

Integrated Buddhist Social Development Based On Buddhist (Three-Fold Principle) Participation: Nakhonsawan Province, Thailand

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Abstract

This research article aims to propose the model of integrated Buddhist social development based on Buddhist (Three-Fold Principle) participation. The research methodology applied documentary research consisting of in-depth interviews from key informants, in terms of focus group data. The process of action research was also used to achieve empirical results with descriptive analysis technique. The research result revealed that the model of integrated Buddhist social development based on Buddhist (Three-Fold Principle) participation enabled social members, when applied, to gain 'Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.' As well, they would be developed in 3 manners:

1. They became social members of pertaining morality, maintaining morality called training in higher morality. What existed in their society presented the members' morality and cultural elevation; i.e., driving to attain the Five Precepts practice.
2. They became social members of being volunteering, public-minded from mental development training among themselves. These helped to establish strength and peace in their society; i.e., after training mental discipline.
3. They became social members of wise called being trained in higher wisdom. Also, from being trained in welfare education to attain the Right View and the Right Thought, people would become comprehend completely in cause and reason, in right and wrong, in suitability and unsuitability, in cause and effect, in knowingly, and in matter relationship.

Keywords: integrated Buddhist social development, participation, Buddhist (three-fold principle)

Introduction

The present Thai society can be called the society of the unlimited materialism consumption. No matter what type of societies, urban or local, people are struggling for their desirable objects. The more society becomes materialistic, the more social members will crave for materials factors. This causes competitiveness that leads to nonsense others harassment (Pinittokakorn and Numanong 2017). The society then becomes very brittle. This is because people do not rely on the Middle Path. Their life is heedless. Many families live without moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity that cause them to lack of knowledge and ethics (Panyasing, 2014). This kind of livelihood is risky affected by the social system changing. People nowadays step out from simple life and step into consumerial livelihood. They become more selfish, immoral, unethical and more independent on each other. Then participation rarely happens. Society changes to be less and less empathy, generosity, unity, caring and sharing. Public mindedness also happens.

Concerning the integrated Buddhist social development, what is concentrated involves team working, being united in action and spirit, competitiveness decrease, mutual bulliness decrease. The development process should be only economic growth, but instead, by applying integrated Buddhist social development principle, both social and environment factors must be considered together too. The mechanism then depends on participatory action and wisdom in critical thinking improvement. Since the development target is people, the development process should be related to good and happy life of the social members. In Thai society, the concept of the Three-Fold Principle (home, temple, school) network was practiced. That means cooperation and coordination among people are used to drive the society to success.

Either exchanging data and information or volunteering, participation should be brought into mind. It is proposed here that working under networking parties means bringing about the personal strength and mutual learning, as well as creation of participatory practice among the social members. According to conforming practical teamworking, the united community members to drive better life forward together is essential. This mechanism then needs resources exchange, repetitive employment decrease to be practiced in the community and society. The results, surely, will represent effectiveness and sustainability of action to the society. The Three-Fold Principle is believed to cause power because more than one factor is

concerned. Finally, the expected social unity will be created (Phratheppariyattimedhi, 2021).

Research Objectives

To develop the model of integrated Buddhist social development based on Buddhist (Three-Fold Principle) participation.

Research Methodology

The applied research was used in this research with the following procedure steps:

1. Documentary research was used to study the concept, principle, conceptual principles, social development theories, the integrated Buddhist social development principle and practice, principle of living together in multi-cultural society.
2. In-depth interviews with key informants consisting of local leaders, area leaders, local wisdom scholars, Buddhist monks, people organizations, public sector organizations, networking partners, local academic experts, non-profit organization scholars, including related informants. 125 persons were recorded.
3. Focus group discussion among experts consisting of the selected group from the above 2 was done. Two discussions designed by researcher team was carried out. 25 experts to give exchange discussion were recorded.
4. Action research was practiced to aim for finding conclusion of ideas and concept in from of workshop, action research in field study to receive the empirical result on the integrated Buddhist social development guidelines and concepts principles. The so-called action research method working together with 750 people and Buddhists of Nakhonsawan Province had participated in the research.
5. Non-participant observation by the researcher team in the research project was used. The way of life, tradition and culture observation by the so-called observation data were gathered. However, the missing data and related necessary information required was also gathered and recorded in detail by the research team.

Research Results

In accordance with the integrated Buddhist social development based on Buddhist (Three-Fold Principle) participation, the cooperation and coordination among local and area leaders together with public sector officials and community member partnership to drive the society growth forward are essential and required. The concrete activities include mutual promotion and support practiced among those groups of people. They have to adapt and be flexible to the current practical

situations and phenomena. The Right Livelihood must be continuously applied and extended to the next generation after generation of which performance can be realized from the habitual culture and traditions of the social members' activities. The Buddhist performances are, for example, merit making, morality keeping practice, mental development training and self-spiritual purification. These good deeds will certainly lead to establish empathy, generosity and mutual care and share in all happenings among the social members. Whenever there is a problem or suffering occurs, the community members will rise up to help and cooperate to solve and find solution together. Respect and peace will then reach to be practical in that society.

In the same manner, the distinctive result from applying the integrated Buddhist social development based on Buddhist (Three-Fold Principle) participation to achieve cooperating and extending well-trained intention and action of the social members can be seen. The regular generating prototype of good habit and knowledge of elderly members must be accepted among the younger. These activities and performances among all generation of social members having home, religion, and school as the integrated basis of practice are the only mechanism to perform the Right View to train oneself in precept and morality maintenance, the Right Livelihood in congruence with the Right View practice will enable the social members to sustain happy and peaceful life in their own community. The behavior resulted from purifying body and mind practice will show their typical identity and image society.

Moreover, the research result revealed that the integrated Buddhist social development based on Buddhist (Three-Fold Principle) participation needs drive for development with the practice doctrine of Giving, Morality, Mental Development led by the community Buddhist monks, local leaders, local government and public sector officials, and related partnership parties. The drive projects such as "The Five Precept Village," the extension of 12 traditions and 14 ways of social practice, as well as the "Prosperous and Ethical Land Project" are practiced and well-trained. This means everybody in the society has to help each other to participate and cooperate in creating modelling persons possessing volunteering and public minds as well as sense of responsibility and contribution in finding space for exchange ideas and experience to foster the multi-cultural society to be well established and existed. The result of applying the Buddhist (Three-Fold Principle) participation includes setting up the village temple to be the center of performing religious and community activities to drive the "Sub-district Citizen Training Unit" of which the function is in 8 folds. The such 8 folds of development are listed as: Morality and Culture, Healthcare, Right Livelihood, Peace Promotion, Welfare Education, Public Welfare, Gratitude, Cultivation, Village and Community Unity

Promotion. These 8 folds of concept, certainly, will enhance livelihood with SEP (Sufficiency Economy Philosophy) Principle so that the well-trained would realize and comprehend ethical components --- honesty, forbearance, effort and wisdom to apply them to their livelihood. In order to attain good development, the participation of all sectors to join and perform public activities will be relied on this Buddhist (Three-Fold Principle) application.

Research Result Discussion

In this research study, the proposed principle of Buddhist way of participation must be congruent with Buddhism Middle Path or in other word --- the Noble Eightfold Path, proclaimed by the Buddha. In detail, the Eightfold Path, when applied, consists of Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. The Eightfold Path is used to solve any problems occurred. Besides, those who practice will perform purified deeds and behavior that lead to 3 issues of development as followed:

1. Training in higher morality, involving development for Right Action, Right Speech and Right Livelihood are considered as the effective means of defilement extinguishing. The society can be reformed to be empathetic, mutual care, living together with peace and happiness. The social members are trained to be honest, legal, non-violent, no destruction, without false speech. The practice can be extended to help create peace globally.
2. Training in higher mentality (mental discipline), involving development for Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration are considered as the effective means of elevating the society morality and ethics so that people will be safe from greed and hatred power, unshakable from external phenomena that cause wretched, frustrated, and troublesome feelings.
3. Training in higher wisdom, involving development for Right View, Right Thought, are considered as the effective means of realization in cause and effect, right and wrong, suitable and unsuitable, guilty and guiltless, knowingly, cause and effect, and all beings interrelations.

Conclusion

The integrated Buddhist social development based on Buddhist (Three-Fold Principle) participation concept is aimed to establish social development in form of networking participation among social members. The mechanism of the so-called integrated social development uses the principle of the Buddhism Middle Path consisting of the Noble Eightfold Path to lead their lives. The result of practicing the Middle Path is seen from the ability of setting up Right

View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. The Noble Eightfold Path, when practiced, leads people or social members to attain 3 issues of development:

1. People are trained to keep and maintain morality and higher morality. Their minds are elevated to morality and beautiful culture. The community becomes the unit of “the Five Precept” and is conserved.
2. People including Buddhist lays are trained to be volunteering, public-minded from the practice of mental development program and activity. The concrete result is seen from being “the Land of Ethics and Prosperity” village. This helps the social members to be strong and peacefully happy.
3. People including Buddhist lays are trained to be wise and attain higher wisdom. They are what is called those who elevate their minds contributing and developing the society with the sense of welfare education. The social members, then, are able to improve their Right View and Right Thought to apply for problem solution, realization and comprehension of cause and reason, right and wrong, good and bad, guilty and guiltless, suitable and unsuitable, useful and useless, cause and effect and all beings interrelations.

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