

# The investigation on School Guidance and Counselling Services in Sri Lanka

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## Abstract

Nowadays complexity of students' lives are considerable and getting dangerous, therefore parents, teachers and principals should take immediate actions to prevent their childhood. It is said that students they do not have their own lives, because they must have to overcome from three main examinations (Grade five, GCE Ordinary level and advanced level) within their school education period. Under such a situation students have to considerate to pass above examinations with higher credits, and school culture and school health also are being badly changed. As a part of the society schools have to cope with drugs, alcohol, and tobacco adapted children. So such mentioned complicated school situation, some students frustrated and they have mental health problems, so that students in a school should have provide good school Guidance and Counselling Services (GCS). Therefore this research focused to investigate current situation of GCS in selected five schools, case study research method was used and data were collected by interviewing principals, teachers and students. The findings of the study showed schools do not have proper GCS, and lack of trained teachers for GCS, further, stakeholders of the schools they do not have awareness about concept of GCS, and infrastructure facilities of GCS were insufficient in schools. Some solutions for above mentioned issues were discussed and guideline for further investigating also provided by the paper.

**Key Words:** *school Guidance and Counselling Services, school culture, secondary school system*

## 1. Introduction

This study focuses on the investigation on Guidance and Counselling Services in Secondary Schools in Sri Lanka. Specifically, this study attempts to identify the possibilities, effectiveness, issues and challenges involved in school Guidance and Counselling Services (GCS) within the context of the

secondary education system in Sri Lanka. The research paper begins by articulating the importance of the study, followed by the outlines of the research methodology and the importance of the selection of the research methods and the about the sample.

The world has entered into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with new expectations in all areas of the modern society. Particularly in the new millennium, the demands of education have become broader and more complex. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, school Guidance and counselling services are very important because students in schools are faced complicated problems. These are personal, psychological, educational, and socio-economic problems. Therefore, schools need good counselling programs (Baker. S. B. 2000). Further, this study explores the effective strategies, methods, government policies, which will require enhancing the current Guidance and Counselling Services in secondary schools, and it is anticipated that the findings will be helped to make national policies to develop effective and efficient Guidance and Counselling Services (GCS) in the future. The findings and recommendations of the study will also be useful for planning, organising and providing suitable Guidance and Counselling Services in secondary school in Sri Lanka as well as future researchers who interested to fill the gap of the existing knowledge in similar field.

## 2. Review of Literature

Guidance and Counselling services began and stretched in many countries around the world in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Gysbers, N. C; 2008). The first school counsellors emerged in the late 1800's (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Paisley & Borders, 1995). In America school Guidance and Counselling Services identified in early 1900s.

After gaining Independence in 1948, the Sri Lankan education system has been steadily developed in many areas. Some examples were; the student population increased; the infrastructure facilities were also developed. Subsequently, the rate of

literacy has increased from 60% to 90% by 2002 (Mathews, 2002). However quality of education in the system is questionable, therefore, to enhance the quality of education outcomes in Sri Lanka, students need well organized Guidance and Counselling Services within the school context. However, School Counselling Services in Sri Lanka has not long history, it was established in 1960s (Muthukumara, 2009). Even, Abepala, R. and Abepala. A, (2011) believe that, by 2013 school counselling services in Sri Lanka are very limited or less developed. Under such a situation, this research has discovered that some secondary schools have organised and implemented effective and innovative Guidance and Counselling Services. But the development of these programs is one of the many complicated issues within the education system in Sri Lanka because of lack of qualified teachers, infrastructure facilities, some traditional cultural believes and government policies etc. Therefore, in this research investigate the current situation on Guidance and Counselling Services in selected secondary schools in two different Provinces in Sri Lanka.

**3. Materials and Methods**

**3.1 Research aim and questions**

The study seeks answers to following research questions.

The overarching research question is: **How do Sri Lankan secondary schools provide Guidance and Counselling programs for students?**

The following four sub-questions are used to support this overarching research question.

1. What factors affect the development of GCS in Sri Lanka?
2. Which types of GCS in secondary schools in Sri Lanka?
3. How is the effectiveness of the contemporary GCS demonstrated in each school?
4. What specific changes in students followed GCS?

**3.2 Research Methodology**

To seek answers for the research questions, qualitative research approach has been used, research method was Case study method. The school sample was five secondary schools which were selected purposely from Central and North-Central provinces accordingly researcher’s convenience. Further, the data collection process was employed in-depth interviews which conducted with five school principals and twenty teachers who randomly chosen from a sample of secondary schools. In addition, thirty students were interweaved to collect students information of their views, believes, experiences and expectations of GCS, Non-participant observation and searching of documents also conducted and

gathered further valuable qualitative data of the above schools. The collected qualitative data were manually analysed, using codes and five themes. Observation and documentary data also complying with interview data, three types of data were triangulated to develop trustworthy and validity.

Table: 01 sample of the study

school	principals	teachers	students
A (Central province)	01	04	06
B (Central province)	01	04	06
C (North-Central province)	01	04	06
D (North-Central province)	01	04	06
E (North-Central province)	01	04	06
Total	05	20	30

Above table shows the details of the selected secondary schools and participants of the study.

**4. Results and Discussion**

The School Guidance and Counselling services has long history in Sri Lanka, 1957 also the government has released a circular (circular no: 10) regarding this manner. In last decades over time the Ministry of Education has emphasized the importance of GCS for the system, and the Ministry of Education issued number 2013/06 circular and it was strong and even emphasised teachers for GCS.

However findings proved that the principals, teachers, parents and students they do not have sufficient knowledge and awareness about this GCS concept. Further the findings showed the school culture was not ready and prepare to enhance GCS within school environment, only one school from the sample had a separated room for GCS. Among the five schools of the sample, three schools do not have any qualified and appointed teacher for GCS. Majority of principals were not trained for conduct School Guidance and Counselling services in their schools. Students have different types of counselling related problems, but they do not like discuss these problems with teacher in the schools. Teachers of the sample mentioned, their supervision and supporting services from zonal, provincial and ministry levels are very poor. Further principals and teachers suggested that, special allowance for teachers of GCS should be given and it will be benefited for development of GCS in the system.

## 5. Conclusions

In conclusion this study made some proposals to develop effective GCS in secondary schools in the system which are; qualified teachers should be appointed for Guidance and Counselling Services and frequently need to be trained and updated. Infrastructure facilities for GCS must be developed in each and every school. Zonal Education offices should take action to supervise, monitor GCS programs in the zone. The school system do not have government policies to develop GCS in the secondary education system, therefore the Ministry of Education or National Institute of Education should be made national policies to enhance GCS in the country.

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