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NATIONAL SECURITY

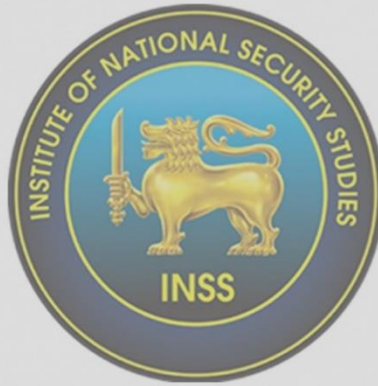**PAPERS**

Volume V

INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES

NATIONAL SECURITY PAPERS

Volume V

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ABOUT THE JOURNAL

Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) explores and researches on an array of issues pertaining to the national security of Sri Lanka. This journal is a compilation of such valuable academic work produced by the staff of INSS doing their tenure of employment over the past few years. The aim of this publication is to build awareness on pressing national security issues and threats, challenging Sri Lanka and proposes analysis and recommendations to decision makers and public leaders for addressing those challenges as viewed by authors of each paper. The journal of national security papers will no doubt meet research needs and as such are compiled with authentic materials with quality content on various facets of national security. All papers included in this publication have already been published elsewhere either online or in printed form in newspapers or publications of other academic organizations and have been reproduced by obtaining the final draft sent for its initial printing by each author.

FOREWORD

It gives me great honour and a privilege as the Acting Director General of the Institute of National Security Studies to write a foreword for the 5th edition of this prestigious publication of the institute, titled 'National Security Papers' which contains papers and commentaries that have been authored by the staff of INSS during their tenure serving in this important institution. All papers and commentaries included in this publication have been published or presented elsewhere in either seminars/conferences or in newspapers/websites. The staff of INSS are passionate on doing research and events on various aspects of national security and are determined to explore new dimensions that evolve that keep challenging this country, the region and the world at large.

The twenty (20) papers contained in this 5th edition have discussed a vast range of issues pertaining to national security such as health security, human security, financial security and terrorism.

Ms. Charani Patabendige, an Honorary Associate Research Fellow of the Institute is on record having got 10 articles (50% of the contents) authored by her included in this volume. The paper she has presented at the 8th International Research Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura is on a very important facet of national security which is 'disinformation' which she describes it as a national security menace. Towards the latter, she has given certain recommendations as to how best we could mitigate and prevent it in this digitalized world. Her other papers have highlighted other national security perspectives such as Netwar and Cyber war, food insecurity, cybercrimes, human security, reconciliation, religious extremism and digital literacy. Her two articles on disinformation and anti-corruption were published in a European website called Modern Diplomacy which is an invaluable platform for assessing and evaluating complex international issues that are often outside the boundaries of mainstream Western media and academia. Her research interests are counter-terrorism, religious extremism, drug menace, human rights and national security. She is currently serves in the capacity of an Acting Research Analyst and a Research Assistant of the Institute as well.

Wing Commander Udith Pathirana is one of the three Military Research Officers attached to the institute. Soon after his graduation from the prestigious Defence Services Command and Staff College at Sapugaskanda in December 2022, he was

attached to the institute as the representative from the Sri Lanka Air Force. Wing Commander Udith is an officer who is very passionate on academic work and is immensely helpful to other researchers in the institute with their academic work as well. He has authored two papers in this edition on Money laundering and terrorist financing highlighting the drawbacks we have in Anti money laundering mechanisms and a regulatory framework for money or value transfer services (MVTS) in Sri Lanka giving a few firm recommendations to prevent and mitigate.

Ms. Kalpani Gunatilake, is a senior Research Assistant who has read a BA (Special) degree in Economics from the University of Sabaragamuwa and has discussed about the high tax burdens in Sri Lanka in her paper which she says that it has led to an economic insecurity in the country and has recommended a more robust tax collecting system in Sri Lanka to mitigate the situation. Kalpani's research interest are economics, labour economics, microeconomics, economic security and national security.

How Chemsex has become a threat to the health security of Sri Lanka has been well discussed by Mr. Thusitha Bulathgama in his paper. He has shown the importance of rehabilitation of drug addicts under professional counselors. He too is a senior Research Assistant at INSS who has pursued a BA (Hons) degree in Peace and Conflict Resolution at the University of Kelaniya. His research interests are criminology, gender-based violence, criminal justice, climate change and national security.

Ms. Minoshi Perera, Research Assistant has discussed about corporal punishment at schools' verses child rights and has made certain recommendations in her paper to mitigate the situation. She is a double graduate having a Bachelor's degree in law from the Sir John Kotelawala Defence University and a bachelor's degree in Arts, in English and Linguistics from the University of Sri Jayewardenapura. Her research interests are National Security and Human Rights.

Dwelling in to a very pertinent and trending health security issue in Sri Lanka, Ms. Chandani Dissanayake, Research Assistant has discussed the Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). She has elaborately argued that unless the government take action to mitigate the vulnerability of this non communicable disease which is prevalent mainly in Uva, North Western, Central, and Eastern provinces, it could lead to loss of human productivity which will be a grave security threat to Sri Lanka. Ms. Chandani is an Honours graduate in Arts on Sociology from the University of Kelaniya and her research interest are global and local health security, gender and

gender -based violence, criminology and national security.

Ms. Madhushi Sandamini, Research Assistant in her paper has deliberated on 'Dengue fever' arguing that it is not only a public health emergency but that it is a human security challenge as well to Sri Lanka. Showing ample statistics in this field, she has brought out that rapid urbanization is one of the main reasons for the increase of this epidemic and has recommended some concrete steps to mitigate the situation. Ms. Madhushi Sandamini has health security, social security and environmental security as her research interest and is a graduate in Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Kelaniya.

Ms. Methma Ranaweera, Intern (Research) has also discussed various human security issues in our country and the need and implementation of a human security doctrine. Ms. Sankani Gunawardhane, Intern (Research) has chosen to write on the impacts of climate change and Ms. Darshika Sewwandi, Intern (Research) on impacts of air pollution, both on Environment security.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate all authors for penning these articles especially as they have made an effort and found time to do so during their leisure which has both benefitted them as well as the institution not forgetting the enthusiastic readers of this edition as well.

Rear Admiral Dimuthu Gunawardena,
RWP**, RSP, VSV, USP, nswc, psc, hdmc
Acting Director General

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Food Insecurity: The Current Crisis

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige
Published on Modern Diplomacy, 23rd January 2023

Sri Lanka is facing hardships immensely. People are struggling to fulfill their basic needs and they have sacrificed their mid-term goals and long-term goals. Food security is one such sector that is gravely affected due to the current economic crisis. Food security, as defined by the United Nations Committee on World Food Security, means that "all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life". No need to say that Sri Lanka has no food security and this is detrimental to the lives of the people. According to the World Food Program, 6.3 million people, or over 30 percent of Sri Lanka's population, are "food insecure" and require humanitarian assistance. Of these, around 5.3 million people are either reducing meals or skipping meals, and at least 65,600 people are severely food insecure. According to a study by Save the Children in June 2022, 59% of families reported not being able to meet all their food needs fully. In addition, two in three respondents noted that their households had to rely on less preferred or less expensive foods at least once a week before the survey. The report stated: "Over half of all children had to eat less preferred food and children had to reduce their quantity of food intake. About one in ten children had reduced their frequency of food intake (twice or less)." The recent situation in the country is a predicament of various factors including, economic mismanagement, the banning of chemical fertilizers in April 2021, Covid -19 pandemic, the Ukraine war as well as the debt crisis. Apart from the factors which lead to Sri Lanka's some other matters such as environmental stresses and lack of policy responses to global change also affects food insecurity. Irrespective of government measures Sri Lanka is still batting with day-to-day needs. Therefore, it is high time that government should cater to address the needs of the public.

According to Food and Agriculture Organization Policy brief, there are different dimensions of food security. One such is food availability, which is the availability of sufficient quantities of food of appropriate quality, supplied through domestic production or imports (including food aid). The next is food access which is the access by individuals to adequate resources (entitlements) for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet. Entitlements are defined as the set of all commodity bundles over which a person can establish command given the legal, political, economic, and social arrangements of the community in which they live (including traditional rights such as access to common resources). When it comes to utilization, utilization of food through adequate diet, clean water, sanitation, and health care to reach a state of

nutritional well-being where all physiological needs are met. This brings out the importance of non-food inputs in food security. The third dimension is stability, which is the ability to be food secure, a population, household, or individual must have access to adequate food at all times. They should not risk losing access to food as a consequence of sudden shocks (e.g., an economic or climatic crisis) or cyclical events (e.g, seasonal food insecurity). The concept of stability can therefore refer to both the availability and access dimensions of food security. Applying this to the Sri Lankan context, it is clear that these dimensions are not fulfilled well.

As a result of hardships, people took over to the streets and demanded their rights by way of Aragalaya, they were asking to reduce prices, penalize the corrupt, and give a corrupt-free country. The situation escalated and people-appointed leaders stepped down. Irrespective of the new leadership, the government still is struggling to provide for the needs of the people. At present, "in the face of Sri Lanka's economic crisis, food insecurity remains at concerning levels. 36 percent of households are food-insecure, according to World Food Program's (WFP's) latest Household Food Security Survey (October 2022). Furthermore, in urban areas of Colombo, food inflation (year-on-year) was at 73.7 percent in November, according to the latest Colombo Consumer Price Index (October 2022). While food availability has widely improved from the previous month, coinciding with the Yala harvest, markets continue to report concerns around price volatility, according to WFP's October Market Functionality Index. High and unstable prices are further impacting food accessibility for households".

Ministry of Agriculture has implemented the concept of "Ekwa Wawamu, Rata Dinamu". Where the community must take necessary actions to grow essential crops in the backyard and condominium property owners on their balconies. Moreover, Sri Lanka President's office established a Food Security Program Unit to address increasing poverty and hunger information. Accordingly, Samurdhi recipient families with more than 05 members, families with disabled and people with chronic illnesses, poverty-stricken families with children below 05 years, families without a husband or wife, families with pregnant and lactating mothers, and poverty-stricken families who have not even received primary education who are facing severe food insecurity have been identified as criteria for assisting with the World Food Program. In addition, programs are conducted around the country to educate the public, such are, the National Program for Food Security and Nutrition which was held on the 20th at Mampe Sanasa Hall and Honnantara North, Sri Vijayanandanarama Temple under the leadership of Dr. Suren Batagoda, Presidential Adviser on the National Program for Food Security and Nutrition, under the concept, "All families in a village should be strong at the family level", rural economic revitalization committees have been established covering every village to look into the problems faced by each family and

provide solutions.

When looking at international assistance, since the start of emergency operations in mid-August 2022, WFP has reached 576,944 people with cash assistance (479,908) and in-kind assistance (97,036). This is a result of WFP's response scale-up aimed at reaching 1.4 million people through unconditional food assistance (cash or in-kind). Further, WFP distributed rice to 3,517 schools in November and has reached 479,087 children to date. WFP has further planned to support 1 million children with school meals through the Government's national school meals program. WFP is coordinating with the Government and donors to provide raw materials (maize and soybean) to the Government's Thriposha facility which is targeting approximately 1 million pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and young children with nutritious food support.

Irrespective of all these measures, people are still struggling to survive. It is praiseworthy that the government as well as international actors are aiding the public. Yet, the government of Sri Lanka as the custodian of the public has more duties to do in addition to the good things they are doing at the moment. Firstly, it is important to understand hunger as a threat. Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition mentions that every man, woman, and child have the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition and to develop fully and maintain their physical and mental faculties. Therefore, the government should increase resource allocation to improve food security, concessions should be provided to low-income families. Women, children, and lactating mothers should be given extra prominence, vocational training should be taught to strengthen the capacity of individuals, this will uplift their social standards since they will be employed.

Charani Patabendige is a Research Assistant and Acting Research Analyst at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are her own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.

Cyberwar, Netwar: The Untouchable and Unpredictable

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige
Published on Modern Diplomacy, 31st January 2023

Territorial integrity, sovereignty and non-interference are salient features of a just and secure state. For a state to exist, compete and survive in the international context, a country must be well equipped. The unbiased, neutral and non-aligned movement is the best way to reach heights, especially for small states. However, this is not an easy task, 'everything has a price'. The existence and co-dependence of a state are made further vulnerable as well as strengthened by way of 'information'. Unlike in past, when troops protected borders, at present country must face and react to content generated and disseminated on online platforms.

Cyberwar and Netwar are mechanisms that are used by certain individuals as well as entities to infiltrate systems, pass a message, steal information or change the material content. "Cyberwar" is the act of "disrupting, if not destroying, information and communication systems". On the contrary, "Netwar" is to "disrupt, damage, or modify what a target population knows or thinks it knows about the world around it". These threats are vicious to national security. Since the whole world is digitalized, any information regardless of its credibility reaches a wide audience. There are various modes of cyberwar including Phishing, Ransomware, E-commerce data interception, Crimeware-as-a-Service, Cyber Scams and Crypto-jacking. (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 1995) states, that a Netwar may focus on public or elite opinion, or both. It may involve diplomacy, propaganda and psychological campaigns, political and cultural subversion, deception of or interference with local media, infiltration of computer networks and databases and efforts to promote dissident or opposition movements across computer networks.

According to Blackfog's 2021 State of Ransomware Report, government agencies were the top targets for cybercriminals, followed by education, healthcare, services, technology, manufacturing and retail. According to Curran, Concannon and McKeever (in Janczewski and Colarik 2008: 03) have pointed out; the LTTE became the world's first terrorist outfit to attack a country's computer system in 1998. Another example is India. In August 2013, Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI) faced a Cyberattack. 'Technical snag' hit the operations of terminal no. 03. Nisar & StepovayaIn (2022) has cited (UNODC, 2021) which states that in September in Malaysia, a web-hosting service was the target of a ransomware attack demanding US$ 900,000 in cryptocurrency and In May, four subsidiaries of an international

insurance company in Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and the Philippines were hit by a ransomware attack asking for US$ 20 million. Where that being said for cyber-war, net war is also a crucial problem. This is explicit in Russia and Ukraine conflict where information advantage is heavily discussed and debated. Byman (2022) has mentioned, "Confrontation between Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE (the so-called "Quartet") and Qatar, for example, began in 2017 in part due to social media exploitation involving hacked email accounts and associated disinformation". Sri Lanka too faces disinformation by LTTE and its international networks.

Threats, which occur on online platforms, are equally important as much as militaristic aspects of warfare. Where the militaristic aspect includes conquering and declaring power, Cyberwar and Netwar disrupt systems and brainwash people respectively. Since crimes conducted, are unpredictable, intangible and cross borders, ascertaining the criminal is daring. Due to these reasons, imposing liability as to whether it is collective or individual becomes strenuous. Furthermore, lack of experience, expertise in personnel, lack of technology and inadequate infrastructure can be identified as problems. Information illiteracy is another pertaining issue, which is the inability of individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use information effectively. Moreover, cyber-attacks are widely done due to their low cost and widespread nature.

With that being said, it is imperative to reiterate, that national security is threatened by Cyberwar as well as Netwar. Thus, any country must overcome the challenges mentioned afore. For that, to fight cyber war, enhancing technological infrastructure and technical capacity is important. In netwar, information literacy must be instilled to the population. Hence, people will be able to evaluate the quality, credibility and validity of the content. In addition, it is crucial to have a reporting mechanism for false content disseminated online. International cooperation is effective to combat Netwar and Cyberwar. Likewise, it is vital to sign and ratify necessary laws and follow resolutions in the international context. Furthermore, individuals, government, as well as private entities, must behave in a cyber-resilient manner that they are otherwise not incentivized to do.

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Chemsex is Threatening Health Security

By Thusitha Bulathgama
Published on Ground Views, 03rd February 2023

The world has become more complicated day by day and people are trying to find new ways to enjoy their lives such as using drugs and liquor as external happiness tools. There are many new drugs that are not compatible with the human body causing changes to patterns of behavior. In the past few months, Sri Lanka has experienced several storms including an economic crisis, a political crisis, a change in leadership, protests and an increase in HIV cases. Now there is a new threat arising among young people that is known as Chemsex.

The meaning of Chemsex is having sex under the influence of specific drugs to support, enhance, disinhibit, or enable sexual behavior. Chemsex carries many hazards and may have long lasting effects. In Europe and Asia, the term Chemsex is used. It is referred to as PnP, which stands for party and play, in the US and Australia. People are unable to control their feelings, especially when they have consumed high doses of drugs. It impacts heterosexual men and women, transgender women and non-binary individuals. There are many usage levels ranging from occasional drug use to regular drug use.

According to Dr. Rasanjali Hettiarachchi, Director of the National STD and AIDS Control Programme (NSACP), chemical sex has increased among young people between the ages of 18 to 30. She said that this form of sexual behavior was prevalent among the youth, particularly in Colombo and Gampaha, where there was a wide range of network among youth who organize private parties through social media.
While this type of risky sex had previously been practiced, the use of the ICE drug has contributed to the rise, which can affect health security in the country.

Chemsex involves four drugs including methamphetamine, which is also known as crystal, ice or meth. This is an extremely addictive drug and one of the most common drugs used for Chemsex. The central nervous system is stimulated immediately and results in increased physical activity, enhanced wakefulness and a reduced feeling of tiredness. It can energize, stimulate sex and give a sense of confidence and strength. The second one is mephedrone, which is also a powerful stimulant that increases alertness, talkativeness and gives a strong sense of connection and empathy with others. The third drug is GHB, which is a sedative that can give a feeling of euphoria along with a reduction of inhibitions, enhanced libido and increased sensitivity to touch. But a few milliliters could make the difference between a recreational dose and

an overdose.

Since ice was readily available among drug dealers, there was an upsurge in usage among young people who then engaged in sexual behavior. People take part in Chemsex for many different reasons including to increase their confidence if they have low self-esteem; escape from the issues and reality; manage depression, stress and loneliness; expand one's social network by meeting new people; and to belong to a group.

These drugs can give a sense of being impervious to harm and confidence, making you take risks that you ordinarily wouldn't. This means that you frequently ignore your fundamental requirements such as eating, hydration and sleeping. Your relationship, job and health are impacted. People participating in Chemsex could have problems with physical well-being including the risk of accidents and injuries; nutritional problems, lung and heart conditions, dental issues and disrupted sleeping patterns; mental health issues such as severe depression and psychotic episodes; emotional problems such as loneliness, family and relationship issues, low self-esteem and difficulty concentrating; financial problems and unemployment; drug overdose and suicide; and crimes related to chemsex.

It is clear that engaging in Chemsex is a risk for health security. The NSACP is contacting people who are engaging in Chemsex to provide them with medical support to recover by conducting clinics. A website has an online reservation system that provides the most convenient means for conducting HIV screening tests with the NSACP and preferred private practitioners while handling data to ensure privacy.

To lessen the drug menace, rehabilitation is vital. Instead of locking them up and mixing them with criminals, the authorities should concentrate on rehabilitating drug addicts, especially young students. The rehabilitation procedure needs to be carefully carried out under the supervision of professional counselors. Class room counseling is another important initiative to implement. The Ministry of Education should introduce counseling and awareness programs to educate students on the grave consequences of using drugs.

Thusitha Bulathgama is a Research Assistant at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are his own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.

Incorporating Human Security Doctrine for Sri Lanka's Present-Day Context

By Methma Ranaweera
Published on Colombo Telegraph, 08th February 2023

The seventh UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has stated that "We will not enjoy security without development, we will not enjoy development without security, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights." This accurately depict the complexity as well as the importance of human security. Human security is commonly understood as prioritizing the security of people, especially their welfare, safety and well-being, instead of that of states. In modern arena "it is argued that human security is poverty, population displacement, hunger, disease, environmental degradation, and social exclusion." The recognition given to development, peace, security, and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. It can be identified as encapsulated in the concept of human security.

The human security framework was developed by the "United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the 1994 Human Development Report (1994 HDR) and significantly this concept was broadened in the 2000s by the Commission on Human Security (CHS) which was designed to reframe understandings of insecurity as well as introduce new approaches and tools for reducing vulnerabilities, particularly by non-state actors." The UNDP suggests that "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" are the two main components of human security. These correspond to the concepts of freedom from "deprivation" and freedom from "violent conflict," respectively, according to terminology used by the Commission on Human Security. It is identified "that the main risks Human security are organized violence and relative poverty." "Organized violence is caused by social and economic inequality, by group aspiration for being dominant or incapability to maintain collective consensus and relative poverty is a condition in which some groups are perceived as relatively better than others. This creates collective frustrations which lead to collective violence".

In recent past, Sri Lanka has dealt with many human security challenges. They can be identified as the civil war which was there for nearly three decades, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the countrywide protests in which people from different socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds came together to call for deep political and democratic reforms, and accountability for economic mismanagement and corruption. As a result of it, the President resigned on 14th of July 2022. However, it can be identified that Sri Lanka is facing an economic crisis and is still in the process of overcoming it. This economic crisis is a result governance

system of the country failing to identify human security as a high priority.

Historically, Sri Lanka is considered one of the more stable and secures countries in the South Asian region. In the years after independence, it gradually dawned on the government that maintaining national security was a crucial and most challenging contemporary issue faced by the country. Even though there were deep sense of peace building measures done to restore the country, yet national security was led to an unstable situation. It is mainly because of short sightedness, inadequate decision making, conducting own agendas in the country. Unfortunately, there were no common agenda to the country.

There has been considerable discussion of ways that human security can assist in identifying insecurities and the general operating principles and implementing development-related projects. Yet, "there is a lack of an evidence base and accuracy of the information for operationalizing and ensuring human security remains an obstacle". At the moment the country is in a crisis, if the government does not take necessary measures and consider the policy recommendations given by the stake holders this situation might escalate and country may lead to extreme poverty. Further they need to adopt Humanitarian principles and address human suffering to ensure the right of civilians under local and international law to be protected from discrimination, violence, torture, and other serious violations of human rights; they also stress the right of civilians to receive, in exceptional circumstances, material assistance necessary for their survival.

As per Article 27 (1) of the constitution describes directive principle as 'The Directive Principles of State Policy herein contained shall guide Parliament, the President and the Cabinet of Ministers in the enactment of laws and the governance of Sri Lanka for the establishment of a just and free society.' And further in the Article 27 (2) (a) states that 'The State is pledged to establish in Sri Lanka a Democratic Socialist Society, the objectives of which include – the full realization of the fundamental rights and freedoms of all persons. The most important article is that Article 27 (2) (c). Accordingly, the realization by all citizens of an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing, the continuous improvement of living conditions and the full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities; it is the duty of the State shall recognize and protect the family as the basic unit of society The State shall recognize and protect the family as the basic unit of society as per Article 27(12). However, it is obvious that the basic unit of the society is now challenged due to the crisis situation. The cost of goods is increasing day by day and the wages of citizen do not increase parallel therefore it is been challenged undoubtably.

Sri Lanka needs common goals to ensure human security. Therefore, government can adopt goals that are suggested and available internationally. For example, sustainable development goals. "On 1st of January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at a historic UN Summit – officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind. The SDGs, also known as Global Goals, build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and aim to go further to end all forms of poverty. While the SDGs are not legally binding, governments are expected to take ownership and establish national frameworks for the achievement of the 17 Goals. Countries have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review of the progress made in implementing the Goals, which will require quality, accessible and timely data collection. Regional follow-up and review will be based on national-level analyses and contribute to follow-up and review at the global level" It is an identical progress that "United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for 2023–2027 articulates the collective vision and contribution of the United Nations system to support Sri Lanka to accelerate actions towards the achievement of the SDGs. It is anchored in a rights-based approach and is underpinned by the principle of leaving no one behind as the country makes progress on all three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental."

Even though Sri Lanka has shown a positive trend towards this, the current situation of economic security is threatening. It is uncertain and unpredictable. And most of the time there is no plan for the distribution of the necessary items and citizens of the country are not used to producing them on their own. They are solely dependent on the import items. Furthermore, the quality of the items that are made in Sri Lanka for Sri Lankan people is most of the time at very high prices or very low in quality. Therefore, some of the triumphs in SDGs are challenges at present.

Even though, Human security is established in the past two decades it can be identified as a people-centred approach to foreign policy that recognizes that lasting stability cannot be achieved until people are protected from violent threats to their rights, safety, or lives. In essence, "human security means safety for people from both violent and non-violent threats. It is a condition or state of being characterized by freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, their safety, or even their lives." It is important to state that once human security is established individually national security will eventually establish.

When implementing the human security doctrine in Sri Lanka initially is necessary

to give an interpretation to human security which leads to national security eventually. And then it needs to have development goals, long-term and short-term. Furthermore, Sri Lankan needs to work for common goals without leading personal agendas and reliable and unbiased decisions to ensure human security as well as national security. And also establish a mechanism to get accurate information regarding national issues.

Methma Ranaweera is an Intern (Research) at the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) the premier think tank on national security established under the Ministry of Defence. The opinions expressed in this article are his own and not necessarily reflective of the institute.

Human Security Implications of Online Hate Speech against Women: The Barrier to Women's Political Participation

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige
Published on Modern Diplomacy, 09th March 2023

Madam Sirimavo Bandaranaike, a Sri Lankan was the first female Prime minister in the world. Her beloved daughter, a Sri Lankan politician Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga served as the fifth executive President of Sri Lanka. Thereafter, there were no female presidents and female prime ministers elected. Even though the female population in Sri Lanka is high, female politicians are very less and this is a grave lacuna in leadership. For example, in Sri Lanka's parliament out of 225 members, there are only 12 lady members at present. Even though, female participation is voiced and backed by policies, females struggle to come into positions of power due to various reasons and hate speech against women is one such obstacle. In addition, it is also pivotal to identify and understand the lack of political participation of women, as a human security issue as pronounced by United Nations. International Foundation for Electoral Systems, in the report titled "Women's Political Representation in Sri Lanka: Electoral System Analysis and Recommendations", mentions the barriers women face which hinder their political participation. Accordingly, challenges are electoral system structure, lack of transparency in the political party framework, weak political finance regulations, Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWE), and Discrimination in the media. Even though the said barriers are crucial, social status, religion, level of education, and economic status are a few other examples.

One of the existing and undeniable threats, which hinder female political participation, is incitement and online hate speech against women. "Online violence against women in Politics" (2020) has stated that, "almost three-quarters of women Internet users worldwide have experienced some form of online violence". Accordingly, online presence, mainly through social media, can be described as a double-edged sword for women politicians. "While it is a unique and extremely useful tool to directly communicate with constituencies and to mobilize support and engagement, it provides a forum where violence can proliferate with impunity". Most of the time women are objectified, criticized, insulted, ridiculed, and taken lightly by both men and other women counterparts.

According to an Action brief on UN women titled "Eliminating Online Hate Speech To Secure Women's Political Participation", "Thai opposition member Pannika Wanich has experienced "all kinds of harassment", from online attacks to body shaming and hate speech and in the Philippines, opposition Senator Leila de Lima has been vilified and harassed on social media platforms, and thirty-year-old Sarah Elago, one of the youngest lawmakers in the Philippines, became subject of a fake sex video that circulated on several websites. The Action brief has further stated, that research conducted by Amnesty International found that "women politicians in India receive on average 113 hostile or abusive tweets per day, which equals 1 in every 7 tweets about women politicians, with a fifth being sexist or misogynistic. In total, this amounted to 1 million problematic or abusive mentions of 95 women politicians between March and May 2019, or over 10,000 hostile or abusive tweets every day". When looking at Sri Lankan context it is the same. As per Hashtag Generation's team of Social Media Analysts, they have "identified that 25% of all harmful speech on social media platforms in Sri Lanka in 2021, targeted women. Furthermore, discriminatory expressions (with a focus on misogyny) was the second-highest category documented in 2021, with a record of 64.85%". The analysts have further stated, "Female politicians such as Rohini Wijeratne, Hirunika Premachandra, Diana Gamage, Harini Amarasuriya, Pavithra Wanniarachchi, Sitha Arambepola, and Geetha Kumarasinghe were targets of Harassment. In most instances, statements that they made were met with contempt and derogatory reactions from social media users. Undoubtedly, men and women are different biologically, and due to those biological reasons, decision-making is affected. Politics in the eyes of a man will be different from politics in the eyes of a woman. Even though they may have the same point, the way they perceive things are different. Parliamentarians are public representatives, they are obliged to raise concerns, clarify doubts, propose essential matters, and oppose detrimental matters. When there is a gender-sensitive matter or concern about women, the decision should be weighed, debated, and perceived by women. However, unfortunately, as parliament and the majority of decision-making bodies consist of male counterparts and therefore, the interests and grievances of the females are unheard of, unreported, and seldom discussed.

Major drawbacks in the system are, irrespective of the high number of hate speeches against female politicians, there is no sufficient conviction on such wrongdoers, they are not pronounced guilty of bullying or defamation. Seldom do we see key figures apologizing and that too is done for the sake of escapism. There are no separate investigation and monitoring mechanisms dedicated to social media platforms. This underrepresentation leads to the erosion of faith in government, marginalization of women in power, and women who are intending to climb the ladder of power. Rather than labelling women as better off as "eye candy" or as "pleasers", it is high time for the government as well as other institutions to take the matter seriously. Due to those

reasons, there is a need to eradicate the existing hatred and anger online.

As mentioned in the introduction, the lack of female political participation is a human security issue. As stated by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women Department of Economic and Social Affairs in 1999 (www.un.org) "One missing element, however, in human security discussions has been an understanding of the fundamental differences and inequalities between women's and men's security. Due to that, to address gender equality goals and objectives effectively, five specific and interrelated issues need to be incorporated into the discussion of human security. The report has stated them as, "violence against women and girls, gender inequalities in control over resources, gender inequalities in power and decision-making, women's human rights, women (and men) as actors, not victims". Therefore, it is crystalline that to achieve the above voice rights it is crucial to have female representation; the breach of it is a breach of human security.

The government must first and foremost, view and understand the need for the political participation of women as a human security concern. Therefore, to secure female political participation the barrier of hate speech must be mitigated as well as eradicated. If not, women in power, as well as women who wish to enter into power feel belittled and victimized. Government as well as other institutions must maintain a zero-tolerance policy for hate speech and criminalize them and such action will set an example. There should be a body of investigation and monitoring dedicated to online platforms to lodge complaints and answer promptly. The wrongdoers must be penalized and a public apology should be given to the aggrieved party. Eventually, this will lead to the restoration of faith in women and encourage them to participate in politics and make sound decisions.

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Annihilating Disinformation; The National Security Menace

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige
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Introduction

'Disinformation', is defined as the information, which is created to deceive, lie or support, either an individual's or a social or political group's agenda. At present, Sri Lanka is facing disinformation on a higher scale. May it be a tweet, Instagram or Facebook post, the impact is tremendous and its damage can be irremediable. Repercussions of disinformation have been seen in Sri Lanka, as those formulated and spread by LTTE and its international network as well as by extremists in every religion. Due to disinformation, countries have passed a plethora of legislatures including Canada's Tamil Genocide Education Week Act. Furthermore, this was seen in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday Attack in 2019. Disinformation creates social division by disrupting harmony, creates unnecessary fear among people, results in ethnic division and radicalizes the community leading to separatism. Due to such reasons, disinformation which is a menace to national security needs to be mitigated and prevented.

Research Problem/s, Objective/s

Research problem- To identify and explore the need to annihilate disinformation, the national security menace.

Research objectives

- To identify disinformation
- To identify the impact of disinformation on national security
- To provide recommendations to mitigate and prevent disinformation to annihilate the national security menace

Research questions

- What is disinformation?
- What is the impact of disinformation on national security?
- What are the recommendations to mitigate and prevent disinformation to annihilate the national security menace?

Materials and Methods

Research has utilized a qualitative perspective. It has used both primary as well as secondary sources. Secondary sources such as books, journal articles, proceedings and reports were used. Information from an online survey consisting of fifty random individuals were collected.

Results and Discussion

Social media is the biggest platform where disinformation ensues. Since the world can be accessed at our fingertips, the dissemination of disinformation is done without any impediment. There are diverse reasons why terrorists and extremists resort to social media. It is efficient, reaches a wide audience, it is simple, affordable and manipulative. When disinformation becomes 'viral', youth embrace it. Accordingly, disinformation sets a precedent. For instance, despite the Sri Lankan government defeating the military attempts of the LTTE, the LTTE international network is accusing Sri Lanka of the offence of 'genocide'.

Thus, it is important to recognize disinformation at its initial stages. For example, to find extremist or terrorist content on the Twitter platform is simply a matter of using hashtags. Social media uses community standards to recognize terrorist-related content. In view of that, if the content is extremist or terrorist-related, social media takes down the respective content on their own or if reported. Therefore, ascertaining the identity of the perpetrators who share extremist content is not impossible, but it is strenuous. Anti-terror laws are not a novel phenomenon in the world. As per Dr Agnes Callamard, the "aftermath of 9/11 saw the adoption of anti-terrorism laws and policies throughout the world, many of which resulted in restrictions to freedom of expression. In 2015, the rise of Daesh, responsible for terrorist attacks in Iraq, Syria, France, Turkey and Tunisia to mention a few, has led governments to adopt additional measures, including the promulgation of a state of emergency, and new anti-terrorism and surveillance laws." Sri Lanka too has an array of laws including, the Sri Lankan Constitution 1978, Public Security Ordinance, Police Ordinance and Prevention of Terrorism Act together with its regulations.

The Sri Lankan Constitution 1978, in Article 14(1) (a) states that "Every citizen is entitled to the freedom of speech and expression, including publication". However, these rights are not absolute. Article 15(7) of the Constitution restricts the rights enumerated in Article 14 (1) (a) in light of national security. The precedence given to national security was also seen in the international context as well. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) mentions the right to privacy. Article 8(1) mentions the right to respect for private and family life, his home and his correspondence. Nonetheless, 8(2) restricts the enjoyment of 8(1) in terms of national security. According to International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), some human rights, defined under article 4 of the ICCPR can never be suspended, including during a state of emergency. Even so, freedom of expression may be restricted under the conditions defined by Article 19(3). During the online survey, it was identified that majority of the respondents use social media and admit it as a platform of falsehoods. Majority were ignorant on what is disinformation. Majority knew that falsehoods are circulated yet their knowledge was limited to false news relating to politics. Respondents were unaware of disinformation campaigns by LTTE and its international networks. Respondents agreed that the government monitor social media. Furthermore, respondents admitted that journalists violate rights of people when reporting news or commenting.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Banning terrorist content is obligatory. It is vital to create awareness of the gravity of disinformation, the reasons behind it, the need to dissuade its ramifications and the penalties of the crime. Therefore, threat patterns should be gauged by espousing a prospective study. It is pivotal to implement the laws as they are. Last but not least, it important to strike a balance between national security and freedom of expression.

Keywords: Disinformation, Freedom of Expression, National Security, Social Media, Sri Lanka's Post-War Allegations

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Impact Of Climate Change in Sri Lanka: National Security Challenges & Way Forward

By Sankani Gunawardhana
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What is Climate Change?

According to the United Nations "Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns". In the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Article 1 defines "Climate change means a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods. In addition, it elaborates Climate Change means the totality of the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere and geosphere and their interactions. Further, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Global Climate Change Facts define, as "Climate change is a long-term change in the average weather patterns that have come to define Earth's local, regional and global climates". Moreover, according to the Climate Change Knowledge Portal for Development Practitioners and Policy Makers in the World Bank refers Climate Change as "Observed changes over the 20th century include increases in global air and ocean temperature, rising global sea levels, long-term sustained widespread reduction of snow and ice cover, and changes in atmospheric and ocean circulation as well as regional weather patterns, which influence seasonal rainfall conditions". Furthermore, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) refers to a change in the state of the climate that can be identified by using the variability of its properties for time.

Sri Lanka Geo-strategic Location

Sri Lanka is geo-strategically located in the Indian Ocean. The Island consists of a mountainous area in the south-central region and a surrounding coastal plain. The Climate of Sri Lanka is wet and warm, ideal for forest growth; almost all of the nation's land area was at one time covered with forests. World Bank (202) has stated that, "over the last century, more than two-thirds of this forest cover, rich in biodiversity, has been removed to accommodate human use". As consequences, the country suffers from landslides, floods and droughts causing immense disturbances to civil people lives. (Disaster Management Centre) According to Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative ND-GAIN, Sri Lanka is recognized as vulnerable to climate change impacts, ranked 100th out of 181 countries in the 2017 ND -GAIN index.

Legal Background of Climate Change in Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan government has established several ministries such as Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Forestry, Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and Ministry of Estate Housing and Community Infrastructure to formulate rules and regulations to mitigate climate

change impacts in Sri Lanka. These ministries comprised with authorities such as Central Environmental Authority, Sri Lanka Disaster Management Centre, Sri Lanka Coast Guard Authority, and Marine Environment Protection Authority to implement those mitigation measures in local levels. In addition, the National Environmental Act, No. 47 of 1980 SC 23A and SC 23B of the Act stated regulations on Environmental Protection License Prescribed Activities and Quality Regulation. In addition, the Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka has passed an amendment to the Act; Fauna and Flora Protection (Amendment) Act, No.22 Of 2009 for the conservation and protection of Sri Lankan habitats. Furthermore, The Sri Lanka Disaster Management Act No.13 of 2005, along with the National Disaster Management Policy was enacted to establish to ensure the safety of all citizens from disasters with minimal harm. The Mahaweli Authority has issued the National Climate Change Policy of Sri Lanka to act upon local issues. It is clear that the government has added some effort to address climate change.

Impact of Climate Change in Sri Lanka

Climate change impacts take on several different forms. Some are highly noticeable and more immediate such as extreme weather events like high intensity rainfall followed by flash floods and some are long term such as drought or sea level rise. (The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change https://www.ipcc.ch/) The ways in which people's lives and livelihoods are affected by climate change impacts depends under three categories. They are exposure, vulnerability and coping capacity to these risks. Exposure is the physical presence of groups of people, infrastructure and other assets in areas prone to climate stressors and shocks. Vulnerability means the tendency of exposed elements such as groups of people, infrastructure and other assets to be adversely impacted by hazard events. Coping capacity refers to the ability of an affected population to cope with climate change risks. (IPC, 2022).

Further, Climate Change stressors can affect the human security of the country. Different threats to human security can be grouped under seven main categories. They are Health, Economic, Political, Food, Environment, Personal and Community. With regard to Health security, in Sri Lanka Diarrhea, Leptospirosis and Dengue are common diseases that has increasing affect due to climate change for the public. In addition to these epidemics skin diseases and respiratory diseases also has increasing effect due to climate change. Economic and Political instability also occurs as an impact of climate change in Sri Lanka and that creates social unrest within the communality. Climate change increasing effects on food security at all time. Furthermore, human beings rely on a healthy physical environment but due to climate changes the country face environmental threats like disruption in the usual function of ecosystem.

National Security Challenges of Climate Change in Sri Lanka

Climate change is not typically a direct cause of insecurity. However, when it converges with other political, social and economic pressures, the impacts of climate change can exacerbate existing drivers of insecurity and eventually cause conflict. It

is important to remember that these risks do not affect everyone equally. In many cases, climate-related security risks deepen gender inequalities, which can further entrench socio-economic inequalities and vice versa – leaving those already marginalised further disadvantaged. However, shifting gender and social norms can also present new opportunities for promoting gender equality.

One of the main challenges in Sri Lanka due to climate can be identified as resource extraction competition. The combination of climate and conflict factors has meant that more people in the country now depend on fewer of the same resources. Droughts and conflict have forced more people to move to highly populated areas close to water sources, while industrialization and overpopulation have simultaneously reduced the amount of land use available for agriculture. This has also led to tension among farmers, increasing the potential for competition and conflict over natural resources to escalate.

Secondly, livelihood insecurity can be taken as another challenge. Climate change and conflict are disrupting livelihoods by affecting the ability of local populations to plan how, when and what to graze, fish and cultivate. Finding farmland that is both fertile and safe is increasingly difficult, and herders are seeing their animals die from thirst or hunger or else stolen by criminals. For example, in December 2022 hundreds of cattle in the Northern Province and Eastern Province had died due to extreme cold conditions, which had led to agony for farmers in those provinces. It also affects the economy of the country because these areas provide dairy products to the country.

Thirdly, volatile food prices and provision also severely affect the economy of the country. The impacts of climate change are disrupting food production in the country. Rising temperatures are threatening the viability of staple crops and making current cropping patterns less effective, decreasing food yields. This is having immediate and direct impacts on food availability in the country, which can increase food prices in urban areas, economic and health insecurity. This causes impaired food production in the country, land loss from flooding, and reduced access to fresh water are likely to cause internally displaced persons. As a result, people might engage in criminal activities due to their situation and that will be another additional strain on national security.

In conclusion, modern world climate change stresses become more severe, reversing its effects become even more difficult. Tackling the challenges of the climate change crisis goes beyond institutional reforms and needs deep change in mindsets and cultures of the public. Irrespective of all these measures taken by the government, people are still struggling to survive and adapt their lives with climate change. It should be appreciated that government of Sri Lanka has taken certain initiatives towards the mitigation of climate change impacts. Nevertheless, governing institutions and regulating bodies of the government needs to re-assist their strategic objectives with international accepted standards that would support to overcome impact of climate change in Sri Lanka. Further law enforcement authorities need to

increase their effort on protecting vulnerable population without being victimized.

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Voicing Against Disinformation

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige
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In the digital era, information dissemination is not an arduous task. Information can reach many places even multiple times. However, not all information that is disseminated is true and accurate. Often information is inaccurately transmitted and this can be with or without intention. However, in the case of disinformation, there is always the guilty intention, it is the deliberate act of disseminating false information to deceive its recipients. Disinformation mostly happens in the online space which means it is a cross-border crime. Since it is extraterritorial, widely available and publicly accessible, the parties to disinformation are more than one. The impact of disinformation does not only affect one but society at large.

The rationale behind intentionally falsifying content is hard to ascertain, however, visible reasons are to gain monetary advancement, political reasons, acts of terrorism and extremism. With the rise of digitalization of the world disinformation is escalating on a great scale and yet to date it has become extremely hard to counter and mitigate disinformation. (Office Of Inspector General Department of Homeland Security, 2022) has stated that "the objectives of disinformation campaigns can be broad or targeted, [for example], campaigns may aim to erode public trust in our government and the Nation's critical infrastructure sectors, negatively affect public discourse, or even sway elections. These campaigns can have foreign or domestic origins and may incorporate several different types of information".

Disinformation can be state-sponsored or by the private sector. At present, information literacy is finely utilized by countries to wage war against one another. (Barnes and Sanger 2020) have stated that countries such as Russia and China have taken [social media platforms] such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to create and amplify conspiratorial content designed to undermine trust in health officials and government administrators, which could ultimately worsen the impact of the virus in Western societies". (King et al, 2017) have stated that according to research "the Chinese government has shown to deploy disinformation campaigns, sometimes to distract and disrupt (for example, concerning events in Hong Kong, Xinjiang or the South China Sea), as to push a particular agenda (for example, to win support for its 'Belt and Road' initiative)".

Disinformation affects both military and soft security aspects. A piece of disinformation can be a critical determinant to decide a victory of a state against

another. There are many instances where global competition happens between countries using information advantages. Disinformation also impacts the economy since disinformation can create a bogus demand for certain products and create a market. Disinformation also undermines the rights of people. Disinformation affects democracy. An example of disinformation is election manipulations where real victory is not pronounced. Furthermore, disinformation can take the face of impersonation of world leaders and prominent figures which affects the dignity of people.

The number of countries that have criminalized disinformation, especially in online space is very low and this not only poses a threat to one country but also affects the rights of other countries at stake. There is also the ability to do fact checks and fact verification however not all matters can reach the state level. The number of people who inquire about the credibility and validity of the content is less and holding people or an authority accountable for the content is hard as well.

World leaders advocate many strategies to counter disinformation such as cyber commands. According to (CNN,2022), "US military and intelligence officials are stepping up their efforts to defend the electoral process from foreign hacking and disinformation". (Shackelford,2020) has stated that "In Indonesia, President Joko Widodo spearheaded the creation of the new National Cyber and Encryption Agency to combat disinformation in their elections". Sri Lanka too has a cyber command center to fight disinformation. Certain countries utilize narratives, and counter-narratives to create or rebut propaganda. (Time,2023) has stated that "As part of an effort to target Telegram, Russia co-opted popular fact-checking formats. It created a host of multilingual channels, like one named "War on Fakes," which "verified" or "fact-checked" allegations to support pro-Kremlin narratives and defend the Russian military's actions."

However, one of the main mechanisms that can be utilized against disinformation is reporting disinformation. This is similar to whistleblowing. Whistleblower is "an employee who alleges wrongdoing by their employer of the sort that violates public law or tends to injure a considerable number of people. The employer can be public or private. Applying the same measure, if any person in the society comes up with a piece of disinformation which is against the morality, tranquility of the society, law and order, creating disharmony, such person or the authority must have the mechanism to report a such issue. Traditionally reporting such content can be done via phone call. Yet, since the world is digitalized and mostly disinformation happens online, reporting the by social media itself is prudent. Social media platforms give the option to "report" content which is against community standards. However, reporting disinformation goes a step beyond. Some disinformation will not be understood by

lay people and only the experts in the field will recognize it. Therefore, it is the duty of such a person to notify it. Governments all over the world therefore has an undeniable role to provide a platform to report disinformation which will encourage whistleblowing. This actually serves the purpose of fostering information literacy in people to inquire and verify the content.

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End Corporal Punishment at Schools in Sri Lanka

By Minoshi Nethma Perera
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The protection of child rights in Sri Lanka is a core issue that should be discussed in the present context. Schools are obliged to educate and maintain the discipline of the children. Thus, corporal punishment has been utilised to maintain discipline at schools. But the fact is that the children are physically and mentally exhausted due to this method. Even though the laws and the community understand its gravity, this method is still followed in schools.

As noted in G.N. Lucas's "Corporal punishment in children: The Sri Lankan scenario", the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Rights of the Child mentions in its "General comment number one: paragraph 11" that corporal punishment is an accelerated method to cause pain or discomfort through of physical force. In contrast, S.M. Kwok and D.M.Y. Tam's "Child abuse in Chinese families in Canada: Implications for the child protection practice" defined corporal punishment as a method of discipline, and it functions with "good intention" but not to cause abuse, even though it causes severe injuries. Therefore, it is evident that there is a contradiction between social opinion and legal reforms regarding corporal punishment.

The Sri Lankan legal system had initially accepted corporal punishment under Section 82 of the Penal Code, No. 2 of 1883. In terms of Section 82, the cause of actions is not in effect to cause death, an attempt to cause death, to inhibit the cause of death, to cause grievous hurt and abetment, but any action made with good intention which may not count as an offence under the Penal Code.

Section 341 of the Penal Code states that any action that causes an injury, fear, or annoyance has resulted in "criminal force". But, illustration (i) has justified the act of a schoolmaster in implementing corporal punishment. Therefore, it is suggested that corporal punishment at school is under the exception of criminal force due to the cause of "good intention" administered. Therefore, corporal punishment at the school level is legal and subject to the laws in Sri Lanka.

Further, the Penal Code was amended with the influence of international instruments signed and ratified in Sri Lanka. Section 308A (2) of the Penal Code (Amendment)

Act, No. 16 of 2016 amends the Penal Code by identifying the injuries as psychological and mental strains. Therefore, it points out that the Penal Code has recognised that causing corporal punishment to a child is not lawfully acceptable. It is recognised as an act of "criminal force" within the context of child cruelty. In addition, Section 71(6) of the Children and Young Persons Ordinance, No.48 of 1939 states that any parent, teacher, or any other person is not entitled to impose any punishment. It emphasises the fact that corporal punishment is restricted under the law. The Education Ministry has instituted a circular to prohibit corporal punishment at schools. Section 4 of the Circular No. 12/2016 prohibits corporal punishment at the school level and proposed a list of positive discipline measures to ensure the discipline of children.

Therefore, the present laws stand against corporal punishment at schools in Sri Lanka amidst certain confusions created by the law. As a result, the rate of corporal punishment is held at a high percentage in the current context.

In the case of H.W. Karunapala and Others vs. J.P.K. Siriwardhana and Others (Supreme Court/Fundamental Rights [FR]/97/2017 – judgement penned by President's Counsel [PC] and Justice [J], S. Thurairaja, and joined by Sisira J. de Abrew J. [since retired] and Murdu N.B. Fernando PC J.), the petitioner, who is a 15-year-old child, was punched by the First Respondent, who is the Art Teacher, the Teacher in Charge of Discipline, and the Sectional Head of the Puhulwella Central College. The child was injured due to the aforesaid incident. The court held that under Articles 11 and 126 of the Constitution, the FR of the child was violated as the child was tortured with cruel punishment for his act.

In the UN Human Rights Committee case of Beddage Tushara Wickramanayaka and Adriana Lakshya Wickramanayaka Cutter (Minor) vs. the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, a girl who attended a private school in Sri Lanka has been subjected to corporal punishment at school. Firstly, it points out that the parents of other children have complained against the first applicant, stating that corporal punishment was acceptable. This shows that public opinion is more likely acceptable for the implementation of corporal punishment at schools. Subsequently, it is emphasised that the Sri Lankan court system and the respective authorities are reluctant to proceed with necessary precautions in such a matter. Hence, it made this the reason to seek protection at the international level.

Therefore, it is emphasised that child psychology is reluctant to be understood at the school level and that this has threatened the security of children since it provokes mental and physical instability. Moreover, the negative trauma created as a result of

corporal punishment has a high risk of shaping the negative behaviour of society in Sri Lanka.

It is recommended that awareness about laws be created among students and teachers at schools to mitigate the harassment caused by corporal punishment at schools. Further, it is suggested that a non-violent atmosphere be established at school premises. In Uganda, the Good School Toolkit programme was implemented to enhance equal relationships and a safe psychological environment, which reduced the risk of physical violence from teacher to student by 42% (per K.M. Devries, L. Knight, J.C. Child, A. Mirembe, J. Nakuti, R. Jones, J. Sturgess, E. Allen, N. Kyegombe, J. Parkes, E. Walakira, D. Elbourne, C. Watts and D. Naker's "The Good School Toolkit for reducing physical violence from school staff to primary school students: A cluster randomised controlled trial in Uganda"). Further, the monitoring of harassment of students caused at the school level has been recommended.

In conclusion, it is emphasised that corporal punishment is namely illegal under the legal system in Sri Lanka, but it is pointed out that it is still in existence in the school system in Sri Lanka. Moreover, it is noted that society is reluctant to act against the said illegal acts. Due to the abovementioned facts, it is noted that beyond its capacity of laws, social acceptance has shaped the existence of harassment in society. Therefore, it is necessary to take immediate necessary precautions to cease corporal punishment and protect the rights of children in Sri Lanka.

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Economic Security in the Face of High Tax Burden in Sri Lanka

By Kalpani Gunathilaka
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The current tax system is the topic of everyone's discussion in the country and it is at a critical juncture. A country's taxation system is identified as a key determinant of macroeconomic development and sustainable economic growth. Taxes are the main source of revenue for the Government in Sri Lanka. According to the financial report of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL), the total revenue of the Government is Rs 1,457,071 billion in 2021. Of that, Rs 1,298,019 billion has been earned from tax, and the rest (Rs 159,052 billion) from other non-tax sources. Accordingly, taxes account for 89.1 per cent of total government revenue. This reveals how important tax revenue is to Sri Lanka.

However, deep direct and indirect tax cuts arbitrarily enacted in early 2020 by the then Government, were a massive challenge to the Sri Lankan economy. They are: economic service charges, debit tax on banking and financial institutions, capital gain tax on the share market, Value Added Tax (VAT) on the sovereign property, Pay as You Earn (PAYE) tax, withholding tax on interest income, and credit service tax were eliminated while Value Added Tax (VAT), Nation Building Tax (NBT) and tax on telecommunication Tariffs were reduced by the Government. Consequently, approximately one million taxpayers lost to the economy between 2020 and 2022. Compared with BIMSTEC nations, Sri Lanka had lower tax revenue to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio in the Asian region.

Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand, and India showed higher tax revenue and Bangladesh and Myanmar showed lower tax revenue as a percentage of GDP among BIMSTEC countries compared with Sri Lanka. However, these arbitrary tax-cutting policies in 2020 created significant and negative consequences directly and indirectly to the economy such as an increase in the budget deficit, an escalation of the total debt-to-GDP ratio of the Government, an increase in inflation, and exchange rate depreciation.

The Government took steps to hike the tax rate for attracting revenue when the recession caused by the Covid-19 pandemic was unbearable. In view of that, VAT and Corporate income tax were escalated while payment of withholding tax on employment was made compulsory and exemptions on individual tax payments were

reduced at the end of May 2022.

Recently, President Ranil Wickremesinghe issued an Extraordinary Gazette Notification on 31 May as Finance Minister by announcing specific groups of people as compulsory to open tax files since 1 June 2023. It is comprised with all the practitioners registered with the Sri Lanka Medical Council (SLMC), members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, members of the Institute of Certified Management Accountants (CMA) of Sri Lanka, members of the Institution of Engineers Sri Lanka, members of the Association of Professional Bankers, members of the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects, members of the Institute of Quantity Surveyors Sri Lanka, Attorneys-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, individuals who have registered their businesses in Divisional Secretariats, individuals who are in possession of vehicles registered (other than three-wheelers, motorcycles and hand tractors) with the Motor Traffic Department, individuals who have purchased or acquired, by virtue of Deeds Transfer, of any immovable property in Sri Lanka on or after 1 April 2018, employees whose monthly contribution from both employee and employer to any Provident Fund which is more than Rs 20,000, any individual who obtains approval for a building plan from a Local Authority, any other individual who receives payment of Rs 100,000 per month or Rs. 1,200,000 for a 12-month period for providing any services in Sri Lanka. Individuals who are 18 years or more as of 31 December 2023, or who attain the age of 18 years on or after 1 January 2024, are also mandatory to open tax files by registering themselves with the Inland Revenue Department.

How it burdens people and affects their economic security
According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), economic security refers to the "people's access to basic needs infrastructure related to education, health, social protection, dwelling, information and work-related security". This concept is vital for individuals and nations as it is one of the determinants in assessing national security. As well as it directly connects with the economic well-being of people. The International Committee of the Red Cross has presented five key livelihood outcomes to measure economic security, food consumption, food production, living conditions, income and the capacity of civil society organisations and the Government to meet people's needs. However, higher tax implementations by the Government create negative effects on the above dimensions in different ways.

Due to the implementation of higher tax rates, the disposable income of every individual reduces. Especially, the increase in VAT is the most common tax that can create a huge influence on people in the upper, middle and lower classes. The most common taxes in society are Income Taxes and VAT. Income Taxes lessen the

disposable income of individuals and it affects mostly professionals and people with higher incomes. All the people in society need to pay VAT directly or indirectly when they are purchasing goods and services.

With the increase of VAT in 2022 from 8 to 12 per cent, prices of all goods and services escalated to higher rates. People, especially in the lower and middle classes, were severely affected by this tax policy as they were financially exhausted due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic crisis. According to the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS), approximately one out of every six people in Sri Lanka is multidimensionally poor.

Therefore, since the poverty level in Sri Lanka is relatively high when a tax like VAT is suddenly increased by a significant percentage and imposed on everyone it affects them very severely. With the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and economic crisis, most people lost their jobs; their salaries and wages were drastically reduced. Although the Government imposed a tax on people with the aim of economic upturn, it was a huge burden on them during that worsened period. It brought people to a situation where even their basic needs could not be fulfilled.

Further, it caused many people to leave the country. In addition, due to the unfair tax policies, many people had to give up and delay their 'dreams and hopes' like purchasing and/or repairing vehicles, houses, starting a new business etc. Consequently, there was a higher level of 'economic insecurity' among people whose way forward was stalled, especially in the middle and lower classes in Sri Lanka. Their ability on access to education, health, dwelling and social protection was almost at a standstill.

Measures to be taken

During this hard time, the Government should target only the 'rich and affluent' for collecting taxes without burdening the poor. There are various other ways to find revenue such as encouraging Exports, Foreign remittances etc. Subsidising on one side and taxing on the other is not very appropriate for the Sri Lankan poor. Therefore, it is vital to expand the immediate social protection measures for the poor and/or vulnerable sections of society who are most impacted by the pandemic, while the Government must make the tax collection systems more robust to increase revenues in the medium to longer term.

Economic security is a less-talked-about topic in Sri Lanka as it is threatened due to various environmental, social, political and financial reasons. Heavy tax burden

creates a significant negative impact on economic security especially for the poor and middle classes. Hence, further studies need to be conducted to identify the impact of the tax burden on peoples' economic security and thereby implement remedial measures to ensure economic security.

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Let's March Onward, All as One

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige
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Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-lingual country, located strategically in the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka had a hard past, when the Sri Lankan Government had to fight the gruesome separatist group called the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and finally accomplished harmony and freedom. Sri Lanka then underwent an unforeseen brutal terror attack in 2019, which is popularly known as the Easter Sunday Attack. Sri Lanka also faced an 'Aragalaya 2022', when people took to the streets due to a plethora of reasons such as an economic crisis, debt trap and political instability. Even today, Sri Lanka grapples with economic hardships that include high prices of commodities and taxation. In parallel to these financial stresses, there is a different storm escalating which needs to be quashed in infancy. This threat is none other than violent extremism. This article aims to look at how 'diversity' is both a challenge to the peace process and also how it can be utilised as a plus factor to promote peace and harmony.

There is no universal definition of extremism and violent extremism. However, verdicts, resolutions and scholars have defined it in numerous ways. (Attorney General's Department, 2011), has defined violent extremism as "beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve their ideological, religious, or political goals. Further, it includes terrorism, politically motivated violence, and types of communal violence." (UNDP, 2016) has stated that "extremist ideologies, whether based on religion, ethnicity, or politics, exalt the superiority of a specific group and reject the principles of tolerance and inclusivity in society." It is important to understand the push and pull factors of extremism. As per (INEE, 2017), 'Push factors' are things that can push individuals towards violent extremism. These factors are the feeling of marginalisation, discrimination, being prosecuted, and denial of rights and also includes socioeconomic grievances. Pull factors are the factors which entice people to violent extremism at both personal and social levels. For example, hope, acceptance, feeling of belonging or monetary and other benefits.

Diversity as a Challenge

Even though there is a famous saying as to 'opposites attract' it is not always true. The reason is the differences can be a platform for disagreements and inconsistencies as well. When looking at the world history this is clear. Nonetheless, it is the differences between us which create uniqueness. According to Mahatma Gandhi, "Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our

civilisation." This showcases a hard truth which is the importance of balancing differences and reaching harmony.

So why does diversity become a challenge? There are many reasons why diversity can be a challenge. One of the key reasons is exclusivism. Which is the "belief or doctrine that only one particular religion or worldview is true or valid to the exclusion of all others." An example of this is Wahhabism where there is a strict interpretation of the same in Saudi Arabia. Another reason is marginalisation or discrimination. One of the major examples of discrimination is South Africa's issue of colour discrimination. There can also be identified conflicts such as in the case of Guatemala. There can also be clashes due to cultural differences as well as different political ideologies.

Lessons Learnt

When looking at the Sri Lankan context, it is evident that there are acts of extremism such as cases of separatist ideologies by the LTTE, Islamist extremism, Buddhist Nationalism and acts of certain groups in the final stages of 'Aragalaya 2022.' To elaborate, LTTE claimed a separate State threatening the democracy and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. Even though the Sri Lankan Government militarily defeated the LTTE in 2009, still there are disinformation campaigns carried out by the remnants of the terrorist outfits living abroad to tarnish the good name of the country. Thus, there is a dire need to strengthen reconciliation efforts between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities and also to counter false claims by the LTTE, its sympathisers, and front and cover organisations. Easter Sunday bombings in 2019 is also a notable example where jihadist extremists subjected this peace-loving country to a devastating situation. The Easter Sunday Attack was perpetrated by the local extremist organisation named National Thowheed Jama'ath (NTJ). An example of extremist Buddhist Nationalism is, groups such as the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS). The later part of 'Aragalaya 2022' is another example of when peaceful protests turned into violence where houses were burnt by certain groups of ill-willed individuals.

Diversity as a Strength

On the other hand, diversity can be utilised as a tool to accomplish reconciliation. The reason is differences in ethnicity, culture and religion can bring harmony, togetherness, cohesiveness, and knowledge which is the uniqueness that heterogenous societies lack. For example, diverse ethnicities mean diverse cultures, languages and visions. This is a platform to create understanding, share knowledge and expertise. Since many ethnicities are present, innovative skills are high with diverse talents. Living in a diverse society also provides individuals with opportunities for personal growth and enhance problem-solving skills. Since society is diverse, people engage with different communities from different backgrounds

which prevents them from stereotyping or generalising habits. In addition, diversity paves the way towards empathy which will prevent extremist activities. Further, diversity promotes social cohesion and reconciliation.

Measures taken towards Reconciliation

In the aftermath of the war, the Sri Lankan Government took several measures to achieve reconciliation and harmony. These measures include constitutional reforms, Office on Missing Persons, Office for Reparations, National Policy Framework for Reconciliation and Coexistence which outline a strategic roadmap, reintegration of the displaced, rehabilitation of ex-combatants, awareness programmes, reparation mechanisms, land distribution, religious interfaith programmes and so on.

Conclusion and Way Forward

The truth is that the prevention of extremism cannot be done single-handedly. Extremism prevention should be a collaborative effort of each individual living in this island and is one which cannot be accomplished or achieved overnight. Therefore, as the title suggests, 'Let's March Onward, All as One'. Civil society has a crucial role to play in preventing extremism. Various measures can be utilised such as, including women and youth who are known to be excellent mediators, and building cohesiveness through sports, art and culture. Another mechanism that can be employed is to groom and support local leaders. Religious authorities also have a key role in balancing conflict and promoting harmony. In addition, educators should inculcate good practices, empathy and harmony among individuals. Individuals should be given awareness to understand extremist behaviour, early warning signs and to notice exclusivist activities. If it is in an uncontrollable state which needs intervention, individuals must be given the liberty and a platform to report such an act. Another important matter is to instill critical thinking ability. This should be done from the family level itself. Individuals should always know that there is another side to the story and how to respond. It is crucial to foster media literacy in individuals. On the other hand, the media should be responsible and accountable for the content they share. Community reporters should be taught to check the content and verify it before reporting and disseminating.

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Society Needs to Use Religion to Counter Extremism

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige
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Political and religious extremism poses a significant threat to our contemporary world. Manifesting in various forms such as psychological, political, cultural, and religious extremism, it arises from factors including a lack of moderation, empathy, and understanding, as well as discrimination and isolation. Thus, there is an urgent need to mitigate and combat extremism.

Various strategies have been adopted worldwide to curb extremist behaviors, including educational initiatives, community engagement, social cohesion, religious cooperation, legal measures, and economic interventions. Among these, religion plays a vital role in countering extremism.

According to Kevin Schilbrack, the term "religion" did not initially refer to a specific societal or cultural category. Stemming from the Latin word "religio," it represented "scrupulousness," encompassing conscientiousness, devotion, and a sense of obligation. These qualities were attributed to the observance of taboos, promises, curses, or transgressions, even outside the realm of deity worship. It was recognized in ancient Western civilizations, and likely other cultures, that different groups revered various gods, leading to social rivalries due to conflicting commitments. However, a closer examination of various religions reveals that religion can act as a potent unifying force, nurturing compassion, fostering understanding, and advocating for peace and cooperation.

Many definitions of religion exist, and throughout history, we have seen conflicts among religions continue to occur. However, in most of these conflicts, religion is not the sole culprit but is intertwined with other factors such as ethnicity, politics, and historical circumstances. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict exemplifies this, and as Christian Moe highlights in "Religion in the Yugoslav Conflicts," the Bosnian conflict is rightly termed "ethnoreligious," where religious identities are integral to ethnic ones.

John F. McCauley's book Ethnicity and Religion in Nigeria's Biafran War, notes that the conflict's frame shifted from ethnicity to religion. As Katherine Marshall states in "Religious Factors in the Rohingya Crisis: A Horrific State of Limbo," what are often perceived as "religious" conflicts frequently tie into struggles for political power or economic advantage, making the disentanglement of the religious dimension complex and challenging.

Religions and philosophies across the globe commonly uphold peace and harmony as

central tenets. Religion provides a calming and enlightening environment, fostering spiritual growth and tranquility in a world primarily driven by profit. The adoption of symbols, attire, worship practices, and colors by different religions is to instill discipline and maintain unique identities.

Since their inception, religions have served as moral compasses, driving humanity towards empathy and kindness. Christianity advocates for loving one's neighbor as oneself, Islam promotes brotherhood and compassion for all believers, Buddhism encourages loving-kindness and the alleviation of suffering, Hinduism emphasizes the unity of all living beings as one family, Sikhism champions selfless service and equality, and Jainism upholds nonviolence and empathy towards all creatures.

However, extremist interpretations of religious principles have paved the way for radical ideologies. Susilo Wibisono makes the point in "A Multidimensional Analysis of Religious Extremism," religious extremists are often driven by perceived injustice and seek martyrdom. They harbor a deep love for their religion, show disdain for others, and refuse to engage in productive discourse.

Groups such as Islamic State, the Taliban, and Al-Qaeda have manipulated Islam to achieve their goals. They present their fight against certain Arab governments as a holy obligation and promote Islam as the only solution to societal and economic challenges. Similarly, Roland Marchal's "Motivations and Drivers of Al-Shabaab" details how Al-Shabaab seeks to implement Sharia law and expel perceived foreign Christian forces from Somalia. The extremist practices of such groups are not only disruptive but also violate human rights.

These extremist interpretations have significant consequences, fueling religious rivalries and promoting hostility and violence. Furthermore, these interpretations, which distort religious teachings, can lead to the marginalization of certain communities, hinder peaceful coexistence, and violate human rights. Extremists may selectively interpret or distort parts of religious texts, leading to a warped perception of religion and harmful practices.

Addressing the destructive consequences of extremist interpretations necessitates embracing the true teachings of religion. The solution to these challenges requires a multidisciplinary approach involving various stakeholders such as governments, non-governmental organizations, international bodies, the media, the public, educators, and religious leaders.

Governments, as custodians of the public welfare, must safeguard human rights, ensure national security, and maintain law and order. They should prioritize monitoring educational materials for extremist ideologies and act swiftly if found. Non-governmental organizations can foster interfaith dialogues and community development, and international collaboration is essential as extremism is a global threat. The media plays a crucial role in fact-checking and validating information, thus countering radicalization. Families can promote harmony, peace, and

coexistence, and schools and religious leaders bear a significant responsibility. Teachers can instill empathy and understanding in children through religious education, while religious leaders can counter false narratives and report any extremist preaching to the authorities.

Harnessing the true tenets of religion is key to fostering a unified front against extremism. A multi-faceted approach involving various societal stakeholders is essential to combat religious extremism and promote peace and harmony.

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Preparing for the Unexpected, Supporting the Vulnerable

By Chandani Dissanayake
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The United Nations has identified "Good health and well-being" as its third Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), signifying the need to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. They targeted (Target 3.4) reducing mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promoting mental health and well-being. As such, the UN Development Programme's special report in 2022 emphasised that "The biggest health threats have shifted to non-communicable diseases." Accordingly, Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), known as kidney structural damage or chronic kidney failure, is a major worldwide public, social, and health issue.

This disease is rapidly increasing and remains an unsolved and formidable health and social issue in Sri Lanka. Currently, it has become one of the most pressing social and health issues of national concern in Sri Lanka. Looking at the latest progress report on CKD, there has been an increase in the year 2021 compared to 2020, and the Kandy district has recently experienced a progressive increase in CKD patients. Thus, it poses a public security emergency, and there is still no stable solution to combat the influence of CKD. Carlos et al. define the prevalence of end-stage renal disease patients in most developing countries as predicted to increase to 70% by 2030. Thus, it is a major security threat that impacts the quality of life in all aspects and the overall sustainable development of Sri Lanka as a developing country facing political and economic instability.

Due to the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing economic crisis, we currently lack adequate quality and essential medicine and healthcare services to ensure the healthy lives of people. Consequently, CKD poses a threat to the health security of humans. Additionally, the out-of-pocket spending and the cost of long-term treatment for CKD push people into extreme poverty, creating an economic burden on their families. Furthermore, CKD causes changes in family dynamics, domestic responsibilities, and social relationships within and outside the family. These changes lead to the creation of social, economic, and health inequalities and vulnerabilities among humans. Particularly, economic well-being in a country depends on labour productivity, but the increasing prevalence of CKD contributes to a decrease in labour productivity due to employees' disabilities and absenteeism in the workplace. Thus, CKD is not only the most pressing health concern in Sri Lanka,

but it is also linked to economic security, social security, and overall national security. CKD is prevalent in many dry zones such as Uva, North Western, Central, and Eastern provinces in Sri Lanka. Factors such as the consumption of drinking water, agrochemical residues, high levels of contaminants, geographical distribution, poverty, food insecurity, and economic instability within families can be identified as risk factors behind the alarming CKD rates. Therefore, CKD poses a significant threat to national security due to increased premature death, lowered quality of life, and disabilities among humans, as well as social, economic, and health inequalities and vulnerabilities.

CKD is a non-traditional security threat that impacts the health quality of humans, economic security, social equality, as well as the sustainable socio-economic development of a country. So, what is the way forward? The government can conduct proper community-based awareness programmes to identify early symptomatic of CKD in collaboration with international agencies and public health programmes. These programmes can promote community health education among rural communities using a proper mechanism. Lack of access to clean water has been identified as one of the risk factors for the prevalence of CKD in rural areas. Therefore, we can re-implement rainwater harvesting structures with a proper monitoring system in rural areas to ensure safe drinking water security. Healthcare can be identified as a main dimension in ensuring human security in a nation. However, social inequalities and vulnerabilities have caused to create mental health issues among CKD patients and their families. Thus, we request the implementation of proper social health protection coverage for people and their families living with CKD to ensure their economic, health, and social security.

Most people with CKD and their family members are vulnerable and face inequalities within the community. Due to disabilities, absenteeism, and premature death, CKD eventually has an impact on national productivity and the quality of life for individuals. Humans can be identified as the centre of development in a country, and the loss of human productivity can destabilise labour market performance, economic viability, human capital accumulation, and the quality of life for individuals. Thus, CKD has complex implications for achieving national security in Sri Lanka and sustainable development in 2030. Therefore, this disease needs to be addressed in the political, social, economic, and scientific spheres with proper mechanisms.

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Role of Non-Banking Financial Institutions in Facilitating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing

By Wing Commander Udith Pathirana
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Sri Lanka is currently experiencing severe economic turmoil due to crippling debts locally and internationally which has intensified various internal issues. As a result, Sri Lanka has requested financial assistance from institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and requested to restructure repayments from money lenders to overcome the financial crisis (IMF 2023). Nevertheless, owing to the conclusion of a mutually conducted investigation into Sri Lanka's financial activities, the Asia Pacific Group (APG) of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) released a mutual evaluation report (MER) in 2015 that rated those activities according to 40 different categories. Moreover, FATF-APG (2015) has identified eighteen (18) key findings and assessed the level of effectiveness against the financial mechanism of Sri Lanka. In accordance with that, the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) and the legal framework had improved its legal framework on financial activities at a greater extent since 2015 when the gradings were evaluated on six different occasions until the year 2022, yet CBSL was unable to uplift the majority of standards up to date (FATF-APG, 2021).

Thus, Sri Lanka poses a distinct Parliamentary Act termed the 'Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)' that was enacted on 6 March 2006 aiming to prevent money laundering actions (Patabendige, 2022). Supplementary, PMLA was amended in 2011 targeting to expand the legal provisions in Anti Money Laundering (AML) (Law Net, 2023). Undoubtedly, this Act is a viable foundation for the AML mechanism of Sri Lanka, but the utilisation of the same was merely a doubt in analysing the prosecutions against the reported cases as emphasised by the FATF MER 2015. According to figures provided by FATF-APG (2015), between the years 2008 and 2013, 7,706 cases of bribery and corruption were reported in Sri Lanka, but of all reported cases, only 336 cases were prosecuted, where only one case led to an AML investigation.

Corollary, FATF-APG (2015) characterised Sri Lanka as a nation with a high-risk grading in corruption through the MER. Accordingly, it comprehends that the existing finance machinery enables the exploitation of financial assets without getting prosecuted in Sri Lanka. Thereby, it is vital to understand the correlation and collaboration between existing financial mechanisms and legislation is insufficient or whether the total system is incompetent in AML. Further, a lacuna of prosecutions would cause a plethora of augmented risks in illicit activities which would directly affect the economy. Directly, the existing opportunity available for Money Laundering (ML) creates numerous consequences for the Sri Lankan economy as

mentioned below:

- Economic Distortion: ML distorts the economy by inserting illegitimate funds into the financial systems which could lead to price falsifications and an irregular distribution of assets which could ultimately undermine the solidity and fairness.

- Decreased Foreign Investment: Opacity and uncertainty due to the lack of an AML mechanism would discourage legitimate foreign investors that can be considered a severe risk at this juncture.

- Fiscal Implications: Illicit funds would reduce the Government income revenue due to tax evasion. Further, it deprives revenue to be utilised for the public sector, infrastructure and citizens' welfare which invariably hinders economic growth.

- Damaged Reputation: FATF is a globally recognised independent regulator that has a major impact on global financial activities. Thereby, the lack of a profound AML system could lead to tarnishing Sri Lanka's reputation among the international community while increasing the scrutiny from international regulatory bodies. As a result, a reduction of foreign aid and restrictions on financial services could be expected while having grave consequences on international trade.

Existing Problem

Even though the Sri Lankan financial sector poses a well-established banking system, it is doubtful whether the compliance staff is adequate to fulfil the requirement of auditing for AML activities. However, the Know Your Customer details (KYC) are to be submitted to justify the source of income on various occasions while dealing with the banking sector. Further, it is a mandatory process to investigate, identify and verify the client's details, source of income, requirement of account operation and type of transactions made during the opening stage of an account which is to be updated periodically over time. Besides, the bank is to verify that their clients are genuine and not using financial mechanisms to conduct any violation of the law and order of the country. Nonetheless, any suspicious ML activity must be forwarded to the FIU for further investigations and subsequently forwarded for investigations to prosecutors.

However, there are both licensed and unlicensed financial intermediaries who are also activated in the Sri Lankan finance market such as Non-Banking Finance Institutions (NBFI), insurance companies, investment funds, leasing firms, stockbrokers, microfinance institutions, and credit unions. Non-Bank Financial Institutions (NBFI), such as several mobile service providers, also act as mediators in the money transactions without posing KYC of the client. Consequently, these mobile service providers are highly attractive among criminals due to factors such as less stringent regulations, complex transaction structures and limited customer due diligence

measures. Further, transactions occurred via a code and application software that does not adhere to the financial regulations provided by the FATF and are not regulated under the FIU as well.

Discussion

ML is the method of concealing the source of illegally gained cash to disguise it as legitimate where it entails a series of intricate financial transactions. Besides, criminal organisations, including terrorist groups, organised crime gangs, and drug cartels frequently attempt ML. Further, these organisations strive to incorporate their illegally obtained money into the legal financial system by attempting various types of ML operations. Hence, ML techniques entail several phases such as placement, layering, and integration, which would reincarnate the source of illegal earns. Therefore, it is vital to detect, investigate, curtail and prosecute to restrict ML activities through strong AML regulatory mechanisms and enforcement procedures.

FATF MER has clearly indicated lapses in the Sri Lankan financial sector which is regulated and controlled by the CBSL. Even though the Sri Lankan Constitution has provided legal provisions to act against money laundering, persecuted figures illustrate the vacuum and the non-availability of sound mechanisms to fight against ML. Nevertheless, despite being under the wings of the established financial sector, it was evident by analysing the statistics between the years 2008 to 2015 which is the finally evaluated period under the MER that prosecution of reported cases has dropped down to 4.4 per cent where less than 0.1 per cent of cases are prosecuted under the PMLA.

Unfortunately, while having enormous lapses in the established financial mechanism in addition to mobile service providers acting as limitedly regulated NBFI, they are also involved in the money flow inside Sri Lanka, which does not have a sufficient mechanism to identify the source of income, the reason for the transaction, end customer details etc. Evidently, these NBFI Mobile Service Providers (MSPs) provide a less vulnerable, easily accessed and limitedly revealable platform for criminals in the present context. Undoubtedly, a massive amount of drug dealers, criminal activities, prostitution and other crimes were immensely facilitated by this method due to the money flow through less monitoring mechanisms. Globally, countries are taking numerous remedial actions to control and mitigate illegal finance activities to restrict crimes, where our financial mechanism permits money flow through NBFI MSPs systems which would augment the crime rates of the country.

Further, it is vital to note that contemporary NBFI MSPs have created financial platforms that have intertwined with drug trafficking, organised crime syndicates, and illicit activities whilst providing a shared network for conducting their financial procedures. Further, in the circumstance of Sri Lanka, it has been challenged in prosecuting identified charges using the established banking network and the PMLA via the CBSL. Nonetheless, authorising illicit transactions and trade through an unregulated mobile finance system in the country is widely deemed highly intolerable in any circumstance.

Eventually, terrorist organisations will potentially exploit NBFI MSPs as a method of financing terrorism, thereby avoiding financial trails within an extremely secure setting. Nonetheless, the predominant contention posits that terrorist financing demands a substantial influx of reserves, which cannot be accommodated through existing mobile cash mechanisms deprived of comprehensive knowledge of the fundamental principles of money laundering. Consequently, the structuring or smurfing appears as useful a money laundering technique that splits substantial cash volumes into smaller increments and subsequently dispenses or transfers those amounts across a greater array of diverse mobile accounts, therefore permitting the discovery of illicit funds almost impracticable.

Certainly, the operational infrastructure of terrorist administrations finds it progressively convenient to acquire financial support through the utilisation of mobile financial transactions. Thereby, these NBFI MSPs methods assist as a means to procure funds for the facilitation of operatives, organisational functioning, and the execution of violent activities.

Way Forward

It is of paramount importance that Sri Lanka is to mitigate aforesaid implications. Thereby, Sri Lanka needs to strengthen its AML framework by enhancing regulatory oversight, improving collaboration with global partners, and raising consciousness amongst financial institutions and the public about the risks and consequences of ML. Further, the undermentioned actions could be taken by the CBSL to curtail ML activities in Sri Lanka.

- Prosecution of Culprits: Competent and trained staff is to be appointed to prosecute ML culprits under available PMLA.

- Conduct NBFI MSPs Risk Assessments: CBSL is to conduct Risk Assessments pertaining to the NBFI MSPs to identify vulnerabilities and implement appropriate risk mitigation measures.

- The necessity of AML Specialists: It is vital to maintain a competent AML staff by the NBFI MSPs to monitor financial transactions to mitigate crimes and terrorist financing activities.

- Regulatory Requirement: It is required to make necessary arrangements by the CBSL to regulate NBFI MSPs under their purview while mandating the KYC details and details of the source of funds during the authorisation process of money transactions.

- Foster Collaboration: Encourage NBFI MSPs for information-sharing and proactive reporting of suspicious transactions to FIU and government regulatory authorities.

- Embrace Technology Solutions: Adopt automated transaction monitoring systems, artificial intelligence and robotic usage for data analytics and digital identity verification to enhance AML efforts within NBFI MSPs.

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Dengue as a Human Security Challenge in Sri Lanka

By Madhushi Sandamini,
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Despite the fact that Sri Lanka has a victorious history of eradicating Malaria as the second nation in the Southeast Asian region, with the World Health Organization (WHO) declaration in 2016, the tragic situation is that the nation is still in the battle of dengue, a fatal vector borne-disease which the tropical and sub-tropical countries where the climatic conditions are favourable for mosquito breeding are experiencing worldwide in abundance. As per the WHO (2023), dengue disease has rapidly increased, with over half of the world's population at risk and an estimated 100-400 million illnesses occurring each year. Hence, WHO has ranked Dengue as one of the top ten public health concerns in the globe. As a region, comprising numerous tropical countries, the WHO Southeast Asia region is home to 1.3 billion out of 3.5 billion people who live in Dengue endemic areas worldwide. WHO highlights that all member states in the SEARO (South-East Asia Regional Office), except for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, are endemic to dengue. And also, it contributes to more than half of the global burden of dengue, and countries such as India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand in the Asian region are among the top 30 most highly endemic nations in the world. The European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) estimates, that Sri Lanka is among the top seven countries in the Asian region with a high risk of dengue while Sri Lanka ranks among the top three countries in South Asia according to WHO. However, these statistics demonstrate the gravity of the dengue situation worldwide and broader to the Asian region.

Sri Lankan Perspective on Dengue Incidence
Sri Lankan historical remarks on vector-borne diseases, particularly mosquito-borne diseases witness a variety of junctures, which the country was forced to battle periodically in a serious manner. In that scenario, dengue has been a persistent national health concern in Sri Lanka with high incidence for several decades, paving the way for human insecurity. According to the Epidemiology Unit in the Ministry of Health, the incidence of Dengue Fever (DF) and Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever (DHF) was declared as nationally notifiable diseases in Sri Lanka in 1996, and multiple dengue epidemics were reported island-wide between 1965 and 1988, as well as in the years 2002, 2004, 2017, and 2019. The most catastrophic dengue epidemic in recent history was in 2017 with 186,101 reported dengue cases and 440 deaths.

The WHO declaration of Sri Lanka as a hyper-endemic country in South Asia for Dengue has left a dark scar on sustainable disease prevention for the past few years albeit Sri Lankan health standards are at a high level. Notwithstanding the fact that Sri Lanka has a low case fatality rate relatively, the circumstances that emerge gradually as outbreaks and epidemics prove the severity of the dengue disease in Sri Lanka. When the dengue cases reported in Sri Lanka from 2010 to 2022 are considered, a fluctuating pattern of reporting dengue cases can be identified, with two outbreaks in 2017 and 2019. According to the reported dengue cases, there was a substantial spike following the 2017 outbreak compared to reported cases from 2010 to 2016, and a considerable decline in 2020 and 2021 in a comparable time period. However, health initiatives that restricted people's movement in order to prevent Covid-19 transmission unexpectedly resulted in a considerable drop in the reported number of dengue cases in Sri Lanka during the Covid-19 pandemic period.

Due to the epidemics that occurred throughout Sri Lanka's dengue history, as well as the considerable number of dengue cases that are typically reported, a variety of prevention efforts had been implemented and are ongoing to lower the risk of dengue disease. The National Action Plan on Prevention and Control 2019-2023 was initiated by National Dengue Control Unit (NDCU) as a strategy to control dengue disease and its major intention was to achieve case incidence below one hundred dengue cases per one lakh out of the total population in Sri Lanka by the year 2023. Accordingly, 22,000 dengue cases, approximately, should have been reported nationwide by 2023 to achieve the anticipated target of the action plan. However, data from the Epidemiology Unit show that 66,608 cases have been reported by December 2022. It was nearly a threefold increase over the expected situation of the action plan. Conversely, since the severe dengue epidemic in 2017, there has been a significant year-to-year increase, with the exception of the Covid-19 pandemic years rather than the years prior to 2017. Accordingly, it is obvious that Sri Lanka is extremely vulnerable to Dengue, which poses a public health emergency and jeopardizes human security.

Dengue as a Human Security Challenge in Sri Lanka

Although most of the national security disclosures are focused on traditional security threats such as military warfare, their priorities have shifted at present to non-traditional security threats related to human security as every nation around the world combats unprecedented security threats such as pandemics, natural hazards, drugs, crimes, etc. In this case, disasters caused by infectious diseases play a crucial role in the modern world, putting human security at risk. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines human security as safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression, as well as protection from unexpected and harmful disruptions in the patterns of daily life. According to the United Nations Development

Programme's Human Development Report in 1994, human security comprises several significant components: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. However, dengue has an adverse impact on human security components within the domestic setting in multiple manners.

Dengue is indeed a human security challenge in Sri Lanka due to a variety of significant reasons. Although the majority of the literature on the incidence of dengue in Sri Lanka specifically attempts to portray dengue as a medical concern, however, it is also a serious issue that needs to be discussed from a human security perspective since there are numerous drivers and consequences that go beyond the medical point of view. When considering dengue in the case of Sri Lanka, the Western province is at the forefront of the high prevalence of dengue, accounting for half of all incidence across the country, with the majority of cases occurring in Colombo and Gampaha. Data from the National Dengue Control Unit show that by the month of June 2023, 48,505 dengue cases had been reported in Sri Lanka, with 24,171 of those cases coming from the western province. Accordingly, it is obvious that dengue disease is an urban dilemma in Sri Lanka. Due to rapid urbanisation, which has contributed to an ideal environment for dengue breeding, and urban challenges such as urban density, urban agglomeration, underserved settlements, and informal drainage system, etc. that grown up with it have accelerated its graveness more and more. However, as a result of high case incidence and considerable fatality rate, dengue has prompted the spread of fear and triggered unrest among populations that live in hotspots falling human security down in urban contexts.

A high dengue burden, on the other hand, has contributed to the development of economic insecurity in the county. Due to treatments and dengue prevention efforts, the high incidence of dengue has brought additional financial strain amidst Sri Lanka's acute economic crisis, which has adversely engulfed every aspect of society and it has caused a burden on the healthcare system by raising the demand for hospitals and medical services as well. In such a circumstance, if Sri Lanka has to encounter catastrophic dengue outbreaks similar to those that occurred in the years 2017, and even 2019, the damage will be grievous, wreaking havoc on human security, especially health security as a result of the effects such as drug shortages and lack of infrastructure facilities that are required to combat the situation. Dengue also significantly impacts the economic well-being of individuals. The disease severely affects those who are already financially disadvantaged while also disrupting the livelihoods of people across all socioeconomic backgrounds.

The impact of dengue on health security is a significant aspect of its human security implications. The disease directly endangers the physical health of individuals,

presenting a range of symptoms that can vary from mild fever to severe complications and even fatalities. Therefore, a country's workforce being weakened has a direct impact on its productivity. On the other hand, dengue hits certain groups in various manners, and children, pregnant women, and the elderly are among the most vulnerable groups in the country who are more at risk from dengue than other groups because of the life-threatening effects it has mostly on them. As NDCU reveals that school children represent almost 25% of all dengue cases in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, Sri Lanka encounters occasional dengue epidemics, despite the disease remaining year-round endemic in general with thousands of cases reported each year. Therefore, due to the disease management strategies such as vector control campaigns have forced to people to adopt some measures such as applying mosquito repellents, special cloths which will add additional financial expense for them. However, the question of whether every individual from different economic origins, meanwhile, is able to survive with it is also challenging while the moment people have exposed to more vulnerable to economic hardships at the micro level in the face of the economic crisis.

Way Forward

In Sri Lanka, dengue poses a significant challenge to human security in addition to being a health issue. Although there is a number of preventive interventions employed by Government officials with high-cost burden, those efforts have been the failure to mitigate it to a sustainable level. Therefore, high-capacity domestic prevention approaches must be improved to reduce the prevalence of dengue from the grass-root level. Despite being a natural disaster, dengue has turned into a man-made disaster as a result of the favourable environment for dengue breeding that people's lifestyles have brought about. Accordingly, the pursuit of a dengue-free nation also necessitates community involvement, which is just as important as medical initiatives. The government is therefore required to concentrate on initiatives that assist people to develop their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours regarding Dengue in Sri Lanka.

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Why Government Must Champion Digital Literacy

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige
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According to the Ministry of Education and Child Care, digital literacy encompasses various factors such as individuals' inclination, mindset, and proficiency in effectively utilising digital technology and communication tools to access, oversee, merge, scrutinise, and assess information, generate fresh insights, and engage in interactive communication with others. Another definition of Digital Literacy as per Joaquim Miro, consists of four key pillars. These pillars include the ability to stay updated with current technologies, the ability to communicate effectively in online environments, manage ideas proficiently in online settings and utilise technology to effectively lead and coordinate teams.

So why does Digital Literacy matter?
Digital literacy is a key matter of significance for an array of reasons, especially in the present-day context. Needless to say, today's world is wholly digitalised. Therefore, to exist in such a world, digital literacy plays the role of a blessing. First and foremost, it is the skill of an individual to utilise technology to delve into digital platforms. Digital literacy fosters critical thinking skills in users. This allows them to understand what to access, and what is crucial, reliable, authentic and relevant. Another imperative fact is the networking and collaborative effect of digital literacy. It enables an individual to actively and efficiently interact in online environments to thrive in their knowledge. It also affects the employment sector, where being more conversant in technology brings about better output and especially it opens avenues in the digital economy. Through digital literacy, individuals have the ability to protect their rights including the right to privacy as well as access to information.

Missed Opportunities
However, lacking digital literacy means missing out on numerous opportunities. One of the most pressing issues is the missed opportunity to reap economic benefits. Possessing digital skills lets individuals thrive in the digital world, especially in fields like technology and banking. Furthermore, a lack of digital literacy represents a missed opportunity in any job sphere since smart technology has become essential for survival. Moreover, it hinders educational advancement, limiting access to knowledge and networking with experts. The absence of digital literacy also restricts people from participating in politics and voicing their opinions, as crucial information is often circulated through digital platforms. The inability to access, verify, and deny

bogus information can lead to disastrous consequences, such as the spread of hate speech, misinformation, disinformation and terrorism. Additionally, the lack of digital literacy further widens the generation gap, leading to exclusivism among younger generations and missing out on important moments with family members.

Countries like Sri Lanka

Therefore, governments all over the world have a crucial role in championing digital literacy. Developing countries like Sri Lanka have many financial and technological limitations when instilling digital literacy. First and foremost, it is crucial to expand and improve broadband infrastructure in rural and semi-urban areas while strengthening the areas which already have access. It is imperative to invest in Digital skills training by providing vocational training with practical digital skills which cater to the job market. There is an imperative role to be played by the community since libraries, schools, and NGOs can interconnect with one another and provide training and opportunities giving room to collaborate.

Another key issue according to UN Women (2023) is, in the realm of technology, there continues to be a lack of representation and participation by women and girls. They are less inclined to utilise digital services or pursue careers in the technology sector, and they are more susceptible to experiencing online harassment and violence. In fact, over the last ten years, women's exclusion from the digital sphere has resulted in a loss of USD 1 trillion from the GDP of low- and middle-income countries.

Therefore, governments should pave the way for women and girls to aspire to their dreams in the technology field which at the end of the day contributes to digital literacy.

Governments should attempt to provide affordable access to the internet access and digital devices, at least for school students and working people. Furthermore, governments have a role in regulating apps and their content. While many apps aim to enhance digital literacy, certain apps can hinder it. These include addictive Social Media apps, Gaming apps, Misinformation and Fake News apps.

Therefore, to wrap up, in the present digital era, digital literacy holds great significance, encompassing many facets such as the effective utilisation of technology, accessing information and online communication. Governments have a crucial role to play in promoting digital literacy, particularly in countries like Sri Lanka facing financial and technological constraints. Priorities for governments include expanding and enhancing broadband infrastructure, investing in practical digital skills training, fostering community collaboration, and addressing the gender

gap in technology. Moreover, governments should ensure affordable internet access and devices, regulate apps and their content, and promote digital literacy as a means to empower individuals and drive economic growth, education, civic engagement, and personal advancement. By championing digital literacy, governments can bridge the digital divide, seize opportunities, and unlock the full potential of their populations.

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Whistleblowers; The Unsung Heroes

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige
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Whistleblowing is a bribery and corruption prevention strategy that does not receive the credit it deserves. In fact, rather than relying exclusively on laws, regulations, and resolutions, whistleblowing can be considered a highly effective method to combat bribery and corruption in any field, including government or corporate settings. Whistleblowing often leads to sustainable solutions, as it involves voices from various levels, ranging from grassroots to top-tier management. However, there are plethora of challenges whistleblowers face when they blow the whistle. Nonetheless, whistleblowers play a crucial role in preventing bribery and corruption, and this pivotal role enables preserving the security of any nation.

As stated by the National Center for Whistleblowing (2021), at its core, a whistleblower is an individual who discloses instances of wastefulness, fraudulent activities, misconduct, corruption, or hazards to public well-being, with the intention of prompting corrective actions. While whistleblowers are often affiliated with the organization where the wrongdoing occurs, it is not a prerequisite; anyone can assume the role of a whistleblower as long as they reveal information about the wrongdoing that would otherwise remain concealed. In simple terms, a whistleblower is a person who acts responsibly on behalf of themselves as well as others. Whistleblowers play an extremely imperative role in any society, as they stand for justice, promote accountability, and advocate transparency.

When looking at its link to national security, whistleblowers play a crucial role. One prominent action is whistleblowers exposing imminent and occurred security threats. They are capable of disclosing breaches of security, illegal surveillance, and in situations where individuals or entities are attempting to divulge material information. Whistleblowers uncover injustices, misconduct, and beyond-the-scope activities of decision-makers within government or private entities. If individuals engage in unethical practices, illegal actions, or actions jeopardizing integrity, whistleblowers blow the whistle. One such example, as reported by St. Francis School of Law in 2022, is whistleblower Frank Serpico's case. He was the first police officer who openly testified about corruption within the New York Police Department, reporting instances of police corruption, including bribes and payoffs, despite facing numerous obstacles. His revelations contributed to a 1970 New York Times story on systemic corruption in the NYPD, leading to the formation of the Knapp Commission. In 1971, he survived a suspicious shooting during an arrest, raising concerns about potential

attempts to harm him. Serpico's bravery emphasized the importance of accountability and transparency in law enforcement.

Whistleblowers also contribute by facilitating accountability by bringing into light corrupt practices such as mismanagement of money. An example is, in 1968 when A. Ernest Fitzgerald, known as the "godfather of the defense movement," exposed a staggering $2.3 billion cost overrun related to the Lockheed C-5 transport aircraft. His courageous testimony before Congress shed light on issues in defense contracting and resulted in substantial government savings. Fitzgerald's contributions went beyond the immediate case, playing a crucial role in the passage of the Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989. This results in a culture of accountability where representatives of the public are answerable to their actions. Whistleblowers uphold the rule of law and promote justice by defending the rights of the citizens. It fosters democracy.

However, whistleblowers are often subjected to criticism for standing up against injustice. They fear retaliation, as guilty parties may try to silence them out of revenge. Additionally, companies or institutions may not take whistleblowers seriously, leading them to avoid addressing the reported issues. In many cases, this happens because governments or authorities in power might be involved in bribery and corruption. Public recognition and appreciation of whistleblowers' contributions to society are vital and should not be perceived as excessive. In addition, there are situations where groups of individuals create sub cultures within organisation and act against rules and protocols jeopardising inclusive culture. In such situations, reporting to a superior will be seen as favoritism or being overly devoted to the institution. This toxic environment demotivates valuable employees or those willing to stand against injustice. The lack of adequate legal protection further compounds the challenges faced by whistleblowers. Moreover, the courage to stand against bribery and corruption is in dire need, as many individuals may lack the moral fortitude to do so.

Whistleblowers are internationally and domestically protected, primarily through the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Other international agreements, such as the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption and the Organization of American States Inter-American Convention against Corruption, also demonstrate a commitment to whistleblower protection. Various influential international organizations, including the G20, OECD, and APEC, have played a role in promoting whistleblower laws and best practices worldwide. On the domestic front, countries like Sri Lanka have specific laws dealing with corruption, while OECD findings highlight countries with comprehensive whistleblower laws such as the United States, Canada, Japan, and others.

Despite these efforts, there are still some ambiguities and gaps in provisions that hinder effective whistleblowing. For instance, the proposed anti-corruption bill in Sri Lanka allows public officers to accept gratifications authorized by written law or employment terms, which undermines the core objectives of the bill and enables influential individuals to evade accountability for corrupt gains. In Russia, whistleblower protection is limited, with unsuccessful attempts to establish protective measures in 2017. This puts Russia behind the EU, which has implemented robust whistleblower protection through the Whistleblowing Directive.

It is evident that whistleblowers play an indispensable role in combatting bribery and corruption, acting as a highly effective strategy to preserve the security of any nation. Despite facing numerous challenges, these individuals contribute significantly by uncovering wrongdoing, promoting accountability, and upholding transparency. By exposing imminent security threats and holding corrupt practices accountable, whistleblowers safeguard the rule of law and foster democracy. However, to harness the full potential of whistleblowing, it is crucial to address barriers to reporting and remedy afore mentioned legal hurdles. Encouraging a whistleblowing culture and recognizing their contributions will enable society to effectively mitigate and combat bribery and corruption, by creating a more just and transparent environment. To accomplish this, organizations can embrace a culture of whistleblowing, by conducting awareness campaigns, implementing training programs, and fostering a safe and supportive environment for whistleblowers to come forward. In addition, implementing technical measures and policies to ensure whistleblower protection, authorities can demonstrate their commitment to supporting those who expose wrongdoing. These collective actions will strengthen the pivotal role of whistleblowers in preserving security by combating bribery and corruption, fostering a safer and more ethical society for the future.

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Fortifying Sri Lanka's Security: The Urgent Need for a Strong Regulatory Framework to Tackle Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing through Money Exchange Entities

By Wing Commander Udith Pathirana
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Introduction

In recent years, global financial regulators have given precedence in addressing the growing apprehension regarding the regulation of illicit financial activities. This heightened focus is primarily driven by the escalating risk posed by various forms of terrorist activities, including extremism, global terrorism, and criminal operations. Thus, regulators were merely targeting to curtail the lacuna of the regulations, strengthening Anti Money Laundering (AML) mechanisms and mitigating the plethora of avenues available for Money Laundering (ML) and Terrorist Financing (TF) within the global financial system. Accordingly, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) being an independent intergovernmental organization plays a pivotal role in an international forum to combat ML, TF and other potential threats to the integrity of the international monetary system. Thereby, FATF influence to establish viable standards on the financial mechanism and promotes the enactment of operative measures to prevent and detect these illegitimate finance activities globally.

Subsequently, the purpose of the FATF Asia/Pacific Group on ML (APG) is to guarantee the adoption, implementation and enforcement of internationally accepted AML and counter-terrorist financing (CTF) standards as set out in the FATF Forty Recommendations (FATF APG, 2015). As a result, the effort includes assisting regional countries in enacting laws and regulations to mitigate and prosecute financial crimes and providing professional legal assistance for confiscation, forfeiture and extradition. Especially, FATF APG offers guidance in setting up profound mechanisms for reporting and investigating suspicious money transactions and the establishment of Financial Intelligence Units (FIU) (FATF, 2023).

Consequently, the Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) conducted by the FATF APG and Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) in 2015 provides a comprehensive analysis of deficiencies related to Sri Lanka's financial mechanism (Pathirana, 2023). Specifically, the absence of Know Your Customer (KYC) and Customer Due Diligence (CDD) procedures for authorized moneychangers, Informal Money or Value Transfer Services (MVTS), and Non-Bank Financial Institutions (NBFIs) was

identified as non-compliant by MER, but it was elevated to the level of Largely complaint by the FATF 6th Follow-Up Report in 2021 (FATF APG, 2015, 2021).

Existing Problem

Nevertheless, the FIU's oversight of regulating MVTS entities in Sri Lanka has been relatively limited, leading to significant implications for the country's financial mechanism. Therefore, it is crucial to identify that MVTS pose severe vulnerability to any nation's security since they are directly facilitating the conversion of money into different currencies. Thereby, the increased potential remains to make criminals conduct ML operations safely and less traceably due to the alteration of its original form. As a result, addressing and strengthening regulations concerning these entities becomes of paramount importance to bolstering Sri Lanka's efforts in combating ML/TF and preserving the integrity of its financial system. Accordingly, this revised discussion underscores the requirement of implementing mandatory requirements to curb ML/TF by emphasizing the significance of robust regulatory frameworks for MVTS.

Discussion

Indeed, MVTS operate as private entities with the primary goal of generating profits from their business activities. Nevertheless, the absence of a well-coordinated platform for monitoring and investigating KYC processes poses critical challenges for legislative authorities in tracking money trails during investigations. At times, despite significant sums being converted through MVTS, even such transactions are not adequately scrutinized, allowing small amounts of money to be converted without thorough inquiry into the associated details. Consequently, this creates an opportunity for ML/TF activities, specifically the technique known as "smurfing," to be easily conducted through MVTS.

It is vital to understand the negative effects of unregulated MVTS functioning in Sri Lanka as mentioned below.

- Increasing Criminal Activities. The ease of converting currency through MVTS would encourage criminals to conduct illicit activities to acquire money posing significant threats to both economic and national security.

- Smuggling and Illicit Trade Across Borders. MVTS could inadvertently facilitate smuggling and illicit trade across borders by undermining the country's regulatory mechanisms by adopting a system interlinked with Hawala and Hundi (also known as Undial).

- Evasion of Currency Controls. During an economic instability, MVTS could facilitate the money flow outside financial controls imposed by the CBSL while making efforts of stabilizing rates into failure.

- Exchange Rate Volatility. Implementing effective monetary policies would become ineffective due to additional liquidity and unpredictability in the foreign exchange market, leading to increased exchange rate volatility.

- Impact on Balance of Payments. Unregulated money flow through MVTS could imbalance the country's balance of payments which would lead to a depletion of foreign reserves, affecting the ability to make international expenses.

Further, the presence of unregulated MVTS activities in Sri Lanka can have significant adverse effects on the country's national security as mentioned below.

- ML and TF. Unregulated MVTS are creating opportunities for criminals and terrorists to launder illicit funds and finance their activities without proper oversight.

- Weakening in AML and CTF Efforts. The lack of regulation against MVTS would weaken AML and CTF measures imposed by the government that leaves the country vulnerable to financial crimes.

- Loss of Revenue. Invariably MVTS would result in revenue leakage of the government due to non-reception of fund essential services and security measures.

- Economic Instability. The unregulated flow of foreign currency through money exchange services can lead to economic instability. It may create volatility in the exchange rates and impact the value of the local currency, making it susceptible to external economic shocks.

- Creation of Criminal Finance Medium. MVTS are providing a medium interlinked with Hawala and Hundi for criminal networks to fund across borders discreetly which can threaten national security.

Sri Lanka, being a tourist destination, strives to boost its income through diverse strategies. On the other hand, MVTS facilitates the integration of foreign currency into the local monetary system with fewer restrictions and minimal government taxes.

Unfortunately, several consequences that could occur due to money integration without proper oversight might open the door to potential misuse, as it could be exploited by individuals with malicious intentions, including those involved in ML and TF.

The Easter Sunday Bombings served as a stark reminder of the vulnerability to extremism and terrorism in our nation. Hence, to address these concerns, the CBSL has implemented measures in collaboration with the Sri Lankan Customs Department to meet the FATF recommendations by limiting the amount of foreign currency an individual can bring into the country to USD 15,000 during arrival (AASL, 2023; FATF APG, 2021). This restriction is intended to prevent large sums of foreign currency from entering the country unchecked and unmonitored. However, it is crucial to consider that even with this limitation, there is a significant potential to use MVTS for currency exchange and integrate it into the local monetary system for ML and TF activities using the "smurfing" technique due to the non-availability of KYC and money trail.

In conclusion, while Sri Lanka aims to boost its income through tourism, it must be vigilant in adopting measures that strike a balance between facilitating legitimate economic activities and safeguarding against potential risks associated with ML/TF. Close cooperation between relevant authorities, strict monitoring, and continuous evaluation of regulations are essential in maintaining the integrity of the financial system and ensuring the nation's security.

Way Forward
Sri Lanka could enhance the effectiveness of its currency exchange rate control mechanisms by strengthening oversight and promoting transparency in the MVTS sector during economic fluctuations. Further, it includes enhancing supervision and regulation of MVTS, promoting international cooperation to combat cross-border financial crimes, and improving intelligence-sharing among relevant agencies. Moreover, to mitigate the adverse effects of MVTS activities on AML/CTF and overall economic stability, responsible agencies should take the undermentioned proactive measures to ensure national security.

- Enhancing the regulation and supervision of MVTS providers to ensure compliance with currency control measures to avoid exchange rate volatility.

- Governments must enforce strict KYC and AML regulations to mandate the record keeping of KYC to identify money trails during any investigation while imposing liability to penalize during illicit conversion authorisation.

- Provide adequate resources to the FIU for efficient monitoring and investigation of suspicious conversions and conduct regular audits of MVTS.

- Establishing a shared information system with MVTS. In such situations, FIU can collaborate with legislative authorities to facilitate suspicious money exchange activity reporting systems.

Fostering financial literacy and promoting the use of formal banking channels for foreign currency transactions can help curb the informal or illicit use of money exchange services. Thereby, striking a balance between promoting economic growth and safeguarding national security remains crucial in managing the impact of money exchange activities on Sri Lanka's overall well-being.

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Impacts of Air Pollution on the Environmental Security of Sri Lanka

By Darshika Sewwandi
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National security is the fundamental aspect of protecting the nation's goals, sovereignty, and well-being from both internal and external threats hence it requires safeguarding the citizens, institutions, territory, and infrastructures as well as protecting the country from numerous threats (Balzacq 2003). Environmental security is part of national security and considers a soft notion of it. The concept of environmental security involves maintaining a sustainable and stable connection between the environment and human beings. It recognises the significance of environmental conditions, the nation's well-being, security, and sustainability and addresses a wide range of issues, such as the availability and accessibility of natural resources, the impacts of environmental pollution on human health, the shortages of resources or competition-related conflicts, and international cooperation. Understanding the link between the environment and national security, the Government needs to understand how important it is to address environmental issues as a key element of its security plans.

Environmental security seeks to maintain the long-term well-being and resilience of human societies by conserving the environment, promoting sustainable development, and addressing the potential risks and challenges arising from environmental degradation, pollution, and climate change. At the current context, there are environmental issues that have developed, threatening environmental security and, ultimately, affect to national security. Air pollution is one of the issues threatening environmental security.

Air Pollution and its Impacts on the Environment
According to the definition of the World Health Organisation (WHO), air pollution is the "contamination of the indoor or outdoor environment by any chemical, physical or biological agent that modifies the natural characteristics of the atmosphere. Air pollution is a major, preventable, and manageable threat to people's health, well-being, and the fulfillment of sustainable development. In some cases, the effects of air pollution on environmental security can be severe".

Air pollution impacts on loss of biodiversity, climate change, acid rain, contamination

of water and soil, health impacts and economy. The first one is the loss of Biodiversity. Air pollution can harm plant and animal species, resulting in a reduction in biodiversity. Certain pollutants, such as nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide, can harm flora and alter ecosystems, and can lead to a reduction in food sources and habitats for many organisms, resulting in ecosystem imbalances and the extinction of species. In addition to that, climate Change can happen as a result of air pollution. The greenhouse effect and rising temperatures are accelerated by this and pollutants such as carbon dioxide and methane are trapped heat in the atmosphere, causing global temperatures to gradually increase. As a result, shifting weather patterns, sea levels rising, and glaciers and polar ice caps melting, endangering ecosystems and coastal areas can happen.

Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from industrial activities, as well as vehicle emissions, interact with moisture in the atmosphere in order to generate acid rain. Acid rain can negatively impact and harm forests, rivers, and other aquatic habitats, causing both animals and plants to die and imbalanced the ecosystem's equilibrium as well. Pollutants in the air can settle on the earth's surface and pollute water bodies and soil. Pollutants in water bodies may negatively impact aquatic organisms and alter the ecological balance while Pollutants in the soil can harm agricultural development, taint groundwater, and harm human health through food consumption.

Furthermore, human health is negatively impacted by air pollution. PM 2.5 and other pollutants may enter the respiratory system and cause respiratory disorders such as asthma and bronchitis. Long-term exposure to pollutants in the air has been linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, and various respiratory diseases. Ultimately, air pollution may result in serious economic consequences as it damages agriculture, ecosystems, and human health and may end up resulting in higher healthcare costs, decreased agricultural output, lost tourism revenue, and infrastructure damage. These economic costs have the potential to slow down progress and accelerate social inequities.

Air Pollution in Sri Lankan Context
Air pollution is a crucial environmental issue in Sri Lanka, especially around urban and industrial areas. Vehicle emissions, industrial activity, and the use of fossil fuels for electricity generation are the primary sources of air pollution in the country. Several Sri Lankan cities, such as Colombo, have experienced high levels of air pollution, especially in regard to particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2) concentrations. These contaminants have the potential to harm both human health and

the environment.

Protecting Air as a Human Right

Every person on the earth has the right to live in a clean, healthy environment, according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). As a result, the Government should be more concerned about this matter, as it is a human right. The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) mandates members to protect the clean air component as a right to a healthy environment through seven key steps, which include monitoring Air Quality (AQ) and its effect on human health, evaluating sources of air pollution, ensuring information accessible to everyone, establishing AQ legislation and regulations and developing AQ action plans at the local and national level.

Interaction of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with Air Pollution

Air pollution is linked to multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the reduction of air pollution is important to achieving environmental security. SDGs connected with air pollution are goal numbers 03, 07, 11, 13, and 15. Goal 03 refers to good health and well-being hence air pollution impacts human health. Goal 07 refers to affordable and clean energy hence the usage of fossil fuels for energy generation emits air pollutants into the atmosphere. Moving to clean and renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, and hydropower to reduce pollution while also supporting sustainable development by delivering inexpensive and clean energy to all. Air pollution and climate change are interconnected with each other because many air pollutants act as greenhouse gases. Therefore, it is important to mitigate climate change and meet Goal 13 targets by lowering air pollution, particularly both methane and carbon dioxide emissions. Goal 15 refers to Life on land as air pollution can harm terrestrial ecosystems, plants, and wildlife. Reducing air pollution helps conserve biodiversity and ecosystems, and promotes sustainable land use, all of which contribute to the goals of Goal 15.

Measures taken to Reduce Air Pollution by the Sri Lankan Government

There are some actions taken by the Sri Lankan Government to reduce air pollution. The basic legislation for air quality management is the National Environmental Act No. 47 of 1980 and its amendments, as well as the establishment of the Central Environmental Authority to implement the laws of the NEA related to ambient air quality Regulations, air Emission, fuel, and vehicle importation standards, and national stationary sources emission Standards.

The establishment of the Air Resource Management Centre which has been essential

in strengthening stakeholder participation in Air Quality Management throughout the country is another significant action taken by the Government of Sri Lanka which functions under the Ministry of Environment's Air Resource Management & National Ozone Unit. This unit is now in charge of coordinating AQM activities. National Environmental Action Plan 2022-2030 Towards Sustainable Development (NEAP) is another strategic plan and the first theme in this section is air quality control by providing ten ways for managing air pollution. According to NEAP, the Sri Lanka Vehicle Emission Testing Programme (SLVET) is being implemented since 2008 and it has progressive improvements in urban air quality as shown by a reduction in PM10 concentrations from >70 g/m3 in 2008 to 60 g/m3 in 2015.

Loopholes and Gaps regarding Mitigating the Air Pollution

There are some loopholes and gaps in the process of mitigating air pollution in Sri Lanka. Inadequate monitoring and data is a main issue because, for effective policies and targeted actions, accurate and updated monitoring data is required. There may be a lack of monitoring units or gaps in data collection and due to that difficult to estimate the magnitude of the problem and find effective solutions. In addition to that, there is no distinct policy in Sri Lanka for clean air or AQM, although the topic is covered in the National Environment Policy and Strategies published in 2003.

Weak Enforcement of Regulations is another gap in this process hence the compliance and enforcement methods are insufficient with the current legislation and emission standards. As a result, there may be more pollution due to polluting industries or vehicles being able to operate without the necessary controls.

Burning biomass for agricultural, heating, and cooking needs can emit a lot of pollutants into the air. In Sri Lanka, agricultural practices including burning rice fields and crop residues can accelerate air pollution, especially during the specific time period of the year. Manufacturing, energy production, and waste management are a few examples of industrial operations that can be major causes of air pollution. Higher pollution levels may result from ineffective pollution control technology installation, lack of regulatory supervision, and the presence of unofficial or uncontrolled industries. Lack of public awareness and participation is another loophole and most of people are overusing the resources without thinking about the environmental issues as they are unaware about these problems.

The Way Forward

To address air pollution, considerable efforts are required, such as switching to cleaner energy sources, implementing solid emission regulations, supporting

sustainable transportation, and deploying pollution control technologies, increasing public awareness, and encouraging cooperation between the public sector, civil society, and the private sector. Government can arrange those efforts as short-term and long-term actions accordingly. Then we can protect the environment, and human health, and improve environmental security by reducing air pollution.

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Hidden Horrors: Online Child Pornography

By C. L. C. M. Patabendige
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The words "child pornography" themselves are abhorrent; the first thought is, how can there be porn involving children? The two words do not belong together. However, even though for the majority, this will be disgusting and remorseful, unfortunately, there are ill-motivated individuals driven by their deepest, darkest desires who fantasize about the nudity of innocent children. Adding to the burden, due to the world being digitalized, child pornography is now committed online and has become a transnational threat as well. Child pornography is often viewed as a moral or criminal offence. However, what is lacking is adequate attention to its implications as a national security concern. In light of this, it is high time to understand the laws concerning, threats posed by child pornography and its ramifications for national security, investigating challenges and the need for coherent recommendations.

(The United States Department of Justice, 2020) has defined child pornography as, "a form of child sexual exploitation. [it is] any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a minor (persons less than 18 years old). Images of child pornography are also referred to as child sexual abuse images. The rapid growth of the Internet and sophisticated digital technology goes hand in hand with the alarming surge in the child pornography industry. Child pornography content can be easily accessed across various online platforms, encompassing social networks, file-sharing sites, photo-sharing platforms, gaming devices, and even mobile applications. Moreover, perpetrators of child pornography can convene on Internet forums and networks to exchange their inclinations, exploits, and encounters involving the abuse of children, besides engaging in the buying, selling, and exchanging of illicit images. Child pornography poses multi-faceted risks for individuals as well as societies, endangering privacy and rights. Children are victimized by pornographic content, and they may be repeatedly traumatized as long as this content exists. Additionally, parents and other family members feel helpless and hopeless in such situations. Moreover, the survivors of such tragedy will have to live with trauma, and restoring the sense of calmness that was present before the incident becomes challenging. This showcases the psychological and emotional toll on the victims and survivors.

Laws
It is also imperative to look into the Budapest Convention, which includes a specific provision, in Article 9, that explicitly prohibits child pornography. The Optional

Protocol on Child Pornography, in Article 3, mandates state parties to criminalize sexual exploitation, which it specifically defines as the 'sale of children.' Similarly, the Lanzarote Convention, established by the Council of Europe, outlines behaviour constituting sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in its Articles 18-23. The European Union Directive 2011/93 also addresses sexual exploitation by referring to acts like making a child participate in pornographic performances, knowingly attending pornographic performances involving children, making a child participate in child prostitution, and engaging in sexual activities with a child in connection with prostitution. Furthermore, the United Nations Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse defines sexual exploitation as any actual or attempted abuse of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. This includes but is not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another individual.

When looking at the Sri Lankan context, the Sri Lankan constitution, the supreme law of the country in its Article 27 (13) Chapter VI states that the State has to promote with special care the interest of children and youth to ensure their full development, physical, mental, moral, religious and social, and to protect them from exploitation and discrimination. The Obscene Publications Ordinance No. 4 of 1927, the Vagrants Ordinance No. 4 of 1841, and the Penal Code do include laws related to pornography. Nevertheless, they do not offer a clear interpretation of terms about child pornography. Furthermore, the Penal Code Section 286A introduces a new offence targeting "obscene publication and exhibition relating to children" below the age of 18. Additionally, Section 286C has been introduced to criminalize the storage or distribution of child pornography through email and the Internet.

National Security Implications

What is seldom discussed is the implications of child pornography on national security. For the majority, national security is about territorial integrity and the physical aspect of security rather than the invisible menaces. One such intangible threat, which is hard to beat, is child pornography. Child pornography has many security violations. It has a direct link to organized crimes which have human security violations and economic security threats. It is also a cybercrime; it also facilitates terrorist financing and it also affects country's reputation. Organized criminals generate money by commercially exploiting children in ways including child trafficking. Child pornography rings are one such example and it is not a novel situation. One such example is the Wonderland Club, an international online pedophile ring that ran for four years before finally being smashed by the biggest international police operation, namely "Operation Cathedral" and another raid was done namely Operation Avalanche. (Eddy, 2020) has stated that German authorities report that they have dismantled a highly sophisticated child pornography network

that traded "unimaginable images" through the internet. In addition, money generated by child pornography is not only violation of child rights, it is detrimental to the integrity of financial system since it generates black money. Apart from organized crimes, another main threat is it affects cyber domains affecting cyber security in light of privacy and data breach risks and exploitation of vulnerabilities. There are also a threat of terrorist financing, since terrorists or radicalized individuals may exploit child pornography as a means of recruitment of vulnerable individuals into supporting their ideologies. Further, it is detrimental to the reputation of the country which is a soft power threat since this will deem the country incapable of tackling such an issue.

Challenges

Primarily, there are several drawbacks in the existing laws that hinder the effective criminalization of child pornography. In the context of Sri Lanka, these legal shortcomings make it challenging to mitigate and prevent the spread of child pornography. One of the major issues is the lack of a specific legal definition for child pornography within Sri Lanka's legal framework, leaving a significant gap in addressing this heinous crime. The Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act No. 48 of 1956 is another example of legislation with limitations. Section 2 of this Act applies to all publications, such as books or magazines, which are likely to be accessed by children or young individuals. These publications primarily consist of visual stories, with or without accompanying written content, portraying (a) the commission of a crime, (b) acts of violence or cruelty, or (c) incidents of a repulsive or horrifying nature. The aim is to prevent such publications from corrupting children or young individuals who might come across them. While this Act effectively criminalizes obscene pictorial materials, including child pornography, nonetheless it falls short in addressing the realm of virtual content, which remains a critical drawback when criminalizing child pornography. In addition, even though there are laws mentioned, unfortunately, pornography is not recognized as a cybercrime in many countries including Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is pivotal to rectify these weaknesses, drawbacks as well as loopholes.

Global Initiative on Transnational Organized Crime has stated that the primary challenge in combating cybercrimes, including child pornography, lies in overcoming identity protection measures that shield the true perpetrators. The Internet remains relatively unregulated, and there is a lack of legislation specifying the responsibilities of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) regarding proxy servers and payment sites that do not maintain transaction records and it is high time to correct these drawbacks. The second challenge involves the need for international cooperation to gather information about criminal groups operating beyond national borders. Since child pornography is an extraterritorial country must strengthen their relationships and drive for the same cause, which is to prevent child pornography.

Therefore, it is clear how child pornography has become a crime mainly on virtual platforms, with many security implications. As discussed, it affects security in various ways and leads to disastrous consequences. Hence, it is high time to address legal gaps to prevent child pornography. In addition to rectifying the above-mentioned loopholes, it is also crucial to advocate for child rights and encourage a whistleblowing culture to deter and prevent child pornography.

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