

# GEO NEWSLETTER



DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY  
UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA

July 2024  
Volume 1 | Issue 1



Explore Our World:  
Unveil the Wonders with Peradeniya Geographers...

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July 2024  
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MESSAGE FROM

# Head of the Department

**Prof. T.W.M. Tilak Wijethunga Bandara**



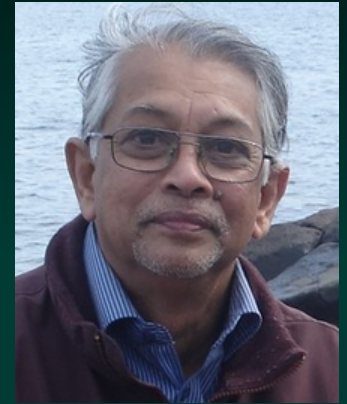
As the Head of the Department of Geography, I am delighted to introduce to you the first volume of Geo Newsletter. This online newsletter, provides the platform to keep our active community informed about the most recent events, successes, and prospects in our department and beyond. During the past few years, amidst the national economic, political crises and COVID 19 pandemic, our department showed great resilience to continue the academic and research environment locally and globally. Our students and staff members have greatly contributed to the success. We are expanding our research collaborations, revising our courses to include more multidisciplinary approaches, and generating additional opportunities for staff and student exchanges with leading universities of the world. These programmes aim to ensure that our department remains at the forefront of geographic knowledge and research. I believe in the unique position of Geography to inform support policy, practice and its potential contribution towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals. This volume showcases our contribution to sustain the power of Geography. This volume features guest articles, events that have taken place in the department, staff achievements, and students' activities. It reflects our shared successes and goals rather than merely serving as a means of communication.

I would like to thank our prominent scholars in Geography for their unwavering dedication, hard work, and for sharing their research work. I appreciate their enthusiasm and expect their continued involvement and support as we embark on this new chapter. I appreciate the great effort of the editorial team to make the Geo newsletter a success.

## GUEST ARTICLE I

# Perceptions of Geography: A Study of Geography Teachers of Sri Lanka

By Professor Nimal Dangalle



### Introduction

In Sri Lanka, as is the situation in several countries, the subject of geography, especially at the school level, faces numerous problems. During the past 50 years or so, geography in the school curriculum of Sri Lanka has been subject to various interventions and misplacements raising doubts among its practitioners of the future of their discipline. Perhaps, geographers themselves should equally bear the responsibility for this unsatisfactory state of affairs. In large measure, we all have forgotten to unravel what is in 'geography store' that could justify its due place.

In the middle of this problematic situation, the teachers of geography in schools play a crucial role. They are the thread that links students with the outer world. The thread should be of high quality, flexible, and durable to ensure the continuing contribution of skillful geography students to society, who will play an active role in the future. As Jan Bent and others pointed out, "only teachers who can encourage students to appreciate spatial distributions, meanings, and the relationships between human and physical phenomena through geography lessons have the power to enhance the status of geography education in both school curricula and higher education". (Bent, et al., 2014, p. 459).

In this respect, an understanding of the perceptions of geography held by the teachers of the subject at schools will be of relevance. If the teachers are of the view that teaching geography is to equip their students with a large amount of factual information, the students will invariably become information storages to be emptied at highly competitive examinations. Therefore, it is paramount to know how teachers transmit their knowledge acquired from the university into school curricula to produce students who can think geographically and thereby contribute positively to the country's progress. Such a transformation will induce administrators and politicians to reassess the value of the discipline of geography.

**Professor Nimal Dangalle**, a graduate of the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, was Chair Professor of Geography at the University of Kelaniya. He has an MA from the Flinders University of South Australia and a Ph.D. from the University of Peradeniya. After graduating in 1968, he joined the University of Kelaniya (then Vidyalankara University of Ceylon) and served the Department of Geography for 44 years. His main interest was in Human Geography with special attention to population, development, and philosophy of geography. He has published several papers in both local and overseas journals and has written a few books. In recent years, he has shown an interest in geography education emphasizing the need for paying attention to the conceptual foundations of geography in teaching the subject at school and undergraduate levels.

## Methods

A group of 121 graduates teaching geography at Advanced Level classes in schools of Sri Lanka were selected for the study carried out in 2023. A majority of their names were obtained from the lists of Advanced Level marking examiners, while those who were not marking examiners were obtained from the WhatsApp groups maintained by the teachers themselves. It should be noted that care was taken as much as possible to select teachers representing different districts of Sri Lanka and both Sinhala and Tamil mediums. A few English medium teachers also participated in the survey. Of the total sample, over 75 percent were female teachers. The respondents had obtained their degrees from different universities in the country. In addition, most of them possessed professional educational qualifications, such as Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGED) and a Master of Education degree. Approximately, 50 percent (59 out of 121) had over 10 years of experience as Advanced Level teachers.

The information was collected by circulating a Google form with two interrelated open-ended questions among the teachers. The questions were as follows:

*Question 1: How do you describe/define geography?*

*Question 2: What is the purpose of learning geography?*

The first question would be used to determine the breadth and depth of the knowledge of geography a teacher possessed that formed the basis of his/her teaching. The responses to the second question, very much related to the first, would show the reference point from which a teacher organized his/her pedagogical practices.

## Findings and discussion

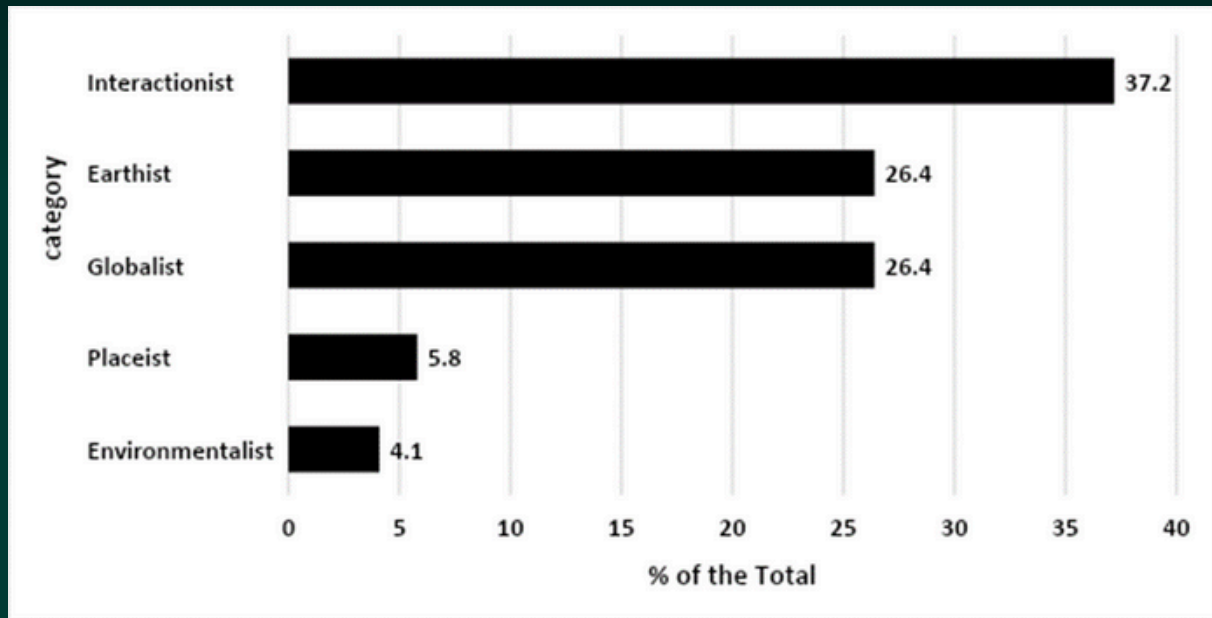
The responses of teachers for both questions spanned a wide range and it was necessary to categorize them into themes to obtain a clearer and more meaningful picture of their perceptions. Such a categorization has been adopted by Catling (2004) and Morely (2012) in their analyses of the perceptions of geography of the primary trainee teachers in England. In Catling's categorization, teachers' perceptions have been grouped into five broad themes: globalists, earthists, interactionists, placeists and environmentalists. Catling's categorization (Table 1) was used to analyze the perceptions of Advanced Level geography teachers of Sri Lanka. Using a widely recognized categorization would permit the comparison of the findings of the present study with studies conducted in other countries and possibly to find solutions to common issues.

**Table 1. Catling's Categorization of Perceptions of Geography**

<b>Geographical Perspective</b>	<b>Purpose of geography</b>
Globalist	To orient oneself in the world <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To get to know the world.</li><li>To develop a general knowledge of the world.</li></ul>
Earthist	To understand the phenomena and processes that occur on the Earth, how things work, and how the Earth works.
Interactionist	To reveal relationships and interdependence between a human and nature/the environment.
Placeist	To get to know different places and activities of the people who live there
Environmentalist	To pursue the idea of sustainability. To seek possible solutions to the environmental crisis

Source Catling, S (2004).

Fig. 1. Perceptions of Geography among A/L Teachers in Sri Lanka



Source: Online Survey, 2023

The persisting traditional view of the human-environment relationship was identified as the perception of the majority of Sri Lankan teachers, too (Fig 1). However, according to their statements describing the purpose of learning geography, the interrelationship is visualized not as an approach or theme but as an end in itself thereby losing an opportunity to educate their students as to “why” and “what for” those relationships are studied. In fact, one teacher elaborated on the interrelationship in explanatory terms, pointing out that in some instances man has to act in accordance with the environment - a deterministic view in explaining the outcome of the relationship. It was evident that they had forgotten the explanatory utility of the interactionist perspective in teaching.

The *Globalist* and *Earthist* perceptions are also prevalent among the teachers. The globalist perspective emphasizes the need to acquire a general knowledge of the world. The locations of mega-cities, countries, and capitals, and places where globally significant events are held are examples. Such knowledge requires memorizing and recalling abilities of the students and, in turn,

suppressing the relational approach in teaching. One notable consequence of the advocacy of global perception is it reduces the image of the subject to a repository of names of capes, bays, rivers and mountains. As Biddulph and Adey point out it exerts a negative impact on the perception of geography as a school subject both with students and with the public (Biddulph & Adey, 2004). The *Earthist* perception of the discipline was held by 26.4 percent of the total number of teachers consulted and an equal percentage of the statements highlighted it as an objective of learning the subject as well. However, it appeared that their conceptions were limited to a description of the physical and human characteristics of the world in which they live. There was no indication of a need for relational understanding. In contrast, a very low number of teachers perceived the discipline from an *Environmentalist* perspective (4.1 percent of the teachers). Of them, the number of statements advocating it as an objective in learning geography was the highest being 27.7 percent of the total statements. The advocacy of the environmentalist perspective in teaching/learning shows that teachers were of the view that the subject of

geography should promote awareness of environmental issues and develop favorable attitudes in students, who will take forward the message of sustainable development. Although the Placeist perspective paves the way to promote relational thinking among students, only very few teachers (5.8 percent of the total statements) valued it as an objective in teaching/learning. However, such an approach will help in producing students with the ability of thinking geographically, the hallmark of the discipline. Another perspective which was identified in the statements was that students should learn how to solve problems as geographers (Solutionist), which was apparent in 9.5 percent of the statements made by the teachers. Although it was not mentioned, such an approach would pave the way to create an environment for thinking geographically based on the key concepts of geography, an advantage the geography students will have over others (Hanson, 2004). Meanwhile, with the advent of neo-liberalism as a dominant development paradigm, education was also to be perceived in terms of its economic return i.e., the student's ability to contribute to the world of work. The statements of objectives directing teachers to follow an approach to develop skills that will be needed in the world of work were apparent in the curricula formulated by the education policy planners (NIE, 2017). This perspective was seen in 7.5 out of the total statements made by the teachers.

## Conclusions

The teachers' conceptualization of the subject and the pedagogical practices they adopt decide the extent of the success in producing a student with the ability to think geographically– an advantage a geography student possesses over others. Students with the capability of thinking geographically will be able to make a difference in the context of a declining image of the subject in the eyes of parents, education planners and administrators. However, as the study revealed,

despite the breadth and depth of the subject knowledge possessed by the teachers, they barely followed a pedagogical approach that led to the production of a student with a geographical advantage. The underlying reason was their pedagogy was overwhelmingly content-based, reducing their task just to knowledge transfer. What is suggested is to adopt a concept-based approach to teaching with their subject expertise in the backdrop. Use of the key concepts of geography, namely, place, space, interrelationship, movement, region, time, and scale, will rearrange the teachers' pedagogical skills which will produce students with the ability of geographically based holistic thinking. It has been pointed out that "never before in human history it has been more important for a person to be geographically literate." (Schell et.al. 2013).



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## GUEST ARTICLE II

# Indigeneity as a global development issue – the cases of the Veddas of Sri Lanka and the Saami of Norway

By Ragnhild Lund



### Introduction

The World Bank recently requested Sri Lanka to strengthen its support to the Vedda population. This request coincides with a renewed interest and debate that is taking place globally on indigeneity, marginalization, and cultural loss. For decades, Veddas have been displaced because of irrigation and resettlement projects with limited compensation and access to power. Likewise, Saami people of Norway were evicted from their traditional homeland because of so-called development- and civilization projects resulting in deteriorating livelihoods. While Veddas remain marginalized and secondary citizens, the Saami situation is changing because of protests by young Saami, who made the government acknowledge the entitlement of their people to land and resources.

### Veddas

Since the early 1990s, the Veddas have been recognized as the indigenous population in Sri Lanka (counting about 2000 individuals according to official estimates). Only a few individuals are fluent in their original language, and their traditional culture is rapidly disappearing. Most live in poverty in the north central and northeastern parts of the country.

My research on the Veddas started in the early 1980s. In several publications, I have documented deterioration of the Veddas' well-being and development options. Their cultural history shows that in earlier days they were famous scouts, ardent hunters, and guides during warfare and expeditions. However, the situation of the Veddas worsened during colonial times. In the 1930s numerous development programs led new settlers to move into Vedda territories while the Veddas had to move out. In attempts to 'civilize' the Veddas, they had to move to permanent settlements, speak Sinhalese or Tamil, and attend schools. Furthermore, expropriation of land into Crown Land limited shifting agriculture, hunting, and gathering in forests and mountains. After Independence in 1948, the Sri Lankan government followed the colonial pattern and constructed large-scale irrigation schemes such as the Mahaweli Development project and opened the jungles to commercial agriculture and resettled farmers from all over the country. These projects further displaced the Veddas.

**Ragnhild Lund** is professor emerita of Geography/ Development Studies at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, NTNU. Her research interests are theories of development and geography, gender and development, development induced displacement, post-crisis recovery, transnational feminism, and women's activism. She is author of *Gender and Place* (1994), and co-author and editor of *Renegotiating Local Values. Working Women and Foreign Industry in Malaysia* (1994), *In the Maze of Displacement* (2003), *Global Childhood, Globalization, Development and Young People* (2008), *The Tsunami of 2004 in Sri Lanka: Impacts and Policy in the Shadow of Civil War* (2010), *Gender, Mobilities and Livelihood Transformation Comparing Indigenous People in China, India and Laos* (2014), *Gendered Entanglements. Re-visiting gender in rapidly changing Asia* (2015), and *Fisherfolks in Cambodia, India and Sri Lanka. Migration, gender and well-being* (2021). In addition, she has published scientific articles on gender, youth, activism, forced migration, mobility, livelihoods, orphanhood/HIV/AIDS, and post-war recovery.

While previously Vedda villages existed in most parts of the country, today only a small number of so-called traditional Vedda settlements are found in the central and northeastern provinces. These people survive on tourism, agriculture, and fishing. Young Veddas tend to seek livelihoods elsewhere, and we find Veddas in manual labour and factory work outside their traditional homeland. Mainly uneducated, most remain a marginalized minority living in material poverty and in undignified conditions as secondary citizens.

### *Saami*

Saami has status as indigenous population in Norway (counting 40.000 individuals). There are 9-10 Saami languages and five major groups. The traditional habitat of these groups is located north of the Polar Circle, but one major group lived further south. About 40 percent of Norway's land area is defined as Saami land. Traditionally, reindeer hunters, today educated Saami are found in all kinds of professions.

The case I present here is about how Saami youth protested the Norwegian government, in a conflict between reindeer herders and windmill constructions in mid-Norway (Fosen) where 151 huge windmills were constructed in two major reindeer grazing areas. In 2010 the Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate gave the permission to construct these windmills on the reason that green energy was needed. The Saami claimed that the windmill was a violation of the rights of the reindeer herding of Saami to exercise their culture and that construction works started without proper permissions. They took the case to court.

The case ended in the High Court that dealt with the case in 2021. The High Court decided that the permissions given were not valid because they broke the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights, Article 27. This Article says that people who belong to ethnic, religious or language minorities shall not be refused the right to exercise their own culture, practice their own religion or use their own language.

In February 2023, 500 days had passed since the High Court sentence, demonstrations started in Oslo. Hundreds of young Saami from all over the country barred several departments, demonstrating outside the Parliament and the King's castle. For a week they sat in silence except singing the traditional song and playing music. The police were cautious, and no violence took place. Cabinet ministers tried to discuss with the protesters but to no avail till the Prime Minister finally admitted that human rights in Fosen had been violated and an official pardon was given to the affected Saami. These events led to discussions between Saami representatives and the Government about mitigating measures. In March 2023, Saami representatives accepted an offer of a huge compensation so the mills could remain and new grazing grounds for the reindeer were promised.

Young activists were thus able to draw attention to an important cultural issue and the various conflicting tensions and dilemmas that co-existed: first, between the rights of minorities versus majority, commercial interests versus nature conservation, and climate-related policies versus practices. Second, international conventions conflict with national and local policies: Norway is a signatory party to The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1999 and ILOs Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention since 1990. Norway is advocate of such rights internationally but as it is struggling with high energy prices nationally it violates human rights.

## Conclusion

Over the years, I have visited indigenous groups in India, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and China. I see how similar the plights of the indigenous people are. There is little difference in how various states authorize their power towards indigenous people. Regarding the two cases presented here, mobilization of educated youth has led to revised political action in Norway while the Veddas show inability to act, primarily because they are uneducated and lack a political voice. Instead, poverty, unemployment, and a daily struggle for survival prevail. Still, both cases illustrate conflicts between cultural/ human rights and environmental/land development. Such violations of indigenous rights exist in both rich and poor countries.

# DEPARTMENT Events

## UN4DRR-EU and Asian delegates visit the Department of Geography



The Erasmus+ CBHE EU-UN4DRR had the final event at the PGIHS, UoP, on October 5–7, 2023. The delegates were given the chance to visit the Department of Geography and check the lab equipment received under the project. The aim of this visit was to introduce DRR courses, GIS, and RS. The consortium has eight partner universities: Polytechnic University of Valencia, Spain; University of Nicosia, Cyprus; University of Zagreb, Croatia; University of Peradeniya; University of Colombo; Maldives National University; IPB University, Indonesia; and University of Syiah Kuala, Indonesia. Prof. K.W.G. Rekha Nianthi coordinates the UoP project with a team comprised of Mr. A.K. Wickramasooriya, Dr. P. P. Masakorala, Dr. Arularasi B., Dr. R. M. K. Kumarihamy, and Dr. S. I. S. Subasinghe.

## Department of Geography - AHEAD Project



The Department of Geography completed the AHEAD World Bank project and received a certificate of completion on the 13th of December 2023 at the BMICH, Colombo. The project aimed at increasing research and teaching capabilities through innovation to implement high-quality education. Prof. Prof. T.W.M.T.W. Bandara, Head of the Department of Geography, presented the project's benefits at a conference held in BMICH Colombo.

## Seminar Series for Advanced Level Students



A seminar series for advanced-level students was hosted by the Department of Geography, University of Peradeniya under the guidance of Prof. T.W.M.T.W. Bandara, Dr. R. M. K. Kumarihamy and Dr. S. I. S. Subasinghe. The sessions covered various geographical topics such as Disaster management, Urbanization, Remote Sensing and GIS.

## Prof. Jason Ludden and his students from the University of Nevada, visit the Department of Geography



Prof. Jason Ludden, Director, Office of Undergraduate Fellowships, Teaching Assistant Professor, English Department, University of Nevada and accompanying students visited the Department of Geography, University of Peradeniya on June 24, 2023. The HOD, Prof. T.W.M.T.W. Bandara, welcomes the team and Prof. K.W.G. Rekha Nianthi gives an introduction speech. Dr. M.A.M. Isthikar has done a presentation on the human-elephant conflict in Sri Lanka, and Mr. M.A.S. Jayakumara has done a presentation on the current situation of the Mahaweli project. Dr. Jason explained the research objectives of the project on the human-elephant conflict in Sri Lanka, and the students shared their experiences

## GIS Training Program for School Teachers

A GIS seminar was successfully conducted by the Department of Geography, University of Peradeniya with the participation of over 50 school teachers on 4th November 2023. This event bears testimony to the department's commitment to enriching GIS education within the country. The day-long event featured interactive workshops and hands-on experience in handling GIS equipment.

## Collaborative Academic work with the University of Sri Jayawardenapura



A collaborative workshop to cultivate passionate academics was organized by the University of Peradeniya and the University of Sri Jayawardenapura on the 14th and 15th of September 2023 under the guidance of Prof. T.W.M.T.W. Bandara, Head of the Department of Geography, University of Peradeniya, and Prof. T.M.S.P.K. Thennakoon, Head of the Department of Geography, University of Sri Jayawardenapura. This project came to fruition with the active participation of 200 second-year undergraduates.

## Sri Lanka Study Programme 2023, Fukuoka Women's University



Collaborative efforts between the Departments of Fukuoka Women's University and the University of Peradeniya have evolved, creating a platform for both short and long-term academic activities. Under the guidance of Prof. Wasantha Athukorala from the University of Peradeniya, Department of Economics, an intuitive discussion on "Development and Well-being in Sri Lanka" was led with insights from Prof. Malaka Ranathilaka, Prof. T.W.M.T.W. Bandara, and Dr. S. I. S. Subasinghe. A scholarship award ceremony recognizing outstanding achievements followed afterwards.

## Geo Week and GIS day

**WEEK:** In league with Geo Week and GIS Day, the Department of Geography conducted an immersive webinar series. The first webinar was held on the 6th of November, which was conducted by Dr. Yudi Setiawan, IPB University, Indonesia, on “GIS and Remote Sensing for Environmental Management”. On the 7th of November, Dr. Lidia Vitanova from Sofia University, Bulgaria conducted an intriguing session on “Urban Heat Islands”. This was followed by Dr. Shahnawaz from the University of Salzburg, Austria, who based his session on Geographic information science on the 8th of November. On day four, Dr. Hao Hou from the Hangzhou Normal University, conducted an insightful session on “Urban Environmental Issues under Increasing Heat and Rainfall Extremes and their Geographic Solutions”. These sessions were moderated by Prof. T.W.M.T.W. Bandara, Prof. K.W.G Rekha Nianthi, Mr. M.S.M. Razik and A.K. Wickramasooriya of the Department of Geography.

**DAY:** Concluding the week, on the 15th of November, 2023, the Department of Geography opened its doors to the public welcoming students to gain hands-on experience about the immersive prospects of Geography. The students were given the chance to deepen their understanding of the relationship between space, place and information systems. Heartfelt gratitude extends to all the scholars, academic and non-academic community in the Department and University, who contributed to the success of the event. Special thanks are reserved for GIS Solution (PVT) Ltd and Sumathi IT Solution for their invaluable contributions. The combined efforts of all involved played an essential role in making Geo Week and GIS Day 2023 memorable and enriching experiences.



# STAFF MEMBERS' Spotlight

## ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Prof. Muditha Perera made valuable contributions to develop concept note on “Sustainable Management of Tank Cascade Systems in Sri Lanka”, prepared by the Ministry of Environment of Sri Lanka, for the 6th United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, 2023.



Prof. Rekha Nianthi had the honor of contributing to Working Group II: Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for Asia, Chapter 10, as one of the contributing authors.

## ACADEMIC WORKSHOP

Dr. Alikhan Mohideen participated in the academic workshop “Holding Aid to Account. The Role of Local Humanitarians” organised by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in collaboration with Makerere University from 20-27 June 2023, in Kampala, Uganda. He presented “The Roles of Housing as Aid for Return Prospects and Experiences of Displaced People: The Case of Internal Displacement of Northern Muslims in Sri Lanka,” a paper he co-authored.

Prof. Muditha Perera participated in a workshop on “Future Prospects of Forest Conservation and Forestry Education in Sri Lanka”, at the Sri Lanka Forestry Institute (SLFI), Nuwara Eliya, and actively participated in the event in August 2023



## APPOINTMENTS

Prof. Fazeeha Azmi was appointed as a Honorary Research Associate from February 2023 to January 2025, South Asia Studies Institute, University of Fraser Valley, BC, Canada



Prof. Muditha Perera was appointed as the co-coordinator of the “Water Resources Management - Postgraduate Degree Programme” of the PGIS, University of Peradeniya, in January 2023.

Prof. Muditha Perera also was appointed to the Library Advisory Committee of the Udunuwara Pradeshiya Sabha in February 2023.

Impact and Policy Research Institute (IMPRI) in New Delhi, India, is a network of several institutions and scholars with the primary focus on academic activities. Given the enormous contribution to the research field and the recent association through various research activities the, IMPRI has appointed Prof. Rekha Nianthi as a Honorary Visiting Professor with the recommendation of the Vice Chancellor of the University of Peradeniya

## GRADUATION CEREMONY



Alikhan Mohideen was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Sussex. He attended his PhD graduation ceremony at the University of Sussex, United Kingdom, on January 25, 2023. He has completed his PhD on “Conviviality, tension and everyday negotiations: subaltern cosmopolitanism and governance dynamics of low-income neighbourhoods in Colombo, Sri Lanka.”

## CONFERENCE

Dr. Alikhan Mohideen presented a paper titled “Falling through policy gaps: Comparing water systems for workers in a Sri Lanka Tea Estate” at the 13th Annual Conference in Political Economy hosted at the Rey Juan Carlos University of Madrid, Spain, 6-8 September 2023. The conference was sponsored by the International Initiative for Promoting Political Economy (IIPPE).

Prof. Fazeeha Azmi presented an paper (online) on ‘Challenges of incorporating Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusiveness (GEDSI), approach in the National Disaster Management Plan of 2023-2030- Sri Lanka: A review research’ at the 2nd International Conference on Climate Change and Disasters from 5-6 October 2023. The conference was organized by the Department of Geography, Government College University, Lahore, Pakistan.

Mr. Ashvin Wickramasooriya participated in the ESRI User Conference that was held in San Diego, California, United States of America from 10-14 July, 2023.

He also participated and made a presentation on “Evaluating Groundwater Quality as Drinking Water in Hambantota District: A Water Quality Index Analysis” at the iPURSE 2023 Conference held at University of Peradeniya from 20-21 September, 2023.

Mr. Ashvin Wickramasooriya presented a poster online with the title “Flood forecast using river gauge heights at Ratnapura in Kalu river basin, Sri Lanka” at the World Climate Research Programme – Open Science Conference held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 23-27 October 2023.



Prof. Rekha Nianthi was invited to deliver a keynote speech at the International Seminar on Awareness of the International Market from 29-30 September, 2023, in Ganganagar, Rajasthan, India at the SEWA Samiti under the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, Government of India, New Delhi.

Prof. Rekha Nianthi delivered a seminar on climate change assessment and economic impacts, Online International Monsoon School Programme, Climate Change Assessment, and Economic Impact in the Indian Subcontinent, on August 12, 2023. <https://www.impriindia.com/event/understanding-nuances-of-climate-change/>

## RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS

Prof. Fazeeha Azmi have been engaging a collaborative research project titled ‘Breaking the Mold: interlinking place-based knowledge, social learning, and collective action to build Community disaster resilience in Canada, Sri Lanka and Nepal’ from 2022-2024. Value: 227,000 CAD, Funded by the: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). With a team consisting of Prof. Bala Nikku, Thompsons River University, Canada, Madhu Sai Deevanapalli, The Happiness Center; Foundation Fazeeha Azmi Mohamed Ibrahim, University of Peradeniya; Dil Thakuri, Kadambari Memorial College.

Prof. Fazeeha Azmi engaged a research project from 2022-2023 with Viluthu team (<http://www.viluthu.org/>) on ‘Formulating an Organic definition of women/girl child headed households in war affected districts of Sri Lanka’. The team consists of Prof. Fazeeha Azmi, Dr. Jeevasuthan, Dr. Ambika Satkunanathan, Ms. Maithreyi Rajasingham and Ms. Arathiya Pushpalingam.

# STUDENTS' Spotlight

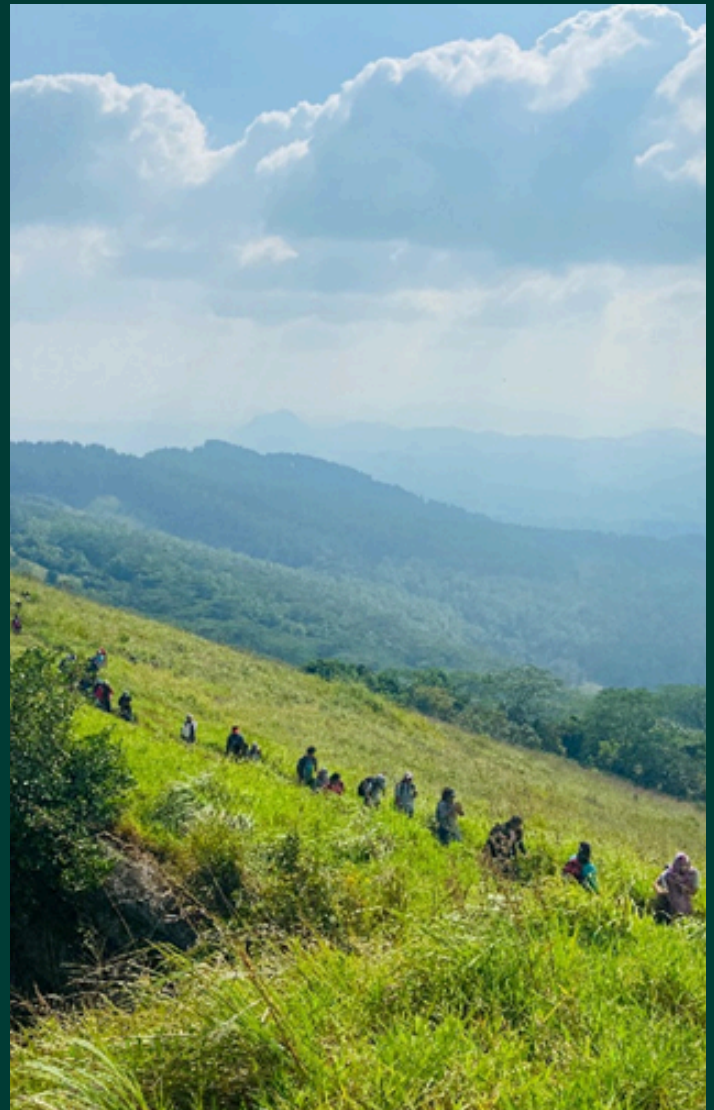
## "Sathiya Kamu" food festival

The Geography Society of the Department of Geography, University of Peradeniya, hosted a week-long food festival called "Sathiya Kamu" from February 2023. The festival attracted a wide range of guests and featured a delicious variety of food items, making it a resounding success. In addition to the delectable food, the event included cultural performances, cooking demonstrations, and interactive workshops that enhanced the overall experience.

## Hanthana Hike



The Hanthana Hike, on the 12th of February 2023, was a memorable event organized by Geography Society. Our students navigated the scenic trails and challenging terrains of the Hanthana Mountain Range. Besides the physical endurance during the trip, they shared many moments of camaraderie and teamwork that fostered a greater sense of unity and relationship building. The hike also provided an excellent opportunity for students to connect outside their academic setting, creating lasting memories and reinforcing the sense of community within the department.





**By**

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