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# Voice of East

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TAEU is a Trade Union registered under the Trade union ordinance no 14 of 1935 with Department of Labour and a member of Federation of University Teachers' Association (FUTA). The TAEU stands as a Trade Union principally for the right of its membership as the collective voice of the member academic staff and the 'voice of the voiceless' to make University a place with transparency and good governance where Academics have a dignified existence to serve the students, university, community and country at large, free from undue influences and pressures. TAEU represent the Academic membership of the University to communicate and act on their behalf for the benefit, dignity and rights of individuals, community or university as appropriate.

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## Message from the President, TAEU

We are the voice of the voiceless, but the voiceless must come forward to communicate their needs, and to show that the unity is our strength.

It is my great pleasure in giving this message as the President of the Teachers' Association of Eastern University.



The period of my presidentship is mingled with both the most crucial and happiest moments and incidents. The crucial period I mention here is that the TAEU had to face many challenges both internally by the Administration and by the changing government policies that took place time to time which affected the academia of the Island on the whole and individually on the membership of each trade union of the university academia.

The government of Sri Lanka had listened to the request of FUTA which voiced about the academics' tax-load and the exodus of them which had serious implications on the university education, especially on the free education system of the country. We had a series of meetings with the Chairman / UGC, both cabinet and state ministers of Education, the Prime Minister, opposition leader, other parliamentarians, and finally His Excellency the President. All of them agreed and accepted the depth of the issues on policy but we had another series of fights to get them implemented. For instance, when the Cabinet of Ministers agreed to increase the Academic Allowance of the academics, the UGC had turned it other way and finally we fought and succeeded on it. Likewise, at least a few of our demand and requests were heard, like the extension of probationary period of the academics who were suffered by the COVID -19 effects. Particularly, two of our members were affected and we were able to get it done which relived the suffered membership.

On our university side, we made several requests for our membership and some of them had been resolved (or heard) by the administration with our strong voice, and still, some of them are incomplete with pending promises by the administration. We strongly trust the requests are our demands and they shall be resolved smoothly and strongly by the administration unlike the kindled resolved matters like the Senior Assistant Librarian's.

We had many demonstrations at our university and outside university. It is very painful to disclose the “open secret” that many of our members do not participate them, we were able to count the participation, though we have more than 300 members in our union. However, when the members had personal issues, they approach TAEU and get things done in a general manner as it is the mandate of TAEU to protect the “rights” of the membership. Also, the non-participatory membership must understand that we fight for the “rights” personally and collectively. This non-participatory mentality must be avoided as we are able to witness that other university teachers’ trade unions’ participation which is very high, in comparison with our own Union. I strongly trust that the membership will understand my plea and give more support collectively to succeed our demands.

Another plea that put forward to our membership is that the attendance of General Body Meetings, Special General Body Meetings as such meetings are the decision-making places. I observed many times that we had to wait to get our required quorum to commence the meetings. We must understand the importance of each meeting and their decisions, rather than commenting on the decision outside the meetings. Each member has equal rights to express her/his view on the topic that is being discussed.

With those views, I once again feel happy that we, as a strong Trade Union, were able to achieve many of our demands because of the unity that we have, though many other sub-culture entities boom up and vanish in time to time.

I wish you all for good academic career and expected working environment and the forthcoming President of TAEU will continue to maintain the same momentum of the TAEU.

**Prof. J. Kennedy,**  
**President,**  
Teachers’ Association of Eastern University,  
Eastern University, Sri Lanka,  
Vantharumoolai,  
Chenkalady.

## Message from the Secretary, TAEU



I am pleased to pen this message for the third volume of the Voice of East magazine, representing the Teachers Association of Eastern University (TAEU). Indeed, it marks a significant milestone since TAEU initiated this platform two years ago to showcase the writings of our members. I would like to express my appreciation for the efforts of our Editor, Mr. V.

Alagaratnam, and all the contributors to this magazine.

As the secretary, I also wish to acknowledge that the past year has been challenging for us. We have dealt with numerous trade union grievances, ranging from individual concerns to broader issues affecting all our members. Countless hours were spent in discussions among both general and executive members, and we engaged in multiple rounds of dialogue with the university administration. Ultimately, we were successful in safeguarding the rights of our members who faced injustices.

Additionally, university teachers have grappled with significant challenges such as unjustifiable taxes imposed by the government, economic inflation, and subsequent price hikes. These burdens have placed considerable strain on our members, leading to a concerning exodus of talent. The Federation of University Teachers' Association (FUTA) organized various trade union actions, in which TAEU actively participated as a sister union. After months of collective efforts and negotiations, we were able to secure a partial relief by increasing the academic allowance by 25%.

These achievements are a testament to the solidarity within our trade union. The strength of any union lies in the unity and determination of its members to advocate for the voiceless and uphold their rights and dignity. I am proud to say that at Eastern University, TAEU is only one teachers' union that has never compromised on these principles for individual gains offered by the administration.

I take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to President Prof. J. Kennedy for his guidance during these challenging times, to all the executive members for their unwavering support, and to the general members who form the backbone of our trade union.

### **S.Santharooban**

Secretary, TAEU (2023/2024)

Deputy Librarian

Faculty of Health-Care Sciences

EUSL

## Message from the Editor, TAEU



Today is the glorious day not only the AGM is held, but also the publication of the prestigious magazine published by our Teachers Association. Eastern University Teachers' Association has been playing a major role in shaping the academic-administrative phenomenon at the Eastern University. As its one of tasks is publishing the Voice of East annually.

Within the capacity as the Editor of Voice of the East, I am very much delighted to welcome all members to the third volume of the TAEU magazine. It is true that we are members of Trade Union, but academic members. In addition to fight for our rights, our duty is to exorcize impurity and to implant our thoughts to readers.

In this volume, we have published carefully selected articles on a range of topics viz; language and linguistics, folklore, philosophy, medicine, medical education, law, human rights and the so forth. This volume also includes few fictional literatures.

As the editor, I express my grateful to all of our contributors, who have shared their time, expertise, and insights by their creative writings. I would also like to thank our readers for their ongoing support and engagement. Dear readers, I welcome your feedback and ideas which will improve the future editions.

Dear members, the successful continuation of this magazine depends on your support and contribution. Therefore, our members please contribute for this magazine in future.

**Mr.V.Alagaratnam**

**Editor, TAEU (2023/2024)**

Senior Lecturer in Philosophy