Research Studies on Tertiary Education Sector

SOCIO POLITICAL IMPACT OF STUDENT VIOLENCE AND INDISCIPLINE IN UNIVERSITIES AND TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTES

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REPORT OF THE RESEARCH STUDY ON "THE SOCIO POLITICAL IMPACT OF STUDENT VIOLENCE AND INDISCIPLINE IN UNIVERSITIES AND TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTES"

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List of Abbreviations

AL	Advanced Level
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GMOA	Government Medical Officers' Association
GNP	Gross National Product
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IT	Information Technology
JVP	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna
LSSP	Lanka Sama Samaja Party
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eeelam
NCMC	North Colombo Medical College
NIE	National Institute of Education
OL	Ordinary Level
SJU	Sri Jayawardenepura University
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SLMC	Sri Lanka Muslim Congress
SSU	Socialist Students' Union
TTI	Technical Training Institute
UC	University of Colombo
UGC	University Grants Commission
UK	University of Kelaniya
UNP	United National Party
VC	Vice Chancellor
VTA	Vocational Training Authority

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Executive Summary

The research study on "The Socio Political Impact of Violence and Indiscipline in Universities and Tertiary Education Institutes" was undertaken on behalf of the National Education Commission with a view toward identifying policy options that could contribute to formulating a policy framework for higher education. The study was conducted in 3 purposively selected universities located in the Colombo District, Western Province of Sri Lanka, between March and August 2007.

While the incidence of violence and indiscipline could be seen as symptomatic of a deeper malaise within the larger social system (the macrocosm) as well as within the university system (the microcosm) as a whole, they have been occasioned by a variety of deficiencies in the administrative, academic, and managerial aspects of the university system.

The lacunae in university administration and teaching have given occasion for entry of forces and organizations outside the university to encroach on and usurp duties that should properly fall within the purview of university administrations and thereby serve as opportunities for such external forces to recruit new members, mobilize students for protests and demonstrations, and use them as instruments for enlarging the party revenues and activities.

Since violence and indiscipline in the universities have multiple causes, they require multi-dimensional solutions that will need re-thinking on such critical areas as methods of conflict resolution, introducing courses that have a practical orientation especially for arts degree students, providing more opportunities for women participation in student councils, counseling services at intra-departmental level, demanding accountability and transparency in affairs of student bodies, seeking viable alternatives to the policy of having residential campuses, introducing minimum levy for higher education, tight security and surveillance of student activism, and meaningful participation of students in the management of universities.

The study also suggests that unless far reaching and multi sector changes are set in place, the universities will always continue to be hotbeds of political agitation, activism and violence given the fact that there will always be shortfalls in government funding that will lead to reduced quality of services and facilities available at all universities. In such a sociopolitical context, the epicenters of student unrest and violence need not be confined to the "big" or metropolitan campuses but the fledgling universities that have been created in the peripheral areas since the latter enjoy even less resources when compared to the already established institutions of higher education.

With regard to policy changes, the study recommends among other things, granting of greater autonomy to universities and reductions of government's role to providing of funds, giving priority to numbers of students in universities as a criteria for disbursement of funds, changing the present district quota system when admitting students to universities, charging levy for higher education, increasing levies for hostel accommodation and facilities, de-emphasize the present system of having residential campuses and improve facilities for distance education, introduce an

applied orientation in academic teaching programmes, change school syllabi to promote character-building, social awareness and practical skills among students, and improve capacity of universities to handle violence and indiscipline.

Introduction

The research study on "The Socio Political Impact of Violence and Indiscipline in Universities and Tertiary Education Institutes" was undertaken on behalf of the National Education Commission with a view toward identifying policy options that could contribute to formulating a policy framework for higher education.

The research was undertaken against a backdrop of sporadic outbursts of violent activities among university students during the last half a century extending up to the time of writing.

The study focused on three, large, metropolitan universities, namely, the University of Colombo, the University of Sri Jayawardenepura, and the University of Kelaniya, and one technical training institute situated in Colombo.

The study methods were both quantitative and qualitative, and included a survey of background literature and statistics provided by the University Grants Commission, and interviews with key informants from the staff and students of the institutions selected for study. Groups of parents from both urban and rural areas and selected individuals from the business community were also surveyed using the focus group discussion method.

The report has 3 sections that are as follows: Section 1 presents the key findings, conclusions and recommendations for policymaking and practice. Section 2 discusses the study methodology while Section 3 presents the findings of the literature survey. Annexes attached at the end of report are as follows: Annex 1 presents the data from field interviews with staff and students from the three universities surveyed while Annex 2 provides a case study of a technical training institute and the results of a participatory workshop held with students and staff of the institute. A list of references is given at the end of the report.

Section 1: Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

This section of the report presents the key findings, conclusions and recommendations as follows:

1.1. Findings:

1.1.1. During the half century that has elapsed since the establishment of the first university (the University of Ceylon) in 1942, student enrolment has increased by a quantum leap from a few hundred to nearly a million. This development was made possible by the policy of free education adopted by the Government of Ceylon in 1947 and the expansion of education to the rural peripheries with the setting up of "Central Schools" in every district. The expansion of numbers of entrants also saw the replacement of the "elite" model of universities with a "populist" one.

1.1.2. The number of university entrants generally comprise about 13% of the total number of students who have fulfilled the criteria for admission to the universities thereby increasing pressure on both politicians as well as university administrations to expand the present opportunities for university education in the country.

1.1.3. Opening up several new universities in different parts of the country, albeit poorly staffed and ill equipped, and increasing the intake in existing university sometimes taking what are called 'double batches" have been two options available so far. These options have, of course, made the universities more vulnerable to protests and criticism and made their management more difficult.

1.1.4. The opening up of poorly equipped universities in the peripheral areas has also meant that student protests and violence are no longer confined to metropolitan universities but have also spread to the newly emerging small campuses elsewhere in the country.

1.1.5. The vulnerability of universities appears to have been accentuated by inadequate funds allocated for university development since state expenditure comprises a relatively small proportion of the annual budget (e.g. 1.6% in 2004) resulting in poor level of services and facilities such as accommodation for students, equipping of libraries and staff development.

1.1.6. Financial allocations for individual universities are apparently not based on the numbers of students enrolled in them but rather follow other criteria such as level of expenditures incurred by a particular university. For example, in 1995, although the Open University had the highest proportion of students enrolled (25.6% in year), it received only 4.7% of the total annual allocation for all universities. By contrast, Peradeniya University that had 11.8% of total students enrolled,

received the highest proportion (18.8%) of the total expenditure on universities.

1.1.7. All tolled, the general distribution of students is highest for the Faculty of Arts. For example, for the academic year 2004/2005, the Arts stream had 30% of the total student intake followed closely by the Faculty of Science (21.3%) and Faculty of Commerce (17.6%) with the remaining 21.1% thinly distributed among other faculties such as dentistry, agriculture, medicine, nursing and architecture.

1.1.8. According to the literature survey, student violence and indiscipline has taken several forms including theft of library material, cheating at examinations, personal brawls, indecent forms of ragging, and protest demonstrations. The period between 1971 and 1989 (nearly two decades) saw an escalation in types and frequency of violence leading to loss of university and public property, loss of working days and personnel although such losses have never been calculated in financial or economic terms.

1.1.9. The incidence of violence and indiscipline could be seen as symptomatic of a deeper malaise within the larger social system (the macrocosm) as well as within the university system (the microcosm) as a whole. It has been brought about by a variety of deficiencies in the administrative, academic, and managerial aspects of the university system including (a) inadequate services and facilities such as accommodation and food for residential students, (b) corrupt practices of university administrations particularly through the use of the tender system for obtaining hostel facilities, running canteens, hiring security staff from the private sector, or color washing buildings (c) drop in quality of teaching that is limited to lectures and note taking (d) lack of uniform policy or rules for handling instances of violence or indiscipline (e) the implacable nature of student demands (f) not giving enough responsibility to students to take a share in management (g) rigid compartmentalization into faculties and departments that produces a sense of isolation of staff from the student body making the task of supervising student activities a problem for student counselors (h) lack of practical or work-oriented courses especially for arts degree students resulting from an educational system that has only focused on subject learning rather than social responsibility (i) lack of a good security system run by the university (j) interference from outside politicians in university affairs (k) exclusion of parents from disciplinary processes involving students (l) lack of opportunities for critical thinking through debates (m) typical responses of administrators to student violence and indiscipline such as tolerance, appeasement or resorting to authoritarian punitive methods without the use of proactive conflict resolution methods (n) adherence to the policy of maintaining residential campuses that are a financial burden to the state and

serve as safe havens for political activists and (o) the new semester cum course unit system that is appropriate for curricula in the sciences but not for those in arts or humanities and has produced a sense of alienation among students from their courses of study and promoted uncritical thinking.

1.1.10. The lacunae in university administration and teaching have given occasion for entry of national level political parties and organizations outside the university to encroach on and usurp duties that should properly fall within the purview of university administrations. These lacunae also serve as opportunities for political parties to recruit new members, mobilize students for protests and demonstrations, and use them as instruments for enlarging the party revenues and activities.

1.1.11. One party in party in particular, namely, the JVP, has followed a systematic method to recruit and indoctrinate new batches of enthusiastic supporters and a hardcore of activists every year, the party is also assured of a continuous supply of new entrants with the commencement of the academic year at all three universities. The most vulnerable students are, therefore, those who are in their first year at the university.

1.1.12. Since violence and indiscipline in the universities have multiple causes, they require multi-dimensional solutions. By implication, unless far reaching and multi sector changes are set in place, the universities will always continue to be hotbeds of political agitation, activism and violence.

1.1.13. All stakeholders, except students and political activists, are of the opinion that privatizing the universities is not the answer although it may appear to be a method of surmounting the large number of constraints facing university administrations at present while they endorse the need to reconsider the policy of free education in institutions of higher learning.

1.2. Conclusions:

The socio political impact of student violence and indiscipline are seen to be negative from the viewpoint of nearly all stakeholders except those who instigate such events:

1.2.1. It disrupts the educational careers of students while at the university since involvement in such activities takes place during their first year at the university which is also the critical year determining whether they will go into a special or general degree programme and also results in delaying their departure from the university and entering the job market

1.2.2. It interferes with the career development of university teachers since such events interrupt their routine duties and disrupts the academic programme of the university

1.2.3. It hinders the opportunities available for university graduates for obtaining employment due to negative attitudes it creates regarding university graduates among potential employers especially in the private sector

1.2.4. It interferes with the stability of government thereby prompting it to take repressive measures that justify the use of force to solve all conflicts

1.2.5. All stakeholders are of the view that protests and violence do not in any way change the situation on the ground at the universities whatever the issue maybe, and therefore, can be regarded as "symbolic rebellions" against the status quo.

1.3. Policy Implications and Recommendations:

This report focuses on several issues that have serious policy implications with regard to higher education in general and institutes of higher education in particular. They are presented in the form of critical questions followed by a brief discussion taking into account the lessons learned from the study along with their pertinent policy implications:

1.3.1. What should be the role of government with regard to higher education?

A good part of what has been discussed earlier has implications for the role of government in higher education. Whereas from the inception of the university system in 1942 up to 1966, the government's role was confined to allocation of or higher education, the ensuing period up to the present has seen government occupying a central, if not dominant, role in that respect and in such matters as university admissions, selection of sites or locations of new universities, appointment of vice chancellors and the chairmen of the University Grants Commission and even minor employees at the different universities, and how each university administration handles critical events such as student unrests, protests, and instances of violence and indiscipline. It would be true to say that universities are virtually state-run while the concept of university autonomy has gone into desuetude. By implication, the ultimate responsibility for acts of violence and indiscipline has to be laid at the doorstep of government and not the university administrations or staff or even students.

However, the annual incidence of acts of violence and indiscipline among university students makes it abundantly clear that the government has fallen short of executing its self-appointed role as the final arbiter and decision-maker in university matters. Furthermore, government control of universities paves the way for the perception among students that the universities are a proxy for government and could serve as legitimate targets in anti-government activities. This is seen in the historical fact that violence and indiscipline intensified along with increased government control of universities.

It is therefore imperative that government reconsiders whether its role in university affairs should be confined to providing the necessary funds (as it did from 1942 to 1966 and as state governments do in respect of state universities in countries such as the United States) and grants more autonomy to the universities as a means of defusing the potential for student violence and indiscipline in the universities.

1.3.2. Should priority be given to numbers of students enrolled in universities when distributing government expenditure among the latter

Apparently, this important criterion is missing in the way that funds for universities are distributed each year. Thus, the Open University that had the highest proportion of students enrolled in 2005 occupied a very low position with respect to funds it

received while other universities having less numbers of students had received a lion's share of the total disbursement. This is seen as an anomalous situation particularly in view of the fact that the Open University has had a clear record of conflict and violence free student atmosphere, a situation that has to be corrected if justice is to be done at least considering the numbers of students enrolled.

1.3.3. Should university admissions continue to be based on the three-tier admission system?

Analysts of higher education have repeatedly pointed out that the three-tier system of admission to universities, which is based on a minimum level of achievement at the examinations and a minimum level of social and economic development in the candidate's district of residence, is responsible for student unrest since it brought into the universities large numbers of students who were ill-equipped for university education and who, particularly when they failed at examinations, vent their rage on the university system at large. It also produced among them the feeling that they were the oppressed class and were the victims of discrimination while they saw the university as the bastion of the privileged.

The Report of the Presidential Commission on Youth (1990), that has endorsed the above view and identified the drop in the quality of university teaching and academic performance of students as primary factors leading to youth unrest in the universities, has recommended as a via media a scientific grading of schools based on their existing facilities in place of the district quota system although it is still not too late to review the classification of certain districts as "disadvantaged" or even to go back to the purely merit system that was in operation up to 1960.
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1.3.4. Should higher education be given free of charge?

This is a central issue raised during the study and to which responses of the stakeholders tend to vary. A majority of students interviewed are generally of the opinion that higher education should be given free of charge as it is being done at present although a minority of students from higher social classes tend to think that this should not be the case. The latter opinion is also held by most academics, administrators, and some parents who think that levying fees for education would discourage students from participating in acts of indiscipline and violence that disrupts their educational careers and has a detrimental effect on university administration and even university property. This opinion is also validated in the study finding that, in the one technical training institute studied (which also happens to be a government-run institution), incidence of violence and indiscipline is virtually non-existent.

All things considered, the government will have to seriously consider the prospect of introducing a system of levying charges for higher education at universities. Of course, the rider attached to this recommendation is the tendency for all governments to use "free education" as a strategy for gaining popular support while parties in the opposition will always try to make political capital of any attempts to levy fees.

However, the opposition to introduction of fees for higher education could be overcome through several strategies including (a) using all available mass media to

make the general public aware of the detrimental effects of free education on the educational development of university students and its linkages with student violence and indiscipline (b) introducing a system of levies that will be proportionate to the income levels of individual families (c) offering a system of tuition-free scholarships to students who perform well in their first-year examinations in place of the current system of giving grants through the Mahapola scheme to virtually all students without making the awards dependant on their academic performance and (d) having a separate, non-fee levying higher education programme at the decentralized level and through provincial administrations for those who cannot afford to pay fees.

1.3.5. Should costs of providing accommodation and food continue to be subsidized by the government?

At present, the costs of accommodation and food are virtually nominal with the rate per day for three square meals being about 6 rupees per student. This results in universities being unable to provide good quality food and other services, a situation that paves the way for unrest and protests. Increase in levies for food and accommodation and other services such as laundry etc is therefore a must since no government is able to bear the costs of such services indefinitely particularly due to inflation and lack of funds for higher education.

As strategic measures, the government can introduce a system of levying such charges proportionate to the income levels of families and also offer lower rates or exemptions from such charges on the basis of merit demonstrated by students at the first year examinations. This will further motivate students to stay away from involvement in student politics and protests that most observers see as having a negative impact on their academic careers during the first year.

1.3.6. Should the government re-consider or revise the present policy of having residential campuses?

Residential campuses have been the most sought out model for university education in Sri Lanka following the example of the first residential university set up at Peradeniya. Whether this model is appropriate and affordable has to be given serious thought today particularly with rising costs of construction and other facilities to be provided by a residential university. It is to be noted that residential facilities also provide occasion for their misuse and manipulation by certain segments of the student population that use such facilities to entertain political activists, unemployed graduates and even rank outsiders having connections with certain student political parties, and to store propaganda materials and even weapons. By contrast, non-residential educational institutions such as the Open University of Sri Lanka and government-run vocational training institutes have virtually no incidences of violence and indiscipline, do not incur extra costs for government, attract sufficient numbers of students, and ensure that their educational programmes start and finish on their scheduled dates; all this, despite the fact that physical infrastructure facilities are no different at the vocational training institute studied from those found on university campuses.

As a strategic measure, the government will therefore need to invest more in providing distance-learning facilities and gradually reduce the intake for student

hostels if it is seriously interested in curbing the present trend of abuse of such facilities for acts of violence and indiscipline.

13.7. What changes are required in the academic programmes of universities if they are to defuse the potential for student violence and indiscipline?

The study has highlighted the need for instituting changes in the present university academic programmes particularly with respect to the Faculties of Arts that are the breeding grounds for student unrest. Among changes proposed are change from the present semester system to the old tutorial based teaching system, allocation of more funds for Information Technology and English courses and facilities, creating internship programmes for arts students so that they could work in institutions and gain the necessary expertise in applied fields thereby enhancing capacities of students in the job market, developing the fine arts programmes and promoting more sports activities among students as means of sublimating their aggressive drives, and providing part-time employment opportunities for students as a means of generating their own incomes and develop positive attitudes to work.

13.8. What changes are required in the academic programmes of schools in order to defuse the potential for student violence and indiscipline and make students useful members of society?

Most academics that were interviewed were of the opinion that changes in the school curriculum during the past 3 or 4 decades have accentuated the tendency for violence and indiscipline in both universities and schools. Such changes as dropping the teaching of literature, hygiene, civics and history from school syllabuses has produced a set of students who are ill adapted to society and are prone to violence and indiscipline. In addition, the school syllabuses of the old central school system produced good citizens; it imparted knowledge plus gave abilities such as work in student associations, carpentry, home gardening, hygiene, how to walk on the road, and importance given to agriculture and farmers, and build citizens. A systematic re-vamping of the syllabi in both universities and schools is therefore a precondition for defusing the potential for student violence and indiscipline and making students useful members of society.

13.9. Are university administrations sufficiently equipped and able to deal with student indiscipline and violence?

The study has noted that among factors contributing to the incidence of student violence and indiscipline are the lack of proper guidelines for university administrators when confronted with such situations with the result that each vice chancellor is left to his or her own strategies or devices to cope with them. Other factors include each university not having a proper system for enforcing law and order as in previous times through university marshals who have now been replaced by security guards and counselors, the latter being full-time academics who are not professionally trained to enforce law and order.

It is imperative, therefore, that all top level administrators be provided with skills and guidelines in conflict resolution and that the government in power allow that these

guidelines be put into effect without pandering to the political whims and fancies of politicians. Buttressing the university's own law enforcement system is also a must.

1.4. Summary of Recommendations

The above recommendations along with their policy implications and strategies required to implement them are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Recommendations

#	Policy Change	Period of Implementation	Implementation Strategies
1	Role of government to be limited to providing funds for universities	Medium Term	Amendment to relevant laws through Parliament
2	Give priority to numbers of students in universities as a criteria for disbursement of funds	Short Term	Decision to be taken by the UGC
3	Change admission policy from 3 tier system	Medium Term	Decision to be taken by Ministry of Higher Education and UGC after re-assessment of the economic level of districts and/or going back to the simple merit system
4	Levy fees for higher education	Long term	Amendment to relevant laws through Parliament; levying such charges proportionate to the income levels of families; granting tuition free scholarships for students excelling at first year examination to be continued on basis of student academic record in subsequent years
5	Increase in levies for food and accommodation	Long term	Amendment to relevant laws through Parliament; levying such charges proportionate to the income levels of families; grant concessionary rates to students excelling at first year examination to be continued on basis of student academic record in subsequent years
6	De-emphasize the present system of having residential campuses	Medium Term	Provide more incentives for distance learning and more learning benefits for external student programmes
7	Applied orientation in academic teaching programmes	Medium term	Allocate more funds for Information Technology and English courses and facilities, create internship programmes

			for arts students, develop the fine arts programmes and promote more sports activities among students, provide part-time employment opportunities for students, and reintroduce the old tutorial based teaching system with end of year exams in place of the current semester system especially in the Arts Faculties
8	Change school curricula	Long term	Reintroduce teaching of literature, hygiene, civics and history; impart skills in carpentry, home gardening, hygiene and agriculture to build better citizens.
9	Improve capacity of universities to handle violence and indiscipline	Short term	Provide top level administrators with skills and guidelines in conflict resolution; government to refrain from political interference when universities handle student problems, and buttress university's own law enforcement system

Section 2: Study Methodology

The methodology employed in this study consisted of a survey of the relevant literature (from March to April of 2007) followed by a field survey in selected institutions of higher education (from May to July of 2007). The details of the methodology are as follows:

2.1. Selection of Institutions of Higher Education:

The research was focused on 3 large, metropolitan universities situated in the Colombo District, Western Province of Sri Lanka, namely, the University of Colombo, University of Kelaniya, and University of Sri Jayawardenepura. In addition, the study included the Technical Training Institute located at Orugodawata in Colombo city, to represent a tertiary education institute.

The underlying rationale for selecting these institutions of higher education was that the sociopolitical impact of incidents of violence and indiscipline in these higher educational institutes would be more serious than if such incidents were to take place in universities situated in peripheral areas.

2.2. Survey of the Literature:

The study commenced with a survey of relevant literature using published materials available at the University Grants Commission and the library of the University of Colombo.

2.3. Field Survey:

Given the time constraints imposed on the study (which was to be completed in 3 months), it was not possible to conduct a sample survey using a formal questionnaire. Instead, the study used a number of qualitative data collection methods consisting of the following:

2.3.1. Key Informant Interviews:

Interviews were held with key informants from both sexes who were selected purposively using a snowball sampling method and to represent different levels in the university hierarchy and using a semi-structured interview format. Probing questions were directed at them to elicit their responses on the incidence of student violence and indiscipline, their root causes, and suggestions for changing the current situation. The respondents included the following; the numbers from each category are in parentheses:

UGC Administrator (01)
Vice Chancellors (02)
Deans (02)
Head of Departments (04)
Professors (03)
Senior Lecturers (08)
Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers (06)

Wardens and Sub Wardens of Hostels (03) and
Marshals (02)

The total number of key informants was 29.

2.3.2. Focus Group Discussions:

Focus Group Discussions were conducted with 2 groups of university students (one male group and one female group), a group of parents from the urban sector, and 1 group of instructors from the vocational training institute selected for study. The objective of the discussions was to determine the problems faced by each group, the solutions they proposed, and their views on student violence. The total number of participants in the focus group discussions was 32.

The details of the interviews and focus group discussions are given in Annex 1 of the report.

2.3.3. Participatory Workshop:

One participatory workshop was also held with a group of 110 trainees from the vocational training institute selected for study. During this exercise, an attempt was made to discover the different types of problems faced by trainees and the solutions they proposed. Trainees were requested to propose the topics for discussion. Division of the entire group into 8 subgroups followed this, each discussing one of the following topics or issues:

- Adequacy of facilities
- Quality of Technical Education
- Family background of Students
- Teacher/student relationship
- Dropping-out from Courses
- Role of Mass media
- Syllabuses, and
- Future Aspirations

The outcomes of the workshop are given in Annex 2 of the report.

2.3.4. Observations:

Observations were also conducted of training facilities and living and study conditions of students in all institutions surveyed, and some photo documentation was also done on facilities available at the TTI.

2.4. Research Staff:

The author had most of the responsibility for conducting interviews with key informants while a team of 3 research assistants helped him to conduct the focus group discussions and participatory workshop.

Section 3: Literature Survey

This section of the report contains the results of the survey of literature on the subject of student violence and indiscipline in the universities. The information is presented under several related topics as follows:

1. Background information on the university system
2. Student enrollment in the universities
3. Nature and types of violence and indiscipline
4. Timeline of incidents of violence and indiscipline:
5. Losses resulting from incidents of violence and indiscipline
6. Factors contributing to violence and indiscipline
7. Conclusions and
8. Gap analysis

3.1. Background information on the university system

The university system of Sri Lanka functions within the framework as laid down in the Universities' Act No. 16 of 1978. At present, there are a total of 14 national universities and 4 tertiary education institutes that have been set up under the above Act[1]; they come under the purview of the apex body known as the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The Sri Lankan experiment with university education began several decades prior to the country gaining its independence in 1948. The colonial government formally began the first university known as the "University College" in 1921 although professional education began in the 1870s with the establishment of the Ceylon Medical College (through the Department of Health) and the Law College that was established in 1874 (see de Silva 1995a). The Ordinance No.20 of 1942 established the University of Ceylon, which was the precursor of the current University of Peradeniya, as the first residential university with Sir Ivor Jennings as its first Vice Chancellor[2].

While the framers of the university system had meant it to be autonomous and politically independent, most historians agree with de Silva that it was so from its inception in 1942 to 1966. The only relationship that the university had with the state was in its dependence on the Ministry of Education for necessary funding that came via the Treasury. Among the chief administrative bottlenecks facing university

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[1] The universities are the University of Colombo including the Sripalee Campus, University of Peradeniya, University of Sri Jayawardenepura, University of Kelaniya, University of Moratuwa, University of Jaffna (including Vavniya Campus & Ramanathan Academy of Fine Arts), University of Ruhuna, Eastern University, Sri Lanka (including Trincomalee Campus), South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka, The University of the Visual & Performing Arts while the four Institutes are the Institute of Indigenous Medicine, Gampaha Wickremaarachchi Ayurveda Institute, University of Colombo School of Computing, and Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies of the Eastern University, Sri Lanka (see University Grants Commission, undated)

[2] Jennings held the post of principal of University College and was a constitutional lawyer by profession (see de Silva 1995a)

administration up to that time was the absence of a "special administrative unit within that Ministry to deal with the university" (de Silva 1995a: 21).

The period between 1966 and 1970 saw a reversal of the philosophy underlying the university set up by a period during which state control of tertiary education was established. This was achieved by the enactment of the Higher Education Act No. 20 of 1966 which "repealed Ordinance No. 20 of 1942 (the 'charter' of the University of Ceylon) and Act No. 45 of 1958 (which served as a 'charter' of the two pirivena universities, and introduced instead a common academic and administrative structure for all universities under the overall control of a National Council of Higher Education" (de Silva, 1995b: 31).

It appears that increasing of state control over higher education was not an isolated event since state hegemony was seen in attempts to control other areas including primary and secondary education and sections of the national economy including plantations and the transport system to mention a few. Greater control over these various sectors also meant political interference in decision making with regard to admission of students to universities, a key item in the agendas of political leaders.

However, it appears that the close affinity between university administrations and government also meant that it was a target for those sections of the population who opposed or were critical of the government. Thus, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramua (JVP) with its revolutionary ideology used the universities as a recruiting base for its insurrection in 1971 and in fact used halls of residence as virtual armories in the conflict.

State control of the universities was consolidated through the University of Ceylon Act No. 1 of 1972 (following the JVP insurrection), which relegated the universities to the status of units or campuses of a single university with its headquarters in Colombo. It gave absolute control of all university affairs to the Minister of Education acting through a Vice Chancellor while campuses had their presidents also appointed by the Minister.[3]

3.2. Student enrollment in the universities

There is no doubt that since 1942 when the first university of the country, the University of Ceylon, was established with a few hundred students, by 1995 (i.e. within a span of 53 years), student enrollment has seen a quantum leap with a total of 97,869 students enrolled in all universities in the country. At the same time, the universities have not been able to absorb all those who have qualified to enter them. Thus, while 55.9% of those who passed the GCE Advanced Level examination had fulfilled criteria for admission to the universities, only 13% of those eligible were able to gain entry. This could be due to the relatively small government investment in higher education as is seen in the fact that state expenditure on university education was 1.6% of the total national budget of 2004. Furthermore, the proportion spent on

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[3] While the UGC functions today as an independent administrative body with its main function being the disbursal of funds to the respective universities and tertiary education institutes, it remains dependent on government in important areas such as funds, broad policy definition, and approval in appointing Vice Chancellors.

university education, as a percentage of GNP, was 0.4% when compared with 2.3% spent on general education (see University Grants Commission 2005).

The distribution of students in the 14 universities shows that the Open University of Sri Lanka has the highest proportion of student enrollments (25.6%) followed by the University of Colombo (12.5%), and University of Peradeniya (11.8%) taking second and third places as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of Student Enrollment in the Universities in 2005

Name of University	Number of Students on Roll	Per Cent
University of Colombo	11,477	12.5
University of Peradeniya	10,813	11.8
University of Sri Jayawardenepura	8,932	9.7
University of Kelaniya	8,592	9.3
University of Moratuwa	4,146	4.5
University of Jaffna	6,040	6.6
University of Ruhuna	6,387	6.9
Open University of Sri Lanka	23,518	25.6
Eastern University, Sri Lanka	1,716	1.9
Southeastern University of Sri Lanka	1,139	1.2
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka	2,323	2.5
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka	2,766	3.0
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka	1,690	1.8
University of the Visual and Performing Arts	2,419	2.6
Total	91,958	100.0

Source: University Statistics 2005, University Grants Commission

However, when student enrollment is compared with the distribution of government expenditure on all the universities for year 2005, it is seen that University of Peradeniya has the highest proportion of total expenditure (18.8%) followed by the University of Colombo (10.7%) and Universities of Sri Jayawardenepura, Kelaniya, and Ruhuna having between 9 and 10% of total expenditure while the Open University that had the highest proportion of students has only received 4.7% (see Table 3). Apparently, the criteria used for distribution of expenditure among universities do not give priority of place to numbers of students enrolled.

Table 3: Distribution of Government Expenditure on the Universities in 2005

Name of University	Government Grant (Rs Million)		Total	Per Cent
	Capital	Recurrent		
University of Colombo	172.05	646.00	818.05	10.7
University of Peradeniya	245.25	1188.10	1433.35	18.8
University of Sri Jayawardenepura	163.60	540.90	704.50	9.2
University of Kelaniya	161.10	584.00	745.10	9.8
University of Moratuwa	206.10	407.00	613.10	8.0
University of Jaffna	170.60	394.00	564.60	7.4
University of Ruhuna	131.60	596.00	727.60	9.5

Open University of Sri Lanka	48.10	308.00	356.10	4.7
Eastern University, Sri Lanka	183.20	215.00	398.20	5.2
Southeastern University of Sri Lanka	91.00	144.60	235.60	3.1
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka	103.50	159.00	262.50	3.4
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka	132.00	189.00	321.00	4.2
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka	111.50	140.00	251.50	3.3
University of the Visual and Performing Arts	71.20	120.00	191.20	2.5
Total	1990.8	5631.60	7,622.40	100.0

Source: University Statistics 2005, University Grants Commission

3.3. Nature and types of student violence and indiscipline:

According to Samaranayake, the upsurge of unrest among the student population has been a significant phenomenon since the mid-1960s: "Student participation contributed to the victory of the coalition led by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. By 1971, this situation changed profoundly with students becoming part of insurrectionary violence and guerilla warfare while the University of Peradeniya was a major centre of revolutionary activities by students" (1992:101). He further states that the student population is highly politicized with universities providing a strong base for the political activities of the former.

Furthermore, in his historical overview of the university system de Silva states: "Even by the standards of student violence and political militancy in some South Asian universities – those in Pakistan and Bangladesh, for instance – the incidence and levels of violence seen in Sri Lankan universities, in particular at Peradeniya, in recent years have been extraordinarily high" (1995a: 45).

In his unique analysis of student violence at University of Peradeniya, Peiris states that student indiscipline takes several forms and includes:

1) Theft of library material, which he says is a problem at university libraries the world over[4].
2) Cheating at examinations (about 50 or more cases are detected each year at Peradeniya University)
3) The occasional personal brawl which has resulted in physical injury
4) Ragging (in indecent and sadistic forms)
5) Protest demonstrations "at which entertainment and 'high jinks' rather than commitment to a cause or collective defiance of authority were the pronounced elements" (1995:187).[5]

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[4] Dambavinna (1998), in a study done for the master's degree, sheds additional light on the problem of mutilation of library materials. Having surveyed 20 libraries belonging to the university system, the author states that 53% of respondents identified mutilation of books as their biggest problem while 15% said it was theft and 30% that it was the non-return of books borrowed. Further, 73.3% of respondents stated that undergraduates did mutilation of books while 13.3% each said that it was done by postgraduates and local readers. A library assistant attached to the University of Colombo library was quick to mention to the researcher that some students would rip out a section of the book at a time so that the crime escapes quick detection. She added that some teachers are also known to indulge in the practice of cutting out parts of theses to avoid the hassle of having the material photocopied although there is a facility available to do so at the library.

The phenomenon of ragging that has been a focal point of controversy among both academics and university administrators although it has only been dealt with in one article, in which the author (Wijekoon Banda 1995) has examined its sociological functions and, in a sense, justifies the phenomenon in the following terms:

1) It should be seen as a part of the subculture to which university students belong and being so makes sense only to the participants of that subculture

2) It has its own set of rules (for example, that it should be done by second year students, that there should not be any body contact with the persons being ragged, and that it should be done by people who were ragged earlier).

3) It is functional since it creates a homogeneous atmosphere among a socially heterogeneous student population coming from various parts of the country and from different socioeconomic levels and thereby helps to reduce conflict among students

4) It is a part of the socialization of students into the university subculture since it leads to indoctrination of proper modes of conduct among students and between students and staff (e.g. the rule that students should not hoot at lecturers is instilled during the ragging process)

5) It involves a process of brainwashing by subjecting the victims to stress-producing situations[6]

6) It leads to a consolidation of the student body with juniors subjecting the seniors to a bath at the end of the ragging period and

7) It has the potential for changing mental sets and attitudes inculcated through the long period of dependency of children on parents.

Obviously, neither the author nor any other academic or researcher has gone into the negative aspects of the phenomenon or its wider social, political and psychological implications.

3.4.Timeline of incidents of violence and indiscipline:

The following timeline of conflicts has been constructed using available sources (primarily from Peiris 1995) relating to such incidents at the University of Peradeniya, a focal point of violence and indiscipline for more than 3 decades within the university system. The picture that emerges from the timeline is a gradual escalation

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[5] Peiris provides as an example, "the 'Dhoby March' of 1956 (which involved the men students attending lectures in nightwear as a protest against unsatisfactory laundry services' or food strikes or the 'Anti Imperialism Demonstration' of 1961 staged in Kandy to condemn the killing of Patrice Lumumba (at which those engaged. ……tried to topple the statue of Governor Henry Ward) ..". These were "obvious violations of university rules and, sometimes, even the laws of the land. But they did not disrupt 'normalcy' at the university, and they were usually treated with leniency by those in authority" (1995: 187).

[6] Ragging in that sense is comparable to a rite of passage held among aboriginal people when young people are initiated into adulthood.

of the type and intensity of violence and indiscipline particularly between the 1971-1989 periods. Furthermore, the typical reaction of the university administration has been to close the university while punishment of offenders has taken a back seat as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4: Timeline of Conflicts in the Universities from 1953 to 1993

Month	Year	Incident	Action Taken	Duration
August	1953	Hartal; police-student clashes in Kandy and Peradeniya	None	
October	1962	Harassment of the Prime Minister and assault on lecturer as a protest against Punishment given for ragging	Punishment of offenders and Closure of university	Not known
August/ Sept	1963	Boycott of classes and satyagraha by Students against punishment for ragging	Closure of university	3 weeks
December	1965	15 Demands by students, student strike, Police intervention at the lodge	Closure of university	Not known
February	1969	Student/Army clash	Closure of university	2 weeks
October	1969	Student strike	Closure of university	4 weeks
January	1971	University employees strike Student demonstrations	No action taken	
March	1971	Bomb explosion at Marrs Hall, arrest and Interrogation of 150 JVP supporters		
April	1971	Outbreak of JVP insurgency	Closure of university	6 months
September	1976	VC taken hostage, police operation, killing of student	Closure of university	Not known
March	1978	Student disturbances, attempted sabotage in science faculty	Expulsion of 8 students	
	1978	Protest strike by students and fast	No action taken	
	1980-81	Election related clashes between 2 student factions with one group having a "sit in" at at Getambe Buddhist Temple	No action taken	
December	1982	Post election clashes between the 2 student Factions (pro and anti government)	4 students belonging to pro government fa suspended for 3 years	
May	1983	Attacks on Tamil students/staff due to deteriorating ethnic situation in the country		

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			No action taken	
July	1984	Clash at the campus police post and killing of student	Dismantling of police post	
July	1985-87	14 one day strikes from March to May) against government's failure to control the LTTE; Storming of the Registrar's office and hostage taking until students arrested in Kandy for fund-raising activities were released	No action taken	
	1987	Rioting over the signing of the Indo Sri Lanka agreement	Closure of the university for 3 months	
	1988	Token strikes after university opened (16 during January and February	Closure of the university	
	1989	Period of turmoil and attacks on JVP by security forces; Killing of 3 men travelling in a jeep by students Killing of the Vice Chancellor of Moratuwa University and ex Vice Chancellor of University of Colombo	Government acts by having the army occupy the campus; dismantling of JVP organizations and cells	
July	1993	Abduction of Science Faculty Dean	Closure of university	Not known
		PERIOD OF DORMANCY		

3.5.Losses resulting from incidents of violence and indiscipline:

There is some documentation on losses to the universities, to the academic community, to students and to society as a whole due to violence and indiscipline. According to Peiris (1995), most of the losses have been documented in respect of the University of Peradeniya and have taken place mostly during 1988. All tolled, they include 54 days in which all academic work came to a standstill while the university was in session, 37 days in which administrative work came to a standstill again while the university was in session, 5 days of disruption of essential services such as electricity and water supply, and 335 days of academic work lost as a result of the closure of the university between the period 1963 and 1988. Thus a total of 431 days was lost during the 20-year period under consideration.

Additional and graver losses took the form of resignations of academic staff and loss of lives and property during periods of conflict. Thus, during and after 1983, a total of 199 academic staff from the faculties of arts, science, agriculture, medicine, dental and vet sciences, and engineering resigned due to turmoil within the university.

Student deaths took place mostly during the period of turmoil[7] between 1989 and 1991. Of the total of 192 students from the above faculties who were arrested or abducted, 81 students or 42.1% went missing or were presumed to have died or were killed (Peiris 1995: 231). In addition, two students lost their lives during confrontations with law enforcement authorities, one in November 1976 at the University of Peradeniya, and the other in 1984 at the University of Colombo. Another death of a student occurred when JVP activism centered on the University of Colombo over the NCMC issue during the last quarter of 1987. More violence followed with the beating up of students opposing the JVP after which the president of the Independent Student Union of the University of Colombo was kidnapped and murdered on 15 December 1986, the first of many such anti-JVP student killed by the JVP over the next two years.

The deaths of two senior academics in 1989 (one a Vice Chancellor and the other a retired Vice Chancellor) at the hands of assassins connected with the left movement in two separate universities are also noteworthy.

Disruption of university examinations was another form of violence directed at dismantling the system of higher education. The move by the JVP to prevent students from sitting the final year examination was successful since "the administration permitted the JVP to intimidate those students into abandoning their intention" (de Silva 2005b: 60). This was also part of an attempt to disturb the secondary schools, which the JVP wished to disrupt, according to the same author.

3.6. Factors Contributing to Violence and Indiscipline:

Two sets of factors, one "external and the other "internal" could be identified as contributing to the phenomenon of student violence and indiscipline.

3.6.1. External Factors:

Among external factors a major role is played by the social policies that have governed education and higher education and have contributed to a drastic change in the social backgrounds of students after the 1960s.

a) <u>Social Policies Regarding Education and Higher Education:</u>

For example, according to Samaranayake (1992), the causes behind the qualitative change in student politics are not confined to University education and the institutions of higher education but are a logical outcome of social policies that have governed education in general. Foremost among these is the system of "free education" (by which is meant education without the levying of fees or charges) introduced in 1947, and paralleling political freedom introduced through universal franchise in the same year. The government policy of expanding educational opportunities to reach the rural sector was reinforced further through setting up of a network of Central Schools on a

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[7] This does not include the several hundred students who lost their lives during the 1971 insurrection; see Obeyesekere (1974).

regionally based electoral system, and subsequently by the change in the media of instruction from English to the local languages in all schools in 1967.[8]

b) Change in the Social Base of Students:

The above changes in turn led to a change in the social base of students entering the universities from urban middle and upper middle class to rural working class backgrounds[9], making students more aligned with the working class and leftist political ideology[10]. The resort to trade union action in the form of "strikes" against university administrations (a form of action resorted to usually by workers against management) is a clear illustration of how closely aligned the student movement and agitation was with the left movement. The problem appears to have been complicated by educational and other facilities available to the students that did not keep pace with the increased number of entrants to universities.

c) Job Market Situation:

The fact that higher levels of educational attainment were not matched with a job market situation that was relatively stagnant particularly in areas that were considered as "desirable jobs" is also adduced as an additional external factor by Peiris (2005).[11] According to him, student disenchantment with the entire social order in general and with the educational system in particular was inevitable in such a context.[12]

d) Failure of Solutions Provided by Government to deal with Graduate Unemployment:

The failure of solutions provided by certain governments to deal with graduate unemployment is also identified as an additional external factor conducive to the creation of student dissatisfaction with the system of higher education. Solutions such as setting up of a "Political Authority" for each district to channel prospective job seekers from rural areas (from 1970-77) and the job bank set up by the post 1977 UNP government only encouraged patron-client relationships and corruption and paved the way for increased frustration among those who were not fortunate enough to get employment while others used their personal or political connections to do so[13].

e) Limiting University Autonomy:

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[8]According to Samaranayake: "The period between 1945 and 1959 saw an escalation of primary and secondary school enrolments from 867,000 to 2,716,000 in 1970" (1992:103)

[9] According to the UGC sources, parents of students admitted to the university between 1988 and 1989 was as follows: 18.2% workers in agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry, 21.4% clerical and related workers, while 38.2% had a monthly income less than Rs 1000" (Samaranayake 1992: 105). See also Strauss (1951).

[10] See also Lipset (quoted in Samaranayake 1992)

[11] A survey among university students (conducted in 1971) revealed that 87% desired public sector employment, 10% private sector employment and 3% self employment. But government expenditure on employment was only a small fraction of the national budget and has decreased considerably since then although in the recent past some attempts have been made to provide employment to "unemployed graduates". According to Wilson (1979), 14,000 university graduates were unemployed by 1969.

[12] As Lloyd Fallers observes: "In many of the newly independent states, the educated underemployed or unemployed are more seriously alienated and politically disaffected than industrial workers" (quoted in Samaranayake 1992:105).

[13] Also highlighted in Hettige (1996) and Uswatte Arachchi (1974).

Methods used by the governments of the time to deal with student agitation between 1965 and 1970 by limiting university autonomy through provisions in the Higher Education Act No 20 of 1960 are also seen as a contributory factor[14]. For example, when the new system of autonomous universities, supported by the government through the UGC, began to operate in 1978-79, many universities, especially those at Peradeniya and Moratuwa, ran into student disturbances similar to the ones that had crippled some of them in 1975-76.

f) <u>Politically Motivated Methods Adopted by the State to Deal with Leftist Politics:</u>

At the same time, attempts by the post 1977 government to counter the influence of leftist parties in student politics, particularly the JVP, by setting up a pro-government student organization only contributed to intensifying inter-student conflicts.

3.6.2. Internal Factors:

A wide range of internal factors such as the physical layout of certain universities, the unsatisfactory state of student facilities, the lack of qualified and competent staff, the social structure among students, the demise of sports, poor quality of teaching, rote learning by students, and ineffectiveness of university administrations have been identified as contributing to student indiscipline and violence.

a) <u>Physical Layout:</u>

The role that is played by the peculiar geography and physical layout of a university is not to be ignored. In particular, Peiris, a geographer, has the following to say about the University of Peradeniya:

1) The campus has two public highways radiating from the city of Kandy traversing the university that promotes ease of access and openness to outsiders thereby hindering security arrangements and effective implementation of decisions concerning trespass or closure of the university.
2) The situation of Faculties far from one another enhances the enclave nature of each Faculty and prevents cross-Faculty interaction
3) Housing for lower staff grades in Rajawatta, a neighborhood situated on the periphery of the university, was to play a critical role in student agitations since "it became a ghetto and refuge for students who were suspended or punished; the disgruntled students found a natural ally in the minor employee (1995: 190)

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[14] More attempts at government control led to higher levels of violence and protest starting with a public rally to protest against the University Act, and campaigning by students for the victory of the opposition against the incumbent UNP government. A key role played by the JVP dominated Socialist Students Union in student politics "within and outside the university" (Samaranayake 1992: 107)

<center>b) <u>Unsatisfactory State of Student Facilities:</u></center>

Apparently, the increased intake of students was not matched with the provision of facilities for students. Thus, according to Peiris, between 1960 and 1991, the number of undergrads registered increased from 1756 to 6569, the only additions in terms of buildings being two new halls of residence with a total capacity of 500 rooms. Only two thirds of the undergraduate community were provided lodging on campus: "The efforts of the university administration throughout the recent past have been mainly in the direction of packing more and more students into the halls of residence, on the sound premise that most students find it well nigh impossible to obtain outside the campus at affordable levels of rent, even the type of accommodation the university provides" (1995:191-192). This is in addition to several hundred students who continued to stay as illicit guests (known as gajays), "which the university authorities treat with tolerance and understanding" (1995:192).

Peiris sees a causal relationship between the unsatisfactory state of university facilities, particularly with the increase in student numbers during the early sixties, and the student disturbances of 1965. He adds that one of the psychological effects of the hardships is that: "Many students develop attitudes of resentment and feelings of antipathy towards those in authority" (1995: 193)

In addition, he states that the large numbers of students enrolled also made it well nigh impossible to do proper management with only a few students known by sight to those in charge. This in turn led to formation of small cliques among students "with many such cliques responding and reacting to various pressures that are applied through rumour and slogan, threat and intimidation or open thuggery " (1995:193).

<center>c) <u>Socioeconomic Background of Students:</u></center>

Peiris also notes that, from sets of data compiled since 1942, there has been a change in the socioeconomic background of students. From the university being a near exclusive domain of students from affluent homes and urbanized areas, it has changed into one in which most of the student population from the mid fifties is from poorer homes and rural areas. Further, as much as 40% admitted to all universities at that time were having parents in 'working class' occupations and 40.1% came from families with a monthly income of less than Rs 200 while 45.2% were from predominantly rural districts. Further, it is stated that as much as 15-20% of students suffer from acute financial hardship during their university career with the Faculty of Arts having the largest proportion of those from low-income, working class backgrounds (Peiris 1995:194). Whether other socioeconomic characteristics mentioned in the literature such as the increase in modal age at entry to the university from 19 years up to the mid sixties to 22 years since then, the higher ratio of women entering the universities, and that an overwhelming majority is fluent only in their mother tongue are contributory factors needs further investigation[15].

Samaranayake also points out how the socioeconomic background of students determined the types of subjects followed upon entering the university and the type of

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[15] This could result from the fact that over 60% of students gain admission on the basis of their performance at their second or third attempt at the GCE Advanced Level examination.

graduates that passed out. According to him, the problem was compounded by: "The lopsided nature of selecting university students leading to imbalance in the type of graduates passing out from universities" (1992: 103), i.e. a quota system in favor of those from disadvantaged regions of the country as opposed to the previous system based solely on merit[16].

Additional light on social stratification in the universities is thrown by Sarathchandra's observations regarding class differences between teachers and students who see the former as "members of a powerful and affluent upper class. This class is equated with the capitalist class in the world at large. The students belong to (or see themselves as) the poor, oppressed class, the nirdhana pantiya (or proletariat). The instruments that the class in power uses to exploit the latter are lectures, examinations, discipline and the entire academic apparatuses. The hand of authority is symbolized in such posts as the Proctor and Wardens of halls of residence along with the police of the campus whose functions are to safeguard the privileges of the capitalist class" (1996: 10, insertions added). He goes on to assert that these perceptions served as the "material basis for the emergence of the JVP on Peradeniya campus" while their campaign slogans included threats to hang lecturers and burn libraries that are the overt symbols of prestige and power.

It is a moot question whether hostility to the privileged class is less among students where staff does not have residential facilities on campus and conversely whether the University of Peradeniya experienced student violence of an unprecedented nature due to the fact that the so-called privileged and unprivileged classes lived together.

d) <u>Poor Academic Performance:</u>

It is noteworthy that participants in the troubles of the late eighties were not only from the Arts Faculty traditionally believed to be a haven for protesters, but also from the Faculties of Science, Agriculture and Veterinary sciences, Medicine, Dentistry and Engineering where they supposedly suffered less uncertainties about their future. Peiris (1995) adduces the probable causal factors to be:

a) High failure rates at examinations conducted by the Faculties of Engineering and Medicine
b) Inability among some students to cope with rigorous standards of the university although they have gained admission due to wide variation in the criteria used for admission and
c) Use of English as the medium of instruction in certain Faculties.

The three tier admissions system[17], that replaced the simple merit system, is seen by de Silva as being responsible for student unrest since it "brought into the universities

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[16] For example, in 1969, while 2662 graduates passed out in the social sciences, their number in the science streams (Engineering, Medicine etc) was only 543 (83% and 17% respectively). See also Kearney (1972)

[17] Under this system, first tier is made up of a rank order or students on average Z scores obtained by them at each GCE A Level examination; the eligibility of students being based on a minimum score of at least an ordinary pass in all of three approved subjects and a minimum mark of 30% of the Common General Paper; the second tier comprises of 55% of the available places in each course of study to be allocated to the 25 administrative districts in proportion to the total population while the third tier is a special allocation of 5% of the available places in each course of study to 16 districts that are

large numbers of students who were ill-equipped for university education and who failed examinations regularly[18]………they proceeded to vent their rage on the university system at large" (1995b: 56). He observes: "For many, a failure at the examination can be the final confirmation of the suspicion that had been there all along – that discrimination is part and parcel of the existing order of things" (1995b: 95)

e) Drop in Quality of Teaching:

The Report of the Presidential Commission on Youth (1990) has identified the drop in the quality of university teaching and academic performance of students as primary factors leading to youth unrest in the universities. This drop in academic excellence overall is attributed to the following:

a) Brain drain from universities due to low salaries for university academics
b) High proportions of unfilled teaching posts due to lack of staff and lowering of standards when filling vacancies for lecturers
c) Lack of closeness between staff and students
d) Inability of students to consult books and instead their reliance on rote learning and copying of published material thereby preventing intellectual feedback and critical learning that are basic to undergraduate education
e) Lack of extra curricular activities, in particular, the demise of university sports
f) Division of students between those learning in the English medium vis-à-vis the vernaculars, the latter having entered the university more due to the prevalence of the district quota system than merit.

While the Commission lays the blame primarily on the system of recruitment of students to universities, it suggests as a solution a scientific grading of schools based on their existing facilities in place of the district quota system.

f) Ineffectiveness of University Administrations:

The ineffectiveness of university administrations when dealing with incidents of student violence and unrest has also been identified as a contributory factor. Weaknesses include granting of concessions to student activists, dealing with problems on an ad hoc basis, and having an inefficient security service.

Citing the example of Peradeniya University, de Silva notes that most university administrators followed a policy of appeasement of troublemakers by providing them with various facilities. This was taken one step further by providing bail for JVP activists who had been arrested by the Police even those who had taken part in violent

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considered disadvantaged. The three-tier system is thus based on a minimum level of achievement at the examinations and a minimum level of social and economic development in the candidate's district of residence.

[18] The failure rate was as high as 50%.

and subversive activities (1995: 61)[19]. Concessions obtained by the JVP include favoured treatment for students in police custody for crimes committed, silence on the issue of whether police should be kept out of the university premises, and support for the GMOA to suspend holding of examinations for students of the NCMC. However, these concessions did not bring in the hoped-for benefits, namely, "the reopening of the universities and the holding of the long-delayed examinations" (de Silva 1995b: 74). Instead, they were followed by an increase in violence and intimidation that brought transport, power, telecommunications and every other service in the country to a standstill. Under the new government of 1988, the last concession was made by making the NCMC a part of the national university system eventually becoming the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Kelaniya.

Dealing with problems on an ad hoc basis is also identified as another factor: "Politicians failed to take a principled stand on this (NCMC) issue; indeed they followed a policy of scuttle, throwing a sop – in the form of the NCMC – to a particularly relentless Cerberus" (de Silva 1995b: 57). Political expediency was more important than proven academic needs as shown in the way the government went back on the decision "to give greater consideration to academic merit, in university admissions, and a corresponding progressive reduction in the district quota" (de Silva 1995b: 58).[20]

The weakness of the university security system is also seen by Peiris (2005) as an important co-factor. Recalling the events of June 6, 1989 he states that when, at the height of violence, students attacked and killed four men in a jeep, the Committee of Vice Chancellors, in a letter of 14th August 1989, recommended to the government that they be relieved of the responsibility of enforcing security, that university authorities not be held responsible for acts committed outside the university, and that students be treated just like any other citizen if they become a threat to the peace. Less than a month after this letter, one member of the committee was shot dead in his office (the victim being Professor Stanley Wijesundera).

g) Increase in Intake of Bhikkhu Students:

In his historical analysis of the university system, de Silva also sees the increase in the intake of Bhikku students (from 8.8% in 1982 to 23.7% in 1987) as a key factor in promoting indiscipline and violence since they participated "in every episode of student agitation in the universities, from public fasts 'unto death', to the intimidation of administrators and fellow students who showed reluctance to join the strike action, and in public demonstrations ……The assumption was that the security forces, in the main Buddhists, would hesitate to use force on a procession led by Bhikkus although, in time, they were treated in the same manner as the students" (de Silva 1995b: 55).

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[19] When the new government came into power in 1977, the students were on their own with no support from auxiliary staff. Disciplinary action was taken against those who resorted to violence and attempts at intimidation with a view to either seek rescission or mitigation of punishment successfully resisted by the new Vice Chancellor, Professor B.L. Panditharatne (de Silva 1995b: 45)

[20] Incidentally, the Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee to investigate "the grave and unsettled conditions prevailing in all the university campuses" does not identify the JVP as the prime factor in agitations, and makes no reference to the inadequacies in the admissions policy.

According to Peiris, the focal point of violence was student council elections. After the elections held in December 1982, there was a clash between the group aligned with the UNP and that with the JVP. The same author also identifies a qualitative change in the nature of student politics from protest to militancy with the rise of the Socialist Student Union (SSU), the student arm of the JVP, and involvement of students in the uprising of 1971. Although it led to the subsequent suppression and banning of the JVP and SSU under emergency regulations, from 1971-76, the strategy of confrontational politics was resumed by the SSU once the JVP became a recognized political party after 1977. By 1978, according to de Silva, "the JVP had firmly established itself in the universities as the strongest group among the students and a legitimate political party at the national level, seeking to fill the vacuum left by the traditional leftist parties. Although it did not have support from a majority of students, it treated the universities as its most important political base and its most productive recruiting ground" (de Silva 1995b: 46). Eventually, the position of the SSU was strengthened in the Inter University Student Federation that was virtually monopolized by the JVP.[21] Samaranayake argues that the use of the "confrontation method and attempts to widen the base of political support" by the JVP (1992:119) accentuated by the dissolution of Student Councils after the ethnic riots of 1983 were additional factors. This was heightened when a group of students from the Medical Faculty confronted the police at the university and this developed into a violent incident during the course of which police opened fire on the students leading to the death of one student. Students from all universities went on strike and protest demonstrations were held. Police fired on one such demonstration and one student from the University of Colombo was killed, creating "a wider gap between the university students and the Government" (1992: 111).

Another significant trend was that the student agitation and activities spread beyond the scope of University issues involving the shooting incidents on May Day, the North Colombo Medical College issue, and protests against the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987. The university examinations were boycotted indefinitely. During this period, the pro-JVP students virtually controlled the University and used it as "a safe haven" for violent activities. Consequently they confronted the Government rather than university authorities as before. With the defeat of the JVP insurrection in 1989 student politics have become dormant" (Peiris 1995: 111-112)

3.7. Summary and Conclusions:

The salient points and conclusions that can be derived from the literature survey are as follows:

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[21] The author also notes the aaccentuation of JVP hold on the university student population by converting the action committee into an apex organization called the Inter-University Student Federation, a 'front organization' of the JVP (1995b: 55), which coordinated student agitation at the national level.

3.7.1. When all the relevant contributory factors are taken into consideration, it is clear that student violence and indiscipline is the product of a complex of external and internal factors that are closely interwoven and include macro level educational policies including criteria used for student admissions, change in the social and economic character of students, and mismatch between student intake and facilities available for them. These factors in combination provide a breeding ground for protest and recruitment to leftist political doctrines and indoctrination. In addition, the reactive (rather than proactive) methods of responding to violence and indiscipline within university administrations including limitations in the security arrangements and physical layout of universities have played a key role.

3.7.2. Viewed from a temporal perspective, there has been an increase or escalation in the intensity and type of violence and indiscipline starting with simple protests that gradually evolved into more grave types of crime including killing and abduction of university staff. It is noteworthy that university administrations have refrained from taking to violence as a strategy for conflict resolution so that the blame for violence appears to fall squarely on the shoulders of student activists. However, a more important issue that needs addressing in the subsequent stage of the study is whether there is a trend in the direction of increased violence on the part of students and, if so, what factors explain such a trend.

3.7.3. It is also noted that student conflict has transformed from being focused on intra university issues to one that engulfs national issues such as the ethnic conflict and the signing of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord involving a wider spectrum of participants such as schoolchildren.

3.7.4. It is clear that the left movement has taken a high profile throughout the history of violence and indiscipline starting with the hartal of 1953 initiated by the LSSP and ending with activities undertaken with the knowledge and connivance of the JVP, also a party with a leftist history although pro-right student factions have arisen particularly after 1977. Thus, it has to be examined in what ways the universities serve as arenas for conflicts between the new left parties and the status quo particularly in view of the pervasive nature of capitalism and the open market economy prevailing at present and the potential such economic structures have for creating resentment and frustration among segments of the population that see themselves as victims of such structures.

3.7.5. This does not necessarily imply that politics should be kept out of the university. But, as one author points out, there should be room within the university set up for healthy dialogue rather than politics based on intolerance and thuggery.

The mayhem created in universities as result of internal politics raises the issue whether politics should be kept out of university life. Peiris' conclusions are relevant: "For several decades now the pious pronouncement that 'politics must be kept out the university' has been heard from many quarters. But in reality what tends to be objected to is the 'politics' with which one does not agree. Past experiences indicate,

in fact, that it is not possible to keep politics out of the university. What seems possible and desirable is to keep the decision-making processes of the university free of political prejudice and bias" (Peiris 1995: 234). A comment by Martin Lipset is also noteworthy in this regard:

> "A completely inactive student body is a more curious phenomenon historically than one which is involved to some degree in activism" (quoted in Samaranyake 1992: 112).

3.8. Gap Analysis and Questions for Further Research:

The study has highlighted several gaps in information regarding the subject of student violence and indiscipline and these gaps that served as pointers during the next stage of the study are as follows:

- ✓ What patterns of violence and indiscipline are found in the post 1990 era?
- ✓ To what extents do the post 1990 incidents of student violence and indiscipline differ from those of the past?
- ✓ Are socio political impacts of the present patterns of violence and indiscipline different from those of the past?
- ✓ What new strategies have university administrations developed to anticipate, cope with or resolve student disputes and incidents of violence?
- ✓ To what extent are these strategies proactive rather than reactive?
- ✓ What changes in national level educational policies are required to defuse tendencies towards violence and indiscipline?
- ✓ What criteria are used when disbursing funds to universities and tertiary education institutes and what impact has fund availability dictate the types of services such as accommodation, counselling and sports activities that defuse potential situations of conflict and frustration
- ✓ What is the level of sports activity in the universities? Why do students not participate in sports? Should sports be made a compulsory subject for undergraduates?
- ✓ What impact has the increase in modal age at entry to the university from 19 years up to the mid sixties to 22 years since then, the higher ratio of women entering the universities, and that an overwhelming majority is fluent only in their mother tongue on student discipline and behaviour
- ✓ Is there less violence in universities where staff do not reside with students on the same campus
- ✓ Should politics should be kept out of university life, if not, what can be done to ensure that it is a "healthy type of politics" that takes place
- ✓ Have students renounced violence as a method of conflict resolution?
- ✓ Should students be involved in national issues?
- ✓ In what ways do the universities serve as arenas for conflicts between the new left parties and the status quo particularly in view of the pervasive nature of capitalism and the open market economy prevailing at present and the potential such economic structures have for creating resentment and frustration among segments of the population that see themselves as victims of such structures?

Section 4: Findings of the Field Surveys

This part of the report presents the main findings from the field surveys conducted in the three purposively selected universities, namely, the University of Colombo (UC), the University of Sri Jayawardenepura (USJ), and the University of Kelaniya (UK) and one Technical Training Institute at Orugodawatta (TTI).

4.1. Background of Institutions:

4.1.1. All 4 educational institutions surveyed are situated in Colombo District, which is also the most populated and urbanized part of the country. The district belongs to the Western Province that has the highest population concentration due to location of urban centers that cater to industrial and commercial activities. Hence, the strategic location of these universities from the viewpoint of national politics and the social and economic system is unquestionable.

4.1.2. With the exception of Peradeniya University, the 3 universities surveyed have a relatively long history (UC being the oldest in the country, established in 1942, USJ and UK in 1959).

4.1.3. All 3 institutions cater to relatively high numbers of university students. The student enrolments for the 3 universities in year 2005 were, respectively, 11,477, 10,813, and 8,592[22], making up a total of 30,882 students or 33.9% of the total student enrolment in all universities. High student strengths ensure that political activists are able to muster a large number of supporters at short notice from all these locations.

4.1.4. The TTI was established during the latter part of the seventies under the Ministry of Labour. It is situated on a six-acre block of land situated next to a main highway (Baseline Road) leading to Colombo City from Kandy Road. Facilities include one large office building that contains a library and several lecture rooms some of which contain machinery and other equipment used for training purposes. At the time the study took place, the TTI had a total of 214 students and 22 teaching staff.

4.2. Political Organization and Activities of University Students:

4.2.1. The student body in all 3 universities consists of two main factions: one is the leftist or anti-establishment or pro-JVP student faction and the other is a faction opposed to it. Currently, the latter group has won at Student Union elections at UC and SJU, although this has not diminished the role played by the anti-establishment faction in student affairs and in political activism.

4.2.2. The decline in popularity of the pro-JVP faction in two of three universities does not signal an end to the troubles of university administrators but the beginning of such troubles since this faction has redoubled its efforts to gain lost ground by staging more protests and to appear as the sole spokesmen for students.

4.2.3. In all three universities the intrusion of national level politics and political parties into student affairs is a standard feature. Parties of all hues are involved including the UNP, the SLFP, the SLMC, the JVP and even separatist anti-

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[22] Sri Lanka University Statistics, 2005, University Grants Commission.

establishment groups such as the LTTE and the Karuna Faction (formerly a wing of the LTTE). The objective of these intrusions is to recruit new members to each party and to use the universities as staging grounds for protests and other disruptive activities that will bring discredit to the government in power and thereby contribute to destabilizing it. The broader objective, therefore, is to use the good opinion that the general public has for the university system to make political gains. In return for their participation in the agendas of political parties, the top rung of student activists are promised employment in the public service oriented "Foundations" that most parties have set up while short term gains for those lower in the hierarchy are in the form of sponsorship of receptions held for each new batch of entrants to the university.

4.2.4. Recruits to the pro-JVP factions in all three universities have typically come from rural schools and belong to low-income families while those in the opposing faction come from urban schools and belong to middle or upper middle-income families. One outcome of these demographic variables is the pattern of clustering of students in faculties and programmes of study. Thus, the former category of students mostly follow arts degree courses while the latter are found in other courses of study such as science, management etc.

4.2.5. Of all political parties, the JVP has succeeded in obtaining a firm foothold in the student bodies of all three universities through a series of clandestine operations that take the form of a hidden insurgency. This methodology is more pronounced in the case of USJ and UK and to a lesser extent in the case of UC and appears to be founded on the principle of making the most out of laxities and weaknesses in the university system including both administrative and academic aspects. The methodology includes:

a) Running an awareness programme for new entrants before they enter the university by contacting them privately at the district level and preparing them for entering the university

b) Administering an orientation programme with the tacit approval of university authorities for new entrants to the Arts Faculties (where party activity is more pronounced) for a period of 3 months. During this period, the new entrant is given a new identity, introduced to the names of faculty, the administrative setup, the facilities available such as library, hostel and medical services and how to use them, names of seniors, and rules for behaviour within the university especially not being present on the premises after dark[23]

c) Enforcing rules through the use of a goon squad known as "jungle police" (kele polisiya) that specialize in the use of weapons such as kris knives, bicycle chains, and even hardware such as pistols and guns.[24]

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[23] The opinion of one academic from UK was somewhat different. He stated that during orientation a conscious attempt is made to create hostility towards academics among the new entrants: The official welcome given to new entrants is only held at the end of the semester (after they have gone through indoctrination of the JVP); instead that should happen when the semester begins. They consciously create a barrier between the staff and students during indoctrination, and create suspicion and distrust within students with statements such as "They are not from your social class. They go in cars with tinted glasses" (kalu kannadi dapu karvala)

[24] Repressive actions of this squad are referred to as "yaka gahanava" also used to refer to demonic attacks in the rural context

d) Giving each student a "card", a term used for a nickname unique to each student that becomes his/her identifier for the rest of the stay at the university and hides the true identity of the person from the university administration.[25]

e) Recruiting the more aggressive students and those who have earned a good ragging record from the first year batch to the party. They are indoctrinated secretly and outside the campus about the party ideology as contained in the infamous "5 lectures" covering the history of colonialism, its negative impacts on society and economy, party vision of a socialist state, party organization, and responsibilities of cadres.

f) Using the new first year recruits to the party to organize protests and demonstrations while the general mass of students are placed at the vanguard in such events or as one respondent called it "the JVP's baby brigade" similar to the "child soldiers" of the LTTE.

g) Paying the new party recruits a monthly wage in return for organizing tin collections all over the country using the new recruits as the "tin shakers"

h) Synchronizing protests and demonstrations in all campuses so that they have the maximum media impact and using mobile phones given free of charge to the activists on campus to coordinate with leaders outside.

i) Using or abusing the power held in the Student Union to allocate hostel facilities to needy students in exchange for their loyalty to the party

j) Abuse of money allocated to the Student Union for party activities and not being transparent in financial dealings and repressing or resisting any attempts to enforce transparency

k) Repression (even to the extent of using violence on other students) of all forms of dissent, critical thinking, and attempts to hold cultural activities such as drama festivals except those held by the party although using university grants for such purposes.

Comment by a lecturer from UK on orientation conducted by the JVP:

"The students come from poor economic backgrounds and have limited objectives. The JVP gives them the feeling that they belong to a club and have one ideology. The use of elder brother and elder sister terms (for senior students) is also noteworthy. They respect what the elder brother or sister have to say; it has started in school. Use of denims is forbidden and girls have to wear cotton dresses. There are lecturers who support this trend. They do not have a proper teacher/student relationship and instead talk of parent/child relationship with students whom they refer to as daughters and sons (doola and putala)".

Another academic from USJ:

"The old staff/student relationship has changed; closeness and mutual understanding are not there. This is due to political interferences. Students are told not to get close to the staff. They are alienated consciously. As a result an anomic situation is created".

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[25] This practice is so strong at UK that it took the university authorities more than one month to get at the real name of a student involved in an act of violence and that too quite accidentally and therefore could be a part of the party strategy of concealment.

Opinion expressed by a top university administrator:

"Now everything (referring to JVP activism) is discrete. Any insurgency has to have a base for recruitment of cadres and methods of training and indoctrination. The university is an independent entity and an enclave and is loosely organized. Anybody can use it as a base for his or her activities. For example, in Peradeniya, there is only 1 party in the student union. Any party that controls Hilda Obeyeskeere Hall controls all other student bodies. This includes the schools also. The JVP is a social and political protest movement. It is effective during periods of transition when there are things to criticize about. Modernization is usually one-sided. The universities are not developed enough. The tolerance for other views stopped after 1977. The LTTE and the JVP are the major players. The universities provide the cadre and the funds. Ragging is used to indoctrinate. Once students are selected to enter the university, the JVP seniors go and visit them in the province level and tell the new recruits about the norms they have to follow. The JVP is also a youth movement
An informal one has replaced formal structure. There is the "batch mentality". Each batch has a representative. At the batch meeting, they decide who is going to contest and who is going to rag. They are mostly active in the first and second year, and in the 3rd year they become neutral
Those who are pro JVP do not have an ideology; they are not Marxists. They demand for social justice and removal of corruption and negligence on the part of the university administration. This is similar to the LTTE demand for ethnic justice.
The pattern of ragging has also changed. In the earlier days, ragging was for 2 weeks and was unorganized with 2 or 3 seniors dominating. Now, second years do it after they have the batch meeting. Those who ragged well are taken as union leaders or batch representatives. Those who oppose ragging (e.g English medium students) are excluded from trips.
Going for private universities is avoiding the issues.
This time, there are no guns.
We should create strategies to prevent the use of the universities to dismantle society".

View offered by a Tamil medium lecturer from UC:

"Lack of contact with staff and over- rationalized education has forced students to have outside links and some even with the underworld. Few teachers visit the hostels. If the students have a festival, the staff calls it a "gon party" ("gon" meaning "stupid") and some do not take part in batch photos and are busy in their own world. Teachers only look at the fighting from balconies and galleries. Last year, 3 students committed suicide (one from the Law Faculty) and this is an indication of their alienation from the university.
Sports activities are discouraged among students; hence the decision to rent the playground to the National Cricket Club since administration says it costs them money to maintain it. There is no protest about this from staff or students.

> *Influence of mass media culture is very high here. For example, there was much excitement among students about the Sirasa Super Star Show here. Ragging has been stopped but it is necessary to establish new contacts, create discipline, respect for seniors, sharing of knowledge, and have links with other faculties."*

4.2.6. In all three universities, the general trend among most students who take up to political activism is to reduce their participation in such activities from their second year at the university and prepare themselves for final examinations and eventually concern themselves with finding employment. However, the hardcore of political activists who are a small minority (averaging between 10 and 15 students per university) continue such activities during their entire career and even function in that capacity after they have left the university. Despite the large numbers who drop out of student politics and activism, the concerned political parties are assured of an uninterrupted supply of enthusiastic supporters with the recruitment of new batches of entrants every year.

4.2.7. Exclusion of women students from leadership positions is a characteristic feature of student politics. Women students enjoy an inferior position vis-à-vis male students and have to perform such tasks as taking down notes on behalf of male student activists who keep away from lectures, wash and iron the latter's clothes including underwear, and, once they have found a partner, satisfy the male partner's sexual needs. This pattern runs similar to that found in the hierarchical relationships between males and females in the rural social context and therefore appears to be replicated on such patterns in the so-called liberal context of university life.[26] As an alternative to male dominance in student politics, one VC emphasized the need for gender balance in political posts and even stressed the importance of having a quota of posts for women students in the student bodies if all universities agree on this.

> In the opinion of a warden of a women's hostel at UC the reasons why women stay out of student politics are more of a socio cultural nature:
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> *"Girls do not do politics or hold important posts. One reason is the violence in political activities. Girls cannot survive in that environment. The second is the cultural subordination of women to men. Also character assassination in politics is something the girls cannot face up to. This will damage the future of a girl"*

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[26] USJ has seen an organization among female students called "Sarasavi Diyaniyo" (Daughters of the University). It is supported by the pro-JVP faction and started in year 2000. Members hold informal group meetings, do not come for lectures, and support protests during examination time to gain time for study. They pretend to represent women students and come typically from impoverished rural families.

4.3. Factors Leading to Protests:

4.3.1.   **Weaknesses in the administration of universities** provide occasion for protests[27] that lead to violence and indiscipline. These stem from the fact that the state has come forward to provide all facilities virtually free of charge; students now regard these facilities as a right although there are insufficient funds to provide the best conditions. The inadequacies on the part of administrations are mostly in the area of hostel accommodations that have resulted in the following conditions:

- ✓ Overcrowding in hostel rooms is the norm rather than the exception with between 6 to 8 students using a room meant for 3 or 4.
- ✓ Poor quality of food due to the extremely low rates charged (Rs 6 per day) from students forcing many to purchase packets of rice sold along the road and share them in order to cut down costs
- ✓ Poor quality of sanitation that results from overcrowding

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The following are comments from a group of women students of SJU:

"Total costs per month per student are about 6000 rupees including money for traveling home twice a month and Rs 100 per day for meals. Many buy a lunch packet for Rs 50 each from the outside and two students will share one parcel since hostel food makes them fall ill. Cooked rice provided by the hostel has worms and geckos. Hostel workers who handle food are also unclean or have sores although there is a PHI. Kelaniya has facilities for students to do their own cooking." (When asked whether they are willing to do the food preparation themselves, they are reluctant saying it will take of their study time especially after introduction of the course unit system. However, the student monks run their hostel as a chummery.

The opinion of the Senior Student Counsellor from UK on providing facilities to students virtually free of charge is expressed below:

"Facilities should not be given free of charge. They include hostels, medical services, transport, newspapers, TV, lectures, library, internet, language learning, and 2500 in cash through Mahapola, all of which are given free. The university finances each student to a tune of 100,000 by the time he/she leaves. There are 70,000 external degree students who do not get any facilities and also complete their degrees. It is only the residential students who create problems. The solution is to give scholarships to 50% who have performed well at the entrance examinations and the others to pay at least half the cost of education. The annual expenditure for the university is 8.5 million."

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[27] As one academic from USJ pointed out: "It is wrong to accuse students of protesting over facilities when they are inadequate whereas it would be justifiable to repress protests if all facilities are provided up to a reasonable or decent level".

4.3.2. The allegation made by most administrators including heads of departments is that most **teachers are only interested in delivering lectures and have no time for contact with or counsel students**. Instead, the lecturers think that this is the task of counselors whom every university has appointed although the numbers of students are far out of proportion to the number of counselors available. It is also alleged that most teachers do not have teaching skills and need development of such skills.

4.3.3. **Lack of uniform policy or rules on how to handle instances of violence or indiscipline** is also a probable factor since it appears that every university administrator follows his own set of policies (usually consisting of rule-of-thumb methods) instead of adhering to a uniform set of policies or guidelines on how to handle or resolve conflicts.

4.3.4. **The implacable nature of student demands** also makes resolution of conflicts difficult. Some demands far exceed what could be considered legitimate demands. Such demands are not about student facilities but about weaknesses or deficiencies in the administration such as incidence of corruption in the handling of building or other types of contracts.[28] Thus, student political groups have become the watchdogs of university administrations whereas legitimate authorities such as the UGC or the office of the Auditor General's Department should perform this function.

4.3.5. Some academics also claim that **not giving enough responsibility to students to take a share in management** is another factor as the following statement illustrates:

> *"Students should also be given responsibilities in matters concerning hostel management: students in foreign universities do so, e.g. cleaning of hostels and providing library services. They are paid and that culture of earning by working should begin there. So also with office assistants, drivers. Instead, the university hires the work out to a contractor. The money saved by hiring students can be used to develop facilities for them. E.g. although there is a mass communications dept, the advertising work that runs into lakhs of rupees every year is given to Lake House. The same also in areas such as accounting, painting buildings and landscaping where we can give the work to other university departments or to students; this will give them a sense of ownership; we should use the resources within the universities and also from among students. If they have a sense of ownership, they will not destroy what is in their environment. Students who do sadistic drawings of women in the hostel bathrooms should be given the responsibility of cleaning them as a part of their job. Since the warden has to sign for their release of their degrees, they will be accountable. We should talk with students and be open with them about how the money allocated to the university is being spent."*

> The following view of another academic from UK is quite different:

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[28] Of course, the accusers seem to be blissfully unaware of their own errors or deficiencies such as lack of transparency in financial dealings of the Student Union or handling of monies given by the public through tin collections or use of hostel facilities such as water and electricity (in the case of one male hostel belonging to UK) to run machinery in an adjoining workshop for making cement bricks.

> *"The current VC is opposed to giving students a share of responsibility in university administration; how can such a group be given responsibility? They will exert influence on the examinations system also. They cannot be given responsibility over handling of finances as many do not come from good backgrounds and they did not handle such positions when they were in school"*

The top administrator from SJC sees a positive role for students as a pressure group:

> *"Having students as a pressure group is okay. They can help the administration to monitor the situation. But now they are trying to take over as in Rajarata University. I have achieved a balance by having a continuous dialogue with them."*

4.3.6. **Rigid compartmentalization into faculties and departments** is also seen as a factor since it produces a sense of isolation among staff from the student body and makes the task of supervising student activities a problem for the student counselors. This is especially so, when they visit a section of the university that they are not accustomed to as following quote from a lecturer from the Arts Faculty of USJ illustrates:

> *"If there is an incident at the Science Faculty, we as lecturers cannot intervene since students at that Faculty do not know us. Students call "sir" only the lecturers who teach them."*

4.3.7. **The lack of practical or work-oriented courses especially for arts students** in place of the total emphasis on theoretical learning as is done at present is a felt need among both faculty and students. This is especially so for students in the arts faculties since, unlike students in science or commerce, they do not get an opportunity to learn from work situations, thereby increase their potential for employment; and prevent students from taking to destructive social behaviour[29].

4.3.8. According to some academics, **the problem of alienation from society** is an important psychological factor and is a product of an educational system that has only focused on subject learning rather than social responsibility as the following statements illustrate:

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[29] In this regard, it is important to note that the Career Guidance Unit of USJ has initiated planning of an internship programme for students of the Arts Faculty and requested lecturers to identify institutions where students could be placed and has established a committee to establish the institutional contacts.

According to one academic the problem has deeper roots:

"The above situation has been accentuated during the past 3 or 4 decades with the decisions by educational policy makers to drop the teaching of literature, hygiene, civics and history subjects from the school syllabuses; this has produced a set of students who are ill adapted to society. Violence and indiscipline is the result of that erosion in education."

Another academic has voiced a similar concern:

The old central school system produced good citizens; it imparted knowledge plus gave abilities such as work in student associations, carpentry, home gardening, hygiene, how to walk on the road, and importance given to agriculture and farmers, and build citizens. The destruction of the country began after 1970; it was like releasing a bunch of mad dogs; private sector was given to mudalalis and was concerned only with marketing and their only concern was to make money (as in the case of petrol sheds with no services such as pumping air).. Media have distorted the human personality further., TV gives importance to ads and tele dramas instead of educational TV programs as was done in earlier times".

A third academic volunteered a slightly different view but pointed out some important root causes:

"There is also a generational conflict. In our day, it was different. With the open economy, the new generation has been socialized differently. Also post 1987 war mentality has justified aggressiveness. There is also a moral crisis or anomie in the Durheimian sense due to radical changes taking place in society. In 1988, we had the highest suicide rate in the world. It is important to look at the problem from the macro viewpoint. The economic takeoff after 1977 came about too quickly as opposed to Rostow's view of social change in gradual stages. There is also general indiscipline in the country as a whole."

A group of female, final year students specializing in sociology and anthropology highlight their sense of isolation in the following terms:

When they first enter the university, there is jealousy among low-income students once they see the lifestyle here in Colombo. They only enter since they have the "Z" score; social competencies are not required. This is so for Arts Faculty students since 95% are from the underprivileged. The conflict is between the two social classes. The laws imposed on them during the ragging period are a social leveler and create group solidarity. They know who is in their batch, names of VC and lecturers, how to use the library, how to live in a hostel, how to use common property and to share equipment such as heaters and cooperate with other students etc. This unity is lost after the second year, after they are broken down into departments and faculties. All 5 courses they have to take per semester are from the same department. We feel the loss of relationships acutely. We also do not know about teachers from other departments. We wish to have a teacher from the department with whom we can talk about our problems. We cannot do so with every teacher since it takes

> *one and half months to get to know a new teacher. We cannot and do not go to counselors provided by the university. Friends cannot advise, as they are also inexperienced while teachers are not so. The students of this university stand and greet the lecturer when he walks into the classroom (not done at KU or CU). This is because SJU started as a Buddhist learning center. During the ragging period, we have to worship the statute of Venerable Soratha and also do so during Soratha Day. We also have lost traditional values such as worshiping teachers as we did while in school; we do it only when we invite lecturers for events and offer them betel when doing so".*

4.3.9. **The lack of a good security system run by the university** has been identified by senior academics, one student counselor, and marshals interviewed since interventions made by the local police are often delayed by which time the damage has been done. A marshal of USJ has offered the following observations:

> *"The university is a place that gives unlimited democracy and independence to students. But after passing out, the students do not know how to work in an outside institution. All students need to be aware of the civil law. Everyone should wear an ID but some students resist such an idea since it goes against their private political agendas. Intelligence is needed to monitor the activities of student leaders and those who come from outside to create agitation here."*

4.3.10. **Interference of outside politicians in university affairs** is put forward as a key factor impeding university administrators from taking neutral and tough decisions when handling violence and indiscipline as the following comment from an academic from USJ illustrates:

> View expressed by a male lecturer from USJ:
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> *"Politicization is there when making appointments to university posts including minor staff; universities had a free hand in earlier times. Even the selection of VCs is politically done. University appointments should be based on impartial criteria; erosion of values since Rev Rahula's time has resulted in a landslide today".*
>
> A similar but more complex rendition of political involvement in university affairs is offered by a Tamil medium lecturer from UC:
>
> *Politicians directly or indirectly support students. Students have outside contacts and contact politicians when they (students) are in trouble. Mervyn Silva, Vimal, Sajith and Namal Rajapakse, all have contacts with students. Senior students introduce juniors to politicians. In every political party, there is an MP for university affairs. For example: Siyambalapitiya for USJ on behalf of the SLFP.*

JVP is dominant in Ruhuna and Peradeniya. Moratuwa and Colombo are UNP, Jaffna is LTTE, Oluwil has Muslim Congress and Batticaloa University has Karuna faction as dominant political groups.

Hostels are also politically aligned: Telawala hostel is pro JVP and Kitiyagara is pro UNP and SLFP.

Student leaders look for employment opportunities through politicians especially in politically led NGOs such as the Rajapakse Foundation, Ravi Karunanayake Foundation. For example, MP Dayasiri was a student leader who was private secretary first to a UNP politician. These are patron-client relationships. As long as there are political connections, the political parties seek a dominant position in the university. The Thondaman Foundation has links with Colombo University and there are 15 estate students in the University at the moment.

The political connections are also a mode for rural youth to join the power elite since otherwise all avenues for upward mobility at local level are limited or closed to them. This includes monks who do politics as well and work through JHU party.

Being a metropolitan university, Colombo has more links with politicians. Moratuwa University has support from the business class.

Another academic made the claim that even the UGC is not free of political interference and that this should not be the case.

4.3.11. **Exclusion of parents from disciplinary processes involving students** is also a factor identified by some academics and even top university administrators.

View of a top UGC administrator on the positive role that could be played parents:

"You have to use your commonsense: bring the parents and have the miscreants apologize and we did that once in Peradeniya. I wanted to avoid harm both to the university and to the students. The persons were reformed after they apologized and worshipped the parents and us. The parents cried when that happened. Parents only participate during the first day of admissions or at the last day that is the convocation."

An academic from USJ has voiced a similar opinion:

"Parents should play a role in monitoring the progress and behaviour of students while they are here. The first responsibility of students is to their families and parents should have some form of control of what their children do. But they do not enquire about what their children are doing here, about their studies, hostel life etc. The political involvements of some of these children can even threaten their lives. They are dragged into the popular culture, to politics or sex.

Studies can be stressful for some students, for example, for medical students in their first year when they have to study in the English medium. There can be some students who are suicidal because of stress. Students need the help of parents when they go through such stress.

Most parents have some education now when compared with the parents of the

sixties. It is easy to educate the parents about what is happening to their children while here. Earlier generation gap in education is not there anymore. In fact, nowadays, the parents fill the application form when the child wishes to enter the university. We need to call the parents together first and tell them about the courses offered here, rights of students, achievements they could make, about problems they might have to face, and activities that are available here such as sports. We need to take advantage of the social change that has taken place".

4.3.12. **Lack of opportunities for critical thinking** through debates etc has further worsened the system of rote learning and blind submission to the commands of political activists as the following statements illustrate:

View expressed by a female lecturer teaching social psychology at UC:

"Lack of critical thinking among students is a problem. Instead, the emphasis is on completing the syllabuses and getting grades. The course unit system is ideally designed to achieve this but has done the opposite. We do not have the resources to do what we would like to do. For example, use more handouts. Lecturers continue the same old method and students also prefer that way. Students do not even understand political differences and do not look deeply into them. Students can be induced to change by using new teaching methods such as film on controversial subjects and have discussions. Films are shown in class, as there are obstacles to accessing hospitals (when teaching social psychology or dealing with subjects like abnormal behaviour).
When students come to the university, they are programmed to be dogmatic. Critical thinking should start before they come to the university. Even in their homes, they are restricted and taught to behave in a certain way. "

4.3.13. **Typical responses of university administrations and faculty to student violence** and indiscipline have also exacerbated the situation. Typical responses take one or more of the following forms: tolerance, appeasement or resorting to authoritarian punitive methods. For example, university administrators have allowed the JVP to perform the role of conducting orientation programmes for newcomers although this should fall on the shoulders of the universities. The latter even cooperate with the process by having the university student counselors present at 6.00 am when the orientation sessions known as "distributing oil"[30] takes place. The policy of appeasement is not new and has been a practice followed by administrations as far back as the sixties and seventies and consists of giving in to student demands without taking into consideration their financial implications or going back on punitive actions such as suspension from attending the university for offences that have been confirmed by the relevant disciplinary committees. According to a member of one such disciplinary committee from USJ, a recent decision by the university administration to rescind a

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[30] "Tel bedanava" in Sinhalese; the place where this activity takes place is known as "tel bemma" or "oil barrier" referring to an embankment or low stone wall erected in the middle of the commons.

punishment makes the members of the committee appear as the culprits and encourages deviant behaviour of students in the future. The management of UC has resorted to the use of authoritarian methods of control including suspension of elections to the Student Council, calling in the police and prosecuting offenders through the use of the civil or criminal law. However, many academics question to what extent such actions are sustainable and state that they go against the spirit of university education.

4.3.15. Many academics and even students interviewed are of the opinion that a proximate cause of student violence and indiscipline is **the new semester cum course unit system** that they say is appropriate for curricula in the sciences but not for those in arts or humanities. Assuredly, the ultimate or hidden objective of this change introduced around 1990 would have been to keep students as busy as possible throughout the entire year by having a system of continuous assessment. While this maybe true, they also argue that, instead of reducing violence and indiscipline, it could actually contribute to it by creating a sense of frustration and hostility toward the entire educational process. Instead, they have suggested a reversal to the earlier system of tutorials at least for students of the arts faculties. Others defend the existing system and even ask for tighter controls on subject matter as the following statement illustrates.

One lecturer from USJ has conceptualized the difference between arts and other faculties in the following terms and sees a need for what he calls "subject imposed control" in study programmes:

"There is subject-imposed control for some disciplines. The student cannot do as he or she wants in disciplines such as science since they contain practicals, regular exams etc. This is not the case for subjects in the Arts. All students think that they can pass the exams no matter what they do in the regular study programme. Most arts students do not like to follow statistics courses since they have subject imposed control. There is intellectual lethargy as a result. If arts subjects are vocation-oriented, we can have subject-imposed control for arts students as well. But staff has conservative attitudes."

4.3.16. By contrast, among trainees at the TTI, who come from all social classes and from all districts of the Island, there is no evidence of intrusion of political parties into student affairs. The management has been able to make early detection of a few problem cases among students and discipline them or, failing which, send them home. This does not mean that facilities and services offered to students of these institutes are entirely satisfactory. In fact, they are of the same level, although smaller in scale, when compared with the universities and is a direct outcome of inadequate funding from the state (see Section 5). In other words, and if the pattern of neglect is continued, the potential for the same patterns of unrest and indiscipline to occur in these institutes as they have happened in the universities is very real. Factors inhibiting an upsurge of violent behaviour include strict security checks on all persons entering and leaving the schools, clearly identified boundary with retaining walls, continuous rapport with parents and obtaining their feedback regarding the students' behaviour at home, and crosschecking student school

attendance with parents to detect possible instances of absconding from school.

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Annex 1: Interview Data

This section of the report presents the results of the interviews held with key informants, focus group discussions and one participatory workshop. Names of persons are purposely withheld to protect their anonymity.

UGC Administrator:

1. National policy regarding admissions (aggregate marks ranked according to Z score and merit system for social sciences); Z score was introduced in 2000.
2. 6 universities are considered "popular": Peradeniya, Colombo, Kelaniya, and Ruhuna, Sri Jaya, and Jaffna. Within the 6 universities, some faculties are "popular": Colombo and Peradeniya for medicine, Rajarata is not popular at all; for engineering, people prefer Moratuwa or Peradeniya and not Ruhuna. Students do not apply to Rajarata, Wayamba. The lack of qualified teachers and infrastructure are the main reasons for not applying. There is also the prestige factor. Applicants have a hierarchy among themselves.
3. Right now, the problems are more with the newly established universities: Wayamba has on-going problems. However, Makandura is good (has a resident Dean although Kuliyapitiya is a contrast; one lecturer teaches continuously for 6 hours and is gone for the rest of the week).
4. The elite model of university has collapsed; we have gone for the mass model
5. The allocation of students to universities: 10% on the basis of merit, 90% on the basis of performance and distance. (There are Jaffna students who do not wish to study at Jaffna university but elsewhere)
6. Lack of interaction with staff: in Wayamba, the academic and other staff are not from the area; they are commuters. The university is empty on Fridays; less use of libraries in general (they close at 6.00 instead of 10.00 p.m when we attended the university)
7. Lack of committed senior staff and good role models is a major problem. Good teachers can change attitudes of students and set an example. That habit is not there among teachers also. There is also no recognition for committed staff.
8. Staff should have a code of ethics as in every profession and this code should be implemented. Some staff members go for cheap popularity.
9. A good university should have a good Registrar and Bursar but this is not so in all universities after 1985. Political interests have replaced academic interests.
10. Staff is not there from 8 to 4.
11. Extra curricular activities are also reduced. They were a part of university education before.
12. Each student should have a personal file (there is no such file system at the moment). This should also prevail at the department level.
13. In the earlier days, students did the politics of staff members but not after 1977. Now, staff does the politics of the students
14. There is no open dialogue between students and staff. Instead, there is underground activity.
15. Politics should be allowed. Students are voters; there should be space for political socialization. Majority is apolitical but before 1987 or 1989 it was the reverse.
16. The student union role has changed. Before 1977, there were many political parties in the union but now it is dominated by one party (JVP) in the south and by the LTTE or Karuna faction in the Northeast. JVP does not allow for other parties to function. It is not visible and now is uncontested. There was a "strike gate" at Peradeniya that symbolized the barrier between the students and the VC. The parties could see each other from the gate. Now, that gate is no longer there. Now everything is discrete. Any insurgency has to have a base for recruitment of cadres and methods of training and indoctrination. The university is an independent entity and an enclave and loosely organized. Anybody can use it as a base for his or her activities. For example, in Peradeniya, there is only 1 party in the student union. Any party that controls Hilda Obeyeskeere Hall controls all other student bodies. This includes the schools also. The JVP is a social and political protest movement. It is effective during periods of transition when there are things to criticize about. Modernization is usually one-sided. The universities are not developed enough. The tolerance for other views stopped after 1977. The LTTE and the JVP are the major players. The universities provide the cadre and the funds. Ragging is used to indoctrinate. Once students are selected to enter the university, the JVP

seniors go and visit them in the province level and tell the new recruits about the norms they have to follow. The JVP is also a youth movement

17. An informal one has replaced formal structure. There is the "batch mentality". Each batch has a representative. At the batch meeting, they decide who is going to contest and who is going to rag. They are mostly active in the first and second year, and in the 3rd year they become neutral

18. Those who are pro JVP do not have an ideology; they are not Marxists. They demand for social justice and removal of corruption and neglicence on the part of the university administration. This is similar to the LTTE demand for ethnic justice.

19. The pattern of ragging has also changed. In the earlier days, ragging was for 2 weeks and was unorganized with 2 or 3 seniors dominating. Now, second years do it after they have the batch meeting. Those who ragged well are taken as union leaders or batch representatives. Those who oppose ragging (e.g English medium students) are excluded from trips (alayao versus batalayo terminology).

20. Going for private universities is avoiding the issues.

21. This time, there are no guns.

22. We should create strategies to prevent the use of the universities to dismantle society

23. We also need a university for health education and to teach nursing and pharmacology.

24. Those who fail at exams become full time activists, especially from engineering faculty. They have dropped out of the system.

25. When something happens, our academics go by the by laws. You have to use your commonsense: bring the parents and have the miscreants apologize and we did that once in Peradeniya. I wanted to avoid harm both to the university and to the students. The persons were reformed after they apologized and worship the parents and us. The parents cried when that happened. Parents only participate during the first day of admissions or at the last day that is the convocation. What about the in-between period? They are adults and should be treated so. Academic staff and administrations have to take responsibility for removing imbalances.

26. Academic culture of seminars, debates etc has to come back

27. Involve more NGOs in the university life. We should not forget that the country is under conflict and that we have had two insurrections.

28. We should be proactive, anticipate problems and not wait till they happen

29. Some students want attention. The solution is to visit them in their dorms and address them in their personal names. I never did politics with students. They know my political ideas and I maintain neutrality in the classroom. I have good relationship with the universities. I adopt a facilitator role and understand problems at the grassroots level. I played table tennis with the students and staff when I went to Rajarata last time. We have to be friends with the students, correct them during the period of peace and use that when there is trouble

30. Emphasis should be on reforming instead of punishing. We adopt an appropriate conflict resolution model. Army discipline prevails at the KDA where the British model of the university system is there from A to Z.

31. Infrastructure development is a priority; we have limited funds

32. Funds for recreation need to be increased and use the alumni associations to contribute funds (otherwise there will be the accusation of favoring only Colombo). We should encourage events between university students and the community and I saw this during a recent New Year celebration at Rajarata.

University of Colombo

Top Administrator:

1. Comments on the recent work stoppage by non-academic staff: JVP union leader has instigated the trade union action; has asked the union leaders to deal with Registrar and no salaried will be paid for the days of not reporting to work.

2. This has become an annual event (4th time in succession); staff has stopped work for one and half months and want to be paid. He has stopped use of university paper and photocopy facilities by the union

3. JVP has given student activists cell phones so that they could maintain contact and set in motion the process and to get information

4. Last time, the security people went on strike so he gave the security work to a private company and it is less cost to the university (35,000 or 45,000 per month versus 21,000).

The strike was about salary anomalies, which he told they had to settle with the Treasury as the university has no money. Students attended classes this time; they were called to take action but they did not. JVP has a vengeance against society as they come from the gutter.

5. He formed the Academic Administrators Association as a registered trade union to resist political interference (formed among all Deans, Heads and other academic administrators including wardens and student counselors.
6. Last year, installed the fingerprinting machine to mark attendance; the Minister wanted that dropped. He went to the Council and got it to agree to the new machine. Only the Council can throw me out and not the Minister. One JVP MP wanted to talk about the issue and Minister told him not to touch the Colombo University. If the Council, administration and academics back me, there will not be any problems.

Dean:

1. He has served as warden of Telawala Hostel four years ago (1997 to 2001), had background experience as a hosteller and as sub warden/Havelock Road hostel)
2. Picking the right person is important, person has to have hostel experience and know how hostellers think, seeing the problem from their viewpoint is important (also had worked in the community as a social worker during his student days):
3. Frequently visited the hostel, not fraternizing, maintaining the teacher/student relationship is important: {I respect students". At the time, it had rained and the area around the hostel was muddy. He explored resources and had the area filled, furnished the hostel rooms with curtains, comfortable chairs in treh reception. Says we should apply our experience from abroad to here. Others referred him to as a JVPer but did not take any sides or do politics. "Lot of people here wear colours. I have no politics. University provided him with a machine to pump the water out. He visited the hostel in the evenings. Gave tasks to different committees made up of students to look after environment, hygiene, and restaurant. TVs installed separately for Tamil and Sinhalese viewers. The committee meetings were held at the hostel. Students came to him and talked about their problems. People put all communist ideas into the JVP context but students have no knowledge of the real ideology or politics.
4. The VC after that period had called the hostel "ungovernable" and tended to marginalize the students. I did not want to be a policeman or use marshals
5. People do the subwardenships to obtain points and not because they really care or have the capacity to do the job. Fr Noel Dias had visited the hostel once and was surprised that the students had treated him well and received him with cakes etc
6. There were no problems in the Faculty during that time since "the students were disciplined at home" (i.e. the hostel)
7. Students need to notice the presence of the subwarden or warden, talking and consulting them on how to address problems is important
8. Was president of Sri Palee campus for 2 years. During that time, the campus had a conflict with a neighboring school over a road that went through the school. The school closed the road. He told the students not to get involved and got their guarantee not to interfere. Problem solved by getting help from the IGP and now the relations with school are ok.
9. Need for universities to use their strategic location and community should feel the university benefits them. Students need to shout sometimes.
10. Need for teamwork within the staff. The staff needs to feel that they are taken care of. The family concept is important.

Senior Lecture/Science Faculty:

1. One or two students will usually take the initiative. Need to identify such students and give them responsibility.
2. There is bullying in schools. Also use of kabool packets that contain intoxicants.
3. Outside elements control the students at the university. Student leaders are promised jobs and their role is to influence other students. Student leaders believe they have power.
4. Political parties also influence student politics. SLFP and UNP have their own branches. JVP controls the Bala Mandalya and are in opposition to all other parties. But JVP has no

power in Colombo U; power is with the opposition group of UNP + SLFP. JVP obtained 49% of student votes during last election.

5. Party agents show a film to attract votes but all groups should have equal privileges when it comes to reserving the hall for films.
6. The students come from poor families and many have grievances. Almost all have psychological problems. 99% of those with the JVP will leave it once they leave the university. They are into politics to get public attention and to get a job or find a partner.
7. Student election system is a problem but we need to have it. The alternative is to have a welfare society for students. The leaders only wish to win the next election. Period of holding elections should be changed. Now it is held 2 weeks after the students come. Instead, it should be held toward the end of the semester. The UGC guideline is that they be held within 2 or 3 weeks of commencing the new academic year. Ragging during the first few weeks is also connected with the elections.
8. Protest marches are also means of mobilizing supporters or members. There is a march every year for one reason or another and is directed against the administration.

Head of Department/Art Faculty:

1. Teachers resort to doing the minimum duties. They are not close to the students. Interactions with them are also at a minimum. Continuous communication is necessary between the different strata.
2. Politics among students is different from 40 years ago. Then we had democratic politics. Now it is fascist although it is true that elections are held
3. Different political groups exert pressure on students. Certain groups are harsher than others when doing so. University is a microcosm and there too there is the use of violence to pressurize.
4. Our task is to manage the situation involving students, administrators and academics. The impact of disrupting studies is not properly assessed.
5. Strikes by non-academic staff also affect academic life. During the recent strike, I had to come and open the doors. Clerks and typists were not working. There is no mechanism to ensure mail delivery without the peons. Invitations to various activities were missed.
6. Better channels of communication among the different groups are necessary. Openness when dealing with workers is missing. University students get a rotten deal that way. One of the main reasons for this situation is the malfunction of our organization. In foreign universities, the academic calendar is known 3 years in advance. This ensures quality of education. This can be achieved only if the interests of every stakeholder are considered when making decisions. We do not have a proper management. Broader society has the same problem. There is need for social engineering. Society produces disorderliness. The university is a part of the society at large.
7. Some problems stem from the operation of a capitalist economy in an underdeveloped country. It leads to waste of resources. The investment is not realized and the future is bleak. Political and cultural factors have a play. National universities are in disarray.
8. There is a lack of work ethic. People are more concerned about material rewards. In the wider society also, work ethic is not rewarded.
9. There is also a need for good facilities for university students: health, food, funds for cultural activities and training including field training. There are restrictions placed on funds allocated for such activities. Money value is also depreciating so that the funds allocated mean less in real terms. A corrective mechanism is not operating here.
10. Material conditions of students are also deteriorating. I heard of two students sharing a single plate of rice.
11. Programme is needed to make students aware fo their responsibilities. Student culture has also deteriorated.
12. Political leaders of every hue use the students as stooges to achieve their limited objectives. It is difficult for academics to intervene in such a situation. In my view, education should be neutral of politics if we are to have a future. Students should be apolitical and areligious if they are to have intellectual development. Some bright students want to ensure their futures by aligning with politicians at the expense of their fellow students. Adult generation is doing the most harm. We need to stress on the importance of developing the intellectual capacities of students. Only then can we expect a good future for the country. But the adult generation has failed in the country as a whole.

13. The controlling valve is dependency of the universities on the government funds.
14. Private colleges prosper under the present situation although there is no regulatory mechanism for them. This is also the case for schools. Colombo based development is also at fault.
15. Education should be secular and not be influenced by religious rituals although this is not found among the students from minority groups (e.g. having Buddhist or Sinhala only festivals or religious events)
16. Student body is not inclusive. There is separatism among students. We need to realize the negative impacts of such practices. Participation of other groups should be enlisted. Cultural diversity should be recognized but cultural hegemony should be eschewed. In the 1960s we had inclusive events such as drama, debates, the law/medical dance
17. Even with war and escalating prices, we should not give up on higher education. We have to ensure that politicians have a more significant role in universities than at present.
18. Applications of technology are also producing negative impacts. For example, philosophical thinking and holistic education should be valued. Technology can be used to productively to stimulate critical thinking.

Lecturer/Tamil medium/Arts Faculty:

1. There are about 300 Tamil medium students in the Arts Faculty and 95% of them are women
2. Some students want to impress girls by showing aggressive behaviour and give vent to their bottled up feelings in college days
3. Higher proportions of students being women is having an impact on their behavior outside the classroom (e.g. women having sex or romances with 3 wheel drivers as they cannot find boyfriends in the campus)
4. Some Muslim females are changing their behaviour patterns such as having boyfriends who are also Muslim while in campus
5. Had a workshop on student violence as a part of the political sociology course two years ago
6. Pro LTTE raggers were responsible for the death of a Tamil student at Peradeniya University; Akbar Hall is run by them
7. Among Muslims, regional issues are important; it is a bad sign when ethnic issues such as having the South eastern University at Olluvil determine higher education; at that university, students from outside that province are not given honours at the examinations
8. Tamil and Muslim students come from all districts to U of Colombo; numbers of students from the plantations is also increasing; there are sectarian differences among Muslim students depending on whether they come from Sunni or Shia backgrounds.
9. Women students regardless of ethnic background are not interested in leadership positions; their goal is marriage and having children and family; many are not full time students and are not worried if the university is open or closed and are not interested in extra curricular activities; they want a violence-free university, however.
10. Women students are not involved in student union activities; he had proposed the setting up of a separate association for women but administration was not interested. They also do not have any extra curricular activities. The Medical Center has not enough female doctors and counselors and therefore the students take treatment from outside
11. Administrators also want to create a political platform out of the university
12. Society has a good opinion about students and believes that they have critical minds. Present political leaders were student union leaders
13. Politicians directly or indirectly support students. Students have outside contacts and contact politicians when they (students) are in trouble. Mervyn Silva, Vimal, Sajith and Namal Rajapakse, all have contacts with students. Senior students introduce juniors to politicians. In every political party, there is an MP for university affairs. For example: Siyambalapitiay for Sri Jaya on behalf of the SLFP. JVP is dominant in Ruhuna and Peradeniya. Moratuwa and Colombo are UNP, Jaffna is LTTE, Oluwil has Muslim Congress and Batticaloa University has Karuna faction as dominant political groups.
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15. Student leaders look for employment opportunities through politicians especially in politically led NGOs such as the Rajapakse Foundation, Ravi Karunanayake Foundation. For example, MP Dayasiri was a student leader who was private secretary first to a UNP

politician. These are patron-client relationships. As long as there are political connections, the political parties seek a dominant position in the university. The Thondaman Foundation has links with UC and there are 15 estate students in the university at the moment.

16. The political connections are also a mode for rural youth to join the power elite since otherwise all avenues for upward mobility at local level are limited or closed to them. This includes monks who do politics as well and work through JHU party.

17. Being a metropolitan university, Colombo has more links with politicians. Moratuwa has support from the business class

18. Violence and indiscipline has increased after introduction of the course unit system, as there is pressure to attend classes and do assignments.

19. Some SU leaders do not like the fact that there are too many women students and refer to Colombo University as Thummulla convent since 80% are women.

20. Education is an ornament for Muslim women when they want to get married and there is a big demand for women teachers. 30% of women students are married and some have children. They are not worried if education is delayed due to disturbances.

21. Muslim politicians eager to have a university at Oluwil; most are Arts students. They started a special degree course in sociology without any qualified staff to teach. Only visiting teachers work there and have only two assistant lecturers but the course has been approved by the UGC. This is the ethnicization of university education. The Oluwil University prefers to recruit teachers from the region.

22. Employment while studying: some students work at betting centers and massage parlors

23. Lack of contact with staff: over rationalized education and hence students are forced to have outside links and some even with the underworld. Few teachers visit the hostels. If the students have a festival, the staff calls it a "gon party" and some do not take part in batch photos and are busy in their own world. Teachers only look at the fighting from balconies and galleries. Last year, 3 students committed suicide (one from the Law Faculty) and this is an indication of their alienation from the university.

24. Sports activities are discouraged among students; hence the decision to rent the playground to the NCC since administration says it costs them money to maintain it. There is no protest about this from staff or students.

25. Influence of mass media culture is very high here. For example, there was much excitement among students about the Sirasa Super Star Show here.

26. Ragging has been stopped but it is necessary to establish new contacts, create discipline, respect for seniors, sharing of knowledge, and have links with other faculties. But the group that is politically or physically strong dominates.

27. There are class differences here between English speaking and other students. The former work with laptops, eat with spoons and forks, have different dress code and never go to the student canteen. This is different from Peradeniya where students cook their own food and university community is bounded.

28. Large number of rice packet sellers on the road opposite the entrance indicates that their patronage is from students coming from middle class backgrounds; hand phones are essential part of student life.

29. Colombo U is open to outside influences. NGOs have a presence here. A traffic jam will affect attendance at lectures or exams. By Thursday evening, the university is deserted and all programs end by 5.00 p.m. Location of high security zone is one factor and university is used to practice Independence Day celebrations.

Senior Lecturer/female/Arts Faculty:

1. Has served the university for 21 years. Says that the authoritarian approach of the present administration has been successful with students (earlier VCs had listened to students); his method is to hand over the matter to the police or threaten to close the university for 6 months. For example, one year ago, during a fight another cut one student's throat; the matter went to the courts and several were suspended. On another occasion, the VC wanted a yes or no answer from members of the department like a court of law. But the VC also has a friendly approach and can smile when talking. He has been able to win over the opposition but also being firm at the same time. For example, heads of depts. Did not protest over having to do the peon's job during the last strike by non-academic staff. The VC is also revengeful if people do not toe his line. He also uses a spy service. It is not a

healthy environment to work in as an academic but it is good for the government since there is less trouble for the government from the student body. Under such a system, there is no room for critical thinking

2. Is not satisfied with university teaching as her work is not appreciated; quality of teaching is not considered important
3. Student leaders do not represent all students but only express the views of a clique; majority want the system to function no matter how it is done
4. Student politics is determined by self-interest; the student canteen is a rubbish heap, the pond is mosquito ridden and the roads are flooded during rains; the campus has no aesthetic quality as in Sabaragamuwa. Students do not even know that the university has its own PHI. Their leaders represent the agendas of the political parties they come from. For example, after the JVP joined with the government, protests from students were suppressed. Those who are in power are friendly with the administration. For example, the VC went to sign the marriage of a student leader. This method has been successful in keeping the university running without an interruption

Senior Lecturer/female/Arts Faculty:

1. Political context and social factors rather than internal psychological factors have an impact on student behavior
2. Your relationships, history, networks and associations might push you in a particular direction; also breakdown of relationships. Lives have changed drastically due to market situation, survival issues, cost of living, and the war. Difficult to think that people are born to behave in a particular way
3. One case of student who attempted suicide as he has laughed at and intimidated; being different is not accepted, there is emphasis on uniformity
4. Notions of gender identity are important for students.
5. There is a mix of social classes here and many have no contact with people from other classes or of the other sex. Hence, they are unable to deal with differences and lack open-mindedness.
6. Lack of critical thinking is a problem. Instead, the emphasis is on completing the syllabuses and getting grades. The course unit system is ideally designed to achieve this but has done the opposite. We do not have the resources to do what we would like to do. For example, use more handouts. Lecturers continue the same old method and students also prefer that way. Students do not even understand political differences and do not look deeply into them. Students can be induced to change by using new teaching methods such as film on controversial subjects and have discussions. Films are shown in class, as there are obstacles to accessing hospitals (when teaching social psychology or dealing with subjects like abnormal behaviour).
7. When they come to the university, they are programmed to be dogmatic. Critical thinking should start before they come to the university. Even in their homes, they are restricted and taught to behave in a certain way.

Senior Lecturer /Arts Faculty/Female/Warden of Women's Hostel:

1. Discipline is better at this university; the students respect the teachers; at the hostel, 50% of students will get permission to charge their cell phone batteries and pay 100 Rs per month; if they get caught doing it otherwise, the cell phone is taken from them and they have to pay to get it back. In some other hostels such as de Saram and Buller's lane, there is no enforcement of the rule.
2. No visitors are allowed in female hostels after 7 pm to prevent unauthorized guests. During a law faculty election time, some male students jumped over the gate; when she as sub warden challenged them and asked them to get out; one student leader was suspended. He worshipped me and got forgiven for what he did. After that no one comes from the SC into the hostel. Students can stay outside till 8.30 pm and leaders get them to come outside when they do ragging. The Havelock hostel is the place where ragging takes place. A girl is the rag leader; girls are also taken to the park, the zoo and socialized with the political leadership who show themselves as their saviors. The political party spends money and this cannot be stopped. The students should know what has to be done. The Telawala hostel is the base for male activists. The women students do work such as ironing clothes for boys or their boy friends including

underwear. One boy at lectures was not taking down notes and when I questioned him he said he was participating according to 'the new system'. The fact was that the notes were being down for him by a girl. Girls do not do politics or hold important posts. One reason is the violence in political activities. Girls cannot survive in that environment. The second is the cultural subordination of women to men. Also character assassination in politics is something the girls cannot face up to. This will damage the future of a girl. There is competition among girls since they are in the majority.

3. Political activists put their noses into everything. They are more stubborn than previous times; they do not care about others and only on what they want. Even cutting throats. There is nothing called 'a university community'. No collective consciousness. This is after 1977 and the political changes that took place after that period. Individualism is rampant. In the 1970s if one is punished all do not strike but it is happening after that.

4. In 2007, the second years threw water on the final years. I closed down the water motor. This happened at 11.00 in the night. When I found out the culprits I said I would take all the second years to the VC. VC warned them. Some students identified the next day same thing happened and the culprits. One was a JVP leader and was suspended for 6 months. He said he was innocent and identified 3 others as culprits. The VC released the JVP man and punished the latter 3.

5. Our national politics does not encourage public debate, problem identification, rational thinking on issues. Most students come from backward areas and the political groups become their saviors.

6. Parent child relationships are also strained due to ME employment; humanitarian feelings are not there among students. There is throat cutting and lack of solidarity. Individualism and competition is also there in schools and tutories. There are cases of stealing from other students (eg. Stealing of a denim when it had been left out to dry)

7. Muslim and Tamil students are united among themselves but as separate groups. The LTTE sponsors each Tamil student by paying 5000 rupees per student for a welcoming party in a big hotel. The LTTE also settles disputes among students. A boy wanted to end his love affair with a girl; the girl complained to the LTTE who asked the boy to go to the girl's village and declare it, which he never did and saved the relationship. It also gives financial assistance to needy students. All of the Tamil students have cell phones and all have to register at the local police station when they enter the university.

8. There are about 70 Muslims students in the hostel. There is cooperation among them. The mosque sends them food during Ramadan.

9. Warden has a general meeting once a month for all students or if there is a funeral in one of their families

10. Suggests the need for outings or summer camps; earlier had awareness programs on AIDS, STD and sexual awareness organized by SLFTU; earlier registration money was kept in a separate account of which a % was given to the hostel for its needs; now that is not done. The TV needs repairing and she could only collect 5000 from student donations; needs a computer for admin work and there are no donors. Students get 3 daily newspapers (one in each language) and have two TVs (for Sinhala and Tamil students). Not interested in reading magazines although some were donated

11. Students pay Rs 15 per month for lodgings but not enough to pay for all facilities, which cost about 2800 per month per student. Students are not concerned. They think it is their right to have free amenities. Additionally they are charged Rs 4 for breakfast, and 17 for lunch or dinner. The cost for food is 38 rupees per day.

12. Students do not buy books or do extra reading. They pilfer flowering plants from the hostel when they leave for home. Science students are better. There are some who worship before going home. Good students are in a majority.

13. The most that a student is willing to donate is 5 rupees for any cause. Not willing to give anything extra for the two cleaning women for the Sinhala New Year. They have given money for funeral of one student and for one student with cancer. They show kindness to blind students

14. No hostel has a playground of its own and students have not time for sports since they have classes till 6 pm. Sports teams monopolize the gym. There is no new group of sportsmen or sportswomen who emerge from the universities; it is always those who had done sports in school. This is due to the routine of school to tuition class to home. Competition starts from preschool days. The parent/child relationship is also sacrificed.

15. English medium students from Colombo schools have a subculture of their own

16. Although students from Sinhala medium come from a good rural culture, they lose it after 3 months. They change and this change has to be offset by having cultural programs to increase awareness.

University of Kelaniya

Senior Lecturer and Head/Department/Arts Faculty

1. Says that students should be given more responsibilities; we remove them from it; having student leader in the Senate is only a formality; they should contribute to all matters except exams. There should be students in the tender board when matters relating to the students are being dealt with, e.g. Purchasing beds for hostels. Their views are not consulted. There is room for corruption when there is no one to probe into these matters outside the administration. When they protest over corruption they are suppressed. The tender system should be changed. Without having students participate in dealing with their problems, the problems will not be solved. There will also be transparency. For example, when filling vacancies in the hostels, the students should be consulted. Conversely, when the university gives a grant to the SC, it does not demand transparency in how this money is spent. They use that money for political activities.
2. Students should also be given responsibilities in matters concerning hostel management: students in foreign universities do eg cleaning of hostels; also library services. They are paid and that culture of earning by working should begin there. So also with office assistants, drivers. Instead, the university hires the work out to a contractor
3. We should talk with students and be open with them about how the money allocated to the university is being spent. The money saved by hiring students can be used to develop facilities for them. E.g. although there is a mass communications dept, the advertising work that runs into lakhs of rupees every year is given to Lake House. The same also in areas such as accounting, painting buildings and landscaping where we can give the work to other university depts. And or to students; this will give a sense of ownership; we should use the resources within the universities and also from among students. If they have a sense of ownership, they will not destroy what is in their environment.
4. Students who do sadistic drawings of women in the hostel bathrooms should be given the responsibility of cleaning them as a part of their job. Since the warden has to sign for their release of their degrees, they will be accountable.
5. Attendance at lectures is another problem. The present system (of semesters) is one form of control since the programme is tight. Still, it is not as tight as the science faculty. Programme in the arts faculty should be tightened some more. The marking systems should be more rigorous with marks given for attendance, participation and presentations.
6. Restructuring of universities also requires student participation. Otherwise we will be heading toward another crisis.
7. Students should not be given privileges. They should pay something for the services.
8. They should also obey the law of the land and should be taken into custody if they violate it. They should not be allowed to put up posters all over the place.
9. PR services are lacking. Students have no forum to take their complaints and some political groups exploit this
10. The current crisis in the university is over the allegation that there is misuse of public funds. . e.g. while university has its own security service, additional security is provided by a contractor. If there is an incident, it is the former that has to take action. Private sector security is there only to open gates, carry bags of officers. This is part of the old colonial system. There is also the fear of theft of vehicle parts when vehicles are parked in the premises
11. Lack of commitment from lecturers is another factor.
12. Closing down of the university for 5 years is the response of the university administration. No one asks for whom the university is being run.

Professor/Arts Faculty/Member of Student Disciplinary Committee

1. The JVP is opposed to any other party coming up within the university; an opposition came up through the science faculty; they did a paduru patiya long ago and developed their strength from it and opposed ragging (in 2000 or so); but no science faculty student was allowed to go through the arts faculty area; there has been fighting between the two

groups from the day the new year started; some students have been hospitalized; one student had hit a fallen student with a bicycle chain and he was caught by the police later

2. The student counselors made a complaint and his classes were stopped. The SC wants the sentence to be removed.
3. Politics is used by some teachers who have an eye for the VC post due to the perks that come with it. They have no respect for seniority or qualifications.
4. There are 25 cases dealing with indiscipline at the moment and only 2 can be cleared in one month
5. When students come with complaints, the same set of names of names is given as the culprits.
6. The current VC is opposed to giving students a share of responsibility in university administration; how can such a group be given responsibility; they will exert influence on the examinations system also. They cannot be given responsibility over handling of finances as many do not come from good backgrounds and they did not handle such positions when they were in school
7. This is the place for recruiting for the baby brigade of the JVP; they do it by having an arts festival called Bihi Dora and is sponsored by the SC inviting people from schools to compete in arts events. They identify skilled students from all levels in the school system, give them prizes and certificates and catch them at an early age
8. They also get addresses of all new recruits to the university and meet them at district level (although it did not happen this year as they could not get the addresses since the present officer in charge did not succumb to their request); they had the practice when X was the Chancellor.
9. The welcoming of new entrants is only held at the end of the semester (after they have gone through indoctrination of the JVP); instead that should happen when the semester begins. They consciously create a barrier between the staff and students during indoctrination, and create suspicion and distrust within students. "They are not from your social class" they go in cars with tinted glasses" (kalu kannadi dapu karvala)
10. The new hostel was put up for boys so that they could be kept out of the university as far as possible, but at the last moment the VC of that time decided that it should be given for girls due to pressure from the activists.
11. Students tell untruths and I get evidence from lecturers. Real names of students are not known to us; they use nicknames and they do not have their ID on when they walk about
12. I punish them so that we have an environment in which lecturers could walk about in safety. There are many student counsellors but none of them have the guts to oppose students.
13. In foreign universities, the chairman of SC is given one year of leave from studies to attend solely to student affairs.
14. They come from poor economic backgrounds and have limited objectives. The JVP gives them the feeling that they belong to a club and have one ideology. The use of elder brother and elder sister terms is also noteworthy. They respect what the elder brother or sister have to say; it has started in school. Use of denims is forbidden and girls have to wear cotton dresses. There are lecturers who support this trend. They do not have a proper teacher/student relationship and instead talk of parent/child relationship with students. (doola and putala). This is a post 1971 development.
15. There should be separate educational system for those who cannot afford higher education perhaps via local authorities and not at the university.
16. Lack of proper preparation for university at schooling stage is also a factor.

Professor at Arts Faculty:

1. There is no room for intellectual dialogue or debate with such a group especially after the collapse of the tutorial system; the assignment system is a fraud. The assignment system has created what is called an "examination mentality (vibhaga manasikathvaya)
2. The SC decides who should be in the hostel and cram 7 or 8 students into one room
3. How can students be given power in the administrative setup. We are sitting on top of a volcano; it is a master plan to destroy the universities.
4. Watertight compartments as faculties are another factor. Need for interdisciplinary activities; science students should do some arts subjects and vice versa.

5. Science students are less likely to get involved in violence etc. they have a target and a future. They also have work-oriented educational activities
6. There are more incidents of unrest than before (i.e. 1980s)
7. There is no logic in the way students are allocated to faculties: students who failed to get admitted to medicine are sent to the ayurveda school where they have problems with Pali and Sanskrit terms that are used in those syllabuses. The same applies to Tamil medium students. They come to ayurveda school wanting to be (western) doctors.
8. Dropping of literature, hygiene, civics and history subjects from the school syllabuses are largely responsible for creating students who are ill adapted to society. Violence and indiscipline is the result of that erosion in education.
9. Mass education at university level has to be looked at again (by policy makers) although compulsory education to maintain the literacy level should be continued. Higher education for all has to be limited.
10. No sense of identification with the university among students. Outsiders can come and go (including external students)
11. People in administration should be more aware of what is happening and learn from the past and implement solutions appropriate for today: instead, their position is that such things did not happen when we were students.
12. Socio political impacts of violence etc: a) political disruption of the higher educational system b) social disruption c) emergence of police state and increase of repression and d) confrontational politics instead of conflict resolution through dialogue.
13. Recommendations: short and long term strategies should be adopted. Long term: revamping of the entire educational system. Short term: interventions at GCE Ol and AL and limiting entrants to higher education. Short term solutions only will be ineffective and worsen the situation. Teaching of world languages should be adopted in schools and education should be trilingual.

Senior Student Counsellor

1. Out of a total of 9000 students, only 25 or 30 are directly involved in violence etc. all are arts students with 1 or 2 who are from commerce department. Commerce students have work programme in companies and have to enter the market competitively. Arts students are not happy with the subjects they have chosen. (vishayath ekka kalakirima).
2. Lecturers are also responsible. If they do the lectures properly students will have no time for such activities. Earlier, we had medical students also involved but not now. If students do not attend lectures, the rule with the science faculty is that it is assumed that they were held whether students attended them or not. This is not done in the arts section. There has to be system to keep the student within the classroom or else they will be attracted to other activities. Arts lecturers are less involved in promoting the welfare of students
3. There are two student factions: one is the Padanama group and the other the Kriyakari Kamituwa or JVP group. The party directs activities from behind the scenes.
4. The VC is strong. He has suspended 4 students who were found guilty of violent activities.
5. The KK drag in welfare issues such as the mosquito problem. The PHI comes and signs the book saying that eradication measures were done. Another issue is that 850 students living in a hostel need a bus to come for lectures (distance of 2 km) for both male and female students. Reinstatement of employees who have been suspended for work related problems (i.e an issue that does not concern student welfare). Students have occupied part of admin building and refuse to leave unless their demands are met while admin is playing a waiting game without resorting to forced eviction.
6. Out of 9000 students, 3000 are in hostels. Electricity bill alone for one month is 300,000 and 150,000 for water. It costs the university 1200 per student but student pays only 350 per year (or 29 cents per day). University also pays for hostels outside the campus (one has 232 students and is a home rented by the university for 192,000 rupees per month. Earlier, there were about 20 such homes and this practice was stopped due to corruption among university officials.
7. We have the most number of students in hostels. We cannot accommodate all. Last year out of 2000 entrants, 900 were accommodated. A new hostel is being built; approximately 40% of total students are benefited at the moment
8. Conflicts are over welfare issues

9. Admin has decided to implement the civil law in cases of violations of the law (13 students are on bail for earlier offences and 4 have been suspended from taking lectures); earlier VCs had given into demands or tried to pacify student leaders who use their power to suppress dissenting voices among students

10. JVP relationship to government in power decides the tone of what happens at student activist level; now it is negotiating for power as the elections are around the corner; 20% of students support JVP but more force is exerted through thuggery with support from outside elements; eg any events organized by neutral students are suppressed or sabotaged by staging protests to coincide with such events

11. Having the "batch photo" is one way of making money for student activists. All photos in all universities are done by one company with payoffs to people in the SU or when there is a death in the family of an activist (kriyakari); those who criticise such things are not allowed to sit in the batch photo and the victims do not complain; this is done by gangs (kandayam vasayen); money is also collected from all newcomers to hold socials. Also collection tins (keta hollanawa) is done by the first years. One person from outside comes to collect the collection. There are fulltime workers assigned to each university and he is given a target for every year. He wanted the university to organize the batch photo but some lecturers were opposed to it.

12. Activists go into abeyance at the 3rd or 4th year; the first year is important also to find girls and 2nd years get the preference.

13. Facilities should not be given free of charge: hostel, medical services, transport, newspapers, TV, lectures, library, internet, language learning, and 2500 cash through Mahapola. The university finances each student to a tune of 100,000 by the time he/she leaves. There are 70,000 external degree students who do not get any facilities and also complete their degrees. It is only the residential students who create problems.

14. Solution: given scholarships to 50% who have performed well at the entrance examinations and the others to pay at least half the cost of education. The annual expenditure for the university is 8.5 million.

15. The politically involved students do not attend lectures.

16. The university needs a good security system. It takes 15 minutes for the local police to come here. We are dealing with young people who are also emotional. Students who are thugs (maera sisyo) have support from politicians.

Lecturer/Fine Arts Dept:

1. The semester system has deprived students of finding opportunities for "viveka buddhiya" development that was possible in the old system. It was created to suppress the student movement but has had the opposite effect. It has prevented them from having knowledge about the outside world and of establishing good social relationships

2. Teachers have become mechanical in their teaching; not interested in doing research and are too busy; external students having less facilities have more awareness; semester system has created jealousy and competition. (this starts with the scholarship exam in year 5 for school goers. Permanent lecturers profit from the strikes and do not come to work and discuss among themselves the reasons for the unrest and providing solutions for it.

3. Cell phones are used to photograph opponents during a fight and used as evidence by the police.

4. Aggressive students can be brought to the positive side but are instead used by politicians for thuggery.

Head/Dept of Fine Arts:

1. People think of the university as a subculture and define it as a violent place. But it is important to have rule of law and this is possible due to the new VC.

2. The old central school system produced good citizens; it imparted knowledge plus gave abilities such as work in student associations, carpentry, home gardening, hygiene, how to walk on the road, and importance given to agriculture and farmers, and build citizens. The destruction of the country began after 1970; it was like releasing a bunch of mad dogs; private sector was given to mudalalis and was concerned only with marketing and only concern was to make money (as in the case of petrol sheds with no services such as pumping air. Media

have distorted the human personality further, TV ads and teledramas instead of educational TV programs that were done earlier.

3. The violence inside the university is different from that outside it.
4. University lecturer is a post held for life. The service should be 24 hour. They should be role models. Some students need personality development and need the guidance of lecturers.
5. When he was given the chair of the housing committee in 2000, he found that there had not been any improvement of services and facilities for the last 10 years. Hostels were used as safe houses for people engaged in political activities. Hostellers were selected on the basis of political influence and were used to enforce conformity to the JVP with students used to collect money from the public.
6. Majority of students are from poor backgrounds and pay only 350 rs a year. Some are children from parents with SLFP or UNP backgrounds and therefore it is not right to call all of them JVP. However, only JVP operates in the Arts Faculty while the opposition known as Sahayogatha Padanama is from science faculty and has students from all political parties. They also do not have time for other activities.
7. Both factions have supporters from the faculty and both are violence-prone. Science faculty students also forget their independent background. There is a brawl among students every year. Revenge is continued (similar to GANG MENTALITY)
8. JVP uses students to show to the public that they have power and use the first year students as a shield. Opponents are hounded out (yaka gahanava).
9. The activists come up with a large number of demands (100 last time) among which are real student demands and others, which are irrelevant. Giving solutions to the student problems is not going to stop the unrest; opposed the drama festival and started bucketing students to reduce their participation in the festival.
10. 70% staff wants the university to remain closed as long as possible so that they could stay at home or attend to their private work.
11. 10% of students are activists. Failure at exams is a major reason.
12. If a punishment of a five-year suspension is given under a strict disciplinarian, violence can be stopped.
13. Hostel used to provide refuge to party favourites, in one case, cubicles of students had carpentry utensils and other cases of workers who night shifts in the local restaurants who were given room facilities. Electricity and water from one such hostel was provided free of charge and illegally to a workshop near one such hostel.
14. SC people do not want a protective fence around the hostel to be built
15. There is room for a third force in politics and it is certainly not going to be the JVP who have a false conception of socialism and even the government has been cheated with this lie. Their fortress is a hostel near Torana Junction. The Kannangara hostel for 800 male students was built to avoid this problem but at the last minute, the decision was made to give it to girls who now face a transport problem that is one of the demands being made now.
16. Distinction between alayo (science faculty) and poddo (from arts).
17. Real activities of students are not trying to take over administration but to do studies, do extra curricular activities and politics. How they do politics is the problem. They fear social harmony after a pirith ceremony is held and disrupt it. They are intolerant and anti-intellectual.
18. The political linkages between students and outside is only with respect to JVP and all other parties have no involvement now in student politics
19. Administration, UGC and government should act in concert and not isolation from one another as it happens now.
20. Parents of students are not aware of what is happening. Students have got an unjust amount of freedom. During orientation for freshers, the parents wait on the roadsides,
21. Political activists do not attend lectures. They assign 4 students to stand in for them and copy notes. The party pays the activists and targets are set for them. The cultural festival before opening of the university is funded by university money but people are told it is money from the box collections.
22. Orientation program should be run by the university and by academics. Seniors should be debarred from attending the university at that time. Students need to be made aware of the services available at the university.
23. Atrocities committed include: cutting up the back of one student requiring 58 stiches using a barber's razor, cutting off of a finger and crushing it by foot, use of pistols, hand bombs, in the 1990s period. Now again, resurgence of weapons possible and university was closed after there were suspicions about that.

24. JVP knows it has no political future; this is an attempt to bolster their position in national politics.
25. Why use the universities?: Rules and regulations do not work here.
26. Why now? The civil law is being applied now.
27. After 6.00 pm the JVP activists are in full control. The security services are scared. Drink liquor and smash the bottle on the premises. Males and females make love in public.
28. Unit system has to change. There should be space for student life especially for students in the arts and humanities faculties. The computer decides who gets a class now; earlier, we would know who those students would be in advance. This is a gamble now. The courses have no content.
29. UGC handbook for students has some serious errors and misguides applicants. For Communications Studies, only one department is mentioned. Subjects such as medicine and engineering are given their proper place. Fine arts is only found in the University of Jaffna. Such issues are not raised in meetings with the UGC and VCs. Humanities Faculty is subsumed under Arts.
30. If a student takes up to the Fine Arts, he will never take up a stone. Funding for fine arts has to be increased. Other academics do not appreciate its value.
31. Need to provide more opportunities for young academics to improve lecturing through study tours and extra curricular activities.
32. University lecturer has social acceptance. We have to keep it and maintain it.

Sri Jayawardenepura University

Top Administrator:

1. The student body is divided into two factions: those that favor ragging (from the Arts Faculty) and those who are opposed to it that are from Science Faculty. Both groups are violence prone. The latter group had won the SC elections last time. Some staff believes that the latter group alone is responsible for some of the violent incidents that led to the death of one student in the recent past.
2. Overt ragging of students has stopped largely due to the anti-ragging stand of the SC. 40 students were suspended as a result of the disturbances.
3. The only way to maintain peace in the campus is for the administration to have a continuous dialogue with all sections of the student body and with student representatives in all the standing committees, particularly those dealing with student welfare. Using repressive methods is not the way, as this will cease to be a university if that is done.
4. Student opinions are necessary. Students are like vigilantes and their opinions are necessary as an impetus for better administration. But they also have a tendency to take over the functions of administration like taking over the running of student canteens.
5. It is important to promote aesthetic and sports activities among students. Earlier administrators had stopped all aesthetic activities since the SC did them and there was lack of transparency and impartiality.
6. During the last two years, the university was never closed unlike with the earlier administration. I am accessible and I like to work with all as a team.
7. Students had once clamored for more canteens and a move was made to increase the canteen service by building a new one. One student group was opposed to the cutting down of large trees that were in the way of the building construction. Students were of the view that it would hurt the environment. Some negotiating was done to preserve one such tree only and even this was opposed in the end. The only option was to call the police to handle the matter.
8. Funding limits and inefficiency of the university system are also responsible for the present state of affairs. Only 50% of the funds allocated are utilized due to bureaucratic delay.
9. Having students as a pressure group is okay, but now they are trying to take over as in Rajarata University. I have achieved a balance by having a continuous dialogue with them. Having students as a pressure group is good. They can help the administration to monitor the situation.
10. The male hostel was the epicenter of conflict in the past. The previous administration gave a large hostel for females and created privately run hostels. A new hostel with

accommodation for 700 men students has been constructed but there was the danger of double occupancy. So, the hostel was given for girls and a smaller one was given to the boys. We have tried to maximize the number that could be accommodated.

11. The students are not opposed to having fee-levying courses here although they oppose them in other universities.

12. More social and cultural activities are needed. I am opposed to having parents involved in student matters. This is not a school. We are dealing with adults. But it is Ok to gave a parents' association to discuss welfare needs of students.

13. We also need more representation from women students in the union leadership. There should a provision for gender balance if all universities agree on this.

Professor/Arts Faculty:

1. Rural/urban disparity is strong among students with most coming from rural backgrounds; economic status is low; JVP dominated and used to collect funds, do picketing e.g. at recent picketing opposite the UGC; students from other universities brought here and leave from here. Economic backwardness creates a proletariat class without awareness of ideology; they fall in line with the trends or what the majority says (rallata vatenava). They are the frontline and get exposed to police retaliation or tear gas first while the leaders are behind them.

2. Students have more freedom when they come the university; but they have no political awareness and therefore get exploited

3. JVP is a protest movement and so they use the students to do their activities. They also get involved in other areas such as exam matters and curricula. They need to continue the present power structure.

4. After they leave the university, they change political colours (SB from Russian communism to SLFP to UNP).

5. There is also a generational conflict. In our days, it was different. With the open economy, the new generation has been socialized differently. Also post 1987 war mentality has justified aggressiveness

6. There is also a moral crisis or anomie in the Durheimian sense due to radical changes taking place in society. In 1988, we had the highest suicide rate in the world. It is important to look at the problem from the macro viewpoint. The economic take off after 1977 came about too quickly as opposed to Rostow's view of social change in gradual stages. There is also general indiscipline in the country as a whole.

7. JVP posits a distorted view of Marxism (with terms like hakula ganiv and marapiyav); and promotes class hatred against the privileged class.

8. During the first 3 months of the first year, the JVP controlled segment imposes a radical code of behaviour insisting on simplicity in dress through a brainwashing programme. Leaders are formed through small groups that are also cohesive and produce conformity. They take on leadership roles during the second year. Every year, a new batch of leaders for the second year is produced although during the 3rd and 4th years they go into decline.

9. Keeping up the pressure through the universities is important for the JVP as it has gone down in the public estimation.

10. Partial patchwork will not be an answer to the problem; need to implement long-term solutions and also follow a policy of moderation. The universities cannot implement such solutions on their own

11. The old staff/student relationship has changed; closeness and mutual understanding are not there. This is due to political interferences. Students are told not to get close to the staff. They are alienated consciously. As a result an anomic situation is created.

12. Impact of globalization is another factor:

13. University infrastructure such as hostel facilities are very poor. On the students' side, the protests are justifiable. Tough decisions against protests can be taken if everything is provided but this is not possible due to funding limits. Ending subsidies will not help the masses and will be politically suicidal. So, the implication is that protests and unrests will be endemic to the universities unless policy makers break through the vicious cycle of causation.

14. Need also for practical courses in place of conventional coursework which is theoretical. This is due to patchwork educational reform.

15. Politicization is there when making appointments to university posts including minor staff; universities had a free hand in earlier times. Even the selection of VCs is politically done. University appointments should be based on impartial criteria; erosion of values since Rev Rahula's time has resulted in a landslide today

16. The 1972 educational reforms do not meet the requirements of the country.

17. The JVP failed to get power by arms ; now they try to do it through politics using the universities as their base.

18. Relevance of frustration/aggression theory of Dollard and Merton/s theory of goals and needs for the analysis of student behaviour.

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Temporary Assistant Lecturer and former student leader:

1. Was a student from 2000 to 2005. during his time, 2 students were killed. "It was emotional group behaviour" (kandayamak thula avegasili hesirima). One was from arts and the other from science faculties. The case is still being heard in the courts. 40 students were arrested and remanded. This starts from a small event and spread like a virus or forest fire. Lack of good leaders among students is one reason. One student each from each of the two main factions.

2. During initiation period, boys are not allowed to wear shorts and are not allowed to smoke. Girls have to wear cotton dresses and rubber slippers. No girls are allowed to stay on campus after 8.30 pm. Students from rural schools are more prone to join the JVP. The tel bamma is the place where ideology is preached although there is less overt physical ragging. Dress codes change after the first year. This is also an opportunity to overcome inferiority complexes of rural students as they enter an alien environment. Also the peer group replaces one's nuclear family (at Ruhuna, freshers are asked about their varige and this is the basis of association. At Colombo U, it is the school attended, i.e. social class. Here, the people who come from the upper class schools are boggu; rural boys rag them.

3. This was run as a torture place during the UNP days; there are places where walls have been marked with blood and where students were killed. Floors are also marked showing such places and they are held sacred by the JVP.

4. About 10 or 15 students are activists; others follow like sheep. They are driven to do certain things by the activists.

5. Independent students do a short play festival called "vedikaveng maha polovata". The competition is open to outsiders also. Money is collected during the entire year for the festival. Some dramas have political ideology.

6. The JVP faction did not allow once an opera called "Eva" since it used naked pictures. The JVP faction emphasizes ethnicity and religion at this university. (This was the work of the "X Group", which came up in the 90s but is no more as an ideological movement excepting to some extent at UC). This is due to the heritage of a pirivena. Also due to the fact that majority of students are from rural areas (true of Arts faculty although more urban students in the commerce and science faculties).

7. Commemorations are held for the past prelates (Sri Sumangala and Soratha). All participate irrespective of politics.

8. JVP also commemorates the dead activists through Vira Sisya Day; at one such event, the opposition tore down a statue showing the breaking down of shackles.

9. During his day, identity of SJU was very strong.

10. Even in the SC, there is pressure on members to conform to party demands

11. Is interested in the role of structures on violence (a la Michel Foucault)

12. Break up of one large hostel into several small ones had a positive effect on reducing violence and conflict

13. Absence of sponsors to hold exhibitions of work of creative students like himself

14. Students are unwilling to spend too much money on field trips (250 per student collected for a 4 day field trip; organizers had spent 400 per student of which 250 went for the diesel of the university bus; when asked to pay 100 per head for overnight lodgings, the students had refused. Finally, stayed overnight in a temple). But all could afford cell phones. Every female student has a gold ring or necklace

15. Except for 3% of males, all others are females in the arts faculty. In 2000, it was about 20% males.
16. Hostels are the breeding ground for JVP cadres. There is no one to check what is happening in them. There is no contact with the hostellers. There is a spirit of sharing encouraged even with the unlawful inmates.
17. Cell phones are considered essential. They are means of keeping contact with outside instigators. During the recent picket at the UGC, some of the activists were students who do not come for regular lectures. Ie. They were mobilized for the event.
18. There is less violence now when compared with the 1989 period. Earlier we had conflicts among student groups, within hostels, and between students and the community.
19. Ideology influences conflict: between those in power and the alternative group (vikalpa kandayama). Eventually, they get assaulted. But when they get support from wider student groups and from the community, they also behave in a violent way.
20. Those in power speak on behalf of students and if someone opposes them, they are attacked physically. There is a unit in the SC known as "kele polisiya" in which informal leaders take decisions. Most students do not question this and if challenged the jungle police will react violently. They also throw out anyone who is found inside the campus after 9.30 pm. They mobilize students for protests and sieges and the latter do not even know why they go to the demonstration.
21. Most students were under the control of parents before they came to the university; they need a controlling force to direct their behaviour. After ragging is over, they are given lectures on free education, history of the JVP, and their role as protectors of student rights. Also about sacrifices made by JVP heroes. Hundreds of students are involved in violent demonstration and see it as a fight for their cause. Those who take the leadership are people without any social service experience and are accepted here since there is a value placed on violence in the student subculture. They are against democracy although they talk about it.
22. There are conflicts among student leaders who compete to get the attention of freshers.
23. Misappropriation of funds: no one knows how the money collected for things like the batch photo (350 per head) or from sale of tickets for heart surgery for one student (8 lakhs in 1998 and student had died in the process while collectors had spent only for the funeral); bank accounts of SC are private accounts

Senior Lecturer and Head of Department:

1. Gap in teacher/student relationship has been identified as the main reason in a recent study done by the Senior student counselor at Colombo U
2. Recently, students recreated a gama during a New Year Festival on campus; this was done as an alternative to ragging. People could be more creative during ragging such as use of masks (as hitting one another with colours as they do in the "holi" festival in India)
3. Lack of recreation and sports activities for many students. Other issues therefore dominate. Sports are limited to a few and are a continuation of what they did in school. This leads to an unbalanced personality.
4. Need to identify talents that students have as is done in criminology and rehab of prisoners. (Incidentally, the three majors are in sociology, anthropology and criminology at the dept).
5. Teaching is teacher centered without giving leadership opportunities for students within the classroom and although a semester system has been introduced. It does not provide space for analytical thinking. No group work or participation in workshops is provided. It is totally different from what took place during the tutorial system. Individual creativity is encouraged even in JVP culture although it has to cater to ideology.
6. Arts students have no goal or objective unlike others. They do not attend English classes or do courses in E medium but continue the same system as before they entered the U, i.e.

note taking. Library use is limited and there are only 2 or 3 textbooks for one work for over 100 students. Halls do not have enough facilities. Only arts faculty is affected and suffers the most. It also has the most number of students from impoverished backgrounds.

7. They are under pressure not to attend English classes or use computers.
8. But sexual activity is done in the open and in corridors (as opposed to love in secret at Peradeniya some decades ago in areas reserved for such activities)
9. During initiation, they cannot laugh and have to dress simply and use a file of a single color (yellow) given by the organizers. There is a welcome party at the end.
10. Student counselors are only policemen; work as counselors is oppressive: have to report for work at 6 or 7 in the morning during the rag period. Common rag for freshers starts at 7.00.
11. Students have no time to meet their supervisors; one student jumped in front of a train and committed suicide; said the lecturers did not show flexibility; teachers have to learn about how to teach; teacher training at Colombo U program is very important; only workshops are held here during vacations; the last one was held in 1986 and 1990. Nothing has happened since then. Students do not have a good opinion of teachers. Most lecturers are egoistic and give priority to their own agendas. The idea that teaching is a profession has to be instilled. Most teachers do not know even how to use the board. Pointing the finger at the students is not enough. Teaching involves an exchange. Most only have an MA and have no opportunities for intellectual development. No facilities in this country for such activity. No guides are available and there is no total immersion in the subject
12. IT and English teaching should be improved and increased
13. Scope also for skill development programmes for students; this does not happen for Arts Faculty students.
14. Syllabuses are not adapted to the country's needs. A lecturer cannot do this individually. Our teachers do not know work of the NIE at Maharagama. It decides what is happening in the schools. There is lack of integration between the various institutions dealing with education.
15. Need to monitor what the lecturers do; there is no supervision of teaching, no signing of book and protests when they are asked to do so
16. Lack of films, drama and inactivity of Arts Council (Kala Parshadaya) whose members are political appointees.
17. No transparency in dealings of the SC and no system of accounting and auditing by the university or by itself.

Senior Lecturer/Female/Arts Faculty:

1. Indiscipline starts at school; also competition among students
2. Macrocosm is also violence prone and has been built on jealousy and hate; violence level decides survival
3. There was disunity among students as shown when they went on a trip; not willing to pay 100 rupees per head for accommodation or to donate 10 rupees per head to guide from aboriginal community. This type of behaviour cannot come from the university but from society as a whole. It is the rural student who is violence prone. We can only communicate good values during teaching.

Lecturer/Male/Arts Faculty:

1. Students with lower marks come here and to Kelaniya. There are fewer students from poor backgrounds in CU.
2. JVP gives the "5-lecture" program to potential recruits from freshers. This is done in secret and outside the campus. This is the way to expand their membership. They want to have a leadership here that can be trusted by the party leaders and to implement higher-level decisions taken by the party. The goal is to destabilize the government. To achieve this they will create issues out of anything and pressure the VC to release students in detention. If there is a protest tomorrow, the leaders are there in the hostels tonight. It is the same group always. Due to their age, they like the suspense and action.
3. The SC does not maintain an account of the money they collect from the public. They have bogus accounts such as spending 250,000 for a torana.

4. The last VC did not allow New Year celebrations on campus saying this is not a village. Although Uva University has a programme involving parents, the present VC is opposed to it, saying this is not a school. A former VC grouped students into forties and assigned one lecturer to each group to be their personal advisor. But, the students did not visit the lecturer; the group opposing the VC who believed that students would lose faith in them aborted the attempt and that they are the ones who are there to solve the problems of students.

5. Students are distant from lecturers; they only call "sir" the person who teaches them. Others are ignored. Relative youthfulness of lecturers is also a factor. There is a need to rebuild the relationship between students and lecturers. This can be done through a one-month long orientation with only new entrants being present on campus then and should include sports activities.

6. Over sexual activities between male and female students is also a new phenomenon. They disregard all considerations of shame and embrace and stroke each other in public and along corridors for all to see.

Senior Lecturer/Male/Arts Faculty:

1. Parents should play a role in monitoring the progress and behaviour of students while they are here. The first responsibility of students is to their families and parents should have some form of control of what their children do. But they do not enquire about what their children are doing here, about their studies, hostel life etc. The political involvements of some of these children can even threaten their lives. They are dragged into the popular culture, to politics or sex.

2. There is subject-imposed control for some disciplines. The student cannot do as he or she wants in disciplines such as science since they contain practicals, regular exams etc. This is not the case for subjects in the Arts. All students think that they can pass the exams no matter what they do in the regular study programme. Most arts students do not like to follow statistics courses since they have subject imposed control. There is intellectual lethargy as a result. If arts subjects are vocation-oriented, we can have subject-imposed control for arts students as well. But staff has conservative attitudes.

3. Studies can be stressful for some students, for example, for medical students in their first year when they have to study in the English medium. There can be some students who are suicidal because of stress. Students need the help of parents when they go through such stress.

4. Most parents have some education now when compared with the parents of the sixties. It is easy to educate the parents about what is happening to their children while here. Earlier generation gap in education is not there anymore. In fact, nowadays, the parents fill the application form to enter the university. We need to call the parents together first and tell them about the courses offered here, rights of students, achievements they could make, about problems they might have to face, and activities that are available here such as sports. We need to take advantage of the social change that has taken place.

University Marshal:

1. JVP activism is higher here than at Colombo University. Some as an expression of their male personality and dominance does it.

2. A former VC insisted that SC display their financial accounts and did not allow posters to be displayed everywhere. He was progressive but staff and students were opposed to him.

3. There is need for discipline. But students do not like security checks to be done when they enter the campus. One marshal was threatened and assaulted when he tried to do so. There is unlimited democracy and independence in the universities. Discipline should be created systematically by having everyone wear an identity card.

4. Student activism is part of a political agenda and project by interested political parties. The party gives money to display expensive banners and posters. The leaders come in expensive vehicles, park them outside campus and walk in (to

show that they are with the common people). The LTTE also has its hands in the pie. When the police recently arrested 6 Tamil students for a ragging incident and remanded them, the next morning there was one lawyer for each student at the courthouse.

5. Intelligence is needed to monitor activities of student leaders and outsiders who come to the campus to create agitations.
6. The idea of having residential campuses should be dropped and instead, the government can give Rs 5000 to each student to find their own accommodations. Many hostellers do not like it although students do not have space to study in their rooms. This is because they will lose the chances of mobilizing students for protests etc.
7. It is important to have practical training programmes for students leading them to a career after spending about 2 years at the university.

Student Voices

5 females, each 21 to 23 years of age:

1. Tamil medium students (Colombo U): there are about 250 students. They do drama and dance competitions and get togethers at the New Arts Theater. They have to finish all activities by 6.00 p.m. it is difficult to get a date for such events. Via the Dean's Office.
2. Limited funds are given for cultural activities (50,000 last year). Used the money to conduct medical camp and cultural programs.
3. Unity among Tamil students although they represent different political parties such as the LTTE
4. Students from remote areas engage in violence toi express their presence and be noticed and be seen on TV
5. Interference from outside political forces causes conflict with university administrations.
6. Last year, there was a conflict between students from management and arts faculties. The former wanted to use the chairs and benches in the arts faculty area. There was an argument, then fighting and the police were called. When this is shown on TV, parents don't want them to attend the university and this is an obstacle to their education.
7. Muslim and Tamil students participate iin Sinhalese events. They can learn and discuss with other groups. They wear mufti as this is required by the parents. There is a prayer room in the gym for male and female Muslim students separately.
8. During the 4 months delay period, neighbors ask them why they are not attending university. Even if they are on vacation, they ask if they are on strike.
9. Pressure last year to increase the number of hostellers; facilities they promise to create should be the basis of their selection
10. Prefer if there are no elections and instead VC to select and also not have 2 parties
11. Do not like privatization since the university benefits the poor students

5 Female Students/SJU:

1. There is jealousy among low-income students when they come to the university and see the lifestyle here in Colombo. They only enter since they have the Z score; social competencies are not required. This is so for Arts Faculty students since 95% are from the underprivileged. The conflict is between the two social classes. The laws imposed on them during the ragging period are a social leveler and create group solidarity. They know who is in their batch, names of VC and lecturers, how to use the library, how to live in a hostel, how to use common property and to share equipment such as heaters and cooperate with other students. Also told about the history of the university (lectures referred to as "taking in common" (common gannava) and teaching known as "tela bedanava").. also names of Heads of Depts and Deans. Also learn about how to take medicines. Senior student takes them to the medical center. Also given orientation about the administrative section of the university. Claims that the university cannot do these activities as "it has no knowledge of who the seniors are". Each fresher is given a "card" after being given a task to perform. Every new student has a card that is his identity for the rest of his stay. He or she is known by the card and not by real name. Monks go through the same process inside the monks hostel. Said she enjoyed this period and called it "the best time in the university". When addressed strongly, they cannot cry; if a person

cries, then he or she has not been ragged. They are given a mud bath and have to stand in line for that.

2. They also have to use pure Sinhalese language in talking. They cannot talk to any senior (referred to as "heduna" or washed down). Males are freshers and females are freshis (what about such English terms?). Identity as first years is communicated by having to wear a chittaya and can wear anything after 3 months ragging is over. Arts faculty freshers have to take a yellow colored file and green files for science faculty.

3. One objective of ragging is for the second years to find a partner from among the first years since they have the time. Third and fourth years have no time for this. Finding a partner is called "kokka gahanava" and refers to the way a man ties on to the hand of a woman.

4. This unity is lost after the second year, after they are broken down into departments and faculties. All 5 courses they have to take per semester are from the same department. The loss of relationships is acutely felt. They also do not know about teachers from other departments. They wish to have a teacher from the department with whom they can talk about their problems. They cannot do so with every teacher since it takes one and half months to get to know a new teacher. Cannot and do not go to counselors provided by the university. (i.e. counseling is seen as an essential part of teaching: positive values there). Friends cannot advise as they are also inexperienced while teachers are. They stand and greet the lecturer when he walks into the classroom (not done at KU or CU). This is because SJU started as a Buddhist learning center. During ragging period, they have to worship the statute of Ven Soratha and also during Soratha Day.

5. Loss of traditional values such as worshiping teachers as they did while in school; now only do so for university teachers when they invite them for events and do so by offering them betel leaves before worshiping.

6. Hostel problems are also contributory. They get only 2500 rupees from Mahapola per month and this is not enough. So, many get into the hostel as unpaid guests. Having double batches complicates this and there are about 6 students in one room. Only first and final year students get hostels and 2nd and 3rd years have to find their own accommodations.

7. There should be a social skills development programme after students complete the AL. they are dependent on parents for the entire period of university education and do not know how long they will have to do so. They should be given the skills to enter society and survive on their own.

8. Mahapola is not given regularly. Total costs per month per student are about 6000 rupees including money for traveling home twice a month and Rs 100 per day for meals. Many buy a lunch packets for Rs 50 each from the outside since hostel food makes them fall ill. Rice cooked has worms and geckos. Hostel workers who handle food are also unclean or have sores although there is a PHI. Kelaniya has facilities for students to do their own cooking. (When asked whether they are willing to do the food preparation, they are reluctant since it will take of their study time especially after introduction of the course unit system. However, the student monks in their hostel run it as a chummery.

9. SC is more interested in political problems and not about genuine student problems like the above. During the first year, they think of SC leaders as their saviours but not after that.

Citizen voices:

Discussion with group of urban parents:

1. Parents do not expect their children to get involved in any of these violent events. They want them to use their hard earned money to get an education

2. There are ways of demanding what students need: good ways and bad ways. Good ways are like having discussion with the administration to get what they need. Agitation on the public roads and public places is not what is needed

3. Violent reactions by the police should be avoided and that is not the way either

4. The solution is to enforce discipline; it has to be done systematically first by having the government take a decision that certain activities within the universities are not in the national interest; all the ministers should agree to that. After that, everyone should be asked to undergo security checks when they enter the university premises and also every room and hostel has to be checked once a month. If the university says that this is being done for national security reasons, no one can object.

Annex 2: Case Study of Technical Training Institute at Orugodawatta

Profile of the TTI

The institution was established during the latter part of the seventies under the Ministry of Labour. It is situated on a six-acre block of land situated next to a main highway (Baseline Road) leading to Colombo City from Kandy Road. Facilities include one large office building that contains a library and several lecture rooms some of which contain machinery and other equipment used for training purposes.

At the time the study took place, the TTI had a total of 214 students and 22 teaching staff that conduct a total of 15 technical courses in subjects such as electrical engineering, motor mechanics, carpentry, plumbing, construction, electronics, and refrigeration.

About 60% of students are from the Colombo district while 40% are from other districts in the Island including rural areas. All students are males. They have to find their own means of transport and residential facilities since the institution has none of its own.

Agencies such as The National Apprenticeship Board provides students attending a few courses such as carpentry, electrical repair, aluminium fabrication, plumbing, and construction with scholarships ranging between 450 and 600 rupees a month in order to encourage their enrolment since only a few students opt for these courses. For all other courses, students have to pay amounts ranging between 2000 and 3500 rupees per course. Duration of coursework ranges between 6 months and 1 and half years.

General Observations Regarding the Institute:

1) There is no real threat to discipline from students; in fact, almost all are well behaved and are aware of their social responsibilities and respect their teachers. The responses given during the workshop show a high level of social awareness and critical thinking capacity.
2) One of the principal reasons given for good discipline among students is that they are assured of employment after they finish schooling.
3) However, during workshop stage, students noted that disciplinary actions had been taken against some students and that there was a tendency to stigmatize such individuals due to misbehavior. Such problems need to be addressed through counseling and not by taking the type of action that the management has adopted.
4) The participants also noted the need to involve parents in the above process and also arrange for some counseling and workshop sessions for parents as they have problems of their own. Some parents find the students a problem to them (for example, one mother knew about the son's non attendance at the institutes several months later and did not want this communicated to the son)
5) During the focus group discussion with instructors, it was found that the VTA has to conduct some proactive programmes to attract female students at OL or AL to take up to vocational training as female participation is nil although female unemployment rates are double that of males in the country. This will particularly help reduce the overcrowding of female students in arts faculties in all the universities and of course reduce the problems of unemployment after they graduate.
6) The public at large needs to be made aware that technical education is not just working with grease ("majan") but is a decent vocation that is now changing from mechanical to electronic mode due to the technological revolution of today. One female teacher pointed out that prospects are particularly available for female students with a pass in math to go into engineering design programmes.
7) The site or physical environment and buildings in general need upgrading and more investment to be made by VTA in improving content of course to go in unison with modern technological developments. For example, teachers in motor mechanism are still working with antique models of vehicles while after passing out, the graduate needs hand-on experience in

modern engines. One student said, without that exposure, he would be afraid to even open a new type of engine to do repair work.

8) According to instructors, politics influences who gets to go on scholarships and usually people who are not involved in teaching at institutes but instead occupy AC rooms in offices do so and this practice has to stop since it demoralizes the active teachers. Students also see this as a problem.

9) Charging fees for courses taught is a good practice but government's other programmes such as Youth Corps (Yovun Senanakaya) give technical training free and also give the students a monthly remuneration. In other words, this contradiction in policy has to be given serious attention since it places the institutions that charge fees in a bad light in the eyes of the public and student beneficiaries.

Table 5: Output of Participatory Workshop Held with Students of TTI

Discussion Group Number	Topic	Problems	Proposed Solutions
1	Adequacy of Facilities	Lack of: - Toilets - Space - Water - Drains - Chairs - Good environment - Instruments - Food at the canteen (same everyday) - Library facilities - Transport Observations: Toilets, places for drinking water are in bad shape; student drink water from 3 taps using their hands. Annual flooding of the area due to lower elevation also interferes with teaching and causes damages to machinery.	1) Destruction of facilities due to poor mai... repairs 2) New chairs are needed 3) Need for cleaning services 4) Need new instruments 5) Lack of proper food 6) Lack of enough books 7) Transport from home is needed During discussion stage, all students expressed w... participate in maintenance of the facilities and do... The AD stated that there is a roster for students t... maintenance activities on a voluntary basis but th... implemented now. He prefers that the VTA prov... do this work and not depend on students since th... education.
2	Quality of Technical Education	- Lack of importance attached to it in the curriculum of schools - Drop in trend toward technical education - Lack of training facilities in difficult areas - Lack of practical instruments in institutions - Lack of proper sanitation in institution - Difficulty in selecting programmes due to practice of different programmes in different institutions - Students taking to jobs at early age due to economic difficulties - Lack of proper career guidance after completion of training - Lack of modern technological instruments in keeping with new technological developments - No training in IT provided for students	1) Need for new courses 2) Broadcast message of technical educatio... 3) Establish training institutions in difficul... them to urban areas 4) Government to provide practical instrum... institution 5) Maintain proper sanitation facilities und... administration 6) Have a common coursework in all instit... 7) Provide night class programme for stude... difficulties 8) Create awareness about technical educa... and seminars 9) Provide modern technologies to training... 10) Establish IT as a part of coursework

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3	Family background of Students	- Loss of good mental state of children due to both parents being employed - Children adversely affected by illicit affairs of parents - Loss of good family life due to father's addiction to liquor and gambling - Loss of aspirations of parents due to wrong deeds of children - Economic difficulties due to parents being disabled - Problems due to parents not having a stable employments - Frequent fights between parents - Large number of children in the family and loss of opportunities for all - Children resorting to deviant Behaviour due to lack of awareness of parents - Effect of living environment on the family background	- Only father should be wage earning wit the mother - Parents to think about the future of chil - Other family members to create awaren resorting to abuse - Parents to be more watchful about their - All members of the household to share r limit it to the father - Secure a stable employment through te institute - Parents should be more patient - Parents to explore other income generat - Parents to become more aware and take correct path - Become aware of one's living environm accordingly
4	Teacher/student relationship	- Problems due to distance between teachers and students - Drop in mental state of teachers due to Behaviour of students - Teachers discussing subjects that are an obstacle to education of students -	- Need for students to heed the instructio obedient to them - Need for communication between stude - Teachers to limit their teaching to the s them - Teachers must behave independents an obedient to them
5	Dropping out of Courses	- Students select courses without a proper awareness of the course and due to pressure from others - Students not getting the expected knowledge of the subject from the subjects chosen for study - Students taking to employment due to poor economic condition of parents and the rising cost of living - Teaching of traditional course content for a longer period of time and non inclusion of modern course content (advanced technology) - Suspension of students from attending courses as they went against the rules of the institute - Leaving for courses offered by German Tech and Japan Tech due to higher status attached to such institutions - Strict rules of the administration and not looking at students from a humanitarian viewpoint - Drop in mental condition of the student due to authoritarian actions of administrators who are not suitable for their posts - Not allowing students to use instruments appropriate to their coursework but which are found in	(Solutions for some problems only addressed du All student participants wanted space, time and f cricket bats, volleyballs, table tennis equipment a special time allotted for sports.)

			the institute	
		-	Administrators not taking proper response to invitations made by outside agencies to able students	
		-	Lack of facilities within the institution	
		-	Lack of opportunities for extra curricular activities	
6	Role of Mass media	-	Electronic and Print media types	Imposition of rules without destroying media fre
		-	Problems:	
		-	Obscene photos and films available through electronic media	Actions against those who destroy the native cult
		-	Use of semi nude pictures and false language in advertisements	Independence of the mass media to be emphasize
		-	Misleading the public through false information	Information Ministry to look into these matters a
		-	Spread of news on liquor and drugs through media	
		-	Decay of the indigenous culture through styles that are contrary to the culture	
		-	Misleading of the public due to politicization of media and of what is contained in them	
		-	Distortion of what was said by certain individual and misleading of the public	
7	Syllabuses	-	Lack of certain instruments appropriate for certain syllabuses	- Introduce new technology connected wi
		-	Not receiving modern technical knowledge when doing coursework	- Provide training for teachers in the new
		-	Study activities not being conducted according to syllabuses	- Teaching the complete syllabuses in ea
		-	IT not being taught	- Introduce courses in IT
		-	No separate time slot for sports activities in the syllabus	- Enforce discipline
		-	No separate time slot for use of the library	- Allot separate time for library use
		-	Not enforcing discipline	- Provide suitable place and time for spo
		-	Delay in issue of certificates after completion of coursework	- Provide the certificates without delay at study
8	Future Aspirations	-	Problem of selecting a job suitable to conduct a good life	- Need good guidance
		-	Successful marriage	- High expenditure for future educations
		-	Be a productive member of society	- Lack of employment to suit one's abiliti
		-	Become a skillful entrepreneur	- Lack of salary appropriate for one's occ
		-	Have a job suitable for profession chosen	- Problems in selecting one's coursework
				- Need for a job to suit one's occupation
				- Establish career guidance programme
				- Provide ways such as job banks to enab jobs