

Editorial

This is the Volume 14, Number 2 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 Agriculture, Health Sciences, Folklore, Postharvest Pathology, Transportation and Buddhist Education.

Mulching is a well-known process among cultivators, but they are seemingly unaware of its contribution to growth and yield of Ginger and its ability to cope with temperature and water stress. A field experiment was conducted at the Intercropping and Betel Research Station, Narammala to investigate the effects of different mulching materials on growth, yield, quality parameters of Ginger and the soil parameters in the Low Country intermediate zone (IL1) of Sri Lanka. The findings given in the paper titled “The Efficacy of Different Mulching Materials in Influencing Growth, Yield, Soil and Quality Parameters of Ginger Cultivated in Low Country Intermediate Zone (IL1) of Sri Lanka” are expected to contribute to eliminate the uncertainty faced by farmers when selecting suitable mulch for Ginger. The mulches tested were straw, gliricidia leaves, coconut leaves, coir dust and polythene. Plant and soil parameters were measured at monthly intervals. Mulch significantly affected soil chemical properties, growth and yield parameters of Ginger as it increased soil moisture contents, soil total nitrogen, available phosphorous, available potassium, plant height, number of pseudo stems per clump, number of rhizome fingers, fresh and dry weight of rhizomes and decreased soil pH and pungency levels. The best significant performances in plant and yield parameters were observed in the gliricidia mulch treatment. Polythene mulch had a good ability to conserve moisture than the other treatments. With the increase in temperature and decrease in rainfall due to global warming, farmers need to follow adaptation measures to maintain the potential yield of Ginger. Average yield of Ginger was estimated as 6000 kg/acre by the Department of Agriculture (DEA). Application of gliricidia mulch positively affected the increasing yield of Ginger at 43.6% per hectare more than average yield denoted by DEA. Therefore, it is advisable to use freely available gliricidia mulch to reach a good yield in Ginger cultivation.

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is a worldwide public health problem which leads to social, physical, economic and psychological issues. CKD has shown a rising trend in Sri Lanka. Haemodialysis (HD) is a method of managing patients with CKD. Improving and maintaining



Quality of Life (QOL) is an essential goal of nursing care for patients with CKD. However, there is a lack of data on QOL among patients with CKD who are undergoing HD in Sri Lanka. Finding of the study published in this journal may help to understand the views of patients with HD about their health, performance capacities, sense of welfare and the benefits of the treatment procedure. Understanding the factors that influence the wellbeing of these patients may allow nurses to focus on specific interventions to enhance the quality of life of their patients. Therefore, the study on “Quality of life among patients with chronic kidney disease who are undergoing haemodialysis at two selected teaching hospitals in Sri Lanka” is aimed at assessing QOL among patients with CKD who are undergoing HD at haemodialysis units in selected teaching hospitals in Sri Lanka. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted with purposively selected participants (n=250) at haemodialysis units (DU) of National Hospital Sri Lanka (NHSL) and Teaching Hospital Anuradhapura. Data was obtained through two pre-tested questionnaires aimed at gathering relevant information on patients QOL of physical, psychological, social and environmental health. Participants were approached in DU while on HD. Findings revealed that, majority of participants were male 184 (73.6%), and belonged to the 30-64 age group. Nearly half of them (48.4%) have undergone HD treatment for periods ranging from 3 months to 1 year duration, and 54% of them have been admitted three times per week for HD. Data revealed that the Environmental domain has the highest mean value (59.2±16.6), and social relationship domain has the least (49.5±22.5). Physical health and psychological domains were 51.9 (15.6), and 52.3 (19.9) mean values, respectively. Most of the participants (69.2%) were observed having poor overall QOL. The majority of the patients with CKD undergoing HD in two teaching hospitals in Sri Lanka experienced poor QOL. Understanding of QOL in haemodialysis patients is useful for nurses when developing individualized interventions based on their personal needs and delivering holistic care to this population. Health education programs should be organised to enhance QOL among patients with CKD and undergoing HD. This study was conducted only in two teaching hospitals, and therefore, results cannot be generalized to the whole country.

Folktales are the traditional speech acts usually attributed to common folks, and yet research suggests that they have the capability of carrying cultural rudiments across time and space. It is these cultural axioms that become the focus of the research paper titled “Your Majesty, your son is unable to learn?": A Study of the

Notions of 'Learning' and 'Teaching' Inscribed in a Sample of Southern Folk Tales from Ancient Lanka." The paper attempts to locate how Lankan folktales from the south situate the notion of 'learning' and 'teaching.' The study uses Ceylon's oldest folktales, which were collected and compiled under the title *Village Folk Tales of Ceylon* by the colonial (British) irrigation officer Henry Parker. Using a folkloristic standpoint which views folk speech acts as being carriers of not only cultural embellishments but cultural predispositions, this study attempts to locate what the notions of 'learning' and 'teaching' present in stories told by southern Lankans tell us about their deep-seated attitudes to/understandings of education.

In Sri Lanka, stem-end rot (SER) caused by *Lasiodiplodia* sp. is the most common and serious disease to affect the mango cultivar 'Karuthacolomban' which is the most popular among the local cultivars. The disease originates in the field and thus is difficult to control. At present, disease control is achieved with chemical fungicides which are hazardous to human health and the environment. As such, the research paper titled "Use of Selected Essential Oils for the Control of Stem-end Rot Disease in Mango (cv. karuthacolomban)" investigated the possibility of using essential oils as biological fungicides. Six essential oils were selected based on literature and tested for effectiveness against the target pathogen by a poisoned food bioassay. The most effective EOs under *in vitro* conditions were used in *in vivo* studies. The effect of the treatment on reducing disease development, organoleptic properties and the edibility of fruits after *in vivo* application was assessed. Results of the present study revealed that basil, cardamom and citronella oils are effective in reducing the growth of the fungus. Out of these EOs the most suitable was cardamom oil and further studies were carried out only with cardamom. Cardamom ($700 \mu\text{l l}^{-1}$) in warm water dip treatment, reduced disease development but did not affect quality parameters such as sugar content, acidity and more importantly, the treatment had no negative effects on the taste of the fruit. Therefore, plant EOs can serve as safe, eco-friendly and effective alternatives to synthetic fungicides. However, the external appearance of the peel was negatively affected by the dip treatment in EO. Therefore, the method of application can be altered, such as spray treatment or incorporation of EO to a fruit coating can be used for optimum benefit.

A study on "Commuter Travel Pattern to OUSL Nawala: A Case Study" has analyzed the commuter inflow travel pattern to OUSL Nawala. The commuter travel origins with their travel mode patterns

and travel nature were identified in the study. Pilot studies were conducted during midweek and the weekend to obtain an awareness of the size of survey teams for interviews and how to locate survey teams during the main surveys. Origin inflow pattern surveys were carried out via roadside interviews on a Saturday (weekend) and a Wednesday (midweek), from 8:00 to 18:00 hours covering a 10-hour duration. According to the questionnaire surveys the walkers and motorists coming to OUSL through all four gates were contacted and more than 1,000 respondents were interviewed. This survey captured around 58% of the total arrivals during the weekend and 56% during midweek. It was observed that a total of 51% of the university community came through Nugegoda. Most of them come from the Kotte DS division. Around 74% of community coming to OUSL used buses, while 9% come by trains. As an outcome of this study a shuttle service of buses is proposed to provide a better service to OUSL users during the rush hours (i.e. 8:00 am to 10:00 am). Shuttle services are proposed from Kotte, Kaduwela, Maharagama, Kottawa, Kesbawa, Gampaha and Dehiwala during the weekends, and also from Kotte, Maharagama, Kaduwela, Kottawa, Kesbawa, Gampaha, Horana and Thimbirigasyaya during midweek.

The paper on “Perceptions of Buddhism among Professionals in Nepal” discusses the existing knowledge and perceptions of Buddhism among the professionals. Prince Siddhartha, who later became the Buddha, was born in the city of Lumbini in Nepal circa 623 BC. The teachings of the Buddha, who throughout his life preached about integrity and morality, could be valuable in promoting ethics and integrity and could also play an influencing role in the current drive of the Nepalese government to create a prosperous nation. Thus, understanding the perceptions of the development of professionals and the intellectuals of Nepal towards this system of philosophy would be critical to understand not only the current status of Buddhist teachings in Nepal, but also how this system of thought could be diverted for the purposes of nation building. Therefore, an exploratory survey was carried out in 2018 with questionnaires developed using Google Forms. The link was shared among 250 professionals and the first 100 responses received online were tabulated and analyzed. The study found that more than two-thirds of the respondents do not have even a basic knowledge about the Buddha's teachings and practices, which would comprise the teaching disseminated through the texts such as *The Dhammapada*, *The Jataka Stories*, and the philosophical foundations

of the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, and Meditation. Some of these professionals illustrated the importance of including the teachings of the Buddha in the school curriculum and offering meditation as an extracurricular activity and further suggested that the best way for Nepal inheriting the legacy of the Buddha is to treasure and practice his teachings.

Professor Shyama R. Weerakoon

Editor in Chief/OUSL Journal

Email: ouslj@ou.ac.lk



<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0975-2738>