Inclusive Teaching Policies in Sri Lankan State Universities

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Focus of the study

- Investigating the presence of inclusive teaching policies in state universities.

- Assessing how state universities formally declare inclusivity through official frameworks.

Literature review

- UN and UNESCO: called for action on increasing inclusive practices in higher education (Moriña, 2017)

- "To move towards inclusion, guarantee equal opportunities and support inclusion of students, it is necessary to design policies, strategies, processes and actions that align educational practices with the principles of inclusive education that contribute to ensuring the success of all students" (Filippou et al, 2025, p. 03)

Methodology

- Research design: Document analysis.

- Keyword analysis: SpLDs and dyslexia

- Sources: Official websites of all state universities in Sri Lanka.

- Data collected: Published policies and official inclusivity statements.

- Seven documents (all available)

Key findings

- University of Peradeniya: Only university with a clear university-level inclusive education policy.

Commonly recognized disabilities include (but not limited to);
  (a) Blind/Low Vision
  (b) Deaf/Hearing Impairment
  (c) Physical and Systematic Disorders Including but not limited to: multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, chemical sensitivities, spinal cord injuries, cancer, AIDS, muscular dystrophy, and spina bifida.
  (d) Psychiatric/Psychological Disorders: Mental impairment that includes any mental or psychological disorder, such as emotional or mental illness.
  (e) Specific Learning Disabilities
  (f) Head Injury/Traumatic Brain Injury

Key findings

- University of Peradeniya: Includes suggestions for alternative arrangements.

4. Alternate arrangements for examinations will be recommended after considering standard practices that redress the impact of a student's disability on their performance in examinations. These may include adjustments such as:
   a. Extensions of time
   b. Use of assistive technology
   c. A separate room
   d. Use of reader, scribe or computer where necessary
   e. Use of ergonomic chair
   f. Alternative formatting of exam papers
   g. Negotiation of an alternative assessment.
   h. Any other reasonable adjustments as may be decided time to time.

Key findings

- Other universities:
    - No formal university-wide inclusivity policies.
    - A few scattered faculty-level policies.
    - Many faculties without any policies → inconsistency and gaps in inclusivity.

Suggestions

- Develop and publish comprehensive university-level inclusivity policies across all state universities with access to everyone.

- Align these policies with Sustainable Development Goals.

- Conduct regular reviews and monitoring.

- Ensure transparency, consistency, and equal support for all students.

Conclusion

"Ensuring inclusivity is not optional—it is essential for equitable higher education."

References

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