

AN INVESTIGATION OF SRI LANKAN BUDDHIST EDUCATION FROM AN ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE AS A MEANS OF INVESTMENT

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ABSTRACT

In today's competitive global economy, knowledge has become a primary factor in national income, with many countries leveraging disciplines such as sociology and humanities as strategic investments. Theravada Buddhism, as an extensive knowledge system in Sri Lanka, holds significant potential as a resource for international investment. This study examines Sri Lankan Buddhist education from an economic perspective and assesses its viability as an investment. The core issue is whether Buddhist higher education institutions in Sri Lanka are sufficiently developed to attract an international audience. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study combined qualitative and quantitative data collected from semi-structured interviews and questionnaires with 10 international Buddhist scholars. The collected information was analyzed using thematic and statistical methods. This study evaluates dimensions such as Buddhist education, foreign exchange, income generation, and international collaborations. The findings reveal a decline in enrolment from both local and international students in Sri Lankan Buddhist graduate programs, primarily due to inadequate English-language resources, limited practical application, and insufficient instructional quality. Addressing these challenges requires scholarships and income opportunities for students, strategic international collaboration, and effective marketing strategies. These reforms could position Buddhist education as a substantial contributor to Sri Lanka's economy while enhancing the nation's cultural and intellectual standing globally. In conclusion, with targeted improvements in academic rigor, interdisciplinary studies, and infrastructure, Sri Lankan Buddhist institutions can meet the rising global demand for knowledge systems that address ethical, psychological, and environmental challenges, establishing themselves as premier centers of learning worldwide.

Keywords: Buddhist education, foreign exchange, income, international collaborations, market economy