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Recommendations for the Development of the School Counseling System in Sri Lanka

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Education is the one of most valuable investments made in the 21st century all over the world. Each country allocates considerable amounts of funds from their national income for the education sector. While, in the Sri Lankan context, the government and parents give their fullest attention towards developing an efficient educational system. On the other hand, within the complex social relations that prevail in our society, individuals face considerable psychological difficulties. Consequently the children constitute one of the most significant groups, affected by these difficulties. In this research, I explore ways of developing an adequate school counseling system in Sri Lanka. Thus, my research questions are as follows: what is the existing condition of the school counseling system in Sri Lanka? what are the challenges that school counselors face? The main purpose of this research is to identify the school counselors' role in addressing the students' disturbed mental state. Employing the symbolic interactionism and Sigmund Freud's iceberg theory model of the mind the study approaches the question at hand This research employed the survey method and case study method. Data was collected by using a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The research employed three sample units in the research: school counselors, teachers and students. I have interviewed three school counselors, 30 students and 15 teachers in boys' schools, girls' schools and mixed schools in the Gampaha district. The research found that there are only about 300 teachers trained as school counselors in Sri Lanka. But they are not adequately trained for counseling and/or they don't have enough qualifications for this purpose. Some of them have diploma certificates for counseling and their main appointment is for teaching. There is no proper understanding of the importance of counseling among educational heads, school administrative officers, and Students Therefore, an appropriate national school counseling program should be implemented. It is a crucial and arduous task that should be followed up by government.

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