

2021
DECEMBER



HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION IN SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITIES

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

VOLUME III

Edited by

Premakumara de Silva

Wimal Hewamanage

Asha Nimali Fernando

Lalith Ananda



UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION
SRI LANKA



**HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION IN
SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITIES: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE**

VOLUME III

**Publications of Centenary Celebration of Humanities and
Social Sciences in Sri Lankan Universities (1921-2021)**

Beyond Boundaries: One Hundred Years of Humanities and Social
Sciences in Sri Lankan Universities - Volume I: Humanities - 2021

Beyond Boundaries: One Hundred Years of Humanities and Social
Sciences in Sri Lankan Universities - Volume II: Social Sciences
- 2021

A Survey on the Satisfaction of Graduands and Graduates:
Humanities and Social Sciences Education in the State Universities
in Sri Lanka - 2021

Book of Abstracts: Humanities and Social Sciences Education
in Sri Lankan Universities: Issues & Challenges - 2021

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION IN SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITIES: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

VOLUME III

Edited by
Premakumara de Silva
Wimal Hewamanage
Asha Nimali Fernando
Lalith Ananda



**UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION
SRI LANKA**

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review.

University Grants Commission - Sri Lanka.

**Humanities and Social Sciences Education in
Sri Lankan Universities: Past, Present, and Future - Volume III**

First Edition: October 2022

© University Grants Commission – Sri Lanka

**Cataloguing-in-Publication Data Approved by the
National Library and Documentation Services Board**

Humanities and Social Sciences Education in Sri Lankan Universities : Past, Present,
and Future - Volume III / ed. Premakumara de Silva., [et al.] - Colombo : University
Grants Commission, 2022
332 p. : 25 cm

ISBN 978-624-5980-09-3

i. 300 72 DDC 23

ii. Title

iii. de Silva, Premakumara (ed.)

1. Social Sciences - Congresses

2. Universities and Colleges - Congresses

ISBN: 978-624-5980-09-3

Edited by

Premakumara de Silva

Wimal Hewamanage

Asha Nimali Fernando

Lalith Ananda

Cover Design by

Nalaka Wijewardhana

Layout Design by

Dilantha Muthugala

Printed by

Government Press, Colombo

Published by

University Grants Commission - Sri Lanka,

No. 20, Ward Place, Colombo 7.

Content

List of Figures and Tables	vii
Abbreviations	viii
Chief Editor's Acknowledgements	xi
Foreword	xiii
Introduction: Humanities and Social Sciences Education: Past, Present, and Future <i>Premakumara de Silva</i>	xxiii
PART I: Higher Education in Sri Lanka: A Historical Perspective	1
1. Education in Pre-Modern Sri Lanka: Scope, Content and Institutions <i>Wimal Hewamanage, Raluwe Padmasiri Thera, Asanga Tilakaratne</i>	3
2. Reflections on the Growth and Development of University Education in Sri Lanka: A Historical Perspective <i>C.R. de Silva, G.K. Jayathilaka</i>	29
PART II: Current Status of Humanities and Social Sciences Education	47
3. Present Status of Humanities Education in Sri Lanka <i>Marie Perera</i>	49
4. Current Status of Social Science and Humanities Education: An Exploratory Study <i>Farzana Haniffa</i>	62
PART III: 'Arts' Graduate Employability	83
5. Employability of State University Graduates: Stakeholders' View <i>Vallipuram Kanagasingam</i>	85
6. Employability and Unemployment of Humanities and Social Sciences Graduates in Sri Lanka: An Economics Analysis <i>O.G. Dayaratna-Banda, P.D.C.S. Dharmadasa</i>	96
7. Measuring Graduate Employability: A Critical Assessment of Employability Goal in Higher Education Plans <i>Athula Ranasinghe</i>	121
8. Employability Issues of Graduates: Arts Stream in the State Universities <i>Jeevaretnam Kennedy</i>	136
9. Square Pegs in Round Holes: Employability of Social Sciences and Humanities Graduates in Sri Lanka <i>Thangamuthu Jayasingam</i>	141

PART IV: Teaching, Learning and Assessment	149
10 Collaboration for Teaching and Assessment in Higher Education: Merits, Issues and Quality Assurance <i>Kalyani Perera</i>	151
11 Re-designing Learning Environments to Enhance Creation and Sharing of Open Educational Resources <i>Shironica P. Karunanayaka</i>	164
PART V: English Language Skill	179
12 Building Confidence to Speak English: A Remedy for the Poor English Language Competencies of the Undergraduates <i>Asantha U. Attanayake</i>	181
13 Developing Reading and Writing Skills in English of Arts Undergraduates Through Content Based Materials <i>S.K. Kannathas</i>	197
PART VI: Research, Innovation and Publication	209
14 Repositioning the Product and Process in Research Publishing <i>Dushyanthi Mendis</i>	211
15 Research and Innovation: The Application of Social Network Analysis in University-Industry Collaborations <i>Vathsala Wickramasinghe</i>	226
16 University Industry Collaborations: Trends and Practical Difficulties Faced by Sri Lankan Public Universities <i>R.G. Ariyawansa</i>	240
PART VII: Plans for Future	255
17 Opportunities and Challenges in International Collaboration in Higher Education: A Developing Country Perspective <i>S.T.W.S. Yapa</i>	257
18 Plans for Future Development in the Field of Humanities and Social Sciences in State Universities in Sri Lanka <i>Premakumara de Silva, Sampath Amaratunge</i>	276
Concluding Remarks	288
Index of Persons	290
Notes on Contributors	297
Editorial Board and Copy Editor	301

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figures

3.1:	The benefits of studying humanities	50
6.1:	The causes of graduate unemployment	108
6.2:	Projected labour force participation rate	111
6.3:	Distribution of employment by sectors	112
7.1:	Unemployment rate by education and gender 2020	123
7.2:	Issues of employment goal	131
11.1:	TRACK framework	166
11.2a & 2b:	A simple and detailed concept maps	171
11.3:	Perceptions of the participants during Phase 1	172
11.4:	Distribution of marks of participants for development of TEL material	174
12.1:	Confidence to speak English with friends inside the classroom after the course	186
12.2:	Confidence to speak English with friends outside the classroom after the course	186
12.3:	Confidence to speak English with teachers inside the classroom after the course	186
12.4:	Confidence to speak English with teachers outside the classroom after the course	187
12.5:	Confidence to speak English in front of the class after the course	187
12.6:	Confidence to speak English with anyone who speaks English after the course	187
12.7:	The fear/shyness to speak English after the course is reduced	191
12.8:	The uncertainty to use words after the course	191
12.9:	The vocabulary development after the course-	191
12.10:	The preference to speak English after the course	192
13.1a:	Linguistics - Second Year	204
13.1b:	Linguistics - Second Year	204
13.2a:	Linguistics - Third Year	205
13.2b:	Linguistics - Third Year	205
13.3a:	Economics - Second Year	205
13.3b:	Economics - Second Year	206
13.4a:	Economics - Third Year	206
13.4b:	Economics - Third Year	206

Tables

2.1:	State universities functioning under the UGC	35, 36
2.2:	Companies authorised to teach tertiary programs	39, 40
2.3:	Enrolment at universities and higher education institutions under the supervision of the University Grants Commission 2019	41

3.1:	List of institutes connected with humanities studies under UGC	54
5.1:	Overview of thematic analysis	92, 93
6.1:	The importance the employers attach to graduates' knowledge	102
6.2:	The importance the employers attach to graduates' soft skills	103
6.3:	The importance the employers attach to graduates' skills to perform individually	103
6.4:	The importance the employers attach to graduates' ability to perform in groups	104
6.5:	The importance the employers attach to graduates' socio-economic conditions	105
6.6:	Methods of government graduate job placements	114
7.1:	Findings of graduate employability studies of Sri Lanka	125, 126
7.2:	Skills demanded by employers	128
7.3:	The QS ranking: employment vs employer	133
8.1:	Contexts used by different countries for the term generic skills	139
11.1:	Process of the intervention	169
11.2:	A summary of results of Phase 1 of the Intervention	173
11.3:	A summary of results of phase 2 of the intervention	175, 176
12.1:	GCE (O/L) results and student groups	184
12.2:	GCE (A/L) results and student groups	185
12.3:	Students feedback on the teacher and her teaching	188
12.4:	Lesson materials and content	189
12.5:	Time/duration	189
12.6:	Other comment on the course	190
12.7:	The preference to learn English after the course	193
14.1	Minimum marks/standards	220
15.1:	Modes of U-I collaboration - main areas & activities	232
16.1:	Number of Universities, faculties and departments in Sri Lanka	241
16.2:	Country ranks for UICs, R&D, innovation, and research	242
16.3:	Examples of ecosystems for innovations	246
16.4:	Trending establishments in Sri Lankan universities 2019-2020	247, 248
16.5:	Types of UICs in Sri Lanka universities and key motivations	249
16.6:	Process of UICs motivations in Sri Lankan Universities	250
16.7:	Levels of barriers and issues in state universities for UICs	251
17.1:	Internationalization activities of universities as identified by different authors	259
17.2:	Process approach for defining internationalization	260
17.3:	University rankings and indicators used in different rankings	262
17.4:	Barriers and challenges in internationalization	263
17.5:	A comparison of international staff and students in different universities (2020)	265
17.6:	Categories related to barriers in international student exchange	267
17.7:	Extract from Higher Education Malaysia Internationalization policy 2011	268

ABBREVIATIONS

UGC	University Grants Commission
CMB	University of Colombo
PDN	University of Peradeniya
SJP	University of Sri Jayewardenepura
KLN	University of Kelaniya
MRT	University of Moratuwa
UJA	University of Jaffna
RUH	University of Ruhuna
EUSL	Eastern University, Sri Lanka
SEUSL	South Eastern University of Sri Lanka
RUSL	Rajarata University of Sri Lanka
SUSL	Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka
WUSL	Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
UWU	Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka
UVPA	University of the Visual & Performing Arts
GWUIM	The Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine, Sri Lanka
OUSL	The Open University of Sri Lanka
SVIAS	Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies
RAFA	Ramanathan Academy of Fine Arts
SP	Sripalee Campus
TRINCO	Trincomalee Campus
VAV	University of Vavuniya

CHIEF EDITOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This collection has been developed as a part of the Sri Lankan universities celebrating hundred years (1921-2021) of teaching Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) and is primarily an outcome of the deliberation of conference papers presented at this national event held on 20th and 21st of December, 2021, organized by the Standing Committee of HSS, University Grants Commission (UGC). At the time of inception of this scholarly task, numerous people and institutions have been instrumental in bringing this collection together, and I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all of them and acknowledge all the support extended to the editorial committee to compile the collection. Most importantly, I would like to thank all the chapter writers, since this collection certainly would not have materialized without their commitment and valuable contribution.

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to Professors Wimal Hewamanage, Lalith Ananda and Dr. Asha Fernando for their invaluable editorial contributions during the process of developing the collection. A special thanks goes to Dr. Asha Fernando for coordinating the conference and chapter writers by showing much enthusiasm in producing this scholarly work. Prof. Lalith Ananda deserves a particular note of appreciation for his copy-editorial support in the collection as well. My gratitude also goes to Emeritus Professor Jayadeva Uyangoda, for providing a thought provoking foreword to the collection at short notice.

At UGC, I must adequately acknowledge the valuable guidance and support given by Senior Professor Sampath Amaratunge, the Chairman of the UGC and the Vice-Chairman Prof. Chandana P. Udawatta and all other Commission Members, Senior Professors, Kotapitiye Rahula Thera, Vasanthi Arsaratnam, Ananda Jayawardena, Mr. Palitha Kumarasinghe PC and Mr. R.H.W.A. Kumarasiri to accomplish this edited collection quite successfully. I am very grateful to the Chairman, Committee of Vice-Chancellors & Directors (CVCD) including all the Vice-Chancellors of the 17 state universities who gave their fullest support by providing adequate financial resources and advice. We are grateful to all our members including the Deans of the Standing Committee for Humanities and Social Sciences of the UGC for the amount of support and encouragement provided to publish this collection.

I must also thank Hon. Minister of Education, Dr. Susil Premajayantha, former Minister Mr. Dinesh Gunawardena and Hon. State Minister for Higher Education, Dr. Suren Raghavan, for the guidance and support provided to us to complete this task. I must

deeply acknowledge the members of the overall Organizing Committee of Centenary Celebrations including Emeritus Professor K.N.O. Dharmadasa, the Secretary/UGC, Dr. Priyantha Premakumara, Accountant / UGC Mr. R.A.U. Ranaweera, Prof. Wimal Hewamanage, Dr. Asha Fernando, Deputy Secretaries, Ms. Janadari Wijesinghe, Mr. Rasika Karunarathna, Ms. Srimathi Wijewardena, Senior Assistant Secretaries, Mr. Samantha Wickramaarachchi, Ms. Chamini Gunawardena, Assistant Secretary, Ms. Maheepa Senadeera, the staff of the Academic Affairs Department, General Administration Division and overall staff of the UGC, not only for their tremendous effort to make this historical event a reality but also for providing adequate support for bringing this publication. Finally, I would like to offer my thanks to the Chairman of the Government Press, Ms. Gangani Liyanage and the staff for helping us to print the collection as they did for the previous two volumes.

Premakumara de Silva

31st October 2022

FOREWORD

It is indeed with much pleasure that I write this Foreword to the volume *Humanities and Social Sciences Education in Sri Lankan Universities: Past, Present, and Future*. I thank the Chief Editor of this volume, Professor Premakumrara de Silva, for giving me this honour.

While celebrating the one hundred years of Sri Lanka's modern university system, it may be useful for the university community as well as the public to reflect on some of the major challenges faced by the system in the past as well as at present. The metaphor crisis is used here to describe some facets of seemingly insurmountable barriers to further advancement not only of the social science and humanities education in Sri Lanka's universities, but also the university system as a whole. Institutional stagnation, incapacity for further growth, and continued alienation from the society have been three dimensions of the systemic crisis for quite some time. These have impacted on the higher education in the social sciences and humanities in ways specific to them as much as that have on the other, science and technology- oriented faculties.

Four major turning points seem to mark four phases in the history of Sri Lanka's modern university education since the university college was set up in 1921. The first turning point was the setting up of University of Ceylon, with degree awarding mandate, in 1942 bringing an end to the status of affiliation of Ceylon University College to the University of London. It was the culmination of an agitation launched by the Sri Lanka's local elites to set up a fully-fledged 'national' university reflecting the 'nationalist' aspirations germinating since the early decades of the century. The second turning point was the period 1955-56. It was during this phase that a strong cultural nationalist argument was made by the Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist movements for the vernacularisation and indigenisation of university education, departing from the British colonial university model of university by the elites for the elites. The third phase began during 1971-72 amidst the political shocks of the youth insurgency of 1971. It marked the recognition that expansion of Sri Lanka's school and university education under the welfare state had produced a 'mismatch' between the society's needs for free universal education and the dwindling capacity of a weak, post-colonial economy to generate adequate employment opportunities. It was during this third phase that major policy reforms in the fields of school and university education began to be implemented, though with mixed outcomes, seeking realignment of the entire spectrum of education with employment orientation. This was also the background

which had forced the policy makers to re-think the optimism about the university's contribution to the nation-building project. The fourth phase began during the mid-1990s under a shift occurring in the world economy as well as national economies towards globalization. It brought an entirely new value orientation – economic rationality – to evaluating the social and individual utility of education exclusively in material terms.

Meanwhile, during the past decade or so, which falls within the fourth phase of our periodization, the humanities and social science faculties, which are generally known to produce 'arts graduates,' have been facing a unique crisis. It refers to the erosion of social and political support and legitimacy which these two streams of university education had enjoyed in the past, leading to an ideology of doubt even among the students whether pursuing an 'arts degree' would bring any demonstrable economic or social benefit. There have also been several attempts made by the authorities through policy reforms aiming at re-orienting the social science and humanities education in the universities. Their key aim was to enable the universities to meet the requirements of the employment market that is dominated by the finance capital under the new conditions of globalization and neo-liberalization of the world economy. This re-framing of the goals and outcomes of education has also cast doubts not only about the economic rationality of the conventional 'liberal arts' approach to university education, but also of the relevance of humanistic ethics that had guided the philosophical assumptions of liberal arts education. Underlying this new policy dogma, or the official ideology of reforms, that began to change our universities too was the renewal of a narrowly utilitarian rationality in terms of economic costs and benefits of education. One of its key features was the de-emphasizing of the social transformative and human emancipatory goals of education as a public social good, particularly in societies with deep and historically rooted inequalities. The current debates on Sri Lanka's university education are primarily centred on the merits and demerits as well as consequences of the market-oriented reforms.

Essays of this volume discuss in detail some of the major challenges that the university system has been facing. Nevertheless, I wish to draw the readers' attention to a few additional challenges that too warrant careful reflection by the university communities.

Institutional Stasis

The institutional stasis, or inertia, is a factor that affects all the Faculties of Sri Lanka's universities and the university life as a whole. It is rooted in the continuity of the university college model that began when Sri Lanka was still a British colony in 1921 and preserved by the university of Ceylon Ordinance of 1942 as well as the subsequent universities acts.

- a. to provide for instruction in such branches of arts, science and learning as the University may determine, and also to make provision for research and for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge;

- b. to hold examinations for the purpose of ascertaining the persons who have acquired proficiency in different branches of study;
- c. to provide postgraduate courses and for this purpose to co-operate with other universities or authorities, in such manner and for such purposes as the university may determine;

The Universities Act of 1978

9. Subject to the powers, duties and functions of the Commission, a university shall have power - Powers of a university.

- a. to admit students and to provide for instruction in any approved branch of learning;
- b. to hold examinations for the purpose of ascertaining the persons who have acquired proficiency in different branches of learning;
- c. to co-operate, by way of exchange of teachers, students and scholars or otherwise, with other universities or institutions in Sri Lanka or abroad, having objects similar or substantially similar to those of the university;
- d. to provide postgraduate courses, and for this purpose, to co-operate with other universities or authorities in Sri Lanka or abroad, in such manner and for such purposes as the university may determine;

Although the legal provisions have not specifically made Sri Lankan universities to be primarily oriented towards conducting undergraduate degree programmes, they have maintained a model since 1942 that has not permitted conducting full-time post-graduate education and research as part of the university mandate and everyday activity. The main mandate of university of Ceylon was “to provide for instruction in such branches of arts, science and learning as the university may determine, and also to make provision for research and for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge.” The provision in the university of Ceylon Act of 1943 empowered the university ‘to provide postgraduate courses and “to co-operate with other universities” in conducting such courses. However, there has been very little, or even no interest in promoting post- graduate education in Sri Lanka. In the absence of post-graduate study programmes of its own, the university of Ceylon encouraged its academic staff to go abroad for post-graduate education. Or else, those who had been recruited to academic positions already possessed post-graduate qualifications from abroad, primarily from the British elite universities. Because of the colonial genealogy of Sri Lanka’s university system, most of the university teachers were sent to the prestigious British universities for their post-graduate training, a legacy which still persists in Sri Lanka as well as many former British colonies.

The non-availability of post-graduate degree courses had a negative impact on the further professional development of those who had acquired post-graduate qualifications, before or after joining the university teaching staff. They had to spend

most of their academic careers teaching only undergraduate students. In those early days, only a very few did post-graduate degrees at local universities. There was no system to provide post-graduate instruction through course work since the model followed at the time was awarding post-graduate degrees on the acceptance of a research-based thesis supervised by a senior academic. Thus, those post-graduate students were not considered as members of the regular student community of the university. Invariably, their links with the university academic life remained marginal.

The reorganization of the Sri Lankan university system carried out during the 1970s, first in 1973 and then 1978, did not alter at all the undergraduate college model of the Sri Lankan university education. This is notwithstanding the fact that the Universities Act of 1978 reproduced the wording of relevant clause the 1943 act on postgraduate education without any change. In both instances, the two Acts empowered the university “to provide postgraduate courses, and for this purpose, to co-operate with other universities or authorities in Sri Lanka or abroad, in such manner and for such purposes as the University may determine.”

An important change that occurred still within the university college model was the setting up of Faculties of Graduate Studies (FGS) to offer part - time post-graduate courses. The first such FGS was established at the University of Colombo in 1985. Since then, several universities in Sri Lanka have established their own FGSs. All of them follow the Colombo University’s model of part-time post-graduate education conducted on the weekends, through an ad hoc teaching staff. However, despite the proliferation of FGSs and the phenomenal increase in the numbers of post-graduate candidates in the Sri Lankan universities, the outdated and worn - out university college model persists with exclusively under-graduate oriented university life. On Saturdays and Sundays, the university class rooms and under-equipped cafeterias are largely occupied by post-graduate candidates who attend classes ranging from the post-graduate diploma to the Ph.D. courses. This increasingly large post-graduate populations are not integrated into the regular university life. Since they exist in the margins of the regular university life, there is hardly any interaction between them and the larger undergraduate student population. Nor are the post-graduate students expected to involve in, or make a contribution to, the university’s intellectual life on a day-to-day basis, since they are institutionally being treated as externals. That is how even the FGS system indirectly sustains the outdated and worn out, undergraduate college model of the Sri Lankan universities.

This takes us directly to the related issue of how our university system has not been able to benefit from the advantages that post-graduate education could offer to a university to sustain a holistic university culture of excellence in all aspects of the production and dissemination of knowledge - teaching, training, research, publication, and intellectual engagement. Since the post-graduate education is not integrated with the everyday life of our universities, there is no institutional space for a vibrant and visible university culture built on research, knowledge creation and innovation, intellectual engagement

and debates, and even inter-university academic exchange even within the country. In the absence of interaction with the community of graduate students who are engaged in advanced learning and the production of new knowledge through research, our undergraduate students could only remain poorer in their intellectual socialization within the university.

Worst still, without teaching in postgraduate courses as part of a regular professional commitment and duty, and largely confined to undergraduate teaching and evaluation, our university teachers find no professional compulsion to engage in advanced learning, innovative research, or authentic academic publishing. Moreover, the absence of regular engagement in training and supervision of advanced research students, who should be following masters and doctoral programmes in line with international standards and quality, has impacted negatively on the career development of many of our university academics. They are deprived of the professional compulsion and institutional incentives for updating their own knowledge, skills, competencies and levels of scholarly excellence through teaching excellence, original research, national and international publications, conference participation, and recognition outside their own departments. They are institutionally conditioned to feel content with mere disseminators of mundane knowledge to undergraduate students who are culturally inhibited to challenge their teachers. It is no surprise that there has been a recent tendency among young and middle-level university academics to be allured by the prospects of becoming MPs, or political appointees to positions of government or semi-government institutions, with advanced pecuniary benefits, yet subservient to much less educated political bosses.

Moreover, the inexplicably lax procedures for recruitment and promotion to senior academic positions of professor are a twisted outcome of the absence of a rigorous culture of research, conferences, and academic publication in our university system. The faculties of humanities, arts, management, and commerce of some universities are specifically affected by this twin problem that has produced a sizeable population of professors and senior lecturers possessing poor record of authentic research and publication. It is a sad reflection of the decaying standards of our university system that while the universities are densely populated with professor level academics, their contribution to post-graduate teaching and research remains dismally marginal.

University Autonomy and Governance

An important issue which is yet to receive sustained attention of the university academic and student communities is the question of autonomy in relation to university governance. The idea of university autonomy in Sri Lanka has evolved since the days of the University of Ceylon. Until the early 1970s, it essentially meant academic freedom and non-interference in the university administration by the government. However, things began to change after the passing of the Higher Education Act of 1966 and the University Act of 1972. Both these legislations placed the universities under greater government control in the internal administration as well as in

determining the composition of Faculties and study courses in each university. That reflected an argument, which began to evolve in Sri Lanka since the late 1950s, that as the universities were public institutions maintained exclusively through public funds sanctioned by parliament and disbursed through the Treasury, the government should have control over the university administration as well. This became the official thinking as well as policy of the government during the late 1960s and it still continues. What is nevertheless noteworthy is that there has been no new legislation passed since the Universities Act of 1978 seeking direct government interference in university autonomy or academic freedom. One attempt to amend the Universities Act to enhance ministerial control of the universities was quashed by the Supreme Court in 1999 when the constitutionality of the draft law was challenged through a fundamental rights petition. In its determination the court declared that academic freedom and autonomy were “essential requisites for the attainment of the objectives of any higher educational institutions” (Udagama Vs. Attorney General, 1999).

However, even the framework of government control without curtailing academic freedom sanctioned by the existing universities act of 1978 after its amendment in 1985 has had a negative impact on the university autonomy in an indirect, yet insidious, manner. The issue is related to the ways in which some of the key appointments to the university administration are open to political decision-making and politicization. From the very inception of the UGC in 1978, the appointee to the post of its chairman has been a political loyalist of the party in power. Most of the Vice-Chancellors and Directors of Institutions affiliated to universities have also been appointed through a process that allows political lobbying and loyalty checks, rather than academic credentials, managerial excellence, personal and professional stature, or the respect commanded by the individuals concerned among the university communities. The politicization of appointments to the highest levels of university governance has produced a general culture of administrative politicisation of the university life. It has unfortunately, and not unexpectedly, led to producing and sustaining a general culture of factionalism, divisions, victimization, and demoralization, particularly among the academic and non-academic communities. This is one dimension of the decline of the stature and esteem which the Sri Lankan universities had earlier enjoyed as public institutions of higher learning.

There are also problems specific to the humanities and social science education and research in our universities that have a corrosive impact on higher education. Two among them are the loss of the social prestige and economic value of the degrees in the social science and humanities fields, and the absence of a general culture of research and publication among the academics belonging to the disciplines affiliated to these faculties. Of the two, the first is reflective of the general crisis of education in Sri Lanka that has roots in the social and economic structures. The second is largely an outcome of the persistence of the overall institutional framework of the Sri Lankan universities in the mould of undergraduate colleges for ever.

Questions concerning the economic rationality of spending public resources on humanities and social science education began during the mid 1970s when the 'problem of unemployment among the educated youth' became a topic of policy debates after the youth Insurgency of 1971. This was also the time when the so-called mismatch between university education and availability of employment opportunities was diagnosed for the first time as the new policy challenge in higher education. Since the mid-1970s, proposals and policy reforms for employment-oriented education in the social sciences and humanities faculties were experimented by successive governments with little success. The anomaly between university education and the availability of employment for graduates highlighted a greater paradox, namely, the incompatibility between democratization of the opportunities for education under Sri Lanka's welfare state and the structural limitations of Sri Lanka's post-colonial economy to respond to the progressively expanding social needs for more higher education and more jobs.

It was against the persistence of Sri Lanka's troubled path of economic and social change that the World Bank and its associates stepped in to reform Sri Lanka's university education in a new global context of economic globalization. Sri Lanka's recent graduation to the status of a middle -income country has also provided a new context to pay more emphasis on the economic utility value of higher education. A new policy discourse of improving relevance and quality of undergraduate education, with an emphasis on development of skills required for the private sector dominated employment market was inaugurated during the late 1990s. This policy shift coincided with the neo-liberal turn of the world economy with an ideology that emphasized the market rationality in the spheres of social life including education. Against the backdrop of Sri Lanka's longstanding anxieties about the employability and economic utility of 'Arts degrees' from the public universities, a deep sense of hierarchy among the fields of university education came to be reinforced. Occasional trivializing of humanities and social science education by political leaders even at the highest levels, primarily from the perspective of the utility and market value of academic disciplines, contributed to the spread of an ideology about university education. It privileged and valorised science and technology-based education at all levels almost suggesting that humanities and social science education at the university education is a social and economic burden to the country. A few years ago, there were also suggestions from the educational policy makers that if the social science and humanities departments failed to meet the criteria of economic rationality, they would be running the risk of losing government funding through the Treasury.

Thus, the past two decades have been a period of much anxieties and uncertainties about the future of social science and humanities education in Sri Lanka. A critical discourse questioning the rationale and consequences of market-oriented university reforms slowly emerged with the participation of a minority of academics in social science and humanities faculties of a few universities. Yet, in the absence of concrete proposals for an alternative and home-grown programme of university educational reforms that also take into account challenges emanating from macro-economic

policy shifts at national and global levels, inspiration for policy reforms continues to come from external funding sources.

Social Mission?

Do our universities have a social mission? This continues to be a question largely ignored by policy makers as well as the university communities. It is also a question that invites the attention specifically of academics and students of the faculties of social sciences and humanities because, unlike the students and academic communities of the science and technology-based faculties, they are trained to grapple with such questions creatively. This question first came up during the early and mid-1950s when the idea of 'national independence' became the framing trope of public policy. In the context of a world-wide movement towards de-colonization in the non-Western and non-European world, a new assumption that education should be guided by 'nation-building' and national development goals became influential in Sri Lanka too. This provided the broad context for humanities and social science faculties to emerge as centres of intellectual and artistic creativity in Sri Lanka during the 1950s and 1960s. The emergence of the Faculty of Arts at university of Peradeniya in arts, literature, aesthetics, historical and sociological research, and the nationalistic as well as socialist economic and political debates occurred against this general historical backdrop of post-colonial resurgence. The vernacularisation of university education and the setting up of Vidyodaya and Vidyalkara universities with special focus on humanities and social science fields were outcomes of the transformation that was guided by an ideology that the university should serve the goals of post-colonial national aspirations. Thus, the period of 1950s and 1960s can be described as the golden age of humanities and social science education in Sri Lanka in terms of artistic and cultural creativity as well as laying the foundations for a tradition of creative scholarship.

However, the 1950s and 1960s also began to show signs of a crisis of the 'nation-building' mission that the universities were expected to serve. The rise of Sinhalese and Tami nationalist mobilizations and the spread of the conflictual relationship between the two main ethnic communities indicated that there was no consensus, not even clarity, about the nature and goals of the nation-building that the Sri Lankan universities could actually contribute to. The third decade after independence, that is the 1970s, saw another development that dramatically highlighted that there must have been something colossally wrong with Sri Lanka's post-colonial nation-building project. The key episode of this political eye-opening was the youth insurgency of April 1971 seeking to overthrow the government. Among the host of economic and social issues that were attributed to this sudden social explosion was the widespread 'social unrest' and 'youth radicalisation' caused by the rising unemployment among the educated youth, particularly university graduates. Many analyses of the social causes of the 'youth unrest' led to a specific policy discourse which persists even today. It is built on the premise that the mismatch between employability the young men and women got from the faculties of arts and social sciences and the kind of education they had received was an issue that needed an urgent policy response. This marked the beginning of an educational policy-thinking in Sri Lanka that emphasized the need

to 'manage' the production of 'arts graduates' in a manner that the country's economy can employ. Yet, despite this lofty policy ideal, no government has been able to address the issue satisfactorily. Although there has been a prejudicial narrative among policy-makers and in the media that 'unrest' is concentrated in the faculties of Arts due to a pervasive culture of social despair, student unrest has been quite frequent since the mid 1980s in the 'elite' faculties of business studies, science, medicine and engineering too.

Thus, the protracted crisis of Sri Lankan universities is also manifested in the continuing inability of not only the policy makers, but also the academic and student communities to define a meaningful social mission to the universities as public institutions that depend on public funding. This failure is particularly evident in the intellectual stagnation and scholarly stagnation that partly define the crisis specific to the social science and humanities Faculties of our universities. The vision and mission statements that are being proudly displayed in the websites of many such faculties and departments testify in general to a condition of arrested intellectual growth for which the reasons are obviously many.

Alienation from the Society

Linked to the issue of the lack of clarity and indeed confusion about the social mission of the Sri Lankan universities is the continuing problem of alienation of the universities as public institutions. They are public primarily in the narrow sense of being run on public funds. The negative public perception about the social and cultural elitism of our universities during the first and second phases of their history was embodied in the metaphor of 'ivory tower.' It emerged during the mid-1950s giving symbolic expression to a nationalist, socialist and populist reaction to the social and cultural elitism as well as the colonial baggage that the University of Ceylon had inherited without critical self-reflection. However, the establishment of the Vidyodaya and Vidyalandara universities during the mid to late 1950s and the subsequent de-decentralization of the university locations in the rural districts outside Colombo had not led much to breaking up of that inheritance of ivory-towerish social isolation. In fact, it has been reproduced with new features and contributory factors by all the new universities, despite the fact that they had claimed to assume nationalist and regionalist identities.

One of the key factors that has contributed to the social isolation of our universities, perhaps by default, is the failure of both academic and student communities to establish and maintain organic links with the society outside the universities. Sri Lanka universities, particularly their social science and humanities faculties, have failed to produce a sufficient number of public intellectuals who create and disseminate critical social knowledge that produces and sustains a modern, pluralistic, humanistic and democratic nationhood and citizenship. Conversely, the student communities because of their practices of violent interaction with fellow students as well as civil communities even in the neighbourhoods adjacent to the universities, have been unable to integrate themselves with the society that that host the student communities.

Moreover, the technical and science-oriented faculties of our universities, because of their essentially Anglo-American intellectual and cultural training, have ignored the need to initiate a dialogue between the western and non-western traditions of science, technology, and medicine. This failure is visible in a slightly different sense in our de-centralized and locally located universities. No regionally located university has so far established a reputation of being a centre of excellence in research, explorations, knowledge creation, or sustained interaction with the local cultures, local society, local economies, local social histories and memories, local linguistics, and local traditions of science and technology. This is a generalized failure among all the faculties and departments of locally located universities. Opening up of the learning and teaching, and training in the science, technology, medicine, engineering, commerce and management, social science and humanities, and law etc. to enable the university communities to critically and creatively engage with the local systems and stocks of knowledge is long neglected mission of our universities.

Necessity of a ‘System Change’

‘System change’ is an idea that has been in circulation in Sri Lanka’s political discussions for the past three years. It has had two meanings, changing the existing procedural and managerial practices of a specific institution, and substantive changes in an entire system as a whole in order to transform it. The idea of a ‘system change’ in its second meaning has been one of the slogans of Sri Lanka’s recent protest movement, *aragalaya*, of the citizens. It emphasized the need for fundamental and transformative changes in the country’s system of politics and governance. The reflections outlined in the ‘Foreword’ suggest that Sri Lanka’s universities have had many attempts towards narrowly conceived goals of system change in procedural or managerial sense, and the time has come for conceiving, strategizing and implementing holistically framed policies for transformative system change in higher education.

Who will conceive and conceptualize and eventually formulate such system-change oriented policies in Sri Lanka’s higher education? If some inspiration is to be derived by the university communities from the example of the recent citizens’ campaign in Sri Lanka for a holistic and citizen-driven goal of systemic change in the country’s politics, it is the urgent need to imagine a new and autochthonous framework of reforms seeking an overall transformation of our higher education. Its main driving force, or the ‘think-tank,’ should ideally be the university communities themselves. Far too long they have been at the receiving end of reform policies conceived and guided by external actors, including those outside the country. In other words, time has come for the Sri Lanka’s university communities themselves to invoke their right to self-determination and agency so that they can claim ownership to more meaningful, socially relevant perspectives to guide and shape the government policies for reforms in the higher education. That would indeed be a more fruitful and persuasive way to celebrate the completion of one hundred years of modern university education Sri Lanka.

Jayadeva Uyangoda

October 31st, 2022

INTRODUCTION

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

EDUCATION: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Premakumara de Silva

Sri Lanka's system of university education has moved in a phase of transition. It is facing new issues and challenges too. These issues and challenges derive from two levels; internal and global. The internal challenges of transition emanate from factors intrinsic to Sri Lanka's own system of school and higher education. The external challenges arise from global factors in the context of the contemporary historical phase of transformations of the global system of market oriented neo-liberalism. The responses to these challenges and issues are interconnected in their impact on shaping the on-going policy reforms and interventions.

Meanwhile, the expansion of opportunities for higher education in traditional as well as new areas of learning and training has been dramatic during the past few years. The government has been encouraging the universities to establish new Faculties of Medicine, Engineering, Technology, and Nursing to meet the increasing demand for vocation-oriented degrees.

Notably, the state universities are no longer the sole provider of higher education in Sri Lanka. Private Higher Educational Institutions (PHEIs) are increasing in numbers and contributing to the expansion of student enrolment. These changes are responses to new dynamics in the global economy, rapid and unprecedented changes in the new technology and communication, shifts in the nature of global as well as national employment markets, and new demands thus placed on the very idea of university education. The expansion of undergraduate education by the state and non-state sectors raises two immediate issues: the quality of education and training, and the capacity of the economy to provide employment to the graduates.

In response to these concerns, the Ministry of Higher Education and the University Grants Commission have been spearheading reforms in the university sector. Improving the quality and standards of undergraduate education through reforms has been a key goal in recent reforms initiated by the MoHE and the UGC (Report 2020). The universities are also being encouraged to integrate skills training into

undergraduate education as a measure to address the mismatch between university education and employment opportunities among the graduates, particularly in the field of humanities and social sciences (HSS). With the advent of such internal and global pressure, social science and humanities education in the universities in Sri Lanka is in dire need of immediate policy intervention and a series of new actions for its revitalization. Formulation of such a concrete plan of action, with the participation of representatives of the university communities, will also provide guidelines for the UGC and Ministry of Higher Education for creating better policy formulation and implementation.

Living as we are in the 21st Century, we have to take into account developments in modern technology, some of whose facilities we were forced to adopt in recent years. COVID-19 poses serious questions to our society that we need to address with the same urgency that our colleagues in the medical sciences are applying to care for the sick. At the heart of our disciplines is the basic question: how do we as scholars of HSS respond to living in a changed world more precisely Post-COVID era? This realization must be treasured and made central in all that we do. Many academics are already exploring ways to put care at the centre of emerging forms of adjusted and online education particularly blended mode of teaching and learning. This must be supported. That in fact was a blessing in disguise. The challenges listed below pertain mostly to the current situation which reflects past practice. We are forced to think afresh and deal with the challenges mentioned below in the light of current practices and with a futuristic vision.

It is in this backdrop that UGC decided to invite eminent scholars who have done research in various aspects in the Higher Education system in Sri Lanka to contribute to this volume which is primarily an outcome of the deliberation of conference papers presented at the National event of Centenary Celebrations of Humanities and Social Sciences Education in our Universities (1921-2021), which was held on 20th and 21st of December 2021 and organized by the Standing Committee of HSS, UGC.

The collection of papers appearing in this volume¹ addresses some of the critical issues and challenges that are quite relevant to the field of HSS. Some of the key issues and challenges highlighted in the volume are the present status of Social Science and Humanities Studies, Employability issues, Learning Environment, Language Competency of HSS graduates, University – Industry Collaboration, Teaching & Assessments, Quality Assurance of Teaching and Examination, and Issues in Publications in HSS.

1. *Paper writers were entirely responsible for the content of their respective chapters and the overall volume's contents are not representing any views of University Grants Commission. Hence, the opinions expressed in this volume are entirely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the authors' affiliated institutions and University Grants Commission.*

This volume consists of seven parts arranged according to the thematic order under which eighteen papers are presented. The first chapter gives the general introduction to the volume and the final is the concluding chapter. Apart from the introductory and concluding chapters, let me briefly introduce remaining chapters as follows.

Part I situates the formation of higher education in the country in a historical context: pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. While Wimal Hewamanage, Raluwe Padmasiri Thera. and Asanga Tilakaratne present a historical development of Buddhist monastic education since Anuradhapura period, C.R. de Silva and K. Jayathilaka provide a comprehensive history of the growth and development of ‘modern’ university education in Sri Lanka. They have highlighted a number of challenges that remain unaddressed in that journey and some of them are areas where further research is needed to suggest policy guidelines that would secure solutions. Primary among them are the adequate funding to improve access to undergraduate education and role that could be played by private education and of on-line education to reduce costs and improve quality while addressing the question of the improvement of the quality of graduates produced by all institutions - both public and private. Improving quality of the academic staff and providing them opportunities to upgrade their expertise and teaching skills and the need to upgrade the expertise of administrative and professional staff in these institutions must be considered. Steps to meet all these challenges through policy and institutional changes might well take a collaborative effort led by the University Grants Commission with the participation of state universities and institutes as well as the private sector including industry and private educational institutions which would be the way forward for expanding higher education opportunities in the country.

Part II carries two papers written by Marie Perera and Farsana Hanifa which focus on current situation of HSS education in our university system. Perera focuses and reflects more on humanities education and argues that traditional disciplines, such as languages, literature and history are becoming ever more important to overcoming cultural boundaries in a globalizing world. Studying Humanities should enable people to appreciate that diversity is a way of life and enrich our lives with how other people live, think and act and perceive a way of life and develop multiple identities. Yet, history has proved that it can be achieved although the purpose of Humanities education can never end with the changes taking place in all human endeavours and the resulting complexities in society at large.

Hanifa’s chapter is critically looking at the field of social sciences by proposing a drastic rethinking of the direction and outcome of SS education from merely ‘Employment oriented education to wider critical, skillful and analytical driven higher education’ in our universities. She proposes that it is high time that not just our higher education system but entire education system must be redesigned to meet the most of the challenges discussed in her paper.

Part III onwards Volume moves from more general issues and challenges to specific ones like Graduate Employability, Teaching, Learning and Assessment, English Language Skill and Research, Innovation and Publication. It concentrates on one of

the pertaining issues of Employability and Unemployment of Humanities and Social Sciences Graduates in Sri Lanka. This part consists of five chapters from chapter five to nine. Chapter five of Vallipuram Kanagasingam study reveals a lack of coordination and cooperation among the major stakeholders, particularly between academics – industrialists, academics - the government staff, academics - academic administrators, academics - students and academics-government-industry. A lack of trust between the stakeholders, little commitment or heavy workloads among the academics, limited forum for dialogue and unawareness of mutual expectations of each other lead to weak coordination and cooperation between or among them. This low level of coordination and cooperation among the key stakeholders has resulted in low employability among graduates in Sri Lankan state universities.

Chapter Six by O.G. Dayaratna-Banda and P.D.C.S. Dharmadasa on An Economics Analysis of Employability and Unemployment of Humanities and Social Sciences Graduates in Sri Lanka examines the problem of employability and unemployment of graduates in Humanities and Social Sciences focusing on both the demand-side and the supply-side factors. The chapter reveals that there is a significant issue of graduate unemployability in Sri Lanka as a result of persistent existence of a skills mismatch and various other socio-economic conditions of the country. Significant deficiencies exist in undergraduate study programmes including lack of study components embedded into study programmes to provide soft skills and other employable skills significantly.

In chapter seven, Athula Ranasinghe puts this issue into much wider context and provides a critical assessment of employability goal in Higher Education plans by questioning the methodology of graduate employability studies. Restricting to partial equilibrium analysis and use of narrowly defined concepts and inappropriately collected data have led the entire research area to a typical case of specification error and measurement error problems. As a result, the policy recommendations, specifying the role of universities in curbing graduate unemployment, are too unrealistic. Chapter eight by J. Kennedy also concentrates on the same issue and proposes to have more ‘skill training’ inbuilt into our degree programs as a way forward of tackling the ‘Arts Graduate Unemployment’ issues in the country. Most of the learning related soft skills (IT, Language Skills, Self-learning ability etc.) are equally applicable for job related skills as well.

Chapter nine by T. Jayasingam looks at the broader question of employability of the Humanities and Social Science graduates and emphasizes that though there are opportunities for graduates in the country, there is a lack of coordination among the government, employer and university to regularize the vacancies and the qualification needed for such vacancies with the plan for development of the country. Individual candidates also hold responsibility for not following the demand and developing skills suited to the labour market of the country and also to suit international demand by becoming skillful graduates.

Part IV concentrates on teaching, learning and assessment in higher education institutes and this section has contained two chapters. Chapter ten by Kalyani Perera on Merits, Issues and Quality Assurance in teaching and assessment provides a lucid view about the importance of collaboration for teaching and assessment that would benefit the students, as well as teachers and institutions in several ways, while enhancing the quality in education provision. She argues that inadequacies in collaborators or institutions can prevent achieving these benefits. Such obstacles can be overcome by introducing relevant institutional policies and procedures and recent technological advances as a catalyst for collaboration in teaching and assessment. She also suggests that it is necessary to formulate quality assurance procedures for collaborative provision in compliance with the existing guidelines and establish mechanisms to ensure adherence to those by collaborating partners. Chapter eleven by Shironica P. Karunanayaka suggests that re-designing learning environments to enhance creation and sharing of Open Educational Resources and open educational practices is quite significant in the current COVID-19 pandemic scenario. Considering this as an opportune moment to revive and reimagine online teaching and learning approaches, an appropriate blend between content, pedagogy and technology is vital. Empowering educators to take a leadership role as ‘change agents’ in a knowledge-society, will undeniably contribute in our shared journey towards achieving SDG4 and ‘education for all’.

Part V is concentrated on English language issues of HSS undergraduates. While SK Kannathas focuses on Reading and Writing Skills in English, Asantha Attanayake discusses how to develop students’ speaking skills in English. Under the language issue, Chapter twelve provides the impact of an ESL classroom employing academic reading materials to enhance language competency of the social sciences and humanities undergraduates and suggests that it is of vital importance that teachers should be equipped with innovative pedagogic skills deviating from traditional chalk and talk teaching method for a comprehensive development of reading and writing skills of undergraduates in English. In chapter thirteen, Attanayake quite convincingly argues that building confidence in speaking English is quite possible among our undergraduates if an inclusive environment is created both inside and outside of classrooms by making them feel less uncertain/fearful about speaking in English. Such an environment enhances their vocabulary, making them feel empowered with more words/phrases to use. As a result of their newly built confidence to speak English, they seem to have developed a desire to learn English and confidence in their ability to do so contributing to developing positive learner identities.

Part VI focuses on Research, Innovation and Publication of Higher Education Institutes in Sri Lanka and three chapters have contributed to discuss issues and challenges in this area. Dushyanthi Mendis enlightens us on the necessity of repositioning the product and process in Research Publishing by arguing the necessity of adopting an egalitarian approach by not favouring experienced researchers over novices, and supports open

access publishing, which is fast becoming a pushback against the monopolies held by large publishing houses and high impact journals. Most importantly, she embraces the new research spaces that digital technologies have created, and proposes to make use of the advantages this holds for Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines. Chapter fifteen by Vathsala Wickramasinghe concentrates mostly on Research and Innovation with the application of social network analysis in university-industry collaborations. She argues that contribution of Humanities and Social Sciences to the field of innovation is so vital and therefore, thinking that only the natural science-based disciplines for innovation systems is important would be a false assumption. For research and innovation, having a conducive environment, particularly the democratic principles of freedom, equality, and sustainable development is a free condition and on top of that ability to develop strong social network is quite crucial in developing research and innovation culture in the university system. In chapter sixteen R.G. Ariyawansa discusses trends and practical difficulties faced by Sri Lankan Public Universities when collaborating with industry. He argues, for a sustainable collaboration between university, industry, state, and society a clear understanding of the role of the respective sectors is quite needed. As the way forward, our universities must be restructured primarily from mere teaching universities to research and innovations oriented universities with a strong backing of industry. It shows that collaborative research with industry is not promoted adequately. Similarly, inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research and innovation are not encouraged adequately in our university system.

Part VII is addressing the plan for future development in the field of HSS in the state universities. Chapter seventeen by S.T.W.S. Yapa proposes opportunities and challenges in International Collaboration in Higher Education. This area of research is very limited but crucially important in the context of internationalization of higher education sector. This study shows that generally international collaboration is not on the agenda of the Sri Lankan universities. Even though the number of international students currently enrolled is very low, Sri Lankan universities have the potential to attract students to pursue degree programmes, particularly postgraduate programmes such as in the field of Buddhist studies and collaborative research on Sri Lankan studies. The final chapter is on future plans, policy formulation, and measures that have been taken by University Grants Commission to address some of the pertinent issues raised in this edited volume. Premakumara de Silva and Sampath Amaratunge provide the views of the UGC on the future plans and measures that have been taken to produce quality graduates in the state universities in Sri Lanka particularly focusing on the future of 'Arts Graduates' in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences.

As solutions to some of the pressing issues highlighted in this volume, standard prescriptions have been formulated and often implemented such as strengthening university-industry collaboration, modernizing curricula to meet the needs of the labour market, public private partnerships, internationalization, promoting more

marketable study programmes, encouraging universities to offer financially sustainable and self-financed study programmes, strengthening ICT, soft skills, English among graduates, and restructuring of external degree programs, expanding science and technology studies while limiting the expansion of the humanities and social sciences. The latest UGC statistics show that Humanities and Social Sciences education is still the dominant field of university education in the country though some argue about the drastic cut down of ‘Arts’ education in our universities.

There are different opinions on the major prescriptions that are suggested and implemented as the remedy to the challenges faced by our university system. Many contributors in this volume as responsible scholars in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences have analyzed some of the key issues and challenges faced by our higher education sector at a time of celebrating centenary years of university education in the country. Although there is a policy debate at the national level on the issues discussed in the volume, they remain sporadic and inconclusive. A systematic and considered contribution to the debate by the university community under the sponsorship of the UGC, along with concrete ideas for reform and implementation, has the potential to produce constructive outcomes. Deepening of the national debate, facilitating the emergence of concrete actions for reform and policy intervention, is indeed the duty of the UGC and the universities, and more importantly, the duty of our academic community. This volume is the outcome of such a minute intervention by the University Grants Commission at a time of a global pandemic and looming economic and political crisis of the country.

Reference

Presidential Task Force Report on Higher Education (2020) The Ministry of Higher Education.

PART I

Higher Education in Sri Lanka: A Historical Perspective

Chapter 1

EDUCATION IN PRE-MODERN SRI LANKA: SCOPE, CONTENT AND INSTITUTIONS

Wimal Hewamanage, Raluwe Padmasiri Thera, Asanga Tilakaratne

Introduction

Keeping in focus the overall context of the larger project, ‘100 years of humanities and social science education in Sri Lanka’, this paper focuses on the aspects of education in ancient Sri Lanka that correspond roughly to what we understand by ‘humanities and social sciences’ today. It covers the period from the beginning of the recorded history of the country to the arrival of colonialism in the 16th century, marking the end to the ancient period in the history of the Island. Education during this long period is predominantly Buddhist. That it is so is established by the related literature, and institutions and individuals recorded in literary and inscriptional sources that are Buddhist. Hardly anything other than Buddhist is found during this period. Even in these Buddhist historical records what is mostly available is what is related to Theravada school of Buddhism (Mahāvihāra tradition) which has continued to remain the main school in the Island from the day it was introduced in the 3rd century BCE. Abhayagiri and Jetavana schools were open to the influence of Indian Buddhist schools other than Theravada. With the unification of the three schools during

the reign of the Parākramabāhu the Great in Polonnaruwa, the Sri Lankan Sangha gradually became one unitary body. There is some architectural and literary evidence pointing to the Mahayana influence on Buddhism in Sri Lanka in addition to a corpus of beliefs and practices integrated into the system. Apart from the textual and academic learning, the country certainly had a rich tradition of ‘technology’ exemplified in the hydraulic system with its highly advanced features and arts and crafts with painting, sculpture, and architecture of high sophistication. Most probably the education involved in this sphere may have been confined to the respective guilds of which we do not have any substantial evidence other than sporadic references in the Buddhist literature and in some inscriptions. An exception is the sculpture of the Buddha statue with its own manual of instruction (see below). In a broader sense, however, this education too may be described as Buddhist for it was originated due to the Indian Buddhist influence with the arrival of Buddhism, and it was encouraged, guided, supported, and sponsored by Buddhism, and took place in an overall Buddhist atmosphere.

The paper begins with a brief overview of the parallel Indian learning which was the sole influence on the early ancient systems of learning in Sri Lanka, and then will move to study education as practiced during the Anuradhapura period which was basically Buddhist and monastic. Although education from Polonnaruwa to Kotte period was still predominantly influenced by India, the sources of influence were not exclusively Buddhist. Influence of such Southeast Asian countries as Myanmar too was seen during this period. The study will be concluded with an overview of education and literary pursuits of the post-Polonnaruwa period ending in the Kotte kingdom.

Education in Pre-Buddhist Era

Sri Lanka is the largest island located in the Indian Ocean which was known as *Sīhaladīpa* in Allahabad inscription and *Tambapaṇṇi* in the inscriptions of emperor Ashoka. *Taprobane*, *Serendip* or *Saradip*, *Ceilao*, were popular among the Greek and Arab merchants and the Portuguese. Lanka is the very early name used by Indians to refer to the island. The *Mahāvamsa*, the Great Chronicle of Sri Lanka, and the Pali commentaries used such terms as *Lanka*, *Lankādīpa* and *Tambapaṇṇidīpa* to refer to this island.

Though chronicles do not say much about the inhabitants of the Island prior to the arrival of Vijaya and his group, from whom the present history of the Island begins according to the *Mahāvamsa*, there are many myths found in the early Indian literary sources and also in the local folklore. The story of Rāvaṇa, the *Yakṣa/Yakkha* ruler of the island, and how he abducted Sītā, the queen of Rāma, the God-incarnate, is the central theme of the

well-known epic, *Rāmāyana* of Vālmikī. The story goes that Rāma constructed a stone bridge to Lanka with the support of monkey king, Sugriva, invaded the Island, killed Rāvaṇa and rescued Sītā. Although Rāvaṇa was portrayed as a villain in this story, popular Indian traditions recognized him as well-versed in the Vedas and other associated sciences (*śāstras*). According to the legends, he composed five treatises: *Arkaprakāśa*, *Nāḍiprakāśa*, *Kumāratantra*, *Uddisatantra* and *Sivatanḍavastotra* on traditional medicine. The recent Sinhala literary work, *Danḍumonara Katāva* (the story of the wooden peacock) by Martin Wickramasinghe (1890-1976) is based on the ancient belief that Rāvaṇa owned a wooden flying machine. There are a number of sites in the country associated with Rāvaṇa and Sītā, such as Rāvaṇa fall, Rāvaṇa temple and caves in Ella, Sītā Ammān temple in Sītā-eliya, Munneswaram temple in Chilaw, Nilawari in Jaffna, Sanjīvanī Mountain in Dolukanada, and Laggala in Mathale, testifying to the persistence of the myth through ages.

The Chronicles and some Buddhist commentaries report the Sakyamuni Buddha's visits to Lanka prior to the arrival of Vijaya. The two chronicles, the *Dīpavamsa* and the *Mahāvamsa* record that the Buddha visited, consecutively, the Island thrice, to Mahiyangana in the modern Uva province, Nāgadīpa in the modern Northern Province and Kelaniya in the modern Western Province. It further records that the Buddha visited and preached the Dhamma and subdued the *Yakṣa/yakkha* tribe, aboriginal inhabitants in the country and directed them to an Island named *Giri*. Sumana, a certain *Yakkha* who is said to have attained the first stage of the spiritual progress

(*sotāpatti*), requested the Buddha a token to venerate him in his absence. The Buddha had given him a handful of his hair, and Sumana built the Mahiyangana cetiya as the first cetiya in the country and the hair relics were enshrined in it. It was 10 feet in height at first and later it was enlarged by several kings. Secondly, the Buddha visited the Nāga-island prior to the outbreak of a dreadful war between two Nāga kings, Mahodara and Cūlodara for a throne made of gems, inherited from ancestors. The third visit was to Kelaniya on the personal invitation extended to the Buddha by Nāga king Maniakkhika. It is further reported that the Buddha visited with 500 arahants and delivered the Dhamma to the king and the people. To commemorate the event, Maniakkhika had built a cetiya where the Buddha preached the dhamma and the gem-studded throne on which the Buddha sat was enshrined in it. During this journey, it is believed that the Buddha visited and sanctified altogether sixteen spots of the island which are venerated by Buddhists even up to date. The stories associated with the Buddha's visits suggest that the country enjoyed a relatively advanced civilization though nothing in particular is mentioned about the system of education that must surely have prevailed at this early stage of the history of the Island.

The arrival of prince Vijaya, son of king Sinhabāhu, to Lanka from the country of Lāla together with his followers, marks the origin of the Sinhala race according to the chronicles which connect this event to the life of the Buddha. It is said that the Buddha who was about to attain great passing away (*parinirvāna*) at Kusinārā (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 533) saw Vijaya's arrival in Sri Lanka and asked Sakka, the head of Buddhist of deities, to protect them as the country they will inhabit is

destined to be the place where his *Sāsana* will be established. Sakka in turn, asked god Uppalavaṇṇa to protect the Island and the people whereupon he reached the Island in the guise of a wondering ascetic (*paribrājaka*) and blessed them by sprinkling holy water on them and tying holy threads in their hands (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 535).

Upon arrival, Vijaya met Kuveni, a native *Yakkhīnī*, with the support of whom he gained control of the country. While Vijaya built a city at *Tambapanni*, (where they landed), his followers built several villages and named them Anurādhagāma, Upatissagāma, Ujjeni, Uruvela, and Vijitha-nagara (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 537). Having settled down, they got *Kṣatriya* maidens from their native place to be their consorts. It is significant to note that the Chronicles further record that craftsmen and a thousand families belonging to some eighteen guilds (*seṇi*) (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 538) accompanied these maidens. Paṇḍuvāsadeva, the youngest son of King Sumitta of Sinhapura, who arrived with his group succeeded Vijaya as the ruler who did not have his own offspring. Bhaddakaccāyanā, a daughter of Sakya Amitodana, was consecrated as the chief consort of Paṇḍuvāsadeva.

The details of the earliest stage of the Island betray, naturally, a strong Indian connection. Brahmins seem to have played a key role in rites and rituals and education during this period. They were advisors, chaplains and instructors, at least, for the royalty. Brahmins' role in consecrating all these kings is referred to in Chronicles. Paṇḍukābhaya is said to have studied under a brahmin named Paṇḍula who taught arts and crafts (*sippam*) to his own son Canda

and Paṇḍukābhaya simultaneously (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 546). The account found in the chronicles of the construction of the Anurādhā city by Paṇḍukābhaya suggests that the people at this early stage had a substantial knowledge in planning a city with a well laid out sanitary system and clearly demarcated settlements for different social groups. The training received by Paṇḍukābhaya from his Brahmin teacher may have played a role in this. In addition, there are references in the story of Paṇḍukābhaya to three Jains who seem to have enjoyed recognition, Jotiya, Giri and Kumbhanda. Jains are also mentioned subsequently in the accounts of Devānampiyatissa, Khallātanāga, and Vaṭṭagāmini-abhaya. Consequently, some scholars assume that Jains too might have played a significant role in religious, cultural and educational spheres during this early period. However, the religious and socio-cultural history of pre-Buddhist era of Sri Lanka is not proposed to be discussed here as a rich literature is available done by eminent scholars such as Adikaram (1994, pp. 1-48), Walpola Rahula (1993, pp. 1-48) and many others.

Arrival of Buddhism

Introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka symbolizes the dawn of a new epoch in all aspects of the society including politics, religion, education and culture. The mission of Arahant Mahinda was a result of the third Buddhist council which was patronized by emperor Ashoka under the instruction of Moggaliputtatissa Thera and the members of the Mahāsaṅgha. King Devānampiyatissa (247-207 BCE) was the ruler of Lanka at the time. The Chronicles refer to the names of the missionaries who accompanied Mahinda Thera, Itṭiya, Uttiya, Sambala, Bhaddasāla theras (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p.

557-561), novice Sumana and male lay disciple Bhaṇḍuka. Names of Mahinda and Itṭiya (*Mahinda thera idiha thera*) are found in Rajagala inscription which belongs to the 3rd century BCE. Moreover, King Mahādāthika Mahānāga's (9-21 CE) inscription at Mihintale refers to the statues of Mahinda, Itṭiya, Uttiya and Bhaddasāla theras. The arrival of the mission, establishment of the *Sāsana* and its rapid spread throughout the country are well attested by a good number of inscriptions, scattered in the entire Island, belonging to the early period, that is, from 3rd century BCE to 1st century CE (Sirisoma 1990, p. 35). The 13th and 14th chapters of the *Mahāvamsa* elaborate on the first encounter of Mahinda Thera with King Tissa at Missaka hill, the conversation between the two, Mahinda Thera's arrival in the city at the invitation of the king, preaching Dhamma to the public and conversion of the king with his relatives and the public into Buddhism and many other important events. In the very first conversation with the king, it is reported that the Thera did an 'intelligent test' on the latter to gauge his ability to grasp philosophical issues. The fact that the Thera chose a discourse of the caliber of the *Cūlahatthipadopamasutta* (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 564) which emphasizes the necessity of inquiry and examination prior to believing in anything, as the theme for his first sermon is significant in this context.

The content of the sermons, as reported in the Great Chronicle, chosen for the commoners in the following days indicates that the missionaries were well aware of the temperament, the needs and the level of understanding of the locals. The *Petavatthu*, *Vimānavatthu*, and *Sacca-saṃyutta*, were taught for women headed by queen Anulā. The *Devadūta*-

sutta was preached to the people of the city, and the *Bālapaṇḍita-sutta* was preached to the women of noble families. These initial events may be taken as marking of the beginning of the Buddhist education in the country.

The first four months of Mahinda Thera's mission laid down the ground to change the entire civilization of the country. Within the first week itself, under the guidance of the Thera, locations for all the aspects necessary for a well-established monastery were marked, and some sacred locations for future monastic constructions were also marked (*Mahāvamsa*, ch. 15). The king donated Mahāmeghavana, a spacious park in the city, for the exclusive use of the Sangha. To the king who was anxious to know as to whether the Sāsana was established in the country, Mahinda Thera responded by saying that, in order for the Sāsana to get established, it is necessary to establish a *sīmā*, a space marked by a boundary, for the monks to gather for Vinaya functions. When the establishment of the *sīmā* was completed, the king wished to reassure that the Sāsana was established in the country. Mahinda Thera responded to him by saying that, although the Sāsana was established, it has yet to take roots in the country. How that happens, the Thera explained in the following words:

... when a person born of parents who belong to Tambapaṇḍīpa, enters *pabbajjā* in Tapaṇḍīpa, learns the Vinaya in Tapaṇḍīpa and recites the same in the Tapaṇḍīpa, then will the *Sāsana* take root in the land. (*Samantapāsādikā*, I, p. 102)

Accordingly, Mahā Ariṭṭha Thera, who met all the requirements, did the Vinaya recitation at Thupārāma. King Tissa himself was a witness to this event

which signified, on the one hand, the importance attributed to Vinaya in the local Theravada tradition, and perhaps, even more important historically, how the tradition brought from India was handed over to the local Sangha, establishing its indigenous roots. Mahā Ariṭṭha Thera seems to have played the role of Vinaya Master and some five hundred bhikkhus with Mattābhaya Thera had received the teaching from him. This symbolizes the beginning of the Sinhalese masters of Buddhist education. This may also be considered as the beginning of a mechanism of handing down of the teaching to the next generations, thus marking the beginning of the local *ācariyaparamparā* (the succession of teachers). The success of Mahinda Thera's mission is eloquently summarized by Rahula Thera in the following words:

Mahinda's arrival in Ceylon can be regarded as the beginning of Sinhalese culture. He brought to Lankā not only a new religion but also a whole civilization then at the height of its glory. He introduced art and architecture into the Island along with *Sanghārāmas* and *cetiya*s. He can be regarded as the father of the Sinhalese literature. (1993, p. 59)

Establishment of Mahāvihāra: the First Centre of Formal Education

Theravada Buddhist monastery known as Mahāvihāra, located in the ancient Sri Lankan capital of Anuradhapura, was the foremost centre of the Theravada Buddhist tradition. It was the first Buddhist centre established systematically with the full royal support under the guidance of Mahinda Thera who seems to have determined the basic plan and the structure of the Mahāvihāra monastery. All the basic features of a

systematic *vihāra* were constructed within the lifetime of the first mission. In Anuradhapura, the sacred Bodhi tree, Ratnamālicetiya and Lovāmahāpāsāda (stone mansion) were the three key religious monuments around which the monastic life in Anuradhapura was organized. Pali commentaries testify to the fact that, within several centuries, not only Mahāvihāra became the centre of Buddhism in the country but also its interpretation of the word of the Buddha gained universal acceptance as the Theravada or the view of the elders. Visiting of reputed foreign monks such as Buddhaghosa, Dhammapāla, Buddadatta and many others who translated Sinhala commentaries into Pali under the guidance of Mahāvihāra elders testify to the high international recognition enjoyed by Mahāvihāra.

References found in Pali commentarial works to a large number of Sinhala texts which have survived only in names, reveal the progress the Buddhist education had achieved within the first eight centuries, that is, from the date of the arrival of Buddhism in the Island to the fifth century CE, the time of the Pali commentaries. Adikaram lists 28 sources such as *Mahā-aṭṭhakathā*, *Mahāpaccariyaṭṭhakathā*, *Kurundi-aṭṭhakathā*, *Andhaṭṭhakathā* used by the commentators as their sources (Adikaram 1994, p. 10). The *Visuddhimagga* (Path of Purification), an independent work by Buddhaghosa recognised as a manual of Theravada Buddhism, contains much information relevant to the system of education of the country. Chinese Buddhist monk Faxian who travelled in India and Sri Lanka in the early 5th century recorded that some 3000 monks lived at Mahāvihāra and about 5000 lived in Abhayagiri Vihara. Meanwhile Cittalapabbata and Tissamahārāma

founded by king Kāvantissa in 2nd century BCE were southern centres of the Mahāvihāra tradition. Evidence of well-established monastic educational centres has been found from all over the Island including Anuradhapura and Rohana (the southern region of the Island). According to stories recorded in the Pali commentaries in particular, the monks moved between these centres often for educational and religious purposes. Issues such as locations of these educational centres, their geographical expansion, the prominent teachers, nature of the subjects taught, impact the education made on the of lives of both monastic and lay people, and many other aspects related to the system of monastic education have been studied by eminent scholars (Adikaram 1994, pp. 1-33, 59-102; Rahula 1993, pp. 78-199, 287-302; Adikari, 2002, pp. 1-25, 75-108, 112-278), and hence we will not duplicate these discussions. Although the physical aspect of Mahāvihāra gradually waned with the collapse of the Anuradhapura period at the end of the tenth century CE, the Mahāvihāra identity seems to have lasted till the end of the Kotte period at the end of the fifteenth century.

Historical records show that the monasteries gradually became the heart of education for the people of all social groups, monastic or lay. Buddhism started to play a dominant role in education reducing the Brahmanic dominance in education in pre-Buddhist Lanka. It should, however, be noted that the role of Brahmins in education that prevailed prior to the arrival of Buddhism did not disappear altogether. It appears that they had continued to contribute to the education of the people notwithstanding the dominant role played by Buddhism.

The presence of a large number of terms in the inscriptions from 3rd century BCE to mid of the 1st century CE testify to the existence of an advanced system of education during this period. Among such terms are *atevaśika* (*Antevāsika*/disciple) and *śadi vihariya* (*saddhivihārika*/disciple dwelling together), *acariya* (*ācārya*/teacher), *tera* (*thera*/ elder), *samaṇa* (*śramaṇa*/Buddhist religious mendicant), and *samaṇī* (*śramaṇī*/ the female counterpart of *sramaṇa*). There are frequent references to the *bhāṇakas*, the experts in particular texts, whose origin may be traced to the first Buddhist council in which texts were assigned to leading arahants and their pupils for the study and preservation. In addition to commentaries, references to such experts are found in the inscriptions. Such terms as *Sayutaka baṇaka* (*Samyutta bhāṇaka*/ reciter of the *Samyuttanikāya*), *Majjhima baṇaka* (*Majjhima bhāṇaka*/reciter of the *Majjhimanikāya*), *Ekautarika baṇaka* (*Ekottarika Bhāṇaka*/ reciter of the *Anguttaranikāya*), *baṇaka* (*bhāṇaka* - reciter) occur in inscriptions. Existence of a particular *thera* or a school named *Sutata-pāli-baṇaka* is reported in the Kaduruveva inscription. The Bambaragastalava inscription mentions a *Thera*, expert in the expositions of the Vinaya which prompts us to infer the fact that the study of the Vinaya was prevalent (Sirisoma 1990, p. 35). The evidence of this nature suggests that there existed a well-organized system of monastic education during this period.

The term '*pirivena*' used now to refer to the centres of Buddhist monastic education, *pirivena*, *piruvana* or *piriveṇa* in Sinhala, has a long history. At the beginning, term *pariveṇa* (from which the Sinhala term '*pirivena*' derives) seems to have been used in the sense of a dwelling place

of the Sangha. *Kālapāsāda-parivena*, *Sunhāta-parivena*, *Dīghacankamana*, *Phaggala-parivena* and *Marugana-parivena* are some relevant examples from the Great Chronicle (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 581-2). A cell or a private chamber served as the living quarter of a bhikkhu was called *piriveṇa* at this early stage (*Sāratthadīpanī*, p. 394). This early meaning of the term subsequently was changed to refer to a place for monastic education. Mahāvihāra *pirivena* education, introduced by Arahant Mahinda Thera and handed down to the native members of the Sangha headed by Bhikkhu Ariṭṭha, flourished to claim international recognition by the mid of Anuradhapura era, that is, fifth and sixth centuries CE. The Sri Lankan Chronicles, Pali commentaries, later Buddhist texts, inscriptions, travelers' records and many other sources shed much light on the history of Mahāvihāra education. Dwelling places built by early kings for both monks and nuns gradually turned into seats of teaching and learning. Issarasamaṇa vihāra, Pācīnārāma, Vessagiri, Upāsikārāma, Hatthāḷhaka Mehenavara, Jumbukola vihāra, Tissa Mahāvihāra are a few of many such places built by King Devānampiyatissa at the very early times of Buddhism. Ample evidence is seen in literature and inscriptions detailing the rapid increase of the number of the monasteries and the monks and nuns in the entire Island. Among the leading monasteries of the early Anuradhapura period were Mahāvihāra, Cetiya-pabbatavihāra, Thupārāma, Issarasamana (Isurumuni) and Meghagiri. Based on the Mahāvamsa, Geiger claims that there were 364 monasteries in Anuradhapura and 3634 *pirivenas* in Tissamahārāma during the Anuradhapura period. In later

periods there were such notable pirivenas as Alāhana, Kappura, ganthākara, Dhāthaggabodhi, Dīghasanda, Bhāndika, in different parts of the country.

These parivenas were basically meant for the monastic communities where they acquired basic skills of reading, writing and knowledge in Pali and the canonical texts. We do not hear much about secular education for the lay people during this period although such secular fields of studies as Sanskrit grammar, prosody (*chandas*, *alankāra*), poetry, logic, mathematics, astrology, medicine, art, sculpture and iconometry were gradually introduced to the monastic curriculum. The presence of highly refined arts and crafts leads us to conclude that there were ways and means for the people to acquire relevant skills. It is reported that King Jetthatissa was an expert in ivory carving and taught it to many (*Cūlavamsa* 1973, p. 9). There were some Bhikkhus who were reputed for their expertise in certain disciplines and were highly sought after. The prospective students would go where they were and stay with them to receive instructions. Commentaries have stories of monks commuting between Anuradhapura and Rohana for such purposes.

Bodhi Tree and Bhikkhuni Order

Bodhi Tree: Saṅghamittā Therī's arrival with the sacred Bodhi tree was a very important part of Mahinda Thera's mission. When queen Anulā expressed her willingness to be admitted as a bhikkhuni, the Thera asked the king to send messengers to his father, King Asoka, to make arrangements for Saṅghamittā Therī, his sister, to arrive in the country. The immediate reason

was that the Thera was not allowed to admit women in accordance with the disciplinary rules. In addition, this opportunity was made use of by the Thera to achieve a very important religious need, namely, to bring down a branch of the original Bodhi tree to be planted in the country (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 574-575).

Ariṭṭha, referred to earlier, was sent as the envoy to the Emperor Ashoka. The *Mahāvamsa* (18th & 19th chapters) contains a detailed report of the events that followed, how the king severed the branch from Bodhi tree, how it was sent to Lanka, and how King Devānampiyatissa welcomed it, brought it to Anuradhapura and planted it. It is further reported that, in addition to those who were sent for the specific purpose of protection and maintenance of the Bodhi tree, there were members of eighteen guilds of arts and crafts that accompanied the mission. Among these people were eighteen from royal families (*devakula*), eight from the families of ministers, eight from Brahmin families, eight from families of guild-chiefs, of cowherds, of hyna and sparrow-hawk clans, of weavers, also of potters, of all guilds and of *Nagas* and *Yakkas* (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 597).

The subsequent history of the island shows that the Bodhi tree has made, and still continues to make, a great impact on religious, social, cultural and educational life of the Lankan people. It has remained the living Buddhist symbol of the country for more than the past two millennia. The considerable impact of the Bodhi tree has beautifully been highlighted by Paul E. Pieris:

It is doubtful if any other single incident in the long story of their race has seized upon the imagination of the Sinhalese with such tenacity as this of the planting of the aged tree. Like its pliant roots, which find sustenance on the face of the bare rock and cleave their way through the stoutest fabric, the influence of what it represents has penetrated into the innermost being of the people till the tree itself has become almost human. (Pieris, 1913, pp. 3-4)

The substantial literature developed in Pali and Sinhala, focusing on the different aspects of Bodhi-tree-culture, highlights the impact exercised by this sacred tree on Lankan culture and education.

Bhikkhuni Order: Following the request of queen Anulā and other females to be admitted as members of the monastic order of the Buddha-sasana, arrangements were made by the king to bring Saṅghamittā Therī. Saṅghamittā Therī arrived with her eleven sister therīs (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 601), and admitted the Lankan women headed by Queen Anulā to the Sāsana marking the beginning of the Bhikkhuni order in the country (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 601). As the organization grew in popularity, nunneries were established in different parts of the country, thus opening a new path for women. Royal patronage was well-provided. The Bhikkhuni order thrived for more than millennium in the country till it disappeared in the 13th century after the invasion of Magha.

Names of the erudite nuns and their multifaceted contribution to the society are referred to in the Chronicles and inscriptions. The *Dīpavaṃsa* records the lineage of the Bhikkhuni Sangha from its beginning from Mahāpajāpati

Gotami to the bhikkhunis in the ancient Anuradhapura. Furthermore, Mahāsonā, Dantā, Sīvalī, Nāgā, Nāgamittā, Dāsiyā, were considered dhammadharās while Sapattā, Chandā, Upāli, Revatā, were known for their special skills (*Dīpavaṃsa* 1982, p. 98). Twenty thousand bhikkhunis from Jambudīpa headed by nuns Mahāruhā and Sīvalī had come and studied Tipiṭaka from local nuns at the invitation of King Abhaya under his patronage (*Dīpavaṃsa* 1982, p. 98). While nuns Walanāgā, Dattā, Sonā, were known as *dhammadharās*, Mahātissā, Mahāsumanā, Sumanā, Paṇḍitā, Mahākālī, Mahāyasā, were known for their wisdom (*Dīpavaṃsa* 1982, p. 99). Inscriptions record many such events involving nuns as participation of ninety thousand Bhikkhuni in the opening ceremony of Maricivaṭṭi cetiya (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 638), King Mahācūlimahātissa's donation of three robes to 12,000 bhikkhunis (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 685), the queen of Jeṭṭhatissa learning and subsequently teaching Abhidhamma in order to transfer merit to the late king (*Cūlavamsa* 1973, p. 84), offering of caves and other requisites for Bhikkhus by Bhikkunis and the offerings made by the members of the royalty for bhikkhunis.

In addition to the cultural, religious, educational and spiritual service the bhikkhuni order thus rendered to enrich the lives of the people for around 15 centuries, international contribution they made is recorded in Chinese Buddhist historical records. A bhikkhuni delegation headed by Tisolo had gone to China in 429 CE and given higher ordination for eleven bhikkhunis there. Kings of Sung dynasty had provided lodging and other facilities for the Sinhalese Bhikkhunis. It is further claimed that three Sri Lankan

bhikkhunis headed by Devasārā went to China and established the Bhikkhuni Order there, thus opening new religious and educational opportunities for Chinese women (Gunatilaka 1994, pp. 23-24).

Emergence of new Buddhist Educational Centres: Abhayagiri and Jetavana

Mahāvihāra enjoyed undisputed monopoly in all matters of religious life and education of people for about three and half centuries from the time Sāsana was established in the country. However, this was changed with the establishment of Abhayagiri Vihāra, constructed and offered by Vaṭṭagāmini-Abhaya, as a token of gratitude, to a Thera named Mahātissa who had supported the king when he was in exile in the forest (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 681). Troubles started when the Mahāvihāra Sangha ousted Mahātissa Thera from the community for the offence of accepting a private gift whereupon his followers started operating as an independent group. Initially, there were no noticeable doctrinal or disciplinary differences between the two groups. Gradually Abhayagiri Vihāra, which was also known the 'Northern Monastery' (uttara-vihāra), became the main rival of Mahāvihāra, a division which lasted till the act of unification by King Parākramabāhu the Great of Polonnaruwa.

The arrival of Dhammaruci Thera of the *Vajjiputtaka* sect in the first century BCE and *Vaitulyavāda* in the third century CE symbolized the beginning of wider differences. The division went to such an extent that Abhayagirivāsins supported openly many contemporary Indian Buddhist schools that Mahāvihāra found disagreeable on the matters of interpreting the Dhamma. It should, however, be noted that the public clashes

between Orthodox Mahāvihāra and the more accommodating Abhayagiriya had occurred only in a very few occasions. According to the *Mahāvamsa*, after the initial break away during the reign of Vaṭṭagāmini-Abhaya, clashes had occurred during the reigns of Bhātika Abhaya, Vohārika Tissa, Gotābhaya and Mahāsena. Despite the opposition they had against each other, we find that they had kept continuous dialogue with each other. Referring to a debate that occurred between the two groups on a disciplinary matter, Adikari says:

It is quite possible that such meetings were frequently held and that the friendly disposition of monks belonging to one school towards those of another was not usually affected by the mere fact of their holding different views. (Adikari, 1994, p. 94)

This new monastery became the home for many local and foreign bhikkhus and the centre was open to many different Buddhist traditions. Following the Indian Buddhist tradition, Sanskrit was made the major academic language though there is evidence that the members of Abhayagiri were not incompetent in Pali language of Mahāvihāra. Faxian, the Chinese traveller monk, resided at Abhayagiri-ā and returned to his home collecting a large amount of Sanskrit texts.¹ According to Faxian, 5000 monks dwelled at Abhayagiri. *Saddhammopāyana*, written in Pali by Kavi-cakravarti Ananda Thera, an Abhayagirivasin, illustrates that their expertise was not limited to Sanskrit. The *Vimuttimaggā* (Path of Liberation), authored by Upatissa Thera, is believed to be the Abhayagiri counterpart of the

1. Legge, *Travels of Fa Hien*, P. 111, Quoted by Adikaram pp 94-95, footnote number 1 in p. 95

Visuddhimagga of Mahāvihāra. Four out of the eight well-known education centres started toward the last half of the Anurādhapura period, Uttara-mūla, Kapāra-mūla, Mahānettapāsāda-mūla, and Vāhadīpa-mūla belonged to this school. Uttara-mūla occupied the key position of all Abhayagiri institutes and was the custodian of the Tooth Relic of the Buddha.

The Jetavana fraternity was started during the reign of King Mahāsena (276-303 CE) who destroyed Mahāvihāra and built in its premises the Jetavana Vihara. Ancient Sinhala literary sources and epigraphs refer to this fraternity as ‘*denānaka*’ which was also known as *Sāgalika* after the name of its main teacher. Jetavana-stupa, over 120 meters in height, is the focal point of the monastery complex and it is the tallest stupa in the world (Ratnayake 2016, p. 70). Alluding to the Mahayana leanings of the fraternity, fragments of the Pragnāpāramitā-sutra, a well-known Mahayana scripture worshiped as *Dharmadhātu*, written on gold leaves and deposited in a pot, were found from the premises. Abhayagiri and Jetavana schools, being more open to the other Buddhist traditions of mainland India, had considerable impact on the Buddhist teaching and education of the country. The fact that these two schools were open to Mahayana ideas does not mean that they belonged to Mahayana. Like Mahāvihāra, Abhayagiri and Jetavana too were Theravada schools which had certain differences in interpretation.² In Walpola Rahula’s view “the dissensions in the Sangha were

by no means a symptom of decay and degeneration, but a sign of movements and progress” (Rahula 1993, p. 85). The identity of three schools, Mahāvihāra, Abhayagiri, and Jetavana, continued until the 12th century when all three were unified into one by King Parākramabāhu the Great.

The Tooth Relic

Marking a milestone in the history of Buddhism in the country, the left-eye Tooth Relic of the Buddha (*vāmadāṭṭhā-dhātu*) was brought by Prince Danta and Princess Hemamālā in the ninth year of King Sirimeghavanna (371 CE), King Mahāsena’s son (Mahāvamsa 1989, Cha. 8). The Tooth Relic was made a property of Abhayagiri, not Mahāvihāra. It is not unthinkable why Pali commentaries of Mahāvīheāra of the fifth century are totally silent about this event. Rahula Thera assumes that Prince Danta and princess Hemamālā are the followers of Mahayana Buddhism (Rahula 1993, p. 97). The custodianship of the Tooth Relic was with Uttara-mūla, a fraternity belonged to Abhayagiri, and it remained so until the fourteenth century, the unification of the Sangha in the 12th century notwithstanding. This sacred relic is considered to be the most precious religious object ever received by the Buddhists of the country. A substantial literature was developed based on this sacred object. The Tooth Relic gradually became the symbol of state power of the Island and consequently, the rulers always kept it in close proximity to their own residence. This led to develop new buildings, arts, crafts and specific literature focussing on this sacred item. The culture and the traditions developed surrounding the sacred Tooth Relic still continue.

2. Lance Cousins has studied in detail the views attributed to Abhayagiri-vasins. See: “The Teachings of the Abhayagiri School” in *How Theravada is Theravada? Exploring Buddhist Identities*, ed. Peter Skilling, et al. Silkwood Books, Thailand, 2012

Literary Tradition of Anuradhapura

Knowledge in Buddhism was transmitted orally from the fifth century BCE to the first century BCE until it was first written on palm-leaves at Aluvihāra (Aloka-vihāra) in the central province of Sri Lanka during the reign of king Vaṭṭagāminī-abhaya (29-17 BCE). Patronage for the event was received from a local chief, but not from the king for the Mahāvihāra had disagreements with him. According to chronicles, this event took place during the second tenure of the king who made an end to the South Indian rule of fourteen years. Changing the format of knowledge from memory to written form is a highly notable event from a religious, educational, and international sense. The contemporary bhikkhus were led to this decision owing to the risks they experienced due to the unstable political situation and the famine caused by a long drought. The chronicles record that many bhikkhus either left the country or fled to southern territories of the country while many others succumbed to the famine. Those who left the country stayed in neighboring India and those who opted to stay back at the risk of their life strived hard to protect the memory of the Dhamma. Since they realized the danger of relying on mere memory, for the first time in their history the monks who survived the famine decided to commit the Pali Canon and commentaries into writing on palm-leaves (*Mahāvamsa* 1989, p. 683). This remarkable writing project of the canon and commentaries proves the existence of an advanced system of writing in the country. Moreover, it is hard to assume that the entire canonical literature was written down within a very short period of time when the factors such as the vastness of

Buddhist literature, scarcity of writing materials, trained human labour needed for writing and other practical difficulties are taken into consideration. Scholars are of the view that the project may have taken several years to complete.

Mahāvihāra received a well-organized and carefully preserved Tipiṭhaka with five *nikāyas* of the Sutta Piṭaka, five *Pālis* of the Vinaya and seven *Pakaraṇas* of Abhidhamma and with the relevant commentaries. Some disagreements on the authenticity of certain texts of the *Khuddakanikāya* which consists of 15 minor treatises are recorded in the commentaries (Abeynayake 1984, pp. 38-40). Writing commentaries to the Pali canon was completed during the fifth century CE. The *Samantapāsādikā* for the whole Vinaya Piṭaka, *Kaṅkhāvitaranī* for the *Pātimokkha*, *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*, *Papañcasūdanī*, *Sāratthappakāsinī*, and *Manorathapūranī* for the first four *nikāyas* respectively, *Atthasālinī* and *Sammohavinodanī* for the *Dhammasaganippakaraṇa* and *Vibhanga* respectively, and the *Pañcappakaraṇaṭṭhakathā* for the rest of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. were authored by Buddhagosa Thera. In addition to Buddhaghosa Thera, Buddhaddatta, Dhammapala, Upasena and Mahānāma Theras compiled commentaries for the *Khuddakanikāya*. N.A. Jayawickrama holds that together with *Tripitaka*, traditional exegeses handed down at the three Buddhist councils also reached Sri Lanka with the first Buddhist mission (Jayawickrama 1969, p. 62). The *Nettipakaraṇa*, *Miḷindapaṇṇa* and *Peṭakopadesa* are recognized as post-canonical and pre-commentarial. A further development in Pali literature occurred with the writing of sub-

commentaries (*Ṭīkā*), manuals, grammar texts, *Vamsakathā* etc. constituting a substantial corpus of literature.

With the translation of Sinhala commentaries into Pali at Mahāvihāra, the position of Pali language became prominent, and the significance of Sinhala language, as far as the study of the Dhamma is concerned, was gradually reduced. However, during this period, a new tradition of classical Sinhala literature was in the making with the direct impact of Buddhist literature. Most of those texts are either translations or adaptations of Pali texts. The nature, scope, language and content of the literature of Anuradhapura period can be witnessed through both direct and indirect sources. However, support from inscriptions in order to know about different features of literature of this period appears to be minimum for most of these inscriptions, usually very brief, contain records of donors to the Sangha. On the other hand, Sigiri gratify written from 6th or 7th to 13th centuries, are very useful to learn about various aspects related to Sinhala literature. Their language, style, and the factors such as the social status of the composers show the extent of education of the people of the society. Scholars who have studied these poems critically all agree about the sophisticated character of the poetic expression of them and the advanced culture and the high level of education of the composers. The visitors, some foreign and many local, seem to have been enchanted by seeing the beauty of the damsels portrayed, and their spontaneous feelings seem to have flowed freely, thus creating a corpus of poetry unique at this early stage in the world history. (Silva 1969, pp. 130-1). These poems eloquently speak of the advanced state of

general education during this pre-modern period.

Three books belonging to the Anuradhapura period are useful to understand both language and literature of this time. *Siyabaslakara* which is considered to have been composed at a time between the end of the 9th century and the beginning of 10th century AD is the first book that has survived from this period, and it consists of poems. It is based on and hence considered to be a translation of *Kāvyaḍarśa*, a Sanskrit text, a kind of instruction manual for writers of poetry, by the Indian author, Dandin. However, it was adapted to suit the contemporary needs of the local culture. Instructions provided in this book have heavily influenced the subsequent Sinhala literature of the country, and the influence has persisted until the Europeans arrived and changed the traditional way of thinking. One such instruction which seems to have been taken seriously by the local poetry writers is that the biography of the Buddha should be written in the medium of verse: *peden budusirita*. Consequently, the ancient Sinhala literature has a good number of poetic texts based on the Jātaka stories detailing the past births of the Buddha. *Dhampiyā-aṭuvāgāṭapadaya* is the second book that has survived from this period, and it is the only book written in prose. King Kāśyapa V (914-924) is the author, and its objective is to explain difficult terms of Pali *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*. The third book is *Mulsikha* and *Sikhavaḷanda* (or *Sikhavaḷanda* and *Sikhavaḷanda Vinisa*) the author of which is unknown. Experts find that the language and style of this book is much advanced and sharper than that of *Dhampiyā-aṭuvāgāṭapadaya*. Moreover, it is considered to belong to a later period than *Dhampiyā-aṭuvāgāṭapadaya* and its

content is confined to a discussion and explanation of the disciplinary rules of Buddhist monks. The objective of the book seems to have been to serve as a manual of instruction on Vinaya matters to those Sinhalese monks who were not competent in Pali. It appears that this text and many other texts of this genre that have not survived were used as text books in monastic education.

A considerably developed Sanskrit literature is also seen in the Anuradhapura period. Among them, King Buddhadasa's (4th century CE) *Sārāthadīpanī* and Kumaradasa's (6th century CE) *Jānakīharaṇa* are prominent. Paranavitana has noted the Sanskrit influence in Sigiri poems (Paranavitana 1964, pp. 382-87). Copper plates consisting Mahayana Sanskrit fragments found in Indikaṭu-sæya at Mihintale and Vijayarama in Anuradhapura bear witness to the influence of Mahayana teachings on people's beliefs and practices. Compositions such as *Mahābodhivaṃsa* and *Telakaṭāhagātha*, which are considered to belong to the end of the 10th century CE show the influence of the Sanskrit poetic style. Moreover, several names of the Mahayana texts given in *Nikāyasaṅgrahaya* written in the 14th century suggest the possibility that many Sanskrit books were popular in Sri Lanka by this time. This further suggests that education during this period was not exclusively based on Pali sources.

Polonnaruwa Period

The shift of the capitol from Anuradhapura to Polonnaruwa came with some significant social and political changes. The influence of Hindu culture and the Sanskrit language was quite visible. Although Buddhism still enjoyed the privileged position characteristic

of the Anuradhapura period, it had to accommodate the Hindu culture with its deities and associated rites and rituals. Pali became the medium of teaching and learning of *Tipiṭaka*. With the unification of the three Buddhist fraternities into one by King Parākramabāhu the Great, Mahāvihāra regained its prominence giving new life to learning of Pali. Meanwhile the Abhayagiri school was active till the middle of the 11th century. Under the influence of Abhayagiri as well as the newly introduced Hinduism, the Sanskrit learning became established. The presence of Gurulugomi (*Garuḍācariya*) represents the lay scholarship with knowledge in Sanskrit. The *Dharmapradīpikā* authored by him provides ample evidence to his proficiency in both Pali and Sanskrit. The support Abhayagiri received from Mahārāja's of Sri Vijaya kingdom during this time is also considered to be a reason behind its flourishing.

Sinhalese commentaries too have existed side by side with the Pali commentaries until the 12th century. Paranavitana thinks that the neglect of Sinhala commentaries began from the eleventh century due to two reasons: Difficulty in understanding the old Sinhala and the negative attitude of the monastic schools toward local knowledge.

This was partly due to the reason that the old Sinhalese of the commentaries was at that time difficult to understand. ... The main reason for the preference given to Buddhagosas's translations in the monastic schools of Ceylon in the eleventh century and later was the belief, then gaining ground, that an opinion becomes more worthy of credence when it is expressed by one who is not native (Paranavitana 1969, p. 164).

A set of glossaries named *Gaṇṭhipada* (knotty words) appeared for the purpose of overcoming the challenge of understanding difficult words in the Pali canon and Pali commentaries. Based on these glossaries, Pali sub-commentaries (*Ṭīkā*) were written. High recognition given to Pali over the Sinhala language is seen as one of the motives behind the invention of this genre of literature. Using impressive names as *Sāratthadīpanī* (Illuminator of the Essential Meanings) this literature prevailed for several centuries. This particular text is reported to have launched in a great ceremony with the participation of the king. Sariputta Thera's *Sāratthadīpanī*, a sub-commentary to the Buddhagosa's *Samanatapāsādikā* is also significant contribution. Moreover, authorship of the *Aṅguttaranikāyaṭīkā* is attributed to the same author by his pupil Dhammakitti. *Bālāvabodhana*, a Sanskrit guide book, too was authored by him. The Burmese tradition holds that Kassapa Thera wrote *Mohavicchedanī*, a treatise on Abhidhamma, and *Vimativinodanī*, a commentary on Vinaya. *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Anāgatavaṃsa* too are attributed to this author.

During the Polonnaruwa period, there was a tendency to rephrase the ancient Sinhala works in Pali language. The *Rasavāhinī* composed by Vedeha Thera during the first half of the 12th century provides relevant example. Popularity of those Sinhalese stories is well-attested by *Saddharmālaṅkāra* written in the 14th century. Even the texts belonging to the genre of historical narrative were translated into Pali from Sinhala. The *Dāthāvaṃsa* in Pali poems authored by Dhammakitti Thera during the reign of Queen Lilāvātī, was a translation of a Sinhalese poetry work believed to have

existed since the fourth century CE. King Paṇḍita Parākramabāhu's reign (14th century CE) is significant as *Bālāvātāra*, a grammatical work by Dhammakitti Thera, and *Rūpasiddhi* and *Pajjamadhu* by Buddhapiya Thera were produced during this time. In these texts, Sanskrit influence is seen in style as well as in vocabulary, *Dhātuvāṃsa*, a translation of an earlier work in Sinhala is considered as one of the best extent Pali poems. *Thūpavaṃsa* and *Haṭṭhavanagallavihāravāṃsa*, written in highly Sanskrit-mixed style, belong in the same genre. Replaced by new Pali versions, the Sinhala originals have gradually disappeared. There are, nevertheless, some works, although heavily influenced by Sanskrit vocabulary and style, still may be considered as independent creations. *Samantakūṭavaṇṇanā*, *Pajjamadhu*, and *Subodhālaṅkāra* may be considered as such independent works.

Studying Pali grammar as a separate subject was developed in this period though such studies were rare in Anuradhapura period. Magulan, head of one of the colleges that belonged to Abhayagiri fraternity, a proven grammarian of Tamil, lived in the eleventh century. Buddhapiya Thera's Pali grammar came to be known later as Kaccāyana, and another grammar school emerged under the name Moggallāna with the support of Mahāvihāra. Paranavitana has highlighted a strong influence of Sanskrit grammar on both these traditions in their methods and terminology (Paranavitana 1969, p. 167). *Abhidhānappadīpikā*, a book on Pali lexicon, was compiled in Polonnaruwa period by Moggallāna Thera who belonged to the Sarogāmūla fraternity. Sanskrit lexicon *Amarakoṣa* is said to have influenced the above

text. Sangharakkhita Thera's *Vuttodaya*, a manual of prosody for Pali students, shows direct influence of *Vṛtataratnākara*, a very popular Sanskrit work on prosody. Writing poems for the sake of poems was uncommon among Pali students until this period. However, a new trend of writing poems for aesthetic purpose itself had emerged. *Subodhālankāra* authored by Sangharakkhita Thera to satisfy the demand for the art of poetry among the monastic members is considered to be a relatively independent work than the works on grammar and prosody referred to above.

Sanskrit has made a considerable contribution to enrich Sri Lankan literature in the Polonnaruwa period. However, role played by Sanskrit even in Anuradhapura era cannot be ignored though it was not the dominant language. Studies of Sanskrit have become prominent in the 9th and 10th centuries in Sri Lankan education. Meanwhile, Sanskrit was the major language of Mahayana Buddhist world and Abhayagiri fraternity paved the way for Sanskrit studies to take roots in the Island. It is certain that Sanskrit enjoyed its prominence in this era irrespective of the unification of the Sangha by King Parākramabāhu I which led to the triumph of the Mahāvihāra. Generally, most of the rituals of the royals were conducted by Brahmins headed by the Brahmin chaplains. Secular education of the princes also was provided by the Brahmins more than by Buddhist monks. The books on the secular subjects such as medicine, astronomy, mathematics, law and politics that royals as well as commoners alike had to study were written in Sanskrit. The Sri Lankan *śilpa* text of the 11th century, *Bimbamāna*, a manual of iconometry pertaining to the

Buddha statue and popularly known as *Śāriputra*, is written in Sanskrit. Mahāvihāra too had to learn Sanskrit at least to understand and react to their opponents since it was the medium they used. *Bhesajjamañjusā* written by the head of the Pañcamūla is an exception and is meant to give the knowledge of medicine found in Pali literature to the Sangha.

In addition to Pali texts influenced by Sanskrit, we come across a good number of texts directly written in Sanskrit itself during this period. *Śataka* literature ('Hundreds') is another genre of literature containing instructional manuals written in Sanskrit. Anuruddha Thera's *Anuruddhaśataka*, Gurulugomi's *Nāmāṣṭaśataka* (12th century) and Ramacandra's *Bhaktiśataka* (15th century) are prominent among them. The Indian origin of *Śataka* literature is well-known. A Sanskrit poem *Buddhagadya* is considered to be written in Polonnaruwa period though its author is unknown. *Vṛtataratnākara* of Ramacandra is believed to have influenced *Vṛtamālekhyā* written during the reign of Parākramabāhu VI. Anomadassi Thera's *Daivajna-Kāmadhenu*, a work on astrology, and *Bālāvabodhana*, a Sanskrit grammar book for the beginners by Sariputta Thera, too belong in this category.

Sannas, word-to-word translations, another genre of literature developed during this period, were compiled for Pali and Sanskrit texts studied by the students of this period. Sariputta Thera wrote a *sanna* for the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, and his pupil, Buddhanaga Thera is said to have written several commentaries on Sanskrit grammar. Udumbaragiri Mahākassapa Thera wrote a Sinhala *sanna* to *Samanatapāsādikā* and a

Porāṇaṭṭikā a text on Abhidhamma. In this manner, word-by-word translations to Pali and Sanskrit works became a standard feature of the academic pursuits of this period.

Polonnaruwa period is also well-known for its classical Sinhala prose. Most of the Sinhala classical works in prose such as *Dharmapradīpikā* and *Amāvatura* of Guruḷugomi, *Butsaraṇa* of Vidyācakravartī, *Damsaraṇa* of an anonymous author, *Thūpavaṃsa* of Vācissara Thera, and poems such as *Muwadevdāvata* and *Sasadāvata*, *Kusadāvata* of King Parākramabāhu belong to this period. Moreover, the *Jātakaatṭuvāgāṭapadaya*, and *Mahābodhivaṃsa Geṭapada* of Upatissa Thera, are among the other noteworthy scholarly works belonging to this period.

Rise of Eight Fraternities: Centres of Learning

The entire education system of Sri Lanka for around two millennia, that is from the third century BCE to the sixteenth century CE was centered around the Buddhist monasteries which were spread throughout the Island though only a few outstanding ones are often referred to. Education of all, both monastic and lay, was looked after by these centres. As discussed before, Mahāvihāra played the key role in teaching and learning until the 3rd century BCE. Subsequently, Abhayagiri too along with the Jetavana fraternity shared a considerable part of Lankan teaching and learning until the 12th century CE. Mahāvihāra regained its prominence with the unification of three schools and continued its uninterrupted role in education until the European invasion. Since the educational role of the three schools has already been discussed, now we will turn to discuss

the educational contribution of the eight centres evolved from these three schools. The centres made a considerable impact on the organization of the Sangha, political affairs of the country and management of monastic property. The leaders of these fraternities have been influential in national issues like appointing new rulers and building peace among the divided fractions of the ruling class.

The emergence of eight fraternities (*aṣṭa-mūlāyatana*) was instrumental in making some significant changes in the organization of the Sangha. Gradually the centres, which had existed for six centuries and had reached the zenith of their organizational development in the ninth and tenth centuries, took over the three schools. These eight fraternities became the prominent institutes of Buddhist Sangha and continued to be so for the next several centuries to come. Both literary and inscriptional evidence ascertain their emergence, evolution and contribution they made in the fields of politics, religion, monastic and lay administration and education. Of these eight fraternities, *Selantara-mūla*, *Uttara-mūla*, *Sarogāma-mūla*, *Mahānettappāsāda-mūla*, *Dakkhiṇa-mūla*, *Kappūra-mūla*, *Senāpati-mūla*, and *Vāhadīpa-mūla*, four are considered to be originated from Abhayagiri and Jetavana niākayas while three fraternities show provincial origin. *Uttara-mūla*, *Kappūra-mūla*, *Vāhadīpa-mūla*, and *Mahānettappāsāda-mūla* belonged the Abhayagiri nikāya and *Uttara-mūla* and *Mahānettappāsāda-mūla* had survived till the fifteenth century. *Senāpati-mūla*, which is reported to have originated in the 10th century and survived until the mid-sixteenth century, that is, the reign Buvanekabāhu VII (CE 1521-

1551), is traced back to Jetavana nikāya. The affiliation of the remaining three fraternities, namely, *Selantara-mūla*, *Sarogāma-mūla*, and *Dakkhiṇa-mūla*, to the three nikāyas or their geographical locations of origin are not certain. They had gained reputation owing to the fame of the teachers who pioneered the institutes or the strength they had and the impact they made for the people.

Terms *mūla*, *mūla*, *āyatān*, *āyatana*, *mūlu-āyatān* and *mūlāyatana* were all used to refer to the centres of monks. It is the monks of these centres that decided to consecrate Vijayabāhu. Parākramabāhu I built three-story buildings for the Theras of the *āyatanas* (*Cūlavamsa* 1973, p. 105). However, *Pūjāvaliya* records that these buildings were constructed by the king at *Sāgiri* in Polonnaruwa (*Pūjāvaliya*, 1930, p. 105). Parākramabāhu II restored lands and villages of eight fraternities in the outskirts of his capital (*Cūlavamsa* 1973, p. 155). Monks of the eight fraternities left Polonnaruwa against King Vikramabāhu's (1111-1332) decision to confiscate monastic property (*Cūlavamsa* 1973, p. 230). The leading role played by these eight centres in monastic education, in particular, is noteworthy. Some further details relevant to some of these centres are as follows:

Selantara-mūla which became popular as *Galaturu-mula* contributed immensely to the education and literature. *Galaturu-mula* Nanda, *Galaturu-mula* Sīla, *Galaturu-mula* Medhankara, and *Galaturu-mula* Maithreya were great teachers of this centre. Nanda therā supported King Parākramabāhu I in his *sāsana* purification in the 12th century. He was nominated to lead the monks of three nikāyas in Rohana. Existence of two theras named Medhankara is

reported in this period and they are said to have supported to prepare *Dambadeni Katikāvata* in the *sāsana* purification performed under the patronage of King Vijayabāhu II (1232-1236 CE). Historians, referring to some practices of this fraternity revealed in the chronicles, argue that they were involved in the contemporary popular cults of deity worship in Sri Lankan Buddhism. Sangharakkhita Thera, who belonged to this fraternity, became the head of the Sangha during the time of King Vijayabāhu III (1232-1236 CE). The fact that there are numerous references to the affiliation this fraternity had with the dignitaries of different strata of the society indicate the high status they enjoyed, role they played and contribution they made.

Uttara-mūla (*Uttaroḷha*, *Uttarāḷhaka*, *Uturoḷa*) is said to have existed from seventh century to fifteenth century CE. However, exact date of the origin of the centre is being debated. Numerous references made to this fraternity in the *Cūlavamsa*, *Sīgiri gratīyā*, *Pūjāvaliya*, *Daḷadāsīrita*, *Padasādhanaṭīkā* and *Kāvyasekaraya* enable us to get some idea about the lineage of the fraternity, special practices they followed, royal patronage they enjoyed, and the socio-religious and academic contribution they made. The *Nikāyasaṅgrahaya* does not refer to this fraternity and it is taken as an indication to the possibility of its disappearance by this time. Its prominent position among other fraternities was seen from its beginning. In its heyday, it had six hundred monks as members. The beginning of the centre dates back to King Mānavamma (684-718 CE) who constructed buildings and offered them to a monk who was his elder brother (*Cūlavamsa* 1973, p. 108). It came under the Abayagiri fraternity and was

the custodians of the Tooth Relic. This king himself made his ordained brother the head of the fraternity and counsel for his administration, according to the *Cūlavamsa* account. No consensus is found among scholars about its geographical location. While some believe it was at a village called *Uturāḷa* in present Kegalle district (Gadoladenia Inscription), some records show that it was within the premises of Abhayagiri monastery in Anuradhapura. Kings Sena I and Sena II (853-857) added new buildings to this school (*Cūlavamsa* 1973, pp. 141-145). With the collapse of Anuradhapura, the seat of this college was moved to Polonnaruwa and this explains why King Vijayabāhu I constructed the temple of Tooth Relic in the precincts of his palace. The centre had become the principle *āyatana* of the Abhayagiri monastery by this time (Epigraphia Indica, Vol. XVIII, p. 337, II. 17-9). This college was a recipient of new monastic buildings made by King Vijayabāhu I in the new city (*Cūlavamsa* 1973, Cha. 60). Having both the Tooth Relic and the Bowl of the Buddha with them seems to have justified their dominance over the other schools and the special powers and privileges they enjoyed politically, socially and religiously.

A number of reputed scholarly monks of this centre and their works portray the literary impact they made. *Mahāsthavira* Mugalan, a leader of this centre, is described in the inscriptions as a scholar versed in the *sāstras* and *āgamas* and also as the royal preceptor (*rājaguru*). Furthermore, he is described as *vyārini* and it is interpreted as “grammarian” by some scholars. Totagamuve Rahula Thera, the renowned scholar of the 15th century and head of Vijayaba Pirivena, refers in his *Padasādhana-tīka* (“*nattā*

uttaramūla rahula mahātherassa sikkhāgaru”), and *Kāvyasekhara* (“*Uturumūla mahatherindu muniburu*”) to himself as the nephew of one Rahula Thera who was the head of the Uttaramula centre, an indication to the high prestige enjoyed by this centre even at a later period.

Kappūra-mūla began and flourished under the leadership of Abhyagiri. Its beginning is traced back to the reign of Kāśyapa IV (885-902) and the last reference to the centre is found during the reign of Vijayabāhu I (1070-1110 CE). Details found in inscriptions of Abhayagiri and Cetiyaigiri etc. and in the literature including *Cūlavamsa*, along with the archaeological findings provide information on its evolution, its religious and educational contribution, and patronage it received. This seat of education had shared an equal power, responsibility as Uttaramūla did in all activities of Abhayagiri fraternity.

Vāhadīpa-mūla another centre originated in the 9th century and continued until the Kotte period is known as *Vahadu*, *Vādu*, or *Vādummūla*. It is believed to have been located in the proximity of Abhyagiri vihara in Anuradhapura. According to the *Pūjāvaliya*, this was built by Mānavamma, and according to the *Cūlavamsa*, rulers such as Aggabodhi VI (722- 733 CE) Udaya I (797-801), Dappula II (815-831) supported the centre by constructing numerous buildings and making donations.

Mahānettappāsāda-mūla originated during the reign of Aggabodhi V (718-724) the centre was later shifted to Polonnaruwa. *Cūlavamsa* reports that this was offered to Dhammarucikas by the king (*Cūlavamsa* 1973, p. 110). A Mahathera

of Coḷadesa, Vidagama Maithreya and Dīpaṅkara Mahātheras were some of the prominent scholars who adorned this centre. Sumangala Thera of this school wrote *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī-tīkā*. He being a student of Sariputta Mahathera of great erudition and authority had played a vital role in developing the sub-commentary literature of this period. Rammungoda Dīpaṅkara Thera being a prominent member of this fraternity was highly praised in his *Vṛttamālākyā*, by Sri Ramachandra Bharatī, a brahmin who came from India during the reign of Parākramabāhu VI (1412-1462 CE). This work contains a eulogy of Dīpaṅkara Thera. Vīdāgama Maithreya Thera of this fraternity composed *Lovāḍasaṅgarāva* and the well-known *Buduguṇa-alāṅkāraya*.

In addition to the fraternities discussed above, four additional fraternities had appeared with different academic identities.

Sarogāma-mūla is also known as *Sarogama-mūla*, *Velgammula*, *Sarasigamamūla* and *Wilgamvehera*. Many references to this seat are found in inscriptions and Sinhala literature, and the centre was more prone to ascetic practices of forest dwellers. Though the origin of this fraternity remains a mystery, it had existed until the 14th century CE in accordance with the reference found in *Sinhala Bodhivaṃsa*. Location of this monastery and its affiliated institutes are still being debated (Gunawardana, 1979, pp. 304-308). The monks of this tradition also gained reputation for their intellectual and literary eminence. Moggallāna is the most prominent among them. A scholar called *Sāhitya-Wilgammula* (*Nikāyasāṅgrahaya* 1958, p. 28), and

Mahāsthavira of Vilgammula, the author of *Sinhala Bodhivaṃsa* belonged to this tradition. The authors of *Vuttamālā* (14th century CE) and *Vimuttisaṅgaha* (1374) had acknowledged their relation to the reputed teachers of this fraternity.

Education and Literary Activities from Dambadeniya to Kotte

After Polonnaruwa, the capital of the country was shifted to four cities, respectively, Dambadeniya (62 years from 1232 to 1284), Kurunegala (34 years from 1310 to 1344), Gampola (64 years from 1344 to 1408), and Kotte (96 years from 1412 to 1508), the whole period from the end of Polonnaruwa to the end of the Kotte covering altogether 256 years.

As discussed above, middle of the eleventh century marked a substantial development in agriculture as well as in the fields of literature, arts and craft. The arrival of foreign scholars with the invitation of the rulers of the Island, and the scholarship of such eminent Bhikkhus as Kassapa of Dimbulagala, Sariputta, Moggallāna, Nāgindapalliya, were among the key factors behind this success. Gadaladeniya and Lankatilaka viharas had played a crucial religious and scholarly role in the mid of the 14th century. Higher learning centres were revived at places such as Totagamuwa, Southern province and Raigama, Western province. A galaxy of monks knowledgeable in the Dhamma, literature, and languages was around King Parākramabāhu VI who had, furthermore, extended his patronage to some South Indian scholars to visit the Island. All these involvements resulted in the progress of studies in the spheres of literature, language, and art.

The evolution of the Sinhala script continued until the end of the Kotte period. Irrespective of the collapse of the politics and other important institutions of the country, the Sinhala script developed gradually. Writings found in Copper plates and Palm-leaves testify to this development. Sinhalese script had progressed as a result of great literary and scholarly activities of the time. According to the scholars such as P.E.E. Fernando (Fernando 1969, pp. 157-161) the Sinhala script assumed its modern form during the latter part of the Kotte period.

Despite of the catastrophic destruction of all the fields of politics, religion, education, culture, and social structures caused by Kalinga Māgha's invasion (1215-1236), the kings starting from Vijayabāhu III who shifted the capital to Dambadeniya to the rulers of the Kotte period were able to maintain peace and stability of the country. Among these rulers, Parākramabāhu II (1236-1271) of Dambadeniya, the son of Vijayabāhu III, stands out as one who helped restore the glory lost due to the foreign invasion.

Reign of King Parākramabāhu II is considered as one of the best periods in Island's history during which Buddhist and Sinhala literary scholarship was revived. King himself played the leading intellectual role among his contemporaries. In addition to the commentary on the *Visuddhimagga*, the *Kavsiḷumīṇa* composed by the King demonstrates his erudition and creativity and justified the title *Kalikāla Sāhitya Sarvajña Paṇḍita* which was unique in the history of the country. Devapatirāja, King's viceroy, too was known for his literary skills.

The pirivenas played a pivotal role in national education, and the high quality of literary and scholarly works produced during this period testify to the high standards in education achieved by these centres. *Sidatsaṅgarāva* was composed at Patiraja Pirivena while *Pujāvaliya* was composed at Mayurapada Pirivena. *Abhidhammatthavikāsinī* was written in Nandi Pirivena and Pali *Thūpavaṃsa* was composed at Mahindasena Pirivena. In addition, there were many other well recognized pirivenas such as Parākramabāhu, Buvanekabāhu at Beligala, Buvanekabāhu at Kurunegala, Nandana at Devundara, Senapati at Anuradhapura, Assadana, Pasmula, Gathāra at Kelaniya, Jayamahale Situ Pirivena at Niyamgampaya, Vijayabāhu at Totagamuwa, Ganānanda at Vidagama and Padmāvati at Keragala, contributing to the system of education of the country.

Gampola period is known for composing poems of new format, poems of four lines and the new poetic genre called '*Sandeśa*' (message) in addition to the books written in prose. Both lay and monastic scholars contributed to the literary advancement of the period. While some wrote in Sinhala medium others used both Sinhala and Pali as their media of writing. *Jātakapothvahanse* ('*Venerable Jātaka Text*'), reverentially treated as the title itself indicates, the Sinhala translation of Pali *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* by Parākramabāhu IV was the most remarkable addition of this period to the Sinhala literature with long lasting religious and cultural impact.

The next period which also was the last period during which pirivena education and literary activities reached very high standards was the reign of King Parākramabāhu VI (1412-1467) and the time that followed immediately. This period is reckoned by scholars as

the most brilliant era of the country's learning and literature. Pirivenas were elevated into highly developed and well-organized academic centres which functioned in Sinhala medium. It is recorded that foreign languages were taught and a considerable number of foreign students also reached the Island for studies. The advanced nature of these monastic colleges is well-reported in the *Sandēśa* literature appeared during this period. The factors such as the eminent teachers, diversity of the subjects taught, state patronage received and the contribution these pirivenas made clearly testify to their glorious history. Sunetrādevi Pirivena of Pepiliyana, Padmavati Pirivena of Keragala, Vijayabā Pirivena of Totagamuwa, and Ganananda Pirivena of Vidagama were prominent among them. Well-established administrative system, buildings and other constructions, funds paid for the writers, provision made for the principal, registrar, academic and other minor staff are some of the highlights of the Papiliyana Pirivena inscription. The glory of this education system existed until the Portuguese destroyed it.

It appears that during this period, there were two main groups of monastic traditions in the country, one representing the scholarship of both worldly and religious subjects, and the other, which rejected the secular fields of learning such as poetry and drama (*kāvya*, *nāṭaka*) and concentrated on the Theravada Buddhist studies unmixed with the Indian Hindu tradition. Of these two divisions, the first, the continuation of the *grāmaṃvāsī* tradition, which has been a feature in the monastic tradition of the country for centuries, was represented by Totagamuve Sri Rahula Thera who was the principal of Totagamuve Sri Vijayaba

Pirivena and the other was represented by Keragala Vanaratana Thera belonging to the *āraṇyavāsī* tradition that dissociated itself from secular forms of learning.

Vijayabāhu Pirivena of Totagamuwa, headed by Totagamuve Sri Rahula Thera, with his close links with the royal court, was a leading academic centre with international reputation, representing a very high standard of secular learning in addition to the traditional Buddhist scholarship. It is noteworthy that this center offered secular subjects for professions such as medicine and law. The subjects taught were (i) Language studies such as Grammar, Poetry, Drama, and other branches of literature of Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Sinhala and Tamil, (ii) Religious studies as *Abhidhamma*, *Sutta* and *Vinaya*, *Aṭṭhakathā*, (iii) Vedas, 18 Purānas of Hindus, and other religions, (iv) Secular studies of professions such as Medicine (*Ayurveda*), Economics (*Artha Sāstra*), Law (*Nītiśāstra*), Astronomy and Mathematics (*Sūryasiddhānta*). Sri Ramachandra Bharati, a famous Brahmin scholar from India was an alumnus of the Pirivena. The *Cūlavamsa* also provides details of this Pirivena.

Keragala Padmavati Pirivena, headed by Keragala Vanaratana Thera, as found in the *Hamsa Sandesa* of Vidagama Maithreya Thera, represented the more indigenous Buddhist tradition. The major areas of learning of the pirivena were the *Sutta*, *Vinaya*, *Abhidhamma* and related subjects including languages. The Ghanananda Pirivena of Vidagama headed by Vidagama Maithreya Thera belonged to this school. Among the works associated with this pirivena, *Lovaḍasaṅgarāva*, *Bududguṇa-alankāraya* still exercise a great influence

on the Sri Lankan Buddhist culture. *Hansa Sandeśaya*, one of the many sandeśa's of this period, stands out in its simplicity and poetic beauty. *Rājāvaliya* records that the young Parākramabāhu VI studied in this *pirivena*. Moreover, the higher ordination ceremony conducted for the visiting Burmese monks who came to the country in search of pure *upasampadā* during the reign of King Buvanekabāhu VI (1473-1480) was headed by Mahāthera Vidagama, the head of the *Pirivena* at that time, a fact which testifies to the high recognition and authority enjoyed by him among his contemporaries.

Conclusion

This discussion covers a vast period spanning two millennia, beginning from the first settlements of the groups of people who came from India around the 6th century BCE ending in the invasion of the first colonial powers at the beginning of the 16th century CE. A more definitive history of the country, however, begins with the arrival of Buddhism in the 3rd century BCE, which was destined to be the main religious and cultural force of the country up to the present. Although we do not have direct records of education and dissemination of knowledge during the early pre-Buddhist era, the information provided in the later chronicles which surely must have been based on oral records in the form of myths, legends and stories, refer to, for instance, city planning of Paṇḍuvāsadeva, giving some idea about the cultured life people enjoyed at this early phase of country's history. The shared legends of India and Sri Lanka on Rāvaṇa who was feared even by gods and his proverbial city of Lanka hailed by the ancient Indians themselves as the most splendid of all

cities take us back to a lost age and lost civilization, though in the present study we did not take it as a premise for our conclusions. It is, however, the general consensus of historians today that not all good things had to wait till Buddhism reached the country. But the point is that any reliable evidence of the history of this early period is found only after the arrival of Buddhism in the 3rd century BCE. The hitherto unprecedented close relationship the country had developed with highly advanced Indian Mauryan system under which Buddhism became a truly world religion must surely have played a crucial role in initiating what was tantamount to a cultural resurgence in the country. We cannot ignore the positive implications of the fact that Emperor Asoka's own political thinking and behavior, being highly influenced by the teachings of Buddha, was behind the first Buddhist mission to the country.

In the course of this chapter, we have discussed sufficiently how systematic education in the country started with the Buddhist missionaries, how the process of education became indigenous and how Mahāvihāra crystalized the value of knowledge-centredness which subsequently became a characteristic of the Sinhala Buddhist culture of the country. In this context, we cannot forget the fact that Buddhism, as expounded by the Buddha, the Enlightened One, is knowledge centred. In the ancient India where the access to knowledge was limited to privileged classes, the Buddha opened the path for both men and women equally to attain the ultimate religious goal by developing knowledge and corresponding behavior or practice (*vijjā-carana*). In a similar manner, in this country, the Buddhist missionaries opened the path of the Dhamma not

only for men but also for women, thus initiating a way of life in which both men and women had access to knowledge.

While Mahāvihāra of Anuradhapura played the pivotal role in education of the country, there arose gradually many affiliated centres in different regions such as Rohana (the South), and even the dissenting fraternities such as Abhayagiri and Jetavana which proved to be very important centres of education along with affiliated schools, *mūla-āyatana*. It is established that by the middle of the first millennium, Sri Lanka had become the centre of Theravada Buddhism to which scholars of the caliber of Buddhaghosa, Buddhadatta and Dhammapala from neighboring India and in the second millennium knowledge seekers such as Chapada (Chappaṭa) from the Southeast Asia region (Myanmar) were attracted.

The Buddhist monk's role as good friend (*kalyāṇa-mitta*), teacher and philosopher in the ancient education and knowledge-disseminating culture of the country cannot be exaggerated. While the monastery continued to be the centre of learning, the resident monk continued to be the teacher and guide to people of all walks of life in the society. In Adikaram's words:

The monk's duty consisted predominantly in teaching the people as the way of right living. It is not easy to overestimate the importance of the part played by bhikkhu in beginning about in Ceylon that high standard of culture which she enjoyed for a period whose parallel in duration is not to be found in many other countries (Adikaram 1969, p. 15).

The text-based monastic learning produced its own experts who were

instrumental in transmitting the tradition to the future. This process, as was demonstrated in the course of this discussion, continued unbroken till the European invasion, even after which the tradition was not totally lost but greatly weakened. This is why, in the 18th century, Asaranasārana Saranankara Sangharaja, as a *sāmaṇera*, strived to restore the tradition securing from *ganinnanses*³ and lay people like Levkerāla whatever the meager support he could receive and was successful in his efforts. In other words, Saranankara Thera did not have to re-invent the wheel; the wheel was already there though in a highly weakened form; he had only to restore it.

We have to admit that there is not much mentioned in the ancient monastic records about the education for the lay people. But when we look at such phenomena as the highly sophisticated hydraulic system prevalent throughout the country and similarly advanced forms of architecture and sculpture, we cannot have any doubts about the existence of a strong tradition of master-apprentice relation. Whereas the technological knowledge was transmitted through the specific manuals of instruction⁴ and from the work-site with hands-on experience, culture and civilization, propriety and morality was provided from the monastery. Arts and crafts and

3. A type of semi-monks who led a household life while safeguarding the monastic property and traditions.

4. A widely used such manual is *Bimbamāna* or *Śāriputra* providing specific instructions on iconometry pertaining to Buddha statue. See. *The Bimbamāna of Gautamiyasastra as heard by Śāriputra*, edited and translated into English by E.W. Marasinghe. Bibliotheca Indo-Budhica Series, No. 138. Delhi, Sri Satguru Publications, 1991. Also see: 'Śāriputra' in *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, volume VII. pp. 766-767.

technologies were never separated from religion. The overall context in which the Sinhala culture evolved and developed during this pre-modern period was Buddhist in outlook. In other words, in this ancient cultural setting, ‘humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and technologies’ were never separated from one another and they functioned as one holistic totality.

That this ancient education system was successful in creating a society economically prosperous and, at the same time, ethically humane and righteous is amply supported by the evidence found in the ancient literature. Two stories from the Pali commentarial literature would suffice: According to one story occurring in *Vaṃsatthappakāsinī* (1994: Ch. 33, v. 85-86, 497-9), when Vattagamini Abhaya who was fighting invaders had to flee with his family in a chariot through a jungle road, they happened to see a small novice (*sāmaṇera*) monk easing himself by the roadside. The decency and propriety with which this young monk attended to his physical need attracted the attention of

the royal family even if they were under a tense situation. The story says that the royal family was very impressed with the cultured behavior displayed by the youngster. The other is a reference in Paṇḍuvāsadeva Stone-Seat Inscription to the high moral standard found among the people when the country was ruled by good rulers and people were economically satisfied. It says that during such periods, even if a good-looking young woman were to carry a gem in her hand and were to travel all over the country all by herself, the country was so safe and people were so cultured that no one would bother even to inquire as to what she was carrying.

The conclusion of this discussion is not that everything in the pre-modern culture of Sri Lanka was golden. But it aims to suggest that the pre-modern Sri Lanka’s education system, guided by the teachings and practices of Buddhism, endeavored successfully to a large extent, to create a society of people with right knowledge, good attitudes and useful skills.

References

- Adikaram, E.W. (1994). *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Center.
- Adikari, A. (2006). *The Classical Education and the Community of Mahasangha in Sri Lanka*, Godage International Publishers.
- Amaravamsa, A., Hemachandra D., (tr.). (1994). *Vaṃsatthappakāsinī, Mahāvamsaṭṭikā*. Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya.
- Ariyapala, M.B. (1968). *Society in Medieval Ceylon*, The Ceylon Government Press.
- Beal, S., (1906) *Buddhist Records of the Western World, Translated from the Chinese of Hiun Tsiang (CE 629)*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.
- Epigraphia Indica* Vol. XVIII, & Vol. (1982). Calcutta & Delhi.
- Fernando, P.E.E., (1969). Evolution of Sinhala Script in *Education in Ceylon - A Centenary Volume*, Ceylon: Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.

- Geiger, W., (ed.). (1980). *Cūlavamsa (Mahāvamsa)* - Vols I, II., London: The Pali Text Society.
- Gunatilake, H. (1994). *Chīna Bhikṣunī Charitāpadāna*, (tr.). D. Amarasiri Weeraratne: Wattala. pp.23-24
- Gunawardana, R.A.L.H. (1979). *Robe and Plough - Monasticism and Economic Interest in Early Medieval Sri Lanka*, The University of Arizona Press.
- Guruge, W.P. (ed.). (1989). *Mahāvamsa The Great Chronicle of Sri Lanka*, Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited.
- Jayawickrama, N. A. (1969). Literary Activity in Pali (ed.), *Education in Ceylon (from the sixth century BC to the present day)*, (1st ed., pp. 60-73). Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs,
- Legge, J. (1886) *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms: An Account of Chinese Monk Fa Hien of his Travels in India and Ceylon* (CE 399-414), Oxford.
- Oldenberg, H. (ed. & tr.) (1979). *Dīpavamsa The Chronicle of the Island An Ancient Buddhist Historical Record*. Williams & Norgate.
- Paranavitana, S. (1961) Significance of the painting of Sigiri. *Artibus Asiae*, (Ascona, Switzerland), Vol. 24, nos. 3 & 4, 1961, in *Felicitation volume presented to Professor George Coedes* on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday, Special Number edited by A.B. Griswold and Jean Boisselier, pp. 382-7.
- Paranavitana, S. (1969) The Learning of Pali and Sanskrit and its Influence on Sinhala literary Trends of the Period, in Editor (ed.), *Education in Ceylon (from the sixth century BC to the present day)*, (1st ed., pp. 162-174). Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.
- Pieris, P.E. (1913). *Ceylon and the Portuguese- Vol. I*, The Colombo Apothecaries Co. Ltd.
- Rahula, Walpola. (1993). *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Dehiwala, The Buddhist Cultural Centre.
- Saddhatissa, B. (ed.). (1930). *Pūjāvaliya*. Panadura.
- Silāṅkārā Thera (ed.), (1914). *Dāthāvamsa*. Alutgama.
- Silva De, R.H. (1969)., A living monument to the education and culture of a nation. in Editor (ed.), *Education in Ceylon (from the sixth century BC to the present day)* (1st ed., pp. 130-31). Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.
- Sirisoma, M.H. (1990) Brāhmi Inscription of Sri Lanka from 3rd century BCE to 65 CE,” in Nandadeva Wijesekara (ed.), *Archaeological Department Centenary (1890-1990) Commemorative Series Volume ii, inscriptions* (1st Ed., pp.3-54). Publisher.
- Skilling, P. et al. (ed.), (2012) The Teachings of the Abhayagiri School in *How Theravada is Theravada? Exploring Buddhist Identities*, Silksworm Books, Thailand.
- අධිකාරී, අබේරත්න (2002), *ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ සම්භාව්‍ය අධ්‍යාපනය හා මහ සඟන, තිවිර ප්‍රකාශන*.
- කුමාරතුංග, මුනිදාස (සංස්.), (1958), *නිකායසංග්‍රහ විවරණය, රත්නාකර පොත් වෙළඳ ශාඛාව*.
- විමලකිත්ති, අනුන්ගල්ලේ (සංස්.), (1959), *දීපවංසො (ද්‍රුතියොහාගො)*, ඊ.ඩී. ඉෂැඩ් ගුණවර්ධන මහාසඟය.
- ශ්‍රී බුද්ධදත්ත, අම්බලන්ගොඩ පොල්වත්තේ (1924), *කලානිශ්ශිලාලිපි*, ඇන්. ආර්. ප්‍රනාන්දු.

Chapter 2

REFLECTIONS ON THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

C.R. de Silva, G.K. Jayathilaka

Introduction

There are several types of institutions in Sri Lanka that provide tertiary education. Traditionally, universities were often rationalized as institutions that promoted the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. University education was considered as an enterprise guided by the goal of acquiring knowledge and the inculcation of intellectual integrity. The fact that this would lead to enhanced contribution by individuals to society was simply regarded as a related, but supplemental outcome. Institutions providing skills that enable individuals to increase life-cycle earnings were regarded as a different type of unit, a vocational college.

Particularly in developing countries, this distinction has been difficult to make. All higher education, university, vocational and professional education, has been in demand because it provides skills which enable individuals to improve their economic and social status, an enhanced status, which in turn, often provides better chances for the next generation. The state too has often favoured investment in higher education for many practical reasons. Higher education has been seen as helpful in nurturing knowledgeable

citizens needed for a modern society. In the present day, it is also seen as key in fostering national growth in the knowledge-intensive global economy. In the survey that follows, there will be numerous instances that illustrate how distinctions in objectives between universities and other tertiary institutions and higher education institutions have become increasingly difficult to make.

Origins and Early Years

Sri Lanka has had a long history of centres of learning in Buddhist monasteries, institutions which produced scholars of great learning and many works of literary merit. However, this tradition was adversely impacted by the impact of western colonialism and despite some efforts to revive indigenous models, the modern structure of university education in Sri Lanka came to be modelled on institutions borrowed from the West.

Indeed, the origins of many of the elements of contemporary tertiary level instruction in Sri Lanka can be traced back to British colonial rule. By the late nineteenth century, British experience in the neighbouring subcontinent of India convinced them of the utility of

having trained indigenous workers to serve in the middle and lower ranks of the administration. The newly emerging Sri Lankan middle class, enriched by the developing plantation economy was also very supportive of developing opportunities for higher education within Sri Lanka, not only because higher education in English was a means to higher social status in colonial Sri Lanka, but also because it would provide access to new areas of employment. This is the context in which a Medical College and a Law College were established in Colombo in 1870 and the Colombo Law College in 1875.

However, there were some constraints to the development of higher education in Sri Lanka. The British rulers were cautious due to their experience of discontent among educated youth in India. The wealthier Sri Lankans already had the opportunity of financing education for their children in Britain and were therefore less enthusiastic than they might have been about a university in Sri Lanka despite the formation of a Ceylon University Association in 1905. Moreover, although there was a spectacular growth in enrolments in Sri Lankan schools after the establishment of a Department of Public Instruction in 1869, and the subsequent policy to give grants-in aid to private schools, most of the growth was in primary schools and the medium of instruction in most schools was Sinhala or Tamil. The emphasis on commercial agriculture in plantations and the absence of emphasis on domestic agriculture led to the failure of the School of Agriculture established in 1884 and of the efforts to set up a School of Tropical Agriculture in 1916. The lack of industrialization limited the

demand for higher technical skills. The needs of state departments of Irrigation, Survey and Railways for technical assistants was filled by training schools within these departments until the Ceylon Technical College was established in Colombo in 1893. This is why, in 1921, when the Ceylon University College was established, it was simply designed to train Sri Lankan students for external examinations of the University of London.

A major change occurred in the last period of British rule in Sri Lanka and in the early years of independence. In 1931, Sri Lankans were permitted to elect a legislature through universal suffrage and from then on, politicians became increasingly subject to public pressure. At the same time, there came greater awareness of the need to train locals to replace departing British technicians and officials. The 'free education' scheme, which ended tuition fees in most schools and at the first-degree level in the 1940s, expanded access to education. The change in the medium of instruction in secondary schools from English to Sinhala and Tamil in the 1950s coincided with a vast expansion in the secondary school network.

First Modern University

It was in this context that the University of Ceylon was established in 1942 by putting together Ceylon University College that taught the sciences, social sciences and the humanities with the Medical College. Given that it was authorized to award degrees in multiple fields we might describe it as Sri Lanka's first modern university. In 1950, a portion of the Ceylon Technical College was transferred to the University to constitute

a Faculty of Engineering. Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences were organized into a new Faculty only in 1953, although university courses in those areas had been offered from 1947. Significant new areas added as departments included Dental Surgery (1943), Law (1946) and Education (1949).

However, the University of Ceylon was slow in planning for issues that would confront it in the late 1950s. Many in the university were resistant to the idea of changing the medium of instruction from English to the local languages. Planning to expand undergraduate intake to meet the substantial increase in students completing secondary school was also inadequate. The original plan for the university was to eventually transfer all teaching to a residential campus at Peradeniya and the first students studying law, agriculture and veterinary science were sent there in 1949 followed by students of the Faculty of Arts and Oriental Studies in 1952. However, with increasing demand for places, a single campus did not prove feasible and faculties in the sciences, medicine and the arts were duplicated in Colombo and Peradeniya. Faced with the need for an increased intake of students who had studied in local languages, the government, in 1958, elevated two Buddhist centres of learning, the Vidyalkara and Vidyodaya *pirivenas* to university status. However, these institutions expanded slowly. In 1960/61 for example, Vidyalkara University had only 654 students and Vidyodaya, only 976. Eventually, the University of Ceylon also began teaching undergraduate courses in local languages, at first in the social sciences and humanities and eventually in science-based disciplines.

Expansion and Reorganization

The 1960s were a period of rapid expansion of undergraduate intake. In 1957 there were only 2718 undergraduate students enrolled. By 1967, this number had risen to 14,287. The rise in enrolments was largely in programs in arts and commerce. The percentage of students enrolled in such programs (including law) increased from 1096 or 40.3% of the student body in 1957 to 10,922 or 76.4% in 1967. The ratio of permanent full-time academic staff to students declined, particularly in the fields of Arts and Social Sciences where it dropped from 1:14.2 in 1956 to 1:56 in 1966. Despite the initiation of several new programs such as those in Food Science, Business Administration and Public Administration at Vidyodaya University, and Commerce at Peradeniya, educational innovation within universities was limited. Graduate unemployment emerged as an issue as did increased indiscipline within universities.

The state reacted with the Higher Education Act No. 20 of 1966 which set up a national Council of Higher Education (NCHE) as a body designed to plan university education, to recommend financial allocation to universities and to admit students to each university. The Chairman of the NCHE and most of its members were nominated by the head of state. The administrative head of each university, the Vice-Chancellor, hitherto elected by the University Court was henceforth chosen by the Minister of Education from nominees recommended by a Board of Regents, a body dominated by appointed members. There were some positive developments in university education under the NCHE (1966-71)

The College of Advanced Technology at Katubedda was given university status in 1967. Also, in 1967, the Old University of Ceylon was split into the University of Ceylon, Colombo and the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya. Vidyalkara and Vidyodaya Universities began admitting female students. Additionally, there was some attempt at planning for the future development of university education. Nevertheless, the revised scheme clearly increased political control over universities and thus roused opposition within the universities.

Opposition to the new system by academics led, in April 1971, to a draft bill to set up a University Grants Commission. However, the youth insurrection of 1971 in which some university students were embroiled broke out the day after the bill was printed. The bill was immediately withdrawn and, in the aftermath, the state further centralized university administration through the University of Ceylon No. 1 of 1972. All universities were combined into a single University of Sri Lanka whose Vice Chancellor was appointed by the Minister of Education. Each former university was designated a campus administered by a President. This effort at even further centralization eventually ended in failure. Economic constraints in the mid-1970s restricted the resources available for university education and the office of the single Vice Chancellor proved to be unable to effectively plan for future developments. The centralized structure aroused opposition from many in the academic community. The University also became embroiled in political controversy when the government decided to alter the criteria to admit students to universities. Up to

1973, admission had been according to student performance at the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) Examination. After results in the 1970 G.C.E. (Advanced Level) Examination resulted in almost 50% of places in engineering and medicine being given to students taking the examination in the Tamil medium, the admission scheme was modified so that places were allocated after standardizing marks at the G.C.E. by medium of instruction. This substantially reduced the proportion of Tamil medium students admitted to science-based programs at the university. The introduction in the next year, of 'district quotas' limiting university admissions from each district to the proportion of national population living in that district further inflamed the controversy which did not abate until standardisation was ended and the district quota system modified through reforms in 1979 and 1984 after which 40% of places were given solely on academic performance as demonstrated in the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) Examination and 55% by district quota, while the other 5% was given to areas identified as 'disadvantaged districts'. The district quota-based admissions system used by the UGC up to the present has continued to be criticized as diluting academic merit, but it has facilitated access to state universities for students from working class and lower income families.

There were also some uncontroversially positive developments in the mid-1970s, including the establishment of university campuses in Katubedda (for engineering and architecture) in 1972 and in Jaffna in 1974. Postgraduate Institutes for Agriculture, Buddhist Studies and Medicine were also set up during this time.

Establishment of the University Grants Commission

The Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 led to several major changes in the university structure in Sri Lanka. The old University of Sri Lanka (1972-1978) was divided into six autonomous universities: University of Colombo, University of Kelaniya (formerly Vidyalkara University), University of Moratuwa, University of Jaffna, University of Peradeniya and University of Sri Jayewardenepura (formerly Vidyodaya University).

Each university was governed by a Vice-Chancellor elected by a University Court. Each University Court had many non-university members including six members of Parliament, eight representatives of professional and cultural bodies and two student representatives. The ongoing administration of the university was in the hands of a University Council which was presided by the Vice-Chancellor and had a lay majority but included all Deans of Faculties (elected by the faculty) and three representatives of the University Senate. This arrangement gave considerable autonomy to individual universities. The legislation also provided for the establishment of a University Appeals Board to deal with individual grievances of university employees. It also set up a University Grants Commission (UGC) of five members (increased in 1985 to a total of seven) to plan and coordinate university education, allocate funding to and regulate the administration of higher educational institutions, maintain academic standards and admit undergraduate students to all universities on the basis of a scheme approved by the government.

In the years that followed, there was a return to some degree of central control. The amendment to the Universities Act in

1985 abolished the University Courts and returned the control of the appointment of Vice Chancellors to the President of the country although the President's choice was limited to three persons nominated by the relevant University Council. The amendment also increased the UGC's power in relation to the creation of new Professorships and abolished University Student Councils replacing them with Faculty Student Relationship Councils. Furthermore, the UGC's financial powers enabled it to become increasingly influential in policy making.

Further Expansion

The university system has continued to expand swiftly in the past forty years. The number of state universities functioning under the UGC rose rapidly from six in 1983 to thirteen in 1999, partly as a result of an effort to set up at least one university in each of the nine provinces of the country. Four more new universities were created between 2000 and 2021, and existing universities continued to expand, creating new programs, departments and occasionally, new faculties. The total annual intake of full-time undergraduate students rose from 4150 in 1977, 5493 in 1983, 24,198 in 2012 to 31,902 in 2019 (Source De Silva (1986) and UGC Reports). The growth in the number of students admitted annually in the last decade has ensured that the percentage of 'qualified' students admitted to state universities grew from 16.7% in 2012 to 19.3% in 2018. Nevertheless, it remains true that many high school graduates who are fully capable of completing tertiary education have not been able to enter universities due to the limited number of available places.

During this period, however, there were some developments that need to be

noted. Due to deliberate admission policy measures taken by the UGC, the number of students admitted to arts-based courses (excluding external degrees) fell from 78.3% in 1966 to 64% in 1977, 55.8% in 1983 and 49.6% in 2019. This was despite an increase in admissions to commerce and management studies programs which accounted for well over a third of admissions to arts-based programs in 2019. Despite these changes and the increase in admissions to programs in technical and professional areas, there has continued to be a mismatch between the skill demands of private sector and the supply of universities. Employers reported that deficiencies in soft skills such as effective communication, working in teams, problem solving and critical thinking as main reasons for not being hired. There have been attempts to address these issues. The Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development (AHEAD) program funded by the World Bank has sponsored programs to develop socio-emotional skills, and English language proficiency among students with the objective of enhancing the job prospects and employment performance of graduates. Sabaragamuwa University has held short residential English language camps since 1997 and other universities have had English language teaching units for decades. In addition, the project has also taken initiative to enhance Information Technology (IT) skills of Arts graduates through their IT for Arts initiative under the direction of Colombo University School of Computing, by offering undergraduates a Diploma in Information Technology concurrent with their main arts degree programmes.

Furthermore, institutions that recently achieved the status of University have also made arrangements to overcome

some of the deep-seated challenges such as graduate unemployment which was also seen within the more established universities. Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine for instance, attempts to systematize indigenous knowledge through various fields of study and seeks to enable the sustainable development of the national economy through novel applications of indigenous knowledge. All their programmes therefore, particularly those in the field of social sciences are designed not only to impart the relevant knowledge but to enhance professional skills and attitudes through practical and applied learning embedded within curricula to create graduates to fit into a global professional community. This also seems to be the objective of the new University of Vavuniya whose website states that it is planning for the following new faculties: Faculty of Health Sciences, Faculty of Aquaculture, Fisheries and Marine Studies, Faculty of Natural Resources, Environment and Sustainable Energy Studies, Faculty of Animal Sciences, Faculty of Media and Communication Studies, and Faculty of Built Environment.

Additionally, given equal opportunity, women continued to gain an increasing proportion of places in admissions to virtually all programs, securing 64% of total undergraduate university admissions in 2019 (although only 33% of the faculty holding the rank of professor were female). In that year, 83.8% of admissions to arts-based programs were secured by females. The exceptions to women gaining a majority of open places were in computer science, technology and engineering where female undergraduate admissions in 2019 were 45.3%, 39.4% and 23% respectively.

Table 2.1: State universities functioning under the UGC

University	History	Faculties	Degree Admissions and Output 2019
University of Colombo	Formerly University of Ceylon, 1942-72	Arts, Education, Graduate Studies, Law, Management and Finance, Medicine, Science, Technology, Nursing	Undergraduate Admissions: 8,939 +636 (Sri Palee) Undergraduate Output: 1675 Graduate Output: 1539
University of Peradeniya	Formerly University of Ceylon Colombo, 1967-72, separated in 1967 from the University of Ceylon, 1942-72	Agriculture, Allied Health Sciences, Arts, Engineering, Medicine, Science, Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, Management	Undergraduate Admissions: 10,965 Undergraduate Output: 1447 Graduate Output: 99
University of Sri Jayewardenepura	Formerly Vidyodaya University (1958-72)	Allied Health Sciences, Applied Sciences, Engineering, Humanities and Social Sciences, Management Studies and Commerce, Medical Sciences, Technology	Undergraduate Admissions: 13,008 Undergraduate Output: 2790 Graduate Output : 413
University of Kelaniya	Formerly Vidyalkara University (1958-72)	Commerce and Management Studies, Computing and Technology, Graduate Studies, Humanities, Medicine, Science	Undergraduate Admissions: 12,020 Undergraduate Output: 2448 Graduate Output: 984
University of Moratuwa	Formerly the College of Technology, Katubedda, granted university status in 1972	Architecture, Business, Engineering, Graduate Studies, Information Technology, Medicine	Undergraduate Admissions: 6,628 Undergraduate Output: 515 (2183 in 2018) Graduate: 503
University of Jaffna	Originally established as the Jaffna campus of the University of Sri Lanka in 1974	Agriculture, Allied Health Sciences, Arts, Medicine, Graduate Studies, Hindu Studies, Management Studies and Commerce, Science, Technology	Undergraduate Admissions: 9,252 +1161 (Vavuniya) Undergraduate Output: 1172 Graduate Output: 59
University of Ruhuna	Originally established as a University College in 1979, granted university status in 1984	Agriculture, Allied Health Sciences, Engineering, Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences, Management and Finance, Medicine, Science, Technology	Undergraduate Admissions: 7,876 Undergraduate Output: 1312 Graduate Output: 249
The Open University of Sri Lanka	Originally set up as a University College in 1979 and granted university status in 1984	Education, Engineering Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Management Studies	Undergraduate Admissions: Undergraduate Output: 3952 Graduate Output: 2843
Eastern University of Sri Lanka	Originally set up as a University College in 1981 and granted university status in 1986	Agriculture, Arts and Culture, Commerce and Management, Health Care Sciences, Science, Technology	Undergraduate Admissions: 5,505 + 1346 (Trincomalee) Undergraduate Output: 433 (1133 in 2018) Graduate Output: 29

South Eastern University of Sri Lanka	Originally established as a University College in 1995 and granted university status in 1996.	Applied Sciences, Arts and Culture, Engineering, Islamic Studies and Arabic Language, Management and Commerce, Technology	Undergraduate Admissions: 5,376 Undergraduate Output: 938 Graduate Output: 21
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka	Established in 1996	Agriculture, Applied Sciences, Management Studies, Medicine and Allied Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities, Technology	Undergraduate Admissions: 7,012 Undergraduate Output: 947 Graduate Output: 201
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka	Originally set up as an Affiliated University College in 1991 and granted university status in 1996	Agricultural Sciences, Applied Sciences, Geomatics, Management Studies, Medicine, Social Sciences and Languages, Technology	Undergraduate Admissions: 5,203 Undergraduate Output: 876 Graduate Output: 19
Vayamba University of Sri Lanka	Originally set up as an Affiliated University College in 1991 and granted university status in 1999	Agriculture and Plantation Management, Applied Sciences, Business Studies and Finance, Livestock, Fisheries and Nutrition, Medicine, Technology	Undergraduate Admissions: 4,450 Undergraduate Output: 685 Graduate Output: 51
Uva-Wellassa University of Sri Lanka	Established in 2005	Animal Science and Export Agriculture, Applied Sciences, Management, Technological Studies	Undergraduate Admissions: 2,700 Undergraduate Output: 500 Graduate Output: 0
University of the Visual and Performing Arts	Based on the Institute of Aesthetic Studies (1974-2004), granted university status in 2005	Dance and Drama, Graduate Studies, Music, Visual Arts	Undergraduate Admissions: 2,309 Undergraduate Output: 505 Graduate Output: 17
Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine	Originally, the Gampaha Sri Lanka Siddhayurveda Vidyalaya founded in 1929, granted university status in 1921.	Graduate Studies, Indigenous Health Sciences and Technology, Indigenous Medicine, Indigenous Social Sciences and Management Studies	Undergraduate Admissions: Became a university only in 2021
University of Vavuniya	Originally the Northern Province Affiliated University College established in 1991 and converted to Vavuniya Campus of the University of Jaffna in 1997, granted university status in 2021.	Applied Science, Business Studies, Technological Studies	Undergraduate Admissions: Became a university only in 2021

Figures of output above do not include degrees and diplomas awarded by external degree programs of state universities which totalled 6007 and by the Institute of Indigenous Medicine (Undergraduate 120, Graduate 829), Institute of Human Resource Advancement (Undergraduate 119), University of Colombo School of Computing (Undergraduate 237), Swamy Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies (Undergraduate 216), Institute for Agro Technology & Rural Sciences (Undergraduate 14), Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture (Graduate 324), Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology (Graduate 144), Postgraduate Institute of Management (Graduate 340), Postgraduate Institute of Science (Graduate 326), Postgraduate Institute of English (Graduate 14), Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (Graduate 496), Postgraduate Institute of Resource Advancement (Graduate 246), Postgraduate Institute of Indigenous Medicine (Undergraduate admissions 1197, Graduate 2), University of Colombo School of Computing (Undergraduate admissions 899, Graduate output 148), Gampaha Wickramarachchi Ayurveda Institute (Graduate 16), National Institute of Library and Informational Sciences (Graduate 22) and the Institute of Biochemistry, Medical Biology and Biotechnology (Graduate 16). Please note that the 2019 admissions reflects some admissions delayed from 2018.

Other Tertiary Education Units Funded by the State

It is worth noting that apart from the 17 universities and 20 Institutes that function under the direction of the UGC, the state has set up a number of other institutions of tertiary education. They include two universities that function under the Ministry of Education, the Buddhist and Pali University and the Bikshu University. The Bikshu University, Anuradhapura had its origins in the Buddhasravaka Dharma Peetaya set up under the Parliamentary Act No. 106 of 1968 but was totally restructured in 1997 as the Buddhasravaka Bhiksu University, the only national university in Sri Lanka for Buddhist monks. In 2012, the name of the institution was changed to Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka. It has a Faculty of Buddhist Studies and the Faculty of Languages and Cultural Studies. Its enrolment is small but it has recently begun programs for external students. The Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka, established at Homagama in terms of Act No.74 of 1981 (as amended in 1995) is entrusted with the training of scholars of Buddhism and the promotion of the study and teaching of the Pali Language, Buddhist Culture and Buddhist Philosophy. It has three Faculties: Buddhist Studies, Language Studies and Graduate Studies.

The General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University was originally set up under the Ministry of Defence in 1980 as the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence Academy to provide officer cadets with courses. In 1988, the Academy was converted to a University and it has established fee-levying programs under several Faculties: Allied Health Sciences, Built Environment and Spatial

Studies, Computing, Defence Studies and Strategic Studies, Engineering, Graduate Studies, Law, Management, Medicine, Research and Development, Social Sciences and Humanities, and Technology.

In addition, there is the Ocean University of Sri Lanka, established in 2014 under the Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research & Innovation. It was based on the National Institute of Fisheries and Nautical Engineering (1999-2014). It has a limited objective of developing training courses in fisheries and allied sectors. It has a Faculty of Engineering and Management and a Faculty of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences. Unlike other universities it conducts courses both at undergraduate and at vocational levels, the former at Colombo and Tangalle and vocational diploma and certificate programs at eight regional colleges.

The University of Vocational Technology set up in 2008 under the Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Home Affairs, is accredited to provide courses up to the first-degree level in four faculties: Education, Engineering Technology, Industrial Technology and Information Technology.

Other state supported tertiary education systems include a network of 39 Technical Colleges which evolved from the commencement of “Technical School” at Maradana in 1893 (later called the Ceylon Technical College). More than half of these colleges were set up between 1948 and 1985, but the sector, offering various certificate and diploma programs in trades and crafts, as well National Certificates and National Diplomas in business fields, has

continued to expand and has received funding from aid agencies.

There are also 19 national colleges of education entrusted with teacher training. Seven two-year teacher training colleges had been set up by the 1950s and the system has expanded considerably since then. Elementary and lower-secondary school teachers in Sri Lanka must hold a Trained Teachers Certificate, which is a three-year program that is typically entered on the basis of A-Levels, and comprises of two years of class room instruction and one year of in-service teaching. These colleges are regulated by the National Institute of Education (NIE), established in 1986.

The Sri Lanka Law College offers a three-year Bachelor of Law (LLB) program. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka offers a Bachelor of Science in Applied Accounting.

The Growth of the Private Sector

One of the characteristics of Sri Lankan higher education in the last two decades has been the growth of private sector institutions providing education in fee-levying institutions. Incentives for the provision of for-profit tertiary education had existed since the opening of the economy post-1978 after which increase in household income in many families led to an enhanced willingness of parents to pay for higher education whether within the country at private sector higher education institutions or overseas. However, there was vocal opposition to the setting up of for-profit education institutions. The North Colombo Medical College, set up as a private fee-levying institution in 1981 was taken over by the state and made into a part of

the University of Kelaniya in 1989. The Institute of Surveying however, obtained recognition for its surveying science degree in 1990.

One of the most successful private sector institutions that has developed in Sri Lanka is the non-profit Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT), initiated in 1999 to produce IT graduates. At the time it had been challenging for state universities to produce the required number of IT qualified personnel. Early progress was slow. Only about 300 of the 3000 applicants were admitted to IT courses in the first year. Despite heavy demand, admission in the second year was only 400. However, the state controlled Mahapola Trust Fund offered land on lease at Malabe to the SLIIT and also contributed financially towards the establishment of the first building at the premises. In the year 2001, the SLIIT Campus was formally established at the Malabe premises. By 2002-2003, the intake had increased to 1000. Soon, SLIIT was producing a substantial number of IT professionals. Following this, the institute had recognised the need for an electronic engineering course to support the IT industry. Therefore, a few years later, an electronic engineering course was also introduced in collaboration with the Sheffield Hallam University, UK. Subsequently, the need was also felt for quality business graduates and a program to fill this need was also begun in collaboration with the Sheffield Hallam University. In the year 2000, SLIIT had begun working with the Curtin University in Australia to offer their degrees through SLIIT under a franchise programme. After 2010, and with the end of the civil war in Sri Lanka and the increased development work taking place, to match

the requirement for skilled labour, SLIIT started four-year civil, mechanical, electrical and electronic engineering programmes. In 2004, the BSc degree awarding status was obtained from the government and the same permission was acquired for business degrees in 2013/14. Subsequently, programmes in quantity surveying and architecture were added in affiliation with Liverpool John Moores University in the UK. Law, psychology and nursing programmes followed. Not long after, postgraduate programmes were added and in 2006 – MSc in Information Technology. Approval was obtained from the Ministry of Higher Education to award MPhil and PhD degrees in engineering and IT. The institute has now begun expanding through branches in Jaffna, Kandy, Kurunegala and Matara. Currently SLIIT is home to 11,000 students. In terms of academics, it has 80 full-time PhDs, over 100 lecturers with Masters-level qualifications and 300 lecturers altogether. In terms of infrastructure, it now has facilities such as sophisticated labs, a gym, swimming pool etc.

However, the swiftest growth in private institutions in the past two decades has come through for-profit institutions. As implied earlier, the Ministry of Higher

Education can grant private institutions degree-awarding authority or program-based recognition, and the UGC currently lists 11 non-state institutions with degree-granting status on its website. They include the Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (Guarantee) Ltd. approved for first degrees and postgraduate diplomas in Information Technology and Information Management (2004) as well as a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration (2011), the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration, approved for Bachelor's and Master's programs in Social Work (2005), Aquinas College of Higher Studies (founded by the Catholic Church in 1954) for first degrees in religious studies, information technology and psychology (2005), the National Institute of Social Development for Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Social Work (2005), and the South Asian Institute of Technology and Medicine (Pvt) Ltd, whose Bachelor of Surgery degree (deemed equal to the MBBS degree offered by state universities) was approved in 2011.

A number of companies incorporated in Sri Lanka under the Companies Act No. 07 of 2007 have also been authorised to teach for bachelors and master's degree programs.

Table 2.2: Companies authorised to teach tertiary programs

Name of Company	Programs authorised		Dates of authorisation
	First degree	Graduate	
National School of Business Management Ltd (NSBM) University	21	8	2013-2021
Colombo International Nautical and Engineering College (CINEC)	24	2	2013-2021
Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy	6	0	2016-2021
The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka	2	0	2013
SANASA Campus Ltd	3	0	2014
Horizon College of Business and Technology (Private) Limited	10	2	2015-2021
KAATSU Highly Advanced Medical Technology Training Centre(Pvt) Ltd	9	5	2015-2020

Nagananda International Institute for Buddhist Studies (Pvt) Ltd	2	4	2015-2020
Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (Guarantee) Limited.	9	18	2012-2021
Aquinas College of Higher Studies	2	0	2017-2019
Institute of Technological Studies	1	0	2017
South Asian Institute of Technology and Medicine (Pvt) Ltd. (SAITM)	3	0	2016-2017
SLT Campus (Pvt) Ltd	23	0	2016-2021
Saegis Campus (Pvt) Ltd	6	0	2018-2021
Sri Lanka Institute of Nanotechnology (Pvt) Ltd	0	2	2017-2019
Esoft Metro Campus (Private) Limited	2	0	2019-2021
Institute of Chemistry Ceylon	1	0	2020
International College of Business and Technology Limited.	1	0	2020
Benedict XVI Catholic Institute of Higher Education (Private) Limited	2	0	2020-2021
Royal Institute Colombo (Private) Limited	1	0	2021
Business Management School (Private) Limited	1	0	2021
International Institute of Health Science (Pvt) Ltd.	1	0	2021

Source: UGC website

One significant characteristic of these private entities is their affiliation with reputed foreign universities, which in turn attracts much interest from potential students. However, in collaborating with these reputed international universities, quality is crucial as the institute has to undergo a stringent quality check following which their standards have to be upheld. The institute has to ensure that the graduates they produce are at the same level. According to the Chairman of SLIIT Prof. Lakshman Ratnayake, collaborations ensure the quality of their teaching and learning and relevance of knowledge imparted through rigorous local as well as international market research conducted prior to starting programmes. At the same time, at least at SLIIT, a dedicated quality assurance unit has been set in place which not only ensures international standards but guarantees staff development and training. In the process, student feedback is regularly sought and peer reviews of staff are conducted. The increments of academic staff are based on their teaching evaluations and research. In addition, all

professional degrees are accredited by international professional bodies such as the Institute of Engineering Technology in the UK, Royal Institute of British Architects etc.

In addition to recognized private institutions which have enrolled well over ten thousand students, there are a number of unregistered providers, which operate simply by seeking affiliation with foreign universities. Under current law, affiliated institutions can freely enter agreements to offer degree programs in partnership with foreign providers, although the UGC does not recognize the final degrees awarded by foreign institutions. It is estimated that there are over 5000 students enrolled at unregistered higher education institutions, most of them in business-related programs. However, the number of students enrolled in private institutions is smaller than the 35, 245 enrolled in Open University programs (4488 in certificate and diplomas, 25,165 in undergraduate degrees and 1273 in postgraduate programs) in 2019. Enrolments in private universities are

Table 2.3: Enrolment at universities and higher education institutions under the supervision of the University Grants Commission 2019

Programs	Students	% Share
Undergraduate degree	103,818	24.5
Undergraduate external degree	278,953	65.8
Postgraduate degree	40,931	9.7

Source: University Grants Commission (2019) (excludes foreign students- 261 undergraduate and 657 graduate)

also a fraction of the 278,953 students registered for external degrees by state universities and the Open University in 2019. Foreign students in state universities were few, being only 657 in postgraduate programs and 261 in undergraduate programs and the number of foreign students in private higher education institutions is negligible.

Current Challenges

There are a number of challenges facing the system of higher education today. A few of these challenges and possible policy measures to meet them will be assessed in this section.

The first of these challenges is securing of adequate funding. The state university system has long suffered from limitations in funding. Slow economic growth in the past, partly due to over thirty years of civil conflict experienced by the country until May 2009 has led to underfunding of the whole education sector. The total funding provided by the state for university education was 2.5 per cent of total government expenditure in 2019. This was less than 0.5 per cent of Sri Lanka's GDP. Universities depend on this state funding to meet about over 87 per cent of their recurrent annual expenditure. In the short term, this challenge will be exacerbated by the economic downturn precipitated by the spread of Covid-19. According to the World Bank, Sri Lanka's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which had grown at a low 2.25% in 2018

suffered a decline of 3.57% in 2020 and is expected to grow only by 3.4% in 2021. The resulting impact on state revenue presents an obstacle to gaining new funds needed to provide additional services after the prolonged closure of universities in 2020-2021. Although mid-term demographic trends in Sri Lanka are expected to lead to a stagnation (and an eventual fall in the 2030s) in the size of the cohort of youth traditionally seeking access to tertiary education, the increasingly complex challenges of planning to meet the requirements in facing a rapidly changing world as well as the need to impart new skills to current degree holders makes the challenge of finance a formidable one.

One of the solutions proposed for the difficulty in securing sufficient financial resources is the further stimulation of private education which would shift much of the financial burden from the state to individuals and families. The tuition and related academic expenses alone of several of the technical oriented degree programs such as engineering and computer science currently range from over a million to three million Sri Lankan rupees, a sum which a vast majority of citizens cannot afford except through loans. In 2017, the government introduced a scheme of interest-free loans for students who passed the G.C.E. Advanced Level Examination, but were not admitted to state universities to seek further education, or to obtain

professional certificates from private higher education institutions. The students are only obliged to pay back the loans upon graduation from a recognized private higher education institute.

According to its Chairman, Prof Ratnayake, the SLIIT is the ideal model for private higher education in Sri Lanka being constituted as a social service institution, non-state but not-for-profit. In other words, company profits go to future development of the institution and establishing more facilities but are not taken out, as there are no shareholders. He proposes establishing private higher education institutes in the form of a charity, a trust, or a guarantee company – with no shareholders nor a distribution of the profits. Currently, most private higher education institutions are for-profit (L. Ratnayake, personal communication, 2021).

Meanwhile, those who oppose the increased emphasis on private for-profit institutions, especially those affiliated with foreign universities claim that the affiliated universities are ‘low ranked’ internationally and are simply seeking a market in less developed countries and therefore, provide a sub-standard deal while exploiting Sri Lankan students. They also point out that these institutions push the products of state universities, particularly students from modest socio-economic backgrounds to the periphery of the job market and thus generate adverse social and political consequences. On the other hand, proponents of private tertiary institutions point out that other Asian countries, notably Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and even India have built private tertiary education networks which have successfully provided

educational opportunities for a majority of their students. It has been suggested that the incentives provided for foreign universities as well as the supervision mechanisms for existing programs should be evaluated to ensure that the for-profit institutions attract more foreign partners of good quality. If this is secured, there is a possibility for Sri Lankan institutions to attract fee-paying foreign students who would enhance the resources presently available to local higher education institutions. Success in this area might depend on securing the collaboration of other units of the state (such as the units controlling immigration and foreign embassies) to ensure promotion of such programs and a smooth entry of foreign students to such institutions. State higher education institutions also need to be encouraged to generate revenues for development. Possible revenue generating services could include income earned through research and consultancy services (including linkages with industry). Fifteen state universities have already set up university-business linkage cells (funded by a World Bank AHEAD Program) designed to enhance university-industry collaborations by connecting the business community with university resources and through the conversion of university research into new products and services for public use. The Universities of Colombo, Kelaniya, Sri Jayewardenepura, Moratuwa, and more recently, Peradeniya have had some success in developing extension and short-courses, and in gaining substantial fees from postgraduate degrees, and diploma and certificate courses. Regionally located state universities, and conflict-affected state universities might need special assistance in this regard.

A related challenge is the improvement of the quality of graduates produced by all institutions - both public and private. Several reports have suggested that general skills such as Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills and knowledge of a foreign language such as English, as well as soft skills such as creativity, flexibility, initiative, team-orientation, communication, positive work attitudes and discipline are areas where students graduating from Sri Lankan tertiary programs need improvement. These issues were recognised in the 2009 report of the National Education Commission and addressed by the World Bank Reports emanating from reports resulting from projects such as the Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education 2003-2009 and the Higher Education for the Twenty First Century 2011-2015. There have been attempts in the recent past to address these issues but this issue needs further continuous attention.

Quality assurance mechanisms were devised to develop a more integrated higher education system with harmonised undergraduate quality standards and better-defined linkages to the labour market. However, much more remains to be done. Sri Lanka still lacks effective quality assurance mechanisms for the alternative higher education sector, the private higher education sector, and the external degree programs. University-industry linkages are only at an infant stage in Sri Lanka. Expanding internship programs providing work experience to students, such as the program currently planned for at the Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine could strengthen higher education programs. In addition,

more attention might be devoted to developing measures of teaching effectiveness in Sri Lankan institutions. Improvements in the quality of graduating students might also have a positive effect on the average non-completion rate which has been estimated at being around 30%, four years after admission. More attention to improving the quality of external degree programs offered by state institutions (and degree programs offered by private organizations), highlighted in the 2010 World Bank project report remains an urgent need. It might be noted that 96.6% of the 252,480 students enrolled for external degree programs in state universities follow programs in arts, commerce and management studies and that many of them come from rural areas and middle to lower income groups. More systematic use of university e-material, better utilization of social media through mobile devices, and better provision of online learning management systems and software as well as more individual guidance could be effective approaches to improve the quality of external programs.

Improving quality of the academic staff and providing them opportunities to upgrade their expertise and teaching skills is another area that needs attention. State universities have 6321 academic staff on permanent contracts in 2019. In terms of rank, 896 had demonstrated sufficient productivity to gain the rank of Professor. Some measures have already been taken to address academic staff development. The staff development centre set up at the University of Colombo has trained over 2000 teachers from all state universities in Sri Lanka and other universities have begun to set up similar centres. The University Grants Commission provides

financial assistance for teachers (on probation) to undertake doctoral studies at local and overseas universities and the National Centre for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences also provides some assistance for the same purpose. Part of the challenge, however, seems to be a disparity across state institutions. For example, well over 50% of permanent academic staff at Peradeniya, Colombo and Sri Jayewardenepura had PhDs while the average for all state universities was 40%. Professors as a percentage of permanent academic staff was 43% in Colombo, but less than 9% in Jaffna. Related to this question is the challenge of providing administrative staff opportunities for further training and advancement,

There is some evidence of growth in areas of graduate education and research output. Postgraduate enrolments in state universities in 2019 came to a total of 40,931 and 9961 students were awarded postgraduate degrees and diplomas in that year. The number of PhDs awarded by state universities (excluding the Open University) rose from 67 in 2013 to 170 in 2019. However, investment in research and development makes up only 0.1% of GDP in Sri Lanka, which is considerably lower than the average among middle-income countries. Compared to other Asian countries, Sri Lanka is not known for obtaining intellectual patent rights and though the majority of state universities have their own scholarly journals, the research output of Sri Lankan academics in indexed journals is limited. The Division of Research and International Cooperation established by the UGC in 2013 to forge international research collaboration and nurture a research culture in higher education

systems might need enhanced support to achieve faster progress.

As highlighted by the national policy framework developed by the National Education Commission in 2009, a special challenge for the higher education sector lies in devising how it could contribute to the creation of a climate for a peaceful, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural Sri Lanka. Higher education institutions can help in the construction of such a society through academic courses and research activities which explain the positive characteristics of multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies, and the requirements for stability and cohesiveness in such societies. The existing mix of ethnic and religious groups among students and staff could provide an excellent environment for collaboration and cooperation among the different groups. The provision of a scheme for faculty in state institutions to spend a 'sabbatical year' teaching and researching in another university might lay the basis for increased understanding and collaboration across institutions as well as among different social groups. Increased cultural, scholarly and sporting activities across higher education institutions including interactions between universities and alternative higher education institutions of the state and private sectors could also be beneficial in improving understanding.

Conclusion

Higher education institutions have developed substantially in Sri Lanka since the first modern university was set up in 1942. The University structure expanded from the original university located in Peradeniya and Colombo to seventeen state institutions with at least

one located in every one of the nine provinces of Sri Lanka. Undergraduate student numbers have risen from 2718 in 1957 to almost 400,000 in 2019 with the introduction of external degree programs and the rise of private tertiary education institutions. Programs have also become more diversified with the growth of areas such as management, commerce and technology and 64% of undergraduate places in 2019 were secured by women.

A number of challenges remain and some of them are areas where further research is needed to suggest policy guidelines that would secure solutions. Primary among them is the need to secure adequate funding to improve access to undergraduate education. The role that could be played by private education and of on-line education in meeting this challenge needs to be examined with a view to developing specific steps to reduce costs and improve quality. There is also the question of the improvement

of the quality of graduates produced by all institutions - both public and private. Improving quality of the academic staff and providing them opportunities to upgrade their expertise and teaching skills is another area that needs attention. While that is addressed, one should not forget the need to upgrade the expertise of administrative and professional staff in these institutions. Then again, there is the key question of how higher education institutions can help in the construction of a peaceful, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural Sri Lanka through academic courses and research activities. Steps to meet all these challenges through policy and institutional changes might well take a collaborative effort led by the University Grants Committee with the participation of state universities and institutes as well as the private sector (including industry and private educational institutions).

References

- Asian Development Bank (2016) *Innovative Strategies in Higher Education for Accelerated Human Resource Development in South Asia: Sri Lanka*, Manila.
- Asian Development Bank (2017) *Innovative Strategies for Accelerated Human Resource Development in South Asia, Public-Private Partnerships for Education and Training: Special Focus on Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka*. Manila.
- Aturupane, H. (2016) *Enriching and Accelerating Higher Education Development in Sri Lanka*, Colombo: Gamini Corea Foundation.
- Bandara, P. K. (1973) Historical development of technical education in Sri Lanka from 1900 to 1970, MEd thesis, University of Sri Lanka.
- De Silva, C. R. (2018) The Education of Buddhist Monks in Sri Lanka: A Historical Review and Some Suggestions for Reform. *Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, 42(1-2), 1-28.
- De Silva, C. R. (1978) The Politics of University Admissions: A Review of Some Aspects of the Admissions Policy in Sri Lanka 1971-1978, *Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences*, (Colombo), Vol. I (2), pp. 85-123.
- De Silva, C. R. and De Silva, D. (1990) *Education in Sri Lanka, 1948-1988*, New Delhi: Navrang.
- De Silva, C. R., Indaratne, A.V. De S., Jayaweera, S. & Peiris, G.H., (1986) *Case Study in Higher Education: Sri Lanka*. Colombo: University Grants Commission.

Gamage, S.N. (2005) An Assessment of the Quality of Faculty in Humanities and Social Sciences in the Public University System in Sri Lanka. *Journal of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka*, 9, pp. 9-11.

Gobinath, S. & others, (2019) Factors Influencing the Private Cost of Higher Education; the Case of Sri Lanka, *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 18 (3), pp. 186-202.

Jayasuriya, D.L. (1965) Development in University Education: The growth of the University of Ceylon (1942-1965), *University of Ceylon Review*, 23 (1 & 2), pp. 83-153.

Jayawardena, D. (2017) The “MacBurger”, Non-State Universities and the Changing Landscape of Higher Education in Sri Lanka, *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 15 (3), pp 213-240.

Rameez, A., Fowsar, M. A. M. and Lumana, N. (2020) Impact of Covid-19 on Higher Education Sectors in Sri Lanka: A Study based on South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 10(6), pp. 341-349.

Senaratne, R. (2012) *Re-creating and Re-positioning of Sri Lankan Universities to meet Emerging Opportunities and Challenges in a Globalized Environment: Workshop Recommendations*, Colombo, Godage.

University Grants Commission (2021) Sri Lanka University Statistics [Online] [Accessed 15

November 2021]. Available from https://www.ugc.ac.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2301%3Asri-lanka-university-statistics-2020&catid=55%3Areports&Itemid=42&lang=en

Wickramasinghe, V. (2018) Higher Education in State Universities in Sri Lanka: Review of Higher Education since colonial past through international funding for development, *International Journal of Educational Management*, 32 (3), pp. 463-478.

World Bank (2009) *Towers of Learning: Performance, Peril and Promise of Higher Education in Sri Lanka*, Colombo: World Bank.

Personal Communication:

Interview with Professor Lakshman Ratnayake, Chairman, SLIIT, 30th November 2021

PART II

Current Status of Humanities and Social Sciences Education

Chapter 3

PRESENT STATUS OF HUMANITIES EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA

Marie Perera

Introduction

Humanities and Social Sciences are academic disciplines central to the study of human life, culture, and society in general. While Humanities encompass the studies in language, literature, the Arts, History and Philosophy, Social Sciences bring into focus a more scientific approach to learning about human relationships and society. Sometimes liberal Arts are also called Humanities. However, Liberal Arts are broader in perspective and includes Humanities and these two are used interchangeably. Both these academic disciplines assist in understanding human nature and nurture with their ethos. They teach the iceberg-like complexities of life, human existence, pleasures, pain, resolving life's predicaments, judgements and much more which cannot be understood by scientific knowledge alone, as one needs multiple lenses to see them in their proper context.

Humanities Education is varying from physical and biological sciences in its objectives and content. It is a great civilizing force resulting in flowering greatly in many facets of society in helping to achieve human greatness and excellence- to be human one must learn Humanities. One must have some concept

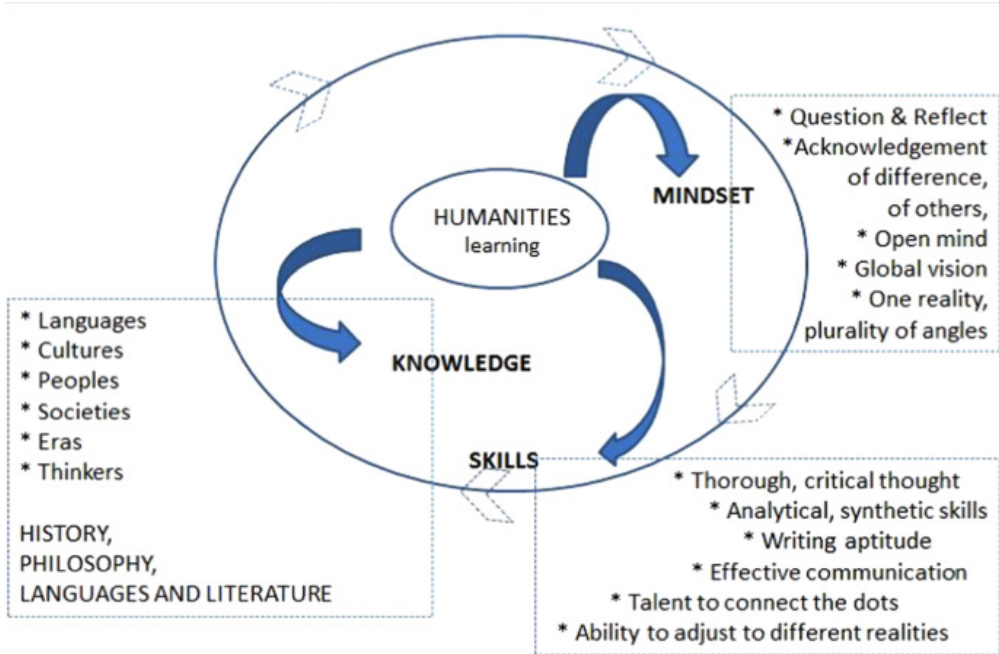
of the person going to be produced by Humanistic Educational journey of learning. The benefits of studying the Humanities can be explained through Fig. 3.1.

The value of the Humanities can be looked at in three independent, mutually reinforcing levels: the comprehensive knowledge, skills and mindset that come with studying the field. History, philosophy, languages, and literature, to mention a few, are nuclear subjects that give direct access to knowledge. The challenge that this knowledge presents is to understand, interpret and attribute meaning to oneself and the surrounding. It is the skills such as critical thought, acknowledgement of others, the ability to adjust to different realities that help in interpreting knowledge and changing the mindset.

Development of Humanities Education in the World

The belief in the West is that Humanities originated in Classical Greece for the study of the nature of people and their position in culture and society. However, Humanities have been developed by all human cultures and societies since antiquity. In this regard the influence

Figure 3.1: The benefits of studying humanities



Source: adapted from Costa, 2017

of India, China, and Greece in the development of Humanities in the world is briefly examined.

Humanities in India

Stepping back into the corridors of history, one observes that seeds of Humanities Education developed in India from about 1500 BCE, followed by Greece in the 5th century BCE and Sri Lanka in the 3rd Century BCE. This is revealed in the following statement by the renowned Indologist Max Muller (1823-1990).

Whatever sphere of the human mind you may select for your special study, whether it be language or religion or mythology or philosophy, it be laws or customs, primitive art or primitive science, everywhere you have to go to India (www.goodreads.com)

Thus the four Vedas (the books of knowledge) composed were perhaps the first of the humanise literature of the world. They were the hymns found in

the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda.

These were followed by the Upanishads, the philosophical narratives and the Puranas. It was near the riparian surroundings and under the sylvan trees that sages and saints resided in their Ashrams or the Gurukulas. According to Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Indian civilization grew up in nature in the forests while the Western civilization developed in the city. However, there is very little archaeological evidence for the Vedic period. But the Vedas are supposed to be the earliest sacred literature in the world counted in thousands of hymns. It appears that later, the populace had developed a complex social organization in their culture culminating in the formation of the caste system which is not yet eroded even in the modern age.

Around the 6th century BCE there arose a great awakening in religions in India. Brahmajala Sutta of the Digha Nikaya mentions over sixty religious ideologies. Among them the great religions were Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. It is of interest to note that there were institutions such as the Samayappavadaka where religious discussions cum debates were conducted which showed religious tolerance at its best during the age.

It appears that India had great seats of learning and the Nalanda University which was the greatest opened in the 4th Century CE. It was a beacon of light to many scholars for several countries of the world until it was vandalized in 1193 CE. There were many other universities of fame such as the Takshashila, Mithila, Valabhi and Vikramshila. Ancient India had produced some of the best minds in Humanities such as Kanda, Aruni and Aryabhata. The most remarkable was a courtier of the Emperor Samudragupta Maurya (321 – 297 BCE) named Kautilya Vishnugupta or Chanakya. His masterwork, the Arthashastra, a political treatise on statecraft, timeless in strategies is comparable to Niccolo Machiavelli's the Prince, a work on the same theme in 1532.

There were many savants, sages and scholars through history who contributed in large measures to Humanities in India. Later, after centuries, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore opened up in 1934 the Shantiniketan which reflects the universality of India. His magnum opus is the Gitanjali – the Garland of poems. Tagore's work contributed to the flowering of Humanities Education.

Influence of the Chinese tradition

Spanning over 4000 years China has contributed to the world many innovations and its Humanities have influenced not only China but also countries such as Japan, Vietnam and Korea and many other parts of Asia.

Mostly acknowledged Humanist in China up to the present times is Philosopher Confucius (551-477 BCE). His teachings are in Analects of Confucius. According to him, the goal of life is to internalize Jen or human heartedness by which a person becomes superior. The key characteristics of Jen are sincerity, filial obligation and reciprocal respect. The other humanistic savants were Sun Tzu, Lao Tzu and Mencius who are respected for their humanistic thought.

Greeks and Humanities

Beginning from the 5th century BCE the city of Athens, a civilization by itself, was the cradle of Western civilization. An educative society where its citizens usually were participants in humanistic learning (exceptions were household slaves) which helped in shaping good citizens for the State. It is assumed that modern ideas and ideals of Humanities have their origins in the ancient Greek *Paideia*-a type of education for active citizenship in *Polis* or the City State.

The major ethos of the society was virtue, the central notion of the ideal life. In fact, the Athenians' idea of education was to produce a wise and good man (*Kalos Kagathos*).

To step back into the corridors of time one meets the galaxy of wise men in

Athens who developed new ways of thinking. Beginning from Socrates who is said to have first brought Philosophy to the market place was followed by Plato who observed that it is only through Education that one truly becomes human and virtuous action is the goal of learning. Plato believed that Democracy requires Education for everyone to know his duties and rights. Aristotle who opened up his Education institute the Lyceum, divided all knowledge into three divisions: productive, practical and theoretical. It appears that it is to thank Aristotle that all knowledge taught in schools and Universities are divided as subject disciplines to this date. Human excellence was his aim in Humanities Education and reminded that educating the Head without educating the Heart is no education at all. There were many other quintessential figures in this period of peak excellence in Athens who creatively enriched the humanistic tradition as a legacy of the heritage of mankind. Some of Greek historical savants were Homer the great poet, Pericles whose period was the Golden Age of Athens, Herodotus, known as the Father of History and Hypocrites well known for the Code of Ethics for physicians.

Even after 2000 or more years the sublime nature and nurture of the Greek civilization could be captured. It is yet alive and fruitful for all humankind. It is assumed that Humanities Education played a primordial role in shaping their worldview (Weltanschauung), a broad view of life without which no civilized society could reach that level of urbane sophistication in knowledge, wisdom and passion for all arts and overflowing creative impulses.

Historical Development of Humanities in Sri Lanka

Historically Sri Lanka's humanistic civilizational journey began with the introduction of Buddhism which has been authenticated by the historical Chronicles *Dīpavaṃsa* and the *Mahāvāṃsa* and also by the inscriptions, (on the eve of the introduction of Buddhism the conversation had between the great Thera Mahinda and the king Devānampiyatissa is said to be the first recorded intelligence Test in the world, Modern Intelligence test was introduced by Alfred Binet only in 1905). Centred around the Mahavihara of Anuradhapura (3rd Century BCE) and the satellite *Pirivenas* established over several locations in the Rajarata, disseminated the human message by the Sangha together with the life skills necessary for living. The community of Sangha is a miniature learning society who is transmitting doctrinal message even at present. Legend says that once King Saddhatissa who wanted to test the people's observance of abstaining from killing animals went to a remote village in Anuradhapura and asked a villager to kill a fowl. But the villager refused to do so. Likewise, whether it was arts, architecture, sculpture or prose or verse literature, all of them depicted a humanistic character in purpose,

Even the moonstones (*sandakada pahana*) placed at the foot of a Vihara complex had a humanistic mystifying symbolic beauty. (Out of religious respect to Saivism, moonstones carved during the Polonnaruwa period did not depict the carvings of bulls). Beginning from the Abhayaweveva (300 BCE) tanks built for sustainable living was a show of an act of benevolence for the good of many. The UNESCO World Heritage site

of Sigiriya a complex built by Kashyapa (473-495) its graffiti, mirror wall and paintings are aesthetically pleasing masterpieces of Art which are symbols of the influence of Humanities in ancient Sri Lanka.

This brief description of the Humanities in ancient Sri Lanka indicates that even before formal teaching of Humanities commenced in Sri Lankan universities, influence of Humanities could be discerned in the Sri Lankan society and culture.

Formal teaching of Humanities in Sri Lankan universities would be discussed next.

Formal Teaching of Humanities Education in the Sri Lankan Universities

At the end of the 19th century, there was a fairly developed formal system of primary and secondary education in Sri Lanka. As a result, there arose an agitation for the development of higher education and the establishment of a university. In 1912, the McLeod Committee recommended the establishment of a University College. It was to prepare students for final Diplomas in Arts, Science and Oriental Studies. The proposal was to establish a University College qualified to grant Diplomas in the first instance which would ultimately be converted into a University (Malalasekera, 1969. P.871)

In January 1921, the University College was formally opened in Colombo as a government institution affiliated to University of London. Hence, the birth of Humanities Education in the Universities can be traced back to 1921.

Development of the Faculties and Departments

In 1942, there were the following independent Departments in the Faculties of Arts and Oriental Studies. Indo-Aryan, Tamil, English, Western Classics, History, Geography, Economics and Philosophy. In 1943, three separate Departments were formed out of the original Indo-Aryan section – Sinhala, Pali and Sanskrit. A Department of Arabic was created in 1945. Courses in Buddhist Philosophy and Buddhist Civilization were added to the Faculty of Oriental Studies.

According to Malalasekera (1969, p. 877) the expansion of the Faculties of Arts and Oriental Studies should have been accompanied by a re-grouping of the Departments of Study in these Faculties. In 1956, the Senate of the University of Ceylon approved a proposal to effect a re-grouping which had not taken place. According to the proposal, there was to be a Faculty of Arts comprising of Departments of Languages, Philosophy and History. Faculty of Social Sciences consisting of Departments of Economics, Law, Mathematics, History and Philosophy. Departments of History and Philosophy were to be in both Faculties.

In February 1967, The National Council of Higher Education recommended to the Hon. Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs that the Colombo section of the University of Ceylon be established as a separate University. It was recommended that the University structure would be

- a. Studies in Arts be regrouped under two Faculties- Social Sciences and Humanities
(Malalasekera, 1969, p.893)

However, at present while the traditional Universities such as Colombo, Peradeniya and Jaffna retain their Faculties as Arts, University of Kelaniya has both a Faculty of Social Science and a Faculty of Humanities.

The following list of Faculties in various Universities shows the disparity in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences when it celebrates the centenary of its existence in the University system in Sri Lanka.

Present Status of Humanities Education in the World

One of the first initiatives undertaken in the framework of UNESCO after World War II, was the establishment of the

International Council for the Philosophy and Human Sciences in January 1949, understanding the uniqueness of the Humanities and for the understanding of the great challenges of Humanity.

Although the Humanities flourished in the 1950s, there appears to have been a crisis in the Humanities in the 1960s.”The Crisis in the Humanities” was the title of a book by J.H. Plumb published in 1964. The book claims that there is “a gulf of mutual incomprehension between the sciences and the Humanities” (Plumb cited in Arndt, 2006, p. 1). On the other hand, Maxwell (1967) claims that the Humanities in the age of super-science and super technology have an increasingly difficult struggle for existence.

Table 3.1: List of institutes connected with humanities studies under UGC

Sri Palee campus	University of Colombo
Trincomalee Campus	Eastern University
Faculty of Arts	University of Colombo
Faculty of Arts	University of Peradeniya
Faculty of Arts	University of Jaffna
Faculty of Humanities	University of Kelaniya
Faculty of Social Sciences	Open University of Sri Lanka
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences	Rajarata University of Sri Lanka
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences	University of Sri Jayewardenepura
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences	University of Ruhuna
Faculty of Social Sciences & Languages	Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka
Faculty of Arts and Culture	Eastern University of Sri Lanka
Faculty of Arts and Culture	South Eastern University of Sri Lanka
Faculty of Hindu Studies	University of Jaffna
Faculty of Islamic Studies and Arabic Language	South Eastern University of Sri Lanka
Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences	University of Peradeniya
National Centre for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences (NCAS)	University Grants Commission

Source: UGC Standing Committee on Humanities and Social Sciences

As the focus of the society shifts, so do the focus and philosophies of the education system. Taking into consideration the global shift towards innovation and technological development, the rapid changes in the global economy, and attempts to find a one-size-fits-all solution for the World's education shortcomings, global focus has shifted towards the StEM subjects—Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. This shift to StEM-focused education has challenged the role of the Humanities in Education, introducing concerns that the overwhelming emphasis on StEM disciplines has pushed the Arts, Humanities and Human sciences to periphery or even completely out of the picture.

“The Humanities Are in Crisis - Students are abandoning Humanities majors, turning to degrees they think yield far better job prospects. But they’re wrong”. This is the opening line of an article by Benjamin Schmidt in 2018. He argued that the Humanities were declining because students prefer to study subjects that they think will lead to better job prospects.

Similarly, Mintz (2020) also noted that Humanities Departments were mostly experiencing growth in non-traditional disciplines like communications, linguistics, and other majors instead of traditional ones such as history, English, or philosophy. In some ways, the growing disciplines are more “vocational” than “scholarly,” reflecting Schmidt’s idea. Students are not uninterested in the Humanities, but they are more aware of the cost of college and want a degree that gives them a start on a good career.

This concern is evident from the rationale for the *World Humanities Conference* that took place in Liège, Belgium in August 2017. The theme was *Challenges and Responsibilities for a Planet in Transition*, and it was organized in cooperation with UNESCO. The rationale for this conference as stated by Costa (2019, p.1) is as follows: “The Humanities were at the heart of both public debate and the political arena until the Second World War. In recent years their part was fading and they have been marginalized. It is crucial to stop their marginalization, restore them and impose their presence in the public sphere as well as in science policies”

In this context it was necessary to “Reimagining the Humanities” in a time of global crisis in the Humanities. “Humanities are not encased in amber: far from being static, the fields associated with the Humanities and the value and purpose of a Humanistic Education have shifted over time” (Mintz 2020, p.5). One such shift is to develop courses that connect traditional Humanities concerns with aesthetics, ethics, historical perspective and meaning to high-demand employment areas such as law, medicine, architecture, business, engineering, fashion, healthcare and technology. Hence, today there are studies in legal Humanities, the Medical Humanities, Environmental Humanities and Digital Humanities. Therefore, the StEM education has become StEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education world-wide. There are also courses in Applied and Critical Humanities and call for a “truly Global Humanities” (Mintz 2020).

The World Humanities Report, 2015, indicates that this shift in focus in Humanities can also be seen in Humanities research. New uses of Humanities research are also helping to integrate scholarship and other types of knowledge, such as use of historical data for public planning, of narrative models for business, of arts technology for media, and of philosophy for bioethics. Furthermore, long-standing disciplines, such as languages, literature and history of ideas, are becoming ever more important to overcoming cultural boundaries in a globalising world.

Further, research findings have shown many advantages of Humanities Education. The following findings are extracted from a Report (2018) by the Macquarie University, Australia on the Value of the Humanities. This research was built on a rich and diverse literature through econometric analysis of Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) and Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) data, analysis of graduate outcomes and employer satisfaction surveys and consultations with global businesses, public sector agencies and researchers in Humanities disciplines.

Humanities degrees involve many technical skills including quantitative analysis skills, policy development, software use and foreign language skills. This report identifies over 30 technical skills that may be acquired in a humanities degree.

In addition, transferrable and transversal skills, which have at their core the ability to solve complex problems by

taking a flexible and adaptable approach, have become widely acknowledged as important in driving business success. Transferrable skills form the basis of a Humanities Education, with surveys finding that both undergraduates and postgraduates tended to be more confident in their analytic and written communication skills relative to those in other fields of education.

Surveys of employers echoed these findings, with Humanities-educated individuals exhibiting superior transferrable skills in terms of collaboration and overall employability. Analysis of HILDA survey provides further evidence of the value of a Humanities Education to businesses – 40% of Humanities graduates work in market sector industries such as professional services. While a large proportion of Humanities graduates work in businesses, the majority work in the non-market sectors of health care, education or public administration. This reflects the broader public benefit of the skills they have learned. Consultations with public sector employers revealed that Humanities graduates possessed the right mix of skills to help solve complex policy problems, often called ‘wicked problems’ (Turner and Brass, 2014) The need to address such complex problems is expected to rise in the future.

Humanities graduates also make meaningful contributions to their communities and society. The rate of volunteering amongst Humanities graduates is 5 percentage points higher than the average volunteering rate of all other fields of study.

There is also a range of evidence that indicates that education establishes greater levels of pro-social values. For example, the level of trust exhibited by tertiary qualification holders is 17% higher than those with a lower level of educational attainment. Analysis of the HILDA survey finds that individuals with tertiary qualifications in the Humanities exhibit improved labour market outcomes relative to those with a completed high school education.

The present status of Humanities Education in the world indicates that the Humanities are not limited to just the disciplines that fall under their umbrella in university settings. Humanistic perspectives can illuminate any discipline, including Technology and Medicine, to ensure that human progress and the human experience are accounted for in decisions to advance technology and medicine.

Present Status of Humanities Education in Sri Lanka

As Table 3.1 indicates there are 13 Faculties offering Humanities and Social Science Education in Sri Lanka. In addition there are two campuses and two institutes to promote the study of Humanities. Yet, it is only University of Kelaniya that has a separate Faculty of Humanities.

In the inception of the Humanities and Social Science Education in Sri Lanka, the discipline of Education was also imparted through a Department of Education in the Faculty of Arts in the University of Colombo. Subsequently, similar Departments were established

in the Faculties of Arts in the University of Peradeniya and Jaffna and Vidyodaya and Vidyalandara Universities.

However, in 1975 all these Departments were amalgamated to form the pioneering Faculty of Education in the University of Colombo and Education became an Independent discipline. However, a Department of Humanities Education is one of its Departments with the mission - “to contribute to the development of competent, committed and innovative professional educators for teaching, research and service to the nation through the teaching of subjects related to man and his culture”. Subsequently, The Eastern University of Sri Lanka also established a Department of Education and Child Care in the Faculty of Arts and Culture.

National Centre for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences (NCAS)

With a vision to be a centre of excellence in promoting research and advanced studies in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences, NCAS was established in 2005. Its Mission as stated in the NCAS website is;

Recognizing the need to strengthen and upgrade teaching and research at all Sri Lankan universities, Realizing the need that universities should contribute to the development of the country and society through research and policy inputs, NCAS shall support both theoretical and applied postgraduate, post-doctoral and other research in the Humanities and Social Sciences and promote advance thinking and creative originality by motivating and rewarding academics in that direction. NCAS will be an apex

body within Sri Lanka's university system networking with national and International organizations to achieve its objectives. <https://www.ncas.ac.lk/>

The Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (PGIHS)

PGIHS is a National Postgraduate Institute affiliated to the University of Peradeniya and functions under the University Grants Commission. It commenced operations in 2015. PGIHS presently conducts postgraduate degree and diploma programmes and short-term training programmes in 20 different disciplines under five Boards of Study. Students have the option of choosing either a programme in their preferred discipline or one that is interdisciplinary in content. The disciplines that the PGIHS provided training include: Arabic, Accounting, Archaeology, Buddhist Studies, Economics, Education, English, Fine Arts, Geography, Greek and Roman Studies (formerly known as Western Classical Culture), Hindu Civilization, History, Islamic Civilization, Management, Pali, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Sanskrit, Sinhala, Sociology and Tamil (<http://www.pgihis.lk/>).

Department of Medical Humanities

The Department of Medical Humanities, which was established in 2016, is one of the newest Departments in the Faculty of Medicine. It is the first Department dedicated to the Medical Humanities among universities in Sri Lanka, and is a pioneer of the discipline in the South Asian region.

The field of Medical Humanities encompasses a wide range of disciplines, such as ethics, psychology and the social sciences (cultural studies, anthropology and medical sociology), as well as the critical use of artistic and literary works to understand the human experience in health and illness. The core goal of the Department is to use the field of Medical Humanities to foster qualities of compassionate care, professionalism and ethics in medical and other healthcare professionals. In addition it aims to promote the inclusion of the Humanities in healthcare at an institutional and individual level, conduct research in the discipline, especially in areas relevant to Sri Lanka, and take a leadership role in the development of Medical Humanities in Sri Lanka.

The Department will support and take a lead role in the existing educational programmes conducted by the Behavioural Sciences Stream. It will focus on addressing six themes, Humaneness, Personal Development, Health and Behaviour, Effective Communication, Medical Ethics and Professionalism (<https://med.cmb.ac.lk/medical-Humanities/>).

Humanities Education and world trends

When considering the introduction of Medical Humanities as well as the separate discipline of Education, it reflects the shift to more “vocational” than “scholarly” disciplines of Humanities mentioned by Mintz.2020

Further, the Medical Humanities is an example of how StEM education

had become StEAM education where traditional Humanities values are used to understand the human experience in health and illness. This is in keeping with the World trend as well as it dates back to the indigenous Sri Lankan doctor patient relationships.

Even though there are some new trends in the discipline of Humanities in the Universities in Sri Lanka, most of the subjects taught are still the traditional Humanities subjects as can be seen from the list of subjects offered by the Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences.

As was the scenario in the world, in Sri Lanka also there is a crisis with regard to the Humanities graduates. According to a Tracer Study of Graduates, UGC 2018/19 one of the problems Sri Lankan higher education sector faces is “employment opportunities available to graduates and number of graduates searching for employment opportunities at any given point of time”. The Report cites two reasons for this problem. This could be a reflection of the lack of opportunities created by the economy or skills mismatch between the graduates produced by the universities and the market requirements.

While employment rates were over 90% in Architecture, Computer Science/IT, Allied Health Science and Engineering, graduates from other disciplines seem to be less dynamic in finding jobs. The only exception is the graduates from the field of Education as all of them have been absorbed into the teaching profession by the state. The lowest employment rates were recorded by the graduates from

the Arts (45.6%) and Performing Arts (37.1%) disciplines. Employment rates among graduates not only vary across disciplines but also among universities. This variation is high among HEMS graduates compared to StEM graduates.

However, unlike in the Global Trend where many do not opt to study Humanities subjects due to lack of employment, in Sri Lanka the number that study Arts subjects is high. According to the Report of the Government Audit Office, 2019 in 10,175 government schools 4,215,487 students had studied in the year 2018. Of this, 75 % had qualified for G.C.E.(A/L) examination and the overall number of students who sat for the GCE (A/L) examination in the year 2018 amounted to 267,111 out of which 105,398 students or 39 % had sat for the examination under the Arts stream. Of the total students who gain university admission, the total number of students who study Arts degree represent approximately 30 per cent. At the same time as discussed in the Tracer Study 2019 the unemployment of the Humanities graduates is also high.

The above discussion indicates that there is a crisis in Humanities Education in Sri Lanka as well. The Audit Report 2019 claims that Sri Lankan system produces “academic persons” as opposed to “skilled individuals”. The Tracer Study 2019 also highlights that it is essential for universities to map their academic programmes regularly with the requirements of the potential employment opportunities available for their graduates. In this context the way forward for the Humanities Education in Sri Lanka is discussed in section 7.0

The Way Forward

In section 1.0, it was argued that the benefits of Humanities Education can be looked at in three independent, mutually reinforcing levels: the comprehensive knowledge, skills and mindset. However, the role of Education should not be to produce skilled robotic manpower making slaves to greed and money. The challenge is for the knowledge to be understood, interpret and attribute meaning to oneself and the surrounding. It is the skills such as critical thought, acknowledgement of others, the ability to adjust to different realities that help in interpreting knowledge and changing the mindset. Yet, it appears that the Sri Lankan Humanities Education has neglected the development of the skills and changing the mindset. However, the world scenario discussed in section 4.0 indicated through research findings that Humanities degrees involve many technical skills and employers claim that Humanities graduates possess superior transferrable and transversal skills in terms of collaboration and overall employability. Hence, the way forward then is to change the focus in Humanities Curricular in Universities.

At present in the world there are studies such as Legal Humanities, the Medical Humanities, Environmental Humanities and Digital Humanities. Yet, in Sri Lanka the only new discipline introduced is Medical Humanities.

Another world trend is as Steve Jobs (2011) remarked “it is technology married with liberal arts, married with the Humanities that yield us the results

that make our hearts sing”. Therefore, the focus has to be shifted from StEM to StEAM. One of the fundamental juxtapositions between technological advancement and humanity is portrayed in Mary Shelley’s novel “Frankenstein.”, (cited in Miler, 2019). The novel asks the question: “just because we can do something, should we?” This is the power of the Humanities — not to halt progress, but to inform the genuine progress that comes only from thoughtful reflection on human values and meaning.

The World Humanities Report, 2015 as discussed in 4.0 indicated a shift in focus in Humanities research as well. New uses of Humanities research are also helping to integrate scholarship and other types of knowledge, such as use of historical data for public planning, of narrative models for business, of arts technology for media, and of philosophy for bioethics. In this regard, it is heartening to note that the World Bank funded AHEAD Project has offered two types of Research Grants for Universities. Development Oriented Research grants for StEM-HEMS research and Promoting Innovation and Commercialization Research for combination of StEM-HEMS research. This appears to be a step in the right direction and should be promoted.

Furthermore, traditional disciplines, such as languages, literature and history are becoming ever more important to overcoming cultural boundaries in a globalising world. Studying Humanities should enable people to appreciate that diversity is a way of life and enrich our lives with how other people live, think and act and perceive a way of life and

develop multiple identities. According to Ralph Linton (1955) renowned Cultural Anthropologist, those who do not know cultures other than their own do not know their own culture.

Conclusion

In order to move towards a new panorama in Humanities Education “Reimagining”

and rethinking of the Humanities in the Sri Lankan Universities is necessary and it is the greatest challenge. Yet, history has proved that it can be achieved although the purpose of Humanities education can never end with the changes taking place in all human endeavours and the resulting complexities in society at large.

References

- Arndt, D. (2006). *The Two Cultures and The Crisis In The Humanities*. Forum on Public Policy
- Canterbury Classics (Eds.) (2018). *Ancient Greek Philosophers*. USA: Canterbury Classics
- Chandradhar, S. (2013). *A critical survey of Indian Philosophy*. New Delhi: Motilal Ranarsidas Publishers Pvt Ltd
- Costa, R. (2019). The place of the Humanities in today’s knowledge society. Paper presented at the World Humanities Conference Challenges and Responsibilities for a Planet in Transition Liege, Belgium, 6-12 August 2017 <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0245-6>
- Holm, P., Jarrick, A., Scott, D. (2015). *The World Humanities Report*. Palgrave MacMillan Open Access. Accessed on 19/07/21
- Jobs, S. (2011). Speech delivered at the launching of Apple iPad2. Retrieved from [youtube.com/watch](https://www.youtube.com/watch)
- Linton, R. (1955). *The Tree of Culture*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf
- Malalasekera, G. (1969). *Beginnings of University Education in Education in Ceylon a Centenary* (Vol part iii)
- Malalasekera, G. (1969). *Expansion of University Education in Education in Ceylon a Centenary* (Vol Part iii)
- Macquarie University (2018). *The Value of the Humanities*. Australia: Macquarie University
- Maxwell, S. (1969). “The Plight of the Humanities” *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, April 1969
- Report of the Commission on the Humanities. (1964). The American Council of Learned Societies. Retrieved from <https://www.amazon.com/Report-Commission-Humanities/dp/B007BNUXYW>
- Report of the National Audit Office. (2019). Sri Lanka: National Audit Office.
- Schmidt, B. (2018). The Humanities Are in Crisis. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com>
- Singerland, E. (2003). (Translator) *Confucius Analects*. Cambridge: Hacket Publishing Company, Inc
- Turney, G. and Brass, K. (2014). Mapping the Humanities, arts and social sciences in Australia. Australia: Australian Academy of the Humanities.
- University Grants Commission (2018). *Tracer Study of Graduates of Universities in Sri Lanka*, Sri Lanka: University Grants Commission.

Chapter 4

CURRENT STATUS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES EDUCATION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Farzana Haniffa

It is necessary to train the pupil not merely to think and act and behave as an individual but also to think and act and behave as a citizen- useful to himself and to society. A tolerably good understanding and appreciation of the increasingly complex political, economic, and social background of modern life and a sense of duty to society and the nation form the essential equipment of a good citizen. The well-being of society so much depends on the right choice of collective aims, i.e., political policy, and on the efficiency of the collective machinery, i.e., political government; and if democracy is not to fail, a grave responsibility rests on the individual citizen of today. He should not only have the factual equipment for sharing in the direction of policy but also the aptitude for judging aims and issues. In the absence of these qualifications, who can guarantee that the destinies of the nation will be entrusted to the proper leaders? This in turn throws responsibility on the schools and education has to be planned so as to make the schools fulfil this need. Although schools must eschew partisan politics, they must take their share of responsibility for the political education of the nation's youth.

Report of the Special Committee on Education (Ceylon), 1943

Introduction

The above is a quote from the Kannangara report on Education Reforms. From the conversation regarding education that occurred when anticipating independence, to the preoccupation that is taking place today regarding quality assurance and employability, we have traveled on a long journey. This paper is written appreciating the recent efforts of the UGC standing committee on Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) to elevate the local programs in these disciplines. It is hoped that they have much success. It is also written to sound a note of caution with regard to

the impact that the most recent higher education reforms are having on a fragile system that is suffering from years of neglect. The paper will argue that the reform process is inadequately appreciative of the contribution that HSS education can make and is even critical of their main premise. Thereby, efforts that are made to “reform” HSS education are in fact undermining the very basis of these programs and are threatening the integrity of the programs. I begin this paper invoking the sentiments of the education reform committee as expressed in their 1943 report to remind us that the need that education is supposed to serve

is not reducible to the too narrow ambit of employability that the university system has been preoccupied with for the past several years.

In the current climate, where education reform for employability, especially of HSS programs has taken center stage, there is very little regard for the integrity of the disciplines taught by the HSS. A preoccupation with the real deterioration of the programs due to a long process of neglect has brought about not greater support for the strengthening of training in these programs and funding for greater research, but an emphasis on moving these disciplines away from their strengths and towards employability skills defined according to limited, and opaque criteria. This paper will demonstrate how this new emphasis is damaging the way the Humanities and Social Sciences are taught in the Sri Lankan university system and undermining the benefits that such disciplines, if taught well, can bring about for Sri Lankan society and citizenship as a whole.

The deterioration of the HSS programs in Sri Lanka has a long history and has been written about extensively. Kumudu Kusum Kumara for instance has argued that the deterioration is partly due to the introduction of the Swabasha system of education where both teaching and research transitioned to the local languages.¹ The lack of a translation tradition, and the limited access to material produced in other

languages meant that academics had little exposure to global developments in their field. (Kumara 2012) They were in turn handicapped by their inability to share their research with others outside their language group. In this context careerist academics concentrated not on research and pedagogy but patronage and political connections to further their careers. Kumara has also claimed that the cultivated hierarchy prevailing within academic institutions globally was particularly pernicious in the Sri Lankan context. The privilege and gatekeeping practices of incompetent senior academics in turn restricted the exposure of their juniors to critical and cutting-edge scholarship and pedagogical practices. (Kumara 2012) The unavailability of networks and funding seem to have limited academics' opportunities for quality PhD training and many of them were compelled to either obtain PhDs from the institutions where they completed undergraduate education or never complete their postgraduate qualifications. (Kumara, 2012) Kumara—while romanticizing somewhat the experiences of other contexts – presents a substantial analysis of the historical deterioration of research and thinking within the HSS programs – especially those taught in the local languages—in Sri Lankan universities.

The regrettable deterioration of standards within the local university system – especially in relation to the HSS disciplines, then, is not in question. In section 2 of this paper, I discuss this deterioration as described by currently serving university lecturers. However, the multiple analyses that have been

1. Kumara, Kumudu Kusum.(2012). Social Science and Humanities Education in Sri Lanka and its Discontents: Some Reflections. *Dialogue*. Vol. xxxix. The Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue. 186-245.

made of the nature of this deterioration and the recommended reform to stem the deterioration and enhance the quality of these programs emerge, I will argue, from several flawed premises that do little to actually enhance the quality of these programs and students' experience at university.

Part One

In mid-2021, the parliamentary committee on public accounts discussed an audit report prepared by the Auditor General's office regarding HSS programs. Some of the assumptions that underlie policy making on education were laid bare in the report.²

The report assumed and noted the following regarding HSS education discussed as the "Arts" stream.

1. The Arts streams in Sri Lanka were the last resort of the academically unsuccessful.
2. The Arts streams were where students from underserved schools, that did not teach science subjects invariably ended up.
3. The Arts streams were producing graduates who had only "theoretical"

2. The report was not a very well put together document. However, it was discussed by the Parliamentary Select Committee and it represents many of the assumptions regarding Arts education that policy decisions seem to be made from. Prior to the conference for which this paper was written there was very little organized push back against such assumptions from HSS practitioners in the Sri Lankan university system. The report, produced by the National Audit Office is entitled *Propensity to tend education under the Arts stream and the unemployment of Arts Graduates* and is available at http://www.auditorgeneral.gov.lk/web/images/audit-reports/upload/2020/special_20/art/English-Report.pdf

or "academic" knowledge and had no "skills" or practical knowledge.

4. Sri Lanka as a developing country could not afford to produce graduates with only academic knowledge or knowledge of the Arts. (Although the Fine Arts were undeniably a part of any civilized and thriving society)
5. There was a large demand for Arts Degree programs.
6. Most graduates from Arts degree programs were female.
7. Most Arts graduates were unemployed. (There is no reliable research from which a number with regard to unemployment can be ascertained.)
8. Most Arts stream students that entered universities came from the country's poorest districts.
9. Most Arts graduates wanted government employment. (Government employment was preferred because jobs were more secure than in the private sector)
10. Of all Arts Graduates those who studied English literature were 100% employed.

As can be ascertained from the list of points above, the report was less than coherent and made few connections between the many points that it made about Arts Education. The report claimed that students from underserved schools enter Arts Faculties. It does not thereby recognize that the Arts degree programs are compelled to engage with students who come with minimal preparation and are expected to produce competent graduates through a system that does not recognize and address this problem. (See Kumara on this point). The report also does not state or explain why teacher to student ratios in Arts streams (18 per lecturer)

are different from science streams (10 per lecturer) to the disadvantage of students. (The rate for management is also 18 students per lecturer.) The report does not distinguish between the different Arts degree programs—three and four-year programs, internal and external programs, distance education programs etc. when describing all Arts programs as failing. It also makes no comment about the differential availability of resources and access to materials at different degree awarding institutions within the University System.³

There is no substantial research to indicate that the Arts graduates are unemployed. The tracer studies that are used have dubious sampling methods and cannot be relied upon to indicate with any validity that Arts graduates remain unemployed. (The report acknowledges this.) Additionally, the report also notes that most graduates consider themselves to be unemployed or under employed until they obtain a government job. The unemployment discourse that it cites seem to be based solely on the burden that the state has to bear to provide employment for Arts graduates. The report, which is of questionable quality, also provides no additional supporting analysis of whether there is a correlation between the fact that most graduates are female and that female labour force participation in Sri Lanka is at an abysmal point of 34%.⁴ The question of whether the government is committed to job creation for graduates trained in the HSS is also left

unaddressed. As economists contributing to this conference have emphasized, state job creation strategies have concentrated on agriculture and industries and not on white collar work. The policy making around higher education seems to have been done with two assumptions: the state is overly burdened with the need to provide unemployed graduates with jobs; the private sector does not consider the Arts graduates to be suitable for employment.

The neo liberalization of higher education remains an important critique that inadequately informs conversations on the status of HSS in Sri Lanka. Currently there is substantial writing on the issue with regard to the higher education reform across the globe in general and in Sri Lanka in particular.⁵ The neoliberal turn has resulted in the framing of higher education not as a path to good citizenship but as a path towards employability. While it is essential that a graduate be employed, it is distressing that at this historical juncture, employability trumps other attributes of citizenship as the priority areas that drive education reform. Additionally, under

3. See the critique of the report by academics within the university system: <https://island.lk/myth-of-unemployable-arts-graduates/>
4. See Sri Lanka Labour force Statistics Quarterly Bulletin released by the department of census and statistics. Available at http://www.statistics.gov.lk/Resource/en/LabourForce/Bulletins/LFS_Q1_Bulletin_2020

5. See Costa, R.C. The place of the humanities in today's knowledge society. *Palgrave Commun* 5, 38 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0245-6>; Cannizzo, F. (2018). Tactical Evaluations: Everyday Neoliberalism in Academia, *Journal of Sociology*. Advance online publication. DOI: 1177/1440783318759094. Gifty Oforiwa Gyamera & Penny Jane Burke (2017): Neoliberalism and curriculum in higher education: a post-colonial analyses, *Teaching in Higher Education*, DOI: 10.1080/13562517.2017.1414782. Dhammika Jayawardena, The “MacBurger”, Non-State Universities and the Changing Landscape of Higher Education in Sri Lanka *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (December 2017) ISSN 1740-2743.

neo liberal conditions, universities are being run as profit making institutions that require financial viability.⁶ The university of a previous era, funded by the state was thought of as a location where lecturers try “to lead the students to search for truth, to stimulate curiosity, make them wrestle with intellectual possibilities, appreciate art and culture and work towards an enlightened politics and public service.” (Krauss- Jensen and Garsten) Today –as “employability” reigns within the higher education policy discourse -- that goal seems hopelessly romantic and outdated.⁷

As part of this neo liberalization, there is a global trend towards corporatization of the university through a standardization of accountability or “auditing” processes, that are considered the justification for the corporatization. In addition, the process also involves making universities visible to the dubious requirements of ranking processes, instituting exorbitant college fees (in the US and the UK), the treatment of students as consumers, and providing services within the university that are not limited to the academic experience. There is a growth in the administration cadre of the university and the academic community is increasingly being marginalized with little or no say

in the direction that the university is taking. Further, while the administrative cadre are gaining increasing salary hikes, the academic cadre and their work is increasingly rendered precarious through adjunct and contract work and a reduction of permanent positions. Globally, in fee levying universities, the fees have skyrocketed, and colleges, especially in the United States, pride themselves on being competitive.⁸ (Harvard University only accepts 5% of all those who apply.) This model that treats the student as a consumer and education as a personal investment is being widely critiqued. The idea of an education as a right and as a social necessity is being eroded at great cost. It is unfortunate that education policymaking in Sri Lanka is inadequately informed by this critique.

There is also, simultaneously a standardization of qualifications that are then recognizable by employers across the globe. Hence, we have the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework or the SLQF. There is little appreciation of what is lost in such a process and, further, skills training that will facilitate an analysis of this loss is also increasingly becoming underfunded and underdeveloped. The consequence of such standardization is the loss of the possibility to be creative in responding to student needs when deciding the direction that a course might take, the overuse of lecturer’s time for administrative and auditing task, the simplification of programs for the sake of standardization and furthermore, the emphasis on reporting alone as a criterion of compliance, and thereby of quality. (Manurathna, 2018) As will be clear in

6. Uyangoda, Jayadeva (2018) University Governance and Autonomy in Sri Lanka: Changing contexts and Directions. Dialogue Volume XLV and XLVI. 2018-2019. Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue. Colombo. and Manurathna, Prabha (2018) University & Co. The Neoliberal University and the Challenges Faced by Arts Faculties in Sri Lanka.
7. Krause-Jensen, J., & Garsten, C. (2014). Introduction: Neoliberal turns in higher education. *Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences*, 7(3), 1–13. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24717960>.

8. See Miller, N. Corporatization of Higher Education. *Dissent*. Fall 2012. Available at <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/the-corporatization-of-higher-education>

the next section of the paper, attention to the local context within which a particular campus is situated, the class and education background of students who attend the university are hugely important in deciding the pedagogic practice at those institutions. Additionally, students' critical perspective on society, whereby students are trained to look beyond the status quo and to look for the inequality and the hidden impact of issues about which there is broad popular consensus— is rarely emphasized in the new conversation.

Prabha Manuratna has made an important observation regarding the transformation that is being anticipated of the Arts Degree student in Sri Lanka. In the formulation of the Learning Outcomes related to the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework in addition to the standard Knowledge Skills and Abilities listing borrowed from Human Resource Management and Employee retention thinking, the Sri Lankan framework has included 4 other factors. These anticipated outcomes that Manurathna names a “mindset” paradigm are described as: attitudes, values, professionalism, and vision for life.⁹ As

9. (The Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework, cited in Manuratna 2018. P 120.)

The labour demand survey of 2017 records the jobs which are most in demand from the employer perspective. These include Sewing Machine Operators, Security Guards, Other Manufacturing Labourers, Shop Sales Assistants, Advertising and Marketing Professionals, Commercial and Sales Representatives, Cleaners and Helpers in Offices, Hotels and Other Establishments, Manufacturing Supervisors, General Office Clerks, Stall and Market Salespersons. Other than perhaps advertising and marketing professionals, Arts Graduates may not be suitable for such employment. There has been no effort on the part of the government to utilize these graduates' skills in a productive manner.

Manuratna claims the “failure” of Arts Education can be located in the mismatch between what the market requires as described in the SLQF framework and the “real” undergraduate that enters the Arts Faculties in Sri Lanka.¹⁰

Manurathna makes the important observation that the quality enhancement that is anticipated within the Arts faculties is one where the impact of students' class background is sought to be transformed through their academic programs.¹¹ Some of the neo liberalization initiatives described as “soft skills” are bound to be resisted by the student body; a large percentage of the class makeup of Arts Faculties are from social groups that have traditionally been excluded from the middle classes or have had a very ambivalent attitude towards such a class that Manurathna describes as “imitative.” The compulsion to now embrace the signage of this imitative middle classness for the sake of employability is likely therefore to be resisted by this section of the student body, leading once again to them being considered unemployable.

One more point in support of Manurathna's argument is also that the critical theory informed critical pedagogy that may be foundational to even the weakest arts and social science programs may in fact be just what the private sector does not want of its labour force. The universities provide the space for articulating class grievances not just through student politics but

10. Manurathna, Prabha (2018) University & Co. The Neoliberal University and the Challenges Faced by Arts Faculties in Sri Lanka.

11. The audit report cited above is a reference point for the typical Arts Graduate at both the secondary and tertiary levels.

through its academic programs. This learning has little place within the hyper-regulated private sector spaces where no thinking outside of job requirements has validation.

What is not being adequately unpacked in Manurathna is the assumption regarding the unemployability of Arts Graduates. For instance, there are few of our students—in the Sociology Honors degree program --who report back to us of their unemployability. Most are employed fairly quickly after completion of their program and if they have English language capability, they have many options. Further, there is no research to confirm the unemployability thesis as stated above. The myth of the unemployable graduate emerges from university graduates' lack of interest in private sector jobs, and private sector employers' perspective on "poor attitudes" of public university graduates.¹² The popularity of government jobs over those in the private sector seems undisputed outside of a particular social class. When the government calls for applications, many who have other jobs give those up to take up the government appointment. Further, the class-based requirements of private sector employers and their position regarding the unemployability of university graduates seems to be informing policy more than research.

12. Page 17 of the Sri Lanka Labor Demand Survey of 2017 notes that "First job seekers coming from university or other higher education institution have been reported having poor attitude / personality or lack of motivation by 17.1 percent of firms." <https://fddocuments.net/document/sri-lanka-labour-demand-survey-2017-domegovlk-v-executive-summary-labour.html?page=57>

That there is very little recognition or acceptance among policy makers of the kind of knowledge the HSS can bring to the table is made clear in the UGC mediated Quality Assurance process. Even a cursory look at the level descriptors of the Sri Lanka Qualifications framework reveals how little input HSS perspectives seem to have had in their formulation. As Manurathna too has noted, the way the learning outcomes that inform level descriptors are formulated has been borrowed from entrepreneurial education. The specific needs of the Sri Lankan context are being included in terms of transforming class markers and not with any understanding of the knowledge gaps that exist regarding the major social problems that the country is facing. For instance, there is a distinct feminization of the higher education sector. However, female labour force participation remains low. Further, ethno-religious conflict remains an issue that regularly impacts life in the country including its economy. The fact that a higher education policy that emphasizes the economy does not address either of the above issues seems rather odd. While recognizing the members of the UGC Standing Committee on Social Sciences and Humanities' and their important ongoing work to raise the profile of the HSS within our universities, it is perhaps time that some sectors that constitute the nuts and bolts of the reform process are revisited.

I would like to discuss a recent experience that spoke to the current level of disregard for these disciplines within the Quality Assurance world. The AHEAD project is the latest World Bank-funded university

improvement exercise and the mantra of “employability” --the contentious ground from which all recent higher education policymaking is done—drives this particular project cycle as well. The workshop we attended was entitled “How to incorporate employability skills into teaching and learning in University Education using the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF).” These workshops are ubiquitous within the University System and are conducted by a group of academics who have long been engaged with the SLQF process. Few of them have HSS backgrounds.

The workshop was part of the systematization process being carried out in the university where we are required to write our course outlines within a uniform format that names all intended learning outcomes (ILOs) for the program and the course. This workshop was about how to write learning outcomes at the lesson level.

The first 15 minutes of the workshop was devoted to describing what outcome-based education is. The outcome that we anticipate needs to be programed into our activities at the outset, we were told. If we don’t do that, we will be disappointed in what we “produce.” The final “product” that we were to envisage using the SLQF framework was a “good citizen” who could contribute to society. The nature of the contribution was not discussed. We were then asked to imagine the production of a building, or of a car. Such a product needs plans and a blueprint. When planning a “human product” too, we should think about planning for the production process. A “human product”

is more complex because we must take individuality into consideration, we were told. Every individual is different, and we have less control over the process with Human Products. We were also told that regardless of how difficult it is, if we have a plan for the process, we can be assured of at least some broad similarities in our “products.”

In our HSS programs, we constantly strive to teach students to unlearn what has become “normal” in popular parlance. Using the language of the market and the production process of saleable goods to refer to students would be an example of the neoliberal marketization creep that we would warn students to be attentive to. We would suggest that, not referring to students as complex individuals with histories and particular personalities, and as people we form relationships with, and whose talents and abilities we nurture, is a process of dehumanization. We would draw attention to the fact that such language encourages thinking of students as nondescript cogs in the wheel of a neoliberal capitalist system, and that using dehumanizing language has dehumanizing consequences. In other words, we would be quite firm in telling our students that referring to human beings as “products” is to be avoided as it references the actual treatment of persons as goods/objects.

There is no inherent problem with designing course outlines and broad learning outcomes. It is good for planning and is efficient. However, the lack of any sensitivity to language indicates the absence of an HSS perspective. Outcome-based education could also have been

described as a process of preparation essential for the thriving of students, for the encouragement of their creativity and for the nurturing of their skills. Direction and structure are a necessary foundation from which creativity can emerge. The fact that such language was not used speaks both to the ignoring of the HSS approach and also to a paucity of imagination in the formulation of the qualification's framework and the quality assurance process. The ultimate goal of the SLQF format and the workshop – as its title suggested-- was to incorporate “employability skills.” And the current definition of “employability skills,” is egregious, limited and shortsighted.

The usage of a metaphor of production to refer to students also meant half the participants at the workshop were completely put off by the presentation. More troublingly, the other half were eager to learn the corporate language to ensure that they performed well in keeping with the requirements of the current dispensation. In the process, irreparable harm was being done to how both sets of young HSS scholars approached and valued their disciplinary training.

The trainer's own assessment of HSS knowledge was illustrated further in the example that she used to teach us how to write a lesson's learning outcomes. We were required to use verbs to correspond with different levels of learning and provide content to match the verb. As an illustration of how to do that, the trainer used an example she believed would be familiar to us in the HSS: the Social Determinants of Health, known to people

in Economics, Sociology, Psychology, and other disciplines, we were told.

The following is a faithful description of the lecture on how to produce ILOs when teaching the Social Determinants of Health.

We should start with the verb “List”, it was suggested, and have the first ILO be – “List common social determinants of health” because these are “basic things a student should know before finding what social determinants a particular person is affected with.”

The second ILO was more puzzling. The trainer said it should start with the verb “Explain”— “an act that require[s] a little more intellectual activity.” She then described what a student should be able to “explain” regarding the Social Determinants of Health. “What would be a social determinant of health that affects a heavy smoker? Maybe the smoking is done in a group with social pressure, maybe it's his job—there are some jobs where you get free cigarettes.” The trainer went on to tell us that we should next require that students *analyze* a health problem to identify Social Determinants of Health and then *design* strategies of modifying Social Determinants of Health.

It soon became clear to us that the trainer had no idea what Social Determinants of Health were. They were the macro social factors impacting the unequal conditions in which people live, and not reducible to a single individual's social circle or social life, as assumed by the trainer.

The WHO's somewhat critiqued but easily googled definition reads,

[The social determinants of health] are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies, and political systems (https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health#tab=tab_1).

The trainer had made no effort to look up the Social Determinants of Health when choosing to use them as an example.

I choose this incident to point to a larger malaise affecting the university system and policymaking on education. The assumption behind the trainer not bothering to find a definition for Social Determinants of Health prior to using them to teach us with, is that HSS knowledge requires no expertise, that it is common-sense. The years we spend teaching students to recognize different forms of inequality and marginalization, to explain their histories, how they continue to persist, to analyse the material effects of such situations and their prevalence in students' own contexts, and to design creative strategies to overturn persisting inequality and marginalization, are negated in the trainer's assumptions.

As will be clear in the next section of the paper that discusses teacher experiences, the low regard for "Arts subjects" is something that teachers and researchers in the Social Sciences and Humanities experience every day. There is a consistent undervaluing of the expertise we can bring to the table. The general lack of value placed on Arts Degree holders has transformed

into a policy on "employability" widely held within the university system – even among some Social Sciences and Humanities Educators. These policies devalue the worth of HSS perspectives and undermine and weaken the integrity of these programs.

The irony, however, is that certain skills cultivated in HSS programs travel easily to the world of human resource management, assessment of private sector service provision, and the assessment of the impact of entrepreneurship education. Many academics writing on business, now use the research skills from HSS, particularly qualitative research and analysis, for application within business studies. A recent training on the use of EnVIvo qualitative research software use was carried out for the Arts Faculty by a member of the Faculty of Management. Many of us from the Faculty of Arts teach on fee levying programs that teach research skills to postgraduate students from the business sector. Yet one more example of the instrumentalization of HSS disciplines for the use of "the market" in a manner that resists the inclusion of HSS disciplines' baseline --- social critique.

The next section of the paper will deal with some examples of how this undermining of the integrity of such programs works in relation to the impact of reforms on the University System.

Part Two

In the second section of my paper, I would like to explore the present status of Humanities Studies from the perspective of currently serving/ recently retired University Lectures. Through an analysis

of their responses, I will argue that the lack of a Social Science and Humanities perspective in the reform process is having an impact on the disciplines that the reforms aim to support and improve, and this impact is not positive.

This section is based on ten in-depth interviews with university academics who are part of the permanent cadre of their respective institutions. The academics that I spoke to were from the University of Colombo, The Open University, University of Kelaniya, University of Peradeniya, Southeastern University and Jaffna and Sabaragamuwa Universities. They were all from the senior lecturer grade and above and one of them was a professor.

My interview rubric was organized around three issues –

- i. Student preparation for and experience of the SS and H degree program.
- ii. Educators' research output
- iii. History and politics of Social Science and Humanities education in Sri Lanka.

From my 1-1.5 hour long conversations with lecturers and professors I was able to ascertain the following.

- i. The current state of Arts and Humanities Studies requires improvement and reform.
- ii. The reforms that come from the center designed only with “employability” in mind is having a negative impact on their programs.
- iii. There is a distinct difference between the problems articulated

by universities in Colombo and perhaps Peradeniya and those of the periphery -universities like Sabaragamuwa, South-eastern, and Jaffna. The discussion in this section is organized around the above three main realizations.

The current state of Arts and Humanities Studies was problematic and requires improvement.

There are two distinct ways in which the current problems were articulated by senior people in Colombo and Kelaniya and somewhat junior people in South Eastern and Sabaragamuwa.

There is an ongoing conversation regarding the problems in our education system where students are taught to sit for competitive examinations in order to obtain a place at university. According to the report cited earlier entitled *Propensity to tend education under the Arts stream and the unemployment of Arts Graduates*¹³, there is a connection between poor and under-resourced regions and the numbers of students that enter the Arts stream. The argument is that the poorer regions do not have enough schools that provide Science Technology education at the secondary level. Further, some students who may have access to schools that do teach science subject continue to require extra help and many poorer parents are unable to support “tuition” classes. Therefore, economic inequality impacts access to science and technology education and

13. The report, produced by the National Audit Office is available at http://www.auditorgeneral.gov.lk/web/images/audit-reports/upload/2020/special_20/art/English-Report.pdf

many of these students with no other opportunities opt for Arts Education. Arts Education is also described in the report as “easy” and as not requiring the skill levels or the resources that Science and Technology education requires.

Academic I interviewed agreed with the above analysis of the audit report and spoke of the students that they encounter in the following terms. The education system and its insistence on training students not to think critically or creatively but to learn the best strategies to respond to exam papers is negatively impacting students’ skills and abilities. Students take tuition in large numbers. Schools that want good A level results for StEM subjects teach students using the same strategies used in the tuition classes. The preparation with which students enter the Arts Faculties, therefore, is minimal. The Tuition culture combined with education as exam prep only rarely prepare students for the challenges of a high-quality Humanities and Social Science Education. One lecturer stated that the knowledge that students are required to acquire in the other sectors—medicine and engineering—for instance, may be adequate for them to engage in a rigorous program at the tertiary level. It is not the case for the Arts and Humanities. The critical perspective that is required, a cultivation of the capacity to observe a problem and critique it requires a level of processing and cognitive skills – even according to Bloom’s taxonomy—that are of a higher level. Students coming in from a tuition driven culture where information retention and responding to an exam is the only skill emphasized, are ill equipped to engage with a rigorous

HSS curriculum. Therefore, students require a significant amount of time to transition into a way of thinking that is suited for such a program and by the time such a transition takes place they are ready to graduate.

One senior academic made a comment regarding the transformation of the teaching cadre in secondary schools and how that was impacting education. According to him, students entering Arts Faculties today were not getting the critical political education that they had when he was in school due to the transformation of Sri Lankan society and its impact on teachers. Today, with large sections of the population accessing free education, and the feminization of education, the teacher cadre are by and large women from low-income households who are possibly the first generation of their families who are achieving educational success. Additionally, given their class status, they are also burdened by familial responsibilities and unable to do more than their required contribution during school hours. In the past, the teacher cadre included local political activists often hailing from the middle classes and women teachers had access to domestic help and therefore, had the time to devote to students outside the classroom hours alone. Therefore, students today lack the individual engagement with teachers who were politically and intellectually active and instead, attend tuition classes where the syllabus is followed in mechanical unimaginative ways. I place this anecdotal account here to state that there is currently insufficient research on the impact of our educational process and the transformations that it has wrought

on the country and what measures are required to address the shortcomings within our secondary school system. Another similar anecdotal account came from a lecturer in English who stated that there were students currently following English literature courses who come from non-English speaking homes and therefore, are not exposed to the reading culture of the Anglicized English speaking middle class and their cultural capital in British and American literature. They are not from homes where reading is a regular practice.

A lecturer from the open university had a different story to narrate regarding students' response to higher education in the Social Sciences and Humanities. He talked about the fact that students today were much more strategic and goal oriented and also time conscious. They were clear about wanting to complete their degrees within a stipulated timeframe and took on a full-time course load even if they were working students. In their approach to education, they were often annoyed and frustrated when there was a requirement for analysis and building of a response and not a more instrumental process by which they could learn a strategy and a method to address a problem. They wanted to be provided with the "right" answer and were irritated with a request to think for themselves. The lecturer rightly thought of this as a frustration that emerges from being in an education system where their thinking was curtailed from the outset. He also stated however, that the students, once they realize what was required from them would generally thrive and enjoyed the freedom that the approach offered.

Whatever the attributed reason for the lack of critical thinking skills in students entering the university, it was spoken about as relevant throughout the education system but especially damaging for HSS programs.

An issue that was also raised in the discussion of students who enter Arts Faculties was that the maintenance of distance between StEM and Humanities and Social Science subjects was detrimental to both sets of students. There is a dire need for a process whereby the divide is bridged and students are provided with the opportunity to engage with the subject material as well as with one another. It was pointed out that tertiary level study programs such as architecture do not require that students have courses at the secondary level that prepare them for the program beforehand. Any student who has done well in any subject should be permitted to engage with any subject. The agriculture program at the University of Peradeniya that is taught from the outset as a Socio technical subject was described as attempting to bridge the gap. It was suggested that the education sector in the country required a substantial transformation that went beyond the limits of the current neoliberal model being proposed.

There was consensus among the group of lecturers that I spoke to that English language proficiency was essential for the current undergraduate. However, the mode through which English proficiency was pushed was not having the desired results it was felt. There were a few students, a lecturer from Sabaragamuwa informed me, that really capitalized on the resources offered

for English medium instruction and improved considerably, but in places like the Southeastern University, where the English requirement was linked to the GPA, many students felt cheated. If they were unable to perform well in the English requirement, they often lost the possibility for a class and their degree was not reflective of their subject knowledge. It was also mentioned that especially in the Arts Stream it was not possible to teach complex ideas to students in a language they were not familiar with. Therefore, the insistence on English, given that it was poorly managed, was leading to a very instrumental acquisition of the language. “It did not seem to matter what was said as long as it was said in English,” one person stated. It was also leading to a deterioration in the complexity of thinking that the Arts and Humanities required of students.

Another point raised with regard to teaching in the Humanities and Social Sciences was the lecturers’ own training, and lecturers’ accountability. With regard to the training, there were concerns that the low-quality training and preparation that many lecturers themselves have had, was impacting student competence. The examples provided were from the dissertation writing process for honors degree programs. Basic skills for formulating a research project --how to write a literature review, how to formulate a research problem etc. are not understood in similar ways by all the lecturers. Even in instances where there are guidelines formulated—and generally there are department guidelines for such processes-- lecturers’ interpretation of guidelines will be dependent on their own background and training. One lecturer stated that most people teaching in the

HSS had a very narrow world view and that it was important that they received exposure to different ways of thinking and doing work. He suggested that there should be a mechanism not only to send people on sabbatical but also to have departments host foreign scholars from whom colleagues in Sri Lanka can learn. While the low quality of academic training was an issue, the lecturers were compelled to carry large teaching loads. In the peripheral universities, departments were carrying out both graduate and undergraduate teaching in small departments with a significant reliance on junior staff.

With regard to accountability processes and the resistance to the policing culture that is currently being imposed on the university community, some lecturers stated that accountability measures of some kind are necessary since excesses—teachers avoiding lectures etc. continued to happen with some frequency especially in the peripheral campuses. It was also pointed out that the expectations as to the writing and analytical quality of dissertations produced by Arts Faculty undergraduates varied across disciplines particularly due to teachers’ own standards. Teachers’ accountability was also presented as an issue together with the issue of the overburdening of lecturers with teaching and administrative duties far beyond their capacity.

Increasing Research Output through the Academic Promotion Process

Part of higher education reform processes in Sri Lanka has been the push to encourage academic research.

The promotion process has been tied to research output and that has encouraged publication.

The academics interviewed had lots to say about the research output of fellow academics in their disciplines. One well respected lecturer in the Social Sciences was dismissive of the number of professors that the HSS disciplines have been producing recently. One academic who had pointed to the fact that her own understanding of how a research problem was formulated and that of colleagues was different, stated that regardless of this incapacity everyone was publishing regularly. The writing was in many instances done solely for the purpose of accumulating enough research points for the promotion application. Speedy review and publication either online or in paper form was required, and numbers mattered in the promotion review process. While the review process grants higher marks for publication in indexed and peer reviewed journals, sufficient marks were awarded for non-indexed publications as well.¹⁴ Further, today, predatory publications are also indexed. There is little or no interest among many academics playing the system in this way to cultivate a research community or even in having one's research cited. Therefore, no significant academic debates are being entered into through the publications and there is no substantial impact of the research on the wider society. Additionally, the questions that are being asked by researchers and the research projects attempted are narrow and superficial and are a further indication of the deterioration of

standards. Similarly, there is very little of this research included in the curricular of the universities. Some lecturers observed that colleagues were writing textbooks that their students were then compelled to purchase and use. There aren't sufficient checks on such practices. The requirement of publications for judging the promotion process alone was not having the desired result. It was resulting in a significant waste of resources with no real contribution to knowledge production.

One lecturer also stated that the emphasis on English was a problem. The English requirement was impacting not just the quality of social science education but also the research output of academics. There is an instrumental relationship to English and pushing of English learning as a requirement for employment success and as a signifier of competence. But this pushing of English is not done with a sufficient awareness of the importance of language to a person. "Language is a part of someone; it is almost a physical part of a person's body." One of the lecturers told me. It must be recognized that the over valuing of English competence and the compulsion to produce in English is having results at a huge cost. There is a challenge to teach students complex ideas in a language that they only have a perfunctory grasp of. Additionally, expressing complex thinking in a language that is not your first language also remains a challenge. This academic stated that most of his academic ideas he first writes out in Sinhala for his own clarity. Treating English ability as a signifier of competence in all areas leads to the production of superficial research

14. Promotion Circular UGC.

material that does little to further our knowledge in a particular subject area, another one stated.

With regard to the emphasis on research production, there was also a sense that there was no real appreciation for what the research process entailed. For instance, while there were funds that were supposedly allocated for research – there were small grants schemes for instance—they were not researcher friendly. The bureaucracy and the justification processes were not tailored to the research process. Additionally, there was little recognition that the research process required time and that the production of publications required time for research and time for reflection and writing was not understood as part of the publication process.

The Employability Discourses

The Social Sciences and Humanities, as research has already established, was the arena for the greatest expansion of vernacular education. The literature also claims—as stated earlier-- that the lack of translations of materials into the Sinhala language limited the knowledge that such students acquired to just the notes that the lecturer produced. The narrowing of the knowledge that many had access to meant narrowing of the fields of social sciences and humanities in the country for a period. Writers have noted the significant brain drain that also occurred when the shift to Sinhala and Tamil language education at the university level was introduced. The literature also speaks of the particularly conservative hierarchical and calcified “guru gola” systems in place within the

university system and its prevalence within the Arts Faculties. Within the university system, departments routinely employ their students. In such a system there is only a very few persons who will be able to assert themselves and disturb institutionalized hierarchies or accepted and calcified norms and practices. This method of recruitment – still in use in Oxbridge colleges—is frowned upon in other contexts – certainly unheard of in the United States. There was an era during which the Arts faculties in Sri Lanka became known not for academic excellence, but for academic neglect and the cultivation of student politics related to the political parties, rampant ragging, moribund and calcified assessment practices, and stilted hierarchies where people in power held on at the expense of any innovation or progress. Students that we produced were considered to be entitled and inflexible troublemakers with few skills useful within a workplace.

The reputation of the Arts Faculties and the Humanities and Social Sciences in general took a beating during this time and the fall out continues to reverberate throughout the higher education system even today. This is probably the reason for the low appreciation for Humanities and Social Science trained academics within the system—as indicated earlier, and the lack of regard for the knowledge that is enabled through the disciplines. Unfortunately, however, the many improvements that have taken place, the academics who have managed to thrive regardless of the challenges, and the programs that are of a good standard also continued to be thought of as substandard and there is no mechanism in place to recognize and reward them. There are

many senior academics in the fields of HSS who may read in English but are not able to function at their best in the English language due to the historical development of their disciplines and departments in the country. Given that the university administrative system functions in the English language, their inability to make their arguments effectively in English language has limited their reach. Their limited ability to express themselves in English is in no way an indication of limited ability *per se*. However, the reputation of the Arts Faculties seems to precede them and the colonial preference for the English language easily translates to treating a lack of English as a lack of ability. Especially in the Quality Assurance process, English ability of mainly STEM educated academics has taken precedence in the deciding of education policy that is currently driving reform within the Higher Education sector.

Many of the fundamental failings of the systems – the inept teachers, the conservatism of the administration and the power relations maintained by various institutions are now being challenged and much needed reform is being foisted on the Arts Faculties. The World Bank funded project cycles through which this reform is being implemented are shaking up the Arts faculties with an overloading of systems, processes and frameworks. These systems and processes are of course trying to transform our failing system into the globally recognizable neo liberal university. We are transforming in order to become visible to ranking systems, and to be in line with global attempts at standardization. This particular model –

the neoliberal university has now been written about for many years as a failing model. And we—rather late to the party – are engaged in replicating it here.

The reforms seem to be wanting to save the social sciences and humanities disciplines but paradoxically they seem to be wanting to do so by transforming the programs to such an extent that they are unrecognizable as social science and humanities programs.

The employability discourse is crippling the Social Sciences and Humanities in narrowing the foundational premise of an education to the promise of job only. The system reflects an undervaluing of the contribution that the humanities and the social sciences can make to understanding the history of ideas, the philosophical foundation of the practices that we are engaged in and how to transform them if need be.

All the lecturers interviewed spoke about the manner in which each program attempts to negotiate the strictures of the discourse that many felt were not adequately sensitive to the emphases of a Humanities and Social Science education. In my interviews, one senior academic talked of his engagement with these QA processes as a negotiation where he used the processes to further what he felt was necessary for his department and discipline. One Professor mentioned that he deliberately avoids the employability workshops and uses the various frameworks in the way he sees fit to enhance the program that he heads. He said that there was space within how the instructions were given to various departments to do this. However, another

academic describing the same process and the same strategy used by SS and H disciplines stated that this response was inadequate and did little to halt the steady undermining of Social Science and Humanities Education that was ongoing in the reform process. This academic also lamented the manner in which the Quality Assurance process was being carried out as a top-down process without discussion or validation through the university administrative process. These reforms were imposed without discussion at Faculty Boards or Senates of the respective universities and were imposed by the UGC. There is currently no space or mechanism through which to mount any opposition to the ongoing process.

Others were less convinced that the employability frameworks could be negotiated. One stated that the purpose of education had shifted today from that of forming a good citizen to supplying the labour market. This lecturer stated that since the world is changing this cannot be avoided. That it would be irresponsible of us to do so. This was not a common position but one that was troubling coming from a lecturer in the Social Sciences and spoke to the impact of the employability discourse.

Another lecturer from university from the periphery stated that in their isolated context the directives are much more difficult to avoid and that the attempt to match up with the directives was causing great harm to the programs. Discussing the Social Science program at her university, she related how her Department Head even indicated that the study of the Sociology of Religion was of little use since it could not contribute to students'

employability. The Social Sciences provide a language through which social phenomenon of substantial importance in the country – such as religion can be critically understood. The fact that the employability discourse compels Social Science departments to criticize their own programs because they do not “fit” the new discourse is alarming and an indication of the problematic manner in which they are being implemented in the peripheral universities. These programs, in their eagerness to comply with the directives that arrive from Colombo teach “practical” courses such as Social Work, Media and Counselling. However, these programs also only provide the most basic introductory coverage of such courses since there was an emphasis on practice. There was no emphasis placed on understanding the philosophical and theoretical bases of these “practical” activities. The lecturer was concerned that further academic work will be difficult for students who follow these “practical” courses. As the lecturer said, “social work is not the answer to everything”.

Another interesting development of a regional university was that students and lecturers were prioritizing the social sciences over the humanities as having greater job prospects. It was assumed that there was a greater demand for Social Science programs and therefore, there were discussions about the possibility of differentiating between the two sets of disciplines in order to maximize on the demand. Therefore, there was a proposal for separate social science and humanities faculties based on the issue of demand alone. It was unclear if the

pedagogical benefit of a Social Science only education or a humanity only education was adequately considered when this proposal was put forward.

The issue of English teaching, a mainstay of the employability discourse, was also discussed thoroughly. The way the delivery of English was done across all the universities was not uniform. There was a concern that it was also superficial and that the desired result was not being achieved. In one university in the periphery, there was great resentment that students' class ranking at degree completion was decided using the English grades as well. In a context where students are from extremely backward backgrounds and where no additional assistance or support were provided to disadvantaged students, this practice was considered damaging. According to the lecturer interviewed, students lost out on first classes due to their inability to successfully complete the English program. While the intention of making successful completion of an English program mandatory was salutary, it was not serving the student population and it was in fact damaging their future prospects.

What the interviews revealed was that lecturers in the metropolitan universities are able to negotiate this discourse and use the frameworks and rubrics to enhance what many feel are essential elements of their own disciplines and programs.

Specificities of Location

Specificities related to the area and its politics and history have substantial impact on decisions made in regional

“peripheral” universities. Their access to resources and expertise is less and students are less prepared as a result. The resources available in areas such as Kandy and Colombo are also not available to students in places like Sabaragamuwa, Jaffna and the Eastern Province. Students are not able to access extra English or other enhancement programs, and they are not exposed to all the opportunities that a metropolitan center offers.

The insularity of the places in certain instances - sometimes cultivated insularity, also impacts programs. It was stated that the Southeastern University, located in a mono ethnic mono lingual and somewhat isolated enclave has problems retaining qualified staff from outside the area. Further, the fact that the academic and non-academic staff, the administration and even the Vice Chancellor was from one village was also pointed out as a concern. The hierarchies that are maintained through the recruitment of one's own students in to the system are further exacerbated in the context of South Eastern where everyone on the staff is a neighbor. Then, Jaffna University where sections of the staff are committed to strictly maintaining a regional identity, are reluctant to transition into English language programs due to the possible influx of large numbers of students from outside. In the above two regional universities, the largest number of students are local, and the mixing is minimal. The consequences of these demographics need to also be considered when analyzing social sciences and humanities teaching in those areas.

In the case of Sabaragamuwa, the isolation was said to be positive. The

place does not have the same distractions that Colombo does and therefore, is better for the building of community. Students – most social science and humanities departments have small numbers – therefore students can be nurtured by their departments and better taken care of.

In the case of the larger and more established universities, the issue was more the conservatism of the old guard and the problems faced when attempting to adhere to the neo liberal frames that were being pushed by the administration. The hierarchical nature of relationships between students and lecturers, the fact that junior staff are generally students of the senior staff continue a tradition where bringing about changes that disturb the status quo are discouraged. You then have a system where younger colleagues are compelled to shoulder the additional burden currently required of the higher education system where multiple forms require filling and multiple activities require organization. The older colleagues resist such calls based on their seniority and the younger colleagues are compelled to shoulder the paperwork burdens.

Conclusion

Degree programs in the Humanities and the Social Sciences have the largest student numbers across the country and are arguably making the greatest contribution in educating the next generation. However, there is very little recognition of what such programs can do and therefore, there is very little support for the programs to thrive on their own

terms. The employability discourse that is over-determining the nature of support that these programs are receiving are perhaps having some positive impact. Systems and guidelines and frameworks do have their place in running a successful program. However, the fact that reform is demanded with little or no appreciation of what good social science and humanities programs look like and what they can do is damaging what little there is of the integrity of such programs. The foundational principles that seemed to undergird the reform process was an acceptance of the status quo and preparing students to shine within the parameters of what was considered acceptable. The ability to recognize the status quo not as a given but as historically specific and riven with power relations is a skill that is cultivated by social science and humanities education. There is little in the reform process that calls for or at a minimum, encourages such a skill. If the social sciences and humanities are to thrive in this country, it is perhaps time to revisit the reform agenda from a critical humanities and social science perspective. The Social Sciences and Humanities programs in the country are riven with problems. We have too many students, too few resources, too little support and in some contexts, very low standards. We are urgently in need of assistance. However, it would be a criminal waste of energy and resources if the assistance that we so badly need is misdirected.

I began this chapter with a reference to the Kannangara report. There we have a reminder of how the role of education was conceptualized at the time when the

country was anticipating independence. Today, there has been a market capture of the discourse on education, and we are seeing the discussion reduced to very flawed and instrumental understandings of what is required of a country's education system. The country and the world are facing innumerable challenges that will require resilience and very new ways of thinking. It is time that our education system was redesigned to rise to this challenge.

References

- Cannizzo, F. (2018). Tactical Evaluations: Everyday Neoliberalism in Academia, *Journal of Sociology*. Advance online publication. DOI: 1177/1440783318759094.
- Costa, R.C. (2019). The place of the humanities in today's knowledge society. *Palgrave Commun* 5, 38 <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0245->
- Gift Oforiwa Gyamera & Penny Jane Burke (2017). Neoliberalism and curriculum in higher education: a post-colonial analyses, *Teaching in Higher Education*, DOI: 10.1080/13562517.2017.1414782.
- Jayawardena, D. (2017). The “MacBurger”, Non-State Universities and the Changing Landscape of Higher Education in Sri Lanka *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3. ISSN 1740-2743.
- Kumara, Kumudu Kusum.(2012).Social Science and Humanities Education in Sri Lanka and its Discontents: some reflections. *Dialogue*. Vol. xxxix. The Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue. 186-245.
- Krause-Jensen, J., & Garsten, C. (2014). Introduction: Neoliberal turns in higher education. *Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences*, 7(3), 1-13. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24717960>.
- Manurathna, Prabha. (2018). University & Co. The Neoliberal University and the Challenges Faced by Arts Faculties in Sri Lanka.
- Uyangoda, Jayadeva. (2018). University Governance and Autonomy in Sri Lanka: Changing contexts and Directions. *Dialogue* Volume XLV and XLVI. 2018-2019.Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue. Colombo.
- The Critique of the Report by Academics within the University System: <https://island.lk/myth-of-unemployable-arts-graduates/>
- Sri Lanka Labour force Statistics Quarterly Bulletin released by the department of census and statistics. Available at http://www.statistics.gov.lk/Resource/en/LabourForce/Bulletins/LFS_Q1_Bulletin_2020
- http://www.auditorgeneral.gov.lk/web/images/auditreports/upload/2020/special_20/art/English-Report.pdf

PART III

'Arts' Graduate Employability

Chapter 5

EMPLOYABILITY OF STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEW

Vallipuram Kanagasingam

Introduction

Higher education has long been recognized as a major contributing factor to society in improving the quality of human life (Tang, et al, 2010). Educational concepts originating in classical Greece, were later adopted by neo-humanists in the 17th century (Samier & Stanley, 2008). Universities were established in the early days with the sole purpose of generating and disseminating knowledge, which were the prime aims of academic societies when fulfilling the social, economic and political needs of nations. Knowledge was the focus of universities from the beginning of philosophical thought from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle up until now. In the early 19th century, the primacy of research, the importance of science and innovation, and the integration of teaching and research were noted as the main functions of the university, which contributed to the development of the nation in Humboldt's model of the University. (Readings, 1999 & Rasmussen, 2007). Knowledge production was given top priority. Institutional autonomy and academic freedom were vital features in Humboldt's model of the University. Humboldt's ideas remain salient in

today's higher educational institutions all over the world. Nevertheless, all universities have become increasingly sensitive to transnational models which are influenced by factors of local and global competitiveness or regulatory forces.

Universities around the world are increasingly concerned that their students graduate with the skills and qualities that will enable them to be the best citizens they can be in their respective societies (Barrie, 2007). Accordingly, the objectives of universities have shifted from being centres of pure knowledge to market-driven centres and, therefore, they now focus on producing employable graduates. Universities have now also become suppliers of labour for industries. With the rise of neoliberalism, the employability of graduates has become more important than ever before. In Australia, Great Britain, and the USA, the increasingly vocational role of universities has led governments and businesses to place pressures on universities to ensure that their graduates are both employable and professional (Green, Hammer & Star, 2009). This paradigm shift has been observed not only in universities in developed countries

such as Cambridge University in England and Harvard University in USA, but also in universities in the developing countries such as Sri Lanka and India. As a result of these changes, universities have begun to encounter a new set of problems such as market mismatching of graduates and the continuing presence of unemployed and under-employed graduates in the job market. This problem has now been specifically highlighted due to market competition and technological changes.

The university system in Sri Lanka came into existence in the year 1870 when universities were established in other parts of the world. The first institution of modern higher education in the island was established in 1921 as the University College of Ceylon. In 1942 the first university was established as the University of Ceylon. All state universities were established under the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 and subsequently, a number of changes took place in higher education. Admission of students for undergraduate courses for all state universities is now tightly controlled by the UGC (Universities Act No.16 of 1978). Siyambalapitiya (2005) highlighted the fact that the number of places available in universities in Sri Lanka for undergraduate education, in term of population is very low, compared to other developed countries, and even some developing countries.

Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) graduates were not adequately recognized as distinct professionals (Nanayankara, 1998). This situation creates a large gap between the output of faculties of HSS and the expectations of the job market in

Sri Lanka. This mismatch of graduates has resulted in unemployment and underemployment. Moreover, the quality of graduates reported in HSS faculties affects knowledge, and knowledge creation is predicted to be more important than technology to Humanities and Social Sciences education in the future, as articulated by Panandiker (1991).

The second largest group among unemployed graduates in the country are Commerce and Management graduates (Ariyawansa, 2008; Nawaratne, 2012; Wickramasinghe, 2010; World Bank, 2010), Arts being the highest. Unemployed HSS graduates in Sri Lanka have become a social, economic and political problem in the country. Ranasinghe (1992) noted that there are no comprehensive studies undertaken to examine unemployment issues in the context of Sri Lanka. Nonetheless, there are some studies available pertaining to this area in other countries such as Nigeria, Thailand, Latin America, India, Brazil, China, the UK, the USA and Australia. The findings of these studies highlight mismatch of skills, and less employment opportunities in the state sector as reasons for unemployment/underemployment among graduates. However, those findings cannot be applied directly to Sri Lanka as Sri Lanka is different from them in terms of educational background (free education) as well as cultural, social and political contexts. Furthermore, there is no study found answering as to why this mismatch of skills continues to exist. Therefore, there is a necessity of undertaking a comprehensive study to understand this phenomenon in Sri Lanka.

Research Problem

Problems regarding unemployed and underemployed graduates in Sri Lanka are not new phenomena, they have been reported since the academic year 1959/60 and unemployed graduates have been around ever since in Sri Lanka. It was in 1970 that the first batch of unemployed graduates was recruited as development assistants by the United Front government. The last batch of unemployed university graduates was recruited by the previous regime in 2012. Unhappily, after four decades, the products of local universities continue to be employed mostly within the State sector. While the first batch of recruits comprised a few thousand graduates, the next batch exceeded 50,000. Even today, unemployed graduates' picketing continues in parts of the country, demanding the government to recruit them. So, graduate unemployment is a chronic socio-economic problem that has become worse over time.

Even today, the average overall employability ratio in Universities in Sri Lanka is 54% (Nawaratne, 2012). The Faculties of Arts and Management have higher rates of unemployment in the country and accounted for 76% and 36%, of unemployed graduates respectively, whereas Medicine and Engineering accounted for 10% and 7% respectively in 2012. This is emphasized by the fact that a number of vacancies for HSS related degree holders appear in weekly newspapers (an average of 7000 vacancies) but the unemployment rates among HSS graduates still remain the highest in Sri Lanka.

According to Wickramasinghe (2010), graduate unemployment or underemployment is due to a mismatch between the aspirations of graduates and the employment opportunities available to them. Further, previous studies have indicated that a mismatch between supply and demand conditions for graduate employment is due to the supply driven education system which produces graduates who are not suited to labour market conditions. (Wickramarachchi, 2008; Ariyawansa, 2008; Weligamage and Siengthai, 2003; Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2003; Davies, 2000; Finn, 2000; Lindsay, 2002; National Science Foundation of Sri Lanka, 2004; Ranasinghe, 1992). Also, previous studies (Ernst and Young, 2012; Danuvatt, 2012) indicate that these issues are universal, since similar problems were identified in the higher education sectors in Nigeria, Thailand, Latin America, India, Brazil, China, the UK, the USA and Australia, and steps have been taken to overcome them. Various steps have been taken from time to time to address this issue in Sri Lanka as well, and the extent of the literature is covered in the literature review chapter (Athula, 2011). Yet, as stated above, the issue as to why HSS faculties of Sri Lankan universities continue to produce graduates who find it hard to obtain the job in the employment market, still remains unanswered.

Methodology

The empirical study was conducted as a qualitative embedded single case study adopting the critical constructivism as the research philosophy. The faculty of HSS of a state university near the city of

Colombo was selected as the case site. Twenty-nine in-depth interviews, three focused-group interviews were conducted covering students, graduates, alumni, academics, academic administrators, industrialists who are related to the case sites and representatives from University, UGC, MoHE and Industries. A sample selection was made based on snowball sampling. These methods are extremely useful under certain conditions, particularly when the research question seeks an in-depth investigation of a small population (Schutt, 2005). In addition, review of key document was also conducted. Interviews were first transcribed in verbatim and analyzed following recommended methods of qualitative data analysis with the help of the data management software Nvivo.

Findings: Coordination and Cooperation

Academics and Industrialists

Industry expects innovative ideas from the university to overcome weaknesses, enhance operations and improve productivity through conducting research. On the other hand, the University needs a platform to conduct experiments/ research on contemporary issues and provide internship training to undergraduates and staff. A comment is made by a participant representing industry as follows.

...if we are offering something we also expect something in return. It has to be a win-win situation. If those academics also can study, say come to this organization and study management practices, how will it happen? Also, these academics have a lot of research capabilities. They can research and tell us; the literature says

this, you all are doing it in this manner. What if you do it this way, it is more productive and efficient. Then there will be a dialogue between the two parties and both parties will understand. And also, these academics can study our patterns and give reports (IND04).

Moreover, findings show that many mutual benefits arise through this university-industry relationship. Academics obtain practical knowledge from the real-life environment and they can apply it to the class room to upgrade their current syllabuses. Similarly, industrialists obtain theoretical knowledge with intellectual advice on how to solve their real work life problems in the organizations. Further, industry gains access not only to technologies, but also to students, lecturers and university facilities. An industry gains prestige and acceptance for its stakeholders through its association with a prestigious university.

Then we will also gain something. It's a win-win situation. Academics are gaining hands on experience as to what is happening on the ground and they are using their theoretical knowledge to give us proposals. So, it's a win-win situation for both business and the university" (IN04).

The same view is shared by academic administrators about the necessity for creating and maintaining university and industry linkages. Actually, the university needs to have a link with industry to produce employable graduates. Nevertheless, industrialists are more interested in having links with the university than with academic administrators. This view is expressed by a participant as shown below:

They (industrialist) try to develop links with the university system and they are expecting mutual benefits (ADM03).

Although academic administrators do not much care about these links, academics emphasize that having the links with industry provide many advantages (Marzbanat.el, 2014), such as learning about the current needs of companies, developing curricula, etc. In addition, it is noted that industrialists wish to have coordination and cooperation with the university, but academic administrators do not recognize their offers, due to barriers in the system and poor leadership qualities. The structure of the university causes a delay due to the hierarchical organizational set up (Taylor, 2010). Every decision has to come from the statutory body. This structure causes delays or reduces opportunities for effective coordination and cooperation between academics and industrialists.

Academics and Government Staff

The Sri Lankan government or representatives of the government are already involved in regulating the processes of private and public universities and industries. The universities and industries work with the government to ensure their existence since all state universities are controlled by the government which allocates students, funds and infrastructure. Universities provide services to the government, such as innovation, patents, employees and consultancy for policy decisions. But, in the Sri Lankan scenario, government intervention is very prevalent in universities and particularly, in its

administration of students, staff and other parties up to the students' graduations. However, the contributions of state universities to the national economy in terms of employable graduates, research and other areas is not adequate as stated by the following participants:

We are lacking. That's why I said that. If the government can contribute more to education than what they are doing now that may be a good point. But still, we do not experience such thing (AD02).

Academic calendar in every year vary, it is much sure that the university starts on the date and regularize the calendar (IND01).

Government activities are important in the university system since all universities are state owned. The intervention of the government to coordinate the major stakeholders of university and industry is unavoidable (Katooli & Rahmani, 2005). The MoHE had taken initiatives in the year 2013 to develop coordination and cooperation between the university and the industry, which was not continued due to the absence of active participation of both parties (University –Industry Advisory Council).

The dialogue can be initiated, when at the highest level, the national requirements are identified and systems are changed accordingly. And when once it is communicated to the private sector, probably the private sector also will get involved. There is no communication until this moment that there is a need for this. So we are also silent (IND04).

Intervention by the government as an agency to make links between industry and the university is essential.

Academics and Administrators

Academic administrators are academic leaders or academic executives in the university system, who are elected or nominated by academics of a particular university. They could work as representatives or voices speaking on behalf of academics. But in reality, it is questionable whether an internal governance exists; if it exists, how long it works and when their own charisma is revealed. Therefore, the subsequent sections examine the level of coordination and cooperation between academics and academic administrators.

When academics and academic administrators work together as a team, the levels of trust should be higher. But, in the real scenario, academics and academic administrators have lost mutual trust, due to how they perceive each other's' behavior, especially academic administrators fail to show their trust of academics. For example, during the Dean's election or Vice-Chancellor's election, academics support different people. A few people may support one candidate, while some others may support another. Finally, one of the candidates becomes elected and then he/she treats those who didn't support him/her differently, as mentioned below by one of the research participants,

There are some certain parties, engagements, but it is natural. There would be one section and there would be another section. But when the thing is over, they will work as or they will try to get their partner to the Dean seat (ADM05).

This situation creates less trust between academics and administration in the university system. The commitment to achieve the common goals is discussed in the next section. In the university system, the academics work for the university and the university serves as a knowledge generator, knowledge transferor, and knowledge disseminator for society. Therefore, the actions and commitments of each academic contribute to the university's collective output. In the real scenario, however, most individuals work for their own interest rather than for collective purposes. The majority of their time is spent not on university work, but on personal, family or other consultancy work. They only cover their lectures and evaluations and are not involved in other faculty or university assignments. Only a few academics commit themselves and are involved in academic and academic supportive tasks. Therefore, individual actions of all academics are not coordinated properly in order to provide better services to the student community, as all academics are not committed to achieve their common goals.

Bad election system bounded by the university acts creates an internal politics tell you very sadly you are the academy as are researcher right they are counting votes for the next term not for anything, therefore, there are people those can work and another category who cannot work or they are not working, just work idling right idling. Then this scenario, always there is disagreement mostly I mean lots of effect to be taken (AC05).

Lack of commitment, lack of trust, limited space for dialogue between academics and academic administrators have led to a loss of mutual expectations.

Academics expect their academic freedom and autonomy from the academic administrators, academic administrators expect participation and support for a smooth administration. In this way both have certain expectations. When they work at the faculty and university levels, they do not have mutual support since they have disagreements about certain issues such as leave, promotions and nominations for other voluntary posts. Academic administrators forget that they are also academics, and they also conveniently forget the fact that they have to return to the faculty after finishing one's term as an academic administrator. That academic administrators do not behave with understanding is stated below by one of the participants.

The academics, they are controlled by the administrators. The academics have the flexibility to change the curriculum and teach what is relevant (IND02).

Therefore, the level of coordination and cooperation between academics and academic administrators is very weak due to lack of suitable fora to deliberate their own wishes, lack of trust among them, inability to realize mutual expectations and the little commitment to achieving common goals in the university system. Let us now move on to the levels of coordination and cooperation between academics and students in the university system in Sri Lanka.

Academics and Students

According to the priority given by the research participants, students, academics and academic administrators are the main stakeholders of the University. They are said to determine the success of the

University. Coordination and cooperation between academics and the students determine the performance (output) of a university (Schiller & Liefner, 2007; McGoldrick et al., 2013). But according to the literature as well as interview data, there is a gap between these two key stakeholders, which has developed from Sri Lankan cultural aspects.

Other reasons for the lack of coordination and cooperation between academics and students are a). Most students (more than 50%) are admitted to the university from rural areas and they are in awe of authority and they always keep their distance from academics. b). Due to language barriers which arise when conducting courses in English, students who have studied up to the Advanced level in their mother tongue, either Sinhala or Tamil, are afraid to communicate with academics, and c). The lecturer and students' relationship is very rigid and the distance between them comes naturally from societal norms. These behavioral factors do not allow students to talk freely and it results in weaker coordination and cooperation between academics and the students, as mentioned in the following quotations.

The graduates demand more since the expectations are very high. But it is not a case for an example if you see the profile or the requirement of the student who came from very rural area, that those who cannot touch. (AC02)

Particularly when we were students, we won't indicate that what the role of syllabus is not accepted or currently they relevant to suit or not? So this is the nature of the students in the academic community (FGD1).

Table 5.1: Overview of thematic analysis

Sub-themes	Space for dialogue	Trust	Commitment	Mutual expectations
Stakeholders Academic vs. Industrialists	No “We don’t have good dialogue between academia and industry. We talk a lot but still this gap prevails” (GOV01)	No Both parties do not trust each other” (GOV02).	Limited “Commonly academic and administrative people may think that industrial training is a headache” People in industry like to deal with us. Due to our work load and other reasons, we are unable to coordinate and cooperate (ADM03)	Limited “Academics are not going to the industry because they are thinking, we know everything, we are the people educating, so why do we want to go? Similarly, the industry people are thinking, we are the corporate sector, we are the people doing, we have the experience and why should we go there...” (IND04)
Academic vs. Government	No “Making decisions even the university can’t make that decision it should come from the higher education ministry or UGC, that is there” (AC07)	No We are disappointed those practices” (ADM01).	Very Poor Academic calendar in every year, I am sure that the university start on the date” (IND01)	
Academic vs. Academics Admin		Limited “There are certain parties’ engagements. There would be one group and there would be another group. But when the thing is over, they will work as or they will try to get their partner to the Dean seat and others will try to change their partner to the dean seat” (AD05)	Poor “Bad election system bounded by the university acts and create an internal politics tell you very sadly...they are counting votes for the next term not for anything therefore, there are people those can work and another category who cannot work or they are not working, just work idling right idling. Then this scenario, always there is disagreement mostly I mean lots of effect to be” (AC05).	Limited “The academics, they are controlled by the administrators. The academics have the flexibility to change the curriculum and teach what is relevant” (IND02).

Academic vs. Students	Limited “In here, when we think about undergraduates, I believe nowadays students are expressing more ideas than us, because we were very frightened of the lecturers and all the things, we never expressed our ideas at university” (AC01) “The graduates demand more since the expectations are very high. if you see the profile or the requirement of the student who came from very rural area, that those who cannot touch.” (AC02)	Yes “We trust academics” (AC 03)	Limited “The academics have to rethink and take a great ownership of their product. Academics themselves are not giving a good example to the students; the way academics behave, the way academics talk, the way academics dress, they are not giving a good example to the students” (IN03).	Limited “Problems in the university Vice chancellors are appointed by political supporters, deans and heads are also elected or nominated so they do not worry about their product whether they are employed or not” (IND03).
------------------------------	--	--	--	---

Source: Interview data

Therefore, students are not close to academics and do not express their opinions freely except for a few students who have studied at international schools or who are extroverted and extra talented. Even though students are aware of the labour market status, they do not discuss their issues with academics or academic administrators due to the absence of a forum and cultural barriers.

Overview of Thematic Analysis

Four themes emerged from the theory of communicative action and the relevant literature with which to analyze levels of coordination and cooperation among

stakeholders. Those are (a) forum for dialogue between stakeholders, (b) trust between stakeholders, (c) commitment of stakeholders to achieve common goal and (d) mutual expectations between stakeholders. The levels of coordination and cooperation between stakeholders (academics and industrialists, academics and the government, academics and academic administrators and academics and students) are analyzed. Table 5.1 shows overview of Thematic analysis for understanding the levels of coordination and cooperation between academics and other stakeholders derived from interview.

It is evident, in the case of the selected HSS faculty, that the level of employment opportunities of graduates is influenced by the level of coordination and cooperation. Therefore, the levels of coordination and cooperation are studied with the sub-themes derived from the TCA. The forum for dialogue, levels of trust between main stakeholders, commitment towards achieving the common goals and recognition of mutual expectation among the parties. The overall analysis shows that there is a lack of coordination and cooperation between academics and other stakeholders. In other words, due to less room for forum for dialogue within the faculty and university system, trust between the main stakeholders and commitment towards achieving the common goals are weak. Finally, the recognition of mutual expectations of the parties are poor, thus levels of coordination and cooperation among stakeholders are weak.

Conclusion

The findings of this study are gathered from an analysis of data covering in-depth interviews, focus group discussions with

different stakeholders of the faculties of HSS and documentary evidence. According to the interviews, the major stakeholders of the faculties of HSS are students, alumni, academics, academic administrators and other administrators including those from the UGC (within the organization), the Government (Ministries), industries, and other professional institutions (outside of the organization). This study reveals a lack of coordination and cooperation among the major stakeholders, particularly between academics–industrialists, academics - the government staff, academics - academic administrators, academics - students and academics-government-industry. A lack of trust between the stakeholders, little commitment or heavy workloads among the academics, limited forum for dialogue and unawareness of mutual expectations of each other lead to weak coordination and cooperation between or among them. This low level of coordination and cooperation among the key stakeholders has resulted in low employability among management graduates in Sri Lankan State universities.

References

- Ariyawansa, E. (2008). Employability of Graduates of Sri Lankan Universities, *Sri Lankan Journal of Human Resource Management*, 2 (1), University of Kaleniya.
- Athula, R. (2011). Employer Satisfaction Towards Business Graduates in Sri Lanka, *International Conference on Social Science and Humanity*, IPEDR vol.5. IACSIT Press, Singapore.
- Barrie, S. (2007). A Conceptual Framework for the Teaching and Learning of Generic Graduate Attributes, in *Studies in Higher Education*, 32.4, pp. 439-458.
- Central bank of Sri Lanka. (2003). *Central Bank Annual Report*, available at: www.lanka.net/centralbank (accessed January 2013).
- Ernst & Young. (2012). Inspection of Ernst & Young Llp, The Public Company Accounting Oversight Board ("PCAOB" or "the Board").

- Green, W., Hammer, S., & Star, C. (2009). Facing Up to the Challenge: Why is it so Hard to Develop Graduate Attributes. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 28(1), 17-29.
- Habermas, J. (1987). *The Theory of Communicative Action (Vol. 2): Lifeworld and system: A critique of functionalist reason* (T. McCarthy, trans.). Boston: Beacon Press.
- Katooli, A. N., & Rahmani, R. (2005). Challenges Facing the Employment of University Graduates, *Tadbir Monthly*, 153. Retrieved April 18, 2010.
- Marzban, F., Ayanzadeh, R. & Marzban, P. (2014). Discrete Time Dynamic Neural Networks For Predicting Chaotic Time Series, *Artif. Intell.*
- Mc Goldrick, N. B. (2013). 'Implementing a Multidisciplinary Program for Developing, Learning, Communication, and Team-working Skills in Second-year Undergraduate Chemistry Students'. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 90, (3): 338-344.
- Nanayakkara, G. (1998). 50 Years Development of Management Studies in Modern Sri Lanka. Postgraduate Institute of Management, University of Sri Jeyawardenapura.
- Nawaratne, S. J. (2012). Shifting Paradigms of Higher Education in Sri Lanka, Re-creating and Re-positioning of Sri Lankan Universities to Meet Emerging Opportunities and Challenges in a Globalized Environment, *Workshop Proceedings, New German Critique*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/488273>.
- Ranasinghe, S. W. (1992). Human Resource Development in Sri Lanka: Present Trends and Future perspectives, Institute of Personal Management Sri Lanka.
- Rasmussen, P. (2007). Learning and Communicative Rationality; The Contribution of Jürgen Habermas, *Working papers on learning 6. Department of Education, Learning and Philosophy*. Aalborg University.
- Readings, Bill (1999). *The University in Ruins*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, England.
- Siyambalapitiya, S. B. (2005). Higher Education in Sri Lanka: Need for a Change in Attitudes, *Sri Lanka Journal of Educational Research*, National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka, 9(1) 33 - 44 .
- Tang, Y., Sachin, S., and Chen, X. F. (2010). "Empowering Students with Engineering Literacy and Problem - Solving Through Interactive Virtual Reality Games,". *2nd International IEEE Consumer Electronics Society Games Innovation Conference*, Hong Kong, Dec. 21-23.
- Taylor, F. (1947). *The Principles of Scientific Management*, New York, Harper & Raw.
- Weligamage, S. & Siengthai, S., (2003). Employer Needs and Graduate Skills: The gap Between Employers' Expectations and Job Expectations of Sri Lankan University Graduates. *9th International Conference on Sri Lanka Studies*. Paper submitted.
- Wickramarachchi, M. W. (2008). Employability of Management Graduates, *Convocation Address, 35th convocation of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura*, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Colombo. www.qaaacouncil.lk.
- Wickramasinghe, V. (2010). Graduates- University Lecturers and Employers' Perceptions Towards Employability Skills. *Education and Training* 52 (3) 226-244, Emerald group publishing Limited.
- World Bank. (2010). *The Towers of Learning: Performance, Peril and Promise of Higher Education in Sri Lanka*, Human Development Unit, South Asia Region. VI.

Chapter 6

AN ECONOMICS ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYABILITY AND UNEMPLOYMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES GRADUATES IN SRI LANKA

O.G. Dayaratna-Banda, P.D.C.S. Dharmadasa

Introduction

The graduate unemployment has been a significant phenomenon in many countries in the world including in Sri Lanka, particularly among humanities and social sciences graduates, and the difficulties faced by those graduates in job markets have often been highlighted in policy discussions. Unemployment and employability of graduates have received a heightened attention from policymakers in recent times, often blame is directed at the universities that produce these graduates. However, whether a graduate is employed or not depends both on graduate attributes and the availability of jobs in the market, whereas employability depends to a great extent on the attributes of graduates in that individual skills and capabilities. It is no doubt that the graduates should be employable in various versatile fields for them to be able to contribute to economic, social and political development.

Graduate unemployment is a global phenomenon, while in Sri Lanka, graduate unemployment has been persistent. According to Labor Force Survey of Sri Lanka, overall unemployment remained at 5.1 percent while the youth (ages

15-24) unemployment rate remained at 23.3 percent in 2019. Moreover, it is reported that more than 50,000 graduates were unemployed, and most of whom were Humanities and Social Sciences graduates. An empirical study of graduates of a state university in Sri Lanka conducted by Wijesekera and Nahallage (2021) has concluded that, after six months of graduation, only 20.9 percent in 2017, 12.2 percent in 2018 and 17.5 percent in 2019 of arts graduates have been employed; 100 percent in 2017, 44.40 percent in 2018, and 54.55 percent in 2019 of ICT graduates have been employed; and 70 percent of English Language graduates have been employed in 2019. It was also reported that graduate unemployment in Sri Lanka is much higher compared to that of Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand (Wickremasinghe, 2010), and overall employability ratio of graduates of universities in Sri Lanka remained at 54 percent (Nawaratne, 2012). The rate of graduate (bachelors and postgraduate) unemployment in India was 30.5 percent in 2019 (<https://www.statista.com>), and 33.9 percent in Bangladesh in 2019 (Bangladesh Institute for Development Studies).

However, graduate unemployment has been considerably low in some advanced economies in 2019, including 7.2 percent in the US, 3.3 percent in Malta, 4.3 percent in Netherlands, 5.7 percent in Germany, while it is considerably higher in some other advanced economies in 2019, including 22.1 percent in Spain, 24.8 percent in Croatia, and 37.2 percent in Greece (www.statista.com). These numbers signify that graduate unemployment is a global phenomenon. When graduate unemployment is soaring, it is natural for the policymakers to direct their criticism against higher education institutes that produce graduates even though they neglect the fact that jobs growth in an economy should take place on par with labour force growth, otherwise, the graduate unemployment is going to be a pervasive phenomenon.

There are a few studies in Sri Lanka that focused on examining the issue of graduate employability and unemployment in Sri Lanka (Wickremasinghe, 2010; Nawaratne, 2012; Ariyawansa, 2008; Chandrasiri, 2008; Senerath and Patabedige, 2014). In his analysis of the labour market experience of university graduates in Sri Lanka, Chandrasiri (2008) has concluded that 'the evidence reveals that the problem of graduate unemployment is not entirely a university problem. It is mostly a structural issue that requires a positive response from both demand and supply sides of the labour market. On the demand side, it involves high economic growth promoted through institutional and policy support, while on the supply side, universities need to be more dynamic and market oriented in the delivery of graduate output'. Moreover, an empirical study, Ariyawansa (2008)

has concluded that employability issues are common to all categories of graduates in Sri Lanka, and graduate unemployment and employability in Sri Lanka are not much different from those of other developing countries. It is also noted that unemployment among engineering technology, and sciences is not very high because the graduates find employment overseas (about 60 percent in the long term) as there are no sufficient jobs in Sri Lanka. However, these studies are neither comprehensive nor more recent, so that further research is required to provide more up to date evidence to understand the abilities and attributes of graduates of humanities and social sciences that are required to make graduates employable based on employer feedback, and the issues of the demand side of the labour market.

The focus of this paper is on the issue of employability and unemployment of humanities and social sciences graduates. In this context, this paper addresses two objectives: (1) to examine the issues of the demand for graduates by the employers, specifically focusing on the ability of the economy to create jobs for graduates by identifying the labour absorption capacity of the economy and jobs growth; and (2) to investigate the supply-side issues including identifying whether there is a skills mismatch pertaining to graduates of humanities and social sciences in the labour market, and the graduate attributes or idiosyncratic factors that tend to determine the employability of humanities and social sciences graduates. Therefore, this contains a policy research review on graduate employability and unemployment in Sri Lanka.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 analyzes the supply side issues pertaining to graduate employability. Section 3 analyzes the issues and the challenges of graduate unemployment. Section 4 is devoted to discussing plausible policy options to address graduate employability and unemployment in the medium to long term. Final section will present concluding remarks.

The Problem of Graduate Employability

Studies of graduate employability have generated a significant number of theoretical models explaining abilities and attributes that are required to be possessed by graduates. The studies have also focused on the nature and the structure of academic programmes to understand whether they have sufficiently incorporated education and training components for knowledge, skills, and values considering the needs of the society and industry. These studies have often led to conclude that there is a serious skills mismatch, i.e., the existence of a serious gap between skills demanded by the industry and skills possessed by the graduates. While the theoretical underpinnings of graduate employability are reviewed here, demand for skills from industry and skills imparted by higher education institutes will be evaluated to identify perceived skills gap, and the problem of graduate employability.

All definitions of employability come down to an individual's (perceived) ability to obtain and maintain employment throughout his/her career (Hillage and Pollard, 1998; Harvey, 2001; Fugate, Kinicki, and Ashforth, 2004; Bridgstock, 2009; Cole and Tibby, 2013). These basically emphasize the

capabilities of the graduate to contribute to the institution in which she/he works and achieve personal and professional development. This attempts to give prominence to idiosyncratic factors of employability. Yorke (2004) stated that graduate employability is "a set of achievements – skills, understandings, and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy." Employability is related to work and the ability to be employed, including: (i). the ability to gain initial employment; hence the interest in ensuring that 'key competencies', career advice and an understanding about the world of work are embedded in the education system; (ii). the ability to maintain employment and make 'transitions' between jobs and roles within the same organization to meet new job requirements; and (iii). the ability to obtain new employment, if required, i.e. to be independent in the labour market by being willing and able to manage their own employment transitions between and within organizations. Van der Heijden (2005) state this as the continuously fulfilling, acquiring or creating of work through the optimal use of efforts. Employability, therefore, prominently relates to the attributes of graduates.

Theoretical Underpinnings of Graduate Employability

There are a number of theoretical models that explain the determinants of graduate employability. These models consider both the idiosyncratic factors as well as socio-economic, and institutional factors in determining employability. Hillage and Pollard (1998) developed a

theoretical framework that explains that employability has four pillars, namely; assets, development, presentation, and contexts. This model, however, lacks clarity in terms of attributes that are expected from a graduate to be successfully employed and sustain the employment. This model also did not explain the determinants of graduate employability in a holistic manner.

A theoretical framework developed by Cotton (1993) identifies a number of areas for consideration including basic skills and knowledge, higher order knowledge and skills, and effective employability skills demanded by employers. This 'employability skills model' became the basis for subsequent studies resulting in a number of modified theoretical frameworks for determining graduate employability. The focus of higher education policymakers and higher education institutes were shifted towards skills of graduates as a result of this model. However, this model does not incorporate factors such as attitudes, behavior and experience of graduates even though these appear to play a significant role in determining graduate employability. Moreover, graduate employability skills are not sufficiently included in this model (Knight and Yorke, 2002, and 2004).

Knight and Yorke (2002) developed a theoretical model that considers skills plus framework by expanding the previous model of Cotton (1993). The skills plus model of employability focused on capability concept including understanding skills (subject-specific and generic), efficiency beliefs, and metacognition (USEM). Though, this model is largely theoretical and has not been subjected to empirical research

adequately because of the difficulties in operationalizing some of the concepts for empirical testing, it provides a strong conceptual basis for higher education policymakers to plan and implement higher education programmes including core-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The Career EDGE model considers the skills and competences included in the USEM model and other employability skills (Pool and Sewel 2007). The model incorporates five lower order factors such as career development learning, experience, degree subject knowledge understanding and skills, generic skills, and emotional intelligence. This is a comprehensive employability skills model that provides a strong basis for higher education policymakers to plan and implement higher education policies and programmes. Researchers who are working on higher education policy should have conducted empirical research to understand the empirical validity of these employability skills framework in the context of Sri Lanka, so that the findings could have been used for policymaking, rather than simply relying on ideologies. As this is a widely accepted model, the data obtained from the empirical research of this model could have been very helpful for evidence-based policymaking.

A practical approach towards determining employability was developed by Harvey (2010) that states that higher education institutes provide a range of employability improvement opportunities for students during their period of study. Certain employability attributes are implicitly embedded into the study programmes while other attributes are explicitly offered through

courses. The study programmes need to be planned and implemented in such a way that the employability skills are included into the curricular considering both implicit and explicit ways so that study programmes are able to train graduates to be equipped with relevant employability skills and attributes.

Considering all of the frameworks developed previously, an integrated framework was proposed by Wellman (2010) that demonstrates the interaction between knowledge, skills, and personal attributes to determine employability. This model considers occupational and personal attributes that are critical for the graduates to be successfully employable. It also considers such enabling factors as policies, strategies, systems, and resources that determine graduate employability.

Journey of employment model proposed by Copps and Plimmer (2013) has questioned the findings of Harvey (2010) and argues that employment process is non-linear and many conflicting factors contribute to it. They argue that one size fits all approach to graduates is detrimental as all graduates of all disciplines will finally end up having the same attributes except the subject knowledge. Sufficient diversity across study programmes should be maintained to produce diverse skills categories of graduates so that they will be able to contribute to diverse socio-economic needs. Therefore, while generic skills may be made common to all graduates, subject-specific and occupation-specific skills and other graduate attributes need to be instilled.

Existing literature on graduate employability has also highlighted that work experience has been widely

perceived as a factor that enhances graduate students' employability (Helyer and Lee, 2014) in a number of ways as it: (i) enhances students' personal maturity and academic performance, self-confidence, motivation and their ability to manage the transition to employment more effectively than students who have not undertaken work experience; (ii) supports students to clarify career choices, gain substantial experience in supervisory or management positions and develop confidence about their future performance in workplaces; and (iii) supports effective learning transfer, in other words, provides opportunities for students to relate theoretical learning to the practical experience in the workplace or to enhance and extend the key skills that are developed through formal study in the workplace. This confirms that the work experience should be given to students during their undergraduate study period through short term employment/ industrial training and internships.

Based on the theoretical framework, in order to understand if there is a skills mismatch between the employers' expectations and skills possessed by graduates, an attempt was made to identify the employers' expectations by a survey and evaluate the current status of the study programmes of the humanities and social sciences using the study programme review reports. This will help to identify if there is any existing skills mismatch. It is noteworthy here that a number of previous studies with respect to Sri Lanka have identified a number of deficiencies and constraints including skills mismatch of the undergraduate study programmes of humanities and social sciences emphasizing that the graduate unemployment is more of

a structural problem in the economy rather than simply deficiencies of skills of graduates (Chandrasiri, 2008; ILO, 2013; Senerath and Patabendige, 2014; Wijesekera and Nahallage, 2021).

Employers' Expectations of Skills and Attributes

The study conducted an employers' feedback survey to identify employers' expectations of attributes of the graduates of humanities and social sciences in Sri Lanka. We dispatched a questionnaire to 200 employers of leading private and semi-governmental institutes in Sri Lanka via email from June 2021. Out of 200 questionnaires sent, we have received 52 completed questionnaires, which constitutes a 26 percent response rate. Given the Covid-19 pandemic, lockdowns, and the difficulties faced by institutes, this is an adequate sample to make meaningful conclusions about the capabilities/abilities and attributes expected from the graduates by the employers. The questionnaire included five categories of abilities/attributes, namely, knowledge of the graduate, soft skills of the graduate, skills required for the graduate to perform individual tasks, skills required by the graduates to perform tasks in groups, and socio-economic conditions of the graduate. The employers were asked to state the level of importance they assign to graduates' knowledge, skills, and personal/social attributes using a 1 to 4 Likert scale, where 1 denotes Not Important and 4 denotes Highly Important. In the analysis, descriptive statistics were used to identify the most important skills/attribute that employers expect a graduate to possess in offering an employment that matches the graduates' level of qualifications, skills, and personal attributes.

Knowledge Factors: Graduates are expected to possess a comprehensive and in-depth discipline-specific and inter-disciplinary knowledge. In order to understand employers' expectation of the level of knowledge of the graduates for the graduates to be successfully employed and sustain their employment, a number of knowledge variables were included to the questionnaire survey.

Table 6.1 provides data received from the employers' feedback survey on the expected knowledge attributes possessed by the graduates. Results indicate that the self-quality control and self-understanding are considered the most important knowledge factors by the employers. Even though undergraduate study programmes give prominence to imparting knowledge to students to make them intellectually resourceful and globally aware, the employers do not view them as most important factors in taking hiring decisions. These results clearly indicate that rearrangements in undergraduate curricular are required to redistribute credit hours from the knowledge factors to skills and values. Highly knowledge-oriented degree programmes that exist at present need to be restructured to reduce the knowledge content of the degree programmes which requires higher education institutes to recognize the essential, peripheral and non-essential knowledge imparted through degrees.

Soft Skills of Graduates: The theoretical literature on graduate employability has emphasized the importance of various soft skills which are generic in nature for the graduates to be employable. In order to address this, our questionnaire

Table 6.1: The importance the employers attach to graduates' knowledge

Skill/Attribute	Mean	Standard Error	Median	Mode	Minimum	Maximum	Rank, based on the mean
Resourcefulness	2.83	0.09	3	3	2	4	5
Global Awareness	2.46	0.08	2	2	2	4	6
Self-understanding	3.50	0.08	4	4	2	4	2
Understanding Workplace	3.19	0.10	3	3	2	4	4
Value Improving	3.42	0.07	3	3	3	4	3
Self-quality control of work	3.67	0.07	4	4	3	4	1

Source: Authors' computation using survey data

survey included a number of soft skills. The employers of the surveys were asked to assign the importance that they give to various skills of graduates.

The results of the employers' feedback survey on expected soft skills provide a convincing scenario about the soft skills needs of the industry (Table 6.2). Except research skills and negotiation skills, almost all employers have viewed these soft skills as very important or highly important for employability. They attribute a very high importance to oral communication skill, English language proficiency, computing skills, IT proficiency, organizing skills, coordination skills, and presentation skills. Various other generic skills are also sought after by the employers from the graduates.

Personal Abilities and Qualities for the Graduate to Work Individually:

In addition to knowledge and soft skills, the literature has emphasized a number of abilities and qualities for graduates to individually perform assigned tasks

in the workplace with efficiency and productivity. The employers were asked to rank the importance they assign to each personal ability/quality of the graduate in employing them in their institutes. Employers give the highest preference to such qualities and abilities as honesty, diligence, time management, decision making, initiative taking, passion, and emotional intelligence, and consider it is very important to have such abilities/skills as flexibility, being energetic, career planning, and dependability for the graduate employees to perform individual tasks efficiently and productively (Table 6.3).

Personal Abilities and Qualities for the Graduate to Work with Groups:

In most workplace settings, the graduates are expected to work in teams or groups and generate group outcomes or outputs rather than individual outputs for the institute that they work. Based on the theoretical literature of graduate employability, a number of abilities and qualities for graduates to perform

Table 6.2: The importance the employers attach to graduates' soft skills

Skill/Attribute	Mean	Standard Error	Median	Mode	Minimum	Maximum	Rank, based on the Mean
English language proficiency	3.62	0.09	4	4	2	4	2
IT proficiency	3.52	0.08	4	4	2	4	4
Oral communication	3.77	0.06	4	4	3	4	1
Written communication	3.21	0.06	3	3	3	4	7
Presentation skills	3.23	0.10	3	3	2	4	6
Research skills	2.25	0.11	2	2	1	4	14
Numerical skills	3.13	0.08	3	3	2	4	9
Computing skills	3.60	0.07	4	4	3	4	3
Evaluation skills	2.62	0.09	3	3	2	4	13
Learning skills	3.02	0.12	3	4	1	4	11
Analytical skills	3.15	0.10	3	3	2	4	8
Explaining Skills	3.23	0.07	3	3	2	4	6
Management skills	3.12	0.04	3	3	3	4	10
Coordination skills	3.35	0.07	3	3	3	4	5
Organizing skills	3.60	0.07	4	4	3	4	3
Negotiation skills	2.96	0.09	3	3	2	4	12

Source: Authors' computations using survey data.

Table 6.3: The importance the employers attach to graduates' skills to perform individually

Skill/Attribute	Mean	Standard Error	Median	Mode	Minimum	Maximum	Rank, based on the mean
Dependability	2.90	0.13	3	3	1	4	10
Honesty	4	0	4	4	4	4	1
Diligence	4	0	4	4	4	4	1
Risk assessment	2.69	0.08	3	3	2	4	12
Risk management	2.77	0.11	3	2	2	4	11
Time management	3.98	0.02	4	4	3	4	2
Decision making	3.58	0.07	4	4	2	4	4
Career planning	3.37	0.10	3	4	2	4	8
Initiative	3.46	0.07	3	3	3	4	5
Flexibility	3.42	0.07	3	3	3	4	7
Energetic	3.33	0.07	3	3	3	4	9
Passionate	3.77	0.06	4	4	3	4	3
Emotional intelligence	3.44	0.07	3	3	3	4	6

Source: Authors' computations using survey data.

assigned tasks in a group setting in the workplace were included in the questionnaire survey. The employers were asked to rank the importance they assign to each of the personal ability/quality of the graduate in employing them in their institutes. Table 6.4 presents data on the employers' expectations of attributes and skills for the graduate to perform in group context. The employers consider that it is highly important for graduates to possess teamwork skills, adaptability to situations and contexts, working with diversity, and having acquired good work ethics to perform tasks efficiently, effectively and productively when they are performing tasks with a group. Since it is a fact that graduates will have to work in institutes in cooperation and coordination with groups with a sense of shared responsibility, these skills become the drivers of institutional success or failures.

Socio-economic conditions: There is a general perception that employers give significant weightage to socio-economic conditions of the graduate in hiring them for employment. In order to understand whether and how the employers in Sri Lanka consider various socio-economic conditions of the graduates in providing

employment, the survey considers a number of socio-economic conditions to understand as to whether the employers given any importance to socio-economic conditions of graduates when the hiring decisions are taken (Table 6.5). Results indicate that the employers in Sri Lanka do not consider whether a graduate is a male or a female, whether the person is from a city, estate or a village, whether the graduate is from a rich family or a poor family, marital status, family situation, and school rank in deciding to hire a graduate. However, there is a little preference to young graduates compared to old graduates.

Skills Deficiency

Existing deficiencies of undergraduate study programmes of humanities and social sciences have also been often highlighted by the study programme reviews conducted by the Quality Assurance Council of the University Grants Commission. A sub-committee appointed by the standing committee on humanities and social sciences of the UGC has also considered such reviews. These reviews have identified deficiencies of skills and attributes in existing study

Table 6.4: The importance the employers attach to graduates' ability to perform in groups

Skill/Attribute	Mean	Standard Error	Median	Mode	Minimum	Maximum	Rank, based on mean
Adaptability	3.79	0.06	4	4	3	4	3
Leadership skills	3.02	0.09	3	3	2	4	5
Teamwork ability	3.87	0.05	4	4	3	4	1
Working with diversity	3.67	0.07	4	4	3	4	4
Work ethics	3.85	0.05	4	4	3	4	2

Source: Authors' computations using survey data.

Table 6.5: The importance the employers attach to graduates' socio-economic conditions

Situation/ Attribute	Mean	Standard Error	Median	Mode	Minimum	Maximum	Rank, based on mean
Graduate is a male	1	0	1	1	1	1	4
Graduate is a female	1	0	1	1	1	1	4
Graduate is from a rich family	1	0	1	1	1	1	4
Graduate is from a city	1.21	0.06	1	1	1	2	2
Graduate is from a state university	1.90	0.12	2	1	1	3	3
Graduate is from a private university	1	0	1	1	1	1	4
Graduate is from a reputed school	1	0	1	1	1	1	4
Graduate is less than 30 years old	2.25	0.10	2	3	1	3	1
Graduate is married	1	0	1	1	1	1	4
Graduate's parents are educated	1	0	1	1	1	1	4

Source: Authors' computations based on survey data.

programmes, including that; (i) curricula have been identified to be highly knowledge oriented and sometimes outdated; (ii) practical training is not provided sufficiently; (iii) the curricula do not include, or weakly include, various soft or generic skills sought after by the employers; (iv) the study programmes also lack components for community-based learning and field-based learning; (v) training to provide English language competence is inadequate; (vi) training of technology skills including ICT skills is inadequate; (vii) required mindset has not been developed for graduates to be employable to venture into risky and uncertain diverse areas for employment; (viii) a lack of sufficient study components in the curriculum for learning by doing, obtaining workplace

experience and exposure through internships and industry placements.

The Mismatch

It is obvious from this review that the skills mismatch that has been identified with respect to humanities and social sciences graduates is still unresolved. Based on the findings of the employers' feedback survey and study programme reviews, it has been emphasized the need to transform undergraduate study programmes to effectively address these deficiencies so that the new curricula of study programmes would effectively train students for employability abilities and qualities as widely expected by the employers. While these reviews have found a serious structural problem in undergraduate study programmes

in humanities and social sciences, especially a lack of focus on skills/competencies and heavy focus on imparting subject knowledge, there is a very serious resistance from academic community to the very idea of graduate employability and the need to embed skills training through undergraduate study programmes.

The clash of ideologies prevents the academia to shift to transform academic programmes to sufficiently include employable skills and attributes. A significant segment of academic community has viewed that the agenda of employability of graduates as an agenda of neoliberalism by way of moving away from welfare systems expounded by Keynesian economics and by others, and moving more towards free markets with the state reframed as a regulator rather than a provider. Employability agenda is, therefore, stated to be an obligation of an individual instead of the state. This is seen as abrogation of the responsibility of the state from the welfare of the citizens (McCowen, 2015). However, employability and employment are requisites for a graduate to survive in a capitalist system. There are benefits of employability to individuals and to some extent to the whole society since skills achieved from the study programmes would make graduates more productive that would improve their incomes and welfare, and thereby increasing aggregate economic activity and raising potential social benefits (Schultz, 1961). Evidently, the ideological left of the political spectrum has been battling against the employability agenda of higher education arguing that

“employability is part and parcel of the highly problematic contemporary capitalist economic system. To support it may entail a reinforcement of that system. Nevertheless, in the current context, leaving individuals ‘without’ employability would considerably diminish their life chances, and therefore, there is a moral obligation for the academia of the higher education institutes to support it to train them to find a suitable career. In addition, attributes of employability can enhance an individual’s productivity in the workplace and thereby provide benefits for society” (McCowen, 2015).

The Causes of Graduate Unemployment

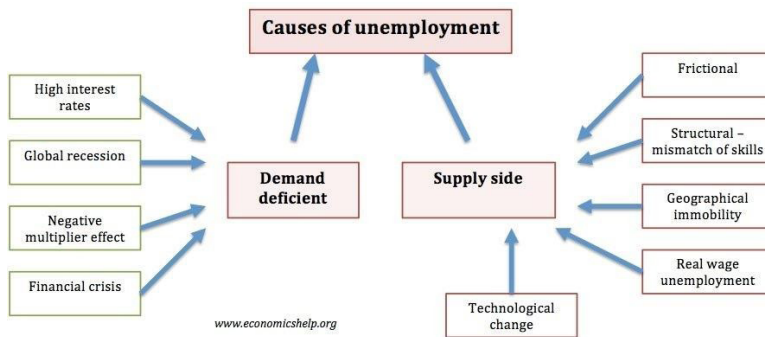
Employability signifies the ability of a graduate to be successfully and sustainably employed in a relevant and chosen occupation, while the actual employment is not solely determined by such supply-side factors alone, so that one cannot give complete responsibility of graduate unemployment to higher education institutes that produce and supply graduates to economy. It has much to do with the ability of the economy to successfully absorb graduates who seek employment. Though employability is often gauged through employment, these two concepts are clearly distinct. While employability is a quality of the individual facilitating to gain employment, it does not guarantee an employment as there are many external factors that tend to determine whether an individual actually acquires employment, including the general availability of jobs, the distribution of different types of job, potential discrimination in the job market, and a range of other

facilitators or constraints' (McGrath 2009; Morley 2001; McCowen, 2015); expectations, uncertainty, and searching costs (Kroft *et al*, 2016); overeducation or undereducation (Herz and Van Rens, 2011); imbalance between individual perspectives and reality (Topa, 2001); and deficiencies of skills and abilities that emphasize the gap between students' developed skills and ability on campus and skills and abilities demanded by the employers for job requirements (Morley, 2001).

According to economics analysis, the causes of graduate unemployment include both demand and supply side factors (Hobson, 2011; Pettinger, 2017). First, human capital theory emphasizes that education and training augment an individual's stock of human capital that enhances a person's productivity and thereby raising the person's incomes (Xiao, 2001). The human capital theory, therefore, emphasizes the need for the graduates to acquire employable skills and attributes during the period of education and training. However, some have argued that this has resulted in overeducation which is a situation where there are highly educated graduates who do not possess matching employability skills. Human capital theory fundamentally states that more skilled the graduate is, the better is his or her employment prospects. Second, the screening and signaling theory argues that higher education plays a filtering role which conveys much needed information to economic agents to prepare for employment. Arrow (1972) argued that higher education serves as a screening device as it sorts out individuals with different abilities and conveys valuable

information to employers. Discrimination theories are the third type of theories of graduate unemployment. Barker (2007) distinguishes three types of discrimination in the labour market that affects graduate unemployment, including; (i) human capital discrimination in which inequalities for education facilities results in a situation of better skilled and less skilled graduates in which better skilled graduates find employment opportunities while others may remain unemployed; (ii) some segments of the labour force take the bigger burden of unemployment; and (iii) occupational discrimination.

Based on this theoretical literature, three categories of unemployment can be identified, including; demand deficient unemployment, frictional unemployment, and structural unemployment (Figure 6.1), emphasizing both demand-side and supply-side factors. For instance, a study of the labour market experience of university graduates in Sri Lanka by Chandrasiri (2008) has concluded that "... the problem of graduate unemployment is not entirely a university problem. It is mostly a structural issue that requires a positive response from both demand and supply sides of the labour market. On the demand side, it involves high economic growth promoted through institutional and policy support, while on the supply side, universities need to be more dynamic and market oriented in the delivery of graduate output". In this context, we will discuss demand deficiency and structural unemployment of graduates considering both the demand and supply sides of unemployment, as frictional unemployment is not a significant phenomenon in Sri Lanka.

Figure 6.1: The causes of graduate unemployment

Source: Pettinger, 2017

Structural Unemployment

Structural unemployment is often highlighted as the single most type of graduate unemployment in Sri Lanka. Reasons for structural unemployment of graduates is identified with respect to individual characteristics of the graduate and socio-economic contexts. Structural unemployment can be categorized into a number of components. First, structural unemployment arises due to occupational immobility (Schultz, 1975; Preece, 2018). This refers to the difficulties in learning new skills applicable to a new industry, technological change, so that some graduates may struggle to find work in high tech industries. It has been emphasized that the academic programmes by construction include number of deficiencies: too much emphasis on academic matters; candidates lacking work experience, lack of adequate career advice, not being trained on how to defend in selection interviews, and misunderstanding the graduate job market. From an individual perspective of the graduate, structural unemployment arises in the economy as a result of; (i) inability to afford or

decision not to pursue further education or jobs training; and (ii) the graduates have chosen fields of study which did not produce marketable job skills. Skills mismatch arises as a result of a lack of frequent updates of academic programmes of higher education institutes in consistent with the changing skills requirements of the economy, and various other deficiencies of academic programmes.

Second, it has been identified that geographical immobility causes structural unemployment (Dankert, 1941; Preece, 2018). This refers to the difficulty in moving regions to get a job, e.g. there may be jobs in Western province in Sri Lanka, but the graduates might find it difficult to find suitable accommodation or schooling for their children. From an individual perspective, structural unemployment arises in the economy as a result of; (i) inability of the graduates to afford relocation from the place of residing to where the jobs are available; (ii) inability of the graduates to relocate due to inability to liquidate existing properties; and (iii) decision of the graduates not to relocate, in order to

stay with a spouse, family, friends, etc. Existing evidence suggests that graduates in most parts of Sri Lanka are reluctant to migrate to Western province where formal institutes or firms of the private sector are located due to these reasons. In addition, the fact that more than 70 percent of graduates of humanities and social sciences are female indicates that these female graduates confront the resistance from families to move to Western province for employment. As it is clear, the transformation of academic programmes to produce skilled graduates alone will not solve the problem of structural unemployment of graduates arising out of geographical immobility.

Third, technological change creates structural unemployment of graduates due to a number of reasons (Du and Wei, 2021). If there is the development of labor-saving technology in some industries, then there will be a fall in demand for some types of labour which have been replaced by machines. (i) technological obsolescence making a specific expertise useless, for instance, demand for manual typesetters disappeared with digitization of printing plate production; (ii) increase of overall productivity of the economy reduces the number of workers (with the same or similar skills) needed to satisfy demand for goods and services; and (iii) adoption of new technology for automation of the work of firms or institutions that tend to reduce the demand for workers. Technology change on the one hand makes the skills possessed by graduates frequently outdated and on the other hand reduction of demand for labour due to use of automation, artificial intelligence, ICT that reduces the labour requirements in firms. In

an attempt to reduce costs to remain efficient and competitive, firms choose to keep the costs of labor low having smaller number of workers by enhancing technology induced operations. This has been witnessed in Sri Lanka for the last two decades.

Fourth, graduate unemployment arises as a result of occupational and sectoral preferences of graduates for government sector jobs for a number of reasons. Many studies have found that preference for public sector jobs over the other sectors has resulted in 'wait unemployment' which is a particular form of structural unemployment (Hyder, 2007). Preference of graduates for public sector employment over other sectors is caused by a number of factors including, public sector pension schemes, more favourable working conditions, favorable leave conditions, lack of financially-aided foreign training, fringe benefits, and job security. Public sector pension scheme is seemingly the most important factor that drives graduates to prefer public sector jobs in Sri Lanka along with jobs security as layoffs are impossible in public sector even in the hardest times. Since graduates tend to take lifetime permanent income on regular intervals due to risk aversion and old age vulnerabilities in taking employment decisions, most graduates prefer government sector employment that guarantees lifetime earnings on a regular interval. The solution is to equalize pension schemes for all sectors of the economy possibly following the Scandinavian model of social security. Without reforming the existing social security system to provide a reasonable social security programme for all citizens,

preference of graduates for government sector jobs cannot be eliminated.

Finally, structural unemployment of graduates is caused by structural change in the economy (Turvey, 1977; Pasinetti, 1990). Structure of the economy consists of agriculture, manufacturing and services. The relative importance of these sectors change overtime with economic development. The change of the structure of the economy results in making some occupations disappear and new jobs emerge which necessitate the graduate to continuously upgrade their skills and remain competitive in the labour market. These shifts in the way an economy, industry, or market operate result in unemployment. In order to address this type of unemployment, institutes/firms need to create a programme for on the job training for educated workers through internships and training programmes.

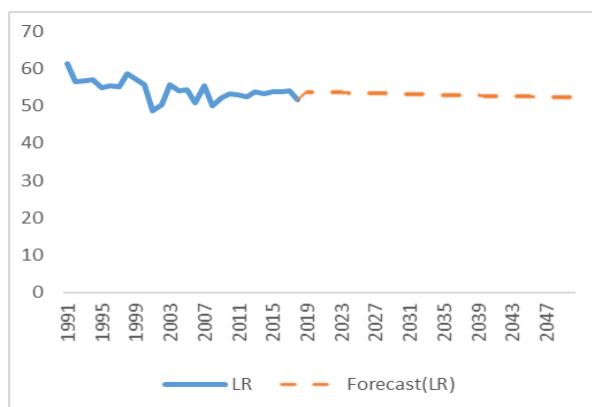
Demand Deficient Unemployment

This paper has so far discussed the supply side influence on unemployment among social sciences and humanities graduates. However, an important question to ask when considering graduate unemployment is whether there is a sufficient demand for graduates in humanities and social sciences from both the public and private sectors in Sri Lanka, since graduate unemployment can partly be attributed to a lack of jobs growth in the economy for graduates. In this respect, the nature and characteristics of the Sri Lankan labour market need to be examined. As emphasized by several previous studies, Sri Lankan labour market is suffering

from tight regulations, slow growth, and labour scarcity (Wignaraja, 2018; World development updates, 2018). The World Bank's Development updates have shown that Sri Lanka is experiencing 3.2 percent of annual average growth while the unemployment rate is 4.2 percent, and growth of employment is 2.1 percent. Owing to the tight regulations, private sector depressed with lack of skilled workers and new startups cannot be established, stressing that Sri Lankan labour market faces four key challenges, i. e. lack of female labour force participation, poor English language proficiency of employees, high unemployment level of graduates with arts degrees, and large public sector with a huge cost (World Bank Development Updates (2018)). As a result of slowing down of population growth and increase in population aging in the country, labour force participation rate shows a declining trend at present and it will continue to decline in the future as well (refer Figure 6.2).

In addition, foreign employment and low female labour force participation due to higher education are also responsible factors for the above condition in the country (Nawaratne, 2018). The other challenges are a lack of vocational training, lack of on-the-job training, and development programs in both public and private sector institutions. Even though Sri Lanka has an established public and private school system, country's youth are still less-aware of vocational training. There is a need for the government to take measures to provide vocational training for college dropouts

Figure 6.2: Projected labour force participation rate



Source: Authors' calculations

and people who have various skills as such skills are needed for the formal industry sector jobs (World Bank, 2018). On the other hand, both government and private institutions do not train their employees adequately for the smooth running of the company. Employers keep on saying that their employees are not fluent in English, but do not take any action to improve their English language ability through training programmes. A lack of well-trained English language teachers is the other factor affecting this situation. English language teachers are highly inadequate in schools in rural areas and the estate sector in Sri Lanka, while there is a surplus in urban areas (Demographic and Health Survey-DHS, 2016). Therefore, majority of school children who become university graduates from those backward areas are weak in English language compared to urban counterparts. Thus, the government should enhance equitable distribution of physical and other resources to schools in every part of the country. A lack of job creation in the market, public sector job protection, tight regulations in the labor

market, lack of coordination between academia and industry are some of the responsible demand side factors that are attributed to the rise in the aforementioned challenges faced by the Sri Lankan economy (ILO, 2018).

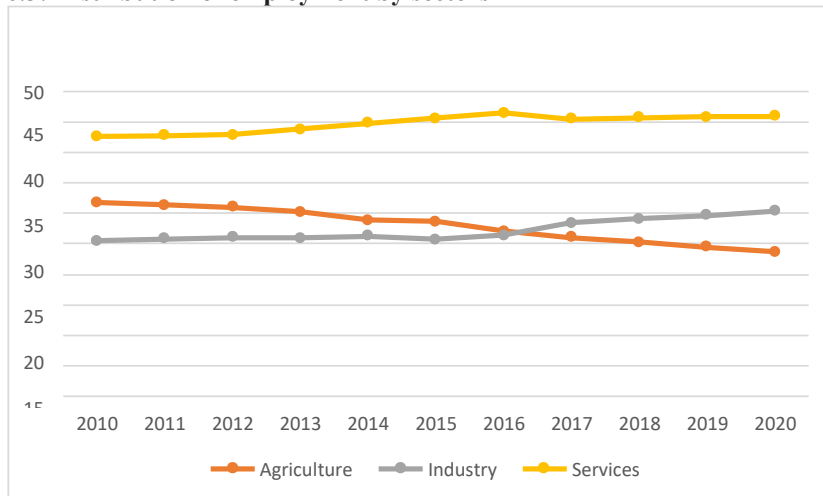
In a market economy, productivity growth and employment creation, that appear as dual goals in a single policy package, is paramount for a country's economic growth, development, and poverty alleviation. However, Sri Lanka has failed to achieve these dual goals even though successive governments have been trying since independence. The failure of the economy to produce jobs for educated youth adequately has been highlighted by many studies. Many development projects implemented since early 1980s such as Accelerated Mahaweli Development Programme, Export Processing Zones, Industrial Parks, Garment Factories across the country and many others did have any specific measures to create jobs for graduates in humanities and social sciences. Two specific projects can be cited here.

For instance, President Premadasa era launched ‘200 garment factory program’ to promote industrial employment in rural areas which was expected to generate employment opportunities in apparel industry for a large segment of low-income population in rural areas, enabling the country to reduce poverty in rural areas to a greater extent. However, this program paid inadequate attention to increase the productivity and create employment opportunities for educated youth including graduates. In contrast, the second program came under the theme of “the year of productivity, followed by the “decade of productivity”, which was implemented in 1996 with a little effort of job creation (Yatawara, 2004). This project was implemented to lay off a large number of government employees before their retirement age, by paying a compensation, with the objective of increasing productivity with less labour, based on the arguments that productivity occurs due to downsizing the employment. However, as

emphasized by Yatawara (2004), even though this downsizing helped increase in productivity in some institutions, majority recorded low productivity due to downsizing. Moreover, some companies gained productivity growth while increasing employment. In general, Sri Lanka failed to sufficiently create employment opportunities for educated youth including graduates (ADB and ILO, 2017) (refer Figure 6.3).

As shown in figure 3, employment-share in services sector was 45.9 percent at the end of 2020 compared to agriculture and the industry sectors. An observation of the growth pattern of employment in each sector indicates that stagnation of employment has persisted in all sectors. Even though, employment-share in the industry sector indicates an upward trend, it still accounts for only as low as 30 percent. Agricultural sector employment shows a declining trend accounting for 23 percent in 2020, which is a sector that rarely attracts graduates of humanities

Figure 6.3: Distribution of employment by sectors



Source: www.statista.com (2021)

and social sciences. Nonetheless, in general, growth moment of employment cannot be seen in all three sectors, which implies that generation of new employment in each sector has been low. According to the Labour Force Survey, total employment to the population ratio in Sri Lanka is 66.2 percent that consists of 92.9 percent of males and 43.5 of females. Among them, only 45.2 percent of graduates in arts stream and 54.8 percent of graduates from other streams were employed at the end of 2019 (Labour Force Survey, 2019).

An investigation of the underlying factors related to aforementioned situation indicates that rigidity in the labour market is the root cause of low employment generation in Sri Lanka. Rigid labour laws and excessive regulations prevent layoffs or hiring new people. This condition prevents generating sufficient employment opportunities for newly passed out graduates, and therefore, graduates are stranded for a considerable period of time until they could find a suitable job for their qualifications. The other option available for graduates is to accept any available job without considering their qualifications or field of study (CEDEFOP, 2010). When a person's waiting period is longer while he/she does not have a job that suits his/her education, he/she will be unable to utilize the skills acquired through learning. This constrains the country to gain potential output from the investment made for the education (Green and McIntosh, 2002).

Protected public sector jobs (Byiers et al., 2015) is a significant labour market characteristic in Sri Lanka.

Since the public sector employment is very popular among graduates in Sri Lanka, employment opportunities seem protected, while giving preferential advantage to some graduates at the expense of others. When recruiting for some of the executive level posts in public sector organizations, especially Corporations, Statutory Boards and Authorities, preference is given to those who are closely linked to the politicians, which, therefore, is disadvantageous to qualified graduates getting selected. A recent survey by the National Human Resource Development Council suggests that recruitment of graduates in most public sector institutions is not strategically positioned (NHRDC 2013). About 48 percent of the survey interviewees were dissatisfied with the way graduates were recruited to the government institutions (refer Table 6.6).

This report further revealed that 30 percent of new recruits has recommended to avoid political interference in recruitments, 23 percent of them has recommended the need to recruit graduates to fill existing vacancies, 20 percent has recommended the need to recruit for a post worthy of a graduate, and 16 percent has recommended that recruitments should match the subject of the degree. The overall judgment that can be drawn from this data is that recruitment system of graduates in government has not been sustainable so far, which needs a systematic improvement to extract maximum productivity from the graduates.

In addition, a lack of coordination between universities and employers is

Table 6.6: Methods of government graduate job placements

Method of recruitment	Percentage of recruitment
Political interference	43
Unsystematic methods of recruitment	33
Recruitment not aligned with degree qualification	8

Source: NHRDC (2013)

also a demand side issue in Sri Lanka. Weak linkages between higher education institutes and industry is strongly affecting graduates' employment prospects. It has been wrongly perceived that developing a link between higher education institutes and industry is a responsibility of higher education institutes without having established a proper incentive mechanism and funding. At present, most of the state universities in Sri Lanka have included 3 to 4 months of compulsory internship programme for undergraduate study programmes in humanities and social sciences, where students receive an industry experience towards the end of their period of education. However, these internship programmes are conducted in a voluntary basis and no private sector firms or government institutions are ready to pay allowances to these trainees so that students/graduates have to find expenses during the period of internship which is a costly exercise. Since most private sector institutes are located in the western province, graduate internees/trainees have to spend a considerable amount of expenditure monthly to undergo this training since they have to find accommodation, travel and food expenses. As stressed by Wignaraja (2018), the graduate internship programmes or mandatory trainee

programmes must be created in such a way that institutions in both private and public sectors provide an allowance and encourage graduates to work in a competitive work environment. This will serve as an incentive and create an interest among undergraduate community, especially in arts stream graduates to work in private sector and gain work experience, which will eventually help reduce the burden on public sector in the longer term. In addition, government should encourage through various policy incentives for the private sector firms to create more opportunities for graduates from arts streams. However, politicians and bureaucrats in Sri Lanka have failed to properly understand the issue and create a suitable graduate trainee/ internship system through a public policy.

In Sri Lanka, a lack of jobs growth due to sluggish economic growth during the post-independence period has been significantly responsible for graduate unemployment. Successive governments have also failed to adequately reform the labour market regulations and other arrangements to create a favourable environment for private sector firms to absorb graduates. Employment opportunities traditionally meant for humanities and social sciences graduates

in public sector have been gradually shifted to attract graduates from other disciplines or non-graduates. There is rarely any arrangement in semi-governmental institutions such as corporations, boards, and authorities to recruit graduates for suitable employment. Successive governments have failed to create a suitable incentive system for internships or trainee programmes in private sector, government and semi-governmental institutions. Even though politicians and misguided bureaucrats continue to blame the higher education institutes for graduate unemployment, the facts remain that graduate unemployment is significantly caused by issues and constraints in the demand side of the labour market which has to be resolved by the government.

Policies to Improve Graduate Employability and Employment

In order to improve employment and employability of graduates, an innovative policy framework and an effective implementation agenda are required. While supply-side reforms are required to improve the employability of humanities and social sciences graduates, demand-side policies and programmes are required to eliminate graduate unemployment. The reforms needed therefore range from modernizing academic programmes, labour market reforms, incentive mechanism, infrastructure development, and regulatory reforms. To implement supply-side reforms, higher education institutes need to take the lead role, while the demand-side policies and programmes should be implemented by the government.

Supply-side Policies

To produce intellectually rigorous and able graduates, reforms that have been commenced by the UGC to modernize undergraduate study programmes of humanities and social sciences in the state universities need to be completed. These recommendations have continuously been proposed by the study programme reviews and committees appointed by the UGC from time to time. These policy reforms include both supply-side and demand-side policy reforms. Reforms in the supply- side include: (i) modernizing academic programmes without losing the intellectual rigor and academic content of the degree programmes to incorporate employability skills; (ii) redesigning the curricula to incorporate core, peripheral and inter-disciplinary knowledge considering a wide array of occupations; (iii) incorporating soft/generic/employability skills such as communication skills, critical thinking, creative thinking, analytical thinking, decision making, personality and leadership, emotional intelligence, work ethics, professionalism, time management, numeracy, managerial and administrative skills, coordination skills, basic mathematics, basic statistics, English language competence; (iv) compulsory study components that need to be integrated to provide technology skills including ICT competence into the curricula; (v) incorporating study components for experience based learning; (vi) introducing a comprehensive career development programme through career counselling and internships; (vii) switching over

from current monolingual system of Sinhala or Tamil medium to bilingual system or convert to English medium; (viii) changing the norms for academic and non-academic staff cadres allocation to equalize them with the cadre norms of science-based faculties because when practical and skills training components are included, the teaching/learning and assessment methods of humanities and social sciences study programmes will not differ much from those of the science-based study programmes; (ix) changing the norms for allocation of recurrent funds to the faculties of humanities and social sciences by increasing recurrent funds allocation norms on par with science-based faculties for the faculties of humanities and social sciences for them to be able to offer skills based practical training. In order for higher education institutes to produce highly employable graduates, a comprehensive policy reform to implement these has to be implemented; (x) in order for the universities to provide experience-based learning, mandatory internships, learning by doing components need to be embedded into the curricula with a proper incentive system.

Demand-side Policies

In the demand-side policy reforms, government needs to revisit its understanding on graduate employability by appointing a Presidential Task Force and implement its recommendations. A new policy framework should include a number of areas. First, it is no doubt that economic growth should be stimulated for creation of jobs in the economy, especially growth policy should target

areas of the economy which are able to attract educated labour. Second, in order to address structural unemployment due to geographical immobility, ongoing constructions of expressways need to be expedited so that employees could find jobs in the metropolis without migrating. Third, a new training cum employment programme should be introduced by law to facilitate fresh graduates who do not have prior work experience to absorb into private and public sectors as trainees. This requires government to encourage public and private organizations to setup programs to employ potential fresh graduates into their workforce as part of the corporate social responsibility - this approach is also good for the organizations to 'inject' new blood for new ideas and younger workforce for key job continuity. A trainee system similar to the trainee system available for vocational and technical education students of the vocational and technical training students under Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission should be introduced to university students of humanities and social sciences. This requires providing allowances to graduates by the government during the period of traineeship/internship. Fourth, current recruitment schemes and service minutes/standard recruitment procedures are identified to be biased against the graduates of humanities and social sciences and biased towards mathematically and quantitatively sound graduates. This needs to be reformed to remove the unfavorable environment created in recruitments. Fifth, the Ministry of Education or the University Grants Commission in collaboration with the Department of Census and

Statistics need to create an occupation-based labour demand database with occupation-based job market forecasts and keep them updated annually while making the database accessible to all higher education institutes. The same should be implemented to create a skills requirement database of industry sectors of the economy with a forecast of skills requirement. Seventh, labour market reforms are required to facilitate employment growth for graduates. Eighth, a new social security system with pension benefits should be created for all working citizens both in public and private sectors possibly following the Scandinavian model of social security so that preference for government sector jobs can be discouraged and private sector jobs can be encouraged. Finally, the need to produce employable graduates by promoting employability skills has not been well received by academic community of humanities and social sciences. The general ideological position of most academics in the humanities and social sciences is that the push to produce merely employable graduates is a neoliberal agenda of capitalism (McCowen, 2015). In order to resolve this controversy and reform the undergraduate study programmes to produce employable graduates, more informed discussions and policy/regulatory reforms are required.

Conclusion

This paper examined the problem of employability and unemployment of graduates in humanities and social sciences in Sri Lanka focusing on

both the demand-side and the supply-side factors. The review revealed that there is a significant issue of graduate employability in Sri Lanka as a result of persistent existence of a skills mismatch and various other socio-economic conditions of the country. Significant deficiencies exist in undergraduate study programmes including lack of study components embedded into study programme to provide soft skills and other employable skills significantly. The evidence suggests that the skills mismatch is only one source of graduate unemployment as factors such as occupational immobility, geographical immobility, and technology change also tend to contribute as supply-side factors to graduate unemployment. The failure of the economy to generate sufficient rate of jobs growth and various structural constraints in the labour market remain to be the most important factors that contribute to graduate unemployment. The study suggests significant structural reforms in both supply-side and demand-side to make graduates more employable and employed. Higher education institutes alone will not be able to solve the problem of graduate employability and unemployment as government is required to play a leading role in these structural reforms, especially in the demand side of the labour market, while the higher education institutes should undertake a major structural reform of study programmes that enables them to produce intellectually-rich, highly skilled graduates in humanities and social sciences.

References

- Ariyawansa, R. G. (2008). Employability of Graduates of Sri Lankan Universities. *Sri Lankan Journal of Human Resource Management*, 2(1): 91-103.
- Arrow, F. (1972). The theory of discrimination. Industrial relations section, Woodrow Wilson School and conference office of Princeton University
- Barker, F. (2007). *The South African labour market*. Fifth Edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik publishers
- Bridgstock, R. (2009). The Graduate Attributes We've Overlooked: Enhancing Graduate Employability Through Career Management Skills. *Higher Education Research & Development* 28 (1): 31-44.
- Byiers, B., Krätke F., Jayawardena, P., Takeuchin L.R., & Wijesinha, A. (2015). Manufacturing Progress? Employment creation in Sri Lanka. Case Study Report, European Center for Development Policy Management
- CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training). (2010). The Skill Matching Challenge: Analyzing Skill Mismatch and Policy Applications, Publications Office of the European Union: Luxembourg.
- Chandrasiri, S. (2008). The Labour Market Experience of University Graduates in Sri Lanka. *Higher Education Policy*, 21.
- Cole, D. & M. Tibby. (2013). *Defining and Developing Your Approach to Employability*. York: The Higher Education Academy.
- Copps, J. & Plimmer, D. (2013). *Inspiring Impact - The Journey to Employment* - a guide to understanding and measuring what matters for young people, s.l.: NPC.
- Cotton, K. (1993). *Developing Employability Skills*. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
- Dankert, C.E. (1941). Labor Immobility and Technological Unemployment, *Social Forces*, 19(3): 426-434.
- Department of Census and Statistics. (2016). *Demographic and Health Survey*. Colombo: Department of Census and Statistics.
- Department of Census and Statistics. (2019). *Labour Force Surveys*. Colombo: Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka, <http://www.Statistics.gov.lk/page.asp?page=Labour%20Force>.
- Du, Y. & X. Wei. (2021). Technology Change and Unemployment: evidence from China, *Applied Economics Letters*, DOI: 10.1080/13504851.2021.1896666
- Fugate, M., Kinicki, A.J., & Ashforth, B.E., (2004). Employability: A Psycho-Social Construct, its Dimensions, and Applications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 65: 14-38.
- Green, F., & McIntosh, S. (2007). Is there a genuine under-utilization of skills amongst the over-qualified? *Applied Economics*, 39(4), 427-439
- Harvey, L. (2010). Defining and Measuring Employability. *Quality in Higher Education*, 7(2), 97- 109, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13538320120059990>.
- Harvey, L. (2001). Defining and Measuring Employability. *Quality in Higher Education* 7 (2): 97-109.
- Helyer, R. & Lee, D. (2014). The Role of Work Experience in the Future Employability of Higher Education Graduates, *Higher Education Quarterly* 68(3).
- Herz, B., & Van Rens, T. (2011). Structural unemployment. Economics Working Papers, 1276 Hillage, J., and E. Pollard. (1998). *Employability: Developing a Framework for Policy Analysis*. London: DfEE.
- Hobson, J.A. (2011). *The Economics of Unemployment*. London: Routledge.
- Hyder, A. (2007). Preferences for Public Sector Jobs and Wait Unemployment: A Micro Data Analysis, *PIDE Working Paper*, 20, Pakistan Institute of Development Studies.

- International Labour Organization (ILO). (2017). *Sri Lanka: Fostering Workforce Skills Through Education. Employment Diagnostic Study*.
- International Labour Organization. (2013). *Decent Work Country Report Sri Lanka, 2013-2017*. Geneva: ILO
- Knight, P. & Yorke, M. (2004). *Learning, Curriculum and Employability in Higher Education*, London: Routledge Falmer,
- Knight, P.T. & Yorke, M. (2002). Employability through the curriculum. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 8(4), 261-276.
- Kroft, K., Lange, F., Notowidigdo, M.J., & Katz, L.F. (2016). Long-term unemployment and the great recession: the role of composition, duration dependence, and nonparticipation. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 34(S1), S7-S54.
- McCowen, T. (2015). Should universities promote employability? *Theory and Research in Education*, 13(3): 267-285
- McGrath, S. (2009). What is employability? Learning to support employability project paper 1. School of Education, University of Nottingham. Available at: http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/shared/shared_uccer/epa_docs/what_is_employability.pdf
- Morley, L. (2001) Producing new workers: quality, equality and employability in higher education. *Quality in Higher Education*, 7 (2), 131-138.
- National Human Resources Development Council (NHRDC). (2013). Recruitment of Graduates into the Public Service, and their Contribution to Productivity vis-a-vis their Job Satisfaction. Colombo: NHRDC.
- Nawaratna, N. N. J. (2018). Economic Aspect of Aging Population, Daily Mirror 30, October 2018
- Nawaratne, S. J. (2012). Shifting paradigms of higher education in Sri Lanka. re-creating and repositioning of Sri Lankan Universities to meet emerging opportunities and challenges in a globalized environment, Workshop Proceedings.
- Pasinetti, L.L. (1990). Structural Change and Unemployment, *Structural Change and Economic Dynamics*, 1(1): 7-13.
- Pettinger, T. (2017). Causes of Unemployment. www.economicshelp.org (retrieved on 08-06- 2021).
- Pool, L.D. & Sewell, P. (2007). The key to employability: developing a practical model of graduate employability. *Education + Training*, 49, 277 - 289.
- Preece, J. (2018). Immobility and Insecure Labor Markets: an active response to precarious employment, *Urban Studies*, 55(8).
- Schultz, T.W. (1961). 'Investment in human capital.' *The American Economic Review*, 51 (1): 1– 17
- Schultz, T.W. (1975). The Value of the Ability to Deal with Disequilibria. *Journal of Economic Literature* 13 (3): 827-846.
- Senerath, S.A.C.L. & Patabendige, S.S.J. (2014). Job-Education Mismatch Among the Graduates: A Sri Lankan Perspective, *Ruhuna Journal of Management and Finance*, Vol 1, No 2: 1-16
- Statista. (2021). Sri Lanka: Country profile: <https://www.statista.com>.
- Topa, G. (2001). Social interactions, local spillovers and unemployment. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 68(2), 261-295.
- Turvey, R. (1977). Structural Change and Structural Unemployment, *International Labour Review*, 111(2).

- Van der Heijden, B.I.J.M. (2005). *No One has Ever Promised You a Rose Garden. On Shared Responsibility and Employability Enhancing Strategies throughout Career*, inaugural address (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum)
- Wellman, N. (2010). The employability attributes required of new marketing graduates. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 28(7), 908-930, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/02634501011086490>
- Wickramasinghe, V. (2010). Graduates, University lecturers and employers' perceptions towards employability skills. *Education and Training*, 52 (3): 226-244.
- Wignaraja, G. (2018), Fixing Sri Lanka's Labour market: Comparative Lessons. *Daily FT*.
- Wijesekara, P.D., & Nahallage, C.A.D. (2021). Employability Survey of Arts Graduates with Special Reference to a State University in Colombo, (2021). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3809155>
- World Bank. (2018). More and Better Jobs for an Upper Middle-Income Country. Sri Lanka Development Update. [online], <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org>
- Xiao, J. (2001). *Determinants of salary growth in Shenzhen, China: An analysis of formal education, on-the-job training, and adult education with a three-level model*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Yatawara, R. (1997), Labour Productivity Growth and Employment Creation. In Kelegama, S. (eds). *Economic Policy in Sri Lanka: Issues and Debates*, Sage Publications. pp 255-270.
- Yorke, M. (2004). *Employability in higher education: what it is – what it is not*, The Higher Education Academy/ESECT.

Chapter 7

MEASURING GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY GOAL IN HIGHER EDUCATION PLANS

Athula Ranasinghe

Introduction

This paper is an attempt to initiate a discourse on the major methodological issues of Sri Lankan studies on Graduate Employability. As far as the theme is concerned, this is a cross-cutting issue connected with all sorts of studies on graduate employability. In this paper, more emphasis is given for studies on the employability of Humanities and Social Science (HSS) graduates from state sector universities in Sri Lanka.

In most of the literature, the terms *employability* and *employment* are treated synonymous and used (un)employment rate, length of unemployment and underemployment rate of graduates to measure the size of employability problem of graduates. For Sri Lankan studies on graduate employability, one of the highly used sources of data is the convocation survey data which has been done annually since 2011. According to this survey of 2017, at the time of convocation, little over 30 percent of graduates from state universities were unemployed. Quite surprisingly, going against the conventional wisdom, nearly the same percentage of unemployment

is reported from non-state universities too (Gunaratne *et al* 2018). The same report also highlights that the highest unemployment rates are reported from Arts and Performing Arts streams, where the unemployment rates are above 50 percent. These results are more or less the same in most of other studies as well¹. Next to Arts and Performing Arts streams, Management Faculties report nearly 25 percent unemployment rate.

This has become one of the key concerns of the policy makers of Sri Lanka. It is claimed that such graduates are at a risk of finding a suitable job for their qualifications and aspirations and they wait for such jobs over a very long period. Some conservative estimates show that over 50 percent of HSS graduates are unemployed by the time of convocation. Out of the employed graduates, a significant percentage is either under-employed or mismatched.

-
1. Ranasinghe (2018) has reported the situation of University of Colombo. According to the convocation survey of 2017, out of the total attended convocation in that year, 38 percent was unemployed and 6% was under employed. The situation is worse in Arts, Education, Sreepali, Law and IIM.

No one can dispute about the severity of the unemployment problem of HSS graduates. Despite its non-disputability, in this paper, author attempts to highlight several major methodological limitations of the research undertaken in the field of graduate employability.

This paper is organized into 4 Sections including Introduction. Section 2 presents literature review on “employability and employable skills”. Methodological limitations and their impacts on research findings and higher education policy making are presented in Section 3. Section 4 concludes the paper.

Literature Review

In order to convince the reader about methodological issues of employability studies in Sri Lanka, one has to start with a note on background knowledge of the intentions of employability studies. Therefore, literature review of this paper starts with some statistics regarding the main issue: *graduate unemployment*. This section is followed by a section of causes of unemployment, where general theories of unemployment and specific and popular theories explaining graduate unemployment are presented. Based on that, this paper critically assesses the role of universities, recommended in the literature, in solving the graduate unemployment problem. Once the role of universities is agreed upon, issues of research methodology are straightforward. Based on the knowledge acquired on the role of universities in solving graduate employment problem, this paper critically assesses the methodologies used by many researchers in their publications on graduate unemployment.

Size and Composition of the Problem

According to the available reports, in 2013, nearly 27 percent graduates were unemployed ((Ramanayake *et al* 2013)). In 2017, nearly 32% of graduates from state universities and 33% of graduates from non-state universities were unemployed by the time of convocation (Gunaratne *et al* 2017)). In 2017, nearly 38% of graduates of University of Colombo were unemployed (Ranasinghe 2018)). Over time, the graduate unemployment rate has rapidly increased (graduate unemployment rate has increased 3.7% per year)². Composition of these figures are also interesting to understand.

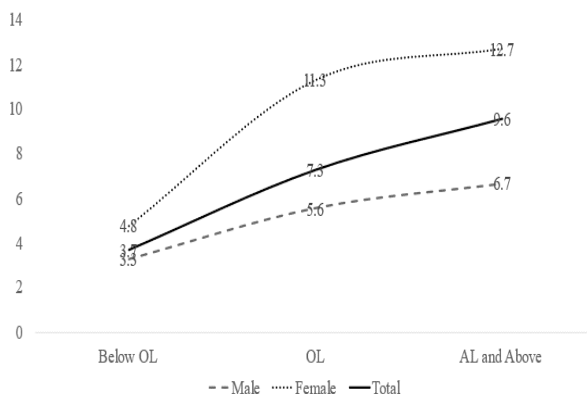
Figure 7.1 reports the unemployment rates by level of Education and Gender.

Female unemployment rate is higher at all levels of education. For Male and Female, positive relationship is observed with level of education.

According to Convocation Survey of year 2017, out of all female graduates passed out in 2017, nearly 40% was unemployed. The corresponding percentage for male graduates was only 17%. As far as Academic Stream-wise distribution was concerned, highest figures were reported for Arts (54%) and Performing Arts (54%) streams (Gunaratne *et al* 2017)).

2. According to Quarterly Labor Force Survey of Department of Census and Statistics, in 2019, there were 42,024 unemployed graduates out of which 55% was Arts Graduates. Unfortunately, the QLFS report has not calculated unemployment rates for graduates. Unemployment rate of labor force with AL or Above qualifications was 8.5%.

Figure 7.1: Unemployment rate by education and gender 2020



Source: Table 9, LFS Quarterly Bulletin (2020)
Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka.

Causes of Unemployment

The Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka has defined *involuntary unemployment* as those who are willing and able to work but without a work in the reference period of the Labor Force Surveys. In Explanatory Note of Sri Lanka Labor Force Survey, unemployment is defined as:

Persons available and/or looking for work, and who did not work and taken steps to find a job during last four weeks and ready to accept a job given a work opportunity within next two weeks are said to be unemployed. ([http://www.statistics.gov.lk/LabourForce/Statistical Information/ ExplanatoryNotes-SriLankaLabourForceSurvey-2013](http://www.statistics.gov.lk/LabourForce/StatisticalInformation/ExplanatoryNotes-SriLankaLabourForceSurvey-2013) Onward. Underlined by the author of this paper)

For the Department of Statistics, a person is classified into unemployment category if the four conditions underlined in the above quote are satisfied.

General Theories of Unemployment

All the economic theories regarding unemployment are about *involuntary unemployment*. All those theories can

be classified into two broad groups as *Demand Side Theories* and *Supply Side Theories*.

The demand side theory of unemployment is called the *Demand Deficient Unemployment* or *Keynesian Unemployment* named after JM Keynes, who invented the idea of demand deficient unemployment. This describes unemployment as an outcome of lack of aggregate demand. This explicitly means that some people are involuntarily unemployed because there is no demand for the goods/Services that they produce (Keynes 1936)).

There are several Supply Side theories. *Structural* or *Mismatch* unemployment is about mismatch of *attitudes* and *skills* of people compared to the labor demand. In 1970s, after famous Seer's report (ILO 1972)) attitude mismatch was recognized as the main cause of youth unemployment of Sri Lanka. Currently, the skills mismatch has become a popular explanation about graduate unemployment. Search theory or Queue theory of unemployment is another

supply side theory. This theory suggests that unemployed people stay unemployed until such time that the offered wage is equal or greater than reservation wage. Rama Martin (1999) described youth unemployment of Sri Lanka in terms of Queue theory. He described youth unemployment (Specially educated youth) is mainly voluntary. They voluntarily stay unemployed (disregarding the jobs available) until they find the desired job.

Specific Causes of Graduate Unemployment

Most of the researchers engaged in graduate unemployment problem of Sri Lanka have a specific set of explanation to describe graduate unemployment. Theoretically, almost all the recommendations are implicitly based on *Skill mismatch hypothesis* where, the main cause of unemployment is that graduates (Specially, graduates from Arts, Social Science and Humanities streams) do not possess the skills demanded by the jobs available in the market.

In this context, the general opinion is that HSS graduates are not employable as they do not possess *employable skills*. Therefore, researchers recommend that it is the responsibility of respective education institute to impart such skills into the curriculum.

However, debate on definition of employable skills and mechanism of imparting such skills is not yet consolidated. There are many definitions of employable skills. Debate on the optimal timing of imparting such skills and opportunity cost and resources-gap of universities for imparting employable skills into curriculum is not yet resolved.

Table 7.1 summarizes the empirical findings and conclusions of selected studies of graduate employability of Sri Lanka.

In general, all the causes of graduate unemployment identified in the literature reviewed above can be classified into 3 as *a.) Demand Side* explanations, *b.) Screening* practices in the labor market and *c.) Human Capital* issues.

Demand Side: In the context of literature on graduate employability, demand side explanations are quite different from the Keynesian theory of demand deficiency³. In graduate-employability literature, demand side explanations take two arguments. First, that there is *no adequate demand* for graduates because the production processes of the economy do not require educated employees. Second, the overproduction of graduates cannot be absorbed to the system⁴.

Screening Practices: Dissanayake and Benfratello (2011) has stated that

...graduates' academic qualifications are generally evaluated not by the contents and quality of their education but primarily by the title that they earned (BSc, BA, BCom, etc.) and the medium that they learnt.... (Dissanayake and Benfratello 2011, p. 79, underlined by the author of this paper)

3. Keynesian theory explains unemployment in terms of inadequate aggregate demand. See, *inter alia* Mitchell and Watts M. (2001).
4. Conceptually, this is similar to Freeman's ideology described in "The Overeducated American" where, Freeman (1976) described that American youth (in 1970s) have acquired more education than what the American economy can absorb.

Table 7.1: Findings of graduate employability studies of Sri Lanka

Study Reference	Method/s	Conclusion/s	Reasons
Ariyawansa (2008)	Opinion survey among potential employers and survey of newspaper advertisements during the survey period.	Low employability of HSS Graduates is not due to the “quality” of graduates.	Quality of degree programs is not a problem. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of professional orientation of HSS course. • Excess supply. • Demand deficiency
Herath and Ranasinghe (2011)	A survey of employers.	Employability of Management Graduates is slightly better than that of HSS graduates. That is due to the additional qualifications they have acquired during their university career.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the employability of Management Graduates further. • ICT skills, English language proficiency and • Ability to apply knowledge to solve practical problems.
Chandrakumara (2014)	A survey of Graduates. Graduates’ perception of labor market status.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low employment probability of Arts graduates. • Sampling mechanism is questionable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree type, • Soft skills and social capital, • Efforts made by graduates in applying for jobs, and • Professional qualifications
Rajapaksha (2014)	In-depth interviews of graduates, employers and policy makers. Graduates’ perception of labor market status.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High unemployment rate of Arts Graduates. • English and IT skills and lack of professional qualifications are blamed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School level factors: • Inadequate employment orientation in rural schools • Overall: • Lack of English proficiency, • IT skills, • Communication skills • Absence of practical course work, • Lack of reflective and instrumental knowledge, • Over-politicization of the Arts stream in Sri Lanka, • Declining budget share for education,
Ministry of Productivity Promotion (2011)	Survey of recently passed out graduates of all public universities in Sri Lanka. A structured questionnaire. Sample frame is all graduates passed out from state universities in 2009 Survey was done in 2011. A postal survey. Non-response rate is quite high. Graduates’ perception of labor market status.	Excessively high unemployment of Arts graduates. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 50% of Arts graduates was never employed after 2 years of graduation. • For other degrees, it is around 20%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of “employable skills” is the main cause of the problem.

Continue...

UGC Tracer Studies, 2013, 2016 and 2017

Convocation Survey. All the graduands are required to fill when they come for convocation.
Structured Questionnaire.
Graduates' perception of labor market status.

Singam, K. (2017)

Literature Review

- High unemployment among HSS Graduates.
- Female graduates suffered more than Male counterparts.
- Relatively low reservation wage.
- Length of unemployment is also relatively high.
- Significant percentage of under employment.

- Lack of "employable skills" is the main cause of the problem.

- Skill mismatch
- Education mismatch
- Poor coordination and cooperation among stakeholders.

Dissanayake and Benfratello (2011)

Survey of state university graduates. Year of graduation is also considered in analyzing data.
Responding graduates were classified into 5 categories as *a.)* Inactive, *b.)* Unemployed, *c.)* Self-employed, *d.)* Employed and, *e.)* Employer.
Graduates' perception of labor market status.

- Study is completed in 2011. Year of graduation ranges from 2006 to 2009.
- Overall, 70% graduates in the sample are either inactive (1.1) or unemployed (69.1).
- Should interpret the results considering that the respondents have been graduated **at least 2 years before** the research is undertaken.

- (Unemployment + Inactive) rate has been declining on average 17 percentage point per year after graduation. This indicates that every year nearly 17 % terminates their unemployment spell.
- Annually, 3% of graduates move away from conventional labor market aspirations (become inactive or self-employed or employer, instead of searching jobs)
- A significant percentage of graduates consider "social network" as a successful method of job search.

Pushpakumara (2016)
Use Primary and Secondary Data to explore, strategies of HSS graduands of state universities to minimize the risk of being unemployed.

- 8 factors are identified. All are statistically significant at 10%. But with little or trivial association with labor market success. (Measured in terms of Cramer V stat).

Small effect:

- Medium of instruction (English vs. Official Languages).
- Degree type (HSS vs. Other types).

Trivial effect:

- University.
- Subject stream (In favor of Food & Nutrition, Law and IT).

Poor effect:

- Class earned has no significant impact.
- Special or General.
- Graduates academic qualifications are generally evaluated not by the contents and quality of their education but primarily by the title that they earned (BSc, BA, BCom, etc.) and the medium that they learnt.

- High and prolonged unemployment among HSS graduates.
- They invest in "Human Capital Portfolio" to minimize the foreseeing labor market risk after graduation.

- Graduands' perception of unemployment is explored by studying the human capital portfolio.
- Investment in IT skills, English.
- Investment in alternative professional skills (HRM, Attorney at Law_

Sources as indicated in Column 1

This implies that the degree certificate is simply a signal in the labor market to distinguish between Good (Productive, Trustworthy, Talented etc.) and Bad. In economic literature, there are three pathbreaking articles on the issue (Spence 1972, Arrow 1973, Stiglitz 1975))⁵. Among these papers, Arrow (1973) is directly relevant to the theme of this paper. Accordingly, universities can only screen and categorize the workers on their ability levels. Arrow (1973) argues that universities play the role of “filtering” enrollees at two stages (double filter: p. 195), first at the entrance (accepted vs. rejected) and second at the exit (qualified vs. not qualified). In Arrow’s (1973) own words:

Higher education... increases neither cognition nor socialization. Instead, higher education serves as a screening device, in that it sorts out individuals of differing abilities, thereby conveying information to the purchasers of labor... (Arrow 1973, p. 194).

Human Capital: Human Capital theorists believe that universities impart certain qualities (ability, skills etc.) in its enrollees which they can use in future after completion of the education. In this context, Pushpakumara’s (2016) argument on *human capital portfolio*, various other contributors’ argument on *employable skills* are falling into this classification. According to Human Capital argument, universities impart

some qualities in graduands useful in the labor market. Wijayanama *et al* (2021) has described the un(employability) of graduates in terms of Graduate Capital (GC), where, GC is defined in terms of six capital concepts including Human Capital (Knowledge and Skills).

What universities can do to ease graduate unemployment problem depends on what hypothesis (among the three above) is true. If it is demand side theories, universities have very trivial things to do. Universities can either reduce the intake or produce the skills demanded by the labor market⁶.

However, the role of universities become salient, if the screening or human capital hypotheses were true.

Following subsection describes the human capital argument in reasonable detail. If the reason for graduate unemployment is lack of required human capital (skills mismatch) what type of skills should be incorporated to education system is described below.

Employable Skills

There is a vast literature on types of employable skills. Ranasinghe and Logendra (2015) has reviewed most of Sri Lankan and international literature on employable skills. As it is already described, most of Sri Lankan literature emphasize on Communication Skills (English), IT skills and various professional skills. In this regard, one of the interesting survey findings is reported in Department of Census Statistics (2017),

5. These papers in general, contribute to the belief that education does not enhance one’s productivity or skills. Its role is to reveal the productivity (hidden attribute) of workers to employers in a world with asymmetric information.

6. The latter is also recommended under human capital hypothesis. See, next subsection for details and criticisms against it.

Sri Lanka Labor Demand Survey. In this survey, employers' perceptions on soft skills required from future employees are listed in descending order of popularity of that.

In general, coverage in international literature is much wider than that of Sri Lankan literature. Department of Census and Statistics (2017) has a list of skills employers (private sector) are looking for.

It should be noted that these are only general opinions of employers. Whether they recruit graduates and what percentage of current employees are graduates are not clear in this survey.

This survey report also predicts the type of jobs that will be demanded in future. Sections 4 and 5 of DC&S (2017) are about current (survey time) recruitments and future expectations. In the list of 40 trades, employment opportunities

matching with graduates' minimum expectations is very few. This is very clear evidence for demand side problems in Sri Lanka.

Harvey (2001) is a critical assessment of the methodology of graduate employability studies. This study describes employability in two perspectives: *individual employability* and *institutional employability*. Individual employability is defined in terms of five indicators. Basically, all these are about whether the individual graduates are employed or not or whether they have abilities to find a suitable job in a reasonable period after graduation.

Institutional employability measures whether the degree awarding institute has good records in producing employable graduates who can find a suitable job for his/her qualifications in a reasonable time period after graduation and their ability to hold it.

Table 7.2: Skills demanded by employers

Skills	%
Teamwork	37.30
Oral Communication	29.20
Taking Initiatives	26.20
Literacy	20.60
Public Speaking/Instructing/Training	20.60
Written Communication	20.50
Customer Handling	17.30
Planning and Organizing	16.70
IT (Literacy/Ability to use IT)	14.60
Numeracy	13.70
Management Responsibilities/taking a lead	9.70
Advanced IT Applications	8.80
Knowledge of Foreign Languages	8.10
Clerical/Admin Tasks	6.80
Manual Dexterity	3.30
Other	0.80

Source: Extracted from DC&S (2017): Table 5.3, p. 44

Role of Universities

Prevalence of excessively high unemployment rate is a shocking news. As a matter of fact, policy makers, media, and general-public pinpoint that the public investments on university education is a waste. This accusation becomes even more serious when the fact that “the best students from general-education (*cream of the cream*)” enter universities. If the output of general education is the *cream of the cream*, why does such a massive number of graduates become idle after graduation?

In Arrow’s (1973) framework (Double Filter), universities have failed at least at one filtering stage, at selection stage or at qualifying stage or both. Harvey (2001) has described that due to the social and political pressure at universities on graduate (un-)employability, currently the employability has become an institutional goal as well. Therefore, employability studies should look at employability from individual as well as institutional perspectives (Harvey 2001, pp. 98 -99).

In responding to this critique, UGC and individual universities have taken many innovative steps throughout the period. Among them, *Pedagogical Changes* (Outcome Based Education, Student Centered Education), *Industrial Affiliations* (Internships, Industrial Mentors, Industry-Faculty Affiliations etc.) are prominent.

In this context, literature highlights mixed experiences. They range from pessimistic outcomes (Fraser and Thomas 2013), Ranasinghe & Logendra 2015))

to hopeful outcomes (Wijayanama *et al* 2021)).

Fraser and Thomas (2013) described the experience of Australian Universities during the period under investigation.

In 1992, the Federal Government first required Australian universities to articulate the attributes that would be developed for all of their graduates. This requirement grew out of employer dissatisfaction with what was perceived to be a lack of transferable skills in university graduates. Fifteen years later, employers were still expressing concerns about the level of transferable skills with which students graduate (Fraser & Thomas 2013, pp. 546-547).

Ranasinghe and Logendra (2015) addressed the challenges that the Universities face in connection with incorporating employable skills to curricula. Based on a literature review, Ranasinghe and Logendra (2015) has classified the challenges into 3 as *Political challenges*, *Financial (resources) challenges* and *challenges due to Quality of undergraduate inputs*.

Political challenge refers to the resistance emerging from university internal lobbying groups against targeting employment as a main goal of university education (Chanock 2003), Barrie (2004), Barrie et al 2009; Fraser & Thomas 2013)).

Ranasinghe and Logendra (2015) further highlights that the “Skills-gap” of undergraduate input is much wider, especially in HSS faculties. Therefore, the solution is a cooperative action of

universities and schools. As most of the employable skills are also the learning skills, a significant level of employable skills can be incorporated at school level as well.

This is supported by the following quote from Fasih (2008).

...if a 15-year-old enrolled in school is unable to use his or her literacy skills for further learning and attainment of knowledge, ...the education system has failed the individual. (Fasih 2008, p. 2)

The above statement from Fasih (2008) is based on their experience from empirical studies in Ghana and Pakistan. However, these findings are equally relevant for Sri Lanka as well. Wijayanama *et al* (2021) takes a novel approach, where they report a brief literature review to introduce Service-Learning Approach (SLA) and have reported assessment of one such experiment in Sri Lanka. Wijayanama *et al* (2021) has introduced two novel concepts to Sri Lankan literature on employability studies. The new concepts are Graduate Capital (GC) and Service Learning (SL). This study defines GC in terms of 6 capital concepts as *Human Capital* (Technical Skills, Experience and various Employability Skills), *Social Capital* (Networking, Teamwork and Collaborations), *Cultural Capital* (cultural knowledge, cultural fit, and alignment with values) *Psychological Capital* (Resilience, Adaptability and Self-efficacy) and *Identity Capital* (Present him/herself positively and the Ability to create a personal brand). This model suggests that the best way of incorporating this “skill portfolio” is Service Learning (SL), where SL

is a *well-conceptualized, coordinated, and guided* involvement in any form of social activity. In other words, undergraduates are required to engage in Service Activity predetermined by the faculty. Community service engagement organized and coordinated by the faculty could be the best example for it.

Empirical assessment of Wijayanama *et al* (2021) is based on only one case with 20 students. The study concluded in favor of the conceptual model.

Methodological Issues of Employability Research

Figure 7.2 summarizes the main facts summarized in the literature review. It shows that whether a randomly selected graduate is employed or unemployed depends on a multiplicity of factors, role of university is only one in this complex system.

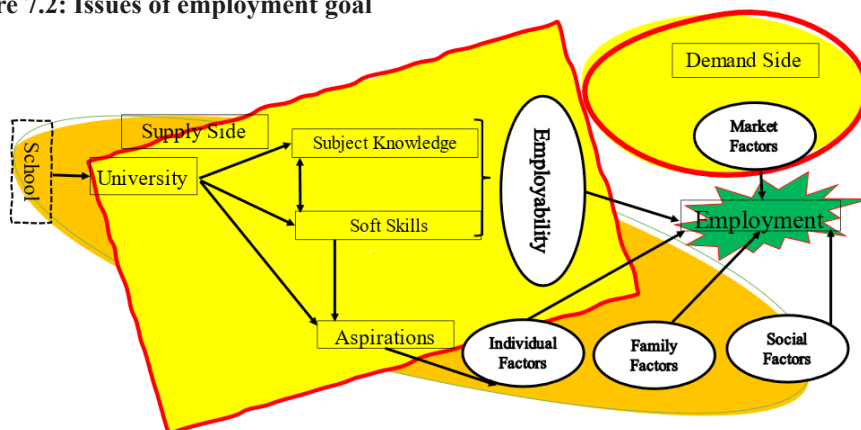
Most of the employability research have used Rectangle and Oval as the conceptual framework. However, coverage of both demand side and supply side is seldom found.

Methodological issues of Graduate Employability studies stemming from this can be described under three broad headings as; *a.)* Restricted Research Focus (Partial Equilibrium Model), *b.)* Narrow Definition of Concepts, and *c.)* Unrealistic Policy Directions.

Restricted Research Focus: Partial Equilibrium Analysis

Most of the literature explores either demand side or supply side situations. As the rectangle in figure 7.2 indicates,

Figure 7.2: Issues of employment goal



supply side studies have not considered school level factors and Individual, Family and Social Factors into account⁷. This is noticed in particular, at policy recommendation stage. Despite that factor beyond university attributes are considered in analysis, at least partially, there are hardly any study considering them in policy discussions⁸.

In technical terminology, this is called *specification error* problem. With specification error problem, statistical estimates become *biased* and *inefficient*. (Gujarati *et al* 2020, Chap. 13).

Narrow Definitions

In most of the studies reviewed above, conceptual difference between “employability” and “employment” are identified. However, when it comes to measure it and to draw policy implications,

employability and employment are considered synonymously.

There is also no general agreement about the definition of employability. A good starting point to discuss employability is Harvey’s (2001) classification of employability concept into two as *individual employability* and *institutional employability*. Most of the studies have concentrated only the individual employability.

One definition suggests that employability is the *ability to acquire a job and to carry out the duties pertaining to the job effectively* to the satisfaction and benefit of the worker, the employer and the society at large. (Perera & Perera (2009)).

Employability is also defined as the *ability of an individual to gain employment appropriate to his/her educational standard*. Yorke and Knight (2004) define employability as “a set of achievements/skills, understanding and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations,

7. UGC survey has covered Gender, Ethnicity, Place of Residence, Type of Schools attended and Parents’ education Background. Type of School is limited to cover only whether the school is National School, Provincial School or Private/Semi-government School.
8. Obviously, their objective is to draw policy implications on higher education policy under given conditions of the rest of the model.

which benefit themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy."

In practice, most of the empirical literature, including Sri Lankan literature, use un-employment rate, under-employment rate and some measure of mismatch to quantify the degree of (un-) employability of graduates. To what extent these measures cover the concept of employability is questionable.

Another problem of graduate employability surveys in general is related with the classification of graduate on labor market status. It is the opinion of respondents collected in employment surveys whereas the Census and Statistics Department follows an objectively defined criterion for classification⁹. Therefore, graduate employment survey results are not comparable with the relevant statistics of Labor Force Surveys.

Another definitional issue of graduate employment studies, specially in the context of Sri Lankan studies is that in many circumstances, employable skills are defined in terms of employers' opinions. International experiences in this context are abundant. Most of the international investigations of employer-perspectives on graduate employable skills are based on *Employer Barometer Index (EBI)*.

Using EBI framework, Association of Graduate Employers (AGR) (1995) has identified four work related attributes.

The four work related attributes are *specialty* (in Subject knowledge), *self-reliant* (in work progress), *connected* (in teamwork) and *generalist* (good in supplementary knowledge and skills).

There is no dispute on the importance of employers' opinions. However, usefulness of employers' opinions in higher education policy formulation is subject to two conditions. First, the opinions should be obtained from "graduate recruiters" (See, *inter alia* European Commission 2010 & AGR 1995)). As far as HSS disciplines in Sri Lanka universities are concerned, it is difficult to identify "Graduate Recruiters" other than the state sector¹⁰. Collecting opinions on "employable skills" from any employer may mislead the researchers. Second, the Graduate Recruiters' opinions on employable skills must be cross validated with past employment records and scientific assessment. (See *inter alia*, Heckman & Kautz 2012).

In this context, one of the best models is the QS ranking¹¹. Figure 7.3 below summarizes the QS ranking methodology.

Reader may note that the QS ranking refers to Harvey's (2001) *institutional employability* where, the ability of higher education institutes to produce employable graduates is measured.

According to Figure 7.3, employment rate is given only 10% weight. Another 10% is allocated to Employer-Student relations. The rest 80% is from the

9. Census and Statistics Department classify respondents into Employed, Unemployed and Underemployed after observing respondents' responses to several other questions. It is not the respondents' opinion. Based on the respondents' responses, Census officers classify them into different categories.

10. State sector jobs are also based on "political motivations". Unemployed graduates are given jobs without proper consideration of their specialty or skills.

11. QS stands for *Quacquarelli Symonds* (A British Company dedicated to rank universities).

Table 7.3: The QS ranking: employment vs employer

QS Employability Index (Five Sub-indices. Only 10% weight for employment rate)

Employer Reputation Index	30%
Alumni Outcome Index	25%
Partnerships with Employers	25%
Employer-student connection	10%
Graduate Employment Rate	10%

Source: (QS World University Ranking, 2019, pp. 5-6)

institutional commitment for economic activities. This suggests that graduate employability would never be improved only with changing teaching learning pedagogy. Staffs' capacity in independent research, institutional reputation matters most.

This is a typical case of measurement error problem in Statistics. Measurement error in variables lead statistical estimates biased and inefficient. (See, Gujarati *et al* 2010, Chap. 13).

Unrealistic Policy Directions

Partiality of Facts and Interpretation:

Causes of un/underemployment are only opinions of the undergraduates. They are not cross validated with employers, negligence of macro environment of labor markets, negligence of quality of undergraduate inputs (ability, aspirations), negligence of unacceptable social environment within universities (student politics).

Unfair Recommendations: As a result of negligence of overall picture of graduate employability, in many forums, responsibility of graduate employment is explicitly given to universities.

Conclusion

This paper is an exploration of the methodological issues of graduate employability research with special reference to such studies undertaken using Sri Lankan data.

While the magnitude of poor employability of HSS graduates is not disputed, this study identifies several limitations of the methodology of graduate employability studies. Restricting to partial equilibrium analysis and use of narrowly defined concepts and data with inappropriately collected data has led the entire research area to a typical case of *specification error and measurement error* problems. Then, the policy recommendations, specifying role of universities in curbing graduate unemployment, are too unrealistic. On one hand, it is too short for universities to impart employable skills in graduates while maintaining the subject contents at international standards. It is always, better to incorporate at least some soft skills at school level. As Harvey (2001) has pointed out, most of learning related soft skills (IT, Language Skills, Self-learning ability etc.) are equally

applicable for job related skills as well. Therefore, incorporating such skills at school level would be twice beneficial for the students. First, with such skills, they can learn in universities more effectively.

Second, they can get benefits in the labor market as well. This will definitely improve the quality of education in universities as well.

References

- Arrow, K. (1973) Higher Education As a Filter, *Journal of Public Economics* 2 (1973) 193-216. North-Holland Publishing Company
- Association of Graduates Recruiters (AGR) (1995) *Skills for Graduates in 21st Century: Getting the Balance Right*, Whiteway Research
- Barrie, S.C. (2004) A research-based approach to generic graduate attributes policy. *Higher Education Research and Development*, Vol. 23, No. 3, August 2004. 261-275. DOI: 10.1080/0729436042000235391
- Barrie, S., Hughes, C. & Smith, C. (2009). The national graduate attributes project: integration and assessment of graduate attributes in curriculum, *Final report of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council*.
- Chandrakumara D.P.S. (2014), Employment of New Graduates in Sri Lanka: Implications for Policy Development, *GSID Discussion Paper No. 195*, Nagoya University, Nagoya 464-8601, Japan
- Chanock, K. (2003, November) *Challenges of the graduate attribute movement*. Paper presented at the Language & Academic Skills in Higher Education 2003 Conference, Flinders University, Adelaide
- Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka (2020) *Sri Lanka Labour Force Statistics: Quarterly Bulletin*, Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey, 3rd Quarter 2020.
- Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka (2017) *Sri Lanka Labour Demand Survey 2017*
- Dissanayake, E.L.K. & Benfratello, L. (2011) *Determinants of Unemployment among Sri Lankan University Graduates: An Econometric Analysis*, Masters Dissertation, Master Course in “Applied Labour Economics for Development” (MALED) 2010/2011, Turin, Italy
- European Commission (2010) *Employers' perception of graduate employability: Analytical report*, Flash Eurobarometer 304, The Gallup Organization
- Fasih, Tazeen (2008) *Linking Education Policy to Labor Market Outcomes*, World Bank, <https://books.google.lk/books?id=LJqsmW9bdN4C&pg=PA2&lpg=PA2&dq=%>
- Fraser, K. & Thomas, T. (2013) Challenges of assuring the development of graduate attributes in a Bachelor of Arts, *Higher Education Research & Development*, 32:4, 545-560, DOI: 10.1080/07294360.2012.704594, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2012.704594>
- Freeman, R.B. (1976) *The overeducated American*. San Diego: Academic
- Gujarati, D.N., Porter, D.C. & Manoranjan, P. (2020) *Basic Econometrics*, 6th Edition, McGraw-Hill Higher Education
- Gunaratne, P.S.M. Ramanayake, A. and Panagoda D. (2018) *Trace Study of Graduates: Universities in Sri Lanka*, UGC Sri Lanka, Sponsored by the UNESCO Participation Programme 2016/2017
- Harvey, L. (2001) Defining and Measuring Employability, *Quality in Higher Education*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2001
- Heckman, J.J. and Kautz, T. (2012) Hard evidence on soft skills, *Labour Economics*, 19 (2012), pp. 451- 464
- Herath, H.M.T.S. & Ranasinghe, A. (2011) Labour Market Prospects for Business Graduates in Sri Lanka, *International Journal for Social Science and Humanity*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 26-30.

ILO (1971) *Matching Employment Opportunities and Expectations: A Programme of Action for Ceylon: Report and Technical Papers*, ILO, Geneva

Keynes, J.M. (1936/2007) *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*, London: Macmillan.

Martin, Rama (1999) *Sri Lanka Unemployment Problem Revisited*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No 2227

Ministry of Productivity Promotion (2011), *Determinants of Unemployment among Sri Lankan University Graduates*, Manpower Planning, Development and Research Division, Department of Manpower and Employment, Sri Lanka

Mitchell, W.F. & Watts, M. (2001) Addressing demand deficient unemployment: The Job Guarantee, *Working Paper No. 01-06*, Centre of Full Employment and Equity The University of Newcastle, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia

Perera, E.R.K. & Perera, A.,N.,F., (2009). *Employment Status of Graduates from the University of Wayamba*. (Unpublished)

Pushpakumara, M. (2016) *Investment in Human Capital Portfolio: The case of university arts undergraduates in Sri Lanka*, Unpublished PhD Thesis submitted to University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

QS World University Ranking (2019) *Graduate Employability Rankings 2019*, <https://content.qs.com/qsui/GER2019supplementwithupdatedtablesWEB.pdf>

Ramanayake, A. Jayamanne, I. & Porage, C. (2013) *Graduand Employment Census 2012 & 2013*, Govt. of Sri Lanka, HETC, World Bank

Ranasinghe, A. (2018) *Graduate Employment Survey 2017: Final Report*, University of Colombo.

Ranasinghe, A. & Logendra, R. (2015) *Graduate Employment, Employable Attributes and Attribute Gap in Developing Countries: A Case Study from Sri Lanka*, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Athula_Ranasinghe2

Singam, K. (2017) Review on Graduates' Unemployment in Sri Lanka and the Globe, *Global Journal of HUMAN-SOCIAL SCIENCE: G Linguistics & Education*, Global Journals Inc. (USA) Online ISSN: 2249-460x & Print ISSN: 0975-587X Volume 17 Issue 8 Version 1.0 Year 2017

Spence, M. (1972) Job Market Signaling, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Aug., 1973, Vol. 87, No. 3 (Aug., 1973), pp. 355-374 Published by: Oxford University Press Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1882010>

Stiglitz, J.E. (1975) The Theory of "Screening" Education and the Distribution of Income, *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 65, No. 03, pp. 283-300, American Economic Association, Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-8282%28197506%3A3%3C283%2ATTO%22EA%3E2.0.CO%2B2=0>.

Wijayanama, C., Ranjani, R.P.C., & Mohan, D.U., (2021) Can Service Learning enhance Graduate Capital? Evidence from Sri Lankan State Universities, *Kelaniya Journal of Management*, 2021, Vol. 10, Issue 01, pp. 1 – 11

Chapter 8

EMPLOYABILITY ISSUES OF GRADUATES: ARTS STREAM IN THE STATE UNIVERSITIES

Jeevaretnam Kennedy

Introduction

Due to globalization and the consistent changes in the government policies, the globe is confined to a global village, where the nature of education nurtured itself from knowledge to “job market.” According to the UNSCO IESALC report (2020), the access to higher education worldwide almost doubled in the last two decades, from 19% to 38%. Graduating in the Arts based streams is learning human’s attitude, his society, and the world at large. It is because the humanities and social science-based education makes the human think, especially the said studies lead to critical thinking and this critical thinking creates many questions that are based on the society and the social setups, which again questions the basic human values. As Eric (2003) claims, the ideology of the universities becomes “to capture the human” and “to human capitalism.”

Since the system and the trend of education has changed its shape, the arts-based education is also compelled to change from “knowledge” to “job”. However, the arts-based education, after the necessary changes are made, has its own strengths and weaknesses. One such change is the introduction

of interdisciplinarity. Davidson and Goldberg (2004) as quoted by Jeffrey D Sachs “interdisciplinarity was the only way to solve world problems. The need, he said, was ‘to focus not on the disciplines but on the problem’.” This is not only the Western concept, but also it does have effects in the Sri Lankan context. This article focuses on the base and backgrounds in the Sri Lankan context, particularly analyzing the present scenario and the way forward for the arts-based streams in the Sri Lankan state universities.

The sphere of arts-based studies is varied and it has a variety of sub-fields as well. Further, there are a lot of opportunities for interdisciplinary studies which further widen the scope of the arts-based fields. The interdisciplinary studies need not be confined to another arts-based study, but science-based studies as well such as medical sciences, natural sciences, marine science, etc. But it all depends on how a student catches her/his opportunity.

Strength and Weakness

According to the UGC statistics (2018), the total number of students following arts-based stream in the Sri Lankan

state universities as internal students is 31,793 (comprising arts, education, and law) and as external, open, and distance learning students is 204,605 (comprising arts, education, and law). Based on the National Institute of Education 2019 report, 96,494 students sat for the GCE (A/L) examination in the Arts streams (both old and new syllabus). This is a huge number of students in the education system in Sri Lanka and subsequently they will come out as “Arts” graduates from 2022 onwards. The community and the employers expect more from these graduates.

The 2021 UGC’s *Admission to Undergraduate Courses of the Universities in Sri Lanka* for the Academic Year 2020/2021 indicates that almost all seventeen state universities have arts-based courses. Further, these universities offer a variety of courses with a huge number of combinations. For instance, if a student from the GCE (A/L) arts-based stream wants to select a course in a Sri Lankan state university, she/he can choose a minimum of 60 different courses among the 17 state universities, based on the above 2021 Students’ Handbook of the UGC. None other GCE (A/L) stream has this kind of selection. This is another strength of the arts-based courses.

The arts-based students have more capacity in critical thinking. Daniela Dumitru (2019) clearly states “Being a student in an artistic domain (such as Fine Art, Music, or Literature) has a direct impact on critical thinking skills and, especially, on its dispositions. In the Visual Arts, arguing why a work of art is a masterpiece requires interpretation

skills, explanation, analysis and a proper motivation to engage in such a process with support from a refined sensibility” (873). Of course, there are certain number of weaknesses in the arts-based streams; both in the GCE (A/L) and in the state university system, as that of other streams.

Many of the arts-based courses do follow the older versions of the curriculum. As Koff (1999) points out, quoting Twombly (1992), “Indeed, at many, if not the majority of, undergraduate institutions, the tradition of a liberal arts education has been reduced to instructional elements within a ‘basic core.’” Though this was stated in 1999, this is valid till date that many of the institutions confine themselves within, and the system in the other fields of study such as natural science and agriculture has come out from the lab. The system has become “lab to land.” This needs to be undertaken for furthering the arts-based education, especially in the undergraduate education in the state universities. As Davidson and Goldberg (2004) correctly point out “Diversity is important. The humanities have been the principal (and for the most part the principled) site of diversity and diversification in the academy, both demographically and intellectually.” This is a serious concern when the arts-based graduates come out from their undergraduate education.

Further, the practicum knowledge is not given to many of the students. Okay-Somerville and Scholarios (2015) state “Graduate employability is often operationalized in terms of job offers, employment status and, to a lesser extent, quality of employment”. This is the

most practicable approach in producing marketable graduates. There are some state universities sending the students for “internship training.” However, the period the students get the said training almost covers up the syllabus and the “credit” of the said course, not the real expected training. Many arts-based faculties send their undergraduates for this kind of training for about one to three months, where the required (or expected) knowledge and the training for the said course is inadequate to meet the challenges in the real world. There may be an excuse given by the respective faculties in the universities that handling a vast number of students is a problem while allocating the places for the internship training and/or for the choice of the students. Davidson and Goldberg (2004) point out “Engineering, the sciences, the social sciences, and, to a lesser extent, the business schools now may be playing catch-up, recruiting increasingly diverse students and faculty populations; but the humanities are still way ahead in facing up to the challenge of understanding diversity in complex and paradigm-changing ways”. Just give importance on the above statement, where this was said in 2004 in the Western world, and this is still applicable in the Sri Lankan state universities. This becomes a major weakness in the arts-based education in Sri Lanka.

Also, it has to be noted that the term “employability” becomes a core one in creating curricula, both in the schools and undergraduate systems. Whatever knowledge we gain (or more specifically teach), they have to be converted in terms of employment, which is a global

requirement. Are the arts-based faculties ready to accept and adopt this paradigm shift in the Sri Lankan state universities? It is obvious that the entire world started going towards this goal and if not now, then when are we going to start this process? Whether we like it or not, we must shed our traditional view and take the journey towards the new direction – the employability.

The Future

Get out of the Formal Teaching-Learning System: Though the global pandemic changed the mode of teaching and learning from the school level to the graduation level, yet many of our lecturers seem to prefer their traditional and formal way of teaching. For instance, the classrooms have been shifted to homes and within the study room, for teaching and learning by using different kinds of virtual modes. But the teachers upload their “age-old” notes in these virtual modes and read them for the students. Also, the teachers keep lecturing (speaking) to the students for hours where many of the students do not follow. This kind of teaching and learning is not the expected turning to a new system of teaching and learning. The latest technology gives many opportunities and varieties for teaching and learning, and it is the duty of the teachers to adopt them by updating their knowledge.

Practicum: As stated earlier, the practicum component must be included in the curriculum. The present component may “fill” the credit value and satisfy the completion of the syllabus, but the expected “value” of this component must be fulfilled. This practicum component

must have two sections; one must cater to the employability as internship training, and the second must provide opportunity to link the community, as social sciences and humanity-based education directly involves the community. Hence, incorporating the above two components become vital for the future of the arts-based education.

Soft skills: Almost all the universities in the world incorporate soft skills in their curriculums of engineering, natural sciences, agriculture or even business studies, since each field of study, particularly at undergraduate level, targets employability. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate soft skills in the curriculum – both in the school and university system. At the university curriculum, this must be taught most specifically in the final year of the degree programme. In addition to that, each unit of lecture must have soft skills components. That is to say, each lecturer must teach soft skills while they teach. Tang (2019) suggests the way of including soft skills developments among the undergraduates as follows:

Training and education in participatory approaches to a certain degree, is considered an effective method to generate the required soft skills development. Therefore, there is a need for the incorporation of these four soft skills, namely, communication and interpersonal, personal development, team-working, and critical thinking and problem-solving skills into the curricula because higher education lecturers have to consider themselves, as corrective soft skills experts relatively than soft skills communicators.

Generic Skills: Generic skills are defined differently in different countries. Some countries relate them to employability and some countries emphasize on social context. Table 8.1 outlines how different countries use different contexts:

Making students competent in generic skills is an essential part of their undergraduate education. For that, students should be made aware of the basic philosophy of the course unit. Each sector of higher education, especially the arts-based streams, must facilitate the development of generic skills in the

Table 8.1: Contexts used by different countries for the term generic skills

Country	Contexts based for generic skills
UK	Core skills, key skills, common skills
New Zealand	Essential skills
Australia	Key competencies, employability skills, generic skills
Canada	Employability skills
USA	Basic skills, necessary skills, workplace know-how
Singapore	Critical enabling skills
France	Transferable skills
Germany	Key qualifications
Switzerland	Trans-disciplinary goals
Denmark	Process independent qualifications

Source: https://www.ncver.edu.au/_data/assets/file/0020/4457/nr2102b.pdf

students. The education policy makers should not overlook this aspect.

Conclusion

A bright future for the arts-based graduates exists in the job market. For instance, the following fields can be identified: media, mass communication, languages, economics, tourism,

literature, advertising, law, and interior designing. However, most of the current curricula in the state universities do not seem to capture this momentum. Further, designing such courses with different combinations would bring more job opportunities, both at national and international levels, for the arts-based students.

References

- Davidson, Cathy N and Goldberg, David Theo. (2004). A Manifesto for the Humanities in a Technological Age. *The Chronicle Review*. February 13, 2004.
- Dumitru, Daniela. (2019). Creating Meaning. The Importance of Arts, Humanities and Culture for Critical Thinking Development, *Studies in Higher Education*. 44.5,870-879, DOI: 10.1080/03075079.1586345
- Gould, Eric. (2003). *The University in the Corporate Culture*. Yale University Press.
- Handbook of University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka (2021). Academic Year 2020/2021. Admission to Undergraduate Courses of the Universities in Sri Lanka.
- Koff, Susan R (1999). The Role of the Arts in Undergraduate Education. *The Journal of General Education*, Vol. 48. No. 1. Penn State University Press, pp. 9-16.
- Okay-Somerville, B., & Scholarios, D. (2015). Position, Possession or Process? Understanding Objective and Subjective Employability during University-to-Work Transitions. *Studies in Higher Education*, University of Glasgow. pp 3. DOI:10.1080/03075079.2015.1091813.
- Tang, Keow N. (2019). Beyond Employability: Embedding Soft Skills in Higher Education. *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology* – April 2019, volume 18 issue 2. pp. 8.
- <https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/en/2020/12/16/unesco-iesalc-report-reveals-that-access-to-higher-education-increased-from-19-to-38-in-the-last-two-decades>/https://www.ugc.ac.lk/downloads/statistics/stat_2018/Chapter3.pdf
- <http://www.nieresearch.lk/nie/Statistics/Final%20Report%20finished.pdf>

Chapter 9

SQUARE PEGS IN ROUND HOLES: EMPLOYABILITY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES GRADUATES IN SRI LANKA

Thangamuthu Jayasingam

Introduction

Any question or problem is best approached from its root causes to understand the fundamental issues and then seek an appropriate solution. Here we have youth, education and employability as factors that need consideration in the process. Let me approach the issue from a different angle as my colleagues have looked at it from other angles.

In an evolutionary perspective, the role of an individual organism (virus or human) is to replace itself so that its genetics is maintained over time and sustain its populations. Increase in this would yield population rise and vice versa. Imagine a fish that produces a million eggs and a tree that produces millions of seeds, if allowed to mature, then the whole world will be taken over in a few years, but it does not happen. We see explosions of weeds, insects at times and the demise of the dinosaurs that ruled the earth for long times. Therefore, natural control and balances are essential. On the above, where does the graduation or study fit into this? Why study at all? Study makes

the consolidation of the past experiences; thus, humans can build on them such that they grow faster and better than others as a species. As an individual, there is an evolutionary significance where a graduate has a better living and can get a 'better partner' in competition and thus the relevant genes may be transmitted to the next generation by the offspring, in preference. Thus, those genes form the future as evolved traits. If not, your genome dies with you and does not contribute to the development of humans. This is an evolutionary perspective where certain qualities are very evident in isolated tribes. It is survival of the fittest: a process of evolution.

System

We have an interest and need for a better living and thus education becomes important specially in Sri Lankan context. However, there are not all who have the same talent or skill for it and many have taken to family trades or others as available. However, the requirement of compulsory education for children up to 14 years as part of law made that more

difficult as they had to attend schools; schools gave meals also as an incentive to poor students attending junior schools; later the promotions from grade to grade was made automatic until they reach Ordinary Level (O/L) when they are about 16 years old. It was a great tragedy to find those, few or many who get all 'F' at the O/L which is a serious failure of our system, where qualification/promotion test would have blocked them earlier for alternate education. Grade 5, 8, SSC which was for segregation was done away with, another error. However, the Census of Population and Housing 2012 data conducted by the DCS reveals that of the age 15 and above population, English literacy (ability to speak, read and write) and computer literacy were around 22% and 23%, respectively (Daily FT, 2017). This situation creates a gap in meeting the demand for soft skills as previously noted. Thus, these students are neither there nor here at the age of 16.

Those who qualify for Advanced Levels (A/L) are also limited by 'subjects': passes in Mathematics and Science were needed for science streams and commerce streams. Others would have options away from those only. Those who choose Arts stream often choose subjects easy to score marks for A/L than for employment opportunity. Thus when they do not enter the University they may be left with language, religion and another subject which is less preferred for employment. Out of 10,162 schools, only 10% have the facilities to teach A/L in the science stream. These have resulted in mismatches between the

demands of the market and the skills of school and university graduates (Daily FT, 2017). The National Education Commission introduced curriculum reforms over the years but there was little change in quality of education, and the educational system still features an overloaded curriculum, outdated teaching methods and a traditional examination system that requires only memorizing information (ILO, 2017).

Lack of adequate advocacy to student and community in relation to opportunities and associated professions had been a curse that had led to unnecessary crowding of universities as the only option is a failure of the system. It is thus having a group of students entering university for a degree course who have no idea about or the opportunities they have in front of them except for a few, making the bulk of humanities and social sciences. The system should take a great responsibility for this and one cannot blame the universities. Many may have gone for other skills had there been other accepted avenues as in developed countries. The acceptance is also associated to social stigma which seeks all to be Doctors or Engineers. Little had been done to change them to date, and this had been carried over abroad with our Diaspora from the information we have, unfortunately.

Verite research findings in 2018 indicated that youth employment in Sri Lanka is directly connected to poor school-to-work transition and they also found that youth aspire to jobs that complement

their existing skills and facilitate safe working environment. (Veriterresearch, 2020). The education policy should focus on addressing the shortage in skilled areas opposed to expanding the tertiary education more generally. The increasing of numbers into universities should be done with more rationale. Recent introduction of Technological Faculties is an example but the operation of those is far from meeting the demands of the concept, and lacks innovation in many places.

University and Employment

The university is now faced with the students who have arrived with or without interest, expecting an employment at the end of it, irrespective of any traits that may be needed by the employers. It is the square peg that wants to fit the round slot, a task of incompatibility. Forced pegs, thinner pegs, trimmed pegs may fill the blanks but would be under-employed or overqualified, all are of concern. It is at this phase the universities have a herculean task of match-making between the graduate and employer or opportunities. This has been even worsened by the fact that the students entering science stream have little practical experience as they have no practical component in their examination except the theory of it, which extends the burden on the university to start from scratch. Poor funding of education has partly contributed to the low quality and low enrollment (relatively) at the tertiary level and in vocational education (ILO, 2017). Though there was a massive protest over 100 days by the FUTA (Federation

of University Teachers Association) in 2014 over need to increase the funding for Higher education to 6% (from around 2% at that time) the government had never seriously considered fulfilling that to date.

Previous research has shown that the capacity of science and engineering education at the tertiary level is restricted by the low capacity of the secondary education to equip the students with the basics of science, meaning that the expansion of tertiary education in these fields will need to be accompanied by expansion of science education at the secondary level (Nedelloska, 2018). It is also true that many who have scores at A level are unable to access science education close to their homes and are restricted to available subjects at the near schools.

This scenario is applicable to Geography (part of the Social sciences in Sri Lankan context) where the students have to start from zero in some areas of the subject. Another key event had been the standardization in 1972 creating 'district quotas' to enter the university. It was planned to have the upliftment of the disadvantaged districts at 5% per year which should have ended in 1972 making only the marks as the measure for entrance to the University. However, till date, nothing has been established and the discrepancy stands today and the lack of practical aspects in A/L is seen. Collectively, findings reveal that possessions of university graduates of key skills sought by employers are lacking.

Universities do not generate the required labour market situation (Weligamage & Siengthai, 2003).

Further it should be remembered that we have seen some employers conveniently expecting the university to produce tailor-made graduates as for a professional degree which is impossible. For example, the medical degree has a specific design within its amplitude as all are to serve as medical professionals, but humanities and social science graduates may serve a much wider amplitude of employment. Thus one package may not fit all but a flexible pack to be comfortable in any position. There have to be more dialog between the employers and university frequently of the need of knowledge and skills expected by them. A regular change of curriculum to accommodate them adequately and appropriately may be necessary to accompany the needs. The employer must also understand that employment related skill training needs to be included as their part of skill development and the potential only could be produced by the university.

This type of discrepancy is not new to the education system. There had been a dispute between the pure and applied fields in the UK and other developing countries in the 1980s where the sought employment was for applied sciences which led to the reduction in pure sciences. Then came a situation that there were no new ventures for applied sciences and the entire system came to a halt. Large efforts had to be diverted to the pure sciences so that the applied are

kept alive. Systems are compatible and interdependent, and each has to honor their part for sustenance.

The development of the academic staff is also a key resource needed in this context as it is relevant that they are able to liaise with the community and critically adapt the teaching in relation to the need of the system. Overseas training is one that would facilitate a great outlook. The age limits of 65 to 'academics' which were imposed when the life expectancy was around 67 years had been kept constant to date in the universities which needs to be expanded at least to 70 years as experienced staff is a luxury for a university. The practice of USA, to have an open limit is an example. They will be able to better provide revisions in curriculum more appropriately. Experience is a valuable resource in academia and cannot be matched by qualifications alone. But periodic result-based assessment needs to be done even before 65 to ensure that the service of the staff is meaningful to the university and the system. Given that the share of the elderly population (>65 years) was beginning to approach 10% in 2015 and the dependence ratio would increase sharply to double in 2038 and to 76% in 2050 (ILO, 2017), such action would be of immediate need, as experienced staff cannot be installed at once.

Candidates / Graduates

The other component in the equation is the candidates, the grandaunt/graduates. They cannot behave as children at the university. They should seek opportunities

to expand their horizon to be competitive in their claim for employment beyond the degree alone. I am aware of many engineers who do MBA to be enlisted as managers in their profession, accounting has been another and law has become another recent preference. These have to be part of a design of the individual of what he chooses to do and what may be of advantage to him, a question only he could answer. University would and should provide the opportunities where necessary on demand. I am aware that all universities provide opportunities for English language teaching and computer training facilities, but it is a very few, lower than 10% who use it successfully, which is regretted. Later, when the graduates are seen to be in front of Government offices for employment, I could not but feel that if these hours were spent for acquiring the skills, they would have now been in employment. We find that 77% of university graduates are employed by the public sector with job security but earn only a fraction paid in the private sector (N, 2018). James Unfield (2017) reports that more than 1/3rd of graduates is underemployed a year after graduation in UK, nearly 25% score a first class in 2016 compared to 17 in 2012. He also reported that the employers complained that the graduates are unable to start work on day one. There is a great expectation and contribution by the students to develop themselves to the employable status, as it is a competition. Extracurricular activities also offer a better opportunity at employment and also make a better personality and develop interpersonal

skills and comradeship and team work, and these need to be developed in every one in any of the areas of interest. Lapse on these must be borne by the candidates themselves. An important aspect is the misalignment between the qualification and job requirement. Thus, they find it difficult to adjust to the private sector jobs where the job skills requirement is high (NHRDC, 2013).

Humanities and Social Sciences Graduates

We have discussed the general issues of the employer and employment in Sri Lanka indicating special examples at times. It is observed that the unemployment problem in Sri Lanka is severe among Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities graduates. Only one third of graduates from Arts faculties found jobs within three years from their graduation. (Ranasignhe & Logendra, 2015).

Let us look at the broader question of employability of the humanities and social science graduates. It has been documented that there are opportunities for graduates in the country thus anyone suitable should be able to find employment in the country. However, lack of coordination among the government, employer and university is a main concern for the failure to regularize the vacancies and the qualification needed for such vacancies with the plan for development of the country. Individual candidates also hold responsibility for not following the demand and develop skills accordingly. The filling of vacancies on political recruitment to schools and other offices

has actually demeaned the graduates and also caused a 'deadwood' situation in various locations where the graduates are frustrated as they are under-employed or overqualified for such employment and also have no further training is provided for their development. This also reduces the effectiveness and efficiency of the offices where 'too many cooks' seem to spoil the soup. Such 'unqualified/unsuitable' employment in education sector could affect the entire future generations.

I highlight a few suggestions on how the square pegs may be fitted to the round slot by way of rounding them during the process of production and during trainings so pegs and slots fit to make the best for the country as we need more graduates. Excess graduates in my opinion is a myth at present when we are a middle-income country.

It may be worth to look at the constraints and issues that are the basis for this:

- a) The failure of the primary and the secondary school system which lacks critical thinking aspects away from memory-based examinations. Teacher trainings are very essential for this and change of curriculum as appropriate.
- b) Continuous education without evaluation to Ordinary level undermines the skills of individuals thus pushing them to higher education. There needs to be qualifying examinations at different levels. Many could be assigned or shifted to other areas of study at a lower-level grade 8 for instance who may make a better career at the end of the day. Specialized training in technical skills would be of validity. MIT reaches the standards of Harvard rising from a different origin and many universities in UK arose from technical colleges. IIT in India too is an example.
- c) Practical experience from a lower level is the only way where critical thinking and analytical skills could be developed, and thus more input of finance is a need of the day. More schools with science stream and practical components need to be developed in each district. I am aware that 100 schools were developed for science but had not been utilized adequately. There is a critical need that the teacher trainings are continued throughout their career for updates of the curricula and trainings.
- d) Universities should have more facilities to accommodate various sectors and disciplines which cost money and the spending of the budget to 6% would be appropriate from around 2% at present. This allows the university to have more staff catering to various opportunities without hundreds in a class but limiting it to numbers so that a variety is available to the student for take. This would allow to limit the hours in his own discipline and thus allow them to have more hours for skill development, which looks after his employment prospects.

- e) Special degree of 1+3 may be better than 2+2 if the numbers are limited where they really specialize including the associated skills needed for the market, which is not supplied by the 3+1 degrees.
- f) Continuous upgrade of curriculum, appropriately, is a key task. This has to be done with information from market trends and the involvement of the employers, which I have rarely seen. This should be applicable to global labour market and also with adequate practical applications. This needs to be a continuous process.
- g) State universities should change to become dynamic centers of teaching and learning that will react to changes in the market in a timely manner. Opportunities for private education would be an offer to the system which would be inevitable with time.
- h) Significant changes are needed in the curriculum of social sciences and humanities to meet the need of the

day which is extensive and thus there needs to be staff development along these lines significantly.

Conclusion

Isolated development plans by various sectors and agencies as shown ahead, lead to the 'square peg and round hole' situation where they do not match for the common purpose. It is therefore essential that these agencies and institutions operate as one, coordinating with each other for the common goal for us to sway away from the square peg - round hole scenario to a rational-focused vision to produce the best graduate from sociology and humanities sector who is able to meet the needs of the world. It is thus a collective responsibility of parents, schools, education system, university, and employers along with the graduates themselves to induce changes to the present system and process to overcome the present 'catch 22' deadlock situation for the benefit of the country and its people.

References

- Nedelkoska, L, O'Brien, T. & Stock, D. (2018). Center for International Development (CID) 2018. Does the Sri Lankan economy need more University graduates? <http://growthlab.cid.harvard.edu/bl;og/does-sri-lankan-economy-need-more-university-graduates>.
- NHRDC (National Human Resource Development Council of Sri Lanka), 2013. The Study on recruitment of Graduates into the Public service and their contribution to the productivity vis-à-vis their job satisfactions, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skill development.
- Ranasinghe, A. & Logendra, R. (2015) Graduate employment employable attributes gap in developing countries : A case study from Sri Lanka.
- Senarath, S.A.C.L. & Patabendige, S.S.J. (2014) Job-education mismatch among graduates: Sri Lankan perspective. *Ruhunu Journal of management and Finance*.1,2.
- Daily FT* (2017). Skill gaps: The Achilles heel of Sri Lanka's education sector. Tuesday, 24, October 2017.

ILO (2017). Sri Lanka: Fostering workforce skills through education, employment diagnostic study.

Ufindell, J. (2017) Bridging the gap between employers and students. *Strategic HR Review*, Vol. 16, No. 5, P. 203-206.

Veriteresearch (2020). Invest in skills to thrive tomorrow. [Http://veritereserach.org/2020/07/17/invest-in-skills-today-to-thrive-tomorrow/](http://veritereserach.org/2020/07/17/invest-in-skills-today-to-thrive-tomorrow/)

Weligamage, S. & Siengthai, S. (2003) Employer needs and Graduate skills: The gap between employer expectation and Job expectation of Sri Lankan University Graduates. *9th International Conference Sri Lankan Studies*. 20-30 Nov. 2003. [www. Researchgate.net /publication/279704564](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/279704564).

PART IV

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Chapter 10

COLLABORATION FOR TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: MERITS, ISSUES AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Kalyani Perera

Introduction

Teaching is a complex multifaceted activity implemented to facilitate meaningful learning by engaging learners in the construction of knowledge through learning experiences that are morally and pedagogically acceptable. Meaningful learning enables learners to apply the learnt concepts to new or real-world situations, an important skill that helps them to overcome the challenges faced in the working world and become productive citizens. With the dawn of the twenty-first century, the universities and higher education institutions around the world have come under increasing pressure to produce graduates with the competencies needed to succeed in the globalized world, because the ‘skills mismatch’ of the graduates has prevented them from securing gainful employment. The Faculties of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences of the Sri Lankan universities that produce approximately 47% of the annual graduate output of the state university system (SLUS, 2020) require to strengthen the employability skills of their graduates because available reports (Gunarathna et al. 2017) indicate that only about 45.6% of their graduates

become employed. This is a challenge faced by these faculties at this time when those step into the second century of higher education. Teaching as the means of facilitating learning plays a significant role in this regard.

Assessment has been defined (Huba & Freed, 2000) as a systematic process that involves gathering and analyzing information from different sources to develop a deep understanding of what the students understand and can do with their knowledge obtained through educational experiences, documenting the findings and using those to improve subsequent learning. It is a critical component of any teaching-learning process and is considered as the most important single component that serves as a tool that makes students learn. Assessment on the other hand helps in determining the degree of achievement of desired outcomes by the learners and thereby serves as a tool to ascertain the standard of awards.

The term collaboration has been defined in many ways. In all these definitions, two or more people and a joint activity for which they pool their competencies and efforts is involved, while more often

than not considered as a means to an end or an outcome (Evans, 2020). In higher education, collaboration has been defined as an approach that allows two or more professionals to work together to contribute their expertise to develop shared expertise (Friend & Cook, 2007). It is a working practice that allows individuals to work together to achieve a common goal. There can be two principal forms of collaboration among faculty members - collaboration in research and collaboration in teaching. Collaboration in research is more widespread than collaboration for teaching in higher education. However, the demand for strengthening collaboration in teaching is on the rise in the higher education sector around the globe.

‘Quality’ in higher education has been defined as ‘fitness for purpose with minimum cost to the society (CoL, 2006). The Sri Lankan higher education sector has adopted the definition of quality assurance as the ‘means by which the universities or higher education institutions can guarantee with confidence that its education provision and standard of awards meet the threshold expectations of the stakeholders’ (Warnasuriya et al., 2015a). There cannot be any education provision without teaching in some mode, while it is not possible to guarantee the standard of awards without assessment. In this context, teaching and assessment are undoubtedly two very important determinants of quality assurance in education provision. This paper presents the merits of and challenges to collaboration for teaching and assessment and the potential impact of collaboration on quality assurance in higher education provision based on a conceptual study.

Methodology

Literature on collaboration for teaching and assessment were collected through Google search in August 2021 using keywords teaching, assessment, collaboration, higher education, benefits, challenges and quality assurance in different combinations. The resultant output was sorted out based on the titles. Only those articles with relevant titles were selected. The selected sources were further scrutinized based on the abstract content and further reading of the manuscripts or review articles. In the next step, the snowballing technique was applied, the references of the sources that were deemed relevant were examined to find more important studies. These were again judged based on their title, abstract and, if necessary, further reading. The information collected was analyzed and presented in the next subsection. The sources of literature used are listed in the References section.

Findings

Collaboration for Teaching and Assessment: Teacher collaboration has been defined in many ways. Friend and Cook (1992) defined collaboration as ‘joint planning, decision making and problem-solving directed towards a common goal’, while in 1993 Freeman defined collaboration as ‘the condition that occurs when two or more people join forces over some time to achieve something that neither can achieve alone’. Vangrieken et al. (2015) who conducted a systematic review of 82 studies on teacher collaboration, have defined collaboration as ‘joint interaction in the group in all activities that are

needed to perform a shared task'. They further indicated that different types of collaboration at varying depths can be situated in a continuum of collaboration from independence to interdependence.

Generally, the common goal in teaching is facilitating the achievement of the desired outcomes by learners. Collaboration in teaching may include several joint activities such as defining the desired outcomes, identifying appropriate content, planning a course and lessons using appropriate teaching-learning activities based on available resources, timing relevant assessment activities, delivering the lessons according to the plan, assessing the students, interpreting the results and using the findings to further improve learning. These activities have been grouped into four approaches, namely, consultation, co-planning, co-teaching and coaching by Mofield (2019). However, in many an instance, the terms 'co-teaching' and 'collaboration' are interchangeably used. Co-teaching is only an example of collaboration, but not the only way that teachers can collaborate. Co-teaching is an intentional partnership of two or more teachers who share responsibility for the planning, simultaneous instruction and assessment of a group of students. In co-teaching, both teachers have a shared responsibility for all aspects of education within the class. In a true co-teaching model, both teachers have defined roles and are actively engaged in the same physical space of the classroom.

There are different models of co-teaching which include 'One Teach, One Observe'; 'One teach, one assist (drift)'; 'Station

teaching'; 'Parallel teaching', 'Alternative teaching' and 'Team Teaching'. Those are interchangeably used in schools, depending on the purpose of instruction and student learning needs (Friend & Cook, 1996). However, collaboration does not necessarily require both or all collaborators to be present in the classroom at the same time. For example, aligning the course plans of different courses which address different aspects of the same subject area by the academics who teach those aspects to the same group of students is a form of collaboration. Collaboration involves cooperation, in which the responsibilities of each partner may or may not be equal. Teachers can collaborate across all instructional levels and subject areas without being actively engaged in each other's classrooms.

According to Friend and Cook (2010) collaboration consists of five components, namely, personal commitment, communication skills, interaction processes, programmes or services and context. These components are interrelated. Most of the available literature on collaboration for teaching has been based on teaching in schools rather than on university teaching. The limited available literature on university teaching indicate that depending on the goals of the collaborating team members, there can be different forms of faculty collaboration that may occur in a variety of settings. Essentially, faculty collaboration is a cooperative activity targeting common goals. It involves coordinated effort while the collaborators share responsibility as well as credit for the outcomes.

Esterby-Smith and Olve (1984) identified five forms of collaborative teaching that might be found in higher education classrooms. Those are Star, Hierarchical, Specialist, Generalist and Interactive forms. In the star form, one teacher holds major responsibility for the course, and collaborators function as guest lecturers. In the hierarchical form, as the name suggests, one senior teacher is responsible for most of the class while junior instructors assist in discussions. In the specialist form, every team member assumes a significant role and contribute according to their special knowledge and skills and collectively design the curriculum based on their special knowledge and all of them assist in class discussions. In the generalist form, team members collectively design the curriculum but teaching is shared considering practical considerations rather than their specialty. In the interactive form, the curriculum is collectively designed by team members, but teaching is highly flexible according to need at the time of teaching rather than in advance.

Types of Collaboration: In higher education, two main categories of collaboration exist: collaboration *within* an institution, and collaboration *across* higher education institutions. Collaboration within an institution takes place through interaction between teachers, students, administrative staff and management, in all kinds of combinations. Collaboration between higher education institutions can take place nationally or internationally. While there exists some degree of collaboration for teaching and

assessment between state universities in Sri Lanka, cross-border collaborations are mostly limited to research or staff training compared to teaching.

Collaboration can be of synchronous and asynchronous forms. Synchronous collaboration involves interacting with others in real-time as in online meetings. Asynchronous collaboration involves time-shifted interactions to facilitate obtaining optimal results. Collaboration has been categorized as vertical and horizontal collaboration based on the level of collaboration. Vertical collaboration refers to aligning the curriculum and instructional strategies from one level to the next, while horizontal collaboration refers to collaboration within groups of teachers of a particular grade or level or content area.

Collaborative practices are reported to differ considerably across fields. For example, collaboration is common in “data disciplines” like physics or chemistry, while collaboration is less widely practiced in “word disciplines” like sociology or political science, and is rare in fields like philosophy or literature (Bayer and Smart, 1988; Fox and Faver, 1984).

Sutton (2010) identified two types of international collaboration; namely “transactional” and “transformational” and indicated that the two types differ in the manner the collaborators contribute to the partnership. In transactional partnerships, the resources are exchanged by the collaborators in a focused and product-oriented fashion, while in transformational partnerships the collaborators contribute to establishing

common goals and activities for which resources are combined. With time the partnership expands and become relationship-oriented. According to Sutton (2010), transactional collaborations are a good first step for institutions entering into international collaborations. With experience and time, they can progress into transformational collaborations.

Keys to Successful Collaboration for Teaching and Assessment:

Having a shared or clear vision on the purpose of collaboration or educational values (Brownell et al., 1997; Bunker, 2008; Welborn, 2012; Rice, 2015), commitment to collaboration (Brownell et al., 1997; Welborn, 2012), focus on common goals (Bunker, 2008), Joint planning of activities (Rice, 2015), allocation of time for reflective dialogue (Bunker, 2008; Wellborn, 2012), making a structured and on-going inquiry (Bunker, 2008), awareness of methods of collaboration and communication (Wellborn, 2012), frequent communication (Brownell et al., 2008; Rice, 2015), paying attention to the results (Bunker, 2008), maintaining reliable records (Rice, 2015), having flexible expectations regarding collaboration (Rice, 2015), presence of supportive administration leadership (Brownell et al., 1997; Bunker, 2008; Wellborn, 2012), and openness to power-sharing (Brownell et al., 1997) have been reported as keys for successful collaboration, especially for co-teaching.

Thus, it appears that for successful collaboration there should be an agreed-upon shared vision on educational values,

focus on well-defined desired learning outcomes, administrative leadership and support, clarity of individual roles, commitment to and allocation of time for collaboration, power-sharing, joint responsibility, joint planning, frequent communication, sharing of knowledge and experiences, and attention to results. Furthermore, mutual respect for the knowledge and experiences of each collaborator, flexible attitude, willingness to work together, and ability to directly address conflicts are additional keys to successful collaboration.

Benefits of Teacher Collaboration:

According to Powell (2000), collaboration is a deceptively simple concept with wide-ranging and exciting implications for the education of all children and the effectiveness of all educators. The evidence that collaboration has positive effects on teachers has been well established (Goddard et al., 2007; Moolenaar et al., 2012; Vescio et al., 2008); while literature is limited regarding the benefits of educator collaboration on improving the academic outcomes of students (Bunker, 2008; Vescio et al., 2008). Below indicated are the commonly reported benefits of teacher collaboration.

Improve course and lesson planning – Collaboration enables teachers to share knowledge, critically reflect on teaching practices, provide collegial support or peer feedback, and collectively design teaching methods (Kelchtermans, 2006; Vangrieken, et al., 2015). Collaborating faculty can brainstorm and use their ideas and expertise to identify more relevant course content, incorporate more effective and innovative teaching-

learning activities based on available (or that can be made available) learning resources, appropriately sequence the learning activities, allocate sufficient time for students to engage in those activities to facilitate achievement of the desired outcomes. Furthermore, the collaborating faculty can develop appropriate assessment methods, assessment criteria, assessment rubrics and marking and grading schemes to ensure awarding the deserving grades to the students depending on their rate of achievement of the desired outcomes. In this manner, collaboration would help in planning a more effective course.

Enhance academic effort – A course well-planned will not bring about the desired outcomes unless it is delivered as planned. As indicated previously, one of the factors contributing to successful collaboration is sharing the expertise of everyone involved in the learning environment (Brownwell et al., 2006). In addition, collaboration provides educators with the opportunity to model different ways of teaching to respond to students' needs (Harris & Harvey, 2000). Sawyer (2007) claimed that collaboration acts as a catalyst for instructional creativity and innovation. Thus, when the collaborators use diverse appropriate teaching methods in lessons, the achievement of the desired outcomes by the learners is facilitated. This fact is articulated by Croft et al. (2010) who reported 'teacher collaboration—skillfully implemented and supported—constitutes a powerful lever to advance student learning'.

Effective assessment – In any education system, assessment is the single most important component that serves as a tool

that promotes learning while determining the degree of achievement of the desired learning outcomes by students. For effective assessment of learners, diverse diagnostic, formative and summative assessment approaches can be incorporated. Ideally, assessment needs to be integrated into teaching. Desired learning outcomes, respective learning activities and corresponding assessment activities need to be aligned. Every assessment should be valid, accurate, fair, reliable and feasible. Relevant assessment criteria, assessment rubrics, scoring and grading schemes need to be developed and established. Unless these requirements are fulfilled, assessment and grading will not be effective or fair and the standard of awards will not be guaranteed. Collaboration provides opportunities for teachers to discuss and use their expertise to develop assessment items that are fair, valid, and feasible and aligned with desired learning outcomes and learning experiences, formulate assessment rubrics, appropriate scoring and grading methods that will reflect the degree of achievement of desired outcomes by learners. In this way, teacher collaboration can promote the effective assessment of student learning. In addition, collaboration facilitates the relevant teachers to discuss the outcomes of the assessments and help students in a formative manner, and work together to improve the teaching-learning methods adopted for the course. Teacher collaboration can help in assessing the attainment of all graduate skills, especially the twenty-first-century graduate skills, assessment of which is less familiar to teachers.

Promote professional growth - Collaborative teaching provides opportunities for teachers to learn from each other, capitalize on each other's knowledge and skills, engage in joint inquiry, gain greater insight into their discipline, discuss and solve problems on an ongoing basis. Using this opportunity, collaborating teachers can improve their teaching skills and support each other's professional growth. Such improvements in teaching skills and professionalism not only benefit the collaborating teachers, but also the students in achieving the desired outcomes.

Widened access to learning resources at lower cost – Not every teacher has or can provide access to all required learning resources to students. Collaboration facilitates sharing of resources among academic institutions depending on the requirements. Such practice enhances the access to limited learning resources at a lower cost benefitting the institutions as well as the students.

Shared responsibility for student learning – Another benefit of collaboration is sharing responsibility for facilitating students' learning. Students should be made responsible for their learning. Collaboration enables teachers to share the responsibility of facilitating student learning through increased academic effort.

Challenges to Collaboration for Teaching and Assessment: Despite the benefits that could be harnessed through the collaboration for teaching and assessment, several challenges that prevent successful teacher collaboration have been reported. Hasslen et al (2001)

and Kurbatov (2009) indicated these challenges to emanate from deficiencies in individual teachers or the university.

According to them, misunderstanding of individual roles and responsibilities, mistrust or suspicion and lack of understanding about partner/s, unwillingness to share relevant information and experiences, basic philosophical differences in teaching and assessment methodologies, inability to directly address conflicts, working with self-serving goals, obeying the orders from superiors (disregarding rules of collaboration) for personal benefits, absence of self-motivation and nonattention to life-long learning as a foundation for improvement are the deficiencies in individual teachers that prevent successful collaboration. The absence of a strong initiative, authoritarian decision making, unclear instructions and communication, targeting too many goals, differences in the culture of two institutions, and insufficient financial, time and human capacity are the institutional factors that prevent successful teacher collaboration.

Lack of shared vision, lack of shared focus, power struggles, inconsistent communication, inability to work with each other, lack of recognition and support in the respective education context, conflict of schedules, lack of time to meet, and lack of clear agreement on the division of labour have been identified by Handler and Ravid (2001) as negative features of an academic partnership.

Lack of time to prepare, work and reflect together and personality conflicts

have been cited as barriers by many researchers including Mofield (2019). Lack of training in group dynamics, loss of instructional and decision making academic autonomy, professional identity, reduced flexibility, greater communication demand and non-receipt of due credit for contribution shatter collaboration.

Lack of proper planning leading to confusion regarding learning outcomes, roles of individual teachers, appropriate teaching and assessment methods, scoring and grading systems is another barrier to successful collaboration. Insufficient funding, technology resources and inadequate logistics create additional challenges to faculty collaboration.

While all the above factors would challenge teacher collaboration in general, several additional factors challenge international collaboration. Kushnarenko (2010) has categorized the challenges and issues of international collaboration into three major groups, viz., individual, institutional and national. While the individual and institutional level barriers are pretty much the same as those affecting in-country collaboration, lack of coherent and coordinated government strategy to promote international academic collaboration and bureaucratic red tapes represent major challenges faced by the higher education sector when establishing transnational collaboration for teaching and assessment. These challenges can be overcome by establishing pro-collaboration strategies by the government, policies and procedures on the suitability of partner institution(s), code of conduct, roles

and responsibilities of collaborating partners and mechanisms by the institute to safeguard the interests of students and the reputation of the institute.

Role of Technology: The evolution of technology has impacted many aspects of life including higher education. Technology has enabled fast access to learning resources, efficient communication, and the use of innovative teaching-learning and assessment methods. The sudden emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic has created a digital revolution in higher education worldwide, bringing a lot of changes in a very short time. These recent technological advances have accelerated peer-to-peer communication, social networking, the formation of digital hubs for educators and educational resources, the use of Learning Management Systems, accessibility to information, video technology and the formation of online communities and have paved the way for enhanced collaboration at different levels and types. The Faculties of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences of Sri Lankan state universities have somewhat embraced this worldwide transformation, and have adopted digital technology for teaching if not for assessment. Thus, it would be possible for the academics and administrators of these faculties to find ways of using technology to enhance collaboration at different levels and formulate more relevant curricula, more efficient course plans, innovative teaching and assessment methods to produce graduates equipped with the attributes desired by stakeholders. Such an initiative will help in increasing the employability of arts, humanities and

social sciences graduates, enabling them to be members of a productive workforce. Successful usage of technology for collaboration would require improvements in technological infrastructure, technical support services, internet connectivity, modifications in regulations and curricula, and training of academia and students.

Collaboration for Teaching and Assessment on Quality of Education Provision and Standards of Awards:

As indicated previously teaching and assessment are two important means which the universities and higher education institutions employ to guarantee with confidence that their education provision and standard of awards meet the threshold expectations of the stakeholders. This section addresses the manner in which collaboration for teaching and assessment affect the quality of education provision and standard of awards.

Quality assurance of education provision implies ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes and standard of awards desired by stakeholders, by the learners. Collaboration in teaching provides opportunities for the collaborating faculty to design curricula, plan courses by selecting relevant teaching-learning activities and sequencing those appropriately, implement the planned learning experiences using the academic expertise of collaborators enabling the learners to engage in those activities over a sufficient period to facilitate the acquisition of the desired outcomes. Such collaborative course planning to facilitate achievement of desired outcomes with optimal use of resources

and delivery with increased academic effort will contribute to quality assurance of education provision.

Another best practice that promotes quality in education provision is drawing upon research, scholarship and professional activities of the teachers to enhance teaching. Such enrichment of teaching can become even greater in collaboration because instead of one teacher, two or more collaborating teachers can contribute to the students' learning experience by drawing upon their research, scholarship and professional activities.

Using assessment outcomes to inform teaching methods, assessment methods and course curriculum is another best practice that helps in improving the quality of education provision. Teacher collaboration enables joint reflection on the assessment outcomes by all relevant collaborators and improve the course especially teaching methods and assessment methods.

Drawing upon real-world scenarios to help students to comprehend the application of theoretical knowledge is another best practice that promotes quality in education provision. Collaboration by two or more educators further strengthens this aspect than teaching by one.

The use of appropriate teaching-learning approaches that promote students to take personal responsibility for their learning is another good practice that improves the quality of education provision. Planning the course curriculum incorporating appropriate student-centered teaching-learning activities that would facilitate

the acquisition of the desired outcomes is one aspect of collaboration for teaching, which will in turn help in improving the quality of education provision.

The use of innovative pedagogy is another best practice that improves the quality of education provision. An increased academic effort is a hallmark of collaboration. According to Sawyer (2007) collaboration acts as a catalyst for instructional creativity and innovation. Thus, collaboration is a catalyst for improving the quality of education provision.

Engagement with peers for continuous improvement of teaching through evaluation and reflective practices is another best practice of collaboration that improves the quality of education provision. This fact has been confirmed by the finding that teacher collaboration is theoretically and empirically linked to the quality of instruction. Quality of instruction is theoretically and empirically linked to student learning.

Continuous professional development of teachers is another best practice that promotes the quality of teaching. Sharing of experiences, ideas, practices and reflections, peer-reviewing and feedback are characteristics of collaboration that facilitate professional development of teachers.

While the quality of education provision depends on teaching, the standards of awards depend on assessment. Making assessment strategy an integral part of curriculum design and aligning the assessment strategies with desired learning outcomes are best practices in

assessment to improve its effectiveness. Collaboration between faculty members can help in constructive alignment if at least one of the collaborators has been trained in outcome-based curriculum designing. Since all recruits must undergo induction training which includes an outcome-based curriculum development module, most of the faculty members would have received this training. Hence, paying attention to such competencies in the collaborating members will help in improving the quality of the course plan and subsequent delivery thereby enhancing the quality of education provision.

Not only constructive alignment, but also appropriate timing of assessments, allocating appropriate weightages to different components of assessments and the use of well-defined marking and grading schemes are required to ensure transparency, fairness, and consistency in assessment, and thereby ensure the standards of awards. These can be easily accomplished through collaboration.

Steps in Establishing Collaborative Partnerships: The establishment of effective and sustainable collaborative partnerships requires careful consideration of several factors and step-wise implementation. Of the several publications that address this aspect, below listed nine steps outlined by the Center for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (2019) appears to be comprehensive and inclusive of the steps outlined by other investigators.

- i. Determine the need and readiness for collaboration by checking the existing collaborations, their purposes, aspects or areas that need

- collaboration, and the degree of commitment of the university to support collaboration.
- ii. Recruit the academics with relevant competencies and disposition and organizations that are pro-collaborative by holding discussions with potential partners regarding elements of collaboration and obtaining commitments from the agreeing parties.
 - iii. Assess the required resources by identifying the skills and competencies needed to manage and support the collaboration and existing barriers that might affect the success.
 - iv. Determine the appropriate structure of the collaborative partnership while ensuring the partners are clear about the mission, values and underlying principles of the collaborative partnership. Plan the processes needed to manage and sustain the partnership and formulate an agreement incorporating all the above and get it signed by relevant partners.
 - v. Formulate a communication plan, secure consensus from the partners and establish an effective communication strategy.
 - vi. Review the objectives to ensure that they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound and challenging. Reach consensus and formulate an action plan to meet the goals and objectives of the collaborative partnership.
 - vii. Discuss with the collaborating partners to identify potential risks and challenges to the collaboration and develop strategies to overcome them.
 - viii. Identify and promote factors that would build trust among partners, nurture and support equality and diversity to create an open environment.
 - ix. Celebrate success appropriately after implementing.
- When establishing a collaborative partnership for teaching and assessment, one should bear in mind that teaching and assessment are not the only determinants of the quality of education provision and standard of awards. The criteria, relevant best practices and the threshold standards of those best practices concerning different modes of teaching-learning and assessment in Sri Lankan higher education have been established (Coomaraswamy et al., 2014; Warnasuriya et al., 2015a and 2015b; Coomaraswamy, 2019; Perera et al., 2021). The universities must develop quality assurance procedures for collaborative provision in compliance with these guidelines and establish mechanisms to ensure adherence to those guidelines by collaborating partners.

Conclusion

Collaboration for teaching and assessment has been shown to benefit students, collaborating teachers and institutions in several ways, while enhancing the quality in education provision. Inadequacies in collaborators or institutions can prevent achieving these benefits. Such obstacles

can be overcome by introducing relevant institutional policies and procedures. Recent technological advances can be made a catalyst for collaboration in teaching and assessment, if the technological infrastructure, technical support services, and internet connectivity are improved, regulations and curricula are modified and academia and students are trained. Establishing

effective and sustainable collaborative partnerships requires step-wise action following careful consideration of the existing potentials and challenges. Furthermore, it is necessary to formulate quality assurance procedures for collaborative provision in compliance with the existing guidelines and establish mechanisms to ensure adherence to those by collaborating partners.

References

- Bayer, A.E., & Smart, J.C. (1988). Author Collaborative Styles in Academic Scholarship. Paper presented at an annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Brownell, M.T., Yeager, E., Rennells, M.S., & Riley, T. (1997). Teachers working together: What teacher educators and researchers should know. *Teacher Education and Special Education*. 20: 340-359.
- Bunker, V. J. (2008). *Professional learning communities, teacher collaboration, and student achievement in an era of standards-based reform*. Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest.
- Center for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (2019). Steps To Building A Collaborative Partnership. In *Campus-Community Partnerships*. 8-14.
- Croft, N., Dalton, A. & Grant, M. (2010). Overcoming Isolation in Distance Learning: Building a Learning Community through Time and Space. *Journal for Education in the Built Environment*. 5(1): 27-64.
- Coomaraswamy, U., Abeygunawardena, H. & Jayatillake, B.G. (2014). Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses offered by Universities. University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka.
- Coomaraswamy, U. (2019). *Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Distance Higher Education Institutions* (Eds.). G. Ponnampemuma, J. Jayawardena and U. Mampitiya). University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka.
- Esterby-Smith, M., & Olve, N. (1984). Team teaching: Making management education more student-centred? *Management Learning*, 15(3): 221-236.
- Evans, C.M. (2020). Measuring student success skills: A review of the literature on collaboration. Dover, NH: National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment. <https://www.nciea.org/>
- Fox, M.F. & C.A. Faver. (1984). 'Independence and Cooperation in Research: The Motivations and Costs of Collaboration'. *The Journal of Higher Education*. 55(3): 347-59.
- Friend, M., & Cook, L. (1992). The new including: how it really works. *Instructor* 101: 30-36.
- (1996). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals*. White Plains: Longman.
- (2007). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for professionals* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- (2010). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals*. (6th ed.). Columbus, OH: Merrill.
- Goddard, Y.L., Goddard, R.D., & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2007). A theoretical and empirical investigation of teacher collaboration for school improvement and student achievement in public elementary schools. *Teach. Coll. Rec.* 109: 877-896.

- Gunarathna, P.S.M., Ramanayake, A. & Panagoda, D. (2017). Tracer Study of Graduates Universities in Sri Lanka. University Grants Commission. Sri Lanka.
- Handler, M.G. & Ravid, R. (2001) Models of School-University Collaboration, in R. Ravid & M.G. Handler (Eds.) *The Many Faces of School-University Collaboration: Characteristics of successful partnerships*, pp. 3-10. Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas Press.
- Harris, C., & Harvey, A.N. (2000). Team teaching in adult higher education classrooms: Toward collaborative knowledge construction. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*. 87: 25-32.
- Hasslen, R., Bacharach, N., Rotto, J., & Fribey, J. (2001). Learning connections: Working towards a shared vision, In *The Many Faces of School-university Collaboration. Characteristics of Successful Partnerships*, (pp. 59-69), Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas Press.
- Huba, M.E. & Freed, J.E. (2000) Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses: Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning. <http://assessment.uconn.edu/what/index.html>
- Kelchtermans, G. (2006). Teacher collaboration and collegiality as workplace conditions. *A review. Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, 52(2): 220-237.
- Kurbatov, S. (2009). Higher education across the borders. *Higher Education* 41(2): 22-41.
- Kushnarenko, V. (2010). *International Collaboration in Higher Education: The Canadian-Ukrainian Curriculum Development Partnership* (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Toronto)
- Mofield, E.L. (2019). Benefits and Barriers to Collaboration and Co-Teaching: Examining Perspectives of Gifted Education Teachers and General Education Teachers. *Gifted Child Today*. 43(1): 20-33.
- Moolenaar, N.M., Slegers, P.J., & Daly, A.J. (2012). Teaming up: linking collaboration networks, collective efficacy, and student achievement. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* 28: 251-262.
- Perera, E.R.K., de Silva, N., de Silva, J., Jayasinghe-Mudalige, U.K., Nahallage, C., Thilakerathne, P.M.C., Nandadeva, B.D. & Mampitiya, U. (2021). *Manual for Review of Postgraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions*. University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka. (in Press).
- Powell, W. (2000). Chapter 5: Collaboration In (Ochan Kusuma-Powell and William Powell) Count me In *Development of International Schools*. Overseas Schools Advisory Council publication
- Rice, S. (2015). 6 Keys to Effective Collaboration. *KDP New Teacher Advocate* 14-15.
- Sawyer, R.K. (2007). *Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- SLUS. (2020). *Sri Lanka University Statistics 2020*. University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka.
- Sutton, S.B. (2010). Partnering: Transforming Internationalization Through Partnerships. *International Educator*. 60-63.
- Vangrieken, K., Dochy, F., Raes, E. & Kyndt, E. (2015). Teacher collaboration: A systematic review. *Educational Research Review* 15: 17–40
- Vescio, V., Ross, D. & Adams, A. (2008). A Review of Research on the Impact of Professional Learning Communities on Teaching Practice and Student Learning, *Teaching and Teacher Education* 24(1): 80-91.
- Warnasuriya, N., Coomaraswamy, U., de Silva, N., Nandadeva, B.D., & Abeygunawardena, H. (2015a). *Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions*. (ed.). N. de Silva. University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka
- Warnasuriya, N., Coomaraswamy, U., de Silva, N., Nandadeva, B.D., & Abeygunawardena, H. (2015b). *Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions*. University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka
- Welborn, B. (2012). Six Keys to Successful Collaboration. In *Education Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-six-keys-to-successful-collaboration/2012/03>

Chapter 11

RE-DESIGNING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS TO ENHANCE CREATION AND SHARING OF OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Shironica P. Karunanayaka

Introduction

‘Education for All’ is a fundamental notion emphasized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2015). The concept of Open Educational Resources (OER) contributes to SDG4 by enhancing free and open access to educational materials, and advocating the use, creation and sharing of resources. Access to knowledge is a human right. Built on this premise, the OER movement fosters making educational resources available to all, without restrictions imposed by copyright laws, access barriers, or closed, proprietary platforms. Hence, OER play a key role not only in providing increased access to resources, but also, enhancing a culture of creative, cooperative, and participatory learning (Cape Town Open Education Declaration, 2007).

The increased use of digital technologies in teaching and learning in the recent past has augmented the adoption of OER by teachers and learners. The

COVID-19 pandemic, while causing an unexpected disruption in the education systems worldwide, has also accelerated the digitalization of education. It has thus created an opportune moment to revive the prevailing teaching-learning approaches and re-design resourceful learning environments based on innovative pedagogy and technology. In the current global scenario, empowerment of educators to become active consumers, creators, and disseminators of open content, as well as enabling them to take a leadership role in integrating digital practices and OER into their teaching-learning processes is crucial.

This paper presents an action research study implemented at the Open University of Sri Lanka to develop capacity of a group of educators in creating and sharing OER-integrated technology-enhanced learning (TEL) materials via a systematic intervention. This is a novel intervention specifically designed during the COVID-19 pandemic scenario, which comprised the design, development, and implementation of a fully online learning environment. It involved carefully structured series of online experiences

for capacity development of educators in the creation and sharing of OER-integrated TEL materials, with a view to evaluate its effects on changing their thinking and practices, and also, to identify desirable design strategies for future developments.

Capacity Development in the Adoption of OER and OEP

Open Educational Resources (OER) are learning, teaching, and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under an open license, that permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation, and redistribution by others (UNESCO, 2019). Since the open licensing of OER provides permissions for anyone to engage in the 5R activities, i.e., Retain, Reuse, Revise, Remix, and Redistribution of educational resources (Wiley, 2014), adoption of OER empower individuals to become more open and creative in their educational practices. Such shifts in the focus from mere access of OER, to engage in more open, collaborative, and innovative pedagogical practices in the use, creation and sharing of OER, leads to Open Educational Practices (OEP) (Cronin, 2017; Ehlers, 2011). However, due to various barriers including lack of awareness, limited competencies and conventional mindsets, adoption of OER and OEP in educational institutions has been slow (Mishra, 2017), which necessitates rethinking of appropriate approaches to remove the obstacles for mainstreaming OER and OEP.

The UNESCO OER Recommendations emphasize the need to strategically plan and support capacity building, awareness

raising, use, creation and sharing of OER at institutional and national levels, targeting all education sectors (UNESCO, 2019). This implies the necessity for continuous capacity enhancement, and empowerment of individuals to become active consumers, creators, and disseminators of open content, which also entails changes in their pedagogical thinking and practice. Provision of professional development opportunities for educators to meaningfully engage in digital and open practices through a strategic approach will support enacting innovative practices in the use, creation, and sharing of resource, as evident by previous studies (Karunanayaka & Naidu, 2018; 2017; 2014). However, developing and implementing such enabling learning environments to enact changes in professional thinking and practices of educators is a challenging process, and requires systematic interventions.

Teachers as Designers of Learning Experiences

Teaching has been described as a ‘design science’, since it involves continuous improvement of its practices to attain the goal of student learning, based on the implementation of its designs (Laurillard, 2012). Similarly, teachers are considered as ‘designers’, since they engage in designing learning experiences and learning environments for their students (Henriksen & Richardson, 2017). Learning experience design is a creative process. Exploring novel and creative approaches to teaching adopted by teachers provides an understanding of how they function as designers of innovative pedagogies (Paniagua & Istance, 2018). An extensive content

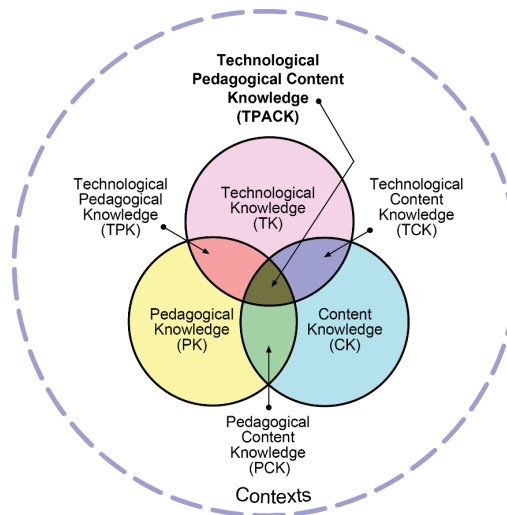
analysis of literature of a decade on teachers and design suggests that the teaching profession itself could be considered a design profession (Warr & Mishra, 2021).

Innovative pedagogy as well as novel technology play a significant role in the process of learning experience design. For instance, the use of digital technologies in teacher professional development supports teachers to design innovative technology-enhanced learning (Laurillard, et al., 2018). Provision of teacher professional development programmes that encompass ‘learning by designing’ opportunities will thus encourage the teachers to function as innovative designers of technology-enhanced learning experiences for their students. Hence, re-thinking, re-imagining, and re-designing of learning environments, harnessing the affordances of both technology and pedagogy, based on learning theory and practical design frameworks is of utmost importance.

Conceptual Framework

The blend between subject matter content, pedagogical approaches and technology integration is an essential aspect to focus on teacher professional development initiatives. The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Koehler & Mishra, 2009) captures the forms of knowledge that is required by teachers to be effective in technology-enhanced teaching and learning. It presents three broad knowledge bases—Content Knowledge (CK), Pedagogical Knowledge (PK), and Technological Knowledge (TK), and their interactions—Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK); Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK); Technological Content Knowledge (TCK); and the synthesized knowledge on all these (TPACK) (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). (See Figure 11.1). The TPACK framework provided the conceptual basis for the current study.

Figure 11.1: TRACK framework



TPACK Framework (Source: Koehler & Mishra, 2009)

The inter-relationships between the seven constructs of the TPACK framework offer useful direction for teachers to focus on how technology could be effectively integrated into teaching and learning, meeting the pedagogical needs to teach the subject matter content in specific contexts (Koehler & Mishra, 2009; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). A key concern in the unity of technology, pedagogy and content in the teaching-learning process is the design of learning experiences. By functioning as ‘designers’, teachers can put this synthesized knowledge into practice by designing appropriate learning experiences for their students (Koehler et al., 2016). Design of such learning experiences needs careful thought about the intersections of subject matter content, pedagogical approaches, and technological affordances (Naidu, 2016).

In the current scenario, which necessitated the design of an intervention with fully online learning experiences for the capacity development of educators in OER-integrated TEL material creation, the TPACK framework provided useful direction.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided planning the study:

- i. What are the effects of an intervention programme designed for educators on the creation and sharing of OER-integrated TEL materials, on changing their thinking and practices?
- ii. What challenges were faced by the educators during the creation and

sharing of OER-integrated TEL materials?

- iii. What are the desirable design strategies in a fully online learning environment to enhance capacity development of educators on the creation and sharing of OER-integrated TEL materials?

Methodology and Research Design

The study adopted an action research design, which is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by practitioners in social situations to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Action research is fundamentally about changing an environment, a system, or a practice, and learning about the context through changing it. The action research methodology was selected as an appropriate approach in the current study context, where the COVID-19 pandemic compelled all teaching-learning transactions to swiftly shift to a fully online mode. It allowed investigating desirable design strategies for a fully online capacity development intervention to enhance the creation and sharing of OER-integrated TEL materials by educators.

The study was conducted in several steps in accordance with the four stages of the action research cycle - planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Masters, 1995). Within the action research methodological framework, a systematic process of activities was conducted, comprising the design, development, and implementation of an intervention

programme for educators on the adoption, creation and sharing of OER-integrated TEL materials, and the evaluation of its effects on changing their pedagogical thinking and practices.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were, to:

- i. Design and develop a fully online intervention for capacity development of educators to create and share OER-integrated TEL materials.
- ii. Implement the intervention through a systematic process and evaluate its effects on educators in changing their thinking and practices.
- iii. Identify desirable design strategies for a fully online capacity development environment to enhance the creation and sharing of OER-integrated TEL materials by educators.

Participants

The participants for the study were selected using the purposive sampling method. They included sixteen (16) educators who followed the optional course “Computer Technology in Education” in the Master of Education study programme. The participants comprised 14 female and 2 male participants, including 13 schoolteachers, one ISA (In-Service Adviser), and two Directors of Education. Most of them (11) were holding Postgraduate Diploma in Education, while 5 were with Bachelor of Education degrees as their highest academic qualification. All participants were in the age group of 31-50.

Professional experience varied between 6-20 years among a majority, while two with less than 5 years and another two with more than 20 years of experience.

Process

A systematic capacity development intervention was designed, developed, and implemented with the group of participants, in accordance with the stages of the action research approach (See Table 11.1). It comprised a series of Zoom-based interactive workshops and an enabling online learning environment in the Moodle LMS. These were designed with intensive hands-on activities, both individual and collaborative, providing capacity development, guidance, support, motivation, and feedback. Two phases of the intervention were implemented during a period of six months.

Phase 1 of the intervention focused on the design of OER-integrated TEL materials based on constructivist theories, instructional design models and TPACK framework, whereas Phase 2 focused on the development of OER-integrated TEL materials using free digital tools and OER. Based on the results of Phase 1, Phase 2 was further systematized with more interactive activities, which culminated with a fully online activity-based assignment of creating and sharing an OER-integrated TEL material by each participant. The participants were also encouraged to continuously engage in sharing ideas, resources, and best practices in the online discussion forums, and to reflect on their experiences in the online reflective journal, throughout the process.

Table 11.1: Process of the intervention

Stage	Activities	Data Collection
Phase 1 – Design of OER-integrated TEL materials (December 2020 – March 2021)		
Plan	Constructive alignment of learning activities and the assessment tasks with the intended learning outcomes. Design of Zoom-based interactive workshop sessions. Design of online learning activities in the Moodle LMS.	Concept map creations Discussion forum posts
Act	Knowledge construction on the TPACK framework and its applications. Concept mapping to plan a TEL material based on the TPACK framework. Learning experience design based on constructivist theory of learning. Sharing concept maps for peer review and subsequent improvements.	Reflective journal entries Questionnaire survey Focus group discussions
Observe	Assessment 1: Part I – A concept map of a TEL material based on the TPACK framework Part II – An explanatory report on the created concept map Part III – Online Discussion forum activities and Reflective journal	
Reflect	Evaluate effects of the Phase 1 of the intervention Find out challenges faced by the educators during Phase 1. Based on the findings revisit and improve the design strategies for Phase 2.	
Phase 2 – Development of OER-integrated TEL materials - (April 2021 - June 2021)		
Plan	Improved design of Zoom-based interactive workshop sessions Improved design of online learning activities in the Moodle LMS	OER-integrated TEL material creations Discussion forum posts
Act	Knowledge construction on ID models and design aspects. Competency development on using free digital tools. Competency development on finding, creating, and integrating OER. Storyboarding on TEL materials and sharing for peer feedback. Sharing OER creations for peer review and subsequent improvements.	Reflective journal entries Questionnaire survey Focus group discussions
Observe	Assessment 2: (Activity-based assignment during a Zoom session) Part I – Creation of an OER-integrated TEL material with a brief report Part II – A presentation on the created TEL material, with peer review Part III – Online Discussion forum activities and Reflective journal	
Reflect	Evaluate effects of the Phase 2 of the intervention Find out challenges faced by educators during Phase 2. Based on the data analysis of both phases, identify the desirable design strategies of the intervention.	

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

Multiple data gathering methods were used at different stages of the intervention. These comprised both quantitative and qualitative strategies including questionnaire surveys, discussion forum posts, reflective journal entries, focus group discussions, and scrutiny of the created artefacts including concept maps, storyboards, and OER-integrated TEL materials. The adoption of multiple strategies enabled data triangulation to provide a more comprehensive view of the findings.

The data sources of Phase 1 are stated below:

- i. Concept maps (16)
- ii. Explanatory reports (16)
- iii. Discussion forum on 'TPACK framework' (24 posts)
- iv. Discussion forum sharing draft concept maps (126 posts)
- v. Reflective journal on 'TPACK framework' (15 entries)
- vi. Reflective journal on draft concept maps (15 entries)

The data sources of Phase 2 are as follows:

- i. OER-integrated TEL materials (16)
- ii. Brief reports and storyboards (16)
- iii. PowerPoint presentations (16)
- iv. Discussion forum on 'Using digital tools' (63 posts)
- v. Discussion forum on 'OER integration' (57 posts)
- vi. Discussion forum sharing draft storyboard (257 posts)

- vii. Discussion forum on 'TEL material development' (150 posts)
- viii. Reflective journal on 'Using digital tools' (12 entries)
- ix. Reflective journal on 'OER integration' (10 entries)
- x. Reflective journal on 'TEL material development' (16 entries)

Data analysis mainly involved an in-depth content analysis of the data collected using coding, categorization and interpretation. A structure including 3 categories and 12 codes was used to analyze data, in terms of the Technology (T), Pedagogy (P), and Content (C), and their intersections - TC (Technology/Content), PC (Pedagogy/Content), TP (Technology/Pedagogy), and TPC (Technology/Pedagogy/Content), in line with the TPACK conceptual framework, and addressing the research questions of the study.

Results - Phase 1

Analysis of the concept maps and explanatory reports revealed the initial effects of the intervention on the participants' thinking and practices, in terms of integrating content, pedagogy and technology when designing learning experiences for their students. While all 16 concept maps displayed how the subject matter content was planned to be presented integrating technology and pedagogy (TC and PC), only a few concept maps clearly demonstrated the intersections of technology and pedagogy (TP) and all three aspects as a whole (TPC). Some concept maps were very simple and brief without adequate details (Figure 11.2a), yet some others were more elaborative (Figure 11.2b).

The explanatory reports on the concept maps provided much clearer indications on the integration of TC, PC, TP and TPS, as evidenced by the sample quotes given below:

...The lesson initiated with a YouTube video which indicated the general form of a straight-line graph...The topic was further elaborated using online graphing calculators... (TC)

...A quiz consisting of 5 short answer questions is administered to check the knowledge about discriminant and interpretation of nature of solutions... (PC)

...the students are asked to draw logic gates using the Logic Gate Simulator software tool...(TP)

...I use the Internet, several blogs, and HTML language...and ask student to explore the content and find the basic codes of HTML...also I use digital interactive board...to build a simple web page using HTML with the support of the students' discoveries...(TPC)

The perceptions of the participants based on the questionnaire survey-1 implemented at the end of the phase 1 are presented in Figures 3a-3f.

As indicated by Figures 3a, 3b and 3c, about half of the participants have started using free digital tools (50.1%) and OER (43.8%) and a majority (81.3%) have agreed with the importance of them, extremely or very much. While 56.3% thought that this task was moderately challenging, another 37.5% viewed it extremely or very challenging (Fig. 3d). It was interesting to observe that while 50% were extremely motivated to create OER-integrated TEL materials (Fig. 3e), only 37.5% were extremely motivated to share them (Fig. 3f). At the same time, it was encouraging to note that all participants were motivated in both these aspects, moderately and above.

Analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions in the survey (S), as well as posts in the discussion forums (DF) and the reflective journals (RJ) indicated the effects of the Phase 1 of the intervention on the participants, challenges faced by them and the supportive design strategies (Table 11.2).

Results of Phase 1 revealed that the novel experiences have encouraged the participants to use and integrate digital tools and OER in their teaching. Amid facing various challenges such as time

Figure 11.2a & 2b: A simple and detailed concept maps

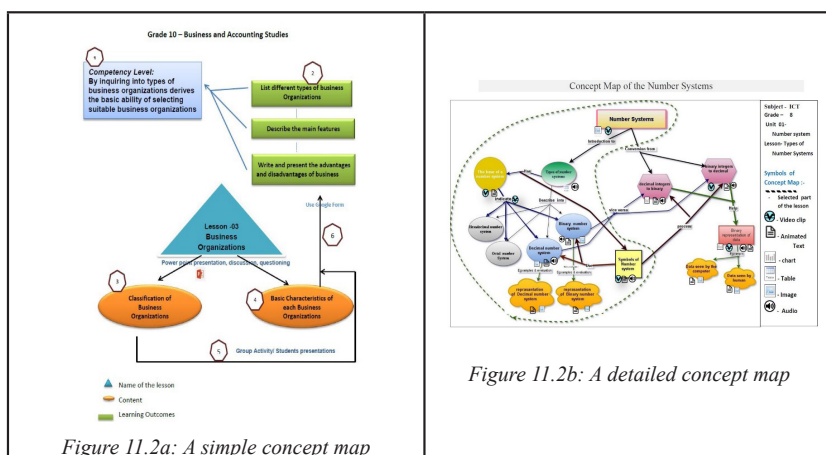
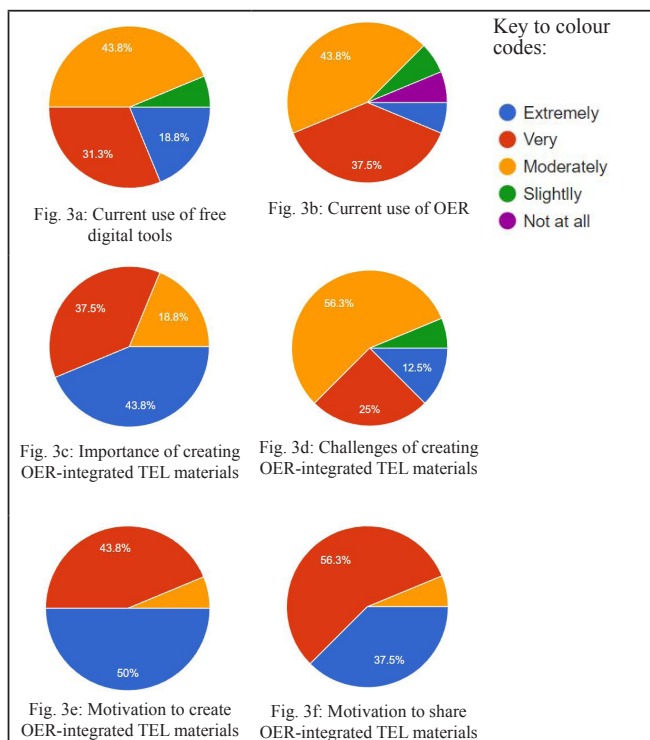


Figure 11.3: Perceptions of the participants during phase 1

constraints and technical issues, they were still motivated to proceed. The practical design strategies employed in the intervention as well as peer feedback have supported the participants. The findings also suggested the need to provide more guidance, hands-on activities, and opportunities for peer interactions to further support them in the process.

Results - Phase 2

All 16 TEL materials, storyboards, brief reports, and the presentations of the participants were analyzed according to the following criteria:

- Constructive alignment of learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment tasks

- Adopting a constructivist pedagogy
- Appropriate storyboarding with a clear visual representation of the learning experience
- Integration of digital tools and OER
- Addressing the four design aspects: Information; Instruction, Interaction; and Interface design

Using an assessment rubric, the above tasks, as well as the discussion forum activities and the reflective journal on TEL development were evaluated. Figure 11.4 indicates the marks distribution among the 16 participants.

While a majority of them (12) have fulfilled all expected criteria to a very satisfactory level (gaining above 60 marks), only 4 of them have gained between 45-60 marks. The marks distribution however, represented a normal curve.

Table 11.2: A summary of results of phase 1 of the intervention

Category	Codes	Supportive quotes	
Effects on thinking and practices	Use; Create, and Share OER	<i>I'm eagerly expecting to use OER amongst my students now...I'll create many OER resources including images, animations, and videos to be shared.</i>	S
	Curate and Share OER	<i>I like to prepare a collection of OER...for future use of students and teachers which help to share knowledge...</i>	
	Use of TPACK	<i>Blending technology, pedagogy with subject matter is a successful way of creating a fruitful teaching situation.</i>	DF
	Use of digital tools	<i>Not only video, we can use simulations and web applications that can especially be useful in mathematics to give a visual impact for the learner...</i>	
	Instructional design	<i>I was happy to understand that just the use of tools will not work but it should be backed by proper instructional designs.</i>	RJ
Challenges faced	Lesson plans; Confidence	<i>I've made many changes in the way that I do my lessons...I'm really happy about the enlightenment...it makes me feel more confident.</i>	
	Time; Internet	<i>It's time consuming to find quality OER. Thus, it requires lots of data and a fast internet connection.</i>	Q
	Language	<i>Student do not have much knowledge in English.</i>	
	Connectivity	<i>I really experienced a bad network coverage strength... for which I worried very much.</i>	RJ
	Workload	<i>I feel overwhelmed...it was clear that we, students have to work really hard.</i>	
Supportive design strategies	Traditional practices	<i>It is not so easy to get out of the track that we have been following for a long time.</i>	
	Digital tools	<i>This course has given me an in-depth insight to free digital tools available to create TEL materials...</i>	Q
	TPACK framework	<i>TPACK framework shows the right path for educators... to develop the concept of digital pedagogies.</i>	DF
	Concept mapping	<i>I find concept mapping as a fine replacement for writing lesson plans...</i>	RJ
	Peer feedback	<i>The comments made by my colleagues on my activity were really useful for me.</i>	

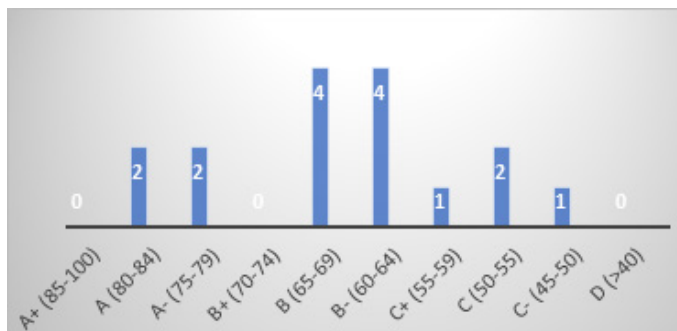
All TEL materials have been created by the participants as self-learning materials for their target student groups, with the integration of various digital tools (such as Padlet, Mentimeter, EdPuzzle, Flipgrid, Kahoot, Powtoon, NearPod... etc.) as well as OER – either repurposing existing OER, or creating new OER.

Analysis of the responses to the questionnaire survey 2 (S), discussion

forum posts (DF), reflective journal entries (RJ), and the focus group discussions (FGD) indicated the effects of the Phase 2 of the intervention (Table 11.3).

Findings

Effects on Changing Thinking and Practices: The effects of the intervention programme on changing thinking and practices of educators were uncovered

Figure 11.4: Distribution of marks of participants for development of TEL material

during the two phases of the intervention. These are summarized below:

- i. Adopting the TPACK framework to blend technology and pedagogy with subject matter content
- ii. Thinking about copyrights issues when using resources taken from the internet
- iii. Using, adapting, and integrating OER in the teaching-learning process
- iv. Creating new OER and sharing OER with the others
- v. Using and integrating free digital tools in the teaching-learning process
- vi. Encouraging students and peer teachers also to use digital tools and OER
- vii. Increased confidence in designing and developing OER-integrated TEL materials
- viii. Motivation to continue with creating innovative OER-integrated TEL materials

The introduction to the TPACK framework has stimulated the participants to consider how technology and pedagogy could be effectively integrated with content, when designing learning experiences (Koehler & Mishra,

2009). The competency development in using free digital tools has encouraged them to think creatively and develop TEL materials with confidence. Further, the exposure to OER has not only triggered their thinking to be concerned about creators' rights, when educational resources are being used, but also to adopt more open, innovative, collaborative and sharing practices, thus moving towards OEP (Cronin, 2017).

Challenges faced during the process:

Key challenges faced by the educators during the design and development process were identified as follows:

- i. Adopting the novel strategies such as concept mapping and storyboarding
- ii. Searching and finding relevant OER
- iii. Identifying the licenses of OER, and attributing OER
- iv. Skill development in using various digital tools
- v. Time constraints due to heavy workloads
- vi. Technical issues including connectivity problems and power failures
- vii. Language barrier
- viii. Changing from traditional practices

It was heartening to observe the motivation and determination of the participants to proceed with all the

Table 11.3: A summary of results of phase 2 of the intervention

Category	Codes	Supportive quotes	
Effects on thinking and practices	Integrating OER	<i>I include more OER integrated TEL in my teaching learning process with my students now.</i>	S
	Copyrights	<i>Using OER is good way to share content done by others while not infringing copyrights...and importance of credit to creators.</i>	
	Creating OER	<i>I feel that I want to create more and more OER in the future.</i>	
	Sharing of digital tools	<i>Particularly, we can have video-based interactive learning materials with these tools, which are very user friendly.</i>	DF
	Creating digital materials	<i>I was able to upload a video and insert questions and notes in the middle to stress the importance of certain concepts.</i>	
	Use of digital tools	<i>Now I use these digital tools with my students in the virtual classrooms, and they engage in the lessons with great interest...I also encourage my peer teachers to use these tools.</i>	RJ
	Technology integration	<i>I have a big role in finding more technological knowledge and I hope that I will be a successful teacher...with the TPACK framework, TEL materials and integrating latest technologies.</i>	
Challenges faced	Creating and sharing OER	<i>I created video content by myself and uploaded with Creative Commons license...I thought to make it public so that others would also benefit.</i>	FGD
	Storyboarding	<i>Storyboarding seemed a little challenging in the initial stage, but with peer review it became much easier</i>	S
	Finding OER	<i>Some expected OER were not there online and so I had to create them on my own.</i>	
	Identifying open licenses	<i>Finding OER and identifying their creative common license was challenging.</i>	
	Selection of digital tools	<i>Although abundant platforms are there, we should wisely select the most appropriate I think.</i>	DF
	Time consumption	<i>I had to spend a lot of time to study different digital tools and select the most appropriate ones to create the TEL material.</i>	RJ
	Technical issues	<i>I faced the worst challenge that one could face while engaging in the activities. That is sudden technical issues...my computer suddenly stopped and I felt sorry for myself.</i>	
	Power failure	<i>This activity-based day school was a new experience for me though I had to face many challenges due to the power failure.</i>	
	Attribution	<i>I still don't have a clear idea how to include the licenses in OER.</i>	FGD

Supportive design strategies	Session structure	<i>Today's session was very productive. Every minute we have to engage in effective activities. And gained lot of experiences which we could apply in future effectively.</i>	S
	Video-based discussions	<i>Showing video clips and discussions make the lessons very easy to teach and the activities with various digital tools motivate both the students and me too.</i>	
	Digital tool-based activities		
	Group activities and presentations	<i>Group activities were good but sometimes different ideas ended up in confusion...however feedback for group presentations made me active and inquisitive about others viewpoints</i>	
	Guidelines; Rubrics	<i>All the guiding was there in the Moodle and assessment Rubrics was really helpful.</i>	
	Learning resources	<i>It is also very helpful that I could access the learning resources at anytime and anywhere.</i>	
	Reflective journal	<i>The reflective journal helped me to reflect on where I stood versus where I am now.</i>	
	Peer feedback	<i>Peer review did a lot. I myself improved and helped the peers to reach the expected level.</i>	DF
	Discussion forum	<i>As a collaborative effort, discussion forum in the Moodle LMS helped me a lot to gain new ideas and peer feedback were so helpful to create my TEL material.</i>	RJ
	Interactive sessions	<i>Today was a once in a lifetime day. It was an interactive session with much to learn...Overall, it was an experience that added much to my life.</i>	

activities, amid various challenges. While time constraints and technical issues were found to be common issues faced by everyone, some faced limitations in technical skills and English language skills. Since many aspects of the intervention were totally novel to the participants, involving pedagogically complex and technologically challenging tasks, they have experienced 'cognitive load' (Sweller, 1988). However, during the process, the participants made concerted attempts to minimize the issues and overcome the challenges, supporting each other, and working together as a 'community of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Supportive design strategies: The findings of both phases of the intervention

revealed desirable design strategies in a fully online learning environment to enhance capacity development of educators on the creation and sharing of OER-integrated TEL materials as summarized below:

In the ZOOM platform: Individual activities (Quizzes; Polls), Group activities (Breakout rooms), Watching video clips and discussions, Group presentations and peer feedback, Activities integrating various free digital tools and OER

In the Moodle LMS: Specific guidelines, Structured activities, Learning resources, Discussion forums, Reflective journal, Assessment rubrics

Learning activities: Knowledge construction on the TPACK framework

and its applications, Concept mapping to plan a TEL material based on the TPACK framework, Learning experience design based on constructivist theory of learning, Sharing draft concept maps for peer review, Competency development on using free digital tools, Competency development on searching, selecting, and creating OER, Knowledge construction on ID models and design aspects, Storyboarding on TEL material and sharing for peer feedback

The identification of the desirable design features indicates the significance of taking a careful and a systematic process in the design of learning experiences and engaging the educators themselves to function as designers (Laurillard, 2012). It also underscores the fact that online teaching and learning should not be considered as just another mode of content delivery, but as an opportunity to adopt alternative pedagogical methods focusing more on knowledge management and competency development (Bates, 2019).

Conclusion

Overall, the findings reveal significant impacts of the intervention on the educators, despite various challenges. The specific design strategies adopted in the fully online learning experience have facilitated them to move from

being mere consumers of knowledge, and to become co-creators of knowledge within a learning community. Especially, the carefully structured online learning environment has supported their use of digital tools and the adoption of OER. The ‘teachers as designers’ approach employed in the process has stimulated and supported the educators to become creators of digital learning materials as OER and share them as well. The shifts from the conventional mindsets to think out of the box and putting ideas into action through ‘learning by designing’, has enabled educators to apply their knowledge and skills effectively and efficiently in authentic contexts.

Enacting such changes in the thinking and practices of educators towards embracing digital education practices and open educational practices is quite significant in the current COVID-19 pandemic scenario. Considering this as an opportune moment to revive and reimagine online teaching and learning approaches, with an appropriate blend between content, pedagogy and technology is vital. Empowering educators to take a leadership role as ‘change agents’ in a knowledge-society, will undeniably contribute in our shared journey towards achieving SDG4 and ‘education for all’.

References

- Bates, A.W. (2019). Teaching in a Digital age: Guidelines for Designing Teaching and Learning. Tony Bates Associates Ltd. <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/teachinginadigitalagev2/>
- Cape Town Open Education Declaration (2007). *Cape Town open education declaration: Unlocking the promise of open educational resources*. <http://www.capetowndeclaration.org/read-the-declaration>
- Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming Critical Education, Knowledge and Action Research*. Falmer Press.
- Cronin, C. (2017). Openness and praxis: Exploring the use of open educational practices in higher education. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 18(5), <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v18i5.3096>
- Ehlers, U.D. (2011). Extending the territory: From Open Educational Resources to Open Educational Practices. *Journal of Open, Flexible, and Distance Learning*, 15(2), 1–10. <http://journals.akoatearoa>

ac.nz/index.php/JOFDL/article/viewFile/64/46.

Henriksen, D. & Richardson, C. (2017). Teachers are designers: Addressing problems of practice in education. *Phi Delta Kappan, The Journal of PDK International*, 99(2), 60-64 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721717734192>

Karunanayaka, S.P. & Naidu, S. (2017). Impact of integrating OER in teacher education at the Open University of Sri Lanka. In C. Hodgkinson-Williams & P. B. Arinto (Eds.), *Adoption and impact of OER in the Global South* (pp. 459–498). African Minds. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.600398>

Karunanayaka, S.P. & Naidu, S. (Eds.) (2014). *Integrating OER in Educational Practice: Practitioner Stories*. The Open University of Sri Lanka. <http://www.ou.ac.lk/home/images/OU SL/publications/intergratingOERinEducationalPractice.pdf>

Karunanayaka, S.P., & Naidu, S. (2018) Designing Capacity Building of Educators in Open Educational Resources Integration Leads to Transformational Change. *Distance Education*. 39(1), 87-109, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2017.1413933>

Koehler, M.J., & Mishra, P. (2009). What is technological pedagogical content knowledge? *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 9(1), 60-70.

Koehler, M.J., Mishra, P., Akcaoglu, M., & Rosenburg, J.M. (2016). The technological pedagogical content knowledge framework for teachers and teacher educators In M.N. Panigrahi (Ed.). *ICT integrated teacher education*. (pp. 20-30). CEMCA

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815355>

Laurillard, D. (2012). *Teaching as a design science*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203125083>

Laurillard, D., Kennedy, E., Charlton, P., Wild, J., & Dimakopoulos, D. (2018). Using technology to develop teachers as designers of TEL: Evaluating the learning designer. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 49(6), 1044-1058. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12697>

Masters, J. (1995) ‘The History of Action Research’ in I. Hughes (ed) *Action Research Electronic Reader*; The University of Sydney. www.iopp.ru/pub/21sept06_M2.doc

Mishra, P., & Koehler, M. J. (2006). Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge: A framework for teacher knowledge. *Teachers College Record*, 108(6), 1017-1054. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9620.2006.00684.x>

Mishra, S. (2017). Open educational resources: removing barriers from within. *Distance Education*, 38(3), 369-380.

Naidu, S. (2016). The case for open educational practices. *Distance Education*, 37(1), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2016.1157010>

Paniagua, A. & Istance, A. (2018). *Teachers as designers of learning environments: The importance of innovative pedagogies*. Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/teachers-as-designers-of-learning-environments_9789264085374-en#page1

Sweller, J. (1988). Cognitive Load During Problem Solving: Effects on Learning. *Cognitive Science*, 12, 257-285. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15516709cog1202_4

UNESCO (2015). *Sustainable Development Goal 4*. <https://sdg4education2030.org/the-goal>

UNESCO (2019). *UNESCO OER Recommendations*. http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=49556&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Warr, M. & Mishra, P. (2021). Integrating the discourse on teachers and design: An analysis of ten years of scholarship. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 99(4). 103274 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103274>

Wiley, D. (2014, March 5). *The Access Compromise and the 5th R*. <https://opencontent.org/blog/archives/3221>

PART V

English Language Skill

Chapter 12

BUILDING CONFIDENCE TO SPEAK ENGLISH: A REMEDY FOR THE POOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES OF THE UNDERGRADUATES

Asantha U. Attanayake

Introduction

A needs analysis vis-à-vis English language learning was conducted, and the results demonstrated that the most desired skill among the students was speaking. Their reason for not speaking or not attempting to speak English was fear, shyness and uncertainty, which resulted in a lack of confidence to speak English owing to Language Attitude Anxiety (LAA). In order to build student confidence to speak English and to help them develop a liking for learning English, a special course, 'Building Confidence to Speak English', was introduced. It was given in the form of an intensive course and was to run for 3 hours of English language teaching every day, 5 days a week for one month. It commenced on 3rd March 2020. However, due to the pandemic, the Institute was closed and the course was only completed on 12 Oct. 2020, after about 120 hours of teaching. A few online speech activities were also uploaded to the LMS in addition to a special Facebook page that was started specifically for students to upload speech activities during the closure. The final assessment was a stage performance

from each group with all of the group members taking part.

Objective

This study aimed to build student confidence to speak English by eliminating fear and shyness caused by being ridiculed by others, while also eradicating the uncertainty they have vis-à-vis word choice, grammar, etc. in speaking.

Literature Review

The literature related to fear, shyness and uncertainty in relation to speaking in English shows that these create a poor learner identity. This is the result of the accumulation of many negative and discouraging experiences in learning histories both inside and outside the classroom (Koay, 2018). According to Norton (2000), identity refers to how a person relates himself to the outside world, how he/she constructs his relationship across boundaries such as time and space and how a person understands possibilities for future. Learners who lack confidence to speak English visualise themselves as being

limited in their future accomplishments, thus creating poor learner identities. This in turn affects their concept of possible selves as they see themselves as the poor L2 possible selves that they fear of becoming (Marcus and Nurius, 1986). What is interesting here is that, possible selves are a concept that is individual and personal to the learner but the creation of it can be very social and all the more so in this instance where learners are affected by the attitudes in society towards the speakers of English (herein, learners with low English language proficiency). As a result, the reverse of what they fear themselves becoming as poor L2 possible selves, i.e., “what they might become and what they like to become” (Marcus and Nurius, 1986, p. 954) does not occur. This is due to the Language Attitude Anxiety created by the language attitudes that exist in society at large that affect language learners in their speaking performance, manifesting in a lack of confidence to speak English (Attanayake, 2019). Anxiety about speaking English has the potential to project its damaging effects onto English language learning in general. As MacIntyre (1995) states:

... anxious students are in a double bind; they have learned less and may not be able to demonstrate the information that they have learned (p. 97).

As a result, learners develop a general dislike for learning English and/or they perceive English language learning as a Herculean task. This seems paradoxical, but learners, having understood the value of being able to communicate in English for their future careers, seem to have given up learning it and developed a general notion that English is too difficult

for them. This is evident in the results of the GCE (O/L) and GCE (A/L) results for English where a large majority have either failed or obtained a simple pass. In addition, a good 3/4th of the student population entering the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences each and every year belong to the lowest proficiency group in some of the leading universities in Sri Lanka, namely those which have mother tongue instruction¹.

What cannot be disregarded is that in certain instances, societal perceptions have extended to the point that those who speak better English are perceived as intelligent and smart, and therefore, it cannot be considered an objective social judgement since social judgements of speech styles and their users are governed by a collection of beliefs (Giles and Rakic, 2014). Students with lower English language proficiency are aware of social nuances in regard to English, further incapacitating them in their performance in English speech. These views seem to have a grounding in the observations made by Gluszek and Dovidio (2010) where speakers of nonstandard language varieties face stigmatization resulting in a poor notion of self.

This whole notion of being scared of, or uncertain, when using the English language in its spoken form is caused by Language Attitude Anxiety (LAA), which is manifested in a lack of confidence to speak. LAA comes from the standards set by the mentality of the elites in post-

1. In the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo where I worked over 20 years, out of about 800 annual student intake, around 450-500 fall into the lowest proficiency group at the entry point placement test.

colonial South Asian societies who want to speak like the whites, which works against rural English language learners in their efforts to speak English. As the history of ELT in the region shows,

Left unexamined, the dominant group or language will serve the good of one group at the expense of the other which leads to hegemonic social relations (Razfar & Rumenapp, 2011, p.242)

Therefore, it is not ethical to leave one's "beliefs about language and culture unexamined" as beliefs are held implicitly and develop through "historical-cultural relationships" (Razfar & Rumenapp 2011, p. 242).

Methodology

Sample: The student sample consisted of 126 undergraduates belonging to the 1st and 2nd years studying in their Bachelor in Agro-technology and Rural Sciences degree programme. The medium of instruction in their degree programme is English. However, a large majority belonged to the lower English language proficiency levels, as was evidenced in the marks of the placement test that was conducted prior to the commencement of the course.

The Course and its Logistics: Students were grouped according to their marks at the placement test. Students were divided into 10 groups as per their placement test marks. The groups were formed in ascending order according to the number of marks obtained by students: i.e., group 1 consisted of students who scored the lowest range of marks whereas the students with the highest marks were in group 10. Each group had 20 or fewer

students, so that individual attention to student-needs could easily be given. Also, the activities were timed, taking their duration for performance into account.

The 'Building Confidence to Speak English' course follows a special teaching methodology and uses special teaching materials both of which were developed specifically for the course. The teaching methodology was Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) associated with small group activities, while the teaching materials were developed using 2 scales: communicative potential and cognitive potential development scales. In order to achieve the main objective, building confidence to speak English, the classroom was transformed into a safe zone where stereotypical teaching strategies were avoided and student-friendly techniques such as no error correction, no grammar teaching, no homework, no individual work or performance, no compulsion to perform, etc., were adopted with no mother tongue, English only and a single phrase to memorise and use every day. Teachers were trained every day after their teaching in order to teach the next day. Teacher training was done with teachers simulating students by roleplaying the encounters they are likely to face in their own classes. The teaching materials were designed and activities were sequenced for maximum collaborative student participation, beginning with pair work or small group work. The course was conducted for one month, 3 hours a day, for 3 weeks (the first 3 weeks) and 5 hours a day for 1 week (during the last week). The final assessment was a stage

play in which all of the students took part at their individual group level.

Tools: At the end of the course, students were assessed through their stage play performances and this was a whole class participatory activity. In addition, student feedback was sought by means of a questionnaire that consisted of questions given in a Likert scale and open-ended questions. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS while the qualitative data was thematically analysed.

Data analysis

The following section presents the data collected by means of the questionnaire.

There are only 10 students who have obtained A passes for their GCE (O/L) English out of 126 students. There are 12 students with B passes. Almost half of the student population (55) received a simple pass while 41 have C passes. Those who have failed in English at the GCE (O/L) were 7.

Almost all the students who obtained A and B passes for GCE (A/L) are clustered in the 3 highest language groups while the highest number of weak passes and failures are found in Group 1.

There was only 1 student who obtained an A pass at the GCE (A/L) English while there were 3 with a B pass. About half (67) failed in A/L English while 38 obtained a simple pass. Only 15 have a credit pass.

The only A pass is in Group 10 with 3 B passes falling into the groups 9 and 10. Most weak passes are in the lowest proficiency groups.

Student feedback on the confidence building course was sought relating to 3 main areas: A) their confidence level to speak English in different situations, B) about the logistics of the course such as modules and duration and C) the impact of the course on their English language learning in general.

A. Confidence to Speak English in Different Situations

Students were asked to rate their level of confidence to speak in English in different situations after following the course on a Likert scale with responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The situations were, i) with friends inside the classroom, ii) with friends outside the classroom, iii) with

Table 12.1: GCE (O/L) results and student groups

Grade for English in O/L - Group in which you study cross tabulation											
Grade for English in O/L	Group in which you study										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	7	10
B	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	6	12
C	1	5	3	4	5	6	6	3	6	2	41
S	10	5	9	7	7	6	3	6	2	0	55
W	1	0	2	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	7
No response	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	12	11	14	13	14	12	10	12	12	16	126

Table 12.2: GCE (A/L) results and student groups

Grade for English in A/L - Group in which you study cross tabulation											
Grade for	Group in which you study										
English in A/L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
C	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	8	15
S	1	1	3	4	6	5	5	2	6	5	38
W	10	9	10	8	8	7	5	7	3	0	67
No Response	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Total	12	11	14	13	14	12	10	12	12	16	126

their teachers inside the classroom, iv) with their teachers outside the classroom, v) in front of their class and vi) with anyone who speaks English. The data is analysed and presented below.

The data shows 95 students strongly agreeing with the statement that they have developed sufficient confidence to speak English with their friends inside the classroom. Thirty (30) students somewhat agreed that they built sufficient confidence while only one (1) responded as “cannot say” about developing such confidence. None of the students responded in the negative.

A majority of 67 students somewhat agreed that their confidence to speak English with friends outside the classroom increased after the course while 50 of them strongly agreed with the same. Seven (7) students could not say whether their confidence was developed to do the same while 02 strongly disagreed that they increased their confidence to speak with friends outside the classroom. There were none who somewhat disagreed with the statement.

A large majority of 95 students strongly agreed that they developed increased

confidence to speak in English with their teachers inside the classroom while 29 somewhat agreed that they developed the confidence to do the same. Two (2) were non-committal. None responded negatively.

Seventy-three (73) students strongly agreed that they developed sufficient confidence to speak in English with their teachers outside the classroom while 45 somewhat agreed to the same. Five (05) students stated that they could not say anything about it with 03 somewhat disagreeing with the statement. No one strongly disagreed.

To the statement that the confidence was developed to speak in English in front of the class, 71 strongly agreed and 45 students somewhat agreed. Eight students (08) were non-committal and 01 each reported that they somewhat and strongly disagreed with the statement.

Forty-four (44) students strongly agreed that they developed enough confidence to speak English with anyone who spoke in English after the course. Sixty-six (66) somewhat agreed with the same with 15

Figure 12.1: Confidence to speak English with friends inside the classroom after the course

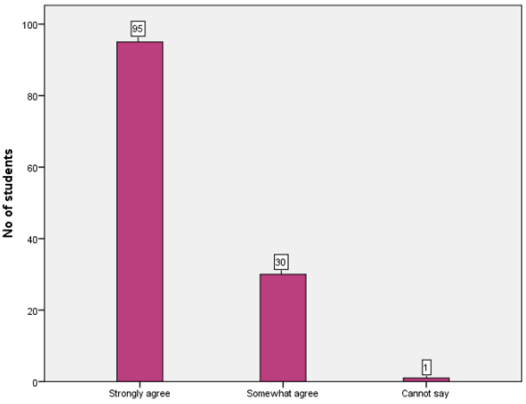


Figure 12.2: Confidence to speak English with friends outside the classroom after the course

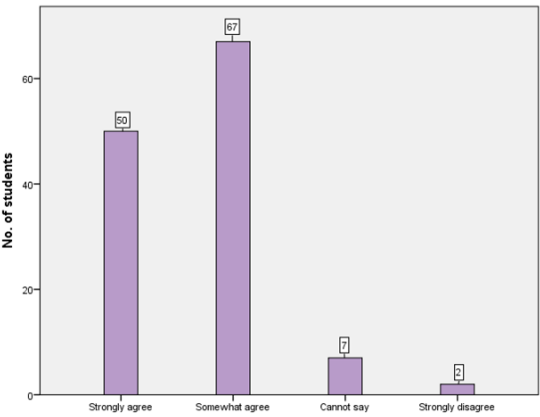


Figure 12.3: Confidence to speak English with teachers inside the classroom after the course

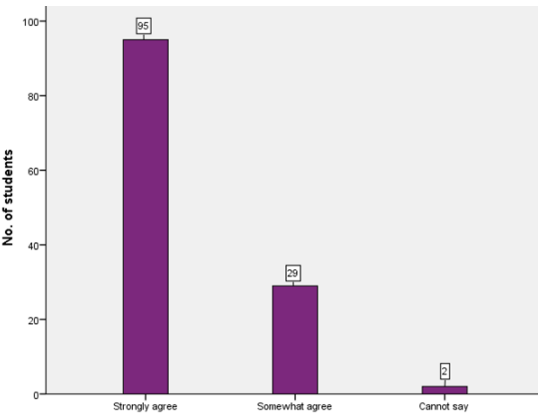


**Figure 12.4: Confidence to speak English with teachers
outside the classroom after the course**

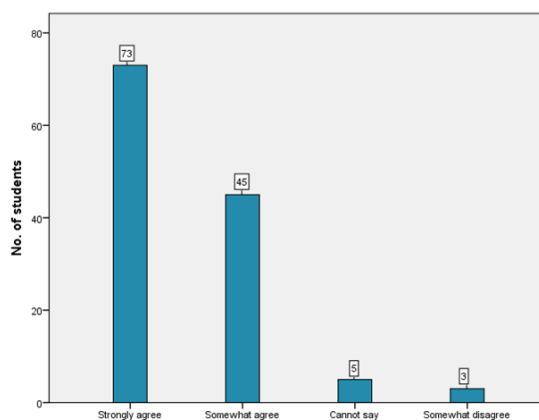


Figure 12.5: Confidence to speak English in front of the class after the course

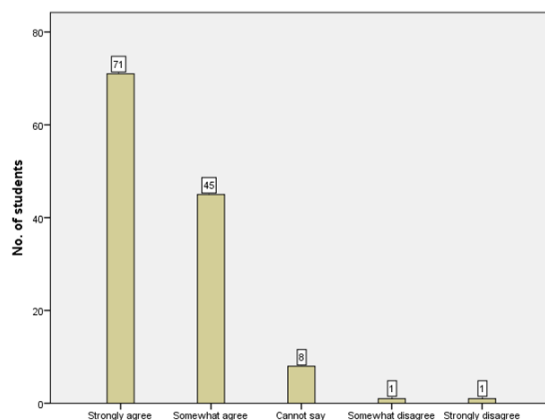
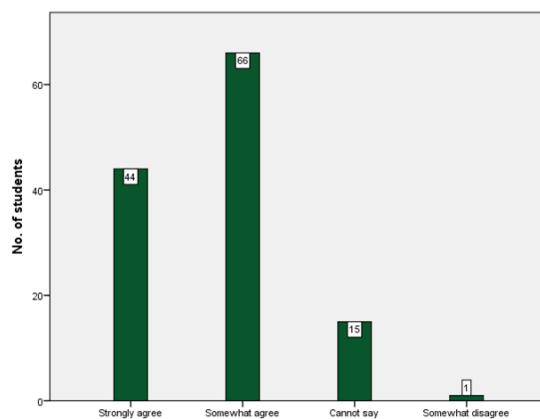


**Figure 12.6: Confidence to speak English with anyone who speaks
English after the course**



stating that they could not say that for sure. Only 01 somewhat disagreed that they developed enough confidence to speak in English with anyone. And none strongly disagreed to the same.

B. About the Logistics of the Course such as Modules and Duration

All of the students stated that their teacher's teaching was excellent and friendly. Some were generous enough to say they "started loving English" because of the teacher and her teaching. Even though the course does not set a goal of improving English speech as the main objective, students seem to believe that it helped to improve their speaking skills and vocabulary as well.

The feedback on the lesson materials was divided with more than half stating that they were sufficient, interesting and good while about ¼ of the students in the sample felt that they were too simple. Another ¼ wanted grammar to be included while a few saw the materials as neutral or mixed responses. This reflects the initial proficiency levels of the students as the

placement test results revealed, in that a large majority belonged to low and around average proficiency levels who find the learning material suitable to their level of proficiency while around 30-40 students in the upper category seem to feel that the modules were too low for their level.

About half of the student population seem to like the initial 3-hour sessions. However, 1/3 of the students in the sample found that the 5-hour lectures conducted towards the end were too long. Even when 100% of the time in class was used for speaking, there still seems to be a minority who needs more time for speaking. It is noteworthy that there were 3 students who felt that the time spent on the course was a waste and that there was no freedom because of the classes. These may be the 3 students of which one has an A pass and two have a B pass each at their A/L English and were placed in the highest proficiency group (Group 10).

The most noteworthy comments are about their reduced fear and the built confidence levels to speak English. In

Table 12.3: Students' feedback on the teacher and her teaching

Code (comment category)	Example expression	No. of comments
Excellent teaching, friendly	"We were happy to learn from our teacher as she was not strict on correcting our mistakes in speaking", "our best friend"; "All students were treated equally." "The best teacher that I ever had."	126
Started loving English b's of teacher & her teaching	"I started loving English after this course as thing was practical." "Sad to mis her." "...this my 1 st started to my sunshine life."	32
Improved vocabulary	"Phrase for the day is very useful. Need more of them."	11
Improved spoken English	"Within a few months we could speak English."	26
Total		195

Note: The total number of responses exceeds the total number of students owing to some students giving multiple responses.

Table 12.4: Lesson materials and content

Code (comment category)	Example expression	No. of comments
Sufficient, interesting and good	"They are very clear and I understand well."	78
Activities are not sufficient, too simple. Need advanced modules	"Modules are boring." "Not satisfied." "honestly these modules were like grade 3 like."	37
Need grammar & writing	"Need grammar activities."	31
Can't say anything/They are okay / Not bad	"Some modules were so boring and some modules were good."	8
Total		154

Note: The total number of responses exceeds the total number of students owing to some students giving multiple responses.

Table 12.5: Time/duration (We had classes 3 hours a day for 4 weeks, and the last week of the course for 5 hours)

Code (comment category)	Example expression	No. of comments
Sufficient & very useful	"Had a great time."	66
Need more time to speak	"We want more time speaking."	8
Not sufficient	"More time"	5
Too much	"This time period '5 hours' is very long." "3 hours enough."	40
Time wasted	"We can't do anything. Not freedom, very boring. Disturb to our semester studies."	3
Total		122

addition, they admitted that they enjoyed the course, and it was a "wonderful experience" for them. A considerable number of students requested that the English courses continue. Also, they expressed their need to practice speaking more. The most noteworthy outcome is that after the course, 88% (111 out of 126) of the students have developed a preference to speak more English.

C. The Impact of the Course on their English Language Learning in General

Students were asked to rate the impact of the course on their English language

learning in general covering, whether i) their fear/shyness to speak English was reduced, ii) they knew what words/verbs to use in speaking English, iii) they had more words/phrases to speak English², iv) they liked to speak in English more and v) they wanted to learn English more.

The data is presented below.

Sixty-five (65) students strongly agreed that their fear/shyness to speak English

- The ii) and iii) aspects are checked as opposed to the needs analysis outcomes. Students at the needs analysis stated that they did not know what word/verb to use when speaking, an uncertainty leading to a lack of confidence to speak English.

Table 12.6: Other comments on the course

Code (comment category)	Example expression	No. of comments
Need more speaking/pronunciation practice	Please continue this programme.	21
Drama competition / speech practice helped us get rid of fear to speak English/ Built confidence	“We got the good confidence and shyless.”	48
This course is excellent, and we are happy, we enjoyed the course	“Wonderful experience.”	42
This course proved that English is not difficult	“English not difficult”	10
Continue the programme	“We want to continue English.”	32
Repeat the same course for us and juniors.	“Please give this course to our juniors”	6
Offer us a certificate.	“Give a certificate.”	2
Group activities built new friendship with students belonging to other ethnic groups.	“Can talk to Tamil muslim friends”	6
Course helped to get out of monotony and took hidden talents out	“It was funny.”	9
Total		176

Note: The total number of responses exceeds the total number of students owing to some students giving multiple responses.

was reduced after the course while 46 somewhat agreed with the same. There were 07 students who responded as “Cannot say” while 04 strongly disagreed that their fear/shyness of speaking in English was reduced. Two (02) students somewhat disagreed to the same and 02 others did not respond.

Students were asked to rate their development in regard to the ability to use words and verbs appropriately in speaking English and 65 strongly agreed that it was developed after the course while 54 somewhat agreed to the same and 07 stated that they were unable to say anything about it. No student disagreed.

Students were asked to rate their improvement in regard to vocabulary

after the course. Sixty-seven (67) strongly agreed that they knew more words and verbs to speak while 51 somewhat agreed that they have developed their vocabulary. Seven (07) were unable to agree or disagree with one (01) student somewhat disagreeing that he/she developed his/her vocabulary after the course.

After the course, 111 strongly agreed that their liking for speaking in English has increased while 13 somewhat agreed with the same. Only 02 stated that they could not give any rating for the same. None of the students either strongly or somewhat disagreed.

Upon asking students whether their liking for learning English increased after the course, 112 students strongly agreed that they wanted to learn English after the

Figure 12.7: The fear/shyness to speak English after the course is reduced

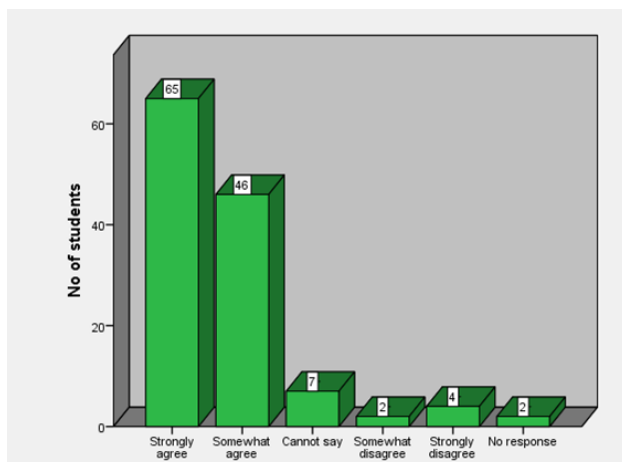


Figure 12.8: The uncertainty to use words after the course

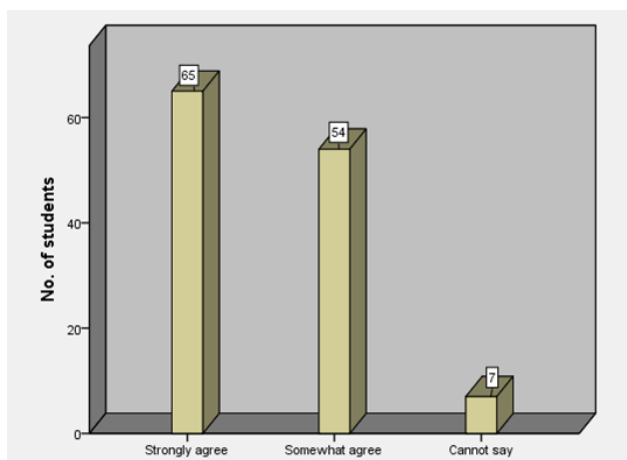


Figure 12.9: The vocabulary development after the course

After the course, students have more words/phrases to use in speaking English.

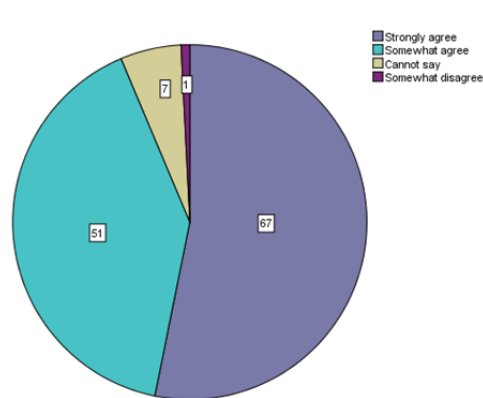
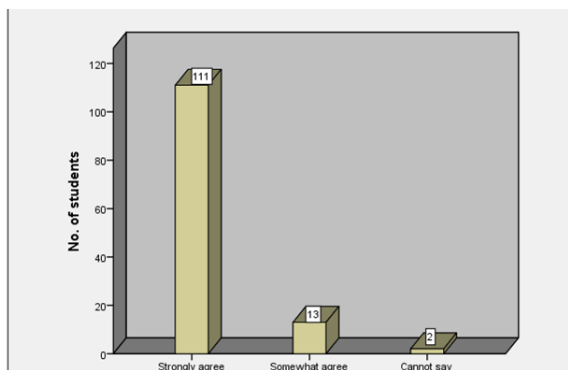


Figure 12.10: The preference to speak English after the course

Preference for speaking in English increased.



course, while 10 somewhat agreed with the same. Three (03) were unable to rate with 1 not responding to the statement.

Discussion

The main objective of the course is to build student confidence to speak English. It *does not aim to improve English language proficiency*. It is deemed a bonus if students have also improved their English language proficiency by following the course. The needs analysis revealed that students lacked confidence to speak English despite speaking being the most sought-after skill by the students. Their lack of confidence to speak English stems from fear and shyness due to being ridiculed by the society for their mistakes and results in uncertainty when they are unable to find correct words/grammatical forms to speak. The course is designed to give students the maximum possible exposure to listening and responding in English irrespective of the variety or quality of English they can produce when speaking. The main feature of this course is the teaching methodology, which creates a safe zone for students to speak English without being self-conscious about the accuracy of their spoken English. The intention for obtaining student feedback

is to see whether they have gained confidence to speak English; and if they have, when and where the students have gained confidence to speak English; in other words, the situations in which they have gained confidence to speak English; and the people with whom they feel they can speak in English with confidence. If any English language improvement is experienced, it is a by-product of the confidence-building process.

A. Confidence to Speak English

i) Inside the classroom

The student feedback shows that almost all of the students have overcome their inhibition to speak English with friends in the classroom without being fearful of ridicule by their peers after studying in the Building Confidence to Speak English course. In addition, the students have built enough confidence to speak English with their teachers in the classroom environment and are comfortable in doing so. Also, students have built up enough confidence to speak English in front of their class. This may be a result of their small group performances in front of the class for one month without having been corrected by their teachers at every step in the speech performance.

This may be corroborated by the student feedback on the teachers and their teaching styles; namely, that the special teaching methodology employed to teach English in this course would have played an important role in making them think of the teachers as their “best friends”; a methodology with no error correction, no homework, no grammar teaching, no compulsion to perform, consisting only of group tasks with no individual activities, etc. These measures seemed to have made the classroom into a safe zone as we intended with few “threats,” so that students could build confidence to speak English inside the classroom.

ii) *Outside the classroom*

After the course, students have built their confidence enough to speak English with their teachers, even outside of the classroom environment. The findings further reveal that students have built their confidence to speak English with their peers outside the classroom considerably as well. It seems that students are able to project the confidence that is built to speak English within the classroom to the outside environment as well, with the same audience, their peers and teachers. In addition, a significant percentage of students seem to have built their

confidence to speak English with anyone who speaks English irrespective of who they are and where they get to speak. However, the number of students who built the confidence to speak English with anyone seems low in comparison with those who built up enough confidence to speak English in the other situations. The stage play competition that made them practise acting while talking in English would likely have contributed to their confidence to speak English outside the classroom environment as well.

B. About the Logistics of the Course

Student views of other aspects pertaining to the course seem to vary. Three hours a day to learn English seems preferable to 5 hours. This is quite understandable as any learning undertaken for 5 hours per day would exhaust anyone. In order to pick up the lapse due to the temporary closure, 5 hours of teaching was done in the last week of the program. The modules are liked by a majority with their easy language even though a few students with a higher language proficiency seem to have found them to be too easy. The tasks are sequenced from easy to more challenging which required student involvement rising from pair work to small groups and finally to engagement with the whole class.

Table 12.7: The preference to learn English after the course

		Want to learn English more			Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	112	88.9	88.9	88.9
	Somewhat agree	10	7.9	7.9	96.8
	Cannot say	3	2.4	2.4	99.2
	No response	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

The tasks are mostly related to their everyday experiences both academic and otherwise. Students seem to have been able to connect with them easily as their challenge is to use English rather than accomplishing the task per se.

C. Impact of the Course on English Language Learning in General

The effect of the course on other areas related to English language learning demonstrates that a large majority of the students experienced a decrease in their fear and shyness to speak English. This is of course a result of the confidence built to speak English.

Another effect is that students gained the ability to use the appropriate words when they spoke in English. Their inability to find the appropriate words, and their uncertainty over the chosen words were reported as major factors inhibiting them from speaking English at the needs analysis level. However, during the course, students seem to have gained some certainty when using the word/s appropriate for the situation. At the same time, students report that their vocabulary has improved as well. This may be owing to the “phrase for the day” technique whereby teachers are supposed to give a phrase every day for students to use in performing the tasks. Some of the phrases given to the teachers at the teacher training sessions include, ‘Move your chair please’; ‘Could you please show me your answer?’; ‘Have you completed the task?’ etc. the language students would need to use then and there in the activities. By the end of the course students would have had about 30-40 phrases, which they used on daily basis during classes. As some students pointed

out, the phrase for the day “is very useful. Need more of them.”

This course obviously motivated the students to speak English more, as nearly everyone stated that after the course their preference for speaking English increased. Students reveal that they developed a liking for learning English after engaging in speech activities throughout the course. This is supported by their request that the course should continue. In addition, we received a large number of emails requesting the same. Even though this is not among the intended outcomes, it shows that the built confidence to speak English from the course could be projected towards developing a liking for learning English in general.

The Safe Zone

The safe zone for building confidence to speak English is created within the four walls of the classroom with the friendly approach of the teacher, using carefully designed materials in teaching. The positive experiences students faced speaking English inside the classroom made them feel less fearful and more confident to speak English both inside and outside the classroom in addition to wanting to learn English more. Herein, the teacher factor is pivotal in changing learner attitudes. The teaching methodology that demanded the teachers to overlook student mistakes and errors, not force students to work individually, not expect mandatory performance at the end of a task, etc. play a major role in creating the safe zone. On the other hand, the prohibition of the use of the mother tongue, the compulsion to use English during the class - the most

daunting task, etc. are compensated by the relaxing environment where individual performances are not required; hence there are no “threats” directed at an individual as group performance on a voluntary basis is the norm. The positive effect of this methodology is evidenced as students perceive the course as a “wonderful experience” as one commented, “Within a few months we could speak English”.

Students may have found the classes relaxing when there was no compulsion for them to read and understand the content in the modules prior to carrying out the tasks as teachers were asked not to emphasise students reading the instructions for the activities given in the modules as the objective of the course was not to improve reading or reading comprehension. Instead, teachers were asked to explain what was to be carried out and students were required to follow instructions and carry out the task themselves. At the same time, teachers were asked not to give any homework to students and that would have made them feel relaxed to come back to classes every day.

The stage plays seem to have boosted students’ confidence considerably as they performed on stage in English for a competition. As one commented, “We got the good confident and shyless (*sic*)”. The scheduled after class hours of stage play practices seem to have helped them feel less inhibited in using English in spoken form. Students considered the course as a “wonderful experience” where they felt “happy” and “enjoyed” learning. In this “created” safe zone, students commented that they were able to talk with students belonging to other ethnic groups whose mother tongue was different than theirs.

In discussing the negative experiences learners have had in their English language learning histories in creating poor learner identities and equally poor possible selves must have a root cause both in the classroom and outside, (Koay, 2018). What took place inside the classroom during the course is the reverse, that the learners were given positive experiences thereby eradicating the negativity they associated with English language learning. Learners seem to have developed an association of themselves with better possible selves and a positive identity vis-à-vis English language learning as being able to speak with confidence made them feel “English not difficult” (*sic*).

The characteristics of a ‘safe zone’ discussed are carefully designed, implemented and monitored. The prime intention of such a maneuver is to give students the maximum exposure to the target language thereby helping them reduce Language Attitude Anxiety. Psychologists view exposure as effective in reducing anxiety on four different levels: (a) physiological, (b) psychological, (c) behavioural and (d) emotional (Shpancer, 2010). Exposure makes habituating the nervous system and it is a *physiological* antidote to anxiety (*ibid.*). On the *psychological* level, confronting fear/shyness/uncertainty leaves a person with a sense of achievement. Every time learners speak/respond in English, they confront their own fear/shyness/uncertainty and gain power; as a result, their LAA loses strength. In order for this to happen, the safe zone in the classroom must operate at all times (Attanayake, 2019). To this end,

the teacher must follow the specifically designed teaching methodology at all times. On the *behavioural* level, habit formation takes place when learners confront their fear/shyness/uncertainty every time they speak English (maybe slowly at first) steadily developing the skill. As a result, the sense of failure diminishes and LAA is reduced. Exposure is helpful at an *emotional* level as well. Shpancer (2010) observes that many anxiety issues have a fear of fear at their core. Usually, the learners are discouraged by the sensation of fear owing to overcorrection by teachers. However, when learners are exposed to situations where only English is spoken in a safe environment, they lose the fear of fear and become habituated to speak in English. This helps them improve their emotional literacy because staying in the English-speaking setting helps them learn how to navigate, manage and work within an environment in which the fear

of fear has been neutralized (Shpancer, 2010).

Conclusion

Students have built confidence to speak English within the classroom with their peers and teachers significantly. Their confidence to speak English with the same groups outside of the classroom has increased as well, although to a lesser degree. Their confidence to speak English with anyone who speaks English has also increased to a certain degree. The most noteworthy outcome is that after the course, a large majority developed a preference to speak English more than ever had before. This contributed to making them feel less uncertain/fearful about speaking in English. Also, they have increased their vocabulary, making them feel empowered with more words/phrases to use. As a result of their newly built confidence to speak English, they seem to have developed a desire to learn English and confidence in their ability to do so contributing to develop positive learner identities and better L2 possible selves.

References

- Attanayake, A.U. (2019). *Post-colonial curriculum practices in South Asia: Building confidence to speak English*. London: Routledge.
- Giles, H., & Rakić, T. (2014) Language attitudes: the social determinants and consequences of language variation. In: Holtgraves, TM (ed), *Oxford Handbook of Language and Social Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 11–26.
- Gluszek, A., & Dovidio, J.F. (2010). Speaking With a Nonnative Accent: Perceptions of Bias, Communication Difficulties, and Belonging in the United States. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X09359590>
- Koay, J. (2018). What is learner identity? *EduMaxi Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 33, 119–120. Dankook University. Retrieved from: <http://www.edumaxi.com/what-is-learner-identity/>
- MacIntyre, P.D. (1995). How does anxiety affect second language learning? A reply to Sparks and Ganschow. *The Modern Language Journal*, 79(1), 90–99.
- Marcus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist*, 41, 954–969.
- Razfar, A., & Rumenapp, J.C. (2011). Developmental Context(s): Mediating Learning through Language Ideologies, *Human Development*, Vol. 54, No. 4, pp. 241–269.
- Shpancer, N. (2010). Retrieved from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/insight-therapy/201009/overcoming-fear-the-only-way-out-is-through>

Chapter 13

DEVELOPING READING AND WRITING SKILLS IN ENGLISH OF ARTS UNDERGRADUATES THROUGH CONTENT BASED MATERIALS

S.K. Kannathas

Introduction

The desire for Learning English as a second language (ESL) among human beings is observed in this globalized world nowadays as it focuses on promoting trade, technology, scientific researches, cultural and social fusions and political links. English is expected to contribute in a favorable manner to accelerate the process of globalization. In spite of the efforts made to promote the standard of English language teaching and learning as a second language, still there is an accusation that the learners' communicative competence is not developed to the expected level. In teaching a second language, teachers are compelled to search for an effective and result oriented method to be applied in classrooms to help learners to achieve their target proficiency level. In this situation, it is of vital importance that teachers should be equipped with innovative pedagogic skills deviating from traditional chalk and talk teaching method. An appropriate method which undoubtedly contributes to the improvement of teaching and learning a second language, and professional development is carrying out 'research',

where teachers experiment and reflect on problems, reasons and solutions. A Language teacher plays the role of a facilitator to evolve appropriate strategies to stimulate the learners to achieve their target proficiency level with available materials and methods. Since change is the fundamental idea for improvement in teaching, the traditional language teaching has undergone a critical change throughout the world. The success in teaching ESL depends on how best a teacher ensures involvement of the learners in learning with real motivation and enthusiasm by catering to their needs. Language Teachers should change their teaching ideas and focus on the ways to make the learning activities attractive.

Since English language was made a compulsory second language to be taught and learned, there have been problems of inadequacy of teachers and lack of materials for it. A language is assumed to be well taught and learnt only under circumstances where there are properly qualified teaching personnel and sufficient facilities conducive to pedagogic purposes. It is very clear that right from the beginning in the history of English as a second language,

there have been problems in recruiting teachers to English, providing them necessary training and making materials available. In spite of all the efforts of the government in collaboration with many non-governmental organizations aided by foreign countries, the performance of the students at the GCE Ordinary Level and GCE Advanced Level examinations has not reached the desired proficiency level. In the recent years the government has taken highly concerned measures to promote the standard of English Language in schools. The teaching approaches have been changed and revised from time to time. The curriculum has undergone changes and text books have been restructured. Yet, the competency of the students has not reached the desired level.

Also, English language Competency of the undergraduates is not appreciable. Their motivation is accelerated towards learning English for the personal extrinsic goals such as employment opportunities and graduate studies. Their level of motivation is generally high, but the need to pedagogically assist their requirements of promotional prospects is seen as a crux to the pedagogical implications. As a result, when they go for employment, employers frequently complain about the graduates' low proficiency in English. This may be one of the reasons for comparatively low employability rate of the Arts Graduates mentioned in the recent survey of University Grants Commission. The Department of English Language Teaching is accused by the university administration for the low competency level of the graduates in English at interviews held for recruitment.

Literature Review

In Sri Lankan universities, a number of degree programmes in English Language Teaching (ELT) are offered; English For General Academic Purpose, English for Specific Purpose, English For Business Communication, English For Communication, and Advanced English. The success of such programmes depends on effective teaching methodology and the curricular addressed to the needs of the students. There have been a number of researches done on these ELT programmes in the universities. Even then, there has hardly been any change in undergraduates' performance indicator. In a research it has been mentioned "What hasn't changed is that when revisions are made to university English language curricula, they lack coherence and grit" (Attanayake 2017). In our state universities, the undergraduates are offered a second language course named English for General Academic Purpose (EGAP) in their first year. A study based on EGAP states that "the students have a wide range of needs, which includes academic, occupational and social needs, which they hope to fulfill by following the EGAP course" (De Silva and Devendra 2014). During specialization in the second and third year, they are offered English for Specific Purpose (ESP). This course unit provides them opportunity to use a wide range of reading materials. A study on this reveals that "the undergraduates have realized the value and importance of English in their academic and future endeavours and are keen to improve the skills related to English language. And also the English language proficiency and related skills could be stimulated, inculcated and enhanced through

effective teaching methodology and the L2 vocabulary enhancement could be done vastly through the exposure to the L2 vocabulary itself” (Weeraratna, Wijetunge & Jayasinghe). The results of another study revealed that majority of teachers were not aware and exposed to any research related to ELT (Gunawarddana & Karunarathna 2017). A study conducted in the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka revealed that Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) will motivate the undergraduates to enthusiastically participate in ESL classroom activities to enhance their writing skill (Janarththan, 2018)

Content Based Language Teaching

The researcher with his thirty years of experience in teaching English as a Second Language feels the importance of Content Based Materials in teaching and learning English Language. These materials will certainly hold the interest of the learners and thereby motivate them to get involved in classroom activities.

Content Based Language Teaching (CBLT), which is known as Content Based Instruction (CBI), introduced a few decades ago is a form of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in which language instruction is integrated with academic content instruction. Content-based approach to second language teaching has become increasingly well-known and accepted at all levels of education. In content-based instruction, focus is on students’ learning and sharing of information through the medium of the second language, needed for learning the particular content. In content-based instruction, there is the need to draw

learners’ attention to the functions of the second language within communicative situations. Content-Based Instruction is an approach to second language teaching in which teaching is organized around the content or information that students will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or other type of syllabus.

“Content-based instruction is a vibrant approach to curriculum design that is able to ‘flex’ to fit a wide variety of student populations, settings, and program goals.” (Ann Snow & Brinton 2017). Sharing with CLT the same fundamental principles, CBI bases its idiosyncrasy on promoting the use of subject matter for second/foreign language teaching purposes. (Dueñas, 2009). CBI, CBLT and CLIL have been argued to increase student motivation, promote cognitive engagement, and enable acquisition of both basic and interpersonal communication skills and cognitive academic learning proficiency (Lightbown, 2014)

Researches done on content-based instruction show even though CBI has been proved as an effective approach in various language settings, this promising curricular approach remains rarely implemented in mainstream foreign language educational texts. This may be due to the fear among the language teachers to use academic reading materials of other subjects. “The teachers struggle mainly with the idea of teaching language through content, a concept they have difficulty grasping or even accepting as a possibility. Professional development programs must be designed to respond to this specific challenge if they are to help teachers explore new

instructional possibilities.” (Laurent, 2010).

An action research conducted to find out the strengths and weaknesses of content-based instruction on teaching reading in Nepal states “Content-based instruction was found to be effective in teaching reading” (Adhikary, 2020.) In a study conducted in Thailand among the undergraduates, the researcher states that “It can be concluded that the use of content-based instruction contributed to improved English language performance of Thai undergraduate students as it can help them learn English and perform better.” (Vanichvasin, 2019).

Advantages of Content Based Language Teaching

There are a number of advantages of CBLT. It can make learners learn a language more interestingly and with motivation. Learners can use the language to fulfill a real purpose, which can make students both more independent and confident. Learners can also develop reading on the subject of their interest through CBI which can improve and support their graduate studies. It can help learners to develop their communicative skills as it paves way for them get involved keenly in classroom activities. CBLT is very popular among EAP (English for Academic Purposes) teachers as it helps students to develop valuable study skills such as note taking, summarizing and extracting key information from texts.

Research: This study focuses on the efficiency and effectiveness of using CBLT in ESL classrooms to enhance competency level of the L2 learners. For this, academic reading materials on

Economics and Linguistics were selected (Social sciences and Humanities).

The purpose of the study: The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of an ESL classroom employing academic reading materials to enhance language competency of the social sciences and humanities undergraduates. The main objectives of the study are

- i. To find out whether CBLT motivate L2 learners’ involvement in the classrooms.
- ii. To find out whether using academic reading materials enrich L2 learners’ motivation in improving their competency in English Language.
- iii. To propose suitability of academic reading materials to enhance the performance level of L2 learners.

Research Methodology: The data display of this study is in qualitative research method. The research instruments of this study are classroom observation and the final ESL examination results.

Participants: To achieve the aim of this study, undergraduates of the University of Jaffna from Economics (to represent Social sciences discipline), and Linguistics (to represent Humanities discipline) were selected.

Duration of the Study: The selected undergraduates were taught ESL integrating academic reading content and language skills for one year, covering two semesters of their specialization in the third year.

Hypothesis of the Study: ‘The content based academic reading material in

CBLT holds the interest of L2 learners to be motivated to get involved keenly in ESL classroom activities for better performance.'

Theory Involved in the Study:

Motivation is a key factor for explaining the success or failure of any difficult activity. We know that success in a task is due to the fact that someone is motivated. It has been noticed that in second language learning, a learner will be successful with the right motivation. Motivation theory of Gardner (2010) supports this study, which includes motivational components such as attitudes towards learning the language, motivational intensity and desire to learn the language, and effort of the learners to learn the language to bring positive influence on performance in the language-learning classroom.

Limitations of the Study: The researcher of this study thought of doing this research in the University of Jaffna and the Eastern University in Sri Lanka. But due to the present COVID 19 situation the research is limited to the University of Jaffna. The difficulty in collecting the data from the Examination Branch in the pandemic situation barricaded the researcher to use only three years' data for the study. The researcher could not include more undergraduates from other disciplines of social sciences and humanities because of the present situation.

Experimental Teaching: The undergraduates from the departments of Economics and Linguistics and English were taught ESL using the academic reading materials of their relevant subjects in CBLT approach during the

two semesters of their specialization in the third year. The exercises were given on skimming, scanning, transferring information to the tables, comprehension, guided writing, and oral WH questions. In the first semester, the assessments were done on speaking and listening skills. The learners did PowerPoint presentations on their relevant subjects chosen by them. The lecturers from the respective departments were also invited for feedback and suggestions for further improvement. In the second semester, the assessments were done on reading and writing skills.

Evaluation Process: In the third year first semester, evaluation was done in the following manner: 30% for Presentation, 10% for Listening, 20% for PowerPoint presentation and interaction, and 40% for final exam. In the third year second semester evaluation was done in the following manner: 20% for reading assessments, 20% for writing assessments, and 60% for final exam.

Data Analysis: The Table shows the performance of the learners in three batches; one is the batch before the CBLT, second is the CBLT experimental batch, and the third is the batch after CBLT. The grades denote the scores in the following manner;

Although the target group is the third year, the second year performance is also analyzed to compare the performance of the learners.

The analysis clearly shows that the performance of CBLT experimental batch is higher in the third year of Economics and Linguistics. Economics students'

Batch	Year	Semester	Discipline	# students	A+	A	A-	B+	B	Total	Percentage	A+p	Ap	A-p	B+p	Bp	ΔB
Year before CBLT	2nd year	First semester	Economics	64	0	2	6	11	15	34	53%	0%	3%	9%	17%	23%	47%
Year before CBLT	2nd year	Second semester	Economics	64	0	1	6	12	16	35	55%	0%	2%	9%	19%	25%	45%
Year before CBLT	3rd year	First semester	Economics	63	1	2	5	15	10	33	52%	2%	3%	8%	24%	16%	48%
Year before CBLT	3rd year	Second semester	Economics	63	0	1	5	13	11	30	48%	0%	2%	8%	21%	17%	52%
Year before CBLT	2nd year	First semester	Linguistics	23	0	1	1	0	6	8	35%	0%	4%	4%	0%	26%	65%
Year before CBLT	2nd year	Second semester	Linguistics	23	0	1	1	0	6	8	35%	0%	4%	4%	0%	26%	65%
Year before CBLT	3rd year	First semester	Linguistics	23	1	1	6	4	0	12	52%	4%	4%	26%	17%	0%	48%
Year before CBLT	3rd year	Second semester	Linguistics	23	2	1	2	6	2	13	57%	9%	4%	9%	26%	9%	43%
CBLT experiment batch	2nd year	First semester	Economics	37	0	5	2	5	11	23	62%	0%	14%	5%	14%	30%	38%
CBLT experiment batch	2nd year	Second semester	Economics	36	0	2	6	5	10	23	64%	0%	6%	17%	14%	28%	36%
CBLT experiment batch	3rd year	First semester	Economics	36	1	15	17	3	0	36	100%	3%	42%	47%	8%	0%	0%
CBLT experiment batch	3rd year	Second semester	Economics	36	2	15	12	7	0	36	100%	6%	42%	33%	19%	0%	0%
CBLT experiment batch	2nd year	First semester	Linguistics	19	0	0	2	2	5	9	47%	0%	0%	11%	11%	26%	53%

CBLT experiment batch	2nd year	Second semester	Linguistics	19	0	0	2	1	5	8	42%	0%	0%	11%	5%	26%	58%
CBLT experiment batch	3rd year	First semester	Linguistics	19	0	1	4	4	4	13	68%	0%	5%	21%	21%	21%	32%
CBLT experiment batch	3rd year	Second semester	Linguistics	19	1	2	5	6	4	18	95%	5%	11%	26%	32%	21%	5%
Year after CBLT	2nd year	First semester	Economics	45	0	3	6	8	7	24	53%	0%	7%	13%	18%	16%	47%
Year after CBLT	2nd year	Second semester	Economics	45	2	2	6	7	7	24	53%	4%	4%	13%	16%	16%	47%
Year after CBLT	3rd year	First semester	Economics	44	1	10	10	9	0	30	68%	2%	23%	23%	20%	0%	32%
Year after CBLT	3rd year	Second semester	Economics	44	2	1	7	9	4	23	52%	5%	2%	16%	20%	9%	48%
Year after CBLT	2nd year	First semester	Linguistics	10	0	1	1	2	2	6	60%	0%	10%	10%	20%	20%	40%
Year after CBLT	2nd year	Second semester	Linguistics	10	0	1	2	2	2	7	70%	0%	10%	20%	20%	20%	30%
Year after CBLT	3rd year	First semester	Linguistics	10	0	1	2	1	4	8	80%	0%	10%	20%	10%	40%	20%
Year after CBLT	3rd year	Second semester	Linguistics	10	0	1	2	1	4	8	80%	0%	10%	20%	10%	40%	20%

The above Table shows the performance of the learners in three batches; one is the batch before the CBLT, second is the CBLT experimental batch, and the third is the batch after CBLT. The grades denotes the scores in the following manner;

A+ 80 and above
A- 70 - 74
B 60- 64
A 75 - 79
B+ 65- 69

performance is 100% for both semesters and linguistics students' performance is 68% in the first semester, and 95% in the second semester. The CBLT experimental Batch in the second year showed relatively low scores in second year. Economics students' performance was 62% in the first semester and 64% in the second semester. Linguistics students' performance was 47% in the first semester and 42% in the second semester. The performance of the Economics and Linguistics students was lower in the batch before CBLT and after CBLT. The Economics students' performance was around 50% before CBLT and Linguistics

students' performance was 35% in second year, and 55% in average in the third year. The performance of the Batch after CBLT was also comparatively low with 60% in average in the Economics discipline. But the Linguistics students' performance was 65% in the second year and 80% in the third year.

Observation

The learners in the CBLT classroom were quite interested in the academic reading materials used and actively participated with true enthusiasm in the activities and highly motivated in by CBLT approach.

Figure 13.1a: Linguistics - Second Year

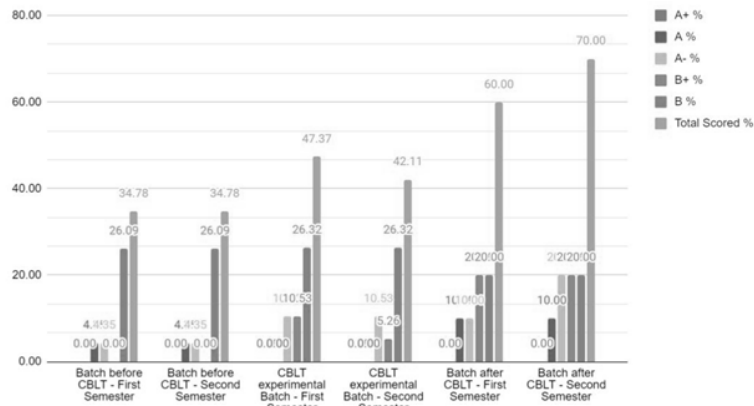


Figure 13.1b: Linguistics - Second Year

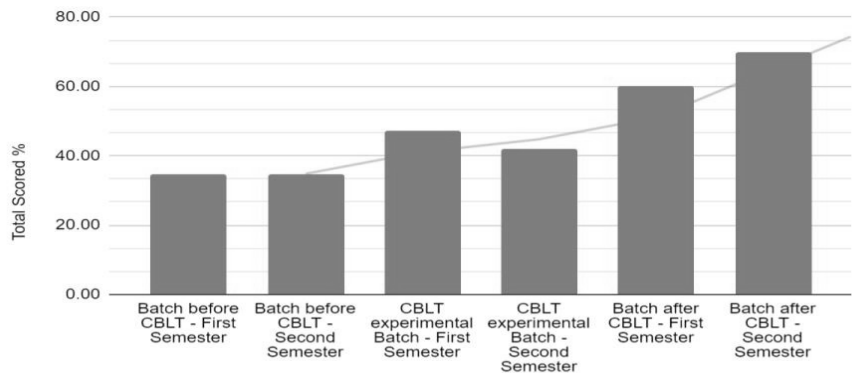


Figure 13.2a: Linguistics - Third Year

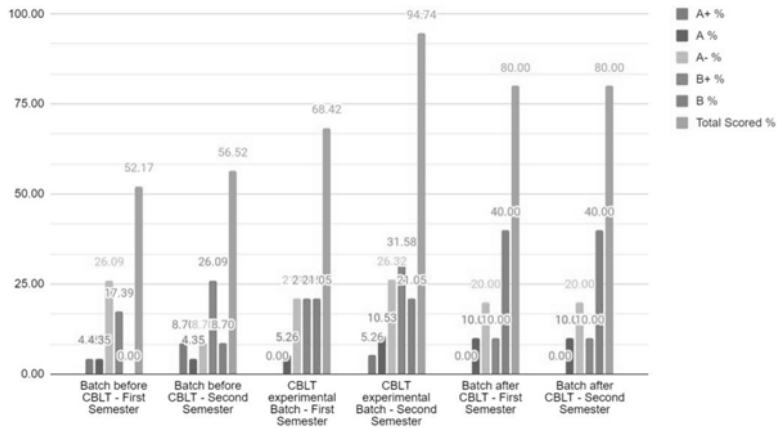


Figure 13.2b: Linguistics - Third Year

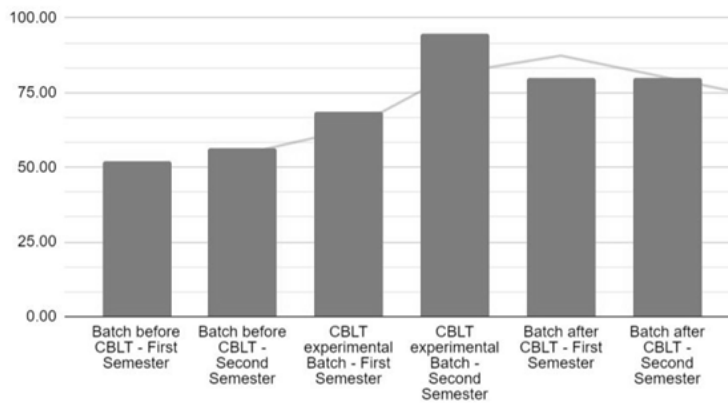


Figure 13.3a: Economics - Second Year

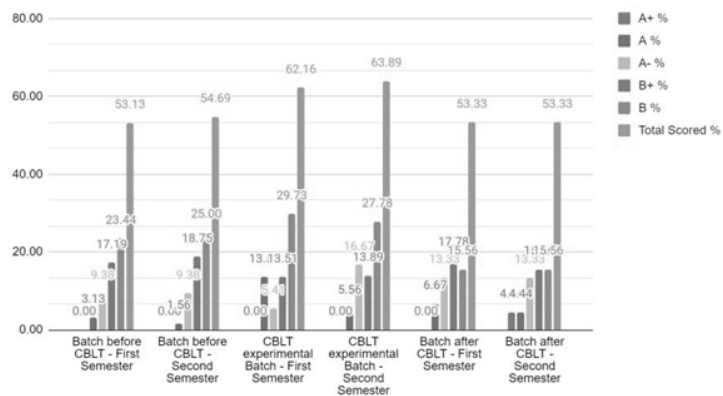


Figure 13.3b: Economics - Second Year

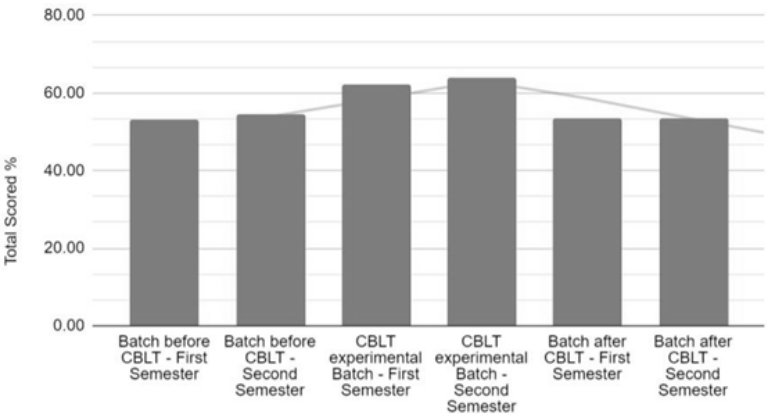


Figure 13.4a: Economics - Third Year

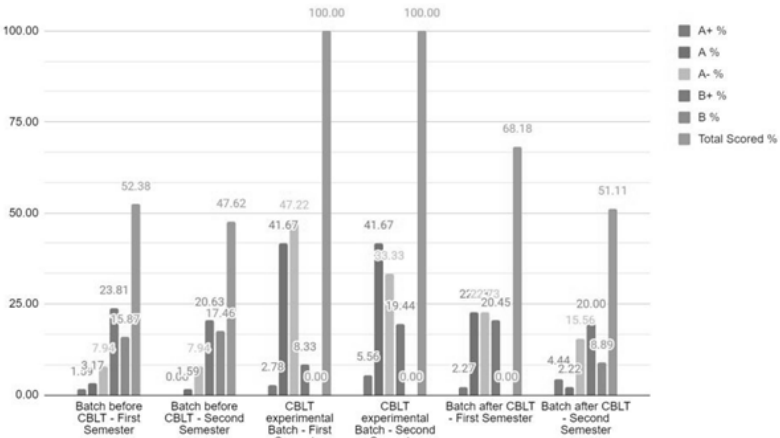
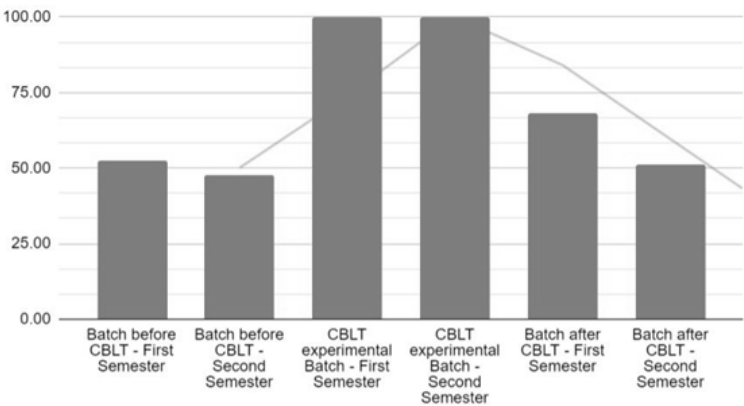


Figure 13.4b: Economics - Third Year



SWOT Analysis: Strengths of CBLT

- i. Students are interested in content based academic reading materials.
- ii. They strongly believe that CBLT helps them to English Language through the subject of their specialization.
- iii. The lecturers from other departments are willing to help the students in choosing the reading materials.
- iv. CBLT allows students to learn in groups through discussions which in turn help students for interaction.
- v. Learners are motivated to put more effort in classroom activities as the CBLT provides a conducive environment for them.
- vi. It strengthens the role of the teacher as a facilitator as the learners are fully involved in activities.
- vii. Teacher needs to be friendly with students which in turn supports student-centered teaching and learning activities.

Weaknesses

- i. Some learners find it difficult to understand the materials used in CBLT.
- ii. Teacher is forced to learn the special terminologies used in relevant disciplines.
- iii. Sometimes the reading materials are needed to be simplified.

Opportunities

- i. CBLT has a positive effect among learners on achieving desired competency level in English Language.
- ii. It can enhance performance of L2 learners as it can be adapted to any level of education.
- iii. Learners have many opportunities for interaction to improve communication skills.
- iv. Learners can choose reading materials to suit their needs.

Threats

- i. There is a possibility for more L1 usage among learners.
- ii. Teachers need to update their knowledge on special terminologies of the subjects on which the reading materials are chosen.
- iii. Learners need to be from same discipline of study as CBLT cannot be successful for a mixed group of learners.

Conclusion

The CBLT approach is very successful in teaching ESL to the undergraduates of Social sciences and Humanities disciplines. It helps learners to get involved actively in ESL classroom activities. The learners are highly motivated in learning English language and it helps learners to achieve desired competency level. This study promotes CBLT approach to be used in the universities to teach ESL to the Humanities and Social Sciences students.

References

- Adhikary, R., (2020). *Effectiveness of Content-based Instruction in Teaching Reading*. Theory and Practice in LanguageStudies 10(5)DOI:10.17507/tpls.1005.04. Project: Research Articles.
- Anoma, G., Buddhima, K., (2017). *Teacher Research: Remedy for Failures in English Language Teaching in Sri Lanka*, Conference: International Conference of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka 2017.
- Asantha, U., Attanayake, (2017). *Undergraduate ELT in Sri Lanka: Policy, Practice and Perspectives for South Asia; Cambridge Scholars*.
- Cammarata, L., (2010). *Foreign Language Teachers' Struggle to Learn Content-Based Instruction*, <https://doi.org/10.5070/L2219063>
- De Silva, R. & Devendra, D. (2014). *A study of the needs and expectations of students in the English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) programme at the OUSL Department of Language Studies*, The Open University of Sri Lanka.
- Gardner, R.C., (2010). *Motivation and second language acquisition: The socio-educational model*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Lightbown, P. M., (2014). *Focus on Content-Based Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Marguerite A.S., & Brinton D.M., (2017). *The Content-Based Classroom: New Perspectives on Integrating Language and Content What every ESL Teacher needs to Know*. Second Edition.
- María, D., (2009). *The whats, whys, hows and whos of content-based instruction in second/foreign language education*. International Journal Of English Studies Published in 19-01-2009.
- Shyinthavy, J., (2018). *Impact of TBLT Activities in ESL Writing Skills Classroom 5th International Conference on Research in Teaching, Education and Learning*. ICRTTEL 14th November, Singapore.
- Vanichvasin, P., (2019). *Effects of Content-Based Instruction on English Language Performance of Thai Undergraduate Students in a Non-English Program*.English Language Teaching; Vol. 12, No. 8; 2019. Canadian Center of Science and Education.
- Weeraratna, W.M.M.M.J.T., Wijetunge, M.T.N., Jayasinghe, V.U., *The Use of First Language in Teaching Second Language Vocabulary to Sri Lankan Undergraduates*. Research article.

PART VI

Research, Innovation and Publication

Chapter 14

REPOSITIONING THE PRODUCT AND PROCESS IN RESEARCH PUBLISHING

Dushyanthi Mendis

Introduction

The public perception of universities is that they are institutions whose academic staff uphold high standards of teaching and engage in research that benefits the community. If by research we understand the seeking of new knowledge, the development of innovative technology or the proposing of new theories, the expectation that academics in universities, representing the highest seats of learning, should be engaging in such practices, and publishing their results is not unreasonable. Coleman (2014) highlights two principal reasons for research publishing – the dissemination of the latest empirical findings and theoretical understandings, thus adding to what we already know in a particular discipline, and to bring prestige to researchers and their institutions. A third reason, particularly in Sri Lankan Universities which place an emphasis on teaching, is the inclusion of new knowledge or discoveries in course content and curricula.

While the aims and outcomes of research in the Humanities and Social Sciences has not changed a great deal over a century, research practices and publishing certainly have. For instance,

ethical considerations, especially in studies involving human participants, have become more rigorous, and some of the data collection practices linguists engaged in less than 50 years ago would be unacceptable today; and no reputable publisher will accept a manuscript without evidence that prior informed consent was obtained from the research participants of the study. Online publishing has resulted in a substantial increase in academic journals (many of which are now primarily digital publications) over the last 30 years; and the expansion of digital spaces available for both information retrieval and dissemination has meant that research findings have found a home in online media such as personal webpages, blogs and even social media networks.

How have we, as researchers in disciplines of the Humanities and Social Sciences, responded to these 21st century trends and developments? Have we understood that these global changes in the world of academia and scholarly publishing necessitate changes and corrections to our research practices? Or are we comfortable in the belief that, within our home institutions, we can set our own standards for what is acceptable as a scholarly presentation or publication?

These are some of the questions this paper will attempt to discuss in relation to a discourse which has as its principal topic the issues and difficulties of research publication. Too often the focus of this discourse is the end product, with little or no attention paid to the steps that need to be navigated before the final outcome of publication can be reached. Research publishing is, however, a journey, with several stages between the beginning and the end. Thus, while discussions of issues and problems which cluster around the beginning or the end of the journey, such as a paucity of funding or resources, a lack of time for research activities, or the rejection of a conference abstract or journal article are all valid concerns, there are many other difficulties and challenges inherent in the research process, which can also present obstacles to successful publishing. For instance, identifying a suitable platform for publication, using the appropriate methodology with due consideration given to ethical protocols, addressing reviewer feedback to the satisfaction of an editor, even using a journal's recommended style guide accurately and adhering to its formatting requirements are all parts of the research process which attention must be paid to for the outcome to be successful in terms of a publication.

For early career academics, some of these steps of the research process are not always clear, giving rise to questions such as: Given the wide range of publishing and presenting options available, how can I identify a predatory publisher or conference? Does my research require ethics approval? How do I respond when a journal editor says something akin to

"When resubmitting your manuscript, please carefully consider all issues mentioned in the reviewers' comments, outline every change made point by point, and then submit a revised version of your work"? What does "Use the appropriate academic register" mean?

One of the main arguments of this paper therefore is that the research process is as important - if not more important - than the research product. This paper also argues that the recent emphasis on the quantifying of research - a natural outcome of institutional pressures to publish - has had a detrimental effect on the quality of research, not only in the Humanities and Social Sciences, but in all academic disciplines. It has encouraged the proliferation of predatory publishers and publications, with an 'anything goes' ideology that academics have bought into in order to satisfy the requirements of a promotion scheme or a Senate award for outstanding research; such competitive awards in turn raise questions about the consequences of comparing one researcher against another by means of a "points" system. Research should not be a competition, particularly in universities. Research in universities should promote the ideals of knowledge-sharing, collaborative efforts and cooperation between colleagues. Internationally, there is a strong move towards collaboration in research, with several high impact journals making it a requirement that authors / researchers make the databases on which their publication is based available and accessible to other researchers, partly in relation to transparency, but also to promote knowledge sharing, even

across disciplinary boundaries. It is time therefore not only for a repositioning of the emphasis placed on the research process and product, but also to re-examine the impact that the quantification of research output has had on the quality of research produced.

The Research Process

Research processes are not unique to the Humanities and the Social Sciences, or for that matter, to any academic discipline. This makes it surprising that the contribution that elements of the research process can make to the success of the final product is so often not sufficiently recognized in Sri Lanka. For instance, I am yet to see a publication by a Sri Lankan author in the Humanities or Social Sciences that comprehensively and systematically addresses the research publication process, although workshops (and more recently webinars) are conducted as part of a conference, or as an initiative for continuing professional development for academic staff. However, these initiatives tend to be conducted in an ad hoc manner mostly based on demand, and are not, to the best of my knowledge, offered as systematic training for early career researchers (ERCs) across the university system.

In contrast, there are many books and journal articles published outside Sri Lanka, which unpack the elements and stages of the research process. A simple Google search using the keywords *Getting Published in Academic Journals* yielded How-to book titles in disciplines as varied as Anthropology, Bio Medicine, Life Sciences, Psychology, and Women's Studies, which point to the

high stakes aspect of research publishing in all academic disciplines. From the perspective of my discipline, Linguistics, I find the work of Coleman (2014), Paltridge and Starfield (2016) and Habibie and Hyland (2019) particularly relevant and useful in discussing and disambiguating the steps and procedures an aspiring author needs to navigate in order to achieve a successful outcome in terms of a publication. These three works, as well as a selection of recently published journal articles are cited as support for the main arguments of this paper.

Coleman (2014) writes from the perspective of an author, teacher, reviewer and perhaps most pertinently, the Editor-in-Chief of *System*, a high-ranking journal in the field of Linguistics. He begins by addressing the question of how to select a target journal, and moves on to discuss the submission process, the peer review process and how to respond to and deal with reviewer feedback. He also acknowledges the difficulties of publishing in an English language journal if your first language is not English (p. 406). Coleman's article ends with a short section on Open Access publishing and predatory "junk journals" (p. 410). In their book titled *Getting published in academic journals: Navigating the publication process*, Paltridge and Starfield (2016) devote an entire chapter to explain how to decide which academic journal to publish in; other chapters focus on the conventions of academic discourse, the sub-genres of introduction and discussion sections, and similar to Coleman (2014), the peer review process and responding to reviewer reports.

Habibie and Hyland's (2019) work is an edited collection of chapters specifically targeting novice writers, i.e., doctoral students and ERCs. Individual chapters address issues of writing for publication, including mentoring and collaborative writing, text mediation, the review process, journal practices, and editorial decision making (p. 4). In contrast to Coleman (2014), Habibie and Hyland are of the view that researchers whose first language is not English are not at a particular disadvantage in publishing because "the enormous challenges of gaining acceptance for research in prestigious journals" (2019, p. 5) are faced by native speakers of English as well. Paltridge and Starfield (2016) share this view, being of the opinion that many of the writing for publication issues facing scholars are similar, regardless of their first language (L1).

Predatory Publishing

A danger facing researchers in all disciplines is that of predatory publishing, which did not pose a significant threat in the pre-digital era. In the last few decades, however, predatory journals have become "a global threat" (Grudniewicz et al., 2019, p.1). Krawczyk and Kulczycki (2020) state that the pressure to publish exerted by universities and policy makers on academic staff could be "an important explanatory factor for the predatory publishing phenomenon" (p. 5) which has grown exponentially. According to Mathew et al., the exact number of predatory publications are difficult to determine because of their unstable nature; but in 2014 "it was estimated that 420,000 articles were counted from approximately 8000 journals presumed

to be deceptive in nature, representing an eight-fold rise in five years" (2021, p.1).

What exactly is a predatory publication? Teixeira da Silva et al. (2019) note that within the discourse related to 'predatory' publishing, the term "predatory" has become equated with "exploitation" as well as "unscholarly behaviour" (p. 3). However, the notion of "predatoriness" can be understood and defined in many other ways, as demonstrated by Teixeira da Silva et al. (2019); also, not all publications engaging in unscholarly practices share the same characteristics. This has made it a challenge to formulate a definition that everyone agrees with. In 2019, a group of 43 academics from 10 countries put together a definition that captures most of the characteristics typical of predatory publications:

"Predatory journals and publishers are entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices" (Grudniewicz et al., 2019, p. 211).

While even experienced researchers can be deceived by a predatory publisher (Teixeira da Silva et al., 2019; Grudniewicz et al., 2019), Merga and Mason (2021) and Mathew et al. (2021) make the point that a lack of experience coupled with the pressure to publish make ERCs particularly susceptible to exploitation by predatory publishers. Even unknowingly publishing your research in a predatory journal can lead to serious repercussions. It can cause damage to scholarly reputations, and also

result in doubts being cast on the validity of the research, or the risk of research findings being ignored. Identifying the right platform to disseminate research output is therefore something that needs to be undertaken with care, caution and awareness. Teixeira da Silva et al (2019)'s finding that "A majority of researchers submitting their work to predatory journals are from developing countries" (p. 5) makes it all the more important to educate young ECRs in Sri Lanka on how to recognise red flags that signal exploitation and other types of predatory behaviour and how to avoid the pitfalls of engaging with such unethical publishing. Coleman (2014, p. 410-411) provides a comprehensive account of the characteristics of predatory publications when he says:

You can identify them easily: ... their titles have very broad scope, you have never heard of the publisher, the editors or editorial board, they promise publication within a matter of weeks, they send circular emails asking for submissions, they always charge authors (but may offer a discount or not mention the cost until you have submitted), they claim to be abstracted and indexed but they do not have an impact factor. They claim peer review but actually accept any author who pays, so a single issue can attain enormous proportions, with error-strewn articles of poor quality, by unknowns, in poor English. They have an ISSN (but anyone can get one free), and they imitate respectable open access journals by stressing 'open access', 'international', 'indexed by' and 'peer review', but links with established universities are hard to find.

Not all predatory journals display all the above features; but three or more should be sufficient to warrant further investigation.

Mentoring

It should be clear by now that, with such dangers lurking in 21st century research publishing for both experienced and inexperienced academics, a process of mentoring by informed colleagues who have an awareness and understanding of unscrupulous and dishonest practices in academia is a vital need. Mentoring, described as "an intense interpersonal exchange between a senior, experienced, and knowledgeable employee (i.e., the mentor) who provides advice, counsel, feedback, and support related to career and personal development for a less experienced employee (Turban & Lee, 2008 as cited in Merga & Mason, 2021, p. 3) is an essential component of a novice or ECR's research publication journey. An important point to make here is that in the Sri Lankan university system, seniority is equated with the accumulation of years of service and not necessarily perceived as experience gained in doing research or in publishing. Such a perception of seniority can lead to several problems: first, in the misplaced belief that as a "senior" person, one does not need guidance or mentoring in the publishing process oneself, and second, that as a "senior" person, one is well-equipped to provide guidance and mentoring to someone else. The outcomes of either of these two views, or worse, both views in combination, can be, to say the least, quite damaging to both the institution and its academic staff.

A good mentor can provide advice and insights into aspects of the research process that are not very transparent (Eg: the peer review), and which are known

only to select members of the academic discourse community. Mentoring relationships can emerge informally, or they can be a part of a formal program (Schriever & Granger, 2019, as cited in Merga & Mason, 2021). The participants of Merga and Mason's (2021) study reported that mentors provided support in the publication journey by giving feedback, co-authoring research, providing encouragement and also assistance with editing. My perception as a member of a Faculty of Arts that houses both Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines is that there is a lack of mentoring support for ECRs. The Faculties of Medicine and Science of the University of Colombo, on the other hand, have established mentorship programs both to train mentors as well as to ensure that mentoring support is made available for ECRs. In the Faculty of Arts, one can only speculate as to the reasons for lesser visibility of mentoring; but a few that come to mind are a lack of training and / or understanding on how to be a good mentor, or that some experienced researchers are themselves not entirely confident about how to navigate the research and publication process¹. A third, and far more troubling possibility might be that due to research production becoming more and more competitive, some experienced faculty members view their junior colleagues as potential threats – i.e., that junior colleagues might overtake them in the publication race by becoming more successful authors. Whatever the reasons

1. This is not unusual. Li (2019) observes that, in situations where English is not the first or dominant language, some supervisors may lack experience in publishing papers themselves (p. 244).

might be, a lack of mentoring can lead to significant challenges for ECRs. Merga and Mason (2021), who observe that research communication can be a challenging set of skills to learn, report that participants of their study who did not have mentors felt that this put them in a position of “comparative vulnerability” (p. 3).

What is the solution to this problem? This paper argues that mentoring should be formally instituted and actively encouraged in Faculties of Arts, Humanities and the Social Sciences. This will require a training program for senior and middle level academic staff, who can perform the role of a mentor for more junior ECRs. For mentoring to be taken seriously and viewed as an activity that promotes both self-growth as well as self-worth, it should be recognized and rewarded at the institutional level. If engaged in correctly and ethically, a mentoring partnership can be immensely satisfying and productive for both mentor and mentee, (Darvin & Norton, 2019; Ferris 2019). If therefore Universities expect a significant research output from their staff, they should also ensure that support is provided through facilitating mentoring and peer relationships (Merga & Mason 2021).

In the literature on academic mentoring, two processes that are mentioned as being particularly useful for ECRs as an introduction to some of the more challenging aspects of the publication process are collaborative writing or co-authoring a publication with a supervisor or an experienced researcher (Darvin & Norton, 2019; Shvidko & Atkinson, 2019). Referring to the doctoral

level, Darwin and Norton assert that collaborative writing between a student and a supervisor can be a valuable component of the academic socialization process. However, it should be kept in mind that collaborative writing and co-authorship should not result in the exploitation of the ECR's labour by the mentor or supervisor. For co-authorship to be a fair and transparent process, the writers' roles and responsibilities and most of all their individual contributions should be worked out as clearly as possible, keeping in mind that even the best-demarcated responsibilities can change or shift during the research process. Co-authorship is "a powerful form of mentorship that allows both the novice and the expert to reimagine identities and agentive possibilities" (Darvin & Norton, p. 178). A reimagining of identities is important because it allows the ECR to find his or her own voice in the research narrative, which is an important first step in the process of academic socialisation.

In Humanities and Social Science disciplines it is customary for supervisors or more experienced researchers to be the second (or third, or last) author on a publication, thus acknowledging and giving credit to their students' or mentee's work. However, the co-authoring practice can also be abused, either by the supervisor insisting on being the first author, or by adding their name as co-author to a manuscript that they have made little or no contribution to. Cummins (1996, as cited in Darvin & Norton, 2019) identifies this as a coercive rather than a collaborative relationship. Such practices are often

difficult for an ECR to resist – but in the fairly small disciplinary communities of which we are members, word soon gets around on which senior faculty members should be avoided as potential co-authors or supervisors because of this type of exploitative behaviour. On the positive side, Darwin and Norton make the point that collaborative unity involves co-authors recognizing the capital that each one brings to the writing process; in such relationships "capital flows bi-directionally as student and supervisor share knowledge and competencies" (2019, p. 188) as they work towards a common goal.

The Peer Review Process

According to Paltridge (2017, as cited in Tardy, 2019), peer reviewing became a common part of academic publishing after World War II. It is therefore not a new process; and as everyone is aware, it is now firmly established as a necessary practice to ensure high standards of quality in the dissemination of research methodologies and results/findings. However, the peer review is an intimidating process not only for novice scholars (Tardy, 2019), but for experienced scholars (Corcoran, 2017) as well. Corcoran (2017) observes that attempting to deal with the reviewer comments is "a common stumbling block for both emerging and experienced scholars" (p.71). Much of the trepidation felt by researchers is probably due to the discomfort of engaging with an unknown entity (the reviewer), with a journal or book editor as a mediating agent; and also the awareness of the power that reviewers have over an author since journal editors in particular rely heavily on reviewers'

recommendations when making decisions on whether to accept or reject a manuscript. Shvidko and Atkinson (2019, p. 107) report that the peer review was the most common difficulty mentioned by the participants of their empirical study, both on an emotional and practical level. This is not surprising, as review reports can be harsh, confusing, unclear and even unfair. An aspiring author can sometimes be unlucky enough to be assigned a reviewer who is not familiar with the theoretical basis of their paper. Coleman remarks that negative feedback can be a “burning disappointment” to newer writers who may have spent years conducting their research and writing it to the best of their ability (2014, p. 408). On the flip side, however, Coleman makes a point worth keeping in mind when he says that if the reviewers are those of a reputed international journal, they are likely to be “top names in the world” (p. 408); his advice is that it is therefore to the author’s advantage to accept the feedback, however disappointing it might be (p. 408).

There is agreement in the literature that an author can disagree with a reviewer’s recommendation, as long as a suitable justification or argument is given (Coleman, 2014; Paltridge & Starfield, 2016; Tardy, 2019); but the question of which recommendations can be safely rebutted is often a difficult one for an ECR to answer. This is where a mentor or an experienced co-author can provide invaluable advice and guidance, underscoring the importance and necessity of good mentoring in one of the most challenging steps of the research publication process.

Ethics in Research

The necessity of adhering to ethical practices, especially in data collection, is a development that is relatively recent in Humanities and Social Sciences research in Sri Lanka. When I was completing my doctoral studies at the University of Michigan, USA, in 2003, I was required to obtain clearance from the University’s Institutional Review Board in order to conduct focus group discussions with human participants, which was a part of my data collection methodology. When I returned to Sri Lanka in 2004, I found that no one of my acquaintance who was using human participants in linguistics research appeared to need ethics approval for their research protocols. This was mostly because there was no mechanism through which the necessary ethics approvals could be obtained in the Faculty. By 2014, however, an Ethics Review Committee for Social Sciences and the Humanities had been established in the Faculty of Arts, and all academic staff and postgraduate students of the Faculty who plan to collect data from human participants are now advised to submit their research protocols to this committee for approval, prior to commencing their research activities.

Ethical practices in the research process are not limited to data collection. Every aspect of the research process discussed above has strong ethical underpinnings. In terms of publishing, however, the most pertinent (and unfortunately quite common) violation of ethics is plagiarism. Simply put, plagiarism is the theft of intellectual property, and is “accentuated by the ease of cut-and-paste at a time when virtually all research

articles, and an increasing number of books and book chapters are available in electronic form” (Coleman, 2014, p. 409). However, this also means that the detection of plagiarism from these very sources by means of software programs is quick, and easy; something all aspiring authors would do well to take note of, because the detection of plagiarism in a manuscript can result in all future submissions being blocked by a journal’s editor.

Research Products

Research output has a significant impact on the individual as well as on the institution. At an individual level, in order to be hired for a permanent position in a University, academic qualifications alone are no longer sufficient; it is expected that candidates applying for university teaching positions have a few journal articles already published before they do so (Bhatia, 2019). This expectation can be seen in local universities as well. Evaluation criteria used by selection panels at hiring interviews typically include a section for the assessment of a candidate’s research portfolio. Once in the university system, upward mobility in the form of promotions from the Grade of Lecturer to Senior Lecturer and thereafter to Associate Professor, Professor or Senior Professor is dependent to a large part on an academic’s research output. In the UGC’s current scheme of promotion (in effect since 2009²), the minimum points required of an applicant for the position of Associate Professor/Professor is highest in the category of Research, Scholarship and Creative Work. In fact,

there is quite a contrast between the minimum thresholds of points required for the three areas assessed for promotion, as given below.

At the institutional level, the cumulative research output of a University’s academic staff is given importance because it impacts the institution’s annual ranking at the national, regional and global levels. Rankings are a manifestation of neo-liberal ideologies that have infiltrated the higher education sector at a global level, and Sri Lanka is no exception. Coleman (2014) observes that “... in the complex global market which higher education has become, publication and citation rates contribute to all of the national and global university rankings” (p. 404). This sentiment is echoed by Sanchez (2014, p. 31) who comments that research productivity is “a critical factor” (p. 37) when arguing for scarce resources, comparing academic programs, or when universities are competing with each other in global educational and research markets.

It is therefore not difficult to see how the presenting and publishing of research has been transformed into a contest of outputs and products under the onslaught of contemporary global trends. An emphasis on the research product does not necessarily entail a negative outcome. It can, for example, broaden our perspectives and acceptance of what constitutes a research product in online publishing and evolving digital spaces. However, there could also be negative outcomes when a quantification of research output is the primary, or even the sole assessment in a University’s internal

2. University Grants Commission Circular No 916

Table 14.1**Minimum marks/standards**

	Associate Professor		Professor
	Internal	External	(Merit)
Contribution to teaching & Academic Development	10	05	20
Research, Scholarship & Creative Work	25	35	50
Dissemination of Knowledge and contribution to University & National Development	10	05	10
Minimum Required Total Mark	70	70	105

Note: Source: University Grants Commission Circular No 916

recognition or reward scheme such as a Senate or Faculty Award for outstanding research. Such awards set up a contest between colleagues, and can sometimes lead to acrimony and allegations of unfairness. Financial remuneration schemes such as the Research Allowance which is closely tied to research output can have long-term detrimental effects on the quality of research products – for example, according to Demir (2018, as cited in Mathew et al., 2021, p. 6) “a rapid jump” in submissions to predatory publications was seen in Nigeria following the introduction of an academic/incentive allowance per publication. I am not aware of any similar studies done in Sri Lanka in relation to the effects the Research Allowance has had on the quality of research outputs, but it is no secret that many Faculty-level conferences and symposia are held in order to give academics the opportunity of presenting a paper in order to satisfy the minimum criterion for receiving the Research Allowance. The next section of this paper will discuss in greater detail some of the less than satisfactory outcomes of an emphasis on the quantification of the research product.

The h-index

In 2018, the University Grants Commission (UGC) issued a circular³ titled *Transparent Research Performance Scheme to recognize researchers in the University System*. According to the Circular, this scheme was devised in order to “recognize research performance and rank researchers ... in the university system” (University Grants Commission, 2018, p. 1). The ranking will be based on the value of an academic’s h-index, as reported by Google Scholar (University Grants Commission, 2018, p. 1). Two aims are fairly clear here: the Circular is an attempt to assess research performance based on a quantification of research output, and to compare researchers from all disciplines represented in the Sri Lankan University system by means of a common tool of measurement – the h-index.

The h-index is a part of the high frequency vocabulary of the contemporary discourse of academic publishing, along with related terms such as i10-index, citation metrics, impact factor, etc. It was proposed by the physicist Jorge

3. University Grants Commission Circular No 05/2018

Hirsch in 2005 as a way of quantifying the cumulative impact and relevance of an individual's scientific research output (Hirsch, 2005, p. 16569). The h-index is defined as "A scientist has index h if h of his or her Np papers have at least h citations each and the other $(Np-h)$ papers have $\leq h$ citations each" (Hirsch, 2005, p. 16569). In other words, a researcher with an index of h has published h number of papers, each of which has been cited h times. The h-index was devised by Hirsch to overcome the problem of a researcher appearing to be highly influential on his or her field by having a large number of citations for a single work (Spicer 2015). It aims to provide a robust, single-number metric of an academic's research impact by combining quality with quantity (Harzing, 2010). However, Hirsch himself admitted that quantifying an individual's scientific research output could be "potentially distasteful" (2005, p. 16569), and that the index does in effect cloud or mask information such as the number of papers published over n years, the journals where the papers were published, their impact parameters, etc. Proponents of the h-index as a tool of measurement argue that because it is a common criterion that is applied to all researchers, it avoids subjective assessments. What such arguments fail to consider is that using a common yardstick to quantify research output in disciplinary areas as varied as for example, Humanities on the one hand and Medicine on the other, is both problematic and unfair because of significant differences in methodological approaches, types of data, discursive practices, length of publications, typical number of co-authors, etc. In fact, Hirsch

himself, in his original article, makes no mention of using the h-index to evaluate research outputs in Humanities or Social Sciences disciplines. Hirsch proposed the h-index for Physics, and only "suggests" that "the h index should be useful for other scientific disciplines as well" (2005, p. 16569). He goes on to acknowledge that there will be differences in typical h values in different fields (p. 16571), and that "Scientists working in nonmainstream areas will not achieve the same very high h values as the top echelon of those working in highly topical areas" (p. 16571).

Hirsch's observation above is very relevant for some Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines. An area such as Fine Arts, for example, while not quite "nonmainstream", is nevertheless very different from other Humanities and Arts disciplines in terms of research products. Some of these products, especially those in the performance aspects of music, dance or theatre studies most likely will not be listed in a Google Scholar (GS) academic profile. Similarly, publications in Sinhala or Tamil do not appear in GS profiles. This makes the h-index, if based on data from GS, an inappropriate and unfair metric of assessment for research produced by academics in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences disciplines in Sri Lanka, much of which is published in Sinhala and Tamil. The h-index is in fact an example of 21st century academic linguistic imperialism operating in the guise of an institutional mechanism to assess research performance. The third and final part of this paper presents an alternative mode of research publishing which, if executed correctly, has the

potential to mitigate, if not provide some solutions for the issues highlighted above.

Digital Working Papers

The concept of Working Papers is not new, with some of the world's leading universities such as Yale University, Georgetown University and Ohio State University showcasing their research output by publishing Working Papers on their websites. The University of Essex describes Working Papers as

... preliminary scientific or technical papers. Authors often release them to share ideas about a topic or to elicit feedback before submitting to a peer-reviewed conference or academic journal. Working papers can be the basis for related works, and may in themselves be cited by peer-review papers ("Working papers: Introduction", n.d.).

May (2018) lists several positive aspects of Working Papers. First, it is a double saving in terms of publication costs, as Universities pay for research (through awards and grants) and then purchase subscriptions from journals in which the research is published. It also gives Universities and individual academics ownership of their research instead of the copyright being signed over to a commercial publisher. Most importantly, Working Papers is an Open Access strategy which more and more academics / researchers are turning to as a more equitable means of sharing and disseminating research findings. It is however, an underutilized initiative, as noted by May (2018, n.p.) – "One of the frequently suggested open access strategies, yet relatively under-developed

in the Social Sciences, is for professional associations to run peer-reviewed disciplinary focused repositories."

One might argue that publishing one's research in a University's Working Paper series rather than in a journal of international repute might not be an attractive alternative. However, if a University maintains appropriate standards in the manuscripts accepted for publication as Working Papers, I would argue that in addition to the advantages of quick publication and adding to one's research portfolio, peer review feedback and the opportunity to engage in a critical dialogue with experts in the field are benefits that can assist greatly in transforming a working paper to a longer manuscript of publishable quality.

With these advantages in mind, and with a clear understanding of the challenges in mainstream publishing faced by Humanities and Social Sciences researchers, the Department of English of the University of Colombo proposed a Working Papers Series (WPS) as an activity to be carried out as part of a Development Oriented Research (DOR) award under the Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development (AHEAD) Project funded by the World Bank. Through the Working Papers, the Department of English aims to create a space for dialogue and engagement between authors and other members of the research and academic communities. The WPS will mainly target ECRs, but will also accept submissions from more experienced researchers. Recognising the potential of digital technologies to

broaden our perspectives and views on the form of a research product, it is envisaged that the WPS will disseminate research in multimodal formats – i.e., texts, images, audio files, video clips, files in GIF format, etc. This will open up a space hitherto not available in Sri Lanka (R. Perera, personal communication, October 5, 2020) for highlighting research from disciplines such as Fine Arts and Performance Studies which cannot be done justice to through traditional unimodal methods of research communication. For example, the inclusion of a script of a dramatic production, along with visuals (photographs) or video clips of the performance, or a research article on dance illustrated with recordings of music and movements of dance (R. Perera, personal communication, October 5, 2020) can be hosted on the site. Similarly, papers on linguistic research in the area of phonetics and phonology can be enhanced by the addition of sound files, spectrograms, etc. (E. Surenthiraraj, personal communication, October 5, 2020).

Conclusion

This paper argues therefore that the WPS is an initiative that can address many of the issues and challenges that are proving to be obstacles in individuals' research publication journeys in Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines. It adopts an egalitarian approach by not favouring experienced researchers over novices or ECRs, and supports open access publishing, which is fast becoming a pushback against the monopolies held by large publishing houses and high

impact journals. Most importantly, it embraces the new research spaces that digital technologies have created, and proposes to make use of the advantages this holds for Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines that are and have been constrained by not having a suitable platform for the dissemination of multimodal research. In this respect, this paper calls for a re-envisioning of the research product and a greater transparency in the research process. Also, in Sri Lanka, where English is not the only language used for the dissemination of information, and is not the language in which most teaching in Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences is done, research publishing should incorporate the ideals of inclusivity and diversity by allowing for equal prominence to be given to academic outputs in Sinhala and Tamil. A digital publishing platform can accomplish this with ease. With technology moving at its current pace, the future holds many more possibilities and modalities for research publication. Repositioning and reconceptualizing will thus be necessary, on-going processes; and the directions in which future publication journeys will move will be determined by new generations of researchers such as ECRs, to whom we need to give an ear now.

Acknowledgements: The Digital Working Papers is part of the development oriented research of the Digital Humanities Lab of the Department of English and is supported by the Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development (AHEAD) Project of the Ministry of Higher Education funded by the World Bank.

References

- Bhatia, V. K. (2019). Foreword. In P. Habibie & K. Hyland (Eds.), *Novice writers and scholarly publication* (pp. v–vi). Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95333-5>
- Coleman, J. A. (2014). How to get published in English: Advice from the outgoing Editor-in-Chief. *System*, 42, 404–411. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2014.01.004>
- Corcoran, J. (2017). Book review. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 27, 71–72. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2017.01.002>
- Darvin, R., & Norton, B. (2019). Collaborative writing, academic socialization, and the negotiation of identity. In P. Habibie & K. Hyland (Eds.), *Novice writers and scholarly publication* (pp. 177–194). Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95333-5>
- Ferris, D. (2019). Guiding junior scholars into and through the publication process. In P. Habibie & K. Hyland (Eds.), *Novice writers and scholarly publication* (pp. 215–231). Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95333-5>
- Grudniewicz, A., Moher, D., & Cobey, K. D. (2019). Predatory journals: No definition, no defense. *Nature*, 579, 210–212.
- Habibie, P., & Hyland, K. (2019). *Novice writers and scholarly publication*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95333-5>
- Harzing, A. W. (2010, June 1). Citation analysis across disciplines: The impact of different sources and citation metrics. Retrieved from <https://harzing.com/publications/white-papers/citation-analysis-across-disciplines>
- Hirsch, J. E. (2005). An index to quantify an individual's scientific research output. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 102(46), 16569–16572. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0507655102>
- Krawczyk, F., & Kulczycki, E. (2021). How is open access accused of being predatory? The impact of Beall's lists of predatory journals on academic publishing. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 47(2), 102271. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2020.102271>
- Li, Y. (2019). Mentoring junior scientists for research publication. In P. Habibie & K. Hyland (Eds.), *Novice writers and scholarly publication* (pp. 233–250). Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95333-5>
- Mathew, R., Patel, V., & Low, G. (2021). Predatory journals - the power of the Predator versus the integrity of the honest. *Current Problems in Diagnostic Radiology*, 000, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1067/j.cpradiol.2021.07.005>
- May, C. (2018, September 3-4). *The political economy of social scientific publishing*. [Keynote]. Selling (critical) finance: Getting your work published, Lancaster University, UK. https://www.academia.edu/37278950/The_Political_Economy_of_Social_Scientific_Publishing
- Merga, M. K., & Mason, S. (2021). Mentor and peer support for early career researchers sharing research with academia and beyond. *Heliyon*, 7(2), e06172. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e06172>
- Paltridge, B. & Starfield, S. (2016). *Getting published in academic journals: Navigating the publication process*. University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.5173299>
- Sanchez, T. W. (2014). Academic visibility for urban planning and the webometric future. *The Journal of the World Universities Forum*, 6(2), 37–52. <https://doi.org/10.18848/1835-2030/cgp/v06i02/56825>
- Shvidko, E. (2019). From student to scholar: Making the leap to writing for publication. In P. Habibie & K. Hyland (Eds.), *Novice writers and scholarly publication* (pp. 155–175). Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95333-5>

Spicer, A. (2015, May 21). Explainer: What is an H-index and how is it calculated? Retrieved from <http://theconversation.com/explainer-what-is-an-h-index-and-how-is-it-calculated-41162>

Tardy, C. (2019). We are all Reviewer #2: A window into the secret world of peer review. In P. Habibie & K. Hyland (Eds.), *Novice writers and scholarly publication* (pp. 271–289). Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95333-5>

Teixeira da Silva, J. A., Dobránszki, J., Tsigaris, P., & Al-Khatib, A. (2019). Predatory and exploitative behaviour in academic publishing: An assessment. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 45(6), 102071. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2019.102071>

University Grants Commission. (2009). *Schemes of recruitment/promotion for Associate Professor/Professor*. https://www.ugc.ac.lk/attachments/666_Circular916.pdf

University Grants Commission. (2018). *Transparent research performance scheme to recognize researchers in the university system*. [https://www.ugc.ac.lk/attachments/2067_Comm%20Circular%205_2018%20\(i\).pdf](https://www.ugc.ac.lk/attachments/2067_Comm%20Circular%205_2018%20(i).pdf)

Working papers: Introduction. (n.d.). Library and Cultural Services. Retrieved October 5, 2021, from <https://library.essex.ac.uk/linguistics/workpap>

Chapter 15

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION: THE APPLICATION OF SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS IN UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY COLLABORATIONS

Vathsala Wickramasinghe

Introduction

The term knowledge is identified concerning theoretical or practical comprehension as well as expertise and skills gained by experience and/or through education of a subject. Lundvall (1992) states “knowledge constitutes the most fundamental resource and learning the most important process in a modern economy” (p. 1). Leveraging and enhancing knowledge are vital for growth and sustainable development. Although the concepts such as “the knowledge-based society, the knowledge-based economy, and the knowledge-based democracy” were used rigorously across disciplines, a shift has also been observed to “the knowledge society, the knowledge economy, and the knowledge democracy” (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009, p. 224). University is assumed as the centre of knowledge and the centre for research that addresses challenges to the economy and society. The universities created in the West have provided an almost universal model for education (Newman, 1852). The state universities created in Sri Lanka during and post-colonial eras followed the same Western principles; the university education

reform has also been introduced and interpreted by the governments of Sri Lanka together with international non-governmental organizations following Western ideologies (Wickramasinghe, 2018). The university is assigned with three missions to accomplish, namely teaching, research, and economic and social development (Etzkowitz, 2003). As part of the first mission, universities educate students with desired learning outcomes necessary to work with contemporary problems faced by national and global societies. As part of the second and third missions, universities forage in realms of abstraction, create new knowledge, and contribute to innovation that are vital for societies for immediate use and with potential benefits in the future. As reviewed in the next section, the theories on innovation systems identify university-industry (U-I) collaborations representing a fundamental mode of achieving these missions. Hence, it is firmly established among governments that universities are important national assets, which led to the public policy debate about how universities can embrace their activities for the maximum potential.

This paper discusses knowledge production and application in innovation systems concerning U-I collaborations. Although U-I collaborations are attractive, the university and industry have different orientations, i.e., the university is oriented towards creating new and fundamental knowledge whereas the industry is oriented towards profit and practice. However, U-I collaborations can be identified as an important source for generating external knowledge for industry performance and growth while providing benefits for both parties enabling access to the respective party's unique resources. Given the evolution of theories on knowledge production in innovation systems, on the one hand, the university has co-evolved with the changing landscape of economy and society. On the other hand, due to the complexities of different modes of U-I collaboration, understanding interactions between universities and industry becomes complicated and difficult. Therefore, actors, linkages, and their reciprocal relationships in U-I collaborations have been of interest to academic, practitioner, and policy-making communities.

This paper aims to identify the university's role in research (knowledge production) and innovation (knowledge application), review theories on knowledge production and application in innovation systems, evaluate the modes of U-I collaboration, and discuss challenges faced and possible strategies to be adopted to improve U-I collaborations. The paper also examines the use of social network analysis (SNA) for evaluating U-I collaborations to improve the empirical rigor of research

studies in innovation systems and U-I collaborations. To achieve the purposes of the study, an exhaustive review of the secondary sources of information on the focused areas was performed. In doing so, the study took an interdisciplinary approach and reviewed complex relationships between actors, institutions, and networks as components of innovation systems and thereby U-I collaborations. Further, the changing nature of ideologies on research and innovation has also been reviewed. Furthermore, the modes of U-I collaboration are reviewed covering the entire spectrum of possibilities. The paper looks at the universality of social network analysis, its potential usefulness to research on innovation systems, and its usefulness for evaluating linkages between actors, institutions, and networks and their reciprocal relationships in U-I collaborations.

University as a Centre of Knowledge Production

Innovation systems are identified at different levels, such as national (Freeman, 1987), regional (Cooke et al., 1998), sectoral (Breschi & Malerba, 1997), and technological (Carlsson & Stankiewicz, 1991). Each innovation system consists of functions and components. The general function that takes place inside an innovation system is to develop, diffuse and use innovations (Edquist, 2004). Apart from the general function, several other functions have been identified as entrepreneurial experimentation, market creation, resource mobilization, and legitimation (Hekkert et al., 2007). The main components are the actors,

networks, and institutions (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). Actors are the entities in the entire value chain, such as business firms, universities, government, and agencies. Institutions are laws, regulations, norms, values, and cognitive rules surrounding interactions. Networks are either the links that enable the transfer of knowledge, i.e., learning networks, or coalitions seeking to influence political agenda, i.e., political networks.

Universities are key components of innovation systems having strength at generating economic activities through the functions of research and innovation. Specifically, universities create job opportunities; supply human capital, products, and services; consume products and services to perform core functions. Given the strength of universities in creating economic activities, theoretical discussions on the operation and role of universities in innovation systems have proliferated during the past few decades. Further, governments and the economic regions, such as the European Commission, have implemented a wide array of public research policies to provide the right conditions for U-I collaborations to effectively exploit the knowledge housed in the universities (Munari et al., 2016). The theoretical efforts, which are reviewed in the next section, together with the public research policies have provided the normative framework for understanding interactions between actors, networks, and institutions.

Ideologies on Research and Innovation

Theories on the production and application of knowledge in innovation

systems describe linkages between actors and their reciprocal relationships derived from their interactions. The main ideologies are described below, in brief. Of these, Mode 1 postulates a linear model of innovation, identified as the *first-then* relations and network configurations in a *sequenced* process that asserts basic research that occurs at the universities; outcomes of the research diffuse to society; industry picks up the outcomes and develops the knowledge further for application outside of the university system, ultimately leading to economic and commercial success (Kline & Rosenberg, 1986). Since Mode 2 is proposed, the linear model has been challenged and non-linear models of innovation received much attention. The non-linear models propagate a simultaneous pairing of basic research at universities with commercial research and development in the industry. Hence, the non-linear models are identified as *simultaneously-simultaneously* relations and network configurations in a *parallel* process with cross-link mutually in basic research and commercial applications.

Mode 1

Mode 1 is characterised as a “university-based knowledge paradigm” with a mission of knowledge production (and application to a certain extent). Mode 1 addressed two of the missions of a university – teaching and basic research. The basic research often outlined within academic disciplines of a university and government acts as the funder. The attraction of government funding for research at universities depends on research excellence demonstrated in proposals for research funding.

The securing of funding, on the one hand, allows universities to develop research competence and appropriate infrastructure, over time. Governments, on the other hand, are able to increase the national stock of knowledge in selected areas, where the outcomes of the research are understood as public goods to society (Gibbons et al. 1994). The research outputs are diffused to the public by way of research dissemination modes such as conferences. If the university technology transfer office is in operation, it will work for the protection of intellectual property of the research, creating opportunities for the sale or licence to the industry (Jones-Evans et al., 1999). Mode 1 offers a linear model of innovation.

Mode 2

The success in Mode 1 research is a requirement for Mode 2 operations, and government funding is essential to sustain basic research at a university. Mode 2 of Gibbons et al. (1984) provides a clear reference to the innovation drawing direct connections between research and innovation. University-industry collaborations are coined with the introduction of Mode 2 operations. Success in Mode 2 depends on a university's capacity to transfer knowledge to the industry. Mode 2 emphasises a closer interaction and alignment between the university and industry, which may provide a longer-term focus offering greater scope for mutual benefits for both parties (Gibbons et al., 1984). The Mode 2 university invests in certain enabling capabilities such as university-based testing and verification laboratories, which allow a better iterative process of a research

partnership with industrial partners. Enabling capabilities and ancillary services of the university provide required sustaining relationships with longer-term gains rather than short-term contract research and financial gains. Hence, the Mode 2 university could develop deeper relationships and trust with industrial partners, yielding a relative competitive advantage with partners compared to other universities. Mode 2 postulates a non-linear model of innovation and parallel relationships.

Mode 3

Mode 3 of Carayannis and Campbell (2009) has been identified as the nexus of the innovation ecosystem for the 21st-century, having human capital, social capital, financial capital, technological and cultural artefacts as the essential building blocks. Mode 3 emphasises a creative environment consisting of knowledge clusters and innovation networks to create, diffuse, and use knowledge (Carayannis et al., 2016). Knowledge clusters are “co-specialised, mutually complementary and reinforcing knowledge assets in the form of knowledge stocks and knowledge flows that exhibit self-organising, learning-driven, dynamically adaptive competences and trends in the context of an open systems perspective” (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009, p.205). Innovation networks demonstrate an internal configuration of physical and virtual infrastructures and infra-technologies, which ties together a cluster and expresses relationships between different clusters. The specific context determines multi-modal (which knowledge production and application mode), multi-level (which level), multi-

lateral (which actors), and multi-nodal (what knowledge clusters) nature of the innovation system (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009). Mode 3 architecture consists of meta-networks, i.e., networks of innovation networks and clusters, and meta-clusters, i.e., clusters of knowledge clusters and networks (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009). Economic, political, technological, social, and cultural contexts continually affect the co-existence, co-evolution, and co-specialisation of Mode 3 research and innovation. Mode 3 paradigm should be governed by quality assurance and improvement initiatives (Carayannis et al., 2016). The success of Mode 3 depends on the adaptive capacity to amalgamate different knowledge production modes, which are discussed in the next section as the modes of U-I collaboration. Mode 3 provides a clear reference to a non-linear model of innovation.

Triple Helix

Triple Helix of Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000) postulates research and innovation in the interwoven, cross-connected, and cross-interconnected context of university-industry-government relations that create a national innovation system. University (academia), industry (private-led business enterprise sector), and government (public) are in a reciprocal relationship where each actor attempts to enhance the performance of the other. Three configurations of Triple Helix can exist (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). In the statist model, the dominant institutional sphere is the government; academia and industry are subordinate parts of the state. In the laissez-faire model, the university, industry, and the

government are much separated having modest interactions across their strong boundaries. In contrast to these two configurations, the university, industry, and the government move to a greater interdependence in the Triple Helix III model. The trilateral relations in Triple Helix III overlap in a hybrid fashion creating indispensable conditions for fostering innovation.

Triple Helix thesis sees research and innovation with the economy, and the university is identified as a prime source for economic development (third mission) in addition to its first (teaching) and second (research) missions (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000, p. 110). The university is expected to assume the role of an entrepreneurial university, with a considerable degree of interdependence with the government and industry, in the achievement of this third mission (Etzkowitz, 2003). Entrepreneurial universities are prominent in the establishment of mechanisms such as technology transfer offices, contract research, patenting, and licencing (Jones-Evans et al., 1999). At some point, the creation of research centres, strategic alliances, incubator facilities, spin-off companies, and science parks become realistic due to the university-industry-government interventions (Etzkowitz, 2003). In these transformations, the university should reconcile both curiosity-driven invention (exogenous) and market-driven innovation (endogenous) components of university research. The key indicators of the state of relations in Triple Helix are the rate of knowledge production and the speed of knowledge transfer

and exploitation. In doing so, science applied to local resources is identified as the basis of much of future potential for economic and social development of less research-intensive regions (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000, p. 116).

Triple Helix builds on a non-linear model represented as a spiral capturing reciprocal relationships between public, private, and academic spheres. Triple Helix thesis is the standard of and for innovation, and the dominant frame of reference for most countries. Further, the knowledge economy proposed in Triple Helix can become a reality in either democratic or non-democratic political frameworks (Carayannis & Campbell, 2014). Although Quadruple Helix and Quintuple Helix are identified as extensions to the Triple Helix model, these are possible only with a democratic political framework.

Quadruple Helix

Quadruple Helix of Carayannis and Campbell (2009) added the fourth helix named “media-based and culture-based public” to extend the Triple Helix. Quadruple Helix postulates two main characteristics, namely “arts, artistic research, and arts-based innovation”, and “democracy for knowledge, knowledge production, and innovation”. The inclusion of media, creative industries, arts, and culture as components follows the arguments of the creative class of Florida (2004) and the innovation cultures of Kuhlmann (2001). Quadruple Helix explicitly identifies the contribution of universities of the arts in addition to the universities of sciences as pivotal and influential institutions of innovation

systems. The inclusion of arts, on the one hand, assumes as a source of creativity that is vital for innovation. On the other hand, implies not only interdisciplinary but also transdisciplinary problem-solving involving human and the material world for sustainable development (Lindberg et al., 2012). Quadruple Helix is very explicit in the sustainable development of and in the economy with a democratic framework built on freedom, equality, and sustainable development (Carayannis & Campbell, 2019).

Quintuple Helix

Quintuple Helix proposed by Carayannis and Campbell (2010) added the fifth helix named as “natural environments of society” to extend the Quadruple Helix. This model is, therefore, ecologically sensitive, and takes the environmental and ecological concerns of survival (such as global warming) as potential drivers for current and future research and innovation. When compared to innovation models discussed earlier, Quintuple Helix postulates “eco-innovation” and “eco-entrepreneurship” by introducing a type of governance for problem-solving and evolution with the natural environment (Carayannis & Campbell, 2019). Quintuple Helix is a non-linear innovation model that promotes lasting development for the 21st-century in a democratic framework (Carayannis & Campbell, 2010).

University-Industry Collaborations in Innovation Systems

The theories of innovation systems, discussed above, provide the basis for understanding U-I collaborations that coined with Mode 2 innovation systems.

There is ample evidence for different modes of U-I collaboration relating to the first, second, and third stream missions of a university in an innovation system. In connection to the first stream missions, modes such as student placements, the industry provided sponsorships and scholarships (Heyler & Lee, 2014), co-produced (co-designed, co-delivered, and co-supervised) degree programmes (Samuel et al., 2016), industry-sponsored laboratories (Gento et al., 2021), collaborative industrial doctoral programmes (Kitagawa, 2014), industry partnerships for teachers' professional learning (Singh, 2013), and dual education programmes (Pogatsnik, 2018) are commonly recognised. In connection to the second and third stream missions, modes such as technology transfer (Fischer et al., 2019), knowledge transfer (Steinmo & Rasmussen, 2018), patents, licences, spin-offs, and

contract research (Chen et al., 2016) are commonly recognised. Larsen et al. (2016, p. xiv) report that universities in Sri Lanka showed a preference for deeper and more demanding modes of collaboration, such as joint research and development, prototype testing, and spin-offs even though such modes remain relatively uncommon in the country. However, empirical evidence based on case studies represents only a fraction of collaborative modes available and fails to provide a picture of the entire spectrum of U-I collaborations possible. Davey et al. (2018, p. 40) suggested a comprehensive listing of different modes of U-I collaboration categorised into four main areas and 14 different activities as shown in Table 14.1.

The U-I collaborations can be analysed building on Mode 2, Mode 3 and any of the three “Helix” models (Triple,

Table 15.1: Modes of U-I collaboration - main areas and activities

Education-related collaborations:

1. Curriculum co-design
2. Curriculum co-delivery
3. Mobility of students by way of student internships/placements
4. Dual education programmes
5. Lifelong learning for industry personnel

Research-related collaborations:

6. Joint funded research and development
7. Consultations/contract research from industry
8. Mobility of staff to industry on temporary-basis

Valorisation-related collaborations:

9. Commercialisation of research outcomes by way of licencing and patenting
10. Academic entrepreneurship by way of spin-offs
11. Student entrepreneurship by way of start-ups

Management-related collaborations:

12. Governance by participating in each other's governance boards
13. Shared resources by way of expertise, equipment, and infrastructure
14. Industry support by way of scholarships and sponsorships

Quadruple, and Quintuple), and appropriateness depends on the level of analysis and the type of decisions to be made. Building on Lundvall (1992, p. 7), Carayannis and Campbell (2019) state: “innovation systems might differ in their ambitions and goals: the national level emphasizes international competitiveness of the national economy; at the level of international organizations, the efforts concentrate on strengthening economic growth and avoiding international conflicts; at the global level, ambitions focus on the long-term survival of the global economy that depends on ecological sustainability and a reduction of the extreme social inequality” (p. 10). In different periods, different interfaces may appear to be more or less important in research and innovation. For example, the European Commission interprets U-I collaborations as an encompassing, overarching, and interconnected complex ecosystem, and it demands all actions to be handled simultaneously at all levels, and actors have to be addressed as a whole (Galan-Muros & Davey, 2019). This recollects the features of Mode 3, and Quintuple Helix models reviewed above.

Still, irrespective of the model of innovation system used, identifying, explaining, and measuring U-I collaborations ensure that these are recognised, understood and promoted. In this regard, Davey et al. (2018, p. 41) state “some activities are easier than others to identify, describe and quantify”. It is also suggested that when a university engages in a particular mode of collaboration, it may also consider engaging in other modes of collaboration. Further, modes

that offer more direct, measurable, and promotable benefits are the most developed ones whilst less measurable modes that provide more indirect benefits and little ability to promote are the least developed ones (Davey et al., 2018). The most developed and widely identified modes were found in the area of research due to direct financial benefits and opportunities for student mobility; less developed modes were found in curriculum design, governance, and mobility of academics (Davey et al., 2018). It is suggested that universities should be transformed to make U-I collaborations meaningful (Della Volpe, 2018); the transformations should stem from the university’s first mission – teaching (Della Volpe, 2018; Plewa et al., 2015) (refer to Table 14.1).

The characteristics of actors, institutions, and networks in an innovation system affect the structures and modes of U-I collaboration. The characteristics such as the university’s historical background, specialisations, and location influence the modes of U-I collaboration and the size of collaborating industry partners (Pittayasophon & Intarakumnerd, 2017). Further, an industry partner gives preference for the quality of research at a university over its geographical proximity to the university (Laursen et al., 2011). Furthermore, the modes of collaboration may differ depending on whether the industry partner belongs to a mature or emergent industry (Arocena & Sutz, 2001); mature and emergent industries experience different innovation environments due to characteristics such as technology turbulence, market turbulence, and search strategies used

for innovation inputs (Von Tunzelmann, 2009).

Social Network Analysis in U-I Collaborations

Social network analysis is a quantitative methodology that utilises structural or relational information to examine linkages between actors and their reciprocal relationships within a social network. A social network is a set of actors possessing similar or complementary characteristics with ties between them (Scott, 1991; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Social network theory is used to understand the linkages between actors and their reciprocal relationships. Social network theory finds a direct link to the theories of social capital since “social capital inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors” (Coleman, 1988, p. 16).

The theories on innovation systems discussed above are built on actors, institutions, and networks and their interactions. When an innovation system is taken as the basis for understanding U-I collaborations, the interactions between the university, industry, and the government (actors), the configuration of the innovation system itself (networks), and the regulatory framework (institutions) operate as its main determinants. Hence, SNA provides a unique methodological approach to measure linkages between network members and their reciprocal relationships in research and innovation.

Three main theories of social capital are important for innovation systems and U-I collaborations. These are the weak

tie theory of Granovetter (1973) that focuses on the strength of ties between actors, the structural hole theory of Burt (1992) that emphasizes the bridging properties between networks, and the social resources theory of Lin et al. (1981) that focuses on the nature of ties among contacts. All these theories follow the convention of SNA and can be used for the evaluation of U-I collaborations. The measurement of relationships helps to define the behaviours that exist in a network and their impact on the functioning of the network. Social network analysis emphasises adhering to several steps involving 1) the determination of the type of analysis, such as tie-level (dyadic), actor-level (monadic), and/or network-level, 2) the definition of relationships in the network, such as communication relations, instrumental relations, power relations, and interpersonal relations, 3) the collection of data and the analysis of data using programmes such NetDraw and UCINET, and 4) the measurement and interpretation of relations (Scott, 2000; Wasserman & Faust, 1994; Worren et al., 2002).

Social network analysis has been applied to understand U-I collaborations (Lagoke et al., 2020; Pinheiro et al., 2015; Thune, 2007). For example, Pinheiro et al. (2015) investigated the application of SNA in understanding U-I collaborations in research at individual and organizational levels. They provided specific evidence for an asymmetry in connections between the different types of partners, where business firms’ preferential linkage is to research institutes and research institutes’ preferential linkage is to another research

institute. Lagoke et al. (2020) provided specific evidence for the use of SNA in curriculum design and concluded that “the inability of the government to serve as a fulcrum within the network, which would bring both higher education institutes and the industry together, is affecting the achievement of the curriculum being on a par with industry demands” (p. 11). Thune (2007) studied U-I collaborations in general, and provided evidence for the opportunity-driven character of tie formation, the role of the government in initiating U-I collaborations; difficulties in creating U-I collaborations between previously unconnected actors due to lack of central resources, familiarity, trust, and commitment for knowledge exchange. The studies like these conducted using SNA provide vital information central to both forming and carrying out U-I collaborations.

Conclusion

The current and future success of the economy and society is decided by the potential to create new knowledge and apply them balancing with nature. Innovation systems play a pivotal role in economic and social development. Mode 2, Mode 3, Triple Helix, and the two extensions of Triple Helix are potential ideologies to be used for the understanding of innovation systems. Still, the appropriateness depends on the context of the analysis. Of the theories of innovation systems, Quintuple Helix can be identified as the most current of all addressing sustainable development together with the natural environment to suit the circumstances of the 21st century. Still, it is an extension of Triple Helix, by adding creative class and ecosystem into

the equation. As a result, it emphasises not only the importance of science-based disciplines for innovation systems but also arts-based disciplines. Further, it emphasises the democratic principles of freedom, equality, and sustainable development in research and innovation.

University-industry collaborations, coined with Mode 2, assume utmost importance in innovation systems. The university and industry as the two main actors of the innovation systems can find various modes for interaction leveraging or translating knowledge into application and use. Knowledge applications have the potential to be used for economic gains and the benefit of society. Differences in terms of strategy, orientation, priority, and capability between the university and industry could become hindrances for successful U-I collaborations. Still, on the one hand, in-house learning mechanisms of the industry or the university alone are insufficient for radical innovations. On the other hand, a combination of heterogeneous sources of knowledge lowers research and development costs. These imply the importance of better interactions between the two actors. The government and regulatory framework can play a vital role in providing necessary support to overcome or at least smoothen out differences between actors in innovation networks. When actors and institutions are aggregated in a network and enabled access to each other's unique resources, beneficial outcomes would be reached in the selected knowledge domain. In this regard, it is important to accept that although nation-state structures for the political systems dominate in the world,

some parts of the world, such as Europe, are moving towards the transnational and the regional level with the possibilities to create meta-clusters and meta-networks for research and innovation.

In the realm of U-I collaborations, the ability to understand relationships that exist within the structure, the performance of individual components, and their ability to function in a network are very important. In the Sri Lankan context, a very limited number of research publications appeared in the internationally reputed, highly-ranked, mainstream publications. A systematic analysis of experiences of or attempts of U-I collaborations in education, research, valorisation, and management seems to be largely neglected. Further, the lack of in-depth research studies involving linkages between actors, institutions, and networks and their reciprocal relationships involving centrality, density, rigidity, supportiveness, sharing potential, and well-being influence the effective decision-making on U-I collaborations

in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, sufficient information on mechanisms used by the government to become the fulcrum within innovation systems by regulating other actors and also to be a broker within networks is valuable; such information does not exist in the Sri Lankan context. Still, it is widely accepted that the status of U-I collaborations in Sri Lanka has not reached the level that policymakers would like to see. Therefore, despite the growing interest in U-I collaborations in academics, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, there is a vast number of gaps in the understanding of U-I collaborations in Sri Lanka. For the growth and development of U-I collaborations in the country, the sharing of information on a wider variety of modes through which universities and industry partners collaborate and the factors underlying the interactions are a must. Social network analysis in U-I collaborations can provide necessary relational information to enhance the current and future performance of U-I collaborations.

References

- Arocena, R., & Sutz, J. (2001). Changing knowledge production and Latin American universities. *Research Policy*, 30(8), 1221-1234.
- Breschi, S., Malerba, F. (1997). Sectoral systems of innovation: Technological regimes, Schumpeterian dynamics and spatial boundaries. In C. Edquist (Ed.), *Systems of Innovation*. London: Frances Pinter.
- Burt, R.S. (1992). *Structural holes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Carayannis, E.G., & Campbell, D.F.J. (2009). "Mode 3" and "Quadruple Helix": Toward a 21st century fractal innovation ecosystem. *International Journal of Technology Management*, 46(3-4), 201-234.
- (2010). Triple Helix, Quadruple Helix and Quintuple Helix and how do knowledge, innovation and the environment relate to each other? A proposed framework for a trans-disciplinary analysis of sustainable development and social ecology. *International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development*, 1(1), 41-69.
- (2014). Developed democracies versus emerging autocracies: Arts, democracy, and innovation in quadruple helix innovation systems. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 3(12), 1-23.

- (2019). *Smart Quintuple Helix innovation systems - How social ecology and environmental protection are driving innovation, sustainable development and economic growth*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Carayannis, E.G., Campbell, D.F.J., & Rehman, S.S. (2016). Mode 3 knowledge production: Systems and systems theory, clusters and networks. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 5(17), 1-24.
- Carlsson, B., & Stankiewicz, R. (1991). On the nature, function and composition of technological systems. *Journal of Evolutionary Economics*, 1(2), 93-118.
- Chen, A., Patton, D., & Kenney, M. (2016). University technology transfer in China: A literature review and taxonomy. *Journal of Technology Transfer*, 41(5), 891-929.
- Coleman, J.S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(Supplement), S95-S120.
- Cooke, P., Uranga, M.G., & Etzebarria, G. (1998). Regional Systems of Innovation: An Evolutionary Perspective. *Environment and Planning: Economy and Space*, 30(9), 1563-1584.
- Davey, T., Meerman, A., Galan Muros, V., Orazbayeva, B., & Baaken, T. (2018). *The state of university-business cooperation in Europe. Final Report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. doi:10.2766/676478.
- Della Volpe, M. (2018). Entrepreneurial university and business education: Towards a network model. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 13(3), 13-27.
- Edquist, C. (2004). Reflections on the systems of innovation approach. *Science and Public Policy*, 31(6), 485-489.
- Etzkowitz, H. (2003). Innovation in innovation: The triple helix of university-industry-government relations. *Social science information*, 42(3), 293-337.
- Etzkowitz, H., & Leydesdorff, L. (2000). The dynamics of innovation: From National Systems and "Mode 2" to a Triple Helix of university-industry-government relations. *Research Policy*, 29(2), 109-123.
- Fischer, B.B., Schaeffer, P.R. & Vonortas, N.S. (2019). Evolution of university-industry collaboration in Brazil from a technology upgrading perspective. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 145, 330-340.
- Florida, R. (2004). *The rise of the creative class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community, and everyday life*. Cambridge, MA: Basic Books.
- Freeman, C. (1987). *Technology policy and economic performance: Lessons from Japan*, London, UK: Pinter Publishers.
- Galan-Muros, V., & Davey, T. (2019). The UBC Ecosystem: Putting together a comprehensive framework for university-business cooperation. *Journal of Technology Transfer*, 44(4), 1311-1346.
- Gento, A.M., Pimentel, C. & Pascual, J.A. (2021): Lean school: An example of industry-university collaboration, *Production Planning & Control*, 32(6), 473-488.
- Gibbons, M., Limoges, C., Nowotny, H., Schwartzman, S., Scott, P., & Trow, M. (1994). *The new production of knowledge- The dynamics of science and research in contemporary societies*. London: Sage.
- Granovetter, M.S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), 1360-1380.
- Hekkert, M.P., Suurs, R.A., Negro, S.O., Kuhlmann, S., & Smits, R.E.H.M. (2007). Functions of innovation systems: A new approach for analysing technological change. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 74(4), 413-432.
- Heyler, R., & Lee, D. (2014). The role of work experience in the future employability of higher education graduates. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 68(3), 348-372.

- Jones Evans, D., Klofsten, M., Andersson, E., & Pandya, D. (1999). Creating a bridge between university and industry in small European countries: The role of the Industrial Liaison Office. *R&D Management*, 29(1), 47-56.
- Kitagawa, F. (2014). Collaborative doctoral programmes: Employer engagement, knowledge mediation and skills for innovation. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 68(3): 328-347.
- Kline, S.J., & Rosenberg, N. (1986). An overview of innovation. In R. Landau & N. Rosenberg (Eds.), *The positive sum strategy: Harnessing technology for economic growth*. 275-306, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
- Kuhlmann, S. (2001). Future governance of innovation policy in Europe: Three scenarios. *Research Policy*, 30(6), 953-976.
- Lagoke, O., Adesola, S. & Soname, S. (2020). Social network analysis as a methodological tool to understand university-industry dynamism in enhancing the HEI curriculum: A case of the Nigerian oil industry. *Studies in Higher Education*, DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2020.1723529
- Larsen, K., Bandara, D.C., Esham, M., & Unantenne, R. (2016). Promoting university-industry collaboration in Sri Lanka- *Status, case studies, and policy options*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Laursen, K., Reichstein, T., & Salter, A. (2011). Exploring the effect of geographical proximity and university quality on university-industry collaboration in the United Kingdom, *Regional Studies*, 45(4), 507-523.
- Lin, N., Ensel, W.M., & Vaughn, J. C. (1981). Social resources and strength of ties. *American Sociological Review*, 46(4), 393-405.
- Lindberg, M., Danilda, I. & Torstensson, B.M. (2012). Women Resource Centres - Creative Knowledge Environments of Quadruple Helix. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*. 3(1), 36-52.
- Lundvall, B.-Å. (Ed.). (1992). *National systems of innovation: Towards a theory of innovation and interactive learning*. London: Pinter Publishers.
- Munari, F., Rasmussen, E., Toschi, L., & Villani, E. (2016). Determinants of the university technology transfer policy-mix: A cross-national analysis of gap-funding instruments. *Journal of Technology Transfer*, 41(6), 1377-1405.
- Newman, J.H. (1852). *The Idea of a University*. 1852. London, UK: Aeterna Press, 2015.
- Pinheiro, M.L., Lucas, C., & Pinho, J.C. (2015). Social network analysis as a new methodological tool to understand university-industry cooperation. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 19 (1): 1550013-1 - 1550013-22.
- Pittayasophon, S., & Intarakumnerd, P. (2017). University and industry collaboration in Japan and Thailand: Influence of university type. *Asian Journal of Technology Innovation*, 25(1), 23-40.
- Plewa, C., Galán-Muros, V., & Davey, T. (2015). Engaging business in curriculum design and delivery: A higher education institution perspective. *Higher Education*, 70(1), 35-53.
- Pogatsnik, M. (2018). Dual education: The win-win model of collaboration between universities and industry. *International Journal of Engineering Pedagogy*, 8(3), 145-152.
- Samuel, G., Donovan, C. & Lee, J. (2018). University-industry teaching collaborations: A case study of the MSc in Structural Integrity co-produced by Brunel University London and The Welding Institute, *Studies in Higher Education*, 43(4), 769-785.
- Scott, J. (1991). *Social Network Analysis*. 1991. London: Sage, 2000.
- Singh, M. (2013). Designing research to improve students' learning: 'Industry/university' collaborations for educating teacher-researchers. *Australian Education Research*, 40, 549-566.
- Steinmo, M., & Rasmussen, E. (2018). The interplay of cognitive and relational social capital dimensions in university-industry collaboration: Overcoming the experience barrier. *Research Policy*, 47 (10), 1964-1974.

Thune, T. (2007). University-industry collaboration: The network embeddedness approach. *Science and Public Policy*, 34(3), 158-168.

Von Tunzelmann, N. (2009). Competencies versus capabilities: A reassessment. *Economia Politica*, 26(3), 435-464.

Wasserman, S., & Faust, K. (1994). *Social network analysis: Methods and applications*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wickramasinghe, V. (2018). Higher education in state universities in Sri Lanka – review of higher education since colonial past through international funding for development, *International Journal of Educational Management*, 32(3), 463-478.

Worren, N.A., Moore, K., & Elliott, R. (2002). When theories become tools: Toward a framework for pragmatic validity. *Human Relations*, 55(10), 1227-1250.

Chapter 16

UNIVERSITY INDUSTRY COLLABORATIONS: TRENDS AND PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES FACED BY SRI LANKAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

R.G. Ariyawansa

Introduction

University-Industry Collaborations (UICs) have been solid strategic devices since the inception of universities in the world achieving goals of creation and dissemination of new knowledge. Understanding of mutual benefits, trust in each other, and effective communications have been critical factors for effective UICs. Experts' view is that to establish and maintain effective UICs, universities need to think and act like entrepreneurs. It also emphasizes some conditions such as "appropriate industry partners", "developing sustainable business models", "maximizing limited budgets", and "pitching value and ideas to potential industry partners". In the modern world, universities are forced to transform their industry collaborations in line with the reshaped desires of societies and nations. Being a middle-income country, Sri Lanka needs vibrant support from national universities ensuring new knowledge, competent graduates, innovations, and new products. Hence, national universities are urged to work collaboratively with the industry to realize national development goals. This paper discusses trends and practical

difficulties faced by Sri Lankan national universities in maintaining effective industry collaborations. Initially, UIC models were reviewed to define the concept. For the primary data collection, academics and industry representatives were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire and identified the needs of collaborations and related problems. Constant comparison and content analysis were adopted as data analysis techniques. The study revealed that major motives for many existing collaborations are "training placements" and "employment opportunities". From the university side, "seeking funds" for social and development activities such as conferences, CSR projects, and scholarships is a general practice. "Exchange of human resources" is mostly on personal interest. Collaborative research & publications, innovations & new products are very rare in Humanities and Social Sciences Departments. Conventional understanding and approaches, weak policies and strategies are major issues. However, in developed countries, new ideas from research done in universities are put into practice through UICs while

some are reaching the market through licensing or starting companies. Research evidence shows that organizations in developed countries increasingly rely on external sources of innovation via inter-organizational network relationships. It is also argued that UICs are essential as business organizations are having limited capacity to work on complex social, environmental, and economic challenges such as in areas of energy, environment, health, and security. Hence, it is proposed to bridge the gap between “lack of industry capacity” and “solution for complex social, and market issues” through effective UICs. Universities and firms should wish to see results from joint research putting into practice. However, this study revealed that within the Sri Lankan UICs, such interests have not yet been widely recognized. The prime motive of many collaborations is seeking places of training and employment. Hence, there is a need for policy and strategic intervention to raise active participation of academics, students, and firms for effective UICs in Sri Lanka.

Need of UICs for Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a lower-middle-income country home to 21.5 million people with a GDP per capita of USD 4,084.6 and 5.4% of 10-year average annual GDP growth by 2018 (World Economic Forum, 2018). Human Development Index of Sri Lanka is very high in comparison with

Asian countries. 2015 records indicate this index in countries as Sri Lanka 0.766, Afghanistan 0.479, Bangladesh 0.579, Bhutan 0.607, India 0.624, Maldives 0.701, Nepal 0.558, Pakistan 0.550, Indonesia 0.689, Malaysia 0.789, Philippines 0.682, Rep. of Korea 0.901, Singapore 0.925, Thailand 0.740 (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2017). Further, Life Expectancy in 2015 was 75 years and Literacy Rate in 2015 was 93.2 which are comparatively very high in South Asia and closer to developed countries due to the country’s health and education policy.

Education has been critical for human welfare in a time of rapid economic change (World Bank, 2018). Sri Lanka provides free education for all from grade 01 to university education. At present, there are 15 state universities and hundreds of degree offering departments (Table 16.1) and several private degree offering establishments (www.ugc.ac.lk).

Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF) and Quality Assurance Council were established to monitor the quality of universities and degree programmes (<https://www.eugc.ac.lk/qac/>, www.ugc.ac.lk). Yet, as Sri Lanka is striving to become an upper-middle-income country, it needs strong UICs as a centerpiece of innovation systems, which is practiced in developed countries (Larsen *et al.*, 2016). UICs are very strong in some Asian

Table 16.1: Number of universities, faculties and departments in Sri Lanka

	2018	2019	2020
University	15	15	15
Faculty	103	107	109
Department	623	641	675

Source: www.ugc.ac.lk

countries like China, India, Malaysia, and Singapore.

World Economic Forum (2014, 2018), in its Executive Opinion Survey covering 144 countries in 2014/15 and 140 countries in 2018 made four inquiries on ‘innovation in countries’; (a) to what extent do companies have capacity to innovate? (b) to what extent do companies spend on research and development (R&D)? (c) how would it be assessed quality of scientific research institutions? and (d) to what extent do businesses and universities collaborate on R&D? Accordingly, countries’ innovation capacities were ranked as shown with some comparative data in table 16.2.

Table 16.2 shows that Sri Lanka maintains decreasing trend in all ranks from 2014 to 2018 except UICs, which is progressing from 2014 (110) to 2018 (78). China has increased its status for all aspects. This survey has also inquired availability of specialized research and training services, for which Sri Lanka is ranked as 4.4 and Singapore is ranked as 5.5, which is very good status (World Economic Forum 2014). Further, in area

of “quality of education system”, Sri Lanka was ranked as 4.6, which is similar to the UK and USA in 2014. However, it is questionable why Sri Lanka is not maintaining good ranks compared to India, China and Singapore etc. In this regard, Larsen *et al.*, (2016) have stated that both companies and universities in Sri Lanka are aware of the importance of UICs and are increasingly willing to finance for such collaborations. However, Sri Lanka’s rank for companies’ R&D expenditure has shifted from 50 in 2014 to 110 in 2018 (table 16.2), which was a negative move.

Role of Contemporary Universities

A study done by Steenkamp and Rigard (2019), on “The Quadruple Helix (QH) Model of Innovation for Industry” revealed some effective systems that motivate UICs, namely “entrepreneurial universities”, “innovation centres”, “exhibitions and technology transfer offices (TTOs)” in universities as part of innovation ecosystems. Recognition of universities’ role as a contributor in wealth generation and economic development has increased in recent decades (Lawrence and Kirk, 2007). The combination of academia, industry,

Table 16.2: Country ranks for UICs, R&D, innovation & research

Country	Rank of UICs [Multiple Collaborations]		Rank of Company Expenditure on R&D as % GDP		Rank of Capacity for Innovations		Rank of Quality of Research Institutions	
	2014	2018	2014	2018	2014	2018	2014	2018
Sri Lanka	110	78	50	110	29	80	47	74
India	50	26	30	53	48	31	52	08
Singapore	05	12	10	17	18	14	11	21
China	32	29	23	18	40	24	40	24

Source: Author compiled the table based on World Economic Forum, 2014/15, 2018

government and civil society forms an integral part of European innovation policy, which aims to create sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe (Roman *et al.*, 2020). On contrary, Sultan and Qaimary (2017) stated that universities' role in Palestine has been underutilized due to a weak mandate for development-oriented research and poor university-private sector dialogues. This implies the prudent role of universities and hurdles that exist in some countries. In a broader sense, Steenkamp and Rigard (2019), argue that knowledge society, service economy, social ergonomics, epochal social changes are some key concerns that universities should attend to. Finland and Sweden have been innovation leaders in the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) due to the long tradition of effective UICs (Roman *et al.*, 2020).

As per the Triple Helix (TH) model, university is one of the key actors in generating a knowledge economy. Quadrupole Helix System (QH), including society into TH thesis, explains universities' role which is more socially oriented. As society has entered into a modern social-technical world seeing mega changes, megatrends, megacities and mega technology, universities need to modify their role catering to modern society (Steenkamp and Rigard, 2019). This implies a revolution in higher education merging with beneficiaries of development through better health care, green environment, food security etc.

QH framework can also be defined in terms of what value-adding activities they bring to civil society, where users can be businesses, organizations, citizens, and society at large (Hasche *et al.*, 2020). Even if universities assume holistic approaches towards university-industry linkages,

there may have weak operations in such linkages too (Sultan and Qaimary, 2017). Hence, government should facilitate QH collaborations and involvement of civil society in innovation priorities (Roman *et al.*, 2020). The key challenge for UICs is to ensure maintaining a long-term perspective rather than short-term benefits (Lawrence and Kirk, 2007). Through a systematic review on UICs, Ankrah and AL-Tabbaa (2015) identified four strategic actions for UICs as research support, cooperative research, knowledge transfer, and technology transfer for long-term benefits. Accordingly, this study examines prevailing trends and patterns of UICs and barriers & potentials in Sri Lankan state universities.

Methodology

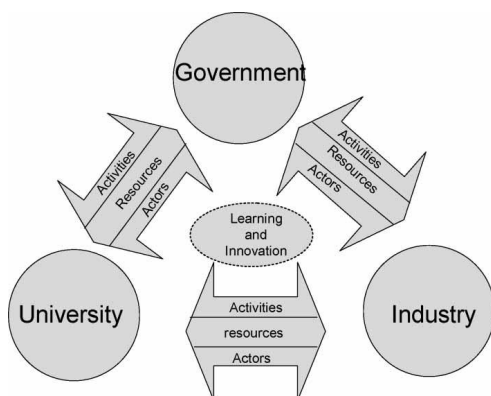
The study design is based on qualitative exploration. Theoretical models and concepts related with UICs were reviewed to understand exploratory questions. Accordingly, the study mainly addressed the question 'what are the trends and patterns of UICs and problems faced and potentials prevailed in state universities in Sri Lanka'. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with academics and administrators of universities. Web based information published by state universities of the country regarding their UICs were also used. Constant comparison and content analysis were adopted as data analysis techniques.

Theoretical Definitions for UICs

Ankrah and AL-Tabbaa (2015), in their study of "systematic review of UICs" using 109 publications out of

1500 related publications, analyzed the phenomenon dividing all stakeholders into two parties; universities and industry. Generally, advanced economies are smart in adopting UICs whereas many developing countries have not well recognized it (Wickramasinghe and Malik, 2018). Primarily, state universities of such countries expect social wellbeing through generating and disseminating knowledge and producing graduates. In contrast, firms aim to maximize profits as conflicting objectives. Hence, UICs must have an adequate mutual understanding to initiate and sustain.

Triple Helix Model (TH): TH model tells that universities, industry, and government can combine to generate new institutional formats for production, transfer, and application of knowledge (Larsen *et al.*, 2016). This model enhances the level of learning and innovation in a country. For effective merging, actors and resources should be in line with the collaborations as linking agents (Etzkowitz, 2008 as in Leydesdorff, 2012).

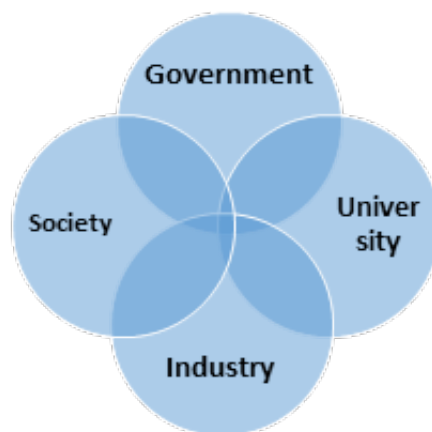


TH mainly focuses on the knowledge economy (Elias *et al.*, 2012). It is a question whether Sri Lankan universities

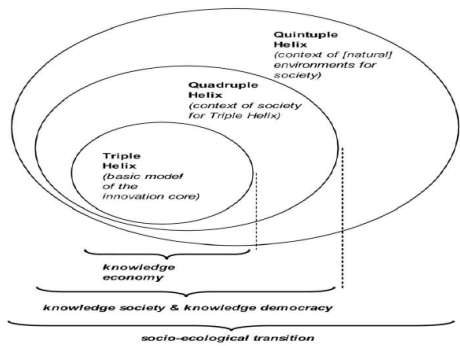
have recognized their responsibility for UICs, as Wickramasinghe and Malik, (2018) are in view that although the Sri Lankan governments formally started to support UICs since 2005, this activity area has received limited leadership, direction or monitoring within the university sector. Yet, state contribution is also inadequate in Sri Lanka as allocation of funds is very low, around 2% of GDP (World Bank, 2020).

Quadrupole Helix System (QH):

This includes four actors; government, university, industry, and society as an enhancement of TH including society. QH encourages perspectives of knowledge society, knowledge democracy in knowledge production and innovation (Elias *et al.*, 2012). QH can be viewed holistically as TH actors' value-adding relationships with civil society, for example, providing new jobs or products for improved elderly care (Hasche, *et al.*, 2020).



Quintuple Helix Model: Quadruple Helix Model forms a win-win situation between ecology, knowledge and innovation, creating synergies between economy, society, and democracy (Elias *et al.*, 2012).



Quintuple Helix is a wider system as it leads socioecological transition of society as Quintuple Helix model connects natural environments, society and economy as drivers for knowledge production and innovation (Elias *et al.*, 2012).

Results and Discussion

Ankrah and AL-Tabbaa (2015), emphasize critical examination on government role in UICs. They argue that in developed economies, governments facilitate highly for establishment and development of such collaborations whereas situation in emerging and developing countries is not appealing including Sri Lanka as allocation of money for education is comparatively very low (World Bank, 2020).

Respondents who participated in this study stated that “*state funding is not adequate for research collaborations*”. They, further, pointed out that “*industry financial contribution is very rare for collaborative work*”. Sri Lanka government spent 1.6 % GDP on R&D in 2010 which is significantly less than Singapore (2.43%) (Larsen *et al.*, 2016). Sri Lankan companies also give narrow emphasis on R&D and have reduced

investments considerably from 2014 to 2018 (World Economic Forum, 2014, 2018).

In an empirical study done using a sample of academics from faculties of Applied Sciences, Medicine, Engineering, Computer Science, and Information Technology of eight universities of Sri Lanka, Wickramasinghe and Malik, (2018) revealed that majority of UICs in Sri Lanka are through “student placements in the industry” and “consultancy to industry by academic staff” and secondly as “research contracted to university staff” and “training of industry staff at university”. However, developed countries’ scenario is different as they apply QH including civil society, consumer, and end-user of knowledge-creating ecosystems (Hasche, *et al.*, (2020). Some developed universities are organized within ecosystems for innovation, as summarized in table 16.3.

Type of UICs in Sri Lankan Universities

Sri Lankan state universities’ web information proves that all universities have established different features such as international conferences, research centres, research grants schemes, journals to promote UICs, of which, some information is included in table 16.4.

Accordingly, it implies that state universities are preparing feasible forums for UICs. World Economic Forum (2014, 2018) also shows that as per its ranking, Sri Lanka maintains increasing trend in UICs from 2014 (110) to 2018 (78). Ankrah and AL-Tabbaa (2015) identified six categories of formations of UICs

Table 16.3: Examples of ecosystems for innovations

University System	Strategic Activities	Lessons for Sri Lanka
Maastricht University Brightlands ecosystem keeps its “core philosophy” as “collaborative open research education”.	This university created TH hotspots focusing on specific future industry challenges, such as safety of food, affordable care and cybersecurity.	This university system is arranged to address national development issues through effective UICs ensuring benefits for society end users.
Technical University Innovation lab at Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands. Appointing Technology Transfer Officer (TTO)	Scientific knowledge generated by this university is translated to small businesses through a specialized TTO.	This is an end-user benefit-oriented system. It ensures the effective transfer of new knowledge to the business community via TTO.
The Aalto University (Finland), which is more solution driven than curriculum focused. This university has produced more than 3000 PhDs	Main research areas are brain simulation technology, design thinking for business innovation, computational nanoscience, inference research, generic intelligent machines and wireless research.	Sri Lankan state universities could produce 164 PhDs in 2020 & only 2.82% registrations is for PhD in 2020. State universities should plan more PhDs with industry collaborative research.
The Innovation Network Science Park in Amsterdam	This is established for innovative companies and research organizations who seek partners, valorization and new ventures.	This is a very practical establishment that can be adopted by Sri Lanka for UICs work.
Innovation Exchange Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, which provides support in the entire valorization process.	This helps inventors to establish partnerships with organizations. The Technology Centre develops scientific instruments in the fields of glass, construction, electronics and software.	When establishing new faculties particularly in science and technology field, university should think of effective collaborative models. New regulations, policies and motivations etc. are needed.
The KU Leuven research-intensive international university in Belgium. This university is central to the Leuven ecosystem, known for the world’s leading anti-HIV drug, which has a long tradition of technology transfer.	Employed TTO who manage their research valorization, form of societal return. Collaboration with industries and creating spin-off companies, Support for high-tech entrepreneurship. Having an ecosystem consists of several incubators, business centres and science parks.	Sri Lankan medical, science and business faculties can work together and develop effective UICs targeting nationally important products. Cost of drugs for Sri Lankan economy is very high. Similarly, there are several burning areas such as agriculture, food, cloths, housing etc to be researched.

Source: Author compiled based on Steenkamp and Rigard (2019), www.ugc.ac.lk

Table 16.4: Trending establishments in Sri Lankan universities 2019-2020

University	Conference	Journals/news	Research Centers	International Office	Collaborations	Business Links	Staff research promotions	Strategic Establishments
Colombo	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Business Collaboration Link, International Office, MoUs, (http://www.cmb.ac.lk/)
Peradeniya	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Research Council, MoUs, Business Collaborations (https://www.pdn.ac.lk/)
Sri Jayewardenepura	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Innovation, Invention and Venture Creation Council, MoUs, World Class University Project, (https://www.sjp.ac.lk/)
Kelaniya	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Research Council, Centre for International Affairs, Ethical Committee, (https://www.kln.ac.lk/)
Moratuwa	√	√	√	*	√	√	√	Intellectual Property Advisory Committee, Industry Collaborative Research Labs, University Consultancy Service Unit, Special Technical and Scientific Support, Research Groups, Office of Research, (https://uom.lk/)
Jaffna	√	√	√	√	√	√	*	Global National Institute for Health Research, (http://www.jfn.ac.lk/)
Ruhuna	√	√	√	√	√	*	*	China-Sri Lanka Joint Center for Research and Education, (https://www.ruh.ac.lk/)
Open Eastern	√ *	√ √	√ √	√ *	√ √	* √	√ *	https://www.ou.ac.lk/ Research Groups, Leading Research Hub in Eastern Province, Consciousness-based Education for Holistic Human Development, University Business Linkage, (https://www.esn.ac.lk/)

South Eastern	*	√	√	√	√	√	*	Research and Innovation Centre, Technology and Innovation Support Center, University Business Linkages Cell, (http://www.seu.ac.lk/)
Rajarata	√	√	*	*	√	√	√	University Business Linkage Cell, (http://www.rjt.ac.lk/)
Wayamba	√	√	√	*	√	√	√	University Business Linkage Cell, Business Support Development Centre, Senate Research Higher Degrees Committee, (https://www.wyb.ac.lk/)
Uva Wellassa	√	√		√	√	*	√	Entrepreneurs Day, Research Committee, (http://www.uwu.ac.lk/)
Visual performing	*	√	√	√	*	√	*	University Business Linkage Cell, (https://vpa.ac.lk/)
Sabaragamuwa	*	√	√	*	√	√	*	Centre for Research and Knowledge Dissemination, University Business Link, (https://www.sab.ac.lk/)

Source: www.ugc.ac.lk (*) information is not clear or unavailable on the date of search.

namely: Personal Informal Relationships, Personal Relationships, Third Party, Formal Targeted Agreements, Formal Non-Targeted Agreements and Creation of Focused Structures. Under these categories, respondents' views were compiled and able to identify different types of UICs available in Sri Lankan state universities as in table 16.5.

Motivations or Purpose of UICs

Motivations for universities in entering into UICs are different from one to another (Ankrah and AL-Tabbaa, 2015). Academics' motivations for UICs may be crucial as representatives of universities. Wickramasinghe and Malik, (2018) have identified five motives from academics' point of view as "to access industrial feedback for graduates and curriculum

development", "access to complementary expertise in the industry", "to train students in an industrial environment", "to contribute to country's economy", and "to find an exploitation outlet for research capabilities" etc. related to Sri Lanka universities. Interviews revealed that the inclusion of compulsory research projects for 08 credits, and 06 credits industrial training for special degree programmes (<https://www.ugc.ac.lk>) as a key motivator for some UICs. Different motivations and how they are usually processed in state universities are as in table 16.6 based on academics' experience.

Issues and Barriers

For successful collaborations, there are two key measures such as rate of knowledge development, and speed

Table 16.5: Types of UICs in Sri Lanka universities and key motivations

Motivations for UICs	Types of Collaborations in Universities
Motivation of Individual Academics	Academics used to develop industry links with personal capacity and invite industry colleagues for - <i>guest lectures, resource persons for trainings, obtaining data and information, seeking places for students' training and jobs, fund collection, inviting as guests of honor in events, opportunities for sabbatical period.</i>
Motivation of Firm's Individuals (state or private)	Industry colleagues may invite academics based on personal contacts for - <i>workshops, training of their staff, as guests of honor in events, preparing proposals.</i>
Academics' common motivation	Academics work as a team and invite industry colleagues for - <i>visiting lectures, guest lectures, resource persons for trainings, obtaining data & information, seeking places for students' training and jobs, fund collection, inviting to participate as guests of honor.</i>
Department level short term motivation	Departments invite industry representatives as <i>visiting lecturers, research supervisors, examiners, guests of honor for events (like orientations, talent shows), requesting funds for students' CSR projects, students' scholarships, training and job placements for students.</i>
Department level short or long term formal motivation	Departments invite industries to be <i>collaborative partners of department level conference, places for compulsory students' industrial training in degree programmes, stakeholder meetings for curriculum development.</i>
Faculty level formal motivations	Faculties invite industries to be <i>collaborative partners of faculty level conference, students' welfare such as financial assistance, accreditations of degree programmes with professional bodies.</i>
Industry level formal motivations	Industry requests from departments/faculties <i>for their staff training, business development, conducting market surveys etc. These are mostly onetime requests and primarily based on personal contact.</i>

of knowledge transfer (Lawrence and Kirk, 2007). However, historically, Sri Lankan universities have had a low level of research and development activities instead of being committed to teaching (Larsen *et al.*, 2016).

Main views of respondents over their experience of industry feedback on UICs are as follows.

- i. *Bureaucratic system prevailing in state universities.*
- ii. *Lack of practical experience among academics.*

- iii. *Mismatch of university and industry objectives.*
- iv. *Universities are more interested in teaching rather than applications.*
- v. *Lack of business fashion.*
- vi. *Delays in decision-making process.*
- vii. *Financial handling with universities is difficult.*
- viii. *Additional charges from universities in budgeting (Table 16.7).*

Respondents also pointed out some issues related to industries such as;

Table 16.6: Process of UICs motivations in Sri Lankan universities

Motivations for UICs	Types of available UICs	Process of UICs
Motivation of Individual Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal: very personal contact with industry work • Formal: academics are seeking non-personal contact expecting formal recognition of industry • Short or long term: Above two modes may happen in short term as one day task or one time assignment or as a long term task may be a semester or year or more. 	Using the privilege of academic autonomy, academics are engaged in industry work seeking extra income, referee or recommendation letters, experience, developing networks. No information is recorded in official data bases and processed via private telephone calls, emails and personal visits.
Motivation of Firm's Individuals (state or private)	Informal/formal in terms of short or long term collaborations with academic members and industry. Industries contact potential academics through personal contacts. Sometimes, they contact potential academics through Heads of Departments or senior members of department. However, such collaborations are developed privately.	Industry needs conducting surveys, awareness programmes, trainings, consultancies, advisories etc. Appreciation letter are issued, payments are made, personal networks are developed. No records are maintained in university data bases.
Academics' common motivations	Senior academics are used to arrange industry supports using their personal contact or official contact for some activities of common interest such as guest lectures, orientation programmes, research supervisions, examinations of thesis, data collections, training or job placements for students.	Official letters are issued for appreciation or permissions. Some information is recorded for short term benefits such as producing monthly progress reports, evaluation reports etc.
Department level short term motivations	Department level formal decisions are taken to get industry support for some activities such as guest lectures, orientation programmes, research supervisions, examinations of thesis, data collections, training or job placements for selected students. Selection of industry partners may be short term because decisions seriously depend on the vision of existing Head of the Department.	Head of department issues letters, information is recorded in department minutes. Sometimes, faculty and/or university level approvals are taken. However, these are situationally changed, for instance, when a new head is appointed, previous links may not be continued.
Department level short or long term formal motivations	Matters are discussed at formal meetings, records are kept, specific guidelines and formats are prepared, included into department formal agenda. Hiring subject specific lecturers from key practicing organizations, for instance, inviting to Government Chief Valuer to conduct applied valuation for final year students, industry training opportunities for students' compulsory credit components, external examiners etc.	University senate approved appointment letters are issued, MoUs are signed by heads of institutions, coordinators are appointed from both parties to monitor activities. Officially identified benefits are gained by both parties.
Faculty level formal motivations	Faculty level committees discuss and take decisions, benefits and responsibilities are identified and guidelines and monitoring methods are developed, established committee(s) or relevant department(s) are assigned, university level approvals are taken. Students' orientations, staff training, student trainings, conference partnerships (for funding) are some common events.	University senate approved appointment/appreciation letters are issued, MoUs are signed, coordinators are appointed from both parties to monitor activities. Officially identified benefits are gained by both parties. Probably these are seasonal or onetime events. Dean's personal vision is decisive for the continuation of collaborations.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>i. <i>Lack of interest in research and lack of theoretical knowledge.</i></p> <p>ii. <i>Very keen on the allocation of resources (money) and benefits.</i></p> <p>iii. <i>Expect direct and speedy gains.</i></p> <p>iv. <i>Expect more work/benefits from recruiting trainers at a low salary.</i></p> | <p>v. <i>Mismatch of industry timeframe and university calendar.</i></p> <p>vi. <i>Industry expects very high capacities, which is not necessarily required.</i></p> <p>vii. <i>Industry expects rapid updates of study programmes, which is not possible as per university practice (Table 16.7).</i></p> |
|--|--|

Table 16.7: Levels of barriers and issues in State universities for UICs

Personal Level

Conventional Role of University/academics:

Respondents reviewed academics main role as “teaching and academic research”. Research and publications are done through supervision of postgraduate students, who are more inclined to academic research.

Issue of positioning state university in TH model or other models: Academics work individually. Motivations for collaboration are very weak.

Capacity and Resources: Self-financing ability of state universities is very limited due to available regulation and cultural limits. Universities should keep undergraduate teaching and their welfare as higher order responsibility. All academics, departments & faculties have to adhere to this norm.

Lack of mutual understanding and respect among academia and industry: Academics are invited by industry for ceremonial events and some basic learning matters. Industry and society respect academics as teachers are culturally noble.

Lack of motivation for merging for new knowledge and innovations in recruitment and promotions of academic staff and evaluation and ranking universities.

Lack of knowledge on intellectual property rights (IPR), patents, and licenses and promotion of business venture among academics.

Management and organization issues related with university leaderships. Senior academics are usually working independently and very lightly supervised by superiors. Individual motivation on UICs is very low.

Institutional Level

Sri Lankan state universities are primarily dedicated for teaching and producing graduates and postgraduate holders. Research is more academic oriented and outcome of academic supervisor and student’s work. Industry and practical world is rarely merged in research.

Sri Lankan universities can work independently to some extent. Yet, universities need to work as state organizations. Therefore, in case of state universities, we can see a Two Helix Model rather than TH or QH.

Adequate resources; funding, human and facilities are burning issues for state universities as cost of undergraduate programmes is very high. Incentives for university researchers, recruitment and training of technology transfer staff is difficult as per the existing regulation.

Higher order of independence/ autonomy that academics enjoy in planning their work. They can either work collectively or individually and engage in basic teaching only. This work norm leads universities to be culturally isolated and away from the practical world and general society.

Recruitments, promotions are fully handled by university authorities. Evaluations, feedbacks etc. done within the system that prevent counting real industry experience of academic staff and universities.

Traditionally universities are committed to undergraduate teaching and academic research which is valued by the ordinary society but less important for firms.

Implementation and continuation of UICs depend on the Leadership/Top management commitment and support. Every three years new leaders are appointed and new leaders usually start totally new systems and continuation of some projects is problematic.

Conclusion

For universities and industries to establish and sustain collaboration, they must gain mutual benefits from interactions (Lawrence and Kirk, 2007). For that, TH or QH actors; university, industry, state, and society should clearly understand their role. It is revealed that research in universities is mere as partial fulfilment of students' examinations and staff promotion. Collaborative research with industry is not promoted adequately. Conventionally accepted university primary role of teaching restricts academics from industry research and innovations. It leads to fewer initiations for UICs aiming at research and innovations instead of as support for the so-called primary job.

However, as Elias *et al.*, (2012) argued, Sri Lankan universities should collaborate with others for long-term sustainability of environment, markets and social institutions. Local universities should research on global issues such as climate change, energy crisis, food safety, disaster management etc. Moreover, production, delivery and consumption pattern and modern lifestyle have to be researched and new models should be introduced. For that, main academic disciplines such as science, arts and management etc. should be merged and form UICs with firms. It can be made some recommendations to be undertaken

by policy makers, universities, and firms for more effective collaborations;

- i. Need to line up national plans to promote country's research infrastructure ensuring research and innovation priorities through effective UICs.
- ii. Need to strengthen R&D funding schemes for joint projects adopting TH or QH model, based on international experiences.
- iii. Introduce flexible systems for existing state universities to better facilitate effective UICs targeting new knowledge, innovation and efficient and effective knowledge transferring mechanism.
- iv. Educate all academic and other actors of TH and QH on intellectual property rights, innovations and new product development.
- v. Defining academic role with more emphasis on research and generation of enterprise-oriented and innovation-based new knowledge.
- vi. Establish science park and entrepreneurial centers affiliated with every state university in the country.
- vii. Make compulsory for all university research centers to be merged with related industries.
- viii. Universities should be empowered with enough mandate and resources to be the initiator of UICs.

References

- Ankrah S, & O. AL-Tabbaa (2015), Universities-industry collaboration: A systematic review, *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 31, 387-408, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2015.02.003>
- Barnes, T.A., Pashby, I.R., & Gibbons, A.M. (2000), Collaborative R&D Projects: A Best Practice Management Model. *Proceedings of the 2000 IEEE International*.

Carayannis, E.G., Thorsten D.B., & David F.J.C. (2012). “The Quintuple Helix Innovation Model: Global Warming as a Challenge and Driver for Innovation.” *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship* 1(1):2. doi: 10.1186/2192-5372-1-2.

Central Bank of Sri Lanka (2017). www.cbsl.gov.lk

Conference on Management of Innovation and Technology: 1:217–23. doi: 10.1109/ICMIT.2000.917332.

David G., Fulvia M., & Jaci E. (2018), 3 ways to nurture collaboration between universities and industry, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/11/3-ways-to-nurture-collaboration-between-universities-and-industry/> accessed on 04.05.2021.

Edgar, G., & Omid A.K. (n.d.). A Conceptual Model of the Role of University-Industry Collaboration in a National Systems of Innovation. *PhD. Dissertation Thesis*.

Hazem A., Ashly P., & Abdelmounaim L (2020). The role of innovation in the relationship between university–industry collaboration in R&D and ISO 9001, *International Journal of Innovation Science*. Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 365-383 © Emerald Publishing Limited 1757-2223 DOI 10.1108/IJIS-10-2019-0095

Ivascu, L., Bianca, C., & Anca D., (2016). Business Model for the University-Industry Collaboration in Open Innovation. *Procedia Economics and Finance* 39(November 2015):674–78. doi: 10.1016/s2212-5671(16)30288-x.

Jin, J., Shanchao W., & Jin C.. (2011). International University-industry Collaboration to Bridge R&D Globalization and National Innovation System in China. *Journal of Knowledge-Based Innovation in China* 3(1):5–14. doi: 10.1108/17561411111120837.

Lam, A. (2011). University-Industry Collaboration: Careers and Knowledge Governance in Hybrid Organisational Space. *International Journal of Strategic Business Alliances* 2(1/2):135. doi: 10.1504/ijbsa.2011.038137.

Larsen, K., Deepthi, C.B., Mohamed, E., & Ranmini, U. (2016). Promoting University-Industry Collaboration in Sri Lanka: Status, Case Studies, and Policy Options. *Directions in Development*. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-0922-4. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO.

Lawrence, D., & Kirk, D. (2007). University-Industry Collaboration: Grafting the Entrepreneurial Paradigm onto Academic Structures. *European Journal of Innovation Management* 10(3):316–32. doi: 10.1108/14601060710776734.

Leydesdorff, L. (2012). *The Triple Helix of University-Industry-Government Relations*.

Lima, João Cardim Ferreira, Ana Lúcia Vitale Torkomian, Susana Carla Farias Pereira, Pedro Carlos Oprime & Luciana Harumi Hashiba, (2021). Socioeconomic Impacts of University–Industry Collaborations—a Systematic Review and Conceptual Model. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity* 7(2). doi: 10.3390/joitmc7020137.

Marta F., Haydeé, C., & Amparo C. (2012). University-industry collaboration from a relationship marketing perspective: an empirical analysis in a Spanish University, *Higher Education*, July 2012, Vol. 64, No. 1 (July 2012), pp. 85-98 Published by Springer, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41477921>, DOI 10.1007/s 10734-0 11-9482-3

Mowery, D.C., & Bhaven, N.S. (2009). Universities in National Innovation Systems. pp. 1-38, *The Oxford Handbook of Innovation*.

National Audit Office, (2019), Propensity to tend education under the Arts stream and the unemployment of Arts Graduates, Report number: PER/A/HED/A/2019/4

Nina Hasche, Linda Höglund & Gabriel Linton, (2020), Quadruple helix as a network of relationships: creating value within a Swedish regional innovation system, *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, 32:6, 523-544, DOI: 10.1080/08276331.2019.1643134.

OECD, (1997), National Innovation Systems: Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development.

Paola, C.V., & Fernanda R. (2018)' Exploring the relationship between university and innovation: evidence from the Italian food industry, *International Review of Applied Economics*, 32:5, 673-696,

DOI: 10.1080/02692171.2017.1357681

Paul, H., Nicholas, D.B., & Jaime, B. (2015). National Innovation Systems in Developing Countries: Barriers to University–Industry Collaboration in Egypt. *International Journal of Technology Management and Sustainable Development* 14(2)(October):113–24. doi: 10.1386/tmsd.14.2.113.

Roman, M., Varga, H., Cvijanovic, V., & Reid, A. (2020). Quadruple Helix Models for Sustainable Regional Innovation: Engaging and Facilitating Civil Society Participation, *Economies*, 8, 48; doi:10.3390/economies8020048.

Sæunn Ósk Unnsteinsdóttir, (2014). Industry-University relations from the industry perspective -Is there a connection between the companies' absorptive capacity (ACAP) and the values and barriers of these relations, *Master Programme in Industrial Management and Innovation*, University of Upsala, uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:725369/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Salleh, M.S., & Omar, M.Z. (2013). University-Industry Collaboration Models in Malaysia. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 102(February 2015):654–64. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.10.784.

Sarwar, U.M., Mohammad, A.K., Kamal Uddin, M., & Solaiman, M. (2015). University-Industry Collaboration (UIC) for Developing Highly Skilled and Productive Business Graduates in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Management and Business Research* 5(1):31–41.

Schütz, F., Marie L.H., & Martina, S. (2019). Co-Shaping the Future in Quadruple Helix Innovation Systems: Uncovering Public Preferences toward Participatory Research and Innovation. 5(2):128–46. doi: 10.1016/j.sheji.2019.04.002.

Singh A, (2019). Challenges in developing university-industry relationship: Quantitative evidence from higher education institutions in the UAE, *Emerald Open Res*, 1:10 (<https://doi.org/10.12688/emeraldopenres.12891.1>)

SLQF, (2015), https://www.ugc.ac.lk/attachments/1156_SLQF_2016_en.pdf

Steenkamp, R.J. (2019). The Quadruple Helix Model of Innovation for Industry 4.0. *Acta Commercii* 19(1):1–10. doi: 10.4102/ac.v19i1.820.

Sultan, S.S., & Qaimary, D. (2017). Role of Universities in Enhancing the Competitiveness of Palestinian Agribusiness : Applying Porter's Diamond Model. *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 8(7):125–32.

The National Science Foundation Industry-University Cooperative Research Centers (IUCRC), (2017). *Industry and university collaboration: how partnership drives innovation*. <https://venturewell.org/industry-and-university-collaboration/>

Tsiligiris, V. (2018). An Adapted Porter Diamond Model for the Evaluation of Transnational Education Host Countries. *International Journal of Educational Management* 32(2):210–26. doi: 10.1108/IJEM-03-2017-0076.

Weerasinghe R.N., & Jayawardane, A.K.W. (2015). University-Industry Partnerships for Innovation: Sri Lankan Experiences. [Paper Presented] International Conference of Inclusive Innovation and Innovative Management (ICIIM 2015), Thailand, November, 121-126.

Wickramasinghe, V., & Malik, K. (2018). University-Industry Collaboration in Sri Lanka – A Developing Country Perspective. *International Journal of Innovation and Technology Management*. 15(4), 1850032. <https://www.worldscientific.com/doi/abs/10.1142/S0219877018500323>

World Bank, (2018), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28340>

World Bank, (2020), <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?locations=LK>.

World Economic Forum, (2014), *The Global Competitiveness Report 2014–2015*. Geneva: WEF. ISBN-13: 978-92-95044-98-2 ISBN-10: 92-95044-98-3, www.weforum.org/gcr.

World Economic Forum, (2018), *The Global Competitiveness Report 2014–2015*. Geneva: WEF ISBN-13: 978-92-95044-76-0, www.weforum.org/gcr.

https://www.ugc.ac.lk/attachments/1156_SLQF_2016_en.pdf

PART VII

Plan for Future

Chapter 17

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A DEVELOPING COUNTRY PERSPECTIVE

S.T.W.S. Yapa

Introduction

Universities in the 21st century are producing not just graduates but future citizens. These graduates have to work in an expanding globalized environment with different cultures (Nussbaum, 2002). Universities all over the world today work hard to establish links with other universities in the world. Even though many universities were limited to their country of location, internationalization of universities had taken place even during the medieval age and the renaissance (Knight & de Wit, 1995; Altbach, 2004). Universities are expanding their international activities in size, scope, and complexity (Altbach & Knight, 2007). According to Knight and de Wit (2018), “branding, international programmes and provider mobility, global citizenship, internationalization at home, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), global rankings, knowledge diplomacy, world-class universities, cultural homogenization, franchising, and joint and double degree programs” are some new developments in the universities in the 21st century. Some authors limit the

discussion on international collaboration to research (Al-Youbi & Zahed, 2020; Larivière et al., 2006; Cheng et al., 2021) while others discuss international/global collaboration in a broader context such as teaching (Neal et al., 2013; Marcillo-Gómez & Desilus, 2016)), capacity building (Bisaso, & Hölttä, 2017), international student mobility (Di Pietroa, 2020), and curriculum (Altbach, 2004). Many studies have been carried out in different countries on various aspects of the international collaboration of higher education. For example, Larivière et al. (2006) in Canada, Di Pietroa (2020) on study abroad programmes in different countries, Nizam (2020) on credit transfer models in the student exchange process in Turkey, Neal et al. (2013) on global collaboration in teacher education between two universities, the USA and Australia, Bisaso and Hölttä (2017) on international collaboration for capacity development between Uganda and Finland, Chelliah (2019) about international exchange of students in Malaysia, Marcillo-Gómez and Desilus (2016) on collaborative teaching experience between two universities,

the USA and Mexico, etc. Most of the universities, virtually all, in developing countries are mainly teaching-universities and they need to seek external support to capture new knowledge and to improve research capabilities. Any dialogue on internationalization of higher education is incomplete if it does not include the deep inequalities that prevail among universities in different countries of the world (Altbach, 2004). According to Lee and Stensaker (2021), most of the research studies on internationalisation and globalisation of higher education are restricted to Global North. Even though many studies are found on the internationalization of higher education in different countries, evidence of research on the internationalization of higher education in Sri Lanka is hardly found in contemporary literature. Even though the University Grants Commission (UGC) has conducted a workshop in 2012 on the theme “Re-creating and Re-positioning of Sri Lankan Universities to meet Emerging Opportunities and Challenges in a Globalized Environment” nothing much has happened in the recent past in terms of international collaborations in Sri Lankan universities except few ad-hoc programmes. In this context, this paper presents the findings of a qualitative research carried out to identify the opportunities available for Sri Lankan universities for international collaboration and the challenges they may face in initiating and maintaining such collaborations.

Literature Review

Internationalization

Knight (1994), one of the most prominent researchers in the field of internationalization of higher education

defined internationalization as “a range of activities, policies, and services that integrate an international and intercultural dimension into the institution’s teaching, research, and service functions”. Altbach (2004) defined the internationalization of higher education as “specific policies and programmes undertaken by governments, academic systems and institutions, and even individual departments or institutions to cope with or exploit globalization”. Another definition is “Internationalization of higher education can be understood as the expansion and integration of the higher education field across borders, implying a growing interconnectedness of the involved actors on a global scale” (Fumasoli, 2021, p.1). Internationalization refers to interactions between persons or individual higher education institutions inside various national systems that extend beyond the borders of nation-states (Komotar, 2019). Table 17.1 shows internationalization activities that have been identified by numerous authors.

Knight and de Wit (1995) have proposed a process for defining internationalization. Under this approach they have identified two categories; programme strategies and organizational strategies.

Scholars have identified the impact of internationalization at three different levels (Hamdullahpur, 2020; Knight, 1994). Firstly, individual impact; students improve their career prospects due to exposure to global environments. Secondly, institutional impact; capacity building mainly due to research collaborations and faculty exchange. Thirdly, national

Table 17.1: Internationalization activities of universities as identified by different authors

Author(s)	Activities
Knight (1994)	Curricular innovation (inclusion of substantial amount of materials of international or intercultural nature) International experience of students (credited course work abroad, internship, student exchange, study tours) Integrational students/learners (interns, researchers and visiting faculty) Faculty/Staff participation in exchange/mobility programmes Foreign language study International development initiatives (technical assistance to developing countries) Institutional cooperation agreements Research with an international dimension Area studies/theme centres Cross-cultural training Extra-curricular activities and institutional services
Ota (2018)	International university alliances centred on research-intensive universities Consortia for international student exchange Cutting-edge scientific and technological research carried out by global networks of researchers Diffusion of joint, double, and dual degree programmes
de Wit and Deca (2020)	Students seeking international degrees Mobility of international talents and scholars Students going for credits abroad Agreements and memoranda of understanding Co-authored international publications in high impact academic journals
Hamdullahpur (2020)	Student exchange Staff exchange Joint research projects Co-authoring of research papers Sharing of resources through joint research grants and using research equipment Development of international research agreements between universities and businesses
Cantu (2013)	Study abroad programmes Recruiting international students Internationalization of faculty
Atalar (2020)	Undergraduate student exchange programmes Graduate student exchange programmes International collaborative courses International joint and dual degree programmes Research workshops between two institutions

Table 17.2: Process approach for defining internationalization

Programme strategies	Research-related activities
	Education-related activities
	Technical assistance and education cooperation
	Extra-curricular activities and institutional services
Organizational strategies	Commitment and support of the board of governors and senior administrators
	Support and involvement of a critical mass of faculty/staff
	International office or position
	Adequate funding and support both internally and externally
	Policy
	Incentives and rewards for faculty and staff
	Existence of formal communication channels
	Annual planning, budget and review process

Source: Knight and de Wit, (1995) p. 19 - 22

and global impact; development of technology and intellectual property through international collaboration. The advantages of internationalization of higher education identified by Rajkhowa (2019) are as follows.

....enhanced capacity, greater access for students, development of joint curriculum, greater diversity of programmes, exposure to a variety of teaching and learning methods, growing comparability of qualifications, exposure to established systems of education administration and management, less brain drain of gifted and bright students to foreign institutions, fusion of cultures, exchange of research ideas and enhancement of research capacity, establishment of multinational and cross disciplinary team and generation of new academic environments.(p.2)

Motivations for Internationalization

Every international collaboration among universities is formed to address the specific needs of the relevant institutions, and researchers or students involved (Hamdullahpur, 2020). Scholars have

identified many different reasons that have made the internationalization of higher education prominent. Firstly, need for preparing graduates who can fulfil the demand of globalized societies, economies and labour markets (Zare et al., 2018; Di Pietro, 2020; Cheng, 2014; Knight & de Wit, 1995; Altbach & Knight, 2007). According to Cantu (2013), “Internationalization arose as a response to diversity and multiculturalism in an effort to create global competencies” (p.1). Secondly, international collaboration is important for producing high impact research. Currently, extensive networks of international partnerships have become common among universities. In some cases, specialization and talent in one university are insufficient and in some other cases, the cost may be too high to be borne by one institute (Zare et al., 2018; Cheng et al., 2021; Knight & de Wit, 1995; Hamdullahpur, 2020; Wyne, 2015). After reviewing a number of articles in current literature, Cheng et al. (2021) concluded that the impact of

research with international collaboration is higher than the locally done research. Thirdly, researchers have identified commodification (Chen & Lo, 2013; Yao & Viggiano, 2019; Chan, 2004; Ota, 2018), and massification (mass demand for higher education) (Chan, 2004; Lanford & Tierney, 2017; de Wit, 2011; Ota, 2018) of higher education during the last few decades as another motivation for internationalization of universities. Most of the countries now consider higher education as a product that can be exported. With the reduction of government funding, universities are forced to attract international students to increase their revenue (Zare et al., 2018; Cheng, 2014; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Wyne, 2015). Killick (2009) has identified that the most prominent approach to the internationalization of HE in the UK was, with the marketization of HE, recruitment of foreign students as a means of income and creation of 'offshore' campuses or delivery of degrees to foreign students in their home countries. However, one of the criticisms against internationalization is also that it is connected to marketization, capitalism, economic expansion and competition and hence it is beneficial only for some countries, institutions, and students who belong to a certain social class (Fumasoli, 2021). Fourthly, some researchers point out that states use education and culture as soft power tools, instead of traditional hard power tools such as military and economic sanctions, to shape the political agenda of the world (Amirbeka & Ydyrys, 2020; Ostashova, 2020). Higher education is used by nation governments as part of their foreign strategy. They also aim to internationalize HE to spread

the values and ideals of the national culture to the rest of the globe (Ardakani et al., 2011). But according to Altbach (2004), this spread of culture has led to the *McDonaldisation* of the universities. Finally, university ranking has grown in popularity among universities all around the world. Rankings are used by prospective students to evaluate institutions, and by university officials as a management and strategic decision-making tool (Komotar, 2019). With the popularization of the internationalization of higher education, the stakeholders of international collaborations wanted to know the quality of universities they collaborate with (Komotar, 2019; Almaa et al., 2016). This need has contributed to the emergence of world university rankings. Among four major international university rankings, ARWU, THE, QS and U-Multirank, except ARWU other three have included international orientation as one of the indicators (Komotar, 2019). Table 17.3 shows the indicators used in rankings to measure the international outlook.

With the increase of competition among the universities, not only internationally but also within the country, universities have been compelled to work towards improving their rankings. As a result, universities have been compelled to be more internationalized.

Challenges and Barriers

Even though internationalization has become a norm among universities, there are many barriers and challenges faced by universities in internationalization. Table 17.4 summarizes some of the barriers and challenges found in the literature.

Table 17.3: University rankings and indicators used in different rankings

Ranking	Indicators measuring the international outlook
THE (Times Higher Education)	International-to-domestic-student ratio (2.5%) International-to-domestic-staff ratio (2.5%) International collaboration (2.5%)
QS (Quacquarelli Symonds)	The proportion of international students (5%) The proportion of international faculty (5%)
U-Multi rank	International orientation of BA programmes International orientation of MA programmes Opportunities to study abroad International doctorate degrees International joint publications International research grants Foreign language BA programmes Student mobility International academic staff Foreign language MA programmes Programme international orientation Foreign language long first-degree programmes

Source: Komotar, 2019

Several authors have identified that socio-economic inequality has an impact on student mobility (Di Pietro, 2020; Simon & Ainsworth, 2012). Bose and Banerjee (2019) have identified, through a literature review, the perception of India as a low-quality place for life and higher education and the low global acceptance of qualifications offered by Indian universities as barriers for attracting foreign students to Indian universities. Some of the challenges of internationalization include limited international exposure opportunities for students from low-income families, the difficulty of ensuring the quality of foreign degree programmes by local regulatory bodies, and resistance and suspicious view of the faculty towards international collaborations.

Methodology

Since the objective of the current study was to identify the opportunities available

for Sri Lankan universities and the challenges and barriers they may face in establishing international collaborations, this study can be considered as an exploratory study. Exploratory studies are suitable when little is known about the situation and the objective of the study is to clarify the understanding of the situation (Saunders et al., 2009; Sekaran, 2003). According to Yin (2003), case studies are the best approach for asking “how” or “why” questions, when the investigator has little control over events and the focus is on a present phenomenon in a real-life environment. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews can be used in collecting data in an exploratory study (Saunders et al., 2009). Accordingly, in the present study, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from two case studies. Further, the data on the current status of international collaboration of Sri Lankan

Table 17.4: Barriers and challenges in internationalization

Title (Author)	Barriers and challenges
Barriers to international interactions of the academic staff in Iran (Zare et al., 2018)	Limited support of university structure for faculty members' international interactions Limited support of university culture for faculty members' international interactions Limited financial support of university for faculty members' international interactions Impact of political tensions and international sanctions on faculty members' international interactions Cumbersome administrative regulations for visa issuance Poor mastery of an international language of faculty members Lack of scientific-research abilities of some of the faculty members
Collaborative online international learning experience between two institutes in the USA and Mexico (Marcillo-Gómez and Desilus, 2016)	Mismatch of cultures of the different countries Difficulties faced in using Learn Management System (LMS) Institutional support
Impediments faced by the international students in the United States (Cantu, 2013)	Lack of proficiency in the English language Financial problems Facing different educational systems Academic challenges Lack of technological skills Problems in establishing meaningful personal relationships Lack of social networks Alienation Discrimination Homesickness Coping with developments in their home country like war, national disasters, a poor economy, or the death of family members or friends

universities was collected from the official websites of the universities and web sites of university ranking organizations. According to Schutt (2014), the objective of qualitative data analysis is to provide an explanation of the situation rather than quantification of particular variables. The focus of the qualitative data analysis is on the meaning rather than the figures. In the case of qualitative data analysis, more data are collected from a few cases

rather than few data from many cases. Depending on the nature of the objectives of the present research, content analysis and narrative analysis were used to analyse the qualitative data. Schutt (2014), defines narrative analysis as “a form of qualitative analysis in which the analyst focuses on how respondents impose order on the flow of experience in their lives and thus make sense of events and actions in which they have

participated.” (p. 339). Content analysis is counting the number of times various words, items or phrases are to be found in the text (Male, 2015).

Analysis

International students and staff in Universities: There are no official figures of international student enrolments to the Sri Lankan universities. However, following figures were extracted from the QS ranking website. These figures have been submitted by the respective universities to the ranking organizations. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that these figures are fairly reliable and valid. To compare the situation in Sri Lanka, the number of international students and faculty members from universities in countries comparable to Sri Lanka are also given in table 17.5.

From the table, it is clear that the universities in other countries shown in the table have been able to attract a fairly high number of students as well as international faculty when compared to Sri Lanka. Even a country like Viet Nam, which is not traditionally considered as a country with a reputed higher education system, attracts a large number of international students and international faculty.

However, an interview with the Senior Assistant Registrar, Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies (PGIPBS) of the University of Kelaniya revealed that the PGIPBS attracts 500 – 600 students annually, mainly Buddhist monks, from foreign countries such as Myanmar, China, Thailand, Cambodia, and Taiwan for the postgraduate programmes conducted by this institute.

These students have not only brought an income to the institute but also have provided an opportunity to earn an additional income for some households in Nugegoda area through providing facilities for foreign students.

Student Mobility: As shown in table 17.1, student exchange is one of the most popular activities in internationalization of higher education. Two cases of student exchange programmes from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (SJP) were studied to identify the barriers and challenges in international collaboration. Semi structured interviews were conducted with the academic staff members participated in these two exchange programmes with the objective of obtaining their insights into the programmes.

The first case was an exchange between the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC) and the Business School of the Monash University of Australia. Twenty-six (out of 1200) final year students and two lecturers from the FMSC participated in this 14-day programme. Students for the programme were selected based on their GPA. There was a specifically designed programme, not regular academic programmes of Monash, for Sri Lankan students. Students could not claim academic credit for the overseas study programme. There were no tuition fees for students. But all other costs were borne by the students. The two lecturers were partly funded by the University. Later on, a group of students from Monash Business School visited the SJP for two weeks as a part of a subject called International Business Assessments. This programme

Table 17.5: A comparison of international staff and students in different universities (2020)

University	Country	International Staff	International Students	QS Asia Ranking	Per capita GDP (US\$)
University of Peradeniya	Sri Lanka	1	164	221	3,682
University of Colombo	Sri Lanka	2	107	291-300	3,682
University of Moratuwa	Sri Lanka	2	23	401-500	3,682
University of Sri Jayewardenepura	Sri Lanka	0	10	451-500	3,682
University of Malaya	Malaysia ¹	526	3340	9	10,401
Universiti Putra Malaysia	Malaysia	433	5040	28	10,401
Chulalongkorn University	Thailand ¹	192	985	43	7,189
Gadjah Mada University	Indonesia	790	738	57	3,869
Universitas Indonesia	Indonesia	1116	1412	59	3,869
University of the Philippines	Philippines	43	292	69	3,298
University of Dhaka	Bangladesh	20	48	134	1,968
Viet Nam National University Ho Chi Minh City	Viet Nam	169	523	158	2,785

Source: QS Ranking and World Bank data

contributed towards the final GPA of the students. This exchange programme was initiated and liaised by an academic staff member of Monash Business school, of Sri Lankan origin and an alumnus of the FMSC, SJP.

The second case selected was a programme between the Department of Sports Science (DSS), Faculty of Applied

Sciences and School of Medical and Health Sciences (SMHS) of Edith Cowan University (ECU), Australia². Sixteen students and three staff members from ECU visited SJP in 2018. They were in Sri Lanka for two weeks. According to the requirements of the ECU, students were required to obtain international exposure. Sri Lanka was also among the countries selected by the ECU. Even though no academic credit was received, this

1. Even though the Gross Domestic Product of Thailand and Malaysia are high compared to Sri Lanka, these countries had the same socio-economic conditions similar to Sri Lanka during mid-20th Century.

2. <https://www.sjp.ac.lk/international/under-graduates-dept-sports-science-received-internships-ecu-australia/>

programme fulfilled the requirement of international exposure for the Australian students. In 2019 ten final year students and an academic staff member from the DSS visited SMHS, ECU as a part of a subject called Internship in Sports Science and Management. Students of the SJP followed a tailor-made programme designed by ECU. This programme was also initiated by an adjunct professor of ECU of Sri Lankan origin.

Content analysis and narrative analysis done on the interviews conducted with the academic staff of SJP revealed that participants of both programmes have faced similar kind of challenges. Table 17.6 shows the barriers in sustaining student exchange programmes as revealed by the participants.

Capacity Building: The traditional approach for building capacity was to send university academics to foreign universities for PhDs under an MoU. Either tuition fees were exempted or paid through a scholarship through an international agency. For example, under an MoU signed between the University of Colombo and the Western Sydney University, Australia³, four academics have completed their PhDs with a scholarship from Asian Development Bank (in 2006 and 2007) and another academic is currently following the PhD with a scholarship from the partner university.

Information about few joint PhD programmes are found on some university websites. There are few PhD programmes offered jointly by a University in Sri Lanka and a University in Australia. In one such programme, an agreement has been signed in

between the Queensland University of Technology and the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka⁴ which provides an opportunity for University lecturers to obtain a PhD. Similar kind of agreements are in place between the Faculty of Engineering of University of Peradeniya and RMIT, Australia⁵ and Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and RMIT, Australia. Common characterises of the joint PhD programmes are the nomination of the candidates (academic staff members) by the local university, registration of the candidates with the foreign university, spending about 1-2 years in the foreign university, exemption of tuition fees with a possibility of stipend during their overseas stay and co-supervision by the supervisors from both universities.

In addition to capacity building through postgraduate programmes, information about exchange of staff between foreign universities and Sri Lankan universities on regular basis is not found on any university website.

Other International Collaboration Activities: Hardly any evidence of international collaboration in research, curriculum development or offering joint degrees is found in the public domain except few instances where international conferences are held by Sri Lankan universities in collaboration with foreign universities.

Discussion

According to the findings, internationalization has not been

3. <https://cmb.ac.lk/collaborative-work-western-sydney-university/>

4. https://inro.pdn.ac.lk/qut_uop.php

5. https://inro.pdn.ac.lk/rmit_uop.php

Table 17.6: Categories related to barriers in international student exchange

Central phenomenon	Main categories	Sub-categories
Barriers to Internationalization of Universities in Sri Lanka	Organization Related barriers	Lack of structure for internationalization Lack of financial support from the university Rigid regulations that prevent assigning credit value for the overseas study Low university ranking
	Student related barriers	Financial difficulties of students Difficulty of selecting students due to the limited number of places Difficulty of being away from the university for a longer period Perception of the students who were not selected Students' lack of previous international exposure
	Administrative barriers	Difficulty of obtaining the visa Difficulty of establishing relationships Difficulty of matching with the academic calendar of the collaborative university Difficulty of organizing the activities during the overseas stay

recognized as an essential element of higher education by Sri Lankan state universities. Among the activities listed in Table 17.1, only student mobility and staff mobility occur even at a minimum level. In the instance of student mobility what has happened can be considered as study tours rather than real student exchanges. Regarding staff mobility also what had happened was sending academic staff members to foreign universities for postgraduate studies under MoUs. The UGC in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education has conducted a workshop titled “Re-creating and Re-positioning of Sri Lankan Universities to meet Emerging Opportunities and Challenges in a Globalized Environment”

in 2012. Despite the fact that the resource persons of this workshop have discussed numerous policy impediments to internalization such as historical background, leadership, state ownership, and university governance, they have not proposed an action plan to internationalize the higher education sector in Sri Lanka. In contrast, a document published by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia titled “Higher Education Malaysia Internationalization policy 2011” has specified action steps with responsibility and measurable indicators. For example, Table 17.7 shows the action, responsibility and indicators for research and development found in the Malaysian document.

However, in the Sri Lankan workshop proceedings, Samarasinghe and Marshall (2012) identified challenges by Sri Lankan universities in competing with universities in western countries such as the USA, UK and Australia. They have identified high quality of education provided by universities in these countries, prestige attached to degrees awarded by these countries, availability of financial assistance to outstanding students, and strong demand for graduates from these countries in the job market, lack of funding for infrastructure and a scarcity of highly competent individuals for research as impediments. These negative conditions may have become worse by now. Attracting international students for StEM or Management degree programmes may be very

difficult, if not impossible, due to low rankings of Sri Lankan universities even when compared to some universities in East Asian countries (See Table 17.5). Even Indian universities face a similar situation due to the perception of India as a low-quality place for life and higher education and the low global acceptance of qualifications offered by Indian universities (Bose & Banerjee, 2019). However, as demonstrated by the number of overseas students in PGIPBS, Sri Lanka has the potential to entice students to pursue courses, particularly postgraduate programmes, in Buddhist and Pali studies. There will be no competition from western universities for these programmes. Sri Lankan universities will have a better chance because the programmes are conducted

Table 17.7: Extract from higher education Malaysia internationalization policy 2011

Sector	Proposed action steps	Responsibility	Measurable
Research and development	Promote R&D capacity of higher education institutions and research institutes through initiatives with international counterparts.	MoHE, Public and private HEIs	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Number of synergistic groupings of experts formedNumber of international awards for R&D productsNumber of outbound Malaysian experts invited as visiting professorMoHE to house links of database from various HEIs under one system (e.g. website/resource centre) by 2011Number of internationally joint research projectsNumber of research projects funded by international funding bodiesNumber of staff being trained abroad with regard to research and development activitiesNumber of students being attached abroad with regard to research and development activities

p. 10-11

in English medium. While the PGIPBS is being promoted as a centre of excellence in that discipline in Sri Lanka, other universities should also attempt to attract overseas students into programmes in that area. A similar situation may be seen in India. According to Bose and Banerjee (2019), a significant number of students from America, Canada and Australia have enrolled in the Indian universities to follow non-traditional courses such as Yoga, Ayurveda, Indian Classical Music and Dance, and Indology.

Short-term study-abroad programmes are becoming more popular in many countries. Students, institutions and governments are investing heavily in these programmes (Cheng, 2014). According to Atalar (2020), student exchange is the first step toward international partnership. Even though it is challenging to implement student exchange programmes, still Sri Lankan universities have an opportunity to organize short term study tours for overseas students. Universities should view these inbound study tours as revenue-generating programmes. Local staff should be allowed to teach these students. This kind of programme will provide an opportunity for academic staff to get exposure to foreign students and to improve their capacity as well. Service of the foreign academics who come with these students may be taken to do a guest lecture or to provide with some ideas to develop the curriculum. However, this kind of study programmes will not help to improve the university ranking as a person is considered as an international student only if s/he spends at least one semester in the host university.

Outbound short term study programmes (i.e. overseas study tours for Sri Lankan students) may not be viable as only a very limited number of students can be given the opportunity. To continue a student exchange programme successfully for a longer duration, the number of students participating in the exchange sponsored by two universities should be about equal in both directions (Atalar, 2020). In the Sri Lankan context, it is not justifiable to spend public funds on an activity that will benefit only a few students. Even while some students may be ready to engage in these programmes with their own money, this cannot be justified because it will result in two tiers within a batch. In other countries also socio-economic inequality has been identified as a factor that has an impact on student mobility (Di Pietro, 2020; Simon & Ainsworth, 2012). Financial difficulties, administrative and cultural issues have been identified as issues in implementing student exchange programmes. Further, visa requirements, university bureaucracy, and the difficulty of finding equivalent courses prevent students from attending exchange programmes (Atalar, 2020). However, short term study tours can be organized for postgraduate students to expose them into different cultures and overseas industries with advanced technologies.

It is an excellent opportunity for other universities and faculties to replicate the joint PhD programme model recently launched at the Universities of Sri Jayewardenepura and Peradeniya. This is a win-win situation for both local and foreign universities. Since candidates are supervised jointly by the foreign supervisors and local supervisors, the

latter will have an opportunity to work with an experienced foreign supervisor. That will enhance the postgraduate supervisory capacity of the local supervisor. The foreign university will have at least 3 research articles published in high-quality journals under its name in exchange for the tuition fee-waivers and the stipends for the candidates. Furthermore, the PhD candidate academic staff member of the local university will have exposure to an advanced learning environment in a developed country for at least 12-18 months.

It is difficult for Sri Lankan university academics to find teaching/research jobs or postdoc opportunities during their sabbatical period if they have no publications in high impact journals or teaching experience at a high ranked university. The number of staff members who were able to spend their sabbatical in a foreign university, especially in non-science faculties, is currently very low. This is an issue that needs to be addressed to maintain the quality of the academic staff of the universities. Further, this is a factor that will affect the possibility of student exchange. Therefore, universities should explore the possibility of extending the same collaborative model mentioned earlier for Postdoc opportunities for senior staff as well, especially in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Management faculties.

International collaboration in teaching and curriculum development was identified as one of the weaker areas. Foreign academics are seldom, if ever, involved in postgraduate or undergraduate teaching or curriculum

development. Earlier it was prohibitively expensive due to airfare and lodging expenses. However, the rise of online education during the pandemic has given the opportunity for universities to recruit overseas academics for teaching and curriculum development. This may not be viable in the case of undergraduate studies since it is not possible to pay an attractive rate for the foreign staff. However, this may be a realistic choice for postgraduate programmes. Overseas lecturers can be hired as visiting lecturers of postgraduate programmes and their services can be sought for the curriculum development of not only postgraduate programmes but also undergraduate programmes as well. The expenses of such contributions for curriculum development might be paid through the postgraduate programme.

As mentioned earlier, Knight and de Wit (1995) have identified two types of internationalization strategies: programme strategies and organizational strategies. Analysis of the internationalization of Sri Lankan universities revealed that some programme strategies, even though at a basic level, can be recognized. However, organizational strategies are completely absent. International engagement is still not high on the priority list of universities in Sri Lanka. The majority of the internationalization efforts have occurred as a result of the passion of some members of the academic staff. There is no formalized programme for international collaboration. There are only a handful of programmes that have been sustained for a long period. One of the most essential and basic aspects

in internationalization that has been recognized is the establishment of an international office with skilled people (Knight, 1994). Most of the Sri Lankan universities have a post of an international director or a coordinator, sometimes even at the faculty level. However, there is no office space or supportive staff for them. Therefore, there is a need to establish a functioning internationalization office with sufficient staff and resource in each university⁶.

Establishing the initial contact with international universities was one of the challenges faced by Sri Lankan universities. Informal relationships are just as crucial, if not more so, than official contacts when it comes to forming collaborations (Wyne, 2015). Establishing and maintaining connections, getting things done, and managing diverse points of view, according to Wyne, are critical for multinational partnerships. As demonstrated in the case studies, Sri Lankan universities can enlist the assistance of Sri Lankan expatriate academics, particularly alumni of respective universities who work in universities in countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia in establishing the initial relationship. Academics in Sri Lankan universities can persuade their colleagues working in universities in other countries to assist in the formation of international collaborations. However, it is critical to formalize these informal ties in order for these programmes to be viable even in the absence of Sri Lankan expatriate academics.

6. For a good description of the functions of an international office of a university see Atalar (2020) and Knight (1994)

Conclusion

Despite the fact that internationalization and international collaboration/cooperation in higher education has become a hot topic among scholars, only very few studies on the international collaboration of Sri Lankan universities are found in the current literature. The findings of this qualitative study fill that void in the knowledge. Analysis of publicly accessible data shows that generally, international collaboration is not on the agenda of the Sri Lankan universities. Among the numerous internationalization activities described in the contemporary literature, any evidence discovered in the context of Sri Lankan institutions was limited to study tours and capacity development initiatives. Even though the number of international students is currently very low, Sri Lankan universities have a potential to attract students to pursue degree programmes, particularly postgraduate programmes, in the field of Buddhist studies due to lack of competition from established western universities. In the other areas, universities can work towards facilitating study tours for foreign students as a means of generating income. Another emerging opportunity available for Sri Lankan universities is to collaborate with foreign universities to offer PhDs, especially for the academic staff, under joint-supervision agreements. In the case of student mobility, similar to other countries, three types of barriers were identified; organization related, student-related and administrative. Universities need to recognize the importance of international collaboration. There is an urgent need to establish an international office in each university, with the

necessary staff, headed by a senior academic to coordinate all international activities of the university. However, this office should not be another bureaucratic barrier for international collaborations.

As in any other study, this study also has few limitations. This study mainly relied on publicly available data regarding the international activities of universities on their websites. Information regarding some of the activities may not appear on the university website. Another limitation was that the part of the findings of this study is based on few interviews and case studies carried out in one university. Furthermore, the focus of this study

was mainly on short term strategies for international collaboration rather than on long term policy formulation.

In the future, researchers may conduct quantitative, explanatory studies on international collaboration. That will help to identify the factors affecting the success of international university collaboration. Further, studies can be done on the policy changes needed to be done at the university level as well as the government level to encourage collaboration activities between Sri Lankan universities and foreign universities.

References

- Almaa, B., Coşkun, E., & Övendiric, E. (2016). University ranking systems and proposal of a theoretical framework for ranking of Turkish Universities: A case of management departments. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 235, 128 – 138. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.11.008
- Almansour, S. (2015). The challenges of international collaboration: Perspectives from Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University. *Cogent Education*, 2(1), 1-13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2015.1118201>
- Altbach, P. G. (2004). Globalisation and the university myths and realities in an unequal world. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 10(1), 3-25. <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:TEAM.0000012239.55136.4b>
- Altbach, P. G., & Knight, J. (2007). The Internationalization of Higher Education: Motivations and Realities. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(3/4), 290-305. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315307303542>
- Al-Youbi, A., & Zahed, A. H. M. (2020). King Abdulaziz University's Approach to International Collaboration. In A. Al-Youbi, A. H. M. Zahed, & W. G. Tierney (Eds.), *Successful Global Collaborations in Higher Education Institutions* (pp. 3-11). Springer. https://doi.org/1007/978-3-030-25525-1_1
- Amirbeka, A., & Ydyrys, K. (2014). Education and soft power: analysis as an instrument of foreign policy. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 143, 514 – 516
- Ardakani, F. B., Yarmohammadian, M. H., Abari, A. A. F., & Fathid, K. (2011). Internationalization of higher education systems. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 15, 1690–1695
- Atalar, A. (2020). Student exchange: The first step towards international collaboration. In A. Al-Youbi, A. H. M.
- Bisaso, R., & Hölttä, S. (2017). International Collaboration for Capacity Development in Higher Education Leadership and Management: the Uganda-Finland Initiative. *International Journal of African Higher Education*, 4(1), 25-40

- Bose, I., & Banerjee, J. (2019). Study in India'-India as destination for international higher education: a critical overview. In B. Dutta, & P. Chaudhuri (Eds.), *Internationalization of Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges* (pp. 5-14). MTC Global Trust, Bangalore, India.
- Cantu, M. P. (2013). Three Effective Strategies of Internationalization in American Universities. *Journal of International Education and Leadership*, 3(3), 1-12. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1136025.pdf>
- Chan, W. W. Y. (2004). International Cooperation in Higher Education: Theory and Practice. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 8(1), 32-55. doi:10.1177/1028315303254429
- Chelliah, S., Khan, M.J., Krishnan, T., Kamarulzaman, M.E.B.M., & Goh, N.E. (2019). Factors influencing satisfaction and revisit intention among international exchange students in Malaysia. *Journal of International Education in Business*, 12(1), 111-130. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIEB-07-2018-0026>
- Chen, D. I., & Lo, W. Y. W. (2013). Internationalization or commodification? A case study of internationalization practices in Taiwan's higher education. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 14(1), 33-41. doi:10.1007/s12564-013-9246-0
- Cheng, A. Y. (2014). Perceived value and preferences of short-term study abroad programmes: A Hong Kong study. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 116, 4277 - 4282. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.931
- Cheng, Z., Lu, X., Xiong, X., & Wang, C. (2021). What Can Influence the Quality of International Collaborative Publications: A Case Study of Humanities and Social Sciences International Collaboration in China's Double First-Class Project Universities. *Social Sciences*, 10(3), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10030109>
- de Wit, H. (2011). Global Citizenship and Study Abroad: A European Comparative Perspective. In H. de Wit (Ed.), *Trends, Issues and Challenges in Internationalisation of Higher Education*, (pp. 77 - 92). Centre for Applied Research on Economics & Management.
- de Wit, H., and Deca, L. (2020) Internationalization of Higher Education, Challenges and Opportunities for the Next Decade. In A. Curaj, L. Deca, & R. Pricopie (Eds.), *European Higher Education Area: Challenges for a New Decade*. (pp. 3-11). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-56316-5>
- Di Pietro, G. (2020). Changes in socioeconomic inequality in access to study abroad programs: A cross-country analysis. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 66, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2019.100465>
- Fumasoli, T. (2021). Purposive design or ecology? A critique of teleological perspectives on internationalisation in higher education. *European Journal of Education*, 56(2), 151-156. doi: 10.1111/ejed.12453
- Hamdullahpur, F. (2020). Global Citizens for the Twenty-First Century: The Role of International Partnerships in University Education. In A. Al-Youbi, A. H. M. Zahed, & W. G. Tierney (Eds.), *Successful Global Collaborations in Higher Education Institutions* (pp. 23-30). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25525-1_3
- Hsieh, H.F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277-1288. doi:10.1177/1049732305276687
- Killick, D. (2009). Curriculum internationalisation: identity, graduate attributes and 'altermodernity'. *Enhancing Learning in the Social Sciences*, 2(1), 1-33, DOI: 10.11120/elss.2009. 02010006
- Knight J. (1994), *Internationalization: Elements and Checkpoint*, Research monograph no. 7, Canadian Bureau for International Education, Ottawa.. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED549823.pdf> accessed on 7th September 2021

Knight, J. & de Wit, H. (1995). Strategies for Internationalization of Higher Education: historical and conceptual perspectives. In H. De Wit (Ed.), *Strategies for Internationalization of Higher Education: a comparative study of Australia, Canada, Europe and the United States of America* (pp. 5-33). European Association for International Education.

----- (2018). Internationalization of Higher Education: Past and Future. *International Higher Education*, 95, 2-4. <https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2018.95.10715>

Komotar, H. M. (2019). Global university rankings and their impact on the internationalisation of higher education. *European Journal of Education*, 54, 299–310. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12332>

Larivière, V., Yves, G., & Archambault, É. (2006). Canadian collaboration networks: A comparative analysis of the natural sciences, social sciences and the humanities. *Scientometrics*, 68(3), 519–533. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-006-0127-8>

Lee, J. J., & Stensaker, B. (2021). Research on internationalisation and globalisation in higher education—Reflections on historical paths, current perspectives and future possibilities. *European Journal of Education*, 56(2), 157 – 168. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12448>

Male, T. (2015). Analysing qualitative data. In: I. Palaologou, D. Needham & T. Male (Eds.), *Doing Research in Education Theory and Practice*. (pp. 177-191). Sage

Marcillo-Gómez, M., & Desilus, B. (2016). Collaborative Online International Learning Experience in Practice Opportunities and Challenges. *Journal of Technology Management & Innovation*, 11(1), 30-35. <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-27242016000100005>

Neal, G., Mullins, T., Reynolds, A., & Angle, M. (2013). Global Collaboration in Teacher Education: A Case Study. *Creative Education*, 4(9), 533-539. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2013.49078>

Nizam, A. (2020). Evaluation and improvement of the credit transfer models in the student exchange process. *The International Journal of Information and Learning Technology*, 37(1/2), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJILT-12-2018-0136>

Nussbaum, M. (2002). Education for Citizenship in an Era of Global Connection. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 21, 4-5, 289-303. doi: 10.1023/A:1019837105053

Ostashova, Y. (2020). Higher Education as a Soft Power Tool of State's Foreign Policy. *Proceedings of the International Conference Digital Age: Traditions, Modernity and Innovations*, 259-265

Ota, H. (2018). Internationalization of Higher Education: Global Trends and Japan's Challenges. *Educational Studies in Japan: International Yearbook*, 12, 91-105. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1182868.pdf>

Rajkhowa, G. (2019). The importance of developing an international strategy for Indian higher education institutions. In B. Dutta & P. Chaudhuri (Eds.), *Internationalization of Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges Internationalization of Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges* (pp. 1- 4). MTC Global Trust.

Samarasinghe, S. W., & Marshall, D. S. (2012). Internationalizing Sri Lanka's universities: a review of fiscal and governance issues. In R. Senaratne, & S. Sivasegaram (Eds.), *Workshop proceedings on Re-creating and Re-positioning of Sri Lankan Universities to meet Emerging Opportunities and Challenges in a Globalized Environment held on 18th & 19th June 2012 at The Sands, Kalutara, Sri Lanka* (pp. 55-73). Ministry of Higher Education and University Grants Commission.

- Saunders, M., Lewis P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research methods for business students* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Schutt, R. K. (2014). *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research* (8th ed.). Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Sekaran, U. (2003). *Research methods for business-A Skill-Building Approach* (4th ed.). John Wiley.
- Simon, J., & Ainsworth, J. W. (2012). Race and Socioeconomic Status Differences in Study Abroad Participation: The Role of Habitus, Social Networks, and Cultural Capital. *International Scholarly Research Notices*, 12, 1 – 21. <https://doi.org/10.5402/2012/413896>
- Tierney, W. G., & Lanford, M. (2017). Between massification and globalization: Is there a role for global university rankings? In E. Hazelkorn (Ed.), *Global rankings and the geopolitics of higher education* (pp. 295–308). Routledge.
- Wyne, M. F. (2015, June 14), *International Academic Collaboration: Why it May or May not work?* Paper presented at 2015 ASEE International Forum, Seattle, Washington. 10.18260/1-2—17144
- Yao, C. W., & Viggiano, T. (2019). Interest Convergence and the Commodification of International Students and Scholars in the United States. *Journal Committed to Social Change on Race and Ethnicity*, 5(1), 82-109
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research Design and Methods* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Zahed, & W. G. Tierney (Eds.), *Successful Global Collaborations in Higher Education Institutions* (pp. 63-71). Springer. https://doi.org/1007/978-3-030-25525-1_7
- Zare, M. N., Pourkarimi, J., & Rezaeian, S. (2018). Barriers and challenges to international interactions of the faculty members in Iran. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 32(4), 652-668. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-02-2017-0041>.

Chapter 18

PLANS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIELD OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN STATE UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA

Premakumara de Silva, Sampath Amaratunge

Introduction

Over the years, Sri Lankan universities have been producing a large number of graduates in Humanities and Social Sciences, therefore there is something to be celebrated with a serious critical reflection on the path that we have travelled on over at least the last one hundred years. We believe that there are achievements and setbacks. Some have begun to raise several pertinent questions like the quality assurance of study programmes, the quality of our graduates, the relevance of the subjects the students' study vis-à-vis society and most importantly the employability prospects of these graduates and research output of staff etc. These are very serious questions which cannot be ignored by us, and the biggest challenge would be addressing those questions while stock-taking to produce quality graduates and research output fit to the 21st century. Hence, this paper will present the measures that have already been taken by the Government, Ministerial, UGC and universities level to address those pertinent questions in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences in

particular and the whole higher education sector in general. And also, to discuss the required policy changes pertaining to reform the Higher Education sector in the country, for example; reforming 43 years old University Act. We consider that without policy reforms and drastic changes, it is difficult for us to address those structural and practical questions in the sector of inquiry. The policy decisions must arrive after having a thorough consultative process including all the stakeholders of the higher education sector, including students and staff and most importantly the private sector and other sectors of the Sri Lankan society and economy. The higher education policy formulating process has already commenced with the direction of HE the President, and a Presidential Task Force for Higher Education sector's reform already appointed. The outcome of the Task Force will also be discussed in our paper. Generally, our paper will critically examine the predicament of the Humanities and Social Sciences education in the country and suggest a way forward in the highly challenging and dynamic world that we live in today.

Sri Lanka's system of university education has entered a phase of transition. It is facing new challenges too. These challenges emanate from two sources; local and global. The internal challenges of transition emanate from factors intrinsic to Sri Lanka's own system of school and higher education. The external challenges arise from global factors in the context of the contemporary historical phase of transformations of the global system of political economy, knowledge economy and the employment markets. The responses to these challenges are interconnected in their impact on shaping the on-going policy reforms and concrete action. The gradual expansion of undergraduate education by the state and non-state sectors raises two immediate issues: the quality of education and training, and the capacity of the economy to provide employment to the graduates. However, this paper does not intend to address the issues directly related to mismatch between economy and education, particularly state-driven higher education sector, but to discuss measures that have been taken to produce quality graduates in the state universities in Sri Lanka focusing on so called 'Arts Graduates' in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS).

In response to the concerns made by different stakeholders in the sector, the Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission have been spearheading reforms in the university sector. Improving the quality and standards of undergraduate education through reforms has been a key goal in recent reforms initiated by the MoE and the UGC. The universities are also

being encouraged to integrate skills-training into undergraduate education as a measure to address the mismatch between university education and employment opportunities among the graduates in some fields, particularly Art, Social Sciences, Humanities, Commerce and Science. The MoE and the UGC have begun to respond to the persistent criticism that Sri Lanka's universities continue to produce 'unemployable' graduates, by taking a series of new measures. Establishment of new City Universities and Faculties of nursing, technology, medicine, and engineering, and integrating career guidance, career counseling, language skills, IT skills, and soft skills into undergraduate education are major initiatives in this regard. Apart from that, this paper explores the drastic policy decisions and actions already taken to address the pertinent issues related to 'Arts Graduates' in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences in our universities.

There is at present a discussion in Sri Lanka too on how to respond to the global pressures through reforms encompassing the entire educational sector. The government, the MoE and UGC have been devising new policy options, particularly aiming at modernizing undergraduate programmes so that they can respond adequately to changing nature of higher education globally. Addressing the challenge of minimizing the gravity of the problem of unemployment among university graduates, especially in the fields of Art, Social Sciences and Humanities, has also become a priority in university curriculum reforms.

The current policy re-orientations have also led to a counter argument calling to recognize the need for universities to remain connected to their original mandate of being ‘bastions of free speech and critical analysis in democratic society’. This perspective warns that remaining unaware of the larger trends in modernization and development of education and employment, and also overemphasizing the utilitarian goals of education at the cost of its value as a democratic social good, could produce a new trap from which public universities might find it difficult to escape. Thus, dissenting voices have emerged in the universities largely from student groups and, to a limited degree from academics too, that social goals of education at all levels should not be abandoned in favour of the market needs of the world economy.

The Current Aim of Humanities and Social Sciences Education

The humanities and social sciences encompass human activities and relations in cultural, social, environmental, political and economic circumstances. The humanities and social sciences have a contemporary and historical focus, from global to personal perspective, as well as reflections on challenges for the upcoming years. It is argued that by studying Humanities and Social Sciences, one can develop the ability to question, solve problems, think critically, make decisions, communicate effectively as well as adapt to modify. Responding and thinking about the issues requires an understanding of the critical historical, political, geographical, societal and economic factors involved, and how

these different elements interconnect. The Humanities subjects offer a broad appreciation of the planet in which we survive as well as how people can participate as active and informed citizens with high-level skills needed for the modern era.

Humanities and Social Science degrees or education can be vastly different, but all have one thing in common: they are centred on human life. While Humanities subjects are mostly analytical or philosophical, Social Science subjects are more scientific and experimental. Encompassing a broad spectrum of fields, Humanities and Social Science subjects explore what it means to be human. Humanities subjects question human life – how do we communicate effectively? How do we express ourselves? What makes each of us unique? This huge category of subjects can be split down into anything from Film Studies, Education and Languages, to Management, Politics, Sociology and Law.

Social Sciences focus on a more scientific approach to studying human relationships and society. This vast subject area can focus on our past, present or future, analysing the world outside the limits of our individual experience. From Communication and Media Studies, Criminology and International Relations, to Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology, there are so many different avenues to explore within this field. What are employers expecting from candidates? How is it relevant to the real world? Most of the time, rather than what they study in, contemporary job market looks for the skills our graduates possess.

These skills give an advantage over others. Interestingly, many employment providers now have realized that most of the skills they look for are present in those coming from Humanities and Social Sciences or Liberal Arts backgrounds. The major areas of skills that they look for can be categorised as follows:

- i. Critical Thinking and Analysis
- ii. Teamwork
- iii. Creative thinking skills
- iv. Communication skills
- v. Interpersonal and leadership skills.

These skills and skill sets are becoming increasingly important and are demanded in all kinds of workplaces. For Humanities and Social Sciences students, the particular employability skills that they should develop include the ability to put together reasoned arguments and question assumptions, understand the processes of change in society and its institutions, draw together, analyse and critically evaluate information. Why are the social sciences important in society? Put simply, the social sciences are important because they create better institutions and systems that affect people's lives every day. Thus, HSS related subjects help people understand how to interact with the social world—how to influence policy, develop networks, increase government accountability, and promote democracy. Particularly, Social Sciences can help us to understand why this is, and develop policies, interventions and actions that can work with people to change to get better outcomes for individuals and for society. The question is whether our universities, particularly the field of HSS has realised these new demands and

skills expected from our graduates and prepare them for emerging 'new working environment'.

It is in this backdrop that this paper explains the plans for future development in the field of Humanities & Social Sciences in Sri Lankan State Universities, particularly what measures and policy changes have been taken by the University Grants Commission to meet some of the challenges posed by new local and global demand in the field of higher education. One of the main challenges that the contemporary higher education in Sri Lanka encounters is how to change the place of humanities and social sciences (HSS) to accommodate market norms within the university curricular. Due to influences of industrialization, the place of HSS within the university curricular has been critically questioned, as the extent to which the HSS contribute to the economic development of the country is significantly minimized. Therefore, both the government and private industries encourage universities to produce globally competent graduates so that they can be accommodated into current socio-economic conditions.

So, let us briefly present some of those challenges identified by UGC and measures taken to overcome them in both policy and implementing level. Before that, we would like to introduce the role of UGC in Higher Education sector in the country.

Role of the UGC

The UGC is the most important external body in the structure of university governance. It functions as the main link

between the Ministry of Education and the state universities. Its objective, as stated in the Universities Act of 1978, shows the manner in which the government commits the universities through the UGC to conform to the national policy, planning and coordination, allocation of funds to maintain academic standards, regulation of administration, and student admission. Accordingly, state universities are expected to meet the requirements of planning, coordination, and monitoring functions specified by the UGC.

The UGC's primary role is policy planning and monitoring and raising the quality of university governance. To achieve them, the UGC formulates corporate plans for a period of five years. The first corporate plan was formulated by the UGC for the period from 1984 to 1988. The latest five-year plan was prepared for the period of 2019-2025 to meet stipulated targets assigned to UGC.

Issues and Challenges

Like many other countries, Sri Lanka's system of university education is facing new challenges too. These challenges derive from the rising of local and global demand for 'quality graduates'. The responses to these challenges are interconnected in their impact on shaping the on-going policy reforms and concrete action. The gradual expansion of undergraduate education by the state and non-state sectors raises two immediate issues: the quality of education and training, and the capacity of the economy to provide employment to the graduates. However, our paper does not intend to address the issues

directly related to the mismatch between economy and education but to discuss measures that have been taken to produce quality graduates in the state universities in Sri Lanka particularly focusing on so called 'Arts Graduates' in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences.

There is a general perception in the country, vigorously by the private sector, that Sri Lankan university graduates lack values and attitudes expected by potential employers. The mismatch between their academic knowledge, attitudes and real world skills is often highlighted by the private sector. The present emphasis on soft skills training may not be adequate for the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences where graduate employment issue is particularly challenging. In addition to soft skills, they are in need of 'professional skills' that will qualify them for managerial and similar levels. The stress on incorporating soft skills development programmes and the emphasis on competencies in IT and English in undergraduate courses is an outcome of this new tendency. Management and entrepreneurial skills are also considered necessary for graduates of all disciplinary backgrounds. But incorporating five essential skills that we have highlighted above including critical thinking and analysis have been paid scant attention in formulating degree programs.

External Degree Programmes:

The problem of 'Arts' graduate unemployment, repeatedly highlighted in discussions among policy makers, is partly linked to the expansion of the numbers of external degree holders. The

expansion of external degree programmes after 2010 has led to a new anomaly in Sri Lanka's state university sector. The opening up of the doors to other students for certificate and diploma programmes in the open and distance-learning framework has also widened the access to university education. However, there are concerns about quality. The external study programmes in all universities have failed to maintain the same quality and standards of learning and training that are available to internal students. The quantum of subject knowledge and soft skills they receive is minimal and marginal. Large numbers of these external students are not exposed to the regular academic environment of the universities either. Enrollment of large number of candidates for external degrees is a major facet of the expansion of higher education in Sri Lanka. However, non-extension of IT, English language, career guidance and skills training programmes, and most importantly, critical thinking and analysis for external undergraduates is a major lacuna in the existing attempts to address the challenge of graduate unemployability.

According to UGC data, in the year 2017, a total of 17,553 were registered for external degree programmes. Of them 11,659 were for Arts, 2915 for management, 2046 for IT, 719 for Commerce, 106 for agriculture, and 108 for Science. The expansion of external degree programmes after 2010 has created positive and negative impacts in Sri Lanka's state university sector. At one level, it has opened the doors for a large number of A/L qualified students who do not get an opportunity to enter the universities as internal candidates

because of the very intense competition for enrolment, to receive university education and degrees. The most welcoming impact would be the opening of the doors for external university education so widely is that it has had a democratizing effect in the field of highly restricted and much valued, and considerably elitist university education in Sri Lanka.

Though such external degree programmes generate some income for the universities they have also created an additional burden to the limited human and infrastructure resources of state universities. In the absence of staff recruitment to serve the external programmes, the same academic staff who are involved in full-time teaching in the regular undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are engaged in teaching, assessment and examination responsibilities of external courses held on the weekends. The overworked academic staff is also attracted to working in the external degree programmes primarily due to the financial incentives built into such programmes.

Besides, the external students hardly get the same degree of teacher attention and engagement that internal students are privileged to receive. The quantum of subject knowledge and soft skills they receive is minimal and marginal. Large numbers of these external students are not exposed to the regular academic environment of the universities either. At job interviews, their performance is destined to be less than satisfactory. This defies the UGC's expectation as articulated in its policy that "the

graduates and diploma and certificate holders produced through the EDP-ODL system” should be “highly employable” (UGC Circular No. 932). In fact, many of these external graduates annually join the army of unemployed university graduates, making their tales of despair highly visible and audible. The problem of graduate unemployment, repeatedly highlighted in discussions among policy makers is partly linked to the expansion of the numbers of external degree holders (see Siddhesena et al 2021).

New Courses and Programmes: There is now increasing pressure on the state universities to reform existing curricula and introduce new courses that (a) match global trends in higher education, (b) prepare graduates to meet the changing demands of the labour market both nationally and globally, and (c) make students gainfully employable without a long waiting period for employment

The demand by university students for new courses and study programmes is laced with caution. Students are weary about the inadequate resources that universities possess in developing and sustaining new study programmes. In their view, buildings, furniture, equipment, laboratories, and the human resources are equally important, and they need to be in place before introducing new study programmes.

There is also increasing recognition that the university courses should also be flexible to become multi-disciplinary or cross-disciplinary in order to enable students to enhance their career opportunities and prospects for professional advancement. This points

towards new courses and disciplines that span across existing study programmes in science, technology, medicine, engineering, commerce & management, law, social sciences and humanities, and aesthetic studies faculties.

Credit transfer possibilities can be a plausible method that can be used to introduce such diversity to the existing programmes. Cross-Faculty and cross-disciplinary courses and programmes will also address knowledge gaps inherent in the existing system that sustains disciplinary compartmentalization.

Skills: The issue of access to higher education has at present been complicated by the question of limited employment opportunities available for graduates in some Faculties. This situation has led to an argument in the country that expansion of access to higher education has caused another social problem in the form of large numbers of unemployed graduates.

The current emphasis on employability of graduates has also placed Social Science and Humanities Faculties of state universities under severe pressure to ensure that their graduates are trained not only in academic knowledge, but also in skills and attitudes demanded by the labour market. The fact that the state sector employment opportunities for graduates in these fields are severely restricted makes the challenge particularly daunting. The stress on incorporating soft skills development programmes and the emphasis on competencies in IT and English in undergraduate courses is an outcome of this new tendency. Management and entrepreneurial skills as well as critical thinking and analysis are

also considered necessary for graduates of all disciplinary backgrounds. Thus, with the UGC guidance, all state sector universities have begun to incorporate career guidance and soft skills training in undergraduate education. The present emphasis on soft skills training may not be adequate for the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences where graduate employment issue is particularly challenging. In addition to soft skills, they are in need of ‘professional skills’ that will qualify them for managerial and similar levels.

Attitudes Gap: There is a general perception in the country, vigorously by the private sector, that Sri Lankan university graduates lack values and attitudes expected by potential employers. The mismatch between their academic knowledge, attitudes and real world skills is often highlighted by the private sector. While the universities are aware of this perception, steps taken to address the issue through training programmes in soft-skills development among undergraduate students require close attention, review, and improvement.

Need for Curriculum Modernization and Collaboration: While there is a growing demand for higher education as the world of work is changing, Sri Lanka’s state universities are slow to respond. University Faculties continue to be reluctant to initiate inter-faculty collaboration to introduce multi-disciplinary and skills-oriented undergraduate courses. The universities accelerate the present efforts to modernize their undergraduate programmes with an appropriate balance between knowledge, skills and values.

Policy Reform and Concrete Actions by UGC

In response to the concerns made by different stakeholders in the sector, the Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission have been spearheading reforms in the university sector. Improving the quality and standards of undergraduate education through reforms has been a key goal in recent reforms initiated by the MoE and the UGC.

There are key measures taken by UGC to positively respond to issues and challenges highlighted in the field of HSS education in Sri Lankan Universities. Some of those key measures are explained below.

i. Reform of Curriculum and Degree Programs: According to Gazette dated 9th August 2020 2187/27, (9) revise curriculums within the overall education reforms policy to create graduates targeting domestic and foreign job markets.

- a. This task has already been initiated by the QAC/UGC. Every five years, curriculums are now being reviewed.
- b. Restructuring Bachelor of Fine Arts
- c. Restructuring BA external program

Universities were advised to submit new, restructured external programmes formulated adhering to the guidelines specified in this circular and with Senate and Council approval to the Quality Assurance Council (QAC/UGC) through the Vice Chancellor on or before 1st of March 2021 for ensuring compliance

and for approval of the Commission thereafter with the concurrence of the Standing Committee on Humanities and Social Sciences and Standing Committee on External Degrees. Under this restructuring, skills development component has been strengthened by introducing a compulsory 9-credit English Language module with three 3-credit course units offered over the 3 years of study, with UTEL Benchmark 5 as the final outcome. Information Technology was introduced as a 9-credit IT component spread over the three years of study as 3-credit course units. Work-based training was recommended with 300 hours of work-based training as a 3-credit compulsory course unit to be completed at any time after completion of the requirements of year 1 which will be indicated in the transcript as a non-GPA course. The unrestricted admission of external graduates has been limited by issuing Commission Circular No. 932 which only allows twice the number of existing internal students. Validity of registration for a given degree programme also was limited to a maximum of twice the prescribed period for completion of the degree. To discourage selection of most popular and easy subjects by students to get high grades, a subject basket system and a ceiling for enrolment per course were introduced (see Commission Circular No. 01/2021 Restructuring Bachelor of Arts (External) Degree Programmes).

ii. Improving Employability of HSS Graduates by Enhancing IT Skills:

This project aims at enhancing the employability of Arts/Humanities/Social

Sciences undergraduates studying at any UGC governed University in Sri Lanka by fulfilling the following objectives:

- a. Provide undergraduates an opportunity to earn a Certificate / Diploma in Information Technology (SLQF Level 3) offered with the assistance of the UGC which the students will follow in addition to their existing study courses.
- b. Strengthen the IT infrastructure of all HSS Faculties which will enable students to experience state of the art facilities. The project aims to develop new computer labs at the ratio of 1 computer for every 9 students.
- c. Establishment of IT Service Units/ Departments in all HSS Faculties.

iii. Issuing of Commission Circular on Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Transfer and Lateral Entry (Commission circular 5/2021): This is a great achievement in order to enhance the employability of students. Provision has been included to admit 15% under these criteria for external Degrees. Commission Circular No. 05/2021: Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Transfer and Lateral Entry in the context of SLQF 2015 was issued to achieve this task and accordingly, new undergraduate curricula are in process of preparation based on the new circular. This measure would facilitate increasing access to higher education.

iv. Annual Graduate Employability Survey was Commenced from 2021 after each Convocation as Directed by UGC with the Central Analysis-right

Given to MIS/UGC¹: This initiative will provide the statistical analysis of Graduate employability and provide future direction of addressing this issue in a rational manner.

v. Commission Circular No. 04/2021: Introduction of Early Exit or Fall-back Qualifications for an Existing Undergraduate/ Postgraduate Programme of Study

vi. Establish a Virtual University to provide more opportunity for Higher Education

vii. Pre-University Online English Course: UGC has decided to carry out an English Language teaching program online for the undergraduates. To improve English language skills of HSS undergraduates, more funding was channelled through AHEAD ELTA-ELSE component of World Bank project.

In addition to UGC, many Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences have already taken some measures to address some of the issues highlighted in this paper. But, more concrete measures should be taken to address many of the critical issues prevalent not only in the field of humanities & social sciences but also in the entire higher education sector with an appropriate policy reform. In order to do that, Higher Education Presidential Task Force – Higher Education for all- was appointed by HE the President and the policy document of the task force has

already been published after completion of a rigorous consultative process with the stakeholders of the sector². Based on that policy document, higher education policy implementation plan is now operationalized by both UGC and MoE. In addition to that, measures have been taken to reform 43 years old University Act, and review the current practices in university admissions and remove the bottlenecks that cause delays.

On top of that, special attention was paid to improve Innovation, Research and Development in our universities. Universities need to play a central role in the formulation of national policy, promote innovation and contribute to development. The University-Industrial partnership must be mutually beneficial and healthy. HEI research agenda needs a multifaceted framework of scientific, economic, social, cultural and organizational elements that lead to pragmatic and practical solutions facilitating the development and diffusion of innovations and technologies.

Most high-ranking Asian universities have been transformed from teaching universities to research universities. The key components of this transformation need to be viewed as strategy, resources, talent, and structure. The strategy is to harness talent, resources and recruit the best of researchers. The process involves training more postgraduate students, recognize the contribution of post-docs, establish quality research centers, and raise funds for research through

1. See more detail on such survey 'A survey on the Satisfaction of Graduands and Graduates: Humanities and Social Sciences in the State Universities in Sri Lanka' Siddhisena et al (2021) https://hss.ugc.ac.lk/?page_id=5987

2. See the Taskforce summery report (2021) <http://nec.gov.lk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/6.Re-imagining-Education-Sri-Lanka-Summary-Report-by-Presidential-Task-Force.pdf>

collaboration, grants, and endowments. UGC has decided to set up a Standing Committee for Innovation, Research and Development to facilitate and encourage innovations in our universities while promoting fundamental and policy research as well.

However, R&D expenditure on Humanities and Social Sciences fields is relatively lower as a percentage than for science, technology and engineering fields. Investment in the Humanities and Social Sciences targeting specific fields related to national priorities has been somewhat limited. Yet, this is significant for evidence-based research policy in Sri Lanka, where social and human challenges lie squarely at the forefront of our current and future development agenda.

Humanities and Social Sciences researchers play a vital role in providing critical analyses of national goals, choices about development policies and strategies, and other national issues pertaining to the transformation of Sri Lankan society. Their involvement is crucial to a deeper understanding of social issues and to stimulating public debate that could lead to a reconsideration of chosen paths. Despite recent efforts of universities to promote research through the external support such as AHEAD project, the universities find it difficult to drive such initiatives due to lack of incentives for academic staff for such efforts and barriers to risk-taking in the existing regulatory framework. The University Act therefore needs to address the existing gaps to remove such barriers and facilitate R&D leading to intellectual property and innovation with commercialization.

Conclusion

Humanities and Social Science education is an important subsection in higher education since it contributes to the knowledge production and dissemination, and it has produced a large number of graduates over the last one hundred years in our university system. Despite its importance, there are several issues in HSS education, particularly in the public sector universities, as their authoritative place within the university system has been gradually decreasing due to failure of meeting the demand imposed by a highly changing world. Alongside the socio-economic changes, the expectations of higher education are being changed tremendously, while accommodating contemporary societal needs in their curriculum. The increasing demand for graduates who would be employed in the industry sector is likely to diminish the place of HSS in higher education in Sri Lanka. We have identified several such challenges faced by HSS education in our university system, and the measures taken by UGC, as an apex body of higher education in Sri Lanka to overcome such obstacles, were presented with policy reform and concrete actions taken. We believe that such policy reform and implementation initiated by UGC may bring a positive outcome to strengthen Humanities and Social Sciences education in our universities thereby benefitting not only our graduates but also our academics.

Acknowledgment: Our thanks must go to Mrs. Janadari Wijesinghe for helping us to locate some valuable information relevant to this paper.

References

Presidential Taskforce Summary Report (2020). Reimagining Education in Sri Lanka. <http://nec.gov.lk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/6>.

Siddhisena et al (2021). A survey on the Satisfaction of Graduands and Graduates: Humanities and Social Sciences in the State Universities in Sri Lanka. https://hss.ugc.ac.lk/?page_id=5987

Universities Act No. 16, 1978. <http://www.ugc.ac.lk/en/policy/universities-act.html>

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The chapters in this volume are primarily an outcome of the deliberation of conference papers presented at the Centenary Celebrations of Humanities and Social Sciences Education in our Universities (1921-2021) held on 20th and 21st of December 2021 organized by the Standing Committee of HSS, UGC.

Contributors to this volume have discussed and analyzed how Sri Lanka's university education system, mainly the Social Sciences and Humanities, has evolved effectively amidst many local and global challenges. They have highlighted how the promising opportunities that emerged during the last hundred years were progressively utilized for the improvement of traditional and modern education in Sri Lanka. The latest UGC statistics show that Humanities and Social Sciences education is still the dominant field of university education in the country though some argue about the drastic cut down of 'Arts' education in our universities. It has also been pointed out in this volume, that in addition to continuing the advanced learning of school subjects at the University level, remarkable progress has been achieved by us in the fields of Medicine, Nursing, Engineering, Technology, Management, Communication and IT to meet the increasing demand for vocation-oriented degrees.

In response to the formidable challenges of the 21st Century, the Ministry of Higher Education and the University Grants Commission have initiated many reforms in the university sector to address the mismatch between university education and employment opportunities, particularly in the field of humanities and social sciences. Further, our experts in the medical sciences have contributed substantially to the global efforts in curbing the dreadful COVID-19 pandemic using their expertise and modern medical technology. While the colleagues in the medical sciences were thus engaged in exploring ways to handle emerging forms of viruses, we in the HSS were forced to explore the ways to get adjusted to the new-normal condition and perform our duties effectively. Thus, the online education, particularly blended mode of teaching and learning had to be adopted.

This Volume, in seven parts, has presented some critical issues and challenges relevant to the field of HSS. In addition to reviewing the present status of Social Science and Humanities Studies, it has presented sufficient analytical insights into Employability issues, Learning Environment, Language Competency of HSS graduates, University-Industry Collaboration, Teaching and Assessments, Quality assurance of

teaching and examination, and issues related to Publications in HSS as well. Also highlighted are the aspects of humanities education and traditional disciplines, such as languages, literature, and history. It is argued that studying Humanities should enable people to appreciate that diversity is a way of life which enriches our lives with insights into how other people live, think, and act. In relation to social sciences, suggestions are made for drastic rethinking of the direction and outcome of Social Sciences education from merely 'Employment oriented education' to 'wider, critical, skillful and an analytical approach oriented higher education.' While addressing issues like promoting competency in English Language, enriching the research culture and academic publications, emphasis also has been made on teaching, learning and assessment in Higher Education Institutes. It is argued that learning and teaching in Social Sciences and Humanities should encourage the students and also the lecturers to develop their values such as respect, sharing, care, compassion, love, and solidarity. Through them these values may gradually penetrate into the community at large.

On the whole, the necessity of restructuring our universities from mere teaching centers to research and

innovation-oriented academies with sufficient backing of industry is noted by our academics. Similarly, interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary research and innovation are also to be encouraged adequately in our university system. This may increase the number of international students seeking postgraduate qualifications in the fields like Buddhist Studies.

Another aspect that has captured the attention of the academics who contributed to this volume is the lack of publishing facilities for upcoming researchers. Publishing houses that dominate this industry favour only the famous senior researchers and writers. Remedial steps in this regard are necessary to encourage upcoming scholars to emerge as published academics.

Contributors to this volume have analyzed the present situation of university education from multiple perspectives in the context of issues and challenges that we are faced with, and have also suggested constructive remedial measures. While celebrating the achievements we have made, let us also start the implementation process and be more innovative to excel in the world community as a progressively enlightening community,

INDEX

A

Abari, A.A.F. 272
 Abdelmounaim, L. 253
 Abeygunawardena, H. 162, 163
 Abeynayake 14
 Adams, A. 163
 Adesola, S. 238
 Adikari, A. 8, 12
 Ainsworth, J.W. 262, 269, 275
 AIYoubi, A.H.M. 257, 273
 Akcaoglu, M. 178
 Almaa, B. 272
 Almansour, S. 272
 Altbach, P.G. 272
 AlYoubi, A. 273
 Amaratunge, Sampath 276, 297
 Amirbeka, A. 261, 272
 Amparo, C. 253
 Anca Draghici 253
 Andersson, E. 258
 Angle, M. 274
 Ankrah, S. 243, 245, 248, 252
 Archambault, E. 274
 Ardakani, F.B. 261, 272
 Ariyawansa, E. 86, 87, 94, 97, 125
 Ariyawansa, R.G. 118, 240
 Arndt, D. 54, 61
 Arocena, R. 233, 236
 Arrow, K. 134
 Arrow, F. 118
 Ashforth, B.E. 98, 118
 Ashly, P. 253
 Atalar, A. 259, 269, 271, 272
 Attanayake, A.U. 182, 195
 Ayanzadeh, R. 95

B

Baaken, T. 237
 Bacharach, N. 163
 Bandara, D.C. 238

Bandara, P.K. 45
 Banerjee, J. 262, 268, 269, 273
 Barker, F. 107, 118
 Barnes, T.A. 252
 Barrie, S.C. 85, 94, 129, 134, 238
 Bates, A.W. 177
 Bayer, A.E. 154, 162
 Benfratello, L. 124, 126, 134
 Bhatia, V.K. 219, 224
 Bhaven N.Sampat 253
 Bianca Cirjaliu 253
 Bisaso, R. 257, 273
 Bose, I. 262, 268, 269, 273
 Brass 56, 61
 Breschi, S. 227, 236
 Bridgstock, R. 98, 118
 Brownell, M.T. 155, 162
 Buddhima Karunarathna 208
 Bunker, V.J. 155, 162
 Burke, Penny Jane 65, 82
 Burt, R.S. 234, 236
 Byiers, B. 113, 118

C

Campbell, D.F.J. 236, 237
 Cannizzo, F. 65, 82
 Cantu, M.P. 259, 260, 263, 273
 Carayannis, E.G. 236, 237, 253
 Carayannis, Elias G. 244, 245, 252
 Carlsson, B. 227, 237, 291
 Carr, W. 177, 291
 Cathy N. 136, 140, 291
 Chan, W.W.Y. 273, 291
 Chandradhar, S. 61
 Chandrakumara 125, 134
 Chandrasiri, S. 97, 101, 107, 118
 Chanock, K. 129, 134
 Charlton, P. 178
 Chelliah, S. 257, 273
 Chen, A. 237

Chen, D.I. 273
 Chen, X.F. 95
 Cheng, A.Y. 273
 Cheng, Z. 273
 Cole, D. 118
 Coleman, J.A. 224
 Coleman, J.S. 237
 Cook, L. 162
 Cooke, P. 237
 Coomaraswamy, U. 161, 162, 163
 Copps, J. 100, 118
 Corcoran, J. 217, 224
 Coşkun, E. 272
 Costa, R. 61
 Costa, R.C. 65, 82
 Cotton, K. 272
 Croft, N. 156, 162
 Cronin, C. 165, 174, 177
 Cvijanovic, V. 254

D

da Silva, Teixeira 214, 215, 225
 Dalton, A. 162
 Daly, A.J. 163
 Daniela 137, 140
 Danilda, I. 238
 Dankert, C.E. 10, 118
 Darwin, R. 216, 217, 224
 Davey, T. 232, 233, 237, 238
 David F.J. Campbell 253
 David Theo Goldberg 136, 137
 David, C. 2444, 245, 252
 David, Theo 136, 140
 Davidson C.N. 136, 137, 138, 140
 Dayaratna-Banda, O.G. 96
 de Silva, C.R. 29, 33, 45, 297
 de Silva, J. 163
 de Silva, N. 163
 de Silva, Premakumara 276, 297, 301
 De Silva, R. 198
 de Wit, H. 273, 274
 Della Volpe, M. 233, 237
 Desilus, B. 257, 263, 274

Devendra, Dinali 198, 208
 Dharmadasa, P.D.C.S. 96, 299
 Di Pietro, G. 273
 Dimakopoulos, D. 178
 Dissanayake, E.L.K. 134
 Dobranszki, J.A. 291
 Dochy, F. 163
 Donovan, C. 238
 Dovidio, J.F. 196
 Dumitru, D. 137, 140

E

Edquist, C. 237
 Elliott, R. 239
 Ernst & Young 87, 94
 Esham, M. 238
 Etzkowitz, H. 237
 Evans, C.M. 162

F

Farzana Haniffa 62
 Fasih, Tazeen 134
 Fathid, K. 272
 Faust, K. 234, 239
 Faver, C.A. 155, 162
 Fernanda R. 253
 Ferris, D. 224
 Fischer, B.B. 237
 Florian Kratke 113
 Florian 113
 Florida, R. 237
 Fowsar, M.A.M. 46
 Fraser, K. 134
 Freed, J.E. 163
 Freeman, C. 237
 Freeman, R.B. 134
 Fribey, J. 163
 Friend, M. 162
 Fugate, M. 118
 Fulvia M. 253
 Fumasoli, T. 273

G

GalanMuros, V. 233
 Gamage, S.N. 46
 Gardner, R.C. 208
 Garsten, C. 66, 82
 Geiger, Wilhelm 27, 28
 Gento, A.M. 237
 Gibbons, M. 237
 Giles, H. 196
 Gluszek, A. 196
 Gobinath, S. 46
 Goddard, R.D. 162
 Goddard, Y.L. 162
 Goh, N.E. 273
 Goldberg 136, 137, 138, 140
 Gould, Eric 140
 Granovetter, M.S. 237
 Grant, M. 162
 Green, F. 118
 Green, W. 95
 Gujarati, D.N. 134
 Gunarathna, P.S.M. 163
 Gunaratne 122, 134
 Gunatilake, Hema 28
 Gunawardana, Anoma 199
 Guruge, W.P. 28
 Gyamera, Gifty Oforiwa 65

H

Habermas, J. 95
 Habibie, P. 224
 Hamdullahpur, F. 273
 Hammer, S. 95
 Handler, M.G. 163
 Harris, C. 163
 Harvey, A.N. 163
 Harvey, L. 118, 134
 Harzing, A.W. 224
 Hasslen, R. 163
 Haydeé, C. 253
 Hazem A. 253
 Heckman, J.J. 134
 Hekkert, M.P. 337

Helyer, R. 118
 Henriksen, D. 178
 Herath, H.M.T.S. 134
 Herz, B. 118
 Hewamanage, Wimal 3
 Hillage, J. 118
 Hirsch, J.E. 224
 Hobson, J.A. 118
 Holm, P., Jarrick, A., Scott, D. 61
 Hölttä, S. 273
 Hsieh, H.F. 273
 Huba, M.E. 163
 Hughes, C. 134
 Hyder, A. 118
 Hyland, K. 224

I

Intarakumnerd, P. 238
 Istance, A. 178
 Ivascu, Larisa 253

J

Jaime Banks, 254
 Jayasingam, T. 298
 Jayasinghe, V.U. 163, 199, 208
 Jayasuriya, D.L. 46
 Jayathilaka, G.K. 29, 298
 Jayathilaka, K. 29
 Jayatillake, B.G. 162
 Jayawardane, A.K.W. 254
 Jayawardena, D. 46, 82
 Jayawardena, Dhammika 65
 Jayawardena, J. 162
 Jayawardena, Priyanka 118
 Jeffrey D Sachs 136
 Jobs, S. 61
 Jones-Evans, D. 229, 230

K

Kamal Uddin, M. 254
 Kamarulzaman, M.E.B.M. 273
 Kanagasingam, Vallipuram 85
 Kannathas, S.K. 197
 Karunanayaka, S.P. 178

Karunanayaka, Shironica P. 164, 165
 Katooli, A.N. 95
 Katz, L.F. 119
 Kautz, T. 134
 Kelchtermans, G. 163
 Kelegama, S. 120
 Kemmis, S. 177
 Kennedy, E. 178
 Kennedy, J. 136
 Kenney, M. 237
 Keynes J.M. 135
 Khan, Aktaruzzaman 257
 Khan, M.J. 273
 Killick, D. 273
 Kinicki, A.J. 118
 Kirk, D. 253
 Kitagawa, F. 238
 Kline, S.J. 238
 Klofsten, M. 238
 Knight, J. 272, 274
 Knight, P. 119
 Knight, P.T. 119
 Koay, J. 196
 Koehler, M.J. 178
 Koff, Susan R. 140
 Komotar, H.M. 274
 KrauseJensen, J. 66
 Krawczyk, F. 224
 Krishnan, T. 273
 Kroft, K. 119
 Kuhlmann, S. 237, 238
 Kulczycki, E. 224
 Kumara, Kumudu Kusum 63, 82
 Kurbatov, S. 163
 Kyndt, E. 163

L

Lagoke, O. 238
 Lance Cousins 13
 Landau, R. 238
 Lanford, M. 275
 Lange, F. 119
 Lariviere, V. 274
 Larsen 232, 241, 242, 244, 245, 249
 Larsen, K. 238, 253

Laurillard, D. 178
 Laursen, K. 238
 Lawrence D. 253
 Lee, J. 238
 Lee, J.J. 274
 Lee. D. 100, 215, 232,
 Lewis, P. 262
 Leydesdorff, L. 237, 253
 Lightbown, P.M. 208
 Limoges, C. 237
 Lindberg, M. 238
 Linton, R. 61
 Lo, W.Y.W. 273
 Logendra, R. 135, 147
 Lu, X. 273
 Lucas, C. 238
 Lumana, N. 46
 Lundvall, B.A. 226

M

MacIntyre, P.D. 196
 Malalasekera, G. 61
 Male, T. 274
 Malerba, F. 236
 Malik, K. 244, 245, 248
 Mampitiya, U. 163
 Manoranjan, P. 134
 Manurathna, Prabha 82
 Marasinghe, E.W. 26
 Marcillo Gómez, M. 274
 Marcus, H. 196
 Maria Duenas 208
 Marshall, D.S. 274
 Marta F. 253
 Marzban, F. 95
 Marzban, P. 95
 Mason, S. 224
 Masters, J. 178
 Max Muller 50
 Maxwell, S. 61
 McGoldrick, N.B. 95
 McCowen, T. 106, 107, 117, 119
 McGrath, S. 119

Meerman, A. 237
 Mendis, Dushyanthi 299
 Merga, M.K. 224
 Mishra, P. 178
 Mishra, S. 178
 Mitchell W.F. 135
 Mofield, E.L. 163
 Mohamed, Esham 253
 Mohammad, M. 257
 Mohan, D.U. 135
 Moolenaar, N.M. 163
 Moore, K. 239
 Mowery 253
 Mullins, T. 274
 Munari, F. 238

N

Nahallage, C. 163
 Nahallage, C.A.D. 120
 Naidu, S. 178
 Nanayakkara, G. 95
 Nandadeva, B.D. 163
 Nawaratna, N.N.J. 119
 Nawaratne, S.J. 95, 119
 Neal, G. 274
 Nedelkoska, L. 147
 Needham, D. 274
 Negro, S.O. 237
 Newman, J.H. 238
 Nizam, A. 274
 Notowidigdo, M.J. 119
 Nurius, P. 196
 Nussbaum, M. 274

O

Oldenberg, Hermann 28
 Olve, N. 162
 Omar, M.Z. 254
 Orazbayeva, B. 237
 Ostashova, Y. 274
 Ota, H. 274
 Ovendirelic, E. 272

P

Padmasiri, Raluwe 299
 Paltridge, B. 224
 Panagoda D. 134, 163
 Pandya, D. 238
 Paniagua, A. 178
 Paola, C. 253
 Paronavitana, S. 17, 28
 Pascual, J.A. 237
 Pasinetti, L.L. 119
 Patabendiage, S.S.J. 147
 Patabendige, S.S.J. 119
 Patton, D. 237
 Paul, H. 27, 254
 Perera, A. 135
 Perera, E. 131, 163
 Perera, E.R.K. 131, 135, 163
 Perera, Kalyani 299
 Perera, Marie 300
 Pettinger, T. 119
 Pieris, P.E. 10, 11, 28
 Pimentel, C. 237
 Pinheiro, M.L. 238
 Pinho, J.C. 238
 Pittayasophon, S. 238
 Plewa, C. 238
 Pogatsnik, M. 238
 Pollard, E. 118
 Ponnampereuma, G. 162
 Pool, L.D. 119
 Porage, C. 135
 Porter, D.C. 134
 Pourkarimi, J. 275
 Powell, W. 163
 Preece, J. 119
 Pushpakumara, M. 135

Q

Qaimary, D. 254

R

Reid, A. 254
 Raes, E. 163
 Rahmani, R. 95
 Rahula 7, 8, 13, 21

Rahula, Walpola 6, 13
 Rajkhowa, G. 274
 Rakić, T. 196
 Ramanayake A.Jayamanne 135
 Ramanayake, A. 163
 Ramanayake, P.S.M. 134
 Rameez, A. 46
 Ramesh, Adhikary 208
 Ranasinghe, Athula 300
 Ranasinghe, S.W. 95
 Ranjani, R.P.C. 135
 Rasmussen, E. 238
 Rasmussen, P. 95
 Ratnayake, Lakshman 40, 42, 46
 Ravid, R. 163
 Razfar, A. 196
 Readings, Bill 95
 Rehman, S.S. 237
 Reichstein, T. 238
 Rennells, M.S. 162
 Reynolds, A. 274
 Rezaeian, S. 275
 Rice, S. 163
 Richardson, C. 178
 Riley, T. 162
 Roman M.H. Varga 254
 Rosenberg, N. 238
 Rosenburg, J.M. 178
 Rosenburg, N. 238
 Ross, D. 163
 Rotto, J. 163
 Routledge Falmer 119
 Rumenapp, J.C. 196

S

Sachin, S. 95
 Salleh, M.S. 254
 Salter, A. 238
 Samarasinghe, S.W. 274
 Samuel, G. 238
 Sanchez, T.W. 224
 Sarwar, Uddin 254
 Saunders, M. 275

Sawyer, R.K. 163
 Schaeffer, P.R. 237
 Schmidt, B. 61
 Scholarios, D. 140
 Schraudner, Martina 254
 Schultz, T.W. 119
 Schutt, R.K. 275
 Schutz, F. 254
 Scott, J. 238
 Sekaran, U. 275
 Senarath, S.A.C.L. 147
 Senaratne, R. 46
 Senerath, 97, 101
 Sewell, P. 119
 Shannon, S.E. 273
 Shpancer, N. 196
 Shvidko, E. 224
 Shyinthavy, Janarththan 208
 Siengthai, S. 87, 95, 144, 148
 Simon, J. 275
 Singam, K. 126, 135
 Singerland, E. 61
 Singh, A. 254
 Singh, M. 238
 Sirisoma, M.H. 28
 Siyambalapitiya, S.B. 95
 Slegers, P.J. 163
 Smart, J.C. 162
 Smith, C. 134
 Smith, M. 162
 Smits, R.E.H.M. 237
 Solaiman, M. 254
 Somerville, B. 140
 Soname, S. 238
 Spicer, A. 225
 Stankiewicz, R. 237
 Star, C. 95
 Starfield, S. 224
 Steinmo, M. 238
 Stensaker, B. 274
 Stock, D. 147
 Sultan, S.S. 254
 Sutz, J. 236

Suurs, R.A. 237

Sweller, J. 178

T

Takeuchin, Laura Rodriguez 118

Tang, Keow N. 140

Tang, Y. 95

Tardy, C. 225

Taylor, F. 95

Thilakerathne, P.M.C. 163

Thomas, T. 134

Thornhill, A. 275

Thorsten D. Barth 253

Thune, T. 239

Tibby, M. 118

Tierney, W.G. 275

Tilakaratne, Asanga 3, 300

Torstensson, B.M. 238

Toschi, L. 238

Tsigaris, J. 225

Tsiligiris, Vangelis 254

Tunzelmann, N. Von 234

Turney 61

Turvey, R. 119

U

Unantenne, Ranmini 238

Uranga, M.G. 237

Uyangoda, Jayadeva 66, 82

V

Van der Heijden, B.I.J.M. 120

Van Rens, T. 118

Vangrieken, K. 163

Vanichvasin, Patchara 208

Vathsala Wickramasinghe 46, 95, 120,
239, 254

Vescio, V. 163

Viggiano, T. 275

Villani, E. 238

Vonortas, N.S. 237

W

Wang, C. 273

Warnasuriya, N. 163

Warr, M. 178

Wasserman, S. 239

Watts, M. 124, 135

Weeraratna, W.M.M.M.J.T. 208

Weerasinghe, R.N. 254

Welborn, B. 163

Weligamage, S. 95, 148

Wellman, N. 120

Wenger, E. 178

Wickramarachchi, M.W. 95

Wickramasinghe, Martin 4

Wickramasinghe, V. 46, 95, 120, 239, 254

Wignaraja, G. 120

Wijayanama, C. 135

Wijesekara, P.D. 120

Wijesinha, Anushka 118

Wijetunge, M.T.N. 208

Wild, J. 178

Wiley, D. 178

Worren, N.A. 239

Wyne, M.F. 275

X

Xiao, J. 120

Xiong, X. 273

Y

Yao, C.W. 275

Yapa, S.T.W.S. 300

Yarmohammadian, M.H. 272

Yatawara, R. 120

Ydyrysby, K. 272

Yeager, E. 162

Yin, R.K. 275

Yorke, M. 119, 120

Yves, G. 274

Z

Zahed, 254, 272

Zahed, A.H.M. 272, 273

Zare, M.N. 275

CONTRIBUTORS

Amaratunge, Sampath is a Senior Professor in Business Economics, currently serving as the Chairman of the UGC, Sri Lanka and was the former Vice-Chancellor of the SJP. He obtained his B.A. (Hons.) in Economics from SJP and an MA in Economics from the CMB, an MSc in Economics in Rural Development from the Saga National University, and a Ph.D. from Kogoshima National University in Japan. As an accomplished academic, a brilliant scholar, and an efficient administrator, Senior Professor Sampath Amaratunge has made an outstanding contribution to the development of the SJP as its Vice Chancellor (2014-2020), Dean of FMSC (2009-2014) and presently to UGC as its Chairman. Professor Amaratunge counts over 25 years of service as an academic at the SJP. He has published more than 50 articles in international and national refereed journals.

Attanayake, Asantha U. is a Senior Lecturer at the CMB, Sri Lanka. She received her B.A. from the PDN and a Ph.D. from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She was a Fulbright Awardee at Pennsylvania State University, USA. She is a HKSEE alumna at Harvard University. Her thesis, Undergraduate ELT in Sri Lanka: Policy, Practice and Perspectives for South Asia is published (2017) by Cambridge Scholars Publishers, UK. Post-colonial Curriculum Practices in South Asia: Building Confidence to Speak English by Routledge Publishers (2019), UK, is her latest addition to the academia. Currently, she is attached to Ohio State University as visiting Associate Professor.

Dayaratna-Banda, O.G. is a Professor in Economics in the PDN, Sri Lanka and also he is currently the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, PDN. He has earned a B.A. degree in Economics (first class in monetary economics), M.A. in Economics from the PDN, Sri Lanka, and Ph.D. in Economics from the National University of Singapore. He has been a Visiting Research Professor in the International Governance Innovation and University of Waterloo in Canada (2006-2007). He has published widely in international journals and has contributed to various policy research working papers in various topics including applied macroeconomics, international trade and finance, and economic development, which have been published internationally.

de Silva, Chandra R. majored in History at the University of Ceylon. His early work, through Portuguese and Sinhala sources including *The Portuguese in Ceylon, 1617-1638* (1972), represents an attempt to reconstruct the colonial experience from the point of view of the colonized. Subsequently, his work covered studies of Portuguese activities in Sri Lanka, in the Indian Ocean and on the East African coast. He has over 100 publications including eleven authored or edited books, and more than eighty book chapters and articles in scholarly journals. He has taught history at the University of Ceylon (1962-89), at Bowdoin College (1989-91), at Indiana State University (1991-98) and Old Dominion University (1998- 2016). At old Dominion University he served as Professor and Chair of History, Dean of the College of Arts and Letters (2003-2010), Vice Provost for Faculty Development (2012-2015) and Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

de Silva, Premakumara is Senior Professor at the Department of Sociology, CMB. He received his Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from the University of Edinburgh, UK. He was the first Deputy Vice-chancellor of CMB and former Dean of the FoA, CMB and Head of the Dept. of Sociology. He has won several prestige international fellowships including British Academy, American Academy of Religion and Sir RadcliffeBrown and Sir Remond Firth Fellowship of Royal Anthropological Institute in UK and several national awards including outstanding researcher of CVCD (2018), State Literary Award (2018), Vice-chancellor's and Senate awards for the best researcher. In 2016, an Honorary Professorship has been awarded to him by Deakin University in Australia for his contribution to the field of Sociology and Anthropology. Currently, he is a Senior Research Fellow at University of Birmingham, UK, and Senior Researcher at the SJP and also a member of UGC.

Dharmadasa, P.D.C.S. is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Economics at the KLN, Sri Lanka. She has earned a B.A. degree in Economics from the PDN and M.Sc. in Finance and Economics and a Doctor of Philosophy in Economics from the University of Saga in Japan. She was also a Postdoctoral Fellow in the University of Saga in Japan. Dr. Dharmadasa has published in journals and has contributed to policy research in applied macroeconomics, money and banking, and public sector economics.

Haniffa, Farzana is a Professor and HoD in the Department of Sociology at the CMB. She obtained her Ph.D in Anthropology from Columbia University, NY in 2007. Haniffa has published on the social and political history of Muslims, on gender politics and the anti-Muslim movement in Sri Lanka. Haniffa was a visiting fellow at the Center for South Asian Studies at the University of Cambridge (2018-19) and visiting research fellow at the Leibniz Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) in Berlin in 2016. Haniffa serves on the Management Council of the Social Scientists' Association, the Board of Directors of the Law and Society Trust and is a trustee of the Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust in Sri Lanka.

Hewamanage, Wimal is a Professor in Buddhist Studies, Faculty of Arts, CMB. He earned his B.A. with first-class honours in 2001 and then M.A. and M. Phil from the KLN, and Ph.D. from the Wuhan University under the Chinese Government Scholarship. He received Vice Chancellor's Award for Research Excellence -2018 and Senate Award for Research Excellence -2019, CMB. Currently, he serves as the Sri Lankan Director of Confucius Institute, CMB, and contributed to introducing the Chinese Language Study Stream Degree programme in 2022, inaugurating Colombo Journal for Chinese Studies (CJCS) in 2021, and the annual conference on Understanding Chinese Language and Culture (UCLC) in 2020.

Jayasingam, Thangamuthu is a Professor of Botany at EUSL having served 40 years since its inception in 1998. He is a graduate of B.Sc. Botany of PDN and obtained his Ph.D. in Population Ecology from the University of Bangor, Wales. He served as Vice Chancellor of EUSL and also the Chair of the Public Service Commission (Eastern Province). He is consultant to UNDP, WB, NORAD, CIDA, ADB, Ministry of Environment & Dept of Wildlife Conservation on various sectors especially on livelihood, EIA and ESIA. He is also a Director of National Peace Council and an Attorney at law.

Jayathilaka, G. K. (Ph.D.) is a former Research Fellow at the ICES, Kandy. As a past travel writer, her main areas of interest span the cultural significance of tourism and the way populations, nations and subcultures are represented through tourism and associated projective fields. She is currently a Senior Lecturer and the Acting HoD of Indigenous Social Sciences, Faculty of Indigenous Social Sciences and Management Studies at the GWUIM.

Kanagasingam, Vallipuram is a Professor in Management. He has been working as a Rector of Trincomalee Campus of Eastern University, Sri Lanka (EUSL) since 2015. He had served as Dean/Faculty of Commerce and Management of EUSL from 2004 to 2007. He received

his Ph.D. from the Postgraduate Institute of Management (PIM) of Sri Jayewardenepura University, M.Sc. in Management from the same university and BBA from EUSL. He is author of 75 peer reviewed research papers and two textbooks on Management.

Kannathas, S.K. is a Senior Lecturer in English Language at the UJA, Sri Lanka, where he has been a faculty member since 2008. He is the Head/Department of Translation Studies, Faculty of Arts, UJA. He has thirty years of experience in teaching English as a Second Language. Kannathas completed his Ph.D. at Tanjore University, India, his Masters at KLN and his undergraduate studies at UJA. His research interests lie in the area of language through literature, and motivation in ESL classrooms. He has collaborated actively with researchers in several other disciplines related to bilingualism and gender issues in language policy implementation.

Karunanayaka, Shironica P. is a Professor in Educational Technology at the OUSL. She is a former Dean of the Faculty of Education. Professor Karunanayaka has been an academic at OUSL since 1993. She holds a first class in the B.Sc. degree from the OUSL, and the Degree of Doctor of Education from the University of Wollongong, Australia, specializing in Information Technology in Education and Training. Being an active researcher, Professor Karunanayaka has published widely. Her key research focus is on ICT in education, learning experience design, Open Educational Resources and Open Educational Practices.

Kennedy, Jeevaretnam is the present Dean of the FAC, EUSL. He is a Senior Lecturer Grade – I in English, attached to the Department of Languages, EUSL. He received his Ph.D. from Bharathidasan University, India and completed his B.Sc (Mathematics), M.A and MPhil in English Language and Literature in the same university. He has published many research articles in many reputed refereed journals and presented many researches in International Research Conferences in and out of Sri Lanka. His researches mainly focus on English literature, Diasporic Literature, Gender Studies, English Language Teaching and Testing, Cultural Studies, etc. He has published a collection of essays on Teaching of English as a Second Language, English Literature, and text books for the undergraduate students, and as a creative writer he has published a collection of short stories in Tamil.

Mendis, Dushyanthi (Ph.D.) is a Professor in the Department of English, CMB, where she teaches courses in linguistics and language studies. Her research interests are sociolinguistics, discourse and genre analysis, language planning and policy, and Sri Lankan Englishes. From a disciplinary and pedagogical perspective, she is interested in and has engaged in processes of curriculum review, quality assurance and ethics in teaching, research and publication.

Padmasiri, Raluwe Thera is serving as a Professor in Buddhist Studies at the Department of Buddhist Thought at PGIPBS, KLN in Sri Lanka. Professor Raluwe Padmasiri Thera has obtained B.A. (Special) Degree in Pali & Buddhist Studies at the PDN and M.A Degree from National University of Singapore. He has published three books, thirty-five academic articles, five article translations in Sinhala and English. He has presented papers in local and international conferences.

Perera, Kalyani is a former Senior Professor of the PDN, with nearly 40 yearlong academic career and 34 years postgraduate teaching and research experience. She has published 100 research articles, authored 7 book chapters, 2 textbooks, and a dictionary. She is a Council member (MRT), Senior Consultant (Matale City University), Academic Consultant (Gampaha Wikramaarachchi University), and former Acting Director-Quality Assurance Council (UGC), National Quality Assurance Consultant (HETC), Quality Assurance Consultant (SJP), and a Council member (UWU). She has been involved in formulating Manuals for Institutional Review, Programme Review, External Degrees, Subject Benchmark Statements and Sri Lanka Qualification Framework and co-authored Manual for Postgraduate Programme Review.

Perera, Marie is an Emeritus Professor of the CMB. She was a Senior Professor in Humanities Education and the Director of the NEREC, CMB. She has also held the positions of Dean of the Faculty of Education, Head of Department of Humanities Education and Director SDC of the CMB. Professor Perera has over forty research publications and several book chapters in internationally recognized publications. She has won several research grants and awards including Zonta woman of achievement award in the Education category in 2017.

Ranasinghe, Athula is a Senior Professor in Economics in CMB. He possesses B.A. (Econ) (CMB), PgDED (CMB), MEcon (Thammasat University, Thailand), and Ph.D. (Tinbergen Institute, University of Amsterdam). He was Dean of the Faculty of Arts, CMB and he is serving as Visiting Lecturer at University of Fiji, and Honorary Professor at Macquarie University, Sydney. His research interest is in economics of education/labor economics. He has published on economics of education, labor economics, development economics, law and economics, and industrial development in top journals published in Sri Lanka and overseas.

Tilakaratne, Asanga is an emeritus Professor of Buddhist Studies and founder HoD of Buddhist Studies at CMB, Sri Lanka. He was the former director of PGIPBS, KLN. He has published substantially on Buddhist studies in Sinhala and English. Recently (August 2020) his collected works have been published in eight volumes (03 in Sinhala and 05 in English) in Colombo. Currently, Professor Tilakaratne serves as the editor-in-chief of Encyclopedia of Buddhism published by the Government of Sri Lanka.

Uyangoda, Jayadewa with B.A., University of Peradeniya and Ph.D., University of Hawaii, is a Professor Emeritus in Political Science and Public Policy, University of Colombo. He was the Distinguished Chair of Democracy at the Center for the Study of Developing Societies, India (2016-2017). He has numerous local and international academic publications on Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, minority rights, conflict and peace processes, democratization and state reform in Sri Lanka. His recent publications which include those he has both edited and co-edited are Political Science: A Contemporary Introduction, Political Parties in Sri Lanka: Change and Continuity and Local Government and Local Democracy in Sri Lanka: Institutional and Social Dimensions. He has also been a member of the Council of Management of Social Scientists' Association, Council of the University of Jaffna (2018-2019), Governing Board and National Institute of Education (2018-2019). He was Chairman of Academic Affairs Board and National Institute of Education (2018-2019) as well.

Yapa, S.T.W.S began his career as an Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Business Administration, FMSC, SJP, and is now a Professor in the Department of Decision Sciences. He graduated from the KLN and earned his MBA from the PIM, SJP. He earned his Ph.D. from the Sheffield Hallam University in the UK. He served as the head of the Decision Sciences and Business Administration Departments. He is currently the Director of the SDC at the SJP.

Wickramasinghe, Vathsala is a Senior Professor in the Department of Management of Technology, MRT. Her Ph.D. is from the University of Manchester, the UK. Her research focuses on strategic human resource management and the human side of technology management. She has won both Most Outstanding Senior Researcher and Most Outstanding Young Researcher in Management and Law in CVCD Excellence Awards Scheme, in 2020 & 2008, respectively; President's Award for Scientific Publication-2010; National Research Council Merit Award for Scientific Publication- 2011 and 2012; and Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence-Outstanding Paper Award- 2013 and 2018. She has served as Editor of the Engineering Research Unit of the Faculty of Engineering in 2006 and 2007; Director of the Business Research Unit of the Faculty of Business in 2018; and Director Research of the MRT (2018-2020).

Editorial Board

Premakumara de Silva: PhD (Edinburgh), Chair, Senior Professor at the Department of Sociology, University of Colombo - Chair, Standing Committee on Humanities and Social Sciences.

Wimal Hewamanage: PhD (Wuhan), Professor at the Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Colombo - Coordinator of the history writing project, UGC Centenary Celebration of Humanities and Social Sciences in Sri Lankan Universities.

Asha Nimali Fernando: PhD (Erlangen - Nuremberg) Senior Lecturer at the Department of Philosophy and Psychology, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Coordinator of the conference, UGC Centenary Celebration of Humanities and Social Sciences in Sri Lankan Universities.

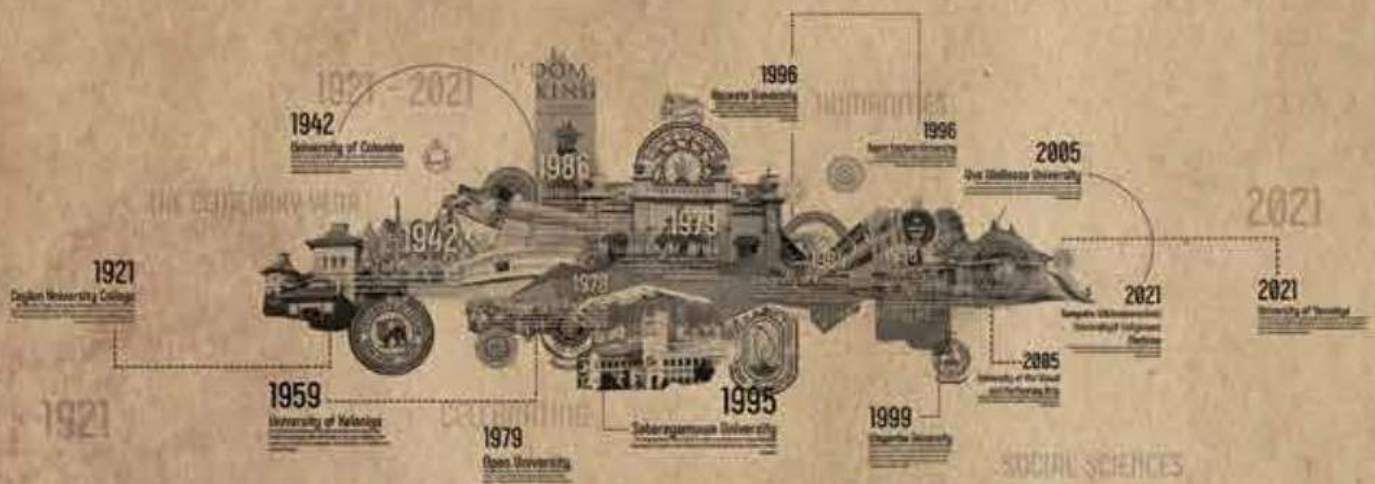
Lalith Ananda: PhD (JNU) Professor at the Department of English and Linguistics, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

Copy Editor

Lalith Ananda: PhD (JNU) Professor at the Department of English and Linguistics, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION IN SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITIES

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE



UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION
SRI LANKA

University Grants Commission, 20, Ward Place, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka.
www.hsshp@ugc.ac.lk
+94 11 2688045



Cover Design | Nalaka Wijewardhane

Printed at the Department of Government Printing