

Borderless Education: Challenges and Opportunities For Sri Lankan Universities

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Abstract

The demand for higher education is continuously increasing in Sri Lanka. Of around 120,000 students who qualify for higher education every year, only about 20,000 are selected to the 14 state universities other than the Open University. The education at these 14 state universities is free and in addition, around 75% of the students get a monthly stipend by way of a scholarship or bursary. Therefore, the demand for state universities is extremely high.

Around 5,000 students register annually at the Open University of Sri Lanka and another 40,000 register for open and distance learning courses at the conventional universities. Of the balance number, some go abroad for their higher studies and most follow the courses at private Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs). Some of the private HEIs conduct classes for the examinations of overseas professional institutions and students sit for examinations on-line. Some others prepare students for the examinations of foreign universities that are conducted in Sri Lanka.

Therefore, due to extremely limited number of places available in the state universities and large number of students who qualify for