



INCORPORATING BUDDHIST TEACHINGS ON GOOD GOVERNANCE IN PROPOSING A FRAMEWORK FOR CRIME PREVENTION

R. P. Pabasara^{1*} and R. Goonaratne²

¹*Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Sri
Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka*

²*Department of Legal Studies, The Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka*

The concept of good governance has become a prominent topic in global political discourse. Meanwhile, owing to their complicated nature, modern-day crime and its dynamics have demanded a structural change in crime prevention mechanisms. Although Buddhist teachings on good governance have been incorporated into policy-making within various disciplines, the literature review indicated inadequacy in relation to crime prevention. Hence, this study was conducted with the objective of identifying the root causes of crime and proposing a crime prevention framework based on Buddhist good governance principles. The strain theory of criminological discourse and the causative principle of criminal law provided the theoretical input to the study. This study employed a qualitative research design, with specific reference to the *Chakkavattisihanada Sutta* (*Lion Roar of the Wheel-Turning Monarch*), which comes under the *Dīgha Nikāya* in *Tripitaka*. Following the line-by-line textual analysis of the *Sutta*, insights were generated by performing a thematic analysis aligned with the objectives. As identified, poverty is the root cause leading to a chain of crimes. Moreover, a causal relationship was identified within this chain, where one crime causes the occurrence of another. It was found that this chain ended with the dissolution of the established social norms and the collapse of the social order. A model named '*Ārya Chakravarthi Piliwetha- Noble Monarchical System*' could be identified as the framework to prevent this social problem. It comprises public security, non-allowance for crime, provision of the legal means of income, and receiving constant guidance from experts. Moreover, it was found that this model has to be continued in every generation and every level of governance. In conclusion, poverty alleviation should be the fundamental principle of good governance. It has to be associated with the assurance of the rule of law and social welfare. Incorporation of these findings in policy-making will have a sustainable impact on crime prevention.

Keywords: *Ārya Chakravarthi Piliwetha, Chakkavattisihanada Sutta*, crime prevention, good governance, poverty

**Corresponding Author: ar102303@fhss.sjp.ac.lk*



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INTRODUCTION

The concept of good governance has been a prominent topic in global political discourse, owing to the attention from worldwide scholars of its utilitarian values in solving the pressing socio-economic problems. Meanwhile, in contemporary society, crime has become a major threat to the social order, and its dynamics have compelled the implementation of different strategies for crime control and prevention. At the same time, Buddhist teachings have been incorporated into different policies, and their inclusion in modern criminal law has given a non-violent ethic to it.

Roots of crime have been deeply explored in Buddhist teachings, and Elamaldeniye (2019) has pointed out three psychological roots responsible for criminal behaviour; i.e. (*rāga*), hatred (*dōsa*), and delusion (*mōha*). Meanwhile, Chui et al. (2012) have considered the impact of societal factors since they attribute crime to both individual and environmental causes, as well as greater support for both coercive and social intervention measures. Even though many studies have explored the Buddhist perspective on the origin of crime and the path to eliminate it, only a handful have analysed the socio-structural changes Buddhism provides concerning crime prevention. Although Channuwong et al. (2023) have identified six principles of good governance in Buddhism, namely the rule of law, merit, transparency, participation, accountability, and economy, the study has taken the administrative perspective and has not discussed the impact of these principles on the control of criminal behaviour. In addition, the study has incorporated discussions on multiple texts and documents, leaving room for a study that deals with a specific text related to Buddhist social control. On the other hand, certain studies have explored the utilization of Buddhist teachings on policy development; yet, the crime prevention aspect has not received due attention. For instance, Tongvijit et al. (2023) have identified a positive relationship between Buddhist teachings on good governance and human resource management in general, but have not specified to which category they are applying their findings. However, shedding a positive light on our concern, Barua et al. (2019) have illustrated the relationship between the ten royal virtues (*Dasa-Rāja-Dharma*) and good governance, which encapsulates crime prevention as a core concern.

However, through this literature review, it could be identified glaring scarcity of studies on the conceptual inter-relationship between the Buddhist teachings on good governance and strategies for crime prevention. Hence, the present study attempts to replenish this vacuum with reference to the *Chakkavattisihanada Sutta*, in the *Pāthika*



Vagga of the *Dīga Nikāya*. This research was conducted with the objective of identifying the root causes of crime and deviance and suggesting a framework for the administration of criminal justice based on the Buddha's teaching of good governance. Therefore, the specific objectives of the study are as follows.

- To identify the root causes of crime and deviance.
- To understand the patterns of inter- and intra-relationships among crimes.
- To figure out the structural changes that should be made for crime prevention.
- To recommend a framework of good governance for crime prevention based on the Buddha's teaching of good governance.

In order to place this study within the existing theoretical framework, the relevant theoretical input was derived from criminal law and criminological studies. Accordingly, from the criminological standpoint, Merton's strain theory was found to be the most appropriate, with its analysis on how structural impediments trigger deviant behavior, and how social goals and means should be changed for effective crime prevention. On the other hand, owing to its relevance in analyzing the causal relationship between the criminal act (result) and contributory factors (causes), the causative principle of criminal law was found to be the most appropriate from the legal standpoint.

METHODOLOGY

To gain an in-depth insight on the significance of the *Chakkavattisihanada Sutta* on crime prevention through good governance, the qualitative research design was utilized throughout the study. First, a line-by-line textual analysis was performed on the *Sutta*, followed by a thematic analysis to extract the relevant, significant concepts of the *Sutta*. Adhering to the research objectives, the thematic analysis categorized key findings as mentioned in the following results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The root cause of criminality

The *Sutta* has underscored economic poverty as the fundamental root cause for the occurrence of deviant conduct resulting in criminality. So, poverty has been identified as the source of the incidence of most crimes. This phenomenal notion is enshrined in the *Sutta* as '*dāḷiddiyē vēpullan gatē aññatarō purisō parēsan adinnan theiyasankhātan ādiyi*', which means that the beginning of a chain of crime is connected with the core social problem of 'poverty'.

The causal nexus of poverty and crime

A chain of causal relationships between different forms of crime could be identified. The *Sutta* has pointed out how one crime leads to another, and the chain continues until the breakdown of the established social norms and values. The line '*dāḷiddiyē*



vēpullan gatē adinnādānan vēpullamagamāsi. adinnādānē vēpullan gatē satthan vēpullamagamāsi. satthē vēpullan gatē pāṇātipātō vēpullamagamāsi', emphasizes the causal connectivity arising from the first act of deviant conduct motivated by poverty and how that causal nexus continues from poverty to theft (crimes against property), then to the manufacturing of illegal arms, and then to homicide (crimes against the person), etc. The *Sutta* further analyses the continuation of this causal relationship from breach of trust through spreading falsehoods and sexual offenses to wrongs, emanating from excessive desires and misconceptions.

The ultimate result

The *Sutta* further says that the vicious chain does not end there, but it leads to the dissolution of the established social norms. This position is described by illustrating how other core social values, such as caring for parents, respect for elders, could be declined and wither away, causing further chaos in human society. Even the characteristics of an anomic society, which is the end result of the breakdown of established social norms, could be identified in the *Sutta*. The line '*ammatteiyō apetteiyō asāmaññā abrammaññā na kulē jeṭṭāpacāinō tē pujjā ca bhavissanti pāsansāca... sambhēdan lōkōgamissati yatā ajēlakā kukkuṭasōkarā sōṇasigālā'*, is an undeniable example to illustrate this position. As described in those lines in the *Sutta*, when incest is in full throttle in a society, revengeful and beast-like feelings will arise in individuals with hatred and malicious thoughts.

The framework of good governance

Accordingly, a framework of good governance could be identified through this model known as *Ārya Chakravarthi Piliweta – Noble Universal Monarchical System*. As it is seen, four fundamental principles have to be incorporated into the governance: i.e. security and protection for every living creature (*Dammikan rakkhāvaraṇaguttin sanvidahassu*), non-allowance for deviant and criminal behaviours (*mā ca tē tāta vijitē adammakārō pavattitha*), provision of the means of income (*Adhanā assu tēsaññā ca danamanuppadeiyosi*), and receiving constant guidance from experts (*kin bhanthe kusalā, kin akusalā*). Also, it is observed that the model of governance has to be followed from generation to generation. If the chain of good governance is broken and discontinued from any generation, and arbitrariness becomes the rule, then the social order cannot be maintained. Moreover, it was observed that the *Ārya Chakravarthi Piliwetha* has to be followed at every level of government. Not only the supreme head of the state, but also every head of institutions, ministries, and departments should practice that method to ensure conformity; if not, deviance will overcome conformity, causing havoc in the entire social order.

CONCLUSIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS

It is observed from this study that the eradication of poverty should be the fundamental principle of good governance. When taken according to the causative principle of criminal law, poverty has become the origin of a chain of criminal acts. In a society with structural impediments to navigate towards set economic goals, yet



defines success as the 'economic well-being despite the path taken', the prevalence of crime and deviance is unstoppable. Since this deep-rooted social pathology called 'poverty' cannot be eliminated through isolated actions, a comprehensive strategy should be implemented. Therefore, the model called '*Ārya chakravarthi piliwetha*' will be truly impactful since it encapsulates a long-term vision for the eradication of poverty through the structural changes in society. It is emphasized that outdated social welfare practices should be replaced by the sustainable model of creating and broadening economic opportunities based on social equity. Popularization of the legal means of income generation within a production-based economy would be the most impactful solution for developing countries. Being guided by the *Ārya chakravarthi piliwetha*, ensuring public safety would be the other structural change that has to be made. Therefore, the rule of law has to be ensured by enforcing the law, administering criminal justice, and implementing effective correction practices. Finally, obtaining constant guidance from experts in the respective fields should also be a key component of this framework.

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