

Editorial

This is the Volume 12, Number 02 of the OUSL Journal, the Journal of the Open University of Sri Lanka which is published biannually. The articles published in this Volume include research based on Folklore, Education, Health Sciences, Law, Zoology and Language.

Folktales are stories that grow out of the lives and imaginations of a specific speech community, or 'folks.' The paper titled '*Folk Ideas' and' Worldview' Inscribed in a Selection of Folktales Attributed to the Muslim Community of the East Coast of Sri Lanka,*' is the preliminary version of a larger study intended to locate, identify and analyze the 'world' as conceived in the imaginations of a group of people living in a specific socio-economic space in Sri Lanka. This research engages the folktales created/narrated/heard by the males and females of this community in a close reading, motivated by the folkloric scholarly assumption that folklore is the 'autobiographical ethnography' of a group of people—or that folklore is people's own descriptions of themselves.

E-learning can be considered an efficient education system for knowledge sharing in developing countries. Ozawa *et al*, in their paper titled '*Renovation of Research and Education in South Asian Countries by Means of ICT*' discuss the present status of the higher education system in South Asia based on the results of KISSEL (Knowledge Integration Servers System for E-learning) project that has been carried out by the authors during the past ten years. Further, the paper reviews the state of application of the KISSEL and illustrates their relevance in renovation of research and education in South Asian Countries. It elaborates on how a scientific project, based on an ICT platform helped and could continue to help researchers to collaborate and share knowledge. The discussion makes clear some future problems that can be solved with the aid of E-learning and E-research techniques, especially the development of a new mobile application technique which would be important for solving various local and transnational problems in South Asian countries.

A phenomenological study based on female's experiences of menopause focuses on the physical, psychological and social effects of this condition. Menopause is the permanent termination of menstruation resulting in critical symptoms that could affect the quality of life of the victim. This study undertakes a close reading and interpretation of the 'experience' of females who have undergone menopause and attempts to understand both the physical and psychological 'realities' of the victims. The researchers also offer the possible means by which a female could manage this condition and they also contextualize menopause by drawing in the socio-economic factors that also shape the 'experience' of the victims.

The importance of journalists in a society, especially those who report armed conflicts cannot be underestimated. They play a vital role in 'witnessing' and 'representing' the conflict to the rest of the world. Inevitably, such journalists are drawn into the vicious cycle of violence and mayhem. Journalists are protected under International Humanitarian Law, primarily under the Geneva Conventions. However, Article 79 of the Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions guarantees journalists the same protection available to civilians, if they resist from taking 'Direct Participation' in hostilities. The research paper titled '*Protection of Journalists in Armed Conflicts: An International Law Perspective*' explores the notion of providing 'special protection' to journalists who risk their lives for their profession in conflict zones of the world. The paper calls for adequate definitions for the terms 'journalist' and 'Direct Participation in hostilities' to facilitate the identification of the journalists who should be protected under the Humanitarian Law.

Ecological studies of seahorses in the Indian Ocean are limited. The vulnerability of seahorses to overfishing and increased anthropogenic impacts on coastal habitats necessitate better management of wild seahorse populations that in turn requires understanding their habitat preferences and population structure. The distribution patterns and population structure of two species of seahorse (*Hippocampus fuscus* and *Hippocampus spinosissimus*) were assessed in this study conducted in a tropical estuary in north-western Sri Lanka. Both species have not been studied in the wild previously and have not been known to occur in estuaries. The study by Perera *et al*, observed that *H. fuscus* was the most abundant and widely distributed species, and was

significantly larger than *H. spinosissimus*. Both species had significant differences in size between sexes. Seahorses occurred in low densities with patchy distribution, with abundance being higher in areas with the seagrass species *Enhalusacoroides* and *Cymodoceaserrulata* which appear to be the favored habitat of seahorses within the study area. The study suggests that basic life history parameters for the two species of seahorses could be more diverse than previously reported in the literature.

The ubiquitous mobile phone and the modalities of texting, known as the SMS language, come under scrutiny in the paper titled “*Does the SMS Language Have an Effect on Teenage Spelling? – A Study Conducted on a Selected Group of Students Studying in Colombo.*” As the title indicates, this study undertakes a close study of the SMS language and its possible effects on the English spellings of a selected group of students and teachers. Contrary to what most people believe, the study implies that SMS language and spelling errors are unrelated. It also suggests that children have the ability to adjust their writing styles in accordance with the context they are writing in. However, as the study was restricted to a small group belonging to a particular socio-economic stratum in Colombo, it could be considered as an opening for broader studies relevant to the subject.

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