

Editorial

This is the Volume 13, Number 1 of the OUSL Journal 2018, the Journal of The Open University of Sri Lanka which is published biannually. The articles published in this Volume offer research-based knowledge and reflections from the fields of Social Sciences, Agriculture, Economics, Statistics, Nuclear Physics and Education.

The concept ‘e-governance’ or ‘e-government’ has captured the attention of many countries, including those in the developing world. The paper titled *The Role of E-governance in Curbing Public Sector Corruption (A Theoretical Overview)* explores the concept of e-governance and the possibility of its application to curb corruption in political and administrative systems. The authors problematize the notion of ‘participation of citizens in government’: they locate such citizen-driven initiatives as a phrase that lack vitality in the material sphere. The authors argue that there is a need to construct a platform for interactive participation of citizens in the state administrative processes. They suggest the introduction of “an interactive system which accepts people’s feedback positively and considers them as serious matters”. The concept of e-governance, according to the authors, has potential to build good governance through transparency in the administrative system.

Presently, there are health concerns surrounding the use of pesticide on agricultural produce as well as the presence of residue from such chemicals on such produce. The research study, *Quantification of Pesticide Residues in Selected Vegetables Using the QuEChERS Method* addresses this timely issue by focusing on the modes by which the QuEChERS method could be optimized for analysis of multi-residue pesticides. The researchers have tested locally grown vegetables from specific geographic locations for the presence of Diazinon, Chlopyrifos, Fipronil, Prothiofos and Tebuconazole residues using reliable technology. The findings do not offer a dismal picture with regard to fresh fruits and vegetables on the market, yet the researchers insist on the idea of introducing a tracer system to obtain critical details relevant to the application of pesticides for

further studies in order on minimizing the pesticide residues on fresh fruits and vegetables.

Colombo has been able to emerge as a location of significance in South Asia during the past few years. However, problems such as those related to essential needs, in particular water, and have prevented the city of Colombo reaching its maximum potential. While many ad-hoc measures have been undertaken by different parties, the problem remains unsolved due to the lack of sustainability of the solutions. The authors of the article *Price Elasticity of Demand for Pipe-Borne Water: A Pre-Requisite for Solving the Water Problem in the Colombo City* have investigated a sustainable solution to resolve the concerns of water supply in the city. The research has focused on how a part of the problem intensified by the lack of financial sustainability of the main organization instrumental in the provision of water to the Colombo city could be resolved via a tariff revision, and thereby enabling the authorities to ensure continuous and complete supply and distribution of water throughout the city. In conducting the study, the authors have clearly identified, with reference to previous literature, the research gap to be addressed as well as the practical problem and the methodology to be adopted to conduct the study. They have also conducted the data collection and analysis for an adequate sample, utilizing widely-used statistical techniques, and have interpreted the results, in an objective manner. The findings of the study support the claim that a tariff revision targeted at discouraging wasteful consumption of water while ensuring social efficiency and welfare is an important measure towards resolving the water problem in the Colombo city. As the authors have conducted the study adopting scientific methods, the results of the study and the interpretation of the results can be deemed reliable. Furthermore, the expected implications of the study could be realized if the results are incorporated into decision making.

In Sri Lanka, the tourism sector continues to perform significantly well and is considered one of the main sources of foreign exchange earners to the national economy. Despite Sri Lanka's natural beauty and unique cultural traditions—the primary attractions for tourists—the country suffered from setbacks caused by the 2004 Tsunami disaster and the 2009 world economic crisis. Yet, the post-civil-war

period saw tourist arrivals in the island growing steadily. Forecasting is an essential analytical tool in tourism policy and planning. The paper titled *Tourist Arrivals in Sri Lanka: A Comparative Study of Holt-Winter's versus Box-Jenkin's Modeling Methods* compares Holt-Winter's and Box-Jenkin's methods of modeling the tourist arrivals and recommends a better method to forecast the tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka. Based on the forecasting accuracy measures employed by the researchers to test both models, the Box-Jenkin's method outperformed Holt-Winter's method. Thus, the researchers argue that since accuracy of forecasts plays a vital role in the planning of tourism, the authorities should pay attention to the model that offers the best accuracy.

Cement can cause external and internal radiation exposure due to the presence of natural radionuclides ^{226}Ra , ^{232}Th and ^{40}K in the raw materials used to manufacture it. Abeydeera *et al*, in their paper *Estimation of Radioactivity and Associated Radiological Hazards of Cement used in Sri Lanka* discuss the specific activities of radionuclides in fly ash that is used to make some varieties of cement. Fly ash is produced by combustion of coal in coal power plants. The highest specific activities of ^{226}Ra and ^{232}Th were observed in some brands of cement where higher amounts of fly ash were added. The radiation exposure risk due to the presence of radionuclides in cement was estimated by finding some indices such as the Indoor Absorbed Dose Rate and the Annual Effective Dose. The specific activities of radionuclides in cement were used to calculate these indices. These specific activities were measured by high resolution gamma spectrometry. If the annual effective dose is within the internationally accepted value, the use of cement could be considered safe. The calculated Annual Effective Dose Values for all studied cement samples used in Sri Lanka were lower than the recommended maximum permissible public dose of 1.0 mSv y^{-1} . Therefore, the studied cement samples did not show any significant radiation hazard and was considered safe for construction work.

The Bachelor of Education in Drama and Theatre Programme offered by the Faculty of Education, The Open University of Sri Lanka has undergone a complete review after seven (07) years of its implementation, In the study, *Analysis of the Problems of and the*

Suitable Solutions for an Initial Teacher Training Programme Conducted through the Distance Mode, the researchers examine the perceptions of the newly reviewed program among teachers and students. Data were collected from all stakeholders using multiple methods. Through triangulation of data, it could be revealed that teachers and students have similar perceptions about the curriculum, lesson material and instructional processes used in the programme. However, teachers were critical about the actors' role played by student teachers in classrooms and the limited skills exhibited during practical teaching. Lack of focus on drama and theater, duration of teaching practice, limited support provided by the schools and mentors during teaching practice and the lack of opportunities for human interaction were identified as reasons leading to the perceived problems among teachers/students. Among the recommendations suggested by the researchers are, changing the focus of the curriculum, application of innovative methods in contact sessions and promotion of close interaction between teachers and students.

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