

EXPLORING COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE NEEDS OF PIRIVENA STUDENTS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

The Pirivena education system which dates back to more than thousand years in Sri Lanka is the major source of education of Buddhist monks. The Pirivena education differs from the general school setting due to several reasons, such as the status of the student and certain specialties of the syllabi. Counseling and guidance is considered one of the most effective and vital services for students in the school setting which leads to achieve their academic goals and personal growth. The purpose of a counselling programme in education settings is the development of the domains; academic, career, social and personal. However, there is no counselling and guidance programme in the Pirivena education system at present. Pirivena students, mainly monks who have separated from biological parents and are cared and fed by chief monks of the temple or Pirivena, may be vulnerable to be subjected to various kinds of problems; mentally, emotionally, socially and personally. But, it is very hard to find researches done on them and their problems. No research has been done to investigate their counselling and guidance needs. Therefore, this research is designed to fill that gap, identifying the counselling and guidance needs of students, especially monks, in the Pirivena education setting. The research was conducted under qualitative research methods. The sample of 43 student monks was selected from five Pirivenas in the Kandy district, based on the convenient sampling method. The data collected using the focus group discussion method were analyzed under content analysis method. The focus group was conducted under three themes related to the student monks in the Pirivena. The research revealed that they have problems academically; lack of motivation for education, less awareness of psychological methods of learning and studying, and the issues of memorizing. When it comes to personal and social aspects concerned, unusual punishments and cruel blaming, low self-esteem, less reinforcements at good work and conflicts with the teacher can be identified. It is concluded that, considering their problems, the counselling and guidance programme is a predominant need within the Pirivena. As such, the chief monks and teachers of the Pirivena need to be more sensitive to student monks and their psychological conditions.

Key Words: Pirivena Education, Student Monks, Counselling and Guidance Needs

