

# Factors Contribute to Misbehaviors of Students in State Universities of Sri Lanka - A Case Study of Eastern University, Sri Lanka

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## ABSTRACT

Eastern University, a state owned University in Sri Lanka, had experienced many misbehavior activities of students range from involvement as a group in assaulting students, gathering to demonstrate against administration without following instruction of the Universities, gathering to block or obstacle the function of the universities. The higher authority of the university has to identify and analyze the factors behind the misbehavior activities. Therefore, a questionnaire was developed using the information such as study environment in the hostels, canteen facilities inside the hostels, communication ability of the Sub wardens, professional counseling by Student Counselors, and availability of Academic Sub Wardens in hostels.

The questionnaire survey was conducted using 400 pre-tested self developed questionnaires and 343 responses were received. The analyses were done by using SPSS 2020 software. The results revealed that 94.2% of the hostel students were satisfied with the studying environment available in the hostels which is significantly different ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Also, the satisfactory levels of facilities of canteens in hostels, communication and language abilities of Sub Wardens, services provided by student counselors when students need psychological assistance, assistance of academic Sub Warden were found to be significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) as 67.3%, 91.5 %, 74.0%, 91.5 % respectively. In addition, all variables were separately analyzed to identify the gender wise satisfactions revealed that female students expressed their dissatisfaction more than the Male students over canteen facilities, inability of Sub Wardens of the hostels to understand needs and wants of students, negative attitude of Sub Wardens, lack of professional Counseling provided by Student Counselor, Non availability of Academic Sub Wardens in hostels while Sub Warden handling student's issues, and they expressed more satisfactions on studying environment in the hostels.

Therefore, we can conclude that misbehavior in the hostels would be limited if sub warden's communicate with student with their mother tongue, Sub Warden are given adequate training in

improving attitude, and professional counseling service given to students. All other factors were found to be satisfied.

**Key Words:** Sub Warden, Academic Sub Warden, Student Counselor, Canteen facilities

## INTRODUCTION

Universities and Higher Educational Institutions not only provide tertiary education to young generation but essentially provide invaluable space for them to mold as disciplined citizens with a vision of continuous intellectual development and contribution. Sir Ivor Jennings the first Vice Chancellor of University of Ceylon describes as “The University is more than a teaching establishment. It is a community with a life and spirit of its own, a community, membership of which is a privilege, and a community which the student –for he always remains a student – never leaves” [1]. Thus, university is expected to provide an environment for the students to achieve the required targets and at the same time expect the students to have a conduct themselves conducive to achieve them. Nevertheless, Sri Lankan universities regularly experience student disturbances with impacts of university functioning. Such disturbances are considered as student misbehavior. This consideration is further justified by the statement as “Not only that in a university, students behave as rebels and they discard good rapports... This is mainly happened due to dissatisfaction of students about the university system” [2].

There are many terms that have been used in literature to define and explain problematic behaviors of students. Few of such terms are misbehavior, misconduct, disciplinary

violations, disruptive behavior and problem behavior. Despite the fact that misbehavior in school is a pervasive problem to educators and despite its adverse consequences, few researchers have examined the range of misbehaviors by students [3]. Student misbehavior in the educational institutions apparently causes disruptions especially in the student academic activities and also has a significant impact on the administrative functioning. It has been reported that student misbehaviors retard the smoothness and effectiveness of teaching and also impede learning of the students [4].

The Prohibition of Ragging and other forms of Violence in Educational Institutions Act No. 20 of 1998 clauses record following activities by the students in and outside the premises of the university as serious offences warranting magistrate action. The clause and the offences are given in the Table I. It should also be noted that actions taken against the students found involved with misbehaviors were fiercely opposed by the students at large, making the authorities to give in. Thus, in many instances no actions were taken by the university authorities [5].

In the past few years [2015 -2019] EUSL experienced student indiscipline activities. They range from involvement as a group in assaulting students, gathering to demonstrate against administration without following instruction of the Universities, gathering to

block or to obstacle the function of the universities, involvement in spreading fake news of any students in the form of Facebook, gathering in the canteens' environment to block the function of canteens, involvement as a group in picketing against the officers who

are maintaining discipline among the students without informing authorities of the universities, etc. A list of such incidences reported between 2015 to 2019 in Eastern University, Sri Lanka is given in a Table II.

**Table 1: Offences and the punishments listed in the Act No. 20 of 1998**

<b>Offence</b>	<b>Punishment</b>
<b>Criminal Intimidation-</b> Any person who, within or inside an educational Institution, threatens, verbally or in writing, to cause injury to the person, reputation or property of any student of an educational institution shall be guilty of offence under this act	Shall on conviction after summary trial before a Magistrate be liable to rigorous imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years
<b>Hostage Taking-</b> Any student or group of students are restrained by a student or group of students without lawful justification and for the purpose of forcing such student or group of students shall be guilty of offence under this act	Shall on conviction after summary trial before a Magistrate , be liable to rigorous imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years
<b>Wrongful Restraint-</b> Any person who unlawfully obstructs any student in such a manner as to prevent such student from proceeding in any direction in which such student has a right to proceed, shall be a guilty of an offence under this act	Shall on conviction after summary trial before a Magistrate , be liable to rigorous imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years
<b>Unlawful confinement-</b> Any person who unlawfully restrains any student in such a manner as to prevent such student from proceeding beyond certain circumscribing limits, shall be a guilty of an offence under this act	Shall on conviction after summary trial before a Magistrate , be liable to rigorous imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years
<b>Forcible Occupation and Damage to Property of an Educational Institution-</b> Any person or	Shall on conviction after summary trial before a Magistrate , be liable to

group of persons who without lawful excuse occupies by force any premises of or under the management or control of an educational institution shall be guilty of an offence under this act rigorous imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years or to a fine not exceeding ten thousand rupees or to both such imprisonment and fine

**Table II: Number of incidences reported during the period from 2015 to 2019 at the Eastern University, Sri Lanka**

Type of Misbehave/Indiscipline activity of student	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Forcefully entered into fresher’s hostel without caring instruction of Sub Warden of the Wing & obstructed to perform the duty of Sub Wardens	05	04	08	10	08
Assaulting by a group of students on another group of students and causing injuries	03	04	02	02	04
Engaged in verbal harassment of first year students	03	02	05	02	01
Engaged in ragging	08	09	10	12	14
Engaged in consuming drugs	02	01	01	01	01
Engaged in illegal gathering in University Premises	01	02	02	01	01
Involved in blocking entrance of the university and obstructed the staff to work	02	02	02	01	00
Engaged in trouble with Canteen’s operators	03	02	05	02	03
Involved in student’s clash between two batches	03	01	01	02	02
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>

(Source: Student Affairs Department, Eastern University, Sri Lanka)

The study concludes that facilities, such as lecture rooms, library facilities, computer labs, social areas, hostel facilities and student cafeterias, work as major determinants of student satisfaction levels at state universities in Sri Lanka [6]. In case of empathy it was found that the requirement of treating students as individual is significant.

Thus, caring for students, understanding, good communication with them and giving

individual attention is important [7]. One study revealed that both academic and non-academic staff and university image have direct impacts on students’ satisfaction in Sri Lankan context. But the impact of non-academic staff on university image is statistically insignificant at 0.5 percent level [8]

It is also generally perceived that the students behave themselves well at the secondary

education level in the school. Students have to study with dedication and much application to be successful at their GCE Advanced Level examination to gain entry into the university. However, upon entering into the university, the university experiences student misbehavior in a widespread manner. It is in this background this study was framed and this paper explores the ways students perceive which would minimize the student misbehavior.

### Objectives

- To identify the factors contributing to the student misbehavior in the university
- To give proper solutions for the problems identified.

### METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted among internal hostel students of Eastern University, Sri Lanka in 2020. A self-administered structured questionnaire was used to gather information. Questionnaire handling was done by trained volunteers without involvement of the researchers. Collected data was analyzed by mix of qualitative and quantitative. The student population of Eastern University, Sri Lanka was more than 5000 and 3500 of them were resided in the hostels of the university. Four hundred students of the hostel population was selected by using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table on power analysis comprising all faculties and all years of study program of Eastern University of Sri Lanka. Fair equal gender and ethnicity representation were also considered. Student participation was voluntary with verbal consent. The data

collected have put to analysis using SPSS 2020 tool. Three hundred and forty three students have responded which is more than 85 percentages.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Studying environment in the hostels

Students in the hostel expressed the satisfactions over studying environment in the hostels with the value of (Mean  $\pm$  SD) of  $3.8192 \pm 0.4820$  which indicates that level of satisfaction of hostel students tend to reach "Agree" over studying environment in the hostels. Further 94.2% of hostel students indicated that studying environment in the hostel was significantly satisfactory level (55, 197 and 71 students out of 343 students were strongly agreed, agreed, neutral respectively).

Further, there was a significant difference between male and female of the hostel students over satisfying studying environment in the hostels ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

#### Canteen facilities in Hostels,

Students in the hostel expressed their satisfaction over canteen facilities in the hostel with the mean value of  $3.0262 \pm 0.2832$  which indicates that level of satisfaction of hostel students likely to pass "Neutral" over canteen facilities in the hostel. Further, 67.3% hostel students indicated that canteen facilities in the hostels were significantly satisfactory level (31, 105 and 95 students out of 343 student were strongly agreed, agreed, neutral respectively).

Further, there was a significant difference between male and female of the hostel

students over satisfying canteen facilities in the hostels ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

### **Sub Wardens of the hostels to understand needs of the students,**

Students in the hostel agreed that Academic Sub Warden should be available whenever Sub Wardens' handling student's issues in the hostel with the mean value of  $3.7390 \pm 0.5622$  which indicates that level of satisfaction of hostel students tend to reach "Agreed" that Academic Sub Warden should be available when Sub Wardens' handing student's issues in the hostel .

Further, 91.5% hostel students indicated that Sub Wardens of the hostels to understand needs of the students in the hostels were not significantly satisfactory level (62, 168 and 82 students out of 343 students were strongly agreed, agreed, neutral respectively). Also there were no significant different between male and female of the hostel students over agreeing that Academic Sub Warden should be available when Sub Warden handing student's issues in the hostel ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). Female student was more satisfied than male student in case of Academic Sub Wardens' availability in the hostel

### **Sub warden given adequate training in improving attitude**

Students in the hostel believed that misbehavior in the hostels would be limited if Sub Wardens are given an adequate training to improve attitudes with the mean value of  $3.7529 \pm 0.4522$  which indicates that level of believing of hostel students tend to reach "Agree" over "misbehavior in the hostels will be limited if sub warden given adequate

training in improving attitude". Further, 93.5% hostel students indicated that Sub wardens training needs were important for them in the hostels were significantly satisfactory level (55, 170 and 93 students out of 343 students were strongly agreed, agreed, neutral respectively). Further, there was a significant different between male and female of the hostel students over satisfying canteen facilities in the hostels ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

### **Professional Counseling provided by Student Counselors**

Students in the hostel expressed satisfaction over services provided by Student Counselors when students needed psychological assistance in the hostel with mean value of  $3.0994 \pm 0.2522$  which indicates that level of satisfaction of hostel student likely pass "Neutral" over services provided by Student Counselors when students need psychological assistance in the hostel.

Further, 74.0% hostel students indicated that students counseling service provided by Student Counselors were significantly satisfactory level (29, 109 and 115 students out of 343 students were strongly agreed, agreed, neutral respectively). Therefore, it revealed that there was a significant different between male and female hostel students over satisfying services provided by revealed that Student Counselors service when students need psychological assistance in the hostels ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

### **Sub wardens' communication with student (mother tongue)**

Students in the hostel believed that misbehavior in the hostels would be limited if

sub wardens are communicating with the student with their mother tongue with mean value of  $3.7029 \pm 0.0512$  which indicated that level of believing of hostel students tend to reach “Agree” over “misbehavior in the hostels would be limited if sub wardens are communicating with students with their mother tongue”.

Further, 91.5 % hostel students indicated that Sub wardens communication should be in their mother tongue was significantly satisfactory level (64, 148 and 99 students out of 343 students were strongly agreed, agreed,

neutral respectively). Therefore, it revealed that there was a significant different between male and female hostel students over satisfying services provided by revealed that Student Counselors service when students need psychological assistance in the hostels ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

Further, there were significant different between male and female students believed more than male student over misbehavior in the hostels would be limited if sub warden are communicating with the student with their mother tongue.

**Table III: Mean and SD, satisfaction level on the factors**

Description	Mean $\pm$ SD	Satisfaction level (%)
Studying environment in the hostels	3.8192 $\pm$ 0.4820	94.2
Canteen facilities in Hostels,	3.0262 $\pm$ 0.2832	67.3
Sub Wardens of the hostels to understand needs of the students,	3.7390 $\pm$ 0.5622	91.5
Sub warden given adequate training in improving attitude	3.7529 $\pm$ 0.4522	93.5
Professional Counseling provided by Student Counselors	3.0994 $\pm$ 0.2522	74.0
Sub wardens’ communication with student (mother tongue)	3.7029 $\pm$ 0.0512	91.5

**Recommendation**

Since studying environment in the hostel was in the satisfactory level for the hostel students, Authority of the university should monitor the studying environment in the hostels to keep same status in both male and female hostels present too.

Even the canteen facilities in both hostels are in satisfactory level, some students (32.7%) dissatisfied over canteen facilities in the hostels. So, Canteen facilities should be upgraded in both hostels further.

Even more students in the both hostels satisfied over services provided by Student

Counselors when students need psychological assistance in the hostels, some hostellers (26.0%) dissatisfied over services provided by Student Counselors when students need psychological assistance in the hostels. So, University authority should consider providing special profession training to student counselors to provide their services to needy students in proper manner further.

Since “Academic Sub Warden should be available when Sub Warden handling student’s issues in the hostels” was much better in female hostel than in male hostel, more female students expressed more satisfaction than male students. Authority

should keep this position unchanged but action should be taken to deploy more Academic Sub Wardens in Men's hostel.

Since more students (91.5 %) in the hostel agreed that misbehavior in the hostels will be limited if sub warden is conversant student's mother tongue, So, Authority of the University should focus on this matter and to do training for the Sub Wardens to catch up mother tongue of majority of the hostel students. As more hostel students ( 93.5 %) agreed that misbehavior in the hostels will be limited if sub warden given adequate training in improving attitude, the Authority of the University should focus on this matter and to make them training to change characters of Sub Wardens to understand the characters of students staying in the hostels. Sub Wardens in women's hostel should be considered first priority in providing training in this regard since female expressed more concern than male students over agreeing misbehavior in the hostels will be limited if sub warden given adequate training in improving attitude

## CONCLUSION

Misbehavior in the hostels would be limited if sub warden's communicate with student's mother tongue and sub warden given adequate training in improving attitude, improved professional counseling service to students. All other facilities were in the satisfaction level.

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