

Challenges faced by pirivena education in the covid 19 pandemic situations in sri lanka

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Introduction

Education is a major component of Buddhism. The Buddha established the Sangha Society as an educated community where monks could learn and chastised each other. (Chandler and Kent, 2008) However, during the colonial period, monasteries were systematically replaced by new pirivena educational institutions as training centers for monks in Sri Lanka. These institutions gradually expanded in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as the colonial state worked to establish a curriculum and formal examinations centered on Buddhist leaders. Some members of the academic community have focused on the use of mindfulness education and have found that it is a powerful approach that can benefit students not only in their education but also in their lives (Mamgain, 2010). It is argued that the development of a more inclusive history curriculum for the education of monks, along with other factors such as better teacher training, will enable Buddhist monks to play a more effective role in Sri Lanka (De Silva, 2019). With the COVID-19 epidemic, the primary focus of education is to educate students using e-learning platforms, with the primary goal of reaching students during the pandemic, including Buddhist education (Hettiarachchi J, 2021). Among the many educational institutions that have been severely affected by the pandemic, the pirivena education system established for the education of Buddhist monks has been tragically affected. pirivena education faces many problems in the current inaction of imparting knowledge which is a basic requirement of education. In the context of pirivena education, the use of technology raises a number of challenges, starting with the lack of knowledge about IT (Information Technology). This research is being conducted as a literary study to explore the role of educators in the efforts for the transformation of education and the advancement of pirivena education during the Covid-19 epidemic.

Current research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Challenges faced by pirivena teachers in teaching their subjects using distance education in epidemic conditions

- Identify how IT has been used in Buddhist monasteries in other countries

Methodology

In collecting data both primary and secondary sources were used. In primary research, the quantitative data were gathered from the Multiple Choice and Likert Scale questions whereas the qualitative data were gathered from the open-ended questions. An online questionnaire was sent to a sample of 25 pirivena teachers in Sri Lanka, selected based on convenience sampling method which was the population of the research. The questionnaire consisted of questions related to pirivena education and the use of IT during the Covid-19 pandemic. Out of the secondary research, quantitative data were gathered from the statistics in the previous research and qualitative data were gathered from books, previous research articles and newspaper articles.

Results/ Finding and Discussion

There are two main types of basic education in Sri Lanka. According to the Buddhist tradition, it is traditionally divided into school education for laity and pirivena education for the clergy. There are many state interventions in pirivena education.

In other countries like Thailand trained buddhist monks in Pariyatitham Saamun schools. The Pariyatitham Saamun schools normally teach a curriculum of general subjects, including Thai language, mathematics, science, social sciences, physical education, technology, art, and English. These students study additional subjects about Buddhism, including religious practice, Dhamma Vinaya (teachings of Buddhism and monastic discipline), and Pali language. The curriculum is divided into six grades (or years), as in Thai public education. (Schedneck, 2019) As China was opened to the outside world from the mid-nineteenth century on, Chinese Buddhists quickly realized the need to update their knowledge about this religious faith, practiced around the world. To this end, Yang Wenhui and others established Buddhist academies, in hopes of better training Buddhist monks and educating lay Buddhist followers. (Silong, 2013)

But with the COVID-19 pandemic, the main focus of education is to teach students using e-learning platforms, which primarily aim at reaching students and teaching them at their homes during the pandemic. The research questionnaire contained pirivena teachers' prior computer literacy, attitudes towards emerging technology, modes of learning and the way e-learning is applied at the pirivenas. Due to the scarcity of physical and human resources and the poverty in the field of pirivenas, it has not been possible to bring IT into the field of pirivenas in a

modern way. All other roles in the world are advancing rapidly with IT and only pirivena education is stagnant and on the verge of destruction.

One of the reasons for this is the attitudes of the students and teachers in the field of pirivena education. Basically, the Sri Lankan majority looks at the field of pirivena education with a traditional mindset. Accordingly, everything is prepared on a simple and minimalist methodology. Many authorities and teachers believe that IT is not necessary for pirivena education. Another obstacle to the integration of IT into the field of pirivena education is the notion that technology causes more harm than good. Due to this concept, even if the pirivena students are keen on learning IT, the teachers and adults are reluctant to direct them to it. Lack of resources and lack of trained human resources are another major obstacle to the development of pirivena education through IT as distance education in such epidemic situations where physical education is not possible. All these issues have arisen due to the declining contribution of the government to the upliftment of the pirivena sector. The pirivena sector in Sri Lanka is largely rural-based and the insufficient availability of technical supplies and resources that are relevant to IT is another major factor contributing to this problem. They also have the ability to change their own wrong attitudes by more effective and basic understanding of IT; Accordingly, by incorporating IT literacy into the field of pirivenas, it is possible to carry forward an effective pirivena education system through the value of distance education in such epidemic situations.

Conclusion/s

Basically, there should be a positive intervention and extensive investment from the public sector to uplift pirivena education. The main focus of the investment should be on mobilizing and directing IT-related resources. Negative attitudes and thoughts among teachers and students in the field of pirivena should be changed in pointing out the value of IT. Based on the expansion of IT related communication networks, programs required for effective access to distance education should be developed in pirivena education. In such a crisis situation, the field of pirivena education has suffered a major setback due to the inability to uplift the field of pirivena education through distance education. The inclusion of IT literacy in pirivena education has the potential to create a more successful and up-to-date generation of pirivena students. It is the most important investment in the progress and future of the pirivena education system. Fortunately, there are lessons to be learned from efforts in other parts of the world such as Thailand, China and Tibet and we might well debate how we approach such objectives in institutions training teachers and students in contrast to teaching religion in pirivenas. This is, however, a prescription for the long term because curricular changes made today could take a generation to have an impact.

Key Words: Distance Education, IT literacy, pirivena Education, Buddhism, eLearning

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