ETHICAL CHALLENGES FOR GLOBAL EDUCATION: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Global education is an active learning process based on human values and technological advancement. Basic human qualities such as tolerance, solidarity, equality, justice, inclusion, co-operation and non-violence are not given enough attention in current education system. Buddhist ethics can be proactively applied to sketch a standard model of holistic education system. The aim of this research paper is to delineate a standard model of global education system and its productive output from a Buddhist perspective. This concerns with application of the five precepts (pañcasīla) and the Buddha's sublime teachings from Nikāya texts.

1. PROLOGUE

Global education is an active learning process based on the universal values of tolerance, solidarity, equality, justice, inclusion, co-operation and non-violence, in addition to technological supports[1]. It is noteworthy that education is the key to solve many of our problems in the world, whether they are social, environmental, educational, political or contemporaries issues. Former U.S. President Abraham Linchon's exposition on a standard model of

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1. Migual Carvalho De Silva, Global Education Guidelines: A Handbook for Educators to Understand and Implement Global Education (2010: the North South Centre of Europe). P. 1.

global education is as thus: "*Upon the subject of education I can only say I view it as the most important subject with which we as a people may be engaged in.*" The aforementioned statement explicitly denotes on holistic education system dealing with solving social problems, overcoming poverty and pursuing a happy life. Nowadays, education, in providing for so-called holistic ways sometimes cross the line of ethical values. The quests appear on current global education are as follows: what should the standard model for global education be? Is the standard model for global education system consistent to ethical development? Buddhist ethics, however, not only concerns with personal morality and spiritual development, but also focuses on contemporary issues. Buddhist ethical values such as integrity, discipline and honesty can be proactively applied for sketching a standard model of holistic education system. The objective of this research paper is to delineate a standard model of global education system and its productive output from Buddhist perspectives. In this regard, the application of five precepts (*pañcasīla*) and the Buddha's sublime teachings from *Nikāya* texts are essentials.

2. THE CONCEPT OF 'GLOBAL EDUCATION'

The term 'education' refers to a form of gradual learning process in which knowledge, skills and habits are transferred from one generation to another generation[2]. Education is the driving force for national development and economic growth. A common saying on the importance of education is, "*education is the backbone for a nation*". The UNESCO declares education as the fundamental human right[3]. However, the concept of 'global education' denotes as a proactive learning process based on human values and technological advancements, with not only rational thoughts, but also holistic approach. The Maastricht Global Declaration (2002) provided two key points in terms of the definition of 'global education' as thus:

> i. Global education is education that open people's eyes and minds to the realities of the globalized world and awakens

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2. Ibid.

3. UNESCO 2003 Declaration; Access on Date : 23rd January, 2019. <https://www.atl.org.uk/Images/Race%20equality%20and%20education.pdf>

them to bring about a world of greater justice, equality and human rights for all.

ii. Global education is understood to encompass development education, human rights education, education for sustainability, education for peace and conflict prevention, and intercultural education; being the global dimension of education for a global citizen today[4].

Based on aforementioned definitions, it is noted that 'global education' arises from the fact that the world is increasingly transparent in a global village today. This makes it crucial for education to provide learners the opportunity to reflect their own standpoints and role within a global, interconnected society. Discussions on complex relationships of common social, ecological, political and economic issues should be evaluated with new ways of thinking and acting for the good of all.

Moreover, the concept 'global education' system may observes some rules as follows:

- Abilities to communicate with each other.
- Respect to all traditions, customs, believes, cultures and civilizations.
- Mutual benefits by solving own problems, in addition to solve others' problem.
- Environmental awareness in order to protect mother Earth.
- Observing non-violence, anti-racist and racial equality.

3. FUNDAMENTALS OF GLOBAL EDUCATION METHODOLOGY

Global education is education that opens peoples' eyes and minds to the realities of the globalized world. However, global education methodology has to relate to the realities of the world in addition to concern with the contexts and learning groups. The

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4. Migual Carvalho De Silva, Global Education Guidelines: A Handbook for Educators to Understand and Implement Global Education (2010: the North South Centre of Europe). P. 9-10.

fundamentals of global education methodology may follow the three steps as thus: (i) Cooperative-based learning, (ii) Problem-based learning and (iii) Dialogue-based learning[5].

Cooperative-based learning: Cooperative-based learning process denotes as a positive interdependence between participants' efforts to learn and instructors' appropriate methods. Interaction, enhances participants' communication skills are prior in the cooperative-based learning methods.

Problem-based learning: Problem-based learning methodology encourage people to conduct questionaries' which make use of natural curiosity about specific events or themes. Participants are invited to reflect on issues that do not have absolute answers or easy developments. A positive approach of problem-based methodology is to open the way for an active, task-oriented and self-controlled approach to the learning process.

Dialogue-based learning: Dialogue-based learning method concerns oral interactions between participants that seek to simulate the exchange of ideas. It works as a bridge between people and creates a friendly space for developing thoughts, reflections and proposals. In fact, dialogue helps to develop communication and listening skills so that participants have better understanding and ability. Hence, learning is improved.

Apart from these abovementioned threefold learning process, a standard model of global education system need to reflect on motivating, interesting and creativity approach. Criteria for choosing and evaluating global education methods are shown in a chart as thus:

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5. Ibid.

Global Education methods have to be:	Global education methods:
• Interesting	• Are based on reliable resources
• Attractive	• Respect the learners
• Motivating	• Are based on human values
• Challenging	• Develop critical thinking
• Participle	• Raise awareness
• Collaborative	• Promote the dialogue
• Realistic, but optimistic	• Give the sense of belonging
• Reflective	• Bring up everyone's responsibility
• Targeted to different people	• Stimulate actions
• Diverse and variable	• Link local to global
• Learner-centered	• Link the content to the praxis
• Creative	• Are micro and macro based
• Interactive	• Do not "teach" but educate
• Democratic	• Are coherent with general education content

4. ETHICS IN GLOBAL EDUCATION

The term 'ethics' is denoted as moral philosophy that involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct[6]. In the advancement of human civilization and culture, ethics has played an important role in history. It is regarded as a subject of great interest for modern thinkers. Its problem are concerned with human conduct. However, global education system should include conduct ethical values. Key ethical challenges for global educations are concerned as follows:

i. Is racial equality observed in global education system e.g. no child left behind policy?

ii. Does the global education method promote peace and non-violence?

iii. Is there any element of discrimination in global education system on social issues?

iv. Does the global education system protect human value?

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6. J. Hastings, Edinburgh, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (London: Roudge Publications, 1986), p. 567.

(i) Racial Equality vs. Global Education

From a scientific standpoint, human species is a single race known as *homo sapience* as its scientific name. However, people live in all aspects of modernity where moral and ethical values degenerate, and racism still has not been eliminated from the society. It is noteworthy that racism is one of prime challenge for establishing a standard global education system. Race equality and global education sets out to combat prejudice surrounding religion and culture, as well as prejudice based on colour and appearance. An educational institutions should be aware on their research projects, instructors and pupils so they may not prompt racism in education. For instance, when someone is dogmatic on a particular religion, he generates negativity to other religious thoughts. He might spread out his negative thought amidst his colleagues. An institution and instructor should take heed to ensure that none in the community is a racist. Most certainly, race, colour and creed should not be a question in any institution in the eye of global education system.

(ii) Violence vs. Global Education

For obtaining a standard global education system, another key concept 'non-violence', i.e., 'peace' has to be established. Nowadays, researchers engaged in studies about global education and peace are primarily interested in finding a way to reduce violence in the world. Needless to say, violence harm persons physically and psychologically. An educational institution and instructor should be concern towards their pupil as they may reflect on peace, tolerance and compassion to each other. School bullying is nothing new and should be given top priority.

(iii) Social Crisis vs. Global Education

Earlier on, it was clearly mentioned that global education may be able to deal with problems, and generate effective solutions. Common social problems are: poverty, drug abuse, prostitution, alcohol abuse, economic deprivation, unemployment, etc. A standard model of global education must provide knowledge and training and long-term development to deal with above mentioned dilemmas. For instance, an unemployed should be trained or has

been trained to be patient and ethical with high moral standards, he should not involve himself in crime. On the contrary, he could also be resourceful and self-sufficient with creative ideas, i.e. volunteer for charitable organization/s instead of be just on the receiving end only. Opportunities open for those who try hard enough, time will tell. People might just offer him a job observing his other positive qualities such as integrity, cooperativeness, responsibility etc. Instilling positivity and optimism is highly important in our fast changing world today. The unexpected can happen anytime, anywhere, and any place. Resilience is one single quality that we modern people lack compared to our forefathers with harsher living conditions. Modernity has its side effects, too. Building character is most important.

5. HUMAN VALUES AND GLOBAL EDUCATION

Human value is one of the most important elements to uphold global education. It is a common saying that technological advancement makes a life easy, but reduces human values in the sense of humanity. Human values teach human to recognize each other and know how to interact with one another. Education in the modern world is essential to human survival and success. Nowadays, people are spending less time with their families, family structural breakdown is high. This is the price of modernity and technological advancement Life is not complete when people don't connect, especially amongst family and friends. Most people these days are in need of this. Therefore, they suffer from loneliness. Advanced technology is so convenient and attractive that people like to spend more time on virtual social media and not real human in communication. This is most damaging, we lost our sense of connectivity in the end. A good model of global education should concern on human values and teach how to give prior on real life relations, apart from virtual life relations.

6. PRINCIPLES OF BUDDHIST ETHICS

Ethics in Buddhism widely define as 'morality', which is known in Pāḷi as "*Sīla*" or morality. There are moral precepts laid down for Buddhist followers called *gahattha-sīla,* which is referred to the five

precepts (*pañcasīla*)⁷. According to Buddhism, the five precepts (*pañcasīla*) are as follows:

> i. Abstains from killing (*Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*)
>
> ii. Abstains from stealing (*Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*)
>
> iii. Abstains from sexual misconduct (*Kāmesumicchācāra veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*)
>
> iv. Abstains from lying (*Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*)
>
> v. Abstains from intoxicants (*Surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*)

The five precepts (*pañcasīla*) refers particularly to the codes of morality (*sīla*) and leading a person with good behavior to bliss, wealth, success and happiness. (*Imāni pañca sikkhāpadāni. Sīlena sugatiṃ yanti, sīlena bhogasampadā, sīlena nibbutiṃ yanti, tasmā sīlaṃ visodhaye*)⁸. In fact, morality (*sīla*) is the basic foundation of ethical life.

Apart from the stage of morality (*sīla*), a holy-life is consist of two more stages, viz. concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*). Each of them serves as a sufficient condition for the other; morality (*sīla*) is the basic foundation of ethical life and it prepares a congenial atmosphere for morality (*sīla*)). Upon the constructive practice of both morality (*sīla*) and morality (*sīla*), wisdom (*paññā*) has been appeared. Having practiced these three stages, it makes a person an ethical man.

Moreover, Buddhist ethics identifies the differences between good and bad. According to *Ambalaṭṭhika rāhulovāda* sutta from *Majjhima Nikāya,* a clear instruction has been observed from the Buddha's advice to his son *Rāhula* as thus:

> "What is beneficial to oneself, other or both, that is good or

7. DN III. P. 235; AN III. P.203, 275.

8. Visuddhimagga.

wholesome. (*atta hitāya samvattati, parahitāya samvattati, ubhoattha hitāya samvattati*). On the other hand, what is not beneficial to oneself, nor other, neither both, that is bad or unwholesome. (*attavyābādhāyapi saṃvattati, paravyābādhāyapi saṃvattati, ubhayavyābādhāyapi saṃvattati*)"[9]

Based on abovementioned discussions, we may find a clear notion on Buddhist ethics that provides a broad direction of good and bad. Apart from the guidelines, Buddhist ethics also instruct a person to stay away from four prejudices, namely: desire (*chand*a), aversion (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*) and fear (*bhaya*)[10]. Furthermore, a definition of Buddhist ethics is found in the verse of the text "Dhammapada", where the Buddha said:

"Not to conduct evils (*Sabba pāpassa akaranan*),

To cultivate what is wholesome (*Kusalassa upasampadā*),

To purify one's mind (*Sacitta pariyō dapanan*)

This is the teaching of the Buddha (*Etan Buddhānasāsanan*)"[11]

The principle of Buddhist ethic, however, maintains intrinsic worth and practical functions to achieve a peaceful society, in addition to bring out benefits for all living beings.

7. AN APPLICATION OF BUDDHIST ETHICS ON THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBAL EDUCATION

According to the Buddhist perspectives, 'global education' should be based on the threefold of training cause, viz., morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*). *Pariyatthi* and *Patipatti* are considered as the foundations of education from a Buddhist context. *Pariyatti* means the true doctrine of study[12], whereas *patipatti* means practice, training, cultivating oneself in the path that purifies oneself[13]. In Buddhism, education begins with the study of discipline (*vinaya*) and doctrine (*dhamma*) for

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9. MN. 61.
10. AN 4.19.
11. Dhp. 183.
12. Prayuddha Payutto, Dictionary of Buddhism, Bangkok 1985, p.125.
13. Ibid.

the destruction of problems (*sufferings*), along with finding out the path of happiness (*freedom*).

Buddhist ethics can be proactively apply for formulating a standard model of global education. For instance, the Buddha's teachings strongly addresses on loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karunā*). As above discussions, racism and violence pose a great challenge to global education endeavours. The issue of racism or violence could be eliminate by observing loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karunā*) by a person.

A framework about the application of Buddhist ethics for facing the challenge of global education as follows is proposed:

Challenges of Global Education	An Application of Buddhist Ethics
Racism	Observing loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karunā*)
Violence	Observing the five precepts (*pañcasīla*), loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karunā*) to each other
Academic Bias	Observing loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karunā*)
Social Crisis	Concentrate to the problems (*samādhi*) and reflects wisely (*yoniso makasikāro*)
Human Values	Observing loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karunā*), and precepts (*sīla*)
Funding	Receiving supports (*dāna*) from able community
Quality Education	*Pariyatti* and *Patipatti* should be considered in an educational institution

Global educational challenges could be overcome when an institute observes Buddhist ethical principles. For obtaining a good practice of global education, another important point is the relationship between a teacher and his students. A teacher should be disciplined enough before his appointment as a teacher. Buddhism implies, diligent training a person became a good practitioner. In the

same manner, diligent disciplines on a particular subject and wise reflections (both *Pariyatti* and *Patipatti*) should be equipped by a teacher. It is noteworthy that a good teacher should be equipped in skills, practice loving-kindness, compassion and observes his precepts sincerely. However, a student also needs to be disciplined and offers his best effort to learn from his teachers. By accumulating energies (merits) from both sides, combination between teachers and students may able to create a perfect model of quality education, which leads to obtain a perfect global educational system. In fact, Buddhist ethics emphasize both teacher-student positive efforts for pursuing quality education.

8. ENDING REMARKS

Based on the discussion above, the scope of Buddhist ethics may be applied to encounter the challenges of global education today. Threefold stages of Buddhist holy life, viz., morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*), observing five precepts (*pañcasīla*) and spreading loving-kindness (*mettā*) and compassion (*karunā*) lead a person to acquire a state of ethical purification. Challenges of global education such as racism, injustice, violence, social crisis and human values may be dealt proactively by observing Buddhist ethics. Buddhist ethics has much to offer global education. Universal values such as tolerance, solidarity, equality, justice, inclusion, co-operation and non-violence are within Buddhist theory and practice. Technological advancement and supports need not be abused with ethical training and practice. The aims of global education remain while Buddhist ethics complement.

To sum up, Buddhist ethics constitutes universal ethics that may able to reform global education system with concrete *Dhamma* instructions.

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