

## Abstract

The main objectives of the research entitled "*Knowledge Synthesis on Thoughts, Roles, and the Application of Buddhadhamma for Social Development: Qualitative Meta Research Methodology*", are i) to examine, and synthesize research works in the fields of social sciences, social work, and social welfare relating to thoughts, roles, and the application of Buddhadhamma in providing solutions of problem in the development of individual, group, community, and society based on qualitative research works conducted between B.E. 2530-2550 (A.D.1987-2007), ii) to study research trends and directions in social sciences, social work, and social welfare in aspects of thoughts, roles, and the application of Buddhadhamma in providing solutions to problems in the development of individual, group, community, and society, and iii) to examine the thoughts and development strategies based on the concept of Buddhist philosophy as the alternative paradigm of thoughts. The qualitative meta research methodology was employed for this study.

The findings based on 39 qualitative research studies reveal that the majority of them were designed to understand the principles of Buddhist philosophy in influencing the life and society. A number of study focused on and the roles and duties of Buddhist monks who carried out social development by applying Buddhadhamma with the aim bringing about social change both at the micro and macro levels. The knowledge created has resulted in increasing societal emphasis on development according to integrated Buddhist philosophy which previously was not given enough attention in both thoughts and practice, due in part to fragmented development, the foundation of liberal democratic capitalist system.

The researchers point out that human and social development must start at the deep structure of human and society, all which are related to political, economic and environment systems. Attention is given to the relationship among all things, or Buddhist philosophy, "*the Dependent Origination*" (Paticcasamuppada), indicating arising, duration, and extinction of the problems or exhibiting the causes, effects, and means to solve problem through noble truths. When human and society can understand the roots

of the problems according to Buddhist philosophy, Buddhist philosophy can further provide the way out of the problematic system called *Padhanasankhara* or *the principles of creative efforts*.

The Padhanasankhara leads to the formulation of thoughts and strategies of eight aspects of Buddhist philosophy-based development, namely, Buddhist epistemology covering worldly and transcendental levels; family institution based on national intelligence and, morality and ethics; national educational system developed to meet physical, social, mental and intellectual dimensions; the commitment of various organizations to continuous learning; ethical and moral responsibility of the mass media in disseminating useful and knowledge-based information to public; continuous development of the national research system; clear social development policies and plans; lastly and most importantly the management of human intellectual strengths.

In addition, this knowledge synthesis suggests that the roles and application of Buddhadhamma for social development have brought about social change known in sociology as *“four levels of integrated Buddhist philosophy-based social control”* i.e. individual, group, community, and societal levels whereby individual ethics was raised to the societal ethics. This is structural change both at the human and societal level.

With regard to research design, researchers must take into account clarity, in determining research goal, consistency among research questions, objectives, and methodology, rigorous conceptual framework, and validity of research results.

The researcher proposed recommendations for future direction of research in social science, social work, and social welfare, namely the investigation of the relationship between Buddhist thoughts and social development, comparative study on the roles and function of different religions in social development in the Thai context, the possibility of Buddhist monks as social worker in using participatory action research (PAR) as a means to engage in social change.