to Sarvodaya to build ethnic harmony in the reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. Further, it investigates how Deshodaya Forums can persuade the decision makers such as local politicians, public officers and religious leaders to act on behalf of the vulnerable people in strengthening relationships between communities.

Sarvodaya Shramadhana Movement, having served since 1958, has addressed issues related to ethnic harmony and the wellbeing of diverse communities even before the conflict erupted. For the first fifty years, Sarvodaya served local communities with self-help initiatives inspired by the Gandhian ideals of truth, non-violence and service for all. And in 2008, having passed a landmark achievement of serving the nation for nearly fifty years, Sarvodaya re-directed its main mission to rights-based initiatives. Deshodaya Forums were established with this focus, and soon after the war ended, these forums were engaged in the reconciliation process.

In order to capture the perceptions, practices and ideologies, a qualitative approach was adopted. Data was gathered through a purposive sampling technique, and the respondents of this study represent the staff attached to Sarvodaya Movement who serve in the Deshodaya Forums. These respondents represent the Jaffna and Mullaitivu Districts of Northern Province of Sri Lanka.

As the key findings of this study, the weakness in capacities of the Deshodaya staff attached to Sarvodaya in advocating the reconciliation process through humanitarian diplomacy to establish ethnic harmony in the Northern Province, and the subservient culture of the local community can be highlighted. Hence it will be useful to strengthen the capacities of the Deshodaya staff to effectively promote the advocacy role with a clear focus to practice humanitarian diplomacy.

Key words: *Humanitarian Diplomacy, Reconciliation, Ethnic Harmony, Deshodaya Forums, Sarvodaya Movement*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In a post war period, mutual understanding, acknowledgment of past sufferings and changing of destructive attitudes are essential elements towards achieving sustainable peace in societies. In this context, humanitarian diplomacy (HD) plays a vital role in bringing vulnerable people back to normalcy. Further, it is important for decision makers to comprehend that a HD-based reconciliation process is not only infrastructure and economic development, but also something that goes beyond, especially ensuring the main prerequisites and reconciliation such as reestablishing lost relationships through ethnic harmony among the vulnerable groups. According to Thaheer *et al.* (2013) there is a tendency that a State driven reconciliation programme may exclude many societal issues, and the contribution of non-state actors with a proper sense of HD will be an effective solution in such a context.

Sarvodaya Movement, established in 1958 is Sri Lanka's largest non-government organization. It is currently working on nine specific areas, namely, Deshodaya, Disaster Management Unit,

Early Childhood Development Unit, International Unit, Rural Technical Services Unit, Woodwork and Exports Unit, Community Health Unit, and Sarvodaya Institute of Higher Learning (Sarvodaya, 2018). Deshodaya means "awakening the nation" and this unit was established to promote a culture of democracy, good governance, reconciliation, and sustainable peace. There are 26 District Deshodaya Forums¹ (Sarvodaya, 2018). Currently there are approximately 14,000 members attached to Deshodaya Forums. This study explores the initiatives carried out by the Deshodaya Forums to establish ethnic harmony in Northern Province of Sri Lanka with reference to HD.

¹ In Sri Lanka, districts are the second-level administrative divisions, and are included in a province. There are twenty-five (25) districts in Sri Lanka. In order to serve in an efficient manner, Sarvodaya has divided a large district (Anuradhapura district in the north central province) into two parts and there are twenty-six Deshodaya Forums

Impact of Humanitarian Diplomacy:

HD is a process of influencing those who make decisions about developing, changing, and implementing policies (Lamb, 2018). It differs from a humanitarian and development work since humanitarian aid is designed to save lives and alleviate suffering during and in the immediate aftermath of emergencies, whereas development aid responds to ongoing structural issues, particularly systemic poverty, that may hinder economic, institutional and social development in any given society, and assists in building capacity to ensure resilient communities and sustainable livelihoods (Humanitarian Coalition, 2015). The distinction lies in its connections to the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. Immediately after the end of the war, the state as well as humanitarian organizations and the private sector could use HD as a tool for raising awareness among the vulnerable communities in order to establish strong relationships to build ethnic harmony.

Scholars argue that HD has to be developed to persuade decision makers and opinion leaders to act

at all times in the interest of vulnerable people along with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles. According to Kelly T Clements, U.N. Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, "Humanitarian Diplomacy does not have a clear definition in international law but draws strongly on the principle of independence, neutrality and impartiality" (The Foreign Service Journal, 2016, p.19). However, the main objective in HD is to promote decision makers to act in the interest of undermined or vulnerable people relating to their fundamental humanitarian issues or actually their human rights (IFRC, 2009a, p.3).

If there are repeated failures in the performance of human rights activities both in government and private sector, relating to their morals, secured life patterns and human dignity, the HD is expected to bring measures to address these issues immediately to bring harmony among the affected community.

2. PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE:

Sri Lanka was in the midst of a deadly civil war for a period of nearly 30 long years in the north and the east of the country between Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Elam (LTTE) and the

armed forces of the government of Sri Lanka. This study analyzes the importance of humanitarian diplomacy and the timing of the reconciliation process in the northern part of Sri Lanka to normalize the livelihood of vulnerable people. In the first instance it is vital to approach vulnerable people through HD since the reconciliation process needs to be activated in a timely manner as HD plays a key role in building relationships.

2.1 RECONCILIATION PROCESS:

A reconciliation process cannot be sustained by imposing an artificial mechanism but by adopting a consultative approach acceptable to the key actors. For instance, one cannot argue that the reconciliation process in South Africa can be adopted to Sri Lanka, for the single reason that in South Africa the rights of the majority were discriminated by the minority, but in Sri Lanka it is the other way round. It is important to identify the uniqueness of the context in the reconciliation process since humanitarian diplomacy requires adhering to the social, political, cultural and economic perspectives of the affected community as well as in the prevailing order. Further, it is necessary to work it out in a systematic way because a post-war period needs to be addressed

properly by persuading both vulnerable people and decision makers to establish peaceful relationships in the society.

2.2 RESEARCH INTEREST:

Communication and diplomatic relations with affected parties of a war or a conflict help to assure the protection of those seeking assistance. The present study explores the possibility and scope of HD as well as some of the challenges faced by Sri Lanka with a view to preparing the way for its eventual recognition and future actions by all sides. Further, one of the objectives of the research is to provide information and recommendations for the improvement of the work of HD in Sri Lanka. This will be done through communication, and those findings will enable us to identify unresolved problems of vulnerable people, and to interpret them in a timely manner to convey them to key actors who are involved in the issue.

2.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Question 1: Has HD, properly instituted by the Deshodaya Movement of Sarvodaya been successful in building ethnic harmony in the northern part of Sri Lanka?

Question 2: How have HD efforts

been perceived by staff of Sarvodaya attached to Deshodaya Forums as a tool in establishing relationships to strengthen ethnic harmony?

Question 3: What are the unresolved concerns of vulnerable people and how effectively can these issues be resolved in a timely manner by the Deshodaya Forums of Sarvodaya through HD?

2.4. METHODOLOGY

According to De Vaus (2001, p.9), the research design refers to the overall strategy that is selected to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring that the research problem is effectively addressed and it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. This study adopted a one stage research design strategy which is a case study based on Sarvodaya Movement and its contribution in the reconciliation process with a humanitarian diplomacy approach in Northern Sri Lanka. According to Robert (1984, p.23), social scientists in particular, have made wide use of this qualitative research method to examine contemporary real-life situations and provide the basis for the application of ideas and extension of methods.

Research paradigm is based on qualitative approach. The qualitative data was collected through semi-structured telephone interviews. The prevailing pandemic restricted travelling, and due to health concerns, the safest and best mode to gather data was through the telephone interviews. Twenty-five telephone interviews were conducted. The gender balance was fifteen (15) males and ten (10) females. Their designations ranged from Programme Officers to Programme Coordinators, and the highest level of education was post graduate-masters level. The main themes discussed in these telephone interviews were based on efforts taken by Deshodaya Forums on the conciliation process, the functions of Deshodaya Forums, the importance of HD in building ethnic harmony, the programmes conducted by Deshodaya Forums in Northern Province, practices of HD principles in the context of building ethnic harmony by them, and challenges in adopting HD in the reconciliation process, and finally, recommendations to move forward.

This study was carried out in Jaffna and Mullathivu districts in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. The sample population represents the District Officers attached to the Deshodaya

Movement, who are considered as respondents in this study.

Data from primary sources was collected through telephone interviews. Purposive sampling method was used to select structured telephone interviews. The study was supported by desk review of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission Report, along with the documents connected to Deshodaya Movement by Sarvodaya, scholarly articles and newspaper articles covering the reconciliation process in Sri Lanka with an emphasis on humanitarian diplomacy.

The qualitative data was analyzed through interpretive technique which is useful in examining contextual features of experiences that might have direct relevance to practice (Oun & Batch, 2014, p. 255).

2.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Respondents of the said study participated on a voluntary basis with full consent and no incentive was paid for their effort. Confidentiality of data was ensured with anonymity of respondents since no names were used in the interview guides during data collection.

2.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research design of the study would have been a mixed approach with qualitative and quantitative data analysis if not for the pandemic situation. Further, the sample population would have accommodated the local community to analyze their perspective of this study and also other concerned stakeholders such as military and national and local level politicians, public officers and religious leaders to obtain an objective result. However, the credibility of the study was increased through strict adherence to ethical consideration as mentioned in the methodology section.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reconciliation process and the influence of humanitarian diplomacy in establishing ethnic harmony

The word reconciliation has become very prominent in the local context since the aftermath of war in May, 2009. Reconciliation is a long and difficult journey. It is vital to explore the definitions by the local actors and also by the scholars. This enables the study to identify how HD can be related in establishing ethnic harmony in Sri

Lanka.

Reconciliation is defined by state as “reconciliation as synonymous with reconstruction and restoration of normalcy” (Kanagarathnam, J, 2019, p. 55). The Tamil National Alliance² defines reconciliation as devolution of political power to the people of the former conflict area.” Given the complexity of the two different definitions of reconciliation by the local actors, it is prudent to use a broad definition as provided by John Galtung (2005, p. 222)

“Reconciliation is a process aimed at putting an end to conflict between two parties. It includes a closure of hostile acts, process of healing and rehabilitation of both perpetrators and victims.”

Galtung’s definition can be considered the most appropriate for the Sri Lankan context because it sees reconciliation as a process that is broad enough to include all elements required to restore a relationship between two parties who are separated, if not divided Thaheer *et al.* (2013). It explains a chasm or a divide that needs to be bridged, and also recognizes the

fractured relationships that need to be mended. It identifies the parties, groups, interests and individuals who need to be subject to the process of reconciliation.

John Paul Lederach (1997, p. 30) defines reconciliation as comprising both “a focus and a locus.” The focus of reconciliation is on building new and better relationships between former adversaries, enemies or groups that supported different parties to a conflict. Once relationships are strengthened it could facilitate a solution to the conflict. In this context, relationships are identified as the core focus of reconciliation. As a locus, Lederach (1997, p. 30) argues “reconciliation represents a space, a place or location of encounter, where parties to a conflict meet.” It follows from this that “the traumas of the past and the hopes for the future must be formulated and brought together by discussing the issues of truth, forgiveness, justice and peace”. In this context, HD plays a vital role since vulnerable people are approached and their issues are discussed at policy levels to establish ethnic harmony.

In the context of the post-war period, reconciliation can take two distinct forms. A negotiated conflict settlement in which reconciliation is most likely to be

² Tamil National Alliance - political alliance in Sri Lanka that represents the country's Sri Lankan Tamil minority

achieved through a process of dialogue. In the case of a decisive military victory for one party to the conflict, reconciliation can be imposed, ignored or improvised, and Sri Lankan reconciliation process can be explained very much in terms of second form.

Andrew Rigby (2001, p.12)) provides an important and useful explanation. "Reconciliation is not only a process but is also a goal. Recognizing when that condition of reconciliation has been achieved is somewhat problematic, and must always be context specific." In the case of Sri Lanka, the main obstacle for reconciliation is the military defeat of the LTTE, which is seen as the only pre-requisite for reconciliation (Thaheer *et al.* 2013). The root causes of the conflict or the minority rights are not considered in the reconciliation process. Further, the reconciliation process remains in the form of infrastructure development and the goals seem to have changed for the state as well for the majority of the people outside the former war affected areas who continue to endorse the popular mandate of the state. In order to bring back the expected goal, according to Rigby, it is fundamental to install humanitarian diplomacy tools to establish ethnic harmony.

The definition by Galtung

identifies that the perpetrators and victims are both equal irrespective of minority-majority division. With respect to Sri Lanka, the relevance of these will appear problematic and even possibly be seriously questioned, due to the triumphalism that followed the decisive victory of the state over the LTTE (Thaheer *et al.* 2013). It also can be argued that the Tamil minority in the war zones and also in the state-ruled territories had no choice but was forcibly influenced by terror tactics. The perception of the Sinhala majority is that LTTE represents the general aspiration of the Tamil community, which is difficult to disconnect, and in this context, state institutions also endorse and promote the same perspective. Both sides that seek reconciliation need to accept "reconciliation" as a societal process. First, it is important to establish or build relationships which will pave the way for substantive reconciliation, which in turn is imperative for sustainable peace.

The next important factor is how can this problematic issue be mediated or influenced in the reconciliation process locally? HD plays a vital role in persuading the decision makers to address the core issues which are sidelined at present, and HD tools provides the

platform to re-visit this issue from a humanitarian diplomacy angle. HD is defined by the IFRC as ‘persuading decision-makers and opinion leaders to act, at all times, in the interests of vulnerable people, and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles (IFRC, 2012, p.3).’ The definition makes it clear that HD is rooted in the same process and ambition as that implied by the term ‘advocacy.’ Advocacy is defined by the IFRC as speaking in support of a particular individual; group of people; a cause or a policy (IFRC, 2012, p.3). Advocacy is the deliberate process of pleading in support of, or speaking in favor of someone (a cause or a policy). It is a means to an end, a tool for positive social change; a way to highlight the problems that may be solved through a change of government policy approach or emphasis; a change of funding or resourcing, through pressure brought to bear by the demands of the public or change to legislation.

According to the LLRC Report, the following narrative reflects the importance of HD tools to be placed in a proper manner, and also the influence that Deshodaya Forums carry out bringing back the lost lives of the minority and persuades the majority to follow a path which would shed light on the reconciliation process

“Despite the new opportunities, there is a severe resentment among the Tamil people. Sinhalese visitors to Jaffna speak to us in Sinhala as if we are obliged to know Sinhala. Soldiers summon us from afar with a wag of a finger we feel we are being treated like a conquered people although we ourselves suffered under the LTTE. Every day the Government delays a solution, the people wonder more if the LTTE was right after all. The opportunity to rebuild a nation must not be frittered away as seems to be happening” (LLRC Report, 2010, p.257)

The LLRC Report recommends organizations or institutions to make progress with regard to this aspect. Interfaith Reconciliation and Peace Committees that may be established at District and Provincial levels could function as a feeder mechanism to support the functions of the Special Institution, in particular, by providing grass-root level inputs in the implementation of measures aimed at inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony. The activity carried out by the Deshodaya forums reflects the importance of the said recommendation by the LLRC Report.

In this context the contribution of

internal nongovernmental actors plays a significant role since they are the ideal group to address the issue having a vast experience on local dynamics.

3.1 THE ROLE OF DESHODAYA FORUMS IN THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS

Deshodaya Forums attached to Sarvodaya are established as people's organizations formed to discuss issues related to modern democracy. They focus on empowering the rural community, and constitute a political school in the modern context. The main objective is to gather community groups for discussions, seminars, dialogues and lectures with a clear focus on issues related to good governance, reconciliation and consensual politics. These forums enable local communities to discuss issues connected to individuals, and in general, to one's society or social issues, and find solutions with the consensus of the local communities in a participatory manner.

The main objectives of the Deshodaya Forums (Sarvodaya, 2009, p.4) are closely linked with humanitarian diplomacy, and are as follows:

1. Create space for public sphere among local community and to develop a culture of participatory decision-making to establish national unity and co-existence.
2. Gather people from different age groups who are recognized or accepted by the society to discuss present context and to develop a philosophy for the future.
3. Establish relationships through mutual respect and trust and to strengthen the network with other civil societies.
4. To persuade and actively engage the local and urban community in forming a formidable pro-people state to accelerate development.
5. To influence political transformation through sustainable public participation and to form social transformation from grass root level to national level.

Deshodaya Forums compose 50% of Sarvodaya staff and the other 50% from the local community. Each district forum is expected to have 75-100 members. These District Deshodaya Forums are conscious of gender balance and ethnic, religious, age and designation-based representation of the district population.

3.2 THE INITIATIVES CARRIED OUT BY THE DESHODAYA FORUMS IN ESTABLISHING ETHNIC HARMONY AND VISIBLE DISTINCT FEATURES OF HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY TOOLS

Deshodaya Forums launched a programme in 2010 with the theme “Heart to Heart” as an initial step to heal the wounds of the perpetrators as well as the war victims and to establish ethnic harmony between the Sinhala majority and Tamil minority communities. This is an opportunity for both parties to forgive and forget past incidents and move forward with the aim of reconciling. It is a difficult process since these communities need to be persuaded to act accordingly, and the humanitarian diplomacy tools enable the vulnerable groups to build trust and confidence to establish the lost relationships. The Deshodaya Forums, in order to strengthen the ethnic harmony, conduct multi ethnic cultural exchange programmes where the Tamil minority is enabled to socialize in the Southern part of Sri Lanka, and the Sinhala majority too to do the same in the north. Although the local community have the right to access internal territories irrespective of minority or majority division, it is important that they also become familiar with, and respect the

cultural settings of one another.

The following initiatives by Deshodaya forums are related to HD and are ongoing activities. They are connected to humanitarian diplomacy.

1. Mediation – having learned bitter lessons in the past, the present society requires a forum to mediate issues connected to the locality through a participatory approach (UNICEF, 2010, p.61). Handing over these to technically set-up administrative structures distances the local community from seeking redress. In this context Deshodaya Forums address this issue by connecting the local community through a strategic approach. These forums accommodate mediation, negotiations, advisory functions, settlement through mediation and arbitration. The staff of Sarvodaya is trained for this purpose. These forums also adopt methods such as facilitating, forming associations and developing policy debates.
2. Advocacy- Deshodaya Forums influence the local community, based on *awakening the nation* theme specifically focusing on

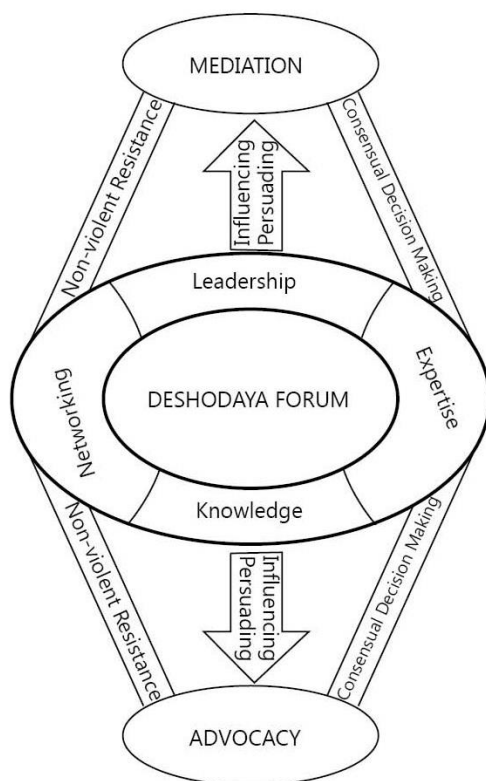
strengthening the relationships between the Tamil minority and the Sinhala majority. The advocacy role empowers the local community to influence the prevailing order (IFRC, 2012, p.6) and these forums focus on issues connected with ethnic harmony at policy level.

3. Nonviolent resistance approach – Sarvodaya Movement as well as Deshodaya Forums in all activities do follow this path. In order to discipline the individuals, the best approach is to tap the spiritual and cultural settings. Next, is to approach the social, political and the organizational structure (UNICEF, 2010, p.35). These key aspects are channeled through various HD tools such as persuasion, mediation and negotiation skills.
4. Consensual decision making- Deshodaya Forums, in order to establish peaceful co-existence to strengthen ethnic harmony in the reconciliation process, attempt to persuade the local community to reach a win-win solution replacing the winner/loser culture. Reaching common consensus is a fundamental principle of Deshodaya Forums. The minority and majority

mentality will also fade away in the future where one ethnic group is not at an advantage since decisions are arrived at having understood the specific situation carefully. It also has a rich essence of attentive listening, empathizing and accepting pluralistic ideals.

5. A strong justification for establishing much required software of persuasion- Sarvodaya has established an “ethos” as a credible institution based on their knowledge and expertise in the field of social development over fifty years. This enables to persuade the state actors, local community as well as other stakeholders to work towards building ethnic harmony.

Humanitarian Diplomacy practices reflected through Deshodaya Forum



4. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

4.1 FINDINGS OF THE PRIMARY DATA – TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

Respondents revealed the efforts taken by Deshodaya Forums to strengthen ethnic harmony through several programmes. These programmes are as follows:

1. “Heart to Heart” programme conducted in Northern Province & Eastern Province of Sri Lanka has been successfully conducted during the early stage of reconciliation.
2. Multi ethnic cultural exchange programme – ongoing exercise
3. Youth Peace Brigade – Although this is not directly affiliated to the Deshodaya Forums, it strengthens their capacity since the youth wing is represented by a sister organization of Sarvodaya Movement named Shanthi Sena. It includes taking initiatives in peace building, promoting democracy and governance by conducting peace dialogues, inter-religious dialogues, youth exchange programmes, youth camps, leadership training programmes, sports for peace programmes and Pen Pal programmes, in order to build bridges among the different ethnic and religious communities in Sri Lanka.

Although humanitarian diplomacy tools are instilled and practiced, the term HDs is a relatively new concept to 2/3rd of the sample population. The respondents perceived HD in the context of supporting the local community in

establishing ethnic harmony, but were unaware as how it connects to develop ethnic harmony in the reconciliation process. The respondents reported that the local community is also unaware of humanitarian diplomacy concept and it is equally important to familiarize and popularize this concept among the local community to maximize the benefits.

Five respondents discussed how Deshodaya Forums gather local community to become an influential force to persuade decision makers. These staff members had local and international exposure and working experience with humanitarian organizations. Having explained the scope of HD, the respondents were able to make sense of the concept as well as the purpose of the study.

Majority view was that local actors involved in the reconciliation process have not handled the root causes of the ethnic conflict in a proper manner, and were focusing only on infrastructure development, ignoring the fundamental element of the reconciliation process which is to establish trust and confidence among the communities to strengthen the relationship. The respondents revealed that fear psychosis and suspicious attitude

still prevails in the society. In this context, respondents were of the view that Deshodaya Forums are cultivating a new culture by mending these relationships to establish ethnic harmony, and the state actors and local community recognize the services.

The respondents were aware of the main humanitarian principles since Sarvodaya Movement is closely linked to Buddhist philosophy. These humanitarian principles are practiced in non-violent resistance as well as in consensual decision-making.

Responding to “how ethnic harmony is practiced through HD” six respondents revealed that mediation, negotiation and advocacy can be identified as HD tools. Another four respondents reported that the local community in North is influenced through Deshodaya Forums to restore the lost connectivity and build strong relationships.

With regard to the challenges, very clearly the study reveals that the respondents indicated little knowledge on HD, and according to Deshodaya Officers, local community has the same weakness. The following were revealed as the challenges in practicing HD tools to establish ethnic harmony.

1. The prevailing system does not

support civil societies and NGOs to address these issues, and the state actors and Sinhala majority fear that such initiatives will re-activate the LTTE movement. War hero's day is only commemorated by the state actors but the family members of the LTTE cadres are prohibited to celebrate it. Whereas equal rights need to be practiced, Deshodaya Forums are persuading the state actors as well as the Sinhala majority to re-visit this as an immediate issue.

2. Deshodaya Forums have not framed the core message in a proper manner to suit the audience. Heart to Heart programme was successful at a particular stage. But twelve years after ending the war, this issue needs to be re-framed to suit the current context.
3. Reconciliation process is understood as establishing normalcy, but not as a process. In this context, the importance of building relationships between the Sinhala majority and Tamil minority is sidelined. And leaders play a vital role in connecting the two different communities to build lost connections. Sarvodaya needs to collaborate with partners with similar interests as stakeholders to strengthen their influence. Isolated journeys weaken the strength of Sarvodaya since state actors tend to suppress such initiatives as the expectation is to establish normalcy.
4. The dependency mentality and the absence of a reforming mindset prevent the local communities undertaking collective work towards establishing ethnic harmony. Local communities accept the actions and the decisions of the rulers without questioning, and the existing subservient culture is a challenge to empower the local communities. In this context, Deshodaya Forums need to empower the local community to be equal partners to overcome the master-servant relationship established between the ruler and the ruled.
5. Funding and resources for such initiatives are also lacking, and it is difficult to sustain these activities.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the following;

1. Capacity building among the Deshodaya Officials attached

to Sarvodaya Movement and also the local community with special focus on HD and HD tools is vital since local community also requires similar training.

2. Promote the advocacy initiative to attract and influence the state actors and local communities to address issues on ethnic harmony as important factors in the reconciliation process. The opinion leaders play a vital role in establishing ethnic harmony since they are the most credible actors in the local context. Already, twelve years have lapsed since ethnic conflict ended and the most important factor of mending, healing and establishing relationships needs to be handled in a manner that touches the hearts and minds of the local masses.
3. Strengthen the resources by signing cooperation agreements with local humanitarian actors and jointly promote advocacy programmes with community-based organizations. This will enable to deliver the advocacy programmes in an innovative manner as well as will ease the burden on funding issues as well. Stakeholder mapping will be a way out to overcome these challenges in future programmes. It will also lead to strengthening the influencing capacity on the part of the Sarvodaya and the state actors who will be compelled to address this issue.
4. Establish a communication and advocacy strategy to attract policy makers. This will enable to frame the core issue in a timely manner.
5. Build a task force within the local community in all twenty-five (25) districts through Deshodaya Forums to actively involve and persuade the local community in building ethnic harmony. This will also empower the local community to build strong personalities, make their presence felt and mould their attitudes and values to establish ethnic harmony.
6. Persuade and influence the state actors to offer civic education at secondary and tertiary level so that the young generation cultivates a culture and a value system that will build a strong foundation for co-existence and mutual respect.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that Deshodaya Forums attached to the Sarvodaya Movement need to re-visit their HD approach and HD tools in persuading the decision makers, and to contribute with a proper focus in establishing ethnic harmony in the country. The capacities can be strengthened with networking and this will enable local nongovernmental actors to bargain with a powerful voice at a time when ethnic harmony in the reconciliation process needs to be addressed urgently. Finally, the young generation needs to be moulded through formal and informal education to adhere to a democratic value system which upholds a strong justification for ethnic harmony.

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**A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF TRAVELLING PARSEE
THEATRE COMPANIES ON SRI LANKAN DRAMATIC ARTS
DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD**

Dr. K. Maddumage¹

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the tours conducted by travelling Parsee theatre companies and their impact on the Sri Lankan dramatic arts during the colonial period. Over a period of 57 years, between 1877 and 1934, 18 Parsee travelling companies performed in Sri Lanka. The Parsee diaspora was a minority within India consisting of people with exceptionally creative and innovative skills, with born talents which may have contributed to them creating this new drama culture. This hybrid style of drama was a combined result of global travelling companies, folk drama of India and the culture of the Indian English speaking society. As they maintained a good relationship with the British during the colonial period they were able to expand their traditions and drama all over the world which paved the way for the birth of drama in many South Asian countries.

Key words: Colonial period, drama, Nuthya, Parsee, travelling theatre companies

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INTRODUCTION

The Parsee population greatly impacted the art of drama and cinema of India and drama of many other South Asian countries. They stabilized this new drama tradition in Bombay which was the commercial capital of Maharashtra. During India's colonization, the main objective of the British was to spread their cultural norms, religion and language, so an English speaking society was formed in Bombay. Since culture held a key role in their society, in 1776 a proscenium theatre was built at Bombay Green (Bombay Courier, 26.08.1797). Starting with this and the collective efforts of the members of Parsee Theatre committees, led to the growth of Parsee drama in India. Though the Parsee community was a minority within the city of Bombay, their economic strength and education allowed them to work hand in hand with the British to further establish their culture. Their economic strength was further proven by their extensive fleet of ships and their manufacturing industries such as Godrej and TATA which are still in operation to this day. Due to this, the British allowed the Parsee community to assist with the shows performed in the Bombay Green theatre. Another testament to this Parsee-

British bond was Dadabhai Naoroji who was the first writer of the *Rast Goftar* newspaper and the president of the Indian National Congress for three terms, who advanced on to be the first Indian member of the British Parliament and Kairas N. Kabraji, who was also a writer of the *Rast Goftar* (Panikkar, 1967). Due to their involvement with the British theatre, the Parsees were able to strongly establish Parsee dramas from their first committee meeting itself where Naoroji and Kabraji played major roles in (Patel, 1931). With this, a large number of Parsee theatre committees emerged such the Sorostrian Nuthya society, Victoria Nuthya society, Empress Victoria Nuthya society, Alfred Nuthya society, Elphinstone Nuthya Society and Parsee Nuthya society (Kumudini, 2014). The new Parsee drama style was birthed through a mixture of the structure of proscenium theatre introduced by the British to India, Indian folk drama and the Indian musical cultures. Owing to this, the first Parsee drama was shown in October of 1853 at the Proscenium theatre in Grant Road and was called 'Rashtam and Zohorab'. This was screened alongside another local farce drama. As the Parsee community rapidly gained popularity, the need to gain economical profits arose, this resulted in the origin of travelling companies. These

travelling companies originated in Bombay and rapidly spread to other cities of India as well, which ultimately led to international tours. They mainly travelled to South Asian countries, touring the country for months performing various dramas. This was a period of time where South Asia was evolving its culture of drama by adapting new styles thus, Parsee culture was embraced very well.

OBJECTIVES

To study the impact of the arrival of Parsee theatre companies on the birth of Nurthi drama in Sri Lanka.

To study growth and hindrance patterns to the Nurthi theatre in Sri Lanka, due to Parsee theatre companies.

To observe the effect of Parsee theatre companies on the deterioration of Nurthi drama in Sri Lanka.

METHODOLOGY

In order to satisfy the objectives of the research, a qualitative research method was employed based on a meticulous and systematic survey of literature and analysis, finding and processing valuable historical data using archives and libraries. Due to the lack of books published related to this subject during this

period, newspapers from the Sri Lankan Archives and Indian Archives were our main source of information however, since they are in a very fragile condition, much care was taken when handling them. The newspaper articles which were published during the period of 1797-1971 related to our topic were used as the main research data samples of this study, mainly including newspapers such as 'Ghanartha Pradeepaya, Dinamina, The Bombay Courier, The Ceylon Times, etc. In addition to the newspaper articles, books and journals were also used to collect information relevant to the field of study. In addition to these drama scripts which are available in the Sri Lankan Archives, posters, published magazines, along with reviews also played a major role in collecting data for this study.

Travelling of Parsee drama companies to Sri Lanka and its Impact

In 1505 the Portuguese and in 1656 the Dutch, colonized the Southern coastal area of Sri Lanka and within this period Westernized culture greatly impacted society at the time (Bandara, 2007). After defeating the Dutch in 1776, the British colonized the entire island in 1815 and completely overturned Sri Lankan societal

norms and culture and replaced it with their Western culture, especially in urban areas. Along with the arrival of the British on the island, an English society was formed. Their primary objective was to gain economic benefits, and to stabilize their power by spreading their religion and their language by establishing schools.

Prior to the arrival of the Parsee theatre companies in Sri Lanka, other Western drama, music, and dancing troupes and circuses toured Sri Lanka since 1856 (The Ceylon Times (TCT), 1856-1879). Similar to colonized India, due to British colonization during this time, an English society had been formed in Sri Lanka as well. These theatre arts were mainly established in the Colombo, Kandy and Galle areas. Within the English society, theatre societies were also formed and performed dramas similar to the proscenium theatre structure. Their main audiences were English society and middle class Sri Lankans. Owing to this background, 22 theatre troupes had toured the island by the time the Parsee theatre companies arrived in Sri Lanka (Kumudini, 2014).

The first recorded arrival of a Parsee travelling company to Sri Lanka was on the 26th of May 1877 to Racquet Court, Pettah where the Hindustani Dramatic

Company, performed 'Indur Sobha' and a comedic farce, Kaiser Jafeer which were advertised as 'Burrah Tamasha' or great show. This consisted of 20 actors and as shown from the flyer, was performed for many days throughout a period of months in different parts of the country (TCT, 26.05.1877). Kariyawasam (1981) described this arrival and performance as a timeless souvenir of the new age of Sinhala drama.

Their arrival affected the societal system during the time as well. The audience was also changed according to a grading system. During the British Colonial period from 1856-1877, 24 travelling companies had toured Sri Lanka. The Indrasabha drama greatly impacted and was embraced by Sri Lankan society due to the similar language being used and it was also a refreshing change from the monotony of Karnataka at the time. The people also liked Hindustani music, as the audience accumulated people of all walks and brought the entire community together (Kumudini, 2014).

Even though other travelling troupes had toured the country since 1856, the Parsee troupe's arrival left a deep impression in the hearts of the public which led to the birth of the first Sinhala Nurthi Drama. Seven months later, on the 16th of December

1877, C. Don Bastian directed Rolina based on the drama Indrasabha. It was performed by students of Punyasanwaree college at No.51, Kaiser street. The Rolina drama was very similar to Parsee structure as the story, music, theatre set and prop usage, ancillary theatre, was very similar to Indrasabha (Kariyawasam, 1981). It was also a romantic fantasy story which showed great similarity in music and drama structure to Indrasabha and it was advertised in newspapers in a similar manner as well (TCT, 25.12.1877, 28.12.1877.).

Many researchers believed that the first Parsee tour started in 1880 with the arrival of the Bombay Elphinstone Dramatic Company at Colombo Fort in handmade a wooden yacht led by its director, the handsome Parsee actor, K.M. Baliwala (Wijetunga, 1966, XII). However, it is evident from the newspaper articles that the Hindustani Dramatic Company arrived in 1877 and these new findings suggest that this was the first Parsee arrival.

Kariyawasam stated that the tourism of Parsee troupes in 1877 which resulted in the birth of a new era of Sinhala drama, was the most crucial stepping stone to the development of Sinhala Drama (1981).

The second recorded Parsee company arrival in Sri Lanka was in 1882. Over the period of 1877 to 1882 other non-Parsee travelling troupes had toured the country as well, such as The Italian Opera Society of 1879, Sylvester's performances, Royal Marians Troupe of 1880 and Ruschvauld's Magic show of 1881 (TCT, 22.03.1879/ TCT, 23.03.1879/ The Examiner, 27.04.1880/ TCT, 21.07.1881). Local drama groups at the time also adapted this style of performance of dramas instead of the frequently used concert structure (TCT, 03.07.1879/ The Examiner, 21.12.1880). The Amateur Theatre also conducted many performances.

All the above mentioned non-Parsee travelling companies only presented a few dramas or parts of dramas. However, the arrival of The Parsee Elphinstone Dramatic Club in January of 1882, created a very different dramatic environment in Colombo and other major towns. This drama company had been patronized by the highest British officials and Native princes of India, Burma and straits as well (TCT, 25.01.1882 /TCT, 27.01.1882). They performed 57 dramas in 26 showings from 28th January to 27th February excluding Sundays. Some of the most popular dramas during the time was Indrasabha, Aladdin and the magic lamp, Goolay

Bakavlee and Jiti Bala. They also included comedies which they performed in a self-made proscenium theatre with new set and props, costumes and other technical equipment.

By this time C. Don Bastian who directed Rolina, was laying down the foundation to establish the Sinhala Nuthya Society from 1882 to 1884 but the arrival of the Parsee companies forced him to compete with them as it gained so much popularity that according to newspapers, upon the request of European gentlemen and the locals, they performed the comic opera Padlock and Bulbul Bimar (TCT, 10.02.1882). Therefore, Bastian stated that his objective of establishing his society was to create contemporary dramas of a new style to win the hearts of the public (Lakmini Pahana, 1883.06.13). In 1884 Bastian performed the dramas Romlin, Frank Law and Ingurli, Romeo and Juliet, and 'Veronawe mahathun Dedena' (Hapuaarachchi, 1981). All these were performed similar to the Parsee drama style to compete with the Parsee's rising popularity. Through the influence of the first two Parsee tours, middle class society embraced the romance and fantasy story genres with supernatural and adventurous twists. Due to this, Bastian also catered to the public's love for these

dramas and adapted the Parsee drama style when directing his own works as well. This is shown through the extremely popular Aladdin and the magic lamp which was performed in 5 showings in 1882 and was directed once again in 1885 by Bastian in the Parsee style (TCT, 24.09.1885).

The third recorded Parsee company arrival was the Parsee Victoria Society in November of 1889. They performed from the 19th of November to 24th of January and publicized their dramas in three English newspapers and one Sinhala newspaper as well (The Ceylon Examiner, The Ceylon Times, the Ceylon Independent and Sarasavi Sandarasa) making it evident that they targeted both English and Sinhala audiences. They performed 72 dramas over 42 days excluding Sundays, of which Indrasabha was the most popular including Aladdin and the magic lamp, Hawaii Majlees and Benazeer Badremuneer. It was reported that before Sri Lanka they toured India and performed at Dilli, Lucknow, Calcutta, Pune, Baranas as well as Rangun, Mandalaya, Singapore and England which showed that they had much experience with travel and tourism (TCT, 04.12.1889). Kurshejji Baliwala was the owner and director of the company when it came to Sri Lanka. Apart from

the main dramas the structure of their tours was to present a comedy as well. As this was the only troupe touring Sri Lanka at the time, they became a crowd favorite.

Due to their performance of a large number of dramas in an extended drama season by the Parsee company, the local drama companies suffered a blow and lost their popularity during this period.

In 1894 The Parsee Nuthya Society established the Malwatta Parsee Theatre and performed in Colombo and Kandy over a long period of time. It has been reported that during their performance in Kandy, their tent was set on fire along with the Colombo Nuthya hall and they suffered a loss of Rs.3000. Discouraged by this they left Sri Lanka and toured Singapore (Dinapatha Prawurthi, 15.03.1894). As they left, they took the very talented Sri Lankan artist Bertholamews who was a part of Bastian's Nuthya team to Singapore with them, which was a great loss to the Nuthya team. It was evident that they had complete power over the drama field of Sri Lanka and the arson committed by the local drama societies can be seen as a response to this.

By this time Bastian had developed the art of Nurthi however,

newspapers show that these Parsee arrivals greatly impacted this, as a setback is seen in both local and international drama and theatre in 1897.

The Parsee Elphinstone Dramatic Club postponed their initial tour in January due to the spread of Mahamari in India (Dinapatha prawurthi, 30.01.1897). They restarted their drama term on the 3rd of February by posting all of their showings in a single notice and releasing a handbill with a description of each drama, and use of set and props, being performed on that day with the newspaper. They performed 51 dramas in 51 showings for over three months, except on Sundays, which was the longest drama season in Sri Lanka (Dinapatha Prawurthi, 29.01.1897-25.03.1897). They highly regarded comedy dramas while Indrasabha became their most popular drama. Gupta showed that their performances had been praised in India as well (1981). Their 'Harischandra' drama gained popularity by its story of King Harischandra who's character was much beloved by the public (Dinapatha Pravurthi, 2.01.1899). Due to this, the Sinhala Drama society adapted this story to create a Nurthi as well (Dinapatha Pravurthi, 24.09.1902). Furthermore, they recreated the songs performed in Romeo and Juliet in a Hindustani

melody, due to the Parsee influence which was very close to the public's heart during this time.

Victoria Parsee Nuthya Society returned from Singapore on the 31st of June of the same year and performed till 14th of September.

The next recorded arrival of Parsee companies was in 1908, at the time which John De Silva who was a renowned Nurthi writer was leading the national campaign of Nurthi dramas through drama societies. Though he aspired Nurthi to be a new form of drama it was undeniable that he couldn't completely escape from the Parsee drama structure because of its popularity and the familiarity.

In April of 1908, the Parsee Alfred Drama Company finally arrived in Sri Lanka after publicizing its arrival since 20th of February. They even received permission to build a Parsee theatre in Malwatte, Pettah (Sinhala Samaya, 20.02.1908). Starting their drama term on the 3rd of April they performed many new dramas and gained the attention of a large number of fans. They mainly performed Shakespearean dramas which were popular in Sri Lanka at the time along with Indrasabha. This prolonged drama term greatly impacted Sri Lanka's nurthi drama as well (Sinhala Samaya,

12.03.1908 -27.06.1908).

Up till 1911 the plays were performed only in temporary Nuthya halls however, on the 16th of December in 1911, Charles Dias established the Tower Hall in Maradana as the first permanent performance theatre in the island. Its first performance was Charles Dias' Nurthi, 'Pandukhabaya'. This paved the way for the Tower Hall drama era of the Sri Lankan society. By this time, similar to Parsee dramas, the cinema industry had also gained great popularity. Due to this both Parsee and Nurthi dramas posed a threat to the progress of Nurthi. During this time the main Nurthi societies were John de Silva's Aryasubodha Drama Society, B.J. Perera's Sinhala Drama society which was affiliated with Tower Hall, John Perera's New Sinhala Drama Society and Lankesha Drama Society of Wellaweediya (Kumudini, 2014).

Though Nurthi had progressed greatly by this time, upon the second Parsee arrival of the 20th century in 1912 by the Parsee Repon Society, the focus from Nurthi was once again redirected. They arrived with a troupe of 75 actors and performed 50-60 dramas from 8th of March to 20th April. They were known to frequently tour Burma and they also toured Kandy as well

(Dinamina, 08.03.1912 / Dinamina, 19.07.1912). This Parsee company took over the Tower Hall Proscenium Theatre of Maradana which was the first proscenium theatre of Sri Lanka built in 1911 and further threatened the Nurthi drama of Sri Lanka.

Due to the powerful effect of this theatre troupe, there are no records of any Nurthi performances in the Colombo area during this period. Furthermore, Tower Hall's own Sinhala Drama Society left Tower hall and performed 'Wijayaraja' on the 18th of May in a temporary theatre in Attorney Thambiraja's land in Meegamuwa Road in Kurunegala (Dinamina, 17.05.1912). They were only able to be active in Tower Hall by September. This shows that the influence of Parsee theatre was greater than that of cinema and it caused a considerable set back to the Nurthi drama movement. This is further shown in an article in the Dinamina newspaper in which the author criticized international drama, cinema and circus groups by describing them as traps that steal money from the country (16.04.1912).

In the latter half of 1913, the Parsee Nuthya society performed in the Criterion Hall of Suduwelle, Colombo on the 27th of December. John De Silva who is

the most renowned Nurthi producer collaborated with this company and performed the comedic play, King Lear written by John De Silva (Dinamina, 23.12.1913).

The inescapable influence of the Parsee drama style is further evident when John de Silva displayed an interest in the mechanics and technology of flying in Parsee dramas which is shown by the direction of his first drama, the 'Ramayana' in which the appearance of Ravana's flying ship and Shakrya's flying ship were especially mentioned in the advertising flyer (Lakmini Pahana, 29.05.1886). Similarly, in the advertising of his drama 'Nala Damayanthi' in 1914, the presence of fairies dancing in the sky was especially mentioned in his flyers (Dinamina, 28.11.1914). Furthermore, this state of Parsee and local dramas going hand in hand is also shown by the advertising of their use of Bharat musicians' music in the 'Nala Damayanthi' play in 1914.

The Parsee Victoria Society reinvented themselves as Baliwala Parsee Victoria Theatricals and arrived in Sri Lanka in 1917. After performing for over three months in the Criterion Hall they also performed at Negombo and Kandy town halls in February (Dinamina, 21.02.1917/ Dinamina,

11.03.1917). This acted as another setback to the slowly growing Nurthi theatre at the time. Their power is shown by their extended drama season from early January to 11th of May. During this, the discouraged Sinhala Drama Society retreated to the Empire Theatre in Kandy (Dinamina, 08.02.1917). This is further shown by a Dinamina article in which the editor questions why our local drama societies were unable to complete a full season, even though several performances took place such as Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice on the 9th of February in Tower Hall, Maradana and other dramas on the 7th March Aariyasinhala theatre (12.03.1917).

During the period of 1917 to 1920 Nurthi dramas were rejuvenated by John de Silva and Charles Dias. In April of 1920, Parsee Victoria Society collaborated with Nurthi drama societies for several performances as well. One such instance is the collaboration between Aariyasinhala Drama Society and the Baliwala Drama Society of Bombay in the performance of 'Viduranatya'. Its flyers mentioned that the backdrop was brought from India (Dinamina, 09.02.1920.). Furthermore, on the flyers of Othello on the 17th and 'Sivammanadanapala' on the 24th the reservation of copy rights from the

Baliwala Drama Society were especially mentioned on their flyers (Dinamina, 24.02.1920). This showed the immense power that Parsee societies possessed at the time. The plays Padmawathi, Ummagga Jaathakaya, Vidura Jaathakaya, Vijaya Narendra Character, Aladdin and the magic lamp were performed on the 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th March respectively with the permission of the Parsee drama societies after which Baliwala Drama society made comparisons with their rendition of Aladdin and the magic lamp (Dinamina, 02.03.1920 – 30.03.1920).

However, while Baliwala Drama society performed in Galle, the Sinhala Drama Society started a very successful drama season in Colombo. This success was once again hindered with the arrival of the Parsee Empire Theatrical Company in 1924.

The Parsee Empire Theatrical Company made its debut in Sri Lanka on the 1st of January, 1924 and started a new drama term and performed for a month in Jithupitya Colombo Theatrical Hall, Colombo. During this time Aryasubodha Drama Society started a successful drama season in Tower Hall where actors of this troupe joined Sinhala dramas as well. Angered by this, Contractor M.A. Mawuson of Rangun filed a

lawsuit which forbade Parsee actors to perform in Tower hall (Dinamina, 01.02.1924). Amidst this disagreeable state the Indian and Sri Lankan actors formed 'Dukiyamaslin Theatrical Company' to perform their dramas. These conflicts were resolved on the 18th of February (Dinamina, 18.02.1924). However, the Parsee companies managed to take over Tower Hall from February till May. This led to the historical moment where for the first time, a Nurthi drama and Parsee drama were performed on the same day at the same venue which was the performance of Parsee 'Kameel Nadizar' drama on the 6th of April at 5pm and Nurthi 'Chandraguptha' drama at 9.15pm.

With the departure of this drama company after their 5-month drama season, Aaryasinhala Drama Society was reactivated in the island. This was greatly challenged by European and Indian Cinema, which was overcome by performing Indrasabha in Hindi itself (Dinamina, 08.03.1930). This is a clear instance where the place of Parsee theatre is taken in their absence. Following this period, on the 1st of January in 1931 the local drama companies fell at the mercy of Parsee works by their release of the Indrasabha cinema (Dinamina, 01.01.1931).

In an attempt at redemption, on the 21st of October 1932, the Indrasabha drama was performed in Tower Hall by the Indian Parsee actress Sultana and her troupe together with local actors (Dinamina, 20.10.1932). This makes it evident that by this time Parsee performers resided in Sri Lanka as well. Furthermore, American actress Lyle acted in 'Sivamma Natya' Nurthi in an attempt to revitalize the Nurthi theatre.

The Parsee Pioneer Theatrical Society was established in Panchikawatta, Maradana on the 8th of April 1936. It consisted of 70 actors and performed for over a month collaborating with local drama societies as well (Dinamina, 24.04.1936 / Dinamina, 16.05.1936). Though related newspaper articles were limited, flyers of the Sinhala Nuthya Society mentioned it as "The night where Sinhala actors preserve their honor in the face of Parsee actors". In an effort to preserve their honor, they rented Rs.1000 worth of Parsee clothes for the Padmawathi drama and rented backdrops and theatre lights for their Magulsakwala drama (Dinamina, 02.05.1936).

There have been no records of Parsee company arrivals since then however, due to this lack of completion and the development

of cinema, the deterioration of Nurthi slowly began in the 1940s.

DISCUSSION

Within 57 years, the Parsee travelling companies had accumulated a vast audience which performed many dramas for months. During the arrival of the Parsee theatre companies in 1877 the indigenous drama style that was prevailing on the islands was Kolam, Sokari and Nadagam. Owing to the middle class society formed during the colonial period, the English education system and the capitalistic economy in Sri Lanka, a class system emerged which resulted in the need for a new style of drama by the locals. It was during this time that the Parsee theatre companies first arrived in Sri Lanka. These Parsee dramas were deeply rooted in local's hearts due to their stories, themes, the usage of Urdu, Marathi and Hindi languages and Hindustani music culture. The combination of romance, fantasy and adventure themes had become an international trend by this time, the majority of dramas created were made to please this audience. Since tender romances were discussed in Nadagam culture as well, the Parsee dramas were also well embraced by the locals.

As mentioned previously, C. Don Bastian adapted the Parsee drama

structure to create a new style of local drama called Nurthi which was further developed by John de Silva and Charles Dias. The Parsee drama structure was especially adapted to the love shown for it by the audience.

As presented by the data, though the Parsees paved the way for the birth of a new era of drama, they also set back the growth of local drama such as Nurthi because of their immense popularity. Towards the end of this era the Nurthi theatre was also dominated by the Parsee and it was an era where Parsee and Nurthi drama cultures were intertwined with each other. Nurthi was considered as part of a national campaign against colonization but due to its strong ties with the Parsee drama style its growth was hindered.

As a solution for this the Sinhala Nuthya society adapted various strategies to win the hearts of the locals and gain popularity like a performance in 1884 which ended with the drama Chau chau, similar to the Parsee performance in 1882, recruiting skilled singers from Bombay in 1902, adapting Parsee storylines for their dramas (TCT, 25.02.1882/Lakmnini Pahana, 15.11.1884 /Lakmnini Pahana, 17.11.1888).

During the 18 tours of the Parsee theatre companies, it can be seen

that each time the Nurthi theatre attempted to lift their heads they were set back from the arrival of each new Parsee company and the Parsee societies which emerged due to this. Towards the 1930s, local theatre displayed a dependent relationship with the Parsee theatre where even Nurthi dramas used Parsee actors, backdrops, costumes etc. which were used to gain publicity. This can be due to the close relationship between them and due to the lack of financial support of local theatre to create a new drama style, rather than cater to whatever was popular at the time in hope of economic gain.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that this birth of a new era of drama was a direct result of the frequenting of the Parsee theatrical companies during the British colonial period. Even though many performing companies frequented the country since 1856, it is evident that the Parsee travelling companies played the main role, both the growth and setbacks of the new drama era. Though these companies greatly impacted the growth of the culture of Sri Lankan drama both positively and negatively, it is an undeniable fact that Parsee theatre at the time, and the growth of local drama and theatre go hand in hand, each influencing the other which finally led to the birth of a

new era of drama arts of Sri Lanka.

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A STUDY ON PROBLEMS RELATED TO ECOTOURISM IN THE DISTRICT OF NUWARA ELIYA

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ABSTRACT

Global climate change concerns and sustainable development agendas urge countries to practice eco-friendly industries. Consequently, the concept of “Ecotourism” has been introduced as a sustainable approach towards the environment, society, and culture to avoid the negative impacts of traditional tourism practices. Therefore, significant studies have been implemented to assess the potentials of ecotourism to promote the sustainability of society, culture, economy, and environment. This study explores the problems of current ecotourism practices in the Nuwara Eliya district in terms of international standards of ecotourism. The study was based on quantitative and qualitative data which was utilized to understand the international ecotourism measures, trends, tourism markets, and background of contemporary ecotourism practices in Nuwara Eliya. The qualitative method required interviews and discussions with KIPs of the tourism industry to realize the attitudes, knowledge, dedication, and difficulties of the people during the current practice of ecotourism. The quantitative data was extracted through archival research including SLTDA and UNWTO annual reports, ecotourism-related studies, and articles.

The problems identified are organized under three main categories: 1. policy implementations; 2. planning and organizing; 3. culture and attitudes. The primary observations of this study reveal that the global goals and objectives of ecotourism are not achieved through current practices of ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya due to inefficient policy implementations, systematic failures, and operational failures. Consequently, this study recommends revising the current Tourism Act No.38 of 2005, adopting alternative sustainable tourism concepts, and eco-friendly accommodation modes as applicable in several destinations, and refreshing knowledge and attitudes of the people. These recommendations can be implemented based on standardized ecotourism practices of numerous countries in the world as compatible with social, cultural, and environmental dimensions in Nuwara Eliya.

Key words: *Destination, International Standards, Ecotourism, Nuwara Eliya*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism is a significant attribute of sustainable tourism which generates income for the community while avoiding the negative impacts of traditional tourism. It is based on an eco-friendly concept that makes sustainable gains towards culture, society, and economy. Hence, the states and international organizations encourage enhancing ecotourism because of its sustainable qualities. Consequently, United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) are committed to the promotion of ecotourism in the contemporary world.

According to the basic prerequisites recognized by UNWTO, the Nuwara Eliya district could be suggested as an ideal geographic area that can be promoted as an ecotourism paradise. Nuwara Eliya district is enriched with various natural and cultural resources when compared to other tourism destinations in Sri Lanka. The unique topography and eco-cultural diversity of Nuwara Eliya provides an opportunity for a sustainable approach towards ecotourism practices.

Waterfalls such as 'Devon', 'St. Claires', and 'Ramboda' and the mountains such as 'Piduruthalagala', 'Kirigalpotta', 'Harangala' and 'Single Tree' covered with giant rain forests are eye-catching scenes in the highlands. Further, 'Nuwara Eliya Raja Maha Vihara', 'Seetha Amman temple', 'Adam's Peak' and botanical gardens and green lush tea estates provide eco-cultural values for ecotourism. Attractions that have been created through environmental projects such as 'Galway forest', 'Kande-Ela forest', 'Horton Plains' and 'Gregory Lake' are frequently used as popular tourism sites to enhance the educational and interpretational knowledge of the eco-tourists towards the environment.

Unfortunately, the natural resources such as Waterfalls 'Lover's Leap', 'Garandi Ella', 'Bomburu Ella' etc., 'Shanthipura viewpoint', and mountains 'Single Tree', 'Harangala', 'Kirigalpotta' etc. along with human resources like traditional tea pluckers, farmers and multi-religious priests are underutilized in current practices of ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya due to the systematic failures of the tourism industry as pointed out in 'Sri Lanka Tourism Strategy Plan 2017-2020'. Coordination failures, institutional failures, and resource failures are significant

drawbacks for the development and efficient utilization of the potential eco-cultural resources. Consequently, the scope of ecotourism has been narrowed at present. However, the international travel demand could be satisfied and fulfilled through re-utilization of these resources in ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya district.

This study pursues potentials in Nuwara Eliya to provide an international approach for ecotourism. It illustrates internationally recognized destinations in the world as models while tracing problems of current ecotourism practices in the destination. On this basis, this study will provide recommendations that could be applied in Nuwara Eliya as compatible with its natural, cultural, and social identities.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

The main research question of this study is: *To what extent does ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya live up to international standards in current practices?* This major question is further deconstructed into sub-questions as follows:

R.Q. 1: What is the nature and background of the current practices of ecotourism in Nuwara

Eliya District?

R.Q. 2: What are the exhibited problems of the current practices of ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya compared to international standards recognized by UNWTO?

- ✓ What are the problems related to policy implementations?
- ✓ What are the problems related to planning and organizing?
- ✓ What are the problems related to attitudes and culture?

These sub-questions are examined to find solutions for the main research problem, and the study attempts to find the most applicable solutions that are tailored with the eco-cultural identities in Nuwara Eliya.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section 3 presents the material and methodology of the study. In Section 4, the concept of ecotourism will be defined using literature reviewed in several archives. It further refers to international standards and characteristics of ecotourism recognized by international organizations. Section 5 analyzes the statistical findings of the current practice of ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya with respect to other

tourism-oriented destinations in Sri Lanka. Section 6 discusses the findings. Section 7 presents the conclusion.

3. Materials and Methods.

This research adopted multiple methods for data collection. The primary data were collected mainly using three approaches. They are,

- ✓ Qualitative approach
- ✓ Quantitative approach (Archival approach)
- ✓ Field visit

In the qualitative approach, the interviews and discussions were held with related parties. The main methodological tools (KIPs) of this study were, (See Annex 1 for more information)

- ✓ Responsible authority members of policy formulations.
- ✓ Stakeholders relevant to planning and organizing the industry.
- ✓ Local and foreign visitors.
- ✓ Community (ordinary people).

Especially, the basic interviews were held with responsible figures (KIPs) of Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion

Bureau (SLTPB), Hotel Owners, General Managers, and the staff members of sample hotels that are currently practicing ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya. Further, the conversations and discussions held with the business community and ordinary people revealed the problems regarding attitudes and knowledge of the people towards the ecotourism concept and its current practices. Tailored questionnaires were given to the local and foreign visitors to obtain information regarding visitors' backgrounds, their preferences, the purposes of their journeys, and their assessment regarding infrastructure facilities in the area.

Quantitative data gathered through SLTDA, SLTPB, and UNWTO annual reports, articles, journals, research papers, and publications are the major archives referred to as secondary sources of data collection. The official websites maintained by several countries in their ecotourism promotions were used in this study to understand the nature of the international standardized practices. The 'European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECST)' has specified several principles that should be adopted to improve the sustainable development and management of tourism in protected areas, considering the identification of the environment,

residents, local businesses, and visitors. In Italy, unique ecotourism products have been created associating small nature reserves in which hiking to the summit of the Monte Rufeno Nature Reserve is the destination product development. Further, the activities such as relaxing on the top of the mount with a glass of local organic wine while stargazing and walking in silent forests, harvesting edible herbs and flowers are being promoted in these reserves. Etruscan paths, visiting medieval castles are promoted as attractions while meeting organic farmers and old charcoal makers are introduced as eco-cultural product promotions in Italy (Noll et al., 2019).

Finally, the field visits to tourism sites in Nuwara Eliya highlighted the necessity to address the problems in the ecotourism industry. The observations of the field survey mainly reveal the evidence of environmental pollution and the nature of people's behavior towards ecotourism.

The limitations of the data collection process of this survey are as follows: It was not possible to obtain actual quantitative data, since the relevant authorities do not have a mechanism to gather adequate data and information relevant to ecotourism in Nuwara

Eliya. Therefore, forecasting quantitative aspects such as tourists' arrivals, hotel capacities, and accommodation distributions which are reported by the SLTDA was limited to the SLTDA registered establishments. However, it is hard to make predictions regarding ecotourism due to the hidden data and information regarding the informal sector which is not supervised by SLTDA. A high percentage of these target groups in the informal sector would do their reservations directly by using the internet. Consequently, data and information related to this group would not be entertained in this survey. Most of the hoteliers, business community, and ordinary people did not provide accurate information of the industry due to poor awareness and knowledge of the concept since majority of them were not properly updated with the growing trends of ecotourism in the world.

4. ECOTOURISM CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS.

The concept of "ecotourism" has been defined in many phases by experts and organizations. Sometimes it was introduced as a "Primary concern with the direct employment of some relatively undisturbed phenomenon of nature" (Valantine, 1992). World

Conservation Union (IUCN, 1994) defines ecotourism as “Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to natural areas, to enjoy and appreciate nature that promotes conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local people”. Moreover, United Nations World Tourism Organization and United Nations Environment Program (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005) have described this concept as sustainable tourism which “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities”. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES, 2015) has defined ecotourism as “a responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education”. It emphasizes that ecotourism is generated with the sustainable survival of nature. Tourism is sustainable when it is developed and operated with the participation of the local population, protection of the total environment, and fair economic return for the industry. This concept is more important in the matter of sustainable development because it guides people to conserve natural resources while

gaining profits economically and spiritually. According to the above definitions, the substance of ecotourism can be defined as a new concept based on ‘sustainability’ which differed from traditional tourism in the world.

This concept has been already formed around the natural and cultural environment in a country as most of the tourists encourage enjoying and experiencing nature as well as several cultures in the world today. According to the report of UNWTO, the international standard of ecotourism is based on the following characteristics (UNWTO, 2002). They are:

1. All nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas.
2. It contains educational and interpretation features.
3. It is generally, but not exclusively organized for small groups by specialized and small, locally owned businesses. Foreign operators of varying sizes also organize, operate, and or market ecotourism tours, generally for

small groups.

4. It minimizes negative impacts upon the natural and socio-cultural environment.
5. It supports the protection of natural areas.

Source: The British Ecotourism Market, UNWTO 2002

Ecotourism varies from traditional tourism due to the above characteristics. This concept mostly considers the quality of gains by the guests, not the quantity. People are looking for solutions to avoid negative impacts of traditional tourism and expect to gain more profits by conserving the environment for the future generation through ecotourism. Therefore, ecotourism could be defined as an ideal tool for upgrading the environmental caring capacity of the people while entertaining benefits. Therefore, this concept is also referred to as “Eco Sustainable Tourism”.

Considering the success of the industry of ecotourism, it may not only be composed of natural and cultural resources, but also human resources. The combination of human resources with eco-cultural resources is essential to achieve the sustainable goals of the industry. In the perspective of ecotourism, the human resources can be

introduced as ‘stakeholders’: those are “the individuals, groups, or sectors with an interest in or involved in or impacted by the use of local natural resources, or with responsibility for resource management” (Lemelas, 2001). The stakeholders related to the ecotourism industry are Hotel Owners, Tour Operators, Tour Guides, Local and Business communities, the Ministry of Tourism, National park directors, Non-governmental organizations, and the government (Lemelas, 2001).

Currently, many countries in the world are practicing ecotourism as an alternative industry to minimize the negative impacts of traditional tourism. Most of the developed countries such as England, Germany, France, etc., and developing countries like India, Nepal, Pakistan, etc. are practicing ecotourism as an income-induced industry under the above-recommended criteria of UNWTO. These definitions and characteristics relevant to ecotourism might be important to conduct this study towards a successful research outcome. Hence, this study examines the potentials of Nuwara Eliya to entertain universally recognized characteristics of ecotourism based on interpretations of the concept.

5. FINDINGS AND THE ANALYSIS.

Sample

17 hotels and restaurants have participated in this survey. 9 hotels of this sample were SLTDA registered, and 8 hotels were not registered under SLTDA. This study focused on 50 foreign guests and 50 local guests who were lodging during the survey in the Nuwara Eliya district. They were given a questionnaire (Annex 1) to extract details regarding their purchasing power towards ecotourism products, accommodation, and transport facilities, their preparation, and demand towards ecotourism activities in Nuwara Eliya. Hiking and bird watching activities were preferred by more than 65% and they were both local and foreign tourists, while camping and wildlife viewing were attracted by 55% of tourists. Further 44% of foreign tourists stated that they have good responses from the host community in Nuwara Eliya, while 35% of foreign tourists were disappointed with the responses of the host community. As well, 73% of foreign tourists are not satisfied with the prices of ecotourism products in Nuwara Eliya, while 80% of local tourists are claiming that Nuwara Eliya is comparatively

expensive. More than 74% and 80% of foreign and local tourists preferred to visit Horton plains; Gregory Lake, Hakgala, and Nuwara Eliya Botanical Gardens, however, less than 40% of local and foreign tourists have given the priority to visit flora and fauna, wetlands, and mountain ranges in the area. This situation emphasized that the maximum capacity of potential tourism nature sites of Nuwara Eliya district has not been utilized by the tourists. The traditional tourism destinations are still being entertained by them. More than 68% of foreign tourists were aware of those sites in Nuwara Eliya through the internet while 18% of foreign tourists were aware through formal ways such as SLTDA, SLTPB information. Considering foreign tourist market, more than 85% of tourists get information about Nuwara Eliya through internet sources in contrast to formal ways and Media. According to the results of the questionnaire, 90% of foreign and local tourists visit Nuwara Eliya to enjoy the scenic beauty. Further, this survey revealed that 65% of tourists have not experienced ecotourism-related background and were served traditional meals inside the accommodations, while 45% got the opportunity to experience the traditional lifestyles and experience the culture through the activities

and the events offered by the hotel.

In the process of seeking an internationally acceptable approach to ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya, it is important to observe the background and present status quo. Therefore, this study primarily analyzes quantitative data derived from statistical analysis of regional data including foreign and local visitation by locations and distribution of accommodations within the district of Nuwara Eliya.

The regional occupancy in Sri Lanka (Table 1) indicates the overall annual room occupancy recorded by all SLTDA registered accommodation outlets within the five zonal tourism regions. It shows that the hill country has

maintained a 57.4% room occupancy level equating with northern, ancient cities and east-coast regions in 2019. But, compared with the previous 9 years (from 2011), occupancy of around 73.3%, it shows an obvious decrease to 57.4% of occupancy in the hill country in 2019 (SLTDA, 2019). It could be considered as a greater downturn of tourism industry not only concerning the hill country but also the other tourism regions islandwide that occurred due to the Easter Sunday Terrorist attack in April 2019.

Table 1: Distribution of Occupancy Rates by Regions in Sri Lanka – 2005 to 2019 (Percentage)

Region	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Colombo City	76.3	64.3	63.9	57.1	57.8	78.3	84.0	75.8	75.2	75.9	76.4	76.75	75.31	79.19	58.7
Greater Colombo	44.8	48.0	49.3	52.6	52.7	75.1	79.5	74.5	70.1	74.0	74.4	75.18	73.14	75.41	57.9
South Coast	31.5	41.2	47.6	46.1	49.6	71.9	78.1	73.9	70.2	73.1	74.3	74.24	72.38	73.10	59.7
East Coast	29.1	16.9	18.0	21.6	37.8	70.0	75.7	68.2	69.8	73.8	74.1	74.92	72.95	71.35	57.3
Hill Country	36.6	39.9	41.2	34.2	42.2	63.5	73.3	68.1	73.2	74.9	74.8	75.24	73.55	71.67	57.4
Ancient Cities	39.5	43.3	40.3	35.2	44.4	62.6	71.7	66.5	73.5	75.0	75.2	75.46	73.85	71.37	56.9
Northern Region	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	69.9	72.4	72.0	69.58	70.98	68.48	48.6
All Areas (Average)	47.8	47.8	46.2	43.9	48.4	70.1	77.1	71.2	71.7	74.3	74.5	74.76	73.27	72.77	57.1

Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2019

Table 2 shows visitation to the major tourist attractions of the hill country. Kandy city, Adams' Peak, and Horton plains have been visited by foreign tourists 48.2%, 14.9%, and 11.4% respectively. According to the total tourist attractions of 57.4% to the hill country in Sri Lanka by the 1st quarter of 2019, Nuwara Eliya contributes 31.7% of total tourist attraction to highlands. It is more

than 2/3 of total tourists arrivals to hill country until 1st quarter of 2019. Unfortunately, from the beginning of the 2nd quarter of 2019, tourist attraction started to decrease significantly to 24.5% compared with the 1st quarter ratio of 31.7% in 2019 (SLTDA, 2019). The reason is well-known as explained above.

Table 2: Places of attraction visited by tourists in Hill country 2019 (Percentage)

Destination	1st Q of 2019	2nd Q of 2019	3rd Q of 2019
Kandy city	48.2%	37.6%	37.3%
Adams' Peak	14.9%	11.8%	12.1%
Horton Plains	11.4%	8.9%	8.9%
Nuwara Eliya	31.7%	24.7%	24.5%

Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2019

SLTDA evaluates the foreign and domestic visitor counts by location. It is important to make future predictions in relevant destinations to facilitate its guests. But in the case of Nuwara Eliya, there is no recognized method to calculate domestic and foreign visitor counts even at present as a single destination since the informal sector statistics are still not formally published. It could be done in respect of approved and registered establishments with the

SLTDA, but not the informal sector. The informal data and information that should be gathered from the informal sector could be obtained from local authorities. Hence, certain studies will indicate informal sector capacity as a percentage of the formal sector overall as well as by destination.

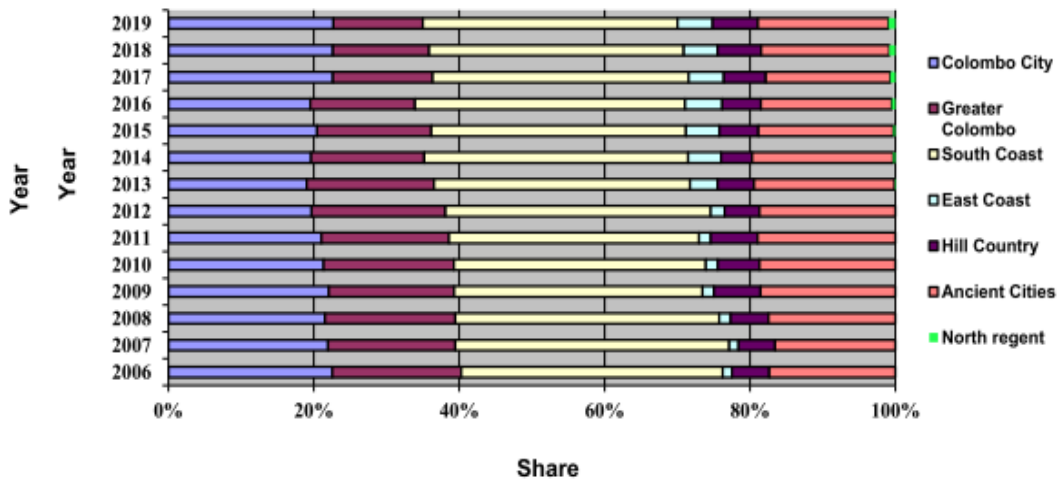
According to SLTDA annual report 2019, the total number of SLTDA registered accommodation establishments was 2,529 by 30th

September 2019 in Sri Lanka. The availability of small and medium enterprises is strong with guest houses, homestays, and bungalows recording the highest number of registered establishments with 1012, 520, and 443 respectively (SLTDA, 2019). But, in Nuwara Eliya, the number of SLTDA approved accommodation outlets were 5 by the end of 2019. Further, SLTDA has reported the number of rooms distributed within the district of Nuwara Eliya was 714 by the 3rd quarter of 2019 (SLTDA, 2019). Compared with other regions of Sri Lanka, SLTDA registered rooms and restaurant distribution is not sufficient to fulfill the tourists' demands for the Nuwara Eliya district. However,

this survey revealed a large number of accommodations in the informal sector that are operated, but most of them are not in proper conditions suitable for ecotourism theme.

According to figure 1, the distribution of accommodation capacity in the formal sector has not increased considerably during 2006-2019 in Hill Country. It shows a slow-moving progression which has been ranging between 78% and 82% for 13 years. Therefore, the accommodation distribution, supply, and development might not be sufficient to satisfy the rapid growth of tourists' demand towards accommodation for ecotourism in the Nuwara Eliya district.

Figure 1: Distribution of Accommodation Capacity by Region (Percentage) – 2019



Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2019

sltda.gov.lk/storage/common_media/Annual%20Statistical%20Report%20new%202109%20Word3889144215.pdf

This background demonstrates that Nuwara Eliya should be individually treated as an ecotourism destination introducing tailored ecotourism products such as hiking, mountaineering, agro-tourism activities, etc. Further, tourist attractions could be expanded towards the 'Adam's Peak', Ella, Devon, St. Claires, and remote areas such as Castlereigh, Thawakelle, and Hatton. Identifying these unique development capacities and potentials might be useful for further improvement and expansion of future ecotourism within the entire district of Nuwara Eliya. In the process of upgrading ecotourism to be on par

with universal standards, the relevant institutions and individuals should understand their responsibility and duty towards nature, culture, and society. As recommended by UNWTO, these standards could be sustained through observation, motivation, and appreciation of nature as well as cultures, development of interpretational and educational features, exclusive organization, minimizing negative impacts upon the natural and socio-cultural environment and supporting the maintenance of natural areas.

The SLTDA and SLTPB play a significant role in promoting ecotourism in Sri Lanka at present. As the above data show,

considerable shortcomings exist with respect to the development of ecotourism as part of the tourism industry in Nuwara Eliya, especially in the informal sector. However, the role of Provincial Councils and The Local Government in the process of developing ecotourism would be important and essential in Nuwara Eliya, but so far, such intervention cannot be seen. Provincial Councils and Local Government Authorities could re-establish the main cities in Nuwara Eliya district as ecotourism models with the participation of SLTDA and SLTPB. Therefore, it is important to incorporate all the authorized bodies in this field towards collective goals of ecotourism under the supervision of SLTDA in the future.

6. DISCUSSION.

The above data and information show that the tourist arrivals of the last few years have been considerably dropped due to the Easter Sunday Terrorist Attack and COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this downturn might directly affect ecotourism in the Nuwara Eliya district. Consequently, the sub-industries and communities that depended on ecotourism are disappointed at present. This downturn of ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya should be immediately addressed by

promoting and expanding the development capacities of the current practices. Therefore, this discussion is based on the problems related to ecotourism practices in Nuwara Eliya under three different categories. They are,

- ✓ Policy related problems
- ✓ Planning and organizing related problems
- ✓ Attitudes and culture-related problems

It will be important to address the above problems in Nuwara Eliya to achieve the objectives of ecotourism sustaining the recommended ecotourism characteristics identified by UNWTO. This discussion will be useful to convert Nuwara Eliya district into an ecotourism paradise on par with international standard criteria of ecotourism as applicable in the future.

6.1. POLICY-RELATED PROBLEMS.

Many issues have been investigated in current practices of ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya regarding policy implementations. This study primarily assesses the Tourism Act No. 38 of 2005 (SLTDA) which is largely based on setting up its institutional framework to govern tourism-related activities. This act

places little emphasis on environmental aspects of tourism, and it does not recognize ecotourism. The final report of the Sri Lanka Sustainable Tourism Development Project in 2009 also examines the prevailing environmental laws of Sri Lanka such as National Environmental Act No. 53 of 2000, Coast Conservation Act No. 57 of 1981, Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance Amended Act No. 49 of 1993 and the North-Western Provincial Environmental Statute Act No. 12 of 1990 which are to facilitate sustainable tourism. But, none of these acts have provided any provision related to ecotourism in Sri Lanka. Hence, non-recognition of ecotourism is visible in the entire tourism act No. 38 of 2005, and SLTDA does not provide fundamental concepts of ecotourism parameters to practice this industry in Sri Lanka (Shanika, 2019). This background implies that the absence of a separate act or a policy-focused industry of ecotourism might interrupt achieving goals of ecotourism since Tourism Act No. 38 of 2005 is based on traditional tourism and institutional framework.

In the process of policy implementation, the authorities such as SLTDA, Ceylon Hotels Corporation, SLTPB, etc. might not properly collaborate with the

middle and ground-level bodies that are hotel owners, destination managers, ordinary people, and other relevant institutions in Nuwara Eliya district. Therefore, these authorities have not been successful in collecting updated information and statistics regarding the industry. According to '*Sri Lanka Tourism Strategy Plan 2017-2020*', The Ministry of Tourism Development has identified significant systematic failures of Sri Lanka's tourism industry under four categories as follows.

- ✓ Coordination Failures
- ✓ Institutional Failures
- ✓ Market Failures
- ✓ Resource Failures

The coordination failures have been identified as poor communication between government ministries, institutions, and stakeholders relevant to tourism planning, tourism assets management, and destination management. Hence, tourism-related agencies and government-level responsibilities have been undefined. The institutional failures have been defined under three sections in this strategic plan. They are 1) deficient and politicized leadership and management at all levels of government. 2) Limited awareness and participation in tourism by

host communities. 3) Inadequate attention to cultural heritage conservation and natural habitat preservation. Moreover, the market failures could be recognized as; limited attention paid to product diversification and destination development, absence of management, standardization, and enforcement of best practices and market distortions. The resource failures have been primarily defined as, 1) limited emphasis in public and private sectors on human capital development and on an inclusive employment agenda across tourism and hospitality value chains; 2) Lack of comprehensive visitor research and data, ongoing research into products and markets, and market intelligence; 3) Lack of access to investment and financing, especially for SMEs and women, and high capital costs (Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs, 2018).

6.2. PLANNING AND ORGANIZING RELATED PROBLEMS.

This study has further focused on the problems related to the planning and organizing of ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya. Ecotourists should be able to concentrate on nature even within the accommodation. However, most of the accommodations in

Nuwara Eliya are not maintaining international standards. There are many problems with the quality of water, sanitation, and foods, the goodness of services, activities provided by the hotels, etc. since they are not certified under a committed standard that is recognized by responsible authorities. Therefore, most accommodations could not be assured for international guests. This condition might discourage the visitors to stay at Nuwara Eliya for more than one or two nights.

“Single Tree” mountain is an attractive eco-tourism destination well-known as a viewpoint surrounded by green tea estates. As of now, this area has become an unpleasant place for visitors due to unnecessary constructions that destroy the natural beauty of the location. Therefore, eco-tourists cannot be satisfied with nature trails through this area due to the barriers of enjoying its scenic beauty. ‘Shanthipura’ is another viewpoint which is situated outside the city that Eco-tourists could capture the whole area simultaneously in Nuwara Eliya. However, this place is not popular among eco-tourists since its ecological background is faded by artificial and unplanned constructions.

Nanu Oya railway station is also a significant place where local and

foreign tourists can use as an access point to the highlands. However, tourists cannot observe cultural and ecological beauty due to the unplanned constructions around the railway station. Moreover, the inadequacies of water, sanitation, cafeteria facilities are also critical problems that discourage the tourists to spend their time at this elegant place.

'Ramboda waterfall' is a popular attraction on the way to Nuwara Eliya. As of now, this splendid environment is being destroyed by unplanned and illegal constructions. Therefore, eco-tourists cannot feel nature since they are inconvenienced by the unpleasant and artificial background around Ramboda falls.

6.3. ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE, AND ATTITUDES RELATED PROBLEMS.

Destinations such as Ramboda waterfall, Lovers Leap, Shanthipura, Horton Plains, 'Adam's Peak' etc. are highly vulnerable to environmental pollution with garbage and human disposals. Therefore, eco-tourists are discouraged by the polluted environment. Deforestation is also a major problem in the Nuwara Eliya district, especially around waterfalls and forests. Primarily, deforestation occurs due to new constructions of the area done by

both government and private sector. Consequently, the catchment areas of waterfalls have started to drain disturbing ecotourism activities related to waterfalls. Further, the Gregory Lake in the city of Nuwara Eliya also is currently vulnerable to draining due to the commercial hotel constructions in the catchment area.

The host community is the most important feature of the industry of ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya. However, they do not entertain the mutual benefits that they will be able to gain from the industry due to the poor awareness and attitudes regarding ecotourism. Frequently, foreign people might be exploited by the business community in the area. These discriminations may discourage foreign tourists from dealing with the local community in Nuwara Eliya. Hence, the poor awareness and attitudes might be harmful to friendly relationships discouraging the cultural exchange among the host community, foreign and local visitors in Nuwara Eliya.

Irresponsible and self-centered behaviors of the people might be harmful to the environment. In the seasonal periods, 'Horton Plains National Park' is crowded, and the extreme behaviors of the people might disturb its animal habitats. Therefore, sound-

sensitive animal species in 'Horton plains' such as deer, sambar deer, and rabbits might leave their habitats. The long-term continuations of such misdeeds may break down the ecosystems and eco cycles of the environment. This would be a negative approach towards eco-tourists who enjoy and study the ecological features of the area.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

Ecotourism is a concept that has been introduced to minimize the negative impacts of traditional tourism in the world. Many countries are currently practicing ecotourism by using eco-cultural resources as a mutually beneficial industry for the host community and tourists. The concept of ecotourism is sustainable since it consumes natural and cultural resources in a destination while preserving them for future generations to generate benefits. Hence, certain countries encourage shifting their traditional tourism practices towards this sustainable concept. Therefore, the present study has focused on pursuing the potentials of ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya district as a destination that exhibits basic ecotourism requirements of its natural and cultural backgrounds.

However, the current practice of

ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya obstructs achieving universal ecotourism objectives. Thus, the primary purpose of this study was to investigate the problems of ecotourism industry in the Nuwara Eliya district while addressing the potentials of the destinations to meet the universal standards of the industry. These problems were analyzed and discussed under a few categories. They are policy implementation-related issues, organizing and planning-related issues and environment, attitudes, and culture-related issues.

The secondary purpose of this study was to suggest solutions and recommendations on identified problems in the field. In this process, the study was mainly based on the recommended ecotourism characteristics by UNWTO and TIES that should be exhibited in internationally recognized ecotourism destinations in the world. Initially, certain standard practices of South Asian countries are considered as model ecotourism sites to make recommendations and suggestions, since those practices are more compatible with natural, cultural, and climatic aspects in the district of Nuwara Eliya. Hence, the ecotourism practices of developed and developing countries in the world have been considered in providing solutions as outlined in

the next section.

7.1. RECOMMENDATIONS.

As an initial step, it is important to formulate a tailor-made Act for ecotourism apart from mass tourism act No. 38 of 2005 in Sri Lanka. This current Act could be amended by including applicable ecotourism provisions based on the eco-cultural identities of each district of the island. For instance, India has focused on regional ecotourism under the provisions of 'conservation and preservation of areas' through the 'Act in 2005' which especially focused on ecotourism in the region of 'Kerala' (Kerala Tourism Act 2005, 2007). In addition, significant ecotourism protocols should be legislated and articulated.

Introducing a method of forecasting tourist arrivals will be useful and applicable to Nuwara Eliya to prevent the rush demand for accommodations and avoid road trafficking in the seasonal periods in the city. A proper urban plan is necessary in this regard. Therefore, this study suggests the concept of 'Urban Ecotourism' as a solution for the rapid urbanization in the city of Nuwara Eliya. Urban ecotourism can be introduced as a simple nature trip and conservation in a city environment (Yi-Yen Wu *et al.*, 2010) which (1)

conserves natural spaces; (2) minimizes environmental impacts; (3) improves education, learning, and knowledge about environmental conservation; and (4) taps into the financial viability of the large urban populations who can face against the effects of seasonal fluctuations of international tourists (Mbatia and Owuor, 2014).

Town planning is important to promote ecotourism in the Nuwara Eliya district. The town should be rearranged according to an eco-preserved strategy. The concept of 'Eco Towns' is eligible for the city of Nuwara Eliya, Hatton, Thalawakelle as ecotourism potentials in the district. This concept was introduced by Japan in 1997 as a more sustainable model. According to the concept of eco-towns, the city should be composed of a green stripe around the city to absorb the CO₂ emission of the industries in the city area (Norton, 2007). The 'Lake Gregory' should be preserved as the catchment area of the city. Other industries, commercial institutions, and hotels should be systematically centered by the catchment area and the green strip of the town.

The infrastructure facilities in the destinations should be restored under ecotourism themes. Therefore, this study proposes

establishing 'Eco-cafes' in the locations such as 'Shanthipura', 'Horton Plains', 'Galway forest', 'Ambewela farm', and Nanu Oya Railway station. Moreover, 'Eco Toilets' establishment in every destination, especially in forest areas would be more sustainable. 'Galway forest', 'Horton plains', 'Kande-Ela forest' could be recommended for introducing eco-toilet concepts. It may reduce contamination of clean water and environmental pollution in forest areas.

The concept of 'Eco Lodges' is well applicable in Nuwara Eliya as an ecotourism destination. They provide an eco-friendly environment for the guests since eco-lodges are made of eco-friendly materials. This study suggests building eco-lodges by the lake 'Gregory', at the top of the 'Shanthipura' viewpoint and 'Single Tree' mountains.

Introducing an 'Eco Labeling Program' is significant in upgrading the quality of the goods and services in the industry of ecotourism. The International Standard Organization (ISO) and the Eco-Management and Auditing Scheme (EMAS) also provide common certification schemes based on the application of an environmental management system (Font and Buckley, 2001). Practicing such kind of

certification standard for labeling could be more reliable for the tourists towards the services and products offered by the hotels. Ayurveda treatments also could be provided and promoted under the eco-labeling program in Nuwara Eliya.

The concept of 'Eco Villages' can be recommended as an alternative approach to avoiding road traffic and the crowded environment of the city areas in Nuwara Eliya district during the seasonal periods. These villages may provide an opportunity for Eco-tourists to share their experiences and traditions with village people while moving together. 'Eco Villages' could be formed in remote areas such as Hawa Eliya, Seetha Eliya, Ragala, and Kandapola inspiring with agricultural backgrounds.

'Eco Hubs' can be introduced in Horton plains, Kande-Ela, and Galway forest where the people can feel the adventures of wildlife while enjoying bird watching. Eco hubs could be planned on high lands and treetops with a strong security network. These accommodation projects will be significant to provide accommodation diversification in the ecotourism industry in Nuwara Eliya.

The concept of 'Ecotourism

Zones' is effective for preserving endangered areas. This concept can be applied in 'Horton plains', 'Galway forest', 'Lovers' Leap' waterfalls, 'Adam's Peak', and all the threatened destinations in Nuwara Eliya district. Most sites have been polluted with the unsystematic disposal of polythene and plastics. Such areas can be named as 'plastic and polythene free zones' and work on them. Sound pollution should be prohibited within such zones and the government should carry out a monitoring system to control these misdeeds by the guests who visit these sites.

Product diversification and intensification will be crucial for the competitiveness and sustainable development of destinations (Benur and Bramwell, 2015). Nepal as a top-ranked ecotourism destination in South Asia is currently practicing product diversification strategies in their destinations. Over 80% of all visitors come for holiday and pleasure and over 50% of visitors cite natural attractions as a key consideration for choosing Nepal as a destination. Further, 38% come for trekking and mountaineering expeditions contributing to enrich ecotourism product diversification in Nepal (Bal, 2002). Therefore, countries such as Nepal can be used as models in ecotourism product

diversification relevant to Nuwara Eliya district. Mountains such as 'Pidurutalagala', 'Kirigalpotta', 'Totupolakanda' can be suggested to promote hard trekking and mountaineering expeditions. 'Horton Plains' and 'tea estates' could be further promoted for soft trekking events and camping. 'Harangala mountain range' and 'Ramboda rocky mountain' could be utilized for ecotourism activities such as mountaineering expeditions on the way to Nuwara Eliya. The Adam's Peak, Thalawakelle tea estates, Garandi Ella, St. Claires, and Devon waterfalls can be suggested as possible ecotourism destinations to expand the scope of ecotourism in the Nuwara Eliya district. Further, Kandpola, Ambewela, Hawa Eliya, Sitha-Eliya, Labukelle, and Thalawakelle can be suggested for agro-tourism practices as part of ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya district.

It is important to organize 'regional workshops' with the collaboration of Central and South Asian countries in the region relevant to ecotourism. PATA (Asia Pacific Travel Association) is one of the good examples of regional associations on Tourism in which Sri Lanka holds a partnership. International and non-governmental organizations such as UNEP, UNESCO, UNWTO, and TIES should

involve in ecotourism in the Nuwara Eliya district. It is important to be affiliated with the projects implemented by these organizations since these institutions represent multi-cultural and multinational ethnic groups in the world. Consequently, their ideas, technologies, and strategies could be exchanged in the process of achieving the universal goals of ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya.

Considering transportation, current public transport services should be more flexible towards the Nuwara Eliya district. Especially, the Ceylon Transport Board and Sri Lanka Railway Department could pay their attention to launch direct bus and train services for the foreign tourists to Nuwara Eliya from Katunayaka International Airport upon arrival. Moreover, visitors could be provided traditional foods and beverages onboard, since the journey to Nuwara Eliya may take 5-6 hours. In addition, the Katunayaka railway track could be renovated and combined with a major railway track to Badulla. It would be important for budget travelers to reach Nuwara Eliya at a low cost. Tourists could be facilitated onboard information providing a map of the area proceeding to Nuwara Eliya. The government can grant a fixed and fair amount of fee for tourists who

use public transport. Further, it will be effective to arrange an efficient transport network program from Nanu Oya railway station to ecotourism destinations in Nuwara Eliya district.

This study further suggests re-establishing Udapussellawa's old railway track from Nanu Oya to Ragala via Nuwara Eliya. It will encourage the tourists to visit the remote areas such as Ragala, Hawa Eliya, Ambewela, Pattipola, and Kandapola to experience traditional cultivations and farming lifestyles of host communities. It will be a good approach to promote 'Agro Tourism' and 'Rural Tourism' re-utilizing agricultural villages as ecotourism destinations in Nuwara Eliya.

Most tourists have skipped attractive sites such as 'Kande-Ela forest', 'Lovers' Leap waterfalls', 'Shanthipura viewpoint', Castlereigh due to lack of publicity and promotions. Therefore, establishing SLTDA recognized information supply counters in the city area in Nuwara Eliya will be important especially for the foreign visitors who travel by public transport.

Cultural exchange is an essential element in the industry of ecotourism. In this case, the government can launch 'Awareness

Programs' for the host community and the guests who visit Nuwara Eliya. Through such programs, both local and foreign people might have an opportunity to get together and share traditions, tastes, ideas, and feelings. The attitudes of the people towards the environment and culture could be positively addressed through such awareness programs.

All the above recommendations would be useful to develop ecotourism in Nuwara Eliya district as a sustainable tourism destination. These suggestions and recommendations might deliver a universal approach to the current practice of the ecotourism industry in the hill country. Further, this study might provide an alternative pathway to address the problems regarding present practices of ecotourism following the eco-cultural identities of central highlands in Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study will be useful to the responsible people to guide the future industry towards an eco-friendly universal approach that seeks mutual benefits for its stakeholders in the district of Nuwara Eliya.

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ANNEX 1

Questionnaire of the Survey on Ecotourism, Nuwara Eliya

Your Host Country: - Date :-/...../2020

1. How much do you wish to spend on an eco-tourism holiday in Nuwara Eliya? Please state by using an 'X'.

£0-500 () £1,500-2,000 ()

£500-1,000 () £2,500 + ()

£1,000-1,500 ()

2. What do you think of the amount that you have to spend on ecotourism according to the amount that you wish to spend in Sri Lanka? Please state by using an 'X'.

It is very cheap () It is too much expensive ()

Satisfied () Fair ()

3. What do you think of the accommodation facilities in Nuwara Eliya? Please state by using ✓ according to your mind.

Services given	Satisfied	Not satisfied
Hospitalities		
Foods		
Sanitations		

4. Are you satisfied with the transport facilities in the Nuwara Eliya area in case of accessing visiting places?

Enough () Not enough ()

5. How do you wish to spend your holiday with ecotourism? Please choose one category by using an 'X'

Hiking () Wildlife viewing ()

Camping () Rafting ()

Canoeing () Walking ()

Cycling () Fishing ()

Horseback riding () Bird Watching ()

Cultural Activities ()

6. Did you able to enjoy the above-mentioned activity which you already wished to do in your Nuwara-Eliya visit?

Yes () No () to a certain extend ()

7. Are you satisfied with those ecotourism activities that have been already available in Nuwara Eliya? Please state by using an X.

Yes () No () To a certain extend ()

8. What is your attitude towards the local people in Nuwara Eliya? Please state by using X

Rich in hospitalities ()

Good companion ()

No any good responses towards you ()

Completely neglect yourself as a guest ()

9. Is your accommodation suit the theme of eco-tourism and do you feel and experience the theme inside the accommodation?

Yes () No ()

10. Have you got opportunities to experience the lifestyles of ordinary people and feel the taste of the traditional foods during your lodging at Nuwara Eliya?

Yes () No ()

11. Are you satisfied with the eco-tourism experience in Nuwara Eliya?

Yes () No () Some extend ()

12. What is your attitude towards the prices of goods in Nuwara Eliya according to your wiliness to pay? Please state by using an X.

Satisfied () Very expensive ()

Not Satisfied () Very fair ()

13. What are the places that you would like to mostly visit in Nuwara Eliya as an eco-tourist?

Put the numbers according to your preference to visit.

- i. Horton Plains ()
- ii. Gregory Lake ()
- iii. Nuwara Eliya flower Gardens ()
- iv. Mountain Ranges ()
- v. Wetlands ()
- vi. Flora and Fauna ()

Other Places; Please name them

.....

14. How do you know about those places before coming to Nuwara Eliya? Please state by using an X.

- i. From SLTDA ()
- ii. From web sites on Sri Lanka ()
- iii. I have been Nuwara Eliya before ()
- iv. From my tour operator ()
- v. Other ()

Please mention?

15. What is the purpose of your journey to Nuwara Eliya as an eco-tourist? Please state by using an X.

- i. Enjoy the scenic beauty ()
- ii. A research purpose ()
- iii. Visiting un-crowded destinations ()
- iv. Experiencing remote and unspoiled nature ()
- v. Increasing knowledge of wildlife ()
- vi. See/ study endemic plants and animals ()
- vii. Increasing confidence through challenging activities ()
- viii. Interacting with native people ()

16. What is your main information source about visiting places that you have visited or going to visit in Nuwara Eliya as an Ecotourist? Please state by using an X.

- i. Travel operators ()
- ii. Itinerary books with information on those places ()
- iii. Leaflets those are available from those visiting places ()
- iv. From the local people who surrounded you ()
- v. No any guidance at all ()

17. Do you have real and worthy guidance through the above sources to achieve your objectives? Please state by using an X.

Yes ()

No ()

18. How long are you going to stay at Nuwara Eliya?
Days

Thank You Very Much for your Kind Cooperation!

KIP's who were interviewed and questioned in this research.

- ✓ Officers of SLTDA, Tourism Promotion Bureau, and Hotel Corporation
- ✓ Mayor D.G. Mahinda Kumara, Office at the Nuwara Eliya Municipal Council
- ✓ Managers, owners, and ground staff members of selected 17 hotels under 5 stars, 4 stars, 3star categories, and below.
- ✓ 50 foreign tourists and 50 local tourists who are lodging during the survey lifted.
- ✓ Destination keeper in Nuwara Eliya upon their availability.
- ✓ Tourism-related communities in Nuwara Eliya who are flower suppliers, guides, activity providers, and ordinary people.

GENDERED OPPORTUNITY: A PRE-ACADEMIC CAREER DYNAMIC IN ACADEMIC LIFE

Dr. Kanchana Sujananie Bulumulle¹

ABSTRACT

The discourse surrounding female academics, with their comparatively slow academic progression records, reveals a range of issues arising from gender inequality. This has, predominantly been ratified through traditional feminist perspectives of gender that center upon women and their experience of disadvantage; a focus that leaves the experiences and positioning of male academics largely unattended and unanalysed. This paper¹ therefore focuses on whether male privilege acts to disadvantage the positions of academic women and interrogates role model configurations where this gender relationality is evident; in pre-career experiences located especially in the family. It explores how these experiences and practices influence gender relational outcomes for male and female academics. The research approach is qualitative, and data was collected from Sri Lankan and Australian universities. A multitude of parental and inter-familial influences, and social background factors significantly shape academics' entry and career aspirations. These social factors of motivation include class privilege, positive family support, role modeling and relatively greater opportunity available to male academics through their family backgrounds interwoven with gendered social practices. Female academics reported being significantly restricted due to gendered ideologies prevalent in society in general, than due to family values or support in this regard.

Key words: Gendered opportunity, Academic men and women, Gender relationality, Pre-career dynamics, Gender inequality

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INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality has been an issue of social and academic interest since times that extend beyond memory. It has resulted from the ongoing attempt to categorise and regularise biological men and women as masculine and feminine, arranging them in a hierarchy valuing the male much higher than the female. This situation is constantly and historically at odds with cohesive social development efforts and is questioned and critiqued with much distrust and suspense especially by those subordinated and victimised by this system of ordering.

Further, a large number of studies demonstrate women's under representation in higher education as a major concern (Probert, 2005, Pearson, 2004, Shakleton, Simonis and Riodian, 2005, Husu & Morley, 2000, Brooks, 1997, Park, 1996, Castleman et al, 1995). The discourse surrounding female academics, with their comparatively slow academic progression records, reveals a range of issues arising from this inequality and gendering of academic activities. This interpretation has, however, predominantly been ratified through feminist perspectives of gender that center upon women,

female understandings and their experiences of disadvantage. However, such a focus leaves the experiences and positioning of male academics within those contexts of disadvantage and inequality largely unattended and unanalysed, thus with an implied theoretical irrelevance to the stories and positions of women's disadvantage. These prevailing customary approaches attribute the constructions of under-representation fundamentally to the women-female perspective and to the 'acclaimed lack' of women's capabilities within those interrogations. Therefore, alternatively we need to pay attention to aspects within men's gendered behaviour and their gender constructions of privilege too in this regard (Hearn, 2001, Eveline, 1996, Cockburn, 1991)

THE OBJECTIVE

This research paper, therefore, endeavours to address this deficient and incomplete analysis theoretically, adopting a critical feminist lens to interrogate male privilege and to examine the extent to which male privilege constructs in everyday life, configures and orders women's disadvantage and similarly their under-representation in the academy.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND THE RELATED RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Hence this paper focuses upon one of the key questions of my PhD thesis, accordingly the study aims to analyse the concept of gender relationality. It interrogates a few key areas where this relationality is evident in the accounts of the daily experiences of male and female academics' in the context of pre-career family background. Further, it questions whether male privilege acts to disadvantage the positions of academic women within the sample and interrogates a few main areas with regards to gendered elements in role model configurations where this relationality is evident in the accounts of the daily experiences of male and female academics': particularly in the context of pre-career experiences located in family background. It explores the way in which these experiences and practices located within family influence the construction of gender relational outcomes for male and female academics.

The point of departure thus for this analysis of academics' gender relational experiences is concerned with the pre-career experiences and its influence on their entry into an academic career. These include the dynamics within family background that shaped

employment aspirations of these academics towards an academic career. Here, the aim was to identify whether there were any regular gender relational patterns of privilege and/or disadvantage evident in academics' social backgrounds that contributed towards their academic career aspirations or shaping of academic interest as gendered pre-determinants of their entry into an academic career and success or failure in it.

Here, two specific aspects of the factors regarding family background is being focused upon. One explores the support, exposure and circumstance-related factors in academics' family backgrounds and considers whether these suggest gender relational privilege and disadvantage in the way they are shaped. A second aspect was to understand the relevance of ideologies of femininity and masculinity as sources of the external, to the individual that shaped those aspirations as 'gender sensitive pre academic career determinants'.

LITERATURE

This analysis begins with a brief introduction of what is meant by gender relationality within this analysis and why it is important in the context of male privilege and

academic life. It very briefly reiterates the need for a scrutiny of male privilege in the academy, taking a few explicit reference points from previous feminist research on academic life. Joan Eveline (1996), for example, is a pioneer for her passionate emphasis on the need to shift the analytical focus from a woman-blame approach to an 'essential' articulation of men's advantage. This shift of perception is necessary for a more insightful, *realistic and complete* understanding of the mutuality or *the relationality* of the discourse that constructs the gender advantage/ disadvantage duality (1996: 69). Such an emphasis introduces an innovative critical dimension to the whole analysis of women's less privileged position in academia. These views have been supported by other scholars too such as Hearn (1989), Connell (1995), Harding (1987) and Holter (1970).

GENDER RELATIONALITY IN THE SOCIAL AND FAMILY BACKGROUND

Social learning theories show that significant elements of human social behaviour are 'learned' through primary and secondary socialisation that occurs from infancy within the family, and from childhood into maturity through more formal channels

(Giddens, 2001: 29). The knowledge and behaviour content of these socialisation experiences are acquired via a range of social roles through a multitude of processes. These correspond to and are guided by the multiple social needs normatively defined and related sets of means made available to men and women.

With regards to gender and Social/family background, more specifically theoretical ideas of Ann Okley in 1972 in her work of *Sex Gender and Society* are relevant to this point. She states that feminine and masculine roles are neither innate nor the result of biology, rather the result of prescriptive social processes that leads to self-socialisation, imitation and reinforcement in internalizing and learning gender roles and attributes. Okley refers to four main ways in which socialization into gender roles occur drawing on Ruth Hartley's 1966 typology. These include Manipulation, Canalization, Verbal appellations and Exposedness. In the context of gendered pre-career aspiration construction (of male and female academics'), this idea is very useful and applicable, especially when scrutinizing male female academics' experience in terms of choice of an academic field as well as the career path.

On the other hand, studies largely

point to a very strong link between attitudes to learning; in this case the academic aspiration, educational performance and the various social environments that primarily comprise home, family and parental social orientation that shapes this experience. Further, these studies also point out that *children's* performances are *highly* contingent on the stimulus the home *environment* offers (Owizy, 2012)² whilst the members of the family serve as *role* models providing the child with necessary guidance towards future career Eyake (1997) quoted. Adeyeme (1977), the failure to do so damages the child. Whilst there is a large volume of information and research perhaps focusing on family background and its influence in shaping the career choice of children in general, the gender dynamics and relations that shape and configure career is limited and seem to represent only a few facets of this reality. In the case of Sri Lanka, there is near

absence of such inquiry regarding gendered patterns in academic career choice pertaining to university faculty and academic staff in general.

METHODOLOGY

The research approach is qualitative. Here the concept of gender relationality is analysed considering informal everyday aspects of pre-academic career determinants in family background. The materialisation of privilege/disadvantage relationality has been investigated considering pre-career determinants or gendered opportunity that have been significantly influential in the choice of an academic profession.

Gender relationality is captured and demonstrated as an influence, initiation or intervention which occurs through discursive processes external to the individual her/himself and not of their own making or initiative. Such processes may be experienced as representations in the external world as beliefs and gender ideologies, or in material terms such as in tangible concrete everyday patriarchal normative practices. In a context of gendered (masculine) privilege, these may have positively favorable influence that contribute to meeting positive academic outcomes and career

²The influence of family background on students' academic performance in physics in gboko local government area of benue state. Simon onowa owizy, feb 2012, a project submitted to the department of curriculum and teaching, faculty of education, benue state university, makurdi in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of bachelor of science in education degree in physics [b. Sc ed physics]. Unpublished report

advancement more often for the male academic than for the female. Such initiations **would** simultaneously result in/produce a negative influence on female academics' career advancement due to the **possible** gender bias against women through such unequal practice.

The field data was collected through the method of academic life histories, data collection was carried out over a period of 8 months from 2 predominantly conventional academics in Australia and Sri Lanka (December 2009-July 2010). The total sample includes 37 academics, 20 females and 17 males. The field data was analysed using Foucauldian discourse analysis to illuminate discursive construction and production of gender relationality in everyday social contexts. This paper therefore focuses field data exploring the relevance and impact of the manifestation of male privilege through gender relational opportunity created in pre-career experiences located particularly within family backgrounds and related spaces.

FINDINGS

RELATIONAL PRIVILEGE IN SOCIAL AND FAMILY BACKGROUND

The interviewee responses in this study, revealed a multitude of experiences of parental and inter-familial influences, and social background factors that significantly shape academics' entry and career aspirations. Within these responses, some key trends are observed which exerted a significant influence in shaping academics' career aspirations and choice. While clear and strong privilege and disadvantage gendered relationality/duality was reflected within some of the representations others represent relatively free narratives unaffected by it. Such elements of influence however are seen to primarily represent a class status dynamic which is relatively free from gender bias, whilst a role model configuration that indicated gendered elements [in] shaping academic career aspirations. However, for this discussion, I have selected an investigation with regards to gendered elements in role model configurations that indicate relationality, whilst supporting gender privilege disadvantage duality in academics' pre-career life experiences.

RELATIONAL PRIVILEGE IN GENDERED OPPORTUNITY

In so far as human social behaviour is learned through socialisation (Giddens, 2001: 29), similarly gendered norms of behaviour are also understood to be learned within social relations and social practice (Connell, 2005 Also see Oakley, 1972, 74 regarding gender role socialisation) and this can have a significant influence in shaping our career and work aspirations.

In this sample, significant influence on men and women's choice of an academic career path was experienced in a form of 'gendered opportunity' that shaped individual academic's career aspirations. A clear element of gender relational advantage and disadvantage was evident in the distribution of such opportunities to men and women.

RELATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Embedded within the above noted supportive family environments, positive role models and class privilege, it was evident that a 'privilege of gendered opportunity' was notably present in men's experience. Such opportunities were experienced as chances to venture into academically-motivating, unique public events and occasions in pre-academic life which were usually unavailable or

gendered in female academics' family background related experiences.

Male respondents often cited having experienced such unique academic opportunities and the freedom to get practical experience and exposure in their field forming a strong foundation for shaping academic career inspiration and confidence, implicitly as well as explicitly. The implicit opportunity was realised in two key ways: 1) within upper and middle class backgrounds, this was through sharing and engaging in the inspiring professional achievements of immediate family members such as parents, siblings or relatives, who acted as role models; 2) in lower and poorer class family environments, it was through chances that arose from the constant coaching, support and unique opportunities for developing academic skills and confidence-building that they received. Among these academics, it indicates that the gendered nature of this kind of opportunity and its configuration often set men's and women's experiences apart as privileged and disadvantaged in constructing academic career aspirations. Nevertheless, within the responses there were very few men and women who did not mention any of the above motivational elements in their family environment.

Similarly, there were also a few women who had benefitted by the privilege of opportunity without any obvious gender bias.

Implicit gendered opportunity and class privilege

In the following example the opportunity is represented implicitly. This male has benefitted by the reputation and popularity of his grandfather and by being involved in his socio-political activities.

‘My grandfather was an [Aurvedic³] guru and he was also ... a politician. So he used to engage in a lot of social services and I used to help him. I felt that even during my under graduate life here [being politically active] ...I used to give private tuition too.’

(Senior Lecturer II, Arts, SL, M)

Here, an opportunity to develop a good grasp of academic's own area of specialisation today materialised out of his association with the grandfather. Later in life, he had been a politically active undergraduate, having been

inspired and influenced by and learning from the experiences of the grandfather. Subsequently, teaching students through his own personal initiative presented further opportunity to develop teaching skills and build up confidence towards realistic academic aspirations. Similarly, as discussed in earlier accounts, the availability of opportunity through economic stability & financial security and role modeling present even more evidence in this regard.

Embedded within this kind of explicit opportunity is also an important *implicit* element of confidence that is subtly gendered. The opportunity to build up this kind of confidence is made available ‘naturally’ to men as a right, and this constructs a big part of their privileged position while contributing to their academic success. In the present research the ‘legitimated’ opportunity to build up confidence given to men rather than to women was made evident in some male respondents’ experiences. The confidence element manifests here in the form of encouragement, love and significantly, in the constant and committed propelling of the aspirant towards setting and achieving academic goals by their immediate family, relatives or teachers. For example, a few examples could be cited but the installation of strong career goals

³ The traditional or the indigenous system of medicine/ medical practitioner in Sri Lanka, that has been in existence over centuries.

encouraged and being coached by his father helped one participant to believe in his own capabilities and develop academic confidence as a child.

‘One day my father took me down this road, the road in front of the Engineering faculty...he showed me the faculty and said, ‘Do you know what this faculty is?’ I said I didn’t know. He said, ‘You know this is the X University’s Engineering Faculty and one day you should come here.’...I thought I should somehow try to come here [this faculty] and become an engineer.’

(Senior Lecturer I, Engineering, SL, M)

In this way, similar opportunity for academics without class privilege or positive professional role models within their family backgrounds also received inputs that shaped their academic aspirations, especially being encouraged to have a go and get involved in unique social situations and forums that fostered building the necessary self-confidence and creativity required for an academic career.

‘But my parents had the wisdom...to say, ‘Look, no. If you don’t want to be a farmer, don’t. Go and do

what you need to do.’ So I did...they weren’t academic or university people...I think for me, one of the turning points when I was only very young was in Australia...when we had the Referendum. I remember standing with my father as he was lining up going to vote in that referendum and listening to the conversations around me, ...I was probably only seven. But it’s one of those things that clearly stands out in my mind, and I think from that moment on I just thought, ‘Well that’s where I’ll go. That’s what I’m interested in.’ And that’s what I’ve done.’

(Level D, Social Sciences, Australia, M)

The only positive thing I would have had is... people would come to our house on a Saturday or a Sunday night, they would talk. These are working class people work in factories and farm labourers. They have very long complicated discussions about all sorts of issues...quite involved and technical...I found that very fascinating.

(Level C, Social Sciences, Australia, M)

Explicit gendered opportunity for academic aspirations

Some academics referred more explicitly to the gendered nature of privilege in the forming of academic aspirations. In the following example, the influence of parental coaching and career guidance is seen in the career progression and ambitiousness of siblings of different genders, as comparative career guidance and advancement are differentiated for the two children in the same middle class family, in the same medical profession.

‘Though he was not knowledgeable enough [in medicine] to guide me into selecting the subjects but he gave me overall direction. He said, ‘Becoming a doctor is not enough— you must become a specialist.’ something like that... and my sister was a doctor too, she stopped at a certain level [in her career] because she is a wife and a doctor, and she voluntarily gave up her career at a certain point.’
(Senior Lecturer I, Medicine, SL, M)

Here the encouragement towards further advancement in the medical profession was for the

male to become a ‘specialist’ while his sister remained a general physician. The suggested notion of a voluntary decision on the part of the female not to advance her career clearly warrants further interrogation by problematising the ways in which this so-called ‘voluntary’ decision is embedded within prevailing societal norms and culture, rather than representing a simple expression of choice. The seemingly natural justification given by the respondent of the sister’s decision is typical of the gendered relationality of this opportunity.

Another explicit example of gendered privilege in the opportunity created for academic career aspiration and achievement was articulated in the experiences of the following Sri Lankan Professor.

‘My mother pushed me to go to [better school] a Christian school in a nearby town so, she always wanted me to do well in studies...Well...here probably there was a gender factor, **I was the only boy in the family.** My mother actually wanted everybody to study but she wanted me to study a little bit harder and qualify in whatever I do, and she actually wanted me

to go in the science stream...she is a major influence on me in my [academic] life.'

(Senior Professor, Arts, SL, M)

In addition to his explicit recognition of the 'gender factor' here, this professor pointed out that none of his sisters reached the academic success that he did, nor received equal propelling and coaching.

In a few cases however, the opportunity for academic aspirations within the family background was reported by females, though it entailed a notable degree of gender bias. Mainly this opportunity was experienced as role modeling or as an academically supportive and conducive family environment. A few female academics in male dominated disciplines pointed out that their academic aspiration for entering into masculine disciplines may have been influenced by association with male siblings. For some it was the parents or relatives. However, it was noted that these experiences within class privilege showed gendered patterns to a lesser degree than those experienced within working class or poorer class environments. For example, for the following respondent, taking up residence with an aunt who was an academic living in a university hostel had

inspired academic career aspirations through role modeling.

'I had the influence of my Aunt who was an academic because I knew she was teaching in the university...like especially after I joined the university I came and I moved in with her [she lived on campus] ... then I thought how nice it is being a student here [university] and then to work here and I thought it would be like may be one percent of the people getting that opportunity.'

(Senior Lecturer II, Science, SL, F)

In the case below, the female is also from a middle class family environment. Her mother's perseverance and dedication in ensuring university education for her children, and setting up foundations for it, provide the opportunity in this case. However, the gendered nature of ambitious pursuit of academic aspirations by both men and women can be observed within this example. The female here expresses a half-hearted commitment and ambition towards achieving and performing at the highest level in the following response.

'It was not like I wanted to become an engineer as such; I don't know, for

some reason my parents didn't push me or my sisters for that matter. I had best results for Ordinary Level Exam. I was the only girl who had eight Distinctions from my school...but still I did not want to like cram a lot and do my studies. I wanted just to make sure (that) I got through the exam to enter the university and did that part...I didn't have any idea at all about joining the university as a lecturer, not at all. I was kind of average, I could have done better but I didn't want to cram myself so much and I wanted to enjoy the life at the University... and my idea was that I wanted to go to the university and get that experience, and because my mother was selected to (University) ...when she did her Advanced Level exam...and then she got married, she never got the chance to go to university because my father said 'no you should stay at home'. It was her dream to send one of us [girls] to (University).'

(Senior Lecturer II, IT, SL, F)

From the above examples it can be observed that in the context of

class privilege some females do have the benefit of opportunity. However, they often indicate that it may be gendered and disadvantageous towards women more generally within family environments. In fact, the opportunity and encouragement towards practical, public engagement is relatively high in men's reports while poorly experienced by women in the sample.

RELATIONAL DISADVANTAGE

Thus men's privilege is seen to be realised through the multiple opportunities offered them in family backgrounds that support and help build up confidence and positive strength. By contrast, some specific experiences of women, present the relative disadvantage women suffer in being deprived of these opportunities, making it difficult for women to build up the same level of confidence to which most men in the sample had 'legitimate' access.

Let us take a closer look at the way this situation has been constructed. For these respondents, gendered employment aspirations that were resistant to academic career aspiration-building had taken place by way of specific social practices, in particular the gender

differentiated social aspirations that parents hold and practice and notably, the limitations on career choice enforced through gender stereotyped career aspirations.

Gendered employment aspirations of parents

The following example highlights the negative influence that parents can effect in this regard.

My parents were very angry with me... when I was in year 10 they said, 'We think it is time that [you] should decide whether [you are] to be a hairdresser or to work in some sort of butchering trade' (which was what my parents did) and I said, 'I don't care for either of those' and I wanted to read books, and they said, 'No, you have to choose one of those', and I said, 'No I was not doing any of that stuff'.

(Level E, Health, Australia, F)

This report shows how some women experience considerable retaliation and disapproval within the family if they want to deviate from the traditional line of occupations and strive for upward mobility. These attitudes can result from ideologies of class as well as those concerning gender-

appropriate career goals. Also in certain other experience of an Australian female, strong encouragement towards forming academic career aspirations was explicitly lacking and possibly seen as irrelevant.

'I think my gender probably maybe limited me in the beginning in areas I thought that I could do. I don't know whether it was just gender or whether it is the lack of self-confidence. For example I remember earlier in school liking science...and then I thought well I could be a laboratory assistant, that was like my highest thing that I could achieve within science and that I am sure was because I thought I was a woman..., I didn't think that I could be a scientist; [but] a laboratory assistant...and then I think when I did start university and I enrolled in drama initially at...[X] University and I really would have liked to have done that... but I never thought I could be a film director you know?...So...I don't know whether that was gender or self-confidence and in terms of what I could do, but I suspect gender played a part in that.'

(Level B, Arts, Australia, F)

Gender stereotyping and naturalised career aspirations

Specific disadvantage frequently

manifests itself by way of limiting chances of free movement in one's own choice of a career especially due to gendered ideologies concerning an appropriate career path. This was much more commonly reported by women in the sample than men, because they felt limited by societal notions of what was appropriate employment for them, with or without their knowledge. These experiences clearly exemplify the level of confidence generally accessible by the exercise of freedom to choose a career in society (Refer above quote).

Most women respondents in both countries here expressed great difficulty in challenging these conventions, especially when deciding on an academic area, and often gave into them for reasons of social survival and acceptance. The extent to which these constructions and conditionings are naturalised also emerges as astonishingly real.

Gender disadvantage was particularly evident in female academics' selection of academic disciplines and areas of specialisation, diminishing females' aspirations for entering into more privileged, male dominated discipline areas. Some females in science-oriented disciplines reported explicitly their experience of gendered influence when choosing their area of

specialisation. The following two responses in Sri Lanka articulate how certain areas of skill had been carefully removed or made unavailable to females as a result of the strategic stereotyping of feminine and masculine discipline areas.

'In my fourth year I wanted to do fisheries. I loved going out into the sea and all and then because I was a girl and because I was the only one who chose fisheries and the professor in charge said, 'it will be difficult to do' because I have to go by the boats to the sea and all. Then I was taken aback because I wanted to do [fisheries].'

(Senior Lecturer II, Sciences, SL, F)

Here a career door closes naturally and explicitly for reasons of gender. In the following experience, a Sri Lankan female's choice of discipline shows clear connotations of gender undermining her free choice because she was aware of the limitations imposed by society for women in employment that involves high levels of outdoor practical engagement. The situation of 'naturalised exclusion' is further aggravated in this respondent's representations due to notions/awareness of Asian

cultural restrictions for women.

'I never liked engineering for some reason. For example, I didn't like the practical side, and I thought if I become an engineer, I was not good at hands on experiments that much, relative to problem solving. [I am] more into the theoretical science but not practical; that is something common to lot of females. (Were you not good at it or were you not interested?) Both..., I never liked, haven't tried until then, I would have been behind if I went for engineering because of my inability on the practical side...that is the culture what we live in. So that [gender] was also probably a contributory factor in my decision. Because I thought if I became an Engineer it will all be practical work.'

(Senior Lecturer II, Science, SL, F)

Research studies have numerously argued that women academics are relatively less ambitious and driven in their career pursuits and academic progression (Probert, 2005). Some academics' responses regarding their pre-career undergraduate experiences vividly reveal the influence of culture in the construction of gendered disadvantage. Academic and career

pursuit decisions in everyday life reflect the way male employment is prioritised over female, and their impact on academic aspirations for women is demonstrated clearly.

A similar impact with regard to women's aspirations and the shaping of them was evident in a reversal of experiences by a male academic. This respondent represented the privilege bestowed on him in his own academic career as triggered by the gendered aspirations of his girlfriend, who preferred him to excel and to prioritise his career aspirations over hers. This resulted in lower achievement as an under graduate on her part compared to his. In this case, women's perception in the South Asian culture that a man's career should receive more significance and priority within the intimate relationships between partners would probably have played a role in the shaping of the gendered aspirations observed in this account.

'Then really she [my wife, then girlfriend] motivated me a lot...she did her Advance Level well, got better results than me but for the Degree she only got an average pass...she really worked hard for me and she wanted me to excel, so she supported, those days she was doing those

individual classes and she would attend the lectures get notes and give everything to me, so there was that type of motivation, support and push.'

(Senior Lecturer II, Management, SL, M)

CONCLUSION

The above analysis has been concerned with socially motivational factors in shaping academic career aspirations in the context of pre-career family related factors. The gender relational nature of those experiences suggests several clear insights. In particular, the basic factors motivating academic aspiration include class privilege, positive family support for educational pursuits, and professional role modeling, especially by fathers. Within this sample of experiences class privilege was gendered to a lesser degree.

On the other hand, relational male privilege was clearly evident and demonstrated itself largely in the greater number of opportunities available to male academics through their family backgrounds interwoven with gendered social practices and the relative freedom they enjoyed in the choice of discipline areas. This facilitated a much greater lack of inhibition for men in constructing career goals,

aspirations and avenues into academic career pursuits. Although parental support was almost a parallel privilege for both male and female academics, men's accounts of being channeled into academic career paths and receiving encouragement displayed a much more vigorous intensity and subtle commitment than was represented in female academics' experiences. Females reported being restricted much more significantly due to gender ideologies than due to family values or support.

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