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**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE B.Sc. SPECIAL
CHEMISTRY CURRICULA OF FOUR SELECTED
SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITIES
AND
EMPLOYMENT OF SPECIAL CHEMISTRY
GRADUATES IN SRI LANKA**

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PGD D E (IGNOU), MA D E (IGNOU)

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of
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August 2008

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ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the B.Sc. Special Chemistry curricula of four selected universities in Sri Lanka and employment of Chemists in Sri Lanka.

The aim of the study was to critically analyse and evaluate the B.Sc. Special Chemistry curricula of four selected universities offering the Special Degree Programmes in Sri Lanka and to examine the nature of employment of the graduates passing out with a Special Degree in Chemistry.

The methodology included the following aspects;

- (i) a comparative and critical survey of the Special Chemistry curricula adopted by the Universities in the sample
- (ii) a survey on the employment of graduates with Special Degree in Chemistry

There are fifteen universities in Sri Lanka under the University Grants Commission. Among these eleven Universities offer B.Sc. Degree Programmes and of these six universities offer Special Degrees in Chemistry. Of these four universities were selected for this study as the sample. These four universities are the University of Colombo, the University of Kelaniya, the University of Peradeniya and the University of Sri Jayawardenepura. These Universities were selected as they have existed for more than 25 years and have produced most of the graduates that have passed out with a Special Degree in Chemistry in Sri Lanka.

The Special Degree curricula were analysed in terms of the course structure, course content, procedures adopted in the assessment and evaluation of achievement of students and the employment of the Chemistry Special graduates in Sri Lanka.

The study revealed that there are similarities as well as differences of the Special Degree Programmes of the different universities under study.

All four Universities have moved from the traditional system to course unit system in the recent past. The traditional system containing the three main sub disciplines Organic Chemistry, Inorganic Chemistry and Physical Chemistry is further extended to include Analytical Chemistry as well at all four universities. It was found that all four universities have shifted to the new grading system offering GPA values.

From the analysis of course contents of the four universities it is revealed that in all universities the traditional system has been replaced by the course unit system. Through the course unit system, universities are able to offer a large number of courses as optional courses. These optional courses to a great extent are related to the needs of the world of work. Almost all optional courses introduced into the curriculum of respective universities have a practical component based on theoretical knowledge. Hence, graduates with a Chemistry Special Degree are favourably equipped to make knowledge in Chemistry relevant to the world of work.

The study has revealed that there are similarities and also notable differences of the curricula, contribution to the final assessment *etc*, while variations are inevitable. A question arises in a small country like Sri Lanka, whether these variations are sporadic and unplanned. It seems necessary therefore that there should be an official gathering of the academics from all universities at regular intervals with the objective of becoming aware of the programmes in different universities so that there could be mutual exchange of ideas for the common good.