

EDITORIAL

**Towards Passionate Revival of Humanities and Social Sciences
Mission in a Context of Political and Organizational Regime
based Constraints**

The VISTAS Journal of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Open University of Sri Lanka provides a bird's eye view of the prevailing system at large. Here, we encourage our academics, and others associated with the institutional and professional mission of the Open University of Sri Lanka, trained in diverse disciplines, to address the elements that constitute the system through specific disciplinary orientations as well as multi-disciplinary perspectives. The purpose is to ensure that we individually and collectively contribute towards institutional welfare, by influencing the prevailing system at micro and at macro levels.

One could say that the large body of knowledge known as humanities and social sciences needs to be revived for the benefit of contemporary Sri Lankan society. The need is much greater within the Sri Lankan university system given the enormous contribution made towards its development by the founding fathers of the University of Ceylon. The changes we face in countries like Sri Lanka with stagnating socio-economic, political and cultural development, demands that we make our critical perspectives known with great vigor, as we ought to play a catalytic role in nation building.

The dominant paradigm may not be helpful very often as many social institutions function, as well as made to function with an unenlightened perspective that the country should exclusively focus on physical infrastructure development. It is implied that unless we develop the hardware at whatever cost we cannot ensure a decent lifestyle for the people. It is also held that an economically poverty-

stricken people cannot afford to have the luxuries that the developed countries enjoy concerning fundamental freedoms. This means that we need to restrict freedoms as they are a hindrance to accelerated economic development. Our challenge to neutralize and defeat the intentions of those propagating such views should be with passionate zeal and commitment.

It is also the position of some that what we need urgently is a regime inspired by surveillance, monitoring and control in both micro and at macro organizational settings. In universities what we see is increasing distrust on academics affiliations both internally and externally, and to what extent they are favourable to what is propagated by the prevailing political regime. The same doctrine is used with regard to student associations, as they have been at the forefront of the recent struggles to curb efforts by the political establishment to administer universities with a corporatist ethos. In layman language to ensure that national universities are run more profitably, with least dependence on the treasury for capital expenditure.

Here, we of the VISTAS Journal strongly advocate that we be individually and collectively be awake to the real as well as perceived threats to our institutional stability. To be mindful of the responsibility we carry on behalf of the general public to ensure that our university as an institution governed by the State shall be alive and awake to our public obligations in protecting what we presently enjoy.

About the Current VISTAS Issue

The scholarly work of Wishwa Chandana Jayaweera reminds the community at large that we should consider Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a progressive concept that enables progressive legislation and protect the welfare of female employees. The author revisits the concept of social responsibility from a broad angle as what is generally seen is institutional apathy in providing urgent redress to

female employee grievances. Hence the article can be regarded as a timely eye opener for those within and outside the sector since deficiencies result in a severe erosion of the quality of happiness enjoyed by the female work force.

Harees and de Silva in their joint work on Paddy Cultivation in the coastal belt of Ampara District look at the system based institutional deficiencies faced by farmers within the rural economy. The focus on the coastal belt reminds us of systemic and operational deficiencies in responding to farmer grievances through central and provincial initiatives.

The article on Nigerian Vigilante groups helps to renew our memories of the insurrectionary forces that our own armed forces had to deal with in neutralizing the expectations of groups that compete to establish their power within the space occupied by the State. Some of the fundamental questions raised include the legitimization process that these groups would expect within the dysfunctional socio-political, economic and moral order as weakened institutions provide scope for alternative arrangements to sustain stability and order within the status quo.

Lakmini Gamage's contribution concerning the emergence of the Tamil Militant movement is not only politically stimulating, but also demanding on the Sri Lankan political system that prevails, as it continues to be apathetic to the outcome of organized action of anti-establishment groups from the early period of the insurrection in 1975 to the end of the war in 2009. The article reminds us that the inability of the system to come out with viable and politically sustainable power sharing arrangements facilitated by local and international actors and institutions like the United Nations remains a matter of grave concern to Sri Lankans, as well as the international community.

Fagbemis's contribution on Nigeria is sociologically stimulating for policy makers in the context of human capacity to relate to gender related issues. The author takes the position that parental literacy levels have a strong bearing on perceptions held in society regarding gender behavioral flexibility among professional and non-professional women. The literature relating to primary and secondary socialization processes in our societies naturally have a bearing on how contentious issues in many areas come to be perceived by people. It implies that unless we reform the education system with adequate attention on higher forms of literacy leading to spiritual and political intelligence in people, very little could be expected at an overall level.

Herath's contribution on the scope of narrative inquiry on language teacher capacity development adds a fresh dimension to the work carried out by specialists in this field and also demands answers to what keeps the initiatives at the national level restricted as well as retarded from a national training perspective. This is at a time the number of personnel trained in this field needs to be radically increased to meet the national demand. The answers to this should essentially involve a combination of factors relating to training from a structural perspective as well as training from a pedagogical perspective to maximize the potential of institutional initiatives.

The article by Arumainayagam and Morais on worker motivation in the tea plantation sector provides a fresh perspective to those involved in quality of life initiatives to upgrade facilities for the plantation community on one side, and the constraints faced by institutional actors in maximizing the potential of the plantation worker community on the other. The task they have undertaken brings to light the critical dimensions connected with plantation worker empowerment. This is in a context of the long evolutionary process of development and socialization that may not be conducive to modern day initiatives.