

Greetings from the HoD,



I am delighted to be able to reach out all our students and colleagues in this December News Letter 2020, which is I hope the first greetings as the newly appointed head of the Department. First, I wish to thank the then Head of the

Department, **Dr. Hemantha** for his immense and heartfelt contribution to the department; under his leadership we were able to thrive forward incorporating progressive mechanisms, even during the unstable condition of society emerged with Covid 19 pandemic. The lockdown did, of

course, caused much unprecedented disruption this past few months, but I am pleased to mention without any surprise that the department adjusted well, and that everyone worked hard to keep the business alive. In spite of some several obstacles, all the faculty members came forward to face the uncertainties caused by coronavirus pandemic while adopting unconventional approaches even addressing some conventional issues grounded in our education system at large. Noteworthy to mention that students too well adjusted to their fullest capacity to go by with online learning without compromising the quality of higher education.

Coronavirus Pandemic, indeed, brought about an opportunity to welcome distant intellectuals which is impossible in offline mode, and hence a number

Continued on Page 2



Honouring the then HoD Dr. Hemantha Kumara, accompanied by some of the faculty members

of intellectuals from around the world have joined the department online while sharing their experiences with the academia. Some new research projects were initiated even collaborating with Public and Private sectors which is recognized beneficial to both academia and the public. We pioneered to initiate an action research to alleviate extreme poverty among women in the southern province in Sri Lanka, which has been supported by the Sri Lankan government. Besides, we laid the corner stones to further the university and public-private sector networks, sometimes having discussions with international delegates.

The 2017 Sociology Special Class successfully completed their BA degree even with much of obstacles emanated due to the covid-19 pandemic. I congratulate them! Furthermore, we welcomed our new sociology-special batch to the department, including the largest ever number of students. In addition, I am happy to report that we were able to organize a lecture series on “Covid-19 and Society”,

which were supported by different academics from around the world. For all these tasks, the help rendered by the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor and the dean of the faculty with all staff members must be sincerely acknowledged.

I express my gratitude to **Susith Nimantha, Lakmi, Dinithi, Yasiru Chathuranga and Buddhini** who recently resigned from the service. Their contribution to the department was immensely appreciated. Meanwhile I welcome our newly recruited assistant lecturers **Kaushalya, Ruwinini and Rashmika**. **Dr. Tilak** will be congratulated of being promoted to Grade-I.

Thanks **Samitha** and **Upul**, editing this newsletter and making it a wonderful piece of work.

Be well and stay in touch !

Suranjith Gunasekara
Head of the Department



Starting afresh while celebrating the new year 2021

*Keep the News Coming !
Anyone with news and comments is
invited to write to:
sociology@soci.ruh.ac.lk*

***Newsletter published biannually
by the Department of Sociology
(second-half-year-2020)***

Website: <https://hss.ruh.ac.lk/index.php/study-programmes/departments/sociology>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Sky-In-The-cyberspace-1227101287440495>

Please send comments and News item to:
sociology@ruh.ac.lk

CREDITS

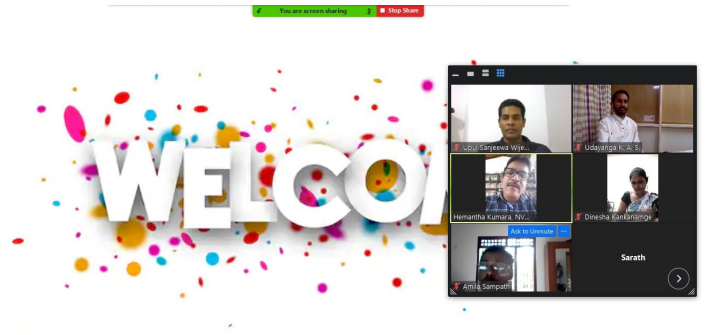
Editing/ Design: Samitha Udayanga
General Text & Support: Upul Sanjeewa

***With thanks to the support received from
every member of the department***

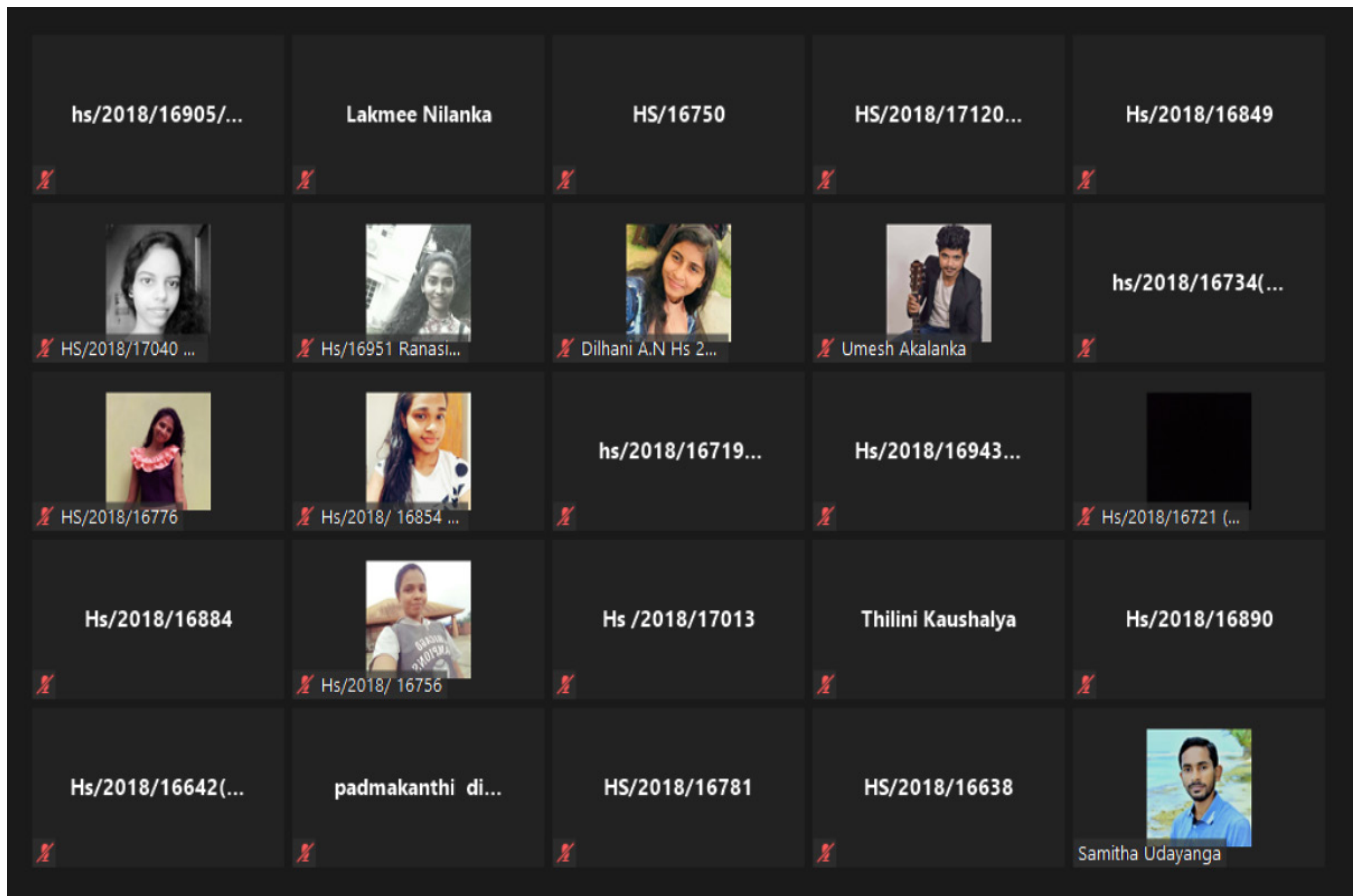
Department Activities -

Welcoming new batch 2020

We welcomed our new group of undergraduates to the sociology specialization class on 12th August 2020. Initially we planned to welcome them on sight, but the prevailing coronavirus situation prevented us from organizing a welcome ceremony. Thus we have planned to welcome them online at least introducing the department members and courses that can be followed by them. This time we have selected 24 students for English medium class and 34 for Sinhalese medium class, altogether 54 students, the largest group ever we had. Due to the prevailing coronavirus pandemic all students were welcomed through an online welcome ceremony. Both staff members and students took part in the event, and students introduced themselves to the audience enthusiastically. Emeritus Professor Sarath Amarasinghe and Dr. Gayathri Wijesundera addressed the gathering while motivating new students to carry on different activities within sociology endeavor.



Online Welcome for the second year special batch



Some students took part in the online welcoming ceremony

Discussion with the European Ambassador

Aiming at implementing bilateral partnership for academic advancement, Samitha and Upul participated in the discussion organized by the department of Public Policy with the European ambassador Holger Seubert. Together with GIZ team who works for strengthening Reconciliation processes, European Ambassador initiated a dialogue in identifying ways and means to deepen bilateral cooperation, including the promotion of German Language.



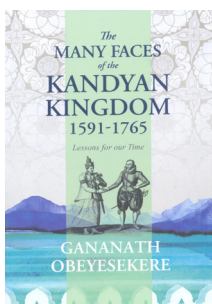
Meeting with the European Ambassador

Discussion with the German Ambassador

While apprising the program conducted by the National Peace Council on “Reconciliation process in Sri Lanka”, Samitha and Upul, faculty affiliates of the department of Sociology took part in a meeting with the German Ambassador with the aim of promoting academic collaboration with two parties. Main focus of the discussion was to recognize possible paths in implementing bilateral partnerships with Germany and Sri Lankan universities. Furthermore, they expressed their willingness to initiate a research on “local mechanisms toward reconciliation and peace in Sri Lanka, once we have presented our comments on the need of contextualizing globally accepted theories and processes into local contexts.



Meeting with the German Ambassador and his team



Gananath Obeyesekere’s lucid study of the Kandyan Kingdom provides an alternative account of how politics and culture intersected in the last capital of the Sinhalese kings. It is a welcome addition to research undertaken thus far on that chapter in Sri Lankan history. What makes it stand out is its

refusal to accept the findings of other studies, and like *The Doomed King*, to which this can be read as a prequel, it serves to dispel certain myths and conventional wisdom regarding the Kandyan polity. Pugnacious and polemical, Obeyesekere makes no apologies for his conclusions.

It is a work that resounds in narrative and analysis, and as such its appeal is not just to the academic, but also the lay reader.

Work of a Sri Lankan Anthropologist

Discussion with the Iranian Ambassador

Head of the Department Suranjith Gunasekare, Tilak Wijesundera and Samitha Udayanga met the Iranian Ambassador to discuss possible opportunities of linking Sri Lankan universities and Iranian Universities in terms of cultural and academic knowledge exchange. It was a successful discussion, in that Iranian Ambassador invited the Department troupe to a generosity lunch. During the discussion, cultural collaboration among universities were given a prominent attention.



Meeting with the Iranain Ambassador

Acknowledgement of the service rendered by the then Head_Dr. Hemantha Kumara

We greatly appreciate and acknowledge the service rendered enormously by the then head of the Department, Dr. Hemantha Kumara. During the past three years of hard working and successful achievements, the contribution given by the Dr. Hemantha was immensely admired. He always steered the department toward favorable ends. Even during the coronavirus pandemic, when the entire country was stood still, with the intention

of continuing all academic activities in favor of students' success, he has immensely and with a complete support contributed to the department. Under his leadership a number of academic activities were organized. We hope that after a long and tiring period, he would then be able to take part in his interesting field research. While appreciating his contribution to the department, we acknowledge him with a token of appreciation and with a 'Farewell to Head – a night party'. Thank You, Dr. Hemantha Kumara for your immense contribution to the department !



Awarding the token of Appreciation



Thanks giving ceremony

Research of the Department

Research on the Social Impact of Leptospirosis

With guidance received by Professor Saman Chandana, a team of researchers have been doing a research on the impact of Leptospirosis in the southern province of Sri Lanka. As of January 2021, more than twenty participants were interviewed and initially understood the social causes of leptospirosis and its server impact of socioeconomic life of peasants. Leptospirosis is a tropical disease and a conditioning fact, that reshapes the existing lifeworld among people particularly in rural Sri Lanka. It has been recognized as a rural phenomena conflated with extreme poverty.



Students participating in data collation for the research on Leptospirosis

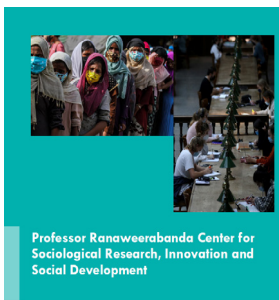
Mass Media Research and Covid-19

A team of researchers from the department of sociology in collaboration with a number of research institutions conducted a research on “Media ethics and Covid-19 in Sri Lanka”. The contribution of journalists done by bringing the information-gap of the public in the Covid-19 pandemic is highly appreciated.

It is well-accepted that while good journalism renders favorable impacts, while the sub-optimum reporting may be associated with harm. This report is prepared

based on the findings of a study which included a quantitate as well as qualitative evaluations of new-bulletins of leading private Sinhalese television channels over 12 days in relation to the Covid-19 related reporting.

The assessments were done based on operational variables in recommended global and local guidelines. The key findings and recommendations have been presented under six main domains.



Professor Ranaweerabanda Center for Sociological Research, Innovation and Social Development

Proposal for Establishing the Professor Ranaweerabanda Center for Sociological Research, Innovation and Social Development at the Department of Sociology
11 January 2021

Establishment of a Research Center

Recognizing the importance of having a formal institution to facilitate research activities of the department, a proposal for establishing a research center at the department of Sociology was submitted to the Faculty Board and now its in due consideration. This research center has been decided to name in honor of the late **Professor Ranaweera Banda**.

Research on Impact of pandemic lockdown on alcohol taking behavior of people in southern province, Sri Lanka

Under the collaboration of Department of Sociology, University of Ruhuna, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, University of Melbourne and University of Monash Australia have implemented a research project titled, “Impact of pandemic lockdown on alcohol taking behavior of people in southern province, Sri Lanka”. As a part of the global epidemic, Sri Lanka has also fallen victim to the COVID - 19. Although the government paid special

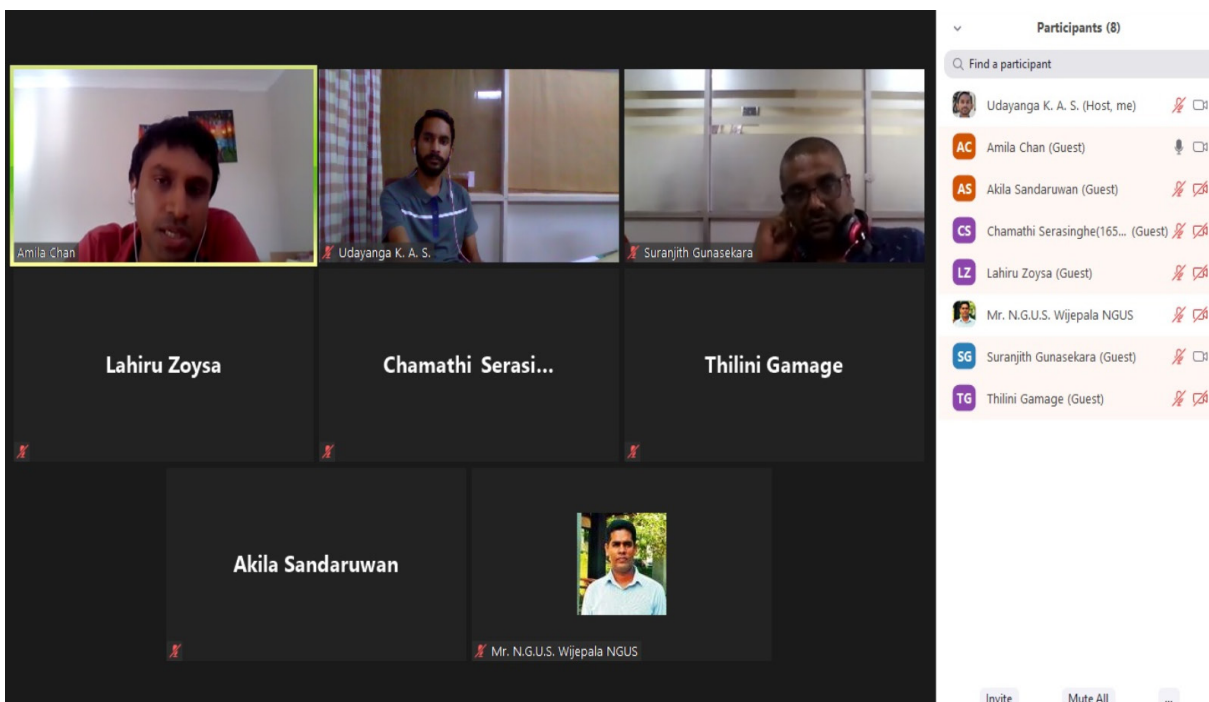
attention to the treatment of corona virus victims and to prevent the spread of the disease, it is observed that the other impacts of the pandemic lockdown have been ignored. Alcohol consumption during the pandemic lockdown is one of the invisible areas which many have missed out in policy planning and interventional programs in this period. Within this background, reports intend to provide evidence-based recommendations to the mental health and public health authorities to initiate necessary action for an opportunistic alcohol prevention strategy, capitalizing on the ‘lock down’ abstinence.

Team members from University of Ruhuna and other Local universities.

- Ms. Ishara Wanniarachchi – Probationary lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka
- Mrs. Padmini Disanayake – Senior lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka
- Lahiru Zoysa - Student (reading BA (Special) in Sociology), University of Ruhuna
- Thilini Gamage – Student (reading BA (Special) in Sociology), University of Ruhuna
- Dr. Amila Isuru – Senior lecture, Researcher and an alcohol prevention expert, University of Rajarata, Sri Lanka
- Dr. Mahesh Rajarathnayake

Team members from University of Melbourne and Monash, Australia

- Dr. Amila Chandrasiri – Honorary Fellow, University of Melbourne, Australia, Former Consultant Community Physician (Acting), Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka.
- L.N.P Samarasinghe – Researcher and Psychiatrist, University of Melbourne, Australia
- Dr. Maddy Fernando – Researcher and Clinical Psychologist, University of Monash, Australia



Zoom Meeting with Dr. Amila Chandrasiri from Melobourn University

Faculty News -

Mr. Suranjith Gunasekara, was appointed as the new Head of the Department by the Vice Chancellor, August 2020. After his tremendous academic endeavour, this is the first time he assumed duties as the Head of the Department. Under his leadership now a new degree programme is planned to develop. He also found the past few months a challenging period as apart from mere academic and administrative activities, an additional burden was presented managing the COVID situation. He assisted the department to initiate

an academic discussion on “Covid 19 and Society”. In addition to his administrative tasks with a busy schedule, he also engages in a number of

research projects including “Social Impact of Leptospirosis”, “Corona Paniya and Social Media Propaganda”. Suranjith is particularly interested in making an effective relationship between academic and community sectors, with the intention of bringing academic knowledge into the practical world. Resonating with this idea he pioneers in projecting a formal proposal to alleviate poverty in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka.



Professor Upali Pannilage

was elected as the dean of the Faculty of Humanities of Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna, continuously for the second time in August, 2020.



Dr. Pushpa Ekanayake has been enjoying the blessing of a research sabbatical while doing some research with regard to medical anthropology. She has presented a paper on “Alternative medical practices during the Covid 19 in Late November 2020”.

Dr. Gayathri Wijesundera, during her research sabbatical, has been working on a number of research projects. As

an executive member of the IHRA, University of Colombo she took part in a discussion chaired by the Ministry of



Education Professor G.L. Pieris. She besides contributed to some broadcasting channels to disseminate knowledge on different themes. Importantly Gayathri pioneered the research conducted by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science on “the impact of Covid 19 in Sri Lanka”.

Dr. Wijekoon Banda, During the past six months Dr. T.M W. Banda was a member of the research project conducted by the members of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna on “the Socio- Economic impact of Covid -19 in Sri Lanka”. Meanwhile he was the co-author of the research paper presented at the 04th International Conference on Multidisciplinary (ICMD 2020) conducted by Global Academic Research Institute titled ‘Changing Gender Contours in the Management of Irrigated Agriculture: Reexamining the Patriarchal Cliche and Women Participation in Water Governance in Rural Sri Lanka. Currently he is engaging with a research project titled “Promoting People’s Well-being and Social Harmony through Effective Water Governance: A Sociological Study on Participatory Governance of the Mahaweli System” in the Mahaweli “C” zone, Sri Lanka.

Dr. Hemantha Kuamara, after a successful three years of the headship has again started his academic endeavour including a number of research projects. He chaired the Fifth International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences.

For the sixth batch of the Master of Sociology degree programme, he serves as the academic coordinator. He was also invited by the Department



of Health, Southern Province as a resource person in the National Diploma for Public Health Inspectors. He tremendously worked toward publishing the Fifth edition on his book on “Sociology - Basic Concepts, Theories and Methods”. Also he is one of the members of curriculum development committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Ms. Padmakanthi Dissanayake, after a three years of study leave resumed duties on July 2020 and continuing her activities successfully.

Dr. Dushmanthi Silva [on leave].

Dr. Tilak Wijesundara, has been promoted to the Senior Lecturer Grade 01. Usually in addition to the teaching and other academic activities, he engages in community services during the past few months.

Mr. Upul Sanjeev Wijepala was appointed as the coordinator for the 12th batch of Diploma in Psychological Counselling since June 2020. He was a member of the research project on Telecasting of Covid-19 related news-bulletins on private TV channels: An eye-opening evaluation on November and December conducted collaboration with the School of Population and Global Health, University of Melbourne. He also engages as a member of the research project titled “Assessment of Impacts of the Covid-19 on Marine Fisheries Sector of Sri Lanka” conducting collaboration with the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences, University of Ruhuna, and the National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA). Further he facilitates as one of the Department Coordinator for conducting Lectures and Programme via “Ruhuna Media” YouTube Channel for increasing the knowledge and raise awareness of students of GCE (O/L). He also contributed to the faculty of Technology, University of Ruhuna as a visiting lecturer for teaching Industrial Sociology. Recently he presented a paper titled ‘Changing Gender Contours in the Management of Irrigated Agriculture: Reexamining the Patriarchal Cliche and Women Participation in Water Governance in Rural Sri Lanka, at the 04th International Conference on Multidisciplinary (ICMD 2020) conducted by Global Academic Research Institute.

Mr. Samitha Udayanga has found the past six months with academic and extra-academic work challenging in many ways, not at least because what was meant to be an easy and smooth working period has turned into a cumbersome and shaking situation with COVID. He has been impressed, as always, at the helpfulness, generosity, responsiveness, and imagination of our students and colleagues. During the past few months, Samitha taught four undergraduate courses. He even contributed to the University of Colombo as a visiting lecturer in the Higher Diploma in Child Rights and Protection. Besides, a number of research projects have been given support, which includes “Social Impact of Leptospirosis”, “Infodemics during the COVID 19”. As usual, Samitha has visited some disadvantaged communities in Sri Lanka even during the coronavirus pandemic to understand the severity of the impact of this pandemic on local communities. For



example, he went to Nonperial Estate, a far-reaching and marginalized community in Ratnapura district was visited and listened to local people to understand particularly about “Learning Poverty”. Furthermore, this year he convenes the curriculum development committee that gears toward developing a new degree programme on “Development Practices”. Despite his busy schedule, he was able to publish some research papers on Internationally reputed journals such as International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences. Samitha, on the other hand joined some conferences to share research findings with academia.

Ms. Ishara Wanniarachchi was invited as a resource person by the European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights - Women Led Human Rights Promotion to conduct a one-day program for rural women leaders in Hambantota district. This was held throughout the day on 21.01.2021 at the Viharamahadevi Training Centre, Hambantota. Woman led Human rights project can be recognized as



a productive extension of the Transitional Justice and reconciliation program conducted by the same project partners in 08 districts to empower the capacities and strengths of the women groups. The main objective of this program was to empower political participation among rural women. Training women groups on the freedom of expression and information, assembly and association, thought ,conscience and including international human rights instruments and national policies, conduct information dissemination events, awareness raising campaigns, conduct women led community dialogues, conduct women-led national level dialogues, women’s engagement with the different media channels to promote Human Rights and Fundamental freedom and designing, Planning, implementation and evaluation of youth focused initiatives promoting effective implementation of fundamental freedoms by the women groups were key activities of the program. Thilini Gamage, undergraduate student from department of Sociology also joined the program as a facilitator. The program was funded by European commission.

Ms. Nirosha Ruwanpathirana gave her outstanding contribution as a Reviewer and a Discussant of the Technical Session on Society & Culture at the 5th Arts Students’ Annual Sessions 2020 (RASAS-2020). In addition, Nirosha is actively working as a member of several research teams

and one such initiative is Alleviating multidimensional poverty in rural Sri Lanka through women empowerment 2021. She further serves as a member of the research project initiated by the Department on 'Problems encountered by young Buddhist monks in their education'. She has also made her valuable contribution to the research project People's expectations and official communication of the Ministry of Health during the COVID-19 period. Further, she is one of the student counsellors of the Faculty and one of the Department Coordinators of the Programme to increase the knowledge and raise awareness of students of GCE (O/L), a YouTube Channel launched and maintained by the University of Ruhuna. Currently, she is working as a Coordinator of introducing a new Diploma in Human Right and Social Inclusion. She is also working as a member of the Editorial Board of the edited volume of Social Science Researchers-Qualitative Research Approaches which is going to be published by the Department of Sociology, University of Ruhuna. Nirosha is working as the Treasurer of the 6th Arts Students' Annual Sessions (RASAS) which is going to be held in 2021. She is also an active member of the Sociology Alumni Association of University of Colombo (SAAUC) & the Bar Association of Sri Lanka. Nirosha is a Committee Member of the International Collaboration & Youth Affairs Circle of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna. Speaking of her participation in Research Conferences, she presented a paper titled 'Female Political Participation in Sri Lanka: A Study Based on the Local Authority Election 2018 in Kesbewa Urban Council, at the 6th Ruhuna University International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences -RUICHSS 2020 and she presented a paper titled COVID- 19 Pandemic, University Education and Role of Librarians on 22.01.2021 at NILIS Research Symposium 2020, University of Colombo.

Ms BKD Lakmali represents the Department of sociology as an Assistant Lecturer since January 2020. She's successfully completed BA in Sociology with first class honor and won the Pro.Ranaweera Banda Memorial Gold Medal in 2017. Currently, she is reading for MA in Peace and Development Studies at the University of Ruhuna. She is actively participating with the ongoing research interests conducted by the Research Center attached to the Department of sociology. As the researches in which she participates, "Social impact of leptospirosis, Reflection of Being a Buddhist Samanera Monk an Issues Encountered in Their Learning Experience: A Phenomenological Study With Buddhist Samanera Monks in Sri Lanka, Challenging Gendered Language for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Telecasting of COVID-19 Related Information in News Bulletin in Private TV Channels an Eye Opening Evaluation to Advocate Media, Assessment of Impact of the COVID-19 on Fisheries Sector in Sri Lanka 2020 and Work Family Complete Against Woman During

the COVID-19 Pandemic". She has recently published four full papers based on various topics, representing various types of aspects in Sociology: Environmental Human Rights and Climate Change, The Impact of Counseling Intervention on Employee Engagement, Awareness of Counseling Psychology and the Significance of Counseling Service for the Undergraduate Studies in Sri Lankan University Context and The Origin and Evaluation of the Subjects of Sociology and Human Recourse Management and Similarities Represented in the Present Context. Besides, she presented one of her research experiences at the RUCHIS, 2020 under the theme of "A Social Anthropological Study of the Impact of Human Relation on Urban Life in the Face of Disaster". In addition, She has written abstracts for several symposium events under the research interested of "Quarantine and Social Isolation During the Covid-19 : Sociological Perspective, Social Resilience in the Face of Climate Change: Landslides and Flood". Furthermore, she was the Chief Editor of the Vimarsha Annual Magazine Published by the Department of Sociology and she is taking part as an editor of the "Sky in the Cyber Space" (online magazine) published by the Sociological Association. As a resource person for Ruhuna FM, she has represented the Department of Sociology and has contributed academically to the programs on "Child Rights and Acceptance of Children in Society and The Role of Social Media During the Covid-19 Period".

Ms S.K. Rashmika Sandamini Kumarasiri represents the Department of Sociology as an Assistant Lecturer since December 2020. She has successfully completed Bachelor of Arts Degree, specialized in Sociology with a Second-Class honor, University of Ruhuna. She has already registered for Master of Arts in Sociology in University of Colombo. She has presented abstract titled "Education and Youth Migration: A Sociological Study Based on the Youth in Sri Lanka" at the 5th Ruhuna Arts Students 'Annual Sessions. - 2020 held on 6th November 2020 University of Ruhuna. Recently She is actively participated to the research project under the theme of "The Rice and Demise of 'Corona Paniya': Influence of Media in Creating both Positive and Negative Images towards the Indigenous Corona Medicine". Currently she has joined with ongoing research project under the theme of "Assessment of Impact of the Covid-19 on Marine Fisheries Sector of Sri Lanka- 2020" conducted by The National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA). In addition to these, she is volunteering as a mentor of Training on Combating online Hate Speech and Sexiest content by Sri Lankan Unites since August 2020. Furthermore, she is taking part as an editor of the "sky in the Cyber Space" (online Magazine) Published by the Sociological Association.

Ms. Ruwini Rajapaksha has successfully completed Bachelor of Arts Degree, specialized in Sociology with a First class

honor, University of Colombo. She has already registered for Master of Arts in Sociology in University of Colombo. She is currently working as an assistant lecturer in Department of Sociology, University of Ruhuna since December of 2020. She presented an abstract titled “Environment Sociological Study of the Women’s Role in the Mahaweli Water Management” at the Under Graduate Research Symposium Humanities and Social Sciences- 2020 held on 24th July 2020 (online), University of Colombo. She presented another abstract titled “Hidden Folk Healing:

A sociological study of the sickness of God (Devayange Leda)” at the “2nd International Conference on Intangible Cultural Heritage” held on



18th December 2020 (online), University of Sri Jayewardenepura. She worked as a provincial coordinator affiliated with the Social Policy Analysis & Research Center, University of Colombo for the research project: “Research on the Scope and Incidence of Cyber Violence against Children and the Mechanism for responding to Cyber Violence against Children- 2020” Report for Government of Sri Lanka- Ministry of Women & Childs Affairs and Social Security. Recently Ruwini joined in the research project under the theme of “The Rice and Demise of ‘Corona Paniya’: Influence of Media in Creating both Positive and Negative Images towards the Indigenous Corona Medicine”. Currently she is taking part in the research project as a research assistant, under the theme of “Improving Smallholder Livelihoods and Nutrition:

An Evaluation of WFP’s Nutrition- Sensitive Food for Assets Program in Sri Lanka” conducted by Department of Nutrition/ Medical Research Institute, World Food Program (WFP) and International Food Policy Institute (IFPI). Moreover, currently she has joined in the research project under the theme of “Assessment of Impact of the Covid-19 on Marine Fisheries Sector of Sri Lanka- 2020” conducted by The National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA).

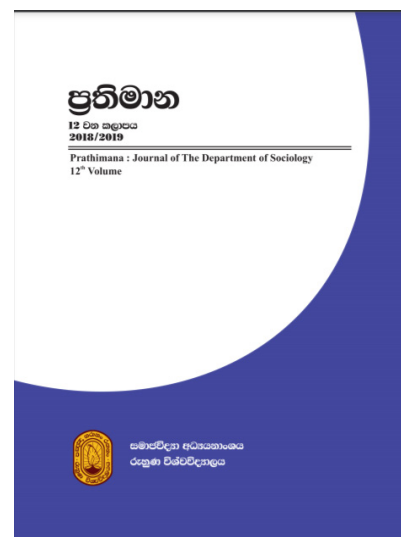
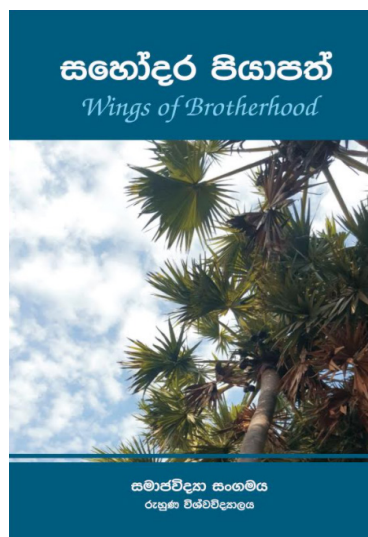
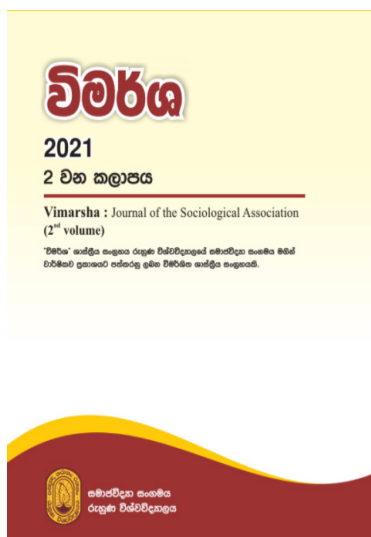
Ms H.V.Kaushalya Piyumali works at the Department of sociology as an Assistant Lecturer since December 2020. She’s successfully completed BA in Sociology with second class honor division in 2017. She won Chinese government scholarship in 2018 to further her education and completed her master degrees July 2020 in Tourism and management . She is part of

the research team at the Department of sociology. She is currently involved with the following research works at the department :



“Social impact of leptospirosis, Assessment of Impact of the COVID-19 on Fisheries Sector in Sri Lanka 2020. In addition, She has written abstracts for several symposium events under the research topic “Quarantine and Social Isolation During the Covid-19 : Sociological Perspective, Social Resilience in the Face of Climate Change: Landslides and Flood”. Furthermore she is taking part as an editor of the “Sky in the Cyber Space” (online magazine) published by the Sociological Association.

Publications



Undergraduates' News -

Nimantha Gayashan, a Final year sociology-special student was chosen as a winner for the recently concluded “Pic that your values” Photography Competition organized by the Asia Foundation. The submitted photograph entitled “Butterfly and the Child” captured a poor yet innocent child in an estate sector. He describes through the photograph that estate children are marginalized only because they are estate children.



A child captured in Suriyakanda Estate



Capturing an event by Nimantha

Thilini Gamage is a final year student who following a special degree in sociology in English medium. According to her highest GPA she was able to win the China scholarship (Rs.50, 000) which was granted by the Chinese Government. She is actively engaged



in both academic and extracurricular activities of the university. She is an active researcher and she has been conducting a

number of research. She conducted a research on Youth Male Attitudes Towards Female Virginity in Marriage for the RASAS conference in 2020. Additionally, she conducted a research on Potentials to Develop Ridiyagama Tank Area as a Cultural Tourism Destination for the Conference IURCAAT -2020 in university of Kelaniya. Especially she worked as a co-researcher for the study of Impact of pandemic lockdown on alcohol taking behaviour of

people in southern province and it was conducted as a collaborative study with the University of Ruhuna and University of Melbourne. Thilini was one of the data collectors for the phenomena of cattle slaughtering research which was conducted by the Department of Sociology, University of Peradeniya. she is an active member of Sri Lanka Unites team for the purpose of prevention hate speech on social media. 21 st January in 2020 she was able to join as a workshop assistant for the workshop on women



led human rights promotion in Sri Lanka which was funded by the European Union.

Lahiru Suresh is a final year student of the Department of Sociology. He serves as the President of Sociological Association and contributes to organize various events conducted by the association. He is an admin of the "Ahasa" Facebook page (Official Facebook page of the Sociological Association). He presented two papers for the RASAS 2020 under the topics of Issues of Legal Pluralism in a Multicultural Country; a Sociological Study Based on Kandian Law, Muslim Law and Thesavalamai Law in Sri Lanka and Christian community's reflection on the role of Buddhist monk in contemporary Sri Lankan party politics ; A Study Based on

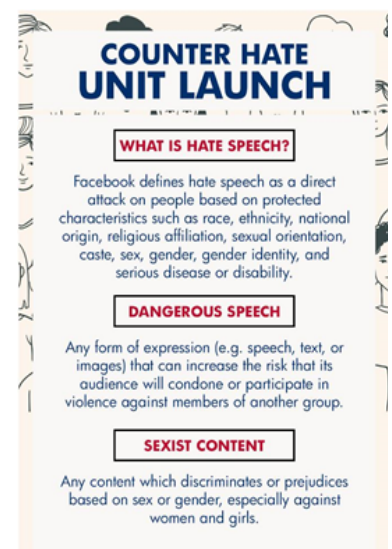
Urban Christian Community in Moratuwa Area. He contributes to some research conducted by Department of Sociology such as Media study during lockdown period, Alcohol taking behaviour during the lockdown period and Role of Media regarding the "Corona Paniya". He participates as a delegate for the International Model United Nations, 2021 conference. He also participates as an university delegate for the Unilever Student Ambassador Program (USL SPARKS), 2020. He is an executive member of the SL2030, Road To Rights program. He also participated for the online training on "Hate Speech Counting Program", conducted by Sri Lanka

Unites. He is a student organizer of the SCI, FHSS program and he contributed for the SCI sessions as a compere and a panellist.



Shashika Kumari Serasinghe is a final year student of the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna. She is an active member of the society of sociology which is activated by the Department of Sociology. She is currently following Chartered Qualification of Human Resources Management at CIPM, Colombo. She has already registered for Diploma in English at University of Ruhuna. She has presented abstract titled "Impact of poverty on teenage pregnancy" at the 5th Ruhuna Arts students' annual sessions – 2020 held on 6th November 2020 University of Ruhuna. She has already called for abstract under the theme of "The impact of COVID-19 on society & the environment: the study based on 'Labeema' area in Matara district" conducted by the Department of Geography, University of Peradeniya. Currently she has engaged with an ongoing research under the theme of 'The impact of COVID-19 on Tourism industry & its related community: the study based on Polhena area in Matara district.' Very recently she has participated as a panelist of the SCI FHSS 6th session which was conducted by the final year students of the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences.

This time, our new sociology batch 2020 has also took part in different activities organized by the department. Maleesha De Silva, Dulshani Martnius and Hansi Sandaruwani participated actively in a research conducted by the department on "Covid 19 and Social Media use". Besides, they have participated in an online debated organized by the SCI-FHSS. In addition, together with final year students, second year students have took part in an online training session on "Hate Speech and Sexiest content on Social Media". Some secondyear students have participated a project program of "Creative Youth Engagement for Pluralism, (C-YEP) project. It is a program of department of Public Policy. It was organized by the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka.

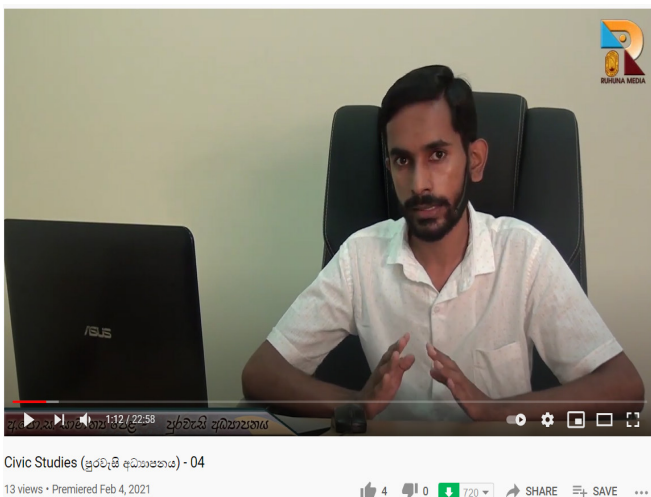
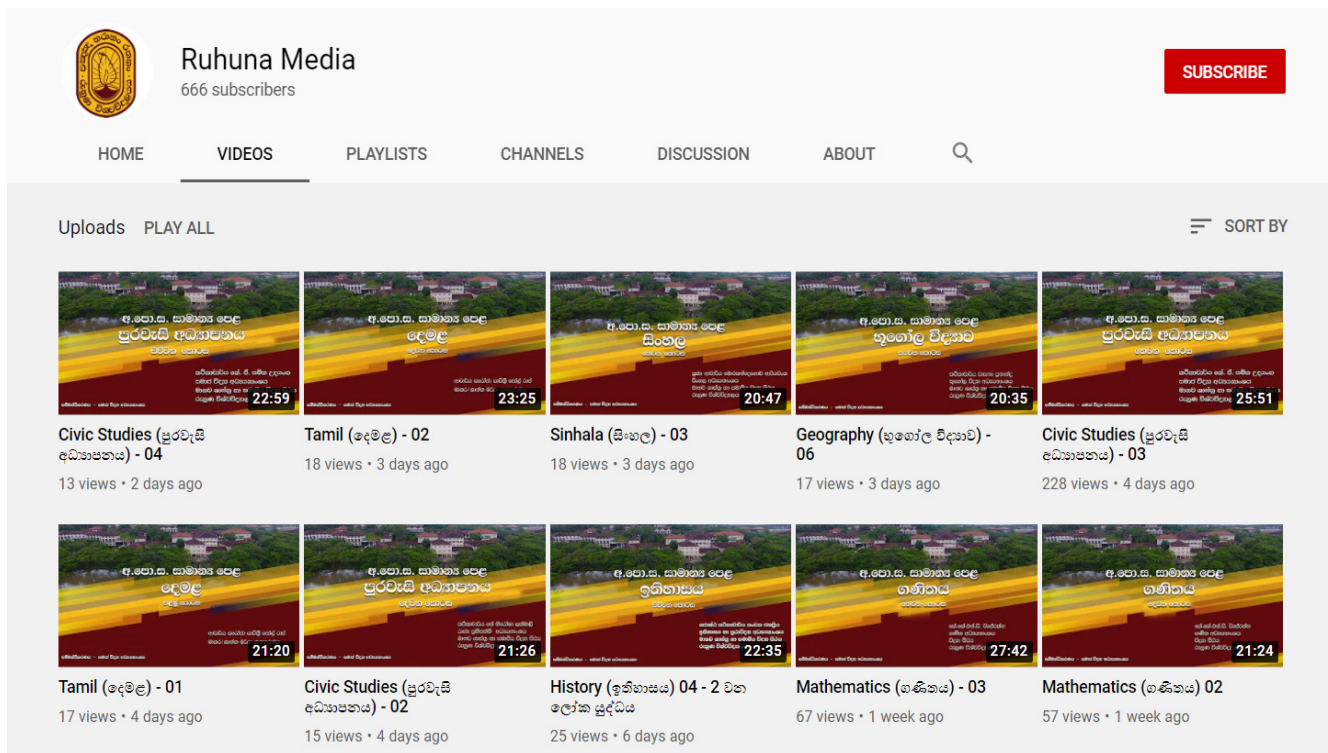


Community Service

Programme to increase the knowledge and raise awareness of students of GCE (O/L) via YouTube Channel

Department of Sociology collaborates with the Media Unit of the University of Ruhuna intending to educate students via YouTube, by conducting subject-related discussions, various activities, counseling programs, positive thinking, facing challenges successfully and increasing social interactions. This project has been started in January 2021 and completed several sessions and covered various Subjects.

Furthermore, this programme aims to update the subject knowledge among students who are taking Ordinary Level examination while increasing their subject knowledge, Discussing questions in previous examinations and mock exams/Raising a student with logical thinking by introducing activities additional to subject knowledge, Developing positive attitudes and competencies of the students who are sitting examination in this year.



Some episodes of the O/L seminar series telecasted through Youtube

Other -

Initiation of a new degree programme

Recognizing the need of help facilitate development requirements of the contemporary Sri Lanka, a committee was appointed to prepare a new degree programme for undergraduate students on “Development Practices”. As of January, 2021 major themes and subject areas of this degree programme were identified and supposed to submit the initial proposal to UGC by September, 2021.

Renovation of the Computer Lab and Staff Common Room

Funds received from the NORHEAD project, the computer lab and the staff common room were renovated. New computers were installed with all software facilities. All the staff members were given a personal computer with the intention of facilitating distance mode teaching.



Students working online

Research on People’s expectations and official communication of the Ministry of Health during the COVID-19 period

Although the Ministry of Health of Sri Lanka has disseminated official statements and news on COVID-19 and raised awareness, individual awareness among people is low. Therefore, this research was conducted by studying the individual expectations vis a vis the official communication of the Ministry of Health with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. This research was primarily based on qualitative data and it was conducted with the participation of 130 respondents. The main objective of this research was to identify what the people expected from the official communication of the Ministry of Health during the COVID-19 phase. This question was directly posed to the respondents and they explained their views. As Finding the following themes could be identified such as ,Awareness on updated information, regulations, and circulars on COVID-19,Identifying the positions of the western medical method and local medical method on the COVID-19 virus, Awareness on current news related to COVID-19,Expectation to know the availability of healthcare facilities related to hospitals, Expectation to know about global health tendencies. This research had been done by Mrs.Nirosha Ruwanpathirana,Ms. Kaushalya Piumini,Mrs. Dinesha Kankanamge and Mr.Surangith Gunasekara and research duration was December 2020.