

# CIRP Offers Masters In Psychology



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Starting as recent as August 2010, Colombo Institute of Research and Psychology has made staggering progress. “Our main aim was to promote Psychology and research amongst the youth of this country,” said Dr Darshan Perera, Founder and Director of Academic Affairs of CIRP.

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Colombo Institute of Research and Psychology (CIRP), offers a variety of Psychology courses. It began with diploma-level programmes and then gradually after one year, got affiliated with the University of Hertfordshire (UH) to conduct BSc, Bachelors degree programmes in Psychology. This year, the institute started two master’s programmes, MSc in Psychology and MSc in Applied Psychology. In February 2013, CIRP will introduce a PhD programme in Psychology affiliated with the University of Hertfordshire, becoming the only public or private institution in Sri Lanka to offer a full range of any Psychology faculty, ie- diploma, bachelor, master’s and PhD.

Dr Perera explained the serious deficiency of clinical psychologists in Sri Lanka; Particularly following the war, he said it has become imperative to have more clinical psychologists to counsel post-traumatic individuals. He said there are many vacancies for psychologists in the Northern and Eastern provinces of the Island. He further emphasised, “since we don’t have sufficiently qualified professionals in the field, NGOs are compelled to recruit International psychologists. Added to the inevitable significant extra cost involved, what’s unfortunate is that the job isn’t fulfilled since there is a lag in understanding our local culture. Hence, despite hiring

foreign counsellors, we still continue to have a serious deficiency of clinical psychologists."

A successful contribution by the institute has been to promote Psychology education amongst various public and private schools. CIRP is in an academic alliance with many leading schools in Colombo to teach Psychology as a London Advanced Level (A/L) subject. "We send lecturers from this institute to teach Psychology in those schools since most schools in Sri Lanka find it difficult to start Psychology as a subject because they can't find qualified lecturers," said Dr Perera. He pointed out the fact that it is not financially feasible for CIRP to send their lecturers with master's qualifications to teach A/L psychology. However they have proceeded despite the challenge since CIRP's objective to promote Psychology in Sri Lanka is being fulfilled. In the last few years, students from those schools are performing exceptionally well, obtaining several awards for their academic performances.

As for career opportunities following diplomas and degrees in Psychology, Dr Darshan was pleased to inform of diverse opportunities for graduates. "Having a foundation in basic psychology, one may proceed to careers in various branches of Psychology like Child Psychology, Organisational Psychology or Clinical Psychology. For those not inclined to conventional pathways, there is now the freedom to divert into academics, advertising, marketing or HR." CIRP is also promoting Organisational Psychology, bridging psychology with the corporate world.

CIRP also has a new facility for autism, where a unique syllabus has been designed not only for academic skills but also for social skills as well. "Most children with special needs suffer because their parents want their children to learn the normal syllabus in normal schools. This is a misconception since these children understand everything, only in a different way," explained Dr Darshan.

The long term goal for CIRP is to attain the University status, not only by name but more importantly in standard, concluded Dr Perera.

