

Buddhist Contribution to Further Social and Humanitarian Development After Covid19 Pandemic.

Ven. Professor Wijitapure Wimalaratana

Vice Chancellor of SANASA University, President of Sri Lanka Economic Association,
Former Head of the Department of Economics, University of Colombo.

The background story of the *Ratana Sutta* goes back to the pandemic-type disease of *Visala* (*Vesali*) city and related problems of famine and non-human beings. At the request of the townspeople, Buddha sent his disciples to chant the *Ratana Sutta*, which led to the dispersal of plague-related miseries from the city. The well-known great three pandemics recorded in history are the Justinianic Plague of 541, the Black Death of 1347, and the bubonic plague of 1894 CE. The COVID-19 *pandemic* originated in 2019 and spread throughout the world quickly. In olden times, the spread of pandemics was confined to a limited geographical area, as social distancing was easier to maintain and world interconnectedness was limited. In the global age, if something like COVID-19 happens somewhere, it spreads everywhere in no time.

Venerable *Thissa* Thera, a disciple of Buddha, was afflicted with an incurable skin disease. Small boils that appeared everywhere on his body developed into big sores, and finally, his whole body was stinking. The fellow priests were not treating him due to this despicable situation and left him alone. Buddha came to know this and went to the temple where this monk lived. Buddha himself cleaned this priest with warm water and treated him, giving a good example of treating sick people to his followers.

Buddha's discourses suggest the necessity of contributing to social and humanitarian development. The creation of favorable conditions by individuals to cultivate Buddhist values is essential to achieving this goal. The social welfare state created by Buddhist monarchs in olden days, including Emperor Asoka, is a good example of this purpose. Buddhism never rejects the minimum material requirements of life, as well as helping others meet these requirements.

There were immediate socioeconomic implications of COVID-19, such as social distancing, isolation, travel restrictions, and reductions in production and consumption, leading to a reduction in the overall welfare of global society. The short-, medium-, and long-term impacts of the pandemic have been disproportionately distributed among the world community. The socioeconomic woes of the pandemic are still widely visible in many societies around the world. The Buddhist contribution to further social and humanitarian development in the post-Covid-19 pandemic period is essential to improving the overall wellbeing of global society.

Key Words: Buddhist discourse, COVID-19, humanitarian development, Pandemic, and social development.

Introduction

COVID-19 was first identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and reached the level of a global pandemic in March 2020. This pandemic sent shock waves through the world, triggering the largest global humanitarian and social crises. Preliminary evidence suggests that the recovery from the crisis will be as uneven as its initial socioeconomic impacts, with emerging economies and economically disadvantaged groups needing much more time to recover from pandemic-induced losses of income and livelihoods (World Bank 2022).

At household and community levels, the COVID pandemic brought untold suffering through the losses of loved ones and income sources; the smooth supply of essential items was disrupted, and prices went up for many essential items. The pandemic also affected the public's mental health and well-being in a variety of ways, including through isolation and loneliness, financial instability, illness, and grief. Over the course of the pandemic, many people, especially adults, reported symptoms consistent with anxiety and depression. Children missed school along with their future, and hardly achieved goals including poverty reduction, and life expectancy loss within a short period of time—the list of impacts goes on. The vulnerability to the risk of COVID-19 infection at the individual level varies due to their health, socioeconomic environment, and living circumstances, which also affect the effectiveness of implementing non-pharmacological interventions (Muna Shifa 2022).

As a principle, humanitarian work focuses on short-term life-saving goals and provides relief to human suffering wherever it is found, paying special attention to the most vulnerable people. Initiatives are taken to protect and mitigate the impact of humanitarian crises on vulnerable people. The fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in dealing with humanitarian work are: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality. The movement focuses on these as its ethics and the core of its approach to helping people in need during armed conflict, natural disasters, and other emergencies (ICRC 2015).

The World Health Organization reported on May 5, 2020, that COVID-19 no longer qualifies as a global emergency, marking a symbolic end to the devastating coronavirus pandemic that killed at least 7 million people worldwide. WHO further said that even though the emergency phase was over, the pandemic hasn't come to an end (TIME, May 5, 2023). Still, some COVID-19-affected people, especially in developing countries, need social and humanitarian assistance to regain their lost socioeconomic status, even though scars will remain for a long period of time.

Social development can be achieved by providing social services targeting disadvantaged, and distressed community members. Alternatively, this is referred to as providing welfare services or engaging in social work. There are numerous publicly or privately provided services targeting the disadvantaged or distressed. In modern societies, social service is a profession in which

trained professionals help vulnerable people work through the challenges they face. The term 'social workers' is used to identify those who engage in social services. They are professionally qualified workers engaged in the profession of rendering such services.

Humanitarian work focuses on short-term life-saving goals; it provides relief to human suffering wherever it is found, giving special attention to the most vulnerable people. Initiatives are taken to protect and mitigate the impact of humanitarian crises on vulnerable people. The fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality. The moment concentrates these as its ethics and the core of its approach to helping people in need during armed conflict, natural disasters, and other emergencies (ICRC 2015).

Humanitarian protection is the technical area of the aid sector that social workers most often join. It is one of the eight UN clusters. Protection projects focus on mitigating the impacts of humanitarian crises on vulnerable people. A commonly agreed-upon measurable result or impact in reducing people's needs, risks, and vulnerabilities and increasing their resilience, requiring the combined effort of different actors.

The objective of this short article is to examine the Buddhist contribution to further social and humanitarian development after the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis is based on secondary data gathered from international and local organizations, institutional reports, journal articles, magazines, newspapers, and other media reports, COVID-related research carried out by organizations and individuals, and unpublished sources such as dissertations, policy documents, etc. The data will be analyzed, focusing on Buddhist contributions to further social and humanitarian development after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Buddhist Contribution to Social and Humanitarian Development for COVID-19-related Problems.

The COVID-19 pandemic was far more than a health crisis, as it was affecting societies and economies in all aspects of daily life. While the impact of the pandemic varied from country to country over time and space, it would most likely increase poverty and inequalities on a global scale, making the achievement of the SDGs even more urgent. The multifaceted crises have affected countries, requiring different sets of policies and solutions to respond, severely impacting the existing infrastructure and services. Among other socioeconomic aspects, COVID-19 has affected global poverty, gender equality, education, social protection, internally displaced people, and slum dwellers (UNDP 2020, June). Core to Buddhism is a wish to relieve suffering by all means, and there may be circumstances where organ donation may also be seen as an act of generosity, especially in modern times. Giving is of prime importance in the Buddhist scheme of mental purification because it is the best weapon against greed (*lobha*), the

first of the three unwholesome motivational roots (*akusalamula*) (de Silva, Lily 1995). Buddhists can contribute, with the help of other communities and international organizations, to alleviating the COVID-19-created sufferings, both materially and spiritually.

COVID-19 and the poverty:

The economic and social miseries brought by the pandemic were devastating, and poverty stands at the top of the list. It is broadly accepted that pandemics, famine, hunger, diseases, and deprivations are some of the surmountable challenges faced by the modern world. Among all matters pertaining to daily life, poverty is the root cause everywhere in the world. It is a multidimensional problem pervading every aspect of individual life, society, and the physical environment. Buddhism advocates that "poverty is a pain to those who do not have means to satisfy the needs of ordinary life' (*Ina Sutta*, Anguttara Nikaya).

Forecasts suggest that COVID-19 caused the first increase in global poverty since 1998. The epidemic is pushing about 40-60 million people into extreme poverty (World Economic Forum 202). During the post-COVID-19 period, world poverty has increased in all income poverty lines: The global poverty headcount ratio at the international poverty line (\$2.15 per person per day) between September 2022 and March 2023 has gone up slightly, and the number of poor people in the world increased from 648 million to 659 million. If the poverty line is raised to \$3.65, the global poverty headcount ratio increases by 0.1 percentage points to 23.6 percent, representing 28 million more people living in poverty. At the \$6.85 poverty line, 44 million more people live in poverty. The upward revision in poverty estimates at the higher lines is largely driven by South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank 2023). UNDP maintains 40–60 million people would be pushed into extreme poverty because of the economic shocks from COVID-19 (UNDP 2020 June).

Poverty ruins not only individuals who are deprived but also the society within which they live. It knows no geographical, religious, ethnic, or caste boundaries. Buddhism recognizes that poverty is the bane of social order in the world. Buddhism concerns itself with the successful production of wealth, its economical and productive use, and its conservation as a reserve for leaner times (Dhammavihari, Bhikku 1990). Buddhist texts maintain that the government has to take appropriate measures to eradicate poverty and cultivate development-friendly attitudes (Nanayakkara, Sanath 1990).

The social unrest created by poverty and combined factors threatens the entire socioeconomic order of a country. This aspect of society is logically presented by Buddha as 'Poverty leads to lying, looting, robbing, killing, etc. in a society. Neither outright grants nor penalties would arrest the situation. The sovereign has to implement the right kind of policies to eradicate poverty (*Chakkawatti Seehanada Sutta*).

Overall poverty has declined to a great extent in the world, and this target was achieved with hard work in the past. COVID-19 has brought poverty to a high level in the world once again. Dana is essential in providing relief to the new poor in the post-COVID period, either through official or unofficial channels. The poor need the help of the rich to survive, and the rich become spiritually richer by helping the poor. Many *suttas* in Buddhist canons enumerate the various benefits of giving. In a way, giving promotes social cohesion and solidarity. It is the best means of bridging the psychological gap, much more than the material economic gap, that exists between haves and have-nots (de Silva, Lily 1995).

Social protection, including food security, was a huge challenge during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of adequate social protection affected 55 percent of the world's population, which was four billion people. They were not covered by social insurance or social assistance. Globally, only 20% of unemployed people are covered by unemployment benefits, and in some regions, the coverage is much lower (UNDP 2020, June). To eliminate hunger among humans, Buddhist texts speak not only of the energetic production of wealth but also of the consequent increase in purchasing power and the dynamic production of food through industriously handled agriculture (Dhammavihari, Bhikku). The salient feature is that Buddhism provides guides to the man to lead a content life where the food is sufficient to prevent the affliction of hunger and adequate to maintain the health of the body; clothing is sufficient to appear socially decent and conducive to the protection of the body from any harm from the natural environment; housing gives sufficient safety and security conducive to one's serious engagement in the culture of the mind; and medicine and health care cure and prevent disease (Premasiri, P.D.). Donation is an integral part of the Buddhist approach to liberation so that global Buddhists can work hand in hand with the rest of the communities to reduce poverty and other socioeconomic difficulties.

Pandemic and its impact on education:

Globally spreading COVID-19 affected human capital formation. Education, training, and skill development activities were adversely affected. **Students out of school** were estimated to be around 1.2 billion, which was about 68% of the total students enrolled (UNDP 2020 June). The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in its thematic series on education, explains how COVID-19 affected the children. It maintained that the economic shock of the pandemic would likely push many children into poverty, increasing the risks of malnutrition, stress, protection violations, and child labor. Lost schooling would likely compromise the benefits of education, including future earnings and better job prospects. The economic shock of the pandemic would likely push many children into poverty, increasing the risks of malnutrition, stress, protection violations, and child labor. Losing access to school, as a

protective space, exposes children to abuse and trauma if their homes are unsafe, putting both their physical and mental health at risk (OCHA 2020).

Unavailability of education and skill development facilities will reduce labour productivity and the earning capability of future generations. Some of the current students will end up in poverty if corrective policies are not implemented properly. Social unrest, and moral degeneration in society are indications of the growth of poverty. The *Kutadanta Sutta* points out that in any society in which the material needs of certain sections are not adequately met, and they are oppressed, exploited, and marginalized, they tend to resort to criminal behaviour (Premasiri, P.D.).

Ideally, education is the principal tool of human growth, essential for transforming the unlettered child into a mature and responsible adult. Thus, wisdom is the crown and pinnacle of the entire system of Buddhist education, and all the preliminary steps in a Buddhist educational system should be geared towards the flowering of this supreme virtue (Bhikku Bodhi, 1997). Buddhist practices improve human qualities in the individual, household, and society. *Mangla Sutta*, in Khuddaka Nikaya, emphasizes that education is a great blessing for a person. "To have much learning, to be skilled in handicraft, well-trained in discipline, and to be of good speech — this is the greatest blessing" (*Mangla Sutta*, Khuddaka Nikaya).

Gender inequality and COVID-19:

On average, women make up to 70% of health care workers and the social care sector in 104 countries. Women already do three times as much unpaid care work as men, and with COVID-19, unpaid care work has increased. With children out-of-school, heightened care needs of older people, and overwhelmed health services in developing countries, the vast majority of women's employment is in the informal economy. (UNDP 2020, June). The compounded socioeconomic impacts are felt especially by women and girls, who are generally earning less, saving less, and holding insecure jobs or living close to poverty (Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women 2020).

Since the beginning of the pandemic, men have been more likely than women to experience fatal disease progression. Up to 75 percent of patients in intensive care units were male, and the proportion of men who died of COVID was higher than the proportion of women (Contagion 2022). When it comes to employment, women's jobs are 1.8 times more vulnerable to this crisis than men's jobs. Women make up 39 percent of global employment but account for 54 percent of overall job losses. Another factor could be COVID-19's disproportionate impact on female entrepreneurship, including women-owned microenterprises in developing countries (where

such enterprises account for a high share of female labor force participation) (McKinsey & Company 2020).

The Dharma has nothing to do with gender; there are no male, female, intersex, or transgender individuals in it. Buddhism has little interest in reproduction or sexuality (Shambunath 2017). Buddhism did not agree with the social stratification that was under the authority of Brahmins. Buddhism challenges not only the caste system but also gender discrimination. Buddhism welcomed women into monastic life during Buddha's time, providing important roles outside of the home. Buddhism does not agree with any social stratification that prevents mobility in a society. It is clearly stated that one who holds dominant or minor characteristics can achieve any of the dominant or minor states according to his decisions and behavior, irrespective of gender or caste (Peiris, H.R. Nishadini 2012).

The gender, skin color, caste assigned by birth, etc. are not important in Buddhism. *Vasala Sutta* rejects the labeling of people by birth as outcasts or high castes. The Pali word "Vasala" means an outcast, a wretch, or a person of low birth.

*"Na jacca vasalo hoti, na jacca hoti brahmaṇo,
Kammana vasalo hoti, kammana hoti brahmaṇo"* (*Vasala Sutta*, Khuddaka Nikaya)

Pandemic and displaced people:

In the face of the global coronavirus pandemic, internally displaced people (IDPs) were especially at risk. Whatever the reasons, millions of IDPs worldwide live in densely populated areas. They were not able to self-isolate, and above all, they did not have access to water, sanitation, or basic healthcare.

Many refugees live in poor urban areas or densely populated camps with inadequate health infrastructure, making physical distancing very difficult. The lack of access to face masks, protective gear, clean water, and soap makes refugees more vulnerable to COVID-19. Refugees have limited access to public health services. Refugee populations often lack the funds to obtain adequate treatment if infected with the virus. Their daily income sources have also been disrupted (UNHCR 2023).

The long-term solution for poverty-related issues, whatever the cause, is the empowerment of people, opening avenues for them to generate their own sources of income. The Buddha addresses this issue as 'what is the right kind of policy aimed at poverty?' To give resources to invest in the source of income (Chakkawatti Seehanada Sutta). The consultation of a broad base of stakeholders would essentially be useful in this process. Other countries' experiences and donor assistance are extremely significant in this exercise. Short-term scarification may encourage long-term achievements as a prime target. To conclude with the assaying by the Lord Buddha, 'Even if income sources are available, there are some people who do not make use of those sources. They will remain poor forever (*Mahacunda Sutta*).

Pandemic researchers evaluated the relationship between the degree of food, housing, and income insecurity related to the pandemic and mental health outcomes among East African asylum seekers in a high-risk, post displacement setting in the Middle East. There is growing evidence of a mental health crisis among asylum seekers that is linked to COVID-19 control policies and residential status policies. The results highlight the risk of suicidal ideation linked to intersectional marginalization among female asylum seekers. These findings may inform post-displacement policy making, social justice advocacy, humanitarian aid, and clinical science and practice to mitigate poor mental health outcomes associated with COVID-19 among forcibly displaced persons (Blay Benzaken Y, Zohar S, Yuval K, Aizik-Reebs A, et al., 2023).

Those who attend the 40th Annual General Meeting of the European Buddhist Union in Berlin call upon the governments and peoples of all European countries to show compassion and generosity to those displaced through war and seeking refuge in Europe, safe from violence. As Buddhists, members of the union hold loving kindness, compassion, generosity, and fearlessness to be among the highest values in life—values we share with those of other religions and none (Lion’s Roar 2015).

Four sublime states of mind have been taught by the Buddha: loving-kindness (*metta*); compassion (*karuna*); sympathetic joy (*mudita*); and equanimity (*upekkha*). These four virtues are also known as *Brahma-vihara*. They level social differences, build harmonious communities, awaken slumbering magnanimity, revive joy and hope, and promote human brotherhood. Loving kindness (*metta*), a traditional Buddhist concept, implies acting with compassion toward all sentient beings and with an awareness and appreciation of the natural world. In Buddhism, compassion is the wish for others to be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.

Slump and COVID-19: Over 90% of COVID-19 cases are happening in urban areas. With over one billion people living in informal settlements and slum-like conditions, COVID-19 is exacerbating the vulnerability of these population groups (UNDP 2020, June). Over a billion people worldwide face a heightened risk of COVID-19 due to overcrowded and substandard living conditions in slums and other informal settlements. It is obvious that people who lived in slums were kept in less social distancing than their non-slum counterparts. As a result of that, they died or were hospitalized at disproportionately high rates, especially in poor countries (World Bank, June 10, 2020). The shanty dwellers of the urban areas are also poor because their percentage is small. Generational poverty is part and parcel of slumps and shanties; the pandemic threw them from the frying pan into the fire. Buddhism accepts that poverty and hunger go hand in hand and that hunger is the dreaded disease (Dhammavihari, Bhikku) . Buddhist texts say that poverty will grow if poor people are not given wealth to generate income. The wealth is given for the purposes of family expenditure, investment, and fulfilling social obligations (*Chakkavatti Sutta*, Patikavagga Paliya). In slums, people do not have almost all the basic needs of life, so they

deserve an empowering program to come out of poverty. This will help them cushion similar pandemics or other disasters in the future.

Donation in Buddhism

The voluntary giving of materials, money, labor, education, medicine, energy, or wisdom (dharma) to others is the center of gravity in Buddhism. Generosity is the most important Buddhist virtue. The practice of cultivating generosity is an integral part of Buddhist life. This practice allows the giver to practice renunciation and achieve self-liberation. In Buddhism, desire and ignorance are the root of suffering. Desire refers to craving pleasure, material goods, and immortality, all of which are ever growing wants and essentially not the basic needs of a life. The practice of giving helps to reduce the desire to a great extent.

Buddhists can contribute to healing the pandemic-affected areas of global society. Spiritual and material support are important in this endeavor. In the *Kashibhradvaja Sutta*, Buddha distinguishes between labor for spiritual development and labor to gain material development (wealth). In a way, it is the duty of Buddhists to provide necessary support to society at different levels to maintain its harmony and sustainability. In the *Singalovada Sutta*, Buddha explains the duties and responsibilities of the different social individuals in a society, such as parents, children, husbands, wives, employers, employees, teachers, etc. The society gets the full benefits when everyone performs his duties sincerely. In the *Mangala Sutta*, Buddha explains good social behavior as contributing factors to social wellbeing. In *Parabhava Sutta*, he reckons the various forms of antisocial behavior that cause damage to society and himself. Buddhism provides plenty of advice to the development of worldly life, and those could broadly and roughly be categorized as guidance about economic development, health, household management, and social life (Kariyawasam, Tilak).

The practice of giving is universally recognized as one of the most basic human virtues, a quality that testifies to the depth of one's humanity and one's capacity for self-transcendence. In the teaching of the Buddha, too, the practice of giving claims a place of special eminence, one that singles it out as being in a sense the foundation and seed of spiritual development (Bhikkhu Bodhi 1995). In Buddhism, self-effort comes first, and no help from even a god could enable one to reach supreme bliss (*Nirvana*). Therefore, self-effort is the basis of economic development. Together with it is the cooperation of all relevant actors in society (Ratnapala, Nandasena,

Making reference to the *Niddesa in Sutta Pitaka's Khuddaka Nikaya* de Silva, they maintain that practically anything useful can be given as a gift. The Niddesa gives a list of fourteen items that are fit to be given to charity. They are robes, alms food, dwelling places, medicine, and other requisites for the sick, food, drink, cloths, vehicles, garlands, perfume, unguent, beds, houses, and lamps (de Silva, Lily 1995). There is also sweat dana, where the giver can donate time and effort, such as working in a soup kitchen or on a construction project.

The practice of giving is also beneficial when directed at someone who is not spiritually advanced. If the donor's intention is good, then even though the receiver is immoral, the donor will earn merit, and further, by his act of giving, he will strengthen within himself his own disposition to renunciation (Jootla, Susan Elbaum 1995). Giving is one of the essential preliminary steps of Buddhist practice. When practiced in itself, it is a basis of merit or wholesome kamma. When coupled with morality, concentration, and insight, it leads ultimately to liberation from *samsara*, the cycle of repeated existence (Jootla, Susan Elbaum 1995).

The giving in Buddhism is threefold by way of the object to be given: the giving of material things (*amisadana*), the giving of fearlessness (*abhayadana*), and the giving of the Dhamma (*dhammadana*). Among these, the object to be given can be twofold: internal and external. The external gift is tenfold: food, drink, garments, vehicles, garlands, scents, unguents, bedding, dwellings, and lamps. These gifts, again, become manifold by analyzing each into its constituents, such as food into hard food, soft food, etc. The external gift can also become six fold when analyzed by way of sense objects: visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, and non-sensory objects. The sense objects, such as visible forms, become manifold when analyzed into blue, etc. So too, the external gift is manifold by way of the divers valuables and belongings, such as gems, gold, silver, pearls, coral, etc.; fields, land, parks, etc.; cows, buffaloes, etc. (Dhammapala, Acariya 1995)

Conclusion

The UN agencies, other multilateral organizations, including the World Bank, bilateral sources, INGOs and NGOs, and individuals quickly responded to the pandemic by providing humanitarian assistance, particularly targeting the poor and vulnerable. millions of households and individuals across Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and South America. The needy countries and community members were provided with essential medical supplies, laboratory equipment to test for the virus, foods and beverages, handwashing stations in camps and settlements, public information campaigns on how to protect yourself and others from the virus, and air bridges and hubs across countries facing shortages of essential supplies. The collective humanitarian actions saved lives, alleviated suffering, and maintained human dignity during and after the pandemic period.

The world has had sufficient previous experience to respond to those emergency situations. Along with its past experience with Ebola, HIV, SARS, TB, and malaria, as well as its long history of working with the private and public sectors, UNDP was leading the UN's socio-economic response to COVID-19 as part of its mission to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality, and build resilience to crises and shocks (UNDP, 2022). Through a combination of new projects, restructuring and emergency components of existing projects, and the deployment of its disaster finance instruments, the World Bank Group's response was targeted in key areas. Saving lives threatened by the pandemic, protecting the poor and vulnerable Helping save jobs and businesses and working to build a more resilient recovery (World Bank, 2020).

Buddhist responses to the coronavirus are firmly grounded in Buddhist doctrine, culture, and historical tradition. Meditation has not only been thought to relieve COVID-related stress and increase resilience, but also to directly heal physical ailments. Buddhists emphasize compassion and generosity for the sick, as they have been guided on this path through the doctrine. In the Theravada tradition of Buddhism, specific texts have long been chanted as *parittas*, as safeguards against danger or disaster. Healing meditations, medical charity, and rituals of protection also played a major role in the Buddhist response to the COVID pandemic (Salguero 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic brought an unparalleled, devastating experience to the global community. Now that the world is passing through the global age, if something like a communicable disease emerges, it will spread throughout the world.

References

Bhikkhu Bodhi, (1995) Dana, *The Practice of Giving*, Selected Essays, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, 1995. <https://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/various/wheel367.htm>

Bhikkhu Bodhi (1997) Aims of Buddhist Education, News Letter, Buddhist Publication Society, <https://www.bps.lk/olib/nl/nl035.pdf>.

Blay Benzaken Y, Zohar S, Yuval K, Aizik-Reebs A et al. (2023) COVID-19 and Mental Health Among People Who Are Forcibly Displaced: The Role of Socioeconomic Insecurity, National Library of Medicine. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35833254/>.

Contagion (2022) Men are more likely to have severe COVID-19: <https://www.contagionlive.com/view/new-research-shows-y-men-are-more-likely-to-have-severe-covid-19>

Dhammanada, K, Sri (1960) *Buddhism for the Future*, Buddha Educational Foundation, Taiwan. <https://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/various/wheel367.html>

Dhammavihari, Bhikku. 'Poverty, Hunger and Under-Development', <https://www.google.com/search?q=OCHA&aq=OCHA&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i67i650j46i67i650j0i512l4j46i512j0i10i512j0i10i131i433i512.4909j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

ICRC (2015) *The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent*, Geneva, 2015.

Kariyawasam, Tilak. 'Melova Diyunuwa Pilibanda Baudda Chintanaya',

Lion's Roar (2015) How are Buddhists responding to the refugee crisis? <https://www.lionsroar.com/how-are-buddhists-responding-to-the-refugee-crisis/>

McKinsey & Company (2020). COVID-19 and Gender Equality: Countering the Regressive Effects <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/covid-19-and-gender-equality-countering-the-regressive-effects>

Muna Shifa, David Gordon, et al 'Socioeconomic-Related Inequalities in COVID-19 Vulnerability in South Africa' in *International journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 2022 Aug 23;19(17), Switzerland.

Nanayakkara, Sanath, 'Sangvardhanaya Pilibanda Bauddda Akalpa' 149; makes reference to *Chakkavattisehanada Sutta* and *Kuutadhantha Sutta*.

OCHA (2020) GLOBAL ANALYSIS COVID-19: Impact on Education-Thematic series on education – November.

Peiris, H.R. Nishadini (2012) Buddhist Point of View on Social Discrimination: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308915848_Buddhist_Point_of_View_on_Social_Discrimination

Policy Brief: The impact of COVID-19 on Women 2020, United Nations; <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/policy-brief-impact-covid-19-women>.

Premasiri, P.D. 'Religious Values and the Measurement of Poverty: A Buddhist Perspective'

Ratnapala, Nandasena, Introduction to A. T Ariyaratne's, *Schumacher Lectures on Buddhist Economics*

Salguero, C. Pierce. Buddhist Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Historical Perspective, August 20, 2020; <https://www.buddhistdoor.net/features/buddhist-responses-to-the-covid-19-pandemic-in-historical-perspective/>

Shambunath (2017) Buddhism and Women-The Dhamma has no Gender, 2017 JETIR August 2017, Volume 4, Issue 8: <file:///C:/Users/Administrator/OneDrive/Desktop/UN%20Vesak/Dhamma%20has%20no%20gender.pdf>

TIME, 05 May 2023: <https://time.com/6277391/who-covid19-global-emergency-end/>

UNDP (2020 June). Putting the UN Framework for Socioeconomic Response to COVID-19 into Action: Insights. <file:///C:/Users/Administrator/OneDrive/Desktop/UN%20Vesak/Brief2-COVID-19-final-June2020.pdf>

UNDP An integrated global response is an investment in our future, 2022: <https://www.undp.org/coronavirus>

UNHCR (2023), Refugees and Impact of COVID 19, <https://www.unhcr.org/media/39074>

Wimalaratana, W (2003) 'Buddhism and Poverty Reduction in Sri Lanka', *Vivarana*, Department of Buddhist Affairs, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2003

World Bank (JUNE 10, 2020). COVID-19 Turns Spotlight on Slums: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2020/06/10/covid-19-turns-spotlight-on-slums>

World Bank (2022) *World Development Report 2022: Finance for an Equitable Recovery*, the

World Bank. World Bank Group COVID-19 Crisis Response, 2020: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2020/11/17/world-bank-group-covid-19-crisis-response>

World Economic Forum (2020) <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/impact-of-covid19-coronavirus-economic-global-poverty/>