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**Abstract**

*It is quite evident that practitioners, scholars as well as laypersons are debating, arguing as well as conducting research on marketing in contemporary management arena. Some researchers argued that the concept of marketing has solution for all problems faced by customers & other stakeholders. Buddhism is becoming popular in eastern as well as western countries for number of reasons; the first reason is that Buddhism has answers (solutions) to many of the problems in modern materialistic societies. Hence following research problem has been advanced in this study. "Is there any relationship between the philosophy of Buddhism and discipline of Marketing?". Content analysis as well as interview method were performed to link the philosophy and marketing management in terms of practice and faith. According to findings these two subjects are going inline with understanding needs and wants of the people. Marketing always focuses on understanding needs and wants of the customer and their satisfaction. Marketing activities and strategies result in making products available that satisfy customers while making profits for the companies that offer those products. Buddhism also includes a deep understanding of the human mind which prominent psychologists are now discovering to be very effective. A marketer can follow the eightfold path to perform well in the market.*

**Introduction**

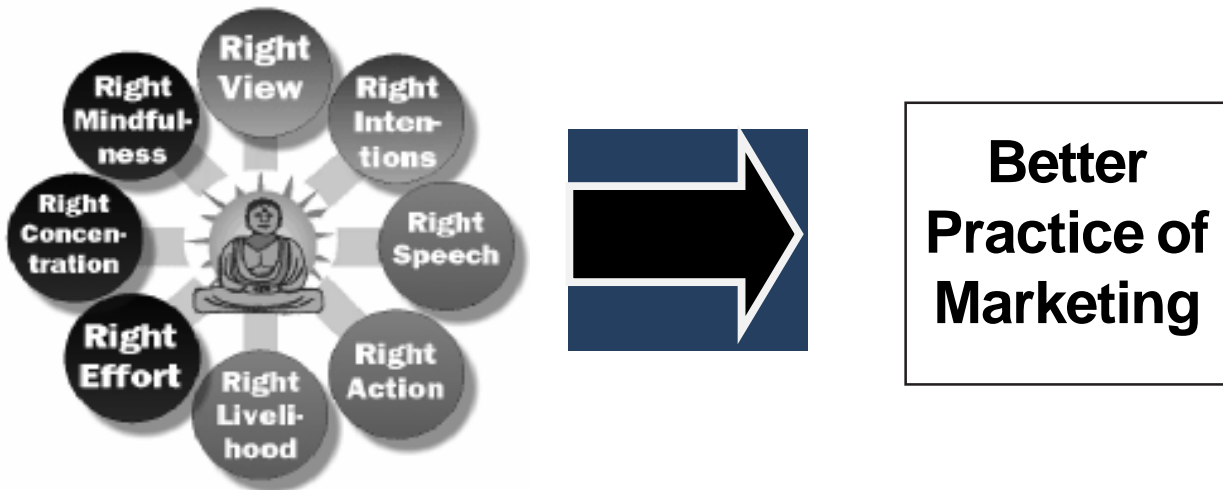
In contemporary management people are taking more on marketing which is must in the business world. On the other hand Buddhism is becoming popular in western countries for a number of reasons; The first good reason is Buddhism has answers to many of the problems in modern materialistic societies. Even it can be considered as fast grown religion in UK Jails. In 1997 there were only 226 Buddhists in prisons in England and Wales, but by the end of June 2008 that figure had risen by 669 per cent to reach 1,737 – 2 per cent of the 79,734 prison population. The vast majority, 1,194, was white and most was over 30. Only 78 were female (www.telegraph.co.uk).

Selling is paramount important in marketing and considered as a lifeblood in marketing The old saying that "selling is selling" echoes a broadly accepted notion that there is a set of sales basics that applies, more or less, to all selling situations. The conventional selling always concern on fundamental characteristics of successful salespeople. Accordingly excellent sales forces consist of smart, aggressive, outgoing personalities, with strong self-confidence, who can smoothly develop needs, present product benefits, and who have good customer-handling skills. On the other hand there is a question of poor sales forces – salespeople who are just order takers, who don't know how to sell benefits, or who don't know the product well enough to sell against competitors. For that you need different skills as well as competencies. This study is going to understand how the eightfold path can be used as strategy to build up the skills of a marketer(see the diagram one)

**Keywords**

*Buddhism, Marketing,  
Eightfold path, Marketer*

## Diagram one-Relationship between Eightfold Path and Marketing



### Literature Review

The Noble Eightfold Path describes the way to the end of suffering, as it was laid out by Lord Buddha. It is a practical guideline to ethical and mental development with the goal of freeing the individual from attachments and delusions; and it finally leads to understanding the truth about all things. The eight aspects of the path are not to be understood as a sequence of single steps, instead they are highly interdependent principles that have to be seen in relationship with each other. (www.thebigview.com).

Following are the main ingredients of eightfold path.

#### Right View

Right view is the beginning and the end of the path, it simply means to see and to understand things as they really are and to realize the Four Noble Truths. Right view is not necessarily an intellectual capacity, just as wisdom is not just a matter of intelligence. Instead, right view is attained, sustained, and enhanced through all capacities of mind

#### Right Intention

While right view refers to the cognitive aspect of wisdom, right intention refers to the volitional aspect, i.e. the kind of mental energy that controls our actions. Right intention can be described best as *commitment* to ethical and mental self-improvement. Buddha distinguishes three types of right intentions: 1. the intention of renunciation, which means resistance to the pull of desire, 2. the intention of good will, meaning resistance to feelings of anger and aversion, and 3. the intention of harmlessness, meaning not to think or act cruelly, violently, or aggressively, and to develop compassion.

#### Right Speech

Right speech is the first principle of ethical conduct in the eightfold path. Ethical conduct is viewed as a guideline to *moral discipline*, which supports the other principles of the path. This aspect is not self-sufficient, however,

essential, because mental purification can only be achieved through the cultivation of ethical conduct. The importance of speech in the context of Buddhist ethics is obvious: words can break or save lives, make enemies or friends, start war or create peace. Buddha explained right speech as follows: 1. to abstain from false speech, especially not to tell deliberate lies and not to speak deceitfully, 2. to abstain from slanderous speech and not to use words maliciously against others, 3. to abstain from harsh words that offend or hurt others, and 4. to abstain from idle chatter that lacks purpose or depth. Positively phrased, this means to tell the truth, to speak friendly, warm, and gently and to talk only when necessary.

#### Right Action

The second ethical principle, right action, involves the body as natural means of expression, as it refers to deeds that involve bodily actions. Unwholesome actions lead to unsound states of mind, while wholesome actions lead to sound states of mind. Again, the principle is explained in terms of abstinence: right action means 1. to abstain from harming sentient beings, especially to abstain from taking life (including suicide) and doing harm intentionally or delinquently, 2. to abstain from taking what is not given, which includes stealing, robbery, fraud, deceitfulness, and dishonesty, and 3. to abstain from sexual misconduct. Positively formulated, right action means to act kindly and compassionately, to be honest, to respect the belongings of others, and to keep sexual relationships harmless to others. Further details regarding the concrete meaning of right action can be found in the Precepts.

#### Right Livelihood

Right livelihood means that one should earn one's living in a righteous way and that wealth should be gained legally and peacefully. The Buddha mentions four specific activities that harm other beings and that one should avoid for this reason: 1. dealing in weapons, 2. dealing in living beings (including raising animals for slaughter

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as well as slave trade and prostitution), 3. working in meat production and butchery, and 4. selling intoxicants and poisons, such as alcohol and drugs. Furthermore any other occupation that would violate the principles of right speech and right action should be avoided.

### **Right Effort**

Right effort can be seen as a prerequisite for the other principles of the path. Without effort, which is in itself an act of will, nothing can be achieved, whereas misguided effort distracts the mind from its task, and confusion will be the consequence. Mental energy is the force behind right effort; it can occur in either wholesome or unwholesome states. The same type of energy that fuels desire, envy, aggression, and violence can on the other side fuel self-discipline, honesty, benevolence, and kindness. Right effort is detailed in four types of endeavours that rank in ascending order of perfection: 1. to prevent the arising of unarisen unwholesome states, 2. to abandon unwholesome states that have already arisen, 3. to arouse wholesome states that have not yet arisen, and 4. to maintain and perfect wholesome states already arisen.

### **Right Mindfulness**

Right mindfulness is the controlled and perfected faculty of cognition. It is the mental ability to see things as they are, with clear consciousness. Usually, the cognitive process begins with an impression induced by perception, or by a thought, but then it does not stay with the mere impression. Instead, we almost always conceptualise sense impressions and thoughts immediately. We interpret them and set them in relation to other thoughts and experiences, which naturally go beyond the facticity of the original impression. The mind then posits concepts, joins concepts into constructs, and weaves those constructs into complex interpretative schemes. All this happens only half consciously, and as a result we often see things obscured. Right mindfulness is anchored in clear perception and it penetrates impressions without getting carried away. Right mindfulness enables us to be aware of the process of conceptualisation in a way that we actively observe and control the way our thoughts go. Buddha accounted for this as the *four foundations of mindfulness*: 1. contemplation of the body, 2. contemplation of feeling (repulsive, attractive, or neutral), 3. contemplation of the state of mind, and 4. contemplation of the phenomena.

### **Right Concentration**

The eighth principle of the path, right concentration, refers to the development of a mental force that occurs in natural consciousness, although at a relatively low level of intensity, namely concentration. Concentration in this context is described as one-pointedness of mind, meaning a state where all mental faculties are unified and directed onto one particular object. Right concentration for the purpose of the eightfold path means *wholesome concentration*, i.e. concentration on wholesome thoughts and actions. The Buddhist method

of choice to develop right concentration is through the practice of meditation. The meditating mind focuses on a selected object. It first directs itself onto it, then sustains concentration, and finally intensifies concentration step by step. Through this practice it becomes natural to apply elevated levels concentration also in everyday situations.

### **Research Methodology**

Content analysis has been performed. Content analysis is a methodology in the social sciences for studying the content of communication. Earl Babbie defines it as “the study of recorded human communications, such as books, websites, paintings and laws.” It is most commonly used by researchers in the social sciences. For this purpose articles, web as well as publications used. Furthermore the interview method also has been used with selected experts in different industries.

### **Findings**

In Content analysis it has drawn that marketing and Buddhism go-inline with understanding needs and wants of the people. Marketing always focus on customer satisfaction (Kotler and Amrsstraong,2008). Marketing activities and strategies result in making products available that satisfy customers while making profits for the companies that offer those products. To satisfy customers there is a need to understand their needs and wants. People should understand the minds of the customers. In Buddhism as well it includes a deep understanding of the human mind which prominent psychologists around the world are now discovering to be both very advanced and effective.

Buddhism teaches solutions to problems. In marketing also people defined it has total solution for customer problems. Understanding Consumer behavior is important in marketing (Fishbein,1970). In Buddhism too behavior of people always tested. And more interestingly it has found that marketer can learn a lot from Buddhism. If marketer wants to understand the mindset of their customers they should learn Buddhism. Buddhism is all about practice rather than belief. If marketer can follow the following eightfold path he can perform well in the market.

1. Right understanding –If marketer can understand the customer needs and wants in a correct way easily he can convince his idea to customer. In Sri Lanka Dialog Axiata offering new packages with low IDD rate by understanding the needs and wants of the customers expecting to offer more than the competitors are doing.
2. Right thinking –If marketer can think about the customer and his/her mindset properly then he/she can deliver the right product, in a right time and in a right way. The small business called Elcardo where they think that roller door market is going to perform well in Sri Lanka. Hence they went abroad and technical expertise has been taken. Now they are producing roller doors in Sri Lanka and rated as

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number one in that market with profit as well as with ethics with corporate social responsibility.

3. Right speech-This is much important in marketing. Especially in sales management negotiation plays a vital role. If you speak correctly to your customer easily you can sell your product. For marketer these elements are important to negotiate with customers. Then only marketer can focus on relationship marketing.(building long term relationship with customers). The Siddhalepa group in Sri Lanka has a long history. They are doing well in Auyurvedic balms etc. The owner of the group Mr. Victor Hettigoda always talk about his success story as well as giving lessons for the people who want to start new businesses ethically etc.
4. Right action –In marketing people always talking about proactive marketing. In other words you have to do something before your competitor. Furthermore it can relate ethical marketing also in this regards. You have to do right things (ethical) to motivate your customers. As discuss earlier the owner of Siddhalepa group Mr. Victor Hettigoda always articulates “right action will lead right results” in business.
5. Right livelihood- Right livelihood means that one should earn one’s living in a righteous way and that wealth should be gained legally and peacefully. This is important especially once it concern about professionalism. Customer always concern about the organization, salesperson and behavior. Once you have a right livelihood only customer will trust you. And then he/she will commit with you too. The company of Dilmah can be considered as one example where customers also willing to be a part of it because of right livelihood of the company in past decades.
6. Right effort –Right effort can be seen as a prerequisite for the other principles of the path. Without effort, which is in itself an act of will, nothing can be achieved, whereas misguided effort distracts the mind from its task, and confusion will be the consequence. Basically some times marketers will go for unethical practices. Marketing ethics is the area of applied ethics which deals with the moral principles behind the operation and regulation of marketing. Some marketers are in competition to increase profits and extracting a few extra rupees from the consumer by using deceptive practices is an easy way. But right effort should be there. In Education business it can be seen some unethical business practices .But Auston Ceylon Limited is doing well under the General Manager Mr. Gamini Jayasooriya who always believing that right effort will lead right outcome.
7. Right mindfulness- Right mindfulness enables us to be aware of the process of conceptualization in a way that we actively observe and control the way our thoughts go. This is important in marketing because every time marketer should understand the market as well as consumer behavior. If marketer

can observe the behavior and the nature of the market easily he/she can understand his/her customer. As discussed earlier the General Manager Mr. Gamini Jayasooriya always believes not to be panic in the situation but to conceptualize the arena in broad mindset.

8. Right concentration - Concentration in this context is described as a state where all mental faculties are unified and directed onto one particular object. If a marketer can concentrate the object(customer) continuously he/she can perform well than competitors Because continuous observation and research in marketing is very much important to understand the behavior of customers.

### Conclusion

To become a good marketer you need knowledge, practice as well as sound mindset. In eightfold path it always teaches that few important aspects with complete touch. Even the latest version of Marketing 3.0 (Kotler, Kartajaya, and Iwan, 2010) argues instead of treating people simply as consumers, marketers must approach them as whole human beings with minds, hearts and spirit. This is what the Buddhism always dictates. Dr. Mikio Matsuoka, Researcher, Institute of Oriental Philosophy discusses it in one article of “The Buddhist concept of a Human Being” (Published in The Journal of Oriental Studies, 2005) which explains how Shakyamuni Buddha’s religious movement attempted to realize a moralistic revolution of society by reforming the hearts and minds of the individuals in that society. Buddhism offers methods to clarify our mind, open our heart, and face the realities of human life Hence it can conclude that Buddhism is a universal subject and it can be used to develop the contemporary subjects like marketing.

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