THE APPLICATION OF BUDDHIST DEMOCRATIC APPROACHES IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article was to study and explain about the application of Buddhist democratic approaches in socio-economic policy implementation. The authors studied and collected the data from Buddhist scriptures, texts, and related document about Buddhist democratic approaches in socio-economic policy implementation. Buddhist principles are relevant with the recognition of the need for consensus that base on major decisions affecting the lives of individual, group, and community. Thus Vinaya or Buddhist rules govern the behavior and life of the Buddhist monastic community related with democratic traditions. It is true that no system of government is perfect, democracy is the closest to our essential human nature and allows the greatest opportunity to cultivate a sense of universal responsibility. Social policy implementation is the process that the administrators who have conceptual, technical and human relation characteristics, and exercising the power to consider the structure, duty and operation, including different resources such as human resource, money, material and equipment that have existed or expecting to have existed. Policy implementation affects the lives of the people in the whole country in order to solve the problem, to promote the well-being of citizens, and to fulfill the basic needs of people. Buddhism does not only have social implications, it also has political implications that Buddha gives freedom of thought and freedom of self-development to all under the same concept and goal with every personnel’s potentiality and with respect to mutual obedience of equality system. Buddhist principles have responded to this complex situation in many ways and cannot be inseparable from the world.

Keywords: Buddhism, Democratic Approaches, Implementation, Socio-economic policy

I. INTRODUCTION

Buddhism has been characterized by some people as an ascetic religion. In reality, asceticism was experimented with by the Buddha and later rejected by him before he attained enlightenment. The ethics of Buddhism is widely discussed, its treatment is frequently misconceived or lopsided, even when offered by Buddhist scholars. In order to gain a more accurate picture of Buddhist ethics, it would be helpful to avoid certain mistakes from the start. Buddhism does emphasize the cultivation of certain mental states, the Buddha taught that human consists of both mind and body, and stated that a necessary degree of material and social well-being is a prerequisite for any spiritual progress. It is common, furthermore, for scholars of Buddhism to confine themselves to the dhamma, or the doctrinal portions of Buddhism whereas Buddhism in its entirety consists of the Dhamma and the Vinaya. In other words, the Dhamma or the doctrine, and Vinaya, or the discipline, make the whole of Buddhist ethics. The Dhamma deals with ideals and principles whereas the Vinaya deals with rules and circumstances in which these ideals and principles are practiced and realized. The Vinaya here denotes not only the monks or nuns discipline, but also the spirit of these rules and regulations. Without taking into consideration both of these components, the Dhamma and the Vinaya, no adequate idea of Buddhist ethics can be reached[1]. Buddhist moral precepts provide a wholesome foundation for personal and social growth. They are practical principles for a good life and the cultivation of virtues. If we understand the objectives of Sīla and realize its benefits, we will see moral precepts as an integral part of life rather than as a burden that we are compelled to shoulder. Buddhist moral precepts are not commandments imposed by force; they are a course of training willingly undertaken in order to achieve a desired objective. We do not practice to please a supreme being, but for our own good and the good of society. As individuals, we need to train in morality to lead a good and noble life. On the social level, we need to help maintain peace and harmony in society and facilitate the progress of the common good. The practice
of moral precepts is essential in this regard. The five precepts training are based on the axiomatic assumption that human beings have the potential for development. In order that this development may be realized, a concrete standard is needed by which people may trainthemselves the five precepts are meant to fulfill this need[2].

In Buddhist perspective, all phenomena have three characteristic marks; impermanence, selflessness, and satisfactoriness. The Buddha stated that happiness, as we ordinarily conceive of it, is an illusion. True happiness cannot be found in possessing things or satisfying our cravings. Rather, it involves an abiding sense of fullness and inner peace, an inner serenity that does not depend upon our life circumstances. The satisfaction of a desire is not a genuine benefit, it does not enhance the quality of our lives. As a philosophy of life, perhaps the most important insight of Buddhism is that genuine happiness is not contingent upon our life circumstances. We can be truly and deeply happy simply by connecting with the present moment without grasping or aversion[3]. In Sigālovādasutta, it is a classic text on lay ethics and social responsibilities, an exposition of the whole code of domestic and social duties of a layman according to the Buddhist point of view. According to this sutta, a social role of Buddhism is a practical way of solving the problems in the societies and to identify the way of living in oneself. Even though such as the six directions taught by the Buddha to the Sigālaka[4]. Buddhist principles are relevant with the recognition of the need for consensus that base major decisions affecting the lives of individual, group, and community. Thus, Vinaya or Buddhist rules govern the behavior and life of the Buddhist monastic community related with democratic traditions. It is true that no system of government is perfect, democracy is the closest to our essential human nature and allows us the greatest opportunity to cultivate a sense of universal responsibility. Buddhism contributed for human development and social welfare, especially Buddhist philosophy has alleviated not only spiritual but also physical well-beings for human societies. Buddhism is carried on in the most ideal way, with no trace of indoctrination and coercion. Buddhism deals with the spiritual realm. It concerns wisdom about how best to live one’s life in light of the realities of human existence. In Buddhism, It is apparent that material well-being is one important factor contributing to the development of a economic community. The primary objective of economic activities in Buddhism is to alleviate poverty. The proper way to deal with crime is to first improve the economic condition of the people. When people are thus provided with opportunities to earn an income, they will be content, has no anxiety or fear, and will not cause harm to the society. These conditions will lead to a peaceful and prosperous society.

II. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

The purposes of this article were to study and explain about the application of Buddhist democratic approach in socio-economic policy implementation. The authors studied and collected the data from Buddhist scriptures, texts, and related document about Buddhist democratic approaches in socio-economic policy implementation.

III. BUDDHIST DEMOCRATIC DISCIPLINES(VINAYA) AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICY

Buddha did not formulate the code of discipline in a single exercise. However, He instituted certain rules as and when the need arose. VinayaPitaka and its commentary contain many significant stories about how and why certain rules were laid down by the Buddha. According to the Buddha the best form of Vinaya was to discipline the mind, words and action. The early disciples of the Buddha were highly developed spiritually and they had little need for a set of rules to be imposed upon them. However, as the monastic order (the Sangha) grew in numbers, it attracted many others, some of whom were not so highly developed spiritually. The Buddha prescribed all the necessary guidance to maintain the holy order in every aspect of life. When the Buddha passed away, these rules were collated so that the order could be organized around them. The code of conduct prescribed by the Buddha can be divided into two broad areas. These are Universal Moral Codes, Lokavajja, most of which are applicable to all members of the order and lay people alike for leading a religious life. Certain other disciplinary codes or rules which can be instituted to meet the existing cultural and social constraints of the country at any one time are called PannattiVajja. In the first category are the Universal Laws which restricted all immoral and harmful evil deeds. The second category of rules applied almost directly to the monks and nuns in the observance of manners, traditions, duties, customs and etiquette. Breaking of moral codes pertaining to the Lokavajja create bad reputation as well as bad karmma, whereas violation of disciplinary codes based on social conditions do not necessarily create bad karmma. However, they are subject to criticism as violation in any form pollute the purity and dignity of the holy Order [5]. The Dhamma-Vinaya is the Buddha’s teaching of the religion he has found. The Dhamma’s the truth which he has discovered and pointed out as thenobleadvice for all who want to gain the liberation from the suffering. The Vinaya is the discipline that the Buddha formulated as the rules, ideal, and standards of behaviors for those of his followers who went forth from home life and took up the quest for the liberation in the greater earnestness[6].

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Human gathering together in form of what is called society usually contains related and interacted components. Such components are always described in 3 folds; one is human behavior of such society, one is human quality of life in all aspects – political, economic and social, one is social organization and institutions. With three related components, it is necessary to set up possible social policy, order and management. Government is one of the issues to make understanding first before go on managing the other social components since government is the power for social administration and management. The Buddhism society during the Buddha’s times was called Sangha means company. This is considered as the true society of equality because the Sangha consisted of members from all castes who will be treated equally. The regulation or order utilized by the Sangha was seniority system regarding the age of when begins joining the Sangha society. So birth, family background, economic states, education levels are not counted nor considered. Instead, each one’s knowledge, behavior as Arahantship is praised. This can be cited from what the Buddha praised his disciples being excellent in various kinds of knowledge. The Sangha society was then peaceful, respectful, and mutual well accepted[7].

IV. THE APPLICATION OF BUDDHIST DEMOCRATIC APPROACHES IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The policy implementation is the process that an administrators who have conceptual, technical and human relation characteristics, and exercising the power to consider the structure, duty and operation, including different resources such as human resource, money, material and equipment that have existed or expecting to have existed. The administration of the organizations must proceed to the destination as needed by depending upon other persons that consist of making plans, managing organizations, personnel works, providing convenience and supervision or called POSDCORB. The policy implementation of the government follows the principle of good governance. Buddhism is a religion of wisdom and practice. The basic Buddhism mentioned the fact by natural law that the people use in parallel of wisdom in practice consisted of morality and ethics focus on the truth of the world literacy and currently lives. Especially, it is an important part of the stimulus the subordinates to live together happily, developing a sustainable and successful organization. The purpose of socio-economic policy is redistribution of income in order to move toward equity. It is this objective that has been subject long term objectives such as welfare and equity achieved. Socio-economy policy has connected the study of the social relations necessary for human well-being and the systems by which well-being may be promoted. Policy Implementation is a process in public policy process which is important step requiring knowledge both science and arts of policy management. Policy Implementation needs to understand the details of interaction, connection, reliance including independence of organization and persons involved in policy process. The policy implementation is divided into 2 main steps; (1) the macro implementation are (a) converting the policies into plans and projects, and (b) creating acceptance of policies of regional and local authorities (2) the micro implementation were (a) mobilization, (b) deliverer implementation and (c) institutionalization or continuation, outcomes. However, the model of policy implementation consists of 3 main theories; (a) Top-down Theories of Implementation, (b) Bottom-up Theories of Implementation and (c) Hybrid Theories of Implementation respectively[8]. In the Buddhist canons, Buddha had clearly mentioned the origin of state, political order and human kingship, particularly in the AggannaSutta of DighaNikaya. In this sutta, it says that in the very beginning human beings were altogether perfect as there were no thieves, no lying, no cheating, no corruption and so on. With such an idealized phenomenon, there was no need for the state to function as a regulatory agency. But later on, the human behavior started to become worsen, untruthful and violent, and the state declined into anarchy. As the people decline more and more from their state of purity, the origin of the kingship was established. This myth is similar to the illustration in the Mahabharata of Brahminic polity. However, when the Mahabharata of Brahmanism says that the ruler of the world was created by Brahma to govern this anarchical society[9]. The evidence that proofs much of his Dhamma policy can be justified in his well-known statement in the Say- Fong inscription which stated that the bodily pain of his people became a pain of the soul for him( King Jayavarman VII), more painful to him than to the actual individuals, for it is the suffering of the state which makes kings suffer, and not their own pain[10]. The impressive development during the reign of KingJayavarman VII were the construction of extensive road networks across the country accessible for military and trade purposes, the building of enormous irrigation systems supporting agricultural development and the establishment of numerous hospitals and resthouses necessary for increasing social welfare, etc., was consequently contributed to by 1) the righteous policies based on the Buddha’s Dhamma, which were applied to the public administration and policy implementation;2) the competent public servants, namely the guru who were supportive both to the king and the Buddhist government; and 3) the Dhamma-oriented leadership, which characterize public administration and policy implementation model as more compassionate and responsible for the interest of his citizens [11].
Buddhist approaches has effected to sustainable socio-economic policy at all levels from individual, group and social structure. As were know that the resources are limit. Therefore, the government and policy makers should think for sustainable socio-economy policy based on the virtue of generosity, sublime state (Brahma Vihara), avoiding Agathi (the four wrong courses of action) that the government and concerned policy makers should contribute generously to the well-being of the people for their basic needs. Additionally, the Four Noble Truths constitutes a framework of socio-economic policy and problem resolution. Dukkha as problem identification of human’s need, Samudaya as causal investigation of the people’s need. In this process, the participation of the people is really required. In this process of socio-economic policy making, the government or the policy makers should concentrates on the principles of virtues for fraternal living (Saraniyadhhamma). Nirodha as possible or required solutions because the socio-economic policy has to be responded with the human’s need, and it is from the real need of the people in the process of fact finding called Samudaya, and Magga as recommendations or methods for desired solutions of the human that is the process of policy implementation. The socio-economic policy affects the lives of people in the whole country. Socio-economy policy has been issued by the government to solve problems, to promote the well-being of people, and to fulfill the basic needs of people. It should concentrate on the responsible administration in serving the public interests, and the government should provide an effective delivery of public service and social welfare to the people.

V. CONCLUSION

Buddhist principles are relevant with the recognition of the need for consensus that base major decisions affecting the lives of individual, group, and community. Thus, Vinaya or Buddhist rules govern the behavior and life of the Buddhist monastic community related with democratic traditions. It is true that no system of government is perfect, democracy is the closest to our essential human nature and allows us the greatest opportunity to cultivate a sense of universal responsibility. For human beings, they search to live in a society in which they can express freely. Democratic approach is the closest to our essential human nature and allows us the greatest opportunity to cultivate a sense of universal responsibility. Social policy implementation is the process that the administrators who have conceptual, technical and human relation characteristics, and exercising the power to consider the structure, duty and operation, including different resources such as human resource, money, material and equipment that have existed or expecting to have existed. Policy implementation affects the lives of the people in the whole country in order to solve the problem, to promote the well-being of citizens, and to fulfill the basic needs of people. Buddhism does not only have social implications, it also has political implications that Buddha gives freedom of thought and freedom of self-development to all under the same concept and goal with every personnel’s potentiality and with respect to mutual obedience of equality system. Buddhist principles have responded to this complex situation in many ways and cannot be inseparable from the world.

REFERENCES