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Editorial

This is the Volume 13, Number 2 of the OUSL Journal of 2018, the Journal of The Open University of Sri Lanka which is published biannually. The articles published in this Volume include: research based on Legal Studies, Education, Agriculture, Health Sciences, Ecology and Civil Engineering.

The emergence of the electronic commerce has transformed traditional consumer markets into a digital one within a few decades. In other words, the development of the internet and e-commerce has drastically changed the medium of transactions for traditional consumers. The paper titled *Protection of Consumer Rights on the Internet: Prospects and Challenges for the Sri Lankan Legal System* explores the concept of consumer rights and its application in electronic transactions. The author emphasizes that, due to the complex nature of the internet, online consumers have to face serious violations of their consumer rights. In such a context, the state intervention is very much important to safeguard the consumer rights in the digital environment. This paper argues that, even though Sri Lankan legislature has enacted several legislations in order to accommodate e-commerce and electronic transactions in Sri Lanka, those legislations fail to specifically address the issue of consumer rights protection in an online context. In order to highlight this lacuna in the Sri Lankan legal framework, this paper compares and contrasts the existing Sri Lankan legal regime with International and European Union approaches. Based on the findings of comparative analysis, this paper further emphasizes the need for an adequate online consumer protection mechanism embedded into the Sri Lankan legal landscape.

The research study titled *Flaws in Research Report Writing: An Evaluation of Research Reports Submitted for an International Conference on Education* investigates the flaws in research report writing by evaluating research reports submitted for an international conference on education. The study uses research report reviewers' evaluation forms to evaluate the quality of the research reports. The findings show that improper focus on the research objectives and

non-indication of gaps in knowledge, lack of attempts to critically critique the method(s) used in previous studies, inadequate description of research designs, non-self-explanatory tables and figures and lack of discussion about the significance and implications of results are the major flaws associated with those research reports. The study recommends that concerted efforts should be made by education faculties to organize faculty seminars where research report can be presented for constructive criticism. Also, the study recommends that universities and research institutions should endeavor to reward researchers for quality rather than quantity of their publications.

Turmeric is widely used as a medicine, condiment, dye, disinfectant and cosmetic. These plants need potassium for higher yield. The authors of the research paper, *Effect of partially-burnt Paddy Husk as a Supplementary Source of Potassium on Growth and Yield of Turmeric (Curcuma longa L.) and Soil Properties* investigate the effect of partially-burnt paddy husk as a supplementary source of potassium for growth and yield of turmeric and soil properties. Seven treatments were prepared by using two sources of potassium, namely Muriate of Potash (MOP) and partially-burnt paddy husk (PBPH) for local type of turmeric cultivation. Results revealed that combined use of MOP (100%) with PBPH (50%) has beneficial effects on turmeric cultivation. Paddy husk is a common plant residue in paddy cultivation and freely available potassium source. Partially-burnt paddy husk can be used as a supplementary source of potassium for turmeric cultivation to maximize the harvest.

Breast cancer has become the most common cause for cancer deaths among women worldwide. Delay in seeking medical advice for breast cancer causes increased morbidity, mortality and decreases the survival rate of these patients. The study, *Perceived Factors Related to Delayed Presentation of Breast Cancer among women with Stage III and IV Breast Cancer in Sri Lanka* was conducted to examine the perceived factors related to delaying of treatment for breast cancer among women. One hundred and fifty-one female patients with breast cancer stage III and IV, admitted to the Oncology ward and Oncology clinic of the Teaching Hospital, Kandy, were purposively recruited for this quantitative descriptive study. The study results

highlighted that majority of patients have not known about the symptoms of breast cancer. Further, about one third of patients delayed treatment due to the perceived embarrassment at exposing their breasts to medical practitioners and fear of partner abandonment. Significantly, four thirds of the patients were not aware of self-breast examination method and never attended the 'Well Women Clinic", which is conducted for the improvement of women's health. Interestingly, majority of the patients did not have family histories of breast cancer. Therefore, establishing an effective public awareness programs is vital to increase early diagnosis, prognosis and survival rate and improve overall quality of life of patients with breast cancer.

Mangrove communities are usually characterized as efficient in carbon sink in tropical and subtropical coastal areas of the world. Sequestered organic carbon occurs both in standing plant biomass as well as in below-the-ground root biomass and mangrove soils. Data on total carbon storage in whole mangrove ecosystems assist pragmatic evaluation of ecological value of mangroves and justify their conservation and management. Lacks in quantitative data on carbon retention capacity of Sri Lankan mangrove ecosystems compelled the authors of the paper titled *Ecosystem Carbon Stock of Mangroves at the Batticaloa Lagoon, Sri Lanka* to carry out a study with the objective of estimating the total ecosystem carbon content in mangrove ecosystems in the Batticaloa lagoon, which is the largest lagoon situated on the east coast and the third largest brackish water system in the country. The total organic carbon content of mangrove ecosystems in the Batticaloa lagoon was calculated to be 506 Mg C ha^{-1}. Mangrove soils that sequester 68% of the organic carbon forms, the largest fraction of the mangrove carbon sink. Below-the-ground components account for only 5% of the total pool while above-the-ground biomass retains five times more (26%) carbon than the root biomass.

Neelagiri stupa, constructed in 2nd Century BCE, is a colossal ruined stupa, situated in the woods of the Lahugala Wildlife sanctuary in the Ampara district of the Eastern province Sri Lanka. Presently, one side of the stupa has collapsed and some vertical cracks are visible on the east side of the lower dome. Therefore, it is essential to carry

out a proper investigation on the current condition of the stupa before any major restoration work begins in order to ascertain its total height. With this objective, a series of experimental testing and numerical modeling was performed as described in the paper, *Structural Assessment and Restoration of the Neelagiri Maha Seya in Ampara, Sri Lanka*. According to the Ground Penetration Radar measurements, there exists a gravel type rock layer below the 3m level from the existing ground and the stupa rests on this gravel layer. Laboratory test results showed that ancient bricks of Neelagiri stupa have a higher capacity than their modern counterparts. Numerical analysis of the stupa showed that the stresses generated within the existing stupa due to its self-weight is well below the compressive strength and the tensile strength of the ancient bricks. Finally, a suitable shape is proposed for the restoration and the different restoration options have been analyzed with respect to the structural performance along with the existing conditions.

In addition, this issue includes the 31st OUSL General Convocation Address made by Professor Torsten Henry Fransson titled *Challenges and Changes towards a Sustainable Society: Climate, Energy and Education* which reflects on the access to clean, affordable energy and water, and appropriate food, all of which are entangled in humanitarian, social and environmental contexts, and which are the three main pillars of sustainable development. Further, collapses in the quality education will also lead water, food and energy services of the world to a state of stagnation resulting a widespread unfulfilled competition for resources and services among the communities.

We welcome your suggestions for further improvement of this Journal. We are looking forward to publishing your current research findings in our next issue.

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