

## **ABAHYAGIRI VIHARA AND ITS CURRICULAM**

*WKD. Keerthirathne<sup>1</sup>*

The Abahyagiri Vihara inaugurated during the reign of King Walagamba existed as an educational center which nourished the Mahayana tradition until the invasion made by Chola in Poloarua kingdom. The main aim of this research was to study the nature of the curriculum that prevailed in Abahayagiri Vihara. While the content analysis method has been used as the research method, literary works relevant to Abhayagiri Vihara have been used for collecting data. Data has been presented analytically with evaluation. According to the research findings, the Abhayagiri temple has existed as a well-developed educational center. Both the local and foreign Bhikkhus and Bukkunis, as well as laymen, have studied here. The curriculum of this institute consisted of three components: formal, informal and non-formal. A number of subjects have been taught under the formal curriculum. They are Languages, Poems, Religion, Technology, and Art, History, Medicine and Occult Sciences (Gupta vidya). Under non-formal education, students have been motivated to engage in producing items made of gold. Coin and tile production were the other two industries operated here. Also, students were acknowledged the way of using them. In addition, the creation of poems had become another co-curricular activity. The organization of assemblies and meetings to share knowledge had been two other major events of non-formal education. The biggest Sannipatasala was available in Abhayagiri Vihara. Conducting Perahara and engaging in worship of God were some other co-curricular activities. The Pinkama, which occurred in Kapararama for offering water tanks, reveals that Abhayagiri institute conducted welfare activity, too. This information reveals not only formal education but also non-formal education has been organized in Abhayagiri Viharaya successfully as the time can be used maximally by students. Maintenance of the temple premises properly was part of the hidden curriculum in Abhayagiri temple. Bribery and corruption were prohibited to those who were in Abhayagiri. Telling lies and harsh words, conducting immoral behavioral patterns, and engaging in malpractices were not practiced by Bhikkus in Abhayagiri. It is visible that Abhayagiri students had developed soft skills precisely. Imposing punishment for offenders had prevented others from doing wrong things. Respecting elders and following the order of higher ordination were another two parts of informal education here. Before admission of students to Abhayagiri institute, it was checked whether their intellectual capacity was conducive for studies. The curriculum practised in Abhayagiri Vihara provides positive lessons for the present educational system in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** curriculum, education, formal education, informal, non-formal education

---

<sup>1</sup> *Department of Humanities, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale. [keerthirathna@ssh.rjt.ac.lk](mailto:keerthirathna@ssh.rjt.ac.lk)*