

Relevance and importance of application of Buddhist counseling principles in

Conflict Resolution:

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Present Global scenario on conflicts:

In a situation like war or conflict it is principally seen the benevolence of the mankind is disappeared. Highness of the mind is suppressed and they will compel to argue, quarrel, clash, fight and battle with the blind guidance of its own unwholesome ideas. In this paper we aim to emphasize the Relevance and importance of application of Buddhist counseling principles in Conflict Resolution. At a conflict situation in any kind of a society is naturally facing with many types of damages in many ways. Among those social, cultural, economical, political, and psychological damages are basically effects on each and every individual in the country or society predominantly an inevitably in some or another way. Among these dreadful effects there again we can identify two major types of destructions in ways of mental and physical. Conflicts physically result people and animal deaths and bodily injuries, property demolishment, environmental pollution etc. In addition to that arms outflow will create the damages in the civil society and social violence eventually occurs by ways of highway robberies, theft, burglaries etc. physical damages will eventually create mental destructions in many ways. Finally all these effects leads to result a generation affected with dejection and glumness. With such type of a mankind no country can achieve goals in its development and will result a grief-stricken future for the entire nation of the country. No body in the world would like to have such a miserable future for them or their next generation other than people such as arms merchants and mentally ill personalities. Sri Lanka, as a country which suffered more than three decades over a terrorist war and having experienced the actual situation of the victims are now trying hard to get remedies in the aforementioned scopes.

We notice this had been a common issue in this part of the Globe. Including Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, Nepal, Indonesia, and some other countries also have been faced with more distressed situations over civil conflicts for many years in their history. Under the

circumstances individual and social development of our neighborhood dragged its generation's development in to a far lower levels comparing to the other parts of the globe in both physical and mental aspects. Even though the conflict is physically come to an end in Sri Lanka, repercussions have not become finished. After a war situation there have been devastations in all major concerns such as individual mind sets, physical injuries, family problems, social affairs impairments and so on where we can not see the point of cessation.

In the circumstance, those problems will certainly run through to the next couple of generations too. The conflict mind-set will effect in a wide spectrum rather than an individual scope which might result ailing sort of a population to the future. Hence certainly there must be a hearty method on its long-term rehabilitation. In the context, post-conflict reconstruction assistance must be provided by us to develop the public of the victimized areas by evaluating the damages caused, and have to provide them with a factual solution in order to get their minds up and about.

Why do people tend to conflict:

Human being is also known as one of the “*satwa*” (Creature) in this world. Both Craving and ignorance are equally powerful defilements which mainly effect to create the “*Satwa*” also can be described as “*āsakta*” that causes attachment and suffering. “*satwa*” at its real meaning explains its nature, and it is grasping in to things due to unwholesome roots (*akusalamula*) described as *rāga*, *dhosa* and *moha* (in English terms known as anger, hatred, and delusion). According to the Buddhist analysis, *Satwa* is being existing as five grasping groups (*panchaupādānakkhanda*¹), with the combination of two main aspects known as Mental (*nāma*) and Physical (*roopa*). Mentality is explained under *Nāma* as Senses, Feelings, Perceptions and consciousness (*vedhana*, *sagnā*, *sankāra*, *vignāna*) of the *panchaupādānakkhanda* where as *rupa* is the physical appearance of the *sathwa*. *Sathwa* is exists Due to passion and collision and same two are the main causes which creates conflict situations as well. Hence this is recognized as a

¹ S. 111.,p.101;D.111.,p.233;M.1.,p.190;A.V.,p.52

psycho-physical interdependent function to create *sathwa* or the living being. As clearly described in *agganna sutta*², living being on the earth evolved in the lead of those three unwholesome roots *rāga*, *dosa* and *moha*. Latter part of the same discourse explains the civilization and subsequently the beginning of conflicts as well. Almost all the problems such as ecological problems, the environmental crisis, and problems of international relations, poverty, civil war, and social conflicts are all arising due to lack of awareness about this Buddha's teachings on "*akusalamula*" (unwholesome roots). Due to these unwholesome considerations, in our world history it has lost some great people, Ideologies, places & historical knowledge etc. (eg. devastation of Ancient *Nālandā* University.)

It is a fact that modern society has been achieved some accomplishments in its physical development. If it is a true development, the mankind and the other beings that live on the surface of this earth too must be benefited from it. The question arise on this concern is, has it provided the proper quality enhancement for the living being through its physical development? And, has the so called civilized society been civilized at its real means? We see though the modern human society has gained a substantial development physically, it has not really civilized under the meanings of humanity concerns. To develop a proper personality the person has to have a simultaneous development in his heart & mind both. Explaining In other words the person has to develop wholesome feelings and intelligence both. Lord Buddha has explained this concept as *mahā karuṇā and mahā pagnā*. But the so called developed society today tends to develop only the intelligence factor where the other important element has slithered away from their concerns. This has happened due to egoism and selfishness. Most of the individuals of the modern society thinking merely about money to develop their corporeal stage and they do not thinking in a humanitarian angel. Greed has leaded the person to loss of sight then tends to chase behind money and matter forgetting real human values. In the past history we have experienced some of today's developed countries conquered other nations and extracted natural resources of them and also damaged the peace and harmony in that divisions of the world. Earlier days Most of the Asian countries which were guided by the

² D.111.,p.136

Buddhist philosophy had a better livelihood and sovereignty within them before this colonialism. However after the colonialism independence of those victim countries obliterated and their peace and harmony also ruptured down and subsequently resulted generation with disconcert mentalities.

Having destroyed the humanitarian values in those victimized innocent countries, some of those developed countries nowadays attempt to teach civilization to us with their rationalism based ideologies, where they did series violations at early stages and after years and years the whole new generations of almost all the victim countries become selfish to keep their status high leaving others in chaos. This unpleasant thinking pattern resulted totally a selfish society which today we do experience. That is why we see the modern generation merely think about the intelligence factor forgetting the humanitarian feeling factor forsaken.

Under the circumstances today parents do not know what to teach their children to develop a proper civilized person nourished with good humanitarian values. They keep on teaching their kids how to defeat another co member in the same society and how to conquer them to bring him self on to the top. At this time when all the parents try to follow this practice, then the whole culture will turn in to endless race fulfilled with egoism and selfishness. Subsequently, this situation will lead to develop full of conflicts within those individuals in the world. Then this will lead the man to be biased and they will make divisions in many ways within the society to result racial discriminations etc. The whole world become a single war field with full of conflicts later on. This is why the Buddhism teaches us to live practicing *Mahā karunā and mahā pagnā* in order to live in a peaceful environment. By this way we learn how to develop a proper personality enriched with good humanitarian values which leads to develop a good individual then to result a proper disciplined and civilized society.

The word *asaktha (sathwa)* itself explains is attachment of beings to vary kinds of physiological and psychological things and concepts in the living environment. Upon these, they tend to like or dislike on those receiving and make attachments and refusals

consequently. When they receive what they like, tend to grasp in to those and when they receive things they dislike trying to get away from them. If the effort become successful they live happy, if not the situation creates conflicts within the mind set. Likings on its positive development create greed then to covetousness as a further developed stage. Where as dislike will develop to the stage of hate and then to malevolence by further developing. Due to the impermanent nature of the life both these attempts to attach or to detach process also will fail and resulting a mentality with delusion³.

Mental status directly involves with the physical status, and then the thoughts lead the being to create unwholesome activities within the people. This will lead to result aforementioned varies out comes as wars, conflicts, quarrels etc. In addition to eager, *māna* (conceit) is another major reason to generate conflicts. The person who led by the conceit basically having higher degree of egoism tend to act in a supercilious way leads to think “I or we need to control- others have to obey⁴”, and also take hold of in to his own proposal to explain the world and fasten to them as well⁵. Due to lack of knowledge on the eternal truth and Misconception of what the world is all about being prime facts to create these types of conflicts in the world.

Division in to clans is much common behavior within the mankind. *Panchaskandha* creates consciousness⁶ in the mind and persons with same thoughts move toward group them in separate clans. It can be called as “social ego”. To say our race, our nation, our belief, our country, etc. But end of the *sansāric* journey we all need to finish as a common man (*podhu purusha*)- as an example venerable *Mahā Mahinda* thero born in India as the son of Great Asoka the emperor came to Sri Lanka to propagate Buddhism, he accomplished his task in a very successful manner and established Buddhism in Sri Lanka by giving *Sanghaship* to a Son of a Local parents in Sri Lanka, and this new sangha completed his takeover by preaching the Dhamma describing in Sinhala language as expected by *Mahā Mahinda* thera. He was satisfied with his *dhammadhutha* service

³ Sumanapala G. D., *An analytical and creative study of the Buddhist theory and practice of psycho-therapy, Thailand, 2012*

⁴ *Aththukkansana, parawammana*

⁵ *Adhivacanasamphassa, D.11., p.62, M.1., p.113D.111., p.86*

⁶ *prapancha*

but after the establishment he did not think of returning back to *Bhāratha dhessa* to join back to his Fathers, since Mahā Mahinda being an arhath had become a common man (*Podhu purusa*). When we consider this concept for a person who had attained Buddhahood, Pachcheika Buddhahood or Arhathship is free of worries which are related to physical world and become a common man. The entire universe will become his territory and there is no grasping into anything physical. Once the supra-mundane status has obtained he will lose all the other bonds and attachments irreversibly.

Conflicts are common within the ordained society as well even at Lord Buddha's time. We can find some examples in the Buddhist readings too for this. There was a conflict between *Vinayadhara* and *dharmadhara* bhikkhus at that time. Failing the attempt to resolve the conflict, The Lord Buddha decided to leave the *sangha* society and left to the forest "Pārileyya". In this example it is clear that conflicts are common for any class of the society. These are obviously unavoidable since we are dealing with different kinds of individuals, whose minds filled with emotional feelings and inward consciousnesses.

Buddhist counseling method for overcome this issue:

Following phrase summarizes the core values of a proper human being,

<i>Arogyā paramā labhā</i>	– physical well being
<i>Santhutti paraman dhanan</i>	– mental well being
<i>Wissāsā paramā gnāthi</i>	– social well being
<i>Nibbhānan paraman sukan</i>	– spiritual well being

If a person develops these qualities, values and attainments in his or her life, he/she will eventually become a noble one in all the main aspects collectively can be taken as physiological, psychological and spiritual.

Sri Lankan Buddhist counseling method has been derived using various kinds of great phenomenologies in our history. It is particularly a method of counseling through the cultural context of the person where he belongs to. In any country we can see those major phenomenons. Buddhism -The great doctrine in the world to explain what the world truth

is all about is the religious context used to build up the mind status. *Ayurvedha* - the ancient treatment methods applied to heal both physiological and psychological illnesses not only in mankind but included trees and other living beings as well is to cure the physiological problems. Astrology the science developed using complete mathematical arguments which has been directed human being to find the correct path in their life span is to resolve issues related to the persons environment and the surroundings, where as the ancient rituals is to guide him through an accepted ways of believing in his culture or the most related way of mind healing through believing accepted by his own mindset which is inherent to him from his ancestors through generations to cure the illnesses occurred due to unseen sort of effects to the mankind.

The mind and the body is depending on each other on its functions, if one goes wrong and imbalanced it effect on the function of the other part and create illnesses on its function⁷. By using this theory to develop a practical method we are able to remedy most of those problems arising in conflict affected mind.

As per teachings of the Lord Buddha, there are three types of wonders⁸ that can be performed by a well developed mind. Out of these three, *anushāshanā prāthihārya* is the most prominent and vital one known as counseling. In his unmatched great life span The Lord Buddha performed this for forty five years and advised his disciples to practice the same for the benefit of the mankind and deities as well⁹. Buddhist counseling is a method derived using this principle of Buddhism which is used to perform *anushāshanā prāthihārya* (wonder of preaching) is carried out in order to heal the human mind and subsequently will have good effects on body as well. To give emphasis to this argument *Ayurvedhic* concepts also describe it is a must to develop good qualities in physiological, psychological and spiritual aspects which certainly need to create a proper personality.

⁷ *nalakalapa sutta S.11.,p.176*

⁸ *irdhi, ādeshanā, anushāshanā prāthihārya*

⁹ *Carata bhikkawe carikan bahujanahitaya bahujanasukhaya*

Hence, to become a healthy person, he must have a balanced in physic, psychic and spiritual concerns¹⁰.

Conflict situation destruct the society in many ways. When considering a situation such as war, which will affects the society in a greater degree results series of problems in the present generation as well as the subsequent ones. Hence, it has to be concerned with a higher prominence of severity to relief the victim mindsets of the present generation to reconstruct the individual and the society. Failing which, the agony will pass in to the next generation would result to start up a vicious complications.

During and after a conflict It is obvious that weapons and other harmful possessions are penetrating in to the civil society which will make disaster situations within the public who suffer with poverty and other related issues. They tend to steal, rob, and practice other noxious activities to prevail in their lives. At a time the mind doesn't understand the situation and describe problems properly, they do not recognize the true values of the human life. In the most parts of the war affected areas we see this tragic situation and aftereffects also see nowadays. Also it is a fact that the human society is losing large number of lives over conflicts, yesterday and today. We as Buddhists who look at the world with wholesome ideas have to work to discontinue the awful situation and we see that as a duty which entrusted on us for the benefit of the mankind and others live in the environment too.

Under Buddhist counseling method there are three gradual ways to train the person, as follows.

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| 1. Behavioral therapy | - | Development of moral behavior |
| 2. Psychological therapy | - | Development of concentration |
| 3. Cognitive therapy | - | Development of understanding |

¹⁰*samadhosha, samadhāthu, samāgnicha malakriya, prasanna āthma indriya manah, swasthā ithi abhidheeyathe*

This is a consequent method which is much important to follow according the Buddhist teaching where behavioral therapy related to *seela*, Psychological therapy related to *samādhi* and Cognitive therapy related to *paññā*. By adhering in to this method, finally the person compels to understand the world as its factual means through the wisdom. Wisdom (*paññā*) is the last stage of understanding the real truth related to the cognitive phase through a process passing behavioral good conduct (*seela*) and mental good conduct (*Samadhi*). This will lead to create an irrevocable understanding in the mind through the path of wisdom, finally leads to understand the eternal truth of the world, and realizes the *nibbhāna* is the only one way out to attain the proper remedy for those entire problems. Also this method will help to get the correct intuition within the person, and will lead to result a good quality individual with wholesome feelings and doings then ultimately will lead to develop a peaceful society.

