

Economic Conflict Resolution: A Buddhist Perspective

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Buddhism, being a practical and scientific discipline, conceives the physio-psycho and socio-economic system of thoughts. Buddha was a very practical thinker. He, searching out the ethical, social, economical and religious problems in the way of leading the balanced peaceful life for the attainment of the final goal, diagnosed the causes of respective problems and their method of resolutions too, which are available in the canonical, non-canonical and commentarial literature. Nothing is escaped from the teachings of the Buddha essential for the cultivation of physical and mental ability as both are reciprocally interdependent working simultaneously. The present paper is intended to deal with physical aspects concentrating on the economic conflict resolutions especially in Buddhist perspective.

Economics enunciated firstly by Kautilya deals with socio-economic ethical human values but with the discrimination of caste, class and society, whereas Buddhism holds the view of equality - 'sabbe pāṇā samasamakā'. It signifies the equality in the sense of an achievement in spirituality and not in materiality. "The principle of equality that recognizes the autonomy, uniqueness and potential of each person should not be confused with the mass egalitarianism" (N.S.F.B., 208) in the material world. The discrimination might have compelled the people for struggle that gives rise to conflicts in the society.

Plato and Aristotle's literature also contains the economic thoughts crystallized into science in the industrial era. It seems that no subject-wise division of thoughts was made in the beginning. Subsequently, the subject-wise divisions and sub-divisions of thoughts with particular specialization of the area concerned were made with the advancement in the way of life. Economics was one of the same divisions with narrow body of knowledge less concerned with human activities. Today what we call modern economics is the outcome of the need of time forwarded and developed by Adam Smith, Marshall, Robinse, Keynes, J.R. Hicks and others. Adam Smith defines the term 'economics' as a science of wealth meaning to the way of earning and spending the wealth for sustenance of life. The other contemporary economists are more or less of the same ideas exploring the field of economics. But no one has taken into consideration of any ethical human values, while earning or spending the wealth. Actually, it is a data based economics dealing with only the theories connected with production, consumption and distribution ignoring completely the ethical norms of human behavior.

The present economic system is mainly based on the concepts of the aforesaid economists. The two opposing forces that are posing threats to world peace today are based on the two theories: philosophy of free trade and dialectical materialism, which were propounded by two distinguished personalities Adam Smith and Karl Marx respectively about two hundred years ago. Socialism, capitalist democracy and other socio-economic systems are based on the views of past thinkers (B.E.P., 5). An extensive development and over wide expansion of science and technology being engaged in modernization of the whole physical and mental working system of the world economy has resulted into the growth of materialism through rapid enhancement of industrialization under capitalism as an impact of which the modernity comes out of

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the existing situation and now it has become the global social culture that had begun in Western Europe in the sixteenth century and has extended throughout the world to the present. It includes all pervasive individualism both politically as liberalism and economically as capitalism that has made possible the immense wealth and technology that pour forth an ever accelerating output of goods and services through exploitation of labor (N.S.F.B., 68). There, happens a clash, between dictatorials and individuals suffering from unsatisfactoriness. The violent thoughts harboring in the mind of the people ignited them for confrontation and conflict, though conflict and suffering are initiated and maintained by dictatorship. It can only be settled down by dropping our personal addiction to the struggle and through non-violent peaceful dialogue. The Buddha has rightly pointed out that:

*Na hi verena verāni, sammantidha kudācanam,
Averena ca sammanti, esa dhammo sanantano (Dhp. V. 5).*

It means hatreds never cease through hatred in this world; through love alone they cease. This is an eternal law. In many places the Buddha advises us not to retaliate but to practice patience at all times, at all places and even under the provocation (Dhp., p. 7; *Kakacūpama Sutta*, Mn.). Thus, Buddhism teaches self-responsibility and the inevitability of the law of cause and effect.

The present era is the age of materialism that governs the global economic system of the world economy promulgated by spontaneous growth of industrialization under capitalism and thereby modernity respectively with proposition of any ethical norms essential for inculcation of human values, with a view to procure maximum profit by less investment in production of goods using low quality of raw materials, paying minimum wage to the labors and by fixation of higher price of commodities in accordance with demands in the market, that depend upon the utility of the respective commodity. Price-fixation also corresponds to the notion of demand and supply in the perfect competitive market under monopoly, where there is a conflict among producers, consumers and in between these two. Capable consumers enjoys an endless range of conveniences, comforts and consolations without any limitation of resources, whereas an incapable ones are unable to enjoy them, but no one claims that enjoyment will bring them greater wisdom or peace of mind which is the main objective of Buddhism, rather it encourages greed, selfishness, hatred, ill-will and exploitation rather than love, sharing and compassion. Consequently global free market capitalism developed and thereby global economic conflicts arise creating many problems which require its replacement by much more equitable and egalitarian global economy backed by a system of authentically democratic global decision making (N.S.F.B., 69, 161-65). The institution of democratic co-operative system where production and consumption could be carried out in common and collective ownership sharing everything that are available in the community of monks support this view (Vin. II, 146-79), yet how far it would be successful in the case of global economy, it cannot be apprehended because of differences in the status of economy, culture, behavior, climate, habits and in the way of living as a whole of different nations under the domain of materialism.

Today, it is profound, pervasive and dominant specially in the sphere of industrialization being engaged in exploitation of nature, which culminates and accelerates one to step up in the process of achievement of spiritualized goal, the state of Nibbāna, but the materialism being reached an unprecedented level of its progress has captured the world economy under capitalism without any care for humanity that creates hurdle in the development of one's spirituality by polluting the mind of the people. Human beings are insatiable animals because of being born with ignorance in

the world of desires, the root cause of suffering, on which the world is established (Sn. I, 38). The reason behind dukkha is unsatisfactoriness caused by unfulfilled desires due to limited resources. It is ever increasing with more new products available in the market produced by industrialists for acquisition of more and more wealth. It is the materialism that grips the mind, of the people and the man loses the sense of his responsibility towards others due to having the mind rooted in greed, hatred, ill-will and delusion. Consequently, he becomes selfish that being intensified gives rise the tendency for hoarding more wealth even by adopting the ill methods of earning because of vigorously inclined to the material world under the dire need of money. An ordinary person (puthujjana) perceives the worldly materials even the earth, water, fire, air, beings, etc. and conceives them to be mine because he does not understand the true nature of material world because of his sensuous infatuation with materials, which are always fleeting and universally flexible. Hence, material world is obviously perceived in modern perspective responsible for existing global economic crisis and conflict.

It is true to the fact that economics is not the goal of Buddhism. The goal of Buddhism is to eradicate the suffering of mankind. The purview of suffering is enlarged comprising of its all kinds whether social, political, economic or spiritual. So, it is a misinterpretations that Buddhism is nothing to do with material world. What I observed during my research is that there is a large number of suttas, which throw an ample light on the subject of economics with the norms to be observed in daily life while performing our respective duties.

Buddhist economics is an ethic based economics dealing with economic activities of mankind and ethics guide us what to do and what not to do, what is lawful and what is unlawful earning, how to earn and how to spend and so on. It is not only related to material aspects but also to the humanitarian as well as spiritual aspects. The Buddhist economics begins with the statement that “*yam piccham tam na labhati pi dukkham*”- Not getting what one desires is suffering, occurred is the first discourse delivered at Isipatanamigadāya in Varanasi (Mv. 13). Therefore, it is said that more we desire, more we suffer; less we desire, less we suffer. The ‘Fire Sermon’ illuminates that- “All things are on fire – with the fire of passion, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of infatuation, with birth, old age, death, lamentation, misery, grief and despair are they on fire”. (Mv. 34). By the terrible twentieth century, humankind had developed sufficient technology, wealth and organization to inflict on itself death and every kind of suffering on an unprecedented scale and now we are facing with three interrelated conflagrations; firstly, violence, war and terrorism spilling over from previous zealous, secondly, structural violence of transnational free market capitalism and thirdly environmental degradation and incompatibility exponential growth of material consumption with a finite ecosystem (N.S.F.B. 159). As such unsatisfactoriness, frustrations, hatred etc. are murmuring silently in the mind of the people to activate for struggle to earn more to fulfill the desires, yet no one can claim to fulfill all the sensuous desires because of clinging towards new products available in the market and unplanned excess expenditure in proportion to income. It effects adversely the physical and mental capability causing conflict starting from the level of family to an international level. The Buddha has propounded some ethical guiding principles as to how should one earn and how should spend (Dn. I, 3-10; An IV, 375-77). The *Sigālovāda-sutta* puts forth before us a systematic and well planned schedule of expenditure of our righteously earned income (Dn. III, 145). It impels one to proceed on for the purification of mind that makes one capable to acquire the true nature of materials to be used in worldly affairs for leading balanced peaceful holy life.

Here, in the present context it seems desirable to raise a question on how does Buddhism perceive the material world? Buddhism perceives material phenomena in the

world as fleeting and universally flexible subjected to cause and effect according to the Buddhist theory of causation (Paticcasamuppāda), and is characterized by three distinguished marks namely, impermanence (aniccatā), suffering (dukkha) and substancelessness (anattatā). All these three are interrelated and interconnected. Therefore, it would be proper to take into consideration collectively of all these three features of material world. A man's all socio-economic activities are molded by understanding the basic nature of their concepts, which form the basis for the development of Buddhist economic thoughts leading to the enjoyment of sensuous objects being detached from material phenomenon. The realization of their true nature through intuitive knowledge (wisdom) is the path to purity for Nibbāna. According to *Mahāsudassana Sutta and Satta Suriyuggamana Sutta* (An. IV, 100-6), whatever things are in the external physical world, all such things are compounded and conditioned which are impermanent, unstable and undependable. There should be disenchantment with regard to these things and release from them (Dn. II, 199; An. IV, 100-6). Finally, the whole idea is conceived in this verse:

*“Aniccā vata sanñkhārā uppāda vaya dhammino,
uppajjitvā nirujjhanti tesam upasamo sukho.” (Dn. II, 199)*
(Indeed all compounded things are impermanent, subject to rising and falling.
Having arisen they die, their appeasement is happiness.)

Hence, Buddhism is less interested with material world. He has not given much importance to material form. He does not consider material welfare as an end in itself. It is only a means to an end which is indispensable for balanced peaceful living with happiness and in achieving the supreme goal. Therefore, Buddhism recognizes certain minimum material conditions favorable for spiritual progress. (W.B.T., 81).

Is materialism responsible for economic conflict? It is evident from the foregoing pages that under the domination of materialism man's desire is increasing continuously like a flow of river for getting more and more materials of each quality directing by craving and activated by clinging to lead a normal, comfortable and luxurious life without having the knowledge of the true nature of material world, though it depends upon the purchasing power of mankind, still he cannot restrict on the rising tendency of his desire. Both modern and Buddhist economists agree on the point that wants are unlimited. It arises one after another endlessly. It is a natural phenomena of materialism that provokes individuals for consumption of goods available in the market. Individual lays more stress on the consumption of materials to lead a lofty life and spends more on luxurious things without any consideration of other essential commodities. Thereby, all the members in a family or of the society are being adversely affected both mentally and physically. Ultimately there happens a conflict in the society.

As pointed out by Ken Jones that the high modernity is the root cause of conflict due to personal identity and its inner voidness that insatiably needs require to be fulfilled. Now these needs have been commodified into the whole culture of consumerism, which has become its popular religion of free market economy. As David Loy puts it in his book 'A Buddhist History of the West: Studies in Lack' that "consumerism is the most successful religion of all time, winning more converts more quickly than any previous belief system or value system in human history". However, the fruitfully success of consumerism depends upon the individual's purchasing power to possess and consume the market offered goods, but it seems world-wide impossible due to persistence of distinct gap between rich and poor, which is widening and more important the number of people falling into poverty is increasing alarmingly in the most

of the industrialized country wherein the variation in the level of living is existing alarmingly (N.S.F.B., 164-65).

What are the economic areas of conflict? The Buddhist economics deals with both individual as well as state based economy which discusses the economic problems pertaining to both individual and state. Life is itself a full of conflicts of different kinds. The economic conflict is motivated by craving for wealth in the material world and the mind being clung with particular commodity activates the respective sense-faculty to do the needful actions for the fulfillment of desires. The man strives in ignorance for the sustenance of his life that harms the quality of life. This is a human nature.

The basic needs are: food, clothing, shelter, medicament and education for spiritual development. These are made available through the production by agriculture, industry, trade, business, transportation etc. All these working systems require labors of different levels. In Tipitaka we find threefold analysis of labor such as (1) Physical or manual labor (unskilled labor), (2) Mental labor (skilled labor) and (3) Spiritual labor. The first type of labor is put forth for production of goods and services. The farmer by tilling the land and crafts by engaging in his crafts spend physical labor. The tradesman in organizing his activities and a government servant through administration spend mental labor. All these labors work for self-benefit as well as for the benefit of others. The third one is spiritual labor who operates within oneself regulating their thoughts by eradicating bad thoughts and cultivating good ones. Primarily, this brings about the well-being of others (B.E.P. 172-73). The physical labor is considered as being low even today. This short of attitude is specially found in societies which are caste-ridden and have been subjected to colonial exploitation of labors.

Participation of labors is required essentially everywhere in the field of economic concerns, especially in the production of goods to be used in our daily life for sustenance and protection of life. In most of the private concerns, very poor wage is paid to manual labors in under developed countries by the owner of the concern, who always likes to procure maximum profit. As a result, unsatisfactoriness among labors spreads and the labors go on strike that compels them for regular struggle. Ultimately, conflicts among labors, consumers and producers become prevalent in the society.

Consumption is the second phase of conflict, which affects directly the production of goods, though the consumption of goods depends upon the purchasing power of consumers and the utility of the commodities. Purchasing power varies from person to person depending upon the income, nature, habits and behaviors of consumers. Thus, consumption is said to be one of the goals of economic activity or it is the satisfaction of desire. Modern economics defines consumption as simply the use of goods and services to satisfy the demands, whereas Buddhism proposes two kinds of consumption such as, right consumption and wrong consumption. Right consumption of goods satisfies the desire for true well-being. It is a consumption with goal and purpose. Wrong consumption of goods and services arises from craving to satisfy the desire for pleasing sensations or ego gratification (B.E. 41). Modern concept of consumption facilitates one for hoarding of wealth that enhances disparity and conflict in the society. According to Buddhism, wealth is not meant for hoarding. *Rāsiya Sutta*, *Pattakamma Sutta*, *Pañcabhogadīya Sutta* and some other ones denouncing hoarding of wealth inspire for proper and equal circulation of wealth that is referred to by the term *sāmvibhajati in Rāsiya Sutta*.

Distribution of wealth is one of the important areas for arising of conflicts in the society. Though, Buddhist teachings are seen less interested in changing the current distributive system of wealth than in cultivating the proper attitude toward wealth, which are defined as those of giving and non-attachment. This is relied upon a karmic interpretation of social and economic inequalities, which serve to justify them. This

may be the ground of economic justice (N.S.F.B., 218). Therefore, it is said that enjoyment of wealth by the rich without sharing it with those who are less privileged is the major cause of social and economic conflict. The Buddha has made it clear in the *Kosambiya Sutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*. Therein it is said that even a meal should be enjoyed by sharing. According to *Vyagghapajja Sutta*, the world looks down upon those who enjoys food without sharing. The ill-fame of such an individual will cause damage to him. Buddhism speaks not only of economic and material loss and that befalls such a person, but also of spiritual decline that takes place. Such type of behavior increases desire for more and more enjoyment of pleasure which leads bondage. Thus, it produces internal conflict instead of internal peace (B.E.P., 202-3).

Conflict had also been prevalent during the period of the Buddha that occurred due to misgovernance in the state as referred in the *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta*. Even the Buddhist order was not free from conflict that sometimes happened on the issue of procedural error in course of ecclesiastical acts in Uposatha, Kaṭhina and Upasampadā ceremonies.

What causes the economic conflict in the material world? According to Buddhism, Changing is inherent in all worldly phenomena subjected to cause and effect. The conflict occurs automatically in the process of phenomenal changing. Even the human behavior is not an exception of this law. It (conflict) is manifested in both positive and negative ways, because the seeds of conflict (raṇa) and non-conflict (araṇa) are the natural phenomena harboring in the mind of the people due to having impressions of actions of the previous births (M.L.D., 180-86). The *Dvedhāvittaka Sutta* also mentions that unwholesome and wholesome thoughts are latent in the mind and they are activated accordingly finding the situation suitable to the nature of mind, (M.L.D., 207-209).

Conflict instigates one for further innovation and production of new things favorable for the circumstances. What we see today an advancement of science and technology in material world is the resultant of positive conflict. An evolution and dissolution of the universe is also the outcome of the both positive and negative conflicts respectively. According to *Aggañña Sutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*, the origin of creatures on the transformed solid sweet layer of the earth in early beginning of the process of evolution happened because of conflict of desires among creatures. Gradually different types of beings came into existence along with an appearance of galaxy. The *Araṇasutta* gives an account of the causes that lead to conflict and the way that leads away from conflict. Desire for sensuous pleasures gives rise first to sensuous desire and then to conflict depending on five cords of senses that cause five types of conflict. Most of them are related to economic activities, which provoke the people for enjoyment of sensuous pleasure, that is only possible from the fulfilment of ever increasing desires, but it seems impossible to satisfy all with limited means. Ultimately, the desire prompted by craving and clinging respectively becomes furious and gives rise to conflict. In this context, *Ajita Mānava* asked several questions to the Buddha. He says that the rivers of desire are running in every directions. How can we dam them and what will hold them back? What can we use to close the flood-gates? The Buddha replies that any river can be stopped with the dam of mindful awareness. He calls it flood-stopper. And with wisdom one can close the flood-gates (Sn. V, 3-4; N.S.F.B., 227-28). Mind is the forerunner of all activities (Dhp., Vs. 1-2). It is pure by nature in spite of having seven immoral latent factors (anusayas) caused by formations (saṅkhāras) of previous births. The seven latent factors are: 1. sensual passion (kāma-rāga), 2. love for life (bhava-rāga), 3. aversion (paṭigha), 4. conceit (māna), 5. false-view (diṭṭhi), 6. perplexity (vicikicchā), and 7. ignorance (avijjā). Hence, it is said that the man is born with ignorance in the human realm of the sensuous blissful plane of

existence. It is pertinent that mind does not function alone. Being associated with mental factors of different nature it starts its functioning according to the nature of mental factors. Wherever it comes into contact with immoral mental factors and due to their active role, the mind loses its natural character and become enveloped with the layer of pollutions. The dominant immoral roots like greed (lobha), hatred (dosa) and ignorance (moha) (A. Dh., 198).

Apart from these, there are some more immoral mental factors which play the significant role in creating agitation and conflict in the society. They are: shamelessness (ahirika) fearlessness (anottappa), restlessness (uddhacca), envy (issā), worryness (kukucca) and so on. They provoke the mind of the people for involvement in immoral actions that break the stability of peace in the nation being initiated thereby the people struggle for the fulfilment of sensuous desires for the benefit of self (C.M.A., 83-84). Ultimately, the whole social and economic working system is disintegrated. Directly or indirectly the production of goods, distribution and consumption are adversely affected and then there arises a conflict among producers and consumers. As the mind is motivated by desires and acts through respective sense faculties, so enjoyment of sensuous pleasure pursues one to enjoy more and more, that at last create economic crisis and conflict.

Araṇavibhanga-sutta gives an account of the causes of conflict which facilitate the social and economic conflict; they are as follow:

1. An utterance of covert or overt sharp speech is a state of conflict, when it is in practice of dealing with producers, consumers and business men.
2. Pursuit of self-mortification is another factor that affects the market price of consumable goods through demand and supply.
3. Though extolling and disparaging are not directly connected with economic activities but with social environment that also affects economic behaviors negatively creating conflict in the society.
4. Enjoyment of sensuous pleasure through five cords connected with sensuous desire is the provocative of lust, which is more effective especially in rising economic conflict.
5. Insistence on local language and overriding of normal usage put the economy downwards of the nation creating conflict.

It is evident from the text that the dispute between Sākyana and Koliyana arose on the issue of the division of water of the *Rohini* River in the month of Jetṭha mūla when there was drought. A violent quarrel arose between the people of both sides for the use of water. Such type of natural calamity adversely affects the production of goods because of which people suffer, irritate and become frustrated due to this, the economic conflict arises (D.P.P.N. 763). These are the factors responsible for causing economic conflict in the material world.

Can economic conflict be resolved? If yes, How? Nothing is impossible in the world, Economic conflict resolution as a way of life and as a social norm is essential for resolving the intractable problems of the contemporary world, but it is the higher third that offers an approach that goes down to the roots (N.S.F.B., 15). The Buddhist view of economic conflict resolution is based on the acceptance of the fundamental features of phenomena, such as change, the recurrence of the evolutionary process, environmental change, oneness of mankind as well as social and economic needs, individual differences and so on. According to this view, all changes in the society for both good and bad are the outcome of the conflict among these numerous factors. The interaction and conflict among these factors give rise to social and economic

institutions, sustain them, destroy them and even pave the way for the rise of new social and economic institutions. (B.E.P., 105).

It is clear from the answer to the question on the causes of economic conflict that material enjoyment with deep engagement for the fulfilment of the sensuous desires is the root cause of the global economic crisis and conflict. There are a number of suttas that contain the discourses of the Buddha regarding material enjoyment focusing the way to enjoyment without being deeply engaged in them. *The Ariyavamsa Sutta, Rāsiya Sutta, Kāmbhogiya Sutta, Araṇasutta* and others too present an elaborative discourse on the philosophy of material enjoyment. These suttas refer to an encroachment into sensual pleasure and enjoying them with much addiction to them. It means the enjoyment of wealth with deep attachment and engrossment which entails one for rude and economically rough behavior by misconduct and misleading the society that helps in creating economic crisis. Therefore, the Buddha has discarded it putting under extreme form of conduct which is vulgar and harmful. Hence, one should give up such practices for the removal of suffering caused by social and economic conflict. (Mv. 13-15)

Five cords of sensuous pleasures, such as forms, sound etc. are the prominent desired matters, which are provocative of lust. As there is no end of enjoying such joyful pleasure rather it increases specially in materialism, where there is a large number of goods for enjoyment through consumption. It compels an ordinary untrained persons to go on for engrossment of lust that creates social and economic conflict. Thus, enjoyment is constantly emphasized in Buddhism. Such type of enjoyment should not be pursued, developed and cultivated to minimize or to stop the arising of conflict. (M.L.D., 1083)

As wealth is a source of enjoyment, so it initiates one for hoarding of wealth more and more to satisfy the thirst of desires by adopting any sort of the ways of earning being aggravated by craving, though it is impossible to rise up from craving. It connotes a state where an employer of wealth finds oneself difficult to get away from enjoying. The *Nivāpa Sutta* says that in such a situation one falls into infatuation and heedlessness that causes abnormality in man, which represents a very acute state of alienation. Such addict loses self-mental balance and becomes abnormal and blind to see the reality. He devotes all his time for the acquisition of money either through good or bad means. However, an excess enjoyment of wealth can be minimized through the mindful awareness of the evil consequences of excessive enjoyment. It can be done only through the perception of the true nature of existence by the right view. It inspires one to control both inner and outer conflict.

Another way to control the rising tendency of enjoyment is a way to generate contentment with self-belongings like the monks who are contented with their robes, almsfood and dwellings. (M.L.D. 309). But it seems impossible in the case of householders who are living in a family with relatives. They require more money to maintain the family taking care of all. The Buddha has advised the people to earn the wealth up to forty years of age as much as possible through their respective profession of right livelihood. In this context he has also prohibited to adopt wrong way of livelihood, (Mn. III, 139). Wrong ways of earning livelihood are also enumerated from which the people are required to keep themselves aloof. (Dn. I, 3-10). The endorsement of these things have been made with a view to prevent the arising of economic crisis and conflict.

The insatiability is considered in Buddhism as human nature. Modern economists also admits that wants are unlimited, which are creation of insatiable mind. Contentment can never be found even with an abundance of sensual objects. It is true, the one who possesses more houses and properties, vehicles, money and such other things should be quite content, but it is not so. It is seen that there is more

discontentment, restlessness, unhappiness in affluent countries, where wide spread of crimes, rape, and murder are seen in large number that shows discontentment prevailing in the societies of European countries and America. (B.E.P. 223), Buddhism confidently remarks that not even the shower of gold coin does contentment arise in enjoyment of pleasure; aptly explains this insatiable nature of human mind, (Dhp., V. 186). The *Raṭṭhapāla Sutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya* tells us that the world is deficient, unsatisfied and a slave of desire. Further it also explains how man being overwhelmed by the desire engage in amassing wealth. The man dies without being fulfill his desires, because there is no sensual satisfaction in this world. (Mn. II, 54). Thus, it is clear that contentment is not inherent in the object of senses.

The knowledge of the true nature of the worldly phenomena is the only way to leash the endless desire. The *Vijjāsutta* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya* also says that knowledge is the forerunner of wholesome things. (Gs. V 148-5). All worldly objects of senses are conditioned things and marked by three characteristics namely, impermanency, suffering and non-substantiality. When these objects come into contact with sense organs, there arises either liking or disliking or neutral feeling. What we like, that develops attachment, and what we dislike that develops hatred. There arises clinging towards what we like to possess and continuously enjoy. But we are unable to possess them forever, because they are changing. This creates unhappiness and restlessness in us. When we truly become aware of the fact that we cannot become content or happy by amassing these objects and enjoying them, there would occur some sort of mental change with regard to these objects and it is of no use of amassing them. This brings about a restraint to our enjoyment that begins to operate with inner change through observance of the true nature of phenomena. (*Indriyabhāvanāsutta*. (Mn. III, 152) and *Nibbedhikapariyāya* (An. V. 410) explain lucidly these ideas.

It is more pertinent to draw the attention towards five precepts that help us in leading peaceful socially and economically balanced life essential for resolution of global socio-economic problems. Five precepts are the refraining from killing, stealing, sexual misdeeds, telling lie and from taking intoxicants. (Kn. I, 3-4) First three curtail physical misdeeds playing role in both socio-economic affairs. The fourth one puts a restraint on vocal ones in dealing with economic affairs, whereas the fifth one controls over all and puts the balanced state of mind. All these generate the feeling of universal friendliness, non-covetousness, family- feeling, true reaction and balanced state of mind respectively, which prepare the background for the functioning of ethic based economic activities, which would prepare the congenial atmosphere for the global resolution of economic crisis and conflict (A.B. 118).

What I have observed being a student of Economics and of Buddhist lore, is that the middle path, avoiding two extremes, viz. indulgence in sensuous pleasure and self-mortification, comprises of eight constituents known as Noble Eight-fold path. It paves the way to solve the problems of life, whether it is physio-socio, spiritual or of economic concerned. Right-action and Right-livelihood are the two pertinent constituents that directly correspond to the Buddhist economics, though all the factors of the path are invariably interrelated and they help each other in resolving the every type of problems in life that makes the economy sound and balanced. Right-view makes one capable to distinguish between right and wrong actions. The *Mahācattārisaka Sutta* emphatically says that the clear understanding of the distinction between right and wrong livelihood is one's right-view. (Mn. III, 135-40). The *Aṅguttaranikāya* two presents three authorities (*adhipateyya*) namely, self-conscience (*attādhigateyya*), public opinion (*lokādhigateyya*) and compliance with the dhamma (*dhammādhigateyya*) that help to distinguish good from bad (An. I, 136-38). The Right-resolution makes one determined to observe right livelihood for earning the wealth. The Right-speech (*sammā-vācā*)

trains one in public dealing with social and economic affairs in right way being completely detached from unwholesome vocal actions that causes the arising of conflict as pointed out earlier and performs the right actions (sammā kammanto) observing the way of right-livelihood (sammā-ājīvo) for earning the wealth through right-effort (sammā-vāyamo) with mindful (sati) concentration (samādhi). Thus, all the factors being interrelated paves the way to make one's mind and body sound essential for economic conflict resolution and for economic growth. The *Mahācattārisaka Sutta* also explains the interrelationship of these factors and their role in resolution of social and economic conflicts.

At last, the question arises as to how can material welfare be helpful for spiritual progress? It is fact that most of religions talk about the supramundane sphere than the mundane affairs and believe in the things more connected with next life. It is only the Buddhism that talks about the happiness of both spheres in respect of material and immaterial phenomena, (Dhp., Vs. 16, 18). It considers material welfare as a means to an end. This is why, one of the constituents of the Noble Path propounded by the Buddha is Right-livelihood which refers to lawful earning through respective professions. It makes an individual a person fit to march towards the final goal. The *Vaḍḍhisutta* of the *Āṅguttaranikāya* mentions ten aspects in which a person prospers. These are: land and fields, wealth and possessions, wife and family, servitors and retinue, beasts of burden, faith, virtue, learning, generosity and wisdom. Thus, Buddhism does not ignore the material welfare that makes the body sound and capable to proceed further for mental culture to procure the knowledge of reality. However, in the present scenario of the domain of materialism, the world is deeply engaged in the development of physical world putting aside the ethical human values, that affects adversely the whole physical and mental working system breaking out the normal situation and turns it into the struggle, crime, crisis and conflict in the society, what we see in the developed countries. The Buddha is nowhere seen against the material progress, but against the attachment with material world. Therefore, he propounded the doctrine of egolessness (anatta) which cuts across the barriers of selfishness, greed and avarice in the human world. Once this barrier is broken, the healthy human relations are possible, that inspires us for balanced material as well as spiritual progress.

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