

A STUDY OF NEO BUDDHISM IN THE SHADOW OF AMBEDKARIAN THOUGHTS

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Abstract

Dr. B R Ambedkar's vision has the power to give life for the thought of neo-Buddhism. The conversion of Ambedkar inspired all Dalits to convert themselves into Buddhism. But the acceptance of Buddhism was not spread till his death. Dr. Ambedkar's death, after his conversion to Buddhism somewhat hindered the Buddhist movement. After his death it was not easily accepted by the dalit. The Neo Buddhist movement faced one more problem when their leaders separated for name and fame. The 2001 Indian census puts the current figure of Buddhists at 7.95 million. Buddhism is the fifth-largest religion in India with 6% of its adherents in Maharashtra, but less than 1% of the overall population of India. The Buddhist revival is centralized in two states: Ambedkar's native Maharashtra, and the land of Bodhanand Mahastavir, Acharya Medharthi and their associates-Uttar Pradesh. Many Ambedkarite organizations are working to spread Neo Buddhism in India.

Keywords: Ambedkar's, Untouchable, Buddhist movement.

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Dr. B R Ambedkar's vision has the power to give life to the thought of neo Buddhism. The conversion of Ambedkar inspired all Dalits to convert themselves into Buddhism. But the acceptance of Buddhism was not spread till his death. After the Dr. Ambedkar's the conversion to Buddhism somewhat delayed the Buddhist movement. After his death it was not easily accepted by the dalit. The Neo Buddhist movement faced one more problem when their leaders separated for name and fame. The 2001 Indian census puts the current figure of Buddhists at 7.95 million. Buddhism is the fifth-largest religion in India with 6% of its supporters in Maharashtra, but less than 1% of the overall population of India. The Buddhist revival is centralized in two states: Ambedkar's native Maharashtra, and the land of Bodhanand Mahastavir, Acharya Medharthi and their associates-Uttar Pradesh. Many Ambedkarite organizations are working to spread Neo Buddhism in India. The current research paper deals with the thoughts of Ambedkar, that implemented and accepted by the society. Neo Buddhism creates its own identity in the world. So the entire world can feel the change. After Ambedkar we see that the entire society is together to celebrate neo Buddhism. All downtrodden come together to celebrate Ambedkars birth anniversary as fig festival. This is big win of neo Buddhism. When entire communities come together they share their thoughts, suffering and celebrate the equality. This is the real win of Neo Buddhism. After the death of Ambedkar, this movement was little imbalanced, but nowadays it has again pic up that grip to create an awareness of equality. The progress is not possible by merely "Dalit Unity", or by only "Dalit Muslim Unity", or by only "Dalit Christian Unity", there is need to build a *BahujanSamaj*. The current division of various sections of the oppressed class in different political parties has made it difficult to achieve the political goals intended to bring positive change in the lives of these people. One should understand the process of Bahujan Samaj to bring people of different caste under on umbrella. The people have to forget for the time being at least, the international tensions between Christians and Muslims, between

Christians and Buddhists and such similar issues. The materialization of the political unity of sufferers of the system is necessary to gain power. Without power, no rapid change is possible.

Another challenge of huge magnitude today is poverty. The preaching of Buddha and Ambedkar urge earnestly to end the inequality, limit you wants and establish peace so that the poor also gets a chance to live. Recent studies in economics of caste have revealed that caste and income are complexly interlinked with each other. Lower the caste in the social ladder, lesser the income. Dr. Ambedkar decision to convert to neo Buddhism has changed millions of lives in India positively in terms of income and social status. Since the abortion of caste system the income parity has improved but a lot needs to be done. The momentum of the Dalit movement needs to be maintained so that the marginalized make to the mainstream in this modern era. The quality of Ambedkar is to see the future of downtrodden today that, this new would bring out the drastic change in the life of each people. Buddhism is non-metaphysical and rational religion. It is one of the four major religions in the world today. It does not accept the supernatural or anything which is extrasensory perception.

In technology ruled world the relevance of the teachings of the Buddha is needed to be outlined. The globalised, dynamic, complex and hectic word does not offer peace and true bliss, in spite of the numerous amenities available for easy living and pleasure. People are both physically and mentally dissatisfied and lack a feeling of secure existence. Both happiness and safety are experience of the human mind. The reason was that they were feeling mentally unsecure. Buddha had discovered that suffering is caused by craving or *trishna*. The Buddhist teachings suggest that mind is the forerunner and mental states are mind made. One's mind is the most significant thing in one's life. Buddha teaches man is the element of five collections, namely: form, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness. Physical is the only form and the others four are mental. These mental faculties are of great import in contemplating man. In the world ruled by materialism, only physical benefits and pleasures are given a lot of importance and the mental faculties are neglected. Religion has not lost significance in modern life, rather its importance has grown and magnified by the dire need of spiritual peace as reflected in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922). Spiritual peace

serves to organise human consciousness and functions as its centre so that the mind doesn't go astray. Buddhism is all about obtaining full control of mind and experience the reality of life and the happiness which it yields. This is the time even for scientists to open out and think of the other dimensions of life. A Religion like Buddhism, cannot be neglected any more. Most of the world populations follow different religions. We can be certain, that Buddhism is a rich source self-knowledge and recognition for every man and his mental and physical development. In today's world, material progress is paramount and fetish and desire is the buzz of the times. People are not satisfied and content with the rule of materiality. Everything is outsourced and commoditised. The world has become sceptical about everything but religion. Buddhism, as redefined and refined by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, is the first rational religion of the world. It is as rational as science since it follows the same empirical process to understand why we do suffer. Therefore it can be stated that the modern civilization which is rational should have rational religion like Buddhism which provides us with insight about human nature. If a form of governance cultivates justice, charity, compassion and virtue, both for the prosperity of the nation and as an example for the government ministers and common citizens. A state would continue to flourish so long as the citizens could assemble and meet in harmony and would maintain good moral standards. Order through inner motivation and mutual understanding is the call of Buddhism. Any order rests on the said Buddhist principles and so does governance of any state.

Religion is universal feature of human society. The society is in a state of flux of complex dynamic cultures and religions. But today we find mass atheism, scepticism, pragmatism, and indifference. These ideas have spread among the masses like a wildfire, especially in western countries. Ethics as code of conduct has been undergoing many changes through the long course of time across history. The modern age has been complex in its orientation. Almost all religions have a long history. Most of them were born in the time when the people believed in magic and were very superstitious; the world had been very different than today's world. History has proved that religions do not die easily.

The Buddha preferred to deal with real life experiences rather than the complex metaphysical problems. He tried to understand the problems of common man and talked of

sorrow and craving. The Buddha made full use of logic, debate and reasoning to resolve philosophical dilemmas.

Individual is responsible for his own actions which spring out of his desire and if desire is the cause of suffering then it is possible to overcome suffering by controlling desire. There is a great chance for such a system of ethics being accepted in the modern world because it transcends and does not contradict the mores of cultural and national boundaries.

There are many political figures come who devoted their life to create the neo Buddhism. One of the Rajendranath Aherwar appeared as an important Dalit leader in Kanpur. He joined the Republican Party of India and converted to Buddhism along with his whole family in 1961. In 1967, "Bharatiya Buddh Mahasabha" was founded at Kanpur for the welfare of society. In the regular meetings where he addressed Buddhism, managed at Buddhist weddings and life cycle ceremonies, and organized festivals on Dr. Ambedkar's Jayanti (birth day)

The Dalit Buddhist movement in Kanpur gained motivation with the arrival of Dipankar, bhikkhu, in 1980. Dipankar had come to Kanpur on a Buddhist mission and his first public arrival was scheduled at a mass conversion drive in 1981. Rahulan Ambawadekar organized an event for RPI Dalit leader. In April 1981, The Dalit Panthers was established by Ambawadekar (U.P. Branch) inspired from the Maharashtra Dalit Panthers.

In 2002, Kanshi Ram, a popular political leader from a Sikh religious background, announced his intention to convert to Buddhism on 14 October 2006, the fiftieth anniversary of Ambedkar's conversion. He planned for 20,000,000 of his followers to adapt at the same time. Part of the implication of this plan was that Ram's followers include not only Untouchables, but persons from a variety of castes, who could knowingly broaden Buddhism's support.

The neo Buddhism spread all over the world the Triratna Bauddha Mahāsaṅgha (formerly called TBMSG for Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha SahayakaGana) this Indian made but work at United states. The founder of Triratna Sangharakshita work in India as well as United

Kingdom for the development of neo Buddhism After visits in the late 1970s by Dharmachari Lokamitra from UK, supporters developed a two-pronged approach: social work through the Bahujan Hitaj (also spelled as Bahujan Hitay) trust, mainly sponsored from the general public by the British Buddhist-inspired Karuna Trust (UK), and direct Dharma work. Currently the movement has viharas and groups in at least 20 major areas, a couple of retreat centers, and hundreds of Indian Dharmacharis and Dharmacharinis.

So here we can conclude that the neo Buddhism spreads its wings all over the world. And we can say that this thought process will definitely gain the ample of applause and accordance from the people of the world.

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