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MESSAGE FROM THE ADVISOR TO THE SYMPOSIUM

With its focus on '*A Productive and Innovative Culture for Shared Prosperity in Thriving Sri Lanka*,' the Second National Productivity Symposium underscores the importance of uniting research, practice, and policy in shaping our future.

At the National Productivity Secretariat, we believe productivity is best advanced when it becomes a shared, national conversation. For this reason, we are working to foster an academic and interdisciplinary discourse on productivity - bringing together research, practice, and policy to address the challenges and opportunities facing Sri Lanka today. This symposium is an important step in that mission, creating a platform where diverse voices can connect and shape practical, forward-looking solutions.

As a member of the Asian Productivity Organization (APO), Sri Lanka is aligned with its focus on innovation, green growth, and digital transformation. These same priorities guide our own national efforts, including *Prajashakthi*, *Clean Sri Lanka*, and the ongoing digitalization of services. The three tracks of this symposium - organizational excellence, green productivity, and digital transformation - demonstrate how closely our academic inquiry is aligned with both global priorities and national initiatives.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to our keynote speaker, Mrs. J. M. Thilaka Jayasundara, Secretary of the Ministry of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development, whose leadership and guidance continue to inspire our work. My gratitude also goes to all presenters, reviewers, panelists, and participants for their contributions, and to our Deputy Director, Ms. Pranidhi P. Algama Bopagamage, and her team for their tireless efforts in organizing this event.

May this symposium strengthen our shared resolve to build a Sri Lanka that is not only more productive, but also more innovative, sustainable, and inclusive.

Thank you

Niranja S. Jayakodi (SLAS)
BSc. (Food & Nutrition), MA (Sociology)

Director, National Productivity Secretariat
Advisor to the Symposium

MESSAGE FROM THE SYMPOSIUM CHAIR AND EDITOR

The National Productivity Symposium 2025 reflects Sri Lanka's growing commitment to embedding productivity and innovation into the nation's development journey. Since our first symposium in 2024, we have made remarkable progress - gaining traction, reaching wider audiences, and fostering a vibrant environment for productivity-led research, policy analysis, and innovation. What began as a single plenary session has now evolved into three dynamic tracks: Organizational Excellence and Entrepreneurial Agility; Green Productivity and Sustainable Innovation; and Digital Transformation, Smart Technology & Data-Driven Governance. This expansion speaks to the broadening perspectives and deepening aspirations that now define our symposium.

Productivity is more than output; it is about creating value that uplifts society. This spirit is reflected in abstracts exploring innovation, digital transformation, resilient workforces, and sustainable resource management—each offering practical pathways to embed productivity in daily life. Aligned with this vision, the theme of this year's symposium, *'A Productive and Innovative Culture for Shared Prosperity in Thriving Sri Lanka,'* underscores our national aspiration to empower people, strengthen institutions, and weave productivity into the fabric of sustainable development.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to our keynote speaker, Mrs. J. M. Thilaka Jayasundara, Secretary, Ministry of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development; to our Advisor, Mr. Niranja S. Jayakodi, Director, National Productivity Secretariat; to our distinguished panel of reviewers and panelists; and to the dedicated symposium team whose tireless work brought this event to life. Special gratitude also goes to those who laid the groundwork for our journey in 2024: our former Director, Mr. Suranga Guneratne; former Additional Secretary (Policy), Ms. K.D.R. Olga; and former Secretary to the Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment, Mr. R.P.A. Wimalaweera.

It is my sincere hope that the insights from this symposium spark lasting transformation and help embed productivity and innovation as everyday practices that sustain shared prosperity for all Sri Lankans.

Thank you.

Pranidhi P. Algama Bopagamage (SLAS)
BSc (Physical Science), LLB, MAIR

Deputy Director (Development ii), National Productivity Secretariat
Symposium Chair and Editor

MESSAGE FROM THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER

It is a distinct privilege to stand before you today at the Second National Productivity Symposium, under the inspiring theme of "*A Productive and Innovative Culture for Shared Prosperity in Thriving Sri Lanka*." This gathering builds upon the promise of our inaugural symposium, reflecting a powerful collaboration among policymakers, academics, practitioners, and communities, all united in weaving productivity and innovation into the DNA of our nation.

In 2024, Sri Lanka claimed the 89th position out of 133 economies on the Global Innovation Index, a modest rise from 90th in 2023. Yet, our performance in key domains such as human capital and research remains among the lowest, signaling an urgent imperative to bolster our foundations. Compounding this is a troubling 2.7% decline in labour productivity between 2022 and 2023, as reported in the Global Innovation Tracker.

Yet productivity must not be dismissed as a cold economic statistic. It is, in truth, a measure of how skillfully we wield our human, natural, financial, and technological assets to uplift the lives of every Sri Lankan. The OECD definition frame productivity as the efficient conversion of inputs into outputs, a cornerstone for sustainable growth. Innovation, in this context, acts as the spark that renders this engine dynamic, inclusive, and adaptive. Together, productivity and innovation become our compass, guiding us through the uncertainties of the 21st century toward shared and sustainable prosperity.

Hence, our path forward must be guided by three integrated strategic pillars. First, Organizational Excellence & Entrepreneurial Agility builds institutions and enterprises that can quickly anticipate opportunities and act decisively. Second, Green Productivity & Sustainable Innovation ensures our progress today does not compromise the well-being of future generations. And third, Digital Transformation, Smart Technology & Data-Driven Governance leverages technology and evidence-based policymaking to enhance efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness across all sectors.

Sri Lanka stands at a critical inflection point. On one hand, we grapple with economic restructuring, climate uncertainties, global volatility, and rapid technological change. On the other hand, we are endowed with a resilient workforce, a strategic geographic position, and deep-rooted ingenuity. How effectively we utilize productivity and innovation will determine whether we turn these challenges into opportunity.

The research converging in this symposium offers genuine cause for optimism. Case studies demonstrating digital transformation in divisional secretariats show how data-led governance can reshape public services. Green productivity initiatives in rural communities reveal how environmental responsibility and economic progress can be mutual allies. Analyses of small and medium-sized enterprises underscore the catalytic role of entrepreneurship, while insights into

resilience and compassion in organizations remind us that a human-centered approach sustains performance, even in tumultuous times.

These contributions affirm a fundamental truth: productivity is not the jurisdiction of any single ministry or sector, but a collective endeavor. When farmers use sustainable techniques, teachers embrace digital tools, administrators streamline public services, and businesses innovate with conviction, all of these actions contribute to our national productivity.

As policymakers, we must craft frameworks that enable and amplify these initiatives. That means investing in research and development, fostering regulatory environments that encourage innovation, pursuing public service reforms, and nurturing partnerships with business and civil society. Equally important is cultivating a culture of productivity; from instilling discipline and teamwork in our preschoolers to guiding boardroom decisions that shape national competitiveness.

At the heart of our symposium's theme lies the ideal of shared prosperity. Prosperity is only meaningful when it is inclusive - when every citizen, whether from urban centers or rural communities, is touched by its benefits. Productivity is the path to that inclusivity, ensuring that growth leads to jobs, services, and opportunities that uplift all communities.

As we close this gathering, let us remember: the symposium's real legacy lies in what comes next. The insights we share, the networks we forge, and the ideas we crystallize must flow into action. We must translate research into reform and inspiration into implementation.

I commend the National Productivity Secretariat and its leadership for cultivating a research-driven, productivity-centered culture, and I acknowledge the scholars and practitioners whose scholarship blends rigor with real-world relevance. Let us depart with renewed determination to build a Sri Lanka where productivity and innovation are not distant ideals, but woven into daily life - a Sri Lanka that thrives in economic strength, social well-being, institutional resilience, and environmental sustainability.

Together, let us forge a truly productive and innovative culture that delivers shared prosperity for a thriving Sri Lanka.

Thank you.

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Secretary
Ministry of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development

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First Plenary Session

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL AGILITY

IMPROVING WORKPLACE WELL-BEING THROUGH DIGITAL NATURE INTERVENTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The workplace burnout syndrome, which includes screen fatigue, chronic stress, and emotional exhaustion is on the rise owing to an increase in the use of technology in workplaces. In response, organizations are exploring virtual reality nature settings, nature soundscapes, and mindfulness-based visuals as one of the digital nature interventions to improve workplace wellness. This research looks into the impact of stress and other mental health conditions with the primary aims of the mental and emotional aspects of work and secondary aims on the best approaches for implementation in different workplace settings. Employees' responses to nature-based digital and hybrid interventions were evaluated through a combination of controlled experiments and qualitative assessments. Results indicate that exposure to digitized nature with a guided element produces dramatic improvement in cognitive functioning, emotional self-regulation, coping with stress, and particularly in hybrid models. Suggestions include developing standardized measurement tools, intervention models specific to setting, and additional research into cross-cultural variation in effectiveness. As work environments evolve with the digital age, integration of evidence-based nature exposure into corporate health promotion initiatives will be key to sustaining employee health, productivity, and job satisfaction. Research in the future must aim at simplifying implementation methods and determining long-term effects in a variety of occupational environments. These interventions represent a promising intersection of nature-based therapy and technology that offers 21st-century workplaces scalable and cost-effective mental health services.

Keywords: Digital Interventions of Nature, Nature Therapy, Stress Management, Workplace Productivity

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STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FOR PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT IN THE ORGANIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF SIGIRI WEAVING MILLS (PVT.) LTD.

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the strategic management practices that drive productivity growth within the private sector, focusing on Sigiri Weaving Mills (Pvt.) Ltd., a leading textile manufacturer in Sri Lanka. As the global demand for competitive, efficient, and sustainable manufacturing increases, private sector companies must evolve by utilizing integrated strategic tools. The objectives of this research are to assess how contemporary strategic management tools such as SWOT analysis, Balanced Scorecard, Lean Manufacturing, and Data Envelopment Analysis Program (DEAP) are utilized within the company; examine the effects of these tools on operational productivity, employee performance, and cost-effectiveness; and identify strategies that can be replicated by Sri Lankan SMEs encountering similar industrial challenges. The methodology adopted for this case study includes a mixed-methods approach: qualitative interviews with senior management, focus group discussions with middle-level supervisors, and quantitative analysis of productivity indicators over the past five years' worth of productivity metrics. Strategic Management frameworks such as SWOT analysis, Balanced Scorecard, and Lean Manufacturing principles were used to assess the company's internal and external strategic alignment. The DEAP software was utilized to measure technical and scale efficiency using multi-input and multi-output models. Key findings indicate that the company's strategic planning particularly its investment in human capital development, automation, and lean production techniques has significantly contributed to increased output per employee, reduced waste, and improved product quality. Furthermore, the integration of digital inventory systems and performance-based incentive structures has enhanced efficiency across departments DEAP analysis revealed a marked increase in technical efficiency, affirming the value of these tools. The study concludes that strategic management, when aligned with industry-specific challenges and opportunities, can serve as a powerful driver of productivity in the private sector. The findings offer valuable insights for other small and medium-scale enterprises in Sri Lanka seeking to improve competitiveness through structured strategic initiatives.

Keywords: Strategic Management, Productivity Enhancement, Textile Manufacturing, DEAP, Lean Production

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EMBEDDING COMPASSION IN ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS: ENHANCING RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE OUTPUT

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ABSTRACT

Amidst rising workplace volatility, burnout, and fragmented human systems, embedding compassion into organizational design offers a compelling pathway toward sustainable productivity and resilience. The objective of this study is to critically examine how compassion, defined as a proactive, empathetic response to human need, can be systematically integrated into organizational culture, leadership, and policy frameworks to enhance long-term performance in Sri Lankan work environments. The review drew from interdisciplinary databases including Scopus, PsycINFO, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, covering peer-reviewed studies published between 2000 and 2024. Inclusion criteria focused on empirical or theoretical research that examined compassion-related constructs (e.g., empathy, psychological safety, emotional intelligence) within organizational or workplace settings. Exclusion criteria eliminated studies that were purely clinical, unrelated to system-level design, or lacking practical implications for organizational change. A total of 47 studies were selected and synthesized using thematic analysis. Given the reliance on secondary sources and interpretive synthesis, the method employed is qualitative in nature, adopting a narrative review approach. Findings indicate that compassion-based interventions, such as compassionate leadership training, emotionally intelligent communication systems, and peer support structures, consistently improve employee resilience, reduce turnover, and boost engagement. Organizations that institutionalize compassion report higher psychological safety, faster post-crisis recovery, and greater innovation. Notably, cultural congruence and leadership buy-in emerged as critical success factors for implementation, especially in collectivist contexts like Sri Lanka. The discussion highlights that compassion is not a soft ideal but a strategic lever for building adaptive, human-centered systems. As Sri Lanka strives for innovation-driven growth and shared prosperity, integrating compassion into organizational DNA may offer a scalable model for thriving amid disruption. Recommendations include national policy shifts toward emotional intelligence development and public-private collaboration on compassion-based organizational training.

Keywords: Organizational Compassion, Resilience, Emotional Intelligence, Sustainable Productivity, Narrative Review

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THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATING REGIONAL SMES ON THE ADVERSE IMPACTS OF UNPROFESSIONAL FINANCIAL PRACTICES IN SRI LANKA: A CASE STUDY ON NUGEGODA AREA

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the adverse impact of unprofessional financial practices on the economic stability and sustainability of regional Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Sri Lanka, specifically focusing on the Nugegoda area of the Colombo District. Regional SMEs are crucial, contributing over 60% of total production and approximately 52% of the national GDP. However, they face significant financial management challenges, including poor record-keeping, over-reliance on informal lending, and inadequate financial planning, which threaten their long-term viability. Many regional SMEs operate informally; lacking standardized financial frameworks, and often resorts to unregulated informal lenders who charge exorbitant interest rates, ranging from 20% to 60% per month, leading to severe debt accumulation and long-term financial instability. Employing a qualitative case study approach, the research involved field visits and semi-structured interviews with 20 small foods stall and shop owners in Nugegoda, utilizing convenience and purposive sampling. A participant-observer role was adopted, gathering firsthand insights into financial decision-making and credit access through informal discussions conducted in the national language Sinhala to ensure authenticity and reduce response bias. The collected data was analyzed to identify recurring financial management issues. The findings reveal several prevalent unprofessional financial practices, including failing to separate personal and business finances, inconsistent accounting records, poor budgeting and financial planning, and a general avoidance of financial audits. These practices result in severe adverse outcomes, such as disrupted cash flow, persistent debt cycles from high-interest loans, and limited access to formal credit, hindering growth and often leading to business failures, job losses, and significant social stress among SME owners. The study highlights the urgent need for structured financial education and formal financial inclusion programs for regional SMEs. Addressing financial literacy gaps and fostering responsible financial management can significantly enhance SME sustainability, improve local livelihoods, and strengthen their crucial contributions to Sri Lanka's national economic growth.

Keywords: Financial Literacy, Regional SMEs, Informal Lending, Financial Mismanagement

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VISIONARY ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION IN RESOURCE-CONSTRAINED ENVIRONMENTS: A CASE STUDY FROM SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Innovation in developing economies is often perceived as being constrained by the lack of formal infrastructure, technical resources, and institutional support. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating under such limitations are rarely expected to lead in innovation. However, this study challenges that assumption by examining how visionary entrepreneurship characterized by long-term thinking, opportunity recognition, and internal strategic action can drive innovation in resource-constrained contexts. The study focuses on Bondville (Pvt) Ltd, Sri Lankan apparel SME that manufactures both bonded apparel and custom-designed bonding machinery based on purposive sampling. The objective was to explore how visionary entrepreneurship enables sustained innovation without reliance on external support or high-end R&D. A qualitative single-case design was employed. Data were gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews with five key personnel, on-site observations, and internal documents. Thematic analysis was used to identify innovation practices and strategic behaviors shaped by entrepreneurial vision. Three key themes emerged: strategic innovation through technical self-reliance, opportunity recognition in niche export markets, and resource-conscious innovation through frugal and modular design. These findings reveal how innovation can be internally driven through foresight, experimentation, and adaptation, even in the absence of formal support systems. The case illustrates that resource constraints can stimulate rather than inhibit innovation when guided by visionary intent. This study addresses a critical gap in entrepreneurship literature by showing how innovation in SMEs can be embedded in local capability, informal systems, and strategic resilience. It also contributes to more inclusive innovation frameworks relevant to emerging economies.

Keywords: Innovation in SMEs, Resource-constrained Contexts, Visionary Entrepreneurship

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EMBRACING NEURODIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE: UNLOCKING UNTAPPED POTENTIAL FOR PRODUCTIVITY IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Neurodiversity, the natural variation in human cognitive functioning, including conditions such as autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia, and ADHD is increasingly recognized as a valuable asset in today's knowledge-driven economy. Global companies like SAP, Microsoft, and JPMorgan Chase have embraced neurodiverse hiring to foster innovation, enhance team performance, and boost productivity. In contrast, Sri Lanka remains at an early stage in recognizing the workplace potential of neurodiverse individuals, with limited discourse around inclusion and productivity outcomes. This study explores how neurodiversity can serve as a catalyst for workplace productivity in Sri Lanka by drawing on qualitative analysis of literature, global best practices, and semi-structured interviews with 15 employees, including 5 neurodivergent individuals. While findings indicate limited awareness, there is growing employer interest in inclusive hiring. Key challenges include stigma, lack of policy frameworks, and unfamiliarity with reasonable accommodations. Nonetheless, neurodiverse employees often excel in pattern recognition, attention to detail, and creative problem-solving skills that, if properly supported, can significantly enhance organizational performance. The paper argues that embracing neurodiversity not only promotes social inclusion but also unlocks underutilized potential for innovation and productivity. Recommended measures include awareness training, inclusive recruitment strategies, and the development of neurodiversity-sensitive workplace practices.

Keywords: Neurodiversity, Workplace Inclusion, Productivity

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ENHANCING WORKFORCE RESILIENCE BY CULTIVATING SKILLS AND AGILITY FOR FUTURE WORKPLACES

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ABSTRACT

The pace of change in the workforce landscape, driven by artificial intelligence, automation, economic shifts, and global events, means that skills can quickly become obsolete. The global workforce is undergoing a profound transformation fueled by rapid digitalization and the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into everyday work processes. AI technologies, especially generative AI and large language models, are revolutionizing industries by enhancing productivity, creativity, and decision-making at an unprecedented scale. According to the McKinsey report (2025), AI has the potential to drive a $4.4 trillion boost in productivity growth. Yet, only a small fraction of companies has fully integrated AI into their workflows, highlighting a gap between potential and current readiness. The World Economic Forum (WEF) 2025 report emphasizes that AI and broad digital access will be the most transformative trends shaping the employment ecosystem by 2030, driving both the creation of new jobs and the displacement of others. The objectives of this review paper are to examine the impact of rapid AI integration and digitalization on workforce skill requirements and psychological resilience; to identify effective strategies and interventions for building workforce resilience, including skill adaptability and emotional well-being; and to evaluate the role of organizational culture, leadership, and continuous learning in sustaining workforce resilience for future productivity. This qualitative narrative review employs thematic synthesis to analyze key themes from relevant literature identified through databases (ScienceDirect, PubMed, Google Scholar, and SAGE) with key search terms such as "workforce resilience," "skill adaptability," "AI integration in workforce," and "psychological resilience at work." The analysis identified recurring themes of skill obsolescence and psychological pressure, supported by existing quantitative data on workplace stress and skill gaps. In conclusion, workforce resilience is essential for navigating rapid technological and economic shifts. These findings, drawn from the qualitative and quantitative synthesis, support the critical need for multifaceted resilience-building approaches combining skill development, psychological support, and adaptive leadership. Organizations must provide personalized AI-driven learning and ensure equal digital access to boost workforce agility. Combining agile leadership, behavioral support, and data-driven feedback helps balance skill growth with psychological resilience.

Keywords: Workforce Resilience, Skill Adaptability, AI Integration in Workforce, Psychological Resilience at Work.

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ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ කොවිඩ්-19 අර්බුද කළමනාකරණය සහ මහජන ප්‍රතිචාරයඃ රාජ්‍ය ප්‍රතිපත්ති, පුද්ගල ස්වාධිපත්‍යය සහ පැවැත්මේ අර්බුදය පිළිබඳ සාංදෘෂ්ටිකවාදී විමර්ශනයක්

එන්. ඩී. එන්. සී ජයසිංහ*, *දර්ශනය අධ්‍යයන අංශය, සාමාජීය විද්‍යා පීඨය, කැලණිය විශ්ව විද්‍යාලය, ශ්‍රී ලංකාව*

එම්. හරිස්චන්ද්‍ර, *දර්ශනය අධ්‍යයන අංශය, සාමාජීය විද්‍යා පීඨය, කැලණිය විශ්ව විද්‍යාලය, ශ්‍රී ලංකාව*

ජී. පී. ජී. එච්. සිරිවර්ධන, *දර්ශනය අධ්‍යයන අංශය, සාමාජීය විද්‍යා පීඨය, කැලණිය විශ්ව විද්‍යාලය, ශ්‍රී ලංකාව*

සාරසංක්ෂේපය

කොවිඩ්-19 වසංගතය තුළ ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ පැන වූ සංචරණ සීමා, මහජන සෞඛ්‍ය සුරක්ෂිත භාවය ඉලක්ක කරගත් අත්‍යවශ්‍ය නියාමන මැදිහත් වීමක් වුවද, එය මහජන අනුකූලතාව සම්බන්ධයෙන් සංකීර්ණ අභියෝග කරළියට ගෙන ඒමට සමත් විය. මෙම පර්යේෂණ නිබන්ධනය, එකී නියාමන ක්‍රමෝපායන්ට එරෙහිව ජනිත වූ මහජන ඉච්ඡාභංගත්වය සහ අනුකූලතා විචල්‍යතාව, සාංදෘෂ්ටිකවාදී දාර්ශනික න්‍යාය ඔස්සේ විමර්ශනය කරයි. පර්යේෂණයේ මූලික ප්‍රතිතර්කය වනුයේ, මහජන අනුකූලතාව හුදු නීතිමය බලපෑමේ ප්‍රතිඵලයක් නොව, පුද්ගල නිදහස, වගකීම සහ පැවැත්මේ අර්ථය වැනි සාංදෘෂ්ටික මූලධර්ම රාජ්‍ය ප්‍රතිපත්ති සම්පාදනයේදී සහ ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීමේදී නොසලකා හැරීමේ සෘජු ප්‍රතිවිපාකයක් බවයි. ගුණාත්මක අර්ථකථන විශ්ලේෂණ ක්‍රමවේදයක් සහ ද්විතීයික දත්ත විශ්ලේෂණයක් මත පදනම්ව, මෙම පර්යේෂණය රාජ්‍ය ප්‍රතිපත්ති ලේඛන, ආර්ථික දත්ත, ජාත්‍යන්තර වාර්තා, මාධ්‍ය කතිකාවන් සහ මහජන ප්‍රතිචාර විශ්ලේෂණය කරයි. ජීන්-පෝල් සාත්‍ර සහ ඇල්බෙයාර් කැමූගේ නිරපේක්ෂ නිදහස (radical freedom), 'අසද්භාවය' (bad faith), සහ 'නිරර්ථකත්වය' (the absurd) වැනි සංකල්ප, මෙම දත්ත අර්ථ කථනය කිරීමේ විශ්ලේෂණාත්මක මෙවලම් ලෙස යොදා ගැනීම සුවිශේෂී වේ. ප්‍රධාන අනාවරණයන් ගම්‍ය කරනුයේ, ප්‍රතිපත්තිමය අස්ථාවරත්වය, සන්නිවේදන විනිවිද භාවයේ ඌනතාව, සහ ඒකපාර්ශ්වික, මිලිටරිකරණය වූ තීරණ ගැනීමේ ක්‍රියාවලිය, පුද්ගල ස්වාධිපත්‍යය බාදනය කරමින්, පැවැත්මේ 'නිරර්ථකත්වය' පිළිබඳ හැඟීමක් පුරවැසියන් තුළ ජනිත කළ බවයි. මෙම තත්ත්වය, රාජ්‍ය නියෝගයන්ට අනුගත වීම අසද්භාවයෙන් යුතු ක්‍රියාවක් ලෙස අර්ථ කථනය කරගැනීමට හෝ තම නිදහස තහවුරු කිරීමේ ක්‍රියාවක් ලෙස අර්ථ කථනය කරමින් නීති කඩකිරීමට පුද්ගලයන් නැඹුරු කළේය. අවසාන වශයෙන්, මෙම අධ්‍යයනය නිගමනය කරනුයේ, අනාගත ව්‍යසන කළමනාකරණ ප්‍රතිපත්ති සම්පාදනයේදී, පුද්ගලයාගේ පැවැත්මේ ගෞරවය, ස්වාධීනත්වය සහ තේරීමේ නිදහස මූලිකාංග ලෙස පිළිගන්නා සහභාගීත්ව ප්‍රවේශයක් අනුගමනය කිරීම මගින් හුදෙක් ප්‍රජාතන්ත්‍රවාදී වටිනාකමක් පමණක් නොව, මහජන අනුකූලතාව සහතික කිරීමේ සහ සමාජ ඉච්ඡාභංගත්වය අවම කිරීමේ ප්‍රබල උපාය මාර්ගයක් සපයන බවයි.

මුඛ්‍ය පදඃ ඉච්ඡාභංගත්වය, මහජන අනුකූලතාව, සංචරණ සීමා, සාංදෘෂ්ටිකවාදය, කොවිඩ්-19

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The English translation of this abstract is provided on the following page.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC REACTION TO COVID-19 IN SRI LANKA: AN EXISTENTIALIST EXPLORATION INTO STATE POLICY, INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM, AND THE CRISIS OF BEING

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ABSTRACT

Although the travel bans imposed during Sri Lanka's COVID-19 pandemic were a regulatory necessity aimed at enhancing public health security, they raised complex challenges related to public compliance to the forefront. This research essay analyzes public frustration and heterogeneity of compliance that resulted against these policy measures from the lens of existentialist philosophical theory. The general thesis of this research is that public compliance is not solely a result of legal enforcement but a direct consequence of neglecting existential principles such as individual freedom, responsibility, and existence meaning while designing and implementing state policies. Based on a qualitative interpretive analysis methodology and secondary analysis of data, this research analyzes state policy documents, economic data, foreign reports, media texts, and popular responses. What is unique with this research is the use of words such as Jean-Paul Sartre's and Albert Camus's 'radical freedom,' 'bad faith,' and 'the absurd' as analytic tools to analyze this data. The most important findings are that policy instability, communicational opaqueness, and one-way, militarist decision-making disempowered individuals, generating a sense of existential 'absurdity' for the masses. The state of affairs led individuals to opt either to consider compliance with state directives as an exercise of 'bad faith' or violate the law, perceiving it as a performance of exercising their freedom. Finally, this study confirms that adopting a participatory approach to future disaster policy-making one that respects human dignity, autonomy, and freedom of choice as fundamental principles not only generates a democratic value but also offers an effective way of securing public compliance and minimizing social frustration. (258)

Keywords: Frustration, Public Compliance, Travel Restrictions, Existentialism, COVID-19

FOSTERING A PRODUCTIVITY CULTURE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF ARIYALAI THIRUMAGAL PRESCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This case study explores the integration of a productivity-oriented value system into early childhood education as a pathway to sustainable national development in Sri Lanka. Conducted at Ariyalai Thirumagal Preschool under the guidance of the Nallur Divisional Secretariat, the research employed a mixed-methods approach with 25 children aged 3–5 years. The intervention aimed to strengthen children's cognitive, behavioral, and emotional development, fostering a lasting culture of productivity. Over six months, the study combined qualitative observations, interviews with teachers and parents, and quantitative assessments of engagement and skill acquisition. The program was structured around the 5S methodology, and integrated with environmental education and community-based participation to promote organization, environmental stewardship, teamwork, and healthy living habits. Data collection methods included pre and post intervention questionnaire surveys, structured teacher observations, participatory techniques such as the "Put-Up Hands" method, and focus group discussions with teachers and parents. Results indicated significant improvements across all behavioral indicators: cleanliness and organization rose from 48% to 88%, teamwork from 40% to 96%, and leadership from 44% to 88%. Environmental awareness increased from 36% to 88%, preference for eco-friendly materials from 28% to 88%, while reliance on plastic toys declined from 84% to 36%. Fruit consumption improved from 60% to 96%, and correct waste segregation practices from 12% to 72%. Teacher observations confirmed these trends, with notable gains in leadership and cleanliness. The findings demonstrate that structured, participatory interventions in early childhood learning environments can produce measurable improvements in productivity-related behaviors, sustainable practices, and holistic development. Aligning school-based activities with home reinforcement was critical to maintaining progress. This model offers a scalable framework for embedding productivity culture in preschool education, supporting Sri Lanka's sustainable development goals, community resilience, and long-term behavioral transformation.

Keywords: Productivity Culture, Early Childhood Education, Sustaining Productivity, Community Resilience

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MEASURING PRODUCTIVITY IN DIVISIONAL SECRETARIATS: A CONTEXT-SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK FOR SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the development of a structured and context-specific framework to measure productivity within the Divisional Administration system in Sri Lanka. Despite the critical role played by Divisional Secretariats in public service delivery—especially following the enactment of the Transfer of Powers (Divisional Secretaries) Act, No. 58 of 1992—there remains a significant gap in performance measurement mechanisms at the divisional level. While executive-level government officers are evaluated through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Divisional Secretariats lack a standardized system for assessing their productivity, leading to inefficiencies, limited transparency, inconsistency in practices and insufficient accountability in administrative practices. The National Productivity Secretariat introduced a KPI based productivity measurement system in 2025 titled "Divisional Productivity Index 1.0" (DPI), based on the Performance Efficiency Indicator (PEI) framework, following two pilot projects in 2023 and 2024. Primary objective of this research is to evaluate the suitability of this system as a framework for evaluating productivity in Divisional Administration. The objectives of the study are: to assess the current performance measurement mechanisms for Divisional Secretariats; to discuss the contextual background of the DPI; and to evaluate the contextual appropriateness and effectiveness of DPI as a framework tailored to the specific functions and responsibilities of Divisional Secretariats. This research adopts a qualitative methodology, as it is based on the 2024 DPI pilot project. The pilot project included 13 Divisional Secretariats in Western Province. This study is based on the secondary data obtained from the project report. Analytical techniques involved qualitative analysis supported by visual tools such as charts and thematic categorizations. The study identified major deficiencies in existing performance assessment practices, including the lack of uniform evaluation criteria, underutilization of data, and minimal stakeholder engagement. Based on empirical findings, the research found that the DPI 1.0 framework improves evidence-based decision-making and enhance administrative planning. The research recommends that the framework should be developed to cover all internal processes of the Divisional Secretariat, as it aims to promote transparency, accountability, and productivity at the grassroots level, thereby contributing to more effective and citizen-centered governance.

Key Words: Performance Efficiency Indicators (PEIs)**,** Divisional Secretariat, Public Service Delivery**,** Productivity Measurement Framework

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Second Plenary Session

GREEN PRODUCTIVITY AND SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

CLIMATE ACTION CO-BENEFITS OF A MODEL TRANSPORT PROJECT IN TRINCOMALEE NAVAL DOCKYARD

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ABSTRACT

Climate change is a complex global threat to human societies, and mitigating climate change impacts by lowering emissions is a challenge. In Sri Lanka, transportation is the second-highest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Cycling has many health benefits as a mode of moderate to vigorous physical activity, amidst the proliferation of non-communicable diseases due to inadequate physical activity. Furthermore, cycling is recognized as a mode of transportation that contributes towards reducing urban traffic congestion, noise and air pollution.

This retrospective study analyzed secondary data from a model cycling project in 2022, at Naval Dockyard in Trincomalee to assess the climate and health benefits of cycling as an alternative transport solution. The project deployed 87 bicycles across 9 integrated stations, strategically allocated to naval and civilian staff, including women sailors, to bridge residential and workplace transit needs. The analysis shows that the average distance travelled by a person is approximately 9 km per day using cycling. In 2022, cyclists covered 328,500 km, displacing fossil fuel use and reducing carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions by 54,000 kg (petrol) and 61,000 kg (diesel), totaling 115,000 kg CO2-equivalent. The daily approximate reduction of CO2 emissions is 3.1kg per day per person. In addition, interventions such as traffic education, stricter enforcement of reduced speed limits (30 km/h) and cycling priority lanes have contributed to enhanced safety and well-being. By integrating cycling infrastructure with multi-modal transport, the model advances equitable, sustainable urban planning. Future studies should employ longitudinal designs to assess long-term health and emission outcomes. This case underscores cycling's dual role in fostering green productivity and climate resilience as co-benefits.

Keywords: Cycling, Climate Change Adaptation, Public Health, Climate Co-Benefits, Green Productivity

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VALORIZING KITCHEN COCONUT DUST AT PERADENIYA TEACHING HOSPITAL: A STEP TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE CLEANING AGENT PRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT

Teaching Hospital Peradeniya (THP) is the second-largest hospital in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. It admits nearly 80,000 patients annually and has a bed capacity of 1,000. The average length of stay for inpatients at THP is about three days, with approximately 630 patients treated as inpatients each day. Given this number, the hospital needs to provide three meals for each patient daily. In preparing these meals, the kitchen uses coconut in every dish, consuming around 40 coconuts per day. This process generates about 15 kg of leftover coconut dust daily. Previously, this discarded coconut dust was not utilized effectively. However, THP has decided to make use of this wastem item by producing soap from the coconut dust within the hospital. The objective of this project was to produce detergent soap in the THP by using coconut dust from the kitchen (THP). To start this project, discarded coconut dust was collected from the kitchen of THP and dried in sunlight. Once dried, the coconut dust was sent to an oil mill to extract coconut oil. Next, soap was made in the hospital using the coconut oil, caustic soda, water, and Sri Lanka Standard Institute-permitted color and fragrance, following the standard ratios for each ingredient. This production involved human resources from the hospital staff with their enthusiasm. The costs were calculated by considering material cost, labor cost, transportation, and other expenses. Ultimately, the production cost of one kilogram of soap was Rs. 208.87. This project was initiated as a pilot using the coconut dust collected within two weeks' duration in the year 2022. The soap produced was used for general purposes in hospitals. The soap-making project can be made sustainable throughout the island by coordinating with various government sectors. Coconut dust is gathered in hospitals, hostels, and training schools as waste, which can be collected and processed in the same manner. Soap produced can be distributed at reasonable prices to public-sector institutions, including hospitals. If there is excessive production, it can be sold to other sectors.

Key words: Sustainability, Waste Repurposing, Hospital, Soap from Coconut Dust

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EFFECTIVENESS OF AZOLLA PINNATA AS A GREEN FERTILIZER: A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION FOR RADISH CULTIVATION

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ABSTRACT

Food security is a fundamental aspect worldwide, as highlighted in Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2), which focuses on delivering sustainable, nutrient-rich, and economically accessible food to meet the needs of a growing population in the face of climate change. The use of green fertilizer is considered one of the approaches in sustainable agriculture. Hence, the objectives of the present research were to evaluate the effectiveness of *Azolla pinnata*, a nitrogen-fixing aquatic fern, as a biofertilizer and to investigate its impact on the antioxidant activity of radish (*Raphanus sativus*). An efficacy test was conducted in a greenhouse, followed by four treatments: control (no fertilizer), urea alone, *Azolla* alone, and a combination of *Azolla* and urea with the same N ratio in each treatment. Those treatments were arranged in a randomized complete block design with four replicates. Key growth parameters included plant height, root diameter, chlorophyll content, biomass (fresh and dry weight), antioxidant activity of the bulbs, and changes in soil organic matter were determined. The combination treatment (*Azolla* + urea) showed the highest average plant height (26.9 cm), root diameter (2.63 mm), and total biomass (143.18 g). Chlorophyll content was also superior in the *Azolla*-urea group throughout the four-week observation period. Antioxidant activity in radish bulbs revealed a statistically significant improvement ($p < 0.05$) in this treatment compared to others, particularly the control. The highest soil organic matter content was also recorded in *Azolla*-treated plots. Nitrogen Use Efficiency (NUE) was highest in the *Azolla*-urea treatment, followed by urea alone, and then *Azolla* alone. The results demonstrate that combining *Azolla* with urea can reduce

dependency on chemical inputs while enhancing crop yield and quality. The present study also observed improved soil fertility and microbial health, suggesting that *Azolla* has the potential to support integrated nutrient management strategies, particularly in tropical environments.

Keywords: Antioxidant, *Azolla pinnata*, Bio-fertilizer

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ENHANCING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH WATER RESOURCE OPTIMIZATION: A CASE STUDY IN A TERTIARY HEALTHCARE INSTITUTION

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ABSTRACT

Healthcare facilities increasingly adopt green initiatives to boost operational productivity and sustainability. Globally, hospitals on average use about 550 L per bed daily (excluding laundry/gardening). Tertiary healthcare institutions spend substantial public funds on water, and this interventional study at District General Hospital (DGH)—Kegalle aimed to explore means to improve water productivity and recommend best practices for water use. The monthly water consumption of DGH-Kegalle from January to July 2023 was observed to identify consumption rate and patterns. During the intervention (August-September 2023), all units were systematically informed (internal memos) on the best practices of water use while activating a mechanism to report leaks. In parallel, a comprehensive audit was conducted to identify all hospital water fixtures and related issues. The identified problems were promptly addressed during the two-month intervention period, with the active participation of hospital staff and the National Water Supply and Drainage Board. Following the intervention, monthly water consumption was monitored (October 2023–April 2024), and per-bed consumption was recalculated. Prior to the intervention, the average monthly consumption was 20,937±97 units, with a daily per-bed consumption of 866 L. Leaks were detected in 6% of the 995 taps (≈60), 7% of the 170 bathroom fixtures (≈12), and 12% of the 168 commodes (≈20). Upon intervention, the average monthly consumption reduced to 18,185±92 units with a daily per-bed consumption of 750 L, resulting in a notable 13.14% decline in water usage. This directly translates to a substantial cost saving of approximately LKR 440,000 per month, demonstrating impressive productivity gains. The process is continuously monitored, creating a sustainable, positive culture within the institution. Overall, the study emphasizes the need for systematic audits, continuous monitoring, regular maintenance of water supply fixtures, and frequent awareness for efficient water use. Such green initiatives can positively promote responsible and productive resource utilization in the healthcare sector, which can be used as a replicable model.

Keywords: Water Conservation, Best Practices, Green Hospitals, Resource Management

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GREEN PRODUCTIVITY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - A CASE STUDY OF MANAIPAY EAST GREEN MODEL VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the use of green productivity principles to promote sustainable development in the J/138 Manipay East Green Model village, located within the Valikamam Southwest Divisional Secretariat in the Jaffna District of Sri Lanka. Green productivity activities involve integrating environmental national goals and sustainable development goals (SDGs) with economic growth. The primary objective of this research is to evaluate how community-driven green efforts improve the environmental setback, increase livelihoods, and promote sustainable development. A mixed-method approach to standard methods was used, including collefromcting primary data Key Informant Interviews (KII), focus team interviews, field observations and Participation of Rural Assessment (PRA) techniques, and secondary data from government records and policy documents. Thematic and comparative analyses were conducted to evaluate local procedures and their wide impacts. Innovations reveal the significant implementation of green productivity practices, including home composting (90%), waste separation (90%), organic agriculture (85%), and solar energy use (20%). Land use in the village reflects standard planning, with more than 83% of environmental friendly production including agro products. Women led families and community-based organizations (CBOs) are the major contributors in environmental efforts and income creation. The initiatives in the village are in line with seven SDGs, especially SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), and SDG 13 (climate change and its impacts). However, the challenges are prolonged to improve renewable energy and infrastructure. This study highlights the performance of locally adopted green productivity models, guided by the community, and provides a reflection structure for rural development in other regions of Sri Lanka. Results contribute to educational discussions and provide practical recommendations for policy coordination, skill development, and stable rural change.

Key words: Green Productivity, Sustainable Development, Community-based Innovation

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FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE: AN EVALUATION OF THE HOUSEHOLD SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN JAFFNA MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT

Solid waste management in Jaffna Municipality (MC) area has been an issue faced by the Authorities for a long time and they blame the public and inadequacy of resources for the current state of affair. Hence, they introduced a new system to collect solid waste within its jurisdiction area from January. Accordingly, they have issued a solid waste disposal registration card to each household, then, requested them to separate waste into eight categories and assigned a date for collection. The new system is in operation from January 2025. The objectives of this paper are to evaluate the impact of the newly introduced system currently in use, and to identify the issues encountered by the households and the MC authorities in implementing the new waste management system to achieve the goals envisaged. The researcher conducted Key Person Interviews (KPIs) mainly with the key persons directly engaged in household solid waste collection and disposal in JMC. Further, group discussions were held with the public in wards selected through random probability sampling to identify the reasons for switching to a new system and to assess the household support and cooperation for the new system. Similarly, the researcher met the households in groups organized through the GN in selected wards and conducted discussions using a guided questionnaire to obtain their views on the new system and suggestions for improving the garbage collection and disposal system to keep the city clean and tidy. Inadequate resources, the attitude of labor and the public, bottlenecks at the disposal areas and poor Understanding solid waste management seems to be the major reasons for unsuccessful operation. The findings indicate that while household participation in waste segregation is relatively high, most segregate waste only into 2 to 5 categories. Public attitudes toward cleanliness are largely positive (85%), but actual practices delay, partly due to insufficient awareness, limited recycling facilities, and negative interactions with some sanitation workers. Suggestions from residents include stronger awareness campaigns, strict penalties for violators, regular collection, expansion of recycling centers, and better use of digital alerts for collection schedules. The newly introduced system is a solid step forward and shows promising results, but it is not yet fully effective. It needs improvements in service reliability, enforcement, and continuous public education to become a complete success.

Keywords: Municipal Waste, Solid Waste Management, Waste Disposal System

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ECO-ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR FOSTERING TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY: A CASE STUDY OF RIDIGAMA, KURUNEGALA

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is the third-largest contributor to Sri Lanka's GDP and plays a vital role in economic development, closely linked with other sectors. While it offers substantial growth potential, it also poses risks to social balance and environmental sustainability, particularly in rural areas. In some cases, tourism fails to enhance local incomes or deliver real benefits to the country. This study is based on the data collected during the National Productivity Secretariat's 2025 programme for eco-tourism development through green productivity. The primary objective of this research is to identify whether eco-entrepreneurship is an effective strategy to sustain tourism in Ridigama Divisional Secretariat Division in Kurunegala. Identifying whether meso and macro-level factors affect eco-entrepreneurship is the secondary objective of this study. Ridigma was selected for the case study as it is a high-potential, low-exposure tourist destination. A stratified sampling method was employed to select nine eco-entrepreneurs, and a qualitative approach was adopted to facilitate in-depth analysis. Data were collected through structured questionnaires designed to assess environmental awareness, sustainable practices, adoption of digital applications, financial capacity, and service diversification. Findings highlight the strategic importance of promoting eco- entrepreneurship, strengthening individual enterprise performance, and aligning strategies with meso- and macro-level factors. Such efforts can contribute to sustainable economic growth while protecting Sri Lanka's natural environment and cultural heritage in destinations with limited exposure to mass tourism but high-potential ecological and cultural significance.

Key words: Eco-tourism, Eco-entrepreneurship, Meso and Macro Contexts, Sustainability

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ENHANCING RURAL WASTE MANAGEMENT THROUGH GREEN PRODUCTIVITY: A CASE STUDY OF AMPIKAINAGAR VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

Green Productivity (GP) is an innovative strategy that integrates productivity enhancement with environmental sustainability. It aims to stimulate economic growth while safeguarding ecological balance, thereby contributing to long-term sustainable development. This study explores how GP strategies can improve waste management and recycling practices in J/19 Ampikainagar village, located in the Velanai West Grama Niladhari Division. The village faces issues such as open dumping, limited awareness on recycling, and lack of organized waste systems. The research assessed current waste handling practices in Ampikainagar village and identified key barriers to sustainable management. A qualitative research approach was used including direct field observation, household interviews, focus group discussions with key community groups and community workshops to gather in-depth insights into local waste management practices and community perceptions on GP. Findings indicate a low level of awareness about waste segregation and recycling, limited infrastructure, but a strong willingness among residents to participate in eco-friendly initiatives. The study found the potential for introducing green productivity methods such as household composting, community collection centers, and recycling linkages with nearby markets. Strengthening the role of local organizations is seen as key to sustaining these practices. Simple actions recommended are composting at home, separating waste, and running awareness programs. With support from the Divisional Secretariat and other stakeholders, these efforts can grow into long-term solutions. This study concludes that using GP can help make Ampikainagar a model village for rural waste management. It can protect the environment and also support community development.

Keywords: Green Productivity, Waste Management, Rural Sustainability, Community Participation,

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Third Plenary Session

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, SMART TECHNOLOGY & DATA-DRIVEN GOVERNANCE

SMART TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR PRODUCTIVITY: PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN VALIKAMAM SOUTH WEST DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT

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ABSTRACT

In the era of rapid digital advancement, public institutions are increasingly turning to smart technologies to enhance service efficiency and citizen engagement. This research investigates the role of smart technology and digital transformation in improving productivity and public service delivery within the Valikamam South West Divisional Secretariat. The primary objective is to evaluate how digital tools, e-governance platforms, and data-driven decision-making contribute to streamlined administrative functions, transparency, and citizen satisfaction. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative data from Key Person Interviews (KPIs), along with quantitative surveys and performance data analysis. Digital initiatives examined include the deployment of online service portals, digital documentation systems, SMS notification services, and internal workflow automation. The research also assesses infrastructure readiness, digital literacy among staff and citizens, and the institutional capacity for sustainable digital adoption. Key findings reveal that the integration of smart technology has significantly reduced service processing times, minimized bureaucratic inefficiencies, and increased citizen trust in local governance. However, challenges such as inconsistent internet connectivity, limited technical training, and resistance to change among stakeholders were also identified. Notably, digital transformation initiatives have fostered greater transparency and responsiveness in service delivery, particularly in land administration, social welfare benefit schemes, elder's benefits, livelihood and pregnant mother's food package. This study concludes that a well-planned, inclusive digital strategy can serve as a catalyst for enhancing productivity and participatory governance at the divisional level. It recommends capacity building, infrastructure investment, and policy support to fully realize the potential of digital transformation in rural public service systems.

Keywords: Smart Technology, Digital Transformation, Public Service Delivery, Productivity, E-Governance

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DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN EDUCATION: ENHANCING PRODUCTIVITY AND LEARNING OUTCOMES IN NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

In alignment with the national vision of fostering a culture of innovation and productivity through digital transformation, the Provincial Department of Education of the North Western Province, Sri Lanka, has initiated a series of smart, data-driven strategies to enhance service delivery and improve academic outcomes. The key objective of this initiative was to strengthen educational governance and classroom practices through the integration of smart technology platforms that promote evidence-based decision-making and inclusive education. The approach was a multi-tiered digital transformation approach. It included the development and deployment of digital platforms: Examination Results Portal, Term Test Marks Portal, Student Remedial Web Portal, Wayamba Sipmansala Learning Management System (LMS), and School Physical Resource Management System. These platforms enabled the real-time collection, analysis, and visualization of student performance and infrastructure data, thus enhancing transparency, accountability, and targeted interventions. This study analyzes data collected for two years from multiple sources, including system usage logs and a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 165 teachers and 118 principals across 333 schools and 98 administrators. The methodology employed was a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis with qualitative survey responses to evaluate the impact of these interconnected digital platforms. Key findings indicate significant improvements in exam performance monitoring, early identification of underperforming students, improved remedial teaching strategies, and optimized resource allocation. Moreover, the initiatives facilitated better coordination between schools, zones, and the provincial office while empowering teachers and principals through data access and digital literacy. The use of blended learning through the Sipmansala LMS and YouTube content further enriched student learning experiences across the province. This case exemplifies how regional education authorities can lead digital innovation to build a resilient, equitable, and high-performing education system.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Educational Productivity, Smart Technology in Education

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DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: ASSESSING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AT NALLUR DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT

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ABSTRACT

The imperative for data-driven governance has grown significantly as public institutions strive to enhance service delivery and ensure citizen satisfaction. This study investigates the performance of the Nallur Divisional Secretariat Office through the application of the SERVQUAL model. The objective of the research is to identify discrepancies between user expectations and perceived service outcomes across five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Utilizing a structured questionnaire, data were collected from 110 service recipients to obtain a comprehensive, quantitative understanding of institutional performance and user satisfaction. The analysis revealed a notable gap between expected and perceived service levels, particularly within the dimensions of responsiveness and empathy, indicating shortcomings in timely communication and personalized service. While tangibility and assurance scored relatively higher, reflecting adequate facilities and professional competence, the overall service experience was affected by deficiencies in human interaction and attentiveness. The use of the SERVQUAL model enabled the identification of these specific service gaps through measurable indicators, demonstrating the utility of data-driven evaluation in public sector performance assessment. These findings reinforce the importance of incorporating user feedback into administrative processes through feasible mechanisms such as physical suggestion boxes at service counters and digital feedback to drive innovation and optimize service delivery. The study concludes that regular integration of evidence-based tools such as SERVQUAL can significantly strengthen institutional accountability and operational efficiency. It recommends the implementation of periodic service quality assessments, digital feedback mechanism systems, and enhanced staff training focused on responsiveness and interpersonal skills. This research presents a replicable framework that can be adopted by other divisional secretariats for consistent service standards and citizen-centered administration. This study illustrates how empirical data can be systematically utilized to make informed policy decisions, enhance customer satisfaction, and foster a culture of continuous improvement in public service institutions.

Keywords: Public Service Delivery, Customer Satisfaction, SERVQUAL, Data-Driven Governance, Innovation in Public Administration

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THE IMPACT OF STAFF ADAPTATION TO THE STRATLINK SYSTEM ON PRODUCTIVITY AT THE IMPORTS AND EXPORTS CONTROL DEPARTMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the implementation and institutional impact of the Stratlink digital system within the Imports and Exports Control Department (IECD) of Sri Lanka. Operating under the Imports and Exports (Control) Act No. 1 of 1969, the IECD had long relied on paper-based and semi-digital workflows that hindered efficiency, transparency, and inter-agency coordination. The introduction of Stratlink in 2025 aimed to transition the licensing process to a fully paperless, streamlined platform aligned with the National Single Window policy. Despite its promising features, the system's effectiveness in enhancing productivity and user adaptability had not yet been empirically evaluated, revealing a clear research gap. The main objective of this study was to assess how digital transformation through Stratlink influenced institutional performance, staff adaptability, and workflow reliability. A mixed-methods approach was employed, guided by the hypothesis that technology adoption alone does not ensure productivity gains without adequate human and organizational support. The study population comprised 35 operational officers and 5 staff officers at the IECD. A purposive and random sample of 12 officers (8 operational, 4 staff) was selected, ensuring representation across decision-making and administrative roles. Quantitative data collected via structured questionnaires were analyzed using Julius AI, providing descriptive statistics on system usability and acceptance. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were analyzed thematically to uncover user perceptions, challenges, and enablers of adaptation. Findings confirmed that digital transformation is most effective when accompanied by structured learning opportunities, responsive leadership, a user-friendly interface, and equitable human resource practices. The study recommends targeted training programs, improved system design, enhanced inter-agency collaboration, and transparent governance mechanisms to strengthen ongoing digital transitions. Despite limitations such as the short implementation period of Stratlink and restricted access to certain internal performance metrics, this research contributes to the broader discourse on digital public sector reform in developing contexts. Future studies should adopt longitudinal and cross-institutional approaches, incorporating trader and citizen feedback for a more holistic evaluation of digital governance systems.

Keywords: Digital Public Sector Reform, Institutional Adaptability, Resilience and Modernization, Public Sector Productivity

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A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND BENCHMARKING OF DIGITALIZATION EFFECTIVENESS IN SRI LANKAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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ABSTRACT
Digitalization of the public libraries is an essential indicator of institutional efficiency and service improvement, but there are no evidence-based frameworks to assess such initiatives available globally, especially in the context of developing countries. In Sri Lanka, large amounts of public money have been invested in the digitalization of libraries, but their sustainability is questionable, and some of them have ended up being underutilized or abandoned. The existing measures of digital success or benchmarking of digitalization effectiveness in public libraries are limited to the current evaluation criteria, which are based on the assessment of the Sri Lanka National Productivity Secretariat, Provincial Councils and other means, which do not fully reflect the broader aspects of the quality of services, user adoption, and sustainability. The paper presents a unique, context-specific national model to assess and rank the benchmarking of Digitalization Effectiveness of Sri Lankan public libraries-filling a significant gap in the international library literature. The research methodology was a combination of secondary analysis of guidelines and manuals, structured interviews of librarians of digitized public libraries, and a focused literature review. Based on the existing evaluation models, namely the DeLone and McLean Information Systems Success Model, SERVQUAL, the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), and the Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP) model, the study combined the strengths of these models into a tailored model. The resulting 100-point scoring system assesses libraries on weighted areas such as technological infrastructure, service quality, user engagement, and sustainability, with each indicator having a particular point value depending on its relative significance. The suggested framework contributes to the academic debate on the assessment of digital libraries and can be used as a policy instrument. It facilitates evidence-based funding, transparency, and helps libraries to know where to improve. It is specifically designed to be relevant to the unique public library ecosystem in Sri Lanka, and to provide a replicable model to other developing countries

***Keywords*:** Library Digitalization, Library Quality Assurance, Public Library Evaluation

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DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING FOR INNOVATION EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS: A CASE STUDY IN DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT, SANDILIPAY

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ABSTRACT

This research explores how Data-Driven Decision Making (DDDM) can foster innovation excellence and enhance productivity in government organizations, focusing on a case study of the Divisional Secretariat Sandilipay. The study aligns with Sri Lanka's national vision of cultivating a productive and innovative culture to achieve shared prosperity and sustainable development. The objectives of this study are to examine how data-driven decision-making (DDDM) practices are currently implemented in regional-level administration, to evaluate the impact of these practices on institutional productivity, innovation, and public service delivery, and to address concerns regarding the adequacy of data infrastructure and the procedural rigidity that may limit effective decision-making at the Divisional Secretariat level. The study adopts a qualitative case study methodology, incorporating structured interviews with public officials, observational studies of institutional practices, and a detailed review of administrative records, ICT systems, and service performance data. Emphasis was placed on how data influences planning, resource allocation, and citizen engagement. Key findings reveal that the Divisional Secretariat Sandilipay has made significant strides in integrating digital platforms and management information systems for data collection and decision-making. Initiatives including e-Samurdhi mobile applications, e-Civil Registration, Aswesuma (Welfare Benefits Board), and Grama Niladhari Beneficiary Selection Support System (B3S) demonstrate increased efficiency and responsiveness. However, gaps remain in data quality, interdepartmental coordination, and staff training, which hinder the full realization of DDDM's potential. The study concludes that fostering a strong data-driven culture supported by leadership, digital infrastructure, and decentralization is essential for modern public administration. The findings offer actionable insights for replicating similar models in other Divisional Secretariats across Sri Lanka to promote inclusive governance, improved service delivery, and national productivity enhancement.

Keywords: Data-Driven Decision Making, Innovation Excellence, Public Sector Productivity, Digital Governance, Shared Prosperity

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CHALLENGES OF APPLYING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTREPRENEURS

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ABSTRACT

Micro, small and medium-sized entrepreneurs (MSMEs) are the backbone of a country's economy. To achieve high efficiency in output growth for MSMEs, leveraging technology is a more effective approach. Artificial intelligence (AI) is made possible by leveraging innovative technologies and digital transformation, which offer significant benefits for entrepreneurs, including creating product descriptions, crafting social posts, preparing creative marketing content, discovering new customers, and tracking progress. Micro, small and medium entrepreneurs are quite far behind in using modern technological tools like AI, particularly in developing countries. Previous research has emphasized difficulties faced by MSMEs in the installation of AI due to technological, regulatory and ethical, and financial challenges. This study aims to identify the challenges of applying AI to MSMEs in Sri Lanka. The objectives of this study are to identify whether AI can be utilized as a means of technological transformation in MSMEs, to analyze the challenges faced by MSMEs, and to provide suggestions to overcome these challenges. This study employed a desk research approach and was conducted with secondary data. Data was analyzed using content analysis and thematic synthesis, adding an analytical dimension to the study. The results of this study offer recommendations on future requirements of MSMEs to better contribute to the country's economic growth and development.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Micro, Small and Medium Entrepreneurs (MSMEs), Technology Adaption Challenges

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