BUDDHIST COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN HEALTH

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Article Information

Abstract
The empowerment of Buddhist communities in the field of health includes a set of concepts, views, and practices that integrate Buddhist religious values with health aspects. This study aims to investigate traditional Buddhist health sciences, differences in the use of herbs for health, aspects of mental health in a Buddhist context, and the development of modern health sciences such as cloning, euthanasia, organ transplantation, and organ donation. This research was prepared by descriptive analysis method. The results of this study found that strengthening public health from a Buddhist perspective encourages active community participation in maintaining and improving collective health. By understanding and applying Buddhism, people can form a proactive mindset towards health, build solidarity, and realize shared prosperity. The conclusion of this study is that empowering the Buddhist community in the field of health is an effort that not only reflects the values of Buddhism, but also integrates the wealth of modern knowledge for the overall well-being of Buddhists.

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Keywords:
Holistic Health, Herbs, Mental Health

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INTRODUCTION

The empowerment of Buddhist communities in the field of health reflects a profound journey in dealing with the dynamics of health complexity in the modern era. The concept of health empowerment is the main foundation, emphasizing the importance of providing knowledge, skills, and motivation to individuals and communities to be actively involved in efforts to improve their own health. In this context, Buddhism on health becomes a profound guide, viewing health as a foundation for achieving holistic well-being that involves harmony between body, mind, and spirit.

The Buddhist approach to health carries a distinctively spiritual dimension, with its central point rooted in the Four Noble Truths leading to a deep understanding of suffering and efforts to overcome it. Traditional Buddhist Health Science contributes value, integrating time-tested traditional practices to achieve optimal health. In addition, the empowerment of Buddhist communities in the field of health involves the vital role of herbal plants as natural resources that can support physical and mental health. Buddha's mental health is an important highlight, with a focus on meditation, self-understanding, and emotional balancing.

Contemporary challenges such as the development of health sciences, such as cloning, euthanasia, organ transplantation, and organ donation, are part of the context that must be faced (Ruhendar, 2021) (Yuhafi et al., 2023). In the face of this dynamic, empowering Buddhist communities seeks deep and critical understanding to respond to these changes and challenges. Strengthening the health of Buddhist communities is not just a response to diseases and health challenges, but also integrating moral and ethical values in every action. Thus, the empowerment of Buddhist communities in the field of health not only pursues physical sustainability, but also forms a strong foundation for mutual happiness and well-being.

Research conducted by Triyanto on "Community Empowerment Development Strategy in the Health Sector by the Pekanbaru City Health Office (study in Tenayan Raya District, Pekanbaru City)", found results that can be through an assessment of empowerment variables consisting of 5 (five) indicators: such as awareness, community/organizational development, increasing advocacy efforts, increasing partnerships and cross-sector participation, and increasing the utilization of potential &; resources (Trianto, 2019). The results of the research can be further traced to the empowerment of Buddhists in the field of Health. So that it can view health as a foundation for achieving holistic well-being that involves harmony between body, mind, and spirit.

This study aims to explore the concept of health empowerment and understand health perspectives in Buddhism, including health approaches according to Buddhism and models of sustainable economic practices in Buddhist societies. In addition, this study aims to investigate traditional Buddhist health sciences, differences in the use of herbal plants for health, aspects of mental health in a Buddhist context, and the development of modern health sciences such as cloning, euthanasia, organ transplantation, and organ
donation. Research also focuses on understanding public health strengthening within the framework of Buddhism.

**METHOD**

This paper is prepared by descriptive analysis method, which aims to describe in detail and systematically the phenomenon or object of study without manipulating variables. Descriptive analysis methods are used to provide a comprehensive picture of the characteristics, relationships, or circumstances observed in the context of the study. The process of descriptive analysis involves collecting data, presenting data narratively, and interpreting results to reveal patterns or trends that can provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Health Empowerment Concept**

According to Marniati explained that health empowerment is an effort made to provide health services to the community in the form of infrastructure, as well as counseling or education (Marniati & SE, 2022). Basically, health empowerment is health programs that are socialized to the community. The government is responsible for conducting socialization through various health institutions.

Based on the 1945 Constitution Article 28 H paragraph 1 it is explained that obtaining a prosperous life outwardly and mentally, having a place to live, obtaining a healthy living environment, and receiving health services are rights for everyone. According to Wahyuni (2015) health empowerment is an effort made by the community in improving environmental conditions, cleanliness, and other fields related to health (Wahyuni, 2017).

**Buddhist Health Concept**

In Dhammapada it is explained that the achievement possessed by a person is health (Dp.204). In Ânguttara Nikâya Buddha explains that there are two kinds of illness, namely physical illness and mental illness (A.II.143) Mental illness is anyone who has not attained the state of purity, because who still has greed (lobba), hatred (sin), ignorance (mohha). While physical illness is an unavoidable worldly trait such as old age and death.

**Health Approaches According to Buddhism**

According to Buddhism, diseases can occur due to natural conditions in life, such as food, climate, weather, shelter, or other natural factors, this is called Utu Niyama in Buddhist terminology. Other diseases can also be caused by a legal mechanism called Kamma Niyama. Actions here can be in the form of actions that occur in this life as well as previous lives that bear fruit in this life.

**Health Sciences According to Buddhism**

According to Kalra the Buddha's description of Medicine, Bhaisajyaguru, Yakushi Nyora, i or Buddha of Healing is described in Mahayana Buddhist texts and is usually depicted sitting with the right hand raised in a vadra mudra (hand and finger gestures symbolize giving and affection), and the left hand resting (Beckmann et al.,
On his lap, holding the medicine jar. In the illustration, he is shown surrounded by an innumerable variety of healing plants and sages, described as a Medicine Buddha Paradise representing an ideal universe where there is a cure for every disease, something that modern medical research has always pursued.

Medicine Buddha is described as a healer who heals suffering and illness, both physical and mental. The Medicine Buddhist Sutras are sutras commonly recited in Eastern Buddhist temples and monasteries. He is believed to have revealed the teachings that make up the Four Medical Tantras in Buddhist medical literature. The Four Medical Tantra have outlined the causes, nature and signs of various diseases, methods of healing and treatment, and precise explanations of medical ethics, describing the qualities of a physician.

Health care practitioners in Kalra Buddhism explain that doctors, nurses, and others involved in the care of the sick are highly respected in Buddhist culture. Doctors are referred to as bhisakka, vejja, or tikicchaka. The Buddha saw the role of the doctor as a very important one. The Buddha said: "One who takes care of the sick, is of great benefit (to others)." "Caring for the sick is highly praised by the Loving and is it any wonder that He did so? Since the Wise Man views the welfare of others as his own and therefore he should act as a benefactor, it is not surprising. This is why caring for the sick was praised by the Buddha. One who practices great virtues must have loving concern for others."

Empowerment of Herbal Plants for Health

Herbal plants are plants that contain natural active ingredients that can be used for treatment or support the health of the human body (Kameswari, 2023) (Putri, 2019). Herbs are a significant approach in promoting public health. Herbs have great potential to provide natural and sustainable solutions in an effort to maintain and promote health. In the journal Dita Kameswari, Types of Herbal Plants:

1. Ginger: It has anti-inflammatory and anticancer properties, and can relieve digestive problems.
2. Turmeric: Contains curcumin compounds that have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.
3. Mint leaves: Able to relieve stomach problems, flu and colds, and have antispasmodic properties.
4. Aloe vera: It has anti-inflammatory properties and can soothe wounds and skin irritation.
5. Cinnamon bark: Contains active compounds that can control blood sugar levels and has antimicrobial properties (Kameswari, 2023).

Some important aspects related to the empowerment of herbal plants for health (Kumontoy, 2023).

1. Chemical Content and Nutrition of Herbal Crops:

Herbal plants contain a variety of natural chemical compounds that can provide health benefits. Each plant has a unique chemical profile, which creates a variety of properties. For example, plants such as ginger (Zingiber officinale) contain anti-
inflammatory substances, while soursop leaves (Annona muricata) are known to have antioxidant and anticancer properties.

2. Herbal Plants as a Source of Nutrition:
   Many herbal plants contain essential nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Empowerment of herbal plants as a source of nutrition can increase people's nutritional intake. For example, spinach leaves (Amaranthus spp.) are rich in iron and vitamin A, which are important for healthy blood and vision.

3. Utilization of Herbal Plants in Traditional Medicine:
   Herbal plants have long been used in traditional medicine in various cultures. Empowering the use of this plant can integrate a holistic approach to health, utilizing the healing properties of plants to treat various disease conditions.

4. Herbs as Disease Prevention:
   Regular consumption of herbal plants can act as a preventive measure against disease. Some plants have immunomodulatory or antimicrobial properties, such as echinacea (Echinacea purpurea) which can increase endurance.

5. Continuity with Conventional Medicine:
   Empowerment of herbal plants should be done by paying attention to harmony with conventional medicine. Consultation with a healthcare professional, including an herbalist or physician, is necessary to minimize the risk of drug interactions and ensure the safety of herbal plant use.

Empowering herbs for health is not just about consuming these plants directly but also involves a deep understanding of their potential efficacy and sustainability of use. With a holistic approach, herbs can be a valuable asset in supporting people's health and well-being.

**Mental Health in a Buddhist Perspective**

Mental health in Buddhism's view is not just about the well-being of the mind, but also involves a deep understanding of the nature of suffering and the way to achieve freedom from that cycle of suffering (Hafiza et al., 2020). Caroline Anglo's paper entitled The Buddhist Perspective on Mental Health, we will discuss some of the main concepts and practices related to mental health in the context of Buddhism.

1. Mind Control and Meditation:
   One of the main keys in maintaining mental health in Buddhism is mind control. The practice of meditation becomes the main means to achieve this goal. Meditation helps a person develop mindfulness of thoughts and feelings, allowing observation without identification or over-involvement.

2. Concept of Mindfulness:
   In Buddhism, consciousness is not only a meditation technique, but also as a way of life. Awareness brings full attention to this moment, allowing a person to deal with stress, anxiety and anxiety more effectively. Awareness helps understand the impermanent nature of everything and teaches to live in the moment.

3. Acceptance and Impermanence (Anicca and Dukkha):
The concepts of impermanence (anicca) and suffering (dukkha) became an important foothold in the understanding of mental health. Acceptance of the temporary nature of everything and recognition that suffering is a natural part of life helps one break free from adverse emotional attachments.

4. Emotional Management and Ego Identification:

Buddhism teaches the importance of managing emotions wisely. Ego identification, or detaching yourself from being fully identified with thoughts and feelings, helps prevent negative emotions from being carried over into everyday actions and responses.

5. Practice of Compassion (Metta):

The practice of Metta or compassion meditation is a way to develop positive feelings towards yourself and others. This creates an atmosphere of kindness and helps overcome anger or resentment that can be detrimental to mental health. Overall, Buddhist practices provide a solid foundation for maintaining and improving mental health. Awareness, acceptance, and the practice of compassion can form a stable basis for a person to understand and overcome his or her mental challenges. However, in cases of serious mental health issues, mental health professionals should be sought for more in-depth guidance and support.

The Development of Health Sciences in Ethical Controversies

Health sciences have undergone rapid development, giving rise to various innovations and technologies that have a significant impact on medical care and human well-being. However, some ethical issues have arisen as this progresses. In this section, we will explore the development of health science in the context of ethical controversies involving cloning, euthanasia, organ transplantation, and organ donation.

1. Cloning (cell division)

Cloning, or cell division, has been an interesting and controversial area of research. Despite its great potential for the treatment of genetic diseases and organ regeneration, the ethics of human cloning is still a source of debate. Questions about human rights, individual identity, and the potential misuse of these technologies should be seriously considered (Wangko & Kristanto, 2010). In Buddhism's view, the concept of life is regarded as an ongoing cycle of reincarnation. Human cell division or cloning can raise ethical questions related to the rights and nature of life. Buddhism's attitude toward cell division may reflect a caution against the manipulation of life and an emphasis on respect for all forms of life.

2. Eutanasia

Euthanasia, or assisted suicide, creates ethical dilemmas regarding the right to life and human dignity. While some advocate for the right of individuals to end their lives generously, others highlight the risks of abuse and far-reaching social repercussions. Continued discussion on euthanasia creates ethical challenges for communities and health systems (Halim, 2012) (Ernawati, 2023). Buddhism emphasizes suffering as an inseparable part of life. In this context, euthanasia, which can be viewed as ending one's suffering, can raise moral questions. However, because of Buddhism's teachings on
impermanence and reincarnation, there may be a tendency to focus more on wisdom in the face of suffering than on ending life.

3. Organ Transplant

Advances in organ transplantation have saved countless lives and improved quality of life. However, organ transplant ethics covers issues such as equitable organ distribution, the need for donors, and the risk of rejection. The establishment of ethical criteria in organ allocation and the development of technologies that minimize the risk of rejection are critical to ensure the success of this procedure (Linanda et al., 2020) (Alfrianto, 2015). Buddhism teaches compassion and concern for the suffering of others. In the context of organ transplants, when the procedure can save lives or reduce suffering, many practitioners of Buddhism can see it as a positive action. However, the ethics of organ distribution and responsibility for donors and recipients need to be carefully considered.

4. Organ Donor

Ethical issues arise in the context of organ donation, especially when there is high demand for organs and limited supply. Questions of donor willingness, individuals' rights to their own bodies, and fairness in organ distribution are central focuses. Ethical policies are needed to ensure that the organ donation process is conducted with fairness and integrity (Arofah, 2013) (Aqbar et al., 2022). The concepts of kindness and wisdom in Buddhism support actions that can benefit others. Therefore, if organ donation can provide a chance at life or reduce suffering, it can be in accordance with the values of Buddhism. It is important to ensure that the organ donation process is voluntary and with full respect for life.

Strengthening Public Health in Buddhism Perspective

Strengthening public health in the context of Buddhism covers various aspects, not only physically but also mentally and spiritually. In the exploration of concepts and practices that can strengthen public health according to the perspective of Buddhism (Jelita, 2022) (Rustanta et al., 2022).

1. Mindfulness-Based Health Education:

   Buddhism emphasizes mindfulness and mindfulness as key elements in the development of health. Mindfulness-based health education can help people to be more aware of their daily living habits, including diet, physical activity, and stress management.

2. Meditation Practices for Mental Well-being:

   Meditation is an integral part of Buddhism practice. Teaching people to engage in meditation practices can help manage stress, improve focus, and improve overall mental well-being. Community meditation programs can be a means to support collective mental health.

3. Healthy Living Ethics:

   Buddhism encourages healthy living ethics, including diet and physical activity. Society can be empowered to adopt healthy living habits based on the ethical values of Buddhism, including compassion for oneself and the environment.

4. The Role of Community and Solidarity:
The concept of sangha or community in Buddhism can be actualized in the context of public health. Strong communities and solidarity can provide emotional and practical support for individuals. Public health programs can be focused on building and maintaining this solidarity.

5. Understanding the Teachings of Karma in Health:

The concept of karma in Buddhism teaches about taking responsibility for our actions towards our own health. Community reinforcement can include education on how daily actions, such as food and lifestyle, can affect physical and mental health. Strengthening public health in the perspective of Buddhism includes not only physical aspects, but also mental and spiritual well-being. Engaging communities in Buddhist practices, such as mindfulness and solidarity, can shape a society that is more aware and concerned about shared health. This reinforcement reflects the ethical and moral values in Buddhism, supporting overall health for individuals and society.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Overall, the empowerment of the Buddhist community in the field of health resulted in a comprehensive and holistic framework, covering key aspects such as the concept of health empowerment, the concept of health in Buddhism, the approach to health according to Buddhism, traditional Buddhist health science, the role of herbs, mental health, the development of modern health science, and strengthening the health of the Buddhist community. The concept of health empowerment is the main pillar, inviting Buddhist individuals and communities to actively participate in maintaining and improving their health. Buddhism on health provides a solid foundation, viewing health as a harmony between body, mind, and spirit.

The Buddhist approach to health leads to a deep understanding of the Four Noble Truths, which view suffering as the root of health problems and offer a path to liberation through correct understanding and supportive practices. Traditional Buddhist health science and the role of herbs make a significant contribution to maintaining health naturally and holistically, leaving Buddhist communities with diverse resources to maintain their physical and mental health.

In addition, the development of modern health sciences, such as cloning, euthanasia, organ transplantation, and organ donation, has become an ethical challenge that requires deep consideration in accordance with Buddhist health values. Strengthening Buddhist public health involves a collective effort to increase understanding, access, and participation across the health spectrum, focusing on balance and overall well-being. Thus, empowering the Buddhist community in the field of health becomes an effort that not only reflects the values of Buddhism, but also integrates the wealth of modern knowledge for the well-being of Buddhists as a whole.
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