

## PREVALENCE OF ANXIETY AMONG BUDDHIST MONKS

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According to the American Psychological Association, anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worrisome thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure. Anxiety disorders are the most common type of mental disorder, which affects nearly 30 percent of adults at some point in their lives. There are a number of different anxiety disorders, and this research study dealt only with the elements common to all those disorders. The study aimed at examining the anxiety in Buddhist monks. Thus, the research problem was how anxiety is prevalent among the Buddhist monks. Spiritual attainment, religious devotion and pro-social behavior are the traditional characteristics and goals in the life of a monk. However, these goals have changed dramatically as a result of the influence of rapid social changes. Monks today have to deal with many novel problems and changes. Having withdrawn from the traditional aims and objectives, many monks have adapted to the urban environment. This results in a clash between the traditional lifestyle of a monk and the modern lifestyle. This is the turning point which leads to psychological problems in a monk's life. It is established that the role of a priest or monk is to develop morality and values in society. The clergy's admonitions influence the general public. Therefore, they must be in good mental health. This paper is based on a quantitative study, which examined the level of anxiety among Buddhist monks. The Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A) was used to measure the level of anxiety. Thirty monks who were residents at a government-registered temple in Colombo District were selected as the population. The population was diverse in terms of their age, the period of ordainment and literacy. 14.6% of the sample population, in the 30-45 age range, had very severe anxiety, while 15.4% of the sample, who were in the 25-50 age range had severe anxiety. 31.8% who were in the 18-60 age range had moderate anxiety level. Thus, 61.8% from the total sample had anxiety. The above results indicate that as many as 61.8% of the sample had anxiety in the very severe, severe and moderate levels. In conclusion, the majority of the monks who live in the urban environment suffer from anxiety.

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