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**BUDDHIST CRITIQUE OF THE MODERN CONCEPT OF
MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT
-AN ANALYTICAL STUDY-**

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ABSTRACT

'Development' which had been a key word in every sphere of human activity since the beginning of 21st century had now turned into a controversial concept specially with regard to materialism. An attempt is made in this dissertation to critically examine the modern concept of material development from the perspective of Buddhist social philosophy with special focus on economics. Since a definite concept regarding material development could not be found both in modern and Buddhist material development the analysis had to be based on empirical evidence found from modern development process and what could be deduced from early Buddhist scriptures. The research reveals 'profit maximization' as the key issue involved in the concept of modern material development whereas in the Buddhist concept it is the highest spiritual development through material development, that becomes the pivotal issue. With the desire driven profit motive, modern material development has created a hyper consumerised and economically imbalanced world, along with its by products such as social pollution and environmental pollution. A steady, fast linear development in place of pre-modern values. On the other hand Buddhist concept reveals a restraint, contented, simple (*appiccha*) life with a gradual development, finely blending both materiality and spirituality. In Buddhism priority has been given to morality in every aspect of life. Hence material and mental development have to be practised on moral grounds following the middle path. It is a sustainable circular development based on moral values with the ultimatum of spiritual liberation encompassing every being in the universe.

To make use of these contrasting concepts harmoniously for the development of mankind premises of the research had to be scrutinized in depth to come to a final conclusion. Humans compared to other beings take a longer time to fend on

themselves. They acquire knowledge through education from parents, teachers, and from society for their independent survival. And education is universally accepted as a media of moulding human nature. But not the modern education which is very much commercialized and targeted at reaching a higher standard of material life only. To be of universal benefit the education should be founded on morality. A morally good life illumines knowledge (*apadāna sobhinī paññā*). A life endowed with knowledge and ethical conduct. '*vijjā carana*'.