“Geography News” is a biannual compilation of information on the academic activities of the staff and students of the Department of Geography, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka.

Department of Geography

University of Ruhuna

Sri Lanka
Appreciation of Service …

Dr S.K.M. Ali retire after finishing her excellent service to UOR

Senior Lecturer Dr S.K.M. Ali who served in the Department of Geography at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences retired on 8 January 2018, after rendering an excellent service to the University of Ruhuna over 30 years. She joined the Department in 1983 as a probationary Lecturer and obtained the PhD in 1991 from University of Durham, United Kingdom. She is a distinguished academic and specialist in Climatology. She initiated the setting up of the Meteorological Center of the University of Ruhuna. She was the coordinator of the third National Geography Conference 2010 and she represented the University of Ruhuna at a workshop on Capacity Building in Asia on Information Technology Applications CASITA I at AIT, Bankok, Thailand in 2003. Her tireless commitment and work have immensely contributed to uplift the Department that it enjoys today.

Prof. P. Hewage contributes to prepare Uma Oya EIA report

Prof. P. Hewage, Head of Department of Geography, University of Ruhuna, has provided an independent report for Uma Oya EIA under the request of Central Environmental Authority. He has been appreciated for this great work, which is supported to carry out the investigation on Uma Oya EIA report. Moreover, Prof. Lal Mervin Dharmasiri, Chairman of the Central Environmental Authority has appraced him for his commendable service and the professionalism, which he has shown in this regard.
Dr. H.I.G.C. Kumara has been promoted to the post of Senior Lecturer Grade I.

Senior Lecturer Dr H.I.G.C. Kumara, specialist in Social Forestry and Bio Geography in the Department of Geography, University of Ruhuna has been promoted to the post of Senior Lecturer Grade I. He has obtained BA and MPhil in Geography, University of Peradeniya, MSc in Development Management, University of Agder, Norway and PhD, Department of Geography, Tourism and Environmental Planning, University of Waikato, New Zealand. He is one of the academic staff members who actively participates in the current curriculum development programmes of the Department of Geography. Best wishes for his great achievement.

International Commitment…

Dr. S.L.J. Fernando presents a research paper at the 9th International Conference on Education and Social Science 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand

Dr. S.L.J.Fernando presented a research paper at the 9th International Conference on Education and Social Science 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand titled The Relationship between Geomorphology of the Waterfall and Potentiality of Ecotourism, organized by The International Academy of Science, Technology, Engineering and Management (IASTEM), Thailand, 11-12 April 2018, Bangkok, Thailand. We congratulate him on his success.
Dr H.I.G.C. Kumara participates in the Second China (Sanmenxia) White Swan Wildlife International Photographic Exhibition and Conference, Jin-shan – Yu, China

Dr. H.I.G.C. Kumara participated in the Second China (Sanmenxia) White Swan Wildlife International Photographic Exhibition and Conference during 10 – 15 December 2017 in Sanmenxia, Jin-shan – Yu, China. This photographic exhibition and conference was well timed with the arrival of tens of thousands of white swans gathered in the Sanmenxia City. This exhibition was open to Scholars and amateur photographers in the worldwide. As such, this was a very rare opportunities to him as a Bio Geographer in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Manjula Karunarathne successfully completes the Durrell Endangered Species Management Graduate Certificate at Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Jersey, UK

Durrell Endangered Species Management Graduate Certificate is the 12-week course which is annually offered to conservationists around the world. Mr. Manjula Karunarathne, Lecturer in the Department of Geography had an opportunity to participate in this course from February to April 2018 aiming at becoming a future conservation leader and to enhance his practical specific skills in endangered species management. Therefore, we congratulate him for this significant achievement in biodiversity conservation.
Mr. Chandana Gunasena a research paper at the International Conference in Bangkok, Thailand

Mr. Chandana Gunasena, Instructor in Computer Technology, Department of Geography presented a Research Paper at the 7th International Conference on Building Resilience, held on 27 – 29 November 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand. His paper was titled “Eco-technological Approach to Demarcate Tsunami Evacuation Sites in Matara District, Southern Sri Lanka”. We congratulate him for his success.

International Collaborations...

Visit of the delegation from Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang

Department of Geography, UOR collaborated with Universiti Sains Malaysia to disseminate knowledge and to create opportunities for higher studies between the two institutes under MoU signed in July 2016. As a part of it, Prof. Russian Rainis and Dr. Wan Muhlyudd visited UOR along with their eight students to explore the university environment and planning the future collaborative initiatives with department of Geography. During their stay here they participated in the field study in Sri Lanka from 21 January to 28 January 2018. In this regard, special thanks should go to Dr. G.P.T.S. Hemakumara who is the coordinator of this programme.
Delegation from the Chinese Academy of Sciences visits our department

Professor Yong Ge, Director and Professor Feng LU, Managing Deputy Director at the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences visited the Department of Geography on 18 April 2018 on an invitation from Prof. Hewage, Head of Department. During this visit, both parties explored and discussed the possible geographical arenas of collaborations between the two universities.

Book Publication …

Mr. Neel Withanage publishes a book titled GIS and Remote Sensing Potentials for Land Use Change Detection

Research Highlights - Academic Staff

Research paper presentation at 15th Academic Sessions: Research for Socio-ecological Sustainability, University of Ruhuna, 7th March 2018


Research paper presentations in International Conferences


Full paper publications in International Journals


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**Full paper publications in National Journals**


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**Completed research projects in the Field of Biodiversity, Sri Lanka**


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**Ongoing research projects**

Dr. H.I.G.C. Kumara obtained a research permit, which is granted by Forest Department of Sri Lanka from 2018 to 2020. The title of this project is **The Diversity of Orchid Species in the Knuckles Conservation World Heritage Forest (KCF) in Sri Lanka.**
Research Contributions of Geography Students

Geography students present research papers at the First National Conference of Undergraduates on Environment and Development (NCUED 2017), University of Kelaniya, 20th December


Geography students present research papers at the 2nd Folklore Research Conference (FLRC 2017), Art Assembly and Cultural Center, University of Sri Jayawaradhanapura. 15 December 2017.
Geography News, Department of Geography, UOR

Geography student presents the research paper at 3rd National Buddhist Conference (BUSL NBC 2017), Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka

Appointments...

Prof. P. Hewage served as;

Program reviewer from 5 July to 31 December 2017

A member of by-law committee, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, university of Ruhuna

Visiting lecturer, Department of Geography, University of Kelaniya

Dr. G. Edirisinghe serves as;

Coordinator in Anti Dengue Campaign, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna with effect from January 2018
Dr. S.L.J. Fernando has been appointed as;

**Deputy Senior Student Counselor, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**, University of Ruhuna with effect from 01.02.2018 to 01.01.2019 under the University Act.

**Senior Treasurer of Student Union Council**, University of Ruhuna.

Ms. R.A.S.P. Ranabahu, served as;

**Chairperson** of a Technical Session at the 1st National Conference of Undergraduates on Environment and Development (NCUED) 2017 organized by the Department of Geography, University of Kelaniya on 20 December 2017.

**Session Discussant** at the Ruhuna University 4th International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences (RUICHSS)-2018 organized by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna on 29 March 2018.

Dr. G.P.T.S. Hemakumara serves in several positions at university and national level as;

A member of Internal review Panel of Self Evaluation Report / Faculty of Management and Finance/ University of Ruhuna on February, 2018 by University Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) of University of Ruhuna.

A **Review member of UGC Programme Reviewer 2017**- 11 to 13 September 2017- General Degree Programme-Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities – Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

A **Committee member of UGC Programme Reviewer**, from 20 to 22 September 2017- Cluster 3- Faculty of Arts – University of Peradeniya and as a committee member of UGC Programme.

**Reviewer** on 6 to 8 November 2017 at Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

**A Committee Member of the Town Planner**, Journal of Institute of Town Planners, Sri Lanka.

**National Expert on Education, Training, Capacity Building and Awareness**. Third National Communication on Climate Change (TNC) Project, Climate Change Secretariat (CCS), Ministry of Mahawali Development and Environment (MMDE).
Other Appointments

The following staff members served in the preparation of Self-evaluation Report of Program Review 2017 in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Prof. P.Hewage - Chairman
Dr. G.P.T.S. Hemakumara – Convener
Ms. L.G.D.S. Yapa – Secretary
Dr. S.L.J. Fernando – A member of review committee

The following staff members serve in several potions at Natural Disaster Information Center, University of Ruhuna

Mr. S. Wijeartne –Coordinator
Ms. Shyama Ranabahu –Secretary
Dr.G. Edirisinghe –Treasurer
Mr. Manjula Karunarathne – Media Coordinator
Dr. S.L.J. Fernando –Editor
Prof. P. Hewage, Mr.G. Senarath and Mr. S. Wijeratne –The members of Advisory Committee
Prof. M.Rathnayake, Mrs. W.K.V. Dayalatha, Mr. P. Amaraweera, Dr. Chaminda Kumara, Dr.G.P.T.S. Hemakumara, Mrs. Sewwandika Yapa and Mr. Chandana Gunasena - The members of Organizing Committee

Establishment of the Natural Disaster Information Centre (NDIC) at University of Ruhuna

The Department of Geography established the NDIC at University of Ruhuna to facilitate students, undergraduates, scientists, researches and the general public to obtain the relevant information on natural disasters. This center will help to gain knowledge and skills required in successful pre-disaster planning and post disaster rehabilitation. Mr. S. Wijerathne, Senior Lecturer in Department of Geography serves as the Coordinator of this Centre. At present, two professors and five lecturers are specialized in disaster related subjects in the Department of Geography and it is expected to provide the services of these resource persons to make the service of this center fruitfully. Preparation of a communication system of Ruhuna University is
one of the recent significant activities of this center. A list of staff members and officers were prepared and sent to the Regional Disaster Management Centre, Matara to communicate the information of disaster events, which may occur in any time.

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**Establishing an Environmental Researcher’s Forum (ERF) as a united voice to protect and advocate for natural resources**

ERF was established by Mr. Manjula Karunarathne, Lecturer at Department of Geography as a student society in October 2017 at the Department of Geography, University of Ruhuna. Establish and promote an environmental research culture among undergraduate students and university academics, develop research based relationships among internal and external institutions and individuals and awake and empower the general public through providing and sharing information and knowledge related to natural resources and environment are the objectives of this forum. Now it is one of the active students’ societies in University of Ruhuna. In addition, Mr. Manjula Karunarathne, has been appointed as Senior Treasurer of the ERF.

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**Initiating Internship programs for Geography special students**

The overall purpose of the training program is to train graduates of Geography to be familiar with working environment and develop their working capacity, skills and qualities to market their capabilities. This training is necessary to fulfill the subject related practical activities and to expand employment opportunities covering the Geography discipline in the job market. The Department of Geography will coordinate the program among students and the institutions. The main role of the department is to direct Geography special graduates to gain working experience before their graduation. Land Use Policy Planning Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Survey Department, Marine Environment Protection Authority, Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka, Department of Irrigation, Department of Census and Statistics, Ministry of City Planning and Water Supply, Galle Municipal Council, Central Environmental Authority, Department of Coast Conservation and Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority will offer the training programme for our students. At the end of the training period, the Department of Geography expects a report from the head of the institution on candidates’ performance at the particular institution. Based on that report, the Department of Geography will award the student a certificate of completion of the training program. Mr. Manjula Karunarathne, Lecturer at Department of Geography coordinates this program with the support of Ms. Maduka Jeewanthe and Ms. Wasana Fernando, Assistant Lecturers in the Department of Geography.
Public awareness through media

Dr. G. Edirisinghe and Mr. S. Wijerathne Participated in a live radio programme at Ruhunu Sevaya on 3 December 2017 titled on Tropical depression of “Ockhi” and introduction of Natural Disaster Information Centre, Department of Geography.

Dr. S.L.J. Fernando and Mr. P.H. Amaraweera participated in a live radio programme (*Sanidha Kathikawatha*) at RUHUNU SEVAYA on 9 December 2017 about Disaster Risk Reduction.

Awareness through programmes

Seminar on Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management was conducted by Matara Disaster Management Centre and Natural Disaster Information Centre, Department of Geography on 13 October 2017 at District Secretariat Office in Matara. Dr. S.L.J. Fernando, Mr. S. Wijerathne and Mr. Palitha Amaraweera participated as resource persons for this event.

Dr. S.L.J. Fernando, Mr. S. Wijerathna and Mr. P.H. Amaraweera have participated as Resource Persons for the awareness programme conducted for the school teachers and students by the Disaster Management Centre, Matara for the World Disaster Minimizing Day on 13 October 2017.
Tsunami drill and awareness program for the rural communities in Matara were organized on 05 November 2017 at Sariputhra MahaVidyala, Matara. Mr. S. Wijerathne was the resource person for this programme.

The First workshop on Volunteering for Disaster Risk Reduction was held successfully for final year students in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences on 10 November 2017 at Auditorium, Department of Geography. This workshop was conducted by the United Nations Volunteers Programme.

Dr. S.L.J. Fernando delivered a lecture at the Natural Disaster Information Center, in Matara District with titled on “Flood Disaster and environmental impact of Matara Municipal area” on 10 November, 2017.

Awareness program for the National Protective Day of Disaster was held on 26 December 2017 at Fisheries Community Centre, Thotamuna, conducted by Disaster Management Centre, Matara. Dr. G. Edirisinghe participated as the resource person.

Dr. S.L.J. Fernando organized a seminar program at the Department of Geography, University of Ruhuna for the school students of WP/KE/ Udupila Weera Vijayaba Maha Vidyalaya, Delgoda on 29 November 2017 and Prof. P. Hewage participated as a chief Guest for school programme on students leaders’ personality development.
ERF conducted a tree plantation campaign at the Wellamadama main university premises on 26 January 2018 with the participation of many students, staff members and official of the forest department. More than 100 plants have been planted and there was a huge interest among students towards this. The chief guest of the event was the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The ERF website was launched by Senior Professor P. Hewage, the Head of the Department of Geography. Dr Pradeep Nalaka Ranasinghe, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology was the key speaker at the event. In his speech, he stressed that the major disaster of this era is the commercialization of environmental activists. It is, therefore, a dire need to be involved in environmental conservation activities in various ways, as groups, individuals and as future citizens, he further mentioned. Mr. Manjula Karunaratne, Lecturer, Department of Geography coordinated this event.

Field Excursions...

Field visit to Bulathsinhala landslide prone area

Students who are following Natural Hazard (GEO 22673) have attended a field visit in Bulathsinhala Landslide area on 02 February 2018. The objectives of this visit were to identify the impacts of landslide, settlers’ response and preparation regarding mitigation. Students collected data using observation, interviews and discussions during the field visit and later analyzed and interpreted their findings of the survey. The field activity was conducted on the whole day by Mr. Palitha Amaraweera and Mr. Neel Withanage.

Institutional visit to gather information for future research

Students who are following GEO 32633 – Hydrology and Water Resource Management have visited the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and Hector Kobbakaduwa Agrarian Research Technology Institute (HARTI) with Ms. Sewandika Yapa on 30 January 2018. Prime objective of the visit was to gather information regarding the research collaborations...
in the field of water management in Sri Lanka. It was a great opportunity for all students to share the ideas and make a linkage with those two institutes for their future studies.

**Developing practical knowledge of water quality testing with the help of Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology**

The students who follow the course unit of Environmental Pollution and Control (GEO 32623) at the Department of Geography were able to visit the laboratory in Department of Limnology and Water Technology to learn water quality testing on 14 December 2017. Our heartfelt thanks go to Dean, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology who gave permission and providing all assistance to make this study success.

Field visit to Magampura Mahinda Rajapaksa Port, Hambanthota

Students who are following Transport and Development (GEO 42633) have attended a field visit in Magmpura Mahinda Rajapaksa Port, which has a natural harbor and is located in the southern tip of Sri Lanka close to international shipping routes. The main objective of this field visit was to observe the port related activities and their contribution to regional development. This field visit was organized by Prof. P. Hewage, Dr. G. Edirisinghe and Mr. Neel Weethanage.
Field observation in Kanneliya forest reserve by third year students

Field Observation under the subject of Biogeography (GEO 32643) of the 3rd year students was successfully conducted on 09 January 2018 at Kanneliya Forest Reserve. It was focused on observation on flora and fauna diversity in Kanneliya forest. The field activities were conducted on the whole day by Mr. Manjula Karunarathe and Mr. Neel Withanage and it was successful especially for the students who wish to pursue their research studies in Biogeography.

Field excursion to observe the impacts of climate change scenario at Hikkaduwa National Park

Field excursion with final year students who are following Global Climate Change (GEO 42613) on 25 January 2018 at Hikkaduwa National Park. Prime objective of the field visit was to study the impact of climate change on coral reef. Especial lecture was prepared by Hikkaduwa Wildlife Conservation Department for the students and this field visit was conducted by Mr. Palitha Amaraweera and Mr. Neel Withanage.
**Field visit to Embilipitiya to identify the agroforestry and tourism potentials**

Field excursion with second year students who are following Tourism Geography (GEO 22653) on 28 December 2017 at Embilipitiya. Prime objectives of the field visit were to identify strengths of the particular site to implementing agro-forestry and agro-tourism and challenges and weakness of the site to develop agro-forestry and agro-tourism activities. Further, it was aimed to develop conceptual framework to implementing agro-forestry and agro-tourism activities. Data collection methods such as informal and semi structured interviews were done by the students at the field. Dr. H.I.G.C. Kumara conducted this field visit.

**Field observation in Kalamatiya and Bundala**

Students who are following GEO 42623 - Geographical Profile of Southern Sri Lanka have attended a field visit in Kalamatiya, Rakawa and Bundala on 22 December 2017. The objective of this visit were to identify the changes of geographical profile of Southern Sri Lanka. Field activities such as direct field observation, soil sample and specimens collections were done by the students at the field. These field activities were conducted on the whole day by Dr. S.L.J. Fernando and Ms. R.A.S.P. Ranabahu.
News and Suggestions to be sent to

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