

# Reduction Of Criminal Cases By Applying The Teaching Of Theravada Buddhism

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## Abstract

The main aim of this research work is to express the reduction of criminal cases by applying the teaching of Theravada Buddhism in daily life. The root causes of the criminal cases are based on "the ten defilements". Among them, "Wrong view (*ditthi*), Greed (*lobha*), Hatred (*dosa*), Delusion (*moha*), Conceit (*mana*) are the most prominent defilements. The criminal cases may be performed by means of ten types of evil conduct which are also called "*Akusala Dhamma*" (evil conduct). These types of evil conduct are three unwholesome bodily actions which are killing, stealing and sexual misconduct, four unwholesome verbal actions which are harsh speech, lying, slandering and vain talk and three unwholesome mental actions which are ill will, covetousness and wrong view. If one, therefore, would like to reduce the criminal cases one must reduce or eradicate greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*motha*).

The only way of the most effective method for this purpose is "applying the teaching of Buddha in Theravada Buddhism to our daily life". So, propagating the teaching of Buddha to the various levels of people can promote and upgrade their concepts and make them to know what is wrong and what is right. This will help to reduce their greed, hatred, delusion and the desire to commit crimes. Consequently, the reduction of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*) in their daily life can make "the reduction of criminal cases".

**Keywords:** Wrong view, Greed, Hatred, Delusion and Conceit.

## Introduction

Some of the well-developed and physically rich countries are increasingly losing their traditional culture handed down from former generations to generations. Along with the losses of

their culture, the society's norms of moral principles that have already been embedded in their values of religious teachings have also dropped in the course of time. That is why moral education should be given to each and every young and old citizen in their daily life.

The teaching of the Lord Buddha is a philosophy that deals with an ethical system including the working of mind, thought process and psychic factors. The word mind has connotations of powerful thinking and powerful knowledge. Mind is said to be like pure, transparent water. It can be easily mixed with anything. When it is mixed with mud, it becomes thick and defiled and we cannot see through. Likewise, our daily actions, physical, verbal and mental are always determined by our mental attitudes. If there is no preoccupied wisdom within oneself, he or she will not decide something virtuous. It is like the pure water mixed with defiled substances. If one mind is well-tamed with virtues taught by the teaching of Buddha, he or she will make fair and virtuous decision.

Wrong decisions bring ill-use in the forms of crimes committed. The supreme wisdom known as mind, which is by nature clear, bright and transparent, becomes dirty, defiled and poisonous by ill-use. Due to the lack of moral education, the lack of proper schooling, the impact of destructive-minded environment, communal sufferings of poverty, uncontrolled and dexterously used mental power, even well-educated persons spoil themselves through bribery and corruption. For uneducated persons, such occurrences are out of the question. Thus, a pure mind is defiled by thoughts of greed, anger and ignorance. There are some people who have touched positions of distinction and because their minds are so much polluted, they have taken ruin to themselves and to large sections of the people also. They are using their powerful minds in a wrong way. It is just like a firearm in the hands of a monkey.

'The mind is unsteady and excitable; it is difficult to restrain and to control.

The wise one trains his mind to be upright as a fletcher straightens an arrow'.<sup>1</sup>

The combination of lack of moral education, deficient in religious knowledge, never ending desire for sense gratification and the impact of destructive-mind encourages the one's

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<sup>1</sup> Buddhaghosa Thera, Dhammapada atthakatha" Vol. I., p. 182.

desire to commit crime and increases the incidence of crime all over the world.

## **Crime**

Crime is the breaking of rules or laws for which some governing authority can ultimately prescribe a conviction. Crime in the social and legal framework is the set of facts or assumptions (causes, consequences and objectives) that are part of a case in which they were committed acts, punishable under criminal law and the application of which depends on the agent of a sentence or security measure criminal. Usually includes a felony violation of a criminal rule or act against law, in particular at the expense of people or moral.

## **Causes of Crime**

By the twenty-first century criminologists looked to a wide range of factors to explain why a person would commit crimes. There are certain factors in societies. These are cultures (family values), system (educational, political and law-enforcement), economy and etc. These factors endorse the potential of criminal activities of an individual. Usually a combination of these factors is behind a person who commits a crime. Reasons for committing a crime consist of greed, anger, jealousy, revenge or pride. Some people determine to commit a crime and gently plan everything in advance to increase gain and decrease risk. These people are creation choices about their conduct; some even deliberate a life of crime better than a steady job, believing crime causes in greater rewards, admiration and excitement, at least until they are caught. Others get an adrenaline rush when effectively carrying out a risky crime. Others commit crimes on desire, out of rage or fear.

## **Root Causes of Committing a Crime**

Children and those people who are neglected or abused are more likely to commit crimes later in life than others. Similarly, sexual abuse in childhood often leads these victims to become sexual predators as adults. Fatherlessness is also one of underestimated cause of crime. Some social factors pose an especially strong influence over a person's ability to make choices. Drug and alcohol abuse are some such factor. The urge to obligate crime to provision a drug habit absolutely influences the resolution process. Both drugs and alcohol damage judgment and decrease inhibitions (socially described rules of behavior), providing a person greater courage to

commit a crime.

Many prisoners could not read or write above elementary school levels, if at all. The most common crimes committed by these inmates were robbery, burglary, automobile theft, drug trafficking and shop lifting. Because of their poor educational backgrounds, their employment histories consisted of mostly low wage jobs with frequent periods of unemployment. People must make a choice between long-term low income and the prospect of profitable crime. Gaining further education, of course, is another option, but classes can be expensive and time consuming. While education can provide the chance to get a better job, it does not always overcome the effects of abuse, poverty, or other limiting factors.

### **The Lord Buddha's Views**

All problems come from deluded minds. People strive for happiness through material wealth and possessions. Failure to have these things can turn a person to crime. Crime does not create happiness. It creates suffering for the victim and the criminal. Crime is done through delusion. The root conditions of committing a crime are craving (*tahna*) or greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). Of them delusion (*moha*) is a universal root condition, the other two are particulars.

Greed, hatred and delusion are known as the three poisons in Buddhist teachings. Those three are evil roots and fires. These metaphors remind how dangerous afflictive thoughts and emotions can be if they are not comprehended and converted. Greed mentions to our selfishness, craving, misplaced desire, attachment and grasping for happiness and satisfaction outside of ourselves. Hatred denotes to our anger, our repulsion and aversion toward uncomfortable people, conditions and even toward our own unpleasant feelings. Delusion states to our darkness, bewilderment and confusion; our wrong views of reality. The poisons of greed, hatred and delusion are a byproduct of ignorance.

### **Assessment of the Causes of Criminal Cases**

Taking into contemplation the situation of the present day, we can find that the fire elements, such as greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), conceit (*mana*), envy (*issa*) and jealousy (*micchiriya*) are growing rapidly in the mind of people and that may lead to the cessation of the

flourishing of moral virtues (*brahmacariya*), namely loving-kindness (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), sympathetic joy (*mudita*) and equanimity (*upekkha*), in the human mind. No one can share loving-kindness to each other and neither sympathy nor compassion for one another. Due to the stimulation of those immoral mental factors (fire elements), people conduct criminal cases. Criminal cases which are conducted due to hatred rooted consciousness (*dosamulacitta*). These cases are murder cases, violent cases and aggravated assault cases.

Criminal cases which are conducted due to greed rooted consciousness (*lobhamulacittas*). These cases are rape cases, trafficking person cases, gambling cases and narcotics offences. Criminal cases which are conducted due to greed rooted consciousness (*lobhamulacittas*) and hatred rooted consciousness (*dosamulacittas*). These cases are dacoity cases, robbery cases, burglary cases, larceny theft and vehicle theft cases.

### **Crime Prevention**

"Prevention is the first imperative of justice". The Guidelines for Crime Prevention defined crime prevention as that; "Crime Prevention consist of strategies and procedures that seek to lower the risk of crimes happening and their possible harmful effects society and on individuals, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes." Therefore, we can also say that the aim of the Crime Prevention is the Reduction of Criminal cases. The fundamental goal of crime prevention is to decrease the risk of being a victim. In order to complete this successfully, it is essential to remove opportunities for a criminal to take advantage people or people's properties. Successful crime prevention exertions will help a safer community by enhancing the awareness of safety and the arrogances and actions that help people feel safe. We should try to reduce the desire to commit crimes while increasing the desire to be a contributor to the improvement of society.

At present times, in most countries, the following methods are applied for the purpose of the prevention and reduction of criminal cases; -

Making crime more difficult or reducing the opportunities for committing crime – This can be made by better security lighting, locking bars on auto steering wheels, the occurrence of guard dogs or high technology developments of security systems and increasing in number of

police officers on the streets.

Punishment - is to discourage a person from committing a crime. It is supposed to make criminal behavior less attractive riskier.

Prolonged imprisonment – is another means of discouraging people from choosing criminal activity.

### **Moral change**

At present time, almost every country around the world are performing workshop seminars and making so many projects, applying various methods for the crime prevention. They try to reduce the desire to commit crimes while increasing the desire to be a contributor to the improvement of a society.

This condition shows obviously that the programs, plans and projects performed for the prevention and reduction of criminal cases are not completely successful and sufficient for this purpose. If we would like to achieve the successful condition of preventing and reduction of criminal cases, we must remove the root causes of committing crime which are the three immoral roots such as greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*).

From the teaching of Lord Buddha's view, to reduce the desire to commit crime, we have to make "moral change", i.e. to change the concept of the people. Almost all of the people are influenced by delusion (*moha*) and they cannot clearly differentiate what is wrong or what is right. Delusion (*moha*) has the feature of blindness or obstruction to knowledge; the core of non-penetration or the role of covering the essential nature of the object; the appearance of being opposed to right manner or causing blindness; the proximate cause of foolish attention; and it should be observed as the root of all ill-conducts (*akusala*). We get confused and take the reverse characteristics to be true when we cannot realize the true nature of things. So, we see things which are; - impermanent (*anicca*) as permanent (*nicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) as pleasant (*sukha*), non-self (*anatta*) as self or person (*atta*) and loathsomeness (*asubha*) as beautiful (*subha*).

On account of this wrong vision of *moha*, a chain of undesirable consequences including miseries and sufferings arise one after another. When the three immoral roots, greed (*lobha*),

hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*) arise together in some people they get the courage of "not to be ashamed and not to be afraid of committing immoral actions, speeches and thoughts (*ahirika* and *anottappa*)". Therefore, these immoral roots encourage a person to commit criminal cases.

To change the concept of the people is the removal of the root causes of crime. So, if we would like to reduce the desire to commit crimes, people from all social strata must be organized to study the Buddha's Teaching, for changing of their "*moha* influenced concepts". "By knowing what is evil and unwholesome and what is good and wholesome; by knowing and avoiding the ten unwholesome actions", one can practice wholesome actions simultaneously. That makes the purifying of one's mind by suppressing immoral roots from arising and make him live in accordance with the advice of Buddha,

"To refrain from all evils, to do what is good and to purified the mind are the teaching of all Buddha".

### **Meditation for the Reduction of Criminal Cases**

We must learn and perform the Practice of Vipassana-Meditation for allowing all thoughts and feelings to arise and pass without reacting to them or evaluating them. Through this practice, one becomes much more aware of oneself in everyday situations. One is able to see when feelings and sensations arise and begin to disturb him. In this way, one can be aware of these feelings and sensations and work with them cleverly before they catch out of control, affecting harm to oneself and others.

With the help of concentration (*Samadhi*), one enters into the fundamental realities and sees with one's own mind-eye the genuine nature of these realities that is the three feature marks of mind (*nama*) and body (*rupa*). By observing the incessant ascending and melting of the ultimate mind (*nama*) and body (*rupa*), one realizes the impermanent nature as well as the unsatisfactory nature of mental and corporeal formations. To be subject to constant dissolving itself means suffering. Since the mind and body are built up of five aggregates and all these aggregates are continually forming and melting, leaving no single creature as permanent, one understands that there is neither self nor soul. Thus, in vipassana-bhavana, one actually sees the ultimate things and knows their nature.

By studying the meditation and applying the teachings correctly in our daily life, one will gradually wear away even the most stubborn habitual behaviors and fully liberating oneself from stress, unhappiness and suffering. One can also make the reduction of desire to commit crimes, which leads to the reduction of incidence of criminal cases, by practicing of meditation.

### Conclusion

Violence in modern societies is increasingly associated with crimes related to materialistic possessions. People think the root cause of crime is poverty and the solution to the crime problem is to make everyone rich but it's not perfectly correct, obviously, if poverty were the cause of crime, then no wealthy people would commit crimes. In fact, criminals, whether poor or rich, are criminals not because they are poor or rich, but because they are in the delusion (illusion) that material things will content them. And, of course, the intention they are in this illusion is because they mistakenly identify their body as themselves.

From the teaching of Lord Buddha's view, the root causes of crime are greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), wrong view (*ditthi*) and conceit (*mana*). These immoral mental factors are also known as the fire elements. On account of this wrong vision of wrong view and *moha*, a chain of undesirable results including sufferings and miseries arise one after another. It is indeed the primary root of all evils and sufferings in the world and stimulates the desire of the people to commit crime.

There are, therefore, no other antidotes for the removal of cause of crime, except changing the concept of people from all social strata. Propagation of our Lord Buddha's teaching is the only and the most effective method for this purpose.

May all beings be wealth and happy.

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