



FIRST INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE

On the Prospects for Integrated Development
in the North & East of Sri Lanka



10th-12th October
2025



University of Toronto, Scarborough Campus
in the Greater Toronto Area or Online

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

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CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

**1st International Research Conference
on
The Prospects for Integrated Development in the
North and East of Sri Lanka**

University of Toronto, Scarborough Campus

Toronto, Canada

10-12 October, 2025

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Integrated development strategies for the post-war recovery and the role of the diaspora - Special focus on North and East development together with Universities

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Executive Summary

The sustainable development of the region requires a strategic focus on **human capital development, digital transformation, and modern infrastructure**. These key pillars will collectively uplift the region's economy, improve quality of life, and position it as a model for balanced national growth.

A well-planned program for developing knowledge-based and skill-based education is essential. Universities equipped with centers such as the Center for Distance and Continuing Education (CDCE) and the Center for Open and Distance Learning (CODL) play a crucial role in empowering the community. Through these centers, individuals—especially those outside the free education system—can access affordable certificate, diploma, and external degree programs that directly support regional needs. These initiatives lay the groundwork for transforming the region into a **Vanni High-Tech City**, similar to how Stanford University fostered Silicon Valley. Additionally, university postgraduate programs can be directed toward solving real regional challenges through applied research and development.

A **digitalized management system** is another key enabler of progress. Digitalization will enhance administrative efficiency, transparency, and accessibility, allowing leaders to operate seamlessly from anywhere while reducing bureaucratic delays. It will also encourage proactive and data-driven governance. Embracing digital systems is the best path toward rapid, modern, and sustainable development—particularly vital in the post-war context.

The development of **backbone infrastructure** is equally critical. Priorities include transportation networks such as roads, railways, airports, helipads, and seaports, along with modern high-rise buildings for accommodation, research, and innovation. High-quality schools and hospitals must also be established to support human welfare and long-term regional stability.

The role of **diaspora professionals, philanthropists, and investors** is invaluable in this journey. Professors, business leaders, and experts living abroad are encouraged to contribute through direct engagement, financial assistance, and knowledge transfer. Visiting professionals can collaborate with local universities through CPD programs, workshops, and short courses, while donors can help build human capital and digital systems. As infrastructure matures, investors can be invited to advance industrial collaboration—particularly in the **SME sector**, which will drive economic growth.

Many **philanthropists** are warmly welcomed in contributing to large-scale infrastructure projects. Their early involvement will establish a solid foundation upon which future investors can build. This phased approach—starting with philanthropy and evolving into structured investment—ensures sustainable, inclusive, and impactful regional development.

1. Introduction (Resources and Sociology):

The Northern and Eastern regions of Sri Lanka are richly endowed with natural resources, including vast marine and fishery assets, significant wind and solar energy potential, fertile agricultural lands supported by ample water sources in few places, and unique products derived from Palmyrah trees. These areas also offer immense potential for tourism development.

Importantly, the human resources in the region are well-positioned to embrace advancements in digital and IT-based technologies. Despite the impact of past challenges on some individuals, the local population generally upholds strong values such as honesty, hard work, mostly respect for rules, social dignity, and spiritual faith. Additionally, the people possess remarkable cognitive abilities, including critical and deep thinking, the capacity to ask probing questions, and a tendency to express high expectations—even if sometimes through blame. These characteristics highlight the need for opportunities and structured guidance to fully harness their potential. However, a significant language barrier persists, as many youth and even some graduates struggle to communicate effectively and strategically in English. This remains a key obstacle to regional development and integration into broader economic opportunities.

2. Human capital development for this region together with Universities:

Developing properly planned human capital in this region is urgently needed. Both knowledge-based and skill-based education are essential to foster growth and innovation. The establishment of universities with specialized centers such as the **Center for Distance and Continuing Education (CDCE)** and the **Center for Open and Distance Learning (CODL)** plays a crucial role in this effort. These centers aim to transfer knowledge and skills to the community in alignment with regional development goals, helping people utilize available natural resources effectively while also taking advantage of global opportunities.

For example, individuals who could not enter the free education system at universities still have access to learning through these centers. They can pursue certificate, advanced certificate, diploma, higher diploma, or external degree programs. Although these are paid courses, the fees are minimal, and the programs are highly relevant to regional development. Such initiatives contribute significantly to empowering the human resources in the area.

This approach will gradually lead to the transformation of the region into a **Vanni High-Tech City**, much like how **Silicon Valley** was formed around Stanford University. For instance, the CDCE of the University of Vavuniya (UOV) can offer specific courses, as listed in Appendix 1, to help build local human capital. The basic courses can begin in Tamil medium, progressing to English in the advanced level courses, ensuring that young learners are both included and uplifted.

Furthermore, university postgraduate study centers, units, and faculties can be effectively utilized to solve regional problems through research and development programs. These efforts will open ample opportunities for in-depth analysis, leading to sustainable and innovative solutions to technical challenges. Through such systematic educational and research initiatives, the region can achieve long-term growth and self-reliance.

3. Digital Infrastructure development for institutional management, to speed up the regional development:

The management system needs to be digitalized. Digitalization will accelerate administrative processes, increase transparency, and build confidence in the administration. It will also allow higher-ranking officers to perform their duties from anywhere and at any time, reducing interruptions and improving productivity. Overall, this transformation will enhance both administrative efficiency and effectiveness, leading to a more responsive and service-oriented system. At present, the lack of a digitalized system has been identified as one of the key bottlenecks hindering rapid development. By adopting digital solutions, institutions will also be able to operate proactively—preparing in advance according to guidelines published on official websites—thereby minimizing the need for physical visits, travel, and waiting times at government offices.

In earlier times, humans controlled information technology. Today, highly skilled individuals control IT, and in turn, IT influences and organizes the activities of the rest of society. This evolution enables advanced human knowledge and systems thinking to benefit all people, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of daily operations. Therefore, digitalization is the most promising path toward rapid, modern, and sustainable development—particularly vital during the post-war development phase. Embracing this transformation will help create a better and brighter future for both the region and the nation with close connection with international/global systems.

4. Infrastructure development for the regional development:

Developing strong **backbone structures** is essential for the progress of the region. These foundational systems will support economic growth, social development, and technological advancement. Among the key priorities are the improvement of **transportation facilities**, including land transport such as roads and railways, as well as the establishment of **airports, helipads, and seaports**. Efficient transport networks are vital for enhancing connectivity, enabling trade, and facilitating the movement of people and goods within the region and beyond.

In addition, the construction of **high-rise buildings** should be strategically planned to accommodate future urban growth. These buildings can serve multiple purposes, including housing, business operations, and centers for **research and development**, particularly in emerging **high-tech and cultural cities**. Well-planned urban infrastructure will attract investment, promote innovation, and create new employment opportunities.

Furthermore, the region must prioritize the establishment of **high-quality educational institutions and hospitals**. Good schools will provide the foundation for human capital development, while advanced healthcare facilities will ensure the well-being of the community. Together, these developments will create a solid base for sustainable regional growth and a higher quality of life for all residents.

5. Roles of diaspora members

The good-hearted individuals who left the island and are now thriving abroad are warmly welcomed to contribute during this crucial period of regional and national development. This region, which once provided them with free education, now calls upon their support to

rebuild and advance the nation. Professors, leading professionals, and business experts are especially encouraged to take part in this noble mission to uplift our motherland.

The universities in the region are equipped with reasonably good guest houses and are surrounded by quality hotels, providing comfortable accommodation for visiting professionals. The **first preference** is for them to physically visit, engage with the local systems, and directly contribute to development activities. Such in-person involvement allows for meaningful integration with the community, creating a sense of fulfillment and purpose. Numerous **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)** programs, seminars, workshops, and short courses can be organized collaboratively with local university lecturers and industrialists to empower the regional population. Although patience and dedication are required to overcome systemic delays and challenges, many who have contributed in this way have found the experience deeply rewarding.

The **second preference** is to provide **financial support** to underprivileged individuals through well-defined systems aimed at building human capital. This investment in people will create a pool of capable and strategically minded human resources, which is essential for long-term and sustainable development.

The **third preference** involves **supporting the establishment of fully automated digital systems** to enhance institutional operations and global interconnectivity. This digital transformation will significantly improve efficiency and transparency across administrative and educational structures.

The **fourth preference** focuses on **developing large-scale infrastructure** to promote industrial collaboration under the supervision of university experts. Such efforts will empower local communities and strengthen the regional economy. In particular, the growth of the **Small and Medium Enterprise (SME)** sector will play a vital role in driving economic prosperity and stability in the region.

In overall, many philanthropists who wish to contribute to **large-scale capital development projects** are warmly welcomed. Their generous support can play a vital role in building the foundation for long-term regional progress. As the infrastructure gradually develops, it will create a stable and attractive environment for investors to participate in further development initiatives. This progressive approach—**beginning with philanthropic contributions and evolving toward structured investment**—will ensure sustainable and inclusive growth for the region.

Appendix 1: For example courses offered by the CDCE of the University of Vavuniya are:

- To empower the pre-school teachers, it is offering “Diploma in Early Childhood Education”. This is to enhance the pre-school teaching this where the future youth empowerment and human capital development starts with pre-school children itself in this region.
- For capacity building of community, it is offering “Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management”. This is really very interesting course empowering the

regional human capacity with many successful outcomes and highly demanding courses while contributing a lot for the regional developments. Participants has already shown scaling up their business during the course period itself, thus immediate outcome too.

- Enhancing the ICT skills is made by offering the “Certificate course in Digital Skills and OCT Applications”. This was targeted to the school leavers to attract in the ICT field and thus will create many more employment opportunity in this region while promoting to export our services to foreign country too.
- To make more active citizen, it is offering “Advanced Certificate in Sports Coaching and Physical Education”. This is also very much demanding course as currently a large shortage of people in this field of expert area while helping to engage the community with active operations.
- Media is a very powerful tool to develop the region. Therefore it is offering “Advanced Certificate in Media Literacy and Journalism”. Even though it is not that much famous course, but timely needed to produce genuine media personalities for this regional development.
- To enhance the English knowledge in this region, it is offering “Higher Diploma in English”. However, we need to start few more courses at lower levels too.

Envisioning Prospects for Integrated Development in the North and East of Sri Lanka: A Plea for Interdisciplinary Approach

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The unavoidable aura of the omnipresence of Information Technology encompassing almost every sphere of human activity from farming to fishing, education to employment, healthcare to biotechnology, culture to religious rituals, environment to geophysics, civil wars to border conflicts, governance to global affairs – and the list could be endless, but all this emphatically points toward the indispensability of the dynamic and synergetic “interconnectedness” of every strata of society at regional, provincial, national and even global levels.

Examining this challenging reality through the lens of an integrated sustainable developmental vision, it is important to remember that such a vision must be grounded on the starkly gloomy reality that presents itself in these regions of North and East bearing the indelible scars of a long drawn-out civil war. These regions are also largely populated by Tamil speaking Saivites, Christians and Moslems, and dotted also with a numerically sizeable Sinhala-Buddhist communities. The same one culture sharing many religions as well as many cultures sharing one religion! Therefore, any significantly fruitful research study in the midst of this complex social fabric with its staggering multiformity must be inescapably interdisciplinary in its methodology. Post-world-war II and post-colonial experience in many Asian nations as Japan, and the four little Asian dragons as Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan” have amply demonstrated that cultural ethos imbued by religious fervour can serve both as an impetus and an accelerating catalyst in development.

As for Sri Lanka, the Western model of development artificially inserted into its polity by successive Sinhala governments not only led to lop-sided development catapulting a prolonged civil war thereby changing the equation of “peace is another name for development into war is another name for development”. Some of the he internationally aided massive development projects in that island-nation have beckoned the necessity of a well-balanced multilateral approach to development. It has reconfirmed that mere polity cannot replace civil society. To bring about sustainable and beneficial outcomes for the people to whom these projects are primarily geared towards, all socio-developmental factors namely political, economic, educational, cultural, ecological, must work in dynamic harmony toward that goal. Unidirectional and unilateral investments, initiated by the state-aided agencies or other hired private sectors with massive capital have reportedly been caught in a web of practices that are either fundamentally corrupt or manifestly ineffective due to sheer lack of a rigorous multilateral developmental vision supported by a predetermined interdisciplinary impetus.

For instance, the massive Mahaweli Oya-diversion scheme originally referred to as Mahaweli Development Programme (MDP) initiated in the 1960s and accelerated in the late 1970s and 1980s and early 1980s with all forms of corrupt, intricate, hegemonic and blatantly discriminatory ethno-political manipulations that undergirded it spelt disastrous consequences for a large section of the Tamils and Moslems in the Eastern province from Vadamunai to Amparai, and in several

other other villages denying access to the ancestral lands of many Muslims and Tamils. Premeditated change in the demographical composition of the national ethnic populations was indiscriminately done under the guise of the new irrigation infrastructure or settlements that were forcibly brought in. An objective and dispassionate revisit to this project can reveal a cascade of man-made maleficence that prevented the poor farmers from earning a livelihood because they were from the numerical minority communities. Canada was among the chief contributors but withdrew its support having recognized in late 1980s that they were also part to an obvious act of injustice along with a few other western nations.

The dynamism of unstoppable social change is not a unilateral phenomenon. Consciously or otherwise, each segment of the social mosaic inevitably interacts with the other realms of social order. A country's educational system cannot afford to pay scant attention to the national economy, neither can the political system allow a numerical majoritarian religious group to dictate foreign policy. Speedy developmental efforts in the agricultural sector or fishing industry cannot go ahead without any consideration for the ecological and environmental damage that can be caused in the long term. Because these areas influence one another, they must be addressed together, not separately.

In the last quarter of the last century when United Nations and the World bank came heavily on the side of integrating culture and developing human resources as away of promoting development they disentangled quietly the western model of progress in non-Western developing nations. Basically, an interdisciplinary apparatus helps to build a team or a system whence expertise and experience from different fields—like economics, sociology, political science, environmental Cultural religious studies, public health, and engineering can collaboratively consult and cooperate to design programmes that can benefit the people and the land without causing adverse effect to neither of them. . Each discipline contributes its unique insights, methods, and tools to find solutions that are comprehensive, realistic, and effective.

An integrated approach means joining hands with as many academic disciplines geared toward humanization to study and thereby to solve the complex of social and economic problems in a coordinated way—because no single field can address them in splendid isolation.

Beginning from the middle of the 1970s, for over fifty years we are submerged in a plethora of various approaches that came with a promise of to the alleviating poverty through accelerated development. In their plans the political dimension of culture or religion were overlooked or bypassed. The entire focus was on naked economic growth and introducing accelerated programmes of development to promote market economy.

It took them time to realize that such a developmental gospel advocated by Max Weber from a sociological perspective and Karl Marx from socio-economic and political order disregarded or even condemned religio-cultural passions in the poor nations as a major obstacle to development in the so-called developing world or what was later came to be termed as third world. Caught up in the labyrinth of western sociology with its Orientalist bias as neatly pointed out by Edward Said in the last decade of the last century in his monumental work **Orientalism**, the developmental theories of the west dissociated itself from any involvement with the humanitarian discipline of culture or religion. Rather these were seen as antithetical to progress and growth in modern times.

Since their inception almost all universities in South Asian born in the shadows of colonialism in the post-colonial era were translating or transplanting western texts to vernacular in almost in all fields of knowledge with little or no recourse to critical creativity about their past legacies. Compartmentalization of academic areas as designed in the 18th century in the West are slavishly followed in the curricula of many South Asian academic institutions to this date. The time is ripe now to creatively enter into a methodological change that will integrate as many disciplines as possible to discern and identify the terrain of development and to sustain it with the valour of all disciplines that touch the human communities with all its ecological, social, cultural and religious bonding that was zealously safeguarded by our ancestors.

As once indicated by the Indian intellectual Felix Wilfred, remember, that Japan which achieved enviable development from the last half of the last century did not go through any form of French revolution, neither did it make a claim for a period renaissance or a thunderous time of enlightenment. But imbibing the spirit of their religio-cultural tradition and the rejuvenation of their corporate spirit of “old village home” that became the dynamic matrix of their successful development.

I therefore appeal to the University dons who are present here engage in creative dialogue with your peers, all senior dons and young scholars in every academic department irrespective of such labels as Arts Science, Medicine, Agriculture, Engineering, Commerce, Management, Economics, Fine Arts and Folk Lore, avoid divisive compartmentalization in research but harness your efforts your academic fervour your creativity and seek to engage the very people with whom, for whom, from whom and through whom you emerged to your present position and toil day and night in your departmental cubicles of research. Cross-fertilize your disciplines toward a new birth of creative discoveries and inventions in all spheres of knowledge and in every arena of academia. This I learned from my dear friend Prof. Alagaiah Thurairajah.

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PART 1

ECONOMY AND RECOVERY

A Study on Development Strategy Plan to attract the Tourism Sector in Eastern Province of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Tourism is a powerful engine for regional development, especially in post-conflict and underdeveloped areas like the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. With its pristine beaches, rich cultural heritage, and ecological diversity, the region holds immense potential. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited promotion, and post-conflict recovery issues hinder progress. This study aims to develop a strategic plan to attract and strengthen tourism in the Eastern Province, using qualitative insights from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with 36 key stakeholders including government officials, tourism professionals, local entrepreneurs, and community leaders. Through thematic analysis, six key priorities emerged: infrastructure development, destination branding, safety and governance, community engagement, skills development, and environmental sustainability. Direct quotations from participants reveal authentic stakeholder perceptions and underscore the need for a locally grounded, inclusive tourism strategy. The study proposes a multi-dimensional framework that aligns regional assets with stakeholder interests, offering practical insights for sustainable tourism development in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Development, Strategy Plan, Attract, Tourism Sector

Gender Empowerment and Social Inclusion: Pathways to Integral Development in the North and East Provinces of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the current realities of gender empowerment and social inclusion in Sri Lanka's Northern and Eastern provinces, 16 years after the end of the civil war. Drawing on secondary data from government statistics, UN and NGO reports, and recent empirical studies, the paper highlights persistent inequalities in women's labour force participation, education, political representation, and access to justice. For instance, women's labour participation in Sri Lanka stands at 34.5% compared to 73% for men (Department of Census and Statistics, 2023), with the Northern Province recording even lower rates. Gender-based violence remains high, with one in four women reporting intimate partner violence (UNFPA, 2022). Female-headed households, which account for approximately 25% of households in the North, face heightened vulnerabilities, including poverty, food insecurity, and landlessness (World Bank, 2021). Against this backdrop, the paper argues that integral development in the region cannot be achieved without embedding gender-sensitive policies and inclusive governance. The study proposes a framework of interventions -legal, economic, political, and psychosocial grounded in both empirical evidence and conceptual analysis, to transform gender empowerment and social inclusion into key drivers of sustainable development in the North and East.

Keywords: Gender Empowerment, Social Inclusion, Integral Development, North and East Sri Lanka, Post-War Reconstruction

Water Resource Development and Management for Jaffna Peninsula, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The Jaffna Peninsula is facing a critical water crisis caused by climate variability, over-extraction of groundwater, and severe salinity intrusion. With an annual rainfall of around 1,200 millimeters that is highly unevenly distributed, the region depends heavily on groundwater, which is rapidly depleting and deteriorating in quality. Approximately 40 percent of Jaffna's aquifers have already been contaminated by seawater intrusion, while inefficient agricultural practices, particularly flood irrigation, result in nearly 80 percent water wastage. Climate change has further intensified the situation through prolonged droughts and unpredictable rainfall patterns, placing immense pressure on the 600,000 residents of the peninsula, more than half of whom rely on agriculture and fisheries for their livelihoods. This proposal outlines a three-year Integrated Water Resource Development and Management Plan (2026–2028) aimed at ensuring sustainable, climate-resilient, and equitable access to water resources. The plan seeks to increase freshwater availability by 30 percent through rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge, reduce salinity levels in aquifers by 50 percent through controlled extraction and barrier systems, and improve water-use efficiency by promoting micro-irrigation and public awareness to reduce agricultural water consumption by 40 percent. A central component of the initiative is the establishment of an independent Water Management Centre, which will coordinate data-driven water governance, operate monitoring stations, and publish regular reports on water quality and availability. The Centre will also collaborate with national and international research institutions and provide scholarships to young researchers, fostering innovation and sustainable management of Jaffna's vital water resources.

Keywords: Climate Resilience, Groundwater Depletion, Salinity Intrusion, Sustainable Agriculture, Water Resource Management

Development of Fisheries and Aquafarming Practices in Eastern Province During the Post-War period in Sri Lanka: Focusing on the Way Forward

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Abstract

Sri Lanka is endowed with a rich base of aquatic resources, including a 21,000 sq. km territorial sea, an exclusive economic zone of 517,000 sq. km, and a narrow continental shelf extending about 300 sq. km. The fisheries sector, particularly in the North and East, has long been a major source of livelihood. Communities residing along the coastal areas of these regions were severely affected by three decades of war. In the post-war period, the fisheries sector in the Eastern Province has seen a significant push toward revitalization and development, especially among small-scale and deep-sea fishers. Shrimp farming, offshore aquaculture, and culture-based fisheries in freshwater lakes, perennial tanks, and seasonal tanks have been re-established. However, despite the abundance of valuable aquatic resources such as pearl oysters, green mussels, crabs, and seaweeds along the eastern coast, farming of these commercially important species has not been developed for value addition in the post-war era. As a result, coastal communities continue to live below the poverty line, with persistent unemployment and malnutrition. Efforts have been made to promote fisheries development, particularly aquaculture of various aquatic species, during the post-war period. Nevertheless, the management of hatcheries and farms, as well as the sustainability of these practices, has been questioned due to numerous environmental and social challenges. This study examines the post-conflict opportunities and challenges in the region. It provides a policy-based strategic review focusing on infrastructure development, including coastal and artisanal fisheries, harbors, and processing plants, along with sustainable aquaculture practices and the constraints hindering aquafarming development in the Eastern Province.

Keywords: Aquafarming, Fishery, Post war, Poverty, Resources,

An Abstract of the research paper on the Challenges in the post war economic recovery of the people in the North and the East in Lanka

by M.C.M.Iqbal and Rajani Iqbal
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Sixteen years have passed after the war in Sri Lanka was concluded, yet the limited efforts of successive Governments and concerned organisations among the Tamils living overseas to deal with the effects of the war on the lives of the victims of the war in the Northern and Eastern Provinces have not borne any remarkable benefits to uplift their living conditions. No efforts had been made to renovate damaged irrigation canals or the tanks in that part of the country. In short, almost all the economic activities of the people in the said areas suffered various setbacks.

The efforts made by a few charitable organisations and philanthropists to help them, have not brought any lasting benefits. On the contrary their efforts have fostered a dependency syndrome among the victims who continue to expect assistance from the Tamils living overseas for most of their requirements. It is our opinion that there is no better way to bring about post war economic recovery in Sri Lanka as the Rochdale Pioneers did in the UK after the Second World War.

Before the conflict escalated most of the people of these regions who were involved in agricultural and other self-employment activities had formed co-operative societies, especially agricultural producers co-operative societies and thrift and credit co-operative societies which provided a stable and a substantial benefit to meets their marketing and financial needs. One of the disastrous effects of the war was the disruption of the co-operative societies in the North and East which had got disrupted due to repeated displacement of the population.

It is on record that among the co-operatives of pre-war days the Thrift and Credit Co-operative Societies (TCCS) had played a decisive role in meeting the credit needs of rural communities which was played a vital role in the economic development of the region. When the war ended many of the displaced people went back to their respective villages or districts and re-activated most of these co-operatives spontaneously. But the two Co-operative training institutes in the region had ceased to exist following the effects of the war. Hence the re-activated co-ops failed to perform as efficiently as they had done before the war. According to a report of the then Governor of the Northern Province, there are nearly 1300 thrift and credit co-operative societies among the victims of the war.

Keywords: Thrift, Co-operative Societies, North and East, Self-Employment

Evaluating the use of Manufactured Sand (M-Sand) as a Sustainable Alternative to River Sand in Concrete Infrastructure Development in Northern Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The escalating demand for river sand in Northern Sri Lanka has led to severe environmental and socio-economic issues due to illegal sand mining. This study investigates Manufactured Sand (M-Sand) as a sustainable alternative to river sand in concrete production. The research evaluates the mechanical, physical, and chemical properties of M-Sand, assessing its performance in concrete mixes with varying proportions (25%, 50%, 75%, and 100%). Results show that M-Sand concrete exhibits comparable or higher compressive strength (up to 26.5 MPa) compared to river sand concrete (24.53 MPa), along with improved durability due to lower water absorption. The study also highlights the economic advantages of using M-Sand, with cost savings of up to 9.4% for C20 grade concrete. While M-Sand offers an eco-friendly alternative, challenges like transportation costs and energy consumption during production remain. Further research is recommended on its long-term performance and socio-economic impact.

Keywords: Manufactured Sand, Concrete, River Sand, Compressive Strength, Durability, Economic Feasibility, Environmental Impact, Northern Sri Lanka.

Post-War Deforestation and Its Influence on Microclimate Change in Northern Sri Lanka: A Case Study of Mullaitivu and Vadamarachchi East

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of post-war deforestation on microclimate changes in Northern Sri Lanka, focusing on Mullaitivu and Vadamarachchi East. The research integrates satellite imagery, climate data, soil sampling, and community surveys to quantify forest cover loss and its relationship with temperature rise, rainfall variability, and soil degradation. Findings show that since 1980, Mullaitivu has lost 65% of its forest cover, and Vadamarachchi East has lost 40%. This deforestation correlates with a 1.5-2°C rise in temperature, a 10-15% increase in rainfall variability, and a 20-25% reduction in soil organic matter. These results highlight the need for reforestation, climate adaptation, and sustainable land management to mitigate these effects. The study underscores the critical role of forests in maintaining local climates and supporting agriculture, particularly in post-conflict recovery regions.

Keywords: Climate Adaptation, Deforestation, Microclimate Change, Post-Conflict Recovery, Soil Degradation

Determinants of International Migration Aspirations among Young Women in Post-war Jaffna District

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Abstract

In the aftermath of Sri Lanka's civil war (1983–2009), young women in the Northern Province, particularly in the Jaffna District, face persistent challenges in accessing quality education, securing meaningful employment, and achieving long-term socio-economic security. These constraints have fueled aspirations for international migration as a pathway to improved opportunities and livelihoods. Drawing on Lee's (1966) 'A Theory of Migration,' which conceptualizes migration as a decision shaped by push and pull factors, this study investigates the socio-economic, political, and cultural determinants driving migration aspirations among young women in Jaffna. Using a purposive sampling method, data were collected from 240 young women aged 18–30 through structured interviews and questionnaires. Thematic analysis and descriptive statistics revealed that 30% of respondents aspired to migrate for higher education, 42% for employment opportunities, and 17% for marriage with expectations of a wealthier lifestyle abroad. Key determinants include economic insecurity, limited local job opportunities, inadequate access to higher education, socio-political instability, and family expectations. The study underscores the need for policy interventions to enhance local employment, improve educational access, and foster upward social mobility to reduce migration pressures. Such measures would empower young women and contribute to sustainable development in post-war Northern Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Jaffna District, Migration Aspirations, Post-war Sri Lanka, Socio-Economic Determinants, Young Women

Microcredit Lending Challenges Among Women Entrepreneurs in Jaffna District: A Case Study Analysis of Discriminatory Banking Practices.

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Abstract

This study explores the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in accessing and utilizing microcredit in Sri Lanka's post-war Jaffna District, highlighting the intersection of gender, culture, and conflict recovery - an under-researched context within the Sri Lankan microfinance literature. Although microcredit is widely recognized for fostering women's economic empowerment, structural and procedural barriers continue to impede business development. Using 15 case studies across diverse sectors, the research highlights the adverse effects of discriminatory banking practices, including high interest rates, complex application procedures, collateral requirements, short repayment periods, and limited financial literacy support. Findings reveal that women entrepreneurs often experience financial strain, lack of institutional guidance, and limited access to concessional loan schemes, resulting in over-indebtedness and reduced business sustainability. The study emphasizes the urgent need for reforms in microfinance delivery, including simpler procedures, concessional interest rates, collateral-free lending, financial literacy programs, and flexible repayment structures. Such interventions would enhance financial inclusion, strengthen women-led businesses, and contribute to sustainable economic development in post-conflict Northern Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Microcredit, Women Entrepreneurs, Banking Discrimination, Financial Inclusion, Jaffna District

Strengthening SMEs and Young Entrepreneurs in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and young entrepreneurs are the drivers of economic growth, innovation, and employment creation in developing regions. In the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka, entrepreneurs demonstrate immense potential with their unique products and services, enriched by the region's cultural heritage and talented human capital. However, their growth is hindered by post-conflict recovery challenges, limited market access, inadequate awareness of international certifications, minimal global exposure, and insufficient protection of their innovations. Consequently, many SMEs remain underrepresented in national and international markets. By considering these challenges, the proposed initiative combines a Regional Trade Fair with a Capacity-Building workshop aimed at strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of SMEs. The trade fair will provide a dedicated platform for entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services, connect with local chambers of commerce, diaspora professionals, and potential investors, and strengthen market linkages. Complementing this, structured training and mentorship programs will enhance the ability of the entrepreneurs to protect and scale their businesses.

Keywords: Capacity Building, Entrepreneurship Development, Market Access, Post-Conflict Recovery, Small and Medium Enterprises,

Ensuring Political Participation to Empower Persons with Disabilities in North and East of Sri Lanka: The Tamil Nadu Model

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Abstract

The Sri Lankan civil war left a devastating legacy, with thousands of Tamil civilians losing their lives and many others suffering from permanent disabilities, especially in the Northern and Eastern provinces. Years of insecurity, malnutrition, and displacement severely affected pregnant women, leading to an increase in children born with physical and intellectual disabilities. According to a UN report, the conflict significantly escalated disability rates in war-affected regions. However, rehabilitation and social reintegration of these individuals have received limited attention in post-war Sri Lanka. While many countries have shifted from a charity-based approach to a rights-based model - emphasizing equality, participation, and inclusion - Sri Lanka's policies remain largely outdated. This study explores the urgent need for political empowerment of persons with disabilities as a pathway to meaningful rehabilitation and inclusion. Drawing from global examples and secondary data sources, the research highlights the Tamil Nadu model, which legislatively ensures the political participation of persons with disabilities in local government elections. This approach moves beyond welfare dependency, empowering individuals to take leadership roles in addressing their own needs in education, employment, and social development. By enabling persons with disabilities to actively participate in governance, this model promotes a more inclusive and equitable society. The study concludes that adopting a similar framework in Sri Lanka could transform post-war rehabilitation efforts, strengthen democratic representation, and redefine persons with disabilities as empowered citizens contributing to national development rather than being perceived as dependents.

Key words: Persons with disabilities, Civil war, Political participation, Rehabilitation, Tamil Nadu model

The Role of Palmyra in the Economic Development of Northern Region of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The palmyra tree, a symbolic emblem of Sri Lanka's Northern Province, plays an integral role in the region's economy, culture, and daily livelihoods, often referred to as the "tree of life" (Katpakkatharu). Producing nearly 800 edible and non-edible products, it holds immense untapped potential for regional economic development. However, its growth has been constrained by traditional cultivation methods and its slow maturation period of 15 to 30 years. As one of the most important agro-based industries in the Northern Province, palmyra cultivation and processing present significant opportunities for value addition and export diversification. Recent data indicate that export income from palmyra-based products in early 2025 tripled compared to the same period in 2024, signalling renewed economic prospects. A single tree can yield approximately Rs.120,000 annually, and optimal utilization across the region could generate nearly Rs.900 million per year. With enhanced processing, branding, and export strategies, the industry's potential revenue could reach up to USD 24 billion annually. Beyond economic gains, this expansion could generate substantial direct and indirect employment, reduce poverty, and promote women's empowerment, as women play a key role in traditional palmyra-based industries. To unlock this potential, transitioning from traditional practices to modern, technology-driven cultivation and processing techniques is crucial. Integrating innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable management can transform the palmyra sector into a cornerstone of inclusive and resilient regional development in post-conflict Northern Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Economic Development, Palmyra Industry, Sustainable Development, Value Addition, Women Empowerment

Jaffna Metro Rail

Gnana Sankaralingam

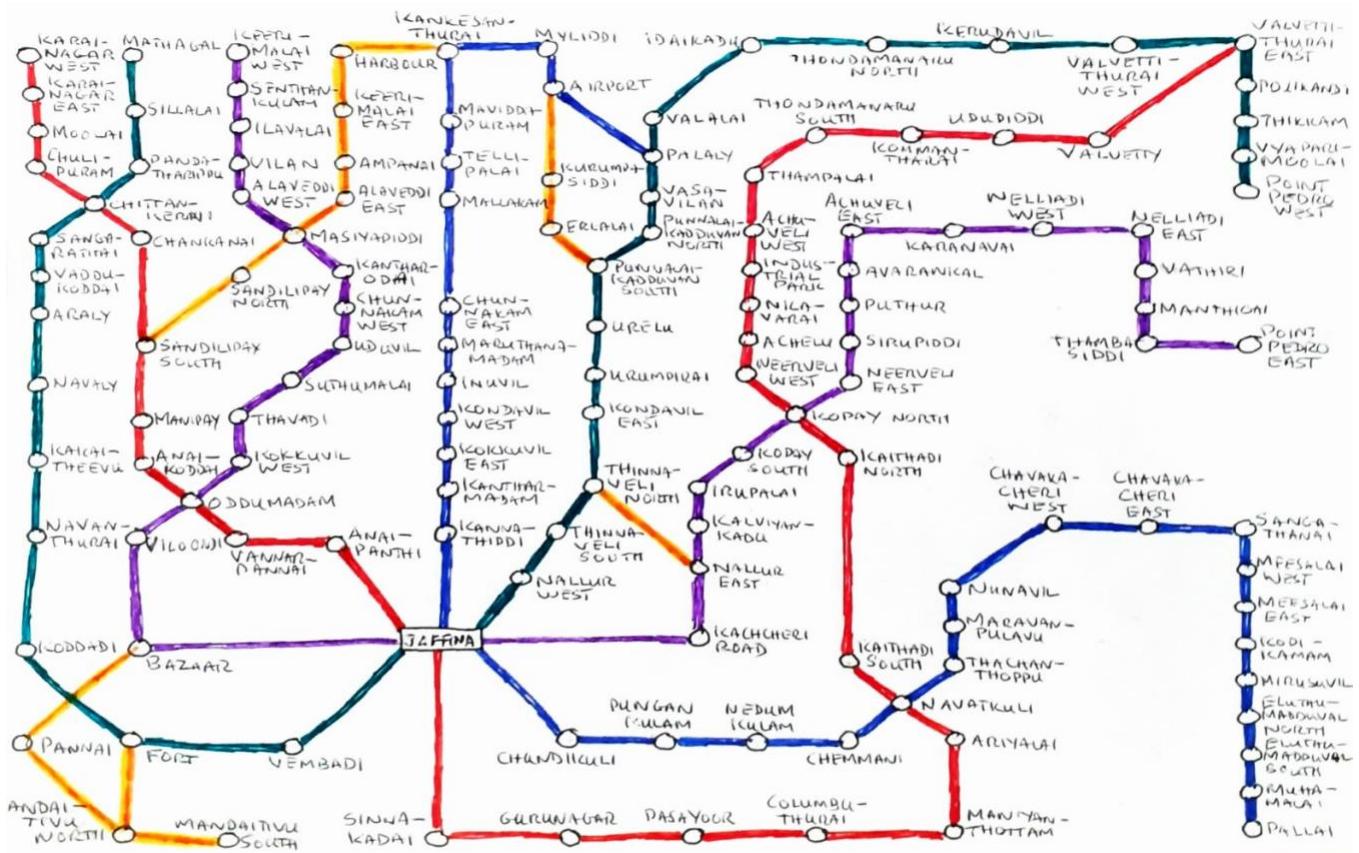
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Abstract

Jaffna Peninsula is the second most densely populated region in Sri Lanka next to Colombo district. It has also within its limited territory airport, harbour, university with almost all the faculties, teaching hospitals, government institutions and industrial zones similar to Colombo district. Thus, it is prudent and pragmatic to propose to have railway system to cover important parts of the peninsula, which will make travelling easy for people living there. Jaffna peninsula is also a built-up area, though less compact than Colombo district, which could pose problems due to opposition by residents when their property is encroached by the tracing of the lines. Due to concentration of middle-class families in the peninsula, it would be widely patronised, though could be expensive than bus journeys.

In this paper we discuss the possibility of the construction of a metro rail to the Jaffna Peninsula.

Keywords: Jaffna Peninsula, Metro rail, middle-class



A Critical Review and Novel Hybrid Housing Model for Post-War Recovery in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study investigates the potential for hybrid housing models that integrate recycled materials and indigenous resources in post-war Sri Lanka to address housing shortages and promote sustainable development. Following a protracted civil conflict, over 300,000 people were displaced, with many still struggling to secure permanent housing. Traditional methods, while culturally relevant, lack durability, while modern techniques often fail to consider cultural and environmental factors. A descriptive and analytical research design was used to review existing housing projects and develop prototype models incorporating materials like compressed earth blocks, bamboo, and recycled plastics. Feasibility simulations assessed cost-effectiveness, environmental impact, and social acceptance. Findings indicate that hybrid housing models can reduce construction costs by 25%, lower carbon emissions by 40%, and improve community engagement and cultural relevance. The study concludes that hybrid housing offers a viable, sustainable solution for post-war resettlement, contributing to long-term socio-economic resilience in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Hybrid Housing, Post-War Resettlement, Recycled Materials, Socio-Economic Resilience, Sustainable Development,

Cross Boarder Venturing via Diaspora Entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka: The Story of Reecha Integrated Agro Tourism Venture in Northern Province, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study advances post-conflict development in northern Sri Lanka by demonstrating how diaspora entrepreneurs like Baskaran Kandiah leverage their dual embeddedness in host and home countries to foster reconciliation and sustainable development. It uniquely contributes by showing how their transnational habitus transforms emotional capital into ventures that drive both economic revitalization and symbolic nation-building. Using interviews, public materials, and MAXQDA analysis, it explores how diaspora entrepreneurs like Baskaran Kandiah mobilize economic, cultural, and symbolic capital to drive post-war recovery. Findings reveal Reecha's role in revitalizing barren lands, creating jobs, preserving Tamil identity, and promoting community empowerment. The study highlights diaspora entrepreneurship's transformative potential, navigating post-war challenges to foster sustainable socio-economic and symbolic change.

Keywords: Community Empowerment, Diaspora Entrepreneurship, North and Eastern Provinces, Post-War Recovery, Symbolic Capital, Transnational Habitus

Eastern Development: Dairy and Coastal Resources of Batticaloa

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Abstract

The Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, accounting for 15% of the country's land area and 20% of its coastline, possesses significant yet underutilized development potential, particularly in the Batticaloa District. Despite its abundant natural and marine resources, progress has been limited since the end of the civil war in 2009 due to inadequate planning, poor financial access, and lack of institutional coordination. This study focuses on two key sectors - fisheries and dairy - as major contributors to the region's economic revitalization. Batticaloa's 100 km coastline, with its lagoons in Vakarai, Valaichenai, and Batticaloa, presents vast opportunities for aquaculture, deep-sea fishing, and tourism development. The district's wetlands and 1,000 hectares of mangroves further enhance its potential for a blue carbon economy, estimated at USD 5 million annually. However, much of this potential remains untapped, with most fishing still confined to coastal areas. In the dairy sector, the region's extensive grazing lands, particularly Mylathamadu Mathavanai, house around 500,000 cattle, offering the potential to produce up to 100,000 liters of milk per day with proper investment in water and pasture management. This could significantly reduce Sri Lanka's dependency on dairy imports, which exceed USD 800 million annually. The study emphasizes the need for community-centered development, township expansion, and strategic partnerships involving the Tamil diaspora, donor agencies, and local institutions. A systematic, sustainable approach integrating resource management, infrastructure, and entrepreneurship could transform Batticaloa into a dynamic hub for inclusive economic growth and long-term regional resilience.

Keywords: Blue Economy, Dairy Industry, Fisheries Sector, Regional Development, Sustainable Growth

Determinants of Entrepreneurial Success of Women-Headed Households (WHHs) in Northern Sri Lanka: Evidence from Kilinochchi District

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Abstract

Kilinochchi district is in the Northern part of Sri Lanka, which was one of the most affected areas during the Sri Lanka Civil war. Of the total population of Kilinochchi, 5.95% of families are headed by women, due to several reasons such as divorce, violence, separate, loss of a husband by war or natural conditions, loss of an elderly male member of the family, or disability resulting from war or natural conditions. Therefore, most of the women in this area have become vulnerable and struggled for their livelihood. Hence, they have started entrepreneurial activities. This research aims to study the influence of family background, personality factors and institutional support on the entrepreneurial success of WHH entrepreneurs in Kilinochchi District. In this study, data were collected from 160 respondents using stratified random sampling through the structured questionnaire. Multiple Regression Analysis was done, and it was found that the factors considered have a 63.6% impact on entrepreneurial success. Through the findings, WHH entrepreneurs can understand which factors most influence their success, and which factors need to be improved, policy makers can design poverty reduction, livelihood improvement and women empowerment programs in post-conflict areas, financial institutions can understand the financial needs and challenges of WHHs and develop suitable loan schemes, credit facilities and financial literacy programs and, educational and training institutions can design capacity-building programs based on identified personal and skill gaps.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Success, Women Entrepreneurs, Women Headed Households (WHHs), Northern Province, Sri Lanka

Post Crisis Recovery of Arugam Bay Tourism in Sri Lanka: Time Series Comparison during the period from 2018 to 2025

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Abstract

This study is to examine recovery path of Arugam Bay tourism in Sri Lanka after the catastrophes such as Easter attacks in 2019, Covid pandemic, and economic crisis in 2022 during 2018 - 2025. By means of datasets from Central Bank, SLDA, and Google Trends, this study employs seasonality decomposition and interrupted time series methods for analyzing arrivals, earnings, and source markets. Findings show sharp decreases during 2019 to 2021, followed by irregular recovery, with European tourists remaining significant while South Asian markets add importance. Tourism reveals steady recovery by 2025. Policy recommendations underscore diversification, digital marketing, infrastructure improvement to strengthen resilience and long term competitiveness.

Key words: Arugam Bay Tourism, Post-Crisis Recovery, Time-Series Analysis, Tourist Arrivals, Destination Resilience

Impact of Women's Unpaid Care Work on their Economic Earnings in Northern Sri Lanka

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Abstract

In Sri Lanka, the female labor force participation rate is relatively lower than that of males, and the difference in monthly wages is also high. Further, females participate in national accounts activities at a lower rate than males due to the underrepresentation of unpaid care work in these activities. Therefore, the study focuses on how unpaid care work impacts women's earnings and investigates the key determinants of women's unpaid care work in Northern Sri Lanka. A 382-sample was selected by using a multi-stage sampling technique. Regression results show a negative relationship between unpaid care work and women's economic earnings, similar to family income and women's unpaid care work. One-way ANOVA output reveals that educational qualification and occupational status are significantly associated with unpaid care work, and the age of women has no such relationship with unpaid care work. Interviews bring various factors behind the unpaid care work, such as the husband's migration for work, whether abroad or locally, accessibility of private tutorial education for children, and the infrastructure facilities in the residential area. The study recommends reducing the unpaid care burden to encourage women's participation in economic activities to improve.

Keywords: Economic Earnings, Educational Qualification, Family income, Occupational Status, Unpaid Care Work,

Demographic Issues Faced by Tamils in Sri Lanka: A Multifaceted Challenge

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Abstract

The Sri Lankan Tamil community faces a multifaceted demographic crisis stemming from historical injustices and a protracted civil war. This paper analyzes how discriminatory post-independence policies, including the 1948 Ceylon Citizenship Act and the 1956 Sinhala Only Act, systematically marginalized the community. It quantifies the human and demographic costs of the civil war, highlighting mass casualties, widespread disappearances, and a substantial exodus of over 800,000 Tamils into the global diaspora. The research also examines ongoing post-war challenges, such as land appropriation and persistent economic disparities in Tamil-majority regions, which continue to hinder recovery and genuine reconciliation.

Keywords: Demographic Crisis, Sri Lankan Tamils, Civil War Impact, Discriminatory Policies, Post-War Recovery

How Can Pay-As-You-Go Solar Improve Sri Lanka's Energy Crisis? With Special Reference to the North and East of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

In the ever-changing world, political leaders, companies, and citizens have relentlessly advocated for clean energy solutions. We have seen those sentiments, especially in the Western World. We have seen people make global headlines for the sake of clean energy adoption. Even as a high school student, I have seen it in my own school. Despite this, the shift towards clean energy dependency is not relevant only to developed nations, but also in the developing world. Clean energy solutions can turn struggling nations into successful ones — only if they are implemented correctly. For example, Sri Lanka, a nation marked by economic instability leading to its energy crisis, can greatly benefit from the widespread use of clean energy. It isn't thermal. It isn't biomass. It isn't hydropower. Solar is Sri Lanka's answer. More specifically, Pay-As-You-Go Solar Models. The arid zones of the North and Easter of Sri Lanka are a portent arena for accelerated agro-production if solar-powered irrigation systems can be methodically introduced and implemented. This research provides an ambitious but practical framework for areas where solar powered technology for agro-production can be implemented with tested affordability for and low-income families that can produce paddy for their own consumption as well as for marketing for substantial income.

Keywords: Clean energy; energy crises; solar energy; Pay-As-You-Go; solar-powered Irrigation

Catalyzing Inclusive Economic Recovery in Post-War Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka through Employment, Entrepreneurship, and SME Development

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Abstract

The prolonged civil conflict and subsequent COVID-19 pandemic in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka have left persistent economic scars, including high unemployment, fragile livelihoods, and a weak small and medium enterprise (SME) sector. This paper explores pathways to inclusive post-war recovery through employment generation, entrepreneurship promotion, and SME resilience. Guided by the theoretical lenses of structural transformation, inclusive growth, and transnational development, the study employs a mixed-methods approach combining household surveys, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions, complemented by secondary data from the Department of Census and Statistics, the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, and international agencies. Results indicate that youth and women face disproportionately high unemployment and underemployment, while SMEs in the North and East exhibit low survival rates, limited access to finance, and weak digital adoption. Regression analyses reveal that education, digital skills, access to credit, and diaspora mentorship significantly improve both employment outcomes and SME performance. However, diaspora remittances - though substantial - are largely consumed rather than invested, highlighting the need for structured engagement mechanisms. The study emphasizes actionable insights rather than immediate large-scale impacts. It recommends piloting blended finance schemes, diaspora–entrepreneur mentorship platforms, and women- and youth-focused credit and training programs to foster resilience. The findings contribute evidence-based strategies for policymakers, donors, and diaspora networks seeking to catalyze inclusive, locally anchored economic recovery in post-war Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Post-conflict Recovery, SMEs, Diaspora Engagement, Inclusive Growth

Socio-Economic Status of Fishing Communities in Kilinochchi District: A Community-Based Cross-Sectional Study

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Abstract

Fishing communities are central to Sri Lanka's economy and food security, yet they often face socio-economic vulnerabilities. The Kilinochchi District, home to a significant fishing population, has received limited research attention regarding livelihoods and well-being. This study assessed the socio-economic status of fishing communities in Kilinochchi by analyzing demographic characteristics, income sources, and livelihood challenges. A community-based cross-sectional study was conducted among 424 fishing households using structured questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including cross-tabulation, chi-square tests, and regression analysis, were applied. Results showed a mean age of 45.14 years (SD = 12.48), with 93.6% male participants. Fishing was the primary occupation for 97.9% of households, with a mean monthly income (Rs. 26,242.92) slightly below average expenditure (Rs. 26,359.67), indicating financial strain. Women played notable roles in fishing-related activities, though economic instability, debt burdens, and seasonal income variations persisted. Regression analysis revealed that fishing experience positively influenced income, while boat ownership and women's involvement were negatively associated. Environmental and regulatory challenges further constrained livelihoods. The findings underscore the need for integrated policy interventions to enhance financial security, infrastructure, and sustainable resource use. Strengthening government support and promoting livelihood diversification can significantly contribute to the integrated development of Northern Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Livelihoods, Rural Development, Socio-economic Status, Sustainable Fisheries

Keeping Youth in Sri Lanka's North and East: Migration Challenges and Retention Strategies

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Abstract

Youth migration from Sri Lanka's Northern and Eastern provinces continues to pose a significant socio-economic challenge in the post-conflict era, exacerbating regional disparities and labor shortages. Despite extensive reconstruction efforts since the end of the civil war in 2009, these regions still face higher unemployment, underdeveloped infrastructure, and limited private sector opportunities compared to the rest of the country. This study investigates the economic, educational, and psychosocial factors influencing youth migration intentions, focusing on personal aspirations, regional challenges, and the effectiveness of retention strategies. Primary data were collected from 1,085 respondents across eight districts using snowball sampling, analyzed through correlation and multiple regression models. Findings reveal that personal ambitions and perceived regional constraints strongly predict migration intentions, while existing retention initiatives have minimal impact. Social networks, including family and peer migration histories, further reinforce migration tendencies. Conversely, participation in community-based entrepreneurship and exposure to localized development programs correlate with reduced migration aspirations. The study underscores the need for policy interventions that expand local employment opportunities, align vocational and higher education with market demands, improve governance and service delivery, and foster community-driven entrepreneurial ecosystems. By addressing both economic and psychosocial dimensions, these strategies can enhance youth retention, mitigate brain drain, and promote inclusive and sustainable development in Sri Lanka's historically marginalized Northern and Eastern provinces.

Keywords: Youth migration, Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka, Post-conflict development, Retention strategies

Political Development of the North and East Sri Lanka: A Critical Study of Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

The North-East is a traditional homeland of the Eelam Tamils. The political fabric that supports language, culture, and economy has been built as a distinct entity separate from Southern Sri Lanka for many centuries. Non-violent struggles and armed struggle have been important in identifying such uniqueness in Eelam Tamil politics. The Tamil national consciousness that must withstand its extension has been facing challenges since 2009. The North and East politics is in a position to face challenges such as the fake left-wing politics of Southern Sri Lanka, the intelligence infiltration of Southern Sri Lanka, the aggressions to destroy the Tamil nation, the distortions that have arisen in the politics of the Tamil National Party, and the interests of regional and international powers. It is the responsibility of the Eelam Tamils to overcome such obstacles and protect their national unity and economic and social existence. The aim of the study is to find strategies to be implemented in the field where Eelam Tamils live and in the diaspora. The study is designed by focusing on direct observation and interviews as primary data and literature published on Eelam Tamil politics and experiences of other countries as secondary data. The study is conducted using a philosophical structured positivism and post-positivist approach and a mixed-methods research types.

Keywords: Left-wing Politics, Nationalism, New Nationalism, Political Economy, Political Party

Challenges to Recovery: Experiences of Conflict-Affected Communities in Jaffna District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Sri Lanka's thirty-year civil war displaced over a million people from Northern Sri Lanka, with more than a hundred thousand fleeing mostly to India. Since the war's end in 2009, many Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have returned, or resettled with government aid, yet some still await resettlement 16 years later. While a few overseas refugees have returned, most remain in India, living in welfare camps or rented housing and facing persistent socioeconomic hardships. This prolonged uncertainty has severely affected both refugees and IDPs, undermining their psychosocial and economic well-being. Even those returned or resettled continue to struggle with durable recovery amidst enduring challenges. This paper examines these challenges among IDPs, refugee returnees, and recently resettled persons in Jaffna district, based on fieldwork conducted between 2020 and 2024. Methods included a survey of 220 IDPs in welfare camps, focus group discussions with officials, and 26 in-depth interviews with current and former IDPs and refugee returnees. Findings highlight delays in resettlement due to military occupation of private land, limited government support, and bureaucratic hurdles as key challenges to recovery. War legacies—destroyed infrastructure, disrupted education, indebtedness and widespread unemployment, especially among youth—further impede recovery. Additionally, the abrupt opening of war-affected areas has fuelled social issues such as alcohol and drug abuse, which were not seen in the Northern province before the conflict in the 1980s.

Keywords: Internally Displaced Persons, Northern Sri Lanka, Post-Conflict Recovery, Refugee Returnees, Socioeconomic Challenges

Digital Financial Literacy and Financial Behavior: Evidence from Women Entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Women entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in any economy by creating jobs and innovation, contributing to economic growth. The rise of fintech and digitalization has increased individuals' vulnerability to enhance resilience in the economy by promoting sustainable practices and tapping into underutilized resources. While more than half of the population are women in Sri Lanka, and examining their digital financial literacy is a key area of research. This study focuses on examining digital financial literacy and its effect on the financial behavior of rural women in the Easter province of Sri Lanka. Adopting a quantitative research design, a sample of 384 respondents was selected using non-probability convenience sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaires. Findings indicate that digital financial literacy has a significant and positive influence on financial behaviour. Its dimensions, such as digital financial knowledge, skills, experience, and awareness, collectively enhance behaviours related to saving, spending, and secure digital transactions. Furthermore, digital financial knowledge has a greater substantial effect on women's financial behaviour. This study contributes to the growing body of literature on digital financial literacy in developing economies by offering practical insights to policymakers, financial institutions, and educators on the need for digital financial literacy initiatives.

Key Words: Digital Awareness, Digital Experience, Digital Financial Knowledge, Digital Skill, Financial Behaviour, Women Entrepreneurs

Barriers to Digital Marketing Adoption among Tourism MSMEs: Evidence from Post-War Northern Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Globally, economic development through entrepreneurship remains a primary focus. Particularly, tourism Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a significant role in fostering economic growth and development, especially in developing countries. MSMEs are stumbled with lack of skills and awareness in applying digital marketing techniques during their entrepreneurial marketing initiatives which set the primary focus of this study. This study followed a qualitative approach using the primary data collected through in-depth semi structured interviews. 30 MSMEs were selected as sample for this study using the combination of cluster and snowball sampling techniques. Qualitative data were tested using Thematic analysis. Findings revealed that unfamiliarity with digital tools, limited time for digital engagement, technological anxiety, infrastructure issues, generational differences, post-war recovery constraints, and language barriers are the major issues in adopting digital marketing tools among tourism MSMEs in Sri Lanka, especially in Northern Region. However, it was found that the rate of adoption of digital marketing is gradually increasing over time. This study recommends strategies and techniques for entrepreneurs to overcome such issues in adopting digital technologies in future.

Keywords: Barriers, Digital Marketing Adoption, Northern Sri Lanka, Post-war, Tourism MSMEs,

PART 2

CULTURE, EDUCATION AND RESOURCES

Mastering English Sentence Transformation among Language Students at Eastern University, Sri Lanka: A Tech-Driven Approach

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Abstract

Sentence transformation is a key element in mastering English language proficiency. This concept must be clearly understood by students for their successful academic writing and language use. Since today's students are digital natives, enhancing their learning process by incorporating computer technology is indispensable. Thus, this paper aims to explore the effective transformation of sentences in English using computer technology. It will provide students with insights into how digital tools can enhance both their understanding and practical application of sentence transformation. For this purpose, the researcher of this study has developed a student-friendly learning-testing computational tool, "*English Sentence Transformer*", to provide students with a more engaging and effective learning experience. The study was qualitative and descriptive and it involved twenty second-year language students from Eastern University, Sri Lanka (EUSL). Fifty different sentences were taken as data for the transformation process. Participants underwent a pretest utilizing traditional methods, followed by a post-test with the developed tool. Results indicated a significant improvement in participants' performance on the post-test compared to the pretest. Thus, the findings suggest that the integration of computer technology into the traditional methods of learning English offers a robust framework for understanding and mastering sentence transformation to a greater extent.

Keywords: sentence transformation, English proficiency, computer technology, learning experience, academic writing

The Role of Tamil Diaspora Remittances in Educational Development: A Sociological Study Based on Gurunagar, Jaffna Peninsula, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The Tamil diaspora in Sri Lanka is an important role in maintaining its transnational relations with their homeland. This study aims to examine the role of diaspora remittances in the educational development of the Gurunagar area of Jaffna Peninsula. The study used a mixed-methods approach. A total of hundred samples were selected the beneficiaries who got diaspora remittances for educational purpose in Gurunagar area. Primary data, including case studies, interviews, and observations, were collected, along with secondary data from books, journals, and research articles. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis, while quantitative data were analysed using a descriptive statistical method with the support of Statistical Package for the Social Science. Specifically, remittances fund various activities such as free Tuition classes, the reconstruction of schools, and the education equipment, financial assistance to university students, the running of free preschools, and the establishment of modern libraries with internet facilities.

Keywords: Education, Homeland, Remittances, Tamil Diaspora

Continuing Education for a Better Improvement: A Special Focus on the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Continuing Education (CE) in Sri Lanka's Northern and Eastern Provinces is vital for rebuilding livelihoods, enhancing employability, and fostering social cohesion in post-conflict communities. This paper reviews the CE landscape - covering adult literacy, vocational training, and upskilling - highlighting roles of government, universities, and NGOs. Key challenges include limited access, digital inequality, and weak industry linkages. Drawing on national and international literature, it identifies structural deficiencies and proposes policy recommendations to expand access, improve quality, and integrate technology. CE is positioned as a critical driver for sustainable development, reconciliation, and resilience, contributing to the achievement of SDGs and addressing regional skill gaps.

Keywords: Continuing Education, Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Skill Development, Sustainable Development, Vocational Training,

Need for Agricultural Education Through ICT in Distance Education of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Agriculture remains the backbone of Sri Lanka's economy, with the majority of rural households dependent on farming for livelihood. However, farmers often face constraints in accessing timely, accurate, and context-specific agricultural knowledge due to geographical, economic, and institutional barriers. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have emerged as a transformative tool to bridge this knowledge gap, particularly through distance education platforms. This study investigates the need for agricultural education through ICT in distance education of Sri Lanka. The objectives include assessing farmers' current access to ICT tools, examining the perceived relevance of distance agricultural education, identifying barriers to ICT adoption, evaluating its effectiveness in enhancing agricultural knowledge and practices, and proposing strategies to strengthen ICT-enabled distance learning systems. Using a descriptive research design and purposive sampling, data will be collected from farmers and agricultural stakeholders to analyze their experiences, challenges, and expectations regarding ICT-based education. The study is expected to highlight both opportunities and limitations in integrating ICT with agricultural education, offering recommendations for policy makers, educational institutions, and extension agencies. Findings will contribute to strengthening sustainable agricultural development in Sri Lanka by promoting inclusive, accessible, and technology-driven learning opportunities for farming communities.

Keywords : e-governance, Distance Education, Information Systems, Telecentres, Farmers.

Transforming Post-war Education in North and East of Sri Lanka: Diaspora Contributions to Student Development and Career Interest

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Abstract

The challenging situation for education in the Northern and Eastern provinces of post-war Sri Lanka is characterized by a lack of resources, limited career guidance, and low student self-confidence. While in the past the diaspora has contributed to infrastructure development for schools and scholarships, its potential for student development and career aspiration initiatives has not been explored. This study remedies this gap through a qualitative case study approach underpinned by the human and social capital theory. Data were drawn from interviews with mentoring teachers, focus groups with students and school leavers, and documentary records of the initiatives of the diaspora. Thematic analysis yielded three key findings: first, diaspora support includes mentorship and knowledge transfer; second, student confidence and aspirations increase through community engagement; and third, sustainable change requires the collaborative effort of diaspora networks with schools and policymakers in shaping education, policy, and workforce development in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Career Interest, Diaspora Contributions, Post-war Education, Sri Lanka, Student Development, Transformation

Challenges in Maintaining Tamil Culture: A Special Reference to the Northern and Eastern Provinces in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Tamil culture is one of the world's oldest and most precious tradition. In Sri Lanka, its influence is not limited only to the Tamil communities living in the Northern and Eastern provinces but it extends among the entire society, enriching the nation's cultural diversity. However, sustaining and fostering this culture in the modern era is difficult due to digitalization in everywhere. This research paper has been developed with the purpose of exploring and identifying the key challenges that questioned the protection and continuation of Tamil cultural values, traditions, and practices. To gather insights, interviews were conducted with individuals who deeply cherish and embody Tamil culture in their daily lives through a qualitative study. Lack of awareness about Tamil culture, Impact of Civil War and Displacement, Migration and Diaspora Influence, Language Shift and Education, Globalization and Modernization, Religious and Cultural Dilution, Economic Challenges, Political and Social Factors, Generational Gap and Environmental and Lifestyle Changes were identified as significant challenges , Which highlight the struggles faced by the community in safeguarding their cultural identity amidst social, economic, and global transformations. Establishing a museum that showcases the values and culture of the Tamil community, making arrangements to educate young people about Tamil customs, and protecting places where the culture exists are some of the key recommendations for preserving Tamil culture in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Cultural Preservation, Globalization and Modernization, Identity and Heritage, Post-Conflict Sri Lanka, Tamil Culture

Exploring Siddha Medical Concepts through *Sangam* Literature

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Abstract

This study explores the origins and significance of Siddha medicine and its deep interconnection with Tamil literature and culture, particularly during the Sangam period (500 BC–200 AD). Rooted in ancient Tamil civilization, Siddha medicine is believed to have originated from Lord Shiva and passed down through the Siddhars, focusing on the holistic balance between body, mind, and spirit. The Jaffna Siddha text Pararajasekharam Angadipatham explains that human diseases arose alongside creation as consequences of one's karma, with remedies provided through divine knowledge. Siddha medicine emphasizes preventive care and rejuvenation (kayakalpam), asserting that all diseases except karmic ones can be cured. The research also investigates how medical concepts were embedded in Sangam literature, including the Ettuthokai and Paththupattu anthologies, which detail both internal and external aspects of human life. Texts such as Tolkappiyam and Agasthiyam provide valuable insights into early medical practices related to childbirth, diet, hygiene, warfare injuries, and daily lifestyles. By integrating religion, philosophy, and health science, Tamil literary works reveal a sophisticated understanding of human well-being in ancient society. Drawing from primary literary sources, historical texts, and research articles available at the University of Jaffna Library, Jaffna Public Library, and digital archives, this study highlights the intrinsic link between literature and traditional medicine. It underscores how the Tamil intellectual tradition used art and literature not only to express human emotion but also to preserve indigenous medical knowledge, emphasizing the enduring value of Siddha principles in promoting holistic health and cultural continuity.

Key words: Sanga Kaalam, Siddha Medicine, Sangam Literature

Nature's Remedy for War's Scars: Leveraging Siddha Wellness Tourism and Blue Economy for Post-Conflict Ecological and Economical Recovery in Northern Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study examines how Siddha Medicine enables sustainable post-war recovery in Northern Sri Lanka. Using mixed methods (15 practitioner surveys, spatial analysis, pilot projects), it highlights Siddha's cultural revival (89% identify with Tamil heritage) and restoration of health (healing trauma and chronic disease). Marine-based therapies - seaweed (*Padina gymnospora*), pearl products (*Pinctada fucata*), saline springs - are Blue Economy compliant with the potential to create 500+ jobs, 78% for women. Challenges include fragmented policy, infrastructure absence (83% of sites), and resource depletion (32% species). Proposed solutions are block chain traceability, telemedicine, wellness trails, and Medicinal Marine Protected Areas, ensuring culture-based yet sustainable development.

Keywords: Marine conservation, Post-conflict recovery, Siddha Medicine, Sri Lanka, Sustainable tourism

Preserving Indigenous Healing: Siddha Medicine as a Tool for Eco-tourism and Economic Revival in Northern Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Sri Lanka's three-decade civil war (1983–2009) devastated the Northern and Eastern provinces, wrecking infrastructure, livelihood, and culture. For this study, Siddha Medicine, an indigenous Tamil system, is explored as a vehicle for eco-tourism and livelihood restoration. Using a mixed-method research design - 28 semi-structured stakeholder, wellness entrepreneur, and Siddha practitioner interviews, three focus groups, five site visits, and examination of 10 policy documents - conclusions highlight strong support for herbal products, healing trails, and integrative retreats from the community. SWOT analysis highlights cultural importance as strengths, weaknesses in infrastructure and market access, opportunities in eco-tourism, and over-harvesting threats.

Keywords: Cultural heritage, Eco-tourism, Post-war reconstruction, Siddha Medicine, Sustainable livelihoods

The Alliance of Cooperatives in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka, the Tamil diaspora, and international networks to foster prosperity and good governance, mobilize collective resources for a peaceful Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Sri Lanka is navigating a post-war transition following the end of its 30-year civil conflict in 2009, with Tamil-speaking regions in the Northern and Eastern provinces still facing deep economic and institutional challenges. A 2023 field study revealed that around 67% of cooperatives in these regions are dysfunctional, primarily due to the lack of financial support, institutional capacity, and sustainable development strategies. Although the post-war reconstruction program funded nearly 3,454 cooperative projects, most were unsuccessful because interventions failed to consider local contexts and cooperative principles. Over 2023–2024, a mixed-method study covering all districts in the Northern and Eastern provinces—including interviews with 100 primary and five tertiary cooperatives—documented the struggles and resilience of cooperative leaders. Findings revealed that inadequate governance structures and the absence of sustainability mechanisms were major obstacles to recovery. However, the study also identified inspiring examples of community-driven success, such as the solar-powered irrigation project in Kilinochchi, supported by the Tamil diaspora organization CSHNA in the Netherlands. This initiative demonstrated how diaspora engagement and appropriate technology can transform local livelihoods. The research emphasizes that cooperatives are vital for rebuilding war-affected economies by fostering employment, social inclusion, and local empowerment. To ensure their long-term success, targeted support policies, institutional reforms, and stronger diaspora partnerships are essential to enhance resilience, sustainability, and economic revitalization in post-conflict regions.

Keywords: Cooperative Development, Diaspora Engagement, Economic Revitalization, Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Sustainability

Archaeological Research in North-Eastern Sri Lanka and the Necessity for Integration of Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract

The north-eastern region of Sri Lanka presents a distinctive cultural and historical landscape within South Asia, characterized by a rich archaeological heritage that extends from prehistoric times to the late medieval period. This area, which includes districts such as Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, Mannar, and Jaffna, is home to a diverse range of archaeological sites. These sites feature megalithic burials, Buddhist and Hindu religious complexes, inscriptions, ancient ports, irrigation systems, and traces of early human settlements. Over the years, archaeological research in this area has illuminated aspects of early maritime trade, urban development, ritual practices, socio-political frameworks, and cross-cultural exchanges across the Bay of Bengal.

Keywords: Cultural landscape, archaeological sites, religious complexes, human settlements, Bay of Bengal

Educate to Empower: Diaspora and Digital Pathways in Post-War Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study examines the persistent digital and educational disparities in Sri Lanka's Northern and Eastern Provinces, sixteen years after the end of the civil conflict. Despite high national literacy rates, these regions continue to face limited access to digital infrastructure, qualified teachers, and economic opportunities, hindering post-war recovery. Focusing specifically on the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in secondary education and vocational training, the research highlights how digital innovation and diaspora engagement can act as catalysts for empowerment and inclusive growth. Using secondary data, national policy frameworks, and diaspora-led initiatives, the study identifies significant digital inequalities. According to recent statistics, computer literacy remains below 30% in both provinces, compared to nearly 45% in the Western Province, while less than 15% of households in the North and East own computers. These findings reveal structural barriers that perpetuate socio-economic marginalization. However, diaspora initiatives - such as ICT labs, mentorship programs, vocational centres, and scholarship schemes - are beginning to bridge these gaps, though their efforts remain scattered and uncoordinated. The study advocates for a comprehensive digital transformation strategy that aligns government policies with diaspora expertise, investment, and global networks. Strengthening ICT infrastructure, promoting e-learning platforms, and expanding STEM-focused vocational education are central to this vision. Findings suggest that well-coordinated digital and educational reforms can create a resilient, technologically skilled workforce capable of driving growth in key sectors such as modern agriculture, renewable energy, and sustainable tourism, thereby fostering equitable regional development and long-term stability.

Keywords: Diaspora Participation, Digital Empowerment, ICT Integration, Post-war Education, Northern and Eastern Provinces, Vocational Training

Preservation and Protection of Tamil Art and Sculpture Heritage in Post-War Sri Lanka: A Socio-Legal context on Challenges in Cultural Maintenance

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Abstract

The post-2009 Sri Lankan civil war has severely impacted the conservation of Tamil art and sculptural heritage in the North and East, where ancient Chola-influenced bronzes, temple carvings, and stone sculptures are integral to Tamil identity and endangered by militarization, land appropriation, and ethnopolitical policies. This study adopts a socio-legal framework to investigate these threats, highlighting limitations of the colonial-era Antiquities Ordinance, which intensifies social vulnerabilities like displacement, gender disparities, and youth disengagement. Using field data from Jaffna and Batticaloa, it reveals deficiencies in enforcing UNESCO's 1970 Convention, compounded by military governance sustaining ethnic tensions. Scientific methods, including geospatial mapping and ethnographic studies, assess degradation and socio-cultural impacts. The paper proposes integrated socio-legal reforms, community driven initiatives, diaspora-supported advocacy, and digital archiving with 3D modelling and blockchain to promote cultural preservation and economic empowerment through sustainable tourism, advocating policies for heritage safeguarding, social cohesion, and livelihoods in Tamil regions, contributing to post-war recovery.

Key words: Tamil Art, Sri Lanka civil war, Antiquities Ordinance, UNESCO 1970, digital archiving, socio-legal lens.

Performance Evaluation of Irrigation Strategies for Chilli Cultivation Using Soil Water Balance Modelling

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Abstract

Efficient irrigation planning is vital for sustaining agriculture in water scarce regions, particularly under increasing climatic variability. This study evaluated four irrigation strategies for Chilli (*Capsicum annuum* L.) cultivation in *Vadamaradchi*, Jaffna across three contrasting soil types; coarse sandy (*Ampan*), clay loam (*Karaveddi*), and sandy loam (*Puloly*) in the *Vadamaradchi* region of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Field experiments were conducted using zero-tension, non-weighing lysimeters over two cropping seasons (2021–2022), and results were validated with HYDRUS-1D simulations. Treatments included: T1 (Irrigation based on the 35-year (1985–2019) long-term average monthly rainfall + FAO Crop Water Requirement), T2 (Irrigation based on the 3-day moving average rainfall + FAO Crop Water Requirement), T3 (Irrigation based on the 30-day moving average rainfall + FAO Crop Water Requirement), and T4 (Irrigation based on farmer's current practices). Findings revealed that T1 maximized both groundwater recharge (>60 mm/season) and yield in coarse-textured soils, while T4 was most effective in clay loam soils, sustaining higher yields with minimal deep drainage (<25 mm/season). Rainfed T3 consistently underperformed across all sites. HYDRUS-1D simulations showed strong agreement with measured data ($R^2 = 0.91\text{--}0.98$), confirming its suitability for site-specific irrigation planning. The results highlight the need for soil- and climate-tailored irrigation advisories to enhance water productivity, crop performance, and groundwater sustainability in semi-arid tropical regions.

Keywords: Irrigation treatment, water use efficiency, HYDRUS-1D, crop yield, soil water balance

Evaluating the Jaffna Hindu College Laboratory Sharing Model: A Framework for Enhancing Science Education in Resource-Constrained Environments

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Abstract

Access to high-quality practical science education in Chemistry, Physics, Biology, and Information Technology remains essential for fostering critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. These competencies are particularly crucial for sustained post-war recovery in Sri Lanka's Northern and Eastern Provinces. Well-equipped laboratory infrastructure adhering to modern safety standards requires significant capital investment. Additionally, there exists a scarcity of trained and experienced teachers and technical staff for laboratory work. These challenges have created severe disparities in science education facilities across schools in the North and East. This study evaluates the laboratory sharing initiative implemented by Jaffna Hindu College (JHC) for students from underprivileged schools in the Jaffna-Islands educational zone. Through systematic analysis of operational frameworks, stakeholder engagement patterns, and measurable outcomes, this research provides evidence-based recommendations for replicating this model across similar contexts. The findings demonstrate significant improvements in practical science education access and suggest a viable pathway for equitable resource distribution in resource-constrained educational environments.

Keywords: Educational Equity, Laboratory Infrastructure, Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka, Practical Science Education, Resource Sharing Initiative

The Future of Silambam: Sustaining Silambam as a Tool for Cultural Identity and Youth Development

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Abstract

Silambam is an ancient Tamil martial art technique used for self-defense and the preservation of Tamil culture. It carries significant historical, cultural, and spiritual importance. In my role as president of the Malaysia Silambam Association, I have witnessed how it provides a sense of belonging, discipline, and identity to Tamil teenagers living overseas. However, Silambam faces several challenges in post-war contexts, particularly for the Tamil diaspora. The decline in intergenerational transmission can be attributed to multiple factors, including urbanization and migration, the conflicting effects of traditional sports, and insufficient institutional support in host countries. Younger generations in Malaysia are showing an increasing interest in historical arts. Nevertheless, economic constraints and the popularity of globalized entertainment discourage many from engaging in these creative pursuits. To ensure the continued vitality of Silambam, it is essential to incorporate it into the educational systems of both Sri Lanka and the countries where Sri Lankans reside. Sustaining Silambam is not only about martial training but also about safeguarding Tamil cultural identity, promoting resilience, and fostering social cohesion in the North and East of Sri Lanka. Additionally, there needs to be recognition within legislative frameworks and initiatives for cross-border cultural exchange. This study explores sustainable styles for maintaining Silambam as a living tradition through case studies and community efforts, with the goal of securing the vibrancy of Tamil culture for future generations.

Keywords: Cross-cultural Exchange, Cultural Preservation, Martial Heritage, Post-war Identity, Silambam, Tradition and Globalization, Youth Engagement,

Productivity Increase in Agriculture through Water Conservation in the North of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This paper explores four innovative water conservation strategies designed to optimize underutilized freshwater resources that currently flow into the sea without contributing to agricultural or domestic needs in Northern Sri Lanka. The first strategy focuses on diverting water collected at the Murasu Moddai causeway from the downstream catchment of the Kanagarayan Aru, including the Iranamadu Tank (IT). By lifting and channeling this water into a high-level irrigation canal, it can replace irrigation water drawn from IT for the Kilinochchi Irrigation Areas (KIA), thereby conserving IT reserves for the Jaffna Water Supply (JWS), Yala cultivation, or other productive uses during dry months. The second method proposes harvesting water currently discharged into the Chundikulam Sea at Elephant Pass Lagoon (EPL) to reduce capillary salinisation in the Vadamaradchi East Lagoon (VEL), improving water potential downstream. The third strategy involves constructing an embankment and causeway between VEL and Thondaimanaru Lagoon along the Varanay–Masiri–Kudathanai Road. This would enhance groundwater quality, expand irrigation potential for both Maha and Yala seasons, and curb the inland progression of salinity. The final method promotes rainwater harvesting from community buildings - such as temples, schools, and markets - into nearby wells or kulams, enhancing freshwater quality in coastal catchments like Valvettithurai from the initial monsoon through April. Hydraulic and hydrological modeling conducted on these proposals confirms their technical feasibility. Collectively, these approaches offer a sustainable framework to enhance water availability, reduce salinisation, and strengthen agricultural resilience in the lagoon-adjacent regions of Northern Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Capillary, Salination, Water swap, Submarine flow, Desalination, Airspace, Carryover, Reclamation

Exploring the Role of Siddha Medicine in Promoting Sustainable Tourism and Local Employment Opportunities in Northern Province of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Siddha medicine originates from the Tamil people and, for the Northern Province, Sri Lanka, provides the basis for a form of tourism that thrives on the authenticity of the local culture and generosity of spirit. Though ages old, engagement with Siddha tourism is noticeably undeveloped: current studies indicate that only a fraction of travellers visit Siddha clinics or heritage sites and the employment opportunities resulting from such visits is scant, informal, and urban- biased. This analysis integrates scholarly research, policy analysis, and local practices on wellness, community driven tourism, and indigenous medicine, utilizing a narrative thematic approach to coastal districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu, and Vavuniya, highlighting opportunities and risks, as well as governance tactics. Five high-potential pillars arise: community herbal gardens, wellness and healing retreats, trained therapists, guides and entrepreneurs, ritual and heritage tourism, and the localized sustainable production of herbal medicine. Improved sustainable outcomes are a function of critical governance infrastructure such as community equity decision-making, consent protocols, and benefit-sharing, along with green tourism practices. Siddha medicine has the positivity to create jobs, empower women, meaningfully heal visitors, protect biodiversity, and foster cultural appreciation, all by working on untapped potential.

Key words: Siddha Medicine, Tourism, Northern Province, Employment

Efficient Use and Management of Mangroves for its Sustainable Existence: Lesson Learnt from Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Sri Lanka hosts approximately 19,500 hectares of mangroves, covering about 0.2–0.3% of the country's land area. Northern and Eastern Provinces contain 65–75% of this cover, playing vital ecological and economic roles. However, both provinces face multiple pressures - ranging from decades of neglect to unregulated resource use - that have intensified the damage to these ecosystems. Understanding these impacts underscores the urgent need for sustainable conservation measures to safeguard mangroves. Their efficient use is critical for ensuring both resilience and long-term sustainability. National efforts reflect a growing commitment to conserving and sustainably managing these critical ecosystems. This paper reviews the importance of efficient use and management of mangroves based on the past and present experiences in the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Ecosystem Resilience, Environmental Degradation, Mangrove Conservation, Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka, Sustainable Management

Challenges and Proposed Strategies to improve the Teaching -Learning process: Through the School Based Development Plans

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Abstract

This study examines the implementation of School-Based Development Plans (SBPD) in schools of the Paddiruppu Education Zone, Batticaloa District, in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province. The research aimed to identify constraints affecting the teaching and learning (T-L) process and suggest strategies for sustainable school improvement. Using a descriptive mixed-method design, data were collected from 169 participants via questionnaires, interviews, observations, and document analysis, analyzed with SPSS and Excel. Six variables were assessed: Teacher Professional Development, Student Motivation, Resource Utilization, Monitoring and Evaluation, Community and Parental Involvement, and School Leadership. Findings showed that teacher professional development had the strongest impact on student outcomes, while student motivation directly influenced GCE O/L performance. Resource utilization had moderate effects, highlighting the need for equitable allocation. Monitoring systems were essential for sustaining progress, and community involvement contributed positively but inconsistently. School leadership emerged as the key factor for long-term educational quality. Analysis of six years of examination results confirmed significant positive correlations between SBPD variables and student performance. The study concludes that improving teacher capacity, enhancing monitoring frameworks, and fostering community engagement are vital strategies for strengthening the T-L process and achieving sustainable educational development in Sri Lanka's Northern and Eastern Provinces.

Keywords: School-Based Development Plan, Teaching-Learning Process, Eastern Province, Educational Strategies, Student Performance

Signs of Fragmentation in Inter-Religious Relationships in the North and East of Sri Lanka: An Obstacle or a Catalyst to Socio-Cultural and Economic Advancements

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Abstract

This study examines the escalating inter-religious tensions in Sri Lanka's Northern and Eastern provinces, highlighting their implications for post-war recovery and reconstruction. Historically, Hindus, Christians, and Muslims in these regions shared solidarity under a common Tamil ethno-national identity during the civil war. However, post-2009 developments reveal a shift: Hindu-Saivite revivalist groups, inspired by external influences such as India's Siva Sena, increasingly assert dominance, marginalizing Christian practices, while Hindu-Muslim rivalries intensify around land and religious sites in Batticaloa and Trincomalee. High-profile incidents, including the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks and earlier clashes in Kattankudy (2013) and Muttur (2017), have exacerbated mistrust and communal polarization. The socio-economic impacts are significant. Diaspora remittances, once vital for reconstruction, are increasingly diverted toward temple and mosque expansion rather than infrastructure, youth employment, or women's empowerment. Inter-religious suspicion has undermined joint livelihood programs, microfinance, and cooperative initiatives, particularly in Batticaloa, while Christian schools and charity institutions in Jaffna face reduced support. Cultural consequences are equally pronounced: shared festivals and communal spaces are contested, reflecting a transition from ethnic to religiously driven conflict and weakening traditions of plural coexistence. This paper argues that inter-religious fragmentation constitutes a major barrier to sustainable development in the North and East. It emphasizes the need for inclusive governance, interfaith dialogue, and equitable resource distribution. Simultaneously, it posits that addressing these tensions constructively could transform rivalry into an opportunity for social solidarity, participatory governance, and purposeful diaspora engagement, fostering long-term socio-economic resilience and inclusive post-war recovery in Sri Lanka.

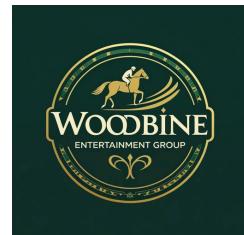
Keywords: Fragmentation; Majoritarianism; Intra-minority; Territorial Dominance; Fundamentalism

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