

# APPLIED STATISTICS

## *Newsletter*

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## First Academic Sessions and the Annual General Meeting of the Institute of Applied Statistics

The First Academic sessions and the Annual General meeting of the Institute of Applied Statistics, Sri Lanka was held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012 at the OPA Auditorium. Mr. S. A. R. Samaraweera, Deputy General Manager (HR) of the Peoples' Bank deputized the chairman of the People's Bank, Mr. W. Karunajeewa who has been invited to be the Chief Guest. There were four Invited papers presented by four researchers who were members of the IASSL.

Winners of the Best Undergraduate and Postgraduate projects, and winners of the National Olympiad received their awards from the Chief Guest. (Names of the winners are published elsewhere in this Newsletter). The Academic sessions were followed by the first Annual General Meeting for which forty four members attended.

Secretary Dr. Rupika Abeynayake presented the Annual Report of the IASSL which highlighted the work done during the year under review. International Statistics Conference 2011 was the major event whilst launching of the National Statistics Olympiad is another important event

organized by the IASSL. Secretary's report reveals that there were many schemes initiated by the IASSL and will be continued during the year 2013.

President awarded the first Fellowship of the institute to Prof. R. O. Thattil considering his service rendered to the Statistics discipline and to the IASSL/ ASASL.



Head Table - Academic sessions

Mrs. Padma Yatapana Asst. Treasurer, in the absence of the Treasurer presented the audited statement of accounts and the financial statements of 2012 up to the month of October.

Outgoing President of IASSL  
Mr. Palitha Sarukkali

Mr. Palitha Sarukkali Stepped down from the Post of President of the IASSL at the last AGM after



serving as its first President for one year.

Prior to this, he served as the President of the former Applied Statistics Association of Sri Lanka, for five consecutive years from 2007 – 2011.

Important achievements during his tenure of six years are the acceptance of Statistics as a professional discipline, admission of ASASL as a member organization of the OPA, the incorporation of the Applied Statistics Association of Sri Lanka as the Institute of Applied Statistics, Sri Lanka, and Organizing the very successful International Statistics Conference in 2011.

Mr. Sarukkali retired from public service in 2009 after serving of 34 years as a Statistician. He obtained his first degree BSc. in Mathematics from the University of Sri Lanka, Colombo and, later Post Graduate Diploma in Mathematics from University of Peradeniya. He holds an MSc. in Statistics awarded by the University of Colombo.

Mr. Sarukkali is also a member of the British Computer Society and the Australian Computer Society.

IASSL President for 2013  
Prof. L. H. P. Gunaratna

Professor L.H.P.Gunaratne has specialized in two areas by holding a B.Sc. (Agric.) degree with a First class and a B.Sc. (Statistics), in his undergraduate education. He won the East-West Center scholarship in 1990, and obtained an M.Sc. in Crop



Modeling and M.A. in Economics from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA. He pursued his Ph.D. degree at the same university and resumed duty as a

Senior Lecturer at the University of Peradeniya in 1997. Since then he was involved in teaching and research in Economics and Statistics. He has made more than twenty five journal articles in refereed journals, nine book chapters and more than 40 conference proceedings. In addition, he has authored six books. He has served as the Chairman of the Board of Study in Biostatistics at the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture and a member of the teaching panel of the Board of Study in Statistics and Computer Science, Post graduate Institute of Science. He has served as the team leader of several internationally funded research projects. He is the founder Treasurer of the Applied Statistics Association of Sri Lankan which was started in 1999.

**Papers presented at the Academic Sessions 2012**

1. Automated approach for sentiment classification and cluster identification – Chintana Perera and W. N. Wickramasingha
2. Modeling nonlinear dependence in raw rubber financial returns – Keminda Herath, S. Samita and Wasana Wijesuriya
3. Joint distribution of water levels of Kotte canal and Kelani river – Sandamali Sumathipala, Kanthi Perera and Nalin Wickramanayake
4. A study on the impact of stock splits on stock return and liquidity – A case study of Colombo stock exchange – R. M. P. G. K. D. B. Rathnayake and R. D. Yapa

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## International Statistics Conference 2014

Based on the experience of organizing a successful International Statistics Conference in 2012, IASSL is now planning to hold its next International Conference in 2014.

Dr. T.S. G. Peiris has been appointed by the Executive Council to chair the Local Program Committee (LPC) with Mr. Palitha Sarukkali as the co-chair. Twenty five members representing various universities, industry have been appointed to the LPC. Prof. K. B. Kulasekera of University of Louisville, Kentucky, USA is heading the International Program Committee. Prof. Peter Hall of University of Melbourne and Prof. Prof. Michael Evans have already accepted our invitation to be plenary speakers whilst Prof. Ron Wessertine, Executive Director, ASA will deliver a Keynote address. Details will follow.

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### **Stat Day 2012- The Event that Transcend the Norm - Jayani Hapugoda, Secretary, Stat Circle, University of Colombo,**

STAT DAY 2012, organized by the Stat Circle of Department of Statistics, University of Colombo was held on the 28th of June 2012 for the tenth consecutive year at the Professor V.K. Samaranyake Auditorium, University of Colombo. It was a phenomenal experience to students, academics and professionals, with its appealing and timely theme of “Statistics for Innovation & Business Improvement”.

Professionals in the field of statistics, prominent figures from private and governmental organizations, academics and undergraduates of the University of Colombo and other institutions participated.

The stat day commenced with a selected group of renowned professionals and academics from the state sector and industrial communities of Sri Lanka addressing the gathering. The keynote speech was delivered by Mr. Frank Munro, Chief Actuary, AVIVA NDB Insurance PLC on the theme, “Statistics in Insurance – An Actuarial Perspective”. Two guest speeches were delivered by Mr. Tony Weerasinghe, CEO, Millennium IT and Mr. Reeza Zarook, CEO, Anything.lk.

The Guest Speeches were followed by the Panel Discussion, an interactive forum, where academics, industry leaders, policy makers, students and a diverse array of experts on different disciplines joined in to share and refine their ideas, views & thoughts on the theme. The panel was represented by Dr. Chandima Tilakaratne, Senior Lecturer, Department of Statistics, University of

Colombo, Mr Chamindra de Silva, Chief Financial Officer, Alliance Finance Company PLC, Mr. Arj Wignaraja, Managing Director, Stax Inc and Mr. Thushera Kawdawatta, Director Technology & CSA, Virtusa.

A number of teams comprising of the crème de la crème of students from the University of Moratuwa, the University of Sri Jayawardenapura, the University of Peradeniya, the University of Kelaniya, the University of Colombo School of Computing, the University of Wayamba and the University of Colombo competed for the prestigious Prof. V.K. Samaranyake Memorial Trophy awarded in memory of Prof. V. K. Samaranyake, the pioneer of Statistics at the University of Colombo. The quiz competition was based on fundamental statistical theories and their applications. The University Of Colombo School Of Computing emerged as Champions of the Prof. V.K. Samaranyake Memorial Trophy.

A brief presentation followed by the distribution of a special booklet including details on Final Year projects undertaken by the undergraduates was presented to the audience. The presentation consisted of a video featuring the current positions of the past graduates of Department of Statistics. This was an opportunity for graduates to share their knowledge and experiences in practical applications of statistics in the industry with the objective of highlighting the value of the knowledge gained through the education obtained at the Department.

All in all, Stat Day 2012 was an attractive and thought stimulating experience for all.

**EDITORIAL**

**Aiming for the citation index**

**Sri Lankan Journal of Applied Statistics**,(SLJAS) the journal published by the Institute of Applied Statistics, Sri Lanka, has a history of 12 years. The first Volume was published in the year 2000 and since then one volume per year was published until 2011.

The need to improve the status of the SLJAS was felt by the Executive Committee of former ASASL and it was decided to attract quality papers and also increase the number of publications (issues) per volume. With that the Executive Committee decided to aim for obtaining the citation index for the SLJAS which automatically elevate its status.

IASSL this year decided to implement a new strategy with an objective of obtaining the citation index before the next International Statistics Conference in 2014. Accordingly three issues per volume will be published commencing from 2013. This will be published in February, June and in October.

An Editorial advisory board comprising of world famous Statisticians in the caliber of Prof. C. R. Rao has been appointed to attract quality papers. To supplement this advisory board a panel of Associate Editors comprising of reputed statisticians in the industry and/ or academia has been appointed to help the Editorial Board.

Papers for February issue will be collected in the usual way by advertising in the web. For the June issue IASSL will contact organizers of popular International Statistics Conferences and try to get some spilled over papers that will not be published in their proceedings. For October issue IASSL will declare a special theme and entrust the entire procedure; that is calling papers, reviewing, editing etc to one reputed person in the academia.

Researchers can now submit their papers online. Also steps have been taken to list SLJAS under Ulrich publications and Sri Lanka JOL which may help it to be recognized worldwide.

With these new changes brought in the IASSL is confident that the citation index can be obtained for the SLJAS before we hold our next International Statistics Conference in 2014.

**Four Major Challenges in imparting Statistical Thinking .....**

**Dr. H. D. Sumanasekera**

The first challenge for educators is to raise awareness about the characteristics of statistical thinking, to reach a common consensus on their understanding of it, and to develop a common language to describe and communicate it.

The second challenge is to recognize statistical thinking in a variety of contexts and situations and be able to explain and justify how and why that type of communication constitutes statistical thinking.

When educators themselves are sufficiently attuned to recognition of statistical thinking, then the third challenge is to develop teaching strategies that will promote and enhance students’ statistical thinking. It will also require mapping out a developmental pathway for statistical thinking across the curriculum and learning about and recognizing the intuitive statistical thinking that is already present in students.

The final challenge is to implement teaching and assessment strategies that focus on developing students’ statistical thinking. This should include acculturating students to how statisticians’ reason and work within the statistics discipline and developing new ways for them to view the world.”

*Source: Maxine Pfannkuch and Chris Wild Towards an Understanding of Statistical Thinking (p. 43). In D. Ben-Zvi and J. Garfield (eds.), The Challenge of Developing Statistical Literacy, Reasoning and Thinking, Kluwer Academic Publishers. (2004)pp. 17 – 46.*

<p><b>INDUCTION OF THE NEW PRESIDENT</b></p> <p>Prof. L. H. P. Gunarathna will be inducted as the Second President of IASSL by the outgoing President Mr. Palitha Sarukkali at a ceremony to be held in January 2013.</p>
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**Winners of the National Statistics  
Olympiad 2012**

In order to popularize the Statistics discipline, the Institute of Applied Statistics, Sri Lanka launched a National Statistics Olympiad for the first time in 2012 for the school children. Following are the winners of the National Statistics Olympiad. Five members of the Sri Lanka team to participate at the International Statistics Olympiad will be selected from these students who fulfill their requirements.

1. Wedige Melanka Saroad, Vidura College, Hokandara.
2. Hashini Anuradha Galappaththi, Tangalle Balika Vidyalaya, Tangalle
3. Athukoralalage Charith Lakpriya Jayathilake, St. Mary's College, Kegalle
4. Harini Upekha Samarasinghe, Bishop's College, Colombo 3
5. Jayasekera Liyanage Miyuru Promoa Jayasekera, President's College, Embilipitiya
6. Venusha Sadeesh Liyanage, Rahula College, Matara
7. Heshan Anjana Amarasekera, Dharmaraja College, Kandy

**Winners of the Best Research Awards**

In order to recognize the research done by our young researchers, the Institute of Applied Statistics, Sri Lanka launched a scheme for two research awards: the Best Undergraduate award and the Best Postgraduate award. This was organized by the Research and Development Committee of the IASSL. The winners are:

Undergraduate category - Ms. N I Jayawardane,  
University of Colombo

Postgraduate category – Ms. N A D N Napagoda,  
University of Colombo

*Congratulations*

Institute of Applied Statistics, Sri Lanka wishes to congratulate the winners of the National Statistics Olympiad 2012 and the Best undergraduate and Best postgraduate awards

**Calling for Papers**

The Sri Lankan Journal of Applied Statistics (SLJAS) is a refereed journal started in 2000 which publishes the results of original work on applications of Statistics and on theoretical and methodical aspects of Statistics. The journal also welcomes critical reviews including conceptual discussions, opinions and book reviews. Applications of Statistics in the area of Agriculture & Forestry, Medical, Dental and Veterinary Sciences, Natural, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, Economics and Actuarial Science fall within the scope of the journal.

The Editorial Board of the IASSL is calling papers from Researchers from Sri Lanka and abroad for the Volume 14, Issue No. 1 of the SLJAS which is scheduled to be published in early 2013. Instructions to authors are available at the website of IASSL. Please visit: [http://www.iappstat.lk/journal/ojs/Instructions to Authors \(summary\).pdf](http://www.iappstat.lk/journal/ojs/Instructions%20to%20Authors%20(summary).pdf)

Online Submission of papers is also available in the website.

**A car sticker for IASSL members!**

A car sticker to be used by the IASSL members was on sale at Rs. 100/- at the AGM. Those who could not purchase this sticker can purchase it now from the IASSL office.

Also the Executive Council has decided to issue membership cards to life members. The cost of a card is Rs. 250/-

Please contact the Administration Officer Ms. Kalani Adikari on 011 - 2588291 for details

### What did they say .....

As you are now aware, on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2012, The Institute of Applied Statistics, Sri Lanka had its first Annual General meeting at the Auditorium of the Organization of the Professional Associations. This was preceded by an Academic sessions in the morning.

At the elections held for the new Executive Council for 2013, Prof. L. H.P. Gunarathna elected uncontested for the post of President whilst Mr. Palitha Sarukkali will be the immediate past President. The extracts of the speeches made by the two presidents are published below.

#### Outgoing President said .....

Mr. Palitha Sarukkali who held the post of President of ASASL for five years and the President of IASSL during 2012 reiterated the achievements of those two organizations during six years of his tenure.

He said “Statistics was recognized as a professional discipline during my tenure in 2009 when we were admitted to the OPA as a member organization. I had to clarify many issues raised by the OPA members to make them clear that Statistics is in fact a separate professional discipline. I was successful at the end when they decided to accept us as a new member organization.”

He also mentioned that incorporation of IASSL by an act of parliament is another achievement by the ASASL under his stewardship. Also during the last six years financial position of the institute improved significantly.

Organizing International Statistics Conference in 2011, which is hitherto considered as the major international statistics conference was organized by the IASSL under his presidency.

He informed the audience that steps have been taken to commence a Diploma Course in Statistics organized by IASSL which will lead to granting **Chartered Statistician** status at the end of the third year.

He said that he has decided to complete two important tasks as the Immediate Past President: that is to obtain citation index for our journal and finding a suitable land to build our own institute.

He said that it had been a wonderful six years of experience for him. He thanked the members of the Executive Committees/ Council and said that he enjoyed every minute of his tenure working with them and will carry with him pleasant memories of working

#### What new President had to say .....

Prof. L. H. P. Gunarathna while thanking the membership for electing him as the President for 2013, said he believed that it was his responsibility to run the Institute with necessary dedication and diligence.

He commended the dedicated efforts of the First President, Mr. Palitha Sarukkali, to transform the Applied Statistics Association of Sri Lanka to a Parliamentary incorporated Institute and said that the new council look forward his continued contribution in the development of the profession and the Institute.

Prof. Gunarathna said that because of our strong foundation, now we should think of expanding our boundaries while strengthening ongoing activities. In expanding our horizons, we may have the both local and global focuses. He also pointed out that Sri Lanka has secured more than 8% annual GDP growth rate. Information technology and infrastructure continue to record a tremendous progress. Meantime, climate change related disaster risks, growing income disparities as well as social upheavals may mitigate the intended socio-economic development. Still most of the policies are made without proper statistical analysis. In global context also, there are impressive changes are occurring such as sustainable development agendas including Rio+20. We, the Statisticians should be able to redirect and formulate policy guidelines by analyzing the piles and piles of data available with the local as well as international sources. In strengthening the existing activities he said “I believe more yet to be done. I understand that these are some of the responsibilities on my shoulders. However, none of these could be accomplished without your support. Therefore, I look forward your valuable support in this team work”.

**IASSL, General Council 2013**

**Research & Development Committee**

- President : Prof. L. H. P. Gunarathna  
Vice President : Dr. B.L. Peris  
Immediate Past President: Mr. Palitha Sarukkali  
Secretary : Mrs. Chandrika Fernando  
Treasurer : Mr. R. R. Jayaratna  
Asst, Secretary : Dr. Samath Dharmarathna  
Asst. Treasurer : Mrs. Padma Yatapana  
Editor : Prof. Pushpa Wijekoon  
Chairperson Academic Training :  
Dr. Chandanie Nawarathna  
Chairperson Research & Development :  
Dr. K.A.P. Siddhisena  
Chairperson Stat popularization :  
Mrs. D. A. B. N. Amarasekera

**Six Committee Members**

1. Prof. S. Samita
2. Prof. R. O. Thattil
3. Dr. Rupika Abeynayake
4. Dr. Gamini De Silva
5. Dr. Dharshana Yapa
6. Dr. Chandima Tilakaratna

**STATUTORY COMMITTEES**

**Editorial Board**

1. Prof. Pushpa Wijekoon  
(Chairperson/Editor)
2. Dr. W. N. Wickramasinghe
3. Prof. R. O. Thattil
4. Prof. S. Samita
5. Mr. Palitha Sarukkali
6. Dr. Dharshana Yapa

**Academic Training Committee**

1. Dr. Chandanie Nawarathna (Chairperson)
2. Mrs. Padma Yatapana (Asst. Treasurer)
3. Dr. Rupika Abeynayake
4. Mr. Palitha Sarukkali
5. Mrs. Chandrika Fernando
6. Dr. L Suriyagoda
7. Prof. N. Wickramasinghe
8. Mr. Keminda Herath

1. Prof. K.A.P. Siddhisena
2. Mrs. Padma Yatapana (Asst. Treasurer)
3. Mr. Palitha Sarukkali
4. Mr. Keminda Herath
5. Dr. T. S. G. Peiris
6. Dr. D. M. L. D. B. Suriyagoda
7. Dr. Gamini De Silva
8. Mr. A. M. Razmy

**Statistics Popularization Committee**

1. Mrs. Nimalshanthi Amarasekera (Chairperson)
2. Mrs. Padma Yatapana (Asst. Treasurer)
3. Mr. P. Dias
4. Mr. Palitha Sarukkali
5. Dr. B. L. Peris
6. Prof. S. Samita
7. Mr A. M. Razmy
8. Mr. Nandana Gunarathna

**House & Finance Management Committee**

1. Dr. B.L. Peris (Chairperson)
2. Mrs. Chandrika Fernando (Secretary)
3. Mr. Ravi Jayarathna (Treasurer)
4. Mrs. Padma Yatapana (Asst. Treasurer)
5. Mr. Palitha Sarukkali
6. Dr. Gamini De Silva
7. Dr. D. M. L. D. B. Suriyagoda
8. Dr. T. S. G. Peiris

**Elected Fellow of the IASSL**

Prof. R. O. Thattil has been awarded the first Fellowship of the Institute of Applied Statistics by its President Mr. Palitha Sarukkali at the recently concluded Academic Sessions.



The Executive Council of the IASSL unanimously took this decision by considering the services rendered by Prof. Thattil to the Sri Lankan Statisticians.

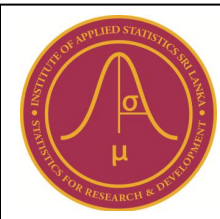
**Do you know that your career opportunities  
get boosted with qualifications in Statistics?**

Qualifications in Statistics opens a gateway to career opportunities available in many sectors including Government and Semi-Government Organizations, Business, Industry and Non-Governmental Organizations.

We invite you to consider Statistics  
when making the choice of study areas.

We, at the **Institute of Applied Statistics, Sri Lanka**  
help you to acquire qualifications in Statistics  
by conducting short courses, seminars and programs leading to professional qualifications in Statistics.

*We are at your service:*



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