



Journal Homepage: -www.journalijar.com

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI:10.21474/IJAR01/14942
DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/14942>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY AND ITS RELEVANCE IN DIGITAL AGE

Dr. D.V.S. Ganapathi Raju

Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 25 April 2022
Final Accepted: 27 May 2022
Published: June 2022

Key words:-

Anitya, Anatta, Dukha, Ariya
Astangamarga, Dependent Origination,
Digitalization, Digital Delusion,
Anapanasati

Abstract

How fast the digitalization is affecting all corners of our life and where does it leave our philosophical, ethical aspirations and cherish the ideals of democratic world, equality, privacy protection, trust and societal autonomy is a matter of social concern. Epistemologically we do understand and grasp the phenomenon, the new mediations, and the very fabric of the new processes. Buddha Dharma encompasses to balance between human life and ecology. Though the Buddhism is an ancient wisdom, the core principles and practice can solve the contemporary social, ethical, human problems and crises caused by the intensity of the digital delusion. Mahayana Buddhism believes that this world is constituted by emptiness, everything is in its becoming, which is dependent on everything else following the law of cause and effect. Buddhism advocates practicing meditation and attain wisdom to get rid of hatred, craving and delusion which are origins of Dukha. Knowing the four noble truths in depth and following the Ariya AstangaMarga, and practice of panchasila to get rid of craving, hatred and delusion which finally leads to Nirvana is the core philosophy of Buddhism.

Copy Right, IJAR, 2022., All rights reserved.

Introduction:-

Human life is transforming in digital age and visualizing a dramatic change in values, thought process of people, ethics, and requirements in day-to-day life. The digital assets occupy the major part in our life. The speed of the life activity taking a new dimension and AI, AR, VR assets are pervading the digital space and more or less no area of our ethical, cultural, social and economic spheres are left unchanged. As more of the social networks are emerged and getting connected online, a kind of digital distance pervades our relationships. Instead of increased intimacies among us, we become more insulated and isolated from each other. The gadget intimacy is a visible example how the members of the family are isolating within their close proximity. The future will be determined by more advanced digital technologies such as Haptics, Unreal engine and BMI are virtually addressing to complement the sensations. So, the fast changing digital future will complement many of real life situations. The word progress is to be substituted to change as is more suitable in the present context.

How fast the digitalization is affecting all corners of our life and where does it leave our philosophical, ethical aspirations and cherish the ideals of democratic world, equality, privacy protection, trust and societal autonomy is a matter of social concern. Epistemologically we do understand and grasp the phenomenon and new mediations and the very fabric of the new processes. We should know how the technological landscape is shaping our living conditions, core value system and also our collective wisdom and self identities. Are they really not exposing our privacy and individual protection and as well societal protection? The paradox is, we thought that we are extending our powers and control through this technological system, but we simultaneously open the door to being controlled

and constrained by these very systems what we invent and create. Almost the day start with our mobile gadget and ends with the same holding in our hand. There is abysmally the social canvass becoming isolated on its own way while we thought of more and more connecting. A crying baby is harnessing and silenced by a mobile in hand or with a TV comics. How and where does the warmth of human touch go and changing role of the mother and nursing. Similarly the change in ecology that engulfed the protecting environment which encompass to harness the mutual living hood in the society.

The dialectics of the nature of our progress is, intimidating with the associated destructiveness that surrounded us and creating a big gap among human harmony as well non-sync with nature which balance and harness the human society. Of course, the digitalization has emerged with fast track and is transforming our society which inevitably will lead to digital delusion. Now the rapid encroachment of digitalization of our lives will be the core issue to discuss about the pros and cons. The pros what we are witnessing and associated with while cons to be foreseen. The cultural and ethical gap that is parcel of this advancement must be addressed without which the next generations will experience a threatening future.

The purpose of this article is to examine and present the core strengths of Buddha Dharma that encompass to balance between human life and ecology. And to examine the Buddha dharma in essence and how useful to the mankind at the present juncture. Is the Buddhist Philosophy and Psychology relevant to this digital world?

Digitalization

Today the digital usage is incrementing on minute to minute. As the telecom spectrum is targeting its reach to remotest areas and paving the way for internet spread to the remotest areas too. The communication networks have been widespread. The market space is changing its dynamics through ecommerce. The physical market place is shrinking while market on internet is spreading. The banking and monetary economy is brought under remote networking. The worldwide internet usage is reaching 4.66 billion plus by 2021 and active mobile internet user space is around 4.32 billion and the social media users are 4.2 billion plus. Out of this, the mobile social media users are nearly 4.15 billion. People are ticked into believing and spending most of their time with digital gadgets and felt they are necessary for the happy life and existence, A sense of instant and short-term happiness and this becomes the essence of our present-day life. Social space is preoccupied with digital space.

Buddhist Philosophy

His Holiness Dalai Lama makes a distinction between Buddhist science, Buddhist Philosophy and Buddhist religion. He says that Buddhist science and Buddhist Philosophy have a great deal to offer to everyone. Buddhist science deals with psychology, it is very deep analysis of how mind works, how the emotion and perception works, Buddhist philosophy deals with reality and how we understand reality and how we deconstruct our fantasies and projections about reality (c.f is Buddhism relevant in our modern world by Yashoda-www.religionworld.in). As change is inevitable and transforming societies also translate the ethical and core values of human life to suite this digital age too. No society wish to progress on a bigger destructive future. In this sense it is worth to note that the mankind always wishes to flourish in good environment and ethics. However, the inherent nature of progress of the material world lies in the destructiveness associated within. Invariably there is associated social and ethical change in human life. As a consequence of this change in contemporary world by fully involved and as it become a way of life, the more effecting are the human relations. The members in a family are falling apart with one another as everyone immersed into this digital traffic. the human efforts should come out of it with spiritual and ethical practices.

Follow the Dhamma principles of Buddhism evoke the harmony and sync with the progressive forces of the society. Let us give a peep into Buddhist epistemology and its driving force. Though the Buddhism is an ancient wisdom, the core principles and practice can solve the contemporary social, ethical, human problems and crises caused by the intensity of the digital penetration, provided if it is understood in its correct sense and practice it.

Let us have brief understanding of the vast Buddhist philosophy, and how the core of it will influence the relationship among us and endeavor to keep our cognition to aware of relations at individual and societal level and safeguard the future of the physical and social ecology. what is social dharma, Buddhism in its core sense emphasize and thrives to remove Dukha in which the human life entangled and causes a ruffle effect as a whole in the society. Hence removing the Dukha from the individual paves the way for emancipation of human life from this suffering that is arising out of ignorance. Once you come out of this ignorance you will know the way to Nibbana; In Essence Gautama Buddha explained the causes of Dukha and offered the ways to relieve from Dukha and thereby to attain

the Parinirvana. Let us examine the Buddhist philosophy and its relevance in any age whether it is in ancient times or in the digital age.

The Trisaranas to observe

BuddhamSaranamGacchami

(I take refuge in Buddha). Buddham means its core philosophical tenets and understanding of what they are and at the end realization of final wisdom.

DhammamSaranamGacchami

(I take refuge in Dharma) Buddha Dharma and observance and practice of AstangaMarga to upkeep Dharma so as the passage to final end

SanghamSaranamGacchami

(I take refuge in Sangham). To renounce the temporal and worldly and then become parcel of Buddha Sangha and to live the Buddhist way of life.

You are part of the society. Everyone is universal human being. He will not be on his own or self; It is not only monastery that consists of Buddha followers, any one and at any time can practice and follow the path of Buddha. It means the lay people, the family and society at large can follow the Buddhist teaching and follow its Dharma so as to attain the ultimate wisdom. As all are equal and need to follow the Dharma so as to attain and reach the final wisdom by detachment from Dukha.

According to Buddhist teachings, nothing exists beyond the nature and whatever is associated with it cannot be separated from the nature, it is part and component of the nature. All events that are taking place are interrelated to nature's phenomena.

The great basic thought ‘‘ Engels writes that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable no less than their mind images in our heads, the concepts, go through and uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away’.

In essence for dialectical philosophy nothing is final, absolute and sacred. It is transitory and nothing can endure before it, except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away of endless chain of continuity and change. It is nothing more than the reflection of this process in the thinking of the brain. The Buddha's emphasis on the use of dialectical analysis is to understand the reality as an inter play of ‘form and void’

‘‘ Sabbapapassaakaranamkusalassaupasampadaa
SachittapariyodapanamethamBuddanusaasanam.’’

Meaning, according to Buddha Dharma one should not commit any bad deeds, instead do perform good deeds and keep your heart always purified. To summate the central theme of Buddhist philosophy we must be familiar with Four Noble Truths (Anitya, Anatta, Dukha and DukhaNirodha) and then 12 chain dependent origination.

1. Anitya(impermanence) ,Anathma(annatta) Dukha, and DukhaNirodha,
2. Dependent Origination (Pratitasamutpada)
3. The AriyaAstangaMarga

‘‘ Buddha preaches us that we need to pave our own way, himself is only acting as guide to lead you in Sanmarga(correct way). Hence one cannot depend on others in relieving from the pain that emanates from the attachment to the impermanence.

Anitya

Buddhism speaks up that ‘‘nothing is permanent, and everything is subject to change including the change’’. By knowing the Anitya and understanding Anatta, the seeker would be able to start his path of detachment of material world and get rid of Dukha; it is the universe as seen through the divyacakṣus (Pāli: dibbacakkhu), the "divine eye" by which a Buddha or an arhat who has cultivated this faculty can perceive all of the other worlds and the beings arising (being born) and passing away (dying) within them, and can tell from and into what state they will be reborn.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_cosmology)

The Buddhism asserts that all of conditioned existence is transient and inconstant. All temporal things whether material or mental are compounded objects in a continuous change of condition subject to decline and destruction. They come into being and passing away or dissolve. It appears in pali as 'sabbesankharaanicca'.

The next one is the Truth of DukhaNirodha. It consists of Dukha, DukhaSamudayam, DukhaNirodham and DukhaNirodhaMarga.

The Philosophy of Buddhism is derived out of the four noble Truths, If one should realize the four noble truths and thereby the path to achieve Nirvana.

Let us examine the epistemological aspects of Buddhist philosophy so as to understand it correctly and follow its Dharma. Accordingly, it would be wise to understand Buddhism as a Dharma in the place of its religious context. It is justifiable to pronounce and practice Buddha teachings as a Dharma (Dhamma)

According to Buddhism everything is subject to change. In fact the change that exists this moment will not be there in the next moment it means change is also changing. It is a flow and as well momentous. Nothing is permanent. It analyses the inner sense and meaning of the Buddhism and theorized the Buddhist logic .

But when one thought of individual or self, It will lead for craving of material world. As long as you are not detached with the impermanent things, you will never liberate yourself. It means you are always remaining in Dukha. Until you find the path of DukhaNirodha you will not be able to attain the ultimate wisdom. Once you catch hold of the path of DukhaNirodha by practicing Ariya AstanghaMarga, to finally realize the Nirvana. (Total detachment).

Anitya and Anatta are the two basic truths that are clearly explained in Buddhist philosophy. The basis of the cosmic philosophy of Budha lies with Anitya and Anatta.

To begin with we need to see the role of sensory organs and the mind and the happiness, the mind derived from the sensations caused by the five sensory organs. We cannot ignore the major role of mind which is the main role player for our attachment and entanglement. It means it is root cause for our Dukha. The five sensory organs nose, eyes, ears, mouth and skin and their sensations smell, visual, audio, taste and touch. Mind is consciously realizing these sensations and control and interact with the physical environment.

Anitya(anicca),Anatma (anatta) and Dependent Origination.

In fact the world is preoccupied with Avidya (ignorance). One has to understand the ignorance, cross its expansion and boundaries and realize that everything is subject to cause and effect relationship which is Anitya and that is continuously moving on and fill this in the mind so as not to allow escaping from the attachments that are causing Dukha. By realizing this, one can get out of this ignorance of permanence.

Anatta:

Epistemologically the word Anatta denotes Not Self. It means nothing is exists on its own. It is a reflective and dependent on others. In fact it is explained in the sense that the word Atman is also not a permanent and independent. As everything in this universe is an outcome of cause and effect and dependently originated. Exactly there is no such thing exists on its own or originated. It means there is no substance which is permanent, non-changing and unmoving,

Further Buddha explained the Anatta which exactly means nothing is permanent including atman and everything is mutually dependent. Nothing in this world exists without any reason, cause or independent. We must first realize that all that exists is dependent on one another.

The wheel of Dependent Origination:

To expound the Buddhist philosophy we must understand what causes the life cycle. Unless we chases and breaks this cycle, the realization of enlightenment is not possible. This cycle consists of twelve fold or twelve links.

The first one is Avidya (Ignorance) it means ignorance of four noble truths.

2. Samskara (Volitional action)- ignorance produces samskara which turns out to be volitional actions and formations that sews the seeds of Karma.
3. Vijnana(conditioned consciousness)- These are consciousness of five sensory organs and mind i.e visual, sound, taste, smell, touch for sensory(physical) organs and thought process for Mind. These are the consciousness that are being bound in the Bhava chakra(wheel of life) jump this way and that way like a monkey and being easily tempted by these sensations and get distracted and pull us away from the Dharma.
4. Nama-rupa. This is the moment when matter (rupa) joins mind it forms a name (nama). It is a representation of five skandas to form an existence. In the Bhava chakra, the nama-ruparepresented by people in a boat travelling through samsara
5. Sadayatana- The assembly of skandas into an illusion of an individual and thereby the six senses which will lead to next links.
6. Sparsha (sense impressions)- The sparsha is a contact between one's sensual faculties and outer environment. This contact creates the feeling. It is like a coupling to the next link
7. Vedana (Feelings)- Vedana is the recognition and experience of the sense impressions and the outcome is the subjective feelings. As per Buddhism these feelings are pleasant, unpleasant and neutral. These are precursor to desire or aversion.
8. Thrishna (desire)- This Thrishna or craving is the cause of stress or suffering (Dukha) if we are not mindful, we remain entangled in the cycle of Bhava chakra.
9. Upadana (attachment)- We are attached to the sensual pleasures, mistaken views and external appearances. This leads us to cling to the ego and sense of individual self. It is a reinforcement of moment to moment of desire or aversion.
10. Bhava (Becoming)- Bhava is set in motion by the other links and force of attachment keeps us bonded to the life of Samsara. As long as we are unable to get rid of it, and unwilling to surrender our chains the force of Bhava continues to lead us to the cycle of rebirth. It means we are not able to dis-entangled.
11. Jati (Birth)- Jati is an inevitable stage of wheel of life, unless we break the chain of dependent origination, we continue to experience the rebirth in the same cycle.
12. Jara-Maranam(Old age and death)- This chain refers above ultimately leads to old age and death, this circle that closes one that also continues until we break the chain.

The central theme of Buddha philosophy is that one can release from the cycle of samsara through the resolution of ignorance, volitional formations and craving and grasping.

Mind and body are conditioned by greed, hatred and delusion and due to the attachment of material conditions and psychological response to them; a deluded individual exists within a self-defeating cycle of dependent conditionality. Buddha acknowledged that material reality defines inner psychological terrain and is conditioned by his past experiences; To give an antidote Buddha preaches the seated meditation to uproot the basis of ignorance in the mind and thereby to dissolve the twelve links of dependent origination through insight. Basically, he acknowledged that by meditational practice, if we revert or delink the chain of dependent origination, the process logically comes to an end without the reborn. As all ignorance and its cause uprooted from the mind and the body, this is state of enlightenment as conceived by Buddha. (Chain of Dependent origination Buddha's historical Materialism –Andrian Chan Wyles)

The AstangaMarga:The eight-fold path that is central to Buddha Dharma which emancipate the mind and body from impurities and lead to realization and attain the enlightenment. The enlightenment is stateless situation and a flow of understanding the reality.

To shape and keep our mind pure and liberate oneself from the attachment and then realize the Anitya and Anatta , the practice of AstangaMarga is the way of Buddhist practice. The Astanga are

1. SamyagDhristi: To understand and form the proper idea on the four noble truths, Anitya, Anatta, Dukha and DukhaNirodha
2. SamyagSankalpa: Take a firm stand and thought (like an oath) on the above and walk accordingly in the life journey
3. SamyagVakku: (Right Speech): Put endless efforts to talk in the right way and not to indulge in wrong speech which leads to suffer yourself and make the others to feel and suffer). It means first understand the world and not to behave against the right understanding of it.
4. SamyagKarmanta: Always try to do good deeds and useful to others but not to affect badly.

5. Samyag Jeevan: Follow and practice non-violence and avoid any type of attempt that may cause violence. This applies to the whole world and all being and life.
6. SamyagVyayama: To relive from the bad and practice to mould to be good.
7. SamyagSmrithi: To know oneself that he is impermanent and cannot escape from death,
8. Samyag Samadhi: First to get out of the idea of "I and mine" observe friendliness, compassion, chastity and share it for the benevolence of the world and train your journey towards relieving from Dukha (suffering of the self and world).

Mind is the interpretation and obstrucater in the way of our journey so as to limit us to the attachment of material worlds which include our approach, thought process and behavior towards others at individual level and at large societal level. We are consciously bound by its limitations and un-freed ourselves.

Freedom is the main aim of our life however once you limit your thought process to I and Mine then the freedom is obstructed. One should prepare himself for giving freedom to the others. We should not be an obstacle to others freedom. However, the idea of I and mine are the cause for ignorance, selfishness, attachment, pain and grief. We need to understand and inculcate the idea of I and Mine are also impermanent. All these thought processes that are emanating from the mind are also intertwined with the social order of the time, Hence the social development and its stage is also an obstacle for an individual to free of this impermanence. So empirically it is a very difficult phase without proper practice to detach from this impermanent cycle of life. Buddhism is about liberating the mind.

Here where the Buddha Dharma that rescue the mankind from its entanglement of material world. In the present context the entanglement of digital gadgets will not give free space to us from ever growing and cross penetrating ignorance which more and more attracted by this digital world. But the practice of Buddha teachings will lift you out of this attachment to this present-day world and digitalization impact. Since this digitalization also within the sphere of impermanence and by realizing the same we can come out of this ignorance too. Better not to be misspelt that we are not to be in this digital world which is beyond, but to detach from it.

Universally nothing is permanent, how could be the individual self is permanent. So the central theme of Buddha Dharma is to understand and realize the Anitya, Anatta and the Pratitasamutpada and by practicing the AstangaMarga to attain the enlightenment.

To accomplish the liberation, Buddha taught his path of morality (sila)

Concentration(Samadhi) and wisdom(Panna) . The mental strength and purity needed for panna comes from Samadhi and Sila (c.f. The 5 precepts: Buddhism and Morality)

As we are digitally more connected we are limiting our journey into a state of impermanence of the so called digitally connected and living in more and more Dukha, as the final digital journey also leads to a delusion; the observance of Buddha Dharma will lead us to final wisdom or reality.

Every Buddhist must observe and practice to upkeep Truth, Non-Violence, Compassion, Chastity, and Prajna to elevate them in his travel to attain Nirvana

Buddha does not limit this teaching and practice of this ethical behavior to Buddha Parivrajaka but to extend to the common people and infact to the society at large and to its entirety.

To observe-

a) PanatipathaVeramaniSikkhapadamSamadiyami.

It means ‘‘ with the Oath on Lord Buddha, I am not commit any act that cause to hit or smack, abuse, torture and kill any life that exists.’’ It is also known as Jeevakaarunya.

b). AdinnadhanaVeramaniSikkhapadamSamadhiyami

Not to commit any act that cause to steal, capture and occupy which are not mine.

c)Kamesu-michasaraVeramaniSikkhapadamSamadhiyami,

I do respect all the people and not to use any one for selfishness, not to misuse against spiritual actions.

d) MusavadaVeramaniSikkhapadamSamadiyami

Do not lie and do not act that cause harshness, annoyance,mudslinging and twisting to others.

e) Surameraya Majjapama Sikkhapadam Samadiyami

Do not take any sedatives and alcoholic products that spoil the life.

If everyone observes, commit and practice the above five principles, it will evolve into Dukkha Nivarana. So this Panchasila are central theme of Buddhist ethics and to practice.

Anapanasati Meditation.: Mindfulness. The mental strength and purity are needed for Panna. This comes from Samadhi and Sila. Purifying the mind means to the purifying effect of Samadhi. It is in a pure concentrated mind that wisdom can arise. Sati is mental vigilance at all times on what our mind is doing. Sati is a prerequisite for Samadhi and it is the one supports the meditation process. Contemplation of Ana/ Inhalation-Intake of breath through the nostrils into the Body and Pana exhalation- the outgoing of breath through nostrils from the Body)

Anapana means inhalation and exhalation. Anapanasati is to free the sensations caused by the movements of the breath in the body while practicing the mindfulness meditation. It is a practice originally taught by Buddha to go into the forest and sit beneath a tree and then simply watch your breath, if the breath is long to notice that the breath is long and breath is small to notice that the breath is small. It means you need to inhale and exhale and then observe it. Mind it and feel it. It is a method of training the mind to be sensitive to one or more of the entire body, rapture, pleasure, the mind itself and mental processes, 2. Training the mind to be focused on one or more of inconsistency, dispassion, cessation, and relinquishment.3. steadying, satisfying and releasing the mind (wikipedia).

Vasubandhu's Abhidharma Karika also teaches the counting of breaths to 10. This practice consists of Ganana, Doshā, Anugama, and stapana, Uplaksana, Vivarta, Kusalamula and Parisudhhi. This according to Abhidharma leads to the stage of Sotapanna which will inevitably lead to the Nirvana. (Wikipedia)

References:-

1. Anapanasati-Wikipedia
2. Anapanasati Meditation (Mindfulness of Breathing) From Buddhism.Net
3. Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins 1997- by Akira Sadakata (Author), Hajime Nakamura (Author)
4. Buddhism and Democracy/ The 14 th Dalailama (<http://www.dalailama.com/messages/buddhism/buddhism-and-democracy>)
5. Digital Technology and social change-Soroptimist International
6. Gautama Buddha-Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goutama_Buddha)
7. Is Buddhism relevant in our modern world? –Yashoda (www.religion.com)
8. .Haptic Technology : The future of Engagement? –Masschallenge.org
9. How Marxism and Buddhism complement each other, Aeon Essays.
10. Nitya Nirvana Anandapadam (Buddha-Nagarajunala Samaharam) by D.Nataraj Sakhya. (2021)
11. Risks and side effects of Digitalization: A multi-level taxonomy of the adverse effects of using digital technologies and media (Henner Gimpel and Fabian Schmied)- Research gate –Jun 2019.
12. The twelve links of Dependent Origination- Barbara O'Brien-July 2018(learning religions.com)
13. The 5 percepts : Buddhism and Morality(Buddho.org)
14. The internet's invisible hands: 11 experts explain how our digital world is fueling polarization.
15. Viswamanavakalyana Acharana Tatva Pradata-Goutama by Buddhudu – D.Nataraj 1996.