

IPS has just brought out two new publications: 'Resource Digest on Pandemics, Public Health and Economic Prosperity' and 'Talking Tobacco: How Reduced Consumption Benefits the Economy'. The Resource Digest presents policy recommendations based on in-depth research on how Sri Lanka can respond effectively to public health concerns so that the country's population and the economy are better protected. In addition to the COVID-19 threat, the tobacco epidemic is another critical public health concern which warrants attention. Given the close nexus between smoking and adverse COVID-19 disease outcomes, the need to reduce smoking prevalence through targeted interventions is even more urgent.

This Monthly Bulletin presents information on these two timely publications and our latest videos. We have also introduced a new segment - 'Inside IPS' - and in this edition, we feature Dr. Asanka Wijesinghe, a Research Economist who joined us in January 2021. As usual, the Bulletin also carries informative articles by IPS researchers working across a diverse range of policy issues including health, environment, labour and trade. We hope you find this edition interesting, and look forward to your feedback.

IPS Communications Team  
communications@ips.lk

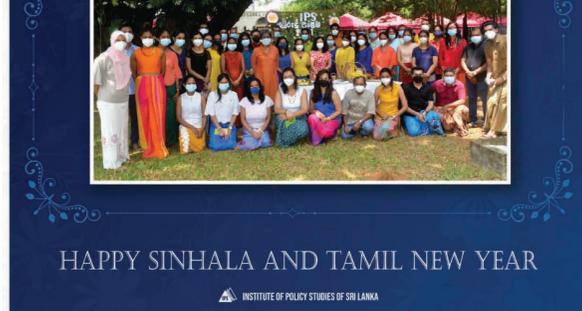
## Season's Greetings

## Publications

## Inside IPS

## Blogs

## Featured Videos

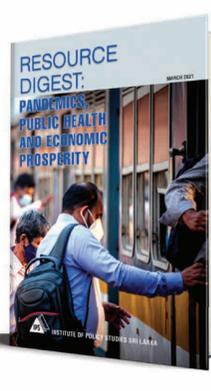


### Resource Digest on Pandemics, Public Health and Economic Prosperity

By IPS Research Team

This Resource Digest on 'Pandemics, Public Health and Economic Prosperity' contains policy recommendations based on in-depth research on how Sri Lanka can respond effectively to public health concerns in the age of pandemics. It is intended for policymakers and other public and private sector stakeholders, as well as the general public to gain insights into the key issues that need to be addressed, and outlines prevention and mitigation strategies to protect public health and foster economic growth.

[See more >>>](#)

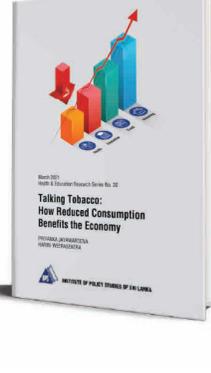


### Talking Tobacco: How Reduced Consumption Benefits the Economy

By Priyanka Jayawardena and Harini Weerasekera

Based on the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) data of the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) and the Economics of Tobacco Toolkit of the World Bank, this new study provides empirical evidence that the net impact on the national economy's output from decreased tobacco consumption is positive. The study reveals that a 20% reduction in tobacco consumption will lead to a 30% net benefit to the economy through increased consumption of non-tobacco goods and services.

[See more >>>](#)



### INSIDE IPS Special interview featuring:

**Dr. Asanka Wijesinghe**  
Research Economist at IPS working on macroeconomic policy, international trade, labour and health economics.

**Q: What drew you into the field of economics?**

I studied agriculture for my BSc degree. I disliked to work in laboratories and so, I decided to major in the Faculty of Agriculture's applied economics department (UOP). I also had an innate interest in the overlapping areas of politics and economics.

**Q: What are you currently researching?**

Currently, I am focussing on two areas: (1) the effect of recent import controls on Sri Lanka's economy, and (2) the effect of trade policy on the global value chain participation of South Asian countries.

**Q: Name one book you recommend to an aspiring economist:**

*Poor Economics* by Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo.

**Q: What do you enjoy most about your work?**

I am doing something I like to do. I have much freedom in doing research.

**Q: Something your colleagues may not know about you:**

I enjoy making food from scratch. I have made Chinese and Japanese noodles, hummus, and even kottu from scratch.

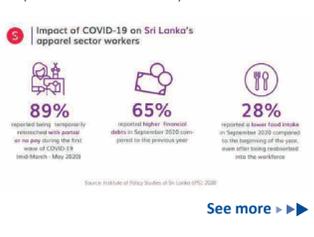
**Q: What is your advice to someone who is looking at a career in economics?**

Learn mathematics: knowledge in calculus, linear algebra and real analysis will come in handy in graduate studies. Also, it is important to sharpen one's economic intuition. This can be done by reading a lot.

### Stitching Solutions: Protecting Sri Lanka's Apparel Workers During COVID-19

By Kithmina Hewage and Anjana Pathirana for Southern Voice

Sri Lanka's apparel exports fell by 27.6% compared to the previous year. This change was due to an unprecedented confluence of supply and demand-side disruptions caused by the pandemic. Even though the industry experienced a marginal recovery during the second half of the year, it continues to be affected by regular disturbances of the second wave of COVID-19. These effects are especially tough for the nearly 350,000 employees dependent on the industry.



[See more >>>](#)

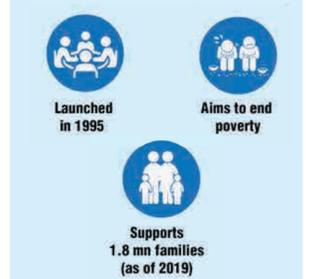


### Forest Restoration: Where Does Sri Lanka Stand?

By Ruwan Samaraweera

This year, International Day of Forests is marked under the apt theme "Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being". Sri Lanka is endowed with a diverse range of forest ecosystems thanks to different topographic, climatic and soil conditions. Dry monsoon forests, lowland rain forests, moist monsoon forests, montane forests, riverine dry forests, savanna and mangrove forests are the major types of forests found in the country. However, recent technical reports and mainstream media reports both signal a rapid increase in deforestation and degradation of forests in Sri Lanka.

[See more >>>](#)



### Towards Zero Poverty: Why Effective Targeting of Samurधि Transfers is Essential

By Lakshila Wanigasinghe

The first Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) is to "end poverty in all its forms everywhere" by 2030. While achieving the goal of zero poverty is a lofty goal for any government, it is profoundly more so for those of developing countries. The high levels of inequalities and resource constraints are the main factors that stand in the way of reaching this ambitious yet attainable aim. There are several steps Sri Lanka can take to fast-track the achievement of SDG 1, and extend greater social protection to its most vulnerable groups. This blog analyses the Samurधि (prosperity) programme, the country's main poverty alleviation initiative launched in 1995, and argues that addressing its core problem of poor targeting of beneficiaries is essential to end poverty in Sri Lanka.

[See more >>>](#)



Source: Authors' calculations based on HIES 2016 micro-data

### Talking Tobacco: How Reduced Consumption Benefits the Household

By Priyanka Jayawardena

The substantial health and economic costs of tobacco consumption are well recognised. Tobacco use increases a household's expenses, diverting a family's limited resources away from basic needs such as health and education. Tobacco control policies in Sri Lanka have, over the years, been successful in gradually reducing the smoking prevalence rate. However, pockets of smokers remain; for instance, 28% of Sri Lankan males above 15 years still smoke.

[See more >>>](#)

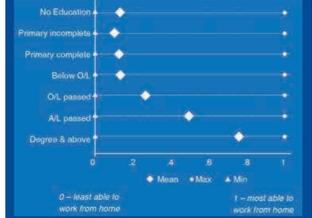


### Beyond Turmeric: How Import Controls are Impacting Sri Lanka's Economy

By Asanka Wijesinghe

Thanks to the import controls, turmeric now fetches a higher price domestically with prices having soared by as much as 275% from Rs. 80 per kilo to Rs. 300 per kilo. The turmeric shortage, reports of adulterated turmeric powder, the ceiling price, black-market sales, and sensational stories of busting smuggling attempts are the manifestations of the impact of import controls. The recent waves of import restrictions imposed by the Sri Lankan government have different justifications such as boosting domestic production and avoiding re-exporting substandard products and foreign exchange leakage. However, protectionism has costs. These costs will have a severe impact on the recovery of the COVID-19 affected economy.

[See more >>>](#)



### Working Remotely in the Age of COVID: Who is Left Behind?

By Nisha Arunatilake and Chamini Thilanka

WFH can increase female labour force participation as women have a higher likelihood of WFH. Access to ICT infrastructure and fast connectivity are essential to effectively WFH. Reducing gender inequalities in access to ICT can also improve economic activities under WFH, and increase female labour force participation. Policies to improve the coverage of good quality ICT infrastructure can also increase the effectiveness of WFH.

[See more >>>](#)

Talking Tobacco: How Reduced Consumption Benefits the Economy



[Click here >>>](#)

What Are Some of the Costs of Protectionist Trade Policies?



[Click here >>>](#)

Towards Zero Poverty: Why Effective Targeting of Samurधि Transfers is Essential



[Click here >>>](#)