



## **SEKHIYA FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

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The Buddhist Sekhiya rules, a subset of the Vinaya, offer a rich framework of ethical guidelines that emphasize mindful consumption, respect for resources, and sustainable practices. These principles are particularly relevant in the context of global efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2): Zero Hunger, which aims to eradicate hunger, achieve food security, and promote sustainable agriculture. This study explores how the teachings of the Sekhiya rules can be integrated into contemporary strategies to combat hunger and malnutrition, especially in Buddhist-majority regions like Sri Lanka. The research employs a qualitative methodology, utilizing content analysis of primary Buddhist texts, including the Vinaya Pitaka, alongside a review of relevant scholarly literature. Through this approach, the study identifies core values embedded in the Sekhiya rules that align with SDG 2 targets, such as promoting a balanced diet, reducing food waste through mindful consumption, and fostering communal responsibility for food security. The analysis reveals that these ancient teachings can offer innovative solutions to modern challenges, contributing to more sustainable and inclusive food systems. The results suggest that by respecting food as a sacred resource and emphasizing the ethical dimensions of consumption, the Sekhiya rules provide a spiritual and moral foundation for addressing food insecurity. This integration of Buddhist principles into global and local efforts to achieve Zero Hunger enhances the effectiveness of these initiatives, particularly in regions where Buddhist teachings are culturally significant. The study concludes with recommendations for further research to explore the application of these principles in diverse cultural contexts, potentially broadening their impact on global food security and sustainability.

Keywords: alms, balanced diet, respect for food, Sekhiya rules, sustainable practices

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The intersection of ancient wisdom and contemporary global challenges presents a unique opportunity to address some of today's most pressing issues. Among these challenges is Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2: Zero Hunger, which aims to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030. This study focuses on the second subcategory of the Sekhiya rules in Buddhism, which pertains to the acceptance and consumption of alms food. By integrating these Buddhist teachings, we explore potential solutions for achieving SDG 2. The objectives of this research are to identify how the principles embedded in the Sekhiya rules can contribute to sustainable food consumption practices and to propose strategies for their integration into modern efforts to combat hunger and malnutrition.

### **METHODOLOGY/MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This research employs a qualitative methodology, focusing on an in-depth analysis of primary Buddhist texts, particularly the Sekhiya rules, as well as scholarly articles and relevant publications. The research methodology includes a detailed content analysis of Buddhist teachings, aiming to uncover the principles that can be applied to modern sustainable practices. Primary data was gathered from canonical Buddhist texts, while secondary data was sourced from academic journals, books, and other relevant literature.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Mindful and Respectful Consumption**

The Sekhiya rules emphasize mindful and respectful consumption, which can lead to a greater appreciation of the food available, potentially reducing waste and promoting sustainable consumption habits. The mindful consumption of alms food, as taught in Buddhism, encourages individuals to eat with awareness and gratitude, recognizing the effort and generosity involved in providing the food (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). This practice can significantly reduce food waste, a critical step towards achieving Zero Hunger (FAO, 2019).

#### **Balanced Diet**

Buddhist teachings on alms food also promote a balanced diet, aligning with the goal of ending all forms of malnutrition. The emphasis on moderation and balance in food intake can be seen as an early form of dietary guideline, advocating for nutritional adequacy without excess (Harvey, 2000). This principle supports the SDG 2 target of improving nutrition and promoting a balanced diet to combat malnutrition (United Nations, 2020).

#### **Respect for Food**

The Sekhiya rules discourage greed and encourage respect for food, fostering a culture of valuing and respecting the resources available. By cultivating an attitude of respect and gratitude towards food,



individuals can contribute to reducing food waste and ensuring that food is valued appropriately (Gethin, 1998). This respect for food can lead to more responsible consumption patterns, helping to create a world where everyone has access to sufficient, nutritious food (FAO, 2019).

### Sustainable Practices

The practice of alms gathering itself is a form of sustainable living. Monks rely on the generosity of laypeople for their daily meals, and in return, they provide spiritual guidance and teachings. This reciprocal relationship fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility, which are crucial for achieving sustainable development goals (Rahula, 1974; United Nations, 2020). The communal and sustainable nature of alms gathering can serve as a model for communities aiming to achieve Zero Hunger, promoting practices that are environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive.

The analysis reveals several key insights from the Sekhiya rules that are directly applicable to the goals of SDG 2. These insights include the importance of mindful and respectful consumption, which can reduce food waste, and the promotion of a balanced diet, which aligns with global efforts to combat malnutrition. Furthermore, the practice of alms gathering as a form of sustainable living highlights a communal approach to food security, fostering a sense of shared responsibility. By integrating these principles into modern strategies, we can develop more sustainable and inclusive approaches to achieving Zero Hunger.

### CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The research provides valuable insights into how the Buddhist teachings in the Sekhiya rules can be integrated into efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger. The principles of mindful and respectful consumption, balanced diet, respect for food, and sustainable practices found in the Sekhiya rules offer a unique perspective on addressing the global issue of hunger and food insecurity.

Mindful and respectful consumption can lead to a greater appreciation of the food we have, potentially reducing waste and promoting more sustainable consumption habits. This practice aligns with the aim of SDG 2 to end hunger and ensure access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food all year round. The Buddhist teachings on a balanced diet can be seen as an early form of dietary guideline, promoting a balanced and nutritious diet. This aligns with the aim of one of the targets of SDG 2 to end all forms of malnutrition. The Sekhiya rules discourage greed and encourage respect for the food received. This can contribute to a culture of valuing food and opposing waste. By valuing the food we have, we can work towards a world where everyone has access to enough nutritious food, aligning with the aim of SDG 2. The practice of alms gathering itself is a form of sustainable living. This reciprocal relationship fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility, which are crucial for achieving sustainable development goals. This can serve as a model for communities aiming to achieve Zero Hunger, promoting practices that are environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive.

In conclusion, the Buddhist teachings in the Sekhiya rules offer valuable insights and practices that can be integrated with the efforts to achieve SDG 2. It is recommended that these teachings be further explored and integrated into strategies for achieving Zero Hunger, particularly in contexts where Buddhism is a major part of the cultural and religious landscape, such as in Sri Lanka. Further research could also explore how these teachings could be adapted and applied in different cultural and societal contexts to promote sustainable food consumption practices and combat hunger and malnutrition.



By integrating these teachings into efforts to achieve SDG 2, we can create a more sustainable and respectful approach to food consumption that aligns with the holistic values of Buddhist practice and contributes to global food security.

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