

International Conference on Religious Tolerance and Harmony

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Department of Religious Studies and Comparative Philosophy,

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Abstract

Relevance of Buddha teachings providing a viable solution towards conflict resolution

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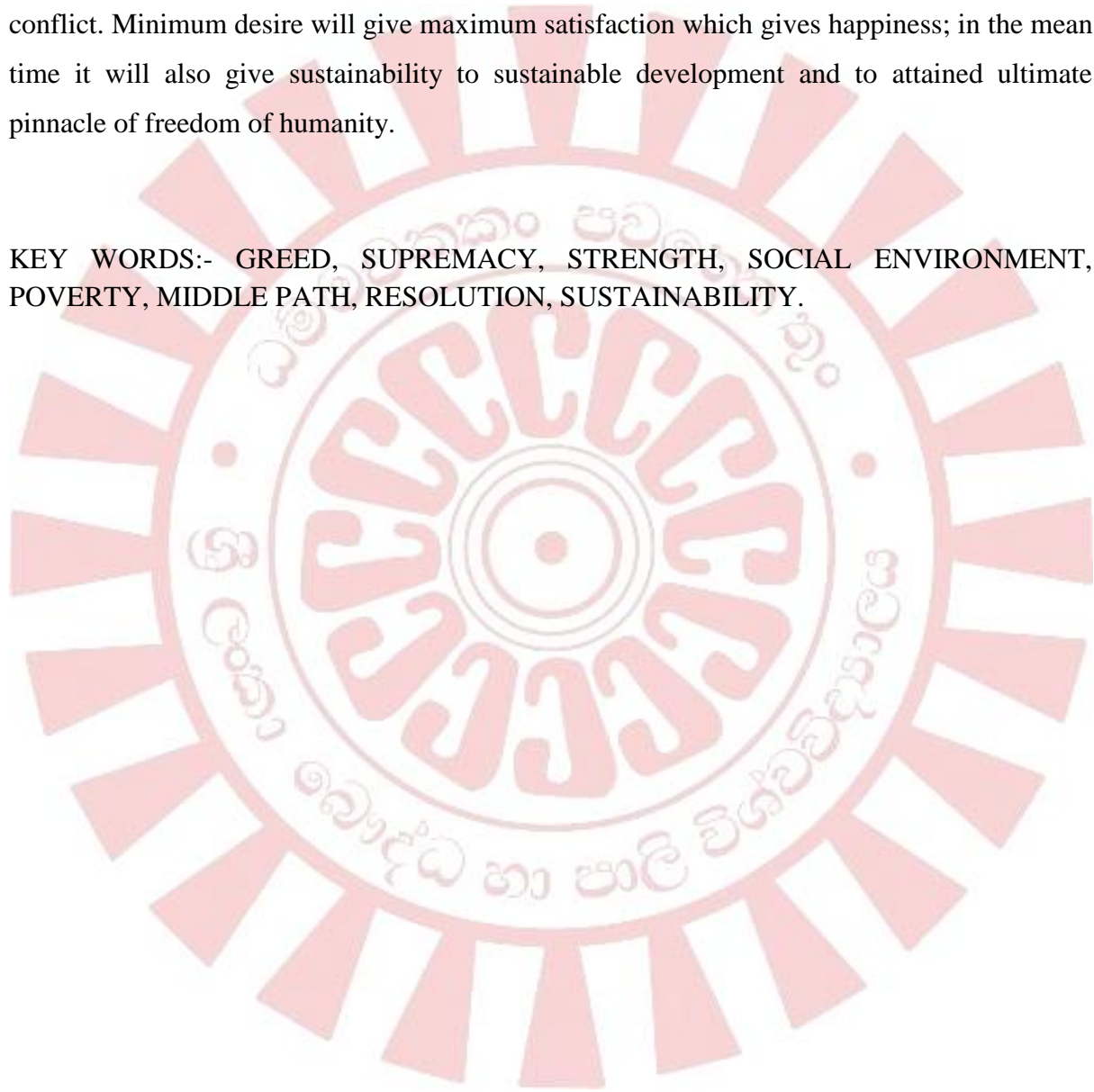
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The world what we see now has change in many fold in due course of time. The constant greed, struggle for supremacy, market, energy and economy has deconstructed world social order. Today around us is the conflict of nations, civil war and persistent threat of fundamentalist forces. The world is in such a chaotic mess that no conventional approach is very effective in bringing down the order in chaos. Buddha's teaching of conventional approach of solving social conflict by understanding compassion, non violence and peace. Desire is the root cause of every problem. Desire leads to manifestation of power to show strength, which provoke conflict. Buddha's theory of Dependent Origination states that "everything originates with a cause. The main cause of social conflict is greed of an individual or group or nation. Individual greed leads to conflict, conflict leads to violence and violence leads to demolish social environment. On the other hand social conflict gives thrust to originate other problems such as poverty, unemployment, civil and human rights issues. Therefore social conflicts originate due to social problems and social problems arise because of the social conflict, both are interconnected and vice versa. This paper is divided into two parts , in brief first part have two sections in which first section deal with origin of social conflicts. How and what are the major catalyst played an important role in the origin of the social conflicts. Second sections will findings of its effect based on Nobel Truth. In both of the section of the first part is based on the Buddha theory of Dependent Origination. Second

part focuses on its resolution with a practical approach self realisation and minimisation of greed on the teachings of “Middle Path”.Today “the light of Asia” becomes “light of the World” and the World is just like one Sangha in the era of information technology and globalisation. Buddhist approach towards conflict resolution is completely different from the theories of modern society. Its first starts with “self” and extended to the society and to the World. Elimination of greed is most important and most practical approach to resolve social conflict. Minimum desire will give maximum satisfaction which gives happiness; in the mean time it will also give sustainability to sustainable development and to attained ultimate pinnacle of freedom of humanity.

KEY WORDS:- GREED, SUPREMACY, STRENGTH, SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, POVERTY, MIDDLE PATH, RESOLUTION, SUSTAINABILITY.



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Conflict is confrontation, between people situation and states. Conflict arises for the power, position and supremacy. According to oxford dictionary “conflict” meaning, a serious disagreement or argument, typically a protected one.¹ Definition of conflict changes according to time, place and situation. In ancient times conflict for power and land was in greater importance. In modern times conflict is all about the right issue in the era of globalization and in democratic setup institutions. In the history of human civilization, at one time or another, in one place or another conflict always arises. There is a difference between conflict of ancient and modern times. In the ancient times conflict was limited to survival but in modern times the conflict depends on the right issue. When we associate conflict with social, it’s become confrontation for social powers. Social conflict is conflict between self,

¹www.oxforddictioneris.com/defination/english/conflict

society and institutions. This conflict is widening in nature, associated with number of issues, but totally associated with opposing social power.² Social conflict is mainly associated with imbalance.

Buddhism was founded in India by Gautam Buddha in sixth century BCE. According to historian Ram Sharan Sharma, invention of iron and starting of new economy based on agriculture, leads to development of different philosophical sects in fifth and sixth century BCE in the Ganga basin³. Iron tool helps in cleaning and making agricultural land that helps in second urbanisation in India. Vedic civilisation was very much involved in animal and human sacrifices. Vedic people were more indulge in conflict for land, property and kingship. The most important was the caste system⁴. Gautam Buddha was against the caste system. Buddha teachings were simple and understandable to the masses. His teachings of non violence and peace were against the class and clan conflict. During the Vedic period, there was rise in the number in ethnic conflict. The main reason for the conflict was the rise in the number of Kingdom.

This paper is divided into two parts, first part have two sections in which first sections deals with origin of social conflicts. Second sections will findings of its effect based on Nobel Truth. In both of the sections of the first part is based on the Buddha Theory of Dependent Origination. Second part will be focuses on its resolution with a practical approach, self realization and minimization of greed on the teachings of “Middle Path”. Conflict always be harmful and barrier towards mental and physical development. Today countries of the World are facing big challenges of social, political and religious conflict. Buddha teaching was religious tolerance.

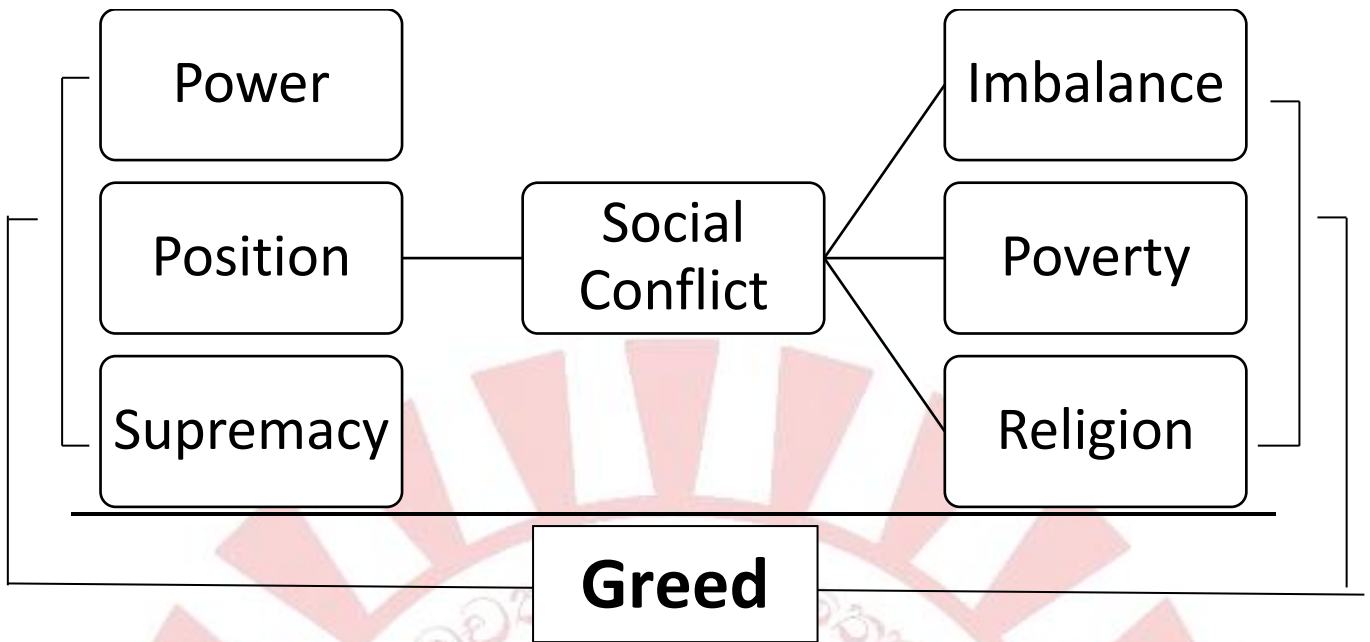
Origin of Social Conflict

Social conflict originates because of the greed of power, position and supremacy over others. Today world is facing serious threat from ongoing social conflict around the globe. The social conflict categorized into terrorism, religious fundamentalist and political turbulence. Social conflict is also because of ideology.

² Loser. A distinction between conflict and hostile sentiments is essential conflict, as distinct from hostile attitudes or sentiments, always takes place in society.

³ Sharma' R.S. India's Ancient Past; Oxford University Press 13th ed. 2013. PP 130-131

⁴ Ibid pp 132-133



In the age of information and communication technology, there are three types of conflicts. These conflicts are problematic for the society and create number of other conflicts. These are:

- **Fundamentalistic Conflict:** Fundamentalistic conflict is based on religion or ideology. These groups are religious association or ideological groups; they are not only disturbing society but also giving fuel to social conflict.
- **Religious Terrorism:** Terrorism based on the religion is most dangerous for the development of civilisation. They are morally bankrupt; they do not understand the difference between living and non living things. They act for the supremacy of there religion, for example ISIS.
- **Civilisational Clash:** Clash of different civilisation gives opportunity of arising failed states, for example Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya and other. Both above mentioned, fundamentalist conflict and religious conflict is the weapon of civilisational conflict.

Result of Social Conflict.

Result of Social Conflict is always devastative. Result will be multidimensional for most is mistrust among individuals. Society consists of very groups, individuals and conflict among themselves result into mistrust among them. Coexistence is basic structure of society,

cohesiveness in term of ideas, faith, goal, and pave away for development in terms of trade economy, cultural cohesive and environmental sustainability. However conflict is society don't make a smooth way to achieve goals of humanity. Moreover, whenever the conflict arises out of violent mean then every parameters of development in society comes to an end. It affects politically, economy, culturally and environmentally to the society or individual.

Culturally – Seems in its inception human society is culturally different. Cultural varied from society to society, group to groups, country to country and social harmony is the entity that covers up all of these diversity of group and makes the society prosperous and strengthen the solid platform for the society. Seems, from the ancient time the concept of “Unity in diversity” is the basic characteristic of humanity and owing to this philosophy the world has strengthen the process of development. However, conflict owing to cultural intolerance among different groups has resulted destructive outcome in past too. Example, destruction of Buddhism in Bamiyan, by Taliban. The world, human society knows the significance of cultural tolerance therefore UNESCO has been established for this purpose.

Economically – Conflict in society is a barrier for economy progress. This is not a single society, group, country which makes progress economically, if conflict in society persists there; No tackle, business, any profitable activity can to be done in a conflict ridden society. Its create unemployment, poverty. So conflict in a society is a barrier for development, which create bigger gap between rich and poor.

Environmental – Conflict in society makes negative on environment and ecology, a society where conflict persist, people used to grab to ownership on natural resources. It makes bigger impact on environment and ecology. Due to conflict in society environment progress of sustainability harms.

Political – Due to social conflict it is very hard to run the state. Its effect the right and justice of the people. Due to social conflict, states and institution not able to fulfill its people oriented policies. Society conflict is the greatest barrier for political development in a democratic setup.

These three main results of the social conflict are very harmful for the development of human civilisation and environment sustainability. If social conflict exists longer in the society then

basic social structure will be collapsed. Then the destroyed society will be taken by fundamentalist forces, leads to an end of the human civilisation⁵.

Buddhism conflict resolution.

Buddhism founded by Gautama Buddha in Sixth Century BCE. Buddha meaning “the awakened one”. The central fundamental principle of Buddha teaching is “middle path” between self indulgence and self-mortification.⁶ Buddha founded Buddhism against the evils of the society was caste conflict, violence brahmanical rituals, animal and human sacrifices. Core philosophy of Buddhism is peace and non- violence.

- Present World Order :

Today social conflict is gripping every section of the society. Social conflict, in the name of religion, the fundamentalist, disordering the World order. Every parts of the world, social conflict is making great impact on the development Ralf Dahrendorf, states in his book. The Modern social conflict is all about enhancing life chances, the ties and binds a society.⁷

Buddhist Peace – Buddha praised non-violence and peace. Non-violence and peace is the central philosophy of development. Peace is conceptual term that gives inner and outer peace.⁸ Inner peace is satisfaction from desires. Inner peace can be achieved by minimizing desires. Outer peaces are conflict free society, harmony and inter faith dialogue.



⁵Jabari. Discourses on violence: Conflict analysis reconsidered. Page 146

⁶Reat, Noble Rose, Buddhism, A History; Jain Publication Company, California, USA. 1994, PP 13-14

⁷Dahrendorf, Ref, The Modern Social Conflict; The Politics of Liberty. Transaction Publisher, USA 2012

⁸Thepsophon, Phra (PrayoonMererk), A Buddhist world view, fifth impression, Bangkok, Mahachulalongkorn University Press, 2000.PP58

Social Conflict resolution on Buddha's teachings.

Buddhist teachings and philosophy is based on ethics and morality. These principles are universal and practical in nature that encourages peace, nonviolence and social harmony. These are based on the following:

***Five precepts:** Five precepts are the practical approach to morality. No stealing, No killing, No adultery, No to lie, No intoxicating liquor. Five precepts are also the self purification.

***Four sublime state:** Four sublime states are the most important teachings of Buddha in achieving social harmony. These four sublime state are, loving kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, equanimity.

How the social conflict originate. If we understand the “*Five precepts*” and the “*Four sublime state*”, now we can also get into the origins of social conflict. Buddhism philosophy of conflict origin is becomes of:

- # Tanha – craving
- # Mana – conceit
- # ditthi – false view
- # lobha – greed
- # dosa – hatred
- # moha – delusion

Greed or desire is suffering. Suffering is Dukkha. Desire of any things can be different from person to person, from group to group, from society to society, from ideology to ideology, from nation to nation.

Yathapiruciranipubbham

Vannavantamagandhakam

Evamsubhasitavaca

*Aphalohotiakubbalo*⁹

Dhammapada(51)

Above mentioned Buddha teachings from *Dhammapada* clearly states about the social, political or religious conflict resolution. According to Buddha's teaching conflict caused by desire, hatred and ignorance. Buddhist moral principle lies in the *SuttaNipata*.

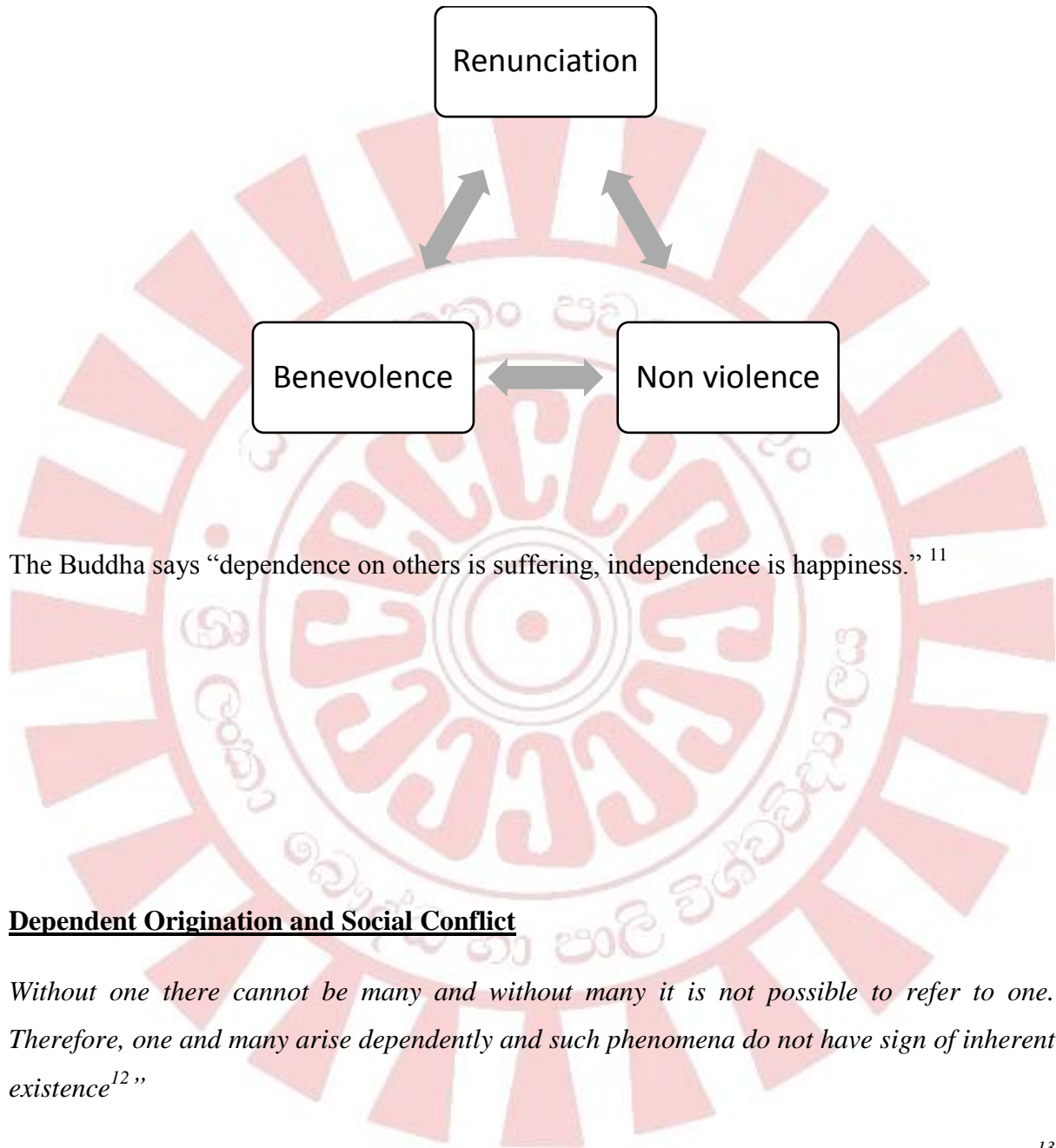
*As I am, so are they. As they are, so am I. Comparing others with oneself, one should not harm or cause harm.*¹⁰

- SuttaNipata, VS705

⁹Dhammapada; 51

¹⁰SuttaNipada; 705

Buddhist view on every conflict resolution is to understand basic social structure of mutual coexistence and follow Buddha’s teachings of peace and non violence.



The Buddha says “dependence on others is suffering, independence is happiness.”¹¹

Dependent Origination and Social Conflict

Without one there cannot be many and without many it is not possible to refer to one. Therefore, one and many arise dependently and such phenomena do not have sign of inherent existence¹²”

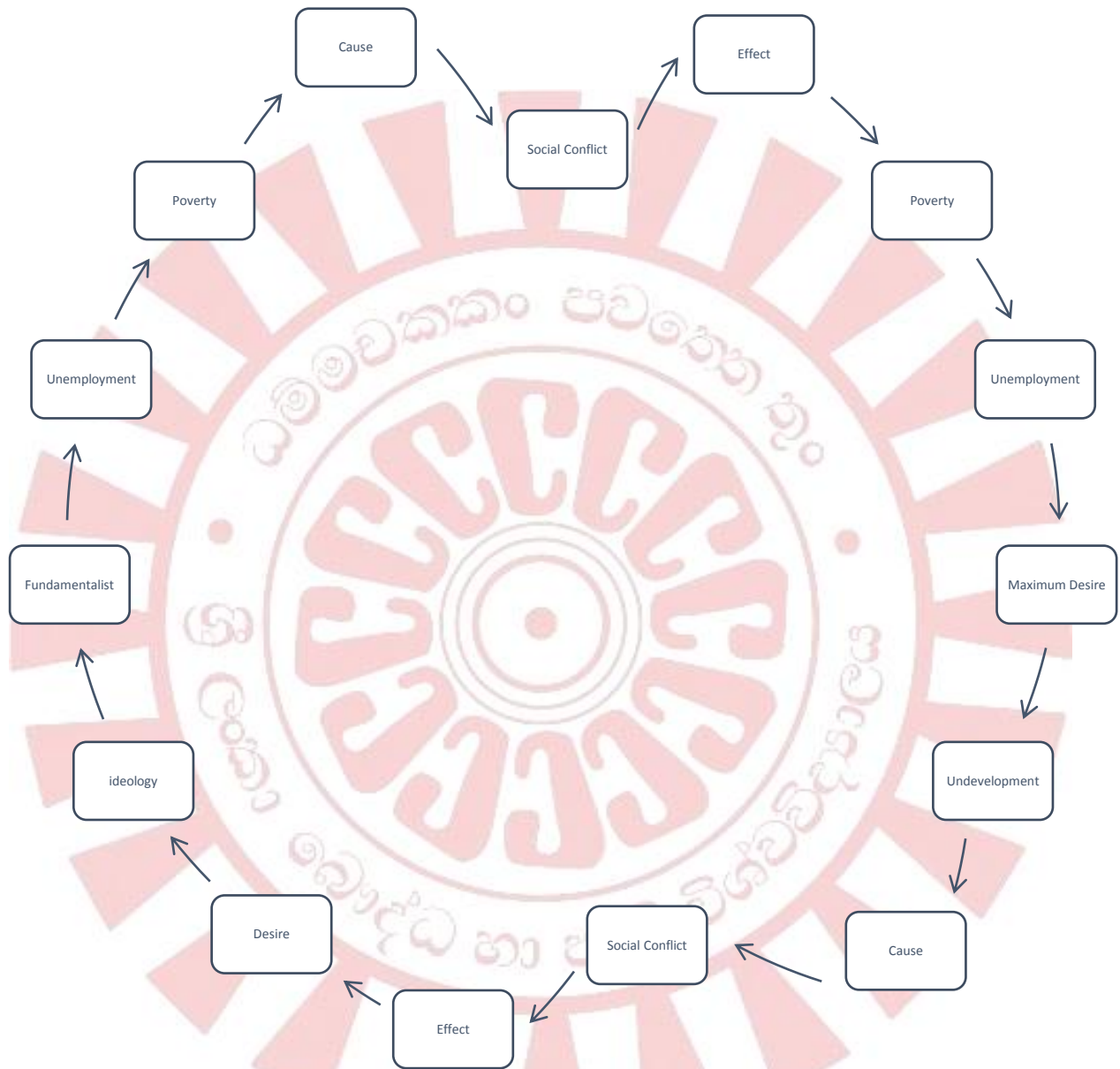
-Nagarjuna¹³

¹¹Udana, P18

¹²William. Mahayana Buddhism:The Doctoral Foundation. 1989.PP 55-76

¹³Nagarjuna was the foremost Mahayana Buddhist Philosopher.

Dependent Origination meaning emergence and existence of any happening depends on others happening; cause and effect theory. On the theory of dependent origination is origin of conflict also dependence on cause that creates effects.



The focal point of social conflict is ignorance. According to dependent origination theory is the main causes of social conflict is poverty, unemployment maximum desire, and undevelopment. These effect once again become cause for the another phase of social conflict. The resolving social conflict on the Buddha’s teaching is to abolishing ignorance and knowing four noble truths, dependent originations and the Noble Eight fold path. As mentioned in Theory of dependent Origination, every action has cause of that action and that

gives result. In that context the main cause of social conflict, in a lower level, is poverty. Poverty gives enormous problem for example unemployment, illiteracy, poor health. The result of the social conflict is the same, which make platform for another conflict. This is a continuous process.

Avoiding of all evils,

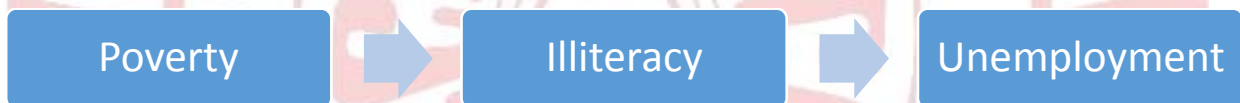
Cultivation of the wholesome,

Purification of one's mind,

This is the teaching of the Buddha.

- DhammanadaD2:49

According to Buddha's teaching conflict resolution is implies on Karma or action. In a globalized world conflict resolution is wider and more difficult. As shows in above chart, the chakra of social conflict is always in motion. For the modern conflict resolution, first we have to fulfill and eliminated the causes that leads to social conflict. i.e.



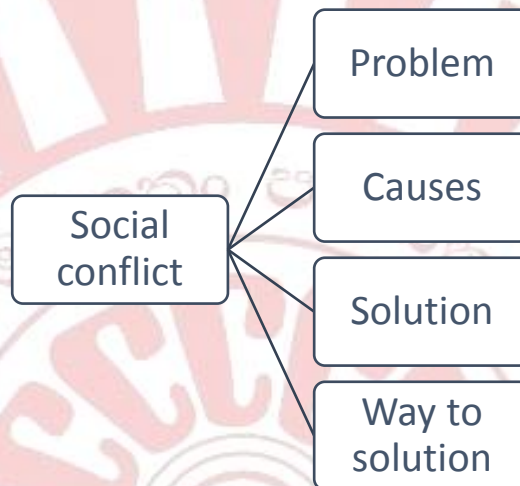
If we able to eliminate poverty, illiteracy and unemployment than there will be minimum social conflict. If financial inclusion education and employment in the society then society will be developed and progressive.

Evolvement of Buddhism is historical based on the theory of Peace and non-violence that gives solution to balance of power and social conflict resolution. Buddhist always active towards resolving problems of the society. To eliminate human suffering is the prime goals of Buddhist United Nation, the prime organization, plying active role in peace making and peace keeping. United Nations Charter, Article No. 33 clearly states that conflict will be resolved by, negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, by the United Nation or its agencies. These are based on Buddha's teachings. Seven methods of individual and group conflict resolution are stated in the Sutra of the *MajjhimaNikaya*¹⁴. The seven way of individual and group conflict resolution was given by the Buddha on the incident happened after the death of Jaina Mahavira.

¹⁴MajjhamaNikaya .243-251

Conclusion

Buddha's teaching is more relevance than any other approach towards conflict resolving. Buddha's teaching of Four Nobel Truth, problem of social conflict, causes of social conflict,



solution of Social Conflict and the way towards social conflict resolution can be achieved.

Solution of Social conflict is based on the “Theory of Dependent Origination.” The Chakra of cause of social conflict and effect of Social conflict should be abolished. Social conflict can be resolved on the following way.

First, this paper has examined the cause of social conflict. The social conflict cause due to ignorance, of understanding self, social structure and social survival ethics.

Second, To resolved social conflict, first, to understand the Social Conflict “Cause and Effect Theory” based on Buddha's theory of Dependent Origination.

Third, cause of Social conflict is through right action (Karma) and abolishing ignorance is the prime aim of Buddhist. Also developing interfaith dialogue is also very important. Buddha' teaching gives great importance on self knowledge. Five precepts teach us about the good conduct. It starts with self and moves towards further.

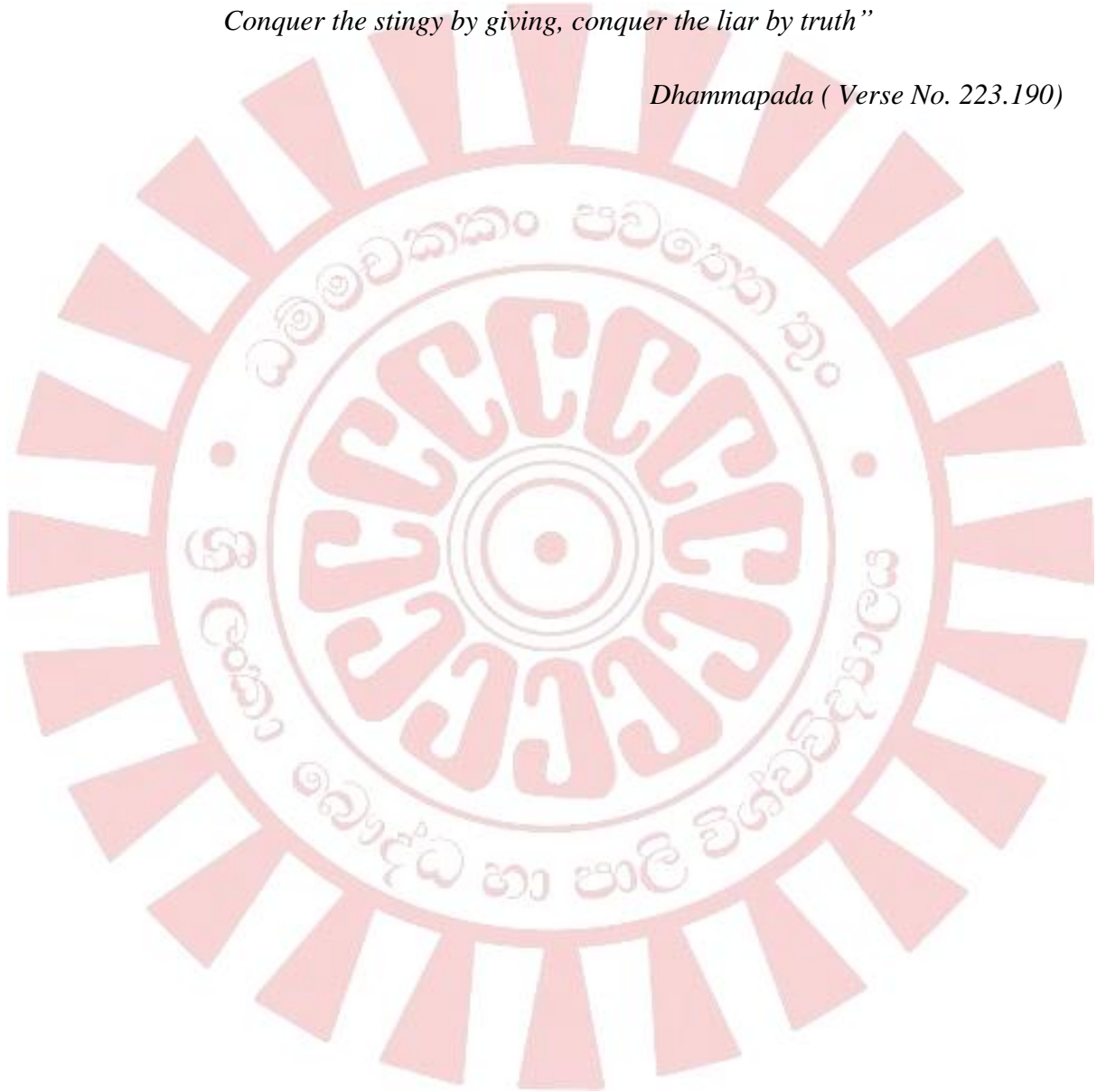
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Elimination of greed is most important and most practical approach to resolve social conflict. Minimum desire will give maximum satisfaction which gives happiness; in the mean time it will also give sustainability to sustainable development and to attained ultimate pinnacle of freedom of humanity.

“conquer anger by love, conquer evil by good,

Conquer the stingy by giving, conquer the liar by truth”

Dhammapada (Verse No. 223.190)



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