

A Study on the Applicability of Buddhist education principles to the Contemporary Sri Lankan Educational System

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Introduction

Education is the process of teaching, training and learning. Knowledge functions with wisdom whereas it is the basis of the education system. Hence, the education system should be integrated with the value-based wisdom. Buddhism is incorporated with an immense intellectual tradition which analyses its teachings with a systematical and logical way of understanding. This study analyses the role of Buddhism in the field of education. This study mainly focuses on the Noble eight-fold path and its reflections towards to contemporary education system. Apart from that, educational implications that can be derived from Buddhist teachings have been generally analyzed.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to find the applicability of Buddhist teachings to the contemporary Sri Lankan education system to improve its effectiveness and to introduce the practical aspect of Buddhist education principles.

Research Methodology

Textual analysis has been used as the methodology of this study along with analytical, comparative and critical methods. The information is collected from primary and secondary sources. Finally, the findings are being philosophically analyzed.

Research Problem

The research problem of this study is to inquire whether Buddhist teachings of education are applicable to the contemporary education system in order to improve its effectiveness.

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Research Discussion

This study mainly focuses on the Noble eight-fold path and its reflections towards to contemporary education system. *SammāDitti* (Right view) refers to the way that a teacher should give attention to the students. The teacher should have a deeper understanding on the behavior of the students. *SammāSankappa* (Right intension) denotes that a teacher should first free himself from the ill-will and selfish-attachments. It is impossible to become humane towards the students without attaining the peace of mind. *SammāVācā* (Right Speech) signifies that the teacher should avoid from harsh words, gossiping, negative words and lying which leads to conflicts and misunderstandings. *SammāKammanta* (Right Action) means that the teacher should avoid corporal punishments done to the students. *SammāĀjīva*(Right Livelihood) refers that teachers should live a life that do not earn money via illegal ways. *SammāVāyāma* (Right Effort) defines that the teacher should be an organized person before she starts teaching. Teachers should give their maximum outcome to educate students with moral values. *Sammā Sati* (Right Mindfulness) indicates that teachers should purify their minds before teaching students and teachers should stay mindfully all the time. *SammāSamādhi* (Right Concentration) gives relaxation. Teachers should practice meditation method in order to get a spiritual comfort. it can be helpful when giving their concentration to the teaching profession. The students can also use this Noble Eight-fold path to their process of learning.

Knowledge, wisdom (*paññā*) and reasoning (*manasikāra*) are the foundations of education in Buddhism. The Buddhist education thoughts aims at developing one's personality along with physical and intellectual development. Buddhist education was aimed at the preparation for nirvana, making awareness on the Four Noble Truths, Noble Eight-fold path etc. the Buddha was a great teacher who had the qualities like *Attaññū* (the Buddha knew what is beneficial to the student), *Dhammaññū* (the Buddha knew what is right), *Mattaññū* (the Buddha knew the measure in which a student should be taught), *Kālaññū* (the Buddha knew the right time) and *Purisaññū* (the Buddha knows the person well).

The curriculum of Buddhist education has been formed as: the core ideas of Buddhist teachings, grammar, art, philosophy, music, medicine, reading and writing. Although this education system is based on a religious grounding, it teaches secular subjects also. In the initial stage of education the monks are asked to do self-study and they do discussions and meditation. In the higher stages

the students are asked to do debates and discussions. The Buddha used different methods as similes, analogies, analyzes, parables to transfer his knowledge. After the discussions carried by the Buddha, he provided a discourse in order to make it easy for the listeners to understand what the Buddha has preached. The Buddha requested the listeners to listen carefully what says (pay close attention/ concentrate), remember them and to study its meaning.

Buddhist education system was basically a system of multi-teacher and multi-students. The only way to analyze the education principles of the Buddha is to analyze how the Buddha treated to the young monks who are newly entered to the *saṅga* institution. All the castes were allowed to enter the Buddhist institution without any discrimination. If one needs to enter the institution, they had to shave their head and to wear a robe. It makes the quality among the new monks. They were allowed to observe the eight precepts and ten precepts. When a monk complete his education, he needs to undertake the ritual '*upasampadā*' which makes him a permanent member of the *saṅga* institution.

Education is rely on the responsibilities of both the teachers and the students which is the same as the Buddhist education system. But the role of a teacher and a student is different from that of the contemporary education system. The educational methods as discussing, preaching, debating, question-answer sessions, and logical arguments were mainly used to give an integral understanding of the Buddhist teachings. Buddhist education mainly directs with moral education. It includes cultivating attitude as truthfulness, honesty, hospitality, sympathy, kindness and tolerance. This moral education makes a perfect human being who is not only an intellectual but a human with humanity. The moral education is a requirement in contemporary education because it can reduce the fall in the cultural values, conflict and violence, corruption, bribery etc.

Research Conclusion

Buddhist education makes a man whose character is free, non-violent, intelligent, moral, logical and sensible. Teachers should promote moral values by creating a social and cultural value in the classroom in order to influence moral attitudes on the students. Education should be directed via critical thinking and decision making. Sri Lankan education system should be revolutionary changed into a student-centered education system which should be considered moral values at its

center. The attitudes of both teachers and students should be should be changed via motivation programs.

Keywords: Buddhism, Education, Applicability, system

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