University Handbook of Disability
University of Vavuniya

2023

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Editor
V. Subramaniam

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GREETING MESSAGES

Message 01: Greeting message from The Chairman, University Grants Commission (UGC) Sri Lanka

What an emotional milestone! Congratulations on publishing your handbook in the name of "University Handbook of Disability, University of Vavuniya". As the Chairman of UGC, it is my great pleasure to congratulate University of Vavuniya for its timely needed successful achievement. Through your handbook and its 05 main chapters (General, Introduction to disability, right based approach and social model of disability, Introduction to Support Centre for Persons with disability, other accessibilities and facilities for persons with disabilities), the University of Vavuniya has ignited a spark within university community and non-university community, encouraging them to pursue their knowledge and skills and their passions on disability. Its courage and determination shine through, inspiring all who read its handbook. This university talent for providing detailed information on targeted subjects is truly commendable! Professionalism and dedication to this university craft shine brightly throughout the pages. Its meticulous research and attention to detail have created a work that is not only informative but also enlightening. The university expertise is evident, and readers will undoubtedly benefit from its knowledge. Therefore, no doubt, the anticipation of the university to bring it as a disability friendly university will be achieved in future. Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey.

Senior Prof. Sampath Amaratunga
Chairman,
University Grants Commission

Message 02: Greeting message from The Vice Chancellor, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka

I am happy to announce the launch of the University of Vavuniya Handbook of Disability, a vital resource designed to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all members of our esteemed institution. This handbook represents our steady commitment to develop an environment that gives diversity and promotes equal opportunities for every individual within our community.

Recognizing the importance of addressing the unique needs of individuals with disabilities, we have exactly curetted this handbook to provide a clear and concise guide to the wide collection of support services and accommodations available. By adhering to the principles of universal design, we aim to create a broad space that empowers every member of our community to succeed academically, professionally, and personally.

It is my sincere hope that this handbook serves as a catalyst for meaningful dialogue and positive engagement, encouraging us to embrace a culture of empathy, understanding, and support.

I would like to appreciate Mr. V. Subramaniam/ Coordinator, Support Centre for person with disability the staffs who contributed wrote the handbook. I thank the reviewers who have accepted and completed the task with short period.

 Finally, I appreciate the contribution of the management committee of the SCPD for their initiation to publish this handbook.

Thank you.

Prof. T. Mangaleswaran,
Vice Chancellor,
University of Vavuniya

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Mr. E.W.M. Samantha Upul Wiyasinghe (Director, Physical Education) and other Sports Officers, for their timely valuable assistances.

Kindly let me appreciate the marvelous service of Dr. (Ms.) Shyamani Hettiarachchi (the Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Disability Studies, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya) and Mr. G. Asanga Ruwan Perera (Former Country Coordinator of MYRIGHT) for voluntarily agreed to review entire first draft and for their fine tunings and amendments in the draft, and thereinafter, recommending it to the SCPD committee.

The other three cooperators are Dr. K. Shriganeshan (Senior Lecturer, English language teaching, Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna), Mr. M. Amirthananthan (Programme Manager / Vavuniya District, Centre for Justice and Change, Trincomalee) and Ms. M. A. Fathima Asna (final year student, environment science, Faculty of Applied Science, University of Vavuniya) who helped the handbook in language modification, formatting the drafts and drawing the cover page respectively. I take this opportunity to salute them with my heartfelt thanks.

Several others from the university and outside had extended their direct and indirect support when I approached them for various helps. Although the handbook does not mention their names here, their contribution is thankfully acknowledged.

I do hope that this handbook of disability would be a milestone in the history of the University of Vavuniya and a main tool to provide disability guidelines to service providers to accelerate and expand the services towards people with disability. It will be a guidebook for university and non-university community members to understand disability.

V. Subramaniam
The Editor

ABBREVIATIONS

AAC   : Accessibility Audit Committee

ABI   : Acquired Brain Injury

AUC   : Affiliated University College

BBM   : Bachelor of Business Management

BIT   : Bachelor of Information Technology

CDE   : Convention against Discriminations in Education

CEDAW   : Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discriminations Against Women

CRC   : Convention on the Rights of the Child

CUD   : Centre for Universal Design

DV   : Domestic Violence

EU   : European Union

GBV   : Gender Based Violence

G.C.E. (A/L)   : General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level)

G.C.E. (O/L)   : General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level)

HEIs   : Higher Education Institutions

HRCSL   : Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

ICESCR   : International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

IC   : International Classifications

ICF   : International Classification of Functioning

ICF-CY   : International Classification of Functioning for Children and Youth

ICIDH   : International Classification of Impairments, Disability and Handicap

ICFDH   : International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health

IDA   : International Disability Alliance

ILO   : International Labour Organization

NAPD   : National Action Plan on Disability

NCPD   : National Council for Persons with Disabilities

NPD	:	**N**ational **P**olicy on **D**isability
NPAUC	:	**N**orthern **P**rovince **A**ffiliated **U**niversity **C**ollege
OPD	:	Organizations of PWDs
PWDs	:	**P**ersons / **P**eople **w**ith **D**isabilities
SCPD	:	**S**upport **C**entre for PWDs
SDGs	:	**S**ustainable **D**evelopment **G**oals
TBI	:	**T**raumatic **B**rain **I**njury
UD	:	**U**niversal **D**esign
UDI	:	**U**niversal **D**esign of **I**nstruction
UGC	:	**U**niversity **Grants** **C**ommission
UMO	:	**U**niversity **M**edical **O**fficer
UN	:	**U**nited **N**ations
UNESCO	:	**U**nited **N**ations' **E**ducational, **S**cientific and **C**ultural **O**rganization
UNICEF	:	United Nations' Children's Fund
UNCRPD	:	**U**nited **N**ations **C**onvention on the **R**ights of **Persons** with **Disabilitie**s.
VC	:	**V**ice **C**hancellor
WHO	:	**W**orld **H**ealth **O**rganization

THE OVERVIEW OF THE HANDBOOK

General Introduction to the Handbook

When University of Vavuniya emerged as Sri Lanka's 17th university in 2021, its first Vice Chancellor Prof. T. Mangaleswaran's thought of the problems and needs of students and staff with disabilities in the university which are critical cross cutting issue. The same thought was shared by Dr. M. Malaravan, Consultant Eye Surgeon of Jaffna Teaching Hospital and a University Council Member. When they jointly approached Mr. V. Subramaniam, Member of National Council for Persons with Disability (NCPD) appointed by the Excellency the President of Sri Lanka, to establish a Centre for Support for PWDs it became materialized.

Out of seventeen Universities in Sri Lanka, only four universities nationally University of Colombo, University of Peradeniya, University of Kelaniya and Rugunu University have already successfully set up such centres and have found them useful to protect and promote equal rights, equal opportunity and equal participation in education of students and employees with disabilities.

Considering the above stated facts, the VC and university council members unanimously granted their approval for the establishment of the centre, without any delay.

In the meantime, the council urged the university to prepare a handbook of details of the centre based on 'The Disability Handbook' published by University of Colombo as a model. This **"University Handbook of Disability, University of Vavuniya"** has been published to fulfill such a decision of the council with the requirement.

Therefore, *Disability Handbook 2021* of the University of Colombo has been used as a source for this handbook. (Disability Handbook, 2021).

However, the entire structure of the model was not followed in preparing the hand book as per domestic features of the University of Vavuniya.

Purpose of the Hand Book

The University of Vavuniya wishes to confirm 100% equal rights, equal opportunity and equal participation in education and employment of PWDs within the frame work of the university. For that, everyone associated with the university should be aware of various issues like what disability is, what the barriers to PWDs are, what their rights to education and career, are what the established centre is to provide them with services, and how they should have the necessary accessibility and other facilities and through which the above objective of the university can be achieved. Providing knowledge,

skills and positive attitude on disability to the readers is the main objective of this handbook.

The university highly, expects the entire university community to acquire such knowledge, skills and attitude and to support the university to protect and promote the rights of PWDs who are also equal citizens of the country.

Therefore, this handbook tries to reflect the university community's commitments on disability for disability inclusion in all sectors.

Hence, this handbook is an open document uploaded in the reference pages of the SCPD web pages of the website of the university and making access to download its pages for references.

Structure of the Handbook

The handbook is divided into a total of 6 sections with the title 'The Overview of the Handbook' and 5 subject areas starting from chapter 01 to chapter 05.

The section 'The overview of the Handbook' highlights purpose, structure and users of the handbook with general introduction to the book.

The heading 'General' (chapter 01) presents an introduction, Sri Lankan context, a brief description of the University of Vavuniya and an introduction to the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka. More specifically, the sub-section on Sri Lankan context has tried to present general information about Sri Lanka, the status of PWDs in Sri Lanka, and the status of practical barriers and possibilities to enjoy their rights to education and employment in the country. The main objective of this section is to create general knowledge on Sri Lanka, University of Vavuniya and UGC

Very important section of the handbook (chapter 02) provides crucial information and clear pictures about impairment, disability/Activity Limitation and participation restriction through their definitions, what the differences between these three major dimensions, are and how to identify them. These three dimensions are always unclear and giving confusions to general public, even sometimes to social workers, disability activists, and educationists working in the higher education institutions. Hence this part tries to eliminate such confusions during the time of their identifications. Here, the readers could obtain the correct and accepted international terminology for these 3 terms, which the government of Sri Lanka is following as well. Causes for disability and types of disability are two important information stated in this section. Finally, the barriers for PWDs in general and especially in higher education institutions have been listed out with brief explanations. The University does hope that this section will definitely assist the students and staff with and without disabilities, post-graduates, researchers etc. for their information of identification of the PWDs within the

university and outsides. Hence, this section helps the readers to conceptualize disability (Activity Limitation) with various other aspects related with disability.

Chapter 03 speaks about Right Based Approach and Social Model of Disability towards PWDs "It important to all institutions including universities to implement rights-based approach and social model and stop treating them with charity - based and needs -based approaches which had been practiced in the past negatively resulted from various religious faiths and beliefs" Readers are expected to understand vast differences between these 3 approaches to recognize and exclusively accept the rights of PWDs. There are 3 major types of rights for PWDs, such as human rights, fundamental rights and disability rights have briefly been pointed out in this section, hence, the readers referring this handbook can obtain basic knowledge on rights of PWDs. However, this section has been designed to highlight further, the right to education of the students and the right to employment of the staff with disability, separately in this section. Ultimately, the key objective of this chapter is to create perception to accept rights of PWDs

Chapter 04 of the handbook introduces SCPD while chapter 05 is introducing accessibility and other facilities in the university for PWDs. So that, these 2 parts are more beneficial to PWDs, but not limited to PWDs only. The key purposes of these 02 chapters are to understand the services provided by SCPD and identify the other services available in the University beyond SCPD.

In addition to the overview of the Handbook section and 5chapters, 4 annexures (Geographical Map of the University, UGC Policy Frame for Higher Education in Sri Lanka, University of Vavuniya Employment Policy for Disability Inclusion and Collection of Information on Disability among the Students in the University of Vavuniya are attached to the handbook for further reference of the readers.

There are so many abbreviations used in the book and such abbreviations and their expansion given in the beginning of the book

Finally, references used for the development of this handbook have been listed in the last 3 pages of the book.

 Expected Users and Direct Beneficiaries of the Handbook.

As a university, the University of Vavuniya too, has various service providers providing services to its staff and students. They are University Administrators, Lecturers, Demonstrators and Staff of Laboratory, Library, Canteen, Security, Cleaning, Hostel; Sports sector etc. eg. Library workers, sports officers, canteen staff etc.

All of them interact with students and staff with disabilities in some way in their service delivery. They are also expected to work to protect the rights of PWDs in the

provision of such services. Therefore, it is expected that they will take this book as a reference. It is also believed that through that, they can improve the quality of their service delivery. So, all of them can be considered as the primary beneficiaries of this handbook.

> **I would say 'If you want to teach Latin to John, the teacher should know about John, rather than knowing Latin.'** *By John Adams*

Therefore, especially, the lecturers and demonstrators who are directly involved in lecturing, instructions, examinations and assessments are very much anticipated to refer this book in order to acquire correct knowledge, skills and positive attitude on disability, about their students with disability and disability inclusion during their time of teaching involvement or engagement related to education.

This handbook provides wider details on SCPD where the students and staff with disability could obtain services and facilitations in order to carry out smooth function of their educational activities. Hence, they are expected to go through this book as much as possible to gather better knowledge on the contents of the book. This will enable them to realize their rights and enjoy right based university life and approach SCPD freely.

The co-workers and co-students could also benefit from the information given in the book if they deeply refer it, then, they could become disability friendly individuals in the university and society.

The post-graduates and researchers registered under universities, to follow post-graduate degree or researches may select the topic of disability inclusion for their dissertations or research and this book would be a key reference to notes of learning disability.

UGC concerns disability as a serious cross cutting issue in higher education, and strongly encourages all universities to have high concern on disability inclusion and to establish service centres for PWDs. In such interest, UGC also has opportunity to go through this guide book to ensure the quality of education of University of Vavuniya.

Since all state and private universities and other higher education institutions functioning in Sri Lanka are gradually increasing their concerns on disability, this book may help them to use as model for developing their own disability handbook in future.

The educationists, scholars, researchers etc. outside universities may be willing to learn more about disability inclusion for their educational performances and interventions. Some of the information available in the book would be useful for them to accomplish their tasks.

Finally, all citizens of the country are entitled to read the handbook for their particular special and general purposes. Therefore, the entire population of the nation is the beneficiary of the book regardless of race, gender, religions, age or disability differences.

The University of Vavuniya anticipates that this handbook will be very useful and helpful one to the university community to support the university to be the best disability friendly university of the country forever.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL

1.1 Introduction

All human beings are born with entitlement to all Human Rights. Right to Life, Right to Education, Right to Equal Treatment before Law, right to follow conscience, Political Right are some of them. It is no exaggeration to say that the Right to Education is the chief among these.

But, unfortunately, in many countries, some of their citizens are denied education or discriminated in education due to their gender, race, religion, language, disability etc. For instance, in some countries, women are denied education simply because they are women. In some countries, children with disabilities are discriminated in education because of their disability.

According to the findings of a survey conducted by the International Disability Alliance (IDA), learners with disabilities continue to be one of the most marginalized groups when it comes to access to quality, equitable education. There are an estimated 240 Million children with disabilities in the world. Compared to children without disabilities they are 16% less likely to read or be read at home, 42% less likely to have foundational reading and numeracy skills, and 49% likely to have never attended school. The pandemic and related lockdowns and armed conflicts have further exacerbated the situation for learners with disabilities. The survey reports that 17% of respondents dropped out during the pandemic. Of those who attended remote classes, only 29% found online platforms accessible. (International Disability Alliance, 2020).

Although such figures are not available for Sri Lanka, field observations show that they remain high in Sri Lanka. Therefore, every pre-school, every school, every higher education institution and every university in Sri Lanka should be in a position to ensure that quality and appropriate education is provided to students with disabilities. However, the UGC is in a position to confirm that all universities including University of Vavuniya to follow it. At the same time, everyone has an obligation to protect and promote the right to employment of employees with disabilities in universities.

1.2 Sri Lankan context

General Information

Sri Lanka is an Island in the Indian Ocean, lying off the southeastern tip of the Indian sub-continent. The island is off the South-Eastern coast shores of India, 880 km north of the Equator. It is popularly referred to as the Pearl of the Indian Ocean. The country is of 65,610 square km (25,332 square miles) in area of which 62,705 square km is land and 2905 square km is water. The Palk Strait and Gulf of Mannar separate Sri Lanka

from India. The Arabian Sea lies to the west, the Bay of Bengal to the North East, and the Indian Ocean to the South. The greatest length, from North to South, is 433 km (269 Miles). The greatest width from east to west across the island's broad Southern portion is 226 Km (140 Miles). Sri Lanka's coastline extends to a length of about 1,340 Km (about 830 Miles) (Millennium Challenge Corporation of the USA, 2017)

(This is MYRIGHT document prepared prior to the project cycle. This is a consultancy work of Mr. Hilmy Ishak and MYRIGHT has the copy right.)

The country is home to 20.966 million people (DCS, 2016) and has been a centre of Buddhist religion and culture from ancient times. Today, the country is a multi-religious and multi-ethnic nation, with nearly one third of the population following faiths other than Buddhism, notably Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. The Sinhalese community forms the majority of the population, with Tamils, who are concentrated in the North and East of the island, forming the largest ethnic minority. Ethnic groups are the Sinhalese, who form the majority (74.9%) of the population, the Sri Lankan Tamils (11.2%), Tamils of recent Indian origin (4.2%), Sri Lanka Moors (9.2%), and other groups like Malays and Burghers forming the rest (0.5%). (Department of Census and Statistics, 2012).

Status of Disability in Sri Lanka

- Available Disability Statistics:

The Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka (2011) estimates the population of Persons / People with Disability (PWDs) in Sri Lanka 1,617,924. However, organizations of PWDs (OPD) estimate that it could be up to 15% of the total population. The lack of reliable data is one of the biggest concerns in relation to the population of PWDs in Sri Lanka. The disability prevalence rate of 15% of total population, or 1 Billion people is also cited by the WHO (2020) making PWDs the world's largest minority.

Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka executed the 'Census of Population and Housing 2011' in the year 2012. The census questionnaire included a particular question (P14) on Physical and Mental Difficulties, inquiring the difficulties in the domains of Sight, Hearing, Walking, Memory, Self-containing and Communication Problems for each individual. The responses were recorded at three levels as **no difficulty**, **difficult** and **not possible**.

According to the Sri Lankan Poverty Review (Department of Census and Statistics, 2013), 8.6% of the Sri Lankan population has one or more of the above difficulties; 5.3% of the Sri Lankan has seeing difficulties as the most abundant difficulty.

As per the 2012 Census of the Population, the total population of the country was 20,328 thousand and out of which 10,464 thousand were female. Further in that census,

it was reported that there were 1,617,924 persons with difficulties, of them 922,661 were female. This statistic suggests that of the total persons with difficulties, 57% were female.

On the other hand, 9.5% of female had one or more difficulty in Sri Lanka, while it is 7.6% for male population. So, one in every 10 females has at least one of the above difficulties.

(Here, it is good to note that Department of Census and Statistics are reporting the disability as difficulty.)

The following figures and facts represent Sri Lankan disability status as per the World Report on Disability (World Health Organization: WHO, 2011).

In Sri Lanka, 6.6% of the general population is 65 years or older representing 22.5% of PWDs (Fig 2.3)

In the meantime, the following statistics show that number of PWDs is gradually increasing in total population of the country.

Table 01: Disability Prevalence in Sri Lanka.

Census of Year	Percentage
1998	01.6%
2002 - 2004	12.9%
2010	02.0%

Source: World Health Statistics 2015

The World Report on Disability (WHO, 2011) estimates that children with disabilities between the ages of 1-14 the world over could be 5.1% of the population or approximately 93 million. Of these, 90% of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school (UNESCO).

- Prevalence of Stigma and Discrimination against PWDs:

Negative perceptions of disability persist in Sri Lanka. Institutionalization of children and youth with disabilities is still very common in the country and the parents most often are left with no other choice due to economic as well as social barriers. Bad karma of the parents or of the children is culturally perceived as the reason for disablement of a child in the majority Buddhist society as well as in other communities. Children with disabilities are also viewed as a bad omen. Mothers are often blamed for the birth of infants with disabilities. Furthermore, it is assumed that the family will care for children with disabilities with limited external support. There is also a lack of information and resources available to parents who prevent them from making informed decisions about their children and their life prospect's. The prevalence of

stigma and discrimination combined with the onus of care on the family amidst economic hardship often results in the isolation, abandonment, or institutionalization of children and youth with disabilities. The structural barriers of inaccessible built environments, institutional mechanisms and socio-cultural beliefs lead to a lack of social participation, exposure, and access for children and youth with disabilities. This adversely affects their opportunities for education, interaction with peers, dignity, and social participation. (Gunawardena & Attanayake, 2021)

On the same of stigma and discrimination against youth with disability, they have to face considerable challenges and barriers in their day to day lives. When we look into the economic condition of PWDs in the island, according to the findings of Sri Lanka Poverty Review, (Table 04), more persons living in poor families are having disabilities than that of the non-poor families, including disabled by birth, disabled by an accident or mental retardation. Denying education for PWDs is the great barrier for them to enter into labour market to obtain decent jobs. Ultimately, they are automatically becoming poorest among the poor and vulnerable of vulnerable due to their very low incomes. The access to credit and other financial facilities are less for PWDs when compared to the general public. Their potential capacity to contribute to the country's economy as well as to make them economically strong is still to be enhanced and utilized.

As the result of above, youth including males and females with disability are facing different serious great challenges such as no access to higher education, suitable employments, married lives, political participation so on.

When we review the status of women and girls with disability, generally in Sri Lanka, female family members often have to do what their male family members say and females have little voice in family matters. This situation becomes worse with regard to Women with Disabilities. At times, these Women with Disabilities find it difficult to have their own families. If they do have their families, then the situation becomes worse than that of Men with Disabilities.

Although, there is a dearth of data focusing on women with disability, field evidences always show that women with disability face multiple-discrimination based on gender and disability, which is gravely overlooked by the respective authorities and as the result of it, young girls and women become double vulnerable due to their gender and disability.

No special schemes have been commenced by the State institutions to specifically cater to girls and women with disabilities and empower them. The Women's Bureau that works on empowering women to overcome difficulties in different fields does not have a separate unit for the women with disability. Also, they are not given recognition under governmental institutions and other organizations on women, and this amount to a denial of an integral aspect of their identity. For instance, the National Committee on

Women, which was established under CEDAW Act and comes under the purview of the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs have not given representation to women with disability, despite their demands. (Law and Society Trust, 2016 & Millennium Challenge Corporation of the USA, 2017).

Another good example is as per the statistics of UGC, it states that the percentage of female students admitted to the universities in Sri Lanka, is 62.9% in the academic years 2017/18—2019/2020. But these statistics did not include the percentage of female students with disability admitted to the university compared with male students with disability.

This is a good juncture to pay attention on the status of children with disability. The majority of children with disabilities in particular are invisible in disability statistics due to a complex array of reasons. Most often, families may not be forthcoming with details on a disability due to stigma and related discrimination. Therefore, most of the children with disabilities in Sri Lanka are also the most vulnerable group affected by right violations, discriminations, marginalization, mental torturing, physical punishments and sexual abuse due to high social stigma.

They are not in the position to enjoy their rights including right to education.

Right to Education in Sri Lanka

Children and youth under the age of 14 accounts for 24.3 percent of the total population of Sri Lanka and the youth enjoy high literacy rates at 98 percent for boys and 99 percent for girls. These high rates of education can be attributed to national policies for free and compulsory education in Sri Lanka dating back to the 1940's. More recently in 1997 the Government of the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka passed the Compulsory Education Ordinance further strengthening the national framework for universal primary education. Free and Compulsory Primary Education in Sri Lanka is implemented by the Ministry of Education (MOE), which manages 9,931 public schools with 41 million students and over 233,000 teachers.

In Sri Lanka the state provides free education at primary, secondary and university levels that is compulsory for children between five and 16 years of age. (Social Protection Online Tool Box, 2013).

Therefore, any legislation / policies within Sri Lanka seemingly (though contested) is offering guaranteed compulsory education between 5 to 16 years. The country having 1996, No. 28 The Act of Protection of Rights of PWDs, National Policy on Disability-2003, National Action plan on Disabilities-2014 etc. to is ensuring the right to education of PWDs, from free school education to higher education in order to accompany with international agreements.

Even though, 1996 No. 28 the Act of Protection of Rights of PWDs of Sri Lanka has just included only three rights (Education, Employment and access to build environment), educationalist are glad to see that education right is among these three rights of PWDs. Part 1, heading ii, Article No. 4 and Part 2, heading vi, Article No. 4, 5 and 6 of National Policy on Disability (NPD) and focus area No. 4 of National Action Plan on Disability (NAPD) and Article No. 24 of UNCRPD are also ensuring Right to Education of PWDs.

Especially, here it is significant to mention the Article No. 24 (Right to Education) of UNCRPD which was the convention adopted by UNO general assembly and opened for signatories of member countries in 2007 and Sri Lanka signed and adopted it in 2007 itself and the Parliament of Sri Lanka ratified it in 2016 is widely ensuring the Right to Education of PWDs.

The Sustainable Goals (SDGs) of UNO does also strongly ensure the right to education in its Article No. 4 (Quality Education). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

The readers could refer detailed articles of above-mentioned act, action plan, convention and SDGs in section 3.3 (Right to Education of Undergraduates with Disability) of chapter 3 (Right Based Approach and Social Model) of this handbook.

Education was not recognized as a human right until the introduction of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (Article 26). Since then, numerous global human rights treaties have affirmed this position. Namely; Convention of elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention of Rights of Child (CRC) and finally United Nations Convention of Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD).

It is noteworthy that Sri Lanka had signed in these conventions and declarations and accepted right to education of children and youth with disability as well.

Though, several conventions, declarations, acts, policies etc. are in practice in Sri Lanka, how far they have achieved their goals and objectives are a crucial question among PWDs always.

Ultimately, right to education of children and youth with disability is badly violated by the society.

- Current Access Avenues / Routes to State Universities

The each and every student with disability sitting for the G.C.E. A/L Examination must remain that the usual mainstream route to enter to a university is always available for

them in Sri Lanka. Thus, each and every student with disability who qualifies in examinations to fulfill the selection criteria for university entrance anticipated by UGC is eligible as other qualified students without disability, to enter to a university.

In the meantime, a quota system has been initiated by UGC, recognizing the inequality/challenges faced by students with disabilities in accessing university education. In Sri Lanka, UGC has allocated 3% seat reservation to all courses of all faculties of all universities for students with disability for this objective. To ensure access to such education, UGC has published **Policy Frame for Higher Education in Sri Lanka**, requesting all universities to have equal Right to Education, Reasonable Accommodation, Universal Design of Instruction etc for undergraduates with disability who are reading in their universities.

Students with disability, their parents or others those related with such students should eliminate the misunderstanding on this 3% quota system. Some of those might mistakenly understand that disability is sufficient qualification to enjoy this 3%. Not so. Approximately 150,000 students qualify for university entrance in Sri Lanka every year, but, only nearly 40,000 students are admitted to the universities due to limited available seats there. Thus, nearly 110,000 students are left from university studies every year. This 3% quota system for PWDs ensures to merge students with disability on priority base, within 40,000 who have been selected for the universities. Hence, all students with disability must also fulfill the other selection criteria of UGC, like students without disability.

However, sufficient number of applicants are not applying to such courses since number of students sitting for the G.E.C.(A/L) examinations every year is very low compared with number of students studying in other classes below G.C.E. (A/L). This may be due to less number of students qualifying from G.C.E. (O/L) to G.C.E. (A/L) since of various reasons. Even in A/L also, few number of students with disability are qualifying to get university entrances. The key reason for this situation is marginalization against students with disability in education. Eg. children with total hearing and speaking disability have great challenges in moving into upper classes like O/L and A/L classes since there are no Sign Interpreters in main stream schools and the teachers of the deaf students do not have proper sign language skills and a proper sign language training is not included in the special education syllabus for the teachers. Sign language used by deaf community has very limited vocabulary which is insufficient to follow higher education.

1.3. Brief on University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka

Education is often described as boundless and limitless, transcending any boundaries. Nevertheless, we can generally understand education as a journey that starts with pre-school education and culminates in university education. Thus, a region's educational system can be considered comprehensive only when it includes a university. The people of the Vanni region experienced an immeasurable sense of joy when the University of Vavuniya was declared as the 17th State University of Sri Lanka in 2021.

1.3.1. History

The stakeholders of the Vavuniya Campus of the University of Jaffna had long recognized the necessity of upgrading it to a fully-fledged university. Recognizing this need, officials from the University Grants Commission (UGC), Ministry of Higher Education, and Jaffna University agreed in principle that the Vavuniya Campus should become an independent university. Consequently, preparations were made to present a proposal for the conversion and establishment of the University within the region of Vanni. The proposed name for this new fully-fledged university was the University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka. It is located at Pambaimadhu, Vavuniya, Sri Lanka.

The Vavuniya Campus, which began as a Northern Provincial Affiliated University College (NPAUC) in 1991 and later became a University Campus in 1997 under the University of Jaffna, has now been elevated once again. Through an extraordinary gazette issued on June 8th, 2021, the Government officially upgraded the Vavuniya Campus to the status of the University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka. This momentous declaration brought immeasurable delight to the people of the Vanni region, as they could now boast the presence of a prominent higher education institution in their community.

Subsequently, the University of Vavuniya proudly achieved the status of being the 17th State University in Sri Lanka, effective from August 1st, 2021. This accomplishment was a direct result of its successful efforts in nurturing responsible citizens for the nation. It is a testament to the unwavering dedication and commitment of the Academic, Executive staff, Non-academies staff, and students. Additionally, the continuous support and cooperation of stakeholders played a crucial role in this achievement.

The evolution of the university system, both nationally and internationally, has often witnessed the establishment of campuses as a stepping stone towards the establishment of independent universities. The Vavuniya Campus, previously functioning under limitations and lacking autonomy and decision-making powers, has faced various challenges during its 30-year journey. However, overcoming these obstacles, the campus has risen to the rank of an independent university, marking a significant milestone in its growth and development.

1.3.2 Faculties

At the time of its elevation, the campus consisted of two faculties: the Faculty of Business Studies and the Faculty of Applied Science. Recognizing the need to cater to students pursuing studies in the Technology Stream, the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Ministry of Higher Education supported the establishment of a new faculty. In 2020, the Faculty of Technological Studies came into being, as stipulated by the Extraordinary Gazette No. 2160/43 dated January 30th, 2020.

Fast forward to the present day, the University of Vavuniya, being the youngest university, now encompasses three faculties. These faculties collectively offer a variety of degree courses across ten departments. As the university continues to evolve and grow, it strives to provide quality education and opportunities for its students.

Faculty of Applied Science has two Departments: Biological Science and Physical Science. Faculty of Business Studies has seven Departments: Finance and Accountancy, Business Economics, Human Resource Management, Marketing Management, Project Management, Entrepreneurship and Management, and English Language Teaching. Faculty of Technological Studies has one Department: Information and Communication Technology.

Furthermore, as part of the Strategic Management Plan of the University, efforts were made in 2017 to establish an additional faculty in recognition of both regional and national development needs. This proposed faculty was the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Unfortunately, due to certain administrative constraints, the establishment of this faculty has not been successfully accomplished.

Moving forward, the University of Vavuniya aims to expand its student intake and academic offerings. Alongside the proposed faculties mentioned earlier, namely the Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Faculty of Health Sciences, Faculty of Aquaculture, Fisheries and Marine Studies, Faculty of Environmental Science, Faculty of Livestock, and Faculty of Graduate Studies, the university envisions the introduction of new study programs. These initiatives aim to address the evolving educational needs of the region and contribute to the overall development of Vavuniya and Sri Lanka as a whole.

1.3.3 Degree Programmes

Currently, the university provides the following degree programmes: Bachelor of Science Honours in Environmental Science, Bachelor of Science in Applied Mathematics and Computing, Bachelor of Science Honours in Computer Sciences, Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, Bachelor of Science Honours in information Technology, Bachelor of Business Management Honours in Accounting & Finance, Bachelor of Business Management Honours in Marketing Management, Bachelor of Business Management Honours in Human Resource Management, Bachelor of Business Management Honours in Business Economics, Bachelor of

Business Management, Bachelor of Business Management Honours in Project Management, and Bachelor of Information Communication Technology

1.3.4 Human Resources

The University of Vavuniya owes much of its success and growth to the dedicated educationalists and scholars who have invested their time and expertise into the development of the institution.

In 1992, the first director of the Northern Provincial Affiliated University College (NPAUC) was Prof. S. Mohanadas, a respected academic from the University of Jaffna. He was later succeeded by Prof. M. S. Mookiah, who had held a prominent position at the University of Peradeniya. In January 1997, Prof. N. Balakrishnan assumed the role of director but soon became the first Rector when the NPAUC was elevated to the status of Vavuniya Campus within three months.

Prof. Thamboo Mangaleswaran took over as the last Rector of the Vavuniya Campus. Due to his positive leadership and successful operation of the campus, he was officially appointed as First Vice-Chancellor of the University on July 13th, 2021.

Notably, Prof. Mangaleswaran played a pivotal role in establishing the Special Centre for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) and aims to make the university a disability-friendly institution of higher education.

University has more than 300 Academic, Nonacademic staff. Most of the Senior Staff have acquired M. Phil and Ph. D level qualifications and have more than 20 years of service as academics.

The academic staff members of the university are involved with research activities about Economy, natural science, management, environmental science, computer science, Community Development, and addressing the issues relating to regional and national development. University staff contribute to regional development projects through research and consultancy.

1.3.5 Physical Resources

When considering the physical resources of the University of Vavuniya, it can be noted that the permanent site of the university is located approximately ten kilometers away from Vavuniya Town along the Vavuniya-Mannar Road, specifically at Sopalapuliyankulam, Pambaimadhu. A total of 160 acres of land has been acquired and reserved for the construction of all academic, administrative, and residential buildings in a centralized location.

The construction of buildings on the acquired land has been an ongoing process and continues. The university campus is designed to be residential, with hostels for male and female students. Few Staff quarters have been given staff and planned to construct staff quarters. The campus also has a forest pocket and two minor tanks within its grounds, further contributing to its distinctive landscape. The major infrastructure

development was expected with upgrade as university but Nothing has happened because of Covid 19 and Economic crisis in our country. Still university is infant level infrastructure.

1.3.6 Support Centre for Persons with Disabilities

The University of Vavuniya currently caters to a diverse student body of approximately 3,000 students, including both local and international students. The university prides itself on promoting social harmony and cultural diversity among its students, who come from various backgrounds and parts of Sri Lanka.

The medium of instruction at the university is English, and it accommodates students from different ethnicities, such as Tamils, Sinhalese, and Muslims. The University of Vavuniya values inclusivity and supports all religious and cultural activities within the country.

Furthermore, the University of Vavuniya is committed to creating a disability-friendly environment. Despite being established for less than a year and prior to the issuance of the UGC Sri Lanka's policy frame for higher education, the university established the Support Centre for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) with a long-term vision. SCPD has conducted internal surveys and identified two staff members and 23 students with disabilities until 2023. The university's Health Center also maintains a separate registration form to record the details of staff and students with disabilities during recruitment and registration processes.

The university prioritizes accessibility for persons with disabilities and ensures that physical, technological, and digital facilities are available to them on campus. All pathways are maintained as barrier-free ways, and entrances to buildings are designed to have easy access for persons with disabilities. Lecture halls, classrooms, laboratories, and the library are all made accessible for smooth movement of students and staff with disabilities. The university has provided some training on disabilities for staff members involved in supporting persons with disabilities, but further training remains necessary.

For more information about SCPD and the various non-academic university services available to students, readers can refer to chapter 04 and chapter 05 of this handbook, respectively. (University of Vavuniya).

1.4. University Grants Commission (UGC) of Sri Lanka

The UGC of Sri Lanka, established under the Parliament Act No. 16 of 1978, plays a crucial role in funding state universities and operates within the framework of the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978. As a public organization, it is responsible for distributing government-allocated public funds to universities and university-affiliated institutes, supporting teaching and research initiatives. Located at No 20, Ward Place, Colombo 07, the UGC exercises significant influence and oversight over appointments and policies within state universities. The official functions of the UGC are;

• Allocation of Funds to Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) that come under it
• Planning and Co-ordination of University Education
• Maintenance of Academic Standards
• Regulation of the Administration of HEIs
• Regulation of Students' Admissions to HEIs

2022 is a milestone in Sri Lanka's history of higher education and higher education opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (PWD). This year, the UGC of Sri Lanka released the Policy Framework for Higher Education. It has thereby ensured the right of PWDs to higher education.

This policy document encourages the inclusion of disability in university education voluntarily by each university. (University Grants Commission)

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY /ACTIVITY LIMITATION

This chapter mainly focuses on three major dimensions of disablement (impairment, disability/activity limitation and participation restriction), nationally and internationally accepted terminologies, causes for disability, types of disability and barriers for PWDs in details with quoting international definitions and explanations, where they are necessary.

2.1 Impairment, Disability /Activity Limitation and Participation Restriction

International Classification of Impairments Disabilities and Handicaps 1980 was published by the WHO in 1980. The ICIDH provides a conceptual framework for information by enabling classification, and hence description, of the three dimensions of the phenomenon of *disablement*. The impairment, disability and handicap are stated from a medical perspective. There are no updated versions of these three concepts. It seems that these concepts are no longer used. (WHO, 1980).

After extensive testing across the world involving PWDs and people from a range of relevant disciplines, The International Classification (IC) Impairment, disability and handicap (IDH) was modified as International Classification on Functioning, Disability and health (ICFDH), shortly known as ICF. The ICF was approved for use by the World Health Assembly in 2001. The ICF received approval from all 191 WHO member states on May 22, 2001, during the 54th World Health Assembly, its approval followed nine years of international revision efforts coordinated by WHO. At the assembly, all member countries of WHO unanimously accepted to follow the ideal terminologies of *activity limitation* and *Participation Restriction* instead of disability and handicap respectively. Also, it was agreed to use the terminology *disability* wherever it is necessary instead of *activity limitation* in practice. (WHO, 1980).

As another success, the first draft of the International Classification of Functioning-Children and Youth (ICF-CY) was completed in year 2003 and published in 2007. The ICF-CY was developed to be structurally consistent with the ICF for adults.

The ICF is a framework for describing and organizing information on functioning and disability. It provides a standard language and a conceptual basis for the definition and measurement of health and disability.

To understand these three dimensions - Impairment, Disability (Activity Limitation) and participation restriction, one should refer the 2 main chapters of ICIDH manual (Body Functions and Body Structure).

The List of Body Functions showed in ICF includes the following.

- Mental Functions
- Sensory Functions and Pain
- Voice and Speech Functions
- Functions of the Cardiovascular, Haematological, Immunological and Respiratory Systems
- Functions of the Digestive, Metabolic, Endocrine Systems
- Genitourinary and Reproductive Functions
- Neuromusculoskeletal and movement-related Functions
- Functions of the Skin and related Structures

The body structure includes the following

- Structure of the Nervous System
- The Eye, Ear and related Structures
- Structures involved in Voice and Speech
- Structure of the Cardiovascular, Immunological and Respiratory Systems
- Structures related to the Digestive, Metabolic and Endocrine Systems
- Structure related to Genitourinary and Reproductive Systems
- Structures related to movement
- Skin and related Structures
- Impairment

According to ICIDH, impairment is defined as any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function. Impairment refers to a problem with a structure or organ of the body. In other words, if a part of the body of a person (eg. eye) differs from the body function, body structure or in both shown in ICFDH that is called impairment.

For an instance, both eyes of a person are in full of vision and accurately matching with the structure given in ICFDH, he/she is a person without visual or eye impairment. But, his /her right eye is a squint eye, but having vision, it is eye impairment since though his/her eye has vision, its structure is not matching with the figure given in the ICFDH. If the both eyes of the person are normal in structure, but right eye has no sight, then, it is also eye or visual impairment because the function of the right eye is defected. If the right eye is a squint eye and having no vision, then, the both function and structure of the eye are defected. In such case also, the person is person with visual impairment.

- Disability (Activity Limitation):

Disability, on the other hand, means "any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range

considered normal for a human being." ... Disability is a functional limitation with regard to a particular activity. ICF has listed the activities and participations as follow.

- Learning and Applying Knowledge
- General Tasks and Demands
- Communication
- Mobility
- Self-care
- Domestic Life
- Interpersonal Interactions and Relationships
- Major Life Areas
- Community, Social and Civic Life

A disability is an inability or restricted ability to perform an activity within the normal human range, e.g. being unable to walk. Thus, a disability is an inability or limitation of doing something. In other words, if impairment in a part of the body of a person makes barrier to perform the activity of such part of the body, then, such impairment is called disability.

For an example, loss of a finger in a hand of a person is just an impairment only since that lose is not making any restriction to the person to perform an activity by using that impaired hand. But, if the person lost his all 5 fingers in hand, such impairment becomes a disability because he/she can't perform activities by using all 5 fingers of that hand. (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, 2016).

It is worthy to note here, the definition of disability prescribed in Article No. 1 of UNCRPD.

PWDs include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (UNCRPD).

The legal definition of disability in Sri Lanka is that described in the Protection of the Rights of PWDs Act No 28 of 1996: A person with disabilities means any person who, as a result of any deficiency in his physical or mental capabilities, whether congenital or not, is unable by himself, to ensure for himself wholly or partly, the necessities of life. (UNCRPD).

- Participation Restriction:

On the other hand, a participation restriction is a disadvantage ... this restriction describes the social and economic roles of impaired or disabled persons that place them at a disadvantage compared to other persons. Thus, the rights of a person with disability

are denied by personal factors or environmental factors, then, that person becomes a person with participation restriction.

For an example, a person with disability enjoying all his rights such as right to education, higher education, right to civil life, right to political participation etc, is a person with disability only. He/she is not person with participation restriction. When the person was denied right to education then, he/she is not only person with disability but also a person with participation restriction.

In summary,

> ■ Impairments are problems in body function or alterations in body structure – For example, paralysis or blindness;

> ■ Disability is activity limitations difficulties in executing activities – For example, walking or eating;

> ■ Participation restriction is participation restrictions problems with involvement in any area of life – For example, facing discrimination1in employment or transportation.

It is not compulsory for a person with impairment to be a person with disability or participation restriction. Thus, all impairments will not become disability. Likewise, it is not compulsory for a person with disability to be a person with participation restriction. Thus, all PWDs will not become persons with participation restriction.

However, finally, those who are working with PWDs have to follow the definition on disability of UNCRPD prescribed in its Article No. 1 as follow.

PWDs include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others." (UNCRPD).

2.2 National and International Disability Terminology
A number of terms had been used since ancient times to refer to PWDs in various Eastern languages including Tamil and Sinhala, as well as in various Western languages. However, as the man became civilized, people began to use more civilized terms instead, as they realized that older terms were highly offensive to PWDs. Thus, many different terms such as people with differently able, people with special needs, people with difficulties etc. are used in many languages to refer to PWDs today. However, it is the expectation of PWDs that everyone should use the nationally and internationally accepted or recognized term only to refer them.

The UN and the WHO in all their dialogues, discussions, policies, declarations and conventions have been using the term of *Disability* only, not any other term mentioned in the above paragraph. For an instance, the United Nations Convention of Rights of

PWDs (UNCRPD), WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICFDH).

Sri Lanka has been following and practicing all such conventions and declarations of UN and WHO, the terminology disability is used to refer the people or PWDs in the country. Eg.

Article 12.2 under the chapter 3 of the Constitution of Sri Lanka (1978) has used the term 'disability' "
This is clearly shows that the term disability has constitutionally and legally accepted in Sri Lanka. (Constitution of Sri Lanka, 1978)

Further, the term disability is used in all parliament or cabinet approved government documents. Eg 1996, no. 28 The Act of Protection of Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2003 National policy on disability, 2014 National action plan on disability.

However, the counter arguments against using term disability are still prevailing in some countries since such debaters view that the term disability is directly pointing out the inability of a person. Therefore, they more prefer to continue with the word differently able instead of disability. But, since the term disability is just telling an unforgettable truth and identification of a person, not aiming to insult him / her, most of the DPOs, disability movements, disability activists and PWDs use the word disability. The PWDs do badly feel that the persons without disability are viewing them as different human beings when they use the word differently able.

Although, the department of education, colleges of education and even some universities in Sri Lanka do use the terminology of students with special needs instead of students with disability' and use the word special to some issues related with students with disability, such as special education, special schools, special teachers etc,

DPOs, disability movements, the disability activists and PWDs are strongly rejecting this terminology as well. Each and every one born on the earth is having some sort of special needs. An infant is having special needs while a child is having separate special needs due to their age. A pregnant mother is having special needs while a feeding mother is having some other special needs due to their physical conditions. Hence, it is unfair for a community to point out that only the PWDs have the special needs. By pointing out the PWDs as persons with special needs, the community is trying to bring a charity perspective on disability. As equal human beings, the PWDs do also have the same mental and physical needs such as peace of mind, joyful life, food, clothes, residences etc. just like other citizens.

In summary, the following vital points regarding current terminologies must be considered by the disability workers.

• Not everyone is in agreement with current terminology, which is good and there is a lack of agreement.

• Terminologies are evolving, reflecting our changing and developing understanding of rights and disability justice.

• There are two camps related to terminology: those who espouse person-first terminology e.g. persons with disabilities) and those who champion identity-first terminology (e.g. Deaf, Autistic and that the debate continues.

• As Sri Lanka is a signatory to the CRPD, it is appropriate that all relevant stake holders should use the terminologies *disability*' instead of *differently able or special needs* and persons/people with disabilities instead of *disabled persons/people* in all policy documents.

Hence, this handbook has used the terminology of disability in all contents throughout the book and it encourages the university community to follow the same terminology in its usages. Also, it wishes to introduce person-first and disability or impairment-first language. For instance, persons with disability, people with disability, women with visual disability, children with hearing and speaking disability, youth with physical disability so on.

Readers can make further references on documents outlining current terminology endorsed by the UK and Australian governments encouraging inclusive language and inclusive communication. (PWDA, 2021).

2.3 Causes for Disabilities

According to The World Report on Disability - 2011 of WHO, disability arises from the interaction of health conditions with contextual factors – environmental and personal factors. The ICF contains a classification of environmental factors describing the world in which people with different levels of functioning must live and act. These factors can be either facilitators or barriers. For environmental factors. Those include: products and technology; the natural and built environment; support and relationships; attitudes; and services, systems, and policies. The ICF also recognizes personal factors, such as motivation and self-esteem, which can influence how much a person participates in society. However, these factors are not yet conceptualized or classified.

Among the personal and environmental factors for disability, poverty is cited as the most common factor. Poverty and disability are considered 2 closely related aspects. They reinforce one another. Poor health and nutrition, poor living conditions, poor access to health services, environmental risks and injuries among persons living in poverty can lead to disability. When poverty occurs, opportunities for early prevention

of disability and after disability occurs, early intervention to address to cure disability are reduced.

Equally, the onset of disability can have an adverse effect on education, employment and earnings, increase living costs and result in higher rates of poverty

However, nevertheless, poverty can be presented as a root cause for disability, we should not forget that poverty cannot be one and only cause for disability, since disability can also be found in rich and middle - class families who are not poor. Disability exists not only in developing countries but also in rich developed countries. So, there are many different personal and environmental factors that contribute to disability.

They could be considered in two categories as factors related with before and during the baby delivery and factors related with postnatal. Among these, it can be seen that prenatal factors are mostly related to personal factors and postnatal factors are mostly related to environmental factors.

- **Prenatal Factors:**

There is a possibility to have a disability due to close blood relatives.

Disability is not something that is genetically shifted from parent to child, but if the parent has a hereditary disease that can cause disability, then the child will be born with a disability, so, in such case, genetic is a cause of disability. Eg. Congenital blindness.

If the personal hygiene and environmental hygiene of the pregnant mother are not properly maintained, the body and brain of the unborn child may be affected and it may be born as a child with physical or mental disability. Similarly, if the nutrition and immunization of the pregnant mother are not properly maintained, the child may be disabled during pregnancy.

There are also many evidences that medical mistakes during childbirth, have led to the birth of children with disabilities. For an example, if forceps are accidentally used during childbirth and could cause some injuries to the child's body, especially skull injury, there is an opportunity that the child may be born with a disability.

Even soon after an infant is born, there are chances for disability. For example, if the environment in which an infant is born does not have adequate sanitary facilities for the infant, the infant can easily get infected and become disabled. If the care of the baby right after birth, for example, making the baby to cry, cleaning the baby, is not done properly, the baby's body and brain can be affected. Because of this, the medical field never permits home delivery and any person to attend the baby delivery, without having a qualified gynecologist. Therefore, a pregnant mother must not allow any place other

than a hospital for delivery and anyone other than a gynecologist to attend the delivery in order to prevent a birth of an infant with disability.

Here, the personal and environmental factors are jointly contributing to the prevalence of disability.

- **Postnatal Factors**

During the period, from birth to death, a man is affected by various factors that could cause disability. The main ones can be summarized as follows.

- **Diseases**

Disease is curable; Disability is incurable; In that way disability differs from disease. But while an illness is chronic, if it is diagnosed by the doctors that it is completely incurable one and it creates functional restrictions in one's daily life, then the illness could lead to a disability. An example is serious mental illness. This is why many countries treat chronic cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure, H.I.V. AIDS, mental illness etc. as disabilities. However, many diseases can lead to disability and therefore diseases could cause of disability.

- **Accidents**

As per the police reports throughout the world, road accidents, railway accidents, air and sea accidents, industrial accidents, domestic accidents, demolition of buildings, fire incidents convert no. of people without disability into people with disability every year.

- **Natural Disasters**

Globally, several natural disasters which are beyond human control such as flood; drought, earthquakes, landslips, storm, and tsunami could also cause disability. The scientists and natural experts have discovered that the climate changes and global warming are the root causes for these unprecedented natural disasters on the earth. Hence, these root causes are also indirect causes for making the persons living with some sort of disability or impairments.

- **Manmade Disasters**

On the other hand, no. of unlimited manmade disasters is also taking place in the countries every day. (Domestic Violence) (DV), Gender Based Violence (GBV), gang attacks, gun shootings, ethnic, religious or color violence, robbery attacks, violence against could either kill people or make them persons with disabilities"

- **War**

Although, the wars are also manmade disasters, we have to consider it a special and separate cause since wars are making a greater No. of PWDs that is very higher than the No. of PWDs prevalent in other manmade disasters. Gun shootings, bombings, aerial attacks, landmines of the wars are cruelly making not only physical, visual, hearing, speaking and multiple disabilities to the people who are in the war regions but also, making psychosocial disability to the people who are observing the war destructions.

- **Aging**

Though, the medical experts and social activists say that 90% of the disabilities occurred due to the above-mentioned causes could be prevented by men, by practicing good responsible hygienic, social and moral habits, the one and only disability that the man could not prevent at all is disability due to aging. The man could reduce the seriousness of the disability in old age, but he could not prevent it at all. Since the world statistics show the No. of elders in the countries and global population is rapidly increasing, the major cause for disability would be aging in the end of 21st century.

2.4 Types of Disabilities

No consensus or conclusions have been reached on the categories of disability in the world so far. Each country has its own set of disability categories and practices. For example, India has classified disability into 21 categories in its Disability Act.

Disabled World organization in its 2022 updated / revised edition, regarding categories of disability, states as follow:

There are many types of disabilities, such as those that affect a person's:

- Vision
- Hearing
- Thinking
- Learning
- Mobility
- Mental Health
- Remembering
- Communicating
- Social Relations

ICF says that disability can be broken down into a number of broad sub-categories, which include the following 8 main types of disability.

- Mobility / Physical
- Spinal Cord (SCI)
- Head Injuries (TBI)
- Vision
- Hearing
- Cognitive / Learning
- Psychological
- Invisible

1. Mobility and Physical Disability

This category of disability includes people with varying types of physical disabilities, including:

- Upper Limb(s) Disability
- Lower Limb(s) Disability
- Manual Dexterity
- Disability in co-ordination with different organs of the body

2. Spinal Cord Disability

Spinal cord injury (SCI) can sometimes lead to lifelong disabilities. This kind of injury mostly occurs due to severe accidents. The injury can be either complete or incomplete. In an incomplete injury, the messages conveyed by the spinal cord are not completely lost. Whereas a complete injury results in a total dis-functioning of the sensory organs.

In some cases, spinal cord disability can be a birth defect.

3. Head Injuries - Brain Disability

A disability in the brain occurs due to a brain injury. The magnitude of the brain injury can range from mild, moderate and severe. There are two types of brain injuries:

- Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

ABI is not a hereditary type defect, but is the degeneration that occurs after birth. The causes of such cases of injury are many and are mainly because of external forces applied to the body parts. TBI results in emotional misfunctioning and behavioral disturbance.

4. Vision Disability

There are hundreds of thousands of people that have minor to various serious vision disability or impairments. These injuries can also result into some serious problems or diseases like blindness and ocular trauma, to name a few. Some common vision

impairment includes scratched cornea, scratches on the sclera, diabetes related eye conditions, dry eyes and corneal graft.

5. Hearing Disability

Hearing disabilities includes people who are completely or partially deaf, (Deaf is the politically correct term for a person with hearing impairment). People who are hard of hearing can often use hearing aids to assist their hearing. Deafness can be evident at birth or occur later in life due to several biologic causes, for example, Meningitis can damage the auditory nerve or the cochlea.

6. Cognitive or Learning Disabilities

Cognitive Disabilities are impairments present in people who are having dyslexia and various other learning difficulties, and includes speech disorders.

7. Psychological Disorders

Affective Disorders: Disorders of mood or feeling states, either short or long term. Mental Health Impairment is the term used to describe people who have experienced psychiatric problems or illness, such as:

- Personality Disorders: Defined as deeply inadequate patterns of behavior and thought of sufficient severity to cause significant impairment to day-to-day activities.
- Schizophrenia: A mental disorder characterized by disturbances of thinking, mood, and behavior. (WHO, 2022)

8. Invisible Disabilities

Invisible Disabilities are disabilities that are not immediately apparent to others.

It is estimated that 10% of people in the U.S. have a medical condition considered a type of invisible disability.

Further, ICF has classified disability into 5 categories based on qualified scale in problems caused by limitations or restrictions for functioning of a person with disability.

TABLE 02: Disability classification of ICF

No	Type	Persentage
1	No Problem	: 00-04%
2.	Mild Problem	: 05-24%
3.	Moderate Problem	: 25-49%
4.	Severe Problem	: 50-95%
5.	Complete Problem	: 96-100%

Source: International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)

UNCRPD in its article no. 1 shows the following 4 categories of disability.

1. Physical Disability (This mainly includes Mobility Disability, Spinal Cord Disability and Brain Disability)

2. Mental Disability (This mainly includes Psychiatric Disorder and Long-Term Mental Illness)

3. Intellectual Disability (This mainly includes Cognitive and Learning Disorders)

4. Sensory Disability (This mainly includes Visual Disability and Hearing and Speaking Disability)

If a person has more than one of above-mentioned disabilities then, he/she could be denoted as a person with multiple disabilities.

In terms of Sri Lanka, categories of disability are not clearly defined in any law, policy or action plan. However, since it has signed the UNCRPD in 2007 and its parliament has ratified it in 2016, we can assume that Sri Lanka follows the 4 types of disability mentioned therein UNCRPD.

2.5 BARRIERS for Persons with Disabilities

A visible or invisible aspect which is making limitation or restriction to an activity of a person is called barrier. In other words, barriers are blocks created by personal or environmental factors and preventing a person to initiate, perform or complete a task though he/she has sufficient physical and mental capacity for doing the task. For instance, if a school administration looks a child with mobility impairment using wheel chair would be trouble for other students studying in the school and denying the admission of the child to school, since such negative attitude is making a restriction to the education of the child, that attitude is a barrier to the child to be educated by the school.

Nearly everyone faces hardships and difficulties at one time or another. But for PWDs, barriers can be more frequent and have greater impact. WHO describes barriers as being more than just physical obstacles? It says that the barriers are factors in a person's environment that, through their absence or presence, limit functioning and create disability.

Often there are multiple barriers that can make it extremely difficulties or even impossible for PWDs to function. Here are the seven most common barriers. Often, more than one barrier occurs at a time.

1. Attitudinal Barrier
2. Communication Barrier
3. Physical Barrier
4. Policy Barrier
5. Programmatic Barrier
6. Social Barrier
7. Transportation Barrier

1. Attitudinal Barriers

Attitudinal barriers are the most basic barriers which contribute to other barriers. For example, some people may not be aware that difficulties in getting to or into a place can limit a person with a disability from participating in everyday life and common daily activities. Examples of attitudinal barriers include:

Stereotyping:

People sometimes stereotype those with disabilities, assuming their quality of life is poor or that they are unhealthy because of their impairments. Stigma, prejudice, and discrimination: Within society, these attitudes may come from people's ideas related to disability. People may see disability as a personal tragedy, as something that needs to be cured or prevented, as a punishment for wrongdoing, or as an indication of the lack of ability to behave as expected in society.

Looking at disability only; not ability

Most of the people without disability including the family members are always having look on the disability of a person, not on his/her ability. Therefore, they are coming to a conclusion or pre judgment that the PWDs have no capacity to perform any task, even their daily activity such as bathing, dressing, eating etc. at all. As a result of this negative attitude, family members deny the social participation of their family member with disability, even sometimes in their own family events such as wedding, birthday ceremony etc. The school community denies to provide education to children with disabilities. Employers are reluctant to provide job opportunity for employees with disabilities.

2. Communication Barriers

Communication barriers are experienced by people who have disabilities such as hearing, speaking, reading, writing, and or understanding and who use different ways to communicate than people who do not have these disabilities. Examples of communication barriers include:

Printed and Written health promotion messages with barriers that prevent people with vision impairments from receiving the message. These include use of small print or no large-print versions of material, and no Braille or electronic versions for people who use screen readers.

Auditory health messages may be inaccessible to people with hearing impairments, including videos that do not include captioning and oral communications without accompanying with Manual Interpretation with Sign Language Interpretation.

The use of technical language, long sentences and words with many syllables may be significant barriers to understanding for people with cognitive impairments.

3. Physical / Environmental Barriers

Physical barriers are structural obstacles in natural or manmade environments that prevent or block mobility (moving around in the environment) or access. Examples of physical barriers include:

Steps and curbs that block a person with mobility impairment from entering a building or using a sidewalk; Mammography equipment that requires a woman with mobility impairment to stand; and absence of a weight scale that accommodates wheelchairs or others who have difficulty for stepping up.

Toilets, bathing places or wash rooms without proper accessibility are always a great challenge for all PWDs, especially, for persons with mobility impairments.

4. Policy and Institutional Barriers

Policy barriers are frequently related to a lack of awareness or enforcement of the existing laws and regulations that require programs and activities be accessible to PWDs. Examples of policy barriers include:

Denying qualified individuals with disabilities the opportunity to participate with government funded programs, services, or other benefits;

Denying individuals with disabilities access to programs, services, benefits, or opportunities to participate as a result of physical barriers; and

Denying reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities for recruitments, so they can perform the essential functions of the job for which they have applied or have been hired to perform.

5. Programmatic Barriers

Programmatic barriers limit the effective delivery of a public health or healthcare program for different types of impairments. Examples of programmatic barriers include:

Inconvenient scheduling;

Lack of accessible equipment (such as mammography screening equipment);
Insouciant time set aside for medical examination and procedures;
Little or no communication with patients participants; and
Service Provider's attitudes, knowledge, and understanding of PWDs.

6. Social Barriers including Cultural Barriers

Social barriers are related to the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, learn, work and aging or social determinants of health that can contribute to decreased functioning among PWDs. Here are examples of social barriers:

PWDs are far less likely to be employed. In 2017, 35.5% of PWDs, ages 18 to 64 years, were employed, while 76.5% of people without disabilities were employed, it is about double that of PWDs.

Adults age 18 years and older with disabilities are less likely to have completed high school compared to their peers without disabilities (22.3% compared to 10.1%).

PWDs are more likely to have income of less than $15,000 compared to people without disabilities (22.3% compare to 7.3%).

Children with disabilities are almost four times more likely to experience violence than children without disabilities.

Sometimes, a religious faith or believe or social superstition may be a cultural barrier for PWDs.

7. Transportation Barriers

Transportation barriers are due to a lack of adequate transportation that interferes with a person's ability to be independent and to function in society. Examples of transportation barriers include:

Lack of access to accessible or convenient transportation for people who are not able to drive because of vision or cognitive impairments, and public transportation may be unavailable or at inconvenient distances or locations.

Within the university environments, it is very common to observe that either single or combined barriers of above stated obstruction are frequently prevailed. For instance, negative attitudes towards PWDs among the university community, especially among the co-students, such as viewing PWDs are always dependable and helps needed human beings is one of the great attitudinal barriers while non accessible physical built environment is making serious obstacles to them in free movement. Hence, universities are not exceptional institutions, making barriers to PWDs knowingly or unknowingly.

CHAPTER THREE

RIGHTS BASED APPROACH AND SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

This chapter highlights two major aspects- approaches and rights which are closely related with PWDs to carry out their day-to-day functions without any barrier or interruption.

3.1 Charity, Need and Right based Approaches

The field of social development has seen three major approaches to dealing with problems.

1. The Charity Based Approach
2. The Needs Based Approach
3. The Rights Based Approach and Social Model of Disability

Although all the above-mentioned approaches are common approaches used to deal with the problems of vulnerable people and their development, the practice of using them in relation to PWDs has also been seen among disability activists.

1. The Charity Based Approach:

This approach is commonly known as 'The Charity Model'. The Charity Model is the most instinctive and emotional. When we see a poor or a needy PWD, we react by wanting donate some money or wanting to do something to help. This is sometimes called the Generosity Model or welfare model. For thousands of years, this was the prevailing model for dealing with problems of PWDs. This was very much based on sympathy, not on empathy and religious faith and believes which make the people to think that doing such charity or help bring them virtue and please the mind set of their own religious faith or beliefs and they expect (donor) something in return when die in the name of God. Hence, this model kept the PWDs to be begging continuously.

It is based on the assumption that the philanthropists (donors) knew the needs of the poor and would satisfy those needs through generosity. Typically the Charity Model involved donation of money, food, clothing, shelter and medical care to alleviate the immediate suffering of PWD. After their immediate needs were catered for, the PWDs continued to be poor and needy and they became increasingly dependent on donations. In many cases, PWDs did not participate in identifying their real needs, they were not fully committed to changing their lives in the way that the donors expected or demanded. The Charity Model does little or nothing to make systemic changes to fix the causes of the problems. Under this approach, PWDs were considered as charity holders, never considered as right holders.

2. The Needs Based Approach:

Around the middle of the 20th century, the development sector started to shift into a new model; the Needs-Based Approach. This approach was to base interventions on the needs as expressed by the PWDs themselves. This approach came with a very important change. The donors did not arbitrarily decide what the PWDs needed. Rather, the PWDs participated in the process of identifying their real needs and deciding on the means to alleviate those needs. For decades, the Needs-Based Approach in the field of development prevailed. It was a huge improvement over the Charity Model as it helped to establish a respectful dialogue between the donors and the needy. Although the Needs-Based Approach included the PWDs in the process, it stopped short of addressing policies and regulations that could make systemic change.

3. Rights Based Approach and Social Model of Disability:

For half a century, developing nations were arguing at the United Nations sessions for the need to recognize the right to develop as a human right. With a growing globalization process and several political changes around the world, and with increasing pressure from developing nations, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Right to Develop.

The right to develop is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples including PWDs are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.

This declaration gave a strong boost to the Rights-Based Approach in the development field and marked a new era in social development. (UNHR, 1986).

Following the UNCHR, the world started to view that the PWDs are also right holders just like the other citizens without disability on equal basis. They are fully entitled to enjoy all human rights, fundamental freedoms and disability rights provided in national and international conventions, treaties, acts, policies, and action plans etc. on equal base with other non-disabled community members. Although, all social, cultural, economic and political aspects are their needs just like other human beings, the fulfillments of such needs are their rights which provided to them by the states and other stake holders and duty bearers at the time of their demanding. Thus, all duty bearers should protect and promote the equal rights, equal opportunities and equal participations of PWDs with reasonable accommodation. Thereby, the community must recognize the PWDs as right holders, not as charity or needs holders. When the service providers and duty bearers view the PWDs on empathy base, not on sympathy base, then, they shall accept the right based approach towards PWDs. Another important aspect of this approach is empowering PWDs to take decisions which affects their lives and involve in decision making at policy level"

Now the world has started to have its fullest consideration on social model of disability along with right based approach, and to provide less priority to other models of disability such as charity, needs, medical models of disability. The following brief may help to understand what's social model of disability and its differentness from medical model of disability.

The social model of disability is a way of viewing the world, developed by people with disability.

The social model of disability says that people are disabled by barriers in society, such as buildings not having a ramp or accessible toilets, or people's attitudes, like assuming people with disability can't do certain things.

The medical model of disability says people are disabled by their impairments or differences, and looks at what is 'wrong' with the person, not what the person needs. We believe that the medical model of disability creates low expectations and leads to people losing independence, choice and control in their lives.

The social model helps us recognize barriers that make life harder for people with disability. Removing these barriers creates equality and offers people with disability more independence, choice and control.

Examples of the social model in action

•You are a disabled person who can't use stairs and wants to get into a building with a step at the entrance. The social model recognizes that this is a problem with the building, not the person, and would suggest adding a ramp to the entrance.

•You are a teenager with a learning difficulty who wants to live independently in your own home, but you don't know how to pay the rent. The social model recognizes that with the right support on how to pay your rent, you can live the life you choose. The medical model might assume that the barriers to independent living are insurmountable, and you might be expected to live in a care home. (AFDO).

3.2 Human Rights, Fundamental Rights and Disability Rights

- **Human Rights**

After the end of the Second World War, the world was shocked to look back at the war crimes such as destruction of human lives and properties, human injuries and disabilities, cruel tortures against human beings, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity in the war prevailed countries during the war. However, the world also found that there were no adequate international criminal laws or an international criminal court to punish any political leaders or military leaders who committed such crimes.

Hence, the United Nations, which was founded in 1945, paid its serious attention to the measures to be taken to prevent the recurrence of these crimes. As a result, due to its hard work for 3 years, *The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was released in 1948; The International Criminal Court was also established.

All 30 articles of the declaration are ensuring various human rights such as right to live, right to follow a religion, right to education, right to employment, right to information etc for all human by treating equally for all human beings born on this earth without any discrimination"

The Article 1 of the declaration states as follow:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

According to this declaration, all aspects which are entitled and essential for a human being born on the earth to live on the earth with respect and dignity on equal basis with others, are human rights.

Thus, all PWDs are also human beings born on the earth and, as equal citizens, entitle to enjoy all human rights prescribed in the declaration, on equal basis with other human beings irrespective of disability.

- **Fundamental Rights**

All the rights which are enshrined in the constitution of a country are called the fundamental rights or fundamental freedom of the people of that country. In that way, fundamental rights are differing from human rights. For example, all the rights mentioned in Article 10 to 17 of Chapter III of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka - 1978 constitution are the fundamental rights of the people of Sri Lanka. (Constitution of Sri Lanka, 1978).

In other words, a country enshrines in its constitution only those rights from human rights that it wishes to grants as fundamental rights to its people. They become the fundamental rights enjoyed by the people of that country. But it is not mandatory for a country to consider all the rights mentioned in the Declaration of Human Rights as its Fundamental Rights. For example, although the *right to life* is mentioned as a right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Sri Lanka has not included it in its fundamental rights. So the fundamental rights of a country are not as broad as the human rights of the United Nations.

If a fundamental right of a person is violated by someone, the victim can file a fundamental violation case for seeking remedy, against the perpetrator in the Supreme Court within a period of 30 days (01 month) from the day he/she comes to know about the violation. But, in the case of violation of a human right of a person, the victim can't file the case in the court, but can report to the Human Rights Commission or any other human right body, to seek remedy.

The HRCSL Act defines the commission's jurisdiction in terms of Fundamental Rights and Human Rights. Fundamental Rights are certain Civil and Political Rights as well as Economic, Social and Cultural Rights guaranteed in Chapter III of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. Human Rights are defined in International Law.

Although, in Sri Lanka, some organizations work directly with human rights aspects and some other organizations consider that the human rights aspects are crucial cross cutting issues in their activities, HRCSL is the plenary body for protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedom of the country. HRCSL is an independent Commission established in 1997 pursuant to the enactment of the Human Rights Commission Act No. 21 of 1996. The Act No. 21 of 1996 sets out the legal basis and operational principles of the HRCSL. (HRCSL)

In terms of PWDs, since they are also equal citizens of the country, they are entitled to enjoy all fundamental rights provided in the constitution of Sri Lanka. Particularly, Article No. 12.4 of the constitution ensures the protection of advancement of PWDs, as follow:

4) Nothing in this Article shall prevent special provision being made, by law, subordinate legislation or executive action, for the advancement of women, children or disabled persons. (Constitution of Sri Lanka, 1978).

- **Disability Rights:**

The 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a universal document protecting the rights of all human beings living in the world in general. At the same time, it lacks specific articles to specifically protect the rights of some of most marginalized and vulnerable groups. For an example, women, children, Persons with Disabilities, patients, consumers, tribal, minorities etc. In this context, the United Nations also started to introduce charters of rights for such vulnerable groups. For instance, the general assembly of UNO passed the conventions named CEDAW to protect the rights of women in 1979 and CRC to protect the rights of children in 1989.

To protect the rights of the vulnerable of vulnerable - PWDs, it brought T**he Universal declaration of Rights of PWDs** in 1975 and advanced it as a convention named UNCRPD in 2007. Various rights of PWDs known as *Disability Rights* such as right to civil life, right to social participation, right to appropriate education, right to movement, right to decent jobs, right to participation in public life etc. have deeply been prescribed throughout the all 50 articles of the convention. So that, all the nations which signed the convention and ratified the convention in their parliaments have obligations to implement the rights provisions stated in the convention to for their citizens with disabilities.

As Sri Lanka has signed the convention in 2007 itself and its parliament has ratified it in 2016, Sri Lanka shall ensure providing all disability rights to its citizens with disability without any discrimination or marginalization. Here, it is noteworthy that Sri Lanka is currently taking full measures to bring a new disability right law instead of the existing disability right law named *1996 No. 28 the Act of Protection of Rights of PWDs* which provide only 3 rights to PWDs namely education, employment and accessibility to the environment and very much lacking including the basic rights provided in UNCRPD to this vulnerable group.

Ultimately, all PWDS are entitled to enjoy and experience all disability right prescribed in the national and international laws and conventions.

In summary, all PWDs are entitled to enjoy 3 major types of rights on equal basis like others without disability.

✓ All PWDs are entitled to all human rights since they are also human beings
✓ All PWDs are entitled to fundamental rights since they are also Sri Lankans
✓ All PWDS are entitled for disability rights since they are disables

3.3 Education Right to Students with Disability

This section highlights right to education, reasonable accommodation, Universal Design of teaching and learning (UDI) and some disability etiquettes which are 4 crucial contributors ensuring protection and promotion of education opportunities for undergraduates with disability reading in universities.

- Right to Education
- Right to Education in UN universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights - 1948 prescribes the right to education in 3 Sub-Articles of Articles No. 26 as follow.

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

It is importance to note that the article 26.1 specifically states the right to higher education which includes the university education as well. Thereby right to higher education has been confirmed as one of the important human rights. (UNHR, 1986).

Thus, as human beings, all PWDs are also entitled for higher education without any discrimination or marginalization.

- **Right to Education and Sri Lankan 1978 Constitution:**

Although, Sri Lanka has not included right to education as one of its Fundamental Right in the Chapter III of its constitution, Articles 12.1 and 12.2 of Article 12 of the chapter treats all citizens on equal basis, as follow.

Right to Equality

12. (1) All persons are equal before the law and are entitled to the equal protection of the law.

op (2) No citizen shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, religion, language, caste, sex, political opinion, place of birth or any such grounds. (Constitution of Sri Lanka, 1978).

Therefore, the PWDs must also be treated as equal citizens for right to education/higher education.

- **Right to Education in the Act of Protection of Rights of PWDs of Sri Lanka:**

The Act of Protection of Rights of Persons with Disability No. 28 of 1996 of Sri Lanka which is the current disability act strongly ensures the right to education of PWDs. Its sub-article 23.1 of article 23 of part V under the sub-title *Provisions for the protection advancement of PWDs* of main title **PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF PWDs** includes such right as follow.

23. (1) No person with a disability shall be discriminated against on the ground of such disability in recruitment for any employment or office or admission to any educational institution. (Legislation on Equal Opportunities and Full Participation in Development for Disabled Persons)

So that, all universities are bound to avoid all types of discriminations and marginalization against students with disability in the universities in maximum level.

- **Right to Education and UGC Policy Frame for Higher Education in Sri Lanka:**

The policy frame for higher education in Sri Lanka' of UGC published in 2022 is another milestone in the history of higher education for PWDs in Sri Lanka. This policy applies to all members of the Sri Lankan university community who are involved in employment or study-related activities at any physical location or online.

Each public University may adopt internal policies, programs, and other processes to assist members of disability groups in gaining access to educational and career opportunities in accordance with this policy and applicable law.

This policy acknowledges that students and staff members with disabilities in the Sri Lankan higher education system do not have the same opportunities for the admissions process, participation in teaching and learning, examinations, and wider social and recreational activities as their non - disabled counterparts. Thus, considers equality of

opportunity as the guiding principle for this policy, which aims to create an equitable higher educational environment in which students and staff members with disabilities can participate fully by eliminating discriminatory limitations in policies, strategies, processes, and actions.

This policy prohibits the vilification or defamation of any individual or group of individuals with disabilities for any reason, whether in the context of learning, teaching, research, intellectual or public discussion, or any other academic or university-related activity.

To the greatest extent possible, the UGC will provide, or make sure the entities registered under it provide, reasonable accommodations, or adjustments to the environment, tasks, and tools, including the courses, instructional / evaluation methods, programs, services, or processes to ensure students with disabilities who disclose their conditions have an equal opportunity to attain the same level of achievement or enjoy the same benefits and privileges available to students without disabilities. However, these adjustments in a study situation must neither weaken nor degrade the academic standard. Students must be able to satisfy the required standards of the assessments.

This policy emphasizes the necessity of incorporating Universal designs into UGC-registered higher education institutions in order to make their courses, instructional/evaluation methods, programs, services, processes, and physical / virtual environments as accessible and usable as possible to all members, including learners with disabilities, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Further, this policy encourages training Programmes for Academics and Non-Academics in Higher Education, Establishment of Support Centres and Pedagogical Sections on disability

As an essential step towards disability inclusion, an Assisted Institutional System covering both disability support services and **Disability Education** as an academic discipline will be established in the higher education system in Sri Lanka.

This policy frame motivates all universities to establish special service centres for students and staff with disabilities and such support centres for students with disabilities is responsible for designing, delivering, coordinating, and reviewing specific disability support services in order to level the playing field for students and staff with disabilities at universities.

Any complaint concerning violations of this policy will be taken seriously, investigated confidently, and addressed promptly. All Complaints may be made in accordance with the relevant complaint policies/procedures of the university available to students and staff members. members (University Grants Commission).

- **Right to Education in UNCRPD:**

UNCRPD has confirmed right to education through its article no. 24 and its 5 sub-articles. In terms of university education, sub-articles 1 and 5 of this article must specifically be noticed and considered by all stake holders.

1. States Parties recognize the right of PWDs to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning.

5. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to PWDs. (UNCRPD).

- **Right to Education in Sustainable Development Goals:**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 also targets quality education in its article no. 4 - one of the articles 17.

The SDGs, also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The 17 SDGs are integrated - they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability.

The SDGs Article No. 4 elaborates education right as follow.

Achieving inclusive and quality education for all reaffirms the belief that education is one of the most powerful and proven vehicles for sustainable development. This goal ensures that all girls and boys complete free primary and secondary schooling by 2030. It also aims to provide equal access to affordable vocational training, to eliminate gender and wealth disparities, and achieve universal access to a quality higher education".

It is obvious that here, Universal access to a quality higher education includes university education as well. Hence, this article considers significant role of higher / university education as one of the root causes for sustainable development.

This goal targets,

1. By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes

2. By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and preprimary education so that they are ready for primary education

3. By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

4. By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

5. By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

6. By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

7. By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

8. Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

9. By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, Small Island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.

10. By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and Small Island developing state.

The considerable aspects of these targets are while target 3 is targeting to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality university education, target 5 is targeting to ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including PWDs. (UNDP).

- **Reasonable accommodation for students with disability:**

While ensuring the accessibility for the students with disability, it is more important that ensuring reasonable accommodation for them in education.

The following scripture of 'Education attorney near me in San Diego' helps us to understand this concept of reasonable accommodation for students with disability.

Education attorney near me in sandiego

–What Are Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities?

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), educational institutions must provide *reasonable accommodations* to enable students with disabilities to have an equal opportunity to participate in an academic program, typically by making adjustments or modifications to the academic environment, application process, or educational curriculum.

There are a number of reasonable accommodations that can be made to help students with disabilities succeed in school. These accommodations may include physical accessibility, such as ramps and automatic doors; audio-visual aids, such as closed captioning and American Sign Language interpreters; or auxiliary aids, such as Braille displays or text enlargements. Some other examples of reasonable accommodations include:

- Modified Classroom Seating
- Assistance with note-taking
- Extended Time for test-taking
- Lecture Recording (European Union, 2020).

Search for: What is reasonable accommodation EU?

The reasonable accommodation for students with disability such as necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments at learning environments of university includes such modifications and adjustments at all learning processes like lectures in lecture halls, experiments in labs, references at library, examinations at examination halls, leisure time activities in play ground.

It is good to note here that the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka has a Senate-approved document from 2015 regarding reasonable accommodation. The University of

Vavuniya has also realized that it would be good to have a clear policy document and a clear pathway/procedure to access reasonable accommodations. It would develop such policy document on reasonable accommodation in future.

- **Universal Design of Instruction (UDI):**

This is an appropriate place to introduce the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the principles of Universal Design for Teaching and Learning (UDI), which are internationally accepted concepts to ensure better teaching and learning environment for students with various disabilities.

When we look into Universal Design first, University of Washington has developed a compressive document on UDI, its definition, principles etc.

(Universal Design of Instruction (UDI): Definition, Principles ... University of Washington) in this document, UD is defined by Romane and Centre for Universal Design (CUD) at North Carolina State University as follow.
'UD, is the design of teaching and learning products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design'.

This designing of any product or environment involves the consideration of many factors, including aesthetics, engineering options, environmental issues, industry standards, safety concerns and cost. Often, products and environments are designed for the average user. In contrast,

Making a product or environment accessible to people with disabilities often benefits others. For example, sidewalk curb cuts, designed to make sidewalks and streets accessible to those using wheelchairs, are today often used by kids on skateboards, parents with baby strollers, and delivery staff with rolling carts. When television displays in noisy areas of airports and restaurants are captioned, they are more accessible to people who are deaf and everyone else.

Centre for Universal Design (CUD)'s 7 principles of UD are listed below. They are followed by an example and application to instruction to the students with disability.

1. **Equitable Use:**

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities. Example: A professor's website is designed so that it is accessible to everyone, including students who are blind and using text-to-speech software.

2.   Flexibility in Use:

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities. Example: A museum that allows visitors to choose to read or listen to a description of the contents of display cases.

3.   Perceptible Information:

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities. Example: A video presentation projected in a course includes captions and audio description.

4.   Tolerance for Error:

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions. Example: Educational software provides guidance and background information when the student makes an inappropriate response.

5.   Low Physical Effort:

The design can be used efficiently, comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue. Example: Doors to a lecture hall open automatically for everyone.

6.   Size and Space for Approach and Use:

Appropriate size and space are provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility. Example: A flexible science lab work area has adequate workspace for students who are left or right-handed and for those who need to work from a standing or seated position.

Universal Design of Instruction (UDI) is trying to promote the pedagogy and assessments through ensuring accessibilities and reasonable accommodation for accessible teaching and learning environments for students with disability.

UDI can provide a framework for inclusive teaching and learning materials and pedagogy

And knowledge on how can educators design instruction to maximize the learning of all students? Lecturers and instructors can apply this body of knowledge to create courses that ensure lectures, discussions; visual aids, videos, printed materials, labs, and fieldwork are accessible to, usable by, and inclusive of all students including students with disability.

UDI embraces UD, UDL, WCAG principles and applies them to all aspects of instruction, including physical spaces, curriculum, pedagogy, and IT. UDI ensures that students have multiple ways to learn, engage and demonstrate what they have learned.

UDI also ensures that each UDI practice is accessible, usable, and inclusive. (CUDUDR).

UDI Examples.

As the tertiary education includes university education, all universities have to consider the right to education of undergraduates with disability on the equal base with other undergraduates without disability.

Ultimately, since the concept or principle of *Education for all* presented by educators and scholars has internationally been accepted, nobody could exclude eligible PWDs from appropriate and their required education for them and educational service providers must ensure the accessibilities, reasonable accommodation and other facilities for them in order to carry out their functions related with education smoothly.

- **Disability etiquettes in education of students with disability:**

Generally, there are so many disability etiquettes, specifically in order to ensure right to education, reasonable accommodation and Universal Design of Instruction in education for undergraduates with disability, to be followed by all community members including university community. Those etiquettes are not only connected with education but also related with all sectors combined with PWDs, such as employments, sports, politics etc.

Some such important general disability etiquettes have been listed out at the end of the section 3.4 of this handbook. (Right to access employment and reasonable accommodation for the university staff with disability).

3.4 Right to Access Employment and Reasonable Accommodation for the University staff with Disability

This section highlights 3 major components - right to accessible employment, reasonable accommodation and disability etiquettes, ensuring accessible working environment for staff with disability within the university.

- **Right to Accessible Employment:**

Like the right to education, the right to access employment is also very essential to a human being, because the right to access employment is directly related to one's livelihood. Therefore, that right is equivalent to one's right to life.

- **Right to Employment in UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights:**

UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights - 1948 proclaims the right to employment in its article no. 23 and its sub- articles 1- 4 given below.

Article 23:

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

It is obvious that the term in the articles *everyone* definitely includes PWDs and the statement in the sub-article 1 *just and favorable conditions of work* requires compulsory accessibility facilities and reasonable accommodation provided by employers to workers with disability. (UNCRPD).

- **Right to Employment in Sri Lankan 1978 Constitution:**

Sri Lankan Fundamental Rights ensure the right to employment of its citizens as one of its Fundamental Rights in sub-article No. 2 of Article no. 12 in the Chapter III of its 1978 Constitution.

Right to Equality

12. (2) No citizen shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, religion, language, caste, sex, political opinion, place of birth or any such grounds:

Provided that it shall be lawful to require a person to acquire within a reasonable time sufficient knowledge of any language as a qualification for any employment or office in the Public, Judicial or Local Government Service or in the service of any public corporation, where such knowledge is reasonably necessary for the discharge of the duties of such employment or office:

Provided further that it shall be lawful to require a person to have sufficient knowledge of any language as a qualification for any such employment of office where no function of that employment or office can be discharged otherwise than with knowledge of that language. (Constitution of Sri Lanka, 1978).

- **Right to Employment in the Act of Protection of Rights of PWDs:**

To support the above-mentioned article, the Act of Protection of Rights of Persons with Disability no.28 of 1996 of Sri Lanka has also expressed the right to employment as one of the essential rights of PWDs. Its article 23.1 confirms such right as follow:

'23. (1) No person with a disability shall be discriminated against on the ground of such disability in recruitment for any employment. (Legislation on Equal Opportunities and Full Participation in Development for Disabled Persons).

- **Right to Employment in UNCRPD:**

UNCRPD does deeply and widely discuss this right of PWDs in its Article No. 27. Article 27 – Work and employment

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. States Parties shall safeguard and promote the realization of the right to work, including for those who acquire a disability during the course of employment, by taking appropriate steps, including through legislation, to, inter alia:

a) Prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including conditions of recruitment, hiring and employment, continuance of employment, career advancement and safe and healthy working conditions;

b) Protect the rights of persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, to just and favourable conditions of work, including equal opportunities and equal remuneration for work of equal value, safe and healthy working conditions, including protection from harassment, and the redress of grievances;

c) Ensure that persons with disabilities are able to exercise their labour and trade union rights on an equal basis with others;

d) Enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and vocational and continuing training;

e) Promote employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities in the labour market, as well as assistance in finding, obtaining, maintaining and returning to employment;

f) Promote opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship, the development of cooperatives and starting one's own business;

g) Employ persons with disabilities in the public sector;

h) Promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector through appropriate policies and measures, which may include affirmative action programmes, incentives and other measures;

i) Ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities in the workplace;

j) Promote the acquisition by persons with disabilities of work experience in the open labour market;

k) Promote vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention and return-to-work programmes for persons with disabilities.

2. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are not held in slavery or in servitude, and are protected, on an equal basis with others, from forced or compulsory labour. *(UNCRPD).*

*. **Reasonable Accommodation for Staff with Disability:**

All these so far above said are pointing out that not only accessibility for PWDs but also reasonable accommodation for PWDs must be provided when they are employed by job providers or employers. This is a good juncture to review the answer for the question 'What is reasonable accommodation in employments for PWDs?'

UNICEF defines it as follow.

Reasonable Accommodation means the necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It further states that 'employees with disabilities can perform at their best.

Reasonable accommodations vary depending on the person's disability and situation, and can consist of assistive products and technology, sign language interpretation for job interviews, hiring a personal attendant for colleagues with mobility or visual impairments, or allowing more flexibility to choose core working hours, among many others'(UNICEF).

European Union (EU) defines the Reasonable Accommodation for PWDs as follow:

Reasonable Accommodation is any change to a job or a work environment that is needed to enable a person with a disability to apply, perform and advance in job functions, or undertake training. Reasonable accommodation is aimed at any employee with a disability. (European Union, 2020).

Search for: What is Reasonable Accommodation EU?
In the meantime, International Labour Organization (ILO) encourages all state parties to ensure reasonable accommodation for PWDs in job environments. It states that 'States should ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities in the workplace, and the refusal to provide such accommodation. (ILO, 2014)

Hence, it is an unavoidable obligation of the University of Vavuniya to ensure the accessibilities and reasonable accommodation for its staff with disability in its all working places.

Considering above addressed all expects and contexts of right to access employment of PWDs, although, it is the youngest university in Sri Lanka, University of Vavuniya designed and introduced *Employment Policy for Disability Inclusion* which is annexure-3 of this handbook and initiated to implement it from 2022 in the university. (*University of Vavuniya*)

In the meantime, it is good to note here that this university effort is only being made about equal access to employment for all, with or without disabilities at the University of Vavuniya as an *equal opportunities employer* and it is not a wider point about the right to employment for all students with disabilities beyond graduation?

- **Disability Etiquettes:**

As a conclusion, as this handbook is a resource for all staff and students, it prefers that a brief on disability etiquette regarding right to education of undergraduates with disability and right to access employment of university staff with disability may also be useful for the readers. It would like to brief some important etiquette below.

- The enjoyment of right to education of students with disability, right to access employments of staff with disability and other rights of PWDs are totally depending on the positive attitude of others without disability rather than their knowledge or skills. Hence each and every one should develop a positive attitude towards PWDs.

- The community members either they are within the university or in the outside of the university must always look into the ability of PWDs, rather than looking into their disability. Their ability is most of the time stronger than their disability.

- All should recognize that disability is not inability. All students or staff with disability coming to university with their purposes is eligible to follow their studies or jobs with their limitations. If they are provided with protections and promotions for their rights, reasonable accommodation and UDI, they could perform successfully on an equal base with others without disability.

- The strong slogan of PWDs is n*othing about us without us*. Therefore, all stake holders working with them must ensure their participations at all decision-making process related with them.

- All parties should recognize that all PWDs are entitled to enjoy their human rights, and fundamental freedom as equal citizens of the country.

- All PWDs who are within the university administration and academic frames must be ensured their equal participations where they are possible, in their related performances.

- All relevant parties must ensure that the PWDs are provided with equal opportunities in curricula and co-curricular activities as much as possible as per their physical and mental conditions.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUPPORT CENTRE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (SCPD)

4.1 Background of SCPD

Not only in Sri Lanka but also throughout the world, the persons with disabilities have socially, politically and economically been marginalized during the past few decades and they have become dependent on the society or their family. They are even deprived of the possibility to enjoy their fundamental rights including health, education, economic stability and independent living which are enjoyed by the other citizens in the society. The disabled community with franchise consists of approximately 1.2 Million out of 20.2 million of the country population and however, they are not included in the decision-making process and the policy making process, and their participation and representation are not guaranteed, depicting the negligence of the country towards the disabled community.

As a responsible higher education institution of the country, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka has deeply observed these conditions prevailing in the society. The university has observed several challenges faced by the staff and undergraduates with disability in other universities, even in Vavuniya Campus of the University of Jaffna due to lack of access to carry out their academic activities.

On the other hand, the university has well noted that the international community is also always encouraging in general and the higher education institutions including universities to protect and promote the right to education of the students with disability and right to work of staff with disabilities.

Since Sri Lanka had signed the UNCRPD in 2007 and Sri Lankan parliament had ratified it in 2016, all universities including University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka have an obligation to follow the right to education of undergraduates with disability, prescribed in Article No. 24 of UNCRPD.

In the meantime, the Sri Lankan UGC also has high concern on disability in its mandate and encourages all universities to establish a service centre for persons with disabilities in universities.

Considering all above, the University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka strongly believed that if a service centre is established it could provide various services such as advocacy and lobbing, technical and digital supports, manual support, access to physical resources etc. in order to carry out smooth academic activities by the staff and undergraduates with disability. Hence, it hoped to protect and promote the rights of education of undergraduates with disability and right to access employment of staff with disability through the established centre.

Based on above mentioned reasons, it established a service centre in the name of *Support Centre for Persons with Disabilities* (SCPD).

It is worthy to note that, at the first meeting of SCPD held on 25th of March, 2022, the VC Prof. T. Mangaleswaran highlighted the importance of having such a centre at the university as a major higher educational institute of Sri Lanka. He further added that, this will benefit not only staff and the students of the university but also the community in region at Large.

Now the established centre has been providing its services to staff and students with disability and would like to expand its services towards other community members with disability in the region.

4.2 Goal and Objectives

The overall goal of this centre is to protect and promote the right to education of the undergraduates with disability and right to work of the staff with disability by providing them barrier free university environment. Thus, the SCPD anticipate developing knowledgeable, skills and positive attitude among the all members of University of Vavuniya, towards equal rights, equal opportunity and equal participation of PWDs who are involved in study related activities or in employment related activities either in a physical location or in online. The overall long term expected impact of SCPD is to create the University of Vavuniya as the best disability friendly university through eliminating all types of barriers against PWDs and establishing equitable working and learning environment for them.

To achieve this goal through short term goal, the centre shall have the following specific objectives.

1. To make available of well strengthened and furnished centre with well-trained staff, sufficient physical assets and allocated financial resources for running and capital expenditures, in order to provide needy services for PWDs within the university.

2. To create disability knowledgeable members of University of Vavuniya, from top to bottom through awareness creation programmes.

3. As a socially responsible higher educational institution, to expand SCPD services targeting community members with disability, through making linkages between the university and the community of the region.

4.3 The Motto, The Vision and the Mission

The Motto, the Vision and the Mission of SCPD designed by SCPD committee and approved by university council are as follows.

The Motto:

Our disability makes our ability

The Vision:

To be the best disability friendly university without environmental, attitudinal, institutional and policy, communicational or cultural barrier which may be root cause of violation right to education of students with disability and right to work of staff with disability.

The Mission:

Making accessible with other facilities for all, especially focusing on persons with disability in order to protect and promote the right to education of students with disabilities and right to work of the staff with disabilities.

4.4 Key Intervention

1. Medical related Activities:

• Supports for medical screening, continuous medical treatments, physiotherapy, psycho social counseling etc.

2. Social related Activities:

• Support for Education, Sports, Cultural Activities etc.

3. Economical related Activities:

• Supports for 3% allocation in university employment opportunities etc.

As per the above-mentioned general interventions, SCPD has plans to draw an action plan for once in 02 years. According to such plan, it initiated a two years action plan for the years of 2022 and 2023 and such proposed key interventions are listed out below for the reader's reference.

Table 03: Proposed key interventions and current status in 2023

S. No	Key Intervention	Current Status
1	Formation and function of SCPD Committee	Completed
2	Physical establishment of SCPD	Completed
3	Internal survey on persons with disability	Started and ongoing
4	Organizing Awareness Workshops for the Staff and Students	Started and ongoing
5	Development and implementation of 3% disability inclusion in employment opportunity in the university-.	Started and ongoing

6	Disability inclusion in university sports activities	Not yet started
7	Encouragement for disability inclusion in all faculties	Not yet started
8	Development of Networks with National and International Universities, other Higher Education Institutions and Donors	Started and ongoing.
9	Initiating Short Term courses on disability by university	Not yet started

4.5 Resources

Well-designed structure of the management operates the SCPD with maximum utilization of current available limited resources, as per the vision and mission statements, to achieve the goal and objectives of the centre. Human resources have not yet allocated in successful operation of the centre.

The VC is playing a vital role as the Chief Consultant to the established SCPD committee which is the decision-making body in related issues and submitting such decisions to the university council for approvals.

11 Members SCPD Committee has the total responsibility on running the centre through the Director of the Centre and Coordinator of the Centre to ensure accessibility and other facilities of the Centre for PWDs who are coming to the point as service seekers.

SCPD Committee Members in 2023:

1. Ms. Nimalka Sanjeewani   - Chairman of the Committee (Centre Director)
2. Ms. P. Thavakiruba   - Secretary of the Committee
3. Mr. V. Subramaniam   - Centre Coordinator
4. Dr. M. Malaravan   - Committee Member (Council Representative)
5. Dr. K. Nanthakumaran   - Committee Member (External Representative)
6. Dr. P. Saththiyalingam   - Committee Member (University Representative)
7. Mr. V. Vinoharan   - Committee Member (Senate Representative)
8. Ms. D. Kulendran   - Committee Member (Non-Academic Staff Representative)
9. Mr. Kodiswaran   - Committee Member (Non-Academic staff Representative)
10. Ms. K. P. S. Pabasara Keerthirathne - Committee Member (Student Representative)
11. Mr. W. M. N. B. K. Weerakkon   - Committee Member (Student Representative)

To make the concept of *nothing about us; without us*, sufficient no. of PWDs have already been absorbed into SCPD Committee. The Coordinator, the External Representative, 1 Non-Academic Staff Representative and 2 Students' Representatives, totally 5 Members out of 11 are PWDs and have already been involved with active participation in decision, policy, rules and regulations making process on behalf of SCPD. The gender balance is also confirmed by enrolling 4 Female Members out of 11 Members.

Another set of Human Resource in the designation of Faculty Coordinators are also actively enrolled in coordinating and facilitating the faculty staff and students with disabilities with SCPD. 3 Students' Counselors of 3 faculties have been assigned for this purpose and they are contributing their time and energy additionally to this service.

Faculty Coordinators in 2023

1. Ms. R. Puvendran, Student Counselor, Faculty of Technology
2. Dr. S. Aruchchunan, Student Counselor, Faculty of Applied Science
3. Ms. S. Piriyatharshan, Student Counselor, Faculty of Business Studies

There is no second word, if we say that success of any organization is based on the commitment and conscientious service of its employees at the ground level. This is an open truth for SCPD too. On that basis an application has been made to the UGC Sri Lanka for the recruitment of the following 7 employees in the initial phase.

01. Director	-01
02. Coordinator	-01
03. Computer Instructor	-01
04. Management Assistant	-01
05. Office Aide	- 01
06. Technician	-02

In compliance with the committee's decision to run the centre with 2 most essential staff until the permission for 7carder is obtained, the centre is now being run with 2 staff with the fullest support of above-mentioned human resources.

1. Mr. A. Kirushanthan- Management Asst. and Data Entry Operator
2. Mr. W. Praveen- - Office Asst.

Through the appointed Management Asst. with visual disability, the disability inclusion in university employment opportunities has been already witnessed as per the University Employment Policy for Disability Inclusion.

In the meantime, it is good to consider here, that UGC has recommended the following special staff for the centre, in its policy frame, in addition to the Administrative Staff.

• Disability Advisor
• Braille Transcriber

• Sign Language Interpreter
• Assistive Technology Trainer

However, a few more years is needed to achieve the full carder of staff in future.

The below shown Management Structure of SCPD highlights all internal human resources directly involving in the services in a simplified designed structure.

Management Structure

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                    Chief Consultant - VC
                            |
                      SCPD Committee
                            |
                      Centre Director
                            |
                   Center Co-ordinator
                            |
        ┌───────────────────┼───────────────────┐
  Faculty of Applied   Faculty Business    Faculty of
  Science Co ordinator Studies Co ordinator Technological Studies
                                             Co ordinator
        |                   |                   |
   Centre Staff        Centre Staff        Centre Staff
```
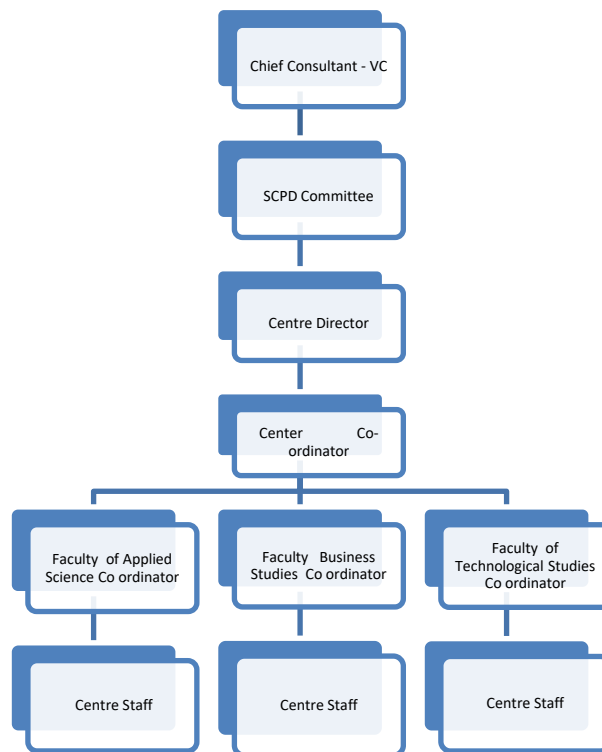
There are several university human resources who are indirectly contributing their services to strengthen SCPD. No doubt, it is impossible to achieve the goal and objectives of the centre without their marvelous contributions.

In terms of the physical resources of the centre, SCPD has been shifted to university former library block in 2023 from administration block where it was located since its year of establishment. Therefore, currently, the centre has been located in a more appropriate place based on accessibility RECU model (R: Reach, E: Enter, C: Circulate and U: Use). The roads leading to the centre and surrounding areas without environmental barriers are accessible to PWDs to reach the centre easily. The rooms of the centre are having entrances with sufficient width, having sufficient spaces for convenient circulation in inside and services are available for use of PWDs.

At the beginning stage, the centre has been provided with following essential basic physical resources in order to carry out day to day operation and administration without lack of physical assets barriers.

1. Desktop and Laptop Computers
2. Computer Tables
3. Computer Chairs
4. Cabinets
5. Steel Alymirah
6. Visitors' Chairs
7. Showcase Wheel Chair

However, now SCPD committee has realized that the current located building is insufficient to accommodate with required big no. of staff, all physical assets in future. Therefore, the committee is now on the process of seeking another suitable building with more spaces within the university premises.

Rs. 108 Mn. LKR had been estimated for next 03 years in the concept note, for capital and recurrent expenditures. When the expected expansion occurs in future, this annual financial resource must be increased accordingly.

As the youngest university of the country, the University of Vavuniya is paying its fullest attention on the development of the human and physical resources of the centre at present; it has not yet initiated to develop the technical and digital resources in large scale. Anyhow, with the rapid development of the university, the infra structures such as human, physical, technical and digital resources of the SCPD must also be developed with the supports of various stake holders in future.

In the meantime the centre accepts that it is on the need to support the well-being of all students and staff, particularly through challenging times such as COVID19 and the economic crisis and prepared to do so.

4.6 Contact SCPD

Postal Address:

SCPD, University of Vavuniya, Pambaimadhu, Mannar Road, Vavuniya 43000,

Sri Lanka.

T.P No.	: +94 24 222 8230
Email	: scpd@vau.ac.lk
Website	: www.vau.ac.lk

CHAPTER FIVE

ACCESSIBILITY AND OTHER FACILITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Although, the university endows with various services for the benefit of its staff and students, this chapter has attempted to analyze here in detail only six of the most important of such services, because these services are essential for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all actions of the university.

5.1 Medical Service

The essential wellness service for everyone including PWDs who are working or studying in the university is essential. The University Health Centre caters 600 - 800 patients a month who are attending for their medical needs around the clock.

Individual record is maintained for everyone who receives assistance from University Health Centre.

The UMO is the Officer in Charge (OIC) for the health Centre and different category of staff are currently serving for the patients. They are;

1. Nursing Officer   - 01
2. Visiting Dental Surgeon
3. Visiting PHI
4. Health Services Assistant and Some Trainees

The health Centre is planning to provide Mental Health Services to the beneficiaries and to recruit a counselor for the purpose. The current location of the health Centre is challengeable for PWDs due to long distance and inadequate facilities. The University Health Services is concerned on disability issues and trying its level best to serve to PWDs.

The UMO is one of the Members of SCPD Committee and he is one of the Members of AAC of the university. Health Centre refers PWDs to General Hospital, Vavuniya for secondary follow-up treatment and further treatments.

Each perfected copy of internal survey form of SCPD used for the identification of staff and students with disability is kept in the health Centre for recording purpose. In addition to the survey form of SCPD, the University Health Centre uses a separate form on the title of Collecting Information on Disability among Students in the University of Vavuniya used at the time of students' registration in order to maintain medical based records at the health Centre. It's suggested to see the Annexure 4 of this Handbook for the form.

The health Centre plans to provide an exclusive training on disability for staff and provide quality health care services to the beneficiaries with disabilities.

5.2 Students' Counseling Service

The University Students' Counseling Service plays a vital role in protecting and promoting the mental health of the staff and students and in preventing their dropping out from the university due to numerous serious psycho-social related issues and problems. Since comparing with staff and students without disabilities, the PWDs may have several sensitive issues due to their disability, this counseling service is an essential service to PWDs, Therefore, while the current team of counselors consists of trained counselors, the SCPD hopes to offer on-going in-service training in psycho-social counseling with a specific focus on supporting students and staff with disabilities. SCPD has assigned 03 Students' Counselors, 01 per faculty as Faculty Coordinators for SCPD.

The Senior Students' Counselor is the in- charge officer for entire counseling service of the university, and 11 Students' Counselors are providing their students counseling service under his guidance and directions.

1. Faculty of Applied Science   : 06 (03 Males + 03 Females) Counselors
2. Faculty of Business Studies   : 03 (01 Male + 02 Females) Counselors
3. Faculty of Technological Studies   : 02 (01 Male + 01 Female) Counselors

There are two-way processes for service seekers to approach the counselors for guidance and capacity building for decision-making to find solutions by themselves for their psycho-social problems.

1. Getting an appointment with the counselor for a direct meeting with them.
2. Getting an appointment with a counselor through service seekers request boxes.

Two request boxes have been placed in each faculty and the Senior Students' Counselor is the officer in charge of opening the request boxes placed in each faculty, and he has the responsibility to assign a suitable counselor for the service seeker who has requested for the service through the request box.

The unit/counselor services are available to staff and students with disabilities and it is anticipated that this number may be increased in future since this service is gradually popularizing now only among the staff and students.

On average, 18 service seekers (Faculty of Applied Science: 08 + Faculty of Business Studies: 05 + Faculty of Technological Studies: 05) approach this service every month and have been receiving mental health support. Counselors are continuously keeping in touch with service seekers in the follow-up process.

Although all counselors have been trained in psycho-social counseling, they need further training to update their knowledge, skills and attitude in counseling. Especially,

as the university expects more students with disability to be admitted and registered in future, there is a dire need of training on disability counseling which requires special capacity and skills to handle service seekers with a disability because the support for mental health of PWDs are highly sensitive. Hence, an on-going in-service training in psycho-social counseling with a specific focus on supporting students and staff with disabilities is essential for all counselors.

All current counselors protect 100% privacy and confidentiality of the service seekers as per the ethics of psycho-social counseling. Currently, the counselors use an available room in their faculty for counseling as there is no separate constructed room for counseling. However, the university is now planning to construct counseling rooms for each faculty as soon as possible.

5.3 Career Guidance Counseling Service

In the modern scientifically advanced world of technological age of a full of complex career opportunities available in labour market, as anyone can easily understand how essential a service is to guide a student to an appropriate career life in the competitive market. It could be considerably noted that University of Vavuniya has a solid structure for such a service since its inception.

The University Career Guidance Counseling Unit is headed by a senior lecturer as the director of the unit - and along with the director, executive staff and a full-time senior career guidance counselor involves in the service with the supports of 3 Asst. Career Guidance Counselors, 1 per faculty, in 3 faculties of the university. Other basic human resources such as Management Asst., Office Asst. etc. are proposed by the unit, to be recruited in the forthcoming administrative year in order to carry out a quality career guidance counseling service.

Although, this youngest university has not allocated a separate building and other physical resources for the unit, the director and counselors have capacity to manage the quality service within the limited resources available in the director's administrative block and hope to receive such resources from the university to establish well-furnished unit as early as possible. The unit is having dialogues with the university administration to obtain sufficient financial resources to run the unit without any financial barriers in future.

Averagely 100 - 150 service seekers - students are approaching the unit and counselors for getting guidance every month. The unit / counselor services are always available to students with disabilities too. Nevertheless, it seems that there are more opportunities to guide such students in future when they enter to the university in future, the staff including the director of the unit are eager to go under an exclusive training on disability to upgrade their services towards these people in need since obtaining appropriate career guidance for students with disability is more complicated compared

with students without disability in the labour markets and a specific service is needed for them. The counselors are to undergo specific training in career guidance counseling for students with disabilities.

5.4   Students' Welfare Services

The Students' Welfare Services Unit is responsible to cover the welfare related matters of the students other than physical and mental related issues which are covered by medical, student counseling and career guidance counseling services of the university. Hence, anybody could easily understand the wider coverage of the services of this unit and its heavy workloads.

The Deputy Registrar (Welfare) - officer in charge as chairman, of the unit administrates entire services coming under his unit. 100 - 150 students averagely visit daily for seeking various welfare services. Following welfare services are managed by this unit with the limited human and physical resources.

1. Hostel and Accommodation Facilities

The unit governs 04 hostels for male and female students separately, where only 1000 first year students (400 Males + 600 Females) are accommodated every year. Females Hostels have been divided into 03 Sub Hostels as A, B and C Hostels in which 100, 400, 100 Female Students are admitted respectively while 400 Male Students are provided with hostel facilities in the Males Hostel. 01 Male sub-warden supervises the males' hostel and A and C females' hostels are supervised by 01 Female Sub-Warden and B is supervised by second female sub-warden. All welfare services related with the hostels such as electricity, water, sanitation, repairs and maintenances etc are coordinated to be provided by the unit based on day-to-day routine works and based on reports and complaints from the sub-wardens from time to time.

Even though, the hostel accommodation facilities are limited for only first year students, considering the disability, the welfare unit is prepared to provide hostel accommodation facilities to students with disabilities regardless of the academic year in which currently such

Students are reading. Also, the unit always pays its high concern on making accessibility in the hostels for such students.

The unit could facilitate to identify houses for rent in the region and having verbal communications with house owners in order to get residential facilities for 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students at the requests made by the students to the unit. This process will be continued until sufficient hostel facilities are constructed by the government for all students in future.

2. Financial Benefits for Eligible Students

The unit has to facilitate the following financial benefits for the eligible students:

I.   Mahapola:

The unit is the main facilitator for the students to get Mahapola Payments for 10 months of an academic year. Mahapola fund issues the Mahapola Award Certificates to the students through this Welfare Unit. Though, the Mahapola Fund does directly credit Rs. 5,000/- per month for each selected eligible student into his/her bank account, it is subjected to the submission of the 80% attendance of the student confirmed by the Head of the Academic Department through the Dean of the Faculty and submitted by the unit to the Mahapola Fund in time.

II.   Bursary:

The eligible selected students under clear selection criteria of the Bursary (The primary criteria is not receiving Mahapola) are provided with financial support of Rs. 5,000/- per time for 10 months of an academic year. 80% attendance is compulsory for a student to obtain this financial support from the welfare unit.

III.   Vice Chancellor's Fund:

A student who has not been selected either for Mahapola or for Bursary and those who are unable to manage with that financial assistance can apply for the financial support from VC Fund of the university. The welfare unit receiving such applications studies carefully the family background and financial conditions of the applied student and approves VC Fund assistance of Rs. 5,000/- per time for 10 months of a year. This VC fund is receiving funds for this purpose from various well- wishers and the students who are leaving the university after the completion of the degree also donate Rs. 500/- to the fund which is the security money paid by the student for covering laboratory damages, at the time of his/her university admission.

IV.   Tamil Engineers' Foundation, Australian Fund:

This foundation provides financial support for selected 1st year students only for 10 months in the 1st year only. Under well designed selection criteria, the welfare unit has the responsibility to monitor this aid by selecting more suitable students, monitoring the attendance of the students, submitting necessary documents and records to the foundation etc.

Selection of eligible students for financial assistances for above mentioned financial assistances other than Mahapola is the great responsibility of the unit which should be implemented as a part and partial of unit's activities.

3. Canteen Services

The unit manages four canteens situated in the main premises of university, Faculty of Applied Science, Males' Hostel and Females' Hostel.

The unit selects eligible service providers / suppliers to run the canteen annually based on low quotation submitted by the supplier through tender. The unit calls tenders to select most eligible providers from the eligible service providers for this purpose. Services of the canteens are closely monitored by the unit with the help of a Canteen Committee in order to make sure whether the canteens provide the services in a satisfactory manner.

To keep the rates in low level for the benefit of the customers, the university provides electricity and water supply free of charge to the canteens. Further, university reimburses the cost of 03 litro 12.5 Kg LP Gas cylinders per canteen per month.

The unit is responsible body to confirm accessibility of the canteens for the PWDs.

4. Marshal and Proctor Services

Marshal and Proctor Section are also under the purview of the students' and Welfare Division until it develops as a separate unit. It is responsible for the disciplinary matters of the students.

5. Facilitation to the University Committees

University of Vavuniya has formed and runs number of committees and centres to handle specific students' related matters. Though those committees and centres have separate Chairmen or Directors, the Deputy Registrar (Welfare), on behalf of the Welfare Unit has to function as Convener of some of those committees. The Deputy Registrar is expected to perform the role of the secretary of those committees or to provide clerical assistance via his unit and take minutes of the meetings of the committees from time to time.

6. Issuing No Claim Reports to the Students

Another key duty of the unit is issuing no claim reports to the students at the time of students' leaving the university after his / her completion of the degree programme. All undergraduates are expected to get no claim report from the university, to get confirmation saying that such student has handed over all items and assets belonging to the unit and such items or assets are no no longer with him / her before leaving the university. For this objective, he/she has to get confirmation signatures from relevant heads of the units and departments such as library, laboratory etc and finally must get signature of the Deputy Registrar (Welfare) to complete the no claim report of the student. The university delivers the certificate of degree to the students based on the

perfected no claim report; hence, this is an unavoidable condition for all students. Ultimately, the Students Welfare Unit is the responsible body to issue the No Claim Reports to all eligible students.

7. Other Services

The unit has some other obligations on ad hoc basis towards students' welfare except the above said services. For an instance, though, the director of physical education organizes various tournaments; the Deputy Registrar (Students and Welfare) co-ordinates students' welfare issues with physical education matters.

Finally, it is worthy to note here that the university students are always very thankful and have gratitude to the welfare unit for its invaluable services to the student community in which the students with disabilities are also part and partial of it. Thus, the all services provided by the welfare unit could be benefitted by students with disabilities too.

The Student and Welfare Division should be strengthened by way of human and physical resources to cater to the requirements of the present student population around 3000.

5.5 Library Services

The statistics and information given in this section in connection to the library services are the facts of the library in the end of the year of 2022. As a university library, it has been providing 05 types of services to the staff and students with and without disability through its following 05 sections since the establishment of NAUC in 1991.

1. Reading Section in which the readers could obtain newspapers, magazines, journals, periodicals etc. for reading.

2. Stack Section (Lending Section) from which the readers could borrow reading materials with the time duration of 01 month for staff and 01week for students with opportunity for extension of date of deadline.

3. Reference Section in which the readers could refer the materials and could borrow them with the time duration of 01 week for the staff and 01 day for the students.

4. Dictionaries and Encyclopedias Section in which the permanent materials have been categorized for references.

 5. Special Collections Section in which the following collections are kept not for lending purpose, but, only for reference purposes.

a.   Vanni Collections
b.   Sri Lanka Collections
c.   Rare Collections

The above mentioned all services are available for PWDs as well and the library is now planning to open the 6th section 'Braille Section' where the Braille books and audio books are going to be kept for the references of the staff and students with visual disability.

Currently, 09 committed library staff (Total No. of staff carder is 11) have involved to provide above mentioned services.

1. Senior Asst. Librarian   - 01
2. Library Information Asst.   - 04
3. Machine Operator   - 01
4. Library Attendants   - 02

The Librarian, the Assistant Librarian and the 3rd Library Attendant posts are to be filled and 01 Library Information Asst. has been promoted as Staff Assist (Library Services). These all staff has well been trained to deal and guide the PWDs coming to the library.

The library has a newly constructed attractive and beautiful 3 floors building situated in a more appropriate central location in the university premises and declared opened in January 2023. This library complex has 3,200 square meters in extension and its specialty is having all accessibility facilities for the PWDs.

Since this library is situated in a more appropriate location in the university premises and roads leading to the library have been constructed without any barrier for PWDs, it is easy approachable one for all such as wheel chair users and white cane users. The main entrance of the building is having a ramp with proper acceptable scale and the main door and sub-doors to the sections are with proper width. Inside the library has a sufficient space for the circulation of the readers including wheel chair users. The PWDs are able to use all needed services and facilities of the library and the trained staff are available to assist readers with disabilities coming to obtain such services. This newly constructed complex has accessible toilets for all including PWDs.

Currently, the university library contains nearly 16234 printed books and 237 electronic books and averagely 700 - 800 users of the library are visiting per month. It is expected that these electronic books having audio format would be much useful for the readers with visual disabilities whom are expected to enter to this university in future.

The university finance committee has been allocating averagely 2,500,000 LKR for capital expenditures including new books and periodicals purchasing and 650,000 LKR (for recurrent expenditures excluding Personal emoluments every year. Now the library

is planning to increase a percentage of allocation in the library budget for making more facilities for readers with disabilities.

5.6 Sports Facilities

There is no doubt that sports have an important place in the co-curricular activities of any educational institution. Sports are important contributors not only to the physical health of students but also to their mental well-being. Thus, sports play a significant role in student physical and mental development.

University of Vavuniya is an institution of higher education with a strong focus on student sports development. Although the basic infrastructure facilities are still under development, the necessary basic facilities have been established for students to participate in both indoor and outdoor sports.

Carom, Badminton, Chess, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, Karate etc. are some of the indoor games available for the students to show their talents and skills while two major types of outdoor sports- tract events and field events are providing opportunities to the students who are much keen and interest in outdoor games. The sports unit of the university has formed netball, cricket, football, volleyball, hockey and ella teams in the field events and continuous practices and coaches are being conducted in the evening times and special coaching sessions are conducted in order to prepare the teams for the time of various tournaments and matches in both indoor and outdoor games.

Averagely, 150-200 students per day are partaking in practicing and sports recreational activities in the university ground, indoor stadium and gymnasium. Though, currently, very few no. of students with disability benefit from these sports facilities, the sports unit is highly expects disability inclusive sports in future when quite no. of students with disabilities enters into the university in future.

The director of sports is the officer in charge of the sports unit and 2 full time instructors (1 Male Instructor + 1 Female Instructor) are involving in practicing and coaching. The ground man and work aid assist the director and instructors to keep the fields, play tools and equipment ready for the day to day practices and for the matches. The unit is planning to recruit a Management Asst. to support to the day to day administration of the unit. These all human resources along with sufficient physical resources are essential for developing the sports activities in order to create more effective and efficient university sportsmen to contribute to the country's sports fields.

The available ground indoor stadium and gymnasium are to be upgraded at least up to national standards, which require large amount of fund allocation. Currently, the university spends only Rs. 01 Mn. and 02 Mn. only for the re-current and capital expenditures of the unit, respectively every year.

Disability inclusive sports are one of the major policies of the sports unit not only inside the university but also outside of the university. It is paying its attention to make linkages with Para Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka for disability inclusion in island Para Olympic Games. The unit is planning to conduct an *Inter University Sports Meet for Persons with Disabilities* in Sri Lanka, then, it will be the first such sports meet in the island while drawing another planning to conduct *Northern Provincial Sports meet for Children with Disabilities* as a social responsible university and its sports unit.

The following table enables the service seekers and others to communicate with the officers in-charge of above mentioned 06 service units via telephones.

Table 04: Contact Information of Services Centres

NATURE OF THE SERVICE	NAME OF THE CENTRE	OFFICER IN CHARGE	CONTACT NUMBER
Medical Service	Health Centre	University Medical Officer	+94 24 222 4674
Students Counseling Service	Dept. of English Language Teaching	Senior Student Counselor	+94 242 22 8235
Students Career Counseling Service	Students' Career Guidance Counseling Unit	The Director (Career Guidance)	+94 24 222 1636
Students Welfare Service	Students and Welfare Division	Deputy Registrar (Students and Welfare)	+94 24 222 8238
Library Service	University Library	The Chief Librarian	+94 24 222 0279
Sports Facilities	Physical Education Unit	The Director (Physical Education)	+94 24 222 3917

ANNEXURE: 1

GEOGRAPHICAL MAP OF THE UNIVERSITY
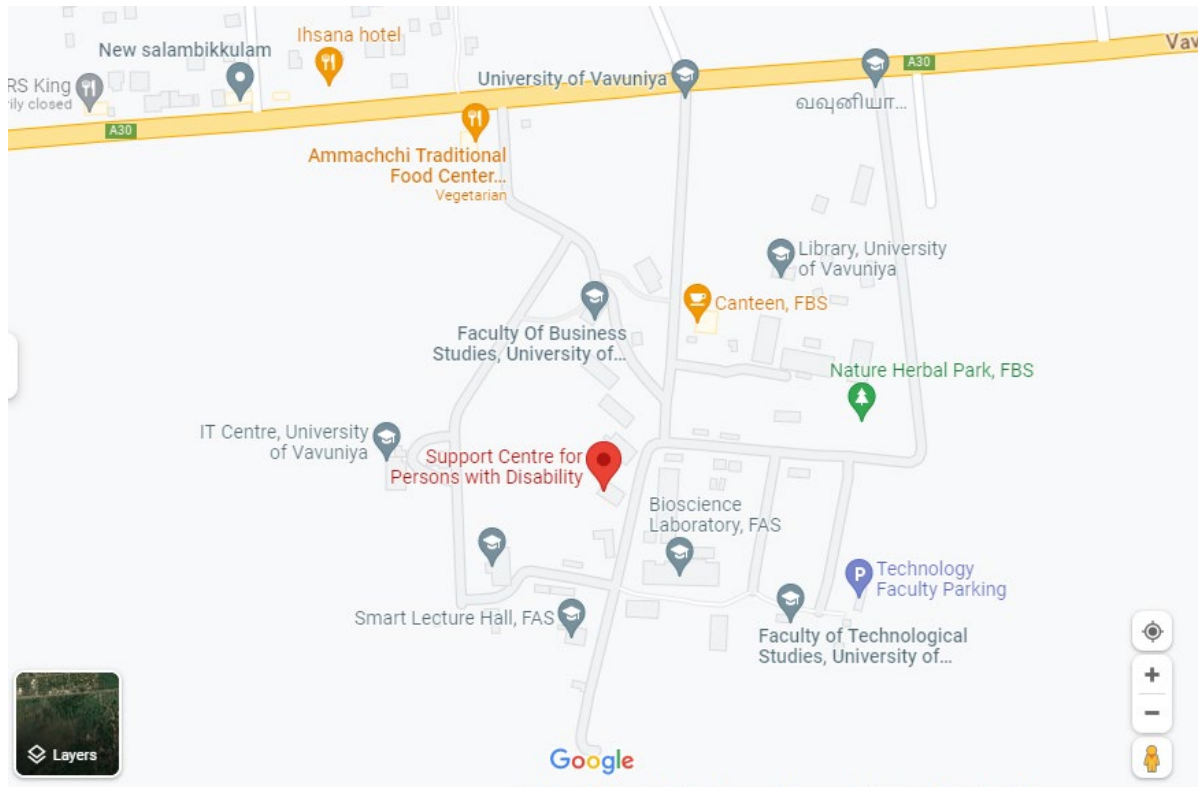
ANNEXURE: 2

UGC POLICY FRAME FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA.

Policy Framework for Higher Education, Sri Lanka

(Policy on Special Needs Education)

1. Purpose, Scope & Approach of the Policy

The University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka recognizes disability as a component of social diversity. Since disability is primarily a social construct, the society that it generates is obligated to dismantle barriers in order to embrace equity and inclusivity. Hence, the duty for addressing the needs of students and staff members with disabilities is shared throughout all registered higher education institutions in the island.

1. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the Sri Lankan university community who are involved in employment or study-related activities at any physical location or online.

2. **Equal Opportunity Approach**

This policy acknowledge that students and staff members with disabilities in the Sri Lankan higher education system do not have the same opportunities for the admissions process, participation in teaching and learning, examinations, and wider social and recreational activities as their non-disabled counterparts. Thus, considers **equality of opportunity** as the guiding principle for this policy, which aims to create an equitable higher educational environment in which students and staff members with disabilities can participate fully by eliminating discriminatory limitations in policies, strategies, processes, and actions.

1. Equality of opportunity is achieved through both pro-active and appropriate reactive measures to address inequitable behaviors or processes.

2. Each public University may adopt internal policies, programs, and other processes to assist members of disability groups in gaining access to educational and career opportunities in accordance with this policy and applicable law.

3. Terminology (Specific Terms to be defined clearly)
4. Statistical Information on Students with Disabilities in Higher Education in the past 10 years
2. Unlawful Discrimination

It is unlawful to discriminate an individual directly or indirectly on the basis of disability and / or the intersectionality of any of the following characteristics:

- Age
- Gender
- Marital Status
- Pregnancy
- Ethnicity
- Skin Colour
- Ancestry
- National or Ethnic Origin
- Religion and
- Political opinion

8. However, it is not a discrimination to characterize differences between individuals on the basis of non-prejudicial traits, which is not explicitly defined by any law.

2. Vilification and Victimization

1. This policy prohibits the vilification or defamation of any individual or group of individuals with disabilities for any reason, whether in the context of learning, teaching, research, intellectual or public discussion, or any other academic or university-related activity.

2. This policy does not allow a person with a disability to be victimized in any way, including the following conditions:

   i.   In making a complaint about anything covered by this policy
   ii. In providing information on a complaint filed under this policy
   iii. In investigating or adjudicating a complaint.

The university may impose maximum sanctions on anybody found to be engaging in unlawful discrimination, vilification or victimization against disability and/or its associated inter sectionality within its physical and virtual grounds. This may include disciplinary action against staff or students, and in circumstances involving persons who attend the university on a temporary or permanent basis, this may entail expulsion from the university premises or withdrawal from its activities.

3. Reasonable Accommodations

To the greatest extent possible, the UGC will provide, or make sure the entities registered under it provide, reasonable accommodations, or adjustments to the environment, tasks, and tools, including the courses, instructional/evaluation methods, programs, services, or processes to ensure students with disabilities who disclose their conditions have an equal opportunity to attain the same level of achievement or enjoy the same benefits and privileges available to students without disabilities. However,

these adjustments in a study situation must neither weaken nor degrade the academic standard. Students must be able to satisfy the required standards of the assessments.

1. UGC Special Intake to Undergraduate Programmes

In addition to the general procedure followed in admitting students to universities, the UGC maintains a special intake, subject to the capacity of the universities, to minimize the prejudices that students with disabilities may face in being admitted to universities due to the difficulties they face in preceding education systems.

1. The UGC will always adhere to established national and international definitions of disability, standards, and scientific criteria when assessing successful candidates for university admission through special intake.

2. **Examination Regulations**

This policy acknowledges that students with disabilities in higher education experience a range of challenges in the existing standard evaluation procedure and will take all feasible steps to minimize these difficulties when administering examinations. These modifications will include changes to the regular timing and scheduling, environmental setting, presentation of information, and response format in an evaluation.

1. Timing and Scheduling:

Relevant evaluation authorities will extend the allowable length of time to complete an examination, assessment, or assignment and be flexible in making required adjustments to how permissible time is organized.

3. **Environmental Setting:**

Relevant authorities should take appropriate actions to alter the venue in which a test or assignment is conducted for students with disabilities if required, or to adapt the conditions of the assessment setting accordingly, to permit physical access, minimize distractions to the peers, and to use of special equipment.

4. **Presentation Accommodations:**

The evaluation authorities should permit students to access and use alternative modes of information, such as auditory, visual, tactile, and multisensory, in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print when demonstrating their true aptitude or achievement level in the form of presentations.

5. **Response Accommodations:**

The relevant examination authorities should make appropriate alternative arrangements to the response mode of students to be able to complete assignments or examinations in ways other than the conventional verbal or written modes, or to solve or organize

associated problems using an assistive device or organizer. Accommodations may include, but not limited to:

- Facilitating the use of scribes or sign language interpreters
- Use of Word processors, text-to-speech or speech-to-text software
- Use of audio recorders, Braille writers or cue cards)

3. Health and Counseling Support
4. Assistive Device Training and Skill Development

Understanding the substantial technological barriers faced by students with disabilities in higher education, the UGC, in collaboration with the assistive technology experts of the support centres, will undertake assistive device training and related skill development programs to enhance academic engagement and productivity. These programs will be:

- Centreed on specific aspects of assistive technology that will aid students in their academic coursework;

- Tailored to the individual's needs and skill level;

- Geared toward gaining the knowledge and confidence necessary to integrate a variety of assistive technologies into the learning environment; and

- Aimed at fostering self-agency.

5. Deferments and completion of undergraduate degree programmes

4. Universal Accessibility within Universities

This policy emphasizes the necessity of incorporating Universal designs into UGC-registered higher education institutions in order to make their courses, instructional/evaluation methods, programs, services, processes, and physical/virtual environments as accessible and usable as possible to all members, including learners with disabilities, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

1. *Infrastructural Accessibility*

In order to guarantee that all students have equal access to all university venues, events, facilities, materials, and equipment, universities will take all possible steps to ensure that accessibility is built in from the beginning rather than retrofitting it later on.

2. *Information Systems*

Universities will take all proactive measures to guarantee that libraries, course materials, notes, and other information resources are flexible, engaging, and accessible to all students.

3. *Accessible Teaching, Learning and Assessment*

A combination of teaching approaches should be used by educators who are committed to universal design in order to meet the diverse needs of students, including:

• The use of captions on videos
• Alternative formats for handouts
• Use large, bold fonts on high-contrast backgrounds when delivering presentations.
• Provision of online courses that adhere to accessibility guidelines, and
• Instructor behaviors that accommodate students with different learning styles, such as verbally summarizing information presented in visuals, minimizing excessive use of jargon, and clarifying terminology that may be unfamiliar to some students.

5. *Training Programmes for Academics and Non-Academics in Higher Education*

Establishment of Support Centres and Pedagogical Sections on Disability as an essential step towards disability inclusion, an Assisted Institutional System covering both disability support services and *disability education* as an academic discipline will be established in the higher education system in Sri Lanka.

1. Support Centres for students with disabilities

1. Duties and Functions

a. Support centres for students with disabilities are responsible for designing, delivering, coordinating, and reviewing specific disability support services in order to level the playing field for students with disabilities at universities. The design of disability support services should be based on the following broad principles:

• User-centreedness : Experiencing services through the eyes of the consumer.
• Co-creativity : Bringing all stakeholders together in the process of service design.
• Sequencing :Taking the whole flow as a series of interrelated actions.
• Evidencing :Visualization of intangible aspects to be made concrete and measurable
• Holistic Approach : Consideration of the entire environment in service designing.

b. Subject to the policies, rules, and regulations of the UGC, the support centres for students with disabilities can liaison with external bodies such as government institutions, business entities, or civil organizations and accept donations in cash or kind to carry out their duties and functions effectively.

2. Resources

1. The UGC will continue to provide the necessary infrastructure such as human, physical, technical, and digital resources to ensure that the support centres for students with disabilities can to carry out their mandated responsibilities and operations.

2. To improve the quality of the disability support services, support centres will also collaborate with organizations and institutions for PWDs, both local and foreign, in training and exchange of technical expertise, subject to the legal and policy constraints of the UGC.

3. **Specialized Cadre Incorporation**

The UGC will expeditiously follow the required procedures to create, approve, and provide the specific cadres listed below, which are essential for the design, delivery, coordination, and evaluation of disability-related support services in the universities.

- Disability Advisor
- Braille Transcriber
- Sign Language Interpreter
- Assistive Technology Trainer

1. Disability Advisor

The Disability Advisor will assess student requirements and provide recommendations for reasonable adaptations to eliminate disability-related barriers by working in conjunction with, and offering advice and direction to, students, staff, centres, units, departments, and other relevant structures of the University.

2. Braille Experts

The primary responsibility of a braille transcriber is to convert materials such as course handouts and exam papers that have been delivered to students with vision impairments in traditional printed format into braille medium. However, they are also expected to engage in transcribing students' Braille answer scripts into print format to be able to mark them by examiners on time. They are responsible for accurately conveying the information in both Braille and print versions while capturing the nuances, complexities, and other components of the written word.

3. Sign Language Interpreters

A Sign Language interpreter facilitates the communication which has been exchanged through auditory means between deaf and hard-of-hearing or other individuals through the Sri Lankan Sign Language or other recognized manual sign system in lecture halls and other meetings in universities. They will eliminate the barriers to communication

that exist between students who are deaf or hard of hearing and the other students and staff members at Universities.

4. Assistive Device Trainers

An assistive technology trainer is responsible for providing one-to-one training in assistive technology (Software and Hardware) to students with disabilities in higher education. To effectively meet the unique needs, the assistive technology trainer should undertake an initial assessment with each student so that the training may be tailored to the individual strengths and academic requirements. In order to fully address the individual requirements, the assistive technology trainer should undertake an initial assessment with each student for the training to be delivered according to the strengths of the individual and the academic expectations.

4. Departments of Disability Inclusion

Despite the growing popularity of disability studies as a new academic discipline in universities around the world, the subject has received inadequate attention in Sri Lanka, both in terms of research and classroom instruction. As a result of this research gap, PWDs and relevant support professionals experience a number of challenges in both delivering and accessing support services, and this scenario has negatively impacted service planning with a more comprehensive view of field advancement. Higher education institutions have a great deal of potential and responsibility to enable professionals in the field of disability to acquire new and scientific knowledge on this field, as well as to impart knowledge on training, policy making, leadership skills development, and professional ethics to help people of all ages with various disabilities in Sri Lanka lead a better life in society. In an effort to foster the positive advancement of the disability sector and contribute to the development of a healthy disability workforce for Sri Lankan society, the UGC will take all necessary steps to establish "the departments of disability inclusion" in order to introduce *Disability Studies* as a new and essential academic discipline in higher education.

(Further information is needed)

3. Inclusion of voices from the Students with Disabilities

Any complaint concerning violations of this policy will be taken seriously, investigated confidently, and addressed promptly. All Complaints may be made in accordance with the relevant complaint policies/procedures of the university available to students and staff members.

6. Career Guidance and Employment
7. Research on Disability (To be drafted later)
8. Collaboration with Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations
9. Policy Implementation
10. Monitoring and Evaluation

ANNEXURE: 3
UNIVERSITY OF VAVUNIYA EMPLOYMENT POLICIES FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION

University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka.
Support Centre for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD)
Employment Policy for Disability Inclusion

Contains
    1. Introduction
    2. Purpose of the Policy
    3. Key Norms and Principles of the Policy
    4. Strategies for the Implementation of the Policy

Annexure: 1Circular No.27/88 of Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs
       - English
Annexure: 2Circular No. 27/88 of Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs
       -Tamil
Annexure: 3Circular No. 27/88 of Ministry of Public administration and Home Affairs
       - Sinhala

1. Introduction:

The Vavuniya Campus of the University of Jaffna which was initiated as an Affiliated University College in 1991 and upgraded as a University Campus in 1997 has now been re-upgraded as 17th independent university of Sri Lanka by the government in Aug 2021 due to its successful functions in creating valuable citizens to the country as the results of committed services of the Rectors, Registrars, Asst. Registrars, Deans of Faculties, Heads of the Departments, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers, Non-Academic Staff etc and valuable co-operation from students, parents, the community members etc for last 31 years.

Now this new university is planning to implement *An Employment Policy for Disability Inclusion* while planning to develop its human, physical and financial resources in order to improve its quality of academic services to undergraduates and their service providers.

Since the Government of Sri Lanka is strongly practicing disability inclusion in government employment opportunities from 1988 and it has ensured minimum 3% job opportunities for persons with disability in all government sectors through the Circular

No. 27/88 of the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs, it is essential for this university to implement the circular in the university staff recruitment processes.

Some Basic Information of the University

Address	: Pambaimadhu, Vavuniya 43 000, Sri Lanka.
T.P No	: 0094 24 222 2265
E-Mail	: vcoffice@vau.ac.lk
Website	: www.vau.ac.lk
Key Contact Authority	: Prof. T. Mangaleswaran
Designation	: The Vice Chancellor
Mobile No.	: 071 434 7689

2. Purpose of the Policy

All over purpose of this policy is to ensure 3% job opportunity for persons with disability in the university.

As one of the responsible Government Universities of Sri Lanka, The University of Vavuniya also has social obligation to practice the government employment policy for disability inclusion. For this objective, it has to follow the Circular No. 27/88 of the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs in its staff recruitment processes in order to ensure 3% job opportunities for persons with disability in the university. Therefore, the first purpose of this policy is to implement the government circular within the university.

Sri Lanka Ministry of Higher Education and University Grants Commission (UGC) are also always motivating higher educational institutions including universities to consider the employments for persons with disability within their circles.

In addition to the above, the international community is always encouraging in general to protect and promote the rights for employment of the persons with disability. Particularly, the International Labor Organization (ILO) highly expects that all the government institutions must provide possible employment opportunities for the persons with disability in their level best. Hence, the University of Vavuniya also has to consider career opportunities within the university to fulfill the international expectation.

Since Sri Lanka had signed the United Nations Convention of Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD) in 2007 and Sri Lankan Parliament had ratified it in 2016, all government institutions including universities have obligation to follow the employment rights of persons with disability, prescribed in Article No. 27 (Work and Employment) of UNCRPD.

For the above said purposes, this young university is trying to practice an employment policy for disability inclusion.

3. Key Norms and Principles of the Policy

1. Minimum 3% job opportunities are considered by the relevant officers of the university in the time of fulfilling vacancies. This means that 3% of the vacancies are allocated for persons with disability. If the no. of applicants with disability is insufficient, then only, the vacancy is fulfilled with persons without disability.

2. To be entitled for a job, an applicant with disability who is applying for a job must have fulfilled all minimum qualifications such as education qualifications, professional qualifications etc expected by the university. This means that the disability is not a qualification for a job, but, it is a condition only to receive 3% job allocation.

3. The members of the university, members of the university council and members of SCPD are solely bounded to practice the norms and principles for the disability inclusion in employment opportunities prescribed in this policy since this policy has been adapted by the university council.

4. Likewise, administration officers, the registrar, asst. registrar, all the deans of the faculties and heads of the departments of the university are also solely bounded to practice these norms and principles.

5. It is an unavoidable responsibility of the university ensuring accessibility facilities for a recruited staff with disability in his/her working environment. This means that lack of accessibility facilities should not prevent recruitment of a person due to his/her disability.

And lack of accessibility facilities should not be a barrier for a recruited staff with disability to carry out his / her career smoothly.

4. Strategies for implementation of the Policy

1. In all possible ways, the university should take measures to do publicity on its practicing of *Employment Policy for Disability Inclusion* by using possible means such as meetings, seminars, workshops, printing and electronic media etc.

2. The university should upload this policy in the web pages of SCPD in its website and should update it from time to time.

3. To have a good awareness on the policy, a copy of the policy should be provided to the University Registrar, Asst. Registrar, Administration Officers, Deans of the Faculties, the Heads of the Departments and others.

4. The university especially SCPD should conduct awareness workshops on the policy to needy relevant officers of the university such as University Registrar, Asst. Registrar, Administration Officers, Deans of the Faculties, the Heads of the Departments and others in order to make sure of good practice of the policy.

5. SCPD should have the responsibility of continuous monitoring on the practicing of the policy and should provide its feed backs to the university council from time to time. On behalf of SCPD, the director and the co-ordinator are solely found to have close monitoring on the practice of this policy and providing feed backs on it in order to ensure its best practice within the university.

ANNEXURE 04:

COLLECTION OF INFORMATION ON DISABILITY AMONG THE STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF VAVUNIYA

The legal definition of disability in Sri Lanka is that described in the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act.1 A *Persons with Disability means any person who, as a result of any deficiency in his physical or mental capabilities, whether congenital or not, is unable by himself to ensure for himself, wholly or partly, the necessities of life.*

The National Policy of Sri Lanka on Disability states the following:

The National Policy on Disability promotes and protects the Rights of People who have Disability in the spirit of social justice. They will have opportunities for enjoying a full and satisfying life and for contributing to national development their knowledge, experience and particular skills and capabilities as equal citizens of Sri Lanka.

It is necessary to identify and record such conditions (people who have visual, speech, hearing, mobility, intellectual, and psychiatric disability and disability arising as a result of epilepsy and other causes) among the students to facilitate related services to them and to improve the learning capacity in the university.

Therefore, the approval of the council is sought to collect the data online from every student enrolled into the University of Vavuniya as per the form annexed herewith.

Dr. P. Sathiyalingam,
University Medical Officer,
University of Vavuniya.

DISABILITY DATA FORM
UNIVERSITY OF VAVUNIYA

Name of Student   :

…………………………………………………………………..

Faculty   :

…………………………………………………………………..

Registration No   :

…………………………………………………………………..

Contact TP No & E-Mail Address:

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………

Do you have an Impairment, Disability, Health Condition or Learning differences that has a substantial or long term impact on your ability to carry out day to day activities?

Yes

 No

 If yes please elaborate.

1. Name of Impairment, Disability:

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

• Description (Cause of Disability, E.g. By birth, Accident, Disease, etc., On the basis of students' own self-assessment)

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

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2. A specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD (H) D:

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3. A Social / Communication Impairment such as per ger's syndrome / other autistic spectrum disorders:

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………………………

4. A long standing illness or Health Conditions such as Cancer, HIV, Diabetes, Chronic Heart Disease or Epilepsy:

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………

5. A mental health condition such as Depression, Schizophrenic or Anxiety Disorder:

……………………………………………………85……………………………………………………

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………………

6. A physical impairment or mobility issue, such as difficulty using arms or using a wheel chair or crutches:

………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………..

7. Deaf or a serious hearing impairment:

………

…………...……………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………...

8. Blind or a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses:

………

………

………………

9. A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed:

………

………

………………

Please attach the medical records if any.

…………………………...   …………………………...

Signature   Date

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About the editor

Mr. V. Subramaniam, the editor of this handbook, is a totally person with visual disability. He started his graduation from the University of Peradeniya and completed it at the University of Jaffna and graduated as an Economics (Hons) graduate. He started his teaching career as an Economics Teacher in J/St. John's College and J/Chundukuli Girls College, Jaffna and then completed it at Vavuniya V/Saivapragasa Ladies College. From 2008, He continued his career as an In-Service Adviser (ISA) for special education in Vavuniya South Education Zone and got his retirement from the Education Department in 2014. Then, he took over the post of the coordinator of SCPD of the University of Vavuniya in 2022 and successfully performing his tasks up to today. While serving in the

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education sector, he obtained his diploma in education and then his master's degree in education. During his school teaching career, he wrote, produced and staged dramas, poetries, villuppattu and other competitive events by himself for his school students, targeting Tamil and English day competitions. Most of those events won places at the stage, in district, provincial and national levels. He involved in various social works in Jaffna district. When he with his family displaced to Vavuniya district due to the Sri Lankan civil war, he observed the inability of any organization to serve for the people with disability in this district and he with some well-wishers, established the "Vavuniya District Organization for the Rehabilitation of Handicaped (ORHAN) in 1999. He was the one who had been leading the organization since its establishment up to 2018. Likewise, He has been involved in establishing National Association for Humanitarian Rehabilitation Operations (NAHRO) in Kilinochchi district in 2003. The Northern Province Consortium of the Organizations for Differently Able (NPCODA) was initiated by him in the Northern Province in 2014, which is an umbrella organization of organizations for persons with disability and he was serving as its president until 2018. He has been appointed by His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka as one of the councilors of National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) and he has been serving in the council since 2002 up to today. He contributed to develop the new disability right bill of Sri Lanka, 2003 National Policy on disability, 2014 National Action Plan on Disability etc. It is worth recalling here that in 2016, when UN Secretary General BanKee Moon organized the first International Humanitarian Conference in Istanbul, Turkey, Mr. Subramaniam participated at the conference as a replica of the Sri Lankan delegation and delivered a speech about the situation of people with disability in Sri Lanka. He has published several books on the subject of disability and has written many articles, poems and short stories for various newspapers, magazines and electronic media. Currently, he is involved in various positions in several institutions such as committee member of sub-committee for persons with disability of Sri Lanka Human Right Commission, one of the patrons of Iniyavazhvu Illam'- special school for deaf and blind in Mullaitivu, advisory board member of Vavuniya public library, member of FIAN Sri Lanka etc. We hope that you who have so far welcomed and appreciated his various social works will also benefit from reading this University hand book of disability, University of Vavuniya.

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