

**Developing Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities  
in Sri Lankan Universities/IncEdu**

Need Assessment Survey Report

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## **Executive Summary**

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## **Section 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Rationale**

Both international and national norms require that persons with disabilities are provided with special facilities to help them pursue their education on equal terms with persons without disabilities. Article 24 Section 2 (d) the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities in 2006 provides that, “Persons with disabilities receive the support required within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education; (e)-Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion”.

National Universities in Sri Lanka admit a limited number of students with disabilities (SWDs) from among those who satisfy the minimum requirements for University admission under the category of ‘special intake’. The total such number of students enrolled in national universities is small compared to overall enrolment and is limited to courses in Social sciences and Humanities. Currently, 34 students with pronounced forms of disabilities (having either visual or hearing impairments, and those requiring mobility assistance) are enrolled in the Faculty of Arts of the University of Peradeniya, the largest Sri Lankan University with a total student enrolment of 16,000. Enrolment of students with disabilities in other Universities is even lower while some Universities do not enroll SWDs at all. The small number of SWDs enrolled stems mainly from the lack of awareness and capacity on the part of educators, administrators and society in general to handle their needs and requirements, as well as due to organisational obstacles.

While these students are, by the very nature of their disabilities, denied easy access to many of the programmes and facilities offered by the Universities, whatever special measures that have been taken to put them on equal terms with others in carrying out their study programmes at the University are far from adequate. They follow the courses together with fellow students without any special teaching methods or aids and experience many difficulties. In a few Universities, a Special Needs Unit (SNU), which is basically a room allocated for the SWDs has been established recently with basic facilities. In almost all cases, the SNUs are supervised by an academic staff member on a voluntary basis. Among the difficulties faced by disabled students their inability to access different facilities including wheelchair access to buildings, lack of information and suitable reading material, and appropriate accommodation are noteworthy aspects to be mentioned. In the absence of special teaching methods, learning strategies and assessment methods, students face challenges in passing subjects such as mathematics, Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Physical Education. Due to the obstacles which are connected to their disabilities coupled with nonexistence of above facilities, SWDs are frequently unable to realise their right to quality higher education. This contributes to low grades in examinations, inability to participate in internships, poor interaction with fellow students and disadvantages in job opportunities.

## **1.2 Project Overview**

The *IncEdu* project funded by the European Commission (<http://www.pdn.ac.lk/cbhe-incedu>) aims at developing a system of support for equalising opportunities for SWDs in Sri Lankan Universities. This is to ensure the rights of SWDs to access higher education, to combat discrimination by instilling awareness and to establish a sustainable support network for SWDs in Sri Lankan Universities. One of the main steps towards developing services for SWDs under the project capacity building in higher education would be creating awareness in the Sri Lankan community.

The project has a number of specific objectives of creating community awareness, developing competency of staff of the partner universities in Sri Lanka, establishing a conducive learning environment for students with disabilities and making policy recommendations. The inclusion of SWDs in the higher educational institutes of Sri Lanka is expected to be achieved by accommodating and adapting suitable environments for them.

The partnership of the project consortium consists of four Sri Lankan Universities; University of Peradeniya (UOP, Principal Coordinator), University of Ruhuna (UOR), Eastern University (EUSL) and Sri Lanka Technological Campus (SLTC) and four European Universities; Uppsala University (UU), Sweden, Masaryk University (MU), Czech Republic, Zagreb University (ZU), Croatia and Transylvania University of Brasov (UTBv), Romania. The role of the EU partner universities within the consortium would be sharing of the knowledge and skills through creating training materials, training of trainers, advice on assistive technology and equipment, planning of quality and assisting with project management, etc. based on their experiences of having dealt with accommodating SWDs. Their expertise and support are extended by means of introducing equipment, assistive technology and training staff in using such technology for creating a friendly inclusive education in Sri Lanka for SWDs.

## **1.3 Introduction to the Baseline Survey**

The project in its initial steps carried out a baseline survey to identify the standard of higher education for SWDs in Sri Lankan Universities. This included identifying the existing facilities for the SWDs, their needs, awareness among peers, university academic and non-academic staff, peers and parents of the SWDs of the needs of SWDs. It is expected from the finding of survey to have a clear understanding of the needs and requirements of the SWDs to provide them opportunities for higher education on equal terms with persons without disabilities, identify the obstacles in providing access to higher education and to identify the improvements required in physical, technical and human capacities that are required. The outcome of this survey will guide the activities to be carried out under the other WPs that aim to develop a system of support for equalising opportunities for SWDs in Sri Lankan Universities.

The baseline survey was conducted in Sri Lankan partner universities. It is based on well-structured questionnaires that were used in gathering information from students (SWDs and others), academic and administrative staff and parents of the SWDs in partner Universities in Sri Lanka. The information gathered during the survey was analysed and presented in this report. The key findings will be disseminated in a workshop which will be held at the time of the second project meeting. Feedback received on the findings will be analysed and used in shaping the activities planned under the other WPs. Based on the findings of the survey, the project will promote and develop services to SWDS to access inclusive education that would lead to a non-discriminated and socially integrated setting assuring the equal right to education.

#### **1.4 National Policy on Disability**

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) account for 8.7% of total population in Sri Lanka (Department of Census and Statistics, 2011). PWDs have been consistently marginalised in main economic and social activities as they are denied the opportunity to participate actively in those activities. However, Sri Lanka was among one of the few countries that signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in the early 2000s. It was signed on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2007 and ratified on 08 February 2016 indicating the country's commitment to uphold the rights of PWDs.

Though the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act No. 28 of 1996 specifically addresses equality in recruitment for employment and admission to educational institutes and for physical accessibility to public places, it does not have provisions to safeguard rights of persons with disabilities. Therefore, the Disability Rights Bill (DRB 2006) was prepared, and it was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2008. However, it has not received the approval of the parliament to be adopted as national law (Disability Organizations Joint Front, 2017).

Under the provisions of the above act of 1996, the National Council for PWDs was established for the Promotion, Advancement and Protection of Rights of PWDs in Sri Lanka and to provide for matters connected therewith.

Legislation of Sri Lanka provides all its citizens the right to free education. With respect to education, several circulars have been developed focusing on special access facilities for students with disabilities, teacher appointments, training, and incentive payments. However, there is a lack of comprehensive data to examine the actual circumstances of persons with disabilities, while there is also little analysis done based on available data (Abayasekara, 2018). According to the Population Census of 2012, around 2% of children between the ages 5-14 have some form of disability, of which around only three-fourths attend school, compared to the near universal enrolment of other children. Further, this share falls considerably with age. According to

statistics received from the 2011 census, 34% of children with disabilities in the school attending age do not receive any education whatsoever. Furthermore, it has been reported that 20.3% of the children of primary education age do not receive primary education.

National action plan on disability which was prepared based on national policy on disability requires Universities/Higher education institutes to allocate funds to facilitate SWDs (UGC Finance Circular Letter,03/2019).Furthermore, a small percentage of SWDs are admitted to the national Universities under special category giving them an opportunity for university education. Under this category, only candidates who satisfy the minimum requirements for university admission and the appropriate subject prerequisites for the relevant course of study will be considered. Applicants are required to submit Medical Certificates of their physical disability acceptable to the UGC. UGC considers physical disability as a permanent physical impairment, which has affected normal life.

Almost all Universities are not able to provide minimum facilities required by the SWDs and those students do not have the freedom to choose the courses that they wish to follow. Instead, they are expected to follow courses as determined by the faculties/Departments which violates their right to higher education. Further, provision of suitable teaching methods, learning material, devices and tools in accessible alternative formats which would help SWDs to engage in higher education are minimum. Also, physical accessible facilities available in every higher education institute are far below the standards and not at all sufficient.

Despite the above attempts to protect the rights of the PWDs, their situation has not improved satisfactorily and they are faced with many challenges and discriminated in the spheres of civil and political rights, social economic and cultural rights and rights related to cross cutting issues such as accessibility, women and children with disabilities. It is required to take action by the authorities to ensure that PWDs will have the same right to civil, political, economic, social, cultural and religious activities, entertainment, sports etc. without discrimination.

## **Section 2: Literature Review**

## **Section 3: Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This section describes the procedures adopted during the need assessment survey. It first describes the methodological approach, details about data collection including selection of the sample, research instruments, data analysis, reliability and validity of the study and the ethical considerations that were followed throughout the baseline study.

### **3.2. Methodological Approach**

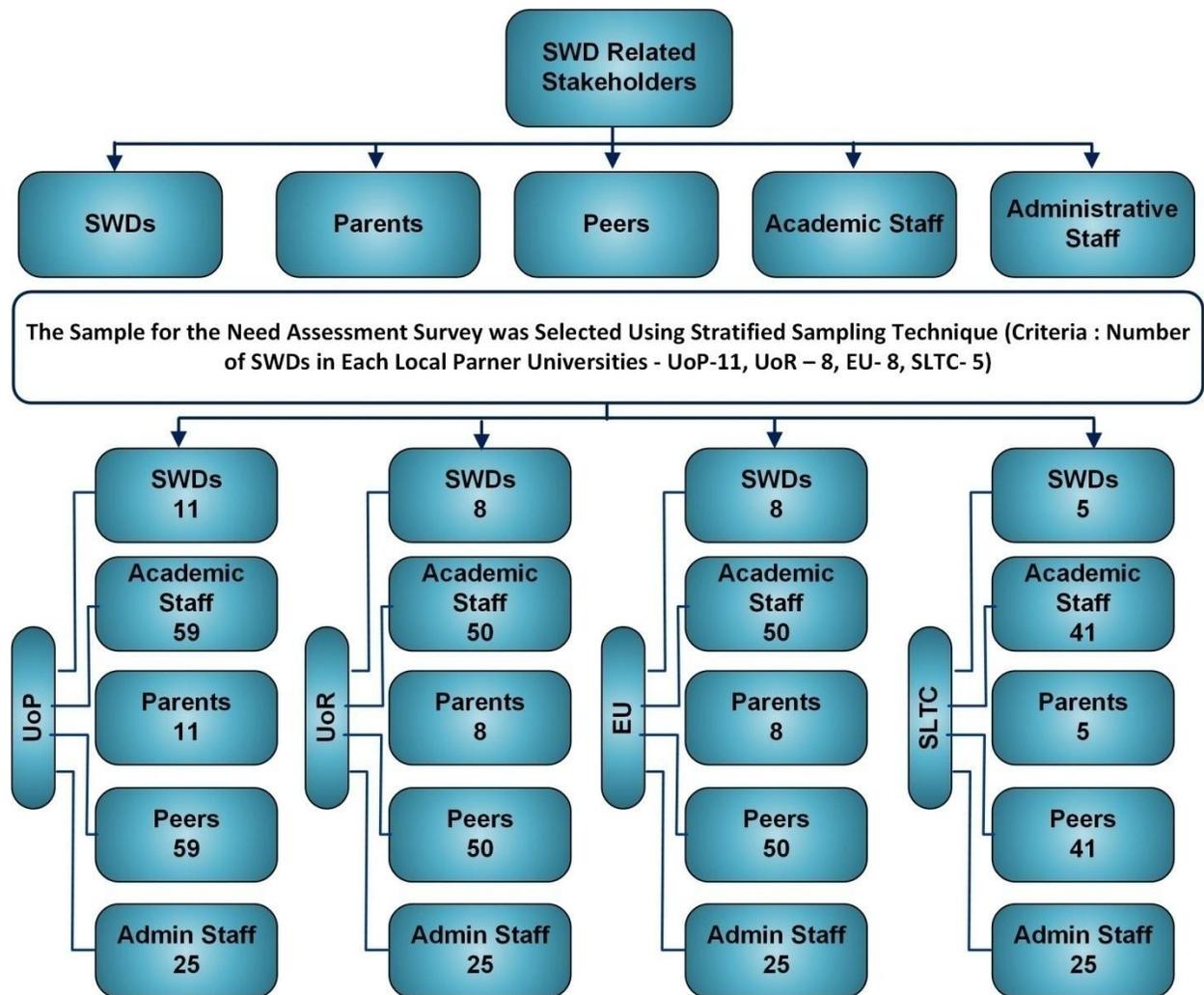
The methodological approach of this baseline study is quantitative which is appropriate to quantify behaviors, opinions, attitudes, and other variables and generalize from a larger population. Further, quantitative research tries to quantify a problem and understand how prevalent it is by looking at results that can be projected to a larger population and ends with conclusions/ recommendations. This would help to see the big picture.

### **3.3. Data Collection Method**

In this study, a survey method in the form of a questionnaire is used. Supporting the selection of this, Scott and Usher, (2004) and Wellington, (2004) suggest that a questionnaire is the usual and commonly used method to collect data from many respondents. It enables one to get a wider picture and an overview. Explaining the advantages of using a survey for research, (Clough and Nutbrown, 2005) state that a questionnaire allows researchers to survey a population of subjects, with little or no personal interaction, and with the aim of establishing a broad picture of their experiences and views.

### **3.4. Selection of the sample**

As stated in the introduction chapter of this report, four Sri Lankan universities that are partners of the project were involved in this study. Thus, as the sample of this study, five groups of stakeholders from all four universities were identified . The five groups of stakeholders that were included are SWDs (32), peers of the SWDs (200), parents of SWDs (32), members of the academic staff (200), and administrative staff (100). The total population of SWDs of the four universities was included in the study as the number of SWDs in the Universities is small. For the same reason, the total population of the parents of the SWDs was included in the survey. The sample with all stakeholders is illustrated in Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.4. 1: Selection of sample**

### 3.5. Research Instruments

#### 3.5.1. Questionnaires

As research instruments, a set of five different questionnaires were developed to collect data from five groups of stakeholders to find answers for the survey questions. They were as follows (Appendix 1: A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5):

- a) Questionnaire for students with disabilities (SWDs).
- b) Questionnaire for peers of SWDs
- c) Questionnaire for parents of the SWDs
- d) Questionnaire for academic staff members
- e) Questionnaire for administrative staff members

After making an outline of each of the questionnaires, similar research studies in the literature were reviewed and evaluated. Then the relevant questions and ideas from literature discussions were adopted to develop the present study questionnaire (Czaja et al., 1996).

The questionnaires include several closed-ended questions to obtain stakeholders' attitudes and beliefs. Two types of closed-ended questions were included in the questionnaires namely: dichotomous questions, multiple questions, and rating scales. Likert scales were adopted when formulating most of the questions. The statements were framed to obtain both positive and negative feedback. In addition to the closed-ended questions, open-ended questions were added at the end of the questionnaires which allowed respondents to answer in any manner they deem fit. In all five questionnaires, part 1 was designed to collect demographic data. However, the other sections were developed focusing on the requirement (Table 3.5.1).

**Table 3.5. 1: Structure of the Questionnaires**

Questionnaire	Section-1	Section-2	Section-3	Section-4	Section-5	Section-6
SWDs	Demographic Information	Disability Information	Accessibility to academic material	General questions	Suggestions	
Academics	Demographic Information	Knowledge, Experience & Training towards SWDs	Opinion or Beliefs about SWDs	Providing accommodations in Teaching & Assessment/Evaluation	Suggestions	
Peers	Demographic Information	Awareness of SWDs	Classroom Environment	Suggestions		

Parents	Demographic Information	Awareness of disability rights in the country	Details of the child	Views on the services provided by the University	Social interactions of the child at the University	University experience of the child
Administrative Staff	Institutional Information	Awareness of SWDs	Availability of Human & Physical resources	Research & publications/Projects	Suggestions	

### **3.6. Piloting of the Survey questionnaire**

All the questionnaires were piloted prior to the main data collection. The pilot study helped to identify the questions which should be eliminated or modified due to ambiguities, lack of clarity, contrary to initial expectations, or which turned out to measure something irrelevant.

### **3.7. Data collection procedure**

The questionnaires were administered in two forms. One method was to administer the printed questionnaires to the respondents and the other was circulating the electronic copies using Google Forms.

### **3.8. Data Analysis**

Data analysis was done with the support of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics are used to organize and summarise data to easily determine what information they contain and describe what the data shows.

### **3.9. Reliability and Validity**

Validity measures what it sets out to measure (Litwin, 1995). To establish content validity of each type of questionnaire, a detailed discussion was carried out with the local and foreign members of the research team. Furthermore, by piloting the questionnaire, the suggested revisions of the survey's content were done to ensure that it contained the required information (Litwin, 1995).

### 3.10. Ethical considerations

During the data collection stage of this study, the approval from the ethical review committee of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Peradeniya was obtained. The questionnaire was anonymised, unless participants volunteered for interviews, in which case they provided their contact details. All the participants were informed about the aims of the research, use of data, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw at any stage.

## Section 4: Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Introduction

Under the baseline survey of the Erasmus+ CBHE project Developing Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities in Sri Lankan Universities, questionnaires prepared separately for each of the stakeholders were administered among all stakeholders of the local partner Universities to assess the needs of the SWDs from their point of view. The need assessment survey for the SWD's for this study consists of five main questionnaires for the five categories of stakeholders: SWDs, parents, peers, academic staff, and non-academic staff.

Table below shows the response rate of the respondents among all stakeholders from the sampled individuals from the four universities. The table reports the 'planned' (the number of respondents aimed to reach) and 'response' (the number of respondents actually responded). Response rate was calculated as the number of persons responded as a percentage of the number of responded aimed to reach. Overall response rates of academics (76%), SWDs (56%) and peers (81%) were relatively high while the response rates of parents (35%) and non-academics (45%) were poor. Response rate of the Eastern University for the Academic group and the response rate recorded by the Ruhuna University for peers were poor which stood less than 50%. The response rate of University of Peradeniya for both these categories exceeded 100% while a zero-response rate was recorded by SLTC for both SWDs and parents. University of Peradeniya had poor responses from SWDs. Overall parents' response rate was poor with only 35%. For non-academics, the overall and other universities' response rate other than Peradeniya were less than 50%.

This table was included to provide readers with some understanding of the accuracy of the information and the ability to generalize the conclusions derived from those information. For instance, as shown in the table, the response rate of SWDs and parents from the SLTC are zero and the response rate of parents, peers and non-academics from UOR was poor.

**Table 4. 1: Rate of Response**

University	Academics			SWDs			Parents			Peers			Non-academics		
	R e s p o n s e	P l a n n e d	%												
EUSL	19	50	38	5	8	62.5	3	8	37.5	34	50	68	11	25	44
UOP	65	54	120	10	25	40	10	25	40	84	69	122	22	25	88
UOR	27	41	66	7	7	100	1	5	20	13	50	26	7	25	28
SLTC	31	41	76	0	1	0	0	2	0	40	41	98	5	25	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>45</b>

The following section of the study presents a descriptive analysis of the collected data on the stakeholders of this study.

## 4.2 Results: Academic Staff

### 4.2.1 Background Information of the Sampled Academic Staff

The total academic member sample (142) consists of Eastern University 13% (19)<sup>1</sup>University of Ruhuna 19% (27), University of Peradeniya 46% (65) and Sri Lanka Technological Campus 22% (31). Academic members of the University of Peradeniya from all 9 faculties had self-administered the questionnaire (Agriculture, Allied Health Sciences (AHS), Arts, Dental Sciences, Engineering, Management, Medicine, Science, and Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences), 2 faculties from Ruhuna University (Humanities & Social Sciences and Science), 2 faculties from Eastern University (Arts & Culture and Commerce & Management) and 5

<sup>1</sup> Number in the total sample

faculties from SLTC ( Business Studies, Computing and IT, Engineering, Graduate Studies, Technology,)

Majority of the academics in the random sample were males with 58% and 42% females (see Table 4.2.1 below).

**Table 4.2. 1: Distribution of the Faculties by Study Sample Universities**

	A H S	A g r i c u l t u r e	A r t s	A r t s & S c i e n c e	C o m p u t i n g a n d I T	D e n t a l	E n g i n e e r i n g	M a n a g e m e n t	M e d i c i n e	N o F a c u l t y	P o s t g r a d u a t e	S c i e n c e	V e t e r i n a r y	Total (%)
University (142)														
EUSL	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	<b>19 (13)</b>
UOP	2	4	31	0	0	6	5	6	6	0	0	3	2	<b>65 (46)</b>
UOR	0	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	<b>27 (19)</b>
SLTC	0	0	0	2	7	0	14	3	0	3	2	0	0	<b>31 (22)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>142 (100)</b>
Gender (140) (2 respondents have not submitted information)														
Female	2	1	25	2	2	5	6	6	3	2	0	4	1	<b>59 (42)</b>
Male	0	3	43	0	5	1	13	5	3	1	2	4	1	<b>81 (58)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>140 (100)</b>

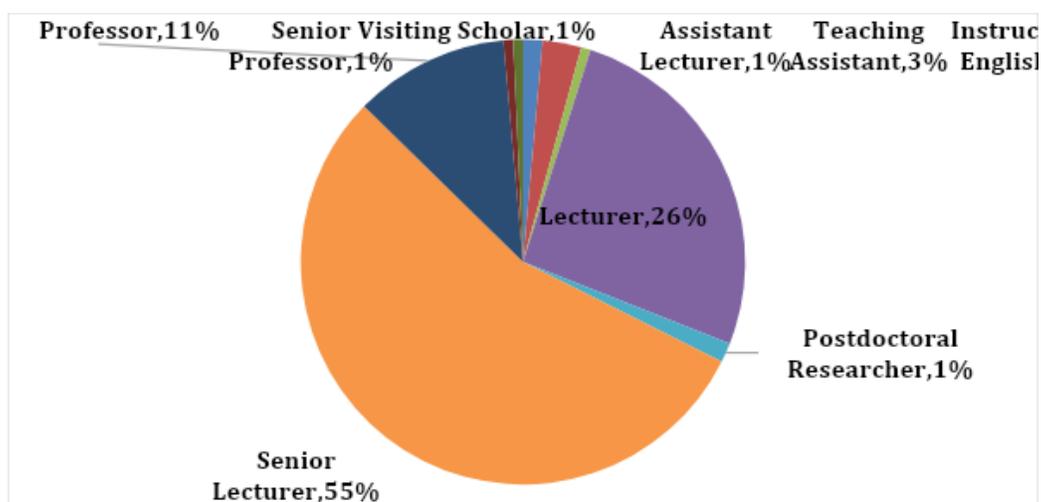
Of the members in the sample, 29% had more than 20 years of teaching experience while 26% had 0-5 years of teaching experience (Table 4.2.2).

**Table 4.2. 2: Years of Experience of the Academic Members**

Years of Experience of the Academic Members						
Faculty	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	15 -20 years	Over 20 Years	Total
AHS	2	0	0	0	0	<b>2</b>

Agriculture	1	1	2	0	0	<b>4</b>
Arts	3	4	4	5	15	<b>31</b>
Arts and Culture	2	1	7	4	3	<b>17</b>
Business Studies/ Management	3	1	3	1	3	<b>11</b>
Computing and IT	2	4	0	1	1	<b>8</b>
Dental	2	1	0	1	2	<b>6</b>
Engineering	11	2	1	0	4	<b>18</b>
HSS	6	3	1	4	8	<b>22</b>
Medicine/Veterinary Medicine	1	3	3	1	0	<b>8</b>
Postgraduate Studies	0	0	1	1	0	<b>2</b>
Science	2	0	2	0	4	<b>8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>137</b>

About 53% of the randomly selected sample of academics were Senior Lecturers who had at least a postgraduate qualification with a research component (shown in Table 4.2.3 and Figure 4.2.1) and, 12% of them were academics with qualifications to become Professors. The academics in the category of Teaching Assistants/Assistant Lecturers (4%) are mostly recruited from the immediate graduates from the respective departments. 69% of the academics were senior lecturers with at least an academic qualification of an M. Phil degree or above.



**Figure 4.2. 1: Academics Designation by Percentage**

These academics came from ten different fields of study such as Allied Health Sciences, Commerce and Management, Computer and IT, Dental Sciences, Engineering, Humanities and Social Science, Medicine, Science, and Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences. Of these academics, 41% stated that they have taught SWDs in their classes. Of the University of Peradeniya academics group, 45% had taught SWDs at some point in their teaching career (Table 4.2.3).

**Table 4.2. 3: Distribution by Faculties for Taught SWDs in Class**

	AH S	Agri cultu re	Arts & Science	Compu tin g	Dent al	Engi nee rin g	Ma nage me nt	Medi cine	NOFA	Post graduate	Science	Veterinary	
Taught SWDs in Class for All Universities													
No (83 -59%)	1	3	32	1	5	5	15	5	4	3	2	5	2
Yes(58 -41%)	1	1	37	1	2	1	4	6	2	0	0	3	0
Total	2	4	69	2	7	6	19	11	6	3	2	8	2

\* Note: Number and % given in brackets.

Of the total 65 academics from the University of Peradeniya (UoP), 55% has not taught SWDs at all. 23% of the total was from Faculty of Arts who had taught SWD's at some point in their teaching career. The other faculties that had a notable numbers were, Medicine (6%), Engineering (5%) and Management (5%). Academics of the Veterinary faculty was the only faculty that did not report teaching SWDs at all (See Table 4.2.4).

**Table 4.2. 4: Taught SWDs in Class - University of Peradeniya**

Taught SWD in Class	Taught SWDs in Class - University of Peradeniya									
	E n g i n e e r i n g	M a n a g e m e n t	M e d i c i n e	S c i e n c e	V e t e r i n a r y	A H S	A g r i c u l t u r e	A r t s	D e n t a l	Tot al (%)
No (%) out of total (65)	2 (3)	3 (5)	2 (3)	2 (3)	2 (3)	1 (1)	3 (5)	16 (25)	5 (8)	<b>36 (55)</b>
Yes (%) out of total (65)	3 (5)	3 (5)	4 (6)	1 (2)	0 (0)	1 (2)	1 (2)	15 (23)	1 (2)	<b>29 (45)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>65</b>

Of the students in class, the majority reported to have had students with visual disability. Second type of disability that was observed among students was physical disability followed by hearing disability and mental disability (Appendix 2: Academic Staff - Table 1). However, it should be noted here that students with visual disabilities are admitted only to faculties of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities.

Only 3% of the sampled academics have had some training to teach students with disabilities, however, 97% of them have had no training at all to teach SWDs. Of the trained academics, 2 were from Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya, 1 from Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Ruhuna University and 1 from School of Computing and IT, SLTC. It was reported that, their training was mainly focused on counselling (from University of Peradeniya and Ruhuna) and training of trainers on special needs education (1 SLTC).

#### 4.2.2 Knowledge, Experience & Training towards SWDs

A set of questions were put forward to the academics to assess their knowledge, experience, and training on SWDs in the form of a 6-point Likert-scale items as 1-Strongly Agree, 2- Agree, 3-Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Disagree, 5- Strongly Disagree, 6- Not Relevant. The responses by the respondents for each question is recorded in the table below as a percentage of responses for each Likert scale for that question.

97% of the academics agreed that SWDs should have access to higher education. However, only 51% of the academics felt that the University Special Needs Resource Unit is helpful for SWDs and academic staff. 86% disagreed that there is a person in their departments to assist to coordinate accommodations for SWDs. 75% agreed that there are certain SWDs whose disability could not be easily recognized. 68% agreed that SWDs in their classes should inform the lecturers about special requirements that they wished to avail of at the beginning of the semester. 95% of the academics feel that they are sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities. 80% agreed that SWDs are able to compete with peers academically at the university level. 76% disagreed that students use disabilities as an excuse when they are not working (academically) in their classes. 81% disagreed that some students take advantage of their accommodations though they may not really need them. While only 35% of the academics agreed that they have learned about disability and appropriate accommodation through literature and websites, 67% of them agreed that they are aware that there are teaching and learning resources for SWDs. Eg: software and apps. 11% only have conducted research studies related to disability (See Table 4.2.5).

**Table 4.2. 5: Likert Scale Response as a % on Academics Knowledge, Experience & Training Towards SWDs**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6
a) Student with disabilities (SWDs) should have access to higher education.	91	5	1	1	2	0
b) Special Needs Resource Unit (SNRU)/Centre at my University/Institute is helpful for SWDs and academic staff.	28	23	20	6	9	14
c) There is a person in my department who assists to coordinate accommodations for SWDs.	6	8	15	7	35	29
d) There are certain SWDs whose disability could not be easily recognized.	30	45	13	4	4	5
e) SWDs in my class, should inform me about special requirements at the beginning of the semester.	39	29	9	7	6	10

f) I am sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities.	75	20	2	1	1	1
g) SWDs are able to compete academically at the university level.	54	26	11	4	4	1
h) Students use disabilities as an excuse when they are not working (academically) in my class.	5	18	32	12	9	23
i) Some students take advantage of their accommodations and may not really need them.	5	14	30	13	15	23
j) I have learned about disability and appropriate accommodation through literature and websites	9	26	24	20	9	13
k) I am aware that there are teaching and learning resources for SWDs. Eg: software and apps	24	43	14	8	9	4
l) I have conducted research studies related to disability	3	8	8	15	32	33

The academics were questioned on the use of different mechanisms to make teaching and learning meaningful for SWDs. Of the academics that used at least one mechanism, the majority preferred using software (38%), followed by mobile apps (19%) and software and mobile apps (19%). Others have used extra classes, extra individual classes, materials made by papers and hard board, personal help to get lecture notes, request them to be in front rows in the class, use alternative manual methods, hand-outs, power-point presentation and interactive learning methods. However, 74% of the total sample of academics (141) have stated that they did not use any special mechanism to make the teaching and learning process of SWDs meaningful (Table 4.1.8). Distribution by University in the use of different mechanisms to make teaching and learning for SWDs meaningful was stood at 41% (University of Peradeniya) 22%, (SLTC), 19% (Ruhuna University and 10% (Eastern University). Majority at Peradeniya and SLTC used software while majority at Eastern and Ruhuna used mobile apps in teaching.

**Table 4.2. 6: Academics Used Tools to Make Teaching and Learning for SWDs Meaningful**

Used Tools for Teaching	Frequenc y	%
Not used any	104	73.76
Extra classes	2	1.42
Mobile apps	7	4.96
Personal help to get lecture notes	1	0.71

Request to be in front rows in the class	1	0.71
Software	14	9.93
Software, Mobile apps	7	4.96
Software, Mobile apps, interactive learning	1	0.71
Teaching materials Made by papers and..	1	0.71
Use alternative manual methods	1	0.71
Hand-outs and lectures	1	0.71
Power Point Presentation	1	0.71
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>100</b>

The survey assessed the willingness of academics' to provide special accommodations to SWDs in teaching. There was an extremely high willingness (above 80% of the overall sample) to facilitate the use of computer or recording device for note taking and preferential seating for SWDs'. And there was above 50% willingness to provide flexibility in terms of completing academic assignments, adjustments in teaching and in providing exams, peer support, extra hand-outs, tutoring and ability to contact Faculty outside of class (See Table 4.2.7).

**Table 4.2. 7: Willingness to Provide Special Accommodations to SWDs in Teaching as a % of Total Study Sample**

Willingness to Provide Special Accommodations to SWDs in Teaching	Frequency	%
Advance copies of course notes/out lines/presentations	62	44%
Computer or recording device use for note taking	114	81%
Extra hand-outs	76	54%
Flexibility in terms of completing academic assignments	91	65%

Note taking friend	59	42%
Preferential seating	121	86%
Adjustments in teaching and in providing exams	95	68%
Peer support	86	61%
Preparation of teaching materials in adjusted forms	45	32%
Tutoring	87	62%
Ability to contact Faculty outside of class	76	54%
A program for raising awareness and identifying potential SWD	1	1%

When considering the individual University academics' willingness to provide special accommodations to SWDs in teaching (Appendix A3), SLTC campus academics were willing to provide most of the suggested facilities above 50% other than for note taking friend, peer support, preparation of teaching materials in adjusted forms and tutoring (32% - 48%). Responses recorded by Peradeniya, for preparation of teaching material in adjusted forms, tutoring, ability to contact Faculty outside of class, note-taking friend, and advance copies of course notes/out lines/presentations were ranged from 26% - 48%. Ruhuna University responded in the range of 19% to 41% for the same attributes except for tutoring and peer support. Academics of Eastern showed low willingness (ranging from 26% - 47%) to provide advance copies of course notes/out lines/presentations, flexibility in terms of completing academic assignments, note-taking friend, and adjustment in teaching and in providing examinations.

#### **4.2.3 Providing Accommodations in Teaching and Assessment/Evaluation**

This section also uses a set of questions to assess the willingness of academics to provide accommodations in Teaching and Assessment/Evaluation to SWDs in the form of a 6-point Likert-scale items as 1-Strongly Agree, 2- Agree, 3-Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Disagree, 5- Strongly Disagree, 6- Not relevant. The responses by the respondents for each question is recorded in the table below as a percentage of responses for each Likert scale for that question.

Very high percentage (81%) of the academics agreed to have SWDs attended their classes via online if it is not possible for the student to be physically present (Table 4.2.11). 68% agreed to make a statement in class inviting SWDs to discuss adaptations with the lecturer. 44% agreed to include a statement in their syllabus inviting SWDs to discuss accommodations with lecturer. A low percentage (11%) of the academics agreed to give extra marks to their students if they help

SWDs. Only 20% of the academics agreed to offer extra marks to their students in future if they offer assistance to SWDs. 84% of the academics either disagreed or uncertain about rendering the lecturers anxious when having SWDs in their classes. 91% of the academics either disagreed or are uncertain about making the lecturers uncomfortable when having SWDs in their classes. 79% of the lecturers encouraged students with disabilities to participate in co-curricular activities. Only 24% agreed to the fact that the academics receive adequate support from school administration when learners with disabilities are enrolled in their classes. 40% only agreed to the point that they adapt the syllabus and teaching material to accommodate SWDs' needs.

**Table 4.2. 8Likert Scale Response as a % on Academics' Willingness to Provide Accommodations in Teaching and Assessment/Evaluation to SWDs**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6
a) I would like to consider having a SWDs attend my class via Skype if it is not possible for the student to be physically present.	44	37	10	1	4	4
b) I make a statement in class inviting SWDs to discuss adaptations with me.	30	38	12	7	2	12
c) I include a statement in my syllabus inviting SWDs to discuss accommodations with me.	16	28	30	7	8	12
d) I give extra marks to my students if they help SWDs	4	7	25	12	35	17
e) In the future, I will consider offering extra marks to my students, if they offer assistance to SWDs.	3	17	27	11	33	9
f) Having the SWDs in my class make me anxious	5	12	17	12	36	19
g) Having the SWDs in my class made me uncomfortable.	5	4	12	12	45	22
h) I encourage students with disabilities to participate in co-curricular activities.	46	33	14	1	1	6
i) I receive adequate support from school administration when learners with disabilities are enrolled in my class.	9	15	28	11	11	26
j) I adapt the syllabus and teaching material to accommodate SWDs' needs	11	29	25	8	9	18

There was an extremely high willingness among academics to provide special accommodation facilities to SWDs for assessments in all Universities as seen in the above Table 4.1.9. They were willing to provide extra time for assignments, preferential seating, computer or recording device, extra time for exam and oral examinations (above 70% for all). Exceptionally low percentage

(1%) was recorded by the academics of the four universities to provide separate places for examinations and they were of the view that students should be fit to take examinations.

**Table 4.2. 9: Willingness to Provide Special Accommodation to SWDs (in assessments as a % the total sample)**

Willingness to extend special accommodations for SWDs in assessments	Frequency.	%
Computer or recording device	106	75%
Extra time for assignments	118	84%
Extra time for exam	106	75%
To consider student should be fit to take exams	1	1%
Oral examinations	102	72%
Preferential seating	116	82%
Separate place for exams	1	1%

Table 4.2.10 below depicts the percentage of academics who had collected feedback regarding their teaching from each university. Overall, all universities had obtained feedback on their teaching at minimum levels. That is only 13% of the academics have obtained feedback from their students. Eastern University academics recorded the highest responses for collecting feedback with a 32% and Ruhuna University, being the lowest with a 4%. Peradeniya and SLTC's rate of responses stood at 12% and 11% respectively.

**Table 4.2. 10: Collected SWDs Feedback Regarding Teaching as a % the Total Sample**

University	No (%)	Yes (%)
Eastern	13(10)	6(5)
Peradeniya	50(39)	7(5)
Ruhuna	24(19)	1(1)
SLTC	24(19)	3(2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>111(87)</b>	<b>17(13)</b>

The Table 4.2.11 below gives how several academics had tried to adopt their feedback suggestion. Of the total that adopted the feedback, 39% and 35% of the academics at Peradeniya and Eastern respectively had tried to implement the feedback suggestions whereas 13% from both SLTC and Ruhuna were also in agreement for the statement. . These feedback suggestions, helped modifying the behaviour of academics in a positive manner as they had made it a point to inquire from the students about their needs and difficulties in class and tried to provide learner support systems based on the SWDs’ need. Furthermore, academics have shown willingness to afford extra time to complete assignments considering their medical reports supporting their disability,

#### 4.2.4 Opinions or Beliefs about SWDs

Table 4.2.11 illustrates the opinion of the academics on the suitability of their subject to be studied by SWDs. While 79% of the academics felt that their subjects were suitable for the SWDs, 18% negated the statement. Among the Eastern University academics, 16% felt that their subjects might or might not be suitable for SWDs. Peradeniya had the highest number of academics who felt their subject might or **might not suitable** for SWDs with 32%. In other two universities recorded less responses which stood at 13% for the same. .

**Table 4.2. 11: Academics Opinion on the Suitability of Their Subject for SWDs by University**

University	My Subject Suitable for SWDs			
	No	Yes	Do not know	Total
Eastern	1	16	2	19
	5.26	84.21	10.53	100
	0.75	11.94	1.49	14.18
Peradeniya	17	41	2	60
	28.33	68.33	3.33	100
	12.69	30.6	1.49	44.78
Ruhuna	3	22	0	25
	12	88	0	100
	2.24	16.42	0	18.66
SLTC	3	27	0	30

	10	90	0	100
	2.24	20.15	0	22.39
Total	24	106	4	134
	17.91	79.1	2.99	100
	17.91	79.1	2.99	100

Table 4.2.12 below portrays what academics had to say about the suitability of their subject of teaching for SWDs. Most of the academics in the fields of Dental Sciences, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine had stated that their subjects were not suitable for SWDs and there were academics even from the Social Sciences as well held the same perception (such as Economics and Sociology). For instance, an academic from the Department of Sociology had stated “*“Sociology” not suitable for Disable students due to many field work components (surveys, research-based assignments, field trips etc.)*”. 24% and 29% of academics from Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Peradeniya respectively were among the academics who denied that their subjects were suitable for SWDs. Some academics from Engineering and Computer were also expressed their views in line with the former. For example, an academic from Computer Science said, “*computer practical classes will not be able to accommodate and it depends on the nature of disability*”.

**Table 4.2. 12: Opinion on the Suitability of their Subjects of Teaching for SWDs.**

<b>My discipline (subject that I teach) is suitable for SWDs</b>
<i>Anatomy practical and especially Dentistry need high level of hand skills and coordination in treating patients</i>
<i>Depends on the type of disability. e.g. hand skills are essential for dentistry</i>
<i>A veterinary graduate should handle unpredictable small animals and large animals. They should be very much alert in doing so. We had to do rigorous surgical and clinical procedures to animals.</i>
<i>Computer practical will not be able to accommodate and it depends on the nature of disability</i>
<i>My discipline is consisted with scientific components therefore the subject components may be difficult to them.</i>
<i>Some classes are field-oriented. Microscopic observations are also involved</i>
<i>“Sociology” not suitable for Disable students due to many field work components. (surveys , research-based assignments, field trips etc)</i>

<i>My courses include lab work, practical, field visit and case studies, and etc. some SWDs will get difficulties of participating for those assignments.</i>
<i>Dentistry is a skill-based degree program. It may not be possible to develop the skill competencies required if the student is physically handicapped. Psychological disabilities are even worse. A care giver should be physically and mentally sound to practice dentistry in my opinion. Students with only minor disabilities can be allowed to enroll considering the possible impact on society in general once they graduate.</i>
<i>Analytical tests in pharmaceuticals cannot be performed by certain SWDs.</i>
<i>Although I said no for major disabilities, it is suitable for students with minor disabilities (but for mentally sound individuals)</i>
<i>There are no facilities/assistance available for them to use quantitative techniques in the discipline.</i>
<i>Electronics is a practical subject. But there are certain areas (Design) where they can contribute.</i>
<i>More field-oriented work ex: research in streams /Mountains/Landslide location /urban traffic</i>
<i>Students with physical disabilities such as in hands will not be able to develop their hands-on skills in practical classes</i>

Academic staff members have expressed their suggestions on a wide array of areas such as enhancement of education facilities for SWDs, provision of enhanced infrastructural facilities both physical and all other forms at universities and disability access to reach a number of university facilities such as library. One member has stressed the need for construction of walking tracks for these students with necessary assistance.

Some of the members suggested providing teaching and learning facilities abreast with new technology, provision for adequate resources, annual budget for SWDs, availability of specially trained academic staff members, highly trained technical staff on modern technology available for SWDs, specific and supportive administrative structure with both human and physical resources, provision of educational material in suitable formats (audio, video and other many other formats suitable for different types of disabilities), suitable accommodation with supportive facilities in close proximity, provision of peers support, provision of counseling, therapy for physical and mental development, and other essential medical facilities, appealing and sound environment for them to carry out their studies with self-esteem and self-confidence.

They reiterated that the SWDS should be provided with equal opportunities and facilities. One member has pointed out that education is the most valuable thing to them in their entire life time. Many of the respondents have suggested that they should be treated equally and provide more opportunities to interact with others.

Moreover, universities must be prepared to handle SWDs and their problems before they enter university. They further suggested that the Resource Centres equipped with suitable equipment and technology be made available with adequately trained and dedicated staff.

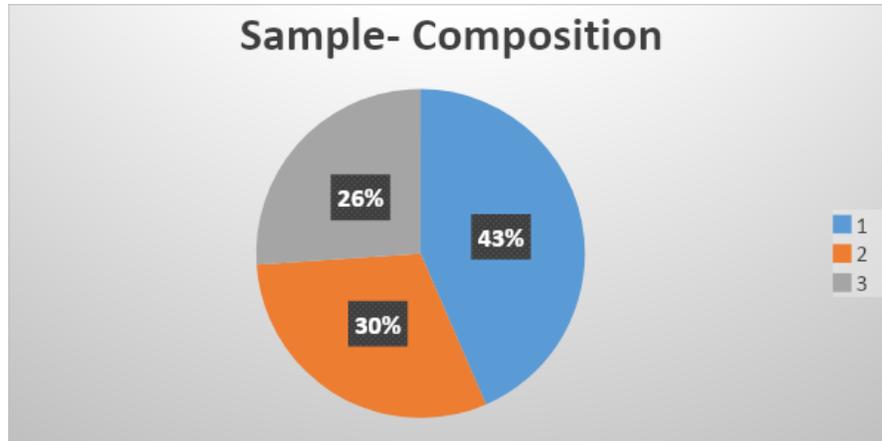
They pointed out the importance of awareness and changes in attitudes towards conducting continuous awareness/training programs for both academic and non-academic staff in joining with Staff Development Centre would result in serving them productively. One member has suggested including a session on SWDs in staff development programmes. Regular students are encouraged to support SWDs as a matter of courtesy only as it no doubt outweighs the other benefits they are looking for.

Furthermore, formulating a National Policy for SWDs in higher education have also been highlighted by them under which matters pertaining to enhanced accessibility for higher education, drawing up admission criteria relevant to SWD intake and assigning them to universities. Overall they suggested that university must attempted to include SWDs with mainstream students to develop their individual strengths and gifts they inherited, foster a culture that respect and recognize the rights of SWDs, to formulate and implement policies and strategies and deliver results in creative and innovative manner to provide conducive environment for SWDs to carry out their higher education at University.

### **4.3 Results: Students with Disabilities (SWDs)**

#### ***4. 3. 1 Demographic information of the respondents:***

For the questionnaire meant for SWDs, only 23 students out of 40 responded, recording the rate of response at 58%. As shown in Figure 4.3.1, among them the majority (44%) were from the University of Peradeniya. None of the students had responded from the SLTC in this respect.



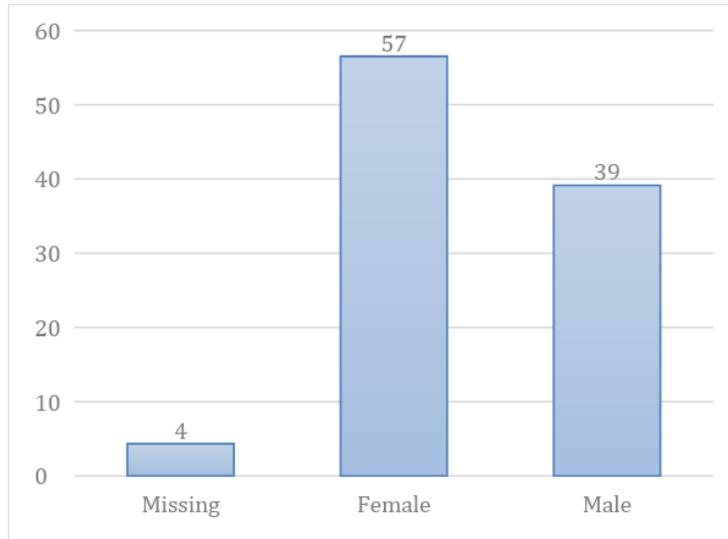
**Figure 4.3. 1: Sample Composition of Students with Disabilities**

The Faculty to which the respondents are enrolled to follow their Degree programme was considered in the survey. As shown in Table 4.3.1, all the respondents (100%) belonged to the discipline of Arts and Humanities.

**Table 4.3. 1: Faculties Where SWDs were from**

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage
Arts	13	56.5
Arts & Culture		
Humanities and Social Sciences	6	26.1
<b>Total</b>	4	17.4
	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As illustrated in Figure 4.3.1, the gender was also an important factor regarding the composition of the responded sample, of which nearly 57% of the SWDs responded were females.

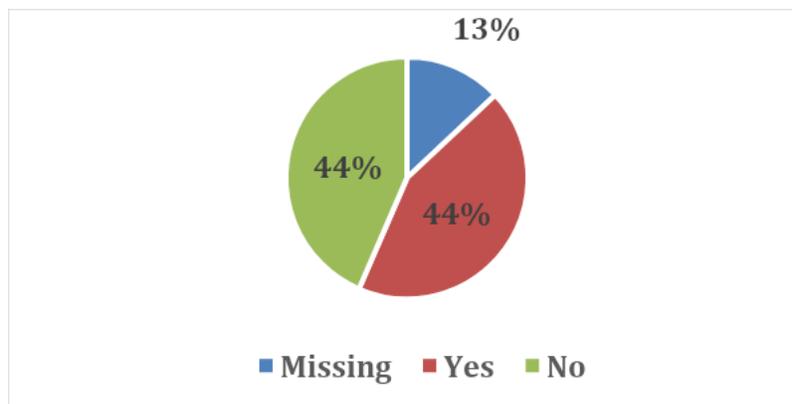


**Figure 4.3. 2: Gender Ratio in the Sample**

The respondents represented all four academic years of the Degree programmes (Appendix A4).

Further, it was also noted that except one student, all the others studied in selected universities were admitted to the University through the special intake (Appendix A5). This implies the difficulty in SWDs getting admission to the Universities.

Participants were also asked about the guidance they obtained in selecting a specific degree programme. According to responses, it was observed that 43% of them were guided by different persons/organizations as shown in the following Figure 4.3.3. Coupled with rate of response recorded for missing category, it can be inferred that SWDs have not properly been guided or no was there a reliable mechanism to guide them in selecting a specific degree programme



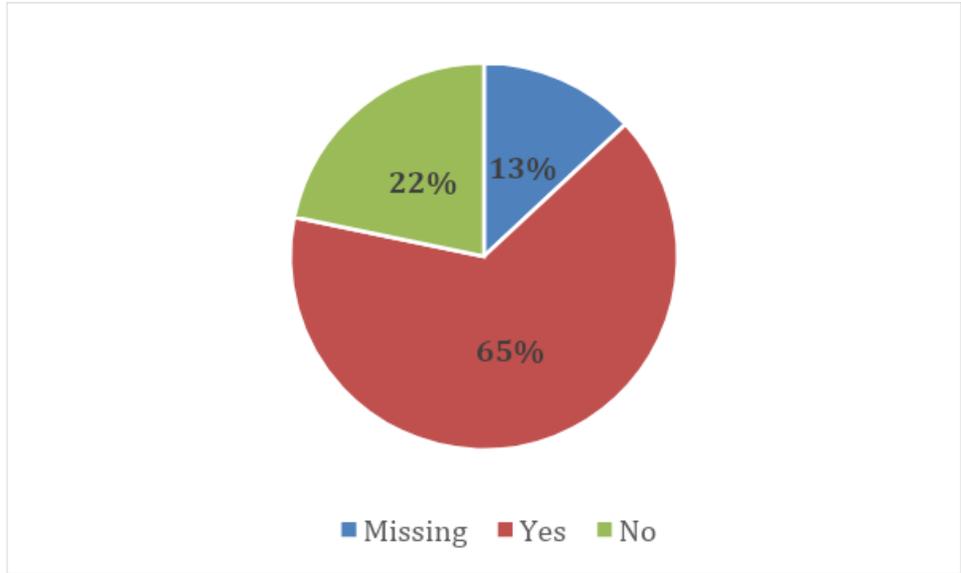
**Figure 4.3. 3: Guidance Obtained in Selecting the Degree Programme**

As shown in Table 4.3.2, in selecting their Degree programmes, 50% of SWDs obtained guidance. Further, it was noted that the university lecturers, parents, senior students and an institute 13%, 17.4%, 4.3%, 4.3% were the other sources that influenced in guiding SWDs in selecting their degree programmes respectively.

**Table 4.3. 2: Guidance in selecting the Degree Programme**

Source of Guidance	Frequency	Percentage
Missing	14	60.9
Senior Students	1	4.3
Parents	4	17.4
University lecturers	3	13.0
Other	1	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Ability to enroll in the preferred Degree programme with the given guidance by different persons/organizations were examined. As illustrated in Figure 4.3.4, about 65% of the SWDs managed to enroll in their preferred Degree programme. Moreover, as illustrated in the figure, the opportunity available for SWDs to select the preferred Degree programme was limited to some extent.



**Figure 4.3. 4: Ability to Enroll the Preferred Degree Programme**

Availability of a special needs unit for SWDs is identified as a privilege that students have in the University. In the survey, awareness of the SWDs’ of the availability of a special unit for them within the University or institute was explored. As shown in the following Table 4.3.3, about 21.7% were not aware of it.

**Table 4.3. 3: SWDs’ Awareness of the availability of SNRU in the University**

	Frequency	Percentage
Missing	3	13.0
I do not know	5	21.7
No	6	26.1
Yes	9	39.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**4.3.2. Disability Information**

The type of disability/impairment that SWDs possessed were also examined. As shown in Table 4.3.4 the majority of the SWDs are visually impaired.

**Table 4.3. 4: Disability Types**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Missing	3	13.0
Visually impaired	10	43.5
Visually and physical impaired	1	4.3
Visually and physical impaired and learning difficulties	1	4.3
Deaf/Hard of hearing	4	17.4
Deaf-blind	2	8.7
Physical and learning disability and mental health problems	1	4.3
other	1	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It is clear that most students have more than one type of disabilities. In the sample, among the types of disabilities blind/visual disability and the mental health disability were the most common and the rarest disabilities identified among the SWDs.

Furthermore, the reasons for selecting the University for their Degree programme was also considered. As shown in Table 4.3.5, many attributes contributed for the selection of the University. However, one student responded that the selection of the University for her Degree programme was entirely based on the decision of the University Grant Commission.

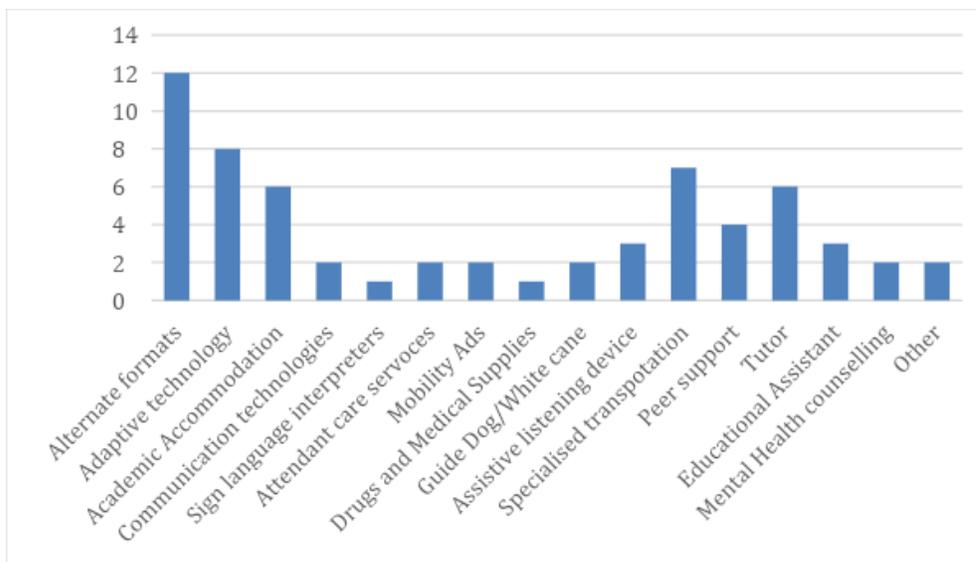
Furthermore, the reasons for selecting the University for their Degree programme was also considered. As shown in Table 4.3.5, there was more than one reason for the selection of the University. However, one student responded that the selection of the University for her Degree programme was entirely done based on the decision of the University Grant Commission.

**Table 4.3. 5: Reasons for selecting the University/Institute**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Missing	4	17.4
Accessibility	9	39.1

Accessibility and academic programmes offered	1	4.3
Accessibility, academic programmes offered and location	2	8.7
Accessibility, Academic programmes offered, Location, Reputation, Scholarship or Grant	1	4.3
Academic programmes offered	1	4.3
Academic programmes offered, Location	1	4.3
Location	2	8.7
Reputation	1	4.3
As selected by the UGC	1	4.3
Total	23	100.0

Literature shows there are different types of services that are required to fulfil the needs of SWDs on a day-to-day basis, to accommodate their disability (Figure 4.3.5). They are; alternate formats, adaptive technology, academic accommodations, communication technology, Sign language interpreters, attendant care services, mobility aids, drugs and medical supplies, guide dog/white cane, assistive listening device, specialized transportation systems, peer support, tutor, educational assistant, mental health counseling, and others. Responses of SWDs to the required services are shown below.



**Figure 4.3. 5: Required Services for SWDs**

According to Figure 4.3.5 the majority of SWDs needed alternate formats and adaptive technologies. Assistance of sign language interpreters and provision of drugs and medical supplies were the least required services sought by SWDs. Moreover, the fact that some SWDs required more than one service is corroborated by the responses recorded for types of disability (Appendix A6).

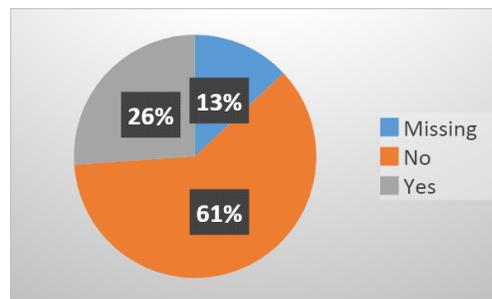
Receiving financial aids for SWDs (Table 4.3.6) in the form of a scholarship, student loan/grant/donation or academic award was also examined during the survey. According to the findings (Table 4.3.6), only 26.1% of the respondents had received financial aid. Three students from the University of Peradeniya mentioned that they were receiving financial aid from a ‘Public trustee fund’ and Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya.

**Table 4.3. 6: Receiving of financial aid by SWDs**

		Frequency	Percent
Missing		4	17.4
No		13	56.5
Yes		6	26.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### **4.3.3 Accessibility to Academic Material**

As SWDs obtaining information about their rights was identified as one of the important factors which was also explored during the survey (Figure 4.3.6). According to data, 61% have not had informed about their academic rights.



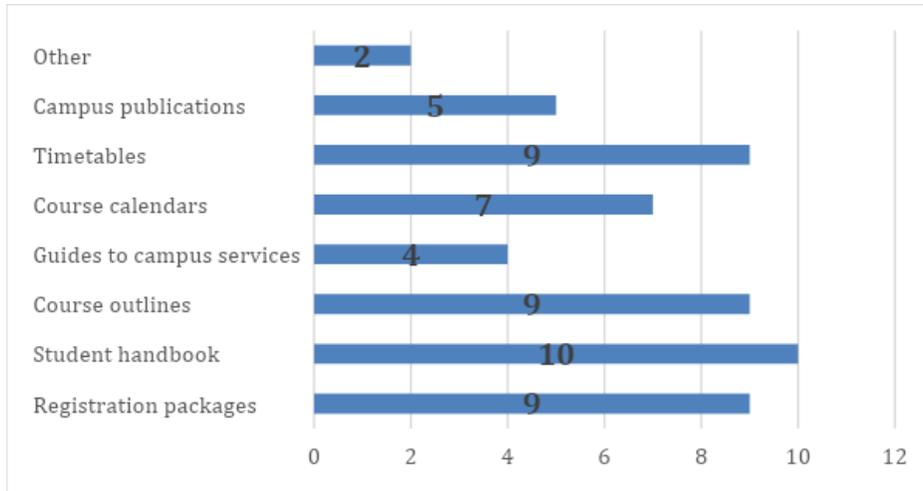
**Figure 4.3. 6: Informed About SWDs Academic Rights**

Furthermore, the sources of obtaining the information about the rights of the SWDs were also inquired and as shown in Table 4.3.7, it was revealed that different sources of informants were available in different Universities.

**Table 4.3. 7: Sources of obtaining the information about the rights of the SWDs**

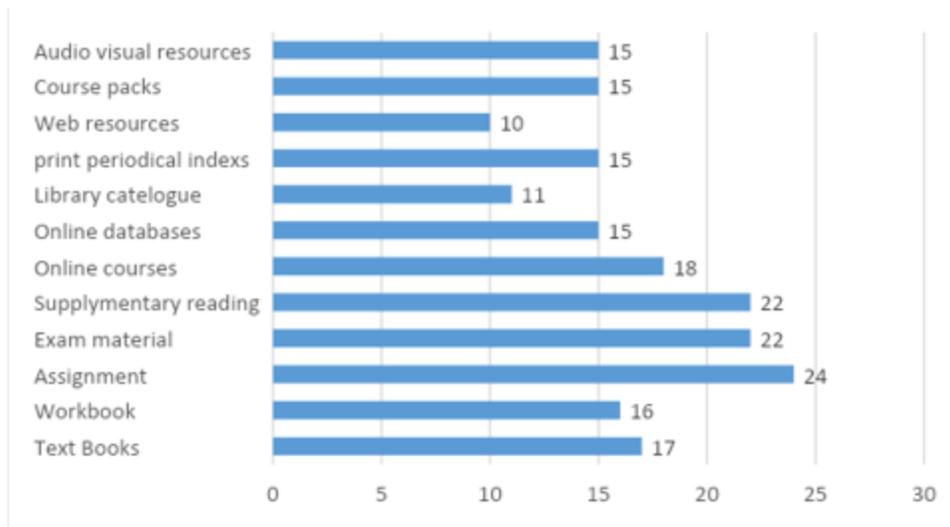
Source of information	Frequency	Percent
Missing	18	78.3
From lectures and by browsing the internet	1	4.3
from senior students	1	4.3
From the SNRU at the university, from the Internet, from the family members	1	4.3
from the SNRU in the University	1	4.3
From the society in the University for SWDs	1	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In the questionnaire there was a question to see whether the SWDs receive information in alternate formats that they can use at their Faculty/University/Institute. The types of alternate formats inquired were registration packages, student handbooks, course outlines, and guides to campus services, course calendars, timetables, University publications or other. According to the responses recorded (Figure 4.3.7), the majority of SWDs had received student handbooks, registration package and course outline. A guide to campus services was the material the least number of SWDs had received.



**Figure 4.3. 7: Alternate forms of Information for SWDs**

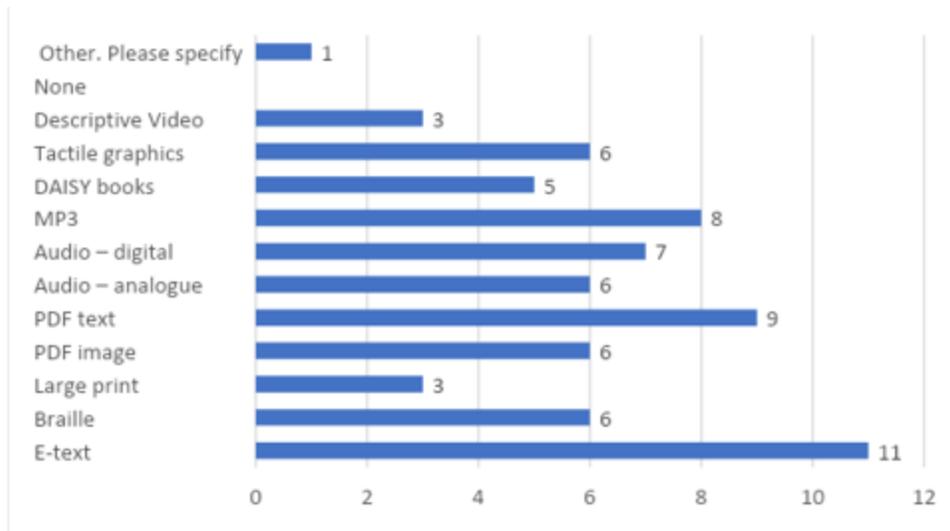
Information of the material that they require for their academic programme were also inquired by the questionnaire and the responses were illustrated in Figure 4.3.8. Assignments, supplementary reading, and exam materials were identified as the material SWDs need for their academic programmes.



**Figure 4.3. 8: Materials Required by SWD's for Their Academic Programmes**

The academic material that the institute currently provides in alternate format for SWDs were also explored. As the responses to the above questions SWDs reported the material they needed for their academic programmes. Figure 4.3.9 reports that the most preferred type of alternate formats they wished to receive was E-text, followed by PDF texts and Daisy books. but with

slightly low (6%) preferences were recorded by them for Tactile graphics, audio analogues, Braille, PDF images etc.



**Figure 4.3. 9: Alternate formats SWDs required for academic work**

In the survey, it was found that SWDs need more than one material (1-E-Text, 2-Braille material, 3-Large print, 4-Pdf image, 5-PDF Text, 6-Audio-Analogue, 7-Audio-digital, 9-MP3, 10-DAISY books, 11-Tactile graphics, 12-Descriptive Video, 13-other ) as shown in Table 4.3.8. Nevertheless, the data collected revealed that the institutes /universities provided only the following materials.

**Table 4.3. 8: Material provided by the University for SWDs**

Material	Frequency	Percent
No response	9	39.1
e-text & large prin	1	4.3
1,8	1	4.3
1,8,11	1	4.3
2,4,5,	1	4.3
2,8	1	4.3

3	1	4.3
5	1	4.3
7	2	8.7
8	1	4.3
9	1	4.3
None	3	13.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>

How do the different Universities provide materials in different formats to the SWDs is shown in the Appendix A6. According to the responses presented in the table, University of Peradeniya provides more formats such as Braille prints, large prints, PDF text and images, digital audio, and MP3 than all other Universities. University of Ruhuna provided Braille, Daisy books and descriptive video to SWDs while none is provided by the Eastern University.

The frequency of receiving academic material is important to continue academic work. SWDs responses to the question related to the frequency of receiving the services by the University is marked in Table 4.3.9 which shows that 74% of SWDs received such materials from time to time.

**Table 4.3. 9: Frequency of receiving academic material**

	Frequency	Percent
Missing	5	21.7
Sometimes	17	73.9
Never	1	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>

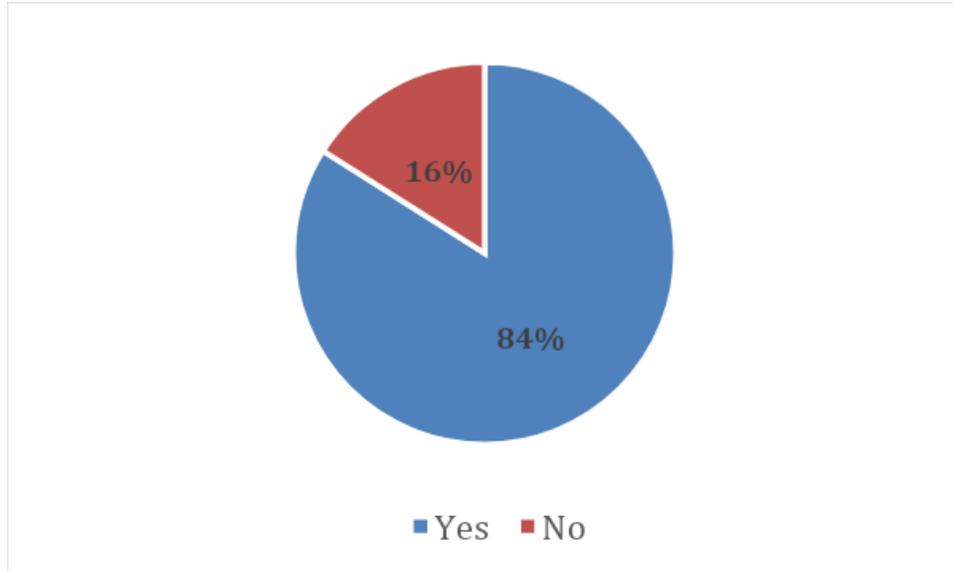
Responses of the SWDs on the alternative avenues of receiving academic materials are presented in Table 4.3.10.

**Table 4.3. 10: Avenues from where SWDs Received Academic Materials**

	Frequency	Percent
Missing	6	26.1
Disability Service Centre	6	26.0
Public Library	1	4.3
Computer lab	1	4.3
Disabled Service Centre and Professor	1	4.3
from friends	1	4.3
General Hospital	1	4.3
Professor	1	8.6
University Library	4	13.07
Other	1	4.3
Total	23	100.0

It was revealed that the Service Centers for SWDs in Universities provide academic material in different formats. Further, they received academic material from the Library and a number of other sources.

Use of technology by SWDs for their studies was also considered as an important factor in this survey. The following figure (Figure 4.3.10) shows responses (‘Yes’) for the statement “I am using technology for my studies”. According to the responses, 84% used different technologies for their learning purposes.



**Figure 4.3. 10: Use of Technology by SWDs for Their Learning Purposes**

Following table (Table 4.3.11) presents the frequency of special accommodations provided for SWDs in their classes such as 1- extra time for assignments, 2- extra time for tests, 3-preferential seating, 4 - Extra handouts, 5- computer or recording device use for note taking, 6-Advance copies of course notes and course requirements, 7- note taking friend, 8- Tutoring, 9-Peer support.

**Table 4.3. 11: Special Accommodations Provided for SWDs in Class**

Type of special accommodation	Frequency	Percent
Missing	7	30.4
1,2,3	1	4.3
1,2,3,4,5,6	1	4.3
1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	1	4.3
1,2,3,4,5,7,8	1	4.3
1,2,3,5	1	4.3
1,2,3,7,8,9	2	8.7
1,2,3,8	2	8.7

1.3.8.9	1	4.3
2	4	17.4
2,5	1	4.3
2,5,8	1	4.3
Total	23	100.0

As shown in the table, the universities provided extra time for assignments, tests and also preferential seating for SWDs. Providing computer or recording devices for the use of note taking were noted as mostly receiving resources by SWDs.

Furthermore, from the responses it was identified that the University of Peradeniya provided all the accommodations; i.e., 1- extra time for assignments, 2- extra time for tests, 3-preferential seating, 4-Extra handouts, 5- computer or recording device use for note taking, 6-Advance copies of course notes and course requirements, 7- note taking friend, 8- Tutoring, except peer support. Nevertheless, the Eastern University provided all special accommodations including peer support whereas the University of Ruhuna was the least service provider such as extra time for assignments and extra time for tests.

When considering the barriers that the SWDs encountered at the university, most students (30%) emphasised the ‘difficulties in mobility’ as one of the main barriers they faced at the university. In Universities, most of the buildings including the libraries do not have elevators and located in different places. This found it difficult to walk to the venues where lectures are held and at the same time when lectures are conducted in upper floors of the buildings their difficulties are multiplied. Further, one student reported the inability of using the library facility as access to the second and third floors of the library is not provided. Another student stated “*Sometimes I missed part of lectures as it takes time for me to walk from one lecture venue to another when they are far away. Not only that as I get tired when moving fast it is difficult to concentrate on lectures*”. Further, explaining the issues related to mobility within the University, another student reported ‘*especially in the first year, I had to move from one department to another, I mean to every department in order to get the special notifications*. This was one of the main problems faced especially during the first year. The same situation prevailed inside hostels as as highlighted by the one student.

Second issue that surfaced from the responses of students with low vision impairments was the difficulty of reading white/black boards and the computer screen. As a result, they had the difficulty of understanding diagrams and texts that were drawn on the board during lectures. One student from the university of Peradeniya mentioned that ‘*especially when we have lectures in*

*the Arts Theater; it was difficult to read (difficult to see) what the lecturer drew on the white board*'. Another student reported the difficulty to engage in learning when they are in a place that is exposed to direct sunlight.

As another issue, two students reported about the discrimination of SWDs by other students as a barrier that they encountered in the University.

When inquired about whether they are provided with adequate facilities at the university hostel to meet their needs, the responses were mixed which are reported in Table 4.3.12.

**Table 4.3. 12: Adequacy of Facilities at the University Hostel for SWDs**

	Frequency	Percent
Missing	9	39.1
No	6	26.1
Yes	8	34.8
Total	23	100.0

As shown in the Table, 35% of the participants were satisfied with the available facilities in the university accommodation. However, 26% responded that the facilities were not adequate to meet their needs. Among them one student reported the unwillingness of other students to share the room with SWDs. Further, the SWDs reported the difficulty of finding storage space to keep the supportive equipment in the room at the university accommodation.

Views of SWDs regarding their experience at the University was measured using Likert scale type questions. The scale consists of 6 levels; 1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neither Agree or Disagree, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Disagree, 6- Not relevant. The responses are presented in Table 4.3.13.

**Table 4.3. 13: Views of SWDs Regarding Their Experience at the University/Institute**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6	Missing
a) I enjoy interacting with others, including peers, professors and other visitors.	17.4	52.2	4.3	4.3	4.3	82.4	17.4
b) I feel comfortable asking help from others, including friends, caregivers and strangers.	4.3	47.8	8.7	8.7	8.7	-	21.7
c) I can use a private room at special needs resource unit/centre to be used for study purposes such as							
i. texting (supporting for reading and writing)	17.4	26.1	4.3	-	21.7	-	30.4
ii. tutoring	17.4	21.7	4.3	-	17.4	-	39.1
iii. counselling	8.7	34.8	4.3	8.7	17.4	-	26.1
iv. meeting		21.4	4.3	8.7	26.1	4.3	34.8
d) I have a personal care attendant.	4.3	26.1		13.0	17.4	13.0	26.1
e) Other students treat me with respect	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.4	8.7		21.7
f) I am satisfied with my university experience as a disabled student	4.3	34.8	8.7	13.0	8.7	4.3	26.1
g) Peers think that SWDs are overly sensitive	21.7	30.4	43	8.7	8.7	4.3	21.7
h) I need advising/counselling support regarding my matters	13		52.2	4.3	8.7		21.7
i) I am willing to approach my professors regarding my special needs.	13.0	43.5		13.0	4.3	4.3	21.7
j) I feel shy/embarrassed when requesting help from my professors	4.3	34.8	4.3	4.3	17.4	8.7	26.1
k) I feel shy/embarrassed when requesting help from my peers	8.7	34.8	4.3	8.7	17.4	4.3	21.7

l) I am treated as an equal part in my study group.	8.7	43.5	4.3	4.3	13.0		26.1
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According to the responses for the statement ‘*I enjoy interacting with others, including peers, professors and other visitors*’, 69% students responded as ‘strongly agree’/’agree’. Further supporting this 51% of students responded as ‘strongly agree’/’Agree’ for the statement, ‘I feel comfortable asking help from others, including friends, caregivers and strangers’ and also 52% being responded as ‘strongly agree/agree’ to the statement on ‘I am treated as equal part in my study group’. SWDs views of the use of the special needs resource unit clearly reflected in their responses, 44%, 39%, 44%, 21.4% of the sample stated that they can use it as a private room to be used for study purposes such as texting, tutoring, counseling and meetings respectively. However, when those not responded were removed, 63% stated that they used a special needs resource unit for texting (supporting and reading) and 59% reported the use for counseling. Thus, it is clear that a special needs resource unit is useful for SWDs studies. As shown in the table, 30% responded that they have a personal care attendant. In considering this while removing the ‘not relevant’ percentage, 41% of the sample had personal care attendants.

Further, SWDs views regarding the satisfaction of university experience as a disabled student, 39% agreed that they are satisfied with their University experience as a disabled student. The fact that other students respect SWDs might be a factor for their satisfaction. 35% of SWDs responded as ‘Agree/strongly agree’ to the statement on ‘Other students treat me with respect’. Furthermore, responses of the SWDs for the statement “their peers think that they are overly sensitive” received a 51% agreement from the sample selected.

Moreover, by agreeing to the statements (57%), ‘I am willing to approach my professors regarding my special needs’, and revealed their need of contacting university academic staff members regarding their special needs. However, by agreeing to statements, ‘I feel shy/embarrassed when requesting help from my professors’, and ‘I feel shy/embarrassed when requesting help from my peers, 39% and 44% respectively indicated SWD’s hesitance to get help from both groups.

#### **4.3.4 General information**

As the last part of the survey questionnaire some general information of SWDs relating to their university/institute education was inquired. For the question, “the main reason for starting to study at university” SWDs’ responses can be summarized as below. Three students responded as studying in a university is one of their ambitions and one student among them admired the support and dedication of her parents and family towards her GCE (A/L) results which made her dream come true. While having a similar thought one member from the sample responded that

the reason for study at a university was to please his parents and also to serve the public as a good citizen accepted by the society in the future.

Another student stated the reason for University education is to obtain a job. He further stated that hitherto disabled community have not been given opportunity to secure other employment and however, obtaining a degree from a university afford them a much better chance as obtain a permanent government job'. Supporting the same view, another student pointed out that studying in a university supports graduating, getting a job and living like other abled students. Three participants reported their aspiration to obtain higher education from a university and their desire to work in a government institute. Endorsing the view, another student stated, 'I think university education is the fundamental basis for enhancing his value as a disabled student and for excelling in society as an independent human being in the future'.

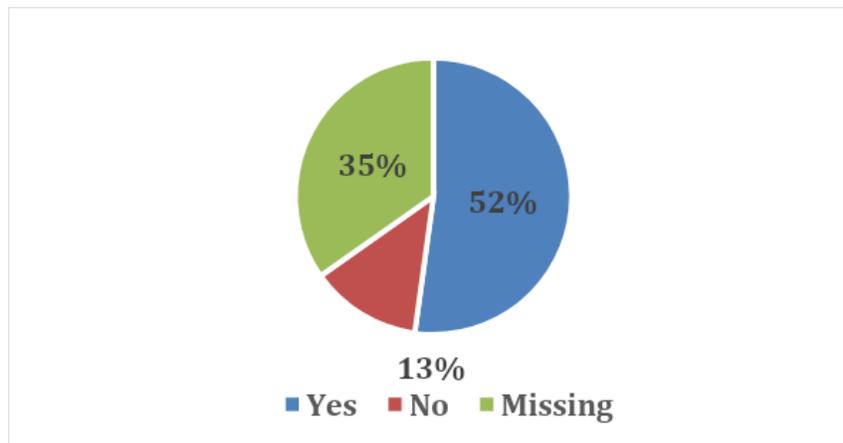
In addition to asking the reason, the survey also sought views from SWDs on the benefits of going to university/institute. From the SWDs, 70 % accepted that learning in a university/institute opens more avenues. Two students reported the possibility of obtaining thorough knowledge and one emphasized the opportunity of getting standard education in a fascinating environment from a renowned university. Further one student said, 'like abled students we also have the capacity. So after completing higher education, like abled students we also have the capacity to work with self-confidence and I feel like that I can live in the society'. Further as benefits some SWDs pointed out the possibility of getting a job opportunity, especially a permanent job. In addition to obtaining the knowledge, being able to serve in the public service permanently and to gain a good reputation is also another benefit. Regarding a SWD's responsibility, one student stated that studying in a university provides education and skills development and experience on how to deal with people in the society.

#### **4.3.4.1 Dreams of SWDs and their aspirations after your graduation were also explored.**

According to responses, one student's dream was to receive an award/prize by obtaining the highest marks in the monthly term examination for one subject. Another student responded by being selected as a student who was admitted to the University under the special intake. Her dream was to acquire knowledge, understanding and experience, and get to make friends. Other than that the majority of students' response was to get a job. Among them one student mentioned her dream is to get a permanent job and gain recognition in the society which is not available to persons with disabilities. Similarly, another student's dream was to obtain a white collar job and live independently. In addition, two SWDs' dream was to improve their capabilities in art & culture and sports.

#### **4.3.4.2 The impact of disability on SWDs' academic life**

Figure 4.3.12 shows how SWDs responded for the impact of disability on SWDs academic life. Data reveals that 52% of SWDs highlighted the impact in a negative way. Their comments can be categorized based on the disability type and given below.



**Figure 4.3.12: Impact of disability towards SWDs academic life**

Visually impaired students stated that difficulty in reading led to a great deal of problems such as waste of time available as they require longer time for reading books, studying and examination than students without disabilities, slowed the phase of learning resulting them being lagged behind the schedule, not continuously being able to focus on study due to eye straining in nights. They believed that their visual impairments deprived them of being engaged in academic and other educational activities.

Students with hearing impairments perceived that difficulty in hearing lectures clearly as a result of not being able to make notes, requiring them to take longer time for reading when they engage in their studies and examinations, which they attributed to wasting of time were the stumbling blocks in their university career. They felt that due to the hearing disability they could not gather adequate knowledge, which they consider themselves being unfit to prepare and sit for examinations.

Difficulty to attend lectures when they are conducted upstairs, travel long distances for lectures, difficulties confronted in recording the information when lectures are delivered were the impacts that students with physical disabilities confronted as reported by them.

Participation in extracurricular activities is no doubt beneficial for any student in a university and therefore the questionnaire examined the opportunities the SWDs can participate in extracurricular activities in the University/institute. The responses of SWDs (1-Sports, 2-Art

based activities, 3- Recreational activities, 4-None, 5- Other) for the question “In which extracurricular activities do you participate in?” are marked in Table 4.3.14.

**Table 4.3. 14: Number of SWDs by Extracurricular Activities Participated**

Response	Frequency	Percent
1,2,3	4	17.4
1,3	1	4.3
1,2,3	1	4.3
2	2	8.7
2,3	1	4.3
4	4	17.4
4,5	1	4.3
Missing	9	39.1
Total	23	100.0

According to data, it revealed that 35% of students engaged in more than one extracurricular activity. However, it seems that 56.5% of SWDs (none + not responded) were not engaged in any extracurricular activity. Engagement in extracurricular activities of SWDs, based on the universities were calculated (University of Peradeniya 7/10, University of Ruhuna 0/7, Eastern 1/6, SLTC- not responded) and was found that the participation of them in extracurricular activities was poor except for University of Peradeniya. This situation may have arisen due to the difficulty in accessing the venues and many other reasons explained in the following para,

Further, the survey clued that attitudes of people around was the main problem in getting them involved in these extracurricular activities. Responses recorded by four participants for the statements ‘Others think that SWDs can't do sports’ and ‘not kind enough for SWDs when engaging SWDs in sports very clearly confirmed this fact.

Spending of SWDs leisure time in the University was inquired in the survey and found that SWDs utilized their leisure for different activities. ‘Reading books (subject related and other) in

the hostel or library (6/23), doing sports and use the gym (3/23), discuss subject matters with friends (2/23) engaging in music programmes, listening to radio and watch television (5/23), spending alone (1/23), surf in the internet and use of social websites (3/23) were among the leisure time activities that they are engaged within a low key.

**Table 4.3. 15: Main Source of Support for SWDs in Studying at Daily Life/university**

Source of support	Daily life	University	Daily life & University	Not any support
Family	8	3	5	7
Friends/neighbors	4	3	6	10
University staff	-	10	1	13
General medical (doctor/nurse)	6	1	2	14
Specialist medical (hospital, specialist therapist)	7	2	1	13
Officially provided local services	1		2	20
Religious organization.	3		5	15

According to the findings, the support from the family (17/23) as well as neighbours (15/23) for their daily life and /or university were highlighted. Further, the support of the university staff for their university life was not satisfactory either (9/23). Moreover, the support from local services is not satisfied at all (3/23). However, except for family support extended for day-today life, they have rated the highest responses for other sources of support available for them in a negative manner.

#### **4.3.5 Suggestions for improve the situation for SWDs at University/institute**

Students' responses for the question in the survey on the matter under reference is noted below.

- *Provide a special room to cater for the needs of SWDs.*
- *Implement a special counseling service to help SWDs.*
- *Provide necessary equipment and assistive technology.*
- *Provide opportunities for SWDs to study courses of their choice.*
- *Make other students aware of SWDs and their needs.*
- *Provide facilities to improve the English knowledge of SWDs.*
- *Take necessary steps to change attitudes of peers towards SWDs.*
- *Enhance facilities and provide computers free of charge.*
- *Provide good guidance upon admission to the university,*
- *Deploy one academic or one academic per student to look after them during the university education period*
- *Provide modern learning equipment.*

Moreover, respondents highlighted the persons who should be targeted within the university to increase the awareness on these issues, particulars of which are as follows:

- Vice Chancellor, Deans and Heads of the Departments
- University Administration.
- Academic staff members of the university
- non- academic staff members
- Students /peers
- Student counselors

Reasons for the need for raising awareness of SWDs are given below.

- Lack of trust in SWDs in the University
- The misunderstanding others have of SWDs
- Problems faced in lectures, examinations and collecting and evaluating SWDs answer scripts.  
(need to collect and evaluate them separately)
- Inadequate allocation of University funds for SWDs.
- Inadequate assistance for the special needs of SWDs
- Lack of employment opportunities to persons with disabilities after graduating.
- Lack of support from the society.

The main issues which are required to raise awareness of SWDs were also explored during the survey. The responses are:

- Problems in receiving relevant information from peer groups.
- Lack of opportunities for social interaction.
- Less employment opportunities for disabled educated people.
- Nonexistence of disability access in infrastructure facilities.
- Lack of facilities (Computers, scholarships, financial assistance for disabled students to purchase suitable equipment)
- Lack of support groups from the government.
- Lack of additional financial assistance from government non-government agencies.

Suggestions of the SWDs to enhance the status of their university life were also collected through the survey. They can be categorized as awareness related, resources related, academic related, ethical related and other.

- Introduce suitable/appropriate evaluation methods in examinations for students with hearing impairments.
- Deliver lectures in person only.
- Provide required resources, academic materials, equipment and financial assistance.
- Providing facilities to use technology to SWDs.
- Provide counseling for positive thinking.
- Disability access in libraries and other places.
- Make a platform to improve disabled students' talents
- Provide opportunities to work collaboratively with ordinary students.
- Providing the opportunity to showcase talent.
- Providing the opportunity to engage in extracurricular activities.
- Provide good guidance on admission to the university by deploying one academic or one academic per person to look after each student during the university education period
- Provide modern learning equipment
- Gather students and ask them daily problems and provide solutions.
- Providing a special room for SWDs to cater to their special needs,
- Provide opportunities to improve English knowledge.
- Make other students aware of disabled students and their needs
- Treating them with kindness, respect, love and affection.

- Better attitudes should be developed among students,
- All special needs students should have the same rights as the other university students.

## 4.4 Results: Parents of SWDs

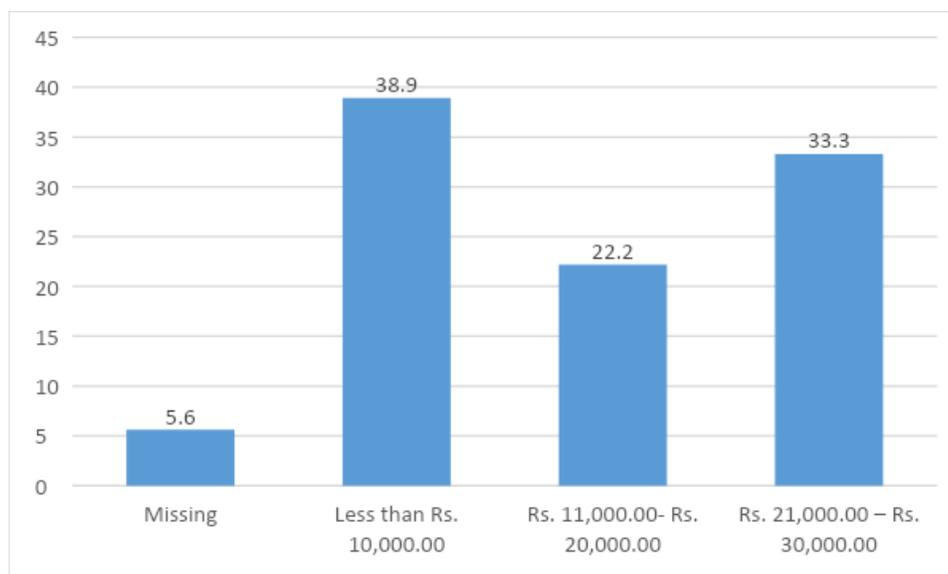
### 4.4.1 Demographic Information

Even though questionnaires were administered to 40 parents, only 12 completed questionnaires were received. Thus, the response rate is 30%. Both mothers and fathers of SWDs responded in an equal manner, recording 50% each in providing demographic information. So, the sample response represents the views of “mothers” and “fathers” in the population. Their occupations were noted in the survey and shown in Table 4.4.1. According to the data, 22.2% of the sample is non-occupied and 11.1% they were retired.

**Table 4.4. 1: Sample of Parents by their Occupations**

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Development Officer	1	5.6
Farmer	4	22.2
House wife	1	5.6
Laborer	3	16.7
Minor Industry	1	5.6
No occupation	4	22.2
Retired	2	11.1
Urban council laborer	1	5.6
Total	18	100.0

As the demographic data, the income of the parents was also considered as an important factor in the survey. As illustrated in the Figure 4.3.2, parents drawing monthly income less than Rs. 10,000 was found to be 40 and there were bread winners of 33.3% who drew income of Rs. 21,000 – 30,000/- on monthly basis. None of the respondents were found to be in the income category of Rs.31, 000 and above among them.



**Figure 4.4. 1: Monthly income of the parents**

Parents' awareness of the existing acts, laws and conventions pertaining to disabled persons in Sri Lanka was examined. The data revealed that 61% of the respondents were not aware of these conventions and 6% did not have any idea on availability of conventions for disabled persons either.

**Table 4.4. 2: Awareness of Existing Conventions on Disability**

Awareness	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	16.7
No	11	61.1
Do not know	1	5.6
Total	15	83.3
Missing	3	16.7
total	18	100.0

Of the three parents who are aware of the availability of conventions, only one parent was aware of the 2 conventions; i.e.; *Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act No 28* of and *Disability Law and Legal Mobilization in Sri Lanka*, who being rent of a SWD from the University of Peradeniya. Surprisingly, not a single parent was aware of the *United Nations*

*Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and on the international acts, laws and conventions on persons with disabilities* either.

Moreover, when inquired about the source of information through which they came to know about them, it was found that the media has played a major role while the websites and schools were also identified as key informants. However, the Universities, workplaces and hospitals have not acted as active sources of informants, even though they are usually perceived by the general public.

Table 4.4.3 illustrates the type of the disability of their children as responded by their parents. As shown, children of 61% of the respondents were Blind/Visually impaired and only one parent had a child with mobility impairment. Not a single parent was found to be having a child with of deaf/hard of hearing or deaf-blind impairment.

**Table 4.4. 3: Type of Disability of Children**

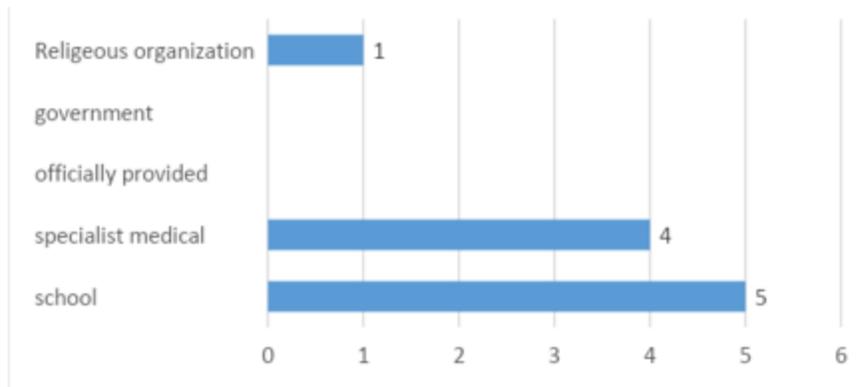
Type of Disability	Frequency	Percent
Missing	4	22.2
Blind/Visually impaired	11	61.1
Mobility impaired	1	5.6
Medical disability	2	11.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In this survey, the support and services received by parents on account of their child’s disability was also considered. As shown in Table 4.4.4, the majority (83%) have received help from the family, while 11% were supported by the friends and neighbors. Only one parent has reported that they received the support from the government.

**Table 4.4.4: Support and Services Received by Parents**

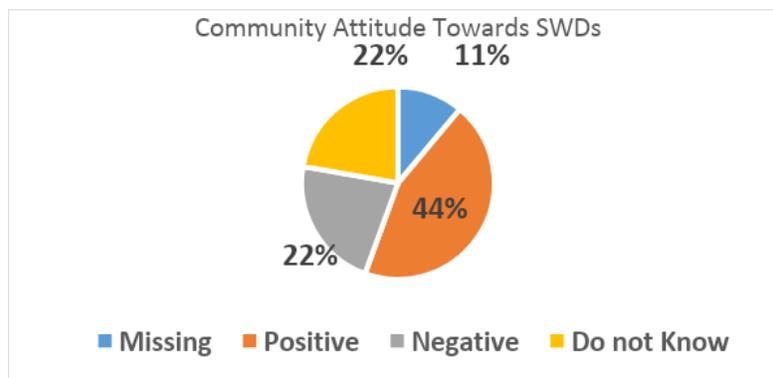
Source of Support	Frequency	Percent
Family	15	83.3
Friends/neighbors	2	11.1
Missing	1	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It was not evident from their responses, that their children have not received support as expected from the Universities. Among them 12/17, (70.5%) marked their family as the main source of support/services.



**Figure 4.4. 2: Available Support Services for SWDs**

Parents' responses regarding the community attitude towards SWDs was also explored (Figure 4.4.3.). As shown in the figure, most parents (45%) said the community has a positive attitude towards children with disabilities, however, 22% expressed that the community attitude towards them was negative.



**Figure 4.4.3: Community Attitude towards SWDs**

Following are the experiences that parents have gained in respect of the attitudes of the community on the disability of their children:

- Community tries to keep the children with disabilities away from them.
- Kind to them but sometimes people look at the children with disgust
- Think as a person who could not do anything in the society
- Some have positive perceptions about them. For instance, once a speech delivered by a child with a disability was admired.
- Help in exercising their rights

- Community always has a positive attitude towards them. An institution assisted greatly in my daughter's studies.
- No assistance available when it is needed and disability citizens are ignored by the community

Survey aimed at identifying the ways of raising awareness and generating positive attitudes in the community. The parents' responses received for this question are given below.

- Educating them and providing opportunities to work as another member in the society
- Raise awareness about the competencies of the disabled children.
- Make the community aware of the CWDs or SWDs
- Help them to exercise their rights.
- CWDs are also a part of the society and thus instead of empathy towards them we have extend our assistance to them.

Further, parents' suggestions were obtained through a questionnaire on how the community awareness can be made, particulars of which are as follows:

- Providing a good education / Creating a social pattern in which these people can respond to certain problems in the society with the help of others / Special attention of the government for the future of these people
- Awareness raising of the society about the disabled children through the media function.  
Acting to give priority to the disabled in public places

Following Table 4.4.5 depicts the parents' perception regarding the child's opinion in making decisions about his/her life.

**Table 4.4. 5: Parents' Perception Regarding the Child's Opinion**

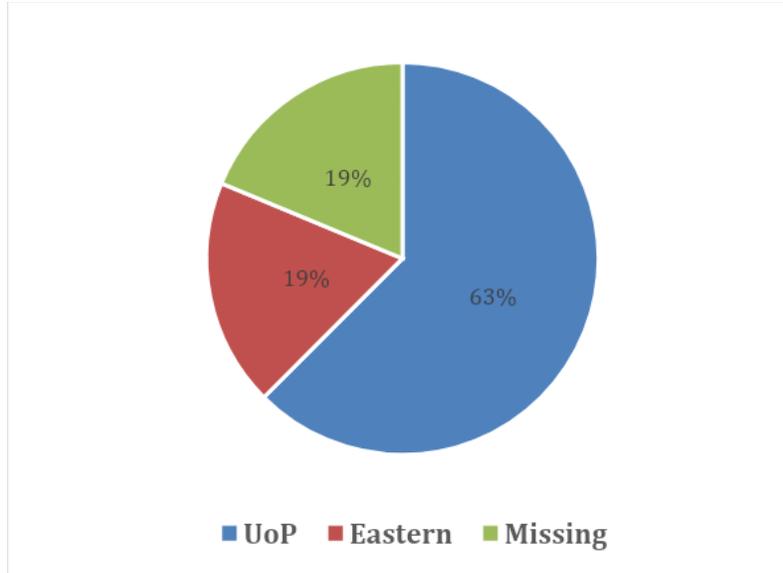
Circumstance	Frequency	Percent
Missing	5	27.8
Health	1	5.6
Health & Education	1	5.6
Health, Education & Marriage	11	61.1
Total	18	100.0

As shown in Table 4.4.5, the majority of the SWDs relied on their own opinion in making decisions related to their health, education, and marriage. In order to explore this further, a question was included in the survey to see whether the SWDs contact/discuss with their parents, before entering University on their prospective study programme, especially curricula, extra-curricular activities and available services, for which parents of SWDs responded in the following manner:

**Table 4.4. 6: SWDs Discussed about Degree Programme with Parents Prior to Enter the University**

	Frequency	Percent
Missing	4	22.2
1	5	27.8
1,2	1	5.6
1,2,3	5	27.8
1,3	2	11.1
Other	1	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to data obtained which is appearing s in Table 4.4.6, about 77% of parents noted that their child discussed the degree programme (1-Curricula, 2- Extra-curricular activities, 3- Available services ) with them before entering the university. Further, about 28% of parents said that their child discussed with them about the curricula, extra-curricular activities and available services of their study programme. Data analysis shows that 62%of the children are studying at the University of Peradeniya (Figure 4.3.5).



**Figure 4.4. 4: University/Institute where child is studied**

As the research team identified the importance of parents' views on the services provided by the University/Institute or the need assessment survey of this project, a section was allocated for that. There were problems that the respondents' child encountered at the University/institution, and responses received are reported in the Table 4.3.7.

**Table 4.4. 7: Problems encountered by SWDs at the University**

a) Access to	b) Problems encountered
Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is difficult to climb up and down steps due to poor eyesight. (1/17)</li> <li>● Visual difficulties due to exposure to sun (2/17)</li> <li>● No specific facilities (3/17)</li> </ul>
Lecture halls/rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is difficult to look at the electronic equipment long time.</li> <li>● No specific facilities (3/17)</li> <li>● Preference is given to other students and not to SWDs</li> </ul>
Student common room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No specific facilities (3/17)</li> </ul>
Toilets/Canteens/Library/Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No specific facilities (3/17)</li> </ul>
Accommodation	Satisfied

Study programmes	Satisfied
Other facilities	Not adequate number of computers
Interact with peers	Satisfied
Interaction with academic staff	Satisfied
Interaction with non-academic staff	Satisfied
availability of learning materials	Somewhat satisfied
realization of academic activities	Somewhat satisfied

According to the responses, it was revealed that the available facilities for SWDs in buildings were not adequate, especially for needs of blind/visually impaired students as well as mobility impaired students were highly ignored and not cared for. Regarding the lecture/classrooms the issues remained the same and particularly the parents' opined that most facilities are meant taking into consideration the preferences of general students. They are neither, satisfied with the available facilities in toilets, canteens and the library. In the meantime, parents expressed their happiness over the interactions of their child with non-academic staff. Furthermore, the response recorded by parents for the available learning material and accommodation facilities in the University/Institution for SWDs were found to be somewhat satisfied.

There were two questions to obtain parents' views on the special services and accommodations provided by the university/institution. Participants' responses are given below:

- Extended testing time, use of enlarged font sizes of question papers and all other facilities which are needed to visually impaired students.
- Need an assistant in exams and academic activities.
- Need front row seats in lecture halls
- There is no grief not receiving special facilities. It is a noble quality to live contentedly with the facilities available.
- As a visually impaired person, he has to go to the General Hospital frequently. It is an impediment to his studies and therefore needs assistance.
- Lack of their own equipment to study online in the current pandemic situation. Problems with internet connectivity
- Difficult to get an air conditioner.
- Transport and financial assistance
- Reading books and using the library

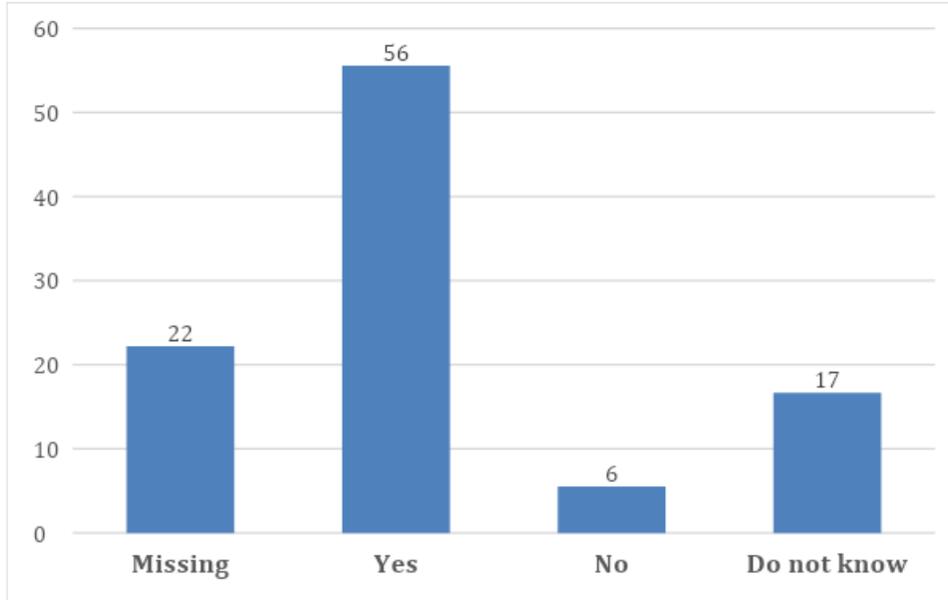
Parents' views on their child's interaction with others, including peers, staff, and visitors are given below:

- Like to be friendly
- Keeps in touch with family in day-to-day activities
- Have a good relationship with everyone
- Make relationships in a very friendly manner
- Happy with others.

Another question included in the survey was to ask parents their views of how their child cope without parental guidance and support.

- Her daughter can do her work alone under guidance.
- Even though her son is not able to fulfill all his wishes, he seems to be living a good life by choosing the good and bad of his parents.
- Follow the guidance of parents as parents know.
- She even asks parents when choosing subjects and we are always there to help ease the pressure during exams and it is a great help to her.

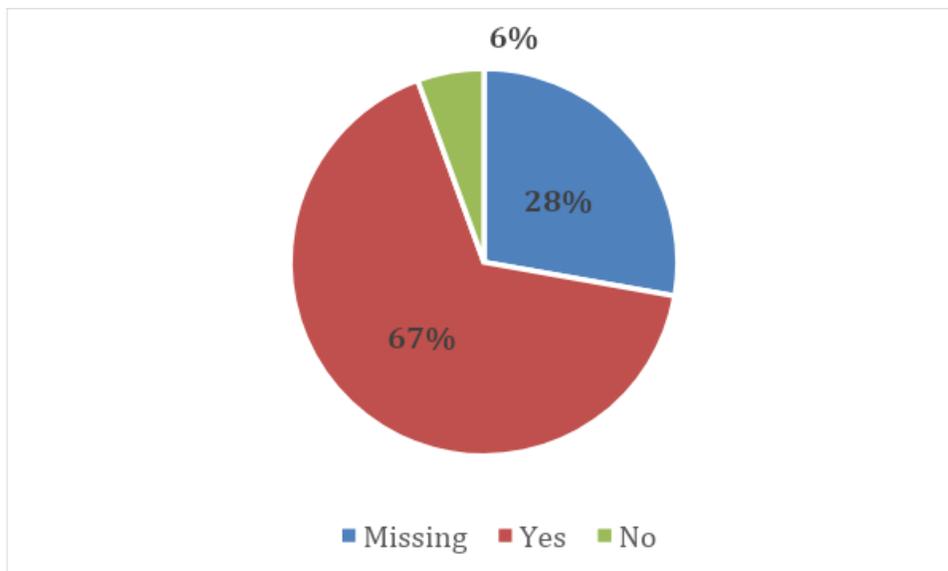
Parental responses were also examined to see whether their child communicated his/her needs adequately with the authorities and peers. The responses received were shown in Figure 4.3.6.



**Figure 4.4. 5: SWDs needs communicated to the authorities**

As shown in Figure 4.3.6, nearly 56% parents reported that their child communicated his/her needs adequately with the authorities and peers. However, 18% have not had an idea about that.

Finally parents' views regarding the university experience of their child was inquired. Importantly, 67% of parents thought that the university experience will have a positive impact on their child's future. However 5% of the parents worried about the impact of the university experience to their child.



**Figure 4.4.5: Impact of university experience on child's future**

They also provided reasons for their responses as mentioned in the below.

- Ability to face challenges and build up self-confidence with experiences.
- Carry out studies successfully.
- Despite the disability, I live with good attitudes and in good spirit.
- The experience gained about the society. Awareness on how to work appropriately in different places.
- It gave me great pleasure when I was selected for the university. The education and knowledge gained through it will help in brightening her life and make a good contribution to the society
- My child is doing her studies successfully though she is suffering from a respiratory issue. She is receiving positive responses from other students and academic staff members.
- University experience will give a good experience for my child's future
- Getting a degree and to secure an employment
- By getting a degree and secure a permanent job

From the responses received from the parents, all of them (100%) had positive attitudes regarding the student career of their child at the University. To the question “Do you foresee your child graduating from the university?” all parents had responded 'Yes'. The parents’ response to the question on ‘Do you feel that the barriers are too great?’ are shown in Table 4.3.8. According to the data, 33.3% of parents felt that the barriers are great and 17% was uncertain about it.

**Table 4.4. 8: Parents’ views on barriers in the University**

	Frequency	Percent
Missing	7	38.9
Yes	6	33.3
No	2	11.1
Uncertain	3	16.7
Total	18	100.0

Reasons for their answers were also requested. The barriers identified by parents such as difficulty in reading and gathering information, accessibility to the library and lack of printed

material in suitable forms, and lack of assistance from the university community etc; reflect the insufficiency of facilities and accessibility. A parent felt that some of the peers look-down on them due to their disability.

In the survey, it was examined whether the parents foresee their child securing a job after graduation. As shown in Table 4.4.9, out of the responses received, 33% responded as ‘Yes’ and interestingly 40% responded for the same as ‘Uncertain’. Nevertheless no one said ‘No’.

**Table 4.4. 9: Certainty of securing a job**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	33.3
Uncertain	1	5.6
Missing	11	61.1
Total	18	100.0

The reasons for their responses are given below:

- These people are not offering government or private sectors' jobs as there are a large number of graduates who are already unemployed.
- I hope the job will be offered as there are more concerns towards the SWDs.
- He is already engaged in a job.
- I have my confident if my child gets a degree then my child could be able to get a job

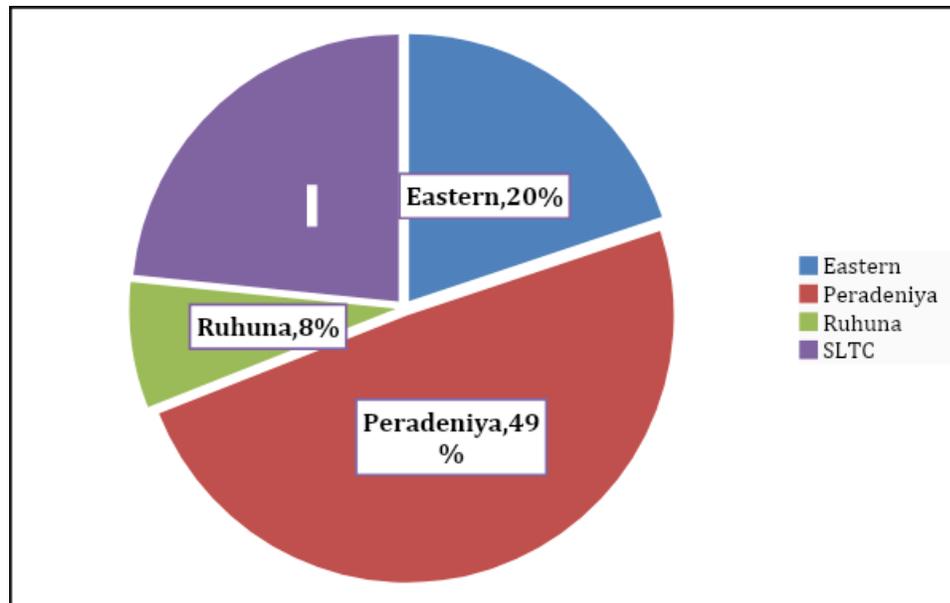
Finally, parents’ suggestions for improvements were taken at the survey. Their suggestions were given below.

- Improve services and facilities as prescribed by local and international treaties and conventions.
- Develop and update existing facilities: Provide computers and financial assistance.
- Provide concessions when they purchase equipment.
- Provide more opportunities to improve English and ICT competency.
- Provide facilities and guidance if they expect to follow postgraduate degrees.
- Provide hostel facilities for these students throughout their period of studies.
- Improvements in teaching learning methods.
-

## 4.5 Results: Peers

In the process of developing inclusive higher education for SWDs, peers have an important role to perform. Therefore, in assessing the needs of SWDs in the higher education process, the baseline survey also collected the information on the knowledge of the peers in relation to SWDs. Given below is the survey results on the peers of the SWDs.

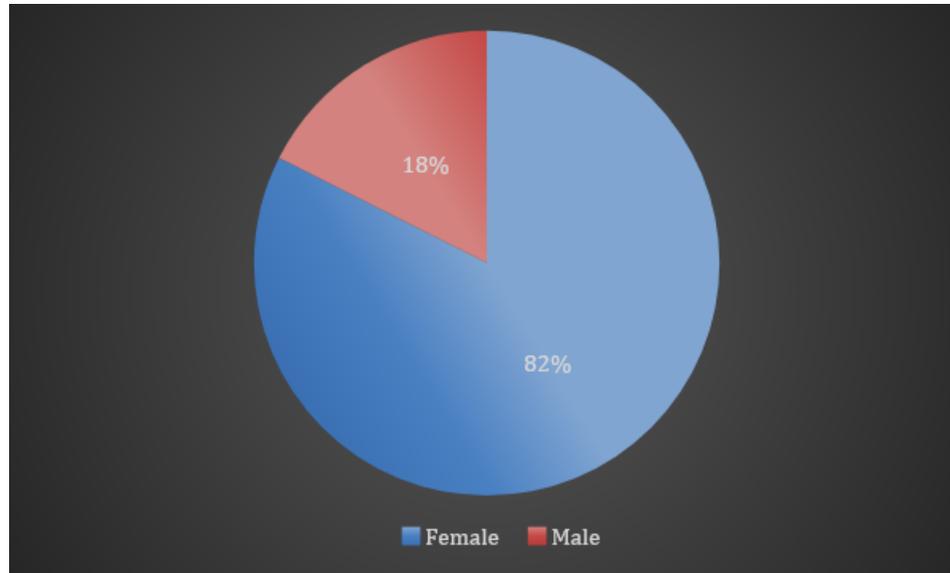
The overall response rate of the peers of the SWDs' for the baseline survey was 81% of the selected sample of 210. The response rate for University of Peradeniya was 122% whereas for Ruhuna 26%. Of the total responses (171), 49% were from Peradeniya. The lowest percentage among the peers was observed from Ruhuna (8%).



*Figure 4.5. 1: Distribution of Peers of SWDs by University*

### 4.5.1 Background information of the Sampled Peers

When the sampled peers of SWDs are disaggregated by gender of the overall sample as well as individual universities, majority are females (overall - 82%) (see Figure 4.4.2).



**Figure 4.5. 2: Distribution of Peers of SWDs' by Gender**

Sampled peers came from several different faculties of the Universities. 71% of the peer students came from Arts Faculties from University of Peradeniya, Eastern and Ruhuna (See Table 4.5.1). From SLTC, there were 9%, 10%, and 4% from Engineering, Business and Computing Schools, respectively. 6% of the peers were from the Faculty of Science from University of Peradeniya, Ruhuna and Eastern. The peer students' sample was mainly administered among senior year students (74%) than first year in all the universities. Furthermore, the majority of the peer students were doing special degrees (76%) rather than general degrees. In the case of Peradeniya and Eastern, 95% and 85% were peers who were doing special degrees.

**Table 4.5.1: Distribution of Peers of SWDs' by Faculty and University**

University	Faculty						Total
	Engineering	Arts	Business	Computing	Medicine	Science	
Eastern	0	32	0	0	1	1	34
	0	94.12	0	0	2.94	2.94	100
	0	18.93	0	0	0.73	0.73	20.12
Peradeniya	0	83	0	0	0	1	84
	0	98.81	0	0	0	1.19	100
	0	49.11	0	0	0	0.73	49.7

Ruhuna	0	5	0	0	0	8	13
	0	38.46	0	0	0	61.54	100
	0	2.96	0	0	0	5.84	7.69
SLTC	15	0	17	6	0	0	38
	39.47	0	44.74	15.79	0	0	100
	8.87	0	10.06	3.55	0	0	22.49
Total	15	120	17	6	1	10	169
	8.87	71.01	10.06	3.55	0.59	5.92	100
	8.87	71.01	10.06	3.55	0.59	5.92	100

#### 4.5.2 Assessment of Peers Awareness about Disability

A knowledge of the existence of a Special Needs Unit/Centre (SNRU) in the University can be considered as an indirect measure of the awareness of the SWDs in campus. In the overall sampled peers, only 30% was aware of the existence of a SNRU in their respective campus. Table 4.5.2 below shows that 43% of the Peradeniya peers were aware of the SNRU in their campus. 23%, 18% and 15% of the students in Ruhuna, Eastern and SLTC respectively were aware of the existence of the SNRU in their campus. However, close to 80% or more of the respondents of the universities other than Peradeniya were unaware of having SNRUs in their campuses. This can be taken as the Peers' awareness about the facilities available for SWDs.

**Table 4.5. 2: Awareness of a Special Needs Unit/ Centre in Campus by University**

University	SNRU Exist on Campus?			
	I do not Know	No	Yes	Total
Eastern	22	6	6	34
	64.7	17.65	17.65	100
	12.86	3.51	3.51	19.88
Peradeniya	42	6	36	84
	50	7.14	42.86	100

	24.56	3.51	21.05	49.12
Ruhuna	6	4	3	13
	46.15	30.77	23.08	100
	3.51	2.34	1.75	7.6
SLTC	18	16	6	40
	45	40	15	100
	10.52	9.36	3.51	23.39
Total	87	32	51	171
	51.46	18.73	29.82	100
	51.46	18.73	29.82	100

According to the sampled peers, 67% of them has had some form of contact with SWDs prior to entering the university. As shown in Table 4.5.3 below, of the sampled universities, Eastern peers had the highest rate (85%) of prior contact with SWDs before entering the University followed by Peradeniya peers (60%) SLTC (67%) and Ruhuna (62%).

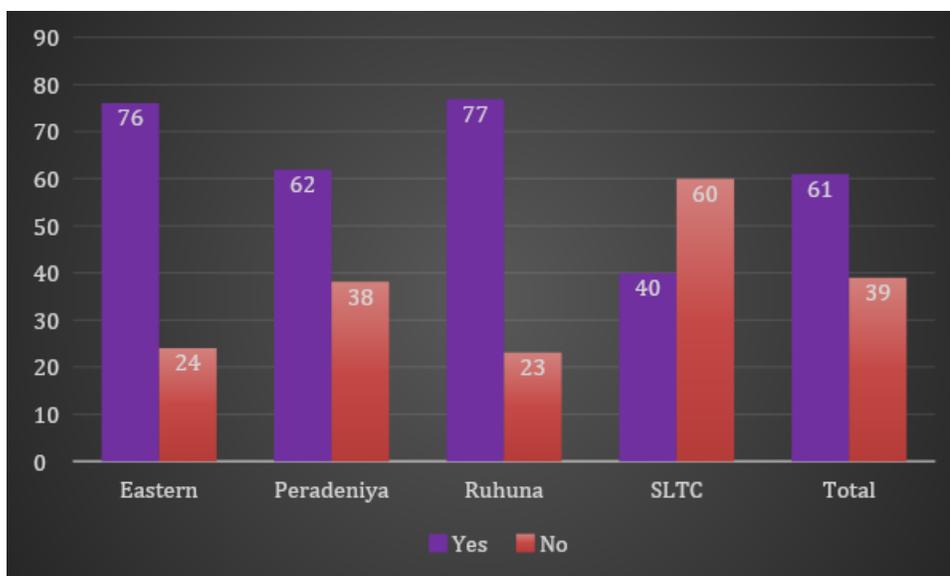
**Table 4.5. 3: Prior to Entering University contact with SWDs by University**

University	Prior to University contact with SWDs		
	No	Yes	Total
Eastern	5	29	34
	14.7	85.2	100
	1	9	
	2.94	17.0	20
		6	
Peradeniya	33	50	84



Eastern	12	1	0	3	3	2	12	33
	36.36	3.03	0	9.09	9.09	6.06	36.36	100
	10	0.83	0	2.5	2.5	1.67	10	27.5
Peradeniya	4	19	4	0	16	0	9	52
	7.69	36.54	7.69	0	30.77	0	17.31	100
	3.33	15.83	3.33	0	13.33	0	7.5	43.33
Ruhuna	2	3	0	0	3	0	1	9
	22.22	33.33	0	0	33.33	0	11.11	100
	1.67	2.5	0	0	2.5	0	0.83	7.5
SLTC	6	13	2	0	4	0	1	26
	23.08	50	7.69	0	15.38	0	3.85	100
	5	10.83	1.67	0	3.33	0	0.83	21.67
Total	24	36	6	3	26	2	23	120
	20	30	5	2.5	21.67	1.67	19.17	100
	20	30	5	2.5	21.67	1.67	19.17	100

The Figure 4.4.4 below shows whether the peers have had experience with SWDs after entering the Universities. Overall, 61% of the peers in the sampled group has had some encounters with SWDs in their Universities. Of the responses recorded for the statement for “Contact with SWDs prior to entering University”, the highest 77% was reported by Ruhuna University and SLTC Campus reported the lowest response for the same which stood at 40%.



**Figure 4.5. 3: After Entering the University Peers' Experience with SWDs by University**

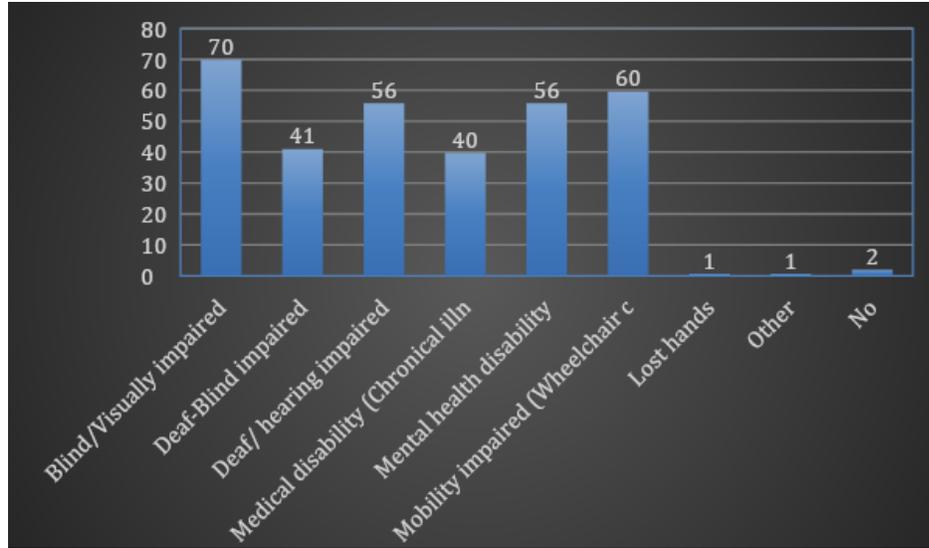
According to the Table 4.4.5 below, peers have known SWD students in various capacities. 31% of the peers who have known a SWD in campus had at least known SWDs as friends, while 42% has at least known them as batch mates or both. Familiarity of SWDs as batch mates led to an inference that peer's relationship built within them was not so intimate as a close friend or a roommate. Only a peer from SLTC reported to be sharing a room with SWDs. 31% and 41% of the peers have also had SWDs as friends and as classmates in the University of Peradeniya the Eastern University respectively..

**Table 4.5. 5: Known SWDs in University on Various Capacity by University**

University	Known SWDs in University on Various Capacity							Total
	Classmate	Friend	Neighbor	No	Other	Roommate	Batch Mate	
Eastern	13	3	2	3	1	0	10	32
	40.63	9.38	6.25	9.38	3.13	0	31.25	100
	11.61	2.68	1.79	2.68	0.89	0	8.93	28.57
Peradeniya	7	17	0	0	5	0	25	54

	12.9 6	31.4 8	0	0	9.2 6	0	46.3	100
	6.25	15.1 8	0	0	4.4 6	0	22.3 2	48.2 1
Ruhuna	0	3	0	0	3	0	5	11
	0	27.2 7	0	0	27. 3	0	45.4 5	100
	0	2.68	0	0	2.6 8	0	4.46	9.82
SLTC	0	4	0	0	3	1	7	15
	0	26.6 7	0	0	20	6.6 7	46.6 7	100
	0	3.57	0	0	2.6 8	0.8 9	6.25	13.3 9
Total	20	27	2	3	12	1	47	112
	17.8 6	24.1 1	1.7 9	2.6 8	10. 7	0.8 9	41.9 6	100
	17.8 6	24.1 1	1.7 9	2.6 8	10. 7	0.8 9	41.9 6	100

Of the total of 156, 171 had reported awareness of at least one form of stated disability in the society as shown below. Most of the peers (70%) were aware of the SWDs with Blind/Visually impairments in society (Figure 4.5.4). The lowest awareness was of medical disability (Chronic illness) which stood at 40%. Other types of disabilities that the peers were aware (f are deaf-blind impairment, Deaf/ hearing impairment, mental health disability, lost hand, and mobility impairment (Wheelchair crutches).



**Figure 4.5. 4: Awareness on the Existence of SWDs in Society by Disability Type**

**Table 4.5. 6: Awareness on Existence of SWDs in Society by Disability Type**

Aware of Existence of SWDs Society	Frequency	% (of 156)
Blind/Visually impaired	109	70
Deaf-Blind impaired	64	41
Deaf/hearing impaired	87	56
Medical disability (Chronic illness)	62	40
Mental health disability	87	56
Mobility impaired (Wheelchair crutches)	93	60
Lost hands	1	1
<i>Other</i>	1	1
No	3	2

#### 4.4.3 Awareness of Classroom Environment for SWDs

Of all the peers sampled for this study, only 25% was aware of SWDs in their classes (See Table 4.4.7) and 56% stated that there were no SWDs in their classes. 18% were not aware if there were or not any SWDs in their classes. Eastern and Ruhuna had the highest awareness of SWDs in their classes of 44% and 46% respectively. Only 19% stated there were SWDs in their classes at Peradeniya whereas 81% stated as “No” or “I did not know”. For SLTC, only 15% stated as there were SWDs in their classes and 85% said there were no or do not know of SWDs in their classes.

**Table 4.5. 7: Awareness of SWDs in their Classes**

University	SWDs in Class			
	I do not Know	No	Yes	Total
Eastern	3	16	15	34
	8.82	47.0 6	44.1 2	100
	1.77	9.47	8.88	20.1 2
Peradeniya	20	46	16	82
	24.3 9	56.1	19.5 1	100
	11.8 3	27.2 2	9.47	48.5 2
Ruhuna	1	6	6	13
	7.69	46.1 5	46.1 5	100
	0.59	3.55	3.55	7.69
SLTC	7	27	6	40
	17.5	67.5	15	100
	4.14	15.9 8	3.55	23.6 7
Total	31	95	43	169

	18.3 4	56.2 1	25.4 4	100
	18.3 4	56.2 1	25.4 4	100

The highest observed type of disability among the SWDs in class according to the peers were Blind/Visually impaired (43%) (Table 4.5.8). There were 56%, 37% 25% and 33% Blind/Visually impaired students at Eastern, Peradeniya, SLTC and Ruhuna, respectively. Deaf-Blind, Deaf/ hearing, and Mobility impairments (03) were recorded as 12%, 14%, 3%, and 28% (04) respectively. The lowest response of 5% was observed in the category of mental health disability SWDs in class. 37% of the SLTC peers had stated that there were Deaf/ hearing impairment among the SWDs.

**Table 4.5. 8: In Class SWDs' type of disability/Impairment by University**

University	In Class SWD by type of Disability					
	Blind/ Visual ly	De af- Bli nd	Deaf /He arin g	Men tal heal th	M ob ilit y	Tot al
Eastern	14	0	1	0	10	25
	56	0	4	0	40	100
	24.14	0	1.72	0	17.24	43.1
Peradeniya	7	4	4	1	3	19
	36.84	21.05	21.05	5.26	15.79	100
	12.07	6.9	6.9	1.72	5.17	32.76
Ruhuna	2	1	0	0	3	6
	33.33	16.67	0	0	50	100
	3.45	1.72	0	0	5.17	10.34
SLTC	2	2	3	1	0	8
	25	25	37.5	12.5	0	100
	3.45	3.45	5.17	1.72	0	13.79

Total	25	7	8	2	16	58
	43.1	12.07	13.79	3.45	27.59	100
	43.1	12.07	13.79	3.45	27.59	100

Of the 58 peer students that reported the existence of SWDs in their classes by disability, 47% of them had observed Blind/Visually impaired and/or 43% Mobility impaired students in their classes. The peers had not reported any availability of Medical disability SWDs in their classes. The third highest impairment observed in class (16%) was Deaf-Blind impaired and Mental health disability (as seen in Table 4.5.9).

**Table 4.5. 9: Type of Disability of In-Class SWDs for All**

Type of Disability of In-Class SWDs for all	Frequency	% (of 58)
Blind/Visually impaired	27	47
Deaf-Blind impaired	9	16
Deaf/ Hearing impaired	8	14
Medical disability (Chronic illness)	0	0
Mental health disability	9	16
Mobility impaired (Wheel-Chair crutches)	25	43
<i>Other</i>	1	2

\*Note - One person might have stated more than once.

Another set of questions were asked to assess the peers' attitude and awareness towards learning with SWDs in the campus. One of the questions framed was whether the peers feel comfortable in engaging in learning activities with SWDs in class. Of the overall peers' sample, 69% felt that they were comfortable in learning with SWDs in class. 76% of the Eastern peers and 73% of the SLTC peers had stated that they felt comfortable in learning with SWDs. 66% and 60% of the peers of the Peradeniya and Ruhuna respectively felt comfortable in learning with SWDs (Table 4.5.10). From this information, one can conclude that there is no stigma among the peers in the Sri Lankan University system of learning with SWDs in their classes irrespective whether they were students from the state sector or the private sector.

**Table 4.5. 10: Comfortable in Engaging in Learning Activities with SWDs in Class**

University	Comfortable Learning with SWDs in Class		
	No	Yes	Total
Eastern	8	25	33
	24.24	75.76	100
	5.03	15.72	20.75
Peradeniya	27	52	79
	34.18	65.82	100
	16.98	32.7	49.69
Ruhuna	4	6	10
	40	60	100
	2.52	3.77	6.29
SLTC	10	27	37
	27.03	72.97	100
	6.29	16.98	23.27
Total	49	110	159
	30.82	69.18	100
	30.82	69.18	100

Table 4.5.11 illustrates the distribution of peers that had a disability study component in their study programme. 82% of students of the (complete) peers' sample have not had a disability study component in their study programs. Only a moderately low percentage of 22% was recorded by University of Peradeniya in a positive manner for the question referred to. The other Universities responses were significantly lower than 5%.

**Table 4.5. 11: Study a course with a component of disability studies in the academic programme**

University	Study a Course with Disability		
	No	Yes	Total
Eastern	27	7	34

	79.41	20.59	100
	16.56	4.29	20.86
Peradeniya	64	18	82
	78.05	21.95	100
	39.26	11.04	50.31
Ruhuna	9	3	12
	75	25	100
	5.52	1.84	7.36
SLTC	34	1	35
	97.14	2.86	100
	20.86	0.61	21.47
Total	134	29	163
	82.21	17.79	100
	82.21	17.79	100

According to Table 4.5.12 below, 81% of the peers have not had any involvement in the form of research, projects, workshops, or seminar work related to disability studies. 29% of the SLTC peers stated that they were involved in these activities. When the involvement of Peradeniya stood at 18%, Ruhuna and Eastern peers have had an identical response rate of 12% for the same. .

**Table 4.5. 12: Engaged in any research, project, workshops, seminar related to disability studies**

University	Engaged in Disability Studies Related Work		
	No	Yes	Total
Eastern	30	4	34
	88.24	11.76	100
	18.63	2.48	21.12
Peradeniya	66	15	81

	81.48	18.52	100
	40.99	9.32	50.31
Ruhuna	9	2	11
	81.82	18.18	100
	5.59	1.24	6.83
SLTC	25	10	35
	71.43	28.57	100
	15.53	6.21	21.74
Total	130	31	161
	80.75	19.25	100
	80.75	19.25	100

Peers' publications on disability was minimal with 94% stating no. However, there was 11%, 10% ,4% and 3% publication work reported from SLTC, Ruhuna , Peradeniya and Eastern respectively (Table 4.4.13).

**Table 4.5. 13: Publications on Disability**

University	Publications on Disability		
	No	Yes	Total
Eastern	33	1	34
	97.06	2.94	100
	20.5	0.62	21.12
Peradeniya	78	3	81
	96.3	3.7	100
	48.45	1.86	50.31
Ruhuna	9	1	10

	90	10	100
	5.59	0.62	6.21
SLTC	32	4	36
	88.89	11.11	100
	19.88	2.48	22.36
Total	152	9	161
	94.41	5.59	100
	94.41	5.59	100

84% of the peers were willing to obtain training to be provided for SWDs (Table 4.5.14). This could be considered as an indication of the peers' willingness to help the SWDs. Only 16% had stated no for the training. Negative responses of peers of universities for this question stood at 21%, 18%, 15% and 12% by the SLTC r Ruhuna, Peradeniya and Eastern respectively.

**Table 4.5. 14: Willing to obtain a training related to facilities for SWDs**

University	Willing to Undergo training on SWDs' Facilities		
	No	Yes	Total
Eastern	3	30	33
	9.09	90.91	100
	1.86	18.63	20.5
Peradeniya	12	67	79
	15.19	84.81	100
	7.45	41.61	49.07
Ruhuna	2	9	11
	18.18	81.82	100

	1.24	5.59	6.83
SLTC	8	30	38
	21.05	78.95	100
	4.97	18.63	23.6
Total	25	136	161
	15.53	84.47	100
	15.53	84.47	100

While 27% of the peers stated that the lecturers used special teaching techniques to teach with SWDs (Table 4.5.15), 73% of the total sampled peers were unaware or stated no to the same question. The Highest response for this statement was recorded by the lecturers' of Eastern (38%), followed by Peradeniya (31 %) and Ruhuna (18 %). These negative responses signal that most of the time teachers do not use special teaching techniques when they teach SWDs. Majority's unawareness might be an indicator for authorities to be mindful when awareness programmes are conducted to improve attitudes of peers towards SWDs Requirements

**Table 4.5. 15: Lecturers use of Supportive Teaching and Learning Materials for SWDs**

University	Lecturers used Supportive Materials			
	I do not know	No	Yes	Total
Eastern	17	4	13	34
	50	11.76	38.24	100
	10.37	2.44	7.93	20.73
Peradeniya	51	6	26	83
	61.45	7.23	31.33	100
	31.1	3.66	15.85	50.61
Ruhuna	6	3	2	11
	54.55	27.27	18.18	100
	3.66	1.83	1.22	6.71

SLTC	26	7	3	36
	72.22	19.44	8.33	100
	15.85	4.27	1.83	21.95
Total	100	20	44	164
	60.98	12.2	26.82	100
	60.98	12.2	26.82	100

According to table 4.5.16 below, only 25% of the peers stated that the lecturers gave extra time for assignments for the SWDs. This can be identified as the highest adopted supportive tool to facilitate the teaching and learning process for SWDs according to their peers. Second, (22%) types of supportive tools used by the lecturers were providing preferential seating and computer or recording devices for note taking. Extra handouts were the lowest types of supportive materials used by lecturers.

**Table 4.5. 16: Type of Lecturers' Supportive Materials Usage Percentage**

Type of Lecturers' Supportive Materials	Frequency	% (of 171)
Extra time for assignments	42	25
Preferential seating	37	22
Note taking friend	22	13
Computer or recording device use for note taking	38	22
Advance copies of course note and course requirements	28	16
Extra time for tests	18	11
Extra hand-out	10	6
Tutoring	20	12
Interactive whiteboard	19	11
Other	3	2

\*Note – One student might have stated more than one.

The questions included in the Table 4.4.17 were formed on a 5-point Likert Scale as 1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3- Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Disagree. The responses by each respondent for each question is recorded in the table below as a percentage of responses for each Likert scale for that question. For example, for the question a) for column 1 with number 1, 26% of the respondents for that question strongly agreed or strongly aware about the rights of SWDs. For that question, 64% of the peers were aware about the SWDs' rights while 36 % were not aware about the rights of the SWDs. 97% of the peers' support SWDs academic rights in all the universities in the sample. 90% of the peers enjoyed interacting with peers with disabilities in the universities. 70% of the peers were satisfied with their university experience in having peers with disabilities. 84% felt comfortable helping SWDs in their campus. This is also an indication of the peers' willingness to extend support for the SWDs in these Universities. However, 35% of the sampled peers were found to be conversant with knowledge and skills about the technologies used by SWDs. 32% of the peers have experience in working with SWDs in centers/NGOs/institutes/clinics. 52% of the peers would like to be a personal care attendant for the SWDs in the University. 82% of the peers used their words carefully when they communicated with SWDs. 83% of the peers were willing to accompany physically impaired SWDs to mobilize them to different locations. 78% of the peers were also willing to push a wheelchair (to the Faculty, Departments, Hospital, Field trips, Hostel, Canteen, and Classroom). 77% were willing to become a tutor for SWDs in the universities. 85% were willing to take notes or record lessons or read for a SWDs. 81% of the peers said that they did not feel disturbed when SWDs were in their classroom (for example - speak loudly, sound of Braille machine, space for a wheelchair).

**Table 4.5. 17: Peers' opinion on their experience with SWDs Likert Scale Response as a %)**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
a)I am aware about the rights of SWDs (Health, Education, Access etc)	26	38	23	7	6
b)I support SWDs academic rights.	71	26	1	1	1
c)I enjoy interacting with peers with disabilities.	55	35	6	2	2
d)I am satisfied with my university experience having peers with disabilities	40	30	21	6	3
e)I feel comfortable in helping them.	52	32	7	5	4
f)I am conversant with knowledge and skills about the technologies used by SWDs	9	26	32	18	16
g)I have experiences in working with SWDs in centres/NGOs/institutes/clinics	11	21	20	27	21

h)I would like to be a personal care attendant.	30	32	30	5	3
i)I use my words carefully when I communicate with SWDs.	41	41	10	6	2
j)I would like to accompany a physical impaired peer to move to different locations (Faculty, Departments, Hospital, Field trips, Hostel)	39	44	11	4	2
k)I would like to push a wheelchair (Faculty, Departments, Hospital, Field trips, Hostel, Canteen, Classroom)	37	41	15	3	4
l)I would like to tutor SWDs.	33	44	16	4	3
m)I would like to take notes or record lessons or read for a SWDs.	40	45	9	5	1
n)I do not feel disturbed when SWDs are in my classroom (Ex: speak loudly, sound of Braille machine, space for a wheel chair).	45	36	8	4	7

As shown in Table 4.4.18 below, 67% of the peers stated that they felt comfortable in sharing their rooms with SWDs in the overall sample, which is an indication that peers' are willing to accept, interact with SWDs and assist them in their learning process

While Eastern University recorded the highest positive responses for the statement of 76% SLTC recorded the lowest responses which stood at 63%. Response rates of Ruhuna and Peradeniya were stood at 73% and 64% respectively for the same

**Table 4.5. 18: Comfortable in Sharing Rooms with SWDs**

University	Comfortable in Sharing Rooms with SWDs			
	No	Yes	Yes/No	Total
.	8	25	0	33
Eastern	24.24	75.76	0	100
	5.1	15.92	0	21.02

Peradeniya	28	50	0	78
	35.9	64.1	0	100
	17.83	31.85	0	49.68
Ruhuna	3	8	0	11
	27.27	72.73	0	100
	1.91	5.1	0	7.01
SLTC	12	22	1	35
	34.29	62.86	2.86	100
	7.64	14.01	0.64	22.29
Total	51	105	1	157
	32.48	66.88	0.64	100
	32.48	66.88	0.64	100

The Table 4.4.19 below indicates the opinions of the peers, in the manner in which SWDs manage their activities in the shared rooms with the peers. Only University of Peradeniya and SLTC peers had responded to this statement. . Of them also, only three peers from SLTC answered this question stating that they will help them in the room and one peer stated, “They do what they can do on their own.” All the other responses in Table 4.4.19 are from Peradeniya peers. Some peers felt that SWDs can manage most of their daily activities by their own,

**Table 4.5. 19: The Way the SWDs Manage their Activities in the Shared Rooms with the Peers**

<b>If you are sharing a room with a SWD, how does that student manage his/her activities independently on a daily basis?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Helping daily/Helps all the time/With help from friends/ help if needs / helping whenever I can	27
They can do their work on their own/Being more intelligent and absolutely amazing. /They will finish their work better	4
Help for study	1

I think he /her can manage it with others help	1
They can do their activities independently, sometimes only they just need a little support	6
Usually hostel warden arrange a separate room for them and allow a parent to stay with them.	1
Want to wake up early to attend to their daily chorus	2
She has tried to do her work by own without my help, but I have always helped to make her notes and when she was reading books	1
With support of peers and lecturers/Non-Academics	2
Change our activities according to disable person's routine activities	2
Must do the duties with difficulties	1
By Collaborating in doing work	5
Total	53

Table 4.4.20 illustrates how the peers act to build relationships with SWDs or support them. Only Eastern (46%), Peradeniya (42%) and SLTC (12%) responded to this statement. . Most of the peers expected to develop friendships, talked with the SWDs and helped them whenever possible. Some felt peers were willing to consider them as siblings or (family). Following are a few statements the peers had stated:

“By talking and working with them in the usual way because I am aware that they do not like our special attention and sympathy. We need to interact with them like all the other students.”

“I will never seem like a SWD person, because they have more talent than normal people, so SWD persons should see a normal person!”

“A casual friendly relationship with SWD would help them to realize that they are also important people. Not letting others to look down on them and helping them to focus on their strengths will be beneficial and effective.

**Table 4.5. 20How the Peers Build Relationships with SWDs or Support Them**

University	How the Peers build Relationships with SWD
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<b>Eastern</b>	Give priority in the canteen queue.
	I contribute to their work when they can't do it.
	Being a good friend
	Help them by knowing their needs
	Talk with them freely and friendly
	I don't consider him disabled. Therefore behave normally with him.
	By doing all the things that he needs as a good friend.
	We should approach him with compassion and kindness
	I have to talk with them casually
	I will help them as a good friend
	as a sibling
	If he needs any help, I will help him as my sibling.
	I don't think that he is disabled. He is my friend, I fulfill his all needs, Make him to be happy. Being a best friend and family member. Being with care about his education and physical health.
	Helping with love
	I help to them for their difficult activities as a good and kind friend (Help to go to the classroom, To buy food from the canteen)
	Making them stronger through my relationship.
	I will help them to do their assignment and I treat them like my other normal friends
<b>Peradeniya</b>	I do not consider them as disabled, because they got more talent than normal people.
	Support academic activities, cleaning clothes and other things.
	If he or she want any help ,can ask me directly ,I can help my side

	Being in love with them and they expect from us they also have no issues with themselves. We have to consider them as normal people.
	By talking and working with them in the usual way because I am aware that they do not like our special attention and sympathy. We need to interact with them like all the other students.
	A casual friendly relationship with SWD would help them to realize that they are also important people. Not letting others to look down on them and helping them to focus on their strengths will be beneficial and effective.
	When I see a disability friend I always go and help
	I will look after them physically and mentally.
	Obviously I like to pay attention to him/her because I know when I wouldn't do this it might be uncomfortable for him/her. I have some experience with blind girl who was my friend, when I was engaging to talk with her she always needed my reply. Sometimes I replied by using facial expressions but suddenly I remembered she is not able to see my expressions then I turned my expressions to words. Words with emotions are a better way to continue a dialogue. I have noticed, she had a better sense to recognize and understand feelings which are implied by my words. So, my perspective of the aforementioned situation is trying to understand by sitting by her side. Then, look around and try to inquire as to how do you feel your surroundings, I never try to neglect his or her emotions because I know that is the only way to express their feelings.
	With showing the kindness and every time makes a hopeful situations
	Talk to them, ask them if they need help. Share notes and other things if they need them.
	In the same way like others
	It depends on the situation and the type of disability

Of the peers who had stated what they feel about SWDs in the Universities, 48% from Eastern, 38% from Peradeniya and 14% from SLTC. Majority of the peers felt that educational facilities for SWDs have to be improved, lecturers should pay more attention

for SWDs' needs and honour importance of equal rights for free education. Peers felt that they are not disabled, but they are differently abled and multi-talented persons.

Following are a few statements the peers had stated:

*“They have high self-confidence, therefore, should appreciate and motivate them.”*

*“Lecturers should pay more attention to them”*

*“In most of the universities students treat the disable students as their siblings and help them voluntarily.”*

*“They are not disabled. They are differently abled and multi-talented persons.”*

*“I do not feel anything towards them. They are also people for me.”*

*“They have equal rights for free education”*

**Table 4.5. 21: What Peers feel about SWDs in the University?**

They need to be accommodated
They face difficulties because lecture halls are situated some distance.
Should increase the educational facilities for disabilities
Should look after disable as a normal person
They want to get all facilities whatever we get
Should teach them without affecting their mentality.
We should allow them to study.
They have effort, Require some special needs
Every student they are not relationship with disabilities
We should give priority to them, should give more payments, we should give priority to participate in the activities that they are specialized. They entered the university and successfully completed the degree after facing many risks and difficulties, so they should be employed in appropriate and suitable departments as soon as possible.
lecturers should pay more attention on them

<p>They have high self-confidence and should appreciate and motivate them.</p>
<p>Most of the university's students treat the disable students as their siblings and help them voluntarily.</p>
<p>They should make it clear that everyone has disabilities and that they have some special disability</p>
<p>Must provide more payments other than the Mahapola. Some students laugh at the disable students, so make them aware. They entered the university and successfully completed the degree after facing many risks and difficulties, so they should be employed in appropriate and suitable departments without any delay</p>
<p>should give more importance and priority</p>
<p>I really appreciate their confidence and hard work</p>
<p>We must help them to improve themselves</p>
<p>All are Students</p>
<p>The disabled students don't observe the lecture carefully.</p>
<p>They are not disable, they have good self-confidence, they can do a particular work with higher confidence than a normal person. So, we should help them to improve their education.</p>
<p>They should learn well.</p>
<p>We should help them as soon as possible without avoiding them. (To take notes and assignments) Insult them by jokes is not good and should avoid it.</p>
<p>Proud of them for being so brave.</p>
<p>Every student they are not relationship with disabilities</p>
<p>To provide what is needed for the learning process</p>
<p>Comparatively they are talented</p>
<p>They are not disabled. They are differently abled and multi-talented persons</p>
<p>They should see correct way,</p>

I am really sad for them but they are very proud of our country because they have some powerful strength to do something.
I feel comfortable but not too much
Good
Not enough facilities
They have equal rights for free education
They should be treated equally like others ensuring the best environment to successfully complete their degrees with a differently able student sensitive atmosphere. They should also be equally welcomed by other students. community and should be encouraged to take part in academia as well as extracurricular activities in a very positive manner creating opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes.
There is even less than a handful of SWD in a batch. Other students should be more concerned about their needs as a whole. Some SWD are assisted to university by their mother/father. Some places are not accessible for them and there are lots of difficulties when they have to attend lectures.
When I helped for disability friend, I felt happy
I feel happy for them, they are talented
I think they are more talented than others. They have good knowledge
They also study in well,
I haven't any experience in university of the f aforementioned conditions
It's a very good
They are very clever better than normal students may be and must give them better opportunities
They also same as us and they also have same right to study
Its good
Authorities should provide quality and adequate special care for them than existing measures.
I m really prod about them and their confidence

I feel that the attention given to them currently is not enough. There needs to be more.
i like to help them as possible
There has to be more facilities within the university premises for them
It's good that they are being given an education without being marginalized
I feel that the attention given to them currently is not enough. There needs to be more.
Nothing bad, they also have right to higher education as others
Poor guy 😞
That they are the same as us. Not disabled but differently 'abled'.
That is good
They have a right for education like every one of us. They should be aided to fulfill that.
I do not feel anything towards them. They are also people for me.
They too have their rights for education so they should also be given opportunities to pursue it.
it is very sensitive situation

Table 4.4.22 indicates suggestions made by the peers to support SWDs education in the Universities. Of the peers who had given suggestions to support SWDs' education in the Universities were 44% from Eastern, 48% from Peradeniya and 8% from SLTC. Majority of the peers had stated that the SWDs should be provided with advanced technological equipment as they would be useful for their studies. Most of them suggested improving accessibility for the SWDs to the buildings in the campuses. One has pointed out the importance of releasing their results on time. Ensuring equal access education was another suggestion made by several peers. Going further, they suggested that the existing library facilities do not sufficiently accommodate SWDs needs. Among their suggestions, lack of awareness of librarians on requirements of the SWDs, poor status of accessibility to the library, unavailability of toilets that are easy to be used, unavailability of a Medical doctor in an emergency situation worth to be mentioned Peers also proposed allowing SWDs to do special degrees in other departments. They added

that SWDs should interact with other students in activities such as student' events, competitions, trips, programmes, conferences and they should be given responsibilities which they can bear, for them to feel a deeper sense of inclusion.

Following are a few statements the peers had stated:

“They are always too shy to work with us, so someone has to try to convince them that they are the same as us.”

“Yes, need highly capable and specialized librarians. We should make necessary arrangements and facilities for them to use the library. Doctor consultations and medical facilities are crucial for a disabled patient. Transport facilities are important for the Mobility impaired (Wheelchair /crutches) people. Should provide separate toilet facilities.”

**Table 4.5. 22: Suggestions on How to Support SWDs Education**

University	Suggestions on How to Support SWDs Education
	Should release their result without late.
	New technological equipment should give for their studies.
	Our university will build a special education unit for the disabilities
	Though the library facilities are available, they are not able to use them. So they need professional librarians who are proficient in their language and their writing to help them. A ramp should be set up for those who cannot walk. If they are sick the doctor should arrange for them to come and visit. Separate toilets should be provided for those who are unable to walk.
	should provide knowledge based on computer for the disable students
	Yes, disable students also should consider as a student and find their specialty, at the same time eliminate the barrier for their education and provide necessary facilities for their education.
	They should be able to identify the problems they face in education and help them to review it every day

	<p>Yes, we need highly capable and specialized librarians. We should make necessary arrangements and facilities for them to use the library. Doctor consultations and medical facilities is crucial for a disabled patient. Transport facilities are important for the Mobility impaired (Wheelchair crutches) people. Should provide separate toilet facilities.</p>
	<p>Should provide more resources for them.</p>
	<p>They should be educated more than others.</p>
	<p>should provide medical consultations</p>
	<p>Yes. Better to give priority seats for the disabled. During the examinations, we should observe them carefully, Have to give special classes, Should give more time for assignment work.</p>
	<p>Admission of more students under separate department</p>
	<p>Coding system education</p>
	<p>Providing all the facilities</p>
<p><b>Peradeniya</b></p>	<p>They need more specific methods</p>
	<p>Build up special units for them</p>
	<p>Please do these types of research for them.</p>
	<p>It is good opportunity for the disable students</p>
	<p>Focus on the problems they have</p>
	<p>If you create a supportive environment for SWD there will be more volunteers in university. They will feel a very comfortable zone.</p>
	<p>They should be integrated in academia with the other students so that they do not feel marginalized. New ways and opportunities should be created for them to interact with student' events, competitions, trips, programmes, conferences and should give them responsibilities that they can bear so they feel the sense of inclusion.</p>
	<p>More accessibility facilities should be provided to the students within university premises and others should be given a proper idea of the rights of SWD.</p>

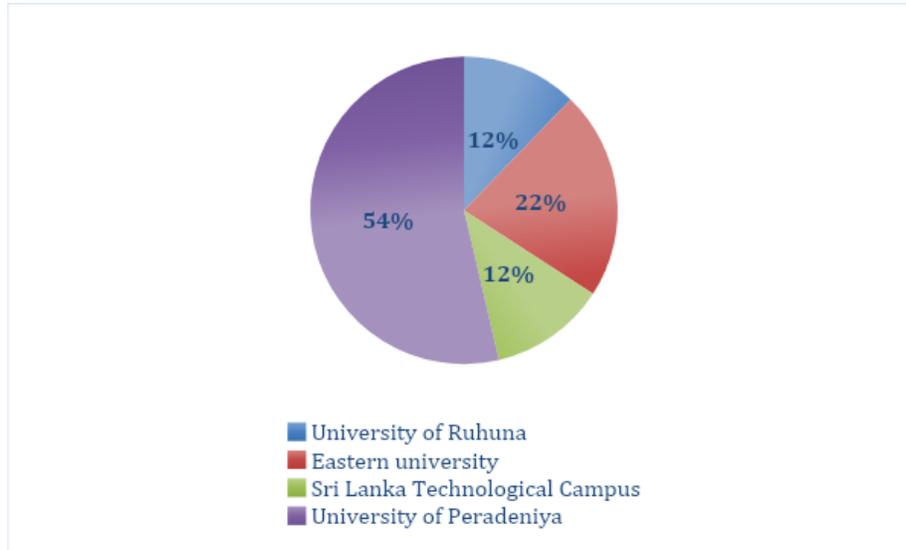
	<p>We have a responsibility to help those people. so we should help those friends.</p>
	<p>Yes, It is better to add slope sides in staircase</p>
	<p>I think if university provide special offers its very useful for them</p>
	<p>For our university, there should be more facilities for them. there are no elevators and they should carry them out into the top of the building for their classes.</p>
	<p>They are always shy to work with us, so anyone tries to convince them they are the same as us.</p>
	<p>Must identify their needs and but do not make them study alone</p>
	<p>Can introduce modern educational system for them</p>
	<p>We should not look at them differently. That will hurt them. So we should spread this though for all the students</p>
	<p>A transportation service up the mountains would be good. The university is a huge place and it's difficult to travel from one building to the other. I have not seen many disabled students in the university, maybe they need to be admitted more. Many of the toilets aren't equipped for disabled people either. Basically, if you don't have a supportive friend to help its very difficult to handle yourself if you are disabled.</p>
	<p>they should have special protection than others</p>
	<p>Awareness.</p>
	<p>A transportation service up the mountains would be good. The university is a huge place and it's difficult to travel from one building to the other. I haven't seen many disabled students in the university, maybe they need to be admitted more. Many of the toilets aren't equipped for disabled people either. Basically, if you don't have a supportive friend to help, it's very difficult to handle yourself if you are disabled.</p>
SLTC	<p>Workshop about disability people. More knowledge on how to help them, understand them and not look at them as another kind of humans from another world.</p>
	<p>Reduce their academic pressure</p>

	<p>Yes, making separate wheel-chair paths for their accessibility and providing such common things for their comfort. May be some students might not be willing to help them or not able to help them all the time at hostels, in such cases separate caretaker or arranging such separate caretaker will be good for both parties. Other than that, informing the lecturers prior and requesting them to conducting lectures in a way that the SWDs also feel comfortable will do</p>
	<p>if there are those people it's good to have a different section to avoid them from unnecessary behaviors of others.</p>

## 4.6 Results: Administrative Staff

During this study, the views and attitudes of the administrative staff members also collected through a survey questionnaire. Around 100 questionnaires were administered among the administrative staff members of the local partner universities/institute, of which only 49 responses have been received marking the response rate at 49%.

### 4.6.1 Institutional Information



**Figure 4.6. 1: Composition of the sample**

As shown in Figure 4.6.1, the sample consisted of administrative staff members of the four selected Universities. Among them the majority represented the University of Peradeniya (54%).

(As it was required to explore the views and attitudes of administrative staff members from all the levels in the hierarchy, (which might provide useful information towards the focus of the project were also considered). The different designations of administrative officers to whom this questionnaire was directed for four different local partner universities were shown in Table 4.5.1.

**Table 4.6. 1: Different Designations Responded from Four Different Local Partner Universities**

Designation	Frequency	Percent
Bursar/DB/SAB/AB	4	8.5

Registrar/DR/SAR/AR	16	34.4
Audio Visual technical officer	1	2.1
Coordinator/Computer Unit	1	2.1
Dean	3	6.4
Deputy Internal Auditor	1	2.1
Directors, Physical education Unit	2	2.1
Engineer	1	2.1
Executive Secretary to the President	1	2.1
Full time Sub Warden	3	6.4
Librarian	2	4.3
Medical Officer	1	2.1
Staff Technical Officer	1	2.1
Statistical Officer	1	2.1
Vice Chancellor	2	4.3
Total	47	100.0

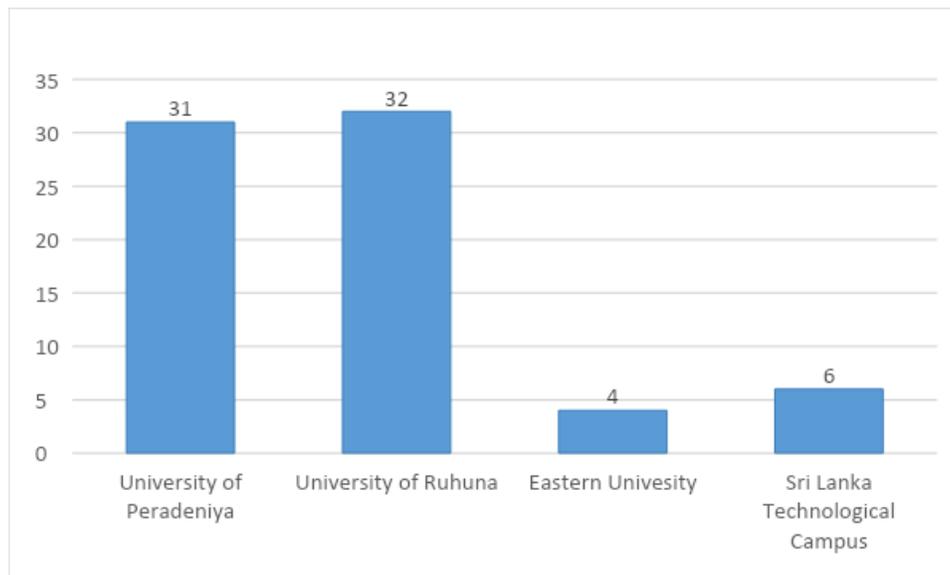
In this survey, the data related to the commencing year of the University /Institution and the commencing year of the support service for the SWDs were addressed. As shown in Table 4.6.2, among four local Universities, University of Peradeniya is the oldest university and the SLTC was the youngest among them. It was also found that, in all universities/institutions the services for SWDs were commenced 5-10 years before.

**Table 4.6. 2: Commencing of the University and the support service**

University /Unit	Commence Year	Commence the service for SWDs
University of Peradeniya	1942	1990
University of Ruhuna	1978	1992

Eastern University	1983	1992
Sri Lanka Technological Campus (SLTC)	2015	2020

(The availability of SWDs in the selected four universities were also considered and Figure 4.6.2, illustrates the current scenario of the matter referred to. However, according to the responses, the number of SWDs varied and as shown in Figure 4.6.2 the highest number of SWDs and PDWs was found in the University of Peradeniya and the least number was found in the SLTC as expected.



**Figure 4.6. 2: Responded administrative staff members and their University**

#### **4.6.2 Awareness of Disability**

The awareness of disability acts, laws and conventions of the administrative staff members was identified as an important fact, and thus questions were formed addressing those fact in order to identify the stakeholders’ awareness in local and internationally established legal documents.

According to the responses on the awareness of local conventions, the majority of the members from three universities except Eastern University, knew only about the Protection of the rights of persons with disabilities (1996). However, compared to other

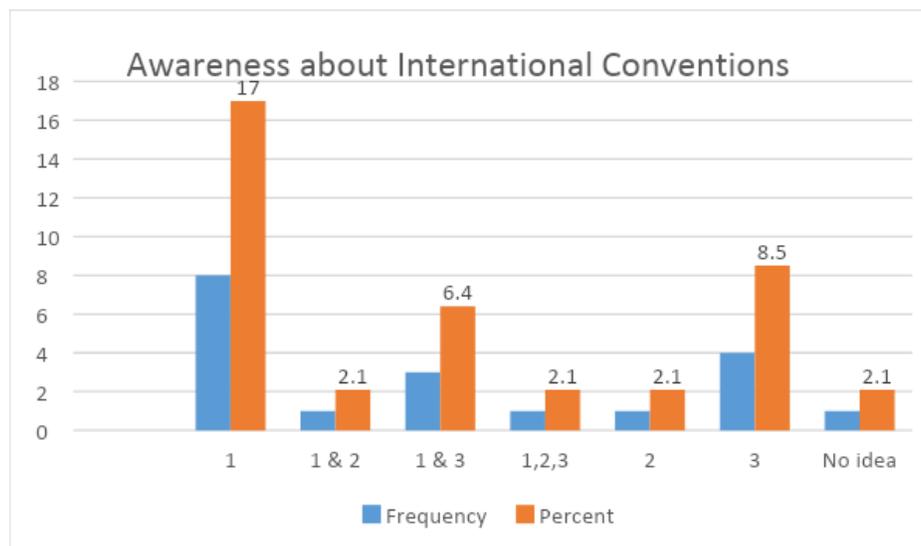
universities, members of the Eastern University were far ahead of others and were aware of three documents more than others.

**Table 4.6. 3: Awareness of disability acts laws and conventions (national Conventions)**

University	1		2		3	
University of Peradeniya	15	65.2%	3	13.0%	5	21.7%
University of Ruhuna	2	40%	1	20%	1	20%
Eastern University	2	22.2%	4	44.4%	3	33.3%
SLTC	4	80%	1	20%		0%

1. *Protection of the rights of persons with disabilities (1996),*
2. *A Review of Disability Law and Legal Mobilization in Sri Lanka, Trust Review, (2013),*
3. *UN Universal Periodic Review - Sri Lanka 2017*

The responses received for the awareness of the International Conventions is illustrated in the graphical manner. According to the survey data, the awareness on the international conventions (Convention on the World Declaration on Education for All (WDEFA, 1990)) was high among the administrative staff members as indicated in Figure 4.6.3.



1. *World Declaration on Education for All (WDEFA, 1990).*
2. *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (SSFASNE.1994)*
3. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006),*

**Figure 4.6. 3: Respondents' awareness of International conventions.**



University of Peradeniya	✓	?	?	?		?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Day to day conversation</li> <li>2. Awareness at staff meetings</li> <li>3. Circulars</li> <li>4. Newspapers</li> <li>5. To include in the student's induction orientation program</li> </ol>
University of Ruhuna	?	?	?			?	
Eastern University	?	?	?			?	
Sri Lanka Technological Campus	?	?	?	?	?	?	

As shown in Table 4.6.4, Sri Lanka Technological Campus provided information through all forms of sources available. Even though the University of Peradeniya did not use newspapers to inform SWDs, it used different other channels to provide information on SWDs.

### 5.5.3 Availability of Physical & Human Resources

In addition to the above, the availability of human and physical resources for SWDS were also concerned and hence enquired in the need assessment survey.

During the survey, the services available for SWDs in the University were also considered as important information to collect and hence the availability services for SWDs were examined. . As shown in Table 4.6.5, 50% said 'yes' to the question of 'Is there a service for SWDs/PWDs in your University?', whereas 34% participants responded in a negative manner for the same. .

**Table 4.6. 5: Services for SWDs available in the University**

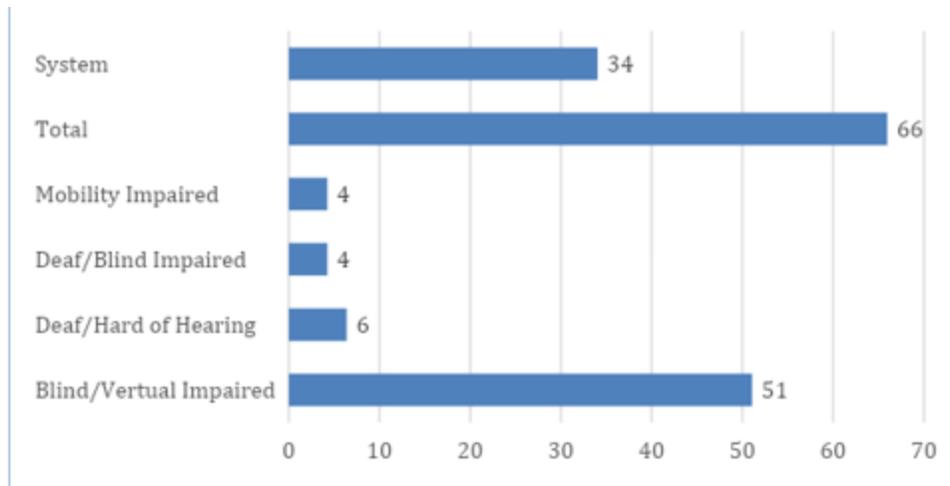
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	23	48.9
No	16	34.0
Total	39	83.0
Missing	8	17.0
Total	47	100.0

The respondents also indicated the source of services provided as illustrated in Table 4.6.6. As portrayed in the table, the special Needs Centre/Unit had identified as the main source of service provider. However, 5% reported the availability of service of a special resource person at the University.

**Table 4.6. 6: Source of Services provide in the University**

Services	Frequency	Percent
special Needs Centre/Unit	18	38.3
Special Resource Person	5	10.6
Other	2	4.3
Total	25	53.2
Missing	22	46.8
Total	47	100.0

The type of disability of SWDs that universities are catering for in the selected Universities were also counted during the survey. As shown in Figure 4.6.5, the majority (51.1%) of SWDs in all 4 Universities were Blind/visually impaired. Further, according to data it was revealed that none of the SWDs had mental disability or mental health disability in all 4 universities/institutions.



**Figure 4.6. 5: Type of disability SWDs that are being benefited in the selected universities**

Conducting a continuous special education programme in institution/university was also checked in the need assessment survey. According to responses, only 12.8% reported that their university/institutions had conducted continuous special education programmes.

**Table 4.6. 7: Conducting of continuous special education programme in institution/university**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	6	12.8
	2	29	61.7
	Total	35	74.5
Missin g	Syste m	12	25.5
Total		47	100.0

The non-academic member from the Sri Lanka Technological campus reported that training for blind/ visually impaired students with different techniques is continued as a support for their academic activities. In addition to that a mentoring training for SWDs were also provided to keep the balance mind set. These training continue as and when it is required for the students in need. In a different way, a continuous special education

programme was conducted in the Eastern University focusing on how to teach differently abled students with assistive technology. In addition to the above two, conduct of a skills development programme was reported as an annual event for the SWDs, at the University of Peradeniya.

Staff agreements on undergoing the different continuous special education training programmes mentioned above were also considered in this survey.

**Table 4.6. 8: Need of training**

	Frequency	Percent
Missing	12	25.5
Yes	32	68.1
No	3	6.4
Total	47	100.0

### **Value of special education programme**

Among the participants 35 respondents valued the special education programme they were obtained. They all (100%) reported the need to continue programmes towards the SWDs especially differently able students need special education. They further emphasized the need of a special education training programme for the staff members, so that the needs of the disability students could be successfully accomplished. Further, the reasons for their response were also probed. The answers were (i) to preserve rights of SWDs (ii) People will understand the different approaches (iii) These training impacted a lot for academics and non-academics to understand the nature and need of the students with disabilities (iv) It is valuable and timely (v) It must be (vi) Differently Abled Students should give priority to obtain education like other normal students (vii) highly benefited.

Available technologies at the University for SWDs were explored by the survey. As presented in Table 4.6.9, all the inquired technologies were available at the University of Peradeniya. Amazingly except Braille none of the inquired technologies were available at the University of Ruhuna.

**Table 4.6. 9: Available technologies at the University for SWDs**

University	E T e x t	B r a i l l e	L a r g e p r i n t	P D F I m a g e	P D F t e x t	A u d i o a n a l o g	A u d i o d i g i t a l	M P 3	D a i s y b o o k s	T a c t i l e G r a p h i c s	D e s c r i p t i v e v i d e o
University of Peradeniya	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
University of Ruhuna	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern University	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
SLTC	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1

Consideration of SWDs when designing a curriculum was found as an imperative concern and it was also included as one of the question items in the survey questionnaire. According to the data it was revealed that except the University of Ruhuna all other universities considered the needs of SWDs when designing the curriculum.

**Table 4.6. 10: Consideration of SWDs in designing Curriculum**

University	Response
University of Peradeniya	Yes
University of Ruhuna	No

Eastern University	Yes
Sri Lanka Technological Campus	Yes

Further the respondents were asked to provide more information in this regard. The responses are grouped based on their University and given below.

(a) University of Peradeniya

- SWDs have been given a chance to selecting of courses
- Designed courses while cooperating facilitation of SWDs and also conducting examinations giving half an hour extra time for disable students.
- Eastern University
- It should contain the techniques to absorb the whole syllabus with assistive technology devices.
- Respective Faculties have taken the responsibility in drafting the syllabus and they will take the responsibility in addressing the course structure for disabilities.
- Appointed a staff for helping visually challenged students, and the curriculum to be redesigned with involving that staff opinion
- Ruhuna
- A Review of Disability Law and Legal Mobilization in Sri Lanka, Law and Society. Trust Review, (2013)
- SLTC
- Strategic plan is aligned with catering to special needs students, to have an education system for all.

Availability of Instructional manuals in the special education field, getting professional support (occupational therapist) to plan individual programme and overcome the problems were questioned in the survey.

**Table 4.6. 11: Availability of Instructional manual and getting of professional support**

University	Availability of Instructional manual in the special education field	Getting of professional support (occupational therapist) to plan individual programme and overcome the problems
University of Peradeniya	Yes	Yes
University of Ruhuna	Yes	No
Eastern University	Yes	Yes
SLTC	No	Yes

According to the data, except Sri Lanka technological campus, the instructional manual in the special education field is available at all universities. Except the University of Ruhuna, the professional support to plan individual programmes and overcome the problems were available in other universities. According to the responses of the administrative staff members only the University of Peradeniya was identified as the university where the instructional manual in the special educational field is available and getting professional support (occupational therapist) to plan individual programmes and overcome the problems.

#### ***4.6.4 Research & Publications/Projects***

***Table 4.6. 12: Conduction of research activities by University***

University	Research seminar	Research workshops	Research conference	Other
University of Peradeniya	Yes	Yes	No	No
University of Ruhuna	No	No	No	Yes
Eastern University	No	No	No	Yes
Sri Lanka Technological Campus	No	No	No	Yes

When the existing literature considers, the research & publication/projects done by a university focusing on SWDs/PEDs was found as an important factor in the literature and in the need assessment survey this was also measured. .

According to the data it was revealed that none of the University has published any research. However, as shown in Table 4.6.12, the University of Peradeniya had conducted research seminars and research workshops for SWDs.

Further in the survey two questions were based on the research collaboration (Table 4.5.13).

**Table 4.6. 13: Research collaborations towards special needs education**

Statement	U n i v e r s i t y o f P e r a d e n i y a	U n i v e r s i t y o f R u h u n a	E a s t e r n U n i v e r s i t y	S R I L A N K A T E C H N O L O G I C A L C A M P U S
(a) Our University/Institution collaborates with local and foreign organizations to do joint projects that relate to individuals with disabilities.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

(b) Our University/Institution is conducting collaborative research, reports, statistical data, etc. that can be shared with other organizations and universities related to individuals with disabilities.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
a) Our University/Institution has contacts/links with NGOs that serve SWDs.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
b) Our University/Institution allocates funds from its budget for SWDs	Yes	No		Yes
c) Our University/Institution organizes recreational events for SWDS	Yes	No		Yes

As shown in Table 4.6.13, except the University of Ruhuna, all other three institutes conduct research in collaboration with local and international counterparts related to individuals with disabilities. Not only that, these three institutes have also been in contact with NGOs that serve SWDs.

As it is understood the financial need to implement different activities for SWDs, the question was included in the survey to see the allocation of funds from the University/institution budget. According to the responses it was noted that the University of Peradeniya and Sri Lanka Technological Campus allocate funds from the budget. Further, according to the non-academic staff members' view, out of these two institutes, only the University of Peradeniya organizes recreational events for SWDs.

#### ***4.6.5. Suggestions***

In the survey as the final question as on the non-academic members further suggestions or comments regarding the enhancement of SWDs Education in the University.

##### *Eastern University*

- Need more facilities for the visually challenged students as this is the only faculty in the university caters the said students.
- SWDs have not been given due attention in the University system. We have never been mandated to investigate the needs of such or include them in our programmes.

- A quota system should be established for such students especially in the healthcare field.
- They may engage in such professions in future or help build strategies to overcome the barriers that SWDs face in academic and professional progress, in research, planning etc.
- As far as the differently able students are concerned proper awareness to be extended to the visually challenged students and special class-rooms are to be designed.
- curriculum of each faculty of the university should include some portion to the differently able students
- Awareness programmes should be conducted to the staff from bottom to top

#### *University of Peradeniya*

- It's better if there is a common policy to be followed by all the Units/Faculties of the university
- Action should be taken to improve facilities, provide software for e-learning etc.
- Should improve all the facilities on in the hostels
- Supportive technologies should be provided
- Though we see SWD's basic needs at the hostel level and they are looked after by their colleagues, much attention is not paid towards them. Hence what should be done is to start a dialogue about this. This research itself has aroused our interest and attitudes positively.
- It's valuable to open special education unit for SWD

#### *Sri Lanka Technological Campus*

There are good SWD Practices in the Masaryk University which can be applied to our universities.

#### *University of Ruhuna*

It is needed to facilitate the SWDs/ with recreational events.

## **Section 5: Discussion of Results**

This section of the study aims to perform a descriptive analysis of the collected data on the different stakeholders of this study. In this section the discussion will be presented under a few themes and they are: response rate, sample and demographic information, disability types, availability of resources, awareness and attitudes, **knowledge, experience, and training on SWDs** and suggestions for further development.

### **Stakeholder Response rate**

There was a relatively good overall survey response rate of 76% for the academics, 66% for peers and 56% for SWDs. But the overall response rates were poor for parents (35%) and non-academic staff (45%). When the response rates of the individual universities are considered, all the universities' academic response rates are higher than 50% except for Eastern University. However, for the peers, Ruhuna (26%) university's response rate was less than 50%. SWDs' response rates for University of Peradeniya and SLTC were also less than 50%. All universities' response rates for parents were less than 50%. In the case of non-academics, only Peradeniya (88%) had above 50% response rate.

### **Sample and Demographic Information**

As described in sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 the actual sample size of the different groups of stakeholders varied. For instance, the actual samples of academic staff members and peers were represented by all four local partner universities. However, the representation of administrative staff members from the University of Ruhuna was very low. Further there were no SWDs from SLTC in the actual sample. From both SLTC and the University of Ruhuna, there was no representation of parents of SWDs in the actual sample. The total sample of students with disabilities included 10 from the University of Peradeniya, 7 from the University of Ruhuna, and 6 from the Eastern University. However, no respondents from the SLTC

When it is considered the sample of SWDs, the key focused group of this research, as described in section 4.2 the majority (95.7%) of SWDs admitted to University under the 'special category' and only one student admitted under 'general category'. Importantly, all SWDs were from disciplines of social sciences and humanities only.

The group of Parents of SWDs consisted of 50% male and 50% female. Occupations varied and 22.2% of the sample was non-occupied and another 22% were retired.

When considering the administrative staff members, the sample consisted of vice chancellors, bursars, registrars, and their deputies, wardens, Chief medical officers, librarians, directors of different units.

The academics in the sample came from altogether about 14 individual faculties in which the same field of Faculty was found in other Universities as well. Main fields of study areas that were found are Agriculture, Arts, Allied Health Sciences, Engineering, Dental, Management, Medicine, Science, Veterinary and Computing and IT. Majority of the academics in the sample were males. 29% of the academics had teaching experience for more than 20 years while 26% had 0-5 years of teaching experience. However, 84% of the academics are senior lecturers or above.

Of these academics, less than half stated that they have taught SWDs in their classes at some point in time. Of the total 65 academics from the University of Peradeniya (UoP), only little more than half has not taught SWDs at all. 23% of the total was from Arts Faculty who had taught SWD's at some point in their teaching career. The other faculties that had a notable number were Medicine, Engineering and Management. Academics of the Veterinary faculty was the only faculty that did not report teaching SWDs.

Sampled peers came from different faculties of the Universities. 71% of the peer students came from Arts Faculties from University of Peradeniya, Eastern and Ruhuna. From SLTC, the peers were from Engineering, Business and Computing Schools, respectively. The peer students' sample was mainly administered among senior year students than first year in all the universities. Furthermore, the majority of the peer students were doing special degrees rather than general degrees.

## **Disability types**

As reported in sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5, the findings of all 4 groups of stakeholders indicated the availability of SWDs having different types of disabilities. Among them the majority of SWDs possessed 'blind/visually impaired disability. In addition to the SWDs, the results of non-academics indicate the availability of PWDs (People with Disabilities) among them in all four local partner universities. According to the responses, the number of SWDs and PWDs varied and the highest number of SWDs and PDWs was found in the University of Peradeniya (31) and the least number was in SLTC (2). Further the majority (51.1%) of SWDs in all 4 universities were blind/visually impaired. According to results it was revealed that none of the SWDs/PWDs have mental disability or mental health disability. Importantly, from the findings from SWDs, it was clear that the majority of students had more than one type of disabilities. Mental health disability was noted as the rare disability among the SWDs. However according to the findings of parents no children with disability in deaf/Hard of hearing or deaf-blind impaired were presented.

Of the students in class, the majority of the academics reported to have had students with visual disability. Second type of disability that was observed among students was physical disability and followed by hearing disability and finally mental disability.

An extremely high percentage of the peers had reported awareness of at least one form of stated disability in the society. Most of the peers were aware of the Blind/Visually impaired in society. Lowest awareness was of medical disability (Chronic illness). Other types of disabilities that the peers were aware of are deaf-blind impaired, Deaf/ hearing impaired, mental health disability, lost hand, and mobility impaired (Wheelchair crutches).

Among the overall sampled peers, an extremely low percentage of peers were aware of the existence of a SNRU in their respective campus. Less than half of the Peradeniya peers were aware of the SNRU in their campus. Less than quarter of the students in Ruhuna, Eastern and SLTC were aware of the existence of the SNRU in their campus. However, close to 80% or more of the respondents of the universities other than Peradeniya were unaware of the SNRU in campuses. This can be taken as the peers' awareness about the facilities available for SWDs.

### **Knowledge, experience, and training on SWDs**

Based on the findings of SWDs on their views regarding the experience at the university, only 39% were satisfied and the other 61% reported that they were not satisfied with the university experience as a disabled student. Furthermore, only 35% viewed that other students treated SWDs with respect' and only 52% of SWDs felt that they were treated as an equal part in their study groups. When considering the university life, the interactions with others like peers, academic staff members and administrative staff members were important. According to the findings, only 69% of SWDs enjoy interacting with others. However, 57% of them expressed their willingness to approach academic staff regarding the special needs. Further, 39% and 44% respectively indicated their hesitance to get help from academics and peers. As the focus of this research, it is worthwhile to explore the reasons for the dissatisfaction and take steps to minimize the negative impacts on SWDs. As described in section on 4.4, parents also confirm the above claim by SWDs. For example, only 57% parents reported that their child communicated his/her needs adequately with the authorities and peers.

Having an awareness of the type of disabilities possessed by SWDs and the difficulties and challenges they face due to their disabilities is important. Nevertheless, the findings from academic staff members, non-academic staff members and peers show relatively poor awareness of all groups towards the rights of the SWDs. Further it was revealed that awareness programmes on disability for peers, academic staff members and non-academic members were very rare. For instance, only 12.6% reported that their university/institutions had conducted continuous special education programmes. They further emphasized the need of special education training programme for the staff members, so that the needs of the disability students could be successfully accomplished

Only 3% of the sampled academics have had some training to teach students with disability. Of the trained academics, their training mainly focused on counselling from the University of Peradeniya and Ruhuna and one from SLTC was a trainer of trainers for special needs education.

Half of the academics feel that the University Special Needs Resource Unit is helpful for SWDs and academic staff. An extremely high percentage disagrees that there is a person in their departments to assist and coordinate accommodations for SWDs. Majority agrees that there are some SWDs whose disability could not be easily recognized. 67% of the academics are aware of the teaching and learning resources for SWDs such as software and apps.

Academics in these universities used different mechanisms to make teaching and learning for SWDs meaningful. Majority had used software and mobile apps and software and mobile apps among the academics that used at least one mechanism. However, 74% of the total sample of academics have stated that they did not use any special mechanism to make the teaching and learning process of SWDs meaningful.

When assessing the academics' willingness to provide special accommodations to SWDs in teaching, there was an extremely high willingness to use computers or recording devices for note taking and to provide preferential seating for SWDs'. However, willingness to be flexible in terms of completing academic assignments, adjustments in teaching and in providing exams, peer support, extra hand-outs, tutoring and ability to contact Faculty outside of class was just above 50%.

A high percentage of the academics agreed to have SWDs attending their class via Skype if it is not possible for the student to be physically present. A low percentage of the academics agree to give extra marks to their students if they help SWDs. Majority of the academics either disagree or are uncertain about them being uncomfortable when having SWDs in their classes. Most of the lecturers encourage students with disabilities to participate in co-curricular activities. An extremely low percentage agrees to the fact that the academics receive adequate support from the university administration when learners with disabilities are enrolled in their classes. Less than half of the academics agree to the point that they adapt the syllabus and teaching material to accommodate SWDs' needs.

There was extremely high willingness among academics to provide special accommodation facilities to SWDs for assessments in all Universities. Above 70% of the academics are willing to provide extra time for assignments, preferential seating, computer or recording device, extra time for exam and oral examinations. Exceptionally low percentage (1%) of the academics of the four universities agree to provide a separate place for examinations and students should be fit to take examinations.

Only 13% of the academics have obtained feedback from their students. Among the universities which took student feedback, Eastern University was the highest and Ruhuna was the lowest. The collection of feedback at the University of Peradeniya and SLTC was also lower than 13%. Several academics had tried to adopt their feedback suggestion. As a result of the feedback suggestions the academics had made it a point to inquire from the students about their needs and difficulties in class and tried to provide learner support systems based on the SWDs' needs. Following are some of the academics' assessments of their knowledge, experience, and training on SWDs. Only about half of academics feel that the University Special Needs Resource Unit is helpful for SWDs and academic staff. A remarkably high percentage disagree that there is a person in their departments to assist to coordinate accommodations for SWDs. Majority agree that there are certain SWDs whose disability could not be easily recognized. 67% of agree that they are aware that there are teaching and learning resources for SWDs such as software and apps. An exceptionally low proportion of the academics have conducted research studies related to disability.

According to the sampled peers, more than half of them have had some form of contact with SWDs prior to entering the university. Prior to entering the university most of the peers had known SWDs as friends, others and family members. In the Eastern University most of the peers had known SWDs before as classmates or family members. In the case of the other three universities the most peers had known SWDs before in the capacity as friends or 'other' category.

Overall, more than half of the peers in the sampled group have had some encounters with SWDs in their Universities. Peers from Ruhuna have had the highest exposure with SWDs in their Universities. SLTC campus had the lowest encounter with SWDs for the peers.

### **Availability of resources**

As reported in the literature, the availability of resources including both physical and human resources to meet the needfulness of SWDs is also highlighted as an important consideration towards the enhancement of education of SWDs. Regarding the physical resources the findings of SWDs questionnaire analysis shows (as described in section 4.2) the materials (such as textbooks, workbooks, assignments, exam materials, supplementary readings, online courses, online databases, audio visual resources) and alternate formats (such as E-text, braille, large print, pdf image, pdf text, audio – analogue, audio – digital, mp3, daisy books, tactile graphics and descriptive video) are required for their academic programmes. However, SWDs findings reported that they received these formats sometimes and it also depends on the university/institute. For instance, the University of Peradeniya provided more formats, whereas the University of Ruhuna provided only Braille and the Eastern provided none. The special need resource unit (SNRU) or special centre for disability students were reported as the venue where most of these materials/tools were available

In addition to these, accommodations provided for SWDs in class (extra time for assignments, extra time for tests, preferential seating, extra handouts, computer or recording device use for note taking, advance copies of course notes and course requirements, - Tutoring, Peer support) were also varied in different university/institute and the frequency is also moderate. Further, providing computer or recording device for note taking were noted as mostly receiving resources. Moreover, it was identified that the University of Peradeniya provided all the accommodations except peer support. Nevertheless, the Eastern University provided all special accommodations including peer support whereas the University of Ruhuna provided only extra time for assignments and extra time for tests.

Except the above physical resources SWDs findings show the inadequate physical resources such as moving facilities for physically disabled students, and special facilities

for blind/visually impaired students and also for deaf/hard of hearing students available in all four universities ). Especially they highlighted the inadequate modern technological tools, equipment, and software available in their University.

Except in the University of Ruhuna, instructional manuals in the special education field, and getting professional support (occupational therapist) to plan individual programme were not available. Importantly, it was identified that the SLTC is the only institute that considers disability in designing curriculum.

### **Suggestion for further development**

As described in section 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 4.4 and 4.5 the suggestions from all stakeholder groups were considered to enhance the quality of the SWDs' education at the selected local partner University, thus providing a better University experience for SWDs.

#### **Suggestions from SWDs**

- Providing a special room for SWDs to cater to their special needs
- Implementing a special counseling service to help SWDs to solve their problems.
- Providing necessary equipment etc. for SWDs.
- Providing opportunity for SWDs to study all courses as well as other students make other students aware of disabled students,
- Help improve the English knowledge of students with disabilities
- Some attitudes should be developed in students,
- All facilities should be enhanced, and computers should be provided free of charge to students
- Provide good guidance on admission to the university,
- Deploying one academic or one academic per student to look after each student during the university education period
- Provide good guidance on admission to the university, deploying one academic or one academic per student to look after each student during the university education period
- Provide modern learning equipment

#### **Suggestions from Parents**

- Improve services and facilities as prescribed by local and international treaties and conventions.
- Develop and update existing facilities: Provide computers and financial assistance.
- Provide concessions when they purchase equipment.
- Provide more opportunities to improve English and ICT competency.
- Provide facilities and guidance if they expect to follow postgraduate degrees.
- Provide hostel facilities for these students throughout their period of studies.
- Improvements in teaching learning methods.

### **Suggestions from non-academic staff members**

- Need more facilities for the visually challenged students as this is the only faculty in the university caters the said students.
- SWDs have not been given due attention in the University system. We have never been mandated to investigate the needs of such or include them in our programmes.
- A quota system should be established for such students especially in the healthcare field.
- They may engage in such professions in future or help build strategies to overcome the barriers that SWDs/PWDs face in academic and professional progress, in research, planning etc.
- As far as the SWDs students are concerned proper awareness to be extended to the visually challenged students and special class-rooms are to be designed.
- Curriculum of each faculty of the university should include some portion to the differently able students
- Awareness programmes should be conducted to the staff from bottom to top
- Its better if there is a common policy to be followed by all the Units/Faculties of the university
- Action should be taken to improve facilities, provide software for e-learning etc.
- Should improve all the facilities on in the hostels
- Supportive technologies should be provided
- Though we see SWD's basic needs at the hostel level and they are looked after by their colleagues, much attention isn't paid towards them. Hence what should be done is to start a dialogue about this. This research itself has aroused our interest and attitudes positively.

- It's valuable to open special education unit for SWD

### **Suggestions of the Academics**

Most of the academics have stressed the importance of providing physical accessibility for SWDs to all buildings in all the universities. A few had stated the importance of having a special room for SWDs to do their examinations. Some also have stated the importance of giving equal opportunities as others in providing higher education for SWDs. To provide SWDs with a shuttle transportation system for physically disabled in the universities. Suggested to have programs to change the attitudes and awareness of the stakeholders in the universities. Some have suggested to have a separate Institute/University to teach SWDs.

## **Section 6: Conclusions and Recommendations**

Overall, this study had a good response rate for academics, peers and SWDs except for parents and non-academic staff. This study does not include information of the SWDs and parents from the private sector university.

Given the competitive nature of the Sri Lankan State university admission process, the majority of the SWDs are admitted to these universities under the “Special category”. However, at least there being one student in this sample indicates that there is a potential for the SWDs to enter the state universities while competing with the other normal students as well. This study reveals that the majority of the SWDs are admitted to the disciplines of social sciences and humanities than the other disciplines. Therefore, there is a need to consider if there is the potential for other disciplines to admit SWDs as well.

Since this study included SWDs of the state universities only, 22% of the parents were unemployed and 22% were retired. The study was able to consider a wider variety of information and opinions of non-academic staff members such as vice chancellors, bursars, registrars, and their deputies, wardens, Chief medical officers, librarians, and directors of different units.

The academics in the sample came from 14 individual faculties. The main fields of study areas that were found are Agriculture, Arts, Allied Health Sciences, Engineering, Dental, Management, Medicine, Science, Veterinary and Computing and IT. Close to 30% of the academics having teaching experience for more than 20 years indicates that the SWDs are being taught by a highly experienced group of academics. In addition, these SWDs are being taught by a highly qualified group of academics at least with a M. Phil. degree, which includes 69% senior lecturers or above.

Of these academics, less than half of the academics had taught SWDs in their classes at some point in time. Of the total 65 academics from the University of Peradeniya (UOP), only little more than half has not taught SWDs at all. 23% of the total was from Arts Faculty who had taught SWD’s at some point in their teaching career. The other faculties that had a notable number were Medicine, Engineering and Management. Academics of

the Veterinary faculty was the only faculty that did not report teaching SWDs. Although the study sample did not include any SWD from other faculties, the academic staff information reveals that other faculties also accommodate SWDs.

Sampled peers came from different faculties of the Universities. Except for SLTC majority of the peer students came from Arts Faculties from University of Peradeniya, Eastern and Ruhuna. From SLTC, the peers were from Engineering, Business and Computing Schools, respectively. The peer students' sample was mainly administered among senior year students in all the universities.

### **Disability types**

All stakeholders indicated that SWDs had different types of disabilities. Among them the majority of the SWDs possessed blind/visual impaired disability. Majority of the academics reported that most of them had students with visual disability in their classes as well. Second type of disability that was observed among students in class by the academics were physical disability and followed by hearing disability and finally mental disability. Most of the peers were also aware of the blind/visually impaired in society. Lowest awareness was of medical disability (Chronic illness). The highest number of SWDs were found at the University of Peradeniya (31) and the least number was in SLTC (2). According to results of the SWDs, it was revealed that none of the SWDs had mental disability or mental health disability. Importantly, from the findings from SWDs and academics, it was clear that most students had more than one type of disabilities. Mental health disability was noted as the rare disability among the SWDs. However according to the findings of parents no children with disability in deaf/hard of hearing or deaf-blind impaired were presented. But, according to the academics they had observed the other types of disability among their students in class.

### **Knowledge, experience, and training on SWDs**

61% of the SWDs were with the view they were not satisfied with the university experience as a disabled student. Furthermore, a lower percentage of the SWDs (35%) viewed that other students treated SWDs with respect and 52% of SWDs felt that they

were treated as an equal part in their study groups. When considering the university life, the interactions with others like peers, academic staff members and administrative staff members were important. By the fact that 69% of SWDs enjoy interacting with others shows that the SWDs' also consider it important to interact with others in the university. However, more than half of them expressed their willingness to approach academic staff regarding their special needs. Less than 45% of the SWDs were hesitant to get help from academics and peers. Since SWDs are the focus of this research, it is worthwhile to explore the reasons for the dissatisfaction and take steps to minimize the negative impacts on SWDs. The parents also confirm the above claim by SWDs. For instance, 57% of the parents reported that their child communicated his/her needs adequately with the authorities and peers.

Among the overall sampled peers, an extremely low percentage of peers were aware of the existence of a SNRU in their respective campus. However, close to 80% or more of the respondents of the universities other than Peradeniya were unaware of the SNRU in their campuses. For instance, there is no SNRU at SLTC, but 15% of the peers had stated that there was a SNRU in their campus. This can be taken as the level of peers' awareness about the facilities available for SWDs in their campuses. This reveals the importance of having awareness programmes for all the stakeholders.

The academic staff, peers and SWDs had a high level of awareness about the rights of the SWDs. But the parents and non-academic members' awareness about the rights of the SWDs were poor. Furthermore, it was revealed that awareness programmes on disability for peers, academic staff members and non-academic members were exceedingly rare. For instance, only 12.6% reported that their university/institutions had conducted continuous special needs education programmes. They further emphasized the need of a special education training programme for the staff members, so that the needs of the disability students could be successfully fulfilled. To increase the awareness of the SWDs' requirements and their rights the universities can incorporate a study module in all the staff development programs for academics and non-academic members. And for the peers there should be an awareness session on SWDs requirements and rights at the first-year orientation programme.

One of the most important manifestations of the study is that only 3% of the sampled academics has had some training to teach students with disability. Of the trained academics, their training mainly focused on counselling from the University of Peradeniya and Ruhuna and one from SLTC was a trainer of trainers for special needs education.

Half of the academics feel that the University Special Needs Resource Unit is helpful for SWDs and academic staff. An extremely high percentage disagrees that there is a person in their departments to assist and coordinate accommodations for SWDs. Majority agrees that there are some SWDs whose disability could not be easily recognized. 67% of the academics are aware of the teaching and learning resources for SWDs such as software and apps.

Academics in these universities used different mechanisms to make teaching and learning for SWDs meaningful. Majority had used software and mobile apps' among the academics that used at least one mechanism. However, 74% of the total sample of academics have stated that they did not use any special mechanism to make the teaching and learning process of SWDs meaningful. This is a short-coming in the process of enhancing teaching and learning of the SWDs. Therefore, it can be considered as an indication of the importance of having training sessions on the available special mechanism to make the teaching and learning process of SWDs meaningful.

The academics in the study sample were willing to provide special accommodation to SWDs in teaching such as to the use of computers or recording devices for note taking and to provide preferential seating for SWDs', have SWDs attend their class via Skype if it is not possible for the student to be physically present and encourage students with disabilities to participate in co-curricular activities. Not many academics agreed to the point that they adapt the syllabus and teaching material to accommodate SWDs' needs. This indicates that the academics needs guidance to adapt the syllabus and teaching material to accommodate SWDs' needs.

There was extremely high willingness among academics to provide special accommodation facilities to SWDs for assessments in all Universities by way of providing

extra time for assignments, preferential seating, computer or recording device, extra time for exam and oral examinations.

Poor performance was seen in academics obtaining feedback from their students in all the four universities. Several academics had tried to adopt their feedback suggestion. As a result of the feedback suggestions the academics had made it a point to inquire from the students about their needs and difficulties in class and tried to provide learner support systems based on the SWDs' need. Following are some of the academics' assessments of their knowledge, experience, and training on SWDs.

### **Availability of resources**

As reported in the literature, the availability of resources including both physical and human resources to meet the needfulness of SWDs is also highlighted as an important consideration towards the enhancement of education of SWDs. Regarding the physical resources, the findings of SWDs' questionnaire analysis shows that the materials (such as textbooks, workbooks, assignments, exam materials, supplementary readings, online courses, online databases, audio visual resources) and alternate formats (such as E-text, braille, large print, pdf image, pdf text, audio – analogue, audio – digital, mp3, daisy books, tactile graphics and descriptive video) are required for their academic programmes. However, SWDs study findings reported that occasionally SWDs received these formats and it also varied by university. For instance, the University of Peradeniya provided more formats, whereas the University of Ruhuna provided only Braille and the Eastern provided none. The special need resource unit (SNRU) or special centre for disability students were reported as the venue where most of these materials/tools were available

Furthermore, there was a moderate frequency and a variation by university in accommodations provided for SWDs in class (extra time for assignments, extra time for tests, preferential seating, extra handouts, computer or recording device use for note taking, advance copies of course notes and course requirements, - Tutoring, Peer support). Providing computers or recording devices for note taking were noted as mostly receiving resources.

Except the above stated physical resources, SWDs' findings show the inadequate physical resources such as moving facilities for physically disabled students, and special facilities for blind/visually impaired students and also for deaf/hard of hearing students available in all four universities. Specially, the SWDs had highlighted the inadequacy in modern technological tools, equipment, and software available in their Universities.

Except in the University of Ruhuna, instructional manuals in the special education field, and getting professional support (occupational therapist) to plan individual programme were not available. Importantly, it was identified that the SLTC is the only institute that considers disability in designing curriculum.

73% of the academics did not use special tools to make teaching and learning for SWDs meaningful. Although there was an extremely high willingness among the academics to provide special accommodations to SWDs in teaching, the study results also revealed that extremely low percentage of the academics had received training to teach SWDs. These facts confirm that the academics are unaware of the special tools that are there for teaching the SWDs and it is important to conduct training sessions and awareness programmes to expose the academics to the available assistive technologies and teaching methods.

### **Suggestion for further development**

All the stakeholders had provided constructive and productive suggestions to enhance the quality of the SWDs' education at the selected local partner universities, to provide better university experience for SWDs. Following are some of the important suggestions stated by SWDs. SWDs feel it would have been better if they were provided with a special room to cater to their special needs, established a special counseling service to help SWDs to solve their problems, provided opportunity for SWDs to study all courses, provided special assistance to improve their English knowledge, provided with proper guidance on university admissions, assigning one academic for each SWD student on admission to guide them throughout the University career, had accessibility to building within the universities, provided with modern and appropriate equipment to enhance their

education in the university and inculcate positive attitudes towards SWDs among the other students.

Most of the academics have stressed the importance of providing physical accessibility for SWDs to lecture halls, library, washrooms, and hostels in all the universities. There is a suggestion to have a special room for SWDs to do their examinations. Some also have stated the importance of giving equal opportunities as others in providing higher education for SWDs. To provide SWDs with a shuttle transportation system for physical disabled in the universities. Suggested to have programs to change the attitudes and awareness of the stakeholders in the universities. Some have suggested to have a separate Institute/University/agency to teach SWDs. The academics also have emphasized the importance of having trained academics with teaching and learning facilities along with the available new technology, trained technical staff on modern technology available for SWDs, establishing a SWD supportive administrative system, availability of SWD supportive educational tools to facilitate their learning processes, providing counselling session and providing SWDs with an appealing and sound environment in order for the SWDs to engage in their academic activities with self-esteem and self-confidence.

Following are some of the suggestions from parents to further improve their children's academic life in the universities. Parents want their children to receive improved services and facilities as prescribed by local and international treaties and conventions, provide and update existing facilities such as computers and financial assistance, provide concessions when they purchase equipment, provide more opportunities to improve English and ICT competency, provide facilities and guidance if they expect to follow postgraduate degrees, provide hostel facilities for these students throughout their period of studentship and provide SWDs with improved teaching and learning methods.

**Non-academic staff members' suggested to have a** mandate to investigate the needs of SWDs, to establish a quota system in university admission criteria accommodate SWDs in other fields of studies, provide all staff members with awareness programmes about SWDs, adopt a is a common policy to be followed by all the Units/Faculties of the university, improve facilities in the universities for SWDs and facilitate the SWDs with recreational events.

Majority of the peers felt that educational facilities for SWDs have to be improved, lecturers should pay more attention for SWDs' needs and importance of equal rights for free education. Peers feel that they are not disabled, but they are differently abled and multi-talented persons. Majority of the peers had stated the SWDs should be provided with new technological equipment that would be useful for their studies. Most of them are also suggesting improving accessibility for the SWDs to the buildings in the campuses. One has pointed out the importance of releasing their results on time. Peers suggest that the existing library facilities does not accommodate SWDs needs such as the librarians are not aware of the SWDs requirements, accessibility to the library and the toilets are not available and if a medical necessity arise there should be facilities for a medical doctor to attend to them immediately. Peers also proposes admitting SWDs to other departments to do special degrees. Peers feel that SWDs should interact with other students in activities such as student' events, competitions, trips, programmes, conferences and should give them responsibilities that they can bear so they feel the sense of inclusion.

## Section 7: References

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## Annexures

### Appendix A1

#### Academics' Designation by Faculties (Appendix?)

Designation	P o s t g r a d u a t e	S c i e n c e	V e t e r i n a r y	E n g i n e e r i n g	H S S	M a n a g e m e n t	M e d i c i n e	B u s i n e s s c h o o l	C o m m e r c e & M a n a g .	C o m p u t i n g & I T	D e n t a l	A H S	A g r i c u l t u r e	A r t s	A r t s a n d C u l t u r e	T o t a l
Assistant Lecturer	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Instructor in English	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Lecturer	1	1	0	4	8	3	0	1	1	5	1	2	2	3	3	35
Postdoctoral Research	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Professor	0	4	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	4	1	16
Senior Lecturer	0	3	2	10	12	2	5	1	1	1	3	0	2	21	12	75
Senior Professor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Teaching Assistant	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
Visiting Scholar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	2	8	2	18	22	6	6	3	2	8	6	2	4	31	17	137

### Appendix A2

**Table 4.1.8: Willingness to Provide Special Accommodations to SWDs in**

**Teaching as a % by University (Appendix?)**

University								
Willingness to Provide Special Accommodations to SWDs in Teaching	Eastern		Peradeniya		Ruhuna		SLTC	
	Advance copies of course notes/out lines/presentations	5	26%	31	48%	9	33%	18
Computer or recording device use for notetaking	13	68%	53	82%	21	78%	27	87%
Extra hand-outs	12	63%	35	54%	11	41%	18	58%
Flexibility in terms of completing academic assignments	6	32%	36	55%	14	52%	20	65%
Note taking friend	7	37%	30	46%	14	52%	10	32%
Preferential seating	14	74%	59	91%	22	81%	26	84%
Adjustments in teaching and in providing exams	9	47%	36	55%	14	52%	18	58%
Peer support	14	74%	32	49%	11	41%	13	42%
Preparation of teaching materials in adjusted forms	10	53%	17	26%	5	19%	5	16%
Tutoring	10	53%	23	35%	6	22%	15	48%
Ability to contact Faculty outside of class	6	32%	27	42%	8	30%	22	71%
A program for raising awareness and identifying potential SWDs	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%
A room for these SWDs	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%

**Appendix A3**

**Table 4.1.13: Academics' Suggest to Enhancement of SWDs Education in the University**

	<b>Suggestions to enhancement of SWDs Education in the University.</b>
Provide Facilities and disability access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is better to provide facilities for the SWDs and accommodate them.</li> <li>● University system should provide enough resources for them.</li> <li>● In the University system, there is a lack of access facilities to buildings for SWDs. It is a fundamental human rights of SWDs. In addition, providing at least basic access facilities for SWDs is one of obligations of the GOSL</li> <li>● Creation of infrastructure (toilets, chairs, desks, pathways etc) for SWDs through LBMC.</li> <li>● Need more facilities and study areas to them</li> <li>● University should provide the special facilities for SWDs ( i.e. Braille computer or Laptop, recorder, transport etc.).</li> <li>● I think it is better pay more attention to the special infrastructure facilities in the planning stage of buildings, roads etc.</li> <li>● Infrastructure facility for SWDs should be developed.</li> <li>● SWD facilities should be developed at the university level.</li> <li>● It is a must to provide disable access facilities in all universities so that SWDs could easily reach academic departments, lecture halls, laboratories and staff offices (academic and administrative).</li> <li>● Should have easy access to class rooms, SWDs should be provided with audio forms of reading materials.</li> <li>● SWDs need special attention in their higher education which is quite differ from the regular process. It should be technocratic. But it should be on their preference.</li> </ul>
Assistive technology & teaching/ learning material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● need to use the technology available today to support SWDs in the classroom as well as in other places. this should be expanded to other levels of learning i.e. school level. some talented SWDs missed the chance of entering universities.</li> <li>● e-learning accommodated in most of the program and facility provided for SWD.</li> <li>● It would be better to provide SWDs with proper trainings to use modern technology-based solutions</li> <li>● Providing learning materials specifically targeting their nature of disability like audio materials.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide additional equipment for SWDs students for teaching and also extra training need for teaching SWDs students</li> </ul>
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduce SWD policies in the student orientation.</li> <li>● There should be a national policy for SWDs covering all aspects including education.</li> </ul>
Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● They don't need sympathy, what they need is acceptance</li> <li>● It is important to identify the skills and weaknesses of SWD's and guide them to improve their skills</li> <li>● They need to be respected and given special place.</li> <li>● We have to more consider about SWD students</li> <li>● Make them feel comfortable at every point of education. Cognitively and physically</li> <li>● Supporting SWD to learn higher education, with necessary facility's to them.</li> <li>● Provide extra activities, Counselling.</li> <li>● we have to individual care and encouraged SWDs students for their studies.</li> <li>● The physical environment should appeal to the students.</li> <li>● Their specific needs are to be consulted at the inception.</li> <li>● Real empathetic consideration should come from all corners and not lip service needed. Fund allocation and and supervision and monitoring should be there in the allocation of resources</li> </ul>
Trained staff to teach SWDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The university staff would benefit largely from programmes such as workshops aimed at improving their skills of teaching SWDs.</li> <li>● the teachers and lecturer should be trained and further should be facilitated with the necessary equipment, materials.</li> <li>● Further, the teachers should be educated on different SWDs and given a proper detailed intro about the student before he/she enter into the lecture/ class.</li> <li>● Staff training is very important and Infrastructure facilities should provide to universities. SWD should give special guidance and special treatments in university.</li> <li>● More training for academic members.</li> <li>● Include a session in SDC program about SWD</li> </ul>

<p>Create a SWDs centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creation of SWDs unit in each Faculty.</li> <li>● <b>Make a Student Disability Accommodation Center at University, and</b> make it a part of ToR of Senior Student Counselors to maintain a rapport with the center.</li> <li>● Create the SWDs centres with specially trained academic members in selected universities.</li> <li>● Need to have a centre for them and need to provide additional support for them.</li> </ul>
<p>Equal opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Education is common for all. So we should provide the equal opportunity to them.</li> <li>● Universities should pay more attention for providing equal opportunities for the students with disabilities. Suitable adjustments should be done in facilities and accommodation.</li> <li>● Equal opportunity for disabled.</li> <li>● I strongly believe when it comes to grading all students should be equally treated (SWDs and others). This is because everything is provided for SWDs to bring them to the level of other students</li> </ul>
<p><b>Separate University for SWDs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There should be a separate Institute/University/agency to teach them.</li> <li>● It is better, if there is a separate institute/university (Under the UGC) for disable students which can be give more support towards them.</li> <li>● There should a one university having all facilities to SWDs. No use of distributing them among all universities in the country. Administration will be more efficient and SWDs will more benefitted.</li> <li>● Better to concentrate them to one university and provide all possible facilities there rather than having them everywhere and not having anything to support them</li> </ul>
<p>Access to buildings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● .No access for them to reach a number of university facilities; example, library. Besides, it is important to construct a walking tracks for these undergraduates with necessary assistance.</li> <li>● Enhancing physical access requirements.</li> <li>● Infrastructure development to accommodate (disability access/ elevators/ hostel accommodation all throughout the academic program; disability washrooms in campus &amp; hostel); shuttle transportation provided for physical disabilities; Center established for SWD's concerns;</li> </ul>

Support of a designated person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Appoint a mentor of choice.</li> <li>● Involvement of AR/SAR/DR in providing facilities for them. Not in Faculty or Dept level, but in University level.</li> <li>● PRO office can attend to assist the process.</li> <li>● Appointment of non-academic person (preparably a clerk) to look after SWDs</li> </ul>
Difficulties faced by SWDs in Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SWDs face many difficulties in the University of Ruhuna to manage the physical environment of the university Here are so many steps Therefore they can't walk easily. Other students have to carry them. Please do not send the students with problems of legs. As human beings we can't bear up that situation.</li> <li>● Physical access to lecture halls, library, and hostels are most important.</li> </ul>
Examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● excuse on 80% attendance requirement to obtain examination eligibility.</li> <li>● I have noticed that SWDs at the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences had not been provided the proper facilities in sitting for examinations. It is worth the have a fully equipped room for them in the process of examination.</li> <li>● We should provide special facilities during exams.</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This is one of the long felt needs of our University! I sincerely thank the whole project team for taking this initiative.</li> <li>● I think you have already taken the necessary steps and I am highly appreciated your kind effort.</li> <li>● This questionnaire is useless, because SWDs are not having similar disabilities</li> <li>● Needed to be addressed carefully and efficiently.</li> <li>● They just like other students. They also have a hope to achieve better life. They also like to work among the people in the society with respect. Therefore, I think Education is the most valuable thing to them in their entire life time.</li> <li>● They need more help.</li> <li>● While I appreciate this I also wish to mention that it should not be a burden on regular students specially in terms of grading and marking. Also students helping SWDs should not be given extra credit because it should be treated as a voluntary / social service. Otherwise when students do voluntary work they will expect such benefits and students will not learn the idea of social work / voluntary work.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to identify the skills of SWD's and guide them in the correct path</li> <li>• Better to arrange the opportunities for them to obtain the higher Education</li> </ul>
Changes in attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A programme is required to change the attitude towards SWDs.</li> </ul>
Raising awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The non SWDs should be given awareness on interacting with SWDs and how to tackle problems.</li> <li>• Be aware about them. Always!</li> <li>• As a University we should take immediate actions to resolve issues related to teaching and learning process of SWDs.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of the problem and solutions among students and staff. Teach staff on how to indentify those SWD</li> </ul>

**Appendix? A4**

**Table 4.2.2: Year of Study in the Degree Programme: Appendix?**

Academic Year	Frequency	Percentage
1st	3	13.0
2nd	11	47.8
3rd	6	26.1
4th	3	13.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Appendix? A5**

**Table 4.2.3: Normal special\_ intake Appendix?**

Intake	Frequency	Percent
Normal	1	4.3

Special	22	95.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**(Appendix A6)**

**Table 4.2.6: Services need by SWDs (Appendix)**

	Frequency	Percent
Missing	2	8.7
1	2	8.7
1,12	1	4.3
1,2	1	4.3
1,2,3,5,8,11,12,13,14	1	4.3
1,2,10,12,13,14	1	4.3
1,2,11	1	4.3
1,2,3,11,12,13	1	4.3
1,2,3,11,13	1	4.3
1,2,4,6,9,12,13,14,15	1	4.3
1,2,4,6,9,12,13,14,15	1	4.3
1,3,11	1	4.3
1,3,11,13	1	4.3
10	1	4.3
10, 12	1	4.3
1,7	1	4.3
3	3	13.0
3,7	1	4.3
7,11	1	4.3

Total	23	100.0
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### Appendix A7

**Table 4.2.9 Materials provided by different universities/institute (Appendix)**

Formats of academic material	University of Peradeniya	University of Ruhuna	Eastern University
E-text			
Braille	1	1	
Large print	1		
PDF image	1		
PDF text	1		
Audio – analogue			
Audio – digital	1		
MP3	1		
DAISY books		1	
Tactile graphics			
Descriptive Video		1	
None			
Other. Please specify			



Observed Type of Disability among Students in Class by Academics

Visual Disability	Physical Disability	Mental Disability	H
Visually impaired students	Students with leg disability	Not physical disabilities but mental disabilities developed	Blind students
Mostly one- or two-blind candidates per batch/per year	I observe disability students in our department	Learning disabilities: Dyslexia	Student with tr with partial dea
I observed some blind students in our department.	Thought one course for disable children for two batches	OCD and other cognitive disabilities	I have had stud disabilities.
I observed some blind students in our students	Visually Challenge and Physically challenge students are in the..	There was a student with speaking disability due to a cognitive	Student who us
A few Blind Students	Permanent disability in walking		Blind students, students with v
Blind	Students with physical disabilities		Poor hearing, p
Visually Challenge and Physically challenge students are in the .....	Polio, temporary disabilities eg. fracture of leg bones		ADD student, A
1 student with week Vision			
Physical (Vision, auditory), Psychological, Dyslexia	Small made - cannot walk		
Students with vision issues	Last semester there was a student with a walking disability		
Blind students, handicapped	Blind students, handicapped		
Blind students and, deaf students.	Student with traumatic brain injury, student with partial deafness		
Eyesight problems			
Visual defects	There was one physically disabled student who had difficulties ..		
Blind students	I have had students with different types of disabilities.		

I have had students with hearing and visual disabilities.	Blind students, Half - Deaf students and students with walking .		
Blind students, Half - Deaf students and students with walking disability	Poor hearing, poor eyesight, disabled arms		
A blind student	Student with disability in the right arm (writing problem);		
Poor hearing, poor eyesight, disabled arms	students with visual impairments, vision impairments, wheelchair		
Only with slight difficulties			
students with visual impairments, vision impairments, wheel-chair			

