

Editorial

This is the eighth Volume of the OUSL Journal, the journal of the Open University of Sri Lanka. The articles published in this issue cover research on Distance Education, Agriculture, and Bilingual Education Policy in Sri Lanka, Lifestyle Factors influencing Coronary Heart Diseases, Protective Techniques needed in Fluoroscopic Guided Surgeries, and Legal Issues related to Domestic Violence.

Extensive cultivation of vegetables and other crops causes depletion of natural phosphate content in soil. In order to enrich soil, farmers use phosphate fertilizer. A majority of Sri Lankan farmers applied higher quantities than the recommended amount, expecting higher yields. This over application of phosphorus fertilizer creates several environmental problems. Korallage *et al.* in their paper discuss these issues and the development of a simple and quick method to determine the available phosphorus in soil so that farmers themselves can estimate the amount of phosphorus fertilizer needed to apply to soil before they begin cultivation.

Agricultural activities (*e.g.* paddy and vegetable cultivation) in the dry zone of Sri Lanka are affected by inadequate rainfall and increased temperature. Gunawardena and De Silva, in their article, discuss the impact of induced temperature and water stress on vegetative and reproductive parameters of tomato variety *Rajitha*. Results show that there are severe yield reductions due to pollen sterility under high temperature. Therefore, farmers are advised to cultivate tomato variety *Rajitha* under greenhouse conditions providing adequate water as it was unsuccessful in open field conditions.

V. V. Medawattegedera, in her paper titled “*Kaduwa (a weapon) or Manne (a tool)? Issues and Tensions Related to Bilingual Education Policy in Sri Lanka*”, examines issues and challenges of the Bilingual Education policy initiated by the Ministry of Education in 2002. It acknowledges that the Ministry of Education does not still have a policy document other than a set of circulars and that each new circular seems to be an attempt to rectify misunderstandings because of the lack of clarity in policy.

Sivajenani *et al.* study the influence of lifestyle factors (*e.g.* dietary habits, pattern of exercise, habit of smoking, and alcohol intake) on Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) patients at the Teaching Hospital Jaffna. The results reveal that substantial proportions of CHD patients in the Teaching Hospital Jaffna did not have regular exercise and that a considerable number of participants was influenced by smoking and a few of them were at risk of CHD due to habitual alcohol consumption. Most of the participants had a poor educational background and as a result, they were self-employed as drivers, mechanics, laborers and fishermen.

Three years ago, the Faculty of Education of the Open University of Sri Lanka introduced several innovations, namely course team approach, training workshops for marking examiners, Activity Based Assignment Day Schools (ABADS) and appointment of centre coordinators for improving the quality of the Continuous Assignments (CA) mechanism of the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PDGE) programme. Lekange *et al.* in their article, evaluate the effectiveness of those components in improving the quality of the CA mechanism. Their finding reveal that the majority of student teachers, visiting academics and marking examiners was satisfied with the new innovations and admired the positive changes taken place in setting, marking and monitoring of assignments.

Dilusha et al. in their paper, present protective techniques followed by nurses to prevent X-ray exposure during fluoroscopic guided surgery at three hospitals in Sri Lanka; namely the National Hospital of Sri Lanka (NHSL), Colombo South Teaching Hospital (CSTH), and Sri Jayewardenepura General Hospital (SJGH). It was found that insufficient protective garments and equipment, poor use of modern technology, lack of training and poor knowledge on international standards are the major concerns/problems in using protective techniques to prevent X-ray exposure. They recommend that the nurses be properly trained before they are appointed to work at theatres with fluoroscopic guided surgery.

Domestic violence has a long history in Sri Lanka where victims are mostly women. According to the Istanbul Convention of 11th May 2011, “*domestic violence*” means “*all acts of physical, sexual,*

psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim". The paper titled "*Domestic Violence: Is the Sri Lankan woman still trapped in the private sphere?*" by Sunethra Goonetilleke examines the international treaties and conventions containing provisions relevant to domestic violence such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the convention on the elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. Then, she discusses the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act No 34 of 2005, which provides a viable solution to those confronted with domestic violence in Sri Lanka. Finally, this article explains the Sri Lankan legal position on domestic violence and the extent to which Sri Lanka has succeeded in formulating a legal framework for victims of domestic violence.

The current issue also includes the Convocation Address-2015 made by Professor Naveed A. Malik on the importance of Distance Education and its relevance to the current job market based on his experience at the Virtual University of Pakistan. The present job market looks for individuals who are prepared to update/acquire knowledge in more than one specialisation. In this regard, ODL provides an invaluable opportunity for self-motivated independent learners to achieve their goals by studying or offering Open Educational Resources (OER), Open Courseware (OCW) and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

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

Professor K. Sarath D. Perera
Editor-in-Chief