

Producing Unique Sociologists: Department of Sociology, University of Peradeniya

The Department of Sociology of the University of Peradeniya is the largest and the best-known Sociology Department in the University system in Sri Lanka. Since its establishment in 1949 the Department of Sociology has grown in reputation, academic achievement and research output. Initially the student numbers were deliberately kept low, but since the 1970s enrollments increased, following the introduction of Sociology in Sinhala and Tamil media. At present, the Department of Sociology is one of the largest departments in the Faculty of Arts with well over 2000 students following Special and General degree courses and Postgraduate courses. This is the only Sociology Department within the whole university system in the country that teaches in all three national languages and, therefore, fully representative of the ethnic and socio-cultural diversity in the country.

Among the pioneering sociologists associated with the Department were the Prof. Bryce Ryan, Prof. Ralph Pieris, Prof. S.J. Tambiah, Prof. Gananath Obeyesekere, Prof. Laksiri Jayasuriya, Prof. Nur Yalman, Prof. E.R. Leach, Prof. H.L. Seneviratne and Prof. Kitsiri Malalgoda. Prof. K. Tudor Silva, Emeritus Prof. W. M. Sirisena and Prof. M. W. Amarasiri De Silva another prominent members who have served in the Department in the recent past.

The teaching and research programmes of the Department of Sociology had a strong academic orientation in the past. Recent changes in the curriculum and research activities of the staff indicate a deep concern with high priority national issues such as poverty, development, health, conflicts resolution and resettlement of people displaced by development schemes, war, natural disasters and environmental issues.

In 2004 the Department came first in a nationwide competition for awards for improving the quality and relevance of undergraduate education under the World Bank-funded IRQUE scheme. As part of this Project the Department embarked on a major project for curriculum and infrastructural development, partnerships with development agencies, internship for students, and post-graduate training of staff in abroad.

Departmental Journal:

Department has been publishing an annual journal called "*Samaja Vimasuma*" since the 1980s. Though the primary objective of the journal is to provide a platform for the academic staff of the department to present their research findings, contributions are also accepted from other departments as well. The Journal is very popular among both internal students and also students who are following the External Degree.

Sociological Association:

This was established by students following the Special Degree course in 1980s and, at present, it is an active body organizing many activities such as community outreach work, welfare programmes etc. under the patronage of the staff.

Academic Programmes:

The Department conducts two academic programmes, one Undergraduate and the other Postgraduate.

Undergraduate Programme:

Students can follow sociology as one of the subjects in their first year. Based on the performance at the end semester exams they can apply for the Special Degree Programme in sociology. Depending on the number of applications the department may conduct an interview or/and a written exam for selection. The number admitted to follow the special degree is around 60-65 per year.

From their second year to final year students follow a range of courses covering both theory and methodology. It is compulsory for students to take a course outside the discipline. The department pays special attention to enhance research skills and competencies in social research to meet the high demand for 'trained sociologists' from various institutes and organizations including the state sector. There are around 200 students are following special degree in sociology at present in 2nd, 3rd and 4th years.

Students who follow the General Degree and the Special Degree in other disciplines on the other hand can take selected courses from the Undergraduate Programme. Some of these courses, such as theory related and methodology related courses, are compulsory for the General Degree students. There are about 1700 students follow sociology as a subject.

Postgraduate Programme:

The postgraduate programme in Sociology has four levels as Diploma, Master of Arts (MA), Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The Diploma in Sociology is one-year programme providing opportunity for those who do not possess a background in Sociology or a merit pass in their Special Degree to be qualified for MA in Sociology. The MA by course work is also a one-year degree. The M.Phil degree is a two-year degree with a thesis. Further, facilities are available for Ph.D. degrees as well. There are about 100 students following the graduate programme at present. The programme is conducted as a part-time programme in which the teaching is conducted in weekends only in order to accommodate employed students to attend the courses.

Head of the department

- Prof. HMDR Herath
BA (PDN), MA(Delhi), Ph.D.(PDN)

Professors:

- Prof. Sisira Pinnawala (Senior Professor)
BA (Cey.), M.Sc. (AIT), PhD(ANU)
- Prof. Karunathissa Athukorala
BA (PDN) MA (By research- PDN)
- Prof. Daya Amarasekara
BA (PDN) MA (PDN-By Research) Ph.D. (Calcutta)

Other Academic staff members

- Dr. Abey Ratnayake
BA(Bowdon College) MA (Washington) (MA)
(Mahidol) PhD(London)
- Dr. Dhammika Herath
BA (PDN) PhD (Gothenburg)
- Ms. Kowsalya Duraisamy
BA (PDN)
- Ms. Kumari Thoradeniya
BA(PDN) MA(PDN) Lphil (Gothenburg)
- Dr. Mallika Pinnawala
BA (PDN) MA(By research-PDN) Ph.D (IISS-Erasmus)
- Dr. MG Manurathna
BA(PDN) M.Phil (PDN), PhD (New England)
- Mr. Nanadana Wijesinha
BA (PDN) MA(Mahidol)
- Ms. Priyadrashani Premarthne
BA (PDN)
- Dr. M G Razzak
B.A. (PDN) MSc (Colorado) PhD (La Trobe)
- Mr. Shantha Wanninayake
BA(PDN) MPhil (PDN)
- Mr. Susanatha Rasnayaka
BA(PDN) MA (PDN)
- Mr. Thushara Kamalrathne
BA(PDN)
- Dr. Upali Weerakoon
BA(PDN) MPhil (PDN) PhD(PDN)
- Dr. Vijitha Nanayakka
BA (PDN) MA (By research -PDN), PhD(Bangalore)

Temporary Academic staff members

- Ms. Imaya Rajasinghe BA(PDN)
- Ms. Nirmani Kaushalya BA(PDN)
- Ms. MRF Rizmina BA(PDN)
- Ms. SSF Safna BA(PDN)
- Mr. Saminda Gnanarathna BA(PDN)

Non Academic Academic staff members

- Mr. SL Nihal Gunarathna (Staff Assistant)
- Mr. RM Roshana De Silva (Technical Office)
- Mr. GDT Wijesinghe (Office Assistant)

Academic Staff

The academic staff of the department is well qualified with training from reputed national as well as international universities. Eighteen permanent and five temporary staff members are currently serving in the Department. One technical officer and two other non-academic staff members are also attached to the Department helping them.

Special Units and facilities in the department:

Computer Unit:

The Department of Sociology has its own computer unit with twenty computers and internet facilities. Every staff room also has a computer with internet facility and a separate intercom line.

Media Unit:

The department also has a fully equipped media unit. Staff and students can use the modern equipment available for their field work and community outreach work.

Vehicle:

The department of Sociology is owner of 54 seat vehicle. It is available for the use of students from other department of the Faculty and also other Faculties through the Dean of the Faculty.

Library:

Department has its own library collection with reading and is equipped with internet facility for its staff and students. There are more than 5,000 books related to the subjects and past student's dissertations.

Air-conditioned Seminar Rooms with multimedia facility:

There are two Air conditioned Seminar Rooms with multimedia facility for seminars, meetings, student presentations and for special lectures.

Entertainment facility:

In their free time student can watch the Television available in Departmental lobby and a similar facility is also available for staff in their well-equipped Common Room.



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA



Department of Sociology University of Peradeniya Sri Lanka

Tel: +94 (0)81 239 2611

Fax: +94 (0)81 239 2610

email: sociology@pdn.ac.lk

website : www.pdn.ac.lk