

## **Utility Of Buddhist Education To Reduce Family Conflicts During Covid-19 Pandemic**

**G. H. Kethumali**

**K. K. K. C. Rangana**

### **Abstract**

COVID 19 is a catastrophic condition in which the people of the world suffer without prior experience. Different countries are taking different measures to control it. Many families in Sri Lanka have been affected by the pandemic. This pandemic situation has uniquely affected children and families by disrupting routines, changing relationships and roles especially low-income families. Meanwhile, various social welfare services are coordinated by religious places. And also, various welfare services are held at Buddhist temples. Buddhist counseling is a Buddhist teaching-based process that suggests solutions to people's mental problems and difficulties and promotes mental relief. Research problem of the study was how to use Buddhist counseling to reduce the increasing family conflicts during the Covid-19 pandemic? The main objective of this study was to identify how Buddhist counseling can be used to alleviate conflicts in families based on Buddhist teachings in the face of this pandemic. This study used a purposive sampling method based on the severity of the problems and nature of the needs. The primary and the secondary method used in the research to collect information were in-depth interviews carried out via case studies. Accordingly, 12 case studies were used for this study. These case studies were taken from selected unique people, who are experiencing family conflicts. This study used thematic analysis as the data analysis method. According to the findings of the case studies, individuals were at high risk physically, mentally and socially. It was revealed that many families faced conflicts because they could not bear the pressure. The Karma-based sermon of the Buddha is also very important to understand the reality of life. It was through meditation that the ability to attain mental freedom was discovered and it was able to further uncover a very important element in Buddhist counseling.

**Keywords** – COVID 19, Buddhist counseling, Family conflict

## **Introduction**

Corona virus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered corona virus. COVID 19 is a catastrophic condition in which the people of the world suffer without prior experiences. Different countries are taking different measures to control it. Also Sri Lankan government and people are taking many actions to control COVID-19. But many families in Sri Lanka have been affected by the pandemic. This pandemic situation has uniquely affected children and families by disrupting routines, changing relationships and roles especially low-income families. Meanwhile, various social welfare services are coordinated by Buddhist temples. Also, Buddhist counselling is able to alleviate people's stressful situations by proposing solutions to their mental problems and difficulties.

## **Main Objective**

The objective of this study is to explore how Buddhist counselling can be used to alleviate conflicts in families based on Buddhist teachings in the face of this pandemic situation.

## **Sub Objectives**

To identify the reasons for conflict within the family

To study existing coping mechanism for mental health disorders within the context of family

To study how Buddhist counselling can be used to reduce family conflicts

## **Methodology**

### **Research Problem**

How can Buddhist counselling based on Buddhism be used to alleviate family problems caused by the COVID -19 pandemic?

### **Study area**

This study was conducted in Padukka Divisional Secretariat, Colombo District in the Western Province, Sri Lanka

### **Sampling Method and Sample size**

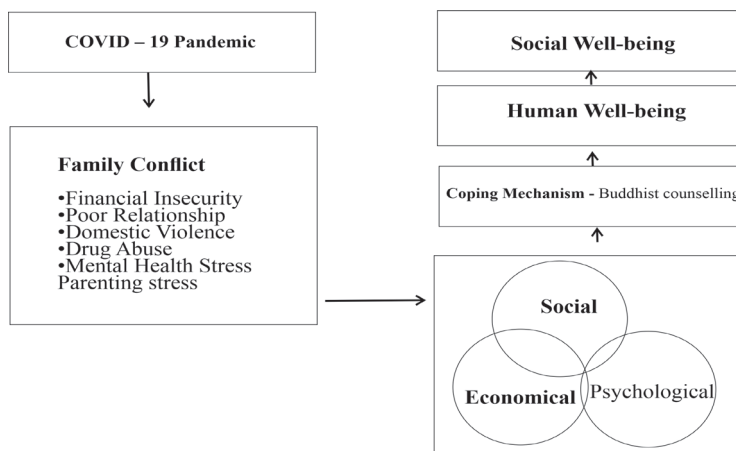
Families were selected using purposive sampling method based on their severity of the problems and nature of the needs. According to the research sample completed 12 case studies. The data was collected from the respondents who were facing conflict within the family.

## Data collection process

The primary and secondary methods used in the research to collect information were in-depth interviews for case studies. There are case studies were taken from selected people, who are suffering family conflict and suffering from mental health disorder.

## Data Analysis

This study used thematic analysis as a data analysis method. The researcher made themes according to the research questions and developed the data analysis. Case studies also analyses in the same way and at the same time when the interview results analyses. It created argumentative and more flexible background for the data analysis.



The result of findings, there are various factors contribute to family conflicts. Covid-19 pandemic has a high influence on every human life and people are uncomfortable and unfamiliar with social distancing and lockdowns. During this period every person has collapsed financially. Also, they have captured in psychological and sociological vulnerable situations. One man said that “I am working small shop near my home. I earn small amount of money and it can manage our needs. But these days’ shops are closed due to the pandemic. Another fact is people who have been exposed to the Covid-19 pandemic, gradually got labialized and isolated in the society. Research reveals that family conflicts have been developed during the epidemic period for the above reasons. In this situation people try to use various formal and informal coping mechanisms. The intervention of Buddhist counselling based on Buddha's teaching is very important in such a situation. According to the Buddha, the kamma is the basic thing and it helps to understand the reality of human life. Therefore, three pillars (discipline, concentration, wisdom) of practice favour to maintain disciplinary control and develop thinking pattern of human life. This study identified that the methods of the Buddhist counselling is able to help to understand the reality of human life and

to build a strong man as well as a strong family free from conflict. Finally, strong families protect the social order properly and develop the social well-being.

## **Conclusion**

There is ample cause for concern regarding the acute impact of COVID-19 on the well-being of the general population. The pandemic represents a global crisis not only of public health and economic stability but also of family well-being. People, who are unable to cope up with the changes and oppressive conditions that are created in the society, become severely oppressed both physically and mentally. It is very difficult to build physically a mentally broken man. But In such a context, Buddhist counselling based on the Buddha's teachings will enable him to be empowered physically as well as mentally. This study was able to identify that the teachings of the Buddha help to understand the reality of human life and to build a strong man as well as a strong family free from conflict. According to the Buddha's teaching, strong families protect the social order properly.

## **References**

Murdock, G.P. (1949). *Social Structure*. Macmillan. New York.

Weekly Epidemiological Report. (2017). A publication of the Epidemiology Unit. Ministry of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine.

World Health Report. ( 2006). WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.