



**International Conference on**  
**“Alternative Social Work Practices**  
**during the COVID-19”**



***ABSTRACT PROCEEDINGS***

Organized by  
**National Institute of Social Development**  
(Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment)



**International Conference on Social Work**  
**31st August 2022**

**ABSTRACTS PROCEEDINGS**

**Alternative Social Work Practices During the  
Covid-19**

Organized by

**National Institute of Social Development**

Social Development Policy, Research & Publications Division  
Ministry of Women, Childs Affairs and Social Empowerment  
Sri Lanka.

**National Institute of Social Development (NISD)  
The 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Social Work**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PATRON



### **Mr. Neel Bandara Hapuhinna**

Secretary, Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment  
and Chairman, Governing council, National Institute of Social  
Development

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I sent this congratulatory message with immense pleasure on behalf of the organizing committee of this **International Conference on Alternative Social Work Practices during the COVID-19 2022 (ICOSW 2022)**.

This international conference is organized by the Social Development Policy and Publications Division, National Institution of Social Development (NISD), and is intended to be the first step towards a conference on Social Work. This conference attempts to address the longstanding social challenges, increased by the global Covid-19 pandemic through Social Work. I believe that this international conference will give opportunities for sharing and exchanging original research ideas and opinions, gaining inspiration for future research and broadening knowledge about various fields in Social Work.

The Ministry appreciates the efforts conducted by the organizing committee who worked hard through this conference to achieve the important objectives towards the development of Social Work. As per the mission of the institute it is expected to enhance human resources needed for social development and disseminate new knowledge for Social Work Practice. This international conference would pave way to achieve that noble mission through the new knowledge generated by conducting research on various areas related to Social Development. I am convinced that the scholars who have gathered here at this conference will bring valuable contributions to this discipline.

Finally, I want to convey my deep appreciation and gratitude to the National Institute of Social Development Social Development, Policy Research and Publications Division and all distinguished participants for their invaluable contributions. I hope this conference will be enlightening for all of us, and I hope that we will be able to continuously collaborate to push the frontiers of social work to solve the problems faced by our society.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CONVENER



**Mrs. M.T.R. Shamini Attanayake**  
Director General (Acting)  
Additional Director General (Academic)  
National Institute of Social Development

Social work education and practice in Sri Lanka faced the challenge of meeting needs in areas of health, social welfare and other service providing settings, while delivering other required services coming under social work during the pandemic. Therefore, the National Institute of Social Development (NISD) has identified the certain limitation and the gaps in society and built up an electronic platform to share the knowledge and experiences among the society.

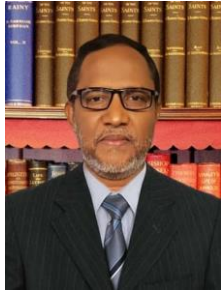
It is a great pleasure for me to issue this message for the “International Conference on Alternative Social Work Practices During the Covid-19” organized by the National Institute of Social Development under the Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment on 31st August 2022. This conference has been successful in fulfilling its mission of empowering the nation with professionals who are competent in searching a new global order for future development and challenging the political, financial and social challenges with the fullest capability.

I sincerely hope that the ICOSW 2022 will create a new opportunity for scholars by creating awareness among our stakeholders on the diversity of the research aspects of various disciplines and especially in social work and community development. This would also provide the background to motivate them to engage in high caliber research in global aspect and in this occasion, I wish to express my sincere sense of gratitude to Directors, Academic staff and the non-academic staff of the NISD and other distinguish well-wishers.

As the Director General (Acting) and the Additional Director General (Academic) NISD, I have extended my support to the maximum, considering the importance of academic forums of this nature to create an atmosphere to enhance the quality of academics and researchers basically in the fields and the discipline of social work and practice.

I congratulate all the presenters and participants and hope all will benefit from a fruitful research encounter at the ICOSW 2022.

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



**M.S.M. Asmiyas**

Director

Social Development Policy, Research & Publications Division

National Institute of Social Development

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It is my immense pleasure to welcome you all to the ICASW sponsored International online Conference on Alternative Social Work Practices during the COVID-19 (ICASW 2022). We are excited about the opportunities of holding an innovative Virtual conference and reach a wider audience that a conference can possibly include. Participants from around the world are expected to actively participate in this event.

The International Conference is serving to establish an international community of research scholars, academicians, industry experts and students for exchange of ideas and information. I am sure that the deliberations in the conference will bring out meaningful ideas and innovative solutions on the subject. It will be interesting to hear the participants of the conference highlight the new areas and the resulting challenges and opportunities. This conference will serve as a vehicle for a spirited debate and discussion on many challenges of Data Management, Analytics and Innovation that the world faces today.

I hope our eminent speakers will cover the theme Social Work and social Work innovation from different perspectives. I am privileged to say that this conference will definitely offer suitable solutions to the global issues. I am also most grateful to the supporting organizations, which have provided support to this conference financially and technically, in spite of the present economic scenario.

The success of this Conference is solely on the dedication and efforts of innumerable people who started working on the preparations for almost a year in many ways to make this Conference become a reality. Finally, I express my special thanks and appreciation to all.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CONFERENCE CHAIR



**Prof. Sarath Chandrasekara**

Academic Advisor

National Institute of Social Development

I am profoundly delighted to issue this message in support of the International Conference on Alternative Social Work Practices During Covid 19 Pandemic. The NISD, being the only recognized higher learning Centre for social work in Sri Lanka, has come forward to host and organize this conference at a time when people are still struggling with the outcome of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Covid 19 brought about unprecedented changes in the lives of individuals, families, communities and state and private organizations all over the world. In countries where social work is established as a profession, meeting the challenges of Covid did not come as a big obstacle. However, in countries where social service work is delivered by non-professionals, it is of paramount importance to recognize the need to employ professionally trained workers in a variety of roles including social policy/planning.

The theme “Alternative Social Work Practice” hence become a timely examination and an intervention for countries like Sri Lanka which are on a journey to professionalize social work. In a pandemic situation such as Covid 19, several developmental workers must deal with the delivery of essential services like food, transport, creating isolation centres, etc. However, professional social workers are the only group that could deal with the human and socio-psychological impact of Covid on a long-term basis.

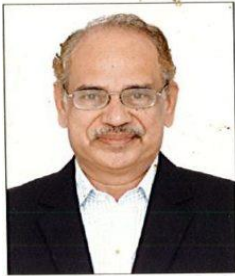
All the themes covered in the conference including healthcare waste management, on-line social work education, Covid 19 impact on individuals, families and communities, green social work, connecting social work research with practice tend to add value to the examination of alternatives.

It is also noteworthy that the organizers have been able to seek collaboration with other higher learning institutions and professionals to present different angles of the main theme.

These presenters not only provide ideas based on empirical research but also their experiences in actual practice settings. Once these papers are published, they will highlight the need to recognize and incorporate professional social workers into mainstream social development efforts in the country. This will also set up a stage for future social work students and educators to engage in innovative research and practices.

I wish the conference every success and look forward to participating in many of the sessions of this forthcoming international conference.

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS



**Prof. M. V. Sriganesh**  
Regional Vice President  
Asia-Pacific Executive Committee  
International Federation of Social Work (IFSW)

I bring greetings and best wishes to you all from International Federation of Social workers -Asia Pacific Region and happy to be a part of this Virtual conference. Covid-19, which seems to be in its last phase. One of the key impacts of the Covid is difficulties organize physical or face to face events even now, due to the uncertainties and as a guarded precautionary measure. However, thanks to technology, you are able convert this challenge into opportunity and switch on to virtual mode bringing social workers together on this platform for a meaningful event.

As you are all well aware Covid 19 has caused great havoc across the globe with an estimated and recorded deaths of 6.5 million people and more that 600 million people getting infected with the virus, that seems to be in its last phase. the latest data on Sri Lanka shows that 670 thousand people have been affected and 16,685 persons have died. But these are recorded figures some estimates put these numbers much higher and I don't want to go into that

The socio-economic impact of Covid 19 has caused unprecedented hardships to large number of people and especially the vulnerable and marginalized sections of society. The adverse impact especially on Manufacturing, Hospitality & Tourism, Trade, construction & real estate, has caused Job losses and lower income and earnings. Consequently, this has pushed many families downwards resulting in more poor families with limited or no lively hood options. The IT sector which could immediately switch on to the remote working wasn't affected much, but the impact on other sectors had a spin off effect for IT too. The agriculture had been marginally impacted because of lock down and movement restrictions and non-availability of agricultural inputs in time. This economic impact has also led to social concerns with school drop outs, reverse migration of people, mental health issues. As it was a bolt from blue and unexpected, the first wave caused more havoc than subsequent waves by which time there was better preparedness of the administration in handling the expected crisis and availability of vaccines. During this crisis, social work professionals, besides many frontline line professionals, have teamed up and responded to the situation to provide relief and deliver services to the affected.

This has been the real testing time for social work professionals and true to the letter & spirit of social work definition which emphasizes that we are a practice-based profession and that we promote social change & development, social cohesion and empowerment of people. We have responded to the situation. We also believe in collective responsibility. These were challenging times when we had to be guided by our core values which are not separate values but the societal values. We believe in core values like service, Dignity & worth of persons, social Justice, importance of Human relations, integrity and competence and in such an unprecedented crisis, we as social work fraternity had to demonstrate commitment to these values through our action and practice. I can confidently say that many schools of social work, professional social work practitioners, students and social work associations have jumped in action and responded to the various situations in helping people across globe. I am sure that there are such responses that has been initiated by professional social workers in Sri Lanka too.

As this conference is going to deliberate on the theme 'Alternative social work Practice during Covid -19', I thought of taking this opportunity to refer to a study on 'professional social work response to Covid-19 affected families and facilitating services'. This study was led by a senior social work professor Dr Deviprasad and published by 'National Association of professional social workers in India'.

The study has identified 10 interventions namely i) Building awareness about COVID-19 appropriate behaviour, ii) Providing personal hygiene material, food, and other relief materials to the affected families, iii) Extending psychosocial counselling support, iv) Providing key information about COVID-19 tests, vaccines, helpdesks, quarantine centres, oxygen supplies, and entitlement documents, v) Managing help desks/sahayata kendras, quarantines centres, and assisting in contact tracing, organizing COVID-19 test camps, etc., vi) Networking and collaborating with governmental and non-governmental agencies, CSR programmes, and with individual initiatives at local level, vii) Channeling local philanthropy, and own resources to help meet the needs of distressed families, viii) Reaching out for the invisible and difficult to reach populations, ix) Recruiting, training and supplying volunteers and social workers to Covid-19 war rooms in the fight against the pandemic, and x) starting new initiatives and assisting government, and other implementing bodies in systematically responding to the relief activities. The study has been conducted through an exhaustive questionnaire administered to social work institutions, Civil society organizations /NGO's headed by social workers and professional social workers who supported in their individual capacity. They have come out with very interesting data, but what is seen across is that social workers either through their organizations or through their institutes or in individual capacity have got themselves involved in supporting Covid affected people. This demonstrates that the commitment of professional social workers and adherence to the core value of service in a difficult environment.

The study has drawn some conclusions, briefly mentioned here below which seems to be very important from social work practice perspective.

1. Inculcating COVID-19 appropriate behaviour through behavioural change among the public is seen as one of the effective public health actions to break the chain of virus' transmission and majority of the social work institutions and CSO'/NGO's have participated in such interventions
2. Distribution of relief materials
3. Psycho social counselling - The departments of psychiatric social work from Bangalore and Ranchi figured prominently in rendering this service.
4. Dissemination of information on vaccines, hospital beds, guidelines by government, etc
5. Managing help desks / sahayata kendras , quarantines centres , ass listed in contact tracing, organising COVID-19 test camps, etc
6. Networking and collaboration with governmental and non-governmental agencies
7. Channelizing local philanthropy, and their own resources to help meet the needs of distressed families.
8. Reaching the invisible and difficult to reach populations Because of their presence at the grassroots level and networks with agencies, communities, and local bodies.
9. Recruiting, training, and supplying volunteers and social workers to COVID-19 war rooms in the fight against the pandemic.
10. Starting new initiatives and assisting government, and other implementing bodies in the assessment and planning the relief activities

I also would like to narrate briefly about the social work intervention and response to covid impacted people, during the first wave by a child rights association called child Rights Trust along with KAPSW (professional social work association) both of which is headed by a Professional social worker.

During the first wave as the pandemic became aggressive and started spreading rapidly, the Government had to step in with the toughest measure to check further spread or slow down spread, but at a big cost. The sudden lock down brought a grinding halt to construction, manufacturing and other non-formal industrial sectors. coupled with the fear of contacting virus, it created panic amongst the migrant labour in many big cities in India. In Bengaluru too, it was a nightmare for many, who just wanted to flee from city and go back to their own places, mostly villages. The public transport collapsed due to over capacity as the public transport services was also to be restricted in few days. Thousands of migrant labour, men and women with children landed in railway stations and Bus stations to find cancelled trains and buses. This created a stampede and chaos in the stations and became law & order problem for the administration. They had no food and water and women and children had to be hungry.

In such a grave situation the administration with some staff drawn from city corporation, couldn't handle the situation other than trying to maintain discipline. Would you allow children to starve? Women to starve?? Besides few other service organisations Child Trust decided to instantly jump into action. Tried to reach the venue with social work colleagues. But administration would not allow them as they had not been issued passes for movement.



they had to push back and convince administration that they are professionals who would like to offer services and support to the stranded people. They worked their way and by that time had parallelly worked and mobilised, biscuit packets, water and other available food material like dray chapathi /bread etc from donors and philanthropists. They had quickly drawn up plans, worked with donors, got materials moved, roped in social work and other students from a college and got into action from next day. They distributed masks, hand wash, food and biscuits to the tune of ten thousand packets, set up help desks, initiated counselling process to create confidence and were there on ground for few days until the government arranged special trains and buses to carry them to different destinations towards their native places. They have continued with many other interventions subsequently too.

Looking at the above case study and also the survey analysis of the study conducted by Prof Devi prasad what strikes to me is that social work response has been multi-functional and not just limited to the core social work practice that we are into during other situations. This possibly is a paradigm shift from conventional social work practice like case work, group work, community organisation or social action & administration, which may be interchanged during any intervention, but more often practiced independently. The covid response has demonstrated that we need to look beyond the conventional social work practice and evolve methodology and practice that are situational and contextual to address immediate problems and also work for a sustainable long-term solution. Our social work values should be the guiding force and solutions to problems will have to come from shared values of not just social workers but from cross functional teams. when we are required to work with Doctors, Health care professionals, Government administrators, donors, media (for validated information sharing) to tackle a problem, we are working on an integrated model to support and deliver services. Also, we have to possess some additional competencies to work our ways. Networking, persuasion skills, speed of response, instant decision making, tech savvy, social media skills are all additional competencies we as social workers need to have to respond in such challenging situation. The pandemic which has stuck after a pandemic hundred years ago has thrown challenges to social workers, but also has given opportunity to re visit some of our present methodology and practice we adopt in order to be ready for any such contingencies Based on the above, I want to leave some thoughts for you to deliberate.

Should we evolve,

- a. competency based social work practice?
- b. integrated social work practice (Networking and multi-functional teams)?
- c. Technology driven social work practice (leveraging technology to deliver services)?

besides other conventional social work practice.

Sources: 'Professional social work response to covid -19 affected families in India - facilitating services & building awareness' by prof Devi prasad, Dr Ankit Kumar and keshari & Dr Shivangi Deshwal and published by NAPSWI

Acknowledgement; Dr Vasudeva Sharma, President KAPSW and CEO -Child Rights Trust.

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## SESSION A 01:

# COVID 19 PANDEMIC: IMPACT ON INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY/COMMUNITY/SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

## REFLECTING ON HUMAN GROWTH AND BEHAVIOR

Dr. Nagchoudhuri, Madhura<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Menezes, Sharon<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT:

Online teaching was a new mode by which teaching was done in the COVID Pandemic. This paper will focus on teaching of the Human Growth and Behavior course. It discusses the contextualizing of the course against the backdrop of the pandemic across two years of online teaching; drawing from students' experiences; creating a classroom environment for students to reflect and express; and negotiating with teaching pedagogies. The course itself is offered as a choice-based credit course by the School of Social Work to all Masters students and has as its primary focus understanding growth and development through the stages of the life cycle using various theoretical perspectives to understand how life experiences shape individual development. It aims at helping students connect human growth and behavior to their practice and to the ground realities. The class size ranged from 40-60 students from fields ranging from management, climate change, social work, education, library science, hospital management, disaster management and health. Teaching in the online mode presented several challenges including network issues at both ends i.e. for teachers and for students, making reading material available, finding suitable modes of assessment and fostering classroom participation. Overall this experience was a positive one wherein planning of self-reflexive exercises, journaling, changing assessment modes by way of giving short quizzes and class room discussions through individual and group reflections, use of chat mode countering network problems made it possible to engage with and create opportunities for fruitful discussions and student participation within the online classroom. Engaging more with family was possible for many through the online mode since this course requires reflections for which students were expected to dialogue with family. While presenting challenges and tensions, the course became a site for opportunity for faculty and students to learn and cope.

**Keywords:** Online teaching, COVID Pandemic, Social Work Education.

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## **IMPACT OF COVID 19 AMONG DAILY WAGE LABORERS: A STUDY BASED ON NUWARA ELIYA DISTRICT IN SRI LANKA**

Ramaiah Alaguraja<sup>1</sup>, Chandrasekaran Dushanthy Jeney<sup>2</sup>

### **ABSTRACT:**

Generally, COVID–19 has increased vulnerability all around the world, especially developing nations are extremely down with vulnerable to its consequences. As per the result a significant economic crisis has been experienced by Sri Lanka too, unlike any other circumstance that has occurred in recent memory. COVID -19 has had a major impact on the current economic downturn in Sri Lanka. The most affected by the economic impact of the COVID -19 were daily wage laborers. During the pandemic, wage laborers experienced a lot of psycho-social and economic problems, such as different forms of discrimination, exclusion, and exploitation during recovery. The study was designed as qualitative method and data was gathered among wage workers from Nuwara-Eliya district. The sample study population was 30 people including 15 men and 15 women with use of purposive sampling method. Primary data was gathered through case studies, interviews, and field observation methods, similarly secondary data was gathered from magazines, books, and internet sources. The thematic analysis method used to obtain the results. As per the conclude most importantly there is no proper social security plan for the labor community in Sri Lanka, in terms of a sudden biological disaster creates many social, economic, and psychological issues for them. In the absence of basic amenities, they are easily susceptible to the disease and more likely to experience the economic and psychological consequences of COVID-19 as well as they are marginalized and discriminated during the COVID -19 relief and recoveries. In that time nation's economy was in disarray, so they couldn't continue their works during the lockdowns. Thus, they fail to properly fulfill their family needs as a role of bread winner. This sense making them with many difficulties psychologically. Stress, tension, disappointment, anger, and a lack of life hope were identified through research as major psycho-social problems that exist for these daily wage laborers. The main duty of the country is to rescue all kind of people of the country in the event of a sudden disaster. The reason for not paying attention to the daily wage laborers during this disaster is that any social security arrangements are not provided to them. So, they can develop social security mechanisms and thereby protect themselves from the effects of economic and psycho-social problems.

**Keywords: Laborers, Social Security, COVID – 19, Psychosocial Issues.**

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# **A SYNOPTIC ANALYSIS OF THE PSYCHOSOCIAL NEEDS OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE MISSING PERSONS (DUE TO THE SRI LANKAN CIVIL WAR) IN THE FACE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Y.H. Silva<sup>1</sup>, Aloka Manamudali<sup>2</sup>

## **ABSTRACT:**

Due to the adverse effects of armed conflicts, hundreds of thousands of people go missing with no trace, leaving an uncertain destiny for their families. Sri Lanka had a haunted civil war from 1983 to 2009 against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE). The armed conflict ended, leaving thousands of families searching for their missing relatives. As the Office on Missing People (OMP) 2020 reported, there are 39,417 missing cases reported by the Office on Missing People Sri Lanka. Families of disappeared people face a constant emotional struggle that is incomparable to most other forms of grief. It is a form of grief that encompasses both a psychological and a social aspect and is known as "ambiguous loss." Subjective families rely on psychosocial support from a variety of non-governmental and religious organizations on a regular basis, but after imposing the traveling restrictions, the continuous support was suspended, and it led to their increasing need for therapeutic support. With reference to that, this research is intended to examine the psychosocial needs of the families. This research was conducted in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, where most missing cases were reported. The semi-structured interview and key informant interviews were adopted to collect information from the respondents, and the data was analyzed through the narrative analysis method. Being vulnerable to the factors of mental, socio-economic, political, and spiritual deprivation, it could be recommended to proceed with the OMP administrative process without further delay and also inform the public and these victims about the administrative procedure through social workers and GN who work at the community level. Providing continuous psychosocial assistance under a proper mechanism could be identified as a crucial fact with regard to the wellbeing of these families.

**Keywords: Disappeared people, Ambiguous loss, Psychosocial needs, Economic needs, Social needs.**

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# IMPACT OF COVID- 19 PANDEMIC ON CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES

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## ABSTRACT:

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected various vulnerable target groups' worldwide leading immense psycho-social impacts on various life perspectives. Children with disabilities and their families have been highly vulnerable with several negative effects on their mental and physical health, social life, finances, education and food security during the pandemic. Access to medical services and medication for chronic illness had been limited or absent due to restrictions in travel and lockdown limitations, some facilities restricting access, and some limited financial resources. The main objective of this study is to identify the psycho- social impacts and challenges faced by semi- urban disabled children and their families during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study utilized qualitative case study approach. Moreover, the study identifies the role of the social worker and social work intervention in promoting accessibility in service provision and improving the psycho-social abilities of children with disabilities and their families to minimize the barriers during global pandemic. The study reveals the stipulation of enhancing the accessibility for the required services and humanizing the overall psycho-social living standards of children with disabilities.

**Keywords: Covid-19, Children with Disabilities, Psycho-Social Impacts, Social work Intervention.**

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# DEAF OR DENIED? PSYCHO-SOCIAL EXPERIENCES OF ELDERLY TOWARDS COVID-19 CRISIS MANAGEMENT MECHANISM IN SRI LANKA

W. A. S. Thilanka<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT:

Covid-19 pandemic was a crisis that distorted the entire community life unprecedentedly. Elderly were identified as a group at risk of this pandemic since the first wave. Thus, psycho-social experiences of elderly are significant in understanding the efficiency of COVID-19 management. Therefore, study attempts identifying the perception of elderly towards COVID-19 crisis management mechanism in the Sri Lankan context. The study was exploratory in nature. 20 elderly above 60 years were selected deploying purposive sampling method. Data was collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed through narrative analysis method. As data reveals, elderly is experiencing an extreme psycho-social fear of pandemic. The insensitive media use on spreading misinformation and stigmatizing infected individuals have widened anxiety and frustration of elders. Specially, constant control of communities by armed officials has deep-offended elderly. Medical recommendations such as quarantine, social-distancing have become alien to the community life elders used to. It's recommended to consider the sensitive domains of community life in media use, avoiding further marginalizing elders. It is prominent using professional knowledge blended with indigenous knowledge when mobilizing communities in such pandemics. It is vital concentrating the community need of a social model in interventions involving social workers who are well-versed in addressing the community dynamics.

**Keywords: Psycho-Social Experience, Stigmatization, Marginalization.**

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## SESSION B 01:

# CHALLENGES TO SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND PRACTICES DURING THE PANDEMIC

## **IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTION FOR THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL PHOBIA ON JOB EXPECTATIONS OF A/L STUDENTS**

K. Chamari Thabrew<sup>1</sup>, Nisansala Madushani Silva<sup>2</sup>, Sandya Sirikumara<sup>3</sup>

### **ABSTRACT:**

“Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all” is one of main goals in Sustainable Development. Advanced Level students are the future of county’s job market. Educational issues as well as psycho-socio issues impact on job expectations of Advanced Level students. This study will be carried out to identify the impacts of social phobia on job expectations of Advanced Level students and importance of psycho social interventions to minimize such issues. Main objective of this study is to identify the impacts of social phobia on job expectations of Advanced Level students. Sub objectives are to identify the nature of social phobia of Advanced Level students, the impacts of phobia as well as to identify psycho social interventions for such impacts. 100 Advanced Level students were selected according to purposive sampling technique from Galle district educational zone. Questionnaires, in-depth interviews, case studies used as data collection tools and data analysis was done according to mix method. Out of total sample 85% of students are willing to occupy in a job in future. However, 72% of students are afraid or facing a difficulty in occupying a job. 70% of students is with interview phobia. Only 15% of students have phobia to occupy any job. Moreover, backwardness issues in selecting a job path, issues in interpersonal relationships have been noticed among students. Counselling techniques and practices can be utilized in minimizing social phobia among these students and social workers interventions will be more beneficial in such events.

**Keywords: Social Phobia, Job Expectation, Students, Interventions, Educations**

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# **SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND PRACTICE: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES DURING THE COVID 19 PANDAMIC**

Dr. Pankaj Kamal Shankar Kumbhar<sup>1</sup>

## **ABSTRACT:**

Social Work Education and Practice is a scientific branch of the educational system that has existed globally for more than 10 decades known as a Professional field of Social Work. Social Work is a practice-based profession and gives emphasize on human service and deals with immediate needs at micro, mezzo and macro level scientifically. Social Work Education plays a crucial role in addressing societal issues and concerns through direct practice with Individuals, Groups and Community. Field Work Practicum plays an essential role in Social Work Education to develop wisdom of knowledge, Skill and Attitude by applying theory into practice. There is no substitute for social work practice in social work education. It's a Human Service Profession and directly deals with humans and their problems. But the global pandemic distracted social work education and practice and forced us to do it on virtual platform. Present paper is a systematic review of challenges and issues of Social Work Education and Practice during difficult times. In this conceptual article following questions will be addressed: What Impact did pandemic on Social Work Education and Practice? What were the alternative ways of social work practice? What were the issues and challenges for Social Work Education and Practice? It also highlights how Social Work Education and practices can be strengthened in the near future.

**Keywords: Social Work Education, Practice, Issues, Challenges, Alternative ways and COVID-19.**

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## UPSHOTS ON SELF-ISOLATION INTENTION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WOMEN IN PREGNANCY

C.M. Munasingharachchi<sup>1</sup>, H.M.D. Subodini Herath<sup>2</sup>, K.C. Gurusinghe<sup>3</sup>

### ABSTRACT:

During the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, governments issued movement restrictions and placed areas into quarantine to combat the spread of the disease. In addition, individuals were encouraged to adopt personal health measures such as social isolation. Meantime its impact in the world lead to fear, stress and anxiety in individuals. This trend is growing more especially in pregnant women at risk as they are concerned about the safety of themselves and the fetus. This study focuses on concerns, problems and attitudes of pregnant women related to diseases in the pandemic process. This will be resolute by detailed discussions based on their individual experience, and by increasing the awareness of midwives and nurses about what pregnant women experience in this process. Content analysis is used as qualitative study pattern. Due to the social isolation rules during the coronavirus pandemic, telephone interviews were arranged with 10 pregnant women who are in their post Covid period. Meanwhile 3 Key Informant Interviews were conducted with medical experts. As a result of the content analysis of the interviews, 3 main themes and 10 sub-themes were identified. The identified themes were as following: (1) not understanding the seriousness and indefinite fear, (2) disruption of the routine prenatal care (3) interrupted social lives. Each theme was necessarily discussed separately. The results of the study illustrate that coronavirus pandemic has a significant potential for creating anxiety, hardship and inferior feeling, which has a negative emotional effect on women in pregnancy. It will be useful to provide awareness for midwives and nurses not only about the physical health of pregnant women, but also their mental health, and to unite with mental health experts and counsellors as required.

**Keywords:** Pregnancy, Covid-19, Self-Isolation, Women.

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# **A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN VARIOUS ALTERNATIVE CARE SETTINGS IN SRI LANKA**

Varathagowry Vasudevan<sup>1</sup>, Y.H. Silva<sup>2</sup>, J. Thatparan<sup>3</sup>

## **ABSTRACT:**

The pandemic bell rang as a measure to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) since the second week of March 2020. Even if its effects are not immediately evident, the psychosocial stress that children are subjected to as a result of the pandemic has resulted in distress and mental related illnesses that have widely differing consequences based on evolving capacity such as the age, social and environmental conditions. The impact study particularly focused on the aspects related to the children in voluntary homes, especially with regard to children in family-like care model and institutional care model. This research paper is intended to examine the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on children in the family-like care model versus the institutional care model and to identify the impact on child developmental needs with reference to formal education. mixed methodology was adopted to study alternatives to school education. A self-administrated questionnaire was used to collect survey data from children ages 15 to 18 years old, and eight districts were selected to draw a total of 602 children, 80% from institutional care and 20% from family-like care. Furthermore, qualitative data was collected using eight focus group discussions with children ages 12 to 18, caregivers, and service providers. Micro Soft Excel and Minitab were used to analyze collected data, and content analysis was used to analyze qualitative data. A statistically significant relationship exists, but no significant differences are found between the two types of care. Children in bigger institutions did not have the facilities and facilitation to participate in online education as the immediate responses to shifting from physical to online school were noted, whereas institutions with a small number of children and a family-like care model were able to respond swiftly to the arising needs of children. The rate of early school-leaving has grown to a troubling extent as a result of lack of facilities due to that many of them become victims of social conditions that force them into child labour and exploitation. This is also a time to develop socio-emotional skills and learn more about how to contribute to society as a citizen. On the other hand, data explicitly shows that children engage in various activities and develop skills during the lockdown. A positive impact is being developed on using information technology and mass media for public educational programs and skills in self-directed learning. The study recommends fulfilling the additional needs created by pandemic situations and responding to immediate child developmental needs and systemic change as dire needs of policy practice in alternative care. The authors acknowledged the support and cooperation rendered by SOS Children Villages Sri Lanka.

**Keywords: COVID 19 Outbreak, Education, Self-Directed Learning and Alternative Care.**

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# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ONLINE LEARNING IN SCHOOL EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED SCHOOL CHILDREN IN HAMBANTOTA

L.W.P.M.S. Rukmalgama<sup>1</sup>, N.T. Marasinghe<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT:

Education has been severely impacted worldwide as a result of the Corona virus outbreak. Millions of educators and students who had previously attended conventional classes in their institutions were forced to use an online education system that was utterly new to them. The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on school education in Hambantota district and how school children had to adjust to the new circumstances is the subject of the research. The study also looked at how the country reacted and accepted the new trend, as well as the hazards and benefits of online learning. A hundred students from Hambantota district were chosen at random to observe about the obstacles, resources, outcomes and impact of online education. Mixed methodology was used in the study. Information including scholarly ideas in books, journals and the online resources were mainly used for the historical demonstration. Data and information were collected using a mixed technique approach. For quantitative data collection, online surveys and analytical data sets were used, whereas for qualitative data collection, interviews, questioners and selected groups were used. The findings of the study were crucial because the chosen area was impoverished. Because it was not engaged in new educational reforms like other countries, it was discovered that the administration was unprepared for unanticipated barriers in school education. Furthermore, schooling budgets were frequently inadequate. Children in rural communities like Hambantota were found to have considerable English and computer literacy challenges. COVID-19, on the other hand, had a good influence since it gave students the opportunity to try out a new type of education and engage with the world.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, learning, online education, school, school children.

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**SESSION C 01:**

**MENTAL HEALTH**

## A STUDY ON LONELINESS OF THE DIVORCEE AT PUTTALAM DISTRICT IN SRI LANKA

M.S.M. Asmiyas<sup>1</sup>, Rameeza Khan<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT:

The Loneliness is seen as the major challenge within the happiness and it is considered as the obstacle for enjoying what available in and around. The losses or the separation of a close relationship between spouses and if there is no any alternative or refilling relationship emotionally lead for the feeling of loneliness of divorcee. As divorcees are prone to sexual abuses and the perception of the community towards divorcee make them avoid the social relationship which leads to loneliness. This situation further worsens as a result of Covid 19 epidemic. The study on loneliness of the divorcee at Puttalam was conducted with the objective examining the severity of the loneliness among Muslim divorcee in the Covid 19 period in Puttalam District, while focusing on this issue in the social work perspective. Puttalam District in the North Western province, Sri Lanka was selected for this study by adopting purposive sampling method. It has been selected 150 divorcees out of 1500 divorcees in the study area. A descriptive method applied to analyze the data collected by deploying interview schedule. Findings revealed that higher level of stress and loneliness prevails among female divorcee at the Covid-19 period. It was identified Further to reduce stress and loneliness among divorcee need more social work intervention such as case work as to make them to accept their own situation and help them overcome from other barriers in a positive way and the Community Organization to eliminate the discrimination of divorcee and awareness creating for a remarriage for the public in the research area specially at the disaster situation like Covid-19.

**Keywords: Divorcee, Loneliness, Stress, Covid -19.**

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## **A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF MENTAL HEALTH SOCIAL WORKER IN REDUCING MENTAL ISSUES IN THE FACE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

K.S. Wedisinghe<sup>1</sup>, A.M.K.L. Adikari<sup>2</sup>, B.G.I.M. Samarasinghe<sup>3</sup>

### **ABSTRACT:**

Individuals respond differently to the various traumatic situations that arise in society. While some people succeed in such challenging situations, some people are not able to face such situations alone. There are times when professional help is needed in such cases. At the same time, this study considers the role of the mental health social worker in empowering individuals as well as enhancing personal strengths. There, psychological problems faced by individuals during covid-19 and the role of the mental health social worker in alleviating them are discussed. The positive effect of covid-19 was also considered. A descriptive methodology was followed for this study. To collect the data, 10 mental health social workers who had been involved in personal problems during the 19 period were selected under the purposive sampling method. Interviews were used to collect data. Data analysis was performed using the narrative analysis method. Although the impact of covid-19 affects every aspect of the individual, the psychological aspect of the individual can be described as one of the most influential areas. The study confirmed that covid-19 had both negative and positive effects on the individual's psychological aspects. Considering the positive aspects, it was seen that people shifted towards spiritual practices during this period. It also appeared that the economic management skills of individuals have improved. Closing the pubs seemed to reduce some of the drug related addictions. It was confirmed that individuals were more inclined towards existing personal relationships as well as roles. Considering its negative aspects, the social barriers imposed during this period have contributed to the further development of the mental disorders that afflicted individuals. Among them, depression, OCD, phobia and stress are common. The breakdown of interpersonal relationships has led to somatic complaints based on unrealistic thoughts about the symptoms of covid-19 disease. This period has also led to the development of sexual problems. However, in minimizing such problems, the mental health social worker has case work handling and as a social worker can conduct awareness to the public. Human insight can be developed, development plans can be prepared for those who need prevention, and referrals can be made for those who need medical treatment.

**Keywords: Mental Health, Mental Health Social Worker, Covid-19 Pandemic, Sri Lanka and Social Work Intervention.**

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## A VIRTUAL COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID 19

Sajani Balasingam<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT:

During the pandemic United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres urged governments to ensure considerations on mental health be at the center of responses to the pandemic. Center on developing the child stated the worldwide outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was a source of unexpected stress and adversity for many young people. This was very evident among a group of youth called 'Sangyog' that the worker had been working with through the Center for Peace Building and Reconciliation who were meeting physically. When physical meetings were not possible due to the pandemic the Youth expressed, they were stressed and isolated and needed to create an environment, where they can come together to interact with their colleagues to address their isolation. To address this important need, a virtual community was planned. Rheingold makes clear that a virtual community must involve a sense of common purpose and active participation by members, often leading to strong interpersonal relationships between members and thus mirroring the affective bonds found in traditionally defined communities. Creating a space for the youth to make connections and to come together for relaxation, form friendships to promote a good mental health among youth during COVID pandemic while building capacities, social capital, Resilience and attitudinal change. To address above need a virtual community was formed to support the youth to develop relationships, learn some skills in areas such as Music, Cookery, Short Films, Gardening, and Art which interested them and were fun. The aim was also to use the community work principles to promote participation, build leadership and other interests and capacities among the participants and develop resilience to manage their mental stress. The worker was constantly challenged to think outside the box and be a creative catalyst and enabler to keep the group engaged till they developed the confidence and skills to participate more fully. The evaluation and the intention of the group to continue meeting indicated the project was very successful in achieving its goals and that a community with effective bonds had been formed. Virtual social work practice is one the alternatives during the COVID pandemic to address the mental health issues among the youth. When people are under social distancing which affects the mental health of many due to less interaction with people, this virtual practice reduced the distance among people, and brought diverse youth from different parts of the country together at one platform.

**Keywords: Mental health, Youth, Virtual Practice, Covid-19, Support Mechanism.**

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## **BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE: PARENTS OF A CHILD WITH AUTISM WHO CONQUERED THE CHALLENGES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Samanmalee T.H. R<sup>1</sup>, Dahanayake D.M. A<sup>2</sup>

### **ABSTRACT:**

Early behavioural interventions improve features of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and are catered to the individual child and family by the multidisciplinary team. The importance of the role of families in management cannot be overstated. This case report aims to highlight the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on accessing services and conducting interventions for a child with ASD. S was diagnosed with mild to moderate ASD at three years of age, two months prior to the COVID-19 lockdowns in Sri Lanka. He attended only two planned therapeutic sessions over a six-month period at the University Child Psychiatry Unit at Lady Ridgeway Hospital, due to the situation created by the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, he was attending preschool and mother was working in the afternoon. Father was only available at night and on weekends. S showed minimal progress in social interactions during this time. Following the lockdown, both parents spent more time with him and implemented behavioural interventions to improve speech, interactions and behaviours. Mother noted rapid progress in speech. Parents were happy with his progress and were more enthusiastic to engage with him. His temper tantrums improved. The treating team offered telephone consults. Follow up with speech and language therapy was inadequate and it was challenging to provide guidance over the phone. Hence it was felt that S's condition improved mainly due to availability of parents. COVID-19 pandemic thus created not only challenges, but also opportunities to offer more support during his early development. This will undoubtedly help him to integrate with the wider community. This highlights the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on managing a child with ASD, whose parents managed to reap the benefits of increased availability of time due to lockdowns, despite restricted physical access to services.

**Keywords: Autism, Covid-19, Behaviours, Interactions, Behavioural Interventions.**

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## DEPRESSION AND FACTORS AMONG ELDER PEOPLE IN ELDER CARE HOME

K. Chamari Thabrew<sup>1</sup>, Nisansala Madushani Silva<sup>2</sup>,

### ABSTRACT:

There is a growth of the ageing population due to increased life expectancy. Complex life patterns results children failing to look after their elders. As a result, the number of elders in elders' homes is increasing. Study was conducted to describe health problems of elders in elders' homes. Objective of this study is to determine the prevalence of depression among the elders and to identify its associated factors. A descriptive cross-sectional study involving 40 senior citizens aged 55 years and above institutionalized in three randomly selected "Homes for the Elders" in the district of Kalutara. An interview had been carried out using socio-demographic tools. In elderly hood mental disorders are way too high depression in comparison to physical diseases. During the study it has been revealed that there are more tendencies in arising non – communicable diseases in elderly hood. Disorders like Dementia and Depression in elderly hood is comparatively high. Depression causes the detachment of elders from their family members. Elders who are suffering from Dementia dislike in attending their daily chores and spending more time unhappily. Moreover, not admitting mental disorders refrain them from getting medical treatments. During the research many reasons causing mental disorders could be identified, and status in the family, retirement from job, lose income, breaking Social relationships. Conclusion in this study depressive disorder is prevalent among the elderly population residing in old age home. This results in lowering their productivity and places burden to family and society. For this reason, concerned authorities should timely address depression in elderly people. In the light of these results, a multidisciplinary approach is required for preparing social arrangements, enhancing family and community support and home care for elderly persons.

**Keywords:** Elders, Depression, Institutionalization, Support.

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# WAR TRAUMA AND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES; BEHAVIORAL CHALLENGES FACED BY SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

M. Sathiyakumar<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT:

Interventions by special education teachers in school-based special education students lead to improved behavioral changes, but conflict-affected parents lack knowledge about interventions for children with special educational needs, and lockdowns during the Covid-19 pandemic can set back improved student behaviors. The purpose of this case report is to highlight the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on continuing services and interventions for children born after the end of the war in 2009, many of whom are seen as having special needs. Teachers and parents participated in a case study of 180 students attached to special education units located in schools in Kilinochchi zone prior to covid-19 lockdowns in Sri Lanka on behavioral change after covid-19 lockdowns. Most of the 180 students who were in the special education unit before the pandemic were born between 2009-2013, mostly the children of wage laborers. Those who had experienced various traumatic events during the war saw improvements in their children's behavior after their children joined the school's special education unit. The students spent the whole time at home. Parents intervened in their behavior. The special education teachers engaged by the zonal Education office Special Education Assistant Education Officer to work on a volunteer basis visited the students' homes and instructed the parents. Weakness has been observed in the proper follow-up of the instructions given by most of the parents. The disruption caused by covid-19 to the implementation of special education in schools in improving the behavior of children with special educational needs shows the importance of services provided by teachers and the need to educate parents that parents are still not free from the impact of war.

**Keywords: War Trauma, Learning Difficulties, Special Education, Covid-19**

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## SESSION A 02:

# EXPLORING THE IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

## **WASTE SEGREGATION AND GREEN SOCIAL WORK: LESSONS FROM COMMUNITY BASED INITIATIVES OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PRACTICE**

Dr. U.L.M. Ashkar<sup>1</sup>, V. Jeyaruban<sup>2</sup>

### **ABSTRACT:**

Evidence from the past incidents like garbage landslide and the attitudes of residents regarding waste disposal seems a very serious matter to be timely looked into. Waste segregating effort is an important positive attitude to be free from various health and environmental hazards that have reflected various other problems including the violations of collective rights of the people. At this point, this study examined the attitudes and the awareness of the people who have been involved in the waste segregation process and the key lessons, which have been learned from a variety of community-based initiatives in the collection of solid waste segregation from the various groups of households. The study further explored the experiences before and after the waste segregation based on community organization awareness practice done by the community organization workers during their placement in Dehiwala Municipal area. The exploratory analysis adopted based on the purposefully selected respondents who were highly reluctant to segregate and encounter barriers behind the segregation then and, currently effectively involving the segregation process. All data obtained from 32 respondents who reside close to the place where there is more garbage dumping on the roadside and abandoned place. The respondents categorized into three cohorts: first, 22 respondents who were initially reluctant in the process of waste segregation. Secondly, 04 student community workers who have been involved in the Green Social Work awareness project in the Municipal Council. Finally, the data was obtained from the 06 waste pickers who had various lessons during the initial stages of waste segregation. The major turning point of changes of their attitudes was negative reinforcement for compulsory segregation from the waste pickers. The compulsory segregation instructions announced by the Municipal Council and the awareness sessions done by the community workers made significant attitude changes among the residents.

**Keyword: Waste Segregation, Community Initiatives, Awareness Practice, Green Social Work, Collective Rights.**

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# LIVING CONDITIONS OF SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS IN RURAL SRI LANKA DURING COVID -19 PANDEMIC PERIOD

Malshani Hettiarachchi<sup>1</sup>, D.K. Arunika Dilrukshi<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT:

The living conditions of single parents are comparatively inferior in rural Sri Lanka compared to other households. They do not have sufficient financial resources or essential needs for a minimum standard of living. Poverty-stricken single parent families go without sufficient and nutritional food, clean water, proper housing, education for children, and even medical attention. They do not have stable sources of income most of the time, and no need to talk about their wealth. This situation aggravated further as a result of Covid 19 epidemic. The objective of this study is to examine the impact of Covid 19 epidemic on single parents living conditions in rural Sri Lanka. The study focuses on primary data as the main sources of information. Malimbada Divisional Secretariat Division of Matara District was purposively selected for the study. Thereafter, 20 families from 4 Grama Niladhari Divisions were selected randomly to collect data by administering a questionnaire. The data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Findings suggest that even before the Covid epidemic, there was insufficient attention to living conditions of single parents such as food intakes, housing etc. due to lack of sufficient income. The study further revealed that in the face of the pandemic, there was no proper plan for food security for single parents in rural areas

**Keywords: Covid-19, Food Security, Single Parents, Living Conditions.**

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# SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS ISSUES: THE CASE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN SRI LANKA

Chandima Jayasena<sup>1</sup>, Ishari Gunarathna<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT:

Around 15 per cent of the global population live with a disability and about 1.6 million Sri Lankans were regarded as disabled according to UN statistics. Although they spend their life with a disability, they also have common needs and persist with similar problems related to Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). People with disability have equal rights to sexual and reproductive desires and hopes as non-disabled people, society has disregarded their sexual and reproductive concerns, aspirations and rights hence the intended purpose of this study is to examine the SRHH issues faced by the students with disabilities. It is noteworthy to explore the condition of university undergraduates as they are in the stage of sexual and reproductive health practices and direct engagement with society through education and occupation. The proposed study is used qualitative research design and purposive sampling method will be used in data collection. Data will be gathered by structured interviews and case studies. Interview schedule will be used to collect information from respondents. The respondents will be the university female undergraduates from age group of 18 years and above. The sample will be 20 female students and among them 05 case studies will be identified for in-depth analysis of the problem. Secondary information will be collected through published, unpublished books, articles, dissertation and internet sources. The findings of this study will explain the present practices among students influenced by their knowledge, attitudes and socialization, therefore interventions could be made possible in short- and long-term measures to address the issues faced by female students. These attempts therefore will provide more concrete solutions to address the prevailing issues among students with disabilities.

**Keywords:** Disable Population, Reproductive Health & Rights, Contraceptive Methods, Sexual Relations.

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# ROLE OF FAMILY IN THE PROVISION OF INFORMAL CARE FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLE PERSONS IN CONTEMPORARY SRI LANKAN SOCIETY

Ishari Gunarathna<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT:

The role of the family in providing care is a historical and culturally rooted practice in Sri Lankan Culture. Even though Sri Lanka is being recognized as a multicultural country, regardless of ethnicities people devoted to protect the family, the most loving and warmth nest for many of the people to spend their life time. The caring is an embedded cultural practice of many Sri Lankans and the strong legacy of sharing and caring is witnessed by the historical writings of many travelers and explorers visited Sri Lanka. Caring for people with disabilities and caring for elders have been an embedded practice among many Sri Lankans, however due to rapid economic and socio- cultural changes the shift of the caring tradition has been observed and reported through formal and informal sources. This study therefore aimed to explore the current caring practice among Sinhalese with respect to people with disabilities and elders. The study has focused on the informal care, cultural aspects of the informal care, social organizations and its structure to provide informal care, social relations of informal care and the community support and assistance to provide informal care at the community level. In addition, the resource availability in the selected community to provide informal care and the assessment from the social work perspective is included in the study. The study has conducted in the Hapugoda No: 405 Grama Niladari Division in the Harispattuwa Divisional Secretariat of the Kandy District and the findings derived from the study is used to identify the significance of the informal care and the care providers, challenges faced by the informal care providers and the opportunities to enhance the informal care provisions in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords: Care, Social Relations, Culture.**

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## **AN UNUSUAL CASE OF A SELF-MUTED YOUNG WOMAN: INTERVENTIONS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES**

Dr. Anula Rathnayake<sup>1</sup>, J.K. Thilakshi Udeshika<sup>2</sup>

### **ABSTRACT:**

Sri Lankan social workers faced several challenges during COVID-19 pandemic in delivering services for service users. This case report is based on a self-muted young woman supported by University Psychiatry Unit, National Hospital Sri Lanka during COVID-19 pandemic with its intervention, achievements, and challenges. A 25-year-old young woman was admitted to National Hospital by Police while drowning in sea and later indicated difficulty in communication, mental illness, no place to live, and no family support. Initial attempts made by psychiatry team to elicit her information were unsuccessful and a sign language interpreter was employed to communicate with this woman. Poor cooperation was observed from woman, and it impacted social workers' psychosocial interventions and had to provide an inward facility for two months. During her stay, she absconded from University Psychiatry Unit and was readmitted with the support of police. Social workers decided to trace family details and reintegrate this woman into her family and requested help of police and the public. Ministry of Social Services, Ministry of Women Empowerment, Magistrate Court, and organizations working on women's welfare were requested to find a place with secure residential facility for this woman. Ultimately, a religious-based institution agreed to provide both accommodation and vocational education. During her stay, she developed aggressive behaviour towards other inmates and was referred to National Institute of Mental Health for further psychiatric management. This woman was supported by addressing psychosocial issues such as mental illness, no place to live, poor family support, poor literacy, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and difficulty in communication. Coordination and implementation of interventions were challenged due to difficulty in eliciting personal information and service user's poor cooperation, lack of institutional support and policy barriers, and legal barriers.

**Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Psychosocial intervention, Psychosocial issues.**

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## SESSION B 02:

# METHODOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION, CAPACITY BUILDING IN SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

## **COVID -19 AND ECONOMIC AND UNPAID CARE BURDEN ON WOMEN: A SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH BASED ON THIRUNALVELY WEST GRAMA NILADARI DIVISION**

T. Rusika<sup>1</sup>, R. Pakeerthika<sup>2</sup>, C. Mathusha<sup>3</sup>, R. Amsathvani<sup>4</sup>

### **ABSTRACT:**

Today the humanity is going through the multidimensional crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought unprecedented changes in our society and economy. Women are the vulnerable group in this pandemic situation. It is increasing women's vulnerability and acquiescence to additional burdens and limited the opportunities for women. For women, pandemic has impacted not only their physical health but also their family, work, everyday life. The main objective of this study is to identify the economic and unpaid care burden on women in the context of covid-19 in Thirunalvely West Grama Nildari Division. Mixed Method was employed for data collection with random sampling method. Total sample comprised 100 women. Primary data were collected by using Questionnaires, case study and Focus Group Discussion. This study utilized the Secondary Data too such as available Literatures and Web Sites. Basic statistical procedures and thematic analysis were used in data analysis. Results indicates that majority of women have faced financial loses, such like lack of income and food. Moreover, food behavior pattern changed during the pandemic period. There is 75% women's food consumption pattern decreased. During the lock down, most of the women spent significantly more time caring unpaid work. It is unpaid and invisible. They faced many problems such like women multiple roles are high level, home - schooling a new domestic task for women, spending more time in childcare and home schooling increased the working hour and psychological problems. This is a foundation to daily life. In conclusion, the paper highlights some recommendations for government and society in order to eradicate the economic and unpaid care burden.

**Keywords: Covid-19, Women, Economic impact and unpaid work.**

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## **A STUDY ON WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FREE TRADE ZONE IN COVID 19 PANDEMIC SITUATION)**

Dr. Chamila Siriwardene<sup>1</sup>

### **ABSTRACT:**

Quality, skills and Intellectual human resources are essential to global market. It is often noted that quality human resources are act as a prerequisite for the competitive advantage and competitive edge of the Industry. Accordingly, the study was focused on the job satisfaction and work environment of the garment workers employed in the free trade zones where Sri Lanka earns a large amount of foreign exchange. It was found that not only the work environment but also the performance of the individual and the enhancement of the employer-employee relationship have an impact on job satisfaction. The study is conducted to search the job satisfaction and work environment of the garment workers employed in the Free Trade Zones, where a large amount of foreign exchange is earned for Sri Lanka, and Koggala Free Trade Zone was selected as the reference. It can also be considered as a Free Trade Zone that has been severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic as a global crisis. The study was conducted by using quantitative and qualitative data collecting through judgment sampling or purposive sampling under the non-probability sampling method. Data were also collected through a closed-ended questionnaire. Also, used the non-participant observation method, in order to ensure the accuracy of the data, the study area was visited and the normal tasks and behaviors were observed in the work environment of the respective data contributors. The quantitative and qualitative data analysis was done using descriptive statistical methods. The research found that not only the work environment has an effect on job satisfaction, but also factors such as personal achievement and increasing employee relations are also directly influenced to the job satisfaction.

**Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Working Environment, Free Trade Zone, Covid-19.**

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# **A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON BUSINESS OWNERS OF TOURISM SECTOR: IN RELATED WITH THE ELLA TOURIST CITY**

Dr. Upali Weerakoon<sup>1</sup>

## **ABSTRACT:**

The tourism industry plays a vital role in the Sri Lankan economic sector by contributing 12.5% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 250,000 direct and up to two million indirect employment opportunities. The pandemic situation of COVID-19 has had a significant effect to the tourism industry in the country. The data shows in 2018 that 169,003 and 219,484 employees were employed as direct and indirect employees respectively, in the tourism sector. As of today, the vast majority of these workers are temporarily unemployed because of the closure of hotels, tourist shops, restaurants and so on. This has made a massive impact on families who were totally dependent on tourism. Ella is one of the seven tourist destinations designated by the Tourist Board of Sri Lanka in the Central Highlands. Ella Pradeshiya Sabha area of the Badulla District of Uva Province consists of 111 square kilometers. The total population is closer to 52,000. The main sources of income for the people are tourism and agriculture. The study population was identified through purposive and snowball sampling methods. Data was collected during the month of August 2021. Qualitative and Quantitative methods were followed and questionnaire, group discussions, direct observation were used to data collected. The impact of Covid-19 pandemic declining number of foreign tourists caused a number of problems. The maintenance of hotels was a major obstacle due to the declining revenue. Some sections of the hotel (such as the swimming pool, Lobby maintenance) have been temporarily closed, restricting electricity and water consumption. Most of the employees have been laid off. Supplies and transportation related to the hotels (vegetable, fruits, jaggery, Kithul honey and handicraft) have been stopped and restricted. Local tourist attraction programs have been implemented. Among them is the provision of affordable room facilities, the provision of free one meals and increased payments to the guides. The problems have been exacerbated by the lack of government subsidies to run the institutions. Institutional owners have resorted to seek relief from foreign contacts. The tourism industry has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic such as in the opening of hotels to local tourists, the reduction of electricity and water consumption, the closure of markets for local products, the increase in direct and indirect unemployment in the tourism sector, and the opening up of foreign organizations.

**Keywords: Tourism Industry, Hotels, Gross Domestic Product, Covid-19 Pandemic, Tourist Board**

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**CONTRIBUTION OF THE YOUTHS IN FORMAL TERTIARY EDUCATION: RESEARCHING THE FACTORS AND THE TRENDS INFLUENCING IN IT. THENMARACHI ZONAL EDUCATION OFFICE - JAFFNA, NORTHERN PROVINCE**

Thavarasa Tharshan<sup>1</sup>, V. Jeyaruban<sup>2</sup>

**ABSTRACT:**

Tertiary education is different from the general education and the basic education, but on the other hand, it is related to the conferences on researches and knowledge sharing. Therefore, tertiary education is being provided formally and informally by both government and non-governmental institutions. Even though free education is provided in Sri Lanka not everyone get access to equality education in the tertiary educational level. A limited number of students getting selected to the state universities based on the Z. Scores, comparing the standard of the private degrees to the government degrees the government degrees are given higher worth to, the society's perspective towards the private degrees, the delay in obtaining a degree from a state university, lack of personal interest, gaps between the job market and the tertiary education, inadequacy regarding the tertiary education, As a result of this, the lack of interest to perceive tertiary level education among the youth has become a matter of discussion in the Thenmarachi educational zone. Based on the primary and secondary data and snowball sampling observation was done. Research was done from the findings that was gathered from 14 youngsters who were selected for an in – depth interview, 5 service providers and primary data givers. As a result of the study It was found, the amount of men qualifying on the ordinary level examinations and attending tuitions for the advanced level to perceive tertiary education is low compared to the women also not completing the external degrees on the assigned time duration, lack of recognition given for the external and private degrees, the excessive course fees required to perceive a private degree, financial crisis and the lack of skills in the field related are the reasons that has led as a challenge to find proper job opportunities for the youngsters Also in government job sector more than male, women are more likely to have obtained tertiary education. In the provincial workforce, contribution of women (61.6 %) is higher than men (38.4 %). Around 85.71 % of the youngsters declared that in line with the prevailing independent learning system in order to regulate, build up values and limitations among students implementing a ragging system is necessary. During the research it is proven that youths are facing challenges when obtaining tertiary education, while continuing tertiary education and even after completing tertiary education. Therefore, through social work intervention by providing intervention on each social work levels on youth, family, peer groups, organizations, conducting awareness and guidance in the societal levels, the youngsters can be motivated to increase their interest in entering to the tertiary level education and also lecturers attitude in handling the students, preparing the workers in the companies and giving promotions for the employees based on their tertiary level qualification will encourage the youth more to perceive their tertiary level education.

**Keywords: Youth, Formal Tertiary Education, Participation, Challenges.**

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# MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES ON MENOPAUSAL WOMEN DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

Faiqa Najumudeen<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT:

The Covid pandemic started from Wuhan, China in 2019 and spread all over the world within a few months. By 2020 March, the first Covid patient was found in Sri Lanka. Since then, Island wide travel restrictions and Island wide curfew were imposed as health measures. From 2020 March to 2021 March, 88,524 Covid positive cases and 534 Covid related deaths were reported. The Covid pandemic vastly impacted the Western Province which led to the extension of lockdown for a longer period than the other provinces specifically Colombo district. With the spread of the pandemic all over the world a panic situation was created among people. This has created an impact on menopausal women as well. Menopause is known as permanent cessation of menstruation which is experienced by the women between the ages of 45 to 55 or earlier due to other causes. This transition in women's life results in hormonal changes, end of fertility and social and psychological changes. Therefore, the quality of life during menopause could be affected by distressing menopausal symptoms including vasomotor, psychological, physical problems and social problems. This study focused on whether any mental health issue occurred in menopausal women during Covid. Researcher used descriptive quantitative research method and used a questionnaire to gather the data. The questionnaire included World health organization's standard Quality of Life WHOQL-BREF which assesses psychological, physical, social relationships and environmental domains. Randomly selected 50 participants from Thimbrigasyaya MOH division was taken as sample. This research showcases that there was a significant number that showed mild depression and anxiety due to the panic situation during Covid pandemic which were associated with their physical menopausal symptoms. Lack of awareness in menopausal health care could be eliminated by giving proper information in the future.

**Keywords: Covid 19, Mental Health Issues, Menopause, Social Relationships**

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## SESSION C 02:

# ON-LINE TEACHING IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

## IMPACT OF CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT ON STUDENTS' SCIENCE LEARNING

K.M.N.T.K.Bandara<sup>1</sup>, Chathurika R. Hettiwaththage<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT:

Schools in different areas have different physical resources and different ways of managing them. Also, the physical resources available in each classroom and how they are set up vary. It is unique to every classroom. But we need to look at the physical resources in those classrooms and how they are designed to affect students' learning. Therefore, this study was conducted to explore the impact of the classroom environment on science learning in the Badulla Education Zone in Sri Lanka. To achieve this goal, 300 O/L students and 25 teachers from 21 schools in the Badulla Education Zone were used as respondents. Mixed methods research approach was followed. And also, a stratified random sampling technique was used in the quantitative method and purposive sampling was used across qualitative research designs. Data were collected from two separate pre-tested questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Similarly, data were analyzed in both descriptively and statistically. According to the results of the analysis, the majority (48%) of teachers are in the 20-30 age group, followed by 24%, over the age of 50, 12% of the 41-50 age group, and 16% in the 31-40 age group. It was reflected that the majority of science teachers are young. Also, 92% of science teachers were women and 8% were men. According to the study's findings, there is a linear correlation between science scores and the classroom environment ( $p = 0.017$ ). Also, the Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) is 0.138. That is, confirms that there is a positive correlation between science scores and the classroom environment. The study further revealed that by managing the physical resources in the classroom and locating them properly, children can increase their interest in learning science and advance their educational goals. The findings of this study can be used to guide children's education on an effective and successful path.

**Keywords:** Classroom Environment, Science Learning, Education, Students' Learning.

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## ONLINE EDUCATION AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER AND STUDENT

S.N.M. Sakeef<sup>1</sup>, D.M.N. Abeygunasekara<sup>2</sup>, S. Jayawardhana<sup>3</sup>, D. Jinasena<sup>4</sup>

### ABSTRACT:

Communication is the main tool to transfer the knowledge from generation to generation. Inter personal communication is most important to transfer knowledge in an effective manner. And the educational system of a country is essential for country's development. Covid-19 outbreak badly effected not educational system but also inter personal communication. Outbreak led to close schools in many parts of the world, according to UNICEF nearly 140 million students worldwide had to drop out of schools by 2021. Similarly, in Sri Lanka, 10155 schools were closed by September 2021 due to the pandemic. At the same time, the educational activities of nearly 4063685 students were disrupted. As an alternative to this crisis, online education system was introduced and a guideline introduced with basic instructions to conduct an online distance learning system in May 2021. The main research problem of this study is, the Student-Teacher relationship in the online education system. The main purpose of this study is to identify inter personal communication between student and teacher in the online education system. Quantitative methodology was used as the research methodology. A questionnaire was presented to 100 secondary level school students and 25 teachers from the selected five secondary schools in the Western Province. The data were analyzed with statistical analysis method. Accordingly, it was identified that the relationship between student-teacher and teacher-student took negative and interpersonal communication was in a least level in the online education system.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Online Education, Inter Personal Communication, Student Teacher Relationship.

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# **SOCIAL IMPACTS ON ONLINE EDUCATION OF SELECTED CHILDREN DURING THE PANDEMIC SITUATION IN BATTICALOA DISTRICT: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY**

Inparaja Nirojan<sup>1</sup>

## **ABSTRACT:**

According to this Corona Virus, also known as COVID-19 has significantly disrupted every aspect of human life including education. However, sudden and unprepared movement affected both teachers & students in many ways due to various reasons such as lack of preparedness, lack of experience in online teaching and learning and a lack of technology infrastructure in the country. This study is going to be focused on social impacts and social problems which have been raised in ratio after the pandemic situation. social impacts and its evaluation have been increased and it emerged in societies such as irritation on studies, continuously using mobile phones, domestic violence, psychological impacts, child abuses, extra marital affairs, drugs addiction, substance abuses, child marriages, broken families in societies, suicidal thoughts and self-harming. These are the kinds of impacts emerged in societies and its effects remains in societies until now when we compare to post war conflicts in Batticaloa district. Statistical reports of the governments and private institutions mentioned that online education has contained the negative impacts and it motivate and break the structure of the families.

**Keywords: Online Education, Covid-19, Social Problem, Teaching and Learning**

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# POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF ONLINE LEARNING DURING THE COVID -19 PANDEMIC WITHIN SRI LANKAN CONTEXT

H.M.D Subodini Herath<sup>1</sup>, C.M Munasingharachchi<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT:

The Covid-19 which has been plaguing the world for nearly three years and Sri Lanka had many repercussions related to pandemic in many perspectives. The lockdown in Covid-19 catastrophe has interrupted the conventional learning in the education system in Sri Lanka. With the closure of school doors, the government of Sri Lanka has introduced online education for school students as an alternative learning method. However, this rapid transformation from traditional learning platforms to online learning platforms was not an easy task for both students and teachers as they lack adequate facilities and equal access to online education. The main objective of this research study is to investigate the positive and negative impacts of the online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic of secondary level school children. The study followed the qualitative method. Six case studies and fourteen semi structured interviews were used as tools of data collection. They were conducted to identify positive and negative impacts and the challenges, which faced by the secondary level school going children in the school premises. The collected data was analyzed manually by using thematic analysis method. Moreover, the study identifies the role of the social worker and social work intervention in minimizing the negative impacts and maximizing the positive impacts of online education attainment for secondary level school children. The study reveals that there is significant aspect for social work interventions with enhancing online education opportunities for secondary level school going children. Therefore, there is a wide scope to strengthen teachers, parents and secondary level school going children in order to attain better online educational condition.

**Keywords: Positive and Negative Impacts, Online Education, Covid-19, Alternative Learning Method.**

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# **A STUDY OF THE CHALLENGES EMERGED IN ONLINE SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

B.A.N.P. Wijebandara<sup>1</sup>, B.G.I.M. Samarasinghe<sup>2</sup>

## **ABSTRACT:**

The scope of social work is a multidisciplinary as well as imparting knowledge and practice. But in the face of the social censorship imposed by Covid-19 during the catastrophic period, the teaching-learning process in the field of higher education was largely carried out through the online method. The purpose of this study was to identify the challenges that arise when teaching social work via online and identify potential possibilities for minimizing them. Mixed methodology was used to collect the data, using questionnaires, direct observations, key information and focus group interviews. The sample was taken from a higher education institution and a state university by using stratified random sampling method. 17 academic members and 401 undergraduates were selected as the sample. Thematic analysis was used for data analysis. Studies have shown that the transition from the traditional class room lectures in which the teaching-learning process took place to an online methodology has fundamentally challenged both the teaching and learning process. Adaptation to a new technological methodology as well as limitations in the use of technological tools can be identified here. Much of this requires new training as well as mental preparation. It is clear that this also distances the relationship between the teacher and the student. The group activities, role-playing, case study analysis have not been much practical as they are done in the classroom. Problems arise in the evaluation and assessment process. This can be seen in the emergence of a candidate who is accustomed to a technological environment. In the face of these challenges, awareness can be raised about new trends in software used for education. As challenging times such as the Covid-19 epidemic may re-emerge, this online practice is essential. Lecturers should investigate on countries which successfully use online teaching and adapt to their practice.

**Keywords: Social Work, Online Education, Technology, Learning Management System.**

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# **SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION THROUGH ONLINE LEARNING DURING COVID -19 PANDEMIC: STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE**

Manjula Wijesekara<sup>1</sup>

## **ABSTRACT:**

The COVID -19 pandemic has created many changes in the regular patterns of social interactions in human life, initiating new modes to teaching social work. This study explores the student's perspectives on the transition of social work education and learning process online mode due to COVID-19 pandemic. It also highlights the achievements and challenges of social work through online mode in Sri Lanka and the study will be helpful to the social work academicians and policy makers in understanding various dimensions of social work education through online mode. The sample of the study was 15 Masters of Social Work students studying in the School of Social Work by using purposive sampling method. Semi structured questionnaire mainly used for the data collection it was designed to assess individual perception, future development of online education in the field of social work. The major findings of the study indicated that all the respondents familiar with online platforms employed in School of social work and react online learning in more dynamic and the process motivate the learners to learn and learn better. Based on the results above has a stimulating effect on learning and academic performance as it allows working in the information space. But the effectiveness of such learning for field practice and gaining practical experience they were partially satisfied with how online met their needs. When examine the research interest of the respondent's findings showed low interest in research activity. Findings suggest that online education process has considerable advantages over traditional classroom teaching. However, there were also challengers such as assessing practice effectiveness the profession faces much more complex tasks as the outcomes are more concrete.

**Keywords: Social Work Education, Online Mode, Learning Process, Student's Perceptions, Field Practice.**

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