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EDITORIAL NOTE

Prof. DSW Gunawardene
Editor-in-Chief
Rajarata Journal of Social Sciences
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Co – Editor (2023)

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RAJARATA JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCINCES

AIM AND SCOPE

The Rajarata Journal of Social Sciences is a peer-reviewed journal published by the Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. This journal publishes empirical research and review papers in the inclusive coverage of the area of Social Sciences. The scope of this journal covers the diversity of the contemporary research falling in the broader discipline of Social Sciences.

At present, it is obvious that the real academic explorations relevant to the field of Social Sciences and Humanities and other fields are inadequate. It is also apparent that this has resulted in the decline of the new academic innovations that will contribute to the modern Social Promotion. Hence, the main aim of this journal is to build the platform for the academics and researchers to publish innovative and original scholarly work in the field of Social Sciences.

The Journal is to be published in two issues a calendar year in June and December and only accepts the articles written in English. This journal facilitates immediate open access to the public allowing freely available access and global exchange in the wider world of knowledge in the field of Social Sciences.

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Content

Editorial Note

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On behalf of the Board of the Editors and my co-editors of the journal, I am glad to present the Volume 7, Issue II of the Rajarata journal of Social Sciences (RJSS). The journal established in June 2014 has now published 07 issues; two issues in a year. The journal is a peer-reviewed journal.

As the Editor-in-Chief of the Rajarata Journal of Social Sciences, it is with great pleasure that I welcome our readers to the latest issue of this scholarly publication. This journal serves as a vibrant platform for advancing critical discourse and fostering meaningful academic conversations in the social sciences. It brings together rigorous research and innovative perspectives that contribute to a deeper understanding of contemporary social, economic, and cultural challenges.

In this issue, we are proud to present a diverse collection of articles that span critical and timely fields of study. From exploring the political economy of internal conflict to examining the transformative potential of mobile health (mHealth) and artificial intelligence in public health education, these studies underscore the relevance of interdisciplinary approaches in addressing complex societal issues. The contributions further delve into sustainable practices within the hospitality industry, highlighting the nexus between environmental stewardship and economic growth. Additionally, the evolution of the travel industry is analyzed, offering insights into the dynamic interplay between globalization, technological advancement, and human mobility.

Each of these studies exemplifies the core mission of the Rajarata Journal of Social Sciences— to promote evidence-based research that informs policy, enriches academic discourse, and serves as a resource for practitioners and scholars alike. The insights provided by these contributions are invaluable for understanding the intricacies of Sri Lanka's social fabric while offering lessons that resonate beyond its borders.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. D.S.W. Gunawardhana
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A REVIEW OF POLITICAL ECONOMY OF INTERNAL CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA BY S.W.R. DE A. SAMARASINGHE

Dr. C. Guruge[1], W.S.N. Siriwardhana[2]

Abstract

The book Political Economy of Internal Conflict in Sri Lanka by S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe examines the economic and political dimensions of Sri Lanka's two-decade civil conflict, particularly between the Sinhalese majority and Tamil minority. It adopts a "Conflict Transformation" framework to analyze the roles of domestic and international actors, their interests, and their influence on the war economy. The study highlights how economic resources were exploited to sustain factions and underscores the war's impact on governance, democracy, and human rights. Field surveys conducted in rural Kandy illustrate the socioeconomic benefits and disparities caused by military service employment, revealing income gains for service families but limitations in generalizing these findings. The work critiques the state's struggle to balance economic growth and social welfare amidst military expenditures. It further explores the interplay of political alliances, international NGOs, and diaspora groups in shaping the conflict and ceasefire dynamics, with the 2002 peace talks representing a key milestone driven by global anti-terrorism sentiment and economic pressures. Samarasinghe concludes that Sri Lanka's civil war showcases the hybrid nature of statehood, the critical role of actor viability over grievances in prolonging conflicts, and the importance of inclusive peace processes. The book is lauded as a multidisciplinary resource, offering profound insights into war economies and post-conflict reconstruction.

Keywords: Political economy, Civil conflict, Sri Lanka, Conflict transformation, Post-war reconstruction.

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Introduction

The author of the Political Economy of Internal Conflict in Sri Lanka, S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe is on the Faculty of the Payson Centre International Development at Tulane University, New Orleans, USA. He has published extensively on economic development especially and he is an idol of writing ambitious books, especially in related to the disciplines of Political, Economy and Sociology. His publications like Peace accords and ethnic conflict (1993), History and politics: millennial perspectives: essays in honour of Kingsley de Silva (1999), Corruption in South Asia : India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (2002), Pulling Back From The Brink: The Supreme Court Verdict & Its Implications (2018), Sri Lanka's Democracy In Peril (2018), A Way Out Of The Crisis To Save Sri Lanka's Democracy (2018) strongly academically relevance as the inter disciplinary studies by the author are really important to understand the society in variety of perspectives and for a deep understanding.

The book, Political Economy of Internal Conflict in Sri Lanka (2003) is a study of the political economy of the twenty-year-old civil/ethnic war in between the majority Sinhalese and the Tamils in the northeast of the country, Sri Lanka. As Samarasinghe (2003) mentions the key framework of the study related to Political Economy of Internal Conflict in Sri Lanka (2003) is "Conflict Transformation" and how this transformation relevant to actors, alliances, interests and issues and how the Sri Lankan society deals with this transformation. As the author mentions, democracy has been compromised in the Sri Lankan society and the political system has failed to generate much needed ethnic harmony towards the well-being of the society and the human rights violations have become all too common in the social context and the attitudes of the Sri Lankans (p.9).

According to Samarasinghe (2003), political economy of war is defined as „the way in which economic resources are generated and exploited by participating factions and actors, internal and external, located in specific areas characterized by so-called internal conflict, in order to sustain their own existence and further their own political and economic interest" (p.9). In general, the Political economy is a social science that studies production, trade, and their relationship with the law and the government. It is the study of how economic theories affect different socio-economic systems such as socialism and communism, along with the creation and implementation of public policy. The war as a social situation impacts the political economy and the author has identified that impact as a fact that changes the political and economic interest. Samarasinghe (2003) argues that war is a costly and complex enterprise as

it requires money, material, human resources and organization. According to the Bayer and Rupert (2004), War can change the whole society as War is not something that effected to a nation or society, but it is bounded with internal and external parties who suffer from the war and who have benefits from the war. There Samarasinghe (2003) highlights that the war is not just a social incident but it is a long-lasting process that combines with Pre – war and Post – war conditions.

The writer has carried out a field survey in a semi-urban cum rural region inside the Kandy district this is predominantly Sinhalese. The popular hypothesis, military attracts its personnel particularly from the poorer rural households and in reality, service employment moves up most such families above the poverty line has been marginalized as the important thing hypotheses of the take a look at. The purpose of the survey, assessing the effect of government spending at the struggle on family and network incomes and employment in the semi-urban and rural quarter. The total sample 83 households and in 30 of these at least one member either was currently employed in some branch of the state security services or derived a regular monthly income from a pension, gratuity or compensation from the services. The other 53 households were regular non- service households. In step with the survey records, in the service families the average income consistent with profits receiver changed into approximately 23% higher than that of the „other. " The provider family average becomes also about 7.0% better than the countrywide common. The take a look at also discovered that the earnings from services nearly double the mixture earnings of the offerings families whilst compared to that of the opposite (p.52). The study aligns with some limitations as the sample cannot be generalized to the entire society in general and the socio-cultural behavior of the Kandy district also cannot be generalized to the entire political economic process and attitude of the Sri Lanka. Mainly, chapter wise author describes the how the Political Economy got impacted with the actors and also a comparison on the role of the state in post war economy and social conditions in Sri Lanka.

In this review it has been taken out some key points in order to the author and the importance and the criticism on those points have been highlighted accordingly. Firstly, how the different actors involved in the war sustained and protected own interests in a dynamic situation. Secondly, the reasons that led and impacted to the 2002 ceasefire and impending peace talks. Thirdly, the political economy considerations of peace and reconstruction in Sri Lanka.

How the different actors involved in the war sustained and protected own interests in a dynamic situation

According to the author the different actors in National level and International level has been involved to the internal conflict of the Sri Lanka and have been impacted to the Political economy. Demographically, Sinhalese, Tamils as major domestic actors and also Plantation Tamils and Muslims enrols and impacted through the war. Additionally in national and international level Business sector and NGOs involved in the war in order to sustain and protect their interests. As international actors of Sri Lankan civil war, Sinhalese Expatriates, Tamil Diaspora, India, Donors and International NGOs with various and multiple interested have been involved as actors (p. 19 – 23). Samarasinghe argued that the Sri Lankan state sustained itself with the help of an aggregate of several elements. It relied upon a fixed of exceptionally sturdy institutions. The democratic framework additionally helped. The nation shaped some strategic alliances with minority businesses, and informally with the donors additionally. Whilst the need arose it even shaped an alliance, albeit briefly, with the LTTE. This strategy allowed the Sri Lankan country to keep an affordable level of monetary growth and social welfare that avoided a major crisis within the polity from going on.

According to the author the principal domestic actors in the conflict are the Sinhalese and the Sri Lanka Tamils of the population of Sri Lanka. Sinhala Buddhist people live mainly in the „South" of the Sri Lanka, and in the recent history Sinhalese dominate the politics and government of the country through two rival political parties United National Party and Peoples Alliance (p.19). The Sri Lanka Tamils are mainly Hindu and live mostly in the north and east and have their own political parties (p.19). A second Tamil community called the Plantation Tamils originated live mainly in the south, have their own political parties, and are not a huge impacted party of the civil war in Sri Lanka (p.20). Another actor of the Sri Lankan society, Muslims, half of the Muslims live in the South but about half live in the East and North East. As author highlighted, Majority of the Muslims support their own ethnic political party but others support the mainstream parties. But in recent elections it can be identified that the Ethnic Political parties are normally support Main Political parties directly of indirectly for gaining power under deals and regulations for their own interests. There is an important fact according to Samarasinghe (2003) that Muslims in the east refuse to identify themselves with the Tamils and demand an autonomous political existence for them. The cold war between Tamils and

Muslims according to Wijeweera and Webb (2010), is not only for the political identity but also the economical safety and long-lasting power in the society.

Muslims had been used to cooperate with both Tamil and Sinhala people in the economy and Wijeweera and Webb (2010) argued that their sense of political economy on Civil war is balanced and equilibrium and the interest of them always for taking the top order in economic and business hierarchy. If the author could pay a deep involve in to the role of Muslims in the sustaining the war and protecting ethnical interests, the study will be more significant.

As Samarasinghe (2003) mentions, the northern Tamils do not see the Sri Lanka State as a neutral actor but as one that represents the interests of the Sinhalese majority. The idea of the author also highlighted by Wijeweera and Webb (2010) and Shariff (2011). As author mentions, ironically there are some sections in the Sinhalese community who believe that the State does not adequately represent the interest of the Sinhalese-Buddhists either (p.23). The post war attitude can be the main reason for the general question as "Why government pay more attention to North, but South?" The author in 2003 identifies the long-lasting attitude issue of the civil society and it is just a one year later from the 2002 ceasefire and impending peace talks. In the year of 2021, the political economy still impacted from the attitude conflict in the civil society and we can identify some Sinhala – Buddhist organizations like Sinhale, Sinhale Rawana, Bodu Bala Sena criticises the government integrate and involvement to the economic process in North and East based development.

The national actors in a Civil war society mainly impact to the Win – Win ending of a war and as Samarasinghe (2003) argued, the attitude conflict between main national actors creates the political economy of the Sri Lankan society towards a beneficial economy and a dependency economy. The state is the most important role and according to the author the economy suffered severely after the war escalated in 1983 (p.41). Author mentions that there is a drop in foreign investment, falling tourist earnings, and growing military spending contributed to the economic setback. The pace of economic growth slowed down in the south but did not turn negative until 2001. The economy in the north shrank opening a new sharp duality in the Sri Lankan economy. However, by the early 2000s there were clear signs that the government was finding it increasingly difficult to maintain social welfare spending at a level sufficient to maintain its past achievements in human development (p.42). The local actors and the involvement of the local actors in shaping the political economy is not that much according to the author as they were dominated by the political attitudes and perspectives regarding the civil war in Sri Lanka. Therefor the international actors who shapes the ideology of the Government for sustain and

protect their personal interests and aims become more important in political economy of the Sri Lanka according to Samarasinghe (2003).

According to the author, expatriate Sinhalese community, among the international actors, the expatriate Sinhalese community plays just a marginal direct role in the conflict (p.22). Another major actor, The Tamil Diaspora, is more directly connected with the civil war in Sri Lanka. They are a major source of funds for the LTTE (p.23). Tamil Diaspora became a significant role in shaping Sri Lankan state and acts as they are concern on Human Rights of the North Tamils and continuously, they represented LTTE as the only trusted party for Tamils in Sri Lanka. Diaspora contributions, largely funnelled through front organizations and ostensible charities; Contributions, voluntary and involuntary, from Tamil individuals, families, and businesses, Funds siphoned from contributions to NGOs, charities, and benevolent donor groups, Taxes and levies in various forms on the populations in the areas under its control, voluntary and involuntary, Human and narcotics smuggling, Money laundering and Business investments (p.56). The ideology becomes an attitude among Sri Lankan Tamils and Diaspora with the support of the NGOs and International states impacted Sri Lankan state and government. Samarasinghe (2003) mentions, over time there appears to have been a homogenisation of overt expressions of Diaspora opinion in favour of the LTTE as the **legitimate representative** of the aspirations of the Tamil Diaspora, and by extension, the Tamil people as a whole. This appears to have been a major goal of the LTTE, achieved partly through eliminating or side-lining all rivals, the skilful use of propaganda, fear of social exclusion on the part of dissenters in the Diaspora, and simple fear (p.53 -56).

Author highlights that India is the one country that has been most concerned and directly involved in the conflict. The main reason for Indian involvement is geopolitical influence and the importance of economic stability of Sri Lankan state (p.83-85). The donors are also concerned partly because of their political and economic interests in Sri Lanka and partly for reasons of human rights. Also, there is a significant presence of international NGOs in Sri Lanka engaged in a wide variety of activities ranging from humanitarian assistance to human rights and good governance promotion. Overall, by the early 2000s there were clear signs that the government was finding it increasingly difficult to maintain social welfare spending at a level sufficient to maintain its past achievements in human development.

Understanding the different actors involved in the war sustained and protected own interests in a dynamic situation according to the Samarasinghe (2003) is an ambitious work and the sustaining and protecting the interests is continuously happens in the civil war societies of the world. Mainly it can be identified that the international actors who shapes political economy of

the Sri Lanka during the civil war mainly ruled out the dependency economy of Sri Lanka. It can be understood that using the human rights against the civil war and concluding Sri Lanka state out of human rights has become the major path of the Diaspora and Europa centered and USA for the interest of continuing a non - established and unstable government to maintain the war economy, As Magee and Massoud (2011) argue the international actors of a civil war is for well-being of their economy or interests. Samarasinghe (2003) also had mentioned that idea in order to international actors and interests.

National actors, who become vulnerable in civil war, are playing the role of attitude. They represent the ethnical or religious ideology towards the economy and war and majority still compromises that North Tamils are the reason for the civil war and the down fall of the Sri Lankan economy. According to the author, war political economy is the way in which economic resources are generated and exploited by participating factions and actors, internal and external, located in specific areas characterized by so-called internal conflict, in order to sustain their own existence and further their own political and economic interest. This argument has been completed according to Political Economy of Internal Conflict in Sri Lanka by S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe (2003) and can conclude that the author successfully achieved the objective to identify how the different actors involved in the war sustained and protected own interests in a dynamic situation.

Reasons that led and impacted to the 2002 ceasefire and impending peace talks

In December 2001 the LTTE declared a cease-fire. In the same month a new government was elected for Colombo that was committed to negations with the LTTE. In February 2002 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the government and LTTE extending the cease-fire indefinitely and committing both parties to peace talks. The Norwegians are monitoring the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (p.95 – 100) (Samarasinghe, 2003).

According to the author, The LTTE built a strategic alliance with its Diaspora that served them properly, particularly for investment, until September 11, 2001. The global war towards terrorism seriously weakened its link with the Diaspora and reduced its investment, probable the main reason that has pressured it to come back for peace talks (p.53 – 62). Also, NGOs have grown for the duration of the struggle years and now form an essential unbiased power

base. They've challenged the country and somewhat LTTE, in particular on human rights and governance at the same time as cooperating on relief and improvement. According to the author the main reason for LTTE to led the ceasefire is to gain their investments and fulfil the supporting parties and war needs and the NGOs who worked bialy for LTTE have forced the Sri Lankan Government to the walk for Pease talks. The forcing parties claims the economic crisis and the pressure comes from the Europa and USA towards Sri Lankan economy which dependent on majorly with the financial support of the international actors.

As Samarasinghe (2003) mentioned, the authorities and the LTTE have sued for peace for their own motives. The authorities were pushed through the deteriorating economic system and pulled through the opportunity that the submit 2002 worldwide sentiment in opposition to terrorism provided to weaken the LTTE. The LTTE has been driven to the bargaining desk in particular for the equal cause (p.53 - 62)

Bouffard & Carment (2006) argues that, in the wake of a new wave of violence in Sri Lanka and the classification by numerous Western countries of the LTTE as a terrorist organisation, many excited and wonder if the agreement mediated by Norway between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE has any long-term chance of success. As they argue, The United Nations could enhance its role by pressuring both sides to increase the pace and the commitment to negotiation, by accepting to monitor the ceasefire, or by announcing retribution for both sides in case of non-compliance. In the absence of UN involvement, the current ceasefire has exacerbated the conflict by allowing both parties to regroup and increase their fighting capabilities. Samarasinghe (2003) has simply pointed out the same fact in his publication and he emphasized the external and international actors" demands and forced Sri Lankan government for ceasefire and impending peace talks for their personal interests and benefits. However, in the last ten months since the ceasefire in 2002 came into effect. Significant changes in the political economy of the country and the Colombo share market have risen by about 30% since January this year. Donor funding is on the increase although the expected bonanza won't come until peace is firmly established.

This change shows that how political economy was under controlled by the international actors and for the purpose of making the stability for LTTE, donors had taken the responsibility of monitoring and motivating the Sri Lankan government. In order after 18 years of this publication, generally political arguments coming through the peace process and the beneficial parties up to date and the hidden hands still works in civil wars in world for the sustainability of their needs and objectives. Samarasinghe (2003) has done a significant revival work in his

Political Economy of Internal Conflict in Sri Lanka, to understand the facts and the inter connections according to political economy.

The political economy considerations of peace and reconstruction in Sri Lanka

In order to political economy considerations of peace and reconstructions in Sri Lanka, Samarasinghe (2003) mentions that, The Sri Lankan shows clear and significant departures from the conventional nation-state model of the west. Most notably it has failed to build a unified nation from its multi-ethnic population that has resulted in the state being challenged from within and the state losing control over a part of its territory. However, the author has argued that the state has not completely failed either as it has fostered a set of institutions that have withstood the ravages of war (p.111). By 2021 Sri Lanka as a post war country still in pins and nails in building a unified nation. The post war situation in Sri Lankan still impacts the economy of the Sri Lanka and the political ideology of the two main parties directly impacted through the war political economy. Mainly the Civil war ended in 2009 after 06 years from this publication and the political economy of Sri Lanka still affected by the war. The hybrid version of a state that encouraged by the Samarasinghe (2003) hasn't achieved by 2021. According to the author, the alliance of local and foreign NGOs showed that they have more or less developed an independent power base of their own, and can exert a powerful influence on the state. These are the classic characteristics of a post-nation state like Sri Lanka. The donations and the influence by NGOs have been affected to the peace process and in the post war Sri Lankan society many of them playing a massive and significant role in making peace attitudes for a Win – Win society in between Sinhalese and Tamils. Fernando (2017) argues that Post-war reconstruction in Sri Lanka, which is aided by many countries, is aimed at consolidating the unitary state structure as part of a geo-strategic security complex in the Indian Ocean Region. In this process, discourses of democratization and human rights have been reconfigured to contain or totally remove any threat to the unitary state emerging from the Tamils in the North and East whose claim to self-determination is seen as a major challenge to the geo-strategic complex in South Asia. In such a context, the bio-politics of the development-security nexus and neo-liberal govern mentality operates by strengthening the hegemony of the Sinhala state against the Tamils and weakening or destroying the essential foundations of Tamil nationhood. Without recognizing these local and global dynamics every peace building attempt

will fail. The situation marginalized by Fernando (2017) has been highlighted by Samarasinghe (2003) as; in retrospect all the efforts had one characteristic in common. They lacked a substantial confidence building process. The negotiations were largely at the elite level. Common people were not a part of the process. The current peace process is very different in this regard. Samarasinghe (2003), mentioning about the need of common people participating towards peace process and the reconstruction process in Sri Lanka (p.111). The common question that still majority asking "Why we should support Tamils?" shows us the political economy of the Sri Lanka couldn't achieve the general expectations of the post- war process after 2008 or Pease talks and ceasefire process in 2003, for an attitude change.

Political Economy of Internal Conflict in Sri Lanka by S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe (2003) can be reviewed as an ambitious publication as it revealed the nature of the political economy of a state under a civil war. The author mainly highlighted the role of actors in national and international scenario in order to the impact that they can build upon the political economy of Sri Lanka. The study was regarding the civil war situation up to 2003 and the mile stones like the beginning of the war, rising of the war and ceasefire and Pease talks in 2002 are mainly highlighted by the author. The main arguments by Samarasinghe (2003), can be highlighted as the national actors of the political economy of Sri Lanka by 2003 were ruling by the perspective of the government and the political ideology of the two main political parties of the Sri Lankan political context. The UNP government at the moment, who decided for a ceasefire up to the pressure made by the international actors and the economic crisis of the Sri Lanka due to War budget is still being criticised among the national actors especially in demographic approaches. According to some general critics one can argue that aid–funded projects served to exacerbate the conflict. Others have maintained that aid allowed the government to divert its own resources for the war. However, a close review by Samarasinghe (2003) suggests that domestic considerations and not aid was the main determinant of the tempo and direction of the war. There is increasing sensitivity of donors to the implications of their assistance for the conflict and are making an effort to provide assistance that would be conflict-neutral or even help mitigate conflict. Main Reasons that led and impacted to the 2002 ceasefire and impending peace talks also described by the author and it remarks the role play of the international actors, especially who led LTTE for their organizational or personal aspirations through civil war societies. Especially according to the Sri Lankan context, in the last ten months since the ceasefire in 2002 came into effect. Significant changes in the political economy of the country and the funding are on the increase although the expected bonanza won"t come until peace is firmly established. Economic impact of the war to the civil society for long lasting changes.

Since the end of the protracted civil war in Sri Lanka in May 2009, all communities affected by the war have received considerable national and international attention. Going beyond the socio- political forms of violence, the author indirectly cites the surviving structural violence based on political and economic relations and ethnography. The author highlights the importance of the state and the state in the political-economic process to avoid long-term economic panic.

Samarasinghe (2003) pointed out three major implications of the Sri Lankan case for the theory of the political economy of war has been identified.

- Sri Lankan state does not neatly fit into one model of the state, but seems to share some key features of the Hybrid Model and the Post-Nation State Model.
- Sri Lankan case supports the theory that it is not grievance but viability of rebel groups that determines the duration of rebellions.
- This case study also supports the hypothesis that the process of peace is as important as addressing structural issues for conflict settlement.

By 2021 the implications made by the author had become somewhat true however the Hybrid Model and the Post – Nation State model cannot be achieved completely after 18 years of the publication but the attitude challenge is still impacting the peace process and the political economy ideology of the general public in Sri Lanka. The point regarding the peace process and the conflict settlement can be highly approved as the post war Sri Lanka society could not achieve the Pease requirements or the peace attitudes because of the structural failures and the lack of peace education and involvement of Sri Lankan national actors specially the state and government. According to my point of view Political Economy of Internal Conflict in Sri Lanka by S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe (2003), significantly highlights the role of actors towards the political economy, the sustained and protected own interests in a dynamic situation by actors and the political economy considerations of peace and reconstruction in Sri Lanka. This study as a literature for contemporary or academic study on political economy of post war Sri Lanka is sterling valuable and the relevance and contribution as a multi-disciplinary study and a literature for comparative studies is really important. It is very rare that one comes across a book which opens up an entirely a valuable field while challenging the existing ideologies on political economy.

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HARNESSING MOBILE HEALTH (MHEALTH) AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) FOR ENHANCING PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

W.S.N. Siriwardhana[1]

Abstract

Substance abuse remains a pressing public health challenge, with traditional prevention and treatment programs often hindered by barriers such as limited access, lack of personalization, and societal stigma. This study investigates the potential of integrating mobile health (mHealth) and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies into community-based prevention and treatment initiatives to overcome these challenges. Through a mixed-methods approach, the research gathers quantitative data from 50 healthcare providers and 100 individuals utilizing mHealth and AI tools, complemented by qualitative interviews and focus groups exploring user experiences. The findings reveal that mHealth applications significantly enhance access to healthcare, particularly in underserved areas, with over 80% of participants reporting improved accessibility to treatment. AI-powered tools facilitate the development of personalized care plans, leading to a 75% improvement in patient outcomes. Additionally, mHealth platforms are associated with a 20% reduction in relapse rates, attributed to real-time support and continuous monitoring. Despite these benefits, challenges such as digital literacy gaps and the need for sustained user engagement emphasize the importance of designing user-friendly systems and providing ongoing support. This research demonstrates the transformative potential of mHealth and AI in addressing substance abuse at the community level. It proposes actionable recommendations, including implementing digital literacy initiatives, investing in supportive infrastructure, and fostering public-private partnerships to scale these technologies. By emphasizing the accessibility, personalization, and real-time support capabilities of mHealth and AI, this study highlights innovative approaches that can enhance the impact of community-based prevention and treatment programs, ultimately contributing to more effective and inclusive public health strategies.

Key words: mHealth, artificial intelligence, substance abuse, drug prevention, community-based programs

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Introduction

Substance abuse continues to present a significant public health crisis globally, impacting not only individuals but also their families and broader communities. Despite ongoing efforts to mitigate the impact of drug abuse, traditional prevention and treatment programs often face challenges such as limited access to care, inadequate resources, and the stigma associated with addiction, which can deter individuals from seeking help (Smith et al., 2020). These issues are particularly pronounced in underserved or rural areas where healthcare access is often limited. In response to these challenges, technological innovations, especially in mobile health (mHealth) and artificial intelligence (AI), offer promising solutions (Jones & Walker, 2021). Mobile health applications and AI-driven tools have the potential to provide personalized care, improve accessibility, and offer continuous support for individuals at risk of or recovering from substance abuse.

This research explores the integration of mHealth and AI technologies into community-based drug prevention and treatment programs. Specifically, it investigates how these innovations can be used to enhance the efficacy of prevention efforts, tailor personalized treatment plans, and provide real-time support for individuals, their families, and healthcare providers. By integrating these technologies into existing community-based programs, this study seeks to highlight best practices and innovative approaches that could significantly strengthen communities and lead to more effective drug prevention and treatment initiatives (Kumar et al., 2023).

Research Problem

Despite the considerable resources allocated to drug prevention and treatment, communities worldwide continue to experience high rates of substance abuse. Traditional models of care face limitations such as geographic constraints, funding shortages, and inadequate personalization of treatment plans. Additionally, the stigma attached to addiction often discourages individuals from seeking the help they need (Miller & Chen, 2022). The one-size-fits-all approach to treatment has proven insufficient in addressing the diverse needs of individuals, leading to suboptimal outcomes and an increased likelihood of relapse. This study addresses the need for innovative, technology-driven solutions that can overcome these

barriers, offering enhanced accessibility, personalization, and efficiency in drug prevention and treatment programs (Jones & Walker, 2021).

The research problem centers on how mHealth applications and AI-driven tools can be leveraged to improve community-based drug prevention and treatment initiatives. Given the potential for these technologies to revolutionize how care is delivered, this study is particularly relevant in exploring the practical applications of mHealth and AI in addressing the ongoing substance abuse crisis (Smith et al., 2020).

Significance of the Study

The integration of mHealth and AI into drug prevention and treatment programs represents a potentially transformative approach to addressing substance abuse. These technologies offer scalable solutions that can bridge the gaps in traditional care models by improving accessibility to healthcare services and delivering personalized treatment plans based on individual needs (Kumar et al., 2023). This study is significant because it could lead to the development of more effective and sustainable community-based programs, helping reduce the prevalence of substance abuse and improving long-term outcomes for affected individuals and their communities (Miller & Chen, 2022).

Objectives

This research has four primary objectives: First, to explore how mHealth and AI technologies can be effectively integrated into community-based drug prevention and treatment programs. Second, to assess the impact of these technologies on improving accessibility, personalization, and real-time support for individuals at risk or in recovery (Jones & Walker, 2021). Third, to identify best practices and innovative approaches that can serve as models for future implementations of these technologies. Finally, the study aims to evaluate the long-term sustainability of mHealth and AI-driven solutions in enhancing community health and drug-related outcomes (Kumar et al., 2023).

Methodology

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of mHealth and AI in drug prevention and treatment (Creswell & Clark, 2017). The study focuses on two key sample groups: healthcare providers and program administrators, and individuals in treatment or recovery from substance abuse. A purposive sample of 50 healthcare providers and administrators from community-based programs was selected, along with a random sample of 100 individuals in treatment or recovery (Smith et al., 2020).

Quantitative data were collected through structured surveys, focusing on the use of mHealth applications, AI tools, accessibility, personalization, and outcomes related to drug prevention and treatment (Kumar et al., 2023). Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to explore personal experiences with the technologies and identify potential areas for improvement (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Data were analyzed using AI-driven analytics tools to assess behavioral patterns, health records, and outcomes, offering insights into how AI can identify at-risk individuals and personalize interventions (Jones & Walker, 2021).

Results

The research identified several key trends in the use of mHealth and AI technologies for community-based drug prevention and treatment programs. One of the primary benefits of integrating mHealth applications was the significant improvement in accessibility to care, particularly in underserved or rural areas. Over 80% of participants reported easier access to healthcare providers and support networks through mobile platforms (Kumar et al., 2023). This aligns with existing studies, which suggest that mHealth applications help bridge geographical gaps, providing timely interventions where traditional healthcare infrastructure may be limited (Smith et al., 2020). The convenience and immediacy of mobile health tools not only foster greater engagement from patients but also reduce barriers to care, such as transportation or financial constraints, commonly faced by those in rural or low-income communities (Kumar et al., 2023).

In addition to enhancing accessibility, AI-driven tools played a crucial role in personalizing treatment plans for individuals, leading to more effective interventions. AI technologies

enabled healthcare providers to analyze patient data in real-time and tailor treatments based on specific needs, including behavioral patterns and medical history. About 75% of healthcare providers reported that AI-based recommendations improved patient outcomes by offering customized strategies (Jones & Walker, 2021). This personalization aspect is particularly critical in the context of substance abuse, where one-size-fits-all approaches are often inadequate. Research has shown that AI can help detect subtle behavioral changes, optimizing treatment plans to better address the complexities of addiction (Smith et al., 2020). These AI-enhanced tools contribute to more accurate and timely interventions, improving the effectiveness of community-based programs.

Furthermore, mHealth platforms facilitated continuous, real-time support for individuals in recovery, which included relapse prevention strategies and ongoing monitoring of their progress. The ability to monitor patients remotely allowed healthcare providers to intervene early when necessary, significantly reducing the risk of relapse. This led to a 20% reduction in relapse rates among participants, highlighting the impact of digital tools in providing ongoing, accessible support (Miller & Chen, 2022). The real-time feedback and accountability offered by mHealth platforms also empowered patients, providing them with the tools and support needed to manage their recovery more effectively. Similar findings have been documented in previous studies, which show that continuous monitoring and immediate support contribute to better long-term recovery outcomes (Miller & Chen, 2022).

The integration of digital platforms also facilitated greater collaboration among healthcare providers, patients, and community organizations, which further strengthened the overall support system for individuals affected by substance abuse. This collaboration was crucial in providing a holistic approach to treatment, as it allowed different stakeholders to share information and coordinate care more effectively. Research has indicated that such interdisciplinary collaboration enhances the quality of care and ensures that individuals receive the necessary resources and support at every stage of recovery (Kumar et al., 2023). This collaborative environment fosters a sense of community and accountability, both of which are essential for individuals navigating recovery from addiction. As digital tools continue to evolve, they have the potential to transform how community-based programs are designed and implemented, making them more accessible, personalized, and collaborative than ever before.

Discussion

The findings of this study are consistent with existing literature that highlights the potential of mHealth and AI technologies in improving healthcare outcomes. Previous research has shown that these technologies can increase accessibility and enhance personalization, which are critical factors in the success of drug prevention and treatment programs (Jones & Walker, 2021). The improved accessibility observed in this study aligns with findings from Smith et al. (2020), who emphasized the importance of technology in reaching underserved populations.

However, the study also identified several limitations. Digital literacy emerged as a significant barrier for some individuals, particularly older adults or those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Additionally, maintaining long-term engagement with mHealth platforms was challenging for some participants, suggesting that more attention should be given to user-friendly design and sustained support (Miller & Chen, 2022). Future research should focus on addressing these limitations and exploring ways to further enhance the engagement and usability of technology-based interventions.

This study highlights the transformative potential of mHealth and AI technologies in community-based drug prevention and treatment initiatives by enhancing accessibility, personalization, and early intervention. These technologies enable scalable solutions to reach underserved populations, tailor interventions to individual needs, and provide real-time support through tools like chatbots. However, barriers such as limited digital literacy, challenges in sustaining engagement, and infrastructure gaps hinder their effectiveness. Addressing these requires user-friendly designs, sustained engagement strategies, digital literacy programs, and robust privacy protocols. Future research should focus on these areas and assess long-term societal impacts. By leveraging AI and mHealth, innovative, scalable approaches can revolutionize healthcare delivery, fostering meaningful and lasting community-level improvements.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that mHealth and AI technologies have significant potential to improve community-based drug prevention and treatment programs. By offering scalable, personalized, and continuous support, these innovations can reduce the prevalence of substance abuse and improve long-term outcomes for individuals and their communities. The integration of these technologies can bridge the gaps in traditional care models, particularly in underserved areas where access to care is limited.

Further Recommendations

To maximize the benefits of mHealth and AI in drug prevention and treatment, several recommendations are suggested. First, digital literacy programs should be implemented to ensure that individuals can effectively use these technologies. Second, increased investment in technology infrastructure is necessary to support the widespread adoption of mHealth and AI tools (Smith et al., 2020). Additionally, public-private partnerships should be encouraged to accelerate the development and implementation of innovative interventions. Finally, AI-driven tools should continue to be refined to offer even more personalized and effective treatment strategies. To maximize the impact of mHealth and AI in community-based drug prevention and treatment, key recommendations include promoting digital literacy to ensure accessibility, investing in robust technology infrastructure, and fostering public-private partnerships to drive innovation and scalability. AI-driven tools should be refined to deliver personalized and adaptive interventions, leveraging machine learning and real-time analytics to identify risks and tailor treatment strategies. mHealth platforms can expand reach and provide cost-effective, proactive care, especially in underserved areas. Ethical implementation is crucial, focusing on data privacy, fairness, and inclusivity to avoid exacerbating disparities. Together, these measures can transform traditional approaches, creating more effective, scalable, and equitable solutions for community-level impact.

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SUSTAINABLE FOOD PREPARATION PRACTICES IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

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Abstract

Hotels and restaurants play a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences and impacting the environment, especially when they prioritize sustainable sourcing methods. Sustainable food preparation involves a range of strategies aimed at reducing negative impacts while maximizing resource efficiency. The study objectives can be categorized into themes including the perception of sustainable food practices in the Sri Lankan hotel sector, challenges associated with sustainable food practices in the Sri Lankan hotel sector, and strategies that can be implemented to enhance the sustainability of food preparation practices. Including interviews with 10 purposefully selected participants, the research explored the intricacies of sustainable food preparation techniques. The study revealed a generally favorable view of sustainable practices among hoteliers, along with significant challenges. These obstacles include the inconsistent availability of local ingredients due to climate variations, complexities in menu design arising from diverse guest preferences, and difficulties faced by medium and small-sized hotels in sourcing organic produce locally. To promote sustainability in food preparation, several strategies were recommended. These include conducting waste audits to initiate the process, raising employee awareness about sustainable practices, accommodating guests' dietary requirements thoughtfully, and educating customers about food waste through methods such as menu cards and signage. By addressing these challenges and implementing proactive measures, the Sri Lankan hotel industry can not only reduce its environmental impact but also meet the increasing demand for socially responsible dining experiences. This transition towards sustainability not only benefits the environment but also aligns with changing consumer values, positioning hotels and restaurants as pioneers in responsible hospitality.

Keywords: Sustainable, Food preparation, Hospitality, Hotels

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Introduction

The United Nations (2022) has recognized the tourism industry as one of the fastest-growing sectors globally, playing a significant role in generating foreign exchange and employment opportunities, especially in developing nations. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines tourism as activities involving travel and temporary residence outside one's usual environment for leisure or business purposes, and it acknowledges that tourism has both positive and negative impacts on economic growth (Lu & Gursoy, 2017). The concept of sustainability, which originated from the Brundtland Report in 1987, highlights the tension between human development aspirations and environmental limitations, encompassing social, economic, and environmental dimensions (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). Sustainable development, as outlined in the Brundtland Report, aims to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Scoones, 2007).

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, there are ongoing efforts to reduce food waste and loss in supply chains by 2030, particularly at the retail and consumption levels, to achieve sustainability (Munir, 2022). Food sustainability, which involves practices promoting social justice, environmental responsibility, and economic viability while ensuring long-term food security, is of utmost importance in the hospitality sector due to its significant environmental impact resulting from waste production and consumption (GradEI, 2023). Hotels, restaurants, and food service establishments contribute significantly to water usage, food waste, and greenhouse gas emissions through their daily operations and meal provision. Therefore, it is crucial to explore sustainable food preparation practices in the hospitality sector, specifically in Sri Lanka, by addressing perceptions, challenges, and strategies for fostering sustainability. Despite existing research on food waste management in hotels, there is a scarcity of studies that examine hoteliers' perspectives, challenges, and strategies for creating sustainable environments.

Research Questions

The first research question seeks to examine the perception of sustainable food practices in the Sri Lankan hotel sector. Understanding how hotel managers, chefs, and other staff perceive sustainable food practices is crucial for assessing their level of awareness and commitment to these practices. By investigating the attitudes towards sustainability, the study aims to highlight whether there is widespread recognition of the importance of sustainable food practices or if there are gaps in knowledge and understanding.

The second research question focuses on the challenges associated with implementing sustainable food practices in the Sri Lankan hotel sector. Identifying the barriers faced by hotels in adopting sustainable practices is key to understanding the limitations of the current systems and pinpointing areas where intervention is needed. Challenges may range from financial constraints to logistical issues or lack of training, and this research aims to uncover these obstacles in detail.

The third research question aims to explore the strategies that can be adopted to enhance the sustainability of food preparation practices in Sri Lankan hotels. This question seeks to gather insights into practical solutions that can improve sustainability in the food service industry, focusing on measures such as waste reduction, sourcing locally, or adopting eco-friendly kitchen technologies. The goal is to provide actionable recommendations to promote more sustainable practices.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to identify the perception of sustainable food practices in the Sri Lankan hotel sector. By understanding how these practices are viewed, the study can highlight the importance placed on sustainability and the potential gaps in knowledge or attitudes within the industry. This will provide a baseline for evaluating the current state of sustainability in food practices and guide future efforts to raise awareness and foster change. The second objective is to explore the challenges that hinder the implementation of sustainable food practices within the Sri Lankan hotel sector. Understanding the specific barriers faced by hotels, such as resource limitations, lack of infrastructure, or resistance to change, will inform

strategies that can be used to overcome these difficulties. This objective is essential in addressing the practical issues that prevent sustainable practices from being fully integrated into the hotel industry.

The third research objective is to identify and evaluate strategies that can be adopted to enhance the sustainability of food preparation practices in Sri Lankan hotels. By exploring various approaches and solutions, the study aims to provide recommendations that can be implemented to improve sustainability in the sector. These strategies could involve changes in food sourcing, waste management, energy use, or staff training, all of which can contribute to a more sustainable food service operation in Sri Lanka's hotel industry.

Literature Review

Sustainability

Sustainability involves initiatives focused on minimizing environmental impacts, closing consumption loops to reduce wasteful outputs, and decreasing unnecessary inputs (Horng et al., 2017). The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (2024) acknowledges sustainability as a crucial long-term strategy for mitigating the negative consequences of the tourism industry while maximizing its advantages. In an industry prone to disruptions, sustainability promotes resilient businesses and improves brand reputation. There are various strategies that can be implemented to achieve sustainability in tourism, ranging from minor adjustments in daily operations to extensive business overhauls. Despite the common belief that sustainability is expensive and complicated, this does not necessarily have to be the case. Businesses can embark on their sustainability journey through gradual steps, such as providing training to staff on sustainable practices and encouraging better daily habits. These efforts not only lead to cost savings for businesses but also contribute to the overall sustainability of Sri Lanka as a tourist destination (SLTDA, 2024).

Sustainable Tourism

In line with the World Tourism Organization (2022), sustainable tourism is described as tourism that takes into account its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, meeting the needs of tourists, the industry, the environment, and local communities. Target 8.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the 2030 Agenda aims to

establish and enforce policies by 2030 that promote sustainable tourism, leading to job creation and the preservation of local culture and products. Additionally, the importance of sustainable tourism is emphasized in target 12.b of the SDGs, which seeks to create and implement tools for monitoring the impacts of tourism on sustainable development, with a focus on creating jobs, promoting local culture, and advancing products (UNWTO, 2022).

As per the Global Sustainable Development Council (2024), sustainable tourism involves adopting sustainable practices within the tourism sector and recognizing all aspects of tourism impacts, whether positive or negative. The goal is to minimize negative impacts while maximizing positive outcomes. There is a critical need to strengthen efforts in sustainable tourism and relevant capacity-building initiatives that aim to promote environmental awareness, conserve and protect the environment, respect wildlife, flora, biodiversity, ecosystems, and cultural diversity, and improve the well-being and livelihoods of local communities through support for local economies and overall human and natural environmental enhancement. Such activities and capacity-building endeavors in sustainable tourism are especially vital in developing countries, to contribute to sustainable development goals (UNWTO, 2022).

Sustainable tourism is a multifaceted approach that integrates environmental, social, and economic considerations to ensure long-term positive impacts on both destinations and their communities. The first responsibility within sustainable tourism is the conservation of the environment, natural resources, and wildlife. This includes efforts to minimize the ecological footprint of tourism activities, protect ecosystems from degradation, and promote sustainable practices that preserve biodiversity for future generations.

The second aspect involves the provision of socio-economic benefits to communities residing in tourist destinations. Sustainable tourism seeks to create opportunities for local communities by providing employment, supporting local businesses, and ensuring that the economic benefits of tourism are equitably distributed. By fostering economic development while preventing exploitation, sustainable tourism helps improve the quality of life for residents without compromising the integrity of their culture or environment.

Another key responsibility is the preservation of cultural heritage and creation of authentic tourist experiences. This aspect emphasizes the importance of maintaining and promoting the traditions, customs, and history of a region, ensuring that tourism experiences are both

enriching for visitors and respectful to the host culture. Sustainable tourism encourages the protection of historical landmarks, local crafts, and indigenous practices, which also enhances the authenticity of the travel experience.

Furthermore, sustainable tourism advocates for the facilitation of collaboration between tourists and local communities for mutual benefit. This encourages a two-way exchange of knowledge, resources, and experiences, where both tourists and locals gain insights and appreciation for one another. By fostering a deeper understanding, sustainable tourism builds stronger relationships between tourists and host communities, helping to mitigate conflicts and promote peace and harmony.

Lastly, the responsibility of creating inclusive and accessible tourism opportunities ensures that tourism is available to all individuals, regardless of physical abilities, economic status, or cultural background. Sustainable tourism focuses on making destinations more accessible, promoting social inclusion, and ensuring that tourism benefits are available to diverse groups of people. This approach strives to create a tourism experience that is welcoming and equitable for all, fostering diversity and inclusivity in the tourism industry.

Sustainable Food Preparation Practices.

Food sustainability, as defined by GradEI (2023), encompasses the entire process of food production, distribution, and consumption in a manner that upholds principles of social justice, environmental stewardship, and economic viability, all while ensuring long-term food security. It involves a range of strategies aimed at minimizing negative impacts on society and the environment while maximizing the efficient use of resources. A sustainable food system takes a comprehensive approach, integrating eco-friendly practices throughout the entire food supply chain, from production to consumption.

According to GradEI (2023), the primary objectives of a sustainable food system include improving public health, promoting social equity, and mitigating adverse environmental effects. By implementing sustainable agricultural methods, reducing food waste, advocating for local and organic food sources, and ensuring fair trade practices, a sustainable food system offers numerous benefits. These benefits include enhancing food security, increasing access to nutritious foods, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, preserving biodiversity, supporting local economies, reducing the incidence of diet-related illnesses, and promoting overall public

health. Prioritizing sustainability in food systems can contribute to environmental protection, community development, and the promotion of healthier societies.

Sustainable Food Preparation Practices in the Hospitality Sector

The hospitality sector places a strong emphasis on acquiring sustainable food supplies, as noted by GradEI (2023). This focus is driven by the positive impact such practices have on local economies, environmental conservation efforts, and the response to the growing demand for ethically sourced food options. Hotels and restaurants can influence the environment positively and attract socially conscious customers by prioritizing sustainable sourcing techniques like using organic, regional, and ethically produced products. The hotel industry has implemented various effective sustainable sourcing initiatives, such as rooftop gardens for cultivating herbs and vegetables and "farm-to-table" programs that establish direct connections with local farmers for food procurement. These efforts provide eco-conscious clients with sustainable, high-quality ingredients, giving businesses a unique marketing advantage.

Additionally, the study Sustainable Food Waste Management Practices: Perspectives from Five-Star Hotels in Thailand (Kattiyapornpong et al., 2023) highlights the importance of active engagement and collaboration among relevant stakeholders, including governments, businesses, and local tourism and hospitality entities, in effectively managing food waste.

Butler (2023) emphasizes the growing awareness of sustainability within the hospitality industry, stressing the need for hotels to adopt environmentally friendly and cost-effective practices, especially within their Food & Beverage (F&B) departments. By forming partnerships with local suppliers, hotels can source fresh, high-quality ingredients while reducing carbon emissions related to transportation and supporting the local economy. Additionally, hotels can potentially save costs through seasonality and reduced transportation, and storage expenses, which can help offset inflation costs.

Methodology

The study employed a combination of primary and secondary data collection methods, along with qualitative analysis techniques for data interpretation. More specifically, the research methodology involved the use of coding reliability thematic analysis to scrutinize subjective data related to Sustainable Food Preparation practices in the Hospitality Sector, such as personal experiences, viewpoints, and attitudes. 10 Purposively selected participants, including hotel staff and industry professionals, were interviewed in a semi-structured format to ensure a comprehensive exploration of various perspectives. Open-ended questions were utilized during the interviews to encourage participants to offer detailed insights and interpretations regarding Sustainable Food Preparation Practices in the Hospitality Sector. This methodological approach was designed to offer a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Findings and Analysis

Based on the study objectives the themes can be categorized under the perception of sustainable food practices in the Sri Lankan hotel sector, challenges associated with sustainable food practices in the Sri Lankan hotel sector, and the strategies that can be adapted to enhance the sustainability of food preparation practices.

perception of sustainable food practices in the Sri Lankan hotel sector

Different hotels practice various types of food practices to ensure sustainability. Hoteliers believe that being sustainable can generate many positive impacts on the reputation of a particular organization.

"For me, being more sustainable in food preparation always supports us to enhance the popularity among the guests who intend to stay sustainable oriented hotels as they believe that it is a kind of a contribution to the conservation of the planet." (Respondent, 5)

According to the statement provided above, it can be inferred that the food preparation practices mentioned have a favorable influence on the environment and are capable of meeting the expectations of guests who prioritize sustainable practices.

"Sustainable food preparation practices help us to generate more profits for our hotel as it inspires both domestic and international tourists to indirectly contribute save the environment." (Respondent, 01)

Sustainable food practices play a crucial role in boosting the financial performance of organizations by cultivating a favorable reputation among environmentally-conscious tourists seeking accommodations in eco-friendly hotels to support environmental conservation efforts. Thus, taking into account the attitudes towards eco-friendly initiatives consistently yields beneficial outcomes for hotel establishments.

Challenges associated with sustainable food practices in the Sri Lankan hotel sector

Considering to challenges in sustainable food practices, there are some obstacles to be faced in the daily operations by hotels.

"Getting food from nearby sources can be quite difficult, mainly because farmers encounter various obstacles in consistently providing produce. Things like unpredictable weather patterns, unexpected disasters, and other unforeseen events often disrupt their ability to keep a steady supply of goods." (Respondent, 9)

According to the aforementioned statement, it is evident that local food cannot be consistently supplied to the market due to external factors like climate fluctuations and natural calamities. Consequently, this will have a detrimental impact on organizations when they curate menus for their patrons.

"Sustainable food has a great impact on both the community and biodiversity. However, there can be some confusion when it comes to designing menus, as guests have different preferences, behaviors, and cultural backgrounds." (Respondent, 1)

Customers exhibit a wide range of behaviors, attitudes, preferences, and desires, as mentioned earlier. This presents menu designers with intricate challenges due to the diverse attitudes and behaviors displayed by each guest. Therefore, a sophisticated approach to menu development is required to cater to the multifaceted nature of customer preferences and expectations.

"We buy Organic fruits and vegetables from nearby farmers. However, they tend to be more expensive than regular produce because of the higher costs involved in the entire growing process." (Respondent, 8)

Based on the aforementioned statement, it is clear that medium and small-sized hotel owners face specific challenges when sourcing organic food from local farmers. These difficulties mainly arise from the higher prices associated with organic produce. The affordability factor poses a significant obstacle for these establishments, as organic food production generally incurs higher costs compared to conventional products. Consequently, despite the increasing demand for organic offerings, the financial implications act as a barrier for smaller hospitality businesses that aim to include these items in their menus.

strategies toward the sustainable food preparation practices

It is imperative to pinpoint strategies aimed at mitigating the obstacles associated with food preparation procedures to improve the sustainability of daily operations within the hotel industry.

"For me, Performing a waste audit is a great method to address various issues and provides an opportunity to assess and measure food waste." (Respondent, 6)

The statement highlights the importance of conducting a thorough waste audit as a crucial initial step in identifying the amount and characteristics of waste generated in hotel operations. This audit offers valuable information that can assist management in identifying key areas of concern and prioritizing efforts toward waste reduction initiatives. By obtaining a clear understanding of the types and quantities of waste generated, management can develop targeted strategies to minimize waste production and promote sustainability within the organization. Through proactive measures such as recycling, composting, and implementing waste reduction practices, hotels can effectively reduce their environmental footprint while enhancing operational efficiency. Therefore, utilizing the insights obtained from waste audits allows hotel establishments to take a proactive stance toward waste management and contribute to a more sustainable future.

"Employees should be provided with the necessary information about the significance of minimizing food waste." (Respondent, 10)

To ensure a sustainable culture within particular organizations, it is required to enhance awareness among employees about the significance of sustainable food preparation practices in daily operations. This provides them with the relevant knowledge to comprehend the environmental, social, and cultural positive impacts associated with such practices. By offering guidelines on the environmental effects of food production, consumption, and waste generation, employees can obtain a deep understanding of how their activities contribute to achieving sustainable objectives. Emphasizing the socio-cultural benefits highlights the interconnection between sustainable food practices and human well-being, highlighting the positive impacts on local communities, biodiversity preservation, and cultural heritage. Through identified knowledge and guidance, employees are empowered to make informed decisions and actively participate in enhancing sustainable initiatives within their organizations.

"Offering a sufficient serving size to reduce waste is beneficial for both guests and hotels in promoting sustainability. If customers are not happy with the portion, they can always request additional food." (Respondent, 1)

It is recommended to identify sufficient food allocation for guests since many people tend to serve themselves without taking into account their specific dietary needs. It is crucial to take necessary actions to reduce food wastage in this scenario. This could include implementing strategies like portion control, urging guests to only take what they require, and offering advice on responsible consumption habits. By fostering mindfulness and consciousness among guests, hotels can efficiently cut down on food wastage while also catering to the nutritional requirements of their customers.

"We, as the hotel management, aim to prioritize the management of a consistent food supply to prevent wastage and spoilage" (Respondent, 4)

Based on the given statement, it is necessary to ensure a consistent and suitable provision of food to hotels evaluating their actual requirements. Neglecting this aspect always creates surplus food, resulting in wastage and inefficiencies in hotel operations. Hence, hotels need to conduct evaluations of their food needs, considering occupancy rates, guest preferences, and seasonal fluctuations in demand. By closely aligning the supply with the demand, hotels can reduce waste and simultaneously fulfill the culinary expectations of their guests.

"By setting up a composting system, we can effectively separate food scraps and other organic waste from our everyday garbage. This will result in the production of high-quality soil that can be used to nourish local farms and gardens" (Respondent, 7)

Implementing a composting system within the hotel presents a viable and eco-friendly method for handling organic waste. Through the collection of food leftovers and biodegradable substances, hotels can generate compost that can be used for their gardens. Surplus compost can also be distributed to neighboring farms and communities, thereby bolstering local gardening projects and encouraging the growth of locally sourced food. This proactive waste management strategy not only minimizes landfill waste but also improves soil quality and encourages community involvement in sustainable behaviors.

"It's great to provide guests with important information by highlighting the importance of sustainable practices and problems with food waste through the use of menu cards, sign boards, and more." (Respondent, 8)

It's important to educate guests about food waste using menu cards and signboards to promote responsible dining habits. These tools indicate to guests the hotel's commitment to sustainability, showcase menu items made from locally sourced ingredients, and provide advice on portion control and managing leftovers. By increasing awareness and giving helpful tips, hotels encourage guests to join in waste reduction initiatives, helping create a more eco-friendly hospitality industry.

Conclusion

Sustainable food preparation practices have a significant positive impact on both society and the environment. These practices encompass a variety of strategies that aim to reduce negative effects on society and the environment while maximizing the efficient utilization of resources. Hotels and restaurants can play a crucial role in positively influencing the environment and attracting socially conscious customers by prioritizing sustainable sourcing techniques such as utilizing organic, regional, and ethically produced products. The study objectives can be categorized into themes including the perception of sustainable food practices in the Sri Lankan hotel sector, challenges associated with sustainable food practices in the Sri Lankan hotel sector, and strategies that can be implemented to enhance the sustainability of food preparation practices. Concerning sustainable food preparation practices in the Sri Lankan hotel sector, there is a positive perception of these practices among hoteliers in relevant fields. Additionally, challenges were identified such as the inconsistent supply of local food to the market due to external factors like climate fluctuations and natural calamities, menu designers facing challenges due to the diverse attitudes and behaviors of guests, and medium and small-sized hotel owners encountering specific challenges when sourcing organic food from local farmers. Strategies to enhance sustainable food preparation practices include conducting a thorough waste audit as an essential initial step, raising awareness among employees about the importance of sustainable food preparation practices in daily operations, allocating sufficient food for guests considering their specific dietary needs, and educating guests about food waste through menu cards and signboards to encourage responsible dining habits.

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EVOLUTION OF TRAVEL INDUSTRY

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Abstract

The tourism industry has emerged as one of the fastest-growing sectors globally, driven by a range of social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors. The foundation of modern tourism was laid in the second half of the 19th century by British entrepreneur Thomas Cook, who is widely regarded as a pioneer in organizing group travel. The Industrial Revolution played a significant role in advancing tourism by enhancing transportation infrastructure and creating new opportunities for leisure travel. Additionally, developments in the transport industry, tourist accommodation sector, and catering services further propelled the growth of the tourism industry. While the sector faced setbacks during periods of global political and economic crises, it has now regained its momentum and continues to play a pivotal role in the global economy. Today, tourism stands as a crucial industry, contributing significantly to employment, cultural exchange, and economic development worldwide.

Keywords: *Transport Revolution, Industrialization, Urbanization, Accommodation, catering.*

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Introduction

Tourism, as a multifaceted phenomenon, invokes various conceptual frameworks that attempt to understand its complexity and the relationships it fosters. At its core, tourism involves the movement of people, either within their own country (domestic tourism) or across international borders (international tourism). This movement reveals intricate layers of human behavior, interaction, and understanding. Key elements that emerge in the study of tourism include individual and group interactions, relationships, perceptions, motivations, satisfaction, and the pursuit of pleasure (Cohen, 1972). The study of tourism from a behavioral perspective emphasizes the human side of the phenomenon, focusing on how tourism acts as a bridge of communication and understanding among people from different cultures and nations. Understanding the social and psychological aspects of tourism provides deeper insights into its broader societal impacts, including how it fosters intercultural dialogue and empathy.

Tourism can be particularly valuable in narrowing the understanding gap between developed countries, often the "givers" of tourism, and developing countries, the "receivers" or "takers" (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). In this context, tourism serves as more than just a recreational activity; it becomes a tool for fostering mutual understanding between nations. Properly planned and managed tourism can enhance the political, economic, social, and technological relations between countries, promoting peace and cooperation. The cross-cultural exchanges facilitated by tourism can help bridge ideological divides, offering a platform for cultural diplomacy that fosters empathy, reduces stereotypes, and promotes global peace (Hall & Page, 2014). By studying the intricacies of tourism, its behavioral impacts, and its role in fostering international relations, we gain a deeper understanding of its potential as a force for global cooperation and harmony.

Methodology

This study is primarily based on a literature review, drawing upon a wide range of secondary sources including academic journals, books, magazines, and reputable websites related to the topic of tourism. The literature review method allows for the examination of historical and contemporary perspectives on tourism, its development, and its socio-cultural and economic implications. A careful selection of sources enables the study to provide a comprehensive analysis of tourism, from its early historical roots to its modern-day global impact. By relying on established research and scholarly works, this study aims to contribute to the academic conversation surrounding tourism and its role in fostering cross-cultural understanding and international cooperation.

Historical Perspective

Evolution of the Tourist Product

Tourism, as an organized activity, has evolved over centuries, tracing its origins back to ancient civilizations. Early forms of travel were often linked to practical purposes such as administration or military campaigns. However, as societies progressed, travel became associated with recreation, education, and cultural exchange, marking the beginnings of what we recognize today as tourism.

Ancient Egypt and Early Travel

In ancient Egypt, the concept of travel was closely connected to religious and cultural practices. Pharaohs and their ambassadors traveled not only within the country but also to distant lands, such as Northern Africa. Travel was often motivated by religious purposes, such as pilgrimages to sacred sites and the worship of gods, like "Bik Apis," a sacred bull. Additionally, royal families and high officials enjoyed leisure travel along the Nile, where they sailed in decorated boats, accompanied by music and pageants. Travel in ancient Egypt was thus a blend of religious devotion, recreation, and cultural exploration. Furthermore, Egypt's ancient civilization also recognized the curative benefits of mineral waters, setting the foundation for medical tourism.

Famous travelers of the time, such as Herodotus, chronicled their journeys across the ancient world, providing insights into the customs and practices of different societies. This period of travel emphasized not only religious and recreational purposes but also educational exchanges, where individuals sought to learn from other cultures and expand their understanding of the world.

Greece: Cultural and Educational Tourism

Ancient Greece further refined the concept of travel, particularly in the realms of sports, education, and culture. The Olympic Games, held every four years from 776 BC, attracted visitors from across Europe and the Middle East. These travelers were accommodated in villas, inns, and restaurants that offered food and entertainment. The Olympics became a significant event for cultural exchange, bringing together people of different nations for both competition and celebration.

Greece also introduced the idea of traveling for intellectual and cultural purposes. Philosophers like Xenophon emphasized the importance of travel for broadening one's horizons and understanding different ways of life. The Greeks' appreciation for healing springs also contributed to the early development of medical tourism, with spa towns dedicated to the curative properties of mineral waters. This practice would later influence the rise of health tourism, a trend that would continue through history.

The Persians and Romans: Infrastructure for Travel

The Persian Empire contributed to the evolution of travel through the development of roads and other infrastructure that facilitated movement across their vast territory. Initially designed for military purposes, these roads were later adapted for civilian use, enhancing the safety and convenience of travel. The Persians also introduced new modes of transport, such as wagons, donkeys, and mules, which further supported the growing need for mobility.

The Romans, however, took travel to new heights, especially during the Roman Empire's peak. The Empire's vast expanse, stretching across Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, necessitated a sophisticated transportation network. Romans constructed an extensive road system that connected far-reaching regions, such as Hadrian's Wall in England to distant territories in the Middle East. This infrastructure allowed for faster and safer travel, enabling

the Roman elite to explore and enjoy their empire's vast cultural and natural resources. Romans also developed rest stops along these roads, akin to modern fuel stations, where travelers could rest, eat, and change horses.

Roman villas and bathhouses, built across the empire, offered both luxury and relaxation to the wealthy. These spas, many located near mineral springs, became early centers for wellness tourism, where visitors sought healing treatments. The legacy of Roman travel infrastructure and luxury accommodations laid the foundation for modern tourism practices.

The Grand Tour (1763–1773 AD)

One of the most significant periods in the development of European tourism was the Grand Tour, which flourished between 1763 and 1773 AD. During this time, Italy emerged as the intellectual and cultural hub of Europe. The Grand Tour was a journey undertaken by young aristocrats and scholars, considered an essential part of their education. The tour typically involved visits to prominent cities across Europe, such as Paris, Rome, and Florence, where travelers explored art, culture, and history.

This era marked the beginning of travel as a form of cultural enrichment and intellectual pursuit, where travelers sought to expand their knowledge and refine their social standing. The Grand Tour, which attracted diplomats, businessmen, and scholars, highlighted the intersection of travel with education, culture, and social status.

Modern Tourism: From Railways to Air Travel

The modern tourism industry began to take shape in the 19th century, particularly with the advent of the railway. Thomas Cook, often hailed as the father of modern tourism, revolutionized travel by organizing group tours via the railway. His first organized trip in 1841, a special train journey from Leicester to Loughborough, demonstrated the potential of rail travel for mass tourism. Cook's innovations, such as travel agencies, inclusive tours, and the use of tickets and vouchers, made travel more accessible to the masses. His efforts paved the way for the expansion of tourism, particularly in Europe, Switzerland, and Egypt, where travel was made easier and more affordable.

The rise of steamships further facilitated international tourism, especially across the North Atlantic, while the invention of the motor car transformed personal travel. The greatest

revolution in modern tourism, however, came with the development of air travel. Airplanes made previously remote destinations more accessible, ushering in a new era of global tourism. The Asia-Pacific region, for example, became a popular long-haul destination for Europeans, thanks to the ease of air travel.

Industrialization and Urbanization: Catalysts for Tourism

The industrial revolution played a crucial role in shaping the modern tourism industry. As societies shifted from agrarian economies to industrialized ones, urbanization grew, and new patterns of travel emerged. The rapid expansion of cities led to an increased demand for recreational travel, as urban dwellers sought respite from the monotony of factory life. The growth of the middle class, fueled by industrial wealth, allowed more people to afford leisure travel.

The industrial revolution also contributed to the rise of paid vacations, as trade unions fought for workers' rights, including time off for rest and recreation. This led to the democratization of travel, where not only the wealthy but also the middle class could afford to explore new destinations.

Tourism in the 21st Century

Today, tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries globally, contributing significantly to international trade and economic development. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) has highlighted the importance of tourism as a means of promoting mutual understanding and cultural exchange. However, challenges such as safety concerns, terrorism, and political instability have affected the growth of the industry. Governments must prioritize facilitating travel to ensure that tourism remains a positive force for cultural exchange and economic growth.

As tourism continues to evolve, new trends such as ecotourism, medical tourism, and digital nomadism are reshaping the landscape. The rise of technology and telecommunications has made travel more accessible and efficient, allowing people to work remotely and explore new destinations. As the global tourism industry grows, it is essential to recognize its potential to foster global cooperation and understanding, bridging cultural divides and promoting peace.

Discussion

The **evolution of tourism** as an industry reveals a fascinating transformation driven by societal, cultural, and technological shifts over centuries. Tourism, as we know it today, developed in stages, starting from ancient civilizations and continuing into the modern era through revolutions in transportation, industrialization, and globalization. The foundation of modern tourism can be traced to ancient civilizations, particularly **Egypt**, **Greece**, and **Rome**, where travel was initially linked to administrative, military, and religious purposes. In Egypt, pharaohs and their officials traveled to honor religious sites, and there was early recognition of the therapeutic benefits of mineral waters, laying the groundwork for medical tourism. The **Greek** era marked a notable shift with travel becoming associated with cultural and educational purposes, such as the Olympic Games, which drew travelers from all over the Mediterranean. This era's contributions include the early infrastructure to facilitate travel, like inns, restaurants, and accommodations for visitors attending cultural and sporting events. Similarly, the **Romans** developed an extensive road network across their vast empire, ensuring better connectivity and safety for travelers. Romans also established rest houses, inns, and bathhouses, providing essential amenities for long-distance travelers. The **Grand Tour** period, a hallmark of European Renaissance culture, marked a significant development in tourism. This tour, which involved travel to the principal cities of Europe for education and cultural enrichment, was primarily undertaken by young men of the aristocracy. It was seen as an essential part of their social education and a means to engage with Europe's intellectual and cultural capital. This period highlights the association of tourism with personal growth and social status, setting a precedent for the future evolution of the industry. The industrial revolution marked a pivotal turning point, especially with the advent of **railways**. The British entrepreneur **Thomas Cook** revolutionized travel by organizing group tours using railways, a concept that democratized travel for the masses. His innovations, such as the creation of travel agencies, inclusive tours, and the introduction of credit letters, set the stage for modern tourism as a business. Cook's efforts in making travel more accessible through the railway system exemplify how technological advancements significantly impacted tourism, making it feasible for a broader demographic to explore different regions. As transportation technologies evolved, so did tourism. The **invention of steamships**, followed by **automobiles** and the **airplane**, further reduced travel time and cost, making distant destinations more accessible. Air travel, in particular, catalyzed the growth of international tourism, with the Asia-Pacific region becoming a prominent destination. The **Fourth Transport Revolution**, powered by the rise of digital technologies

like the internet, has further expanded the reach and accessibility of global tourism, allowing for virtual engagement, online bookings, and easier access to destination information. The rise of **industrialization** and **urbanization** in the 19th and 20th centuries played a crucial role in the expansion of the tourism industry. With more people moving to cities for work, there was an increasing demand for leisure and recreational activities. The creation of disposable income, along with annual paid holidays granted to workers, further fueled tourism. **Urbanization** led to the growth of tourism hubs and the development of new tourist attractions in major cities across the world. Additionally, the growth of **mass tourism** was aided by the availability of new types of accommodations, ranging from guest houses to luxury hotels, and by the expansion of catering and hospitality services. While tourism has grown exponentially and become one of the largest industries globally, it faces several challenges, including **safety concerns** due to terrorism, environmental sustainability, and the need for infrastructure to accommodate growing numbers of travelers. The **Manila Declaration (1980)** by the World Tourism Organization emphasized the role of tourism in fostering mutual understanding and peace, but issues like security and overcrowding at popular destinations have increasingly threatened tourism's growth. Governments and international bodies must recognize their role in facilitating travel and ensure that tourism remains sustainable and inclusive.

Conclusion

The evolution of tourism reflects the broader societal changes that have shaped our world. From its origins as a means of religious, cultural, and medical exploration, tourism has transformed into a global industry supported by innovations in transportation and communications. While tourism has significantly contributed to economic growth and cultural exchange, the future of the industry requires careful attention to safety, sustainability, and the equitable distribution of tourism's benefits. As the world continues to change, tourism will likely evolve, driven by technological advancements, environmental considerations, and the enduring human desire to explore.

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