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### Team Orientation on Team Performance in the Selected Commercial Banks in Sri Lanka

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#### ABSTRACT

An empirical gap has been observed regarding the relationship between team orientation and team performance in banking sector of Sri Lanka. Hence, in order to fill this empirical knowledge gap, this study was carried out with the objectives of find out the levels of team orientation and team performance, explains the relationship between team orientation and team performance and explains the impact of team orientation on team performance in selected licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka. The data of this study have been collected from 157 employees in selected licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka through the structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed with univariate and bivariate analyses. The findings of the study revealed that team orientation and team performance are in high level among the employees in surveyed banks. And also, findings of the study stated that there is a strong positive relationship between team orientation and team performance. This study suggested that degree of team orientation of employees can improve team's performance.

**Keywords:** employees, bank teamwork, team orientation, performance.

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## 1. Background of the Study

“Other resources make things possible, but only human resource make things happen” (Opatha, 2016, p.17). This statement clearly explained the importance of human resources in achieving the organizational goals and objectives. Hence, contemporary organizations are practicing several high-performance work practices in order gain the maximum individual contribution from the employees. In this scenario, Boxall and Purcell (2003) considered team work as one of the high-performance practices to gain the competitive advantage. According to Robbins and Judge (2015), team is defined as a group whose individual efforts result in performance that is greater than the sum of the individual inputs. Further, organization referred as a group of people who interact with each other for the purpose of achieving a common goal (Opatha, 2016). Thus, teams are becoming basic building blocks to every organization to achieve its goals and objectives as well as gain the sustainable competitive advantage.

Teams are increasingly the primary means for organizing work in contemporary business firms (Robbins and Judge, 2015). Teamwork is associated with improved financial performance (Macy and Izumi, 1993), improvements in organizational efficiency and quality (Applebaum and Batt, 1994), and the ability to respond to quickly changing demands in the environment (Zaccaro, Rittman, and Marks, 2001). Nowadays many organizations turn their spotlight on implementing the team working practices to overcome competition and globalization. Especially, team structure has been widely introduced in private and public sectors because teams are more flexible and responsive to changing events than traditional departments or other forms of permanent groupings (Robbbins and Judge, 2015).

Even though there were few private and foreign banks, the banking sector in Sri Lanka was dominated by three public sector banks until late 1980s. Private sector banks started after 1980s introduced information technology heavily into the banking sector. This situation changed the outlook of the banking sector completely. Presently, there are 22 commercial banks in Sri Lanka serving to relatively a small population of nearly 21 million. As a result, the banking sector in Sri Lanka has become very competitive. It is very important to provide a quality service to the customers to attract and retain the customers in such a competitive environment (Yapa and Hasara, 2013). In this context, Sri Lankan banks have the strong need to upscale team working practices to provide the valuable service in order to attract, satisfy, amaze and retain the customers.

According to Anuja and Arulrajah (2013) banks are promoting team works, team culture and team-based practices to uplift the level of team orientation among their employees. Further, Anuja and Arulrajah (2013) reveal that every bank tries to show it as a unique team in the competitive banking environment in Sri Lanka. These teams are directly involved with banking services. Some banks attempt to show their identities as unique teams with their bank names in the banking industry while some banks are struggling to build and practice team culture among their employees. Altogether, banks realized and reorganized the importance of teams in their highly competitive business environment and use various practices, techniques, tools and motivational mechanism to cultivate team orientation among their workforce in Sri Lanka (Anuja & Arulrajah, 2013). In this context, team orientation considered as the one of the crucial

success factors of the teamwork. Team orientation means state of being directed as a team (Arulrajah & Opatha, 2012). In addition to that, team orientation refers to an individual's propensity for functioning as part of a team and the degree to which individuals prefer to work in group settings for task accomplishment (Driskell & Salas, 1992). According to Bruemmer, Marble, and Dudenhoeffer (2002), team orientation occurs when the roles and responsibilities of team members are adjusted based on members' skill sets. Hence, without concerning the team orientation achieve the superior team performance of organization become unrealistic.

In considering above background about team orientation and team performance in the commercial banking sector in Sri Lanka, it is worthwhile to explain the relationship and impact between team orientation and team performance among selected commercial banks in Badulla District of Sri Lanka because these banks also practice team works or try to practice team culture among their employees. This kind of exploration would be useful in gaining empirical knowledge about team orientation and team performance in the Sri Lankan banking context.

### **Problem Statement of the Study**

Today, organizations rely on work groups and teams (Babnik, Sirca, and Dermol, 2002). Especially, Sri Lankan banks are strengthening its presence in the competitive business environment through the adaption of teamwork. In banking context, employees from diverse functional areas such as human resource management, marketing, loan, pawning departments and etc. are necessary to work as a team to achieve the goals and objectives of the bank. The entire team performance depends on each and every department. Due to that, banks have the necessity to apply the cross functional teamwork in order to ensure the bank's success. Recent days, most of the bank's team-oriented activities do not achieve the expected objectives as well as not perform well because of some struggles with working as team. In general, banks are practicing team works in order to upscale the overall bank's performance. Teamwork has the ability and capacity to provide several benefits to the organizations such as capacity to pool resources, exchange information, coordinate actions, and even share the responsibility for team decisions and etc (Driskell, Salas and Hughes, 2010). Furthermore, to promote teamwork, many scholars noted the importance of having team members with a collective team orientation that would facilitate coordination and communication and subsequently improve team performance (Anuja and Arulrajah, 2013; Bell, 2007; Driskell et al., 2010; Mohammed and Angell, 2004). However, team members do not always operate as a team, and real-world examples abound in which a lack of teamwork or failure to function collectively as a team has led to disastrous consequences (Driskell et al., 2010).

In this context, many scholars contributed to the understanding of teamwork (Bell, 2007; Driskell et al., 2010; Carron, Bray and Eys, 2002; Huang, 2012; Anuja and Arulrajah, 2013; Oztop, Katsikopopoulos and Gummerum, 2018). However, only few organizational behavior scholars (Eby and Dobbins, 1997; Bouwmans et al., 2017) linked the team orientation with the team performance of organizations. There is no empirical evidence on the relationships between team orientation and team performance in Sri Lankan context. Further, it reveals that little research has been done with regard to teamwork in Sri Lanka. In

particular, it reveals a gap in the empirical knowledge regarding the relationship between team orientation and team performance in banking sector in Sri Lanka indicating a contextual gap in research at industry level too. In considering above reasons, the researchers would like to conduct this research study in order to fill the empirical knowledge and contextual gaps with regards to relationship between team orientation and team performance.

Therefore, it necessitates a systematic research study to explain and highlight above aspects. Based on above research background and generally observed empirical knowledge gap three research objectives were formulated:

### **Research Objectives**

1. To find out the levels of team orientation and team performance of selected commercial banks in Badulla District of Sri Lanka.
2. To find out the relationship between team orientation and team performance of selected commercial banks in Badulla District of Sri Lanka.
3. To explain the impact of team orientation on team performance of selected commercial banks in Badulla District of Sri Lanka.

Rest of this article is structured as follows. The next section presents the review of the relevant literature about team orientation and teamwork proposes the hypotheses; the third section provides the methodology of this study. Lastly, we present the findings and discussion of the study, and it ends up with the conclusion.

## **2. Literature Review**

The literature review of this paper consists of four sections such as definitions of team and teamwork, definitions of team orientation, empirical studies related with teamwork and team orientation, and relationship between team orientation and team performance.

### **Successive Definitions of Team and Teamwork**

Table 1 shows the successive definitions of team and teamwork.

**Table 1. Successive Definitions of Team and Teamwork**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Dyer	1977	Teams are collections of people who must rely on group collaboration if each member is to experience the optimum of success and goal achievement.
Shaw	1981	Team defined as a group of people who work together.
Larson and LaFasto	1989	A team has two or more people; it has a specific performance objective or recognizable goal to be attained; and coordination of activity among the members of the team is required for the attainment of the team goal or objective.

Parker and Pankowski,	1990	Team is a group of people with a high degree of interdependence geared toward the achievement of a goal or the completion of a task.
Mohrman, Cohen, and Mohrman	1995	Team as "a group of individuals who work together to produce products or deliver services for which they are mutually accountable.
Guzzo and Dickson	1996	Team, which is made up by individuals, who see themselves and are seen by others as a social entity, who are interdependent because of the task they perform, and who are embedded in one or more larger social systems.
Huszczco	1996	It is two or more people interacting together to accomplish a common purpose.
Clegg	2000	Team is a minimum of two people working together towards shared goals
Jabbour and Santos	2008	Teamwork means a small group of people with complementary knowledge whose aim is to attain shared goals and objectives which guarantee the integration of this group.
Salas, Cooke, and Rosen	2008	The interdependent components of performance required to effectively coordinate the performance of multiple individuals.
Flin, Crichton and O'Connor	2011	Two or more people who interact, dynamically, interdependently, and adaptively toward a common and valued goal.
Robbins and Judge	2013	A group whose individual efforts result in performance that is greater than the sum of the individual inputs.

### Successive Definitions of Team Orientation

Table 2 displays the successive definitions of team orientation.

**Table 2: Successive Definitions of Team orientation**

Author	Year	Definition
Driskell and Salas	1992	Team orientation refers to an individual's propensity for functioning as part of a team and the degree to which individuals prefer to work in group settings for task accomplishment.
Wageman,	1995	Team orientation is generally viewed as stable enough to affect how individuals respond to a particular situation but can be changed over time through experience.
Hult and Nichols	1999	Team orientation is defined as the degree to which the organizational members stress collaboration and cooperation in performing business activities and in making business decisions.
O'Shea et al.	2004	Team orientation is a general disposition inclining some individuals toward working in groups or teams.

Driskell, Salas and Hughes	2010	Team orientation as the propensity to work in a collective manner in team settings.
Salas, Sims and Burke	2005	Team orientation refers to both a preference for working with others and a tendency to enhance individual performance through coordination of one's actions with other members while performing group tasks.
Arulrajah and Opatha	2012	Team orientation means state of being directed as a team.
Anuja and Arulrajah,	2013	Team orientation means extent to which the employees of an organization have really directed and committed towards team works.

Based on the above definitions, the researchers defined team orientation of employee as “the extent to which employee is inclined and committed to actively participate in the team activities”. Team orientation of employee is an immense essential component to achieve the team goals.

#### **Definition of Team Performance**

Team performance refers to the behaviors and cognition of team members that influence their working together toward a common goal (Weaver et al., 1995). Team performance defined as an emergent phenomenon resulting from the goal-directed process whereby members draw from their individual and shared resources to display task work processes, teamwork processes, and integrated team-level processes to generate products and provide services (Kozlowski and Klein, 2000; Salas et al., 2007). Based on the above definition, researchers defined team performance as the “team members’ ability to achieve the team goals effectively and efficiently.

#### **Key Empirical Studies related to Teamwork and Team Orientation**

Table 3 presents the empirical studies related with teamwork and team orientation.

**Table 3: Key Studies related to Teamwork and Team Orientation**

Author	Year	Description
Carron, Bray and Eys	2002	This study examines the relationship between task cohesiveness and team success in elite teams using composite team estimates of cohesion. The findings of the suggested that there is a strong relationship between cohesion and success
Mohammed and Angell	2004	This study explores the differential impact of surface-level diversity (gender, ethnicity), deep-level diversity (time urgency, extraversion), and two moderating variables (team orientation, team process) on relationship conflict over time.
Mehta, Field, Armenakis and Mehta	2009	This study examines the relationships between team goal orientation, the team self-regulation tactic of team planning, and team performance The results indicate that team performance-

		prove goal orientation, but not team learning goal orientation, influenced team performance through its impact on team planning.
Driskell, Salas, and Hughes	2010	This study examines the construct of collective orientation, develop a measure to assess individual differences in collective orientation, and examine the extent to which the collective orientation of team members predicts performance on a variety of team tasks
Sumner and Slattery	2010	The results of the study show that team members' satisfaction with processes such as communications, trust, problem-solving, common goals, and effective utilization of team resources were important to team effectiveness, while leadership characteristics of the individual team members were not.
Huang	2012	This study considers the moderating effect of goal orientation on the relationship of task conflict and relationship conflict with team performance. Results show that relationship conflict has a significant and negative relationship, while task conflict has no significant relationship with team performance. The results also show that team goal orientation moderates the relationship between conflict and team performance.
Anuja and Arulrajah	2013	This aims to explore the team working practices of selected state and private sector banks, find out the level of team orientation of employee of selected state and private banks and to investigate whether team orientation of employee gets differed according to the employee's gender, age, education, grade, working section and experience.
Driskell, Driskell and Salas	2015	This study attempted to address the ways in which stress impacts team cohesion, and how the negative effects of stress on cohesion may be mitigated.
Stagl, Burke, Salas and Pierce	2015	This study defined team adaptation and the emergent nature of adaptive team performance and centered these constructs in a heuristic framework. This initial organizing framework contains several key points about team adaptation. Specifically, team adaptation is: (1) the endogenous construct of interest, (2) operationalized as a change in team performance, (3) accomplished via the execution of adaptive team performance, (4) recursive in nature, and (5) inherently functional for the

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		attainment of shared goals.
Unger-Aviram and Erez	2015	This study examines the unique effects of situational goal orientation and cultural learning values on team adaptation to change and the moderating role of cultural learning values in the relationship between goal orientation and team performance and adaptation. Results showed independent effects of situational goal orientation and cultural learning values on team performance and adaptation to change. Cultural learning values also moderated the relationship between goal orientation and performance and adaptation to change.
Shin, Kim and Lee	2016	This study aims at testing the mediating role of team reflexivity in the relationships between team learning, performance-prove, and performance-avoid goal orientations and team creative performance and assessing the relative importance of the three types of team goal orientation in team reflexivity and creative performance. The findings of the study reveal that team reflexivity mediated the relationships between team learning and performance-prove goal orientations and team creative performance.
Bouwman et al.,	2017	This study examines the relationship between team-oriented HR practices and team performance in terms of innovation and efficiency via teachers' affective team commitment and engagement in information processing.

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### **Relationship between Team Orientation and Team Performance**

Despite the current business challenges, organizations are encouraging and promoting the teamwork practices to gain the competitive advantage. Teams are increasingly becoming an essential component of organizations across industries (Gupta, 2009). In this scenario, Scott-Young and Samson (2008) revealed that teams have the ability to adapt to change and continue to provide high-quality solutions and performance is crucial to organizational survival, sustainability, and success. Organizations use teams to respond quickly to environmental changes and to respond to customer needs (Huang, 2012). Further, teams provide superior motivation, enhanced coordination, improved problem-solving, and better decision-making. Further, Thevanes and Arulrajah (2017) have identified teamwork as the one of the effective sustainable human resource management practices which has the ability to equally contribute to the economic, social and environmental performance of organization. Further, teamwork and cross-functional teams are the highly fruitful practices to improve the innovation and creativity of employees which turn leads to enhance the economic performance of the organization. In addition to that, teamwork and cross-



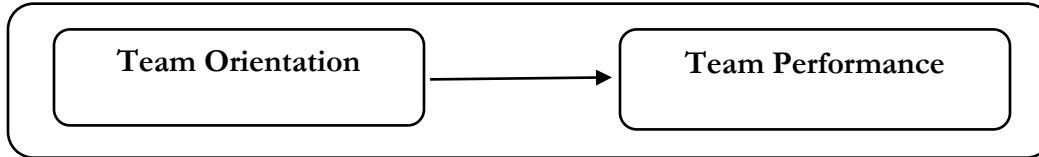
functional teams also contribute to improve the employee commitment and engagement in the work which in turn leads to reduce the absenteeism and employee turnover (Thevanes and Arulrajah, 2017). In addition to that, organizations can retain the talents of the best people through the adaption of team working practices.

Teams are ubiquitous in modern organizations because they can be used to create synergies, streamline workflow, deliver innovative services, satisfy incumbent needs, maximize the benefits of technology connecting distributed employees, and seize market opportunities in a global village (Stagl et al., 2015). Due to the above benefits, organizations are paying a great attention on developing and implementing the teamwork practices in order to materialize the organizational goals and objectives. In this context, several researchers indicated that team orientation has immense potential to be a high performing team (Bouwman et al., 2017). The ability of a team to adapt to changes in a dynamic and unstable environment is critical for successful team performance (LePine, 2005; Porter, Webb and Gogus, 2010). In order to adapt the changes, team orientation of members is essential. In addition to that, management is looking for positive synergy that will allow the organizations to increase performance. Work team generate positive synergy through coordinated effort (Robbins and Judge, 2015). Coordinated effort is highly possible through the team orientation of members. Team oriented work environment provides opportunities for employees to learn from each other through working together, sharing information, creating new ideas through dialogue and discussion (Nonaka, 1994).

Teams are considered as the best way to lead diverse set of people to better outputs. However, managing such a group of experts with diverse background and skills who might have varied perspectives on any problem or an issue itself could be a complex task (Gupta, 2009). Improving the team orientation among the team members can be considered as the effective solution in order deal with this issue. Work teams are effective when they successfully use their distributed knowledge and experience to effectively and efficiently perform as a team to successfully complete a given task. In work-teams, learning may occur as a byproduct of this team orientation. Team orientation facilitates decision making, cooperation, and coordination among team members, which in turn results in increased team performance (Eby and Dobbins, 1997). Furthermore, Salas et al. (2008) mentioned team orientation as one of the big five factors of effective team performance. Hence, it is important to foster the team orientation among the team members in order to nurturing the team performance. Thus, organizations need to focus more on assigning the roles and responsibilities of team members based on their competencies in order to enrich their commitment towards teamwork which result in enhancing team orientation. Ultimately, this trend contributes to uplift the team performance of organization. According to the above literature, this review establishes that team orientation has a positive relationship with team performance as the hypothesis of this review:

*Hypothesis: There is a positive relationship between team orientation and team performance.*

Hence, based on the review, this study proposes a conceptual framework that shows the relationships between team orientation and team performance (see Figure 1)

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

(Source: Developed for this study purpose)

### 3.Method

#### Sampling and Data Collection

The empirical data for the current study were collected from selected licensed commercial banks in Badulla district of Sri Lanka. The total population of this study was all employees in selected licensed commercial banks in Badulla district of Sri Lanka. Out of these, 157 employees were selected as sample to conduct this research by using stratified random sampling method, because to assure representation of employees belonging to different groups in the selected banks.

This study depends on primary data. The data of this study were collected from the respondents through structured questionnaire. The questionnaire contained questions relating to team orientation and team performance.

#### Measures

All constructs were measured with multiple items developed and tested in previous studies. Each item was measured on a five-point Likert-type scale anchored by 'strongly disagree' and 'strongly agree' response options.

This study has used an instrument adapted from past research works of Bouwmans et al. (2017). This instrument can be used to measure the team performance that consists of eleven question items. This instrument had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 which is higher than 0.70. Hence, this instrument had a good reliability. To measure team orientation, eight question items were used from past research works of Brown (2011). The instrument had a good degree of reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.74.

#### Data Analysis Techniques

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the variables (Jahangir & Begum 2008). According to Sekaran (2000), the correlation coefficient value ( $r$ ) ranges from 0.10 to 0.29 is considered weak, from 0.30 to 0.49 is considered medium and from 0.50 to 1.0 is considered strong. However, according to Field (2005), correlation coefficient should not go beyond 0.8 to avoid multicollinearity. The correlation matrix shows that multi-collinearity does not threaten the validity of the data. Regression analysis is a statistical tool for the investigation of impact of variables. R squared is a statistical measure of how close the data are to the fitted regression line. It is also known as the coefficient of determination. The definition of R squared is the percentage of the response variable variation that is explained by a linear model. Thus, regression analysis used to examine the impact of team orientation on team performance.

## 4. Findings of the Study

### Profile of the Respondents

In the survey, 57.3 employees belong to private banks and 42.7 belong to public banks. The gender distribution of the respondents is 54.1 percent males and 45.9 percent females. The results revealed that the respondents are young, with 47.8 percent between 21 and 30 years. In terms of educational background of the respondents, 33.8% of them were A/L qualified, 21% of them were graduates and 7% of them were postgraduates. The results also revealed that 25.5 percent respondents have the work experience below 2 years, 29.3 percent of the respondents have work experience between 2 and 5 years and 45.2 percent of the respondents have the experience above 5 years. Among the respondents, 9.6% them were managers, 12.7 them were assistant manager, 8.9% were hold other positions (junior executive officers, junior executives and banking trainee).

### Correlation Analysis

Table 4 displays the correlations and descriptive statistics for all variables tested in the study. The descriptive statistics of the study suggest that there are high levels of team orientation exists among the bank teams. The results also imply that, team performance of the banks is in high level with mean scores from 4.20 to 4.21 out of 5. Correlation analysis illustrates that team orientation has a strong positive correlation with team performance.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix**

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2
1 Team Orientation	4.21	0.44		
2 Team Performance	4.20	0.46	0.583**	

Notes: N=157, \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)

(Source: Survey Data)

Table 5 shows the results of simple linear regression analysis. The model summary of simple linear regression shows, R (0.583) is correlation coefficient between the independent variable and dependent variable. It says that there is a strong positive correlation between team orientation and team performance. Adjusted R square is 0.335. Therefore, researchers can conclude that 34% of the variability in team performance is accounted by the team orientation. In other words, 66% of variance of team performance was affected by other variables except team orientation.

**Table 5: Model summary of impact of team orientation on team performance**

Mode	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	0.583	0.339	0.335

*a .Predictors: (constant), team orientation; b .Dependent variable: team performance*

(Source: Survey Data)

## 5. Discussion

The empirical findings of the study explained a strong positive relationship between team orientation and team performance ( $r = 0.583$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) at the 99% confidence level. Therefore, findings of the study revealed that 33.5 % of the variability in team performance is accounted by team orientation. The organization while nurturing the teamwork will provide a conducive environment to achieve higher organizational growth and gain enhanced economic benefits in the long run. The teams have the ability and capacity to create positive synergy by compositing diversify and different competent people. Further, team performance highly depends on the active participation, commitment and involvement of team members in towards the teamwork. In addition to that, team needs the collaboration, cooperation, coordination of team members to reach their team goals and objectives. The most effective team-oriented activities happen when individual contributors maximize their efforts and work toward to achieve the planned objectives. It is possible through fostering the team orientation of members. Thus, researchers suggested that banks need pay more attention on upscale the team orientation of members to enhance their active participation and commitment towards teamwork in order to enhance the team performance. This finding is consistent with previous research that indicated high level of team orientation can increase the performance of team (Bouwman et al., 2017). Overall findings of the study show that team members' orientation with team processes is important to team performance.

Some of the limitations of this research were the study focused only on selected licensed commercial banks in Badulla district of Sri Lanka with a limited sample size. Therefore, the same research can be extended to other banks as well as organizations in other sectors such as apparel sectors, hotel industry and project companies by collecting data from a larger sample size and deploying mixed research methods or approaches, because this study used only the quantitative approach. Therefore, future studies may consider collecting deeper data from the respondents. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods would provide an opportunity for more depth and richer explanations regarding the relationships between team orientation and team performance.

## 6. Conclusion

This study concluded that there is a high level of team orientation exist among the employees in selected banks. Findings also suggested that team performance of bank employees is in high level. Moreover,

findings of the study revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between team orientation and team performance.

This study should be both theoretical and empirical significance. From the theoretical perspective the results and findings are expected to contribute to HRM, organizational behavior literature. Further, this study is conducted in Sri Lanka. Findings of the study enrich the study of literature in Sri Lanka. From the practical perspective, the researcher believes the results of this study will help to enhance the teamwork among practitioners. This study especially meant for the selected licensed commercial banks which is operating in Badulla district of Sri Lanka. In other words, the empirical findings should help the practitioners to understand how their team orientation of employees may influence on team performance of organization at the organizational level. Finally, overall findings of the study will be useful organizations which are practicing teamwork. It also provides useful reference for future research in these topics in Sri Lanka.

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