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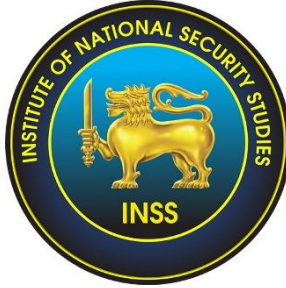**Singhapurage Supasani Nisayuru Ariyawardana**

ABOUT US

Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) is the premier think tank on national security of Sri Lanka established under the Ministry of Defence. The institute was established to understand the security environment and provide sound and timely assessment and recommendations on all aspects of national security to safeguard Sri Lanka from threats to its national security to the President, the National Security Council, the Minister of Defence and other relevant authorities dealing with national security. The institute will conduct a broad array of events and research on national security for this purpose.

OUR VISION

To secure Sri Lanka by nurturing visionary, collective and decisive leaders in security policy and decision making.

OUR MISSION

To enhance national security of Sri Lanka through excellence in research, education and networking.

INSS
DEFENCE
Review

2023
Volume VI

I am pleased to convey a message as we eagerly anticipate the release of the sixth volume of the 'Defence Review' in 2023. The 'Defence Review,' an annual publication of scholarly articles, stands as a testament to the commitment of the INSS - the premier think tank on national security in Sri Lanka. Established under the Ministry of Defence, the INSS's mission is rooted in enhancing the national security of Sri Lanka through excellence in research, education, and networking.

This international journal serves as a conduit for the dissemination of scholarly information to academics and practitioners of national security worldwide. It is a platform that encourages and showcases research from scholars, academicians, professionals, military officers, and students engaged in the diverse fields of national security.

The upcoming volume promises to be an enriching compilation, featuring insightful articles that span a wide spectrum of national security domains. I extend my appreciation to our valued authors for their invaluable contributions to this edition.

These articles promise to offer valuable insights and perspectives on critical issues related to national security. I encourage academics, professionals, and enthusiasts in the field to engage with the contents of the 'Defence Review' 2023 and contribute to the ongoing discourse on safeguarding our nation.

I express my gratitude to the INSS team for their dedication to excellence and their key role in advancing our understanding of national security dynamics.

Wishing you an insightful and enriching reading experience.

General Kamal Gunaratne (Retd)
WWV, RWP, RSP, USP, ndc, psc, MPhil
Secretary
Ministry of Defence

I am honoured to write this preface for the sixth volume of the institute; it holds a special significance for me as the first publication under my tenure. In this volume, we are privileged to present four outstanding papers, each a testament to the dedication and expertise of our esteemed authors.

The first paper, Defending National Security: Uniting Against Corruption and Bribery with Whistleblower Empowerment, delves into the critical issue of combating corruption and examines the role of whistleblowers and the necessity to strengthen their position. The second paper, Future of Information-Technology Enabled Systems in the Military Forces and their Impact on National Security: A Case Study of the Sri Lanka Air Force, explores the transformative role of technology, focusing on the Sri Lanka Air Force as a case study. The third paper, Socioeconomic Factors for Sustainable Peace and National Security in Sri Lanka: A Comprehensive Analysis, offers a deep examination of the socioeconomic aspects crucial for fostering peace. Finally, the fourth paper, The Geopolitical Importance of Sri Lanka as a Maritime Gateway in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR): Impacts and Implications, sheds light on Sri Lanka's strategic significance in the broader geopolitical landscape.

These papers are the result of rigorous research and scholarly inquiry, reflecting the rich diversity of perspectives within our academic community. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the authors for their exceptional contributions; without your commitment to penning these ideas, the journal would not have been a success.

I must also express my profound appreciation for the meticulous efforts of our Editorial Board, whose insightful guidance and expertise have been invaluable. My thanks go to our peer reviewers, whose critical evaluations have ensured the academic rigor of these papers. Additionally, I acknowledge the dedicated work of our copy editor, whose attention to

detail has polished these papers to perfection. I also thank the secretary to the editorial board for coordinating the smooth process of the journal.

While engaging with these insightful works, I encourage you not only to critically analyze the ideas presented by our esteemed authors but also to consider your own contributions to our ongoing scholarly dialogue. Your perspectives and research are vital to enriching the depth and breadth of our discussions.

It is my sincere hope that this publication serves as a catalyst for meaningful discussions, inspiring further research and collaboration in the realms of national security, defence studies, and strategic affairs.

Colonel M B B Nalin Herath, RSP
Overlooking Director General &
Acting Director (Research)
Institute of National Security Studies

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DEFENDING NATIONAL SECURITY: UNITING AGAINST CORRUPTION AND BRIBERY WITH WHISTLEBLOWER EMPOWERMENT

Charani LCM Patabendige

Abstract

Bribery and corruption are constantly happening irrespective of all measures taken by the governments all over the world. This has become a major concern since bribery and corruption escalates day by day and people use sophisticated ways to commit. In light of this, the research problem is to find why bribery and corruption occurs irrespective of all efforts. Research questions are to inquire why people engage in bribery and corruption, impacts of them, challenges to combat and how to use whistleblowing as a strategy. The researcher has used qualitative methodology, both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were gathered by way of an online questionnaire of fifty random individuals and secondary data from available literature. Findings of researcher are that there are a range of challenges in preventing bribery and corruption, including legal barriers and matters such as conflict of interests, link to national security. The researcher has further identified whistleblowing as an effective strategy to combat bribery and corruption. In conclusion researcher has provided recommendations that whistleblowing can be utilized as a prudent strategy to counter bribery and corruption.

Keywords: *Bribery, Corruption, Whistleblowing*

1.   Introduction

Albert Einstein has stated that the world is a place which is in danger but it is not because of those who do evil, instead, it is because of the passive observers who witnesses this. When applying this to the bribery and corruption context it is the same. Bribery and corruption happen everywhere and even though there are various measures taken locally, regionally and internationally, eradication of it has become an unattainable task. According to Cornel Law School, "Bribery is defined as the act of offering, soliciting, providing or receiving any item of value". The object for

the service in return can be monetary a service otherwise and the person offering is a person who is in authority. According to Transparency International Org, "corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain." According to Transparency International, Sri Lanka ranks 102/180. In addition, according to the "Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)", Sri Lanka ranks 37/100. Bribery is not only a white-collar crime; it happens from top to bottom of the social hierarchy and all these people in hierarchy are inextricably interlinked. Therefore, breaking the chain of bribery and corruption is hard. A whistleblower is an individual (employee) who stands against corruption or bribery by reporting it. He/she is a person who expose and report a wrong doer or a set of wrong doers who engage in unethical, immoral and illegal activities.

1.1 Research problem

At present, there is a dire need to look into why anti bribery and anti-corruption fails, irrespective of the constant measures by countries to eradicate. The research looks into whistleblowing as a strategy that can be utilized and promoted against anti-corruption and anti-bribery.

1.2 Research questions

1. Why do people engage in bribery and corruption and their impact?
2. What are the challenges to combat bribery and corruption?
3. What is the link between national security and bribery and corruption?
4. What is whistleblowing and how to utilize whistleblowing strategy to prevent bribery and corruption?

1.3 Research objectives

1. To find why people engage in bribery and corruption and impact of them.
2. To identity the challenges to combat bribery and corruption.
3. To identify the link between national security and bribery and corruption.

4. To understand whistleblowing and how to utilize it as a strategy against bribery and corruption.

2.   Literature review

(Kasemets, 2012)[1] in the working paper "The Long Transition to Good Governance: the Case of Estonia Looking at the changes in the governance regime and anticorruption policy", has mentioned that the deficiency in integrity mechanisms across various institutions is a critical weakness in Estonia's corruption prevention system. This inadequacy primarily results from the outdated Anti-Corruption Act, which has been under discussion for revision for several years without any actual changes being implemented. Although the Anti-Corruption Act contains essential guidelines concerning integrity mechanisms, such as limitations on public sector employment and financial interest declarations, their application may present challenges. For instance, the validity of financial interest declarations requires verification, rules on accepting gifts can be ambiguous, and effective protection for whistleblowers is lacking. Additionally, the Act lacks guidelines on other corruption prevention measures, such as regulating hospitality and lobbying. Overall, these shortcomings in integrity mechanisms pose significant obstacles to an effective corruption prevention system in Estonia. The researcher agrees with the author's observations on the shortcomings in Estonia's corruption prevention system due to the lack of integrity mechanisms. In addition, the researcher has identified similar loopholes in Sri Lankan Act and context as well. However, the researcher will focus solely on the context of Sri Lanka and its unique challenges concerning integrity mechanisms and corruption prevention. By narrowing the research to Sri Lanka, the study can offer country-specific insights into the strengths and weaknesses of integrity mechanisms and their impact on corruption prevention efforts. Analyzing Sri Lanka's specific context will allow the research to recommend targeted measures to address the deficiencies in the integrity

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[1] Aare Kasemets, "The Long Transition to Good S Governance: The Case of Estonia Looking ...," https://www.againstcorruption.eu/, 2012, https://www.againstcorruption.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/WP-32-Long-Transition-Estonia1.pdf.

mechanisms, thereby bolstering the country's efforts in combatting corruption effectively.

According to (Patabendige,2023) in the article titled, 'Whistleblowers' Unsung Heroes", Whistleblowers play a crucial role in national security as they expose imminent and occurred security threats, breaches of security, illegal surveillance, and unethical practices within government and private entities. Their actions contribute to promoting transparency and accountability, which are essential in safeguarding national security. One such example is the case of whistleblower Frank Serpico, who bravely testified about corruption within the New York Police Department, leading to the formation of the Knapp Commission and highlighting the importance of integrity in law enforcement. In the context of national security, whistleblowers serve as watchdogs, ensuring that potential security risks are identified and addressed promptly. By disclosing material information, they allow security agencies to take timely preventive measures, thereby bolstering the country's security infrastructure. Additionally, whistleblowers' revelations often lead to investigations into systemic corruption and misconduct, helping maintain citizens' trust in their security apparatus. The researcher fully agrees with the Patabendige's perspective on the importance of whistleblowers in national security. However, the researcher suggests delving into a country-specific analysis, which means curtailing the study only into Sri Lankan context, in order to understand the direct impact of whistleblowers in preventing bribery and corruption and national security implications.

According to (Transparency International, 2010), "Ideally, concerns should be raised internally within an organization, ensuring the confidentiality of whistleblowers, to allow for a thorough investigation without subjecting individuals or the organization to unfounded accusations. However, there are situations where internal reporting may not be possible or effective due to factors like fear of retaliation or systemic malpractices. In such cases, it is important to provide whistleblowers with the option to report externally to relevant authorities or oversight bodies, especially when there is an immediate risk to people's safety. As a final measure, protections should

also be in place for disclosures made to the media."[2] Researcher fully agrees with the author and has identified that whistleblowing will be an ideal strategy against never ending corruption and bribery cases.

As per the Parliament of Australia, the establishment of robust whistleblower protection mechanisms holds immense significance in fostering transparency, upholding integrity, and effectively uncovering instances of misconduct. According to the website, safeguarding whistleblowers not only cultivates a culture of accountability and integrity within public and private institutions it also empowers individuals to actively combat corruption. Due to those reasons, by encouraging the reporting of misconduct, fraud, and corruption, whistleblowing assumes a pivotal role in enhancing citizen engagement and reinforcing ethical practices[3]. The researcher therefore discusses the imperativeness of whistleblowing, rights of whistleblowing and the need to introduce it as a strategy.

A secure and confidential whistleblowing system boosts the sense of security, trust, and accountability within an organization. It enables quick detection and internal management of suspicious incidents, preventing legal and reputational issues from arising[4]. Agreeing, researcher will elaborate on the rights of a whistleblower.

3.   Methodology

The qualitative approach chosen by the researcher is to interpret and explore societal perceptions in detail. By utilizing an online questionnaire, the researcher has collected primary data from a diverse sample of fifty

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[2] Whistleblowing: An Effective Tool in the Fight against Corruption." Transparency International, 2010. https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/2010_1_PP_ Whistleblowing_EN.pdf.

[3] 1. Canberra corporate Name=Commonwealth Parliament; address=Parliament House, "Chapter 2," Home – Parliament of Australia, May 13, 2023, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Corporations_a nd_Financial_Services/WhistleblowerProtections/Report/c02.

[4] 1. Get in touch with our experts Lajos Antal Partner, "A New Era of Whistleblowing - but Why Is It Important?" Deloitte Hungary, April 1, 2022.

individuals, providing insights into the topic. The inclusion of multiple-choice questions, text boxes, and open-ended questions in the study allows for a comprehensive understanding of participants' perspectives and allows for a round analysis of their responses. In addition to the primary data collection, the researcher has taken a comprehensive approach to data analysis by incorporating secondary sources such as books and journal articles. Furthermore, the researcher has delved into primary sources, which includes Bribery Act and other legislations and a few judicial precedents as well. The use of various sources enhances the credibility of the study and strengthens the validity of the conclusions drawn. This qualitative approach, with its focus on interpretation and exploration, proves to be an effective method for uncovering the complexities of the social phenomenon in question and shedding light on the various mechanisms at play.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Bribery and corruption and ways it happens

Bribery as defined by Bribery Act of Sri Lanka is an act of "offering, soliciting is accepting any gratification". According to the Act, gratification consists of monetary offering or a gift, a reward, loan, a security, property which can be movable or immovable. It can also be any payment, release, discharge or liquidation to obligation or otherwise. The intention of bribing is done in order to influence a person in authority to get the job done. However, authority does not always mean the top order. It can be even a minor staff member who has access to material decisions. Corruption means, exploitation or the misuse of power by people in power, and the motive of corruption motive is for personal gain or benefit opposed to public interest.
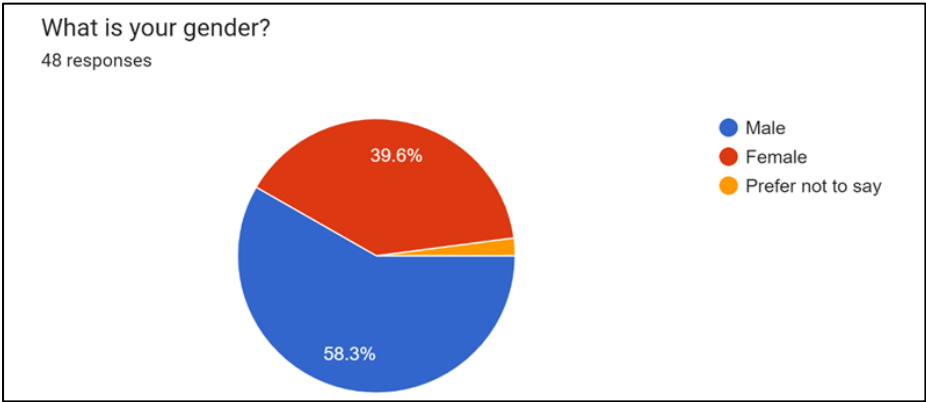
As mentioned in the methodology an online questionnaire was utilized to collect data. The questionnaire consisted of 58.3% of male, 39.6% of female and 2.1% preferred not to say their gender.

When asked whether it is public or the private sector which commits corruption, 54.2% stated it is public and 45.8% stated that it happens by both public and private sector.
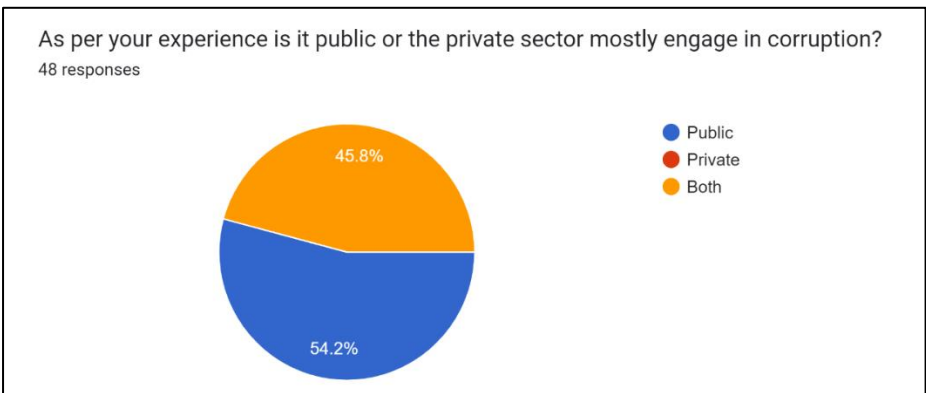
Next in order, to find the ground realities the question was asked as to "Have you ever been approached by a government or business official who asked you to provide a bribe or make a facilitation payment (a small payment to expedite a service) in order for them to fulfill their duties? Answering, 47.9% stated "yes", 50% stated "No" and 2.1% stated "Maybe".

Furthermore, respondents were asked, "Have you ever offered a bribe or facilitation payment (a small payment to an official) to a government or business official in order to influence or expedite their performance of their duties?" In response the majority (60.4%) stated "No", 33.6% stated "Yes" and 6.3% stated "Maybe".
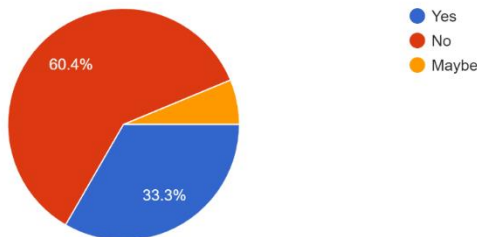
Consequentially, respondents were asked, "Have you provided any per diem payments, cash payments, or payments in the form of cash equivalents to government or business officials?". Answering, 66.7% stated" No",18.8% stated yes and 14.6% stated "Maybe".

Have any government or business official accepted bribe or facilitation payment to do their job?
47 responses

- ● Yes
- ● No
- ● Maybe

29.8%

14.9%

55.3%
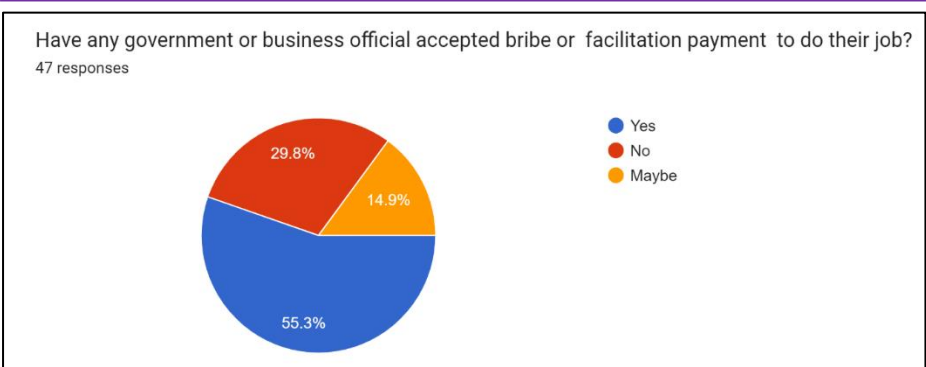
Surprisingly, even though respondents stated they have not provided a cash payment when they were asked "Have any government or business officials been found to have accepted bribes or facilitation payments in order to carry out their duties?"55.3% stated "Yes", 29.8% stated "No" and 14.9% stated "Maybe".

Have you made any per diem, cash or cash equivalent payments of any kind to any government or business officials? (a per diem is a daily living allo... payable to officials who spend time on your site)
48 responses

- ● Yes
- ● No
- ● Maybe

66.7%

14.6%

18.8%
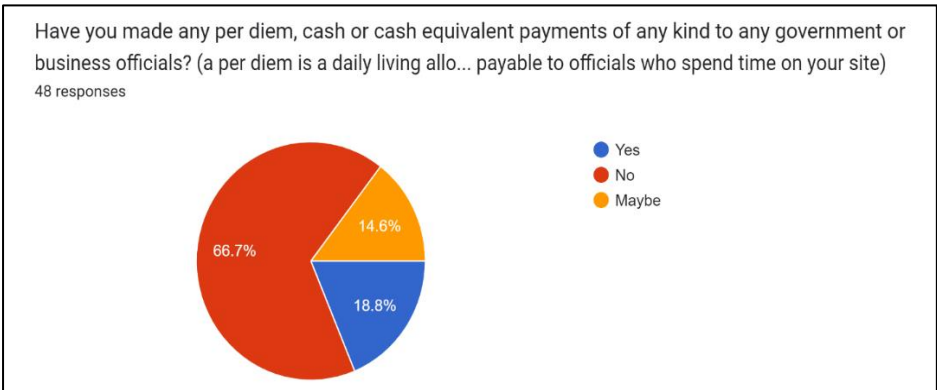
Then, in order to find the true picture questioned was asked as to, "Have you, your business partners, or any members of your staff ever faced criminal convictions or been subject to criminal investigations?". Answering, 79.2% stated "No", 16.7% stated "Yes" and 4.2% stated "Maybe".

Have you, your business partners or any of your staff ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been investigated for a criminal offence?
48 responses
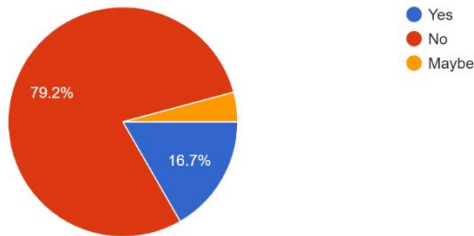
Next the question was, "Has your company ever been involved in investigations conducted by the authorities?" 72.9% stated "No", 25% stated "Yes" and 2.1% stated "Maybe".

Has your company ever been implicated in investigations by the authorities?
48 responses
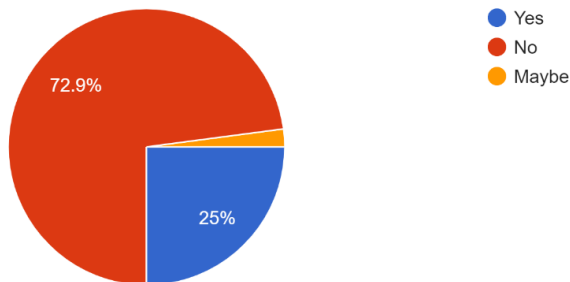
Another question was asked as to whether, "Have you provided any financial contributions to political parties, politicians, elected officials, or candidates for public office in any country? The rationale behind this question was to determine whether a person might unwillingly facilitate, encourage or knowingly allow corruption. Answering, 85.1% stated "No", 8.5% stated "Yes" and 6.4% stated "Maybe".

Have you made any contributions to any political party, politician, elected official or candidate for public office in any country?
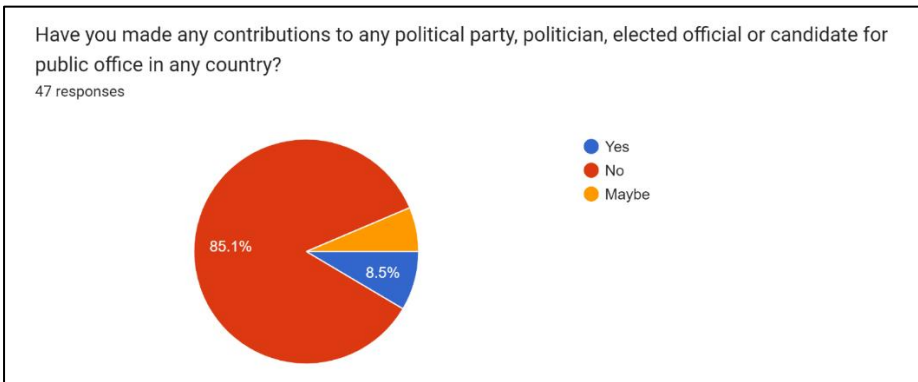
47 responses

Then the question was as to "Why do people engage in corruption and bribery" and this was an open-ended question. In response people gave varied answers. The responses were for personal benefits, for extra income, temptations, financial benefits, family background, personal issues, standards, economic crisis, high living cost, low salary. Moreover, it also included greed, working environment, low income. Respondents also stated that bribery and corruption happen due to the high demand of their work they have the upper hand, they also stated that it makes the job efficient when a bribe is given. Respondents also stated that bribery and corruption happen due to societal acceptance, lack of ethics, abuse of power and inequality among people. Majority of the respondents stated that bribery and corruption happen due to weak laws, regulations and lack of enforcement. A respondent stated that it is due to insufficient rigid laws and nepotism. Another respondent stated that people engage in bribery and corruption since it is a "way of escape" because authorities will never investigate impartially. Some other reasons were orders from higher ranks and precedent set by former seniors.

4.2   Impact of Bribery and Corruption

Bribery and corruption are cross border crimes which involve more than one person. Both these not only affects an individual or a group, they affect society as a whole. Therefore, when investigating   why people engage in corruption, it is easy to come to the conclusion as to the impact of it. Due to personal benefits, exit income, temptations, financial benefits, bribery and corruption thrives a person in illegitimate ways. This money is often not

recorded in money flow resulting in non-contribution to economy and income disparity. Factors like family background, personal issues, standards which drive a person for bribery and corruption results in erosion of morals and ethics in the society. Bribery and corruption undermine transparency, due process, accountability, fairness, erodes public trust and results in injustice. It is important to mention that Sri Lanka has laws to criminalize bribery and acts of corruption; however, there are issues in implementations and challenges due to institutional structures. At present the Anti-Corruption Bill of Sri Lanka is in the final stages. In addition to Sri Lanka has implemented the   Bribery Act, a Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery and Corruption Law, and the Declaration of Assets and Liabilities Law.

4.3   Challenges to combat bribery and corruption

In the online questionnaire   the question was asked, "what do you think as challenges to combat bribery and corruption" in a multiple-choice format. The choices provided were, normalization of corruption, legal loopholes, corrupt supervisory authorities, conflict of interests and lack of code of conduct. Majority chose corrupt supervisory authorities as a reason; second highest was normalization of corruption. Thirdly, respondents chose legal loopholes, fourthly it was a lack of code of conduct and finally conflict of interests.

As per your view, what are the difficulties to fight corruption?
46 responses

Category	Value
Normalization of corruption	29 (63%)
Legal loopholes	27 (58.7%)
Corrupt supervisory authorities	33 (71.7%)
Conflict of interests	18 (39.1%)
Lack of code of conduct	26 (56.5%)
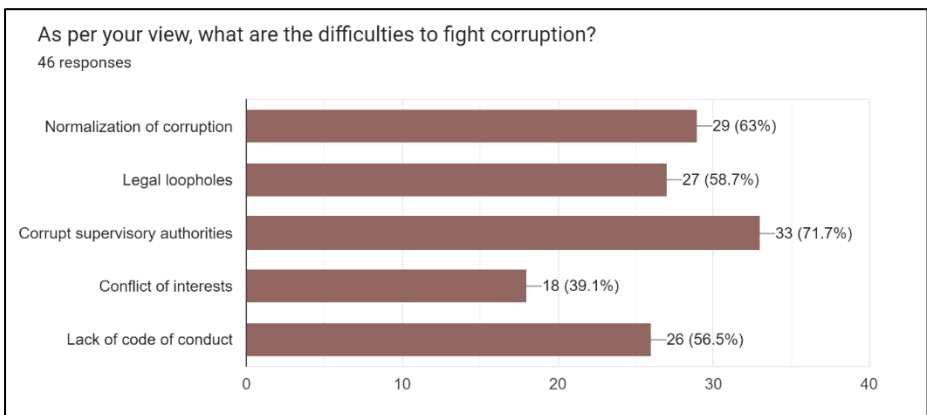
These results showcase a grim reality, even though the sample is small it denotes how much people have lost faith and trust on supervisory authority. The majority do not believe supervisory authority will do their job right. Normalization of corruption is another challenge in preventing bribery and corruption. There is this common misconception that bribery and corruption is justified as long as the job is done. According to (Bribery and Corruption Sri Lankan Report, 2020), "According to numerous participants, it has become an accepted norm to offer cash-filled envelopes to Public Health Inspection (PHI) officers during their inspections. In the said questionnaire, participants revealed that when Food and Drug (F&D) officers plan to visit pharmacies, they inform the employees in advance so they can prepare by switching on the air conditioning (a mandatory requirement for pharmacies) and preparing the envelope for the officer. There are claims that in some instances, the officer may not even conduct a thorough inspection of the premises and simply collect the envelope from their vehicle". In the same conference report, it has mentioned that "It is intriguing to note that despite the normalization of bribery, the act of providing monetary bribes in discreet manners, such as concealing the cash inside a book-like envelope without explicit requests from the officers, indicates that those accepting bribes are well aware of the potential consequences and legal penalties associated with such actions. The questionnaire has mentioned loopholes in law as one of the challenges to prevent bribery and corruption. When perusing literature, according to President Counsel Sarath Jayamanne, "In order for investigations to be effective, the presence of accurate evidence is a crucial [factor]. In cases involving bribery or corruption, it is rare for eyewitnesses, who can provide significant evidence, to come forward. Consequently, investigators and prosecutors often have to rely on the person who offered the bribes a witness, as well as on documentary evidence. Unfortunately, in situations where there is no established practice of maintaining electronic records, the passage of time can lead to the destruction of documentary evidence. Documents may also become misplaced during transitions of power or when officials responsible for handling such documents leave their positions. Furthermore, Sri Lanka lacks proper procedures or systems to effectively track the location of documentation[5]." Mr. Sarath Jayamenne

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[5] Niroshani, Dhanushika. "Are Citizens Shirking Their Responsibility? The Reality of Curbing Corruption in Sri Lanka - Sarath Jayamanne." CIABOC, December 13, 2019.

has further stated that, "In the Sri Lankan context, the prompt and thorough prosecution of cases has proven to be challenging [due to the] persistent issues with legal delays have plagued the criminal justice system, resulting in significant delays in bringing cases to trial. This situation has generated a feeling of mistrust among victims, who question whether justice will truly be served. Consequently, victims are discouraged from pursuing justice. It is important to note that defense counsel and instructing attorneys also contribute to the unnecessary prolongation of prosecutions[6]."

Conflict of interests and corruption according to (Todd, 2021) "is typically a consistent underlying factor: a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest arises when an individual or company has the chance, whether actual or perceived, to use their position for personal or corporate advantage. Corruption transpires when that opportunity is seized upon and the individual or company exploits their position for personal gain. The encouraging aspect is that by managing conflicts of interest, the potential for corruption can be reduced." This explicitly explains the interlinked relationship of conflict of interests with corruption.

4.4   The link between national security and bribery and corruption

Bribery and corruption pose a significant and direct threat to national security, impacting various aspects of a country's stability and integrity. One of the primary consequences of bribery and corruption is the erosion of the rule of law and public trust in institutions. When those in positions of power engage in corrupt practices, it undermines the credibility and faith that citizens have in their government and law enforcement agencies. As a result, people may lose confidence in the effectiveness and fairness of these institutions, which can lead to widespread disillusionment and social unrest. Furthermore, bribery and corruption create a fertile ground for radicalization, extremism, and terrorism. Illicit funds obtained through corrupt practices can be channeled to support extremist ideologies and groups, providing them with the financial means to carry out their agendas.

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https://ciaboc.gov.lk/prevention/prevention-news/837-are-citizens-shirking-their-responsibility-the-reality-of-curbing-corruption-in-sri-lanka-sarath-jayamanne.

[6] *ibid*

This financial support enables extremist elements to expand their influence and recruit vulnerable individuals who may be enticed by the promise of monetary gains. Moreover, the generation of "dirty money" through bribery and corruption undermines the integrity of legitimate financial channels. When ill-gotten gains are laundered and integrated into the formal economy, it creates an artificial appearance of income flow without a traceable origin. This distorts economic data and hinders the ability to accurately assess a nation's financial health. Additionally, such illicit financial activities can lead to a loss of investor confidence, deterring foreign investment and impeding economic growth. The impact of bribery and corruption extends beyond the economic realm and affects social harmony and tranquility within a nation. As ordinary citizens witness corrupt practices and observe a lack of accountability, they may be compelled to take to the streets to demand justice and accountability. This civil unrest can disrupt social cohesion and create an environment ripe for the spread of extremist ideologies and radicalization. In combating bribery and corruption, whistleblowers play a critical role. These courageous individuals are essential in exposing corrupt practices and bringing them to the attention of authorities. By blowing the whistle on corruption, they provide valuable information that can lead to the prosecution of wrongdoers and the implementation of corrective measures. Whistleblowers act as watchdogs for national security, ensuring that corrupt elements within government and private entities are held accountable for their actions.

4.5   Whistleblowing as a strategy

Before explaining whistleblowing as a strategy, it is important to look into other mechanisms which are also available. In the questionnaire a question was asked as to what should be done to prevent bribery and corruption. Answering the open-ended question people gave varied answers. The answers were, to change minds of people starting from school level, promote transparency, encourage international cooperation, strengthen financial systems, increase pay, lead with example and promote public participation. Further, respondents stated the importance of an auditing mechanism. One of the respondents mentioned, "Everything (operations, finance, HR Management, etc.) including private and public sector organizations must be reviewed by an independent external audit unit. All

single owner private sector institutions (specially universities and hospitals) must be announced to share the control to an external director board." Majority of the respondents stated laws as a factor which is important. According to them it is important to impose practical punishments, not to be politically influenced. One of the respondents mentioned as to "What did happen to the tsunami fund? Treasury bonds? BOC loans for Daya apparel s Pvt Ltd? Xpress pearl case and other shipping cases? The same respondent mentioned "that those are the sum of few cases only, when we come to the big picture of it quite complicated. International politics and multinational groups and other local authorities are also responsible for some of the cases. Therefore, out of the box we need anti-corruption environment prevent such an amount of corruption cases". Respondents also stated that it is important to prevent unnecessary lapses in litigation process where cases are piling up and dates are getting dragged. Another respondent stated that only the guilty should be punished and the innocent should be protected. Another set of respondents stated that it is important to make public sector efficient. A respondent also stated that it is important to "have an oversight mechanism along with a strict code of conduct".

Respondents also stated the importance of reporting bribery and corruption. A respondent stated that "people must be encouraged to report any kind of bribery or corruption happening to them and the government should implement mechanisms like using decoys to find the officials who engage in taking bribes more often and the offenders should be made to face strict legal consequences". Another respondent states that there is "nothing with existing operate system" to prevent bribery and corruption. The same respondent stated that it is "recommend to utilize military for monitoring, surveillance, raid & arrest suspicious officials". This demonstrates the complete lack of faith in public where they resort to military as the preventive force.

The reporting people mentioned in the questionnaire are in fact technically known as "whistleblowing". Whistleblowing refers to the act of reporting or disclosing information about illegal, unethical, or harmful activities within an organization or institution. A whistleblower is an individual who exposes wrongdoing or misconduct, typically within their own workplace, to authorities or the public. Whistleblowers may reveal information about

various matters, such as fraud, corruption, safety violations, environmental damage, human rights abuses, or other forms of illegal or unethical behavior. "In today's era of globalization, where economic interests often take precedence over other values and customs, safeguarding the public interest from significant corporate scandals has become crucial. Therefore, corporate whistleblowing is regarded as a highly effective tool for promoting good corporate governance, yet its adoption in Sri Lanka is still at an early stage. After conducting inquiries, it is obvious that, that none of the corporate companies falling under the jurisdiction of the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Colombo Exchange Commission (CEC) have implemented a whistleblowing mechanism within their respective organizations[7]."

Whistleblowing is often driven by a sense of moral or ethical responsibility to promote transparency, accountability, and the greater good, even if it involves speaking out against one's employer or colleagues. Whistleblower protection laws exist in many countries to safeguard individuals from retaliation or adverse consequences for coming forward with their disclosures. As stated by (Vian et al,2022), "to encourage reporting, it is important to protect not only the whistleblowers but also witnesses and also those who assisted in the process of reporting. The path to this is, maintaining, confidentiality, penalizing officials who reveal the whistleblower's identity, considering reassignment or reinstatement when appropriate, establishing effective systems to investigate and address retaliation, and providing comprehensive support including counseling and financial assistance which will create a safe environment for whistleblowers and those associated with them to come forward and report wrongdoing[8]."

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[7] 1. J.A.A.S. Jayasinghe, "Whistleblower's Legal Protection: A Giant Stride against Corruption Drive: Daily FT," Whistleblower's legal protection: A giant stride against corruption drive | Daily FT, December 9, 2022,
https://www.ft.lk/columns/Whistleblower-s-legal-protection-A-giant-stride-against-corruption-drive/4-742867.

[8] Vian, Taryn, Brianna Agnew, and Keith McInnes. "Whistleblowing as an Anti-Corruption Strategy in Health and Pharmaceutical Organizations in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Scoping Review." Global health action, December 31, 2022. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9661981/#cit0015.

When looking at the importance of whistleblowing, according to Whistle link Blog 2021, whistleblowing assists in combating fraudulent activities, it mitigates potential reputational harm, averts the escalation of issues, minimizes financial losses, increases awareness and also fosters a culture of openness[9].

During the questionnaire a question was asked as to, "Do you think being a company/ organization employee if you report corruption/ bribery it will facilitate justice?". Answering, a majority 40.4% stated "Yes", 34% stated "No" and 25.5% chose "Maybe".
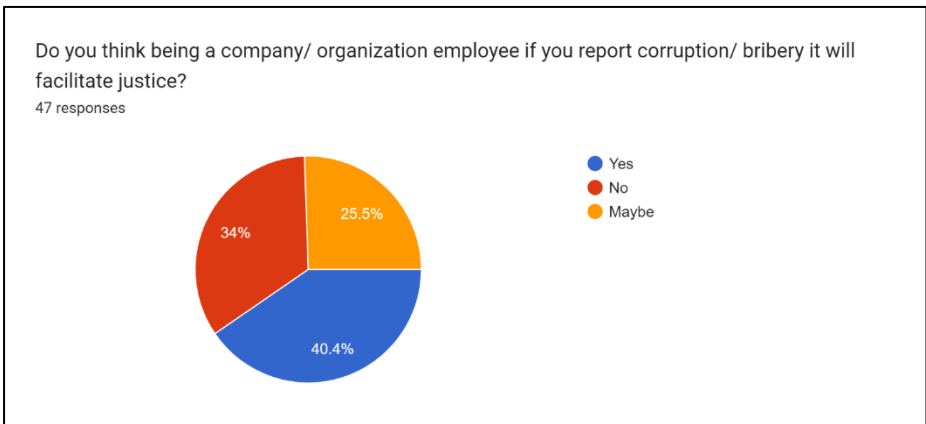
Next, a question was asked, "If you come across such an above-mentioned news will you report it?". Answering, the majority of 62.2% stated "Yes", 24.4% chose the option "Maybe" and 13.3% chose "No".

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[9] "6 Benefits of Whistleblowing Organisations Cannot Afford to Ignore," Whistlelink, May 24, 2023, https://www.whistlelink.com/blog/how-whistleblowing-benefits-organisations/.

If you come across such an above mentioned news will you report it?

45 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

13.3%
24.4%
62.2%
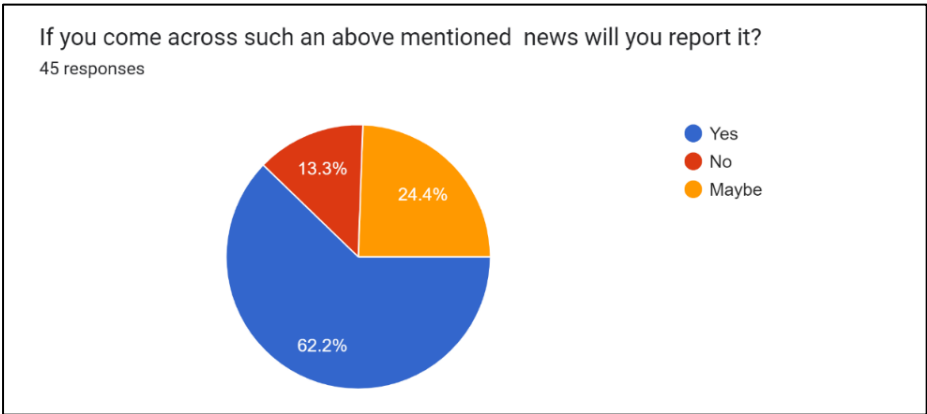
Next, a question was asked as to, "In such a situation, do you think reporter should be protected?", answering, 78.7% stated "Yes", 14.9% stated "No" and 6.4% stated "Maybe". By the questionnaire findings, it is crystalline that whistleblowing as a strategy can be utilized to successfully minimize bribery and corruption.

In such a situation, do you think reporter should be protected?

47 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

14.9%
78.7%
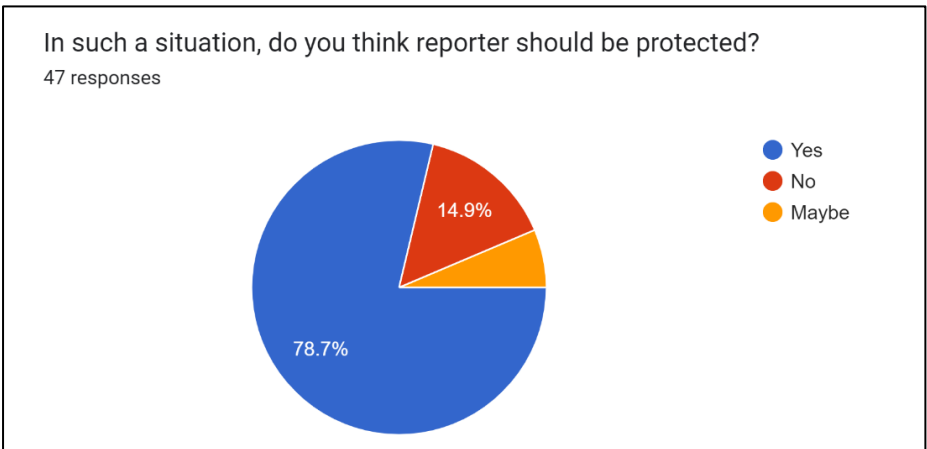
(Lund et al, 2023) have stated that in "implementing effective whistleblowing policies can yield not just commercial and reputational advantages but also mitigate the risk of legal liability. By demonstrating a genuine commitment to addressing wrongdoing and preventing the victimization or retaliation against whistleblowers, such policies can

bolster a business's legal position. Moreover, robust policies can aid
companies in building defenses against corporate offenses like bribery or
enabling tax evasion".[10] Therefore, it is crystalline that whistleblowing will
be an ideal step that can be utilized to prevent bribery and corruption in
addition to already existing mechanisms.

When discussing whistleblower strategies, it is also imperative to mention
the rights vested with the whistleblower. According to Transparency
International, "Sri Lanka recognized the importance of victim and witness
protection as an area in need of reform. Sri Lanka already had a Victims of
Crime and Witnesses Protection Act in place, which aimed to provide a
structured mechanism for safeguarding victims and witnesses, including
those involved in corruption cases. However, TI Sri Lanka identified areas
where further improvements were necessary, and certain aspects of the
law required amendments. Through their commitment tracking work, TI
Sri Lanka saw an opportunity to exert pressure on the government to
enhance the implementation of the Act. TI Sri Lanka defined specific
actions by the government that would signify the fulfillment of their
commitments, and they developed indicators to measure the progress
made. In relation to the government's objective of establishing effective
witness and victim protection, TI Sri Lanka formulated four indicators to
assess advancements. Their efforts have significantly contributed to
holding the government accountable for fulfilling its commitments.
However, it should be noted that progress in this area is gradual, requiring
ongoing dedication and investment in advocacy."[11]

According to (Transparency International, 2010), "Whistleblowers,
including public and private employees and those in non-traditional

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[10] Hayley Lund, Sarah Chaplin, and Charlotte de Vitry, "Implementing an Effective
Whistleblowing Policy," In Brief: European Disputes Blog, January 31, 2023,
https://european-disputes-blog.weil.com/england-uk/implementing-an-effective-
whistleblowing-policy/.

[11] Transparency International, "Increasing Protection for Victims and Whistleblowers
in Sri Lanka," Increasing protection for victims and whistleblowers in Sri Lanka –
transparency international commitment tracker, accessed June 9, 2023,
https://www.anticorruptionpledgetracker.com/case-study/third-case-study-this-one-
should-not-be-show-in-the-nav/.

employment relationships, should be protected from reprisal when honestly reporting concerns. This protection should also extend to those attempting to report or corroborate the reports and should include the right to refuse participation in wrongdoing. Family members associated with the whistleblower should also be covered. If retaliation occurs, the burden of proof to show that the discrimination is unrelated should lie with the employer. Access to normal court procedures should guarantee these protections. Whistleblowers should be shielded from damages suffered as a result of their disclosure and should receive recognition for preventing harm to the organization or society. The design of such a system, including potential financial rewards, should consider national and legal contexts."[12]

However, Transparency International also states that "The absence of whistleblower protection in Sri Lanka is evident through the following examples: a. The Establishments Code discourages public servants from disclosing information. b. The Auditor General lacks freedom to share information with the public. c. Certain information is classified as official secrets, with disclosure resulting in punitive measures under the law. d. Publishing specific Cabinet documents in newspapers is an offense punishable by imprisonment. e. Some statutes limit the availability of information to the public and even restrict courts from accessing necessary documents for proper adjudication. f. Enactments related to State Banks and Revenue Collections include provisions that restrict public access to information, creating opportunities for lack of scrutiny. g. Certain parliamentary proceedings are protected from disclosure, depriving the public of knowledge about the deliberations of their elected representatives."[13]

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[12] "Whistleblowing: An Effective Tool in the Fight against Corruption," Transparency International, 2010, https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/2010_1_PP_Whistleblowing_EN.pdf, 4.

[13] Transparency International, "Increasing Protection for Victims and Whistleblowers in Sri Lanka," Increasing protection for victims and whistleblowers in Sri Lanka – transparency international commitment tracker, accessed June 9, 2023, https://www.anticorruptionpledgetracker.com/case-study/third-case-study-this-one-should-not-be-show-in-the-nav/.

5.   Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the issue of bribery and corruption presents a significant threat to national security, as it undermines the rule of law, erodes public trust in institutions, and fosters an environment conducive to radicalization and extremism. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, and one effective strategy is the promotion of whistleblowing.

Whistleblowing serves as a powerful tool to mitigate and prevent bribery and corruption. By encouraging public servants to come forward and disclose acts of wrongdoing, a whistleblower-friendly environment can be established. This entails providing legal protection to whistleblowers, safeguarding them from retaliation, and ensuring their anonymity if needed. The role of the Auditor General is crucial in this regard, and granting them sufficient freedom to share information with the public is essential to bolstering transparency and accountability.

To foster a culture of whistleblowing, it is imperative to raise awareness in society about the significance of whistleblowers and their contributions. Citizens should be educated about their rights and the safeguards available to protect them when they choose to blow the whistle on corruption. Additionally, establishing an independent decision-making and supervisory body free from politicization, can instill confidence in the whistleblowing process and ensure impartial investigations.

Furthermore, the cooperation of the corporate sector is vital in this endeavor. Rewarding whistleblowers for their courage and cooperation can incentivize more individuals to come forward and report corruption within private entities.

While combating bribery and corruption remains a daunting task, embracing whistleblowing as a crucial strategy can enhance efforts to maintain national security and integrity. By implementing the recommended measures and creating an environment conducive to whistleblowing, countries like Sri Lanka can take significant steps towards safeguarding their interests and building a stronger, more resilient society.

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    blog.weil.com/england-uk/implementing-an-effective-
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Victims of Crime and Witnesses Protection Act.

FUTURE OF INFORMATION-TECHNOLOGY ENABLED SYSTEMS IN THE MILITARY FORCES AND THEIR IMPACTS ON NATIONAL SECURITY: A CASE STUDY OF THE SRI LANKA AIR FORCE

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Sucharitha SV Sooriyaarachchi

Abstract

With the advancement of technology most of the military forces have incorporated Cyber Physical Systems (CPS) into their services such as unmanned vehicles, weapon systems, automated systems, e-mail, Intranet and etc. However, due to the sensitivity of cyberspace this technology enabled systems could be exploited by adversary forces to cause catastrophic effects. Therefore, cyber threats which are developing against the information security should be considered as new dimension of threat to the National Security of a country. The degree of digitalisation of the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) and the status of the Cyber Structures of this organization was a critical factor in this research. During this study the deductive research approach has been followed. Study was conducted according to qualitative method and analysis was based on the Parkerian Hexad information security model. Purposive sampling method and the Snowball sampling method was used to gather required information from the participants. Data analysis was based on Open Coding, Axial Coding, and Selective Coding concepts/techniques. Based on the analysis and discussion, recommendations were suggested for the strategic, operational and the tactical levels of the military and main recommendations are; to incorporate awareness training programmes on INFOSEC (Information Security)/ OPSEC (Operations Security) as mandatory bi-annual/ annual training for the officers and airmen, to publish 'SLAF Social Media Guide' as a guideline for ethical usage of the social media, strict monitoring and continuous security vetting of employees, imposing of strict disciplinary action and exemplary punishments for the perpetrators and introducing of secure physical protection methods.

Key Words: *Automated Systems, Cyber Threats, Information Security, Insider Threat, IT Enabled Systems, social media*

1.   Introduction

Rapid growth of number of connections, bandwidth and increasing dependency on the technology assisted systems has significantly contributed to increase the volume of consumers enjoying latest technology enabled systems. In this context, Cyber Physical Systems (CPS) and latest IT realities such as Big Data, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IOT) were more prevalent within the military and other segments of the society by the end of 2018 as a part of Industry 4.0.[14] However, as the number of technologies enabled systems continues to grow, ensuring their security against cyber-threats has become a significant challenge today. Unbelievable speed and the stealth of cyber warfare, thin line between private, criminal, and state sponsorship, inability to recognize attribution and its capacity to make high potential damages to targets, best signifies the characteristics, as well as the threats caused by cyber warfare to technology enabled systems.

As a result, the number of cyber-attacks and damage to the IT infrastructures are in continuous rise as there aren't any universally accepted pool proof system to deter such attacks. Therefore, cyber threats which are developing against information security are to be considered as new dimension of threat to the National Security.

According to Duo, Meng Chu and Abdullah, one of the identical characteristics of the cyber-attacks are, "degrading the system performances" and some catastrophic effects such as 'Black Energy' malware attack on Ukrainian power grids during the year 2015 resulted in massive power outage for more than 225,000 people for 1 to 6 hours.[15] Further, a survey carried out by the Duo, Meng Chu and Abdullah has identified that during the corona virus pandemic, Czech hospital had to shut down its network due to cyber-attack in March 2020, which badly

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[14] Hamed HaddadPajouh et al., "A survey on internet of things security: Requirements, challenges, and solutions," Internet of Things 14, (2021): 100129.

[15] Wenli Duo, Zhou MengChu and Abusorrah Abdullah, "A survey of cyber-attacks on cyber physical systems: Recent advances and challenges,"IEEE/CAA Journal of Automatica Sinica 9, no. 5 (2022): 784-800.

impacted detection of novel Corona virus and patient care.[16] Besides that, attacks to US Department of Health and Human services during the year 2020 and US Colonial fuel pipeline during the 2021 are classic examples of cyber-attacks on IT enabled platforms.

In this context, today information warfare has become the greatest security challenge faced by the most of the military establishments around the world, since it has become an integral part of modern warfare. Operation Security (OPSEC) is an essential element of any military organization which ensures the safety of its campaign plans and operation plans from their adversaries. Notwithstanding that, OPSEC involves the safety of the policies, practices and procedures in protecting confidential information related to military establishments.

Modern IT realities such as IoT could be utilized at the battlefield to improve situational awareness, assessment of risk and to reduce response time. Further, IoT could be used to identify adversary forces and to monitor armed personnel physical and mental state. Besides that, command and control centers could monitor and pass real-time battle picture to troops on ground.[17] Further, during the planning, supporting and executing of military operations, AI is playing key role and has become an essential tool of the intelligence operations.[18] In this context, Big Data also has been reported to be reshaping many areas such as technology, military applications, etc. Moreover, Big Data holds enormous potential to work hand in hand with the IoT and the AI to make operations of armed forces more efficient and convenient.[19]

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[16] Duo, MengChu and Abdullah, "A survey of cyber-attacks," 808.

[17] Jino Ramson et al., "Applications of internet of things (iot)–an overview," In 2020, 5th international conference on devices, circuits and systems (ICDCS), pp. 92-95. IEEE, 2020.

[18] István Szabadföldi, "Artificial intelligence in military application–opportunities and challenges," Land Forces Academy Review 26, no. 2 (2021): 157-165.

[19] Sanatan Kulshrestha, "Big data in military information & intelligence," IndraStra Global, (2016).

However, due to the sensitivity of cyberspace these IT enabled systems/concepts are subjected to exploitation by adversaries and sensitive military information contained therein might get leaked or IT enabled systems could be misused to cause catastrophic effects. As per the opinion of the Milkovski and Bogdanoski, future terrorists would win the wars without firing a single ammunition, but by gaining control and destroying the information technology (IT) infrastructures of a nation.[20]

Sri Lanka is a country which suffered due to decade's long military conflict between Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Elam (LTTE). Throughout the conflict GOSL had to face and encounter asymmetric warfare tactics used by the LTTE. In this context, LTTE have fully utilized the capabilities possesses by the professionals in diaspora communities to attack and paralyse Government machinery in numerous ways by making use of unconventional methods such as attack and steal data available on the IT enabled platforms of the GOSL such as banking systems, economic hubs, as well as vital and crucial military data bases and operations launched by the Sri Lankan military forces.

Based on the research conducted by the Arnmaker, victor's peace achieved by the GOSL through military means during the year 2009 does not give any assurance on end of protracted social conflicts.[21] Therefore, even after completely defeating long drawn civil war, GOSL, as well as military forces continues to get targets of different forms of attacks; mainly, cyber-attacks from its adversaries. Therefore, to understand the importance of ensuring the security of IT-enabled systems, the researcher has selected the Sri Lanka Air Force for the study as it is at the forefront of Cyber Operations with numerous advanced IT-enabled platforms. Besides that, SLAF is the guardian of Cyber Security of the Sri Lankan Government and is held responsible for ensuring cyber security and protecting and managing critical infrastructure located within the country.

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[20] Mitko Bogdanoski and Nikolche Milkovski, "Information as a strategic resource critical to military operations and defence of the nation,"*Contemporary Macedonian Defense-International Scientific Defense, Security and Peace Journal 15*, no. 28 (2015): 107-118.

[21] Lovisa Arnmarker, "Reconciliation in post-war Sri Lanka A study on reconciliation possibilities after a victor's peace," (2017).
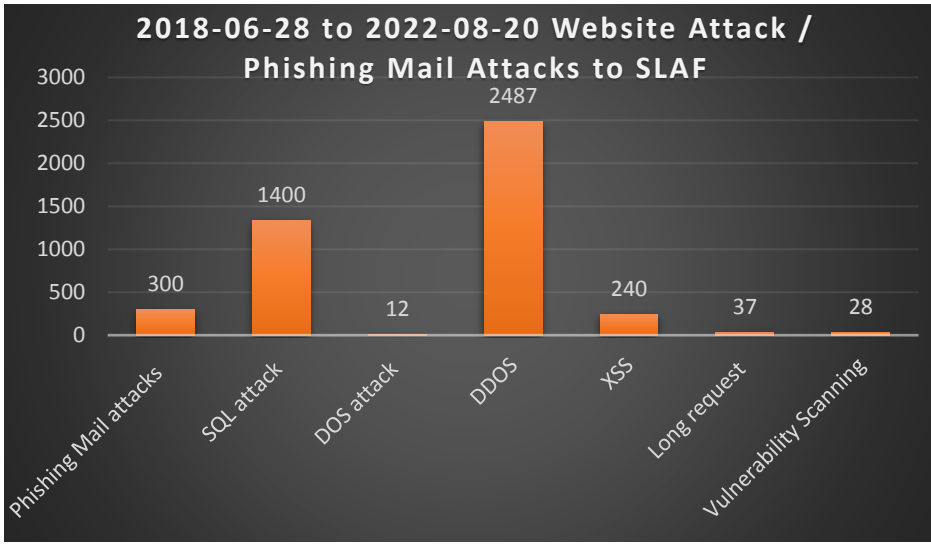
Figure 1: *Cyber-Attacks to SLAF (2018-06-28 to 2022-08-20)*
Source : *SLAF Cyber Security Section*

Nowadays armed forces make use of numerous IT enabled systems/ concepts/realities for their routine functions. These IT enabled systems/ concepts/realities contain large volume of classified military information specific to respective armed services and National Security of the country. Therefore, leakage and outflow of these information could cause grave damage to the National Security. Further, due to the evolving nature of IT, behaviour of the employees, regulations governing information security, as well as security lapses of the IT infrastructures, IT enabled systems are prone to attack by adversaries and large volume of information contained therein could get into the hands of the adversaries/intruders. Though IT enabled systems/concepts/realities used within the military organizations such as Sri Lanka Air Force mostly expedites organisational productivity, however in certain instances it could be a reason to jeopardise national security of the country through information leakage.

2.   Objectives

2.1   General Objectives

General objectives of this paper are to study and identify implications of using technologically enabled systems within the Sri Lanka Air Force and its adverse impacts on National Security of the country.

2.2   Specific Objectives

Specific Objectives of this research are, firstly to identify main reasons/causes for leakage of classified military information contained within the IT enabled systems of the Sri Lanka Air Force. Secondly, to determine and recommend suitable strategies to mitigate leakage and sharing of classified military information contained within the IT enabled systems.

3.   Research Questions

3.1   Main Research Question

What are the implications of using IT enabled systems within the Sri Lanka Air Force and its adverse impacts on the National Security?

3.2   Other Research Questions

Other research questions of this research are, firstly to identify the main reasons/causes for leakage of classified military information contained within the IT enabled systems of the Sri Lanka Air Force. Secondly, to determine and identify what are the suitable strategies to mitigate leakage and sharing of classified military information contained within the IT enabled systems.

4.   Literature Research

4.1   Definitions

4.1.1   National Security

Although there are many different interpretations, National Security can be defined as the ability of a nation to maintain sustained security status within its territorial boundaries against the adversaries. In this milieu like other elements of the National Security, Information Security is considered as the one of the predominant elements which will contribute to preserve National values, as well as the national interest's peculiar to sovereign nation.

4.1.2   Information Technology Enabled Systems

Information Technology enabled automated/semi-automated systems and platforms significantly contribute to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, accuracy and the reliability of the organization functions of IT enabled systems. In certain instances, these systems/platforms could integrate the physical and virtual systems by enabling real-time data processing facilities. Besides that, these systems enable exchange of information between multiple groups and enriched with Cyber Physical Systems (CPS).

4.1.3   Information Security

Information security (INFOSEC) is a set of principles, policies, procedures and action initiated to safe guard the digital data and other means of information from adversaries. Digital data and other types of information are always prone to attack due to the sensitive nature of the information. Therefore, information security has become a mandatory requirement of the overall cyber security plan of the IT enabled organizations. For instance, INFOSEC ensures employees have access to information that they require whilst preventing unauthorized access.

4.1.4   Network Security

Experiments conducted by Acemoglu, Malekian, and Ozdaglar has revealed that, "network security has become the core characteristic of information

security due to rapid expansion of the internet and intranet".[22] Also due to sensitivity of the information, many attackers are keen to attack government and military organisations with the aim of stealing information and to paralyse the operations of the technologically enabled systems such as control systems of the unmanned vehicles, weapon systems, missile systems and automated systems which contain classified information. As a result, network security has become a fundamental prerequisite for the performance of duties and to protect classified military information which has a bearing on the national security of the country. As a measure to improve network security within Sri Lanka Air Force, intranet is maintained as a closed network and completely segregated from the internet to ensure network security.

4.2   Information Security Concepts

Information security consisted of set of strategies that prevent unauthorised access to organisational assets such as computers, networks and data storages that ensure the integrity and confidentiality of sensitive information. With the advancement of the technology most of the organizations and military forces have incorporated Cyber Physical Systems (CPS) into the organizations, as well as to the military forces. Therefore, most of the secure computer system designs and architectures are based on information security models such as (CIA) Confidentiality, Integrity, Availability and Parkerian Hexad.

4.2.1   CIA Model

Security of the information technology enabled systems are guaranteed by three features. That is Availability, Integrity and Confidentiality (CIA). Availability of the system guaranteed that system is available whenever required and all components are working correctly at all times. Alteration of the signals in sensors, controllers and electronic devices by unauthorized parties are prevented by Integrity. Security and personal privacy ensure Confidentiality. The CIA model was examined by Whitman

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[22] Daron Acemoglu, Azarakhsh Malekian, and Asu Ozdaglar, "Network security and contagion,"*Journal of Economic Theory 166,* (2016): 536-585.

and Mattord as a model that could help to identify the issues related to information security[23] and it is depicted as follows.

Figure2:
Components of the
C.I.A. Triad
Source:
The Parkerian Hexad
(2015)

4.2.2   Parkerian Hexad (PH) Model

Parkerian Hexad model is considered as an advance version of the CIA model and it has three elements of the CIA model with few added components to provide a complete and comprehensive model to secure the data in the present context. Accordingly, Parkerian Hexad six elements model illustrated underneath consist of confidentiality, possession or control, integrity, authenticity, availability and utility.

Figure 3:
Components of the Parkerian Hexad Model
Source:
 The Parkerian Hexad (2015)

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[23] Michael Whitman and Herbert Mattord, "Principles of information security 4th edition," *Cengage Learning*, 2011.

One of the most critical aspects of the Parkerian Hexad model is organisations can become adaptable to such a model without investing massive sums of money for the infrastructure development. Also, this model focuses more on better policy writing and the enforcement, employee education and awareness and make use of the technology already available within an organisation. Therefore, the Parkerian Hexad model could be considered as the best suited model for an organisation such as the SLAF for information security.

4.3   Researches on Information and Network Security

With the soaring interest on the subject, many scholars focus their researches on the importance of network and information security for a secure communication system, information encryption programme methods, reasons for information leakage, impact of AI on national security, insider threats, e-mail security issues and social media and national security. Sivaraman and Arumugam have highlighted the importance of network and information security for a secure communication system.[24] Haider and Alabiech, has researched on "Pretty Good Privacy (PGP)" as an information encryption programme method which has high security by using 'Private-public key'[25]. Moreover, Haider and Alabiech have proposed "a novel concept for a secure e-mail scheme based on 'Elliptic Curve Cryptography Combined Public Key,' which would provide perfect security such as data integrity, authentication, data confidentiality, and non-reproduction of the original"[26]. Mulazzani and Sarcia have identified the nature and reasons for the information leakage as the "unrestricted accessibility for information, lack of training and

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[24] Karem Sivaraman and Pole Arumugam, "The security related to electronic mail," *International Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics* 12, (2018): 119.

[25] Al-Mashhadi Haider and Mohammed Alabiech, "A survey of email service; attacks, security methods and protocols,"*International Journal of Computer Applications 162*, no. 11 (2017).

[26] Haider and Alabiech, "A survey of email service," no. 11 (2017).

guidance and technical and cultural issues"[27]. Sedek Muliati et al., have argued that approximately 90% of the organisations are vulnerable to insider attacks and have identified that risk factors include an excessive number of users, as well as excessive access privileges (37%)[28]. Based on their extensive studies on the subject, Cetin and Karabat suggest that organisations should increasingly and seriously pay attention to insider threats[29]. Nagarjuna and Sujatha pointed out that an attacker could use e-mails as devices to distribute the worms, malicious software and viruses by way of attaching them into e-mails[30]. According to the view of the Faruk widespread use of social media could impact the personal safety of military personnel. Besides that, it would lead to the loss of sensitive information related to national security[31]. Malhotra has highlighted that rather than attempting to deny or curb the use of social media, the armed forces should make use of social media as a force multiplier[32]. Kimutai suggests that training and guidance of the officers on social media usage is vital and the training curriculum should be frequently updated to keep up with evolving

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[27] Fabio Mulazzani and Salvatore Sarcia, "Cyber security on military deployed networks,"*In 2011 3rd International Conference on Cyber Conflict*, pp. 1-15. IEEE, 2011.

[28] Sedek Muliati et al., "Development of Trusted Human Framework for Mitigating Risks of Insider Threats,"*resmilitaris 13*, no. 2 (2023): 4042-4065

[29] Karabat Cetin and Cagatay Karabat, "Increasing Awareness of Insider Information Security Threats in Human Resource Department,"*International Journal of Business and Management Studies 4*, no. 1 (2012): 45-54.

[30] Raja Nagarjuna and Pandith Sujatha, "An Innovative Approach for Detecting Targeted Malicious E-mail," *International Journal of Application or Innovation in Engineering & Management*, 2 (7): 31-32

[31] Hadzic Faruk, "The influence of social media on threats to identity, stability and national security; institutional inefficiency and vulnerability of B&H,"*Scholarly Journal for Protection, Security, Defense, Education and Training Issues Year XXIV*, no: 45-46, 2020 (2020): 67.

[32] Deepak Malhotra, "Social Media and the Armed Forces," *Centre for Joint Warfare Studies*, 2016.

technology[33]. Szabadfoldi has identified that during planning, supporting and executing of military operations, AI is playing a key role. However, AI could lead to cause grave damages to the National Security of the country in the event of outbreak of cyber-attack[34]. Yanqing Duan et al., has pointed out that AI systems are becoming an embedded element of Information technology enabled systems and are creating a profound impact on human decision making[35]. According to the view of the Kulshrestha, Big Data holds enormous potential to make the operations of armed forces more efficient across the entire spectrum of the conflict and to study issues related to weapon systems acquisition, combat analysis, and military training[36]. Parushi Malhotra et al., have argued that increased growth of the IoT and continuous outbreak of sensitive information from the digital platforms opens up potent ground for adversaries to initiate copious cyber-attacks, therefore highlight the importance of security of IoT[37].

4.4   Research Gap

Although many researches had been carried out in the field of information security, e-mail security, and the impact of social media on organisational productivity, only limited attention had been paid to analyse how utilization of IT enabled systems within the military forces adversely affect the information security of the military forces by way of releasing/outflow of classified information of nation state/organizations and its impacts on

[33] Julius Kimutai, "social media and national security threats: A case study of Kenya,"*PhD diss,* University of Nairobi, 2014.

[34] Istvan Szabadfoldi et al., "Artificial intelligence in military application–opportunities and challenges." Land Forces Academy Review 26, no. 2 (2021): 157-165.

[35] Yanqing Duan et al., "Artificial intelligence for decision making in the era of Big Data–evolution, challenges and research agenda." International journal of information management 48, (2019): 63-71.

[36] Sanatan Kulshrestha, "Big data in military information & intelligence." IndraStra Global (2016).

[37] Parushi Malhotra et al., "Internet of things: Evolution, concerns and security challenges," Sensors 21, no. 5 (2021): 1809.

the national security of the country. Therefore, there is a clear research gap between the existing knowledge/literature on the subject and the research problem which could be identified as the research gap.

4.5   Theoretical Framework

Figure 4 illustrates the theoretical framework developed based on the literature research.

Figure 4: Theoretical Framework
Source: Based on the literature review developed by the researcher
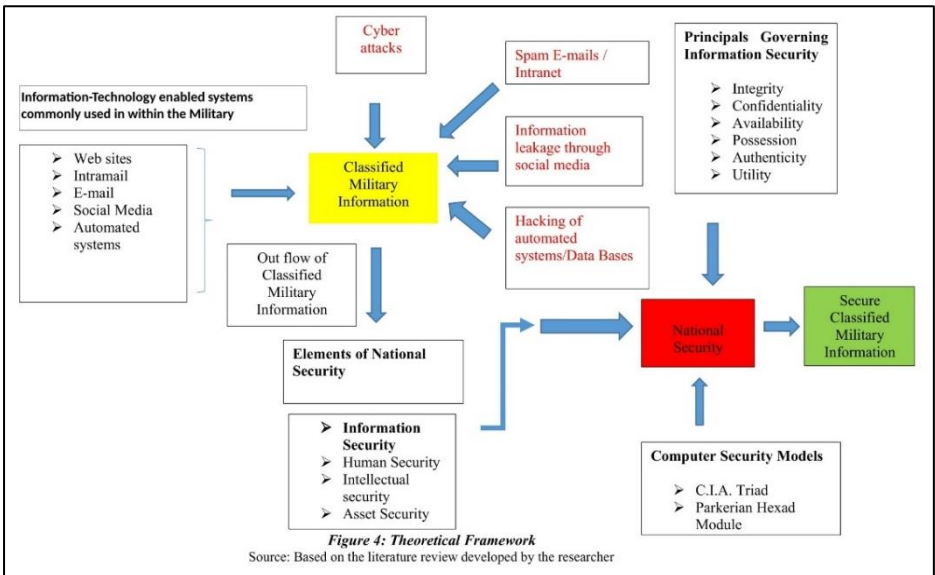
Figure 4: *Theoretical Framework*
Source   : *Based on the literature review developed by researcher*

5.   Methodology

This paper was developed Based on the deductive approach. During the research qualitative data related to research domain were collected and analyzed. Further, the researcher has developed questions for semi-structured and focus group interviews to gather data related to targeted independent variables of the research. Farther, in order to identify and gather required information from the most suited personnel of the population, Purposive sampling method was used. In addition, Snowball

sampling method was used to gather required information from many participants as possible. The data collected from the focus group interviews and professionals/experts based on their expertise knowledge were recorded during the interviews and coded (Open Coding) to derive the concepts and then further coded (Axial Coding) to generate categories. Subsequently, the core categories (Selective Coding) which are common to all/some categories were generated.

During the study, the researcher has selected officers and the airmen posted to Sri Lanka Air Force Colombo as the sample element. That is mainly due to few motives such as its being the hub of the IT related resources and the centralized hub for the all the IT operations, due to availability of mixt personalities of different professions, as well as the different segments. Researcher has chosen one sample element from the Air Force Board of Management (AFBM) including non-Air Force Board of Management directors; another sample element was chosen from the officers posted to the Directorate of Information Technology (DIT) and few other officers and airmen representing different directorates and trades in different ranks. During the study, researcher has interviewed 27 diversified personnel as sample for the interviews, and reached to the saturation. Purposive sampling method and Snowball sampling method were used by the researcher as the sampling techniques.

As suggested by the Silverman data collected from the focus groups and professionals/experts based on their expertise knowledge were recorded during the semi structured interviews and analysed based on the data coding using; Open coding, Axial coding and Selective coding[38]. Subsequently, based on that concepts, categories and core categories were derived.

6.   Data Presentation and Analysis

Qualitative data gathered during this study had been analysed during this segment in order to understand the relationships between the variables. Further, based on the type of interviews conducted and personalities

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[38] David Silverman, "Introducing qualitative research,"*Qualitative research 3*, no. 3 (2016): 14-25.

involved for those interviews, few categories were identified to facilitate data presentation and analysis. Those identified categories are focus groups, professionals in the field, academia and scholars and senior military officers.

During the focus group interviews based on the semi structured interview guide, opinion of the interviewees on social media policy of the Sri Lanka Air Force, their views on publishing photos of the servicemen in military attire and publishing of images related to military assets, and imposing restrictions on usage of the aneroid phones were questioned. Most of them emphasised the necessity of more awareness programmes on information security and social media usage within the SLAF to avoid social media-related issues. Further, it is learned that SLAF employees make use of social media platforms to get more social recognition and highlight themselves among their friends and families. These types of unethical social media practices of SLAF personnel further intensify the exposure of sensitive military information to outsiders.

When conducting semi structured interviews with the professionals in the IT field, questions such as suitability of the existing information protection methods, adequacy of information protection methods to counter evolving IT threats and details about the physical security methods were raised. During the interviews Directorate of Information Technology (DIT) IT engineers of the SLAF were of the opinion that firewalls and spam walls ensure information security/data security within an organisation and stated that SLAF has adequately safe guarded its IT platforms with fire walls and spam walls.

Besides that, they have emphasised the requirement of maintaining intranet as a closed network and separation of internet and intranet to ensure security of intra mail system and database security. According to details obtained from the IT engineers and data collected during the focus group interviews, it was revealed that SLAF is strictly adhering to this instruction. Further, in order to enhance the security of the system introducing of password logging, restrictions on smart phones at the workplace, cyber security awareness, providing security for all three layers (database, application, user layer) of databases, and audit of the data in databases has been suggested by the officers represented DIT of the SLAF.

Moreover, they have insisted on the requirement of physical security measures such as restriction on access, biometric access to vital locations, smart card access for essential locations, and CCTV cameras and security vetting of personnel. However, during the interviews it was revealed that some of these suggestions such as restriction on access, biometric access to vital locations, and smart card access for essential locations are practiced within the organization.

Data and viewpoints of the scholars and academia were obtained with regard to main threats for e- mail and intranet mail security, vulnerability of the web sites, data base security and vulnerability for Cyber-attacks. As per their opinions, database security should provide controlled and protected access to the members of the organisation and should preserve the overall quality of the data. Interestingly, according to the opinion of the IT engineers and end users, within the SLAF data base security and vulnerability of the web sites were adequately safeguarded by restricting access/ separating intranet from internet and by avoiding unauthorized privileged elevation. Furthermore, as military websites contain massive volume of sensitive military information, adversaries could use the information therein for their advantage via attacks. Therefore, they have recommended to implement suitable preventive action against the same.

When analysing the data collected from the Director Information Technology, with related to e- mail and intranet mail security and the web attacks, it was revealed that Directorate of Information Technology has initiated maximum precautionary measures to maintain intra mail system as a closed network by not authorizing internet and intranet to operate on same machine and conducting awareness programmes for the relevant stake holders. Also, it is revealed that main reasons affecting e-mail and intranet mail security are external storage devices, weak passwords, password robbing, Brute force method, key loggers, and security of the ports. Besides that, with the possession of cyber security professionals at the SLAF Cyber Security centre, SLAF is capable of securing the cyber space of the Sri Lanka with professional outlook and it is learned that SLAF website is the least penetrated website among other military/government establishments since it is continuously monitored, updated, and maintained. However, there were different forms of attacks to SLAF digital platforms in many occasions.

According to data collected from beneficiaries of the digital platforms related to insider threat, restricting access to information and unethical social media practices by the users, it transpired that conducting of background check on employees of the organization is a mandatory requirement to prevent insider threat. Also, it would help to select and deploy personnel for places where confidential data circulated/originated and has an effect on the security of information. Besides that, implementation of physical security measures for such places would facilitate restricted access to information. Further, during the study the researcher has learned that SLAF is an organization which initiated several mechanisms to prevent unauthorized disclosure of information to outsiders by restricting access to places where sensitive nature information is handing by means of biometric access control, smart card access control, not authorizing android phones at the work place and security vetting of employees.

7.   Findings and Discussion

During the discussion segment each research question would be addressed by bridging the relationship between literature, data analysis, and findings. Firstly, researcher has addressed the implications of using IT enabled systems and its adverse impacts on the national security of the country, secondly possible causes for leakage of information available on the IT enabled systems and finally possible countermeasures to protect the security of IT enabled systems.   The concepts, categories and core categories which emerged during the data analysis were saturated during the interviews conducted by the researcher. Further, based on the primary data and knowledge on literature, researcher has suggested a process that can be used to develop a conceptual model to address research questions and to achieve research objectives depicted as follows.
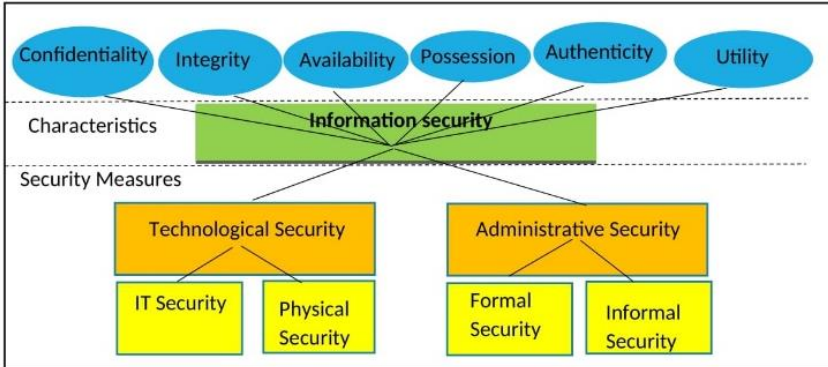
Figure 5: *Conceptual model derived based on data analysis*
Source : *Developed by the researcher*

7.1 Implications of Using Technology Enabled Systems and its Adverse Impacts on National Security of the Country

Mussington et al., emphasise that cyber vulnerabilities pose severe risks to the prosperity of countries, democracy, and social harmony. During the study, researcher has identified four aspects of the SLAF digital platforms which could affect to the national security of the country[39].

7.1.1 E-Mail and Intranet Mail Security

When considering the SLAF intra mail system, it's being operated by several service personnel attached to particular office/section for receipt and dispatch of internal mails. Nevertheless, it is observed that individual passwords applicable to the intra mail system is shared among the section personnel and most of the time all the users make use of login details that belongs to one person. This situation could be considered as unauthorized access to the system. Also, it could create severe security hazard whenever a classified document of operational nature is circulated within the intra mail system. Nevertheless, as per the Parkerian Hexad model information accessibility should be limited as far as possible to ensure information security. Therefore, accessibility for the intra mail system must be limited

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[39] David Mussington et al., "Governing Cyber Security in Canada, Australia and the United States," (2018).

to only two or three dedicated computer operators who are assigned for receipt and dispatch of internal mail.

Further, as highlighted during the analysis segment it is very important to segregate intra mail system from the internet. This could be achieved by not authorizing intranet and internet to operate on the same machine. This is mainly due to the fact that when the internet is connected to the intranet machine, it will lead and facilitate phishing mail attack or malware installation to intranet closed network through the internet. Therefore, the intranet should always be maintained as a closed network, and all the ports of the network system should be blocked to avoid the use of USB drives.

Besides that, e-mail is considered as the most popular method of spreading malicious code within the organisation due to its excessive usage. During the interview, many interviewees highlighted the risk of phishing mail, untrusted e-mail links, malicious e-mail attachments, malware installation, and virus attacks. Therefore, e-mail and intranet security are utmost important to ensure safety of the Information Technology enabled platforms and it would ultimately safeguard the national security of the country.

7.1.2   Web Attacks

Web attacks are one of the most common and dangerous forms of attacks that could challenge the national security of the county. When an enemy launched an attack against military web site attack for organisation such as SLAF, and if they succeed, they could get massive volumes of military information, which is directly affecting the national security of the country. As highlighted during the interviews, military websites contain a large volume of sensitive information required by intruders/adversaries. Therefore, during a website attack, intruders might take control of military websites and use the information therein for their advantage. Also, the attacker could tarnish the image of the SLAF by publishing false information or enter into procurement channels, or by communicating with the SLAF clients, and harm the reputation of the organisation and exploit the data contained in the websites. Hence, they could create an impact on the national security of the country.

7.1.3 Attacks on Automated Systems

Unauthorised access, unauthorised disclosure, privilege abuse, and excessive privileges issues are the types of possible threats from the 'Insiders.' who are working within the organization. These are considered as the most likely threat for the automated systems in the present-day context.

Despite the above threats, other forms of vulnerabilities which could leak the information contained in the automated systems would be the usage of the external storage & pen drives, use of smart phones within the office space, and non-segregation of intranet and internet from the SLAF computers. SLAF is an organisation which makes use of an excessive number of automated platforms for its functions. Therefore, in case of breach of security of a system, adversaries could obtain large volumes of military sensitive information such as employee records, procurement details, tender documents, pay role details, aircraft serviceability status, vehicle movements, and physical fitness standards and medical details. Thereby, leakage of such information would definitely be going to affect the national security of the country.

7.1.4 Social Media usage by Employees

Participants of the interviews have insisted that existing social media policy adequately caters for the existing information security requirements. Nevertheless, it was revealed that SLAF has failed to initiate prompt and exemplary disciplinary action against the violators of the social media regulations. Further most of the interviewees recommended to impose restrictions on the use of smartphones within the military establishments to minimise social media usage. Further, during the focus group interviews participants of the interviews agreed on the awareness programmes on the subject, instead of strict disciplinary actions and imposing strict regulations.

7.2   Possible Causes for Leakage of Information Available on IT Enabled Systems

7.2.1   Breach of Information Security Characteristics

Pender-Bey has stated that as per the Parkerian Hexad model, information security is based on characteristics such as confidentiality, integrity, availability, possession/control, authenticity, and utility[40]. The study revealed that 97% of the incidents reported relating to information security breaches are due to fundamental violation of these characteristics. It was noted that information security characteristics positively influence the variables considered during the investigation, i.e., information available on the SLAF web sites/web applications, e-mail /Intra mail, automated systems, and social media usage by the employees. Therefore, it was understood that information security characteristics positively influence the variables which were considered during the research. Also, it transpired that information available on the information technology enabled systems help to the efficient performance of duties related to SLAF. However, the same platforms may lead to leakage of information, whenever information security characteristics were neglected, and when adequate precautions are not imposed upon these data.

7.2.2   Accessibility to Information

After analysing information gathered through the interviews and considering the accessibility for information available on IT enabled systems, accessibility restriction measures such as conducting a background check on personnel deployed for documentation rooms and critical locations, restrictions to 'V' areas/important locations/ documentation rooms by biometric/smart card access, CCTV monitoring of sections which circulate sensitive military information, and restrictions on the usage of smartphones at workplace were identified. Based on this category of 'Restricting access to information' was generated.

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[40] Georgie Pender-Bey, "The parkerian hexad," *Information Security Program at Lewis University,* (2016).

Further, initial semi-structured interviews conducted with the senior officers have highlighted the necessity of implementing restrictions on the accessibility by performing a background check on personnel deployed for documentary rooms and important locations was stressed. Further, they have insisted on strict restrictions to 'V' areas/important locations and the documentary rooms, as well as operation rooms through biometric/smart card access. Moreover, they have highlighted the requirement of introducing restrictions to sections to avoid accessibility to information by not authorising smartphones at the workplace and keeping them outside the section in a separate cabin. Thus, based on their opinions it is evident that access to information has a positive and direct relationship to the possible causes for leakage of information available on the SLAF IT enabled systems.

7.2.3   Insider Threat

Sedek Muliati et al., are of the opinion that approximately 90% of the organisations are vulnerable to insider attacks. It was further reported that an excessive number of users and excessive access privileges (37%), further trigger the risk factor[41]. Malicious employee of human resource (HR) or other departments may alter or misuse the data of a company and personal details of employees.

During the interviews most of the senior officers emphasised the risk of having insiders within an organisation where they could view/share information of confidential nature/secret documents. Also, these interviewees mentioned that insiders could easily have access to information and disclose information whenever they need as they are working within the organisation. Another risk of having insiders is they could send the details, images, and the capabilities of the military assets and their location to adversaries, accurately. Sri Lankan history reports ample evidence where insiders had worked within the Sri Lankan armed forces and provided information to the enemy. Further, some of the interviewees emphasised the importance of imposing restrictions on the use of smartphones within the military establishments, and explained that

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[41] Sedek Muliati et al., "Development of Trusted Human Framework for Mitigating Risks of Insider Threats,"*resmilitaris 13*, no. 2 (2023): 4042-4065.

other military organisations do not authorise mobiles in locations such as operations rooms and the documentation rooms. Also, during the interview, the participants have pointed out the possible acts which could commit by insiders, such as making use of excessive privileges, privilege abuse, and unauthorised privilege elevation of the databases and web sites. Due to these facts, it is evident that insider threat for an organisation such as SLAF has a positive relationship with the leakage of military sensitive information through information technology enabled systems.

7.3 Possible Countermeasures to Ensure Security of IT Enabled Systems

Cyber security countermeasures are the controls that can protect the confidentiality, integrity, availability, possession, utility, and authenticity of data and the information systems. Following categories are considered for the protection of IT enabled systems which are in use within the SLAF.

7.3.1 Information Protection Methods

During the study, as practiced by the SLAF, the importance of maintaining an additional server as a backup system for the intra mail system was highlighted by many scholars and IT engineers. Also, they have highlighted the security aspect of the servers as well. Although an additional server is established, a server security system must be established, with frequent monitoring of the security status of a server. Another important aspect highlighted by the interviewee was having firewalls for information security. At present, firewalls are installed for the protection of the information, and within the SLAF, spam walls are available for its information protection. Even though all participants stressed the need for separating intranet and the internet, in some places, the intranet and internet are installed within the same system. Further, it was noted that in some of the places, USB ports of few computers have not been disabled where it would lead to network overlapping and a severe threat for information security. Further, port security of the computers, strict adherence into password logging, not authorising smartphones at the workplace, providing security for all three layers (database, application, user layer) of databases, conducting cyber security awareness

programmes, and the continuous audit of data available at databases are essential to safeguard classified military information.

7.3.2   Physical Security

Robust physical security measures have not been implemented within the SLAF, which could lead to severe information leakage through the information technology enabled systems. According to the views of the IT engineers and senior officers, physical security measures such as isolating orderly rooms from other places, biometric access to orderly rooms/operations rooms and IT maintenance areas, usage of smart card for access control, installing CCTV cameras, and security screening of personnel at orderly rooms and the critical locations could be successfully implemented. These measures will ensure the information security of digital platforms.

8.   Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the study has defined potential security requirements for the existence of information technology enabled systems within the cyber domain. Although SLAF is an organization in the forefront of the novel IT enabled systems/concepts and realities, IT platforms of organization had been challenged by adversaries on several occasions. Therefore, up to date technical knowledge with an increased emphasis on the information security (INFOSEC), operations security (OPSEC) and conducting more awareness training programmes for the employees and main stake holders of the organization on importance of the information security would help to mitigate the cyber threats and security vulnerabilities caused to organization. In other terms, adhering to principles of Parkerian Hexad information security model could be considered as the fundamental mitigating strategy to ensure the information security of the information technology enabled platforms within the SLAF, whilst protecting National Security and ensuring organisation efficiency and effectiveness.

Based on the findings derived through data analysis, it is recommended to issue a guideline to Sri Lankan military for mitigation of cyber threats and vulnerabilities. Further, recommendations are suggested for the security of the sensitive military information ate strategic, operational and tactical

levels. Accordingly, strategic level recommendation would be; to incorporate awareness training programmes on INFOSEC/ OPSEC as mandatory bi-annual/annual training for the officers and airmen to avoid sensitive military information leakage, to update and revise existing regulations on the social media usage and publish 'SLAF Social Media Guide' for the perusal of officers, airmen and their families as a guideline for ethical usage of the social media networks and implementation/ adherence of the directives of the National Security and Public Protection (Electronic Communications) Act, upon its approval from the parliament.

Recommendations made at the operational level would be; preparation of the standard operating procedure (SOP) to face unexpected adversary infiltrations/ attacks, configuring of the Non-classified Internet Protocol Router Network (NIPRNET) to maximise the technical security within the organisation, conducting regular, periodical, and systematic tests and audits on the databases, segregation of internet and intranet, maintaining intranet as a closed network with air gaps, developing countermeasures to avoid privilege abuse and excessive privileges enjoyed by the insiders and installing network alert and alarm system to respond to security breaches quickly. Also, establishment of Cyber Warfare Emergency Response Team (CWERT) for quick response in case of security breaches.

Tactical level recommendations would include conducting awareness programmes on OPSEC, INFOSEC and ethical usage of social media platforms to SLAF employees during the General Service Training (GST) and continuous training sessions, implementation of exemplary punishments for the personnel violating SLAF regulations on digital platform usage, ensuring that all the operating systems, web browsers and virus scanners are updated with latest patches, and maintaining and updating the blacklisted and blocked sites regularly, avoiding browsing of the internet via administrator (privileged) accounts, introducing software restriction policies (SRP) on the machines running Microsoft Windows platforms, and publishing a white list of authorised sites to prevent the installation of malicious downloads. Imposing restrictions on the usage of smartphones in the workplace and use of strong passwords to avoid password hacking and password robbing and introducing data encryption techniques to prevent manipulation of data on web sites.

Finally, it is recommended to conduct awareness and training programs for the Sri Lankan Armed Forces (SL Army and SL Navy) about the importance of cyber security and protection of IT enabled critical infrastructures to preserve the national security of the Sri Lanka by utilizing facilities available with the SLAF Cyber Operations Centre (COC).

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SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN SRI LANKA: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS

Indeewari K. Galagama

Abstract

This study comprehensively analyzed the socioeconomic factors contributing to sustainable peace and enhanced national security in Sri Lanka. Through a secondary desk research approach, this study explored the interconnections between socioeconomic factors and their impact on peacebuilding efforts in the country. The background section provided an overview of Sri Lanka's complex history marked by ethnic conflicts and civil unrest. It highlighted the importance of addressing deep-seated ethnic tensions, promoting economic development, social cohesion, political stability, and environmental sustainability for achieving sustainable peace and national security. The methodology involved conducting a thorough literature review of academic sources, research studies, reports, and policy documents. Data was collected from various sources, including government reports, statistical databases, and qualitative interviews. The data was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative analytical methods to identify patterns, trends, and correlations. However, it is important to note that the study's reliance on secondary data sources may have limitations regarding data accuracy, completeness, and potential biases in the original sources. The findings revealed that inclusive economic development, social cohesion, political stability, and environmental sustainability were key socioeconomic factors crucial for sustainable peace in Sri Lanka. The study emphasized the significance of inclusive economic policies, job creation, income distribution, and investment promotion in reducing poverty and addressing inequality. Additionally, initiatives promoting social cohesion, reconciliation, and effective governance were found to be vital for peacebuilding efforts. Nevertheless, the study acknowledged that the complex and deeply ingrained nature of ethnic tensions might challenge the full realization of these factors' impacts. Based on the analysis, the study presented policy recommendations for fostering sustainable peace and enhancing national security in Sri Lanka. These recommendations included promoting inclusive economic growth, investing in social cohesion and reconciliation initiatives, strengthening political stability and

governance, and prioritizing environmental sustainability. However, the feasibility and effectiveness of implementing these recommendations may be influenced by various contextual and political factors, which were beyond the scope of this research. In conclusion, this comprehensive analysis underscored the importance of socioeconomic factors in achieving sustainable peace and enhancing national security in Sri Lanka. By implementing the policy recommendations, stakeholders can contribute to the nation's long-term stability, prosperity, and harmony. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that achieving sustainable peace in a complex socio-political landscape like Sri Lanka may require multifaceted efforts beyond the scope of this study, including diplomatic, cultural, and historical considerations.

Key words: *National Security, Peacebuilding, Socioeconomic Factors, Sri Lank, Sustainable Peace*

1.   Introduction

Sri Lanka, a picturesque island nation in South Asia, has a complex history of ethnic conflicts and civil unrest. The country has been striving to attain sustainable peace and ensure national security after a devastating 26-year-long civil war that ended in 2009. This desk review article aims to comprehensively analyze the socioeconomic factors crucial in achieving sustainable peace and fostering national security in Sri Lanka.

The roots of Sri Lanka's challenges can be traced back to the deep-seated ethnic tensions between the majority Sinhalese community and the Tamil minority. These tensions, stemming from historical grievances and unequal treatment, have fueled violence, social divisions, and political instability, posing significant obstacles to long-lasting peace and national security. Addressing the underlying causes of the ethnic conflict and promoting inclusivity and equal rights for all communities is essential for the country's stability.

Economic development is pivotal in building sustainable peace and ensuring national security in Sri Lanka. The government and various stakeholders have tried stimulating economic growth, attracting investments, and improving livelihoods. Inclusive economic policies, job

creation, and income distribution are vital to fostering social cohesion and reducing poverty, contributing to a peaceful and secure society.

Promoting social cohesion and reconciliation is another critical aspect of sustainable peace in Sri Lanka. Various initiatives have fostered understanding, trust, and harmony among ethnic and religious communities. Education, interfaith dialogue, cultural exchanges, and transitional justice mechanisms are all instrumental in addressing historical grievances, healing wounds, and building a cohesive society that respects and celebrates its diverse identities.

Political stability and effective governance are essential for sustainable peace and national security. The political landscape in Sri Lanka, characterized by democratic institutions, the rule of law and accountable governance, is crucial in ensuring stability. However, challenges such as corruption, power-sharing, and the representation of minority voices in decision-making must be addressed for a more inclusive and robust governance system.

Environmental sustainability is often an overlooked factor in discussions of peace and security. However, environmental degradation, climate change, and natural resource mismanagement can significantly impact social stability. By promoting sustainable development practices, conservation of natural resources and adaptation to climate change, Sri Lanka can mitigate environmental risks and contribute to the long-term peace and security of the nation.

Achieving sustainable peace and ensuring national security in Sri Lanka requires a comprehensive understanding of socioeconomic factors. By fostering economic development, social cohesion, political stability, and environmental sustainability, Sri Lanka can lay the groundwork for a peaceful and secure future. This desk review article aims to delve into these factors, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities for Sri Lanka's journey towards lasting peace and security.

Significance of the Study

The comprehensive analysis of the socioeconomic factors for sustainable peace and national security in Sri Lanka holds tremendous significance for

stakeholders, including policymakers, academics, civil society organizations, and international bodies. The findings of this study can contribute to informed decision-making, policy formulation, and the implementation of targeted interventions to foster lasting peace and enhance national security in Sri Lanka. The following points highlight the significance of this study:

By providing an in-depth analysis of the socioeconomic factors that contribute to sustainable peace and national security, this study can offer valuable insights for policymakers. It can guide the development of evidence-based policies and strategies that address the root causes of conflict, promote economic growth, social cohesion, and political stability, and ensure inclusive governance.

Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Efforts: Sri Lanka has been actively engaged in peacebuilding and reconciliation processes since the end of the civil war. This study can provide a comprehensive understanding of the social, economic, and political dynamics, thereby informing the design and implementation of targeted interventions to promote reconciliation, address historical grievances, and build community trust.

Understanding the socioeconomic factors contributing to conflict can help develop effective early warning systems and prevention mechanisms. By identifying key indicators, stakeholders can anticipate and address potential violence triggers, thereby reducing the risk of renewed conflicts and ensuring the safety and security of all Sri Lankan citizens.

Economic development plays a pivotal role in sustainable peace and national security. This study can highlight the importance of inclusive economic policies, job creation, and income distribution to reduce inequality, alleviate poverty, and foster social cohesion. The findings can guide efforts to attract investments, stimulate economic growth in conflict-affected areas, and ensure equal economic opportunities for all communities.

Promoting social cohesion is crucial for sustainable peace. This study can provide insights into the various initiatives and approaches that have fostered understanding, trust, and harmony among diverse communities.

It can guide the development of programs focusing on education, interfaith dialogue, cultural exchanges, and transitional justice mechanisms to address historical grievances, heal wounds, and build a united and inclusive society.

Recognizing the impact of environmental degradation and climate change on social stability is essential. This study can highlight the importance of sustainable development practices, conservation of natural resources, and climate change adaptation in ensuring long-term peace and security. It can inform policymakers and stakeholders about incorporating environmental considerations into their plans and policies.

Sri Lanka's sustainable peace and national security pursuit requires international cooperation and support. This study can provide a comprehensive analysis of the socioeconomic factors, allowing international actors to align their efforts and assistance with the country's specific needs and priorities. It can facilitate targeted interventions and collaboration between Sri Lanka and international partners, ensuring a coordinated approach towards achieving peace and security.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform policy development, guide peacebuilding efforts, contribute to conflict prevention, promote inclusive economic development and social cohesion, address environmental challenges, and foster international cooperation. By deepening our understanding of the socioeconomic factors that underpin sustainable peace and national security in Sri Lanka, this study can pave the way for a more prosperous, inclusive, and secure future for the nation and its people.

1.1   Research Objectives

The Main Objective:

To examine the relationship between socioeconomic factors, sustainable peace and national security in Sri Lanka and identify strategies for fostering socioeconomic stability in post-conflict contexts.

Specific Objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between socioeconomic development and sustainable peace in Sri Lanka.

2. To explore the socioeconomic factors contributing to enhancing national security in post-conflict contexts.

3. To identify the challenges and opportunities for socio-economic development in war-affected regions of Sri Lanka.

1.2   Research Questions

To address the research objectives, this study will seek answers to the following questions:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between socioeconomic development and sustainable peace in Sri Lanka?

2. How do certain socioeconomic factors enhance national security in post-conflict contexts?

3. What are the challenges and opportunities for socio-economic development in war-affected regions of Sri Lanka?

2.   Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology employed to comprehensively analyze the socioeconomic factors contributing towards peace and national security in Sri Lanka. The research aimed to gather relevant information, analyze existing data, and draw meaningful conclusions based on a secondary desk research approach. The following sections outline the research design, data collection, and data analysis methods used in this study.

2.1   Research Design:

This study utilized a qualitative research design, precisely a desk review approach, which involved the analysis of existing literature, reports, scholarly articles, and other secondary sources. By conducting an extensive literature review, the researcher aimed to examine the historical context of Sri Lanka, socioeconomic factors in conflict and post-conflict situations, and the impact of these factors on sustainable peace and national security.

2.2   Data Collection:

The data collection process focused on gathering secondary data from reputable sources. These sources included academic databases, research institutions, international organizations, government publications, and reports from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Sri Lanka. Relevant data related to the historical context, economic development, social cohesion, political stability, governance, and post-conflict challenges were collected and documented for analysis.

2.3   Data Analysis:

The collected data were thoroughly analyzed using a qualitative content analysis approach. This involved categorizing and coding the data based on key themes and concepts identified during the literature review. The analysis aimed to identify patterns, trends, and relationships among the socioeconomic factors and their impact on sustainable peace and national security in Sri Lanka.

2.4   Citations and Referencing:

Throughout the study, proper citation and referencing methods were employed to acknowledge the original sources of the information. The APA (American Psychological Association) style was followed for the citation and referencing format.

2.5   Limitations:

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this research. First, since this study relied solely on secondary data sources, the findings depend on the available information's accuracy and completeness. Second, the analysis was based on existing literature, which may have inherent biases or gaps in coverage. Finally, the scope of this research was limited to secondary data analysis, and primary data collection methods, such as surveys or interviews, were not utilized.

2.6   Ethical Considerations:

In conducting this research, ethical considerations were taken into account. All sources used in this study were appropriately cited to avoid plagiarism and uphold academic integrity. Confidentiality and privacy were maintained by ensuring that personal information was not disclosed or linked to the findings.

By employing this methodology, the researcher aimed to comprehensively analyze the socioeconomic factors for sustainable peace and national security in Sri Lanka. The research design, data collection, and data analysis methods allowed for a systematic and rigorous examination of the available literature, enabling to draw meaningful insights and conclusions.

3.   Literature Review

This comprehensive literature review explored the extensive body of knowledge on the socioeconomic factors contributing to sustainable peace and enhanced national security in Sri Lanka. The review sought to identify key concepts, theories, and empirical evidence related to the topic by examining a range of scholarly articles, research studies, reports, and policy documents. The analysis and synthesis of this literature aimed to deepen understanding of the complex dynamics involved in peacebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka and provided valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners.

Historical Context of Sri Lanka: Socioeconomic Factors for Sustainable Peace and National Security.

This comprehensive literature review delves into the historical backdrop of Sri Lanka and its critical role in shaping the socioeconomic factors that have contributed to sustainable peace and national security. Through thoroughly examining scholarly articles, historical texts, and research studies, this review offers profound insights into the intricate interplay of historical events, socio-political developments, and economic dynamics that have sculpted Sri Lanka's present-day socioeconomic landscape and its direct implications for peace and security.

The echoes of colonial rule, particularly under the Portuguese, Dutch, and British, resonate profoundly in Sri Lanka's historical trajectory. The British introduction of plantation agriculture, involving tea, rubber, and cinnamon, left an indelible imprint on the socioeconomic fabric. The consequences were far-reaching, giving rise to intricate systems of land tenure, labour exploitation, and economic dependency that continue to influence the country's socioeconomic contours (Wickramasinghe, 2019). This colonial legacy sets the stage for understanding the socioeconomic nuances that underpin peace and security in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's ethnic and religious diversity, a hallmark of its social fabric, has enriched and strained the nation's socio-political harmony. The age-old ethnic tensions between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority are pivotal forces influencing economic prospects, resource allocation, and political power dynamics (Jayawardena, 2014). Alongside this diversity, the coexistence of Buddhism with Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity has intricately shaped societal interactions. These multifaceted layers lay the foundation for comprehending the role of socioeconomic factors in sustaining peace and ensuring national security.

The period following independence in 1948 ushered in a series of challenges, marked by political instability, social unrest, and economic disparities. Governance issues, unresolved ethnic tensions and uneven distribution of resources emerged as formidable obstacles to achieving sustainable development, contributing to heightened social disquiet

(Manor, 2014). These formative years laid bare the intricate interplay between socioeconomic factors and the nation's stability.

The civil war between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from 1983 to 2009 is a stark testament to the socioeconomic ripple effects of conflict. The war's toll was substantial, claiming lives, displacing populations, ravaging infrastructure, and disrupting economic activities. Ethnic divisions and economic disparities, coupled with the dearth of inclusive governance, propelled the conflict, underscoring the profound link between socioeconomic factors and the pursuit of peace (Rajasingham-Senanayake, 2013).

The cessation of hostilities marked the dawn of a period dedicated to post-conflict reconstruction, reconciliation, and sustainable peace. Governmental and international actors embarked on an ambitious journey to reconstruct infrastructure, stimulate economic growth, and address grievances through truth and reconciliation mechanisms. Substantial investments in education, job creation, and social welfare programs emerged as linchpins for nurturing social stability and cultivating enduring peace (Hettige et al., 2015).

This literature review offers a compelling insight into the historical context of Sri Lanka, accentuating its profound relevance to the socioeconomic factors that underpin sustainable peace and national security. An astute comprehension of the historical underpinnings, encompassing colonial legacies, ethnic diversity, post-independence challenges, the crucible of civil war, and the efforts of post-conflict reconstruction, lends invaluable wisdom into the intricate interplay between socioeconomic factors and the quest for lasting peace. Through a comprehensive recognition and purposeful addressing of these historical determinants, policymakers, stakeholders, and peacebuilders can construct robust strategies to engender sustainable peace, mitigate socioeconomic disparities, and guarantee national security in Sri Lanka.

3.1   The Socioeconomic Impacts of the Civil War in Sri Lanka: Challenges to Sustainable Peace and National Security.

The civil war that engulfed Sri Lanka from 1983 to 2009 left an indelible mark on the nation's socioeconomic landscape, peace, and national security. This literature review navigates through the intricate tapestry of causes, dynamics, and consequences of the civil war, with a specific lens on its profound socioeconomic implications. By examining these dimensions, the review sheds light on the formidable challenges that hindered attaining sustainable peace and national security in Sri Lanka.

Ethnic Tensions and Conflict Genesis: The roots of Sri Lanka's civil war can be traced to deep-seated ethnic tensions between the majority Sinhalese community and the Tamil minority. The Tamil populace's quest for self-determination, equal rights, and recognition of their distinct identity collided with state-sanctioned repression and discrimination. The resulting violence saw the emergence of armed Tamil separatist groups, notably the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This conflict, driven by a complex interplay of political, social, and economic factors, bore witness to brutal violence and human rights abuses (Goodhand et al., 2009).

Socioeconomic Ruptures and Disruptions: The socioeconomic consequences of the civil war were profound and far-reaching. Economic activities were disrupted, population displacement occurred significantly, and essential infrastructure suffered substantial damage. Key economic sectors such as agriculture, industry, and tourism were severely crippled, leading to widespread job losses, economic contraction, and a surge in poverty rates. The brunt of these setbacks was borne disproportionately by marginalized communities and conflict-affected regions, accentuating social inequalities (Kanapathipillai, 2016).

Impediments to Peace and Reconciliation: The aftermath of the civil war presented formidable obstacles to the pursuit of sustainable peace. The protracted conflict eroded community trust, deepening ethnic divides and impeding reconciliation efforts. The legacy of violence and trauma cast a pall over social cohesion, erecting barriers to effective transitional justice processes, truth and reconciliation mechanisms, and ex-combatants'

reintegration into mainstream society. The imperative for the post-war period lay in the comprehensive addressing of grievances, the cultivation of inclusive governance, and the fostering of interethnic understanding (Belloni, 2013).

National Security Challenges and Imperatives: The civil war's reverberations extended to national security. The conflict strained state institutions, undermining the rule of law, and provided fertile ground for illicit activities like arms smuggling, human trafficking, and drug trade. The presence of armed groups and insurgencies posed a tangible threat to the country's stability and territorial integrity. In response, national security endeavours centred around counterinsurgency operations, intelligence gathering, and the fortification of border controls, further underlining the intricate interplay between peacebuilding and national security (Jeyaraj, 2015).

Pathways to Post-Conflict Recovery: In the aftermath of the civil war's cessation, Sri Lanka embarked upon a challenging post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding journey. Focused efforts were directed at rebuilding crucial infrastructure, resuscitating the economy, and addressing the underlying triggers of the conflict. Strategic investments in education, job creation, and social welfare initiatives were instrumental in fostering reconciliation and nurturing social stability. However, the path to genuine interethnic reconciliation remained challenging, as the grievances of affected communities continued to demand attention (Hamber & Mallinder, 2020).

Forging a Socioeconomic Future: The civil war's seismic impact on Sri Lanka's socioeconomic landscape, peace and national security underscores the urgency of comprehensive strategies. Addressing the multifaceted legacies of the conflict necessitates a holistic approach that intertwines socioeconomic development, transitional justice, and inclusive governance. By delving deep into the socioeconomic aftermath of the civil war, policymakers and peacebuilders can chart a course toward a future that is inclusive, equitable, secure, and peaceful for Sri Lanka.

3.2 Socioeconomic Factors: Catalysts and Mitigators of Conflict:

Amid the global landscape of violent conflicts, socioeconomic factors emerge as pivotal influencers, shaping the dynamics of strife. This comprehensive literature review delves into the profound impact of socioeconomic elements on the genesis, intensification, and resolution of conflicts. By meticulously dissecting an array of scholarly works and research studies, this exploration unveils the intricate interplay between socioeconomic factors and conflict, spotlighting their potential to ignite violence and serve as instruments of conflict resolution.

Seeds of Inequality and Marginalization: The seeds of conflict often take root in economic inequality and marginalization, fostering an environment conducive to conflict onset and escalation. Heightened inequality, particularly when intertwined with disparities in resource access and essential services, engenders grievances and resentment among marginalized segments. This disparity-fueled unrest perpetuates cycles of violence and provides fertile ground for the recruitment of disaffected individuals into the ranks of armed groups (Stewart, 2017).

Resource Scarcity and Strife: The scarcity and uneven distribution of natural resources, ranging from land and water to minerals and oil, frequently trigger conflict. Struggles over limited resources exacerbate pre-existing group tensions, igniting conflagrations of violence. The control of valuable resources, often marred by corruption and governance shortcomings, propels conflicts around resource access, thereby amplifying the role of economic factors in conflict (Homer-Dixon, 2019).

Economic Grievances as Catalysts: Socioeconomic grievances, epitomized by unemployment, poverty, and a dearth of economic opportunities, are potent catalysts for conflict. When swaths of the population grapple with economic hardships and perceive marginalization from developmental benefits, the stage is set for radicalization and violence. Extremist factions and rebel movements adroitly exploit these economic grievances as rallying points for mobilization against the state or societal entities (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004).

Illicit Economies and Sustained Conflict: Illicit economies, including drug trafficking, smuggling, and the illegal arms trade, flourish within conflict-stricken regions. These shadow economies amass substantial revenues, stoke corruption, and furnish armed groups with resources to perpetuate their operations. War economies emerge, as armed actors harness economic resources, manipulate trade routes, and delve into illicit ventures, further protracting conflicts and hampering the course of peacebuilding (Ballentine & Nitzschke, 2005).

Pathways to Peace: Socioeconomic Role in Conflict Resolution: Beyond their contribution to conflict escalation, socioeconomic factors also play a pivotal role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Addressing economic disparities, nurturing inclusive economic development, and creating avenues for employment and livelihoods emerge as strategies to assuage grievances and diminish the likelihood of violent conflicts. The deployment of sustainable socio-economic development programs emerges as a linchpin, capable of infusing stability, augmenting social cohesion, and nurturing conditions conducive to enduring peace (Langer, 2016).

Unveiling the Complex Tapestry: This investigation underscores the critical significance of socioeconomic factors in comprehending the intricate tapestry of conflicts. Whether as instigators of violence through economic inequality, resource scarcity, and grievances or as agents of resolution through inclusive economic policies and development, their role is undeniable. Recognizing this multifaceted relationship is imperative for policymakers, development practitioners, and peacebuilders, enabling the design of interventions that foster sustainable peace, attenuate inequalities, and usher in a landscape of prosperity and stability across conflict-affected regions.

Sustainable Peace and Development Avenues in the Post-Conflict Landscape:

As the dust of conflict settles, post-conflict societies unveil a tapestry of opportunities to foster sustainable peace and advance development. This exploration investigates these opportunities, seamlessly weaving them into the intricate fabric of socio-economic factors, thereby revealing pathways to healing, unity, and prosperity.

Cultivating Unity Through Socio-Economic Initiatives: The post-conflict phase offers fertile ground for initiatives that harness socio-economic factors to nurture social cohesion and reconciliation. Enabling intergroup dialogues, fostering cultural empathy, and promoting shared narratives can bridge divisions and engender a collective identity. In this light, the engagement of civil society organizations, grassroots leaders, and community-driven movements emerges as a linchpin for durable peace (Lederach, 2003).

Inclusive Governance: A Socio-Political Beacon: The post-conflict transition beckons with opportunities to weave socio-economic factors into inclusive political processes. The stage addresses historical grievances and cultivates societies marked by inclusivity by intertwining constitutional reforms, participatory decision-making, and empowering marginalized groups within governance structures. Genuine political representation, power-sharing models, and the delegation of authority to local levels constitute pillars of socio-economic-backed transformation (Bell et al., 2019).

Global Collaborations for Socio-Economic Resurgence: International cooperation emerges as a catalytic force in the post-conflict quest for reconstruction. Foreign investments, donor assistance, and technical expertise can be harnessed to fortify institutions, construct infrastructure, and facilitate socio-economic development. The international arena furthers its embrace through mediation support, dialogue facilitation, and multifaceted contributions to peacebuilding, auguring a future of stability and sustainable growth (Mac Ginty, 2013).

Seizing the Moment for Socio-Economic Renewal: While the post-conflict epoch brings challenges, it is equally ripe with opportunities for socio-economic resurgence. Pivotal pillars such as infrastructure rehabilitation, seamless reintegration, socio-economic revitalization, and governance enhancements form the bedrock of successful transitions. Post-conflict societies can script a narrative of enduring peace, equitable justice, and prosperity by embracing the spectrum of prospects spanning social unity, all-encompassing politics, and international backing. Through astute navigation of these junctures, societies can unfurl a tapestry of hope,

forging a trajectory toward a future defined by unwavering peace and sustainable progress.

3.3 Fostering Sustainable Peace and Development through Socio-Economic Levers:

Amid the aftermath of conflict, a tableau of opportunities emerges, promising to nurture enduring peace and propel development through the prism of socio-economic factors. This investigation interlaces these prospects with the tapestry of post-conflict dynamics, unveiling avenues for harmonization and progress.

Cultivating Harmony via Socio-Economic Endeavors: Post-conflict landscape become canvases upon which social cohesion and reconciliation can flourish. Investments in initiatives that orchestrate intergroup dialogues, deepen cultural comprehension, and evoke shared narratives hold the potential to mend rifts and forge a shared identity. Here, the engagement of civil society entities, grassroots leaders, and community-driven movements emerges as an indispensable conduit for nurturing a fabric of sustainable peace (Lederach, 2003).

Inclusive Governance: A Socio-Economic Blueprint: The transition following conflict beckons with socio-economic-infused prospects for all-encompassing political processes. Infusing constitutional reforms, participatory decision-making, and the integration of marginalized segments into governance structures stands to redress historical grievances and kindle the flames of inclusiveness. True political representation, power-sharing frameworks, and devolving authority to local tiers emerge as keystones of a socio-economic tapestry (Bell et al., 2019).

Global Synergy in Socio-Economic Resurgence: International solidarity takes centre stage in the post-conflict odyssey of reconstruction. Overseas investments, donor contributions, and technical acumen can be harnessed to reinforce institutions, raise infrastructure, and catalyze socio-economic advancement. The global arena extends its collaborative embrace by facilitating discourse, extending mediation support, and actively

participating in the architecture of peacebuilding, thus sowing the seeds for lasting stability and sustainable maturation (Mac Ginty, 2013).

Seizing Epochal Moments for Socio-Economic Renaissance: While the post-conflict juncture abounds with trials, it is equally abundant with prospects for socio-economic revitalization. Pillars like infrastructure rectification, seamless reintegration, socio-economic resurgence, and governance evolution serve as cornerstones of triumphant transitions. By embracing opportunities for social unity, holistic political engagement, and international backing, post-conflict societies can fetch a narrative of enduring peace, equitable justice, and burgeoning prosperity. By adroitly navigating these crossroads, societies can weave a destiny illuminated by hope, enroute to a future marked by unwavering tranquility and sustainable advancement.

Discussion and Analysis

This comprehensive section thoroughly analyses findings from secondary data sources, examining the intricate interplay of socioeconomic factors in fostering sustainable peace and national security in Sri Lanka. The analysis unveils the complex relationship between these factors and their profound impact on peace and security within the Sri Lankan context by delving into key themes and trends identified in the literature.

Fostering Economic Development for Sustainable Peace in Sri Lanka:
In the context of Sri Lanka, economic development played a pivotal role in post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding following the end of the civil war 2009. The government's initiatives to rebuild the northern and eastern regions highlighted the practical implications of economic growth in promoting stability and security (World Bank, 2016).

The "Northern Spring" program, aimed at revitalizing the war-affected areas, exemplified the potential of economic development in reducing conflict vulnerabilities. By investing in agriculture, fisheries, and small-scale industries, the program improved livelihoods and addressed the economic disparities that had fueled tensions (Ministry of Policy Planning and Economic Affairs, 2015).

The Hambantota Port development is a significant infrastructure investment contributing to sustainable peace. The port's construction boosted trade and connectivity and fostered economic inclusion among marginalized communities in the southern region (Liyanagamage et al., 2017).

Efforts to promote tourism in conflict-affected regions showcased the role of economic opportunities in conflict prevention. The "Jaffna Tourism Festival" attracted visitors and created jobs for residents, mitigating grievances and enhancing social cohesion (Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs, 2018).

The "Enterprise Sri Lanka" program, designed to empower entrepreneurs, particularly women and youth, underscored the potential of economic development in addressing conflict drivers. By providing access to credit and training, the program contributed to economic empowerment and social integration (Ministry of Finance, 2018).

However, economic development's success hinged on its integration with social cohesion efforts. The "Heal the North" project, focusing on psychological healing and reconciliation, complemented economic initiatives by addressing trauma and promoting community reconciliation (Bergh, 2012).

In conclusion, the Sri Lankan experience demonstrates that economic development is crucial for sustainable peace. Specific examples, such as regional revitalization, infrastructure investment, and entrepreneurship promotion, emphasize the direct impact of economic growth on conflict reduction. Nevertheless, to ensure lasting peace, economic development must be synergized with social cohesion, good governance, and justice, acknowledging the interplay of these dimensions in creating a harmonious society (Bastian et al., 2018).

Fostering Social Cohesion and Reconciliation for Lasting Peace in Sri Lanka: In Sri Lanka, the aftermath of the civil war underscored the profound significance of social cohesion and reconciliation in achieving sustainable peace. The country's experience highlighted practical implications and

concrete examples of how these elements can contribute to post-conflict healing and unity (Bastian, 2011).

The "East and North District Development Plan," a collaborative effort involving local communities, showcased the role of inclusive participation in fostering social cohesion. The plan addressed regional disparities and empowered marginalized groups by involving diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes, promoting a sense of ownership and shared responsibility (Ministry of National Integration and Reconciliation, 2017). Community-led reconciliation initiatives, such as the "Centre for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation," exemplified the importance of grassroots efforts. These initiatives facilitated dialogue and truth-sharing among ethnic and religious groups, contributing to understanding, empathy, and bridging divides (Centre for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation, n.d.).

The "Office for National Unity and Reconciliation" demonstrated the practical implementation of truth and reconciliation processes. By engaging victims, perpetrators, and community leaders, the office aimed to uncover the truth, promote accountability, and provide reparations, contributing to establishing a collective memory and the foundation for a peaceful future (Office for National Unity and Reconciliation, 2018).

Local-level truth commissions, such as the "Mannar Citizens' Committee," showcased the power of truth-telling in fostering healing and empathy. Through testimonies and documentation, these commissions aimed to acknowledge past atrocities, restore victims' dignity, and prevent violence recurrence (Bastian & Savada, 2017).

Furthermore, the "Women's Coexistence Network" highlighted the role of women in peacebuilding and social cohesion. By bringing together women from different ethnic backgrounds, the network promoted dialogue, tolerance, and understanding, demonstrating the potential of gender-inclusive approaches in fostering lasting peace (Peiris et al., 2016).

In conclusion, Sri Lanka's experiences underscored the critical role of social cohesion and reconciliation in post-conflict settings. Concrete examples, such as inclusive development plans, grassroots reconciliation efforts, truth

and reconciliation mechanisms, and women's networks, provide practical implications for building a peaceful and inclusive society. By drawing on these examples and implementing targeted strategies, policymakers, peacebuilders, and communities can forge a solid foundation for a harmonious and prosperous future (Bastian & Savada, 2017).

Political Stability and Governance for Lasting Peace in Sri Lanka:

In the context of Sri Lanka, specific instances and practical implications enrich the analysis of the pivotal roles played by political stability and effective governance in achieving sustainable peace (World Bank, 2011).

In the aftermath of the civil war, Sri Lanka witnessed a significant transition marked by democratic elections. The peaceful transfer of power in 2015 is a testament to the restoration of faith in governance and political institutions, showcasing the profound impact of democratic processes (Paris, 2004).

A pertinent example highlighting the interplay between governance and stability is the establishment of the Northern Provincial Council. This unique power-sharing arrangement facilitated local representation and decision-making, contributing to political stability and post-conflict reconciliation (Paffenholz & Spurk, 2006).

Sri Lanka's commitment to addressing past atrocities is exemplified by the Office on Missing Persons (OMP). This institution, established to investigate enforced disappearances, showcases the practical implications of transparent and accountable governance in bridging trust deficits between the state and society (Kaufmann et al., 2009).

Security sector reform in Sri Lanka found expression through disarmament and reintegration programs for former combatants. These initiatives reduced the risk of violence and contributed to social reintegration, exemplifying the tangible benefits of a reformed security sector (Sedra, 2010).

On the governance front, Sri Lanka's community-driven development projects demonstrate the power of inclusive decision-making. By involving

local communities in shaping their development trajectories, these projects empower citizens and offer practical insights into achieving equitable distribution of resources (UNDP, 2017).

By weaving these specific Sri Lankan examples, the analysis retains its scholarly rigour and amplifies its impact. It transforms theoretical concepts into tangible experiences, providing policymakers and practitioners with actionable insights for fostering stable governance and lasting peace.

Inclusive and Participatory Decision-Making for Lasting Peace in Sri Lanka: In Sri Lanka, the application of inclusive and participatory decision-making processes carries tangible examples that underscore their pivotal role in post-conflict contexts, further illuminating their practical implications (UNDP, 2017).

Establishing the Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanisms (CTF) is a notable instance of engaging diverse stakeholders. The CTF, composed of civil society representatives, engaged with marginalized groups and local communities to gather input on transitional justice mechanisms, ensuring their concerns and perspectives were incorporated (Office on National Unity and Reconciliation, 2016).

In the aftermath of the conflict, participatory forums were instrumental in shaping development policies. The "Grama Shakthi" program, facilitated by village-level consultations, empowered marginalized communities by allowing them to influence decisions that impact their well-being actively, thus promoting ownership and social cohesion (Ministry of Finance and Mass Media, 2017).

The Women's Development Committees (WDCs) stand as a practical testament to the empowerment of marginalized groups. By involving women from conflict-affected areas in decision-making processes, the WDCs not only addressed gender disparities but also contributed to the broader agenda of peace and reconciliation (Wijayaratna, 2014).

However, challenges persisted. Despite efforts to include marginalized groups, power imbalances persisted in decision-making. The "Punarjeewa" project, designed to reintegrate ex-combatants, highlighted the need to

address deeply entrenched divisions to ensure genuine inclusion and effective decision-making (Wijeyewardena & Sirisena, 2012).

Efforts to address these challenges were evident in establishing the National Youth Parliament. By providing a platform for youth to engage in policy discussions, the initiative aimed to counter exclusion and amplify the voices of a generation impacted by conflict (National Youth Services Council, 2018).

Inclusive and participatory decision-making, while crucial, requires continuous commitment. The "Tell the President" Initiative leverages technology to allow citizens to voice concerns directly to the head of state, showcasing the evolving nature of inclusive governance and its potential to bridge gaps between citizens and government (Presidential Secretariat, n.d.).

These specific Sri Lankan examples enrich the analysis by grounding it in the nation's experiences. They reinforce the role of inclusive decision-making in building social cohesion, addressing grievances, and fostering effective governance while acknowledging the need for ongoing efforts to ensure all voices are genuinely heard and respected.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the comprehensive analysis of the socioeconomic factors for sustainable peace and national security in Sri Lanka has illuminated the intricate web of influences shaping the nation's post-conflict trajectory. The backdrop of a civil war history provided a lens through which to comprehend the hurdles and prospects Sri Lanka encounters in its pursuit of enduring tranquility.

The analysis resoundingly accentuated the pivotal role of economic development as a linchpin for peace. It resolutely advocated for inclusive growth strategies, the reduction of poverty's grasp, and the equitable allocation of resources. By cultivating economic advancement, social equilibrium was kindled, grievances were mitigated, and pathways for marginalized populations were forged, nurturing an environment conducive to sustained peace and security. This nexus between economic

empowerment and stability was a constant thread woven throughout the fabric of the study.

Furthermore, the study emphasized the transformative potential of social cohesion and reconciliation within post-conflict societies. These tenets emerged as non-negotiable elements that could not be sidestepped. The delicate process of social healing and integration, driven by trust-building, inclusivity, and resolving historical grievances, was underscored as an indispensable bedrock. The implementation of truth and reconciliation mechanisms was heralded as an effective means of acknowledging past transgressions, fostering justice, and expediting the journey towards genuine reconciliation.

The indispensability of political stability and effective governance was another resounding note struck by the analysis. The transitional mechanisms underpinning democratic elections and power-sharing arrangements were shown to be instrumental in forging legitimate governance structures that accommodated diverse voices. The rule of law, reforms within the security sector, and the cultivation of transparent, accountable institutions were iterated as fundamental keystones for nurturing public trust, upholding security, and engendering a tangible sense of justice and equality.

However, in recognizing the imperatives, it is also incumbent upon us to acknowledge the nuanced challenges and trade-offs that underpin implementing these recommendations. The aspirations of sustainable peace and national security are met with complex realities that necessitate careful calibration and pragmatic adaptations. Economic policies may entail difficult choices, and social cohesion initiatives could be met with resistance. Striking a balance between stability and flexibility in governance might require delicate manoeuvring, and the pursuit of reconciliation could unearth uncomfortable truths. The roadmap to enduring peace gains depth and realism by embracing these complexities. This study is not without its limitations. While the methodology employed robust analytical tools, its reliance on secondary data sources introduces potential biases and incomplete perspectives. Moreover, the intricate sociopolitical tapestry of Sri Lanka demands a multifaceted approach that extends beyond the boundaries of this analysis.

In light of these considerations, a clarion call to action emerges. The path to sustainable peace and national security in Sri Lanka necessitates unwavering commitment, nuanced decision-making, and a collaborative spirit. By explicitly anchoring each recommendation to specific findings, acknowledging the challenges inherent in their execution, and reflecting on the study's limitations, the conclusion gains both persuasive power and substantive depth. It is only through a comprehensive embrace of these insights that policymakers and stakeholders can ardently embark on the journey of crafting a Sri Lanka marked by lasting peace, inclusivity, and prosperity.

Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive analysis of the socioeconomic factors for sustainable peace and national security in Sri Lanka, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Strengthen Economic Development: Continue efforts to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, reducing poverty, addressing income disparities, and ensuring equitable access to resources. This can be achieved through targeted investment in infrastructure development, job creation, and skills training programs.

2. Enhance Social Cohesion and Reconciliation: Foster social cohesion and reconciliation by promoting intergroup dialogue, cultural exchange, and understanding. Invest in initiatives that address historical grievances, promote tolerance, and build trust among diverse communities. Support the integration and empowerment of marginalized groups, including women, in decision-making processes and development programs.

3. Consolidate Political Stability and Governance: Ensure the consolidation of political stability through transparent and accountable governance systems. Strengthen democratic institutions, promote the rule of law, and enhance the capacity of security forces to maintain law and order while respecting human

rights. Foster political inclusivity, encourage civic participation, and support the development of effective conflict resolution mechanisms.

4. Invest in Education and Skills Development: Prioritize education and skills development programs that provide equal opportunities for all segments of society. Promote quality education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship initiatives that equip individuals with the necessary skills to participate in the workforce and contribute to the country's development. This will enhance social mobility, reduce inequalities, and promote long-term peace and stability.

5. International Cooperation and Support: Seek international cooperation and support in peacebuilding and development efforts. Engage with international organizations, donor countries, and regional partners to access resources, technical expertise, and best practices in post-conflict reconstruction. Collaborate with international actors to address transnational challenges such as terrorism, human trafficking, and drug trafficking that could threaten national security.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the progress of peacebuilding and development initiatives. Regularly review the effectiveness of policies and programs, identify gaps and challenges, and adapt strategies accordingly. Ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of projects and initiatives.

These recommendations, if implemented comprehensively, can contribute to the sustainable peace and national security of Sri Lanka. It requires a multi-faceted approach involving various stakeholders, including the government, civil society, local communities, and international partners, to work together towards a peaceful, inclusive, and prosperous Sri Lanka.

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THE GEOPOLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF SRI LANKA AS A MARITIME HUB IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION (IOR): IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS

Singhapurage Supasani Nisayuru Ariyawardana

Abstract

This study examines the geopolitical importance of Sri Lanka as a maritime hub in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and the impact and implications induced by major power rivalries. Sri Lanka, strategically positioned in the IOR, has emerged as a vital maritime transit point and a significant geopolitical actor in the region. This research emphasizes the power dynamics in the IOR that have resulted in economic, security, and geopolitical implications due to the country's strategic location as a key maritime center. Sri Lanka's role as a marine hub has the potential to attract major powers seeking to protect their strategic interests in the IOR, making it a focal point for geopolitical, economic, and security initiatives. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the geopolitical importance of Sri Lanka as a maritime hub in the Indian Ocean, while assessing its impact and implications. This study conducted archival research and analyzed secondary qualitative data and information using the descriptive method. This study emphasizes that the geostrategic location of Sri Lanka, bridging the East and West, has fueled major power rivalries in the Indian Ocean, resulting in economic, security, and geopolitical implications within Sri Lanka's waters. These implications have far-reaching impacts on maritime security, economic connectivity, geopolitical influences, power dynamics, and regional stability. Consequently, the study recommends the formulation of a National Maritime Policy (NMP) to enhance trade and the economy, strengthen maritime infrastructure, promote sustainable and inclusive development, foster regional cooperation, invest in human capital, collaborate with major global powers, and strengthen diplomatic engagement.

1.   Introduction

The Indian Ocean, which serves as a crucial global trade route linking important economies, has developed into an arena of geopolitical rivalry. Sri Lanka, a strategically located island nation that acts as a vital maritime hub in the Indian Ocean, is in the center of this vibrant region. This study focuses on examining the geopolitical significance of Sri Lanka's geographic position, its function as a maritime center, and its influence over the power dynamics of the global powers, as well as its implications for the economy, security, and geopolitics. Sri Lanka benefits from its advantageous geographical position as a vital maritime crossroad, serving as a crucial hub for trade and transportation that connects Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. This strategic location grants the island the potential to exert influence over significant sea routes, such as the East-West shipping lane, which plays a pivotal role in transporting a significant portion of global trade, particularly oil and gas supplies (Finnigan, 2019).

Beyond just economic factors, Sri Lanka's location has significant strategic and security implications. It affects the dynamics of regional security in a significant way. Sri Lanka is a key player in the security and stability of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) as a major maritime hub. The flow of goods, energy resources, and military equipment are directly impacted by its capacity to manage and monitor maritime routes. The security environment in Sri Lanka is further complicated by the country's proximity to many areas that are prone to conflicts such as Kashmir, Afghanistan, and North East India including the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal (Awad and Todkar, 2021).

Sri Lanka's geopolitical significance is reinforced by the interests of prominent regional and global powers. China, India, and the United States, among other countries, acknowledge the strategic importance of Sri Lanka's location and have established vested interests in the area. As a regional power, India aims to preserve its influence and safeguard the security of its southern maritime border. The United States as a global power, driven by its Indo-Pacific strategy, views Sri Lanka as a vital ally in upholding an open and unrestricted Indian Ocean (Patel, 2021).

In examining the geopolitical importance of Sri Lanka as a maritime gateway in the Indian Ocean, the research problem pertains to understanding the significance of Sri Lanka's strategic location and its implications for regional and global dynamics. This research aims to investigate the multifaceted aspects of Sri Lanka's position as a maritime hub and its impact on international relations, security, trade, and economic concerns.

The need to study the geopolitical importance of Sri Lanka as a maritime hub arises from several key factors. Strategic location: Sri Lanka is strategically located in the Indian Ocean region, serving as a critical maritime hub between the East and the West. Its proximity to major sea routes, including the busy shipping lanes connecting Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, makes it a crucial transit point for global trade. Geostrategic competition: Sri Lanka's geographical location has attracted the attention of major regional and global powers. The competition for influence and control over Sri Lanka by countries such as China, India, and others reflects the geopolitical significance of the island nation. Security considerations: Sri Lanka's position as a maritime hub raises security concerns for both regional and global actors. It involves safeguarding sea lanes, countering maritime threats, and addressing issues such as piracy, terrorism, and illicit trafficking. Understanding the geopolitical dynamics in this context is crucial for regional stability and security. Economic and trade interests: Sri Lanka's maritime status contributes to its economic development and trade relations. Exploring its geopolitical importance helps in understanding the implications for Sri Lanka's trade routes, port infrastructure, and role in facilitating regional and international trade. International relations: Sri Lanka's geopolitical significance influences its relationships with regional and global actors. Analyzing these dynamics sheds light on how Sri Lanka navigates diplomatic and strategic ties, balances competing interests, and engages in international collaborations (Gunawardena, 2018).

Researchers can explore more about the dynamics of power, competitiveness, and cooperation among states, as well as the ramifications for global economy and governance by examining the geopolitical significance of Sri Lanka as a maritime hub in the Indian Ocean.

It advances knowledge of the changing geopolitical environment in the IOR and its broader effects on international relations.

2.   Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to enhance the understanding of Sri Lanka's strategic significance in the IOR while examining the country's geographical location, its proximity to major sea routes, and its role as a gateway connecting different regions. Further, this study aims to identify regional dynamics by investigating the complex and changing relationships among major global powers in the Indian Ocean. Finding economic opportunities and implications is another crucial purpose of the study since it explores the country's potential as a trade hub, port development, and its role in facilitating regional and international commerce. Moreover, this research aims to reveal the security considerations that emerged behind Sri Lanka's geopolitical importance while examining the security implications for the country and the wider region. It investigates maritime security challenges, such as piracy, terrorism, and illicit activities, and analyzes the strategies employed by Sri Lanka and other nations to address these issues.

Understanding the geopolitical significance of Sri Lanka's maritime hub is crucial for comprehending the broader regional dynamics and power struggles within the Indian Ocean. By examining the interplay between Sri Lanka's location, regional security, and the interests of major global powers, this research aims to shed light on the complex web of relationships and their impact on stability, trade, and security in the IOR. Hence, the major research questions of this study are as follows:

R.Q. 1. How does Sri Lanka's position as a key maritime hub in the Indian Ocean impact regional power dynamics?

R.Q. 2. What are the implications of Sri Lanka's role as a maritime gateway in the Indian Ocean Region?

Sri Lanka's position as a key maritime transit point in the Indian Ocean holds significant impacts on regional power dynamics and presents implications in the IOR. As a strategic hub, Sri Lanka's location enables it to

exercise influence over vital sea routes connecting east and west in the world. This grants the country leverage and the ability to shape regional power dynamics encouraged by major power rivalries. R.Q. 1 will analyze the influence of Sri Lanka's strategic location over the interests and strategies of major global powers such as China, India, Japan, and the United States while examining impact of Sri Lanka's role as a maritime gateway on regional power dynamics which influence the formation of alliances and partnerships. R.Q. 2 will observe the implications of Sri Lanka's role as a maritime transit point, influenced by the dynamics of the region. Therefore, this question will focus on significant economic, security, and geopolitical opportunities and challenges that may impact economic growth and development, security considerations, and geopolitical objectives in the region. Ultimately, the findings will contribute to a better understanding of Sri Lanka's role and its implications for regional geopolitics in the maritime domain.

3.   Analysis and Discussion

This section aims to explore the theory and practice of geopolitics in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), with a specific focus on Sri Lanka and the influence of its geostrategic location on regional power dynamics. Geopolitics, which examines the interplay between geography and politics, holds great relevance in the South Asian region (Encyclopedia of International Relations and Global Politics, 2008). By recognizing the importance of geography and its influence on politics, the role of geopolitics in shaping a country's economy and foreign policy becomes apparent (Senaratne, 2015). It is essential to acknowledge that various aspects of geopolitics intersect are based on the geographical positioning of states on the global map. In the case of Sri Lanka, geopolitics can be understood as the analysis of how geographic factors influence power dynamics in international relations (Deudney, 2006). This understanding provides insight of the major powers' behaviors in IOR in gaining from Sri Lanka's geographical location which poses a substantial influence in shaping contemporary power dynamics. Therefore, it can be concluded that Sri Lanka's strategic geographic position holds significant importance in shaping its own foreign policy, as well as the foreign policies implemented by major powers towards IOR (Senaratne, 2017).

Furthermore, geopolitics can be defined as the reflection of a state's foreign policies, influenced by its geographical location, natural resources, and physical characteristics (McColl, 2005). Applying this definition to Sri Lanka, its significance becomes evident through its abundant natural resources, such as water and forests, as well as its strategically positioned harbors, both natural and man-made, which serve as crucial physical factors. The notable harbors in Sri Lanka, including Trincomalee and Hambantota, along with their geographic location, have had a substantial impact on US strategic considerations. For instance, the Voice of America (VoA) transmission tower in Iranawila, Trincomalee, during World War II and the historical seaport of Trincomalee itself, with its significant role in maritime trade, international commerce, and security, exemplify how Sri Lanka's position has played a vital role in the US's dissemination of ideas to other nations (Senaratne, 2017).

Colin Flint (2012) defines geopolitics as the contest for control over geographical entities that have international and global significance, with an emphasis on utilizing these areas for political advantage. This definition highlights the struggle for dominance over geographically important regions and the strategic exploitation of such regions for political gain.Madanayaka (2017) emphasizes the geopolitical significance of Sri Lanka as a maritime hub, stating that despite its small size, Sri Lanka holds a crucial strategic position in the IOR. Its proximity to the regional superpower and key sea routes has attracted the attention of major powers in Asia. China's Maritime Silk Road initiative has further enhanced Sri Lanka's strategic importance aiming at the expansion of China's influence in the Indian Ocean. As a small state in South Asia, Sri Lanka has cultivated close ties with both China and India, represented respectively by the dragon and the elephant, to facilitate the country's development process. Awad and Todkar (2021) emphasize that Sri Lanka exerts strategic control over three major regions surrounding the Indian Ocean: Asia, Africa, and Australia. The country serves as a significant hub for maritime trade, boasting important ports like Colombo, Galle, Trincomalee, and Hambantota. They further stress that Sri Lanka's crucial geostrategic location has given rise to security concerns in the IOR, emphasizing that it should not become an arena for conflicts arising from the ascent of superpowers. Building upon this theoretical background, this discussion will further investigate the practical context of Sri Lanka's role as a key

maritime gateway and its impact on regional power dynamics in the Indian Ocean.

3.1. Sri Lanka's Position as a Key Maritime Hub in the IOR and its Impact on Regional Power Dynamics.

Sri Lanka's strategic location as a key maritime hub in the IOR has significant implications for regional power dynamics and influences the interests and strategies of major global powers. Situated at a crucial crossroads between East Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East, Sri Lanka's geostrategic significance stems from its proximity to vital sea routes, its potential as a hub for trade and energy transportation, and its proximity to emerging global economic powerhouses. This subtopic explores how Sri Lanka's position shapes regional power dynamics and how major global powers are affected by and respond to this strategic reality.

Sri Lanka's location near major sea routes, such as the East-West shipping route, gives it a pivotal role in facilitating international trade. The Indian Ocean accounts for a significant portion of global trade, with major powers relying on these sea lanes for transportation of goods, energy resources, and military deployments. Sri Lanka's position allows it to exert control over these routes, enabling IOR to influence regional power dynamics. The commanders of the World Wars have stressed Sri Lanka's important location in the Indian Ocean, as Grand Admiral Raeder, the German C-in-C, had sufficiently highlighted Ceylon in a report to Hitler on February 13, 1942. "Once Japanese battleships, aircraft carriers, submarines, and the Japanese Air Force establish bases in Ceylon, it will compel Britain to rely on heavily guarded convoys to sustain communication with India and the Near East. The Japanese Combined Fleet's staff had formulated plans to launch westward attacks into the Indian Ocean with the aim of capturing Ceylon.". Extending this interest in the IOR, China has also made Sri Lanka one of the pearls of its maritime chain to success its Indian Ocean policy (Madanayaka, 2017).

Moreover, the USA and India recognize Sri Lanka's strategic position in the Indian Ocean and view it as a vital component of their regional interests and broader geopolitical strategies. Sri Lanka's proximity to India's southern coast makes it crucial for India's security and defense interests.

By acting as a buffer between southern India and potential security threats from the IOR, Sri Lanka can help ensure regional stability and security for both itself and India. This positioning also highlights the significance of Sri Lanka's geographical location in shaping the dynamics of security and geopolitics in the region. Sri Lanka serves as an important maritime trade partner for India. This island nation provides India with access to key shipping routes, facilitating trade and economic connectivity between South Asia, East Asia, and the Middle East. Ports like Colombo and Hambantota enable India to enhance its regional trade and strengthen its economic engagement with other countries. Sri Lanka's strategic location offers India a platform to exert its regional influence and maintain its dominant position in South Asia. India seeks to prevent the intrusion of other major powers, particularly China, into its sphere of influence (Weerakoon and Perera, 2014). Sri Lanka's cooperation and partnership are crucial for India to shape regional power dynamics and maintain stability in the IOR. India, as a rapidly growing economy, has increasing energy requirements. Sri Lanka's maritime location provides India with access to vital energy supply lines passing through the Indian Ocean. Ensuring the security and stability of these energy routes is crucial for India's energy security and sustained economic growth (Colombage, 2015).

Being a small state in the Indian Ocean with substantial strategic importance, Sri Lanka is vulnerable to competition from both regional and extra-regional powers. The fight for influence in the Indian Ocean among regional nations has been fueled by Sri Lanka's strategic location. Significant regional players like China and India see Sri Lanka as a crucial component of their overall geopolitical and economic strategy. India, the major force in South Asia, wants to keep its hold on the area and views Sri Lanka as a safeguard against future intrusion by other nations in the southern parts of the country.

On the other hand, China has increased its influence in Sri Lanka by funding infrastructure initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Attanayake, 2021). India and China are competing with one another for influence and dominance in the region because of Sri Lanka's strategic location in the IOR. The construction of Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port is one such instance. China made significant investments in the construction of

this deep-sea port because of its advantageous location next to important trade lanes. India is concerned about China's presence and the possibility that it would be utilized for military operations since it sees it as an attempt to infringe on its sphere of influence in the IOR (Wanh and Ye, 2019). Sri Lanka's location is also part of "String of Pearls" strategy, which refers to a network of ports and naval bases surrounding India. This strategy aims to enhance China's naval presence and secure its energy supply routes. Sri Lanka's ports, such as Colombo and Hambantota, are considered key pearls in this strategy, causing apprehension in India about encirclement and increased Chinese influence (Singh, 2021).

The strategic importance of Sri Lanka's maritime location extends beyond regional powers to major global actors. The United States, for example, has recognized the significance of the Indian Ocean and views Sri Lanka as a valuable partner in maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific. The U.S. seeks to ensure its access to the region and collaborates with Sri Lanka on security issues, including counterterrorism and maritime security. With the emergence of the US-supported Indo-Pacific strategic lexicon during the past several years, the waterways between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, or the Bay of Bengal, became a crucial component. In order to implement its Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS), the United States considers Sri Lanka an important partner in its broader IPS. Sri Lanka's maritime location is strategically positioned in the Indian Ocean, a region of increasing geopolitical significance. The US aims to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific, and Sri Lanka's cooperation is crucial to achieving this objective. Sri Lanka's location plays a significant role in ensuring maritime security in the IOR. Hence, the US engages with Sri Lanka to enhance its capabilities in areas such as maritime domain awareness, counterterrorism, and counter-piracy efforts. Collaboration with Sri Lanka enables the US to protect its own interests, maintain stability, and counter potential threats in the region. Further, Sri Lanka's ports, particularly the Colombo Port, serve as vital hubs for international trade and transshipment. The United States, as a major global economic power, has an interest in ensuring the smooth flow of trade and maintaining access to emerging markets. Sri Lanka's maritime location offers opportunities for the US to strengthen economic ties, promote trade, and secure its commercial interests in the IOR. The US maintains a naval presence in the Indian Ocean to ensure freedom of navigation and support regional stability. Sri Lanka's location provides a

strategic base for US naval operations, including refueling and logistical support. Additionally, the US seeks to foster partnerships with Sri Lanka to strengthen its regional network of allies and partners (Awad and Todkar, 2021).

Further, the US maintains a naval presence in the Indian Ocean to ensure the freedom of navigation and support regional stability. Sri Lanka's location provides a strategic base for US naval operations, including refueling and logistical support. Additionally, the US seeks to foster partnerships with Sri Lanka to strengthen its regional network of allies and partners. Through maritime cooperation, US-Sri Lanka bilateral military cooperation continues to support an Indo-Pacific area that is safer and more prosperous. Key initiatives include port calls by the U.S. Navy, a partnership between the Sri Lankan Navy and the Sri Lankan Marine Corps, support for the establishment of the National Defense College for senior military officials, and exercises with the Sri Lankan Navy and Air Force to foster cooperation on humanitarian aid, disaster relief, and maritime security issues in the interest of a secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific. The Excess Defense Articles Program also saw the donation of ex-U.S. Coast Guard high endurance cutters, which improved Sri Lanka's capacity to monitor its territorial seas, seize contraband, and help search and rescue operations for civilian vessels (Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, 2022).

In this background, the BRI, the crowning achievement of China, and the IPS entertained by USA clashed since both plans have marine and naval components as core goals. As a result, the Bay has developed into an economic flashpoint and is turning more and more into a geostrategic pivot. As a result, the IPS and BRI components rapidly merged with the domestic component of American and Chinese engagement with Sri Lanka. This competition for influence shapes global and regional power dynamics and have implications for Sri Lanka's own interests and sovereignty (Khan, 2021).

Moreover, China, Japan and Russia are major powers working to expand their influence in the IOR through naval exercises with the partnership with Sri Lanka. For instance, China's navy has conducted joint exercises and port visits with the Sri Lankan navy, enhancing their naval cooperation

while Japan has been involved in providing maritime assistance to Sri Lanka, focusing on capacity-building and training programs for the Sri Lankan navy. In parallel to these efforts Russia also has developed a naval partnership with Sri Lanka over the years. The two countries have conducted joint military exercises and exchanges, including naval drills (Waidyatilake, 2018). As the primary power blocs, they all intend to increase their maritime influence in order to further their own national interests. This may lead to tension between world superpowers that pose several security threats over Sri Lanka.

Due to Sri Lanka's location as a maritime hub, Sri Lanka gives powerful nations access to developing economies and resources. Colombo and Hambantota are two ports that act as transshipment centers for trade between Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Countries like Japan and South Korea, which rely significantly on energy imports and need safe and effective marine routes for their cargo, are interested in this economic linkage. To improve connectivity and promote trade, major powers frequently invest in Sri Lanka's infrastructure projects. The construction of ports, roads, airports, and other logistical infrastructure could emerge from these investments, enhancing Sri Lanka's ability to manage growing trade flows and enhancing its economy. The Colombo Port is conveniently connected to cargo coming from and going to Europe, East and South Asia, the Persian Gulf, and East Africa as it serves as a major marine hub for the South Asian region. "To meet the growing demand for international logistics services, the Sri Lankan government started the Colombo Port Expansion Project, which is partially completed and includes one terminal. The terminal which is not yet operational, will be added three more container terminals, bringing the total number of terminals to six. The Hambantota Port also benefits geographically from a feature that most of its nearby ports lack: a deep-water coastline that is close to the Indian Ocean Shipping Lanes. This location makes it possible to build deepwater ports that can accommodate the largest container ships and supertankers in the world, making Hambantota the ideal transshipment location for goods and natural resources entering and leaving the subcontinent (Sri Lanka Export Development Board, 2018). This position may provide major global powers with vital resources, such as energy supplies and minerals, in the IOR. The competition among these powers can influence Sri Lanka's resource management policies, including agreements on resource

extraction, environmental concerns, and security arrangements to protect resource-related infrastructure.

3.2.   Implications of Sri Lanka's role as a Maritime Hub in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)

This section will reveal the economic, security, and geopolitical implications given by Sri Lanka's position as a key maritime hub in the IOR. These implications are identified based on the regional power dynamics posed by global and regional superpowers discussed in the subsection 3.1. Sri Lanka's strategic location as a maritime transit point provides it with opportunities for economic growth and development while presenting security challenges in the region. The implications identified through the study of Sri Lanka's role as a maritime hub could be mentioned as follows:

i.   Economic implications:

Trade and Connectivity: The Indian Ocean serves as a thriving center of economic growth and a vital trade route connecting the East and West. It handles a significant portion of global trade, with more than two-thirds of global oil shipments and one-third of bulk cargo passing through its waters. This includes a substantial amount of global bulk shipping trade, such as petroleum products and coal. Consequently, the maritime sector plays a crucial role in supporting the economies of various South Asian countries. The key players in maritime trade within the IOR include India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Sri Lanka's strategic location provides it with a crucial advantage as a transit point for international trade and connectivity. The country's ports, such as Colombo, serve as important transshipment hubs, facilitating the movement of goods between Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. In terms of container throughput, India held the largest share at 53% of the regional market in 2017. Sri Lanka follows with 24%, while Pakistan and Bangladesh account for 12% and 10% respectively (Finnigan, 2019). This enhances Sri Lanka's economic prospects, attracting investment, creating jobs, and boosting revenue through port-related services. Situated between the major hubs of Dubai and Singapore, Sri Lanka's strategic geographic positioning in the Indian Ocean serves as a catalyst for its prominent seaports to witness a continuous growth in container throughput within the South Asian region.

Infrastructure Development: Sri Lanka's position as a Maritime hub necessitates the development and maintenance of modern infrastructure, including ports, logistics networks, and transportation facilities. The maritime space in the IOR is experiencing rapid growth, and it is projected to contribute around 22.1% of the world's GDP by 2025. As an island nation with a relatively small domestic economy, Sri Lanka heavily relies on maritime trade. In 2017, Sri Lanka's container throughput reached six million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), with 42% of that attributed to Indian transshipment trade. The Sagar Mala initiative may have adverse effects on Sri Lanka due to its high dependence on India. One significant challenge for Sri Lanka in improving its maritime sector is the substantial gap in infrastructure financing. The country has been facing difficulties in mobilizing the necessary funds, particularly due to its reliance on public sector financing and an ongoing debt crisis. In this context, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) presents an opportunity for Sri Lanka to secure the required infrastructure financing and overcome these challenges (Kannangara, 2019). These investments might stimulate economic growth, improve efficiency in trade and transportation, and contribute to the country's overall development.

ii.   Security Implications:

Maritime Security: Sri Lanka's maritime gateway role places it at the forefront of maritime security concerns. Ensuring the safety and security of its ports, shipping lanes, and coastal areas is crucial to protecting against piracy, terrorism, smuggling, and other transnational crimes. Sri Lanka's navy and other security forces play a pivotal role in safeguarding its maritime interests and collaborating with regional and international partners to maintain a secure maritime environment. The global security landscape is characterized by constant change and uncertainty, marked by recurring disputes, crises, and conflicts in various regions. Sri Lanka, like other maritime nations, faces concerns over the security of sea lanes and chokepoints, which are critical to its security. The interconnectedness between nations in facilitating the smooth movement of global maritime trade cannot be overlooked, as any disruption in these trade routes would have wide-ranging consequences for all nations and could be particularly detrimental to some (Kumara, 2020). Therefore, it is of utmost importance for Sri Lanka as a maritime community to be prepared to respond to any

potential threats or blockades that may jeopardize these vital sea lanes, chokepoints, and narrow seas in the future.

Regional Stability: As a key player in the IOR, Sri Lanka's stability and security are essential for maintaining regional peace and stability. Any disruptions to Sri Lanka's security can have wider implications for the stability of the IOR, affecting trade flows, investments, and overall economic activities. The presence of internal weaknesses of a political and economic nature is likely to have implications for external security, particularly in the context of the shared IOR. Firstly, such weaknesses could potentially hinder the planned enhancements of the Coast Surveillance Capability (CSC), aimed at deterring the encroachment of external powers that may be tempted to meddle in Sri Lanka's troubled waters and, consequently, in the broader IOR. Moreover, their involvement might extend beyond their conventional investment routes, which may be economically beneficial but could also encompass schemes and conspiracies aimed at instigating regime change or even more disruptive scenarios, akin to the "Arab Spring" or "Orange Revolution." In such situations, local radical groups of various ideologies may seize the opportunity to exert their influence and disrupt stability, potentially leading to unforeseen consequences (Moorthi, 2022).

iii.   Geopolitical Implications:

Global Power Interests: Sri Lanka's strategic position attracts the interests of major global powers, including China, India, and the United States, among others. These powers aim to secure their economic, political, and military interests in the region. Sri Lanka's role as a maritime hub becomes a focal point for geopolitical rivalries, with competing powers seeking to establish influence, secure naval access, or establish military bases. Within this framework, the significance of Sri Lanka's marine territory to the United States, China, Japan, and India is perceived as a crucial aspect of a broader geopolitical dynamic often referred to as the "new great game." Sri Lanka's maritime security is susceptible to external constraints resulting from global power competition in the IOR. While all four countries share a common interest in securing maritime trade routes, the US has allocated relatively fewer economic and security resources to Sri Lanka, choosing instead to prioritize the political landscape. Consequently, Sri Lanka's strategic location is rapidly emerging as one of the most pivotal islands in

the IOR in terms of global maritime trade, commerce, natural resources, and military objectives. Furthermore, it is evident that the primary global shipping routes pass south of Sri Lanka, further underscoring its importance in the maritime domain (Kumara, 2020).

4.   Conclusion

Sri Lanka is a crucial chalk point in the IOR, which broadens the geopolitical significance of the island nation as a maritime hub. This geographical position has posed several impacts on power dynamics among major global and regional powers while having implications for regional economies, security, and geopolitics in the IOR. Due to its proximity to important sea routes like the East-West shipping route, Sri Lanka plays a crucial role in supporting global trade by easing the transportation of goods and energy resources. While China and India perceive Sri Lanka as an essential part of their overall geopolitical and economic strategies, the US and India are aware of Sri Lanka's strategic location in the IOR and considers it an important part of their regional interests and broader geopolitical strategies. In order to advance their own national interests, the three major power blocs—the United States, India, and China—plan to strengthen their maritime dominance by using Sri Lanka as a marine hub. Due to this tension between the world's superpowers over Sri Lanka's maritime significance in theIOR, Sri Lanka may face many economic, security, and geopolitical implications. Sri Lanka's favorable positioning in the Indian Ocean, situated between the prominent centers of Dubai and Singapore, has resulted in notable growth in container traffic at its renowned seaports, particularly within the South Asian region. The investments in modern infrastructure, including ports, logistics networks, and transportation facilities, might stimulate economic growth, improve efficiency in trade and transportation, and contribute to the country's overall development in the future. Concerning maritime security, Sri Lanka should be ready to respond to any potential threats or blockades that might in the future imperil these crucial sea lanes, and narrow seas. These security lapses in Sri Lanka may have broader repercussions for peace and stability in the Indian Ocean, jeopardizing trade, investment, and overall economic activity. The strategic location of Sri Lanka generates interest from significant global powers such as China, India, and the US, among others. However, this could also lead to external threats arising from the competition for power in the IOR. This

study recommends the following suggestions as a way forward to manage the challenges and emerging opportunities in Sri Lanka due to its significance as a marine hub in the IOR.

5.   Recommendations

Implementation of National Maritime Policy (NMP): NMP in Sri Lanka will need to incorporate the necessary structure, systems, and processes for its effective implementation. Parallel to this suggested MNP, it might be important to introduce sectorial policies. Implementing sectorial policies that align with NMP can help maximize the benefits and address the challenges associated with maritime activities.

In that case **trade and economic policies** could facilitate measures to streamline customs processes, reduce trade barriers, and enhance efficiency in cross-border trade. Investment policies could attract foreign direct investment in maritime infrastructure, logistics, and related sectors. Logistics policies may promote the integration of various transport modes and the establishment of logistics hubs to optimize supply chain management. Export promotion policies might encourage industries to utilize maritime routes for international trade.

Strengthening Maritime Infrastructure: Sri Lanka should continue to invest in developing its maritime infrastructure, including ports, harbors, and related logistics facilities. This will not only boost Sri Lanka's economy but also attract foreign investments and enhance its role as a maritime hub in the IOR. Additionally, upgrading the capacity and efficiency of ports can facilitate smoother trade flows and improve connectivity within the region. Further, expanding and modernizing ports, improving connectivity, and enhancing the efficiency of port operations might be undertaken through **infrastructure development policies** implemented under MNP.

Promote Sustainable and Inclusive Development: Sri Lanka should prioritize sustainable and inclusive development in its maritime activities. This includes adopting environmentally friendly practices, promoting responsible fishing practices, and considering the social and economic impact of infrastructure projects on local communities. By prioritizing sustainable development, Sri Lanka can enhance its reputation as a

responsible maritime actor in the IOR. Further, under MNP policy, Sri Lanka will be able to initiate environmental and sustainable policies to promote sustainable practices in maritime operations, such as reducing emissions, managing waste, and protecting marine ecosystems, while encouraging the use of clean energy sources, such as solar and wind, in port operations and maritime activities through renewable energy policies. Under the environmental policies, climate change adaptation policies that address the potential impacts of climate change on maritime infrastructure, coastal areas, and vulnerable communities could be implemented.

Strengthen Regional Cooperation: Sri Lanka should actively engage in regional forums and initiatives to foster cooperation among IOR countries. This can include enhancing maritime security collaboration, intelligence sharing, joint exercises, and capacity-building programs. By working together, countries in the region can effectively address common challenges and ensure the stability and security of the IOR. To strengthen regional cooperation under MNPs, maritime security and safety policies could be suggested to enhance surveillance, intelligence sharing, and cooperation among relevant agencies to combat piracy, terrorism, and other maritime threats while responding to maritime emergencies and aiding vessels in distress, the well-being of seafarers, vessel safety, and the prevention of accidents at sea.

Invest in Human Capital: Sri Lanka should invest in the training and development of its human capital in maritime-related fields. This includes providing specialized education and training programs for maritime security, navigation, logistics, and maritime law enforcement. A skilled workforce will not only enhance Sri Lanka's capabilities but also contribute to the overall development of the maritime sector in the IOR. To invest in human capital, human resource development policies could be suggested as sectorial policies under MNPs. Regarding this matter, education and training policies that focus on building a skilled workforce for the maritime sector, including seafarers, port operators, logistics professionals, and maritime lawyers, could be promoted. Capacity-building programs will be important to enhance technical skills and knowledge in areas such as maritime law, maritime safety, and marine environmental management.

Strengthen Legal and Regulatory Frameworks: Sri Lanka should review and strengthen its legal and regulatory frameworks related to maritime security, including laws pertaining to maritime domain awareness, maritime border control, counter-piracy measures, and environmental protection. This will ensure effective governance of Sri Lanka's maritime space and contribute to the overall security and stability of the IOR.

Apart from MNP's implementation, **Collaborate with Major Global Powers** leads Sri Lanka to actively engage with major global powers, such as the United States, China, India, and Japan, to build partnerships that contribute to regional security and stability. This can involve joint exercises, information sharing, and capacity-building programs to enhance Sri Lanka's capabilities in maritime security and counterterrorism.

Strengthen Diplomatic Engagement: Sri Lanka should actively engage in diplomatic efforts to promote dialogue and cooperation among IOR countries. This includes participating in regional forums, diplomatic exchanges, and negotiations to address maritime disputes, ensure freedom of navigation, and promote peaceful resolution of conflicts. By playing an active diplomatic role, Sri Lanka can contribute to a more stable and secure IOR.

These recommendations aim to address the challenges and maximize the opportunities arising from Sri Lanka's role as a maritime hub in the IOR. By implementing these measures, Sri Lanka could contribute to regional security, economic growth, and stability in the Indian Ocean while encountering the economic, security, and geopolitical challenges posed by the superpowers within the region.

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1.   Editor-in-chief - Professor S. Chaminda Padmakumara

Professor S. Chaminda Padmakumara is a distinguished academic with an extensive background in International Relations. He is the head of the Department of International Relations at the University of Colombo. He holds a BA (Hons) Special Degree in International Relations from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, awarded in 2009. Additionally, he is certified in Teaching in Higher Education, having completed the Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education in 2012, qualifying both CTHE and SEDA (UK) standards. Currently, Professor Padmakumara serves as the Head of the Department of International Relations in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Colombo. He earned his PhD in International Relations from the South Asian University, New Delhi, focusing his research on the historical concept of 'mandala' and Southeast Asian region formation. Prior to his doctoral studies, he obtained an MA in International Relations from the University of Colombo. Professor Padmakumara's academic pursuits and research interests are diverse, including regional integration, methodology in regional studies, and theories of International Relations. He has made significant contributions to the field through his published research papers and presentations on various aspects of International Relations. He served as the Director of Studies of the Faculty of Graduate Studies from 2018 to February 2022. Currently, he is the coordinator for the Master in Peace and Conflict Resolution Program at the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Master of Arts in International Relations program offered by the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo. Furthermore, Professor Padmakumara actively engages with various institutions in the realm of defense and diplomacy. He serves as a resource person to esteemed institutions such as the Defense Services Command and Staff College (DSCS) at Sapugaskanda, Bandaranayake International Diplomatic Training Institute (BIDTI), National Defense College (NDC), and Bandaranaike Center for International Studies (BCIS).

2.   Editorial Board member- Dr Chandra Embuldeniya BSc Cey, PGDip UP, PhD (hc), Distinguished Fellow INSS, FNIPM

Dr. Chandra Embuldeniya has cultivated an illustrious career marked by interdisciplinary contributions to both higher education and business sectors. As a pioneering academic, he has most notably served as the founder and Vice Chancellor of Uva Wellassa University, where he implemented innovative educational approaches that garnered widespread acclaim. His leadership in setting up institutional frameworks has not only been recognized by governing bodies but has also led to ground-breaking intellectual committees, such as the one for the proposed Sports University of Sri Lanka, which gained Cabinet approval. His scholarly contributions extend to serving as a speaker, panelist, and moderator at international conferences, focusing on topics from entrepreneurial education to regional integration in South and South East Asia. Dr. Embuldeniya has also produced significant publications, including academic papers, policy research, and institutional reviews, adding considerable value to both local and global academic communities. Beyond the halls of academia, Dr. Embuldeniya has made a significant impact on business and policy formation. In the corporate sector, he has excelled as a consultant and thought leader. One of his noteworthy contributions was his role in formulating a National Strategy for Small and Medium Industry Sector Development in Sri Lanka. Additionally, he has been a part of Committees for Infrastructure Audit in sectors like tourism and hospitality, producing pivotal reports that aid in national planning. His presence is also strongly felt in media, through participation in nationally televised programs and interviews, making him a voice of authority on both economic and educational matters. Whether it is spearheading university initiatives, contributing to policy dialogues, or advising industry-leading committees, Dr. Embuldeniya's work has consistently bridged the gap between theory and practice, academia and industry, and policy and implementation. His multi-faceted career is a testament to his commitment to fostering sustainable development, innovation, and excellence.

3.   Editorial Board member- Rear Admiral Sisira Jayakody (Retd) RWP, RSP, VSV, USP, ndc, psc

Rear Admiral Jayakody was born in 1962 and did his schooling in Hanadapangoda. On completion of schooling, he joined the then-General Sir John Kotelawala Defence Academy and started his Naval career in 1981. Completed 3 years of training whilst reading for the first degree in Bachelor of Science at the University of Colombo Sri Lanka. Subsequently, he was commissioned as an Acting Sub Lieutenant in the Sri Lanka Navy in 1985. He did his specialization in Hydrography and has held a wide spectrum of appointments both afloat and ashore alike. He commanded various types of ships and craft in the Sri Lanka Navy from the beginning to the end of the conflict that prevailed between Sri Lankan security forces and the separatist terrorist outfit named and he was the commanding officer of SLNS Suranimila, a Fast Missile Vessel during the latter part of the conflict.

Admiral Jayakody also held numerous important ashore appointments throughout his Naval career. To name a few, Staff Officer of Naval Operations at the Ministry of Defence, Directing Staff at Defence Services Command and Staff College of Sri Lanka, Training Commander at Naval and Maritime Academy in Trincomalee, Director of Naval Training, Deputy Area Commander of Eastern Naval Area, Director Naval Personnel, Director General Administration, Commander North Central Naval Area, and Director General Personnel are some of the key appointments among them.

He was awarded Rana Wickrama Padakkama (RWP) and Rana Soora Padakkama (RSP) for his valour and conduct in the face of the enemy which are considered the highest recognitions by the President of Sri Lanka to him for his acts in the face of the enemy. He was skilled in multi-disciplines and was trained abroad for many of the important assignments given to him. He followed his Sub Lieutenant Technical Course in India in 1985 and followed a number of other local and foreign courses which includes Riverine and Coastal Operations Course in the USA in 1989, Senior Officers'

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He is a graduate of the Naval Staff College class fifty-five, Newport Rhode Island USA in 1999. Also, he is a graduate of the National Defence University of Pakistan. Rear Admiral Jayakody was conferred with two master's Degrees in Management and National Security and war Studies.

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Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage has served the Sri Lanka Navy for a period of 36 years and retired as the Chief of the Navy on 01 July 2014. He is the 18th Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy and was decorated for gallantry and commended for exceptional service to the Navy. He is a graduate of the Defence Services Staff College in India and the Royal College of Defence Studies, UK. He holds a PhD from General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (Sri Lanka). His doctoral thesis; 'Asymmetric Warfare at Sea: The Case of Sri Lanka' is now published. He also holds an MSc in Defence and Strategic Studies from Madras University and an MA in International Studies from Kings College, London. He is a visiting lecturer at the University of Colombo, Defence Services Command and Staff College (Sri Lanka), Kotelawala Defence University, and Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute. He is a Fellow of the Nautical Institute, London UK. Admiral Colombage is a Guest Professor at Sichuan University in China and an adjunct professor at the National Institute of South China Sea Studies, Haikou, China. In addition. He has been a guest lecturer in several key universities and research institutes in Bangladesh, India, Japan, and Pakistan. He has also been an editor and reviewer of a number of internationally renowned academic journals. In addition, he has served as the Director General of the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka as well. He is currently a PhD examiner for the University of Colombo. Admiral Colombage held the portfolio of Additional Secretary to H.E. the President for Foreign Relations. Admiral Colombage was also the Secretary to the Foreign Ministry from August 2020 to May 2022. Admiral is currently the Ambassador of Sri Lanka for Indonesia and ASEAN.

Rear Admiral YN Jayarathna (Retd) RWP*, RSP, USP, ndc, psc

Rear Admiral YN Jayarathna retired from the Sri Lanka Navy in 2022 on reaching mandatory retirement age of 55 after an illustrious, battle-decorated and unblemished career span of over 35 years. At the time of his retirement, he was the Chief of Staff and the Chief Hydrographer of the Navy, concurrently holding the appointment of the Joint Chief Hydrographer to the Government. On retirement his expertise was secured by the United Nations and is an International Consultant to the UNODC on Undersea Cables and Maritime Intelligence. He holds two Masters Degrees from the University of Kelaniya for DefenceStudies (2001) and University of Goa, India for Hydrographic Surveys (2003). He is International Hydrographic Organization's Category 'A' Qualified Hydrographer with vast knowledge and experience on oceanic and maritime matters. He has authored several articles for publications on topics covering geo-politics to marine science research and is a regular visiting lecturer for the Think Tanks, Staff Colleges and the National Defence College.

Air Vice Marshal Arosha Surendra Vithana (Retd) USP, MSc (Def Stu) in Mgt, EMSc in Info Sec, BSc (IT), psc

Air Vice Marshal Arosha Surendra Vithana, born in January 1968 and is a proud product of D.S. Senanayake Collage Colombo 7. He joined the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) as an Officer Cadet on 17 May 1988 and was commissioned as a Pilot Officer in the Electronics Engineering branch on 17 July 1990. The Officer has attended different professional courses and graduated from Senior Command and Staff Collage Beijing PRC. He holds a Master of Science degree in Defence and Strategic Studies from Kotelawala Defence University, Master

of Science degree in Information Security from Asia E University of Malaysia and Bachelor of Science degree in Information Systems from Manchester Metropolitan University of UK. He is specialized in Information Technology, Cyber Security and Electronics and spearheaded several flagship IT projects such as setting up of the SLAF data network, Battle Management Command System, Intramail System and digitalization of the SLAF. This Officer led the total digital transformation of the SLAF since he took over the IT Establishment in 2011 as 'Head of IT'. He has taken up research in the areas of 'Network Centric warfare' and 'Cyber and Network Security A.S. Vithana was instrumental in the establishment of the Directorate of Information Technology, SLAF Cyber Operations Centre and two Information Technology Wings. Under his command, SLAF won several awards including the 'best web Sri Lanka' and 'National hacking challenge'. He has held many appointments in the SLAF including Director General Electronics and Telecommunications Engineering, Director Information Technology, Command and Chief IT Officer and many other appointments. For his distinguished and exemplary service, he has been awarded with Sri Lanka Armed services Long Service Medel and "Uttama Sewa Padakkama". Further in recognition of his meritorious service rendered to the Sri Lanka Air Force, he was awarded the Commander's Commendation in year 2023.

Air Vice Marshal Dilshan Wasage (Retd) VSV, USP, MSc (Def Stud) in Mgt.PSA, PG Dip in IR, AD HRM, UAV Instructor

Air Vice Marshal Dilshan Wasage, a highly decorated veteran of the Sri Lanka Air Force, dedicated over three decades of distinguished service to the nation, leaving an indelible mark on the fields of aviation and defense. Embarking on his journey with the Sri Lanka Air Force in 1987, Wasage showcased exceptional leadership and expertise throughout his illustrious career. He underwent basic and advanced flying training at the Indian Air Force Flying Academy in India, earning his flying brevet. As a helicopter pilot, he operated Bell 206, 212, and 412 helicopters, accumulating over 1600 flying

hours Wasage transitioned to pioneering unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) operations, commanding No. 111 and 112 UAV Squadrons in the Sri Lanka Air Force. His remarkable contributions in this field included accumulating more than 2000 UAV flying hours, marking a significant milestone in UAV operations in the South Asian Region. His innovative mindset led to critical technological advancements, including the introduction of the Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) system. He played a pivotal role in designing the Battle Management Command Center at Air Force Headquarters, providing essential technological support during crucial humanitarian operations. Academically inclined, Wasage earned a Master's degree in Defense Studies with a specialization in Management. He pursued specialized training programs on drones overseas and became a qualified Israeli UAV pilot and mission commander instructor. His expertise further expanded through international intelligence application training with the US Air Force and advanced security cooperation training in Hawaii, USA. Additionally, Wasage holds a Postgraduate Diploma in International Relations and an Advanced National Diploma in Human Resource Management. He actively engaged in international conferences as a speaker, sharing his expertise on topics like Unmanned Air Surveillance and Counter-Insurgency. In his role as the Director of Air Intelligence at Air Force Headquarters, Wasage showcased exceptional leadership and strategic acumen. His remarkable career earned him prestigious accolades, including the Visista Sewa Vibushan and Utham Sewa Padakkama, recognizing his commendable service and significant contributions to the nation's defense. Air Vice Marshal Dilshan Wasage's career is a testament to his unwavering dedication, pioneering spirit, and exceptional leadership in the fields of aviation and defense, leaving a lasting legacy of excellence and innovation.

Major General Darshana Hettiarachchi RSP VSV USP ndu psc MA.

Major General Darshana Hettiarachchi is an accomplished professional holding the position of Commissioner General of Rehabilitation. He has an extensive educational background and a wealth of expertise in various areas related to conflict resolution and rehabilitation. Masters in Conflict Resolution from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Master's in Education of Strategic and Resilience Studies from the National Resilience Institute, Indonesia. Postgraduate Diploma in Conflict Resolution (PgD.CR) from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Graduate of Defence Services Command and Staff College, Bangladesh. Diploma in Senior Level Defence Management from the University of Indore, India Diploma in International Affairs from the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, Sri Lanka. Diploma in Youth in Development Work from the Open University of Sri Lanka (2 years Programme). Completed a course on the "Contemporary Global Scene" at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, Sri Lanka. Completed a course on "Open Air Diplomacy" at the Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute, Sri Lanka. Areas of Expertise: Hettiarachchi served as the Commissioner General of Rehabilitation from 2012 to 2013 under the Ministry of Prisons & Rehabilitation. During this period, he successfully rehabilitated and reintegrated approximately 12,500 ex-combatants into society. His efforts were highly praised, earning recognition from local and international government authorities. In 2019, he was appointed as the Head of the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Radicalization, Violent Extremism, and Terrorism in Sri Lanka. He submitted a comprehensive report on this subject to the Ministry of Defense in March 2020. Additionally, Hettiarachchi was reappointed as the Commissioner General of Rehabilitation under the Ministry of Justice in February 2020. In his current role, he focuses on rehabilitating drug addicts and transforming them into healthy, disciplined, and productive members of society. His multifaceted expertise in conflict resolution, rehabilitation, and countering radicalization demonstrates his commitment to promoting peace, social integration, and community well-being in Sri Lanka.

Major General Tuan Suresh Sallay RWP RSP VSV USP ndc psc MPhil M Def S Director General / State Intelligence Service, Sri Lanka

Major General Tuan Suresh Sallay RWP RSP VSV USP ndc psc MPhil M Def S has been serving as the Director General of the State Intelligence Service, Sri Lanka's premier intelligence agency, since 2019. He enlisted in the Sri Lanka Army in March 1987 and has served in Infantry and Signal Regiments from 1989 to 1992. In 1993, he joined the Corps of Military Intelligence. From 1996 to 2006, he served as General Staff Officer 3, 2, and 1 at the Directorate of Military Intelligence. He also served as the Coordinator of Foreign Intelligence at the Ministry of Defence from 2009 to 2012 and as Director of Military Intelligence from 2012 to 2016. He has undertaken two overseas assignments, serving as First Secretary at the Sri Lanka Embassy in Paris from 2006 to 2009 and as Minister Counsellor at the High Commission of Sri Lanka in Kuala Lumpur from 2016 to 2018. Major General T S Sallay completed the National Defence College (ndc) program in New Delhi in 2019 and holds a Master of Philosophy from Madras University, where his thesis was selected as the best research paper among 25 foreign students. He successfully completed the staff course (psc) at the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) and obtained a Master of Defence Studies from Kelaniya University in 2003. He also holds Post Graduate Diplomas in International Affairs (BCIS), Counter-Terrorism (USA), Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution from the University of Bradford (UK), Defence Management (INDIA), and Security Sector Development (USA). He has addressed numerous international conferences, seminars, and workshops, with special reference to intelligence and security. Notable among them are his presentations on "Suicide Terrorism and its Impact" the Pentagon in 2003 and his address at the United Nations Headquarters during a Counter-Terrorism conference in June 2023.

Professor Nirmali Wijegoonawardana

Professor Nirmali Wijegoonawardana is a senior lecturer in the Dept of History, University of Colombo, and professor in International Rations. She holds a BA in History, an MA in International Relations, a Postgraduate Diploma in Conflict and Peace Studies & PhD in International Relations. Her research expertise is on Peace Processes, Peace Education & and Area Studies. She has won the American Fulbright Fellowship Award - 1999, Japan Foundation Fellowship Award 2018/2019, Visiting Fellow Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation University of Hiroshima Japan 2018/2019, and Visiting Researcher Department of Peace Studies University of Bradford United Kingdom in 2006. Her notable publications include Fall of Monuments a Tool for Social Change Colombo Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Research, Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo, 4(1), 1-14, Peace Education in Post War Sri Lanka: Lessons from Post War Japan, (2019) Indo-Pacific Studies, International University of Japan. she is also a co-author with Charles Smith, Sarkar, S. and Wijegoonawardana, N. (2019) Alfred Russel Wallace Notes 9: The South Asian Connection, New York, Western Kentucky University, USA. And also, Peace Building in Sri Lanka: Do the Root Causes Matter? (2013) Institute of Peace Studies, University of Hiroshima, Japan.

Dr. Chaminda Abeysinghe

Dr. Chaminda Abeysinghe is a highly esteemed academician currently holding the position of Professor in International Studies at the Department of International Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Kelaniya University. With his extensive expertise and dedication to the field, Dr. Abeysinghe has become a respected figure in academia. In his current role, he serves as the Head of the Department of International Studies at the

University of Kelaniya, where he has been a Senior Lecturer Grade-1, teaching International Studies since January 2014. His academic journey began as an Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Economics at the University of Kelaniya, where he demonstrated his passion for teaching from August 2001 to 2003. Over the years, he has made significant contributions as a Lecturer and Senior Lecturer Grade-II in the Department of Economics, enriching the learning experiences of his students. Dr. Abeysinghe is a recipient of the prestigious JICA scholarship for Postgraduate studies at the University of Waseda, Tokyo, Japan, in 2005, which has further enhanced his expertise in International Studies. His research interests span a wide range of areas, including Indian Ocean Politics, Indo-Pacific affairs, South Asian Politics, Governance, and International Political Economy. His scholarly pursuits have earned him recognition and respect among his peers. Apart from his teaching and research responsibilities, Dr. Abeysinghe actively contributes to various academic and professional bodies. He has delivered keynote speeches at national conferences and served on significant councils and boards of management, including the Board of Management of the National Youth Corps under the Ministry of Youth and Sports since 2021 and the Board of Management of the Post Graduate Institute of Archaeology (PGIAR) since January 2020.

Ms Chamindry Saparamadu

Ms Chamindry Saparamadu is the Director General of the Sustainable Development Council of Sri Lanka. She is a lawyer and a well-experienced professional in the development sector with over 15 years of work experience in several international organizations including the United Nations System on governance and sustainable development issues. She most recently served as a Technical Advisor to UNDP Sri Lanka and as the Head of the UN Resident Coordinators Office in Sri Lanka. She has also served on a number of government and parliamentary advisory committees including the Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) appointed by

the Ministry of Foreign Relations, the Panel of Experts to the Constitutional Assembly of Sri Lanka, the Governing Council of the Youth Corps in Sri Lanka and as a Legal Consultant to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Electoral Reforms. She currently serves on the Panel of Lecturers of the Oxford College of Business for the MSc Programme in Sustainable Management offered by the University of Bedfordshire, UK. Mrs. Saparamadu has a multidisciplinary education background and she is currently pursuing Doctoral Studies in Development Studies at the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Colombo. She holds a Master's Degree (MA) in Development Studies from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, a Master of Laws (LLM) Degree in International Trade Law from the University of Wales, Post-Graduate Diploma in Conflict Resolution from the University of Fribourg, a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) Degree from the Faculty of Law of the University of Colombo and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) (Hons) Degree in Economics from the University of Delhi. Mrs. Saparamadu is also an alumna of the International Visitor Leadership Programme (IVLP) of the United States Department of State.

Colonel Kandevidanalage Priyantha Dhammika

Kandevidanalage Priyantha Dhammika is a distinguished expert in the realm of technology and security, presently serving as the Director of Defence Cyber Command and Information Warfare Centre at the Ministry of Defence. He earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Electronic Engineering from Sir John Kothelawala Defence University of Sri Lanka (2005-2010) and later pursued an M.Sc in Military Technology from Pune University, India. Dhammika's expertise extends further as a Chartered Engineer in India and through an MPhil in Electronic and Telecommunication Engineering from the University of Moratuwa Sri Lanka (2000-2005). His diverse educational background underscores his profound knowledge in areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security, Robotics, Electronic Warfare, and Drone Development. Notably, he has contributed significantly to the field through

various publications, including papers such as "A Study on Noise Reduction in an Enclosed Space by Destructive Interference" and "Smart GSM Mobile Phone Jammer," both presented at the Annual Symposium of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. Dhammika's dedication to advancing technology for national security is underscored by his role as a Peer Reviewer for academic journals, making him a respected authority in the intersection of technology and national defence.

Lt Col (Retd) Thushara Chandani Kathriarachchi

Lt Col (Retd) Thushara Chandani Kathriarachchi is a highly regarded professional with a wealth of experience and expertise in the field of Criminology. Currently affiliated with the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, she serves as a Senior Lecturer Grade II and holds the position of Head of the Department of Criminology within the Faculty of Criminal Justice. Educationally, Lt Col (Retd) Kathriarachchi has a solid academic background, including an LLB (Hons) from the Open University of Sri Lanka, an LLM from the same institution, and an MSc in Defence Studies from KDU. Additionally, she holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Human Rights from the University of Colombo and a Diploma in Conflict Resolution from BCIS. Currently, she is pursuing her PhD, showcasing her commitment to continuous academic and intellectual growth.

Lt Col (Retd) Kathriarachchi's research interests encompass a variety of crucial areas, including Organized Crimes, International Humanitarian Law, and Conflict Resolution. Her dedication to advancing knowledge in these domains is evident through her six paper publications at KDU IRC from 2020-2023. Furthermore, her achievements have been recognized through her award as the first in order of merit at the MSc in Defence Studies, KDU. Notably, she is also an Attorney-at-Law. Having retired from military service in 2015 after completing 20 years of dedicated service.

Lt Col MDJ Wickramarachchi USP psc ptsc SLE MSc (Mil tech- India), BSc (Mgt & Tech- KDU)

Lt Colonel Wickramarachchi is a distinguished individual with a notable educational and military background. He pursued his education at St Sebastian College, Kandana. In 1996, he enrolled as a Service Cadet at Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Intake 14, where he completed his degree in Management and Technical Science, earning a BSc in defense. Following his academic achievements, Lt Col MDJ Wickramarachchi underwent comprehensive military training. He attended the Military Academy at Diyatalawa and exhibited outstanding leadership qualities, earning the appointment of Company Under Officer at Randeniwala Company – Cadet Government SLMA. Upon his commissioning as 2/Lt, he served in various significant roles within the Sri Lanka Army, showcasing his exceptional skills and dedication. Throughout his military career, Lt Col MDJ Wickramarachchi held several key appointments, including Troop Commander and Intelligence Officer at 8 Field (Rft) Engineers, Engineer Coordinator at the Ministry of Defence, Directing Staff at SLMA, and 2IC at 12 Fd SLE. He further demonstrated his capabilities as Regimental Adjutant at RHQ- SLE, Commanding Officer at 7 Fd SLE, and CO at 14 CBRNe SLE. He later served as GSO1 (DD&P) Engineer and as Col GS in the Engineer Division, where he currently holds his position. In addition to his military accomplishments, Lt Col MDJ Wickramarachchi pursued various courses both locally and overseas, enhancing his skills and expertise. These courses included the Engineer Young Officers Course in India, Basic Parachute Course, Bomb Disposal Courses in Sri Lanka and India, Staff Course (psc) at Batalanda, White Water Rafting Course in India, Counter IED Instructor Course in the UK, Technical Staff Course (ptsc) in India, and CBRN Course in India. He also completed IEDD levels 1, 2, and 3 as well as Humanitarian Demining training with a Mobile Training Team in the USA. Lt Col MDJ Wickramarachchi's dedication and bravery were evident during the humanitarian operation in 2009 when he sustained injuries while serving as Engineer OC, constructing an alternative bridge at Chundikulam, Jaffna. His inventive capabilities were recognized when he won a Bronze Medal

for inventing the Search Camera at the "Innovata" Sri Lanka Inventors' competition and secured first place at the SF HQ (E) Army Inventors' competition as CO of 7 SLE. Aside from his military achievements, Lt Col MDJ Wickramarachchi is a passionate sportsman. He excelled in golf, earning the title of Best Player and Commanding Officer in the Sappers' Golf competition in 2019. Currently, he holds the position of Vice Chairman at the Sri Lanka Army Golf Club, showcasing his leadership not only in the military domain but also in the realm of sports.

COPY EDITOR

A. U. R. Salgado

A. U. R. Salgado with over 20 years of teaching experience and a rich cross-cultural background, Ms. Ruki Salgado is a dedicated university academic. She holds an impressive array of qualifications, including an English Teaching Diploma from the English Specialist Teachers' Training College, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, earned in 1985, a B.A. in English (Hons) from the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, achieved in 1992, an M.A. in International Relations from the International University of Japan, Niigata, Japan, obtained in 1995, and an M.A. in Christian Education from Dallas Theological Seminary, Texas, USA, completed in 2000. Ms. Salgado is currently a Senior Lecturer at the American National College, Sri Lanka, where she imparts her knowledge in subjects such as English Composition, Modern World Literature, and Technical Writing. She has also served as a Visiting Lecturer at esteemed institutions like Bristol Institute, Colombo, and the Informatics Institute of Technology, Colombo.

AUTHORS

Charani LCM Patabendige

Charani LCM Patabendige is an Acting Research Analyst and a Research Assistant at the Institute of National Security Studies the premier think tank established and functioning under the Ministry of Defence. With a strong academic and professional background in national security and law, she is currently pursuing, an MPhil/PhD in Law and the completion stage of a Masters in Conflict and Peace Studies from the University of Colombo. She possesses a Bachelor of Laws degree from the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University with a second class. She has also obtained a distinction pass in the Advanced Diploma in Transitional Justice; a program conducted by the Bandaranaike Center for International Studies. She served as a committee member tasked with reviewing and finalizing Sri Lanka's National Defence Policy. She has contributed to international dialogues on security issues, representing Sri Lanka at the International Scientific-Practical Conference on Regional Security in Asia in the Context of Preventing New Challenges and Threats organized by the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). Charani is also a Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) Alumnus, participating in the NESA-AFRICOM Workshop Series: Changing Nature of Security, Transnational Threats Know No Boundaries in Bangkok, Thailand. She has also expanded her knowledge by attending the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) Climate Change and Security Senior Executive Seminar conducted by NESA Washington, DC, and participating in the Women, Peace, and Security Round Table by invitation both in virtual format. Charani serves as an Honorary Associate Research Fellow and is an active member of the National Authority to Prevent Violent Extremism. She is dedicated to women's empowerment and political participation and she is an active member of the Women's Association. Her research focus includes critical areas such as criminal justice, disinformation, hate speech, human rights, and national security, as evidenced by her numerous international and national publications both on domestic and international platforms.

Wing Commander (Retd.) Gayan Sanjaya Perera Kahandawalaarachchi

Wing Commander (Retd.) Gayan Sanjaya Perera Kahandawalaarachchi is an experienced Human Resources Professional currently pursuing his Ph.D. at the University of Hiroshima, Japan. With a robust educational background and academic exposure gained through his distinguished military career in the Sri Lanka Air Force, he has made a significant contribution to develop Human Resource Management aspects of the Sri Lanka Air Force. He embarked on his academic journey by completing a Bachelor's degree in Management and Technical Science, achieving Second Class (Lower division) at the Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka in the year 2002. Subsequently, as the stepping stone to pursuing his post-graduate qualifications, has completed a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the Open University of Sri Lanka in the year 2010 and thereafter a Master's in Defence and Strategic Studies from the Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka in year 2020. In recognition of his academic and research excellence during his Master's thesis at the Defence Services Command and Staff College, Sri Lanka he was awarded 'Instructor Grading' which qualified him to serve as a 'Directing Staff' at the Defence Services Command and Staff College, Sri Lanka. His fascination with Peace and Conflict Studies encompasses various facets, including International Peace Building, Nexus between sustainable peace and reconciliation, and Conflict resolution in war-affected countries/regions. Author's 24-year-long military exposure has enabled him to find out more practical approaches towards peace and conflict studies and to bring positive outcomes in time to come.

Don Sooriyaarachchilage Sucharitha Vichithra Sooriyaarachchi

Don Sooriyaarachchilage Sucharitha Vichithra Sooriyaarachchi is a Ph.D. candidate in the International Peace and Coexistence Program at Hiroshima University, Japan. He also serves as a Qualified Teaching Assistant at the same institution. His dedication to academic pursuits is deeply rooted in his commitment to contributing to world peace through rigorous research and education. Before embarking on his academic journey, Sooriyaarachchi had a 17-year career as a Commissioned Officer in the Sri Lanka Air Force. In this capacity, he held multifaceted roles that included logistics data management and staff management. Importantly, he also lectured on Logistics Management, thereby bridging military expertise with educational outreach. Sooriyaarachchi's military experience was not without its ethical complexities. He had active conflict experience from 2004 to 2009, which has profoundly shaped his perspectives on peace and conflict. While serving, he witnessed the devastating impact of war on communities, an experience that has fortified his commitment to peace. He contends that identity politics often serve as the catalyst for ethnic conflicts, advocating for political solutions as the pathway to lasting peace. At Hiroshima University, his responsibilities extend beyond classroom management to include academic writing consultation at the Hiroshima University Writing Center. He also moderates team discussions and provides professional comments to improve academic writing across various courses in peace and conflict studies. His academic activities are a blend of research, teaching, and consultation, making him a well-rounded scholar and educator.

Mrs. Indeewari Kanchana Galagama

Mrs. Indeewari Kanchana Galagama is a distinguished senior lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at the esteemed University of Kelaniya. With a rich academic journey and a profound commitment to peace and conflict studies, she has become a notable figure in the field of peace-conflict resolution. She commenced her academic journey by obtaining a Bachelor of Arts in Peace and Conflict Resolution, laying the foundation for her future endeavors. Building on this strong foundation, she pursued a Master of Arts in Conflict, Peace, and Development Studies from the renowned University of Tribhuvan in 2013. Her master's program provided her with a deep understanding of the complexities of conflicts, their resolution, and their impacts on development. Furthered her studies by earning a Master of Science in Governance and Development Studies from the University of Antwerp in 2015. This international experience broadened her perspective, allowing her to view conflicts and their resolution through a global lens. Currently, she is pursuing a PhD in Peace and Conflict Resolution at Massey University, New Zealand. This doctoral journey signifies her commitment to advancing the field and contributing to the academic discourse surrounding conflict resolution. She has diligently honed her expertise by completing a Postgraduate Diploma in Disarmament and Non-proliferation, Human Rights, International Relations, Human Resource Management, and Counselling. Mrs. Galagama has authored numerous research papers in national and international reputable journals. Her research interests encompass a wide spectrum, including Conflict Resolution and Mediation, Gender and Conflict, Peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Conflict Analysis and Transformation, Transitional Justice and Human Rights, Peace Education and Conflict Resolution Skills, and Environmental Conflict and Peace.

Singhapurage Supasani Nisayuru Ariyawardana

Singhapurage Supasani Nisayuru Ariyawardana is a highly accomplished academic and researcher, currently serving as the Academic Coordinator at Lake House Media Academy, Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited, Colombo-01. Educationally, Ariyawardana completed her Bachelor's degree in International Studies, achieving Second Class (Upper Division) at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, in 2011. She furthered her academic pursuits and earned a Master's degree in Arts in International Relations from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 2015. Ariyawardana's research interests are diverse, focusing on international relations grounded in International Law, Diplomacy, Sri Lanka's Foreign Policies, the United Nations, and its specialized Agencies, Peace, and Conflict Resolution. Her expertise extends to areas such as international organizations, diplomacy, regional integration, and conflict resolution. This expertise led her to work as a temporary lecturer in the Department of International Studies at the University of Kelaniya. Additionally, she served as an Academic Coordinator for Politics and International Relations in the Department of Social Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, at The Open University of Sri Lanka. Prior to her academic roles, Ariyawardana worked as a tour executive/Manager for Scandinavian countries, including Germany and France, at leading companies in Sri Lanka until 2015. Ariyawardana's notable achievements include the publication of several research papers (14) encompassing her areas of expertise in International Relations, Travel, and Tourism. Moreover, she authored two significant books in 2022 and 2023, titled "Applications of Western IR Theories in the Contemporary Asia-Pacific Region" and "Asia Rising: Geopolitics in the 21st Century" showcasing her expertise and contributions to the field of International Relations.