

Understanding the Concept of Balanced Living for Domestic Economic Stability in Modernization: A Buddhist Perspective

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Introduction

Domestic economic stability is one of the important factors to achieve a balanced life and it supports to extend physical and mental stability for each member of the family. The concept of balanced living is connoted in Buddhism by the term “*Samajīvikatā*” which emphasizes the ability to keep the balance in one’s income and expenditure without getting into deprivation and extravagance. Buddhism does not reprove the obtainment, inheritance, and amassment of wealth by laymen if the wealth is obtained without harming others. Contrary, if a family has an extreme materialistic lifestyle leading towards unsatisfactoriness, craving, and fearfulness that make difficult to keep the happiness in a family. According to Buddhism, poverty is existing in one’s life with insufficient income for day to day expenditure and being debt is considered suffering which leads a family to dysfunction, stress, hunger, nervousness, suicide, etc.

On the one hand, due to the higher requirement of material needs and overpriced of those material things, the necessity of a stable economic system to a family is recommended for balanced living. However, the Buddha mentioned four kinds of levels of apportioning wealth (*bhoga-vibhāga*). Moreover, the husband is considered the leader of a family, each member has certain responsibilities to sustain and to safeguard the stability of wealth. This is mentioned in the teachings of the Buddha as ‘*kula-ciraṭṭhiti dhamma*’ (the causes of a family’s prosperity and longevity).

On the other hand, social immoral behaviors such as gambling, taking drugs, adultery, etc. have widely been addicted among the modern family members and these misbehaviors causes separations of the families and it also ruins the unity and harmony of the family. In this aspect, the Buddha advises that everyone needs to shut off the channels of ruin.

According to Buddhism, the balanced living in a family should be deepened on the wealth that should be earned by righteously having abandoned from five kinds of evil businesses which are

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known as selling weapons, human beings, meat, intoxicants, and poison. As depicted in the teachings of the Buddha, it is necessary to maintain stable domestic economics to have a balanced, happy and successful domestic life which is described as '*kāma**bhogī-sukha*' (happiness for householder) in *Ānaṇya Sutta*.

Research Objective

To show the value of that Buddha's teachings with regards to the balanced and happy family life based on economic, moral and spiritual stability.

Research Methodology

The qualitative research method will be used for this research. The Pāli Tipiṭaka texts will serve as primary sources. As secondary sources, relevant books, newspapers, social media dealing with problems of modern life will be utilized.

Research problem

The followings are some questions to be raised in the process of research and my attempt is to show such issues of the domestic economy through Buddhist teaching with reference to early Buddhism.

- How can people have an economic steadiness and achieve balanced living in a family in modernization?
- What are the issues related to practicing moderate consumption to lead economic stability in the family?

Research Literature Review

As the literary works the book called '*Small is Beautiful*' written in 1973 by Schumacher, Hettiarachchi's book '*Buddhist Economic Philosophy as Reflected in Early Buddhism*' and the book called '*A Constitution for Living: Buddhist Principles for a Fruitful and Harmonious Life*' composed by Payutto, were beneficial for my study to improve the contribution that is going to be provided in my study about the modern economic system and changing in a modern lifestyle to have a balanced living.

Research Framework

- The concept of balanced living
- The balance between income and expenditure in the family
- The skill of earning money righteously
- The causes of poverty, debt and unbalanced living
- The principles for dividing the wealth of the family
- The achievement of the success in domestic life with the four kinds of happiness

Research Discussion

To analyze and clarify this issue we need to pay attention to understand the concept of balanced living, domestic economic systematic stability in modernization in the light of early Buddhist suttas.

The Buddha did not use the term ‘economy’ in the sense of modern interpretation, he recommended some suttas counseling with someone how to manage income and expenditure as an art of a balanced and happy life.

The Buddha was of the view that poverty and debt cause suffering and unbalanced living in individuals and families. He also emphasized that material success and a stable economic system is the necessary for a balanced and happy life.

Research Conclusion

There is growing evidence that the Buddha has not only explained the path to achieve emancipation from saṅsāric existence by realizing Nibbāna even it is the aim of Buddhism, but also he gives some advice people who want to have material success, a balanced and happy living. In addition, he encourages the development of mundane, supra-mundane and spiritual base on ethical behaviors.

It is possible to say that although a simple living pattern is recommended, it has much spiritual values when a person has a righteous earning, balanced living and economic stability. This simple but stable living system leads a person to a balanced and happy family life. The crucial factor of the Buddha’s advice is not to get attached to material gains as it generates much problems such as; unsatisfactoriness, apprehension of loss wealth and suffering. To execute filial

duties and accumulate merits, and to lead a life to balance between income and expenditure people have to carefully concern about the economic gains.

Keywords: Balanced Living, Domestic Economic Stability, Happiness, Buddhist Ethics

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