

ICBS 34

CIVILIANS' PERCEPTIONS BASED ON THE RELIGIOUS AND SOCIETAL IDEOLOGY TOWARDS THE GOVERNMENT POLICY FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME

Ven. Galle Dhamminda¹ JMG Lalani² GP Subasinghe³
PB Rathnayake⁴

¹*Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka-galledhamminda@busl.ac.lk*

²*Rajarata University of Sri Lanka-lalani.mihin@yahoo.co.uk*

³*Rajarata University of Sri Lanka-gayanps@mgt.rjt.ac.lk*

⁴*IDM Achievers international Campus-pathum@idm.edu*

The Sri Lankan government has implemented the vaccination programme as a government policy to secure civilians against the COVID-19 virus. Every citizen above the age of 60 is required to take the vaccine as a precautionary action. However, there is hesitancy to take the COVID-19 vaccine among non-Buddhists and the people who hold different beliefs and thoughts. This study aimed to understand different perceptions among various religious believers regarding the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Sri Lanka. Primary data were collected for the study via administering an online questionnaire from the period that started from the 1st of July to the 15th of July 2021. All adults aged >30 years were considered eligible for the study. The questionnaire was created using a Google form that was shared on WhatsApp and via e-mail. Demographic variables such as gender, age, race, religion, education level, and perception-related variables were measured. A total of 264 respondents participated, with a mean age of 53.08 years (SD = 6.54), and among them 55% were female and 45% were male. From the sample (n = 264) 88% of the respondents have had the COVID-19 vaccine and only 12% have not had the COVID-19 vaccine due to different reasons. Most of the respondents generally held positive views towards the vaccination programme and appreciated the government policy. Further, a considerable amount of respondents highlighted that their religion and other views discouraged them to take the vaccine. The study revealed that the majority of the respondents accepted it, and had a positive perception regarding the government policy on the COVID-19 vaccination programme. However, a very small percentage of respondents refused to take the vaccine due to religious beliefs and misconceptions about the vaccination programme. The results of this study showed a clear understanding and consensus on the vaccination among Buddhists. However, non-Buddhists and people with different primary views are less interested in it.

Keywords: Buddhist, COVID-19 vaccination, Civilians' perceptions, Government policy, Societal ideology