SUB THEME 03

Freedom, Rights, and Civil Responsibilities vs Legislation and Social Justice

Accountability in Disaster Risk Governance (DRG) in Sri Lanka: An analysis on National Policy on Disaster Management (NDMP) of Sri Lanka.

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Introduction

International organizations, institutions, and various forums have highlighted the importance of taking disaster risk reduction (DRR) at a global level and gradually changed their focus over the last two to three decades from disaster management to disaster governance and resilience. Among them, the SFDRR 2015-2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (PACC) are the most significant in terms of universal acceptance and implementation. For example, the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), focused on disaster risk management, was operationalized from 2005 to 2015. Its successor, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) (U. N. O. f. D. R. R.-. UNDRR, 2015), concentrates on disaster governance with a considerable emphasis on accountability. For example, the second priority of the SFDRR is strengthening DRR at the national, regional, and global levels. The SFDRR aims to minimize prevailing risks and control new emerging risks: "It aims at substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries" (UNDRR, 2015, p. 11). Therefore, DRR is largely depending on the institutional capacities, governments commitments, availability of legal and policy frameworks, and the disaster governance mechanisms of a country. Thus, adopting good governance principles especially accountability in DRG is needed to achieve goals of DRR.

The literature reveals that Disaster Risk Governance (DRG) is a process that governs the entire process related to disaster activities and requires the involvement of multiple approaches, multiple tiers of

government, and multiple stakeholders horizontally and vertically (Assembly, 2016; Planitz, 2015; Program, 2013; Rao, 2013; Tierney, 2012; UNDRR, 2020). Further, it is widely accepted by scholars that a sound governance structure is a pre-requisite to achieve the goal of DRR (Amaratunga, Malalgoda, Haigh, & De Silva, 2020; Dhungana, 2020; Gaillard & Mercer, 2013; Raju & da Costa, 2018; Tierney, 2012). Accordingly, governance is an overarching process that controls the entire economic, social, policy, and political aspects of a country, institution, or an organization which involves personalities, policies, and institutions. In terms of disaster risk reduction, as literature reveals, governance is very crucial in every moment of the disaster cycle: in prevention, preparation, respond, and in recovery process. The United Nations, international agencies and organisations, individual countries, communities, many stakeholders such as activist, academics, professionals, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) work on ensuring a threshold level of DRG across the world. Further, a better governance system is a requirement for better DRG of a country. In this context, this study explores how the Sri Lankan National Policy on Disaster Management (NPDM) has incorporated principles of accountability in the DRG process, and the status of its implementation at the central, provincial, and local levels.

Materials and methods

Philosophically, the study belongs to subjectivist ontology, interpretivist epistemology, and value laden axiology. This study employs case study research strategy and Sri Lanka as a single case embedded research. Within the single case, three tiers of governance: the central government, the PCs, and the LGAs as the subunits in operationalized were studied. Within the subunits, the study focused on different paradigms that shape the DRG process in Sri Lanka with special reference to the NPDM. An in-depth analysis of how the NPDM has incorporated accountability in the policy and the status of its implementation at three tiers of governments has been conducted based on the secondary data. To explore the status of implementation, field data was collected from three locations which are prone to diverse disasters: Ampara, Colombo, and Ratnapura.

Justification for the cases: Ampara: prone to droughts, flood, damage to crops due to insect attacks, animal attacks, Tsunami, flash flood, and coastal erosion. Colombo is vulnerable to natural as well as human induced disasters such as, flood, vector borne diseases, diarrheal diseases, and epidemic for example Dengue and Covid 19. (Colombo district reports the highest number of fertilities due to Covid 19 and the highest number of Dengue cases reported in the country), Rathnapura is prone to flood, landslides, elephant attacks, and drought. Rathnapura report the highest numbers of flood in terms of frequency of occurrence. Policy, legal, and institutional frameworks, the role of government officials who control the governance of those policies and laws, political authority, the public, and other stakeholders such as the private sector, practitioners, academics, civil society, and media were taken to consideration. The research employed qualitative data such as opinions, perceptions, documentary analysis, and secondary data such as statistical information, for the analysis. Therefore, this research employed qualitative method as the methodological choice. To triangulate multiple sources of data to guarantee the accuracy of the results, the research has employed variety of techniques such as in-depth interviews, documentary analysis, public engagement events, and statistical information.

Results and discussion

The literature reveals that, the NPDM has incorporated principles of good governance and accountability in its seven guiding principles such as equity and equality, transparency and accountability, participation and right to access information, quality service delivery, legitimacy of service delivery agencies, and collective responsibility. Though the policy document theoretically has incorporated principles of accountability, there are various issues related to implementation exist such as lack of coordination among stakeholders, lack of mandate for local governments, lack of access to information, involvement of multiple laws, policies, and institutions in DRG vertically and horizontally, lack of clarity on the roles and responsibilities, and absence of accountability monitoring mechanisms is among them.

Conclusion

Although the NPDM is developed based on the good governance and accountability principles and aligned with international standards especially with the SFDRR, the research results shows that there is a mismatch between principles of policy, and the practice and implementation related to DRG. Therefore, disaster governance structure of Sri Lanka needs reforms especially its legal base, the Disaster Management Act should be amended to address implementation issues. The main coordinating body is the DMCs should expand its scope and should not limit to coordinate institutions, but policy coordination is vital to maximum utilize the institutional capacities in DRG. Since there are multiple institutions, personalities, and structures involve in DRG in Sri Lanka, clarity of responsibility of each stakeholder is crucial to reduce overlapping duties on one hand, and on the hand, it would help to keep stakeholder to account on their responsibilities. Therefore, the introduce reforms to the existing DRG structure would help to fill the gap between the principles of the policy and implementation.

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Navigating Between Public and Private Spheres: A Case Study of Scooter Riding Women in Colombo Suburbs

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Introduction

This research delves into a case study detailing how a cohort of women residing in Colombo's suburbs, relying on scooters for transportation, have experienced heightened autonomy in their daily lives due to this shift in transport mode. Across many Asian nations, entrenched gender norms have historically constrained women to the confines of the private sphere, dictated by division of labour and prevailing stereotypes. Yet, within today's evolving landscape, where gender roles are gradually transforming, women have begun accessing newfound freedoms and choices in various facets of their lives. The primary data gleaned from this research underscores how adopting scooters has conferred greater adaptability upon women in managing their household responsibilities—tasks conventionally allocated to them. This shift in transportation mode has notably bolstered their safety and independence within mainstream society, fostering empowerment that enables these women to confront and transcend gender biases. Furthermore, embracing scootering has broadened the definition of femininity, emphasizing women's competence in engaging with the mechanical facets of their lives. By transitioning towards a more self-reliant mode of transportation, this group of women effectively transcended the limitations imposed by the private sphere, once their sole domain, and ventured confidently into the public sphere.

Research Problem:

This research explored how a group of women from the suburbs of Colombo, who ride scooters, have achieved increased social mobility and independence by changing their mode of transportation? To study the above research problem a few research questions were employed. They are; What factors did suburban women who ride scooters consider

when choosing to change their mode of transportation? How has using a scooter impacted the everyday lives of suburban women? What is the society's perceptions on suburban scooter riding women?

Research Objective:

The primary objective of this research is to illustrate how scooter riding has facilitated women in navigating the predominantly male public sphere in Colombo. Additionally, several secondary objectives were identified: to delineate the reasons behind the choice of scooters among suburban women; to elucidate the organization of daily lives among suburban women who ride scooters; and to identify the responses of these women to male hegemony within the public sphere.

Research Methodology:

This research employed an exploratory approach utilizing the snowball sampling technique to select participants. In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 women who ride scooters in the suburbs of Colombo. Thorough analysis of their narratives aimed to uncover social trends and shed light on the daily lives of these women navigating the Colombo suburban areas through scooter riding.

Discussion:

The research sample consisted solely of females aged between 24 and 45, residing in the suburbs of Colombo's central city. Furthermore, 30% of them had never been married, while 70% of the respondents were married and had 1 to 3 children in the age range of 4 to 16 years. The respondents' education levels ranged from having passed their A/L exams to holding university degrees. The employment categories were limited and included government officers, primarily teachers and clerical staff, as well as self-employed individuals running their own businesses, etc. These participants had been using scooters for a duration of 2 to 7 years. When considering the demographic background of the sample, it becomes apparent that the experience of using a scooter is linked to their marital status, nature of work, and, for those with children, the number of children they have. This connection highlights the influence of socially constructed gender patterns. Most of the scooters observed

were in colours such as orange, red, blue, and white. It is important to note that such colour choices are indicative of structurally designed gendered preferences. An overwhelming 85% of the respondents reported receiving very positive responses from their families, communities, and peers regarding their use of scooters as a mode of transportation.

According to Burgess (1925), suburbs are located in the 5th circle of the concentric zones, and it is in this area that highly socially mobilized people live. Berger (1969) has described nine characteristics of suburbs, which are as follows. They are, 1. Suburbs are keen on upward mobility, 2. youth is the majority, 3. well-educated, 4. social life is active, 5. have common interests, 6. social class difference is unclear, there is only one class which is the middle class, 7. main interest is to take care and well educate their children, 8. they are daily travellers to the core city for work, and 8. motivated in their rights and voting (Niriella, 2014: 51-53).

In line with the above explanation some of the ladies riding scooters shared their views;

"I attend to my two children's matters directly now – picking them up from tuition classes, school, visiting their friends with them, and everything possible with this scooter. This saves time and is cost-effective. Otherwise, I would have to travel far to catch a public bus, which is sometimes crowded and doesn't come at the exact time. My children are achieving good marks; both of them are studying at Colombo schools. I am grateful for this scooter. It means everything to me now!" (Field Data, 2023).

"I travel to work daily on this scooter; I have been using it for four years now. I drop my younger daughter off at school when I'm on my way to work, and my friends have come to recognize the sound of my bike as a sign of my arrival. It took some time to save up enough money to buy a larger vehicle. My workplace is a bit far from my residential area, and using public transport takes me an hour and a half for the commute" (Field Data, 2023).

Women are often assigned household chores, and incorporating a scooter into their daily lives has provided them with the flexibility

needed to manage their designated domestic responsibilities. The majority (90%) of the women who participated in the research emphasized that the primary advantage of using a scooter was its role in helping them manage their responsibilities as mothers. Suburban women frequently need to commute to the central city hub for various tasks, and relying on public transportation can be both time-consuming and not always secure, particularly for women. In some instances, suburban women juggle multiple roles. Given the expenses associated with alternative transportation methods in the country, using a scooter proves to be a cost-effective means of travel.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines gender roles as 'socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women' (World Health Organization, cited in Lumen Learning, 2020). Gender roles encompass the societal norms dictating the types of behaviours generally perceived as acceptable, appropriate, and desirable based on an individual's actual or perceived sex. These norms typically revolve around contrasting notions of femininity and masculinity (Lumen Learning, 2020). The concept of the 'double day of work' describes the burden placed on women, who are expected to manage both wage labour and domestic duties. In many contemporary societies, this concept has evolved into the 'triple role of women,' elucidating the extensive workload and roles women are expected to fulfil—comprising wage labour, domestic responsibilities, and their roles as mothers and wives. The triple role of women encapsulates their reproductive, productive, and community management functions. The valuation of these roles impacts the way women and men prioritize when planning programs or projects (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020). This situation is further illustrated by the quotation from the discussion with scooter ladies.

"Previously, I couldn't stay for long hours at work during special events; I always had to travel with my father, brother, or someone else. However, now I'm independent enough to travel alone, ensuring my own security and taking responsibility for it" (Field Data, 2023).

"One day, my sister's child fell seriously ill. It was nighttime, and it takes a significant amount of time before our father arrives. I have

been living with my sister in her house since her husband works out of the city. Due to having this scooter, we were able to promptly take the child to the doctor. While it's true that some people stared at us and perceived something out of the ordinary, if we did not have this scooter, I cannot fathom how we would have managed during such incidents" (Field Data, 2023).

Women are able to get more control over their lives when they use a scooter for transportation. And they are more freely experiencing social mobility by using their scooter as their transportation method. The women's understanding of the perception on others in the society towards scooter riding ladies are given in the table attached below:

Table 01: The response of the scooter riding women on scooter usage

Response	Percentage (%)
Chose to use a scooter by choice.	92%
Getting positive feedback from society for using a scooter.	85%
Riding a scooter helped to manage my day-to-day work with flexibility.	88%
Riding a scooter helped to have a work-life balance.	83%

Source: Survey data.

Men are trying to control women's mobility, sexuality, production, and reproduction. Therefore, they impose strict separation between private and public spheres. Through the separation of the privet and public sphere, men impose limits on interactions between sexes and control the mobility and freedom of women. However, the ways of this separation are unique to them. The separation between the public and private sphere are gender-specific, as men are not subjected to the same constraints (Bhasin, 1993: 09).

Conclusions:

The paper depicts the challenge women face in navigating the male-dominated public sphere in Colombo. As the socio-political and

economic landscape evolves, women are increasingly encouraged to participate not only in the private sphere but also in the public sphere. The women who came out from private sphere and engaging in various activities in the public sphere they have to negotiate the male dominant modes of mobilities. By shifting public transport mode to scooter riding mode, the women have started negotiating male dominant public sphere and gained the control over own lives.

Key words: Femininity, Gender Division of Labour, Gender Prejudices, Gender Stereotypes, Mobility, Suburbs

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Rights of Sri Lankan Indigenous People (the Veddas): A Call for Conservation and Empowerment

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Introduction

The Veddas of Sri Lanka have long been deprived of defined rights, resulting in the erosion of their fundamental human rights over centuries. While many countries around the world have acknowledged the necessity of declaring and constitutionalizing the rights of indigenous peoples as the true custodians of lands later occupied by contemporary dominant groups (Barsh, 1986), Sri Lanka has yet to prioritize the conservation of indigenous peoples' rights. The mid-20th century witnessed the emergence of indigenous peoples as a focal point in international law, with the World Council of Indigenous People (WCIP) and numerous non-governmental organizations highlighting the need for rules and regulations to protect the rights of indigenous and tribal communities. These rules encompassed various aspects, including the preservation of culture, lands, identity, economy, and social and religious life, which are highly applicable to the indigenous Vedda community in Sri Lanka. Drawing from internationally recognized rights of indigenous and tribal peoples, the present research attempts to propose a comprehensive set of rights related to the Sri Lankan Vedda people that should be promptly implemented in the Sri Lankan context.

Literature Review

Over the past hundreds of years, the Indigenous communities have experienced the gradual erosion of their prime human rights, with the country showing little regard for their conservation (Ananda and Nahallage, 2022; Barsh, 1986). Internationally, the significance of recognizing and constitutionalizing fundamental rights for Indigenous peoples has been acknowledged by most countries worldwide. In the mid-20th century, Indigenous people became an emerging focus of international law. Organizations like the World Council of Indigenous

People (WCIP) and numerous Non-Governmental Organizations have highlighted the importance of protecting Indigenous and tribal people's rights. These efforts encompass various aspects of culture, lands, identity, economy, social life, and religious life, which resonate with the context of Sri Lankan Indigenous people. Surprisingly, prior research has shown a lack of focus on the legal and human rights aspect of the Indigenous communities, which is vital in shaping a better future for them. These rights include self-determination, autonomy, and self-government, granting Indigenous people the freedom to govern their affairs (Barsh, 1986). The state must respect the freely expressed wishes of Indigenous communities concerning their jurisdiction and territory. Moreover, Indigenous people should be entitled to permanent control and enjoyment of their ancestral lands and the right to share and use these lands. In cases where lands were unjustly taken, immediate restitution and compensation should be provided to the Indigenous communities without extinguishing their original title. Preserving Indigenous cultural identity is also recognized globally. The research advocates for full respect and protection of Indigenous religious practices, unrestricted access to sacred traditional sites, and the right to manifest, teach, practice, and observe their religious traditions and ceremonies (Barsh, 1986, p. 381). Additionally, the right to preserve their cultural identity and traditions, and the promotion of intercultural information and education to recognize the dignity and diversity of their cultures are essential (Barsh, 1986, p. 383). The United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (1993) reinforces the importance of education for Indigenous peoples. It stresses the right to revitalize, use, develop, and transmit cultural aspects, including languages and oral traditions, to future generations (May & Aikman, 2003). Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control educational systems in their languages, tailored to their cultural methods of teaching and learning, even for Indigenous children living outside their communities (May & Aikman, 2003). The literature review concludes that if the government pays attention to implementing the suggested rights, it will ensure a better future for all Indigenous groups in the country, preserving a living heritage (Barsh, 1986; May & Aikman, 2003).

Methodology:

This research employs a comprehensive and holistic approach to gather data and insights. Data was primarily collected through interviews, observations, focus group discussions, and life histories, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the sociocultural realities faced by the Indigenous communities in Henanigala and Yakkure. Henanigala is belong to the Dehiaththakandiya District Secretariate of the Ampara District and Yakkure to the Dimbulagala District Secretariate of the Polonnaruwa District. Present sociocultural aspect of the Vedda people in these two villages were focused in gathering data while conducting observations among other indigenous groups of the country to understand their current situation (Ananda and Nahallage, 2019a; 2019b; 2022). Mainly older generations of the two communities were targeted in data collection where data saturation was considered to limit the number of informants.

Additionally, this study draws on internationally recognized principles and rights of Indigenous and tribal people, particularly those proposed by the World Council of Indigenous People (WCIP), United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (2008), International Labour Organization (ILO) (Errico, 2017), Cultural Survival (2023), International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) (2022) The Indigenous Foundation (2023) and various Non-Governmental Organizations. These principles include the rights to self-determination, autonomy or self-government, control and enjoyment of their ancestral lands, and restitution for lands taken in violation, among others. Furthermore, the importance of preserving Indigenous cultural identity, language, religious practices, and traditions is highlighted, along with the need to promote intercultural information and education.

Results and Discussion

The majority of the Vedda people are engaged in seasonal paddy farming, receiving income twice a year. However, financial challenges persist, with many families earning insufficient amounts, and some resorting to settling loans before receiving their seasonal income. Self-employment and cattle farming, once traditional and skilled occupations, have seen a decline due to lack of guidance during resettlement. As a

consequence, many Vedda individuals find themselves trapped in a "Culture of Poverty." Resettlement has accelerated assimilation into mainstream society, with intermarriages leading to the erosion of Vedda cultural practices. The abrupt changes during resettlement caused cultural shock, hindering adaptation to the new environment and resulting in land mortgage and selling. Consequently, a significant number of Vedda families now depend on their parents' paddy cultivation for their livelihood, perpetuating the challenges faced by the community.

The research findings reveal crucial insights into the rights and needs of Sri Lankan Indigenous communities, particularly the Vedda living in Henanigala and Yakkure. The following paragraphs summarize the key results:

Land and Resource Rights: The research emphasizes the urgent need for recognition and protection of Vedda ancestral lands, granting them the right to use, manage, and control their traditional territories. It highlights the significance of safeguarding sacred sites, and areas of cultural importance to the Vedda community. Furthermore, ensuring access and control over natural resources, such as forests, water sources, and traditional hunting and gathering grounds, is vital for the cultural and economic well-being of the Vedda people.

Cultural and Linguistic Rights: The study stresses the importance of recognizing and preserving Vedda cultural practices, traditions, and rituals. It advocates for support in revitalizing and maintaining the Vedda language, which is integral to their identity and heritage. Additionally, the protection of traditional knowledge, intellectual property, and cultural expressions is crucial in maintaining the unique cultural heritage of the Vedda community.

Self-Governance and Participation Rights: The research underscores the necessity of recognizing Vedda communities' right to self-governance and active participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives, lands, and resources. The inclusion of Vedda representatives in local and national governmental bodies and policy-making processes is

essential to ensuring their voices are heard and their rights are considered.

Education and Awareness Rights: The study advocates for access to quality education that respects and incorporates Vedda culture, history, and traditional knowledge. It emphasizes the need to establish Vedda cultural centers, museums, and educational programs to promote awareness and understanding among the broader society. Moreover, the inclusion of Vedda perspectives and histories in national textbooks and educational materials is crucial for fostering cultural appreciation and understanding.

Health and Social Welfare Rights: The research highlights the importance of providing Vedda communities with access to culturally appropriate healthcare services, including traditional healing practices and remedies. Adequate social welfare programs addressing the specific needs of Vedda communities, such as housing, nutrition, and community-based healthcare, are essential to ensuring their well-being and development.

Economic and Development Rights: The study calls for support in implementing sustainable economic initiatives that empower Vedda communities, such as traditional crafts, eco-tourism, and community enterprises. It stresses the significance of recognizing and protecting traditional Vedda knowledge and practices related to resource management and environmental conservation. Additionally, fair and equitable participation in development projects affecting Vedda lands or resources, with informed consent and benefit-sharing mechanisms, is crucial for their economic advancement and sustainable development.

Overall, the research underscores the need for immediate attention and action to uphold the rights and needs of the Vedda and other Indigenous communities in Sri Lanka. By implementing the proposed measures and ensuring their active participation in decision-making processes, the country can foster an inclusive and equitable society, preserving the rich cultural heritage of its Indigenous peoples for generations to come.

Conclusion and Remarks

By addressing the pressing issues faced by Indigenous communities and recognizing and protecting their rights, not only will the communities in Henanigala and Yakkure benefit, but all Indigenous communities throughout Sri Lanka will have the opportunity for a brighter future. Embracing and conserving the rich heritage of these communities will not only empower them but also contribute to the preservation of the country's living heritage. The implementation of the suggested measures will pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable society, where the rights and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their background, are upheld and respected.

Keywords: Veddas, Sri Lanka, Culture, Rights, Yakkure, Henanigala

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Cultural Dynamics and the Advancement of LGBTIQ Rights in Sri Lanka: An Investigative Study on Activism and Implementation

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Introduction to the Study

In the dynamic interplay of culture, heritage, and human rights, this research centres on the advancement of LGBTIQ rights within the unique cultural landscape of Sri Lanka. Amidst the symposium's theme of "Culture and Heritage," this study navigates the intricate connections between cultural dynamics and the ongoing efforts to enforce LGBTIQ rights, shedding light on the balance between tradition and progress. Through a mixed-methods approach, including qualitative narratives from activists and experts, and quantitative analysis of legal changes and societal attitudes, the research explores the challenges, opportunities, and strategies shaping the LGBTIQ movement in Sri Lanka. Ultimately, this investigation aims to deepen the understanding of how cultural forces influence the path to social justice, offering insights into the coexistence of diverse identities within Sri Lanka's cultural fabric.

Literature review

The LGBTQ rights movement has its roots in the Stonewall riots of 1969 in New York City. This event marked the beginning of a broader fight for LGBTQ rights and was the catalyst for the formation of LGBTQ advocacy and activist organizations (D'Emilio, 1983). Since then, LGBTQ activism has taken many forms, including direct action, community organizing, and the formation of political advocacy groups (Carman et al., 2020). Pride parades, which began as a way for LGBTQ individuals to celebrate their identity and protest against oppression, have become a prominent feature of LGBTQ activism and a symbol of LGBTQ pride and unity (Hickman, 2019).

In recent years, LGBTQ activism has continued to evolve, with a growing emphasis on intersectionality and the recognition of the ways in which various forms of oppression, such as racism and sexism, impact LGBTQ individuals (Bailey, 2017). This recognition has led to the development of LGBTQ activism that is more inclusive and takes into account the diverse experiences of LGBTQ individuals.

In South Asia, including Sri Lanka, the LGBTQ community faces significant legal and social challenges (Gosine, 2018). Homosexuality is illegal in several countries in the region, including Sri Lanka, and societal attitudes towards LGBTQ individuals are often negative (Gosine, 2018). Despite these challenges, the LGBTQ community in South Asia is actively advocating for their rights and working to raise awareness about LGBTQ issues (Gosine, 2018).

The literature review suggests that LGBTQ activism and pride movements have a rich history, with the LGBTQ rights movement having its roots in the Stonewall riots of 1969. The Gotagogama protest in Sri Lanka in 2022 is an example of the ongoing efforts of the LGBTQ community in the region to advocate for their rights and raise awareness about LGBTQ issues. The literature also highlights the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community in South Asia, including Sri Lanka, where homosexuality is still illegal and societal attitudes towards LGBTQ individuals are often negative. The literature review highlights the need for further research into the experiences and activism of the LGBTQ community in South Asia, including Sri Lanka, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the community in the region.

Objectives of the Study
Main Objective:
Examine how cultural factors, particularly activism and implementation, are influencing the advancement of LGBTIQ rights in Sri Lanka.
Sub-Objectives:
- Examine historical settings that have an impact on how people view gender identity and sexuality.
- Examine the different kinds of activism that the LGBTIQ community in Sri Lanka uses.

- Analyse the relationship between activism and the development of legal frameworks.
- Examine the attitudes of society and how they affect the successful application of LGBTIQ rights.
- Examine the complex interactions that exist between the pursuit of social justice and cultural norms.
- Recognise the impact of intersectionality within the LGBTIQ community.
- Consider pride parades as venues for activism and visibility.

Methods and methodology

Research Design:

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to comprehensively understand the advancement of LGBTIQ rights within the cultural landscape of Sri Lanka. The qualitative component encompassed in-depth interviews and narratives collected from a diverse array of stakeholders, including LGBTIQ activists, legal experts, policymakers, and community members. The quantitative facet involved the analysis of historical legal documents, legislative changes, and surveys aimed at assessing societal attitudes toward LGBTIQ rights.

Data Collection:

Qualitative data collection entailed conducting semi-structured interviews with purposively selected participants possessing insights into the LGBTIQ movement and its interactions with Sri Lankan culture. These interviews delved into participants' perspectives on cultural norms, historical influences, activism strategies, and their perceptions of the challenges and opportunities in advancing LGBTIQ rights. These interviews provided rich narratives contributing to a nuanced understanding of the cultural dynamics at play.

Quantitative data collection involved compiling and analyzing legal documents related to LGBTIQ rights, tracing the evolution of legislation and policy changes over time. Additionally, surveys were administered to assess the attitudes of different segments of Sri Lankan society toward LGBTIQ rights. This quantitative data complemented the

qualitative insights, offering a broader perspective of the socio-legal landscape.

Data Analysis:

Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis, involving the identification of recurring themes, patterns, and perspectives across the interviews. This approach facilitated a deeper exploration of the cultural forces shaping the advancement of LGBTIQ rights in Sri Lanka. The analysis was conducted using qualitative data analysis software, facilitating rigorous coding and interpretation. Quantitative data analysis involved systematically examining legal documents and legislative changes, mapping the trajectory of LGBTIQ rights within the legal framework. Survey data were statistically analysed to quantify societal attitudes toward LGBTIQ rights and identify potential correlations between cultural factors and acceptance.

Ethical Considerations:

Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the research process, ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of participants through pseudonyms and secure data storage. Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in interviews and surveys. Ethical approval was sought from the appropriate institutional review board to ensure adherence to ethical guidelines.

Conclusion:

The research design, which incorporated mixed-methods data collection and analysis, aimed to reveal the intricate interplay between culture, heritage, and the advancement of LGBTIQ rights in Sri Lanka. By combining qualitative narratives and quantitative data, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how cultural dynamics influenced the path toward social justice within this unique cultural context.

Results and Discussion:
Cultural Dynamics and LGBTIQ Advocacy

The analysis of qualitative data illuminated the profound influence of cultural dynamics on the advancement of LGBTIQ rights in Sri Lanka. Participants' narratives underscored the complex interplay between cultural norms, historical perspectives, and the advocacy strategies employed by the LGBTIQ movement. Traditional values often posed challenges, with deeply ingrained beliefs impacting acceptance of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. However, narratives also highlighted the growing acknowledgment of the need for cultural evolution to embrace inclusivity, reflecting a gradual shift toward more accepting attitudes.

Legislative Landscape and Activism

Quantitative analysis of historical legal documents revealed a changing legislative landscape pertaining to LGBTIQ rights. Early legal frameworks exhibited a lack of explicit recognition and protection, often contributing to a hostile environment for the LGBTIQ community. However, legislative amendments over time showcased a concerted effort toward rectifying this disparity, reflecting the influence of both local activism and global human rights discourse. The correlation between legislative changes and the intensity of activism emerged as a significant point of discussion, emphasizing the role of advocacy in shaping policy reform.

Societal Attitudes and Perceptions

The administered surveys provided insights into societal attitudes toward LGBTIQ rights. Findings revealed a diverse spectrum of opinions, reflecting the varying degrees of cultural conservatism and openness within Sri Lankan society. While a portion of respondents exhibited conservative views, a notable segment expressed willingness to embrace more inclusive perspectives. The discussion surrounding these results highlighted the interconnectedness between cultural factors, education, and generational shifts in influencing societal perceptions.

Intersection of Culture and Social Justice

The synthesis of qualitative narratives and quantitative findings highlighted the intricate intersection of culture and social justice in the advancement of LGBTIQ rights. The data illuminated the challenges faced by activists as they navigated the balance between cultural heritage and the pursuit of equal rights. The evolving cultural landscape, combined with the influence of global movements, has driven a growing acceptance of LGBTIQ individuals and their rights. The discussion emphasized the role of cultural reconciliation as a catalyst for societal progress, underscoring the importance of recognizing cultural heritage as a dynamic force that can evolve to promote inclusivity.

Conclusion and Remarks

The results and subsequent discussion underscored the complex and evolving relationship between culture, heritage, and LGBTIQ rights in Sri Lanka. The data highlighted the transformative power of advocacy within a cultural context, showcasing the potential to shape both legislative change and societal perceptions. The interplay between tradition and progress emerged as a central theme, emphasizing the necessity of cultural evolution to foster inclusivity and social justice. This exploration contributes to a deeper understanding of how cultural dynamics impact the trajectory of LGBTIQ rights, offering insights into the broader dialogue on reconciling Culture and Heritage for the advancement of a more equitable society.

Keywords: *Activism, Legislation, LGBTIQ rights, Sri Lankan culture, Social justice*

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Effect of Audit Committee Quality and Corporate Ownership on Timeliness of Financial Reporting: Evidence from India

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Abstract:

This study explores the influence of Audit Committee Quality and Corporate Ownership on the timeliness of financial reporting within the Indian context. The research employs an extensive dataset comprising 11,361 firm-year observations (representing 986 unique firms) listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) from 2008 to 2021. The findings reveal that effective audit committees, characterized by independent chairs, female representation, absence of promoters, financial expertise, and regular high-attendance meetings, contribute to a reduction in Audit Report Lag (ARL). Moreover, the study identifies variations in ARL across different types of firms, highlighting that state-owned firms experience longer ARLs, while Business Groups (BGs) and foreign firms exhibit comparatively shorter ARLs.

Keywords: Audit Committee Quality; ARL; Business groups; Bombay Stock Exchange.

Introduction

In the realm of corporate obligations and societal interests, this study delves into the timeliness of financial reporting in India, where the equilibrium between civil responsibilities and legislation is pivotal. The separation of control between business entities and their owners has underscored the need for effective corporate governance practices (Jensen and Meckling, 1976). Timely financial reporting, a cornerstone of corporate governance, reduces information asymmetry and uncertainty in investment decisions (Ettredge et al., 2006). In the contemporary digital era, the importance of prompt financial information is magnified. This urgency places substantial pressure on

external auditors to conclude audits and release audit reports within filing deadlines. Despite efforts, there is often a considerable time gap between the end of the financial year and the publication of the audited financial statements, known as the Audit Report Lag (ARL). Longer ARL remains a concern, potentially reducing the value of audited financial statements as stakeholders resort to potentially more expensive alternative sources for financial information (Lee et al., 2009).

This concern has led capital market experts and regulatory bodies to take measures to curtail ARL. For example, regulation 33 of listing regulations issued by the Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) requires listed entities to submit annual audited standalone financial results for the financial year within 60 days from the end of the financial year audit report. However, the analysis from this study reveals variations in ARL persist among listed BSE firms, prompting further investigation. Prior research has explored determinants of ARL, including firm-specific and audit function features (Lee et al., 2009, Dao and Pham, 2014, Khoufi and Khoufi, 2018). Nevertheless, studies examining the influence of corporate governance mechanisms on ARL are limited. This study aims to bridge that gap by focusing on Audit Committee Quality and Corporate Ownership and their impact on financial reporting timeliness in India. The Indian setting enriches this exploration. As India's diverse organizational structures, including Business Group (BG) affiliated firms, state-owned enterprises, and foreign firms, provide an intriguing context for investigation. Furthermore, dynamic corporate governance reforms, introduced through the Companies Act, 2013, and SEBI listing regulations, highlight the evolving nature of corporate governance practices in India. These changes necessitate an exploration of their impact on ARL.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development
a. Audit Committee Quality and ARL

Audit committees play a critical role in ensuring the integrity of financial reporting, yet their impact varies due to composition differences (Sultana et al., 2015). Prior research has highlighted factors influencing their effectiveness(Abbott et al., 2004, Ika and Ghazali, 2012). This study extends these findings by introducing novel

governance quality metrics such as chair independence and committee busyness while considering regulatory mandates. Drawing from agency theory, the hypothesis posits that higher audit committee quality correlates with expedited financial reporting. Effective committees enhance oversight, contributing to improved reporting quality and timely information dissemination.

H1. Higher audit committee quality is associated with reduced ARL.

b. Corporate Ownership and ARL

The Indian ownership landscape encompasses diverse entities, such as state-owned enterprises, business groups, privately owned firms, and foreign ownership, each marked by unique characteristics and governance approaches. State-owned enterprises, driven by socio-political considerations, may prioritize social stability over profit, leading to extended financial reporting timelines (Ramaswamy et al., 2002). Government ownership can exacerbate agency issues due to inadequate regulatory oversight and scrutiny (Ma et al., 2018). BG firms raise governance concerns but also offer efficiency advantages. Due to intricate structures and resource diversion potential, BG firms may enhance financial reporting monitoring (Fang et al., 2017, Johl et al., 2016). Conversely, foreign ownership often fosters timely and transparent disclosure influenced by foreign shareholders (Khan et al., 2013). Considering this context, the study asserts that India's varied ownership structure significantly impacts ARL, reflecting the distinct priorities and governance practices of different ownership categories.

H2. Corporate Ownership is significantly associated with variations in ARL.

Methodology

The study's sample comprises BSE-listed firms from 2008 to 2021, excluding financial, utility, and real estate sectors. The total initial sample was 13,232 observations (1,024 unique firms). The period is significant due to regulatory changes by SEBI in 2010 and COVID-19 relaxations in 2020. After data collection and screening, the final sample includes 11,361 observations (986 unique firms). The study focuses on the ARL, defined as the time from fiscal year-end to the signing of the

audit report. A comprehensive audit committee index with twelve attributes is used to evaluate the impact of audit committee quality (H1). Each attribute is assigned a score of 0 or 1, depending on its presence or absence. The audit committee quality index is calculated as an average of these scores. Ownership structures, including state ownership, BG ownership, and foreign ownership, are also examined for their effects on ARL in India. Firm-specific characteristics are considered in the analysis as control variables such as profitability, leverage, firm size, firm risk, firm age, and financial condition are considered in the analysis.

Results and Discussion:

The main results are presented in Table 1. In the overall sample, a higher audit committee quality index (ACQI) is associated with significantly shorter ARL (β = -0.309, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the effectiveness of robust audit committees in expediting financial reporting. Chair independence, female representation, absence of promoters, and higher meeting frequency individually contribute to reduced ARL. Financial expertise within the audit committee and the expertise of the committee chair are also associated with timelier reporting. Additionally, distinct ownership structures impact ARL. State-owned firms exhibit longer ARL (β = 6.972, $p < 0.001$) due to their focus on social stability. Conversely, BG ownership is linked to shorter ARL (β = -7.539, $p < 0.001$) as BG firms prioritize efficient reporting. Foreign private firms also experience shorter ARL (β = -4.876, $p < 0.001$) due to pressure from foreign shareholders for transparency. Further analysis, including Indian and foreign group firms, confirm shorter ARLs, respectively. The findings underscore the pivotal role of audit committee quality and ownership structures in influencing financial reporting timeliness, and enhancing corporate transparency and accountability in the Indian context.

Conclusion:

In summary, this study delves into the connection between audit committee quality, corporate ownership, and the timeliness of financial reporting within the Indian context. The findings affirm the crucial role of effective audit committees in reducing ARL, thereby enhancing

transparency and accountability in financial reporting. Additionally, ownership structures, such as state-owned, Business Group (BG), and foreign-owned firms, play a significant role in influencing ARL, reflecting distinct motivations and governance practices. These results highlight the intricate interplay between corporate governance, ownership incentives, and regulatory frameworks in shaping timely financial reporting. They emphasize that while regulations provide a necessary foundation for reporting obligations, the presence of independent audit committees and aligning ownership priorities with transparency goals are equally vital. This dynamic underscores the ethical dimension of corporate responsibility to stakeholders, balancing individual freedom with the obligation to provide accurate and timely financial information. The study's insights emphasize that responsible corporate practices and timely reporting not only fulfil legal requirements but also uphold the principles of social justice by providing stakeholders with accurate information for informed decision-making.

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We do not need another 'Homosexual' to our Social Sciences Faculty; Workplace Harassment, Discrimination, and Labelling towards LGBTIQ+ and Queer Studies in Critical and Cultural Communication.

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Abstract

Current research has suggested how young Sri Lankan people face workplace harassment, discrimination, and labelling of their LGBTIQ+ interests and queer research. One area of growing popularity has been how young academics are refused in Sri Lankan university social sciences faculty because of their LGBTIQ+ tendencies and queer research interests. Sri Lanka's humanities and social sciences university disciplines have been formalised within the heteronormative context; therefore, the academic environment does not provide a comfortable zone for LGBTIQ+ studies as how it interlays with homophobia and cultural stigmatisation. In response, this article defines how young Sri Lankan academic men are discriminated against and harassed by their mentors of senior social sciences academic men in the lecturer recruitment process and LGBTIQ+ research interests. This research was conducted on constructive ontology and interpretivist epistemology as an inductive qualitative design. Data were collected on auto-ethnography whilst this researcher spent in Sri Lanka for his doctoral field research (August 2019 - February 2022) – one day, he was invited to an evening cocktail party by his senior academic colleagues and how they responded to his doctoral research – the rural Sri Lankan young men's same-sex relationships, and Facebook. Findings on the inductive thematic analysis suggest how young academics are institutionally labelled as 'homosexuals' on their queer values; thus, they are rejected by the recruitment process in social sciences faculty. Also, results indicate that senior colleagues use LGBTIQ+ values to morally

discourage and label young academics individually and disgrace them in public meetings, thus damaging their research and professional performances. This paper highlights the importance of overtly engaging in dialogue and discussing how young people are mistreated, refused, rejected, and labelled on LGBTIQ+ identities. The article concludes by suggesting the necessity of LGBTIQ+ sexual health education and critical cultural queer studies to overcome threats to how people and research interests in the university workplace.

Keywords: LGBTIQ+ identities, workplace harassment and discrimination, heteronormativity, homophobia, cultural stigmatisation, LGBTIQ+ sexual health education

Introduction

In Sri Lanka's universities, discrimination against individuals with non-heterosexual values, encompassing the LGBTIQ+ community, is prevalent. Young academic men identifying as queer face marginalisation and discrimination from senior university academic males and administration (Bailey, 2021). This discrimination is rooted in homophobia and influences institutional decisions, particularly in lecturer recruitment processes. The paper explores how young academics, especially in social sciences, experience discrimination, affecting their careers and personal lives. This paper uses a critical queer cultural communication perspective to examine how senior faculties influence and hinder young academic people, particularly in emerging critical cultural queer research interests (Adikaram and Liyanage, 2021; Gamage, 2021; Liyanage and Adhikaram, 2019; Choudhury et al., 2009).

The theoretical framework aligns with critical queer cultural communication inquiries, exploring the intersection of institutional harassment and discrimination based on non-heterosexual orientations (Huang, 2021). The study uses autoethnography to provide a firsthand account of discrimination faced during field research in Sri Lanka (Ellis, Adams, and Brochner, 2011). The literature review delves into workplace discrimination against LGBTIQ+ individuals, connecting it to hegemonic masculinity and heteronormative patriarchy (Adikaram and Liyanage, 2021; Grace, 2001). Identified research gaps include

perspectives on heteronormativity, hegemonic masculinity, homophobia, cultural stigmatisation, postcolonial cultural context, and workplace harassment. The paper aims to address these gaps through research questions and objectives.

The conceptual/theoretical background discusses how young academics in Sri Lanka face discrimination based on sex and gender within the heteronormative sexual politics of social sciences, intersecting with critical cultural queer studies (Hill, 1995). Methodological research and ethical practices are outlined, leading to the study's discussion, conclusion, and implications. The paper emphasises the importance of LGBTIQ+ sexual health education to counter workplace rejections and advocates for critical cultural studies to eradicate institutional drawbacks against the LGBTIQ+ community (Huang, 2021).

Literature Review and Identification of Gaps

In current management research, Adikaram and Liyanage (2021) highlight the harassment faced by gay male employees in Sri Lanka due to their sexual orientation within a culture of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity. Hence, this stems from Sri Lanka's adherence to British colonial Victorian morals and European sodomy laws, criminalising non-heterosexual identities (Ellawala, 2018). The Penal Code, dating back to 1883, still penalises non-heterosexual acts in public, reflecting hegemonic heteronormative values (Sri Lanka Penal Code, 1995). Adikaram and Liyanage (2021) emphasise the pervasive impact of sexual stigma in workplaces, reinforcing heterosexuality and masculinity as hegemonic discourses. The societal fear and shame surrounding non-heterosexual identities contribute to workplace discrimination (Hart et al., 2021). The lack of critical cultural queer analysis and understanding is implicated in fostering workplace harassment and discrimination against the LGBTIQ+ community. Hearnden's (2020) research from the University of Sydney reveals a hyper-masculinised environment in Sri Lanka's workplaces, threatening LGBTIQ+ individuals through extortion, harassment, and intimidation.

This hyper-masculinity, a response to a perceived loss of dominance, exacerbates discrimination in the post-disaster period

(Austin, 2016; Myrttinen, 2017). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) define hegemonic masculinity as normative but not statistically assumed normal. Sri Lankan society's adherence to socially accepted sexual and gender norms contributes to marginalising non-heterosexual identities (Giazitzoglu, 2022). This normativity affects institutional culture and management procedures, reinforcing heterosexuality as the dominant sexual mood. Gamage's (2021) research from Flinders University emphasises how sociocultural beliefs in Sri Lanka render LGBTIQ+ individuals helpless, justifying their lower societal status. The silence of LGBTIQ+ people in the face of prejudice reflects the societal dominance of heteronormative gender roles and performances.

In the context of social sciences academia, canonical research practices favour a white, masculine, heterosexual perspective, dismissing other ways of knowing (Ellis, Adams, and Brochner, 2011). Autoethnography is proposed as an alternative, allowing a broader lens on the world and understanding the impact of one's identity on research interpretations (Ellis, Adams, and Brochner, 2011).

The gaps identified in the literature include the need for critical cultural queer analysis, the impact of postcolonial culture, the role of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity in workplace discrimination, and the lack of LGBTIQ+ sexual health education. The implication is to explore how young people are harassed for their LGBTIQ+ values, particularly in the social sciences academia, and how autoethnography can provide valuable insights into these experiences.

Aims, Questions, and Objectives

Aim: To explore how LGBTIQ+ young academic harassment and discrimination in the university social sciences faculty interplays with postcolonial culture, homophobia, heteronormativity, cultural stigmatisation, sexual health education, and critical cultural queer studies.

Research Questions:

1. How do social sciences academics interplay with the postcolonial cultural stipulations of gender and sex in heteronormative patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity?

2. How are young academics labelled and refused as 'homosexuals' by the social sciences faculty recruitments because of homophobia and cultural stigmatisation?
3. How do Sri Lanka's homophobia and heteronormativity connect with the lack of people's sexual health education, and thus, to discriminate against LGBTIQ+ and queer research in academic workplace harassment?

Objectives:

1. To analyse the interplay between heteronormative patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity leading to LGBTIQ+ young academic harassment and discrimination in the workplace.
2. To investigate how the university recruitment process, influenced by homophobia and cultural stigmatisation, refuses young academics.
3. To examine the lack of critical cultural queer studies on sex and gender and LGBTIQ+ sexual health education in the social sciences academia.

Conceptual/Theoretical Underpinning
Hegemonic Masculinity and Heteronormative Patriarchy

This paper employs the concepts of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormative patriarchy to analyse how homosexuality is stigmatised in Sri Lankan society and culture (Hale and Ojeda, 2018; Adikarama and Weerakotuwa, 2022). Hegemonic masculinity is understood as the prevailing gender practice that legitimises the dominance of men and the subordination of women (Connell, 2005). It is explored in the context of Sri Lankan university social sciences senior faculty, examining how men are positioned based on gendered sexual positions and adhering to locally established heteronormative patriarchal codes. The paper delves into how individuals enact hegemonic masculinity in a given context and how this embodiment reinforces or challenges the prevailing cultural norms (Haywood et al., 2017; Giazitzoglu, 2022).

Heteronormativity is used to theoretically focus on and question the dominant position of heterosexuality in society (Haywood et al., 2017). The paper investigates how heteronormativity, in combination with patriarchy, contributes to the discrimination against non-heterosexual

individuals, particularly in academic settings. The analysis includes discussions on the cultural construction of masculine power and how societal advantages are linked to conforming to traditional gender norms (Bailey, 2021).

Colonial European Victorian Morals and Debauchery Sodomy Laws – The Penal Code of 1883

The paper utilises the postcolonial concept to explore how Sri Lanka continued to uphold European colonial values, specifically the Victorian morals and debauchery sodomy laws (Spivak, 1999; Aldrich, 2014), even after gaining independence from British colonial. It argues that, despite nearly five centuries of European colonial influence, South Asia's inclusive sexual culture was transformed by colonial values, leading to the criminalisation of various sexual identities. The impact of the British Victorian Penal Code of 1883 is discussed, emphasising its role in shaping the prevailing heteronormative values and legal restrictions in Sri Lanka (Nkrumah, 1965; Huang, 2021).

Workplace Harassment and Discrimination of LGBTIQ+ and Organisational Culture and Institutional Management

Drawing on research from Canada, North America, Switzerland, Australia, and the United States, the paper establishes the broader context of workplace harassment and discrimination faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals, especially in academic settings (Biegel, 2018; Fahie, 2016; Waling and Roffee, 2018). The experiences of LGBTIQ+ teachers and students are examined to highlight the impact of discrimination on mental health, well-being, and academic performance. This international perspective is then applied to the Sri Lankan context, emphasising the need to explore how LGBTIQ+ young academics experience harassment, discrimination, and humiliation within the heteronormative work environments of Sri Lankan universities (Adikaram and Liyanage, 2022).

Methodology
Autoethnography

This research adopts a qualitative inductive design grounded in constructive ontology and interpretivist epistemology (Sarantakos, 2017). The researcher engaged in an autoethnographic approach, conducting an in-depth immersion into the phenomena under investigation through a critical cultural analysis of sex and gender topics (Sparkes and Smith, 2013). The ontological positioning is constructivist, considering knowledge as a social and cultural construction, and the epistemological stance involves interpreting human verbal and non-verbal behaviours (Ormston et al., 2014).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative research aims to make sense of or interpret phenomena based on the meaning people attribute to them. The assumption underlying qualitative research is that reality and truth are constructed by individuals within their cultural settings (Silverman, 2000; Freebody, 2003). While quantitative research assumes an objective reality, qualitative research, though not adhering to a positivist standpoint, is recognised as a valuable research practice, taking a humanistic stance (Méndez, 2013). Autoethnography emphasises the ethnographer's interaction with the culture being researched (Holt, 2003). It is an approach that systematically analyses personal experience to understand cultural phenomena (Ellis, Adams, and Brochner, 2011). This study draws on autoethnography to analyse the researcher's autobiography and ethnography, allowing the researcher to use personal experiences to understand the cultural context. Autoethnography accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on research, providing a nuanced perspective on the phenomenon under investigation (Ellis, Adams, and Brochner, 2011).

The evidence in this paper is supported by autoethnography, specifically the researcher's personal experience at an evening cocktail party and the reactions of academic colleagues to his ongoing doctoral research on rural Sri Lankan young men, same-sex relationships, and Facebook (Keene, 2022). Autoethnography enables the researcher to reflect on the incident, exploring emotions, feelings, and responses as a

gay male in Sri Lanka, culturally stigmatised through homophobia and heteronormativity (Herek, 2004; Yep, 2002).

As Ellis and Bochner (2000) described, autoethnography is an autobiographical genre that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. In this research, autoethnography intertwines the researcher's experience with participant responses, offering a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Reliability in this paper is ensured as the researcher narrates reliable, credible experiences of "what happened to him" (Brochner, 2002). Validity is measured by the reader's perception of the story's believability, coherence, connectivity, and continuity (Plummer, 2001). The autoethnographic approach generalises the experiences, providing readers with insights into unfamiliar cultural processes and facilitating validation through comparisons with the researcher's life (Ellis, 2004). While autoethnography is criticised for being perceived as insufficiently rigorous and too aesthetic, emotional, and therapeutic (Ellis, Adams, and Brochner, 2011), this research defends its value by emphasising the richness of insights gained through personal experience.

Evocative Aesthetic Emancipation and Ethics

This research takes the form of evocative autoethnography, focusing on the researcher's introspection into a specific queer topic; unlike analytic autoethnography, which maintains objectivity in analysing a particular group, evocative autoethnography aims to evoke readers' connections with the researcher's feelings and experiences (Méndez, 2013, p. 281). Ellis, Adams, and Brochner (2011) describe this approach as making texts aesthetic and evocative by utilising techniques of "showing" to bring readers into the scene, enabling them to experience the emotions, thoughts, and actions portrayed in the narrative (p. 277).

The use of "showing" in autoethnography allows for engaging and emotionally rich storytelling, while occasional "telling" provides readers with some distance to reflect on events in a more abstract manner (Ellis, 2004, p. 142). This approach creates an infotainment opportunity, engaging readers like watching a dramatic act or film. The researcher

actively participated in the portrayal of emotions, feelings, and responses, critically evaluating the queer subject independently to construct a narrative that paints a vivid picture and scene.

Emancipatory autoethnography emphasises that those being emancipated represent themselves, avoiding colonisation by others and resisting relegation to second-class citizenship (Richards, 2008, p. 1724). The "do no harm" principle guided this autoethnography, ensuring that no harm was inflicted on anyone involved in the ethnographic incident (Ellis, 2007, p. 6). Autoethnography is viewed as an ethical practice, emphasising the need to consider the impact on participants and adhere to ethical standards (Ibid., p. 7). The research received ethical approval from Newcastle University (Ref: 6997/2018). Relational ethics played a crucial role in conducting this autoethnography, considering the close, intimate relationships formed during the research process (Adams, 2006). Participants were not treated as impersonal subjects but were engaged as individuals, acknowledging the significance of friendships formed during the research process (Ellis, Adams, and Brochner, 2011, p. 281). The ethical issues inherent in this paper are interconnected with the idea that participants, often friends, are integral to the research process, emphasising the importance of ethical conduct and relational considerations.

Inductive Thematic Analysis

The qualitative data in this paper is analysed using Inductive Thematic Analysis (ITA) as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2012). The focus is on collecting data related to the researcher's personal story and experiences concerning the dialogue and discussion among university colleagues about the harassment and discrimination faced by young academics applying for lecturer positions, particularly in the context of queer reasoning related to the LGBTIQ+ community.

In the context of this paper, a "theme" refers to a more abstract final product or result of data analysis (Vaismoradi et al., 2013, p. 402). Themes are used to organise findings logically and coherently, bringing together different data sections. Therefore, this involves identifying patterns and meanings within the data set, capturing informants' voices,

and addressing the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). ITA focuses on identifying and describing hidden and overt concepts within the data rather than quantifying exact words or phrases (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2011, p. 10). Themes are developed through a careful and repeated examination of the data sets (Rice & Ezzy 1999, p. 258).

This paper used a six-step procedure outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87) to conduct ITA and identify critical highlights of the story. First, I transcribed the story and identified key ideas through thorough reading and re-reading. Second, I coded these ideas to develop a nuanced understanding of the data. Third, codes were further examined and collated to generate overarching themes. Fourth, a thematic map of analysis was drafted using level one and level two codes to classify the most significant aspects of the story. Fifth, I redefined themes to present a clear narrative. Finally, the identified themes, captivating quotes, and relevant literature were used to form the arguments presented in the paper, focusing on the key theme – the exclusion of homosexuals from social sciences faculty (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87).

Findings: Social Sciences Faculty and Homophobia

The autoethnography sheds light on a disturbing incident within the senior faculty of the Social Sciences department at a national university in Sri Lanka. The narrative unfolds at an evening dinner party, where a dialogue ensues about academic quality and rigour within the social sciences. During this discussion, a senior faculty member publicly humiliates the researcher by proclaiming, "We do not want homosexuals like Manoj Jinadasa in the Faculty of Social Sciences."

This incident reveals a systemic rejection of LGBTIQ+ identities within the social sciences senior faculty. The derogatory use of the term 'homosexual' serves not only as a label but as a tool for damaging the researcher's reputation and undermining the legitimacy of research interests related to queer studies. The dialogue echoes broader societal stigmas, as highlighted by research on the psychological well-being of homosexual individuals facing verbal stigma and name-calling (Wang, 2019).

The discussion further reveals a preconceived bias against young academics with LGBTIQ+ tendencies. The decision to exclude a prospective lecturer based on their sexual orientation was made during an informal meeting among senior academic staff, bypassing the formal interview process. This practice perpetuates discrimination and disregards the potential for diverse perspectives and knowledge in academic institutions.

The autoethnography also touches on the reluctance of academic environments to embrace diversity, particularly in terms of LGBTIQ+ inclusivity. The researcher challenges the existing mindset in modern-day university academia, calling for a transition from egalitarian thinking to diversity literacy. The need for decoloniality and intersectionality is emphasised to address pervasive heteronormative academic contexts and combat cultural homophobia.

As the narrative unfolds, another senior faculty member corroborates the discriminatory practices within the department. An incident involving a young undergraduate man expressing romantic feelings for a temporary lecturer sheds light on systemic discrimination. The rejected candidate, when questioned about potential interference in the recruitment process, chooses to remain silent, highlighting the pervasive silence surrounding workplace discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation.

The autoethnography underscores the broader societal impact of such discriminatory practices. LGBT individuals often face career implications and may choose to remain silent, perpetuating a cycle of discrimination and marginalisation. This phenomenon is observed globally, with examples from the U.K. and Turkey illustrating the challenges faced by LGBT individuals in educational and workplace settings.

In conclusion, autoethnography serves as a powerful exposé of the entrenched homophobia within academic institutions, urging for a reevaluation of existing norms, promotion of diversity, and the dismantling of discriminatory practices based on sexual orientation.

Discussion: Unraveling Homophobia in Sri Lankan Academia

"The problem is not homosexuality but social attitudes towards it. We might even say that homophobia, rather than homosexuality, makes people ill." (Dean and Lane, 2001, p. 4)

The autoethnography uncovers a distressing reality within Sri Lankan social sciences academia, where the term 'homosexuals' is used as a tool for humiliation and disrespect. The derogatory language perpetuates heterosexism, stigmatising individuals based on their sexual orientation (Burn, 2000). Fasoli et al. (2016) emphasise that homophobic epithets not only convey a negative evaluation but also depict gay individuals as deviant, contributing to a hostile environment. The evidence presented in the paper aligns with existing research on the harassment and discrimination faced by Sri Lankan university staff based on their LGBTIQ+ traits (Gamage, 2021). Discrimination is not solely directed at specific labels but extends to body traits, gazes, postures, and gestures that deviate from established gender norms. Thus, this aligns with Judith Butler's (2020) assertion of the performative nature of gender and sexuality, where deviations from normative gender performances lead to marginalisation.

The autoethnography underscores how homophobic decisions impact the recruitment process, with young academics being refused university positions based on informal discussions. Therefore, this mirrors global challenges, as highlighted by Payne and Smith (2018), where resistance to LGBTQ professional development in educational settings reflects societal reluctance to engage in conversations about inclusivity.

Efforts to combat discrimination and harassment within academic institutions necessitate a shift in mindset. The paper advocates for increased inclusion of LGBTIQ+ content in educational leadership training to foster a positive school climate (Burn, 2000) regarding non-heterosexuality. It emphasises the importance of supporting LGBT teachers and integrating LGBTQ+ education into professional development programs (Morgen, 2020; O'Malley and Capper, 2015). The reluctance to embrace diversity in academia is seen as reflective of a broader societal issue. Beilharz (2015) suggests that critical theory should be brought back to connect personal and societal aspects in

university settings. This shift involves recognising the importance of diverse perspectives and knowledge within the laboratory of social sciences, which is, essentially, human society.

The autoethnography further calls for the incorporation of queer cultural communication studies in academic curricula. This interdisciplinary approach aims to explore the complex intersections of sexualities, understanding how local populations are oppressed due to a lack of queer knowledge. Gamage (2021) highlights the need for NGOs to organise and empower the LGBTIQ+ community, emphasising intersectionality within the community itself.

To address the prevailing discrimination against the LGBTIQ+ community in Sri Lanka, the paper advocates for changes in education policies, awareness campaigns, and amendments to penal codes. Repealing existing penal codes and revisiting sexual education curricula are proposed as crucial steps towards fostering inclusivity and protecting the rights of the LGBTIQ+ community.

In conclusion, the autoethnography not only exposes the deep-seated homophobia within Sri Lankan social sciences academia but also serves as a call to action. It urges for a transformative approach in education, organisational culture, and policies to dismantle discriminatory practices and foster a truly inclusive academic environment.

Limitations and Conclusion: A Call for Queer Studies in Academia
Limitations

The autoethnographic approach employed in this paper, while offering an in-depth exploration of a specific incident, is not without its limitations. Autoethnography is often criticised for its subjective nature and potential bias, being perceived as too artful and not scientific enough (Ellis, Adams, and Brochner, 2011). The focus on a single case may limit the generalizability of the findings, offering insights into a particular facet of the population rather than presenting a comprehensive overview.

Moreover, the theme developed in the paper, "no more homosexuals to our social sciences faculty," might not capture the entire complexity of the incident. The nuances and broader context of the situation may not be fully illuminated, and the paper acknowledges that

its findings and conclusions may not represent the complete picture of how social sciences faculties in Sri Lankan universities perceive LGBTIQ+ values.

Conclusion

The paper concludes with a call for heightened attention to issues surrounding stigmatisation, sexual health, and the coexistence of diverse employees in workplaces, particularly in academic institutions. The existing research cited emphasizes the impact of criminalization and strict institutionalization of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity on individuals facing discrimination and harassment (Liyanage and Adikaram, 2019). The author advocates for societal education on different sexual rights and lives of LGBTIQ+ individuals, regardless of cultural and institutional heteronormative limitations. Workplace discrimination based on non-binary, non-heterosexual identities is highlighted, emphasizing the need for inclusivity and support for marginalized populations. In alignment with broader discussions in critical cultural studies, the paper urges universities to move beyond colonial heteronormative limitations. It encourages the adoption of avant-garde methodologies and epistemologies, such as postcolonial critical cultural queer communication studies, to explore and address contemporary societal challenges.

The importance of queer (post)colonial studies is emphasised, rejecting Western heteronormative structures and imagining new spaces free from colonial and homo-nationalist holds (Asante and Hanchey, 2021). The paper argues that social scientists, particularly those in arts and social sciences faculties, have a critical responsibility to explore and address societal issues, including those related to queer culture and the LGBTIQ+ communities.

Ultimately, the discussion encourages a reconceptualisation of communication around sexuality, recognising the contributions of transnational queer studies to understanding global movements and complexities (Huang, 2021). The intersection of queer and postcolonial studies is proposed as a transformative lens through which to liberate discussions around sexuality and challenge heteronormative structures.

In essence, the paper serves as a call to action for academia to embrace diverse perspectives, challenge discriminatory practices, and contribute to the creation of knowledge that reflects the complexities of contemporary societal issues, particularly in the realm of queer culture and sexuality.

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Gendered Insecurities: Understanding Factors Influencing the Fear of Crime in Colombo, Sri Lanka

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Introduction

Fear of crime is a complex and pervasive issue in urban environments, affecting individual well-being and community cohesion. Among the myriad factors influencing the fear of crime, gender-related aspects have been recognized as significant contributors. This study focuses on identifying and analyzing gender-related factors that influence fear of crime in Colombo, Sri Lanka, shedding light on this critical phenomenon.

Fear of crime differs from the actual risk of victimization, representing individuals' subjective apprehensions of becoming victims. Extensive research in criminology, particularly within victimology, has revealed that personal fear of crime is associated with heightened anxiety levels, social withdrawal, and alterations in daily behaviors. To comprehend fear effectively, exploring attitudes and thoughts through engagement with individuals and understanding its underlying causes is essential. Gender, beyond biological distinctions, influences various aspects of human behavior, including communication patterns, activities, aspirations, and values. Research has shown that women tend to experience higher levels of fear compared to men. This disparity may arise from social stress, differing vulnerability to stressors, and exposure disparities related to gender roles.

In the labyrinth of societal dynamics in Sri Lanka, the fear of crime, particularly among women, is a pressing concern deeply intertwined with gender-related factors. According to the Women's Wellbeing survey, a staggering 20.4% of women in Sri Lanka have encountered physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in their

lifetime, casting a long shadow over their sense of security (Gender-based violence, 2021). This pervasive issue extends beyond intimate relationships, with 6% of women experiencing such violence within the last 12 months (Global Database on Violence against Women, 2022). As we delve into the intricate web of gender-based factors influencing the fear of crime, it is crucial to acknowledge that these statistics not only reflect the prevalence of violence against women but also underscore the broader implications for their safety and well-being. Additionally, the lack of comprehensive statistics on male victims emphasizes the need for a more inclusive understanding of the gender-related dimensions of fear of crime.

Empirical evidence supports the connection between gender and fear of crime. Previous studies have investigated gender-related factors affecting fear of crime in various regions. However, this study aims to delve deeper into the Sri Lankan context, considering unique cultural and socioeconomic influences on fear of crime. By understanding the gender-specific elements contributing to fear of crime in Colombo, policymakers can develop targeted interventions to enhance safety and mitigate fear. This research is crucial for formulating evidence-based strategies that promote community well-being and improve the overall quality of life.

This study focuses on understanding the gender-related factors affecting fear of crime in Colombo, Sri Lanka. In doing so, the research acknowledges the importance of considering gender relations within spatial contexts and their contribution to the experience of fear of crime. Spatial classification inherently shapes individuals' social and cognitive maps, influencing how they organize and navigate their daily lives, including perceptions of crime fear. Investigating the role of public spaces in shaping gender identities and their association with fear of crime becomes a crucial area of study.

Moving beyond the material confines of physical space, the research aims to explore how fear of crime is constituted by the perceived and imagined aspects of these spaces. Additionally, the study aims to uncover the definitive gender-related factors underlying fear of crime perceptions. The primary objective is to identify the gender-specific elements contributing to fear of crime, particularly in the

context of Colombo, Sri Lanka. To achieve the research objective, a key research questions have been formulated. The study seeks to understand What gender-related factors influence the fear of crime in Colombo, Sri Lanka?

Literature Review

Research on gender differences in fear of crime has emphasized the influence of gender identity on fear perceptions. Goodey (1997) found that "male fearlessness" often observed in studies may be shaped by "hegemonic masculinity" developed during childhood and adolescence. Cops and Pleysier (2010) highlighted that gender attitudes aligned with dominant norms lead to higher female fear levels and lower male fear levels. Sutton and Farrall (2005) explored the role of social pressure in fear expression, revealing that men tend to respond in a socially desirable manner on fear of crime surveys.

Marginalized groups, including the LGBTQ community, face higher risks of crime, particularly sexual assault. Discriminatory laws and violence contribute to crime fear in this community (O'Donohue & Schewe, 2019; Akter et al., 2022). Marginalisation takes various forms, affecting access to resources and adequate medical care for trans-identified individuals. Consequently, crime victimisation and fear are prevalent among the LGBTQ community.

Feminist literature highlights how spatial classification reinforces gendered roles, creating an atmosphere of fear for women, especially due to the underlying threat of rape (Whitzman, 2007). Kwan (2000) demonstrated that spatial and temporal restrictions influence activity-travel patterns, while Stanko (1993) emphasized that women's fear is motivated by their position in a gendered society. Fear reduction strategies often overlook the role of societal factors and focus on individual responsibility.

Violence against women significantly impacts their spatial behavior and activities. Despite progress in addressing sexual violence, fear of crime continues to affect women's lives. The family-centric approach to crime prevention can perpetuate victim-blaming attitudes (Pain, 1997). Identifying fear of crime related to gender-based violence is crucial in understanding crime fear in Sri Lanka.

Fear assessment is influenced by individuals' perceptions of risk, control, and consequences. The social environment, crime control measures, and normalization of criminal activities influence fear of crime, including gender-based differences.Research shows that gender is a powerful predictor of fear of crime. Sociopolitical and demographic factors, along with crime intensity and victimization experiences, play a role in shaping fear of crime (Reese, 2009; Bennett & Flavin, 1994).

Gender influences the perception of vulnerability, with women perceiving higher susceptibility due to physical and social factors (Walklate, 1997). Understanding gender-related vulnerability is essential in studying fear of crime.Marginalized groups, such as ethnic minorities and homeless women, may experience heightened fear of crime due to lack of resources and experiences of discrimination (Coston, 1993). Femininity is found to be a primary factor influencing fear of crime for women in gendered societies.

This research applies a sociocultural approach to explore gender-related factors affecting fear of crime in the Sri Lankan context. Qualitative methods are employed to uncover the nuanced influences of gender on fear perceptions without pre-determined variables. The study aims to provide valuable insights into fear of crime among different genders in Sri Lanka.

Methods and Methodology

The research adopts a qualitative approach to explore the gender-related factors affecting fear of crime in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Critical realism is employed to understand participants' experiences with fear of crime within specific contexts. The study area is Colombo Central 1 - District 2A, known for its diverse housing types and multi-ethnic community. Purposive sampling is used to select 28 males and 28 female participants from the electoral register. The research focuses on gaining in-depth insights through smaller sample sizes to understand the variability within the data.

The data collection procedure involves interviews conducted at participants' residences, where they are asked to read and sign a consent form. Voice or video recordings are made with participant

consent, and interviews progress from general questions to specific and personal experiences of fear of crime.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is applied as the analysis method to explore how language and discourse sources contribute to cultural beliefs and social phenomena related to fear of crime. The analysis covers the level of agreement/disagreement, culture-related keywords, and the level of awareness in respondents' language. Posture shifts and facial expressions are also observed to identify emotional responses and gender-related vulnerability.

The study aims to address the limitations of previous fear of crime research by incorporating qualitative methods and a critical discourse analysis approach, providing deeper insights into the gender-related aspects of fear of crime in Sri Lanka.

Results and Discussion:

The findings of the study shed light on the gendered dynamics of fear of crime in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Language analysis revealed nuanced differences in the level of agreement and culture-related keywords used by male and female participants. Gender-related cultural norms and societal traditions emerged as influential factors in shaping participants' fear of crime experiences. Additionally, the level of awareness demonstrated differences between male and female participants, reflecting variations in their social exposure and knowledge of legal procedures.

The analysis of posture shifts and facial expressions highlighted the emotional impact of fear of crime, particularly regarding gender-related vulnerabilities such as sexual harassment and rape. These non-verbal cues provided valuable insights into the emotional dimensions of fear of crime, further emphasizing the importance of considering gender perspectives in fear research.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this research has provided valuable insights into the gender-related factors influencing the fear of crime in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The study revealed that perceived vulnerability is a significant factor, with women expressing a higher sense of vulnerability compared

to men, influenced by societal norms and traditional gender roles. Social expectations and pressure to conform to certain behaviors further contributed to women's fear of crime and influenced their daily routines and choices. Experiences of victimization, particularly related to sexual violence, had a profound impact on women's fear levels, heightening their anxieties about safety.

Moreover, the presence of marginalized groups in certain areas, such as ethnic minorities and low-income communities, contributed to the perception of insecurity and fear among women. The fear of encountering the 'stranger' or the 'other' was prevalent and led to women avoiding specific spaces and feeling anxious in certain situations. The language and discourses surrounding fear of crime also exhibited gendered patterns, with women using religious and cultural keywords to express their anxieties, while men emphasized notions of protection and control.

In light of these findings, addressing the gendered nature of fear of crime in urban environments like Colombo is essential. Crime prevention strategies must consider women's specific needs and experiences, challenging societal norms that perpetuate fear and vulnerability. By promoting gender equality and challenging traditional gender roles, efforts can be made to create safer and more inclusive communities. Additionally, empowering women to voice their concerns and actively participate in decision-making processes related to safety can lead to more effective crime prevention measures that cater to the population's diverse needs. Ultimately, understanding and addressing these gender-related factors will contribute to creating a more secure and supportive environment for all residents of Colombo.

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