

# International Journal of Advanced Research

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## REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56658

Title: CRITICAL EXAMINATION ON FUNCTIONS AND SUBSTANCES OF BUDDHIST TEMPLE: DEVELOPMENT AND PRESERVATION IN CAMBODIAN SOCIETY

### Recommendation:

**Accept after minor revision**

| Rating         | Excel. | Good | Fair | Poor |
|----------------|--------|------|------|------|
| Originality    |        | ✓,   |      |      |
| Techn. Quality |        | ✓,   |      |      |
| Clarity        | ✓,     |      |      |      |
| Significance   | ✓,     |      |      |      |

Reviewer Name: Dr Abdul Haseeb Mir

## Detailed Reviewer's Report

The article titled "**Critical Examination on Functions and Substances of Buddhist Temple: Development and Preservation in Cambodian Society**" provides a comprehensive and essential analysis of the Buddhist pagoda (Wat) as the primary socio-cultural pillar of Cambodia. Given that approximately 95% of the Cambodian population identifies as Buddhist, the author successfully argues that the temple is not merely a religious site but a multi-functional institution central to education, social welfare, and the preservation of national identity. This research is highly relevant for scholars of Southeast Asian studies, sociology of religion, and cultural heritage management, as it captures the "living history" of a nation recovering and rebuilding through its traditional spiritual infrastructure.

The methodology is grounded in a qualitative examination of the current state of Cambodia's 4,932 pagodas, including its 563 ancient temples. The author effectively categorizes the roles of the temple into two primary domains: **Societal Development** and **Cultural Preservation**. By tracing the evolution of the pagoda from ancient times through the French colonial period to the present day, the paper offers a robust historical context that explains why the temple remains the "heart" of the Khmer village. The author's use of contemporary reports from 2024 and 2025 ensures the paper addresses the most current challenges and achievements in the field.

One of the article's strongest sections is the analysis of the **Educational and Social Functions** of the temple. The author highlights the critical role of pagodas in providing housing and education for poor students from rural areas who move to urban centers like Phnom Penh. This "lifeline" function demonstrates how the temple fills gaps in the state's social safety net. Furthermore, the discussion on the

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pagoda as a site for social work—supporting the elderly, the homeless, and the impoverished—repositions the monkhood as active agents of social development rather than isolated ascetics. The link between Buddhist ethics and modern social welfare is articulated with clarity and persuasive force.

In terms of **Cultural Preservation**, the paper offers an insightful look at the temple as a repository for Khmer literature and traditional arts. The author argues that the pagoda is the "guardian" of ancient records and scripts that might otherwise have been lost during periods of conflict. The preservation of architectural styles and traditional crafts within the temple grounds is presented as a vital component of national heritage. However, the author also identifies a tension between development and preservation, noting that the rapid increase in the number of new temples requires careful management to ensure that the "substance" of traditional Khmer values is not diluted by purely aesthetic or commercial interests.

The article concludes with pragmatic recommendations for the Cambodian government, including the enhancement of educational programs within pagodas and the expansion of social welfare services. While these recommendations are well-founded, the manuscript would benefit from a few minor revisions to reach its full academic potential. First, the author could provide a more detailed discussion on the **Economic Advancement** mentioned in the abstract. Specifically, exploring how "Temple Tourism" contributes to local economies versus how it might impact the sanctity of the monastic space would add a necessary critical dimension. Second, a brief analysis of the role of women—specifically the *Don Chi* (nuns)—within the power structure and social work of the pagoda would provide a more inclusive view of the "functions" described.

Furthermore, from a technical perspective, the author should ensure that the distinction between "ancient temples" and "modern pagodas" is consistently maintained throughout the analysis of preservation efforts. Providing a few specific examples or case studies of pagodas that have successfully balanced modernization with historical integrity would help ground the theoretical arguments. Linguistically, the paper is well-structured and written in professional academic English. The bibliography is current, reflecting a deep engagement with both constitutional documents and contemporary news reports from 2024.

In summary, this article represents a significant contribution to the understanding of Cambodian civil society. It successfully elevates the Buddhist temple from a site of ritual to a vital engine of social and cultural resilience. By documenting the move from traditional monasticism to modern community service, the author provides a roadmap for the continued integration of religious heritage into national development strategies. With the addition of a more critical look at economic impacts and the inclusion of specific case examples, this paper will be a landmark resource for researchers in the field.

**Recommendation: Recommend for publication with minor revision.**