Facing Problems Created by Modern Technology – The Buddhist View

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Unprecedented technological developments are taking place at an unimaginably accelerated speed. These developments cause the world to change so rapidly that most people, finding it difficult to adjust their lives to these changes, get highly bewildered and confused. In spite of such bewilderment and confusion, they become enslaved by these developments as these make life in many of its spheres more comfortable and easy. Globalization has become the closest ally of these developments. Through globalization, the influence of these developments, have been able to cast the net to catch all, even against their will. This really is the sum effect of technological developments and globalization, both of which are functioning in the modern world as necessary evils.

There is no escape from globalization and none can decry technological developments. Modern society is faced with this crucial challenge of handling both these in a manner that is beneficial to the individual as well as to society. It is in this regard that religion should play a very constructive and instructive role.

Buddhism built on a threefold training of morality mental culture and development of wisdom is well equipped to provide good guidance to come out safe from this critical situation. To draw a parable from the texts the Buddha says that even his teaching should be used with caution, not slavishly carrying it on the head nor dearly clinging to it like a foolish snake-hunter catching a snake by its tail. Even Dhamma should be used as a raft to solve one's problem.

Sober and mature attitudes should be adopted when utilizing technological developments in this globalized world. Then one would not get enslaved by them. One would be able to master them and use them for good and the wellbeing of oneself and society at large.

This paper will examine selected Buddhist discourses specially from the Pali Sutta Pitaka, and try to point out how they can be used as guidance in utilizing the ever growing facilities provided by technological developments. The thrust of paper will be to demonstrate that the problems lie not with technological developments, but with their users who are either misusing them or getting enslaved by them.