

# THE FEASIBILITY OF THE SOLUTION FOR THE PROBLEMS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE LIGHT OF DIALECTIC OF ENLIGHTENMENT (DE) AND BUDDHISM IN THE WORLD: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

Ratnasabapathy Premkumar

Department of Philosophy & Value Studies, Eastern University, Sri Lanka, Vantharumoolai,  
SRI LANKA.

premkumar.phd@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

*Sustainable development is the most significant problem discussed by intellectuals of many disciplines in the world. Max Horkheimer and Adorno in their magnum opus, Dialectic of Enlightenment (2002) discuss the problems of wellbeing of humanity related to sustainable development from History of Western world in general and Enlightenment period in special. The thinkers of Frankfurt School elaborately study causes for problems for wellbeing of humanity and analyze the effects of positivistic scientific enlightenment of the Western world on ordinary human beings. On the one hand, the analysis of Max Horkheimer and Adorno reveal the causes for the problems of wellbeing of humanity and identify root cause for the problems as the dominating attitude of human beings from Jewish & Greek mythologies, one the other hand, Buddhist metaphysics, ethics and psychology are against the causes for the problems of sustainable development. Buddhism, one of the successful religious and philosophical systems has contributed a lot to wellbeing of humanity in the past in Asia and its contributions are felt relatively very small from Modern period in the Western world. The enlightenment of Max Horkheimer and Adorno sheds light on understanding of problems of sustainable development in full scale. This Paper examines feasibility of the solution for the problems of sustainable development embedded in Buddhism with assistance of the Dialectic of Enlightenment.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable development, Positivism, Buddhism, enlightenment, wellbeing

## INTRODUCTION

Meaning of the word ‘sustainability’ means ‘the ability to sustain’ or ‘the capacity to endure’, thus the meaning of the word is continuing something without changing. (A.S. Hornby, 2005 : 1548). The concept of sustainable development means not only preserving the ecological and environmental resources utilized by human beings without damaging but also the very concept refers to wellbeing of humanity<sup>1</sup>.(Stanley R. Carpenter,1998 : 279). The experts and intellectuals on this field agree that humanity substantially have damaged the environment on which their entire life depends. The concept ‘sustainable development’ gains momentum in the intellectuals and experts from different fields. The concept sustainable development is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” by World Commission on Environment and

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainable development consists of five operational principles: 1) integration of conservation and development, 2) satisfaction of basic needs,3) achievement of equity and social justice,4)provision for social self-determination and cultural diversity and 5) maintenance of ecological integrity .

Development for the United Nations General Assembly in 1987.<sup>ii</sup> (Gro Harlem Brundtland, 1987, Chapter 2.1.: 41. It is said that sustainable development consists of four dimensions: economic, environmental, social and cultural. It is important to note in the hierarchy of the dimensions, environment and economic sustainability aspects taken for consideration for primary positions but the secondary positions are given to the social and cultural sustainability. If we think deeply we can realize that the primary positions should have been given to social and cultural sustainability, because if the world in which there is no socio-cultural sustainability, the sustainable development of all aspects would be questionable. The report of the world commission on environment and development for United Nations General Assembly in 1987(WCEDUNGAR) covers not only the fulfilling needs of the future generations but also it includes its agenda on meeting the basic needs and wellbeing of present humanity as well. "... sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for better life." (Gro Harlem Brundtland, 1987, Chapter 2.4.: 41-42.) The Sustainable development chiefly depends on the environmental sustainability. Survival of human beings or any living beings mostly depends on their environment and ecological resources. Environmental and economic sustainability is laid emphasis as "... the existing economic order needs to be replaced by ecologically sustainable belief and knowledge systems. ...we need to move away from current dominant patterns of human behavior and pursue values and life styles that are in harmony with nature." (Paul Hopper, 2012: 221) The experts argue that if the economic sustainability were achieved, definitely environmental sustainability will be damaged. Further the experts express the worries about economic growth of developed countries' role on substantial damage of environment of the world and the sustainable development of the entire world (present and future humanity) without damaging the environment. 'The limit to growth' thesis is being discussed among the intellectuals of development of every country in the world. Social Sustainability is conceived the significant aspect of sustainable development as "sustainable development also incorporates certain normative principles or behavioral guidelines, as well as concern with social justice in the form of poverty alleviation and gender equality (Ibid. 219). Problems like war, poverty, widespread injustice, unemployment and illiteracy, etc. are considered as characteristics of social unsustainability while social sustainability comprises of elements : equality, plurality, individuality, solidarity, tolerance, good governance, etc. The possibility of social injustice on sharing the wealth and resources is recognized by the Report of World Commission on Environment and Development for the United Nations General Assembly:

...High levels of productive activity and widespread poverty can coexist, and endanger the environment. Hence sustainable development requires that society meet human needs both by increasing productive potential and by ensuring equitable opportunities for all. (Gro Harlem Brundtland, 1987, Chapter 2.6. p.41).

According to my view, the fourth dimension of sustainable development, known as cultural sustainability is the foundation and inevitable of the all other dimensions. The Import of this aspect is insisted as "sustainable development has been conceived of as a moral, not a market concept and has been described as marking as 'paradigm shift.' " (Paul Hopper, 2012 :219). However, the WCEDUNGA report acknowledges the role of culture in the Journey of achieving the sustainable development intact:

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<sup>ii</sup> Gro Harlem Brundtland was the Chair Person of the Commission on Environment and Development for the United Nations General Assembly and her Report known as ' Our Common Future' published in 1987

Living standards that go beyond basic minimum are sustainable only if consumption standards everywhere have regard for long-term sustainability. Yet many of us live beyond the world's ecological means, for instance in our patterns of energy use. Perceived needs are socially and culturally determined, and sustainable development requires the promotion of values that encourage consumption standards that are within the bounds of the ecological possible and to which all can reasonably aspire. (Gro Harlem Brundtland, 1987, Chapter 2. 5: 42).

Ancient Indian philosophers had proposed four values for a just or good society and they are known as *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (pleasure) and *mokṣha* (liberation). Nowadays, necessity of these values is to larger extent realized by scientists as well as intellectuals of many walks of life. Of the four, *dharma* and *mokṣha* have been conceived as higher than the other two in the past but at present *artha* and *kāma* gain currency in the positivistic (scientific) ideology ruling world. This is main cause for the problems of sustainable development in the world.

One can realize that from the beginning the Buddhist ethics has always been giving highest position for *dharma* (observing prescribed virtues) and *mokṣha* (Liberation from the suffering of this world). Thus, the Buddhist ethics has potential to fulfill the requirements of the four dimensions of the sustainable development. We have sufficient evidences to prove that Buddhist ethics would guide us to the sustainable development of the world.

The south Asian region in special and the world in general owe much the Buddha and Buddhism for their richest contributions in term of a great cultural heritage to humanity from 2500 years. Instead, the message of the war Buddhism preached the message of peace to the all over the world. More or less Asia was blessed with message of the Buddha in the early period with a great patronage of Emperor Asoka and the many Kings after him. It is important to note that the regional limit of Buddhism in Asoka period was extended to Europe through the works of German and British scholars. (Heinz Bechert 1991: 275- 285). It is also believed that before Christ Central Asia and South East Asia were influenced with Buddhism. (Oskar Von Hinuber, 1991:99-107). All Asian countries follow directly or indirectly undeniably some cultural forms and contents of Buddhism, even though some of them now are observed in different cultural traditions. (Oskar Von Hinüber 1991 :107). No one can deny the Buddha's influence in those cultural traditions of the Asia in many dimensions. Asian culture to larger extent has been flourished and influenced by Buddhism.

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno are identified as great thinkers of Critical Theory of Frankfurt Institute of Social Research. To larger extent, positivistic nature of science in the capitalistic society was the subject matter of them. Their ideas and arguments on science, religion and human nature were expressed in their magnum opus, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Max Horkheimer and Adorno argue that philosophy, to greater extent, was affected by science and philosophical truth does not equal to scientific truth. According to Max Horkheimer and Adorno it is self-evident truth that there is a negative correlation between the sustainable development and domination. The attitude of the domination severely affects sustainable development of a country or the world. Max Horkheimer and Adorno explore the role of myths and science throughout human history and they consider that the domination is an inherent attitude of human beings. Max Horkheimer and Adorno show many evidences from Greek and Jewish mythologies to prove the earlier existence of domination in human beings and they clearly explain many aspects of domination from enlightenment period to contemporary age.

It is self-evident truth that the three kinds of domination narrated in the DE will severely affect sustainable development of any country or world at large.

### **Max Horkheimer and Adorno on Psychology of Science in the DE**

Max Horkheimer and Adorno highlight Baconian view of science is wrong by citing the description of enlightenment by Bacon. For Bacon, the Enlightenment, domination of science in human knowledge system in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe was a boon for human race and would make man as the master of nature. Max Horkheimer and Adorno never left to indicate that Bacon's view of science is devoid of wealth and power. However, all stories narrated by Max Horkheimer and Adorno were utter failure of the enlightenment to bring peace and happiness to humanity. Max Horkheimer and Adorno observe the view of Bacon—"the happy match between the mind of man and nature of things..." (Max Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002 :1) on which psychology of science depends and it is obvious that thoughts of Max Horkheimer and Adorno are of a complete criticism of Baconian view of science emerged in the age of enlightenment. Max Horkheimer and Adorno's entire thesis is that science wedded with wealth and power is used as an instrument to dominate and to exploit the masses in many dimensions and especially in a capitalistic society. As per them, domination is human nature and domination has many aspects. Human beings try to dominate their fellow beings, animate and inanimate objects and nature as a whole. This attitude of human being is dangerous to sustainable development of the world. For them, domination is patriarchal one; "the happy match between human understanding and the nature of things that he (Bacon) envisaged is patriarchal one: the mind, conquering superstitions, is to rule over disenchanting nature." (Ibid.:2) They argue that knowledge (science and technology) blended with economic power functions as the instrument of domination over human beings as well as nature:

The individual is entirely nullified in face of the economic powers. These powers are taking society's domination over nature to unimaginable heights. While individuals as such are vanishing before the apparatus they serve.... (Ibid.: xvii).

Max Horkheimer and Adorno highlight that science reveals some of truths related to nature by dispelling myths and animism of human beings throughout human history. For them, science discovered a naked nature undressing superstitious beliefs and unproved metaphysical assumptions. Thus, science led humanity to such a new kind of knowledge or truth about nature. According to Max Horkheimer and Adorno, this kind of knowledge is a result of entire thoughts of philosophers and scientists from ancient period and nature of subject-object relationship of this knowledge helps to dominate and to exploit the nature and masses. Max Horkheimer and Adorno argue that scientific paradigm wants us to think everything into commodities and objects and opine that technology, the application of science, helped more rich and kings to dominate and to exploit the masses than myths ruled societies. Max Horkheimer and Adorno uphold that patriarchal ideology is expressed in science which enslaves nature and human beings in many aspects and they pin point that science is inextricably linked to this process. As for them, knowing is inseparably connected to ruling and domination. Max Horkheimer and Adorno argue that Knowledge (scientific truth) is associated with power, wealth, exploitation and domination.

For science, anything would be counted as meaningful only if which fulfills the criteria of calculability and utility. This indirectly supports the attitude of domination of nature and human beings as commodities. (Ibid.:3). As for Max Horkheimer and Adorno, science is totalitarian in nature and from the beginning, human beings constitute of the desire to

dominate or possess animate or inanimate things. Whether science or myth works for the same goal. Citing many references from myth to science, they try to prove that myth and science have the same goal and shows many similarities between them. Max Horkheimer and Adorno try to argue that science is the latest form of myth. According to them, domination of human beings as well as nature is the common goal of them. Both science and myth share the important feature known as anthropomorphism, i.e., attributing subject features on the nature. Max Horkheimer and Adorno highlight this in the following words, “Enlightenment has always regarded anthropomorphism, the projection of subjective properties onto nature, as the basis of myth.” (Ibid.: 4). For the above thinkers, the concept of domination is a result of the evolution of human mind from many to one and they cite evidence from Greek mythology as follows:

According to enlightened thinking, the multiplicity of mythical figures can be reduced to a single common denominator, the subject, Oedipus’s answer to the riddle of Sphinx- ‘that being is man’ – is repeated indiscriminately as enlightenment’s stereo typed message, whether in response to a piece of objective meaning, a schematic order, a fear of evil powers, or a hope of salvation. (Ibid).

Max Horkheimer and Adorno consider that human thinking towards unity: abstraction, generalization, classification, etc. lead humans to the domination. For Max Horkheimer and Adorno formal logic is more sophisticated mode of thought which helps enlightenment thinkers to make the world calculable. Plato’s mythical forms ended in number that becomes quintessence of the enlightenment programme. In the enlightenment programme numbers plays a vital role and those are very useful to rule or dominate human beings as well as things. In human society in which qualitative and quantitative differences has been feasible by the magic of numbers. The import of the numbers in the enlightenment is expressed by Max Horkheimer and Adorno and the numbers in the enlightenment programme is the main cause of domination as well as exploitation in the view of the above thinkers. They remark, “For the Enlightenment, anything which cannot be resolved into numbers, and ultimately into one, is illusion.” (Ibid.)

Max Horkheimer and Adorno narrate a story of falling of myths into the realm of enlightenment and the myths become different entities. Max Horkheimer and Adorno disclose the changes of elements from the myths to science in the following words and also reveal domination and exploitation in the same words but in different worlds as “...the local spirits and demons had been replaced by heaven and its hierarchy, the incantatory practices of the magician by the carefully graduated sacrifice and the labor of enslaved men mediated by command.” (Ibid : 5)

Max Horkheimer and Adorno also observe that all multiple forms of differences existed in the mythological world disappeared and only subject-object distinction is remnant of the enlightenment world. Even in this distinction, the subject is considered as the highest and included objects of the world as an abstract formation of the subject. Infact, thus, the enlightenment programme is to reduce everything into the subject and for the subject. They argue that the instrumental move of the enlightenment programme have already originated in Jewish and Greek mythologies. In this connection, the Jewish and Greek mythologies can be considered for domination and exploitation in the earlier period of human history. “...and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and overall the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” (Ibid).

The attitude of the domination in human society, thus, is revealed by Max Horkheimer and Adorno from mythologies to science and they argue that in some mythologies, the similarities

between God and man- mastery of nature, creativeness, ordering mind and exercising power- spontaneously make him to be master and dominator of nature as God. The relationship between science and things is compared by Max Horkheimer and Adorno to the relationship between a dictator and human beings.

As for Max Horkheimer and Adorno, the man of science thinks that “thing –in- itself” is “for him”, i.e., for domination. This type of identity formation leads humanity to domination and exploitation of nature and human beings. According to Max Horkheimer and Adorno there was a sense of domination in mythologies of the past and the domination in the mythologies was not fully developed but this domination was fully developed in enlightenment period. This is argument of the above thinkers. The domination is opposed to sustainable development as positivistic ideology of science would not help us to achieve the sustainable development. This is the history evidenced by Max Horkheimer and Adorno so far. In this juncture, we need alternative ideology for the sustainable development. This is nothing but philosophy of Buddhism.

### **Buddhism and the DE for Economical Sustainability**

We all know that the virtue of detachment(*Nekkhamma*) is also extremely insisted in Buddhism. The sense of detachment in wealth and assets of the worldly things would lead us to protect resources as they are and it would avoid the conflict and fight for the wealth and assets among the fellow beings. This virtue indirectly would lead to equitability in the resources which is an essential ingredient for economical sustainability. Besides, this economical sustainability leads to the social sustainability by preventing fighting and conflict for the resources. Fighting and conflicting for the wealth and assets of contemporary human beings, their consequences on ecosystem and the human nature (Darwin’s the law of animal kingdom ‘struggle for existence and survival of the fittest’) are described in the report as follows:

The search for common interest would be less difficult if all development and environmental problems had solutions that would leave every one better off. This is seldom the case, and there are usually winners and losers. Many problems arise from inequalities in access to resources. An inequitable land ownership structure can lead to over exploitation of resources in the smallest holdings, with harmful effects on both environment and development. Internationally monopolistic control over resources can drive those do not share in them to excessive exploitation of marginal resources. The differing capacities of exploiters to commandeer ‘free’ goods-locally, nationally, and internationally –is another manifestation of unequal access to resources. ‘Losers’ in environment/ development conflicts include those who suffer more than their fair share of the health, property, and ecosystem damage costs of pollution. (Gro Harlem Brundtland 1987, Chapter 2. 24: 45.)

The Buddhist Psychologism and interpretation of pleasures would definitely help us to achieve economical sustainability in substantial level. The following verses of a holy text of Buddhism prove this position:

Sense pleasures are declared by lord to be (things) affording little satisfaction, of much pain, of much tribulation, wherein is more danger. Sense –pleasures are declared by the lord to be like a skeleton, of much pain, of much tribulation, wherein is more danger. Sense pleasures are declared by the lord to be a lump of meat....to be fire- brand of dry grass...to be like a pit of glowing embers ...to be like a dream ... to be like something sorrowed...to be like the

fruits of a tree...to be like a slaughter house ... to be like an impaling stake.... Sense pleasures are declared by the lord to be like a snake's head, of much pain, of much tribulation wherein is more danger. ( I.B. Horner, 1957, *VinayaPitaka*, Vol. III. : 22-23).

He who, for his own sake or for the sake of another, does not wish for a son or wealth or a kingdom, if he does not wish for his own prosperity by unfair means he certainly is virtuous, wise, and religious.( Narada 1978: 84).

By highlighting and interpreting true nature of sense pleasures, Buddhism helps us to achieve economical sustainability. The psychological insight of sense pleasures would definitely lead us to lower consumption of the objects and reducing desires of the objects and assets. This type of attitude would lead us to the disposition of sharing wealth and assets with fellow beings. This psychologism make disposition of sense of detachment and this mind set will more useful to eliminate corruption with money, assets, etc. substantially than legal and administrative procedures (which already failed to remove the corruption and evils in individual and social level). In contemporary Asian countries, many people live under the poverty line while a few have been included in the list of top richest men in the world. The sense of detachment answers to the unequal distribution of wealth and resources in this region.

Economic activities of the contemporary society are largely affected by positivistic paradigm of science and its applications. Freedom of individual becomes question and domination of few or some permeate with nook and corner of the world. There is possibility of danger that all resources of the world may be trapped under the clutches of dominating few or some. Estrangement of humanity becomes only universally existing phenomenon without doubt. Economic activities of contemporary societies treat human beings as commodities or objects while objects take personification forms in the same societies. Dominating attitude of human beings makes them unfair and injustice in many dimensions. In the contemporary activities, large number of masses are deprived of their labor, their rights, their essence, etc. Due to dominated attitude of human beings, unnecessary labor and excessive resources are utilized to produce goods and services. Needs can be fulfilled but desires of greedy can never be fulfilled, even though all resources of the world are provided to them. For Economic sustainability, unnecessary labor and utilization of excessive resources should be minimized and eco-friendly economic activities should be promoted. Even though law and order, external legal procedures in national and international level are taken for maintaining and protecting economical sustainability, unless the domination attitude is changed in the human beings there is no redemption of humanity from the problems of sustainable development.

Max Horkheimer and Adorno argue that dominating attitude of human beings has been strengthened by scientific enlightenment and due to these humans have lost their essence and originality and become instruments and objects. Every human being views other human being as an object and not a human being. This condition is clearly depicted by Max Horkheimer and Adorno as follows:

...Not only is domination paid for with the estrangement of human beings from the dominated objects, but the relationships of human beings, including the relationship of individuals to themselves, have themselves been bewitched by the objectification of mind... ...Animism had endowed things with souls; industrialism makes souls into things. (Max Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002: 21).

In Current society, national and international organizations and institutions expect some standard behavior from individuals and the behavior affects substantially environmental sustainability via economical activities. This idea is elaborated in the Dialectic of

Enlightenment as; "...The countless agencies of mass production and its culture impress standardized behavior on the individual as the natural, decent, and rational one". (Ibid).

### **Buddhism and DE for Environmental Sustainability**

Virtues of non-violence (*āhimsā*) and compassion(*karuṇā*) of Buddhism are undoubtedly conducive to environmental sustainability. Conserving and protecting attitude and behavior related to animals and plants are also highlighted in the WCEDUNGAR as follows:

Development tends to simplify ecosystems and to reduce their diversity of species. And species, once extinct, are not renewable. The loss of plant and animal species can greatly limit the options of future generations; so, sustainable development requires the conservation of plant and animal species. (Gro Harlem Brundtland ,1987, Chapter 2. 13: 43).

The ethics to respect other living beings as well as our environment at large is an essential aspect of Buddhist ethics. Compassion and nonviolence on living beings (animals and plants) indirectly lead us to the sustainable development by way of recognizing feelings and sentiments of other living beings. The person who observes the virtues of non-violence and compassion definitely would admit and allow equitable sharing of the resources among the living beings. Thus, the above virtues of Buddhism undeniably would pave the way to the sustainable development in many dimensions. Respecting animal Rights mentality and ecofriendly attitudes of Buddhism are expressed the following words:

"Monks, you should not catch hold of cows by their horns, nor should you catch hold of them by their ears, nor should you hold of them by their dewlaps, nor should catch hold of them by their tails, nor should mount on their backs. Whoever should (so) mount, there is an offence of wrong doing. Nor should you touch their privy parts with lustful thoughts. Whoever should (so) touch them, there is a grave offence. Nor should you kill young calves. Whoever should kill them should dealt with according to the rule." (I.B. Horner, 1962 *VinayaPitaka*, Vol. IV : 254). Now at that time the group of six monks went in a vehicle, and there was a bull in the middle yoked with cows and there was a cow in the middle yoked with bulls. "...Monks, should not go in a vehicle. Whoever should (so) go, there is an offence of wrong doing." (Ibid)

"... Doing injury to trees and shrubs is no offence in the eyes of the world, but it is wrong in the religion. The habit of sporting in the water is no offence to a layman, but it is wrong in the religion." (T.W.Rhys Davids ,1965: 266).

Desire begets desire and there is no end for desires but our mother earth had end and limitation in many dimensions. Our desires are infinite but the earth and its resources have limitations. For Buddhism, fulfilling one's desire is analogous to fueling oil in the burning fire. This is the truth discovered by the Buddha. The Buddha wants a layman to control and limit his desires and wants an ascetic to remove the desires. Controlling, limiting and removing one's desires would automatically lead us to lower consumption and minimum use of the objects and resources. This state would lead us to the sustainable development of the world.

Max Horkheimer and Adorno highlight that fetish thinking is all pervaded in contemporary society. It appears that fetish thought considers animate thing (plants and animals) into inanimate things. But this kind of misperception is ruled out in Buddhism. In Buddhism plants and animals receives intrinsic value and karma theory of Buddhism also upholds this



conviction. It seems that the enlightenment of the Buddha loves nature and environment by renunciation of the worldly desires and self-destruction. On the contrary, positivistic enlightenment of science and its applications are totally opposed to environmental sustainability. Buddha's enlightenment on plants, animals and karma theory can be viewed as animistic from the point of view of positivistic enlightenment of science. It is undeniable fact that humanization of nature and environment; some kind of animism or fetishism of Buddhism are conducive to environment sustainability and Scientific enlightenment based on positivistic ideology looks everything of this world into subject and object; everything for subject, except the subject, everything is object. This psychologism causes for process of reification in human beings. It is important to note that subjective state of human beings conceived by the Buddha as well as Max Horkeimer and Adorno is not the same, i.e. states of fettered or liberated view should be considered here. As per Max Horkeimer and Adorno, the objectification of mind is one of the causes for domination. This cause of Max Horkeimer and Adorno can be analogous to 'desire' of Buddhism. However, the desire is a disguised cause for the domination. For Buddhism, the original cause of the domination is ignorance.

### **Buddhism and the DE for Social Sustainability**

The virtues: detachment, compassion, *āhimsā*, etc. of Buddhism, would lead us to social sustainability by feelings and sentiments of fellow beings and these virtues would guide us to live together without conflict and fight. The *Dhammapada* refers to nature of violence and non-violence as follows: "Not any time is enmities appeased here through enmity but they are appeased through non-enmity. This is the eternal law." (Narada, 1978: 5).

He who carries out his purpose by violence is not therein righteous (established in the law). He is wise who decides both advantage and disadvantage He who guides other by a procedure that is non-violent and equitable he is said to be guardian of the law, wise and righteous. (Ibid : 256-257).

Many virtues prescribed by Buddhism undeniably lead us to the co-existence and sustainable development of Asia in special and the world in general. There is a strong relationship between ethics and *nirvāṇa* (liberation) of Buddhism. The Four noble truths and eight fold paths pave the way to us in the right direction. Not only have they lead us to the heaven and liberation but also to the paradise and peaceful life of the pluralistic communities living world. The Buddha as a humanist, as a rationalist, as the superman had tried to remove the suffering of living beings in the world. His system or doctrine is not for few but for all and all times and it is also more valuable at present. It is amazing that his teachings are suitable to the context of co - existence and sustainable development in the contemporary world. His non-violence pervaded from human beings to plants. Apart from this, other virtues: compassion, detachment, etc., to greater extent, help us to live peacefully in the multi -ethnic-communities living world.

The successful social sustainability depends solely on the perfect functions of various hierarchies of the organizations and institutions. Max Horkheimer and Adorno argue that the domination is penetrated with every structures and hierarchies of social institutions and organizations whether division of labor (class system) or caste system in Indian Society. Max Horkheimer and Adorno as well as the Buddha express their criticism on class or caste system due to injustice committed against the individuals in the name of unjust classification based on unjust criteria of the ruling class or caste. This social evil severely affects the people of socially and economically oppressed and suppressed. Fair distributions of accumulated wealth and exploitation of the proletariat class are subject matter of Max Horkheimer and Adorno. For his part, the Buddha also agitated against traditional caste system of India and provides a new interpretation for the caste. The Buddha argues that one's caste is determined

by one's deeds (one's actions of the present attitude and behavior) and not by one's birth status. The following words of him prove this position:

Not by birth does one become an outcaste, not by birth does one become a brahman. By (one's) action one becomes an outcaste, by (one's) action one becomes a brahman. (K.R. Norman, *Suttanipāṭṭa*, 2001: 18).

Even though the Buddha's main goal is renunciation of the worldly things, he recognizes duties and functions of some essential social institutions like family. As per the Buddha a good family is a boon for humanity and not a curse for the latter:

Even if one should carry about his mother on one's shoulder, and his father on the other, and so doing should live a hundred years; and if he should support them, anointing them with unguents, kneading, bathing and rubbing their limbs; and they meanwhile should even void their excrements upon him, even so could he not repay his parents. Moreover, monks, if he should establish his parents in supreme authority, in the absolute rule over this mighty earth abounding in the seven treasures, - not even thus could he repay his parents. What is the cause of that? monks, parents do much for their children: They bring them up, they nourish them, they introduce them to this world. (F.L. Woodward (tr.) *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, Vol. I, 1932, : 56-57).

In Buddhism, family life is praised to some extent, and not condemned. Chastity and faith of spouse towards each other is extolled and believed that an excellent family life ends not only with this very life but also extends to the life to come:

"...herein, householders, if both wife and husband desire to behold each other both in this very life and in the life to come, and both are matched in faith, matched in virtue, matched in generosity, matched in wisdom, then do they behold each other in this very life and in the life to come." (F.L. Woodward (tr.) *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, Vol. II, 1933 :70).

Buddha considers that a good family is not proportionally opposed to ascetic life on which actually ascetic life depends. The ethical system (eight-fold path) is the same for ascetics as well as holders of Buddhism. The difference between the sects on ethics is nothing but degree not quality. Ascetic life and domestic life are recognized by the Buddha as the meaningful path to *nirvāṇa*. Both the two aspects of life are not independent but interdependent each other. The summum bonum of the ascetic life cannot be materialized without a virtuous family life.

### **Buddhism and the DE for Cultural Sustainability**

Buddhist culture includes social values, customs, practices, spiritual beliefs, etc. The precepts of nonviolence and detachment are always stressed by Buddhism and those can be considered as foundations of the Buddhist ethics. The import of the precept of nonviolence is revealed by the Buddha by including this precept as the first virtue in the *pañcaśīla* (five virtues) in the right doing (*samayakkaramānta*) of the eight-fold path. And one of the eight-fold path, right livelihood (*samayaḡājīva*) insists that one's profession should not be dealt with (a) arms (b) living beings (c) flesh (d) poison.

In Buddhism it is believed that The Buddha was born for the benefit of living beings in this world. This idea is proved by the following words of an Indian philosopher, Radhakrishnan :

In the Buddha's scheme of ethics, the spirit of love is more important than good works. All good works whatever are not worth one-sixteenth part of love which sets free the heart. Love which sets free the heart comprises them. It shines, gives light

and radiance. As a mother, at the risk of her life, watches over her only child, so let everyone cultivate a boundless love towards all beings. Respect for animal life is an integral part of morality. A good Buddhist does not kill animals for pleasure or eat flesh. They are his humble brethren and not lower creatures over whom he has dominion by divine right. Serenity of spirit and love for all sentient creatures are enjoined by the Buddha. He does not speak of sin, but only of ignorance and foolishness which could be cured by enlightenment and sympathy. (S. Radhakrishnan, 1984: 22-23).

The virtues of non-violence and detachment are considered as two sides of the same coin in Buddhism. The truth we have to realize that the Buddhist ethical values should be maintained for a healthy society on which other four dimensions of sustainability depend. We must also realize that this is the most important dimension of the four and actually this dimension is the foundation for genuine sustainable development for Asian countries and the world.

### **Karma Theory of Buddhism and Sustainable Development**

Buddhism believes in karma theory. Karma means action and an action is mainly divided into good and evil actions. An evil action arises out three causes: lust, malice and delusion and good action arises free of the above causes. As per Buddhism a good action leads one to happiness in this world and the world to come, on the contrary, evil action leads one to suffering of this world and the world to come. If everyone is able to observe the good actions and avoid evil actions as much as possible, the achievement of sustainable development will not be a day dream but be a possible mile stone. The causes of the actions and their consequences are described in the following lines of a holy text as follows:

Monks, there are these three originating causes of action. What three? lust, malice, delusion. An act performed in lust, born of lust, originating in lust, arising from lust, has its fruit; where ever one's personal self is reborn. Where ever that act comes to fruition, there one experiences the fruit there of, whether it come into bearing in this very life or in some other phase (of existence).

Act performed in malice...an act performed under delusion ...has its fruit in like manner...

...Just so, monks, an act not performed in lust, not performed in malice, not performed under delusion. ...is of a nature not to arise again in future time.” (F.L. Woodward (tr.) *Āṅguttara Nikāya* Vol. I, 1932: 117-118).

### **Self-Annihilation and. Self-Preservation in Buddhism and the Dialectic of Enlightenment(DE)**

Both self-preservation and self-annihilation take significant role in Buddhism and the Dialectic of Enlightenment. The Buddha as well as Max Horkheimer and Adorno speak on self-annihilation and self-preservation. The Buddha as well as Max Horkheimer and Adorno conceive that self-preservation attitude is the successful instrument for domination as well as exploitation and inimical to wellbeing of humanity. As per Buddhism believing in the self (permanent soul) leading our life based on it is state of ignorance, instead of self-preservation, Buddhism proposes self-annihilation to believe and lead our life and for Buddhism self-annihilation leads us to *nirvāṇa*. The concept of self-annihilation influences sustainable development undeniably through economic and environmental sustainability. The self-annihilation questions every one's goal – ‘becoming rich.’ The self-annihilation makes dominating attitude of the subject (human being) into compassion and everything of the

subject into nothing. The enlightenment of the Buddha tries to liberate the world from domination.

As per the Dialectic of Enlightenment, two kind of self-preservation is spoken: 1) Animistic self-preservation 2) mechanical self-preservation. As per Max Horkheimer and Adorno scientific enlightenment has changed animistic self-preservation into mechanical self-preservation. Both the philosophers argue that animistic self-preservation is better than mechanical self-preservation since in the process of mechanical self-preservation human beings are more alienated from the original nature. For sustainable development, mechanical self-preservation is more dangerous than animistic self-preservation. This is proved by following words:

Individuals define themselves now only as things, statistical elements, successes or failures. Their criterion is self-preservation, successful or unsuccessful adaptation to the objectivity of their function and the schemata assigned to it. (Max Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002: 21-22).

The self which, after the methodical extirpation of all natural traces as mythological, was no longer supposed to be either a body or blood or a soul or even a natural ego but was sublimated into a transcendental or logical subject, formed the reference point of reason, the legislating authority of action. (Ibid. 22)

However, Buddhist self-annihilation that based on *pañcaskandhas*<sup>iii</sup> and three universal characteristics of the existence<sup>iv</sup> is conducive to destruction of selfishness as well as sustainable development of the world.

## CONCLUSION

It is not exaggerated that Buddhism is the most successful spiritual system have reached beyond the limits of Indian sub –continent and this is not due to political influence but to the message which Buddhism carries. The message of it is not for one community but for the humanity as a whole. For sustainable development, rigorous reading and contextual interpretation of the holy texts of Buddhism should be carried out by the concerned scholars and intellectuals. Ideas for sustainable development embedded in Buddhism should be disseminated effectively to common men of this region in particular and to the world in general. It is obvious that the psychologism advocated by Buddhism is conducive to sustainable development of this region. For this purpose, ascetics, intellectuals and scholars of Buddhism should comprehend the problems encountered by humanity and also try to realize potentials and capabilities of Buddhism to solve the problems related to sustainable development in hand. In other words, on the one hand, the man in the street should be more spiritualized and reinforced with regard to already existing spiritual characteristics of this region and the world and on the other hand, ascetics and intellectuals of the system should know the problems of humanity related to the sustainable development. Thus, the above said sections of society should work together to achieve the sustainable development in reasonable manner and we should also realize that the activities of them are complimentary to each other. Thus, the Dialectic of Enlightenment of Max Horkheimer and Adorno assist us to understand problems of wellbeing of humanity while enlightenment of the Buddha lead us to solution to the problems of sustainable development of the world.

<sup>iii</sup> *Pañcaskandhas* : *rūpa* (matter), *vedanā* (feeling), *sāmjñā* (perception), *samskāra* (disposition) and *vijñāna* (consciousness); a human being is the combination of the above five.

<sup>iv</sup> Three universal characteristics of existence: *anicca* (non-eternal), *duḥkha* (suffering) and *anātma* (non-permanent soul).

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