



## AN ANALYSIS OF DR.B.R. AMBEDKAR'S CONVERSIONS AND IT'S RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL IMPACT ON INDIAN SOCIETY

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### ABSTRACT :

*In independent India, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's conversion from Hinduism to Buddhism was a long-term event in Indian society. It had a profound effect on society, religion, politics, and culture in India. On the date of 14 October 1956. Dr.B. R. Ambedkar initiated of Buddhism with his lakhs of followers. He took 22 oaths which were created by him. In front of people, He announced that, he scarified Hindu religion. In coming 10-15 years, He expected that the wave of imitation will spared in whole nation and India will become Buddhist nation. While taking consideration of present condition has India really become Buddhist nation? If one raises this question, answer will be partially true.*



**KEYWORDS :** Indian society , hypocrisy, mediation.

### INTRODUCTION :

The responsibility place to the converted brethren and hope of the aspiration was extensive. Are these expectations fulfilled? The answer may be given positively because since 1956 till present time the huge amount of people converted Buddhism. Converted Men and women with determination have overcome from various obstacles of communalism and they have been proving their ability while taking successive flight in various fields. Some Buddhist families celebrate their religious ceremonies from the Buddhist way. Now almost 60 years have completed of conversion. It is very important to think about the various aspects such as, what type of impact is there on the downtrodden society of this conversion? Which religious and political changes have taken place by this conversion these issues are discussed in this research paper .

### RELIGIOUS CHANGE:

In 1956, The conversion of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and his followers was a significant event in Indian society's religious change. The untouchable society, which was rejected by the established Sanatani system, got separate egalitarian Dhamma due to Dharmatara. The main reason for the traditional ignorance and blindness is that the orthodox religion and its priestly Buddhist class rejected the mediating priesthood between religion and God. The established system was given a new pragmatic empirical dhamma in which there was no place for ritualism, hypocrisy, mediation. To spread the Dhamma, neo-pagan followers started erecting ancient Vihare Chaityas. These centers became the new places of worship for Buddhists in modern

times. Dhammaparishads are organized by various gatherings to make the ordinary people understand Dhamma and spread Dhamma to the people. It is helping the society to come together and get a united form. Organized efforts are being made at the organizational level in the Buddhist community to lead all these matters. The Dhamma movement is moving forward through organizations like the Buddhist Federation, Mahabodhi Sabha, Samaj Samata Sangh, Buddhist Society of India.

This change seems to have an aspect of positivity as well as negativity. But while creating a new system by piercing the established system, it is expected that there will be errors in it. Before examining them critically, it is advisable to understand what religious changes have taken place in the 'new' society.

### **The egalitarian Dhamma was achieved:**

The principles of freedom, equality, and fraternity were reserved for a limited number of people in Indian Vedic society. Shudras, Atishudras were not given any place in this system; racism was rampant in the ancient society. Gautam Buddha in the society at that time an alternative to the egalitarian Dhamma became available. The People's Buddhist Dhamma Movement was active from the 5th century A.D. to the 11th-12th century A.D.

Modern Indian society was also divided into caste ,superior-inferior, untouchable. The important task of bringing it to equality is Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar started conversion with the Dalit community. After conversion, the neo- buddhist received the Buddhism, which embraced virtue, humanity, awareness, and rationalism through the *Ashtanga* path's teachings, which laid down the principles of equality, freedom, and brotherhood. The untouchable identity of the pre-born of the converts was erased. The caste system ended; the concept of caste became obsolete with the adoption of Dhamma. The spiritually neglected, class received a new practice of Lord Buddha and his Dhamma, which relied on the realistic principle and gave importance to human life. A new optimism was received to live by embracing the essence of wisdom, modesty, and compassion. The ideal goal by Bodhi is created before them. They achieved egalitarian Dhamma, which did not give importance to ritualism and hypocrisy<sup>1</sup>

The people excluded from the entry in the temple went inside the monastery and began to learn the lessons of virtue, began to embrace the essence of equality and began to resolve to live a life of virtue. This Dhamma of the Indians, who was emerged in Indian soil, was seen as guide to Indian society's restoration on the principle of equality. Converted Buddhists in the city abandoned Hindu festivals and deities in the cultural and religious spheres. As a result, the cost of growing household chores also came to a standstill.<sup>1</sup>

### **Rejection of unnecessary ritual and the middle class:**

The Buddhism gave the realistic, scientific, rationalist thought to society as a viable alternative to the priesthood's self-aggrandizement and sacrificial rituals. Over time, during the renaissance of Hinduism, the priestly class's dominance over religion increased again. In the 16th and 18th centuries, this caste and caste system became more rigid, and it became necessary to have a priestly class while worshiping and worshiping deities. This class composed suktas and shlokas commemorating the hypocrites and ritualists by holding the right of religion in their hands for their selfishness. And the Shudra and Atishudra classes moved away from the strict adherence to religion in the society.

Even in modern times, society has been bound by theology. During the colonial period, the Prabodhan movement began to treat the scriptures to some extent, but it also feared social exclusion. Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj was also affected by this. From that, the Vedokta case emerged

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, on the other hand, was gradually exposed to inequality and the religious system. As a solution to this, he abandoned the heterogeneous religion and converted to Buddhism. In Buddhism, there is no ritualistic, hypocritical, priestly middle class. In this, human beings can save themselves through their efforts. Navayan Sects, this rationalist Dhamma was useful in inculcating democracy in the society in the real sense. The 22 vows accepted at the time of Dhammadiksha, the first 6

are deities, incarnations, and religious pomp in the established Hindu Dhamma.<sup>2</sup> Every person wants to take an oath to live a life of good behavior and virtue without saying any kind of hypocrisy and incomprehensible verse while performing religious rituals. There is no need for any mediation or ritual in this ritual. As a result, the neo-Buddhist community is now free from the exploitation of rituality and priests. After accepting it, the door of Brahmins and astrologers reciting the almanac was permanently rejected by the Buddhists.<sup>3</sup>

### **Construction of Vihar, Stupa:**

In response to the construction of ancient Buddhist monasteries and chaityas. From the 6th to the 8th century, the construction of temples started from the royal palace. These temples and monasteries played an essential role in the revival of Hinduism. In conversion, neo-pagans encouraged the construction of Buddhist monasteries and chaityagrahas, and the search for ancient monasteries, caves, and Chaityas destroyed by Muslim invasions in the Middle Ages began. Scholars and connoisseurs of Buddha statues, idols, and caves began to do research. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Deekshabhoomi, Chaityabhoomi became the inspiration of the Neo Buddhist. Stupas and replicas of ancient Buddhist monasteries and caves are being erected in urban and semi-urban areas. From this monastery, Dhammadiksha, Dhamma message is being conveyed to the masses; Buddhist rites are being taught by keeping Shramaner camp, Bhante's guidance Acharya the ordinary people.<sup>4</sup> As you can see from the construction of monasteries, stupas, and chaityas, the monks involved in the Dhamma movement are determined to propagate the Buddhist Dhamma in India's rural areas.

### **Organizing of Damma Council and Conferences:**

If we want to spread Buddhist Dhamma principles and ideas, we need to convey Dhamma in simple, easy language. Since there is a need for trained Dhamma preachers, monks, and guides, Dharma Parishad is organized to convey the message of Dhamma to the ordinary people and worshipers. The basic teachings of Dhamma literature are presented there through discourses and speeches. The Dhamma is translated into regional languages to make it available to the general public.

In rural areas, the educated class tries to impart Dhamma teachings to the ordinary people in simple language. Attempts are being made to expand the scope of Dhamma by organizing meetings and lectures. It lacks trained religious preachers and knowledgeable monks, royal asylum, and wealth. Buddha Jayanti from the masses, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Jayanti, is being celebrated with great enthusiasm, and conscious efforts are being made to unite and enlighten Dhamma's followers

### **Organizational Efforts and Restructuring of Religion:**

While studying Buddhist Dhamma, many researchers and scholars formed and organized religious scripture. Dharmananda Kosambi established Bahujan Vihara at Paral in 1937 and preached the Dhamma. In 1922, Dr. Anand Nair founded the Buddhist Society, Anand Vihara, in 1931 and spread the Dhamma. Babasaheb Ambedkar established organizations like Buddhist Mahasabha, Samaj Samata Sangh and paved the way for the administrative building.

After conversion, Dhamma's propaganda and religious literature are carried out at various villages, cities, and metropolises through this organization. Scholars like Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan, Rahul Sanskrityayan have translated and edited Chinese, Tibetan, and Sinhala literature of mother Buddhism into the Indian language. A hall has been opened which is rich in the Dhamma movement and study. Similarly, Nagpur, Mumbai, Aurangabad, Patna, Delhi, and Varanasi seem to be encouraging the writing and publishing of Dhamma-related texts.

### **Cultural Change:**

After conversion, the new class's self-awareness, which was aware of their rights and duties, was awakened. While living in society, everything we have experienced, and suffered started to be formed through literature. Inequality, superiority, inferiority, caste, class, dominance, and orthodox attitude were

portrayed, and the realistic structure was created in this literary production. The writings of this literary movement got the nickname 'Dalit Sahitya.' These writers reflected the society through stories, novels, autobiographies, and ideological literature. With a prose writer, The neo-liberal Dalit poets and lyricists did the work of expressing the Dalit mind's feelings clearly and concisely<sup>5</sup>

The inspiration behind all these literary and poetic critics is Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, and his ideas were inherited. In the current literature, writing is being done for religion, conversion, pre-conversion life, non-conversion life, problems, challenges, ethnic equations, the direction of movement, formation of the philosophical foundation of the movement. Authors like Namdev Dhasala, on the other hand has described the pain of the Dalit mind in his dialect with an ideological depth and heartfelt description. His literature awakens young minds, creates resentment against injustice, and develops an attitude of not tolerating injustice.<sup>6</sup>

In his literary work 'Golpitha,' Dhasal has written about the inequality of the society, bigotry, casteism, and feudalism of the government. Not only he addresses the problem, but also suggests solutions from your literature. Similarly, C.B. Khairmaude, Baburao Bagul, Shankarrao Kharat, Gangadhar Pantawane, Vasant Moon, B.L. Bhole. Generation of writers, poets, and writers like Bhole, Raja Dhale, Sharankumar Nimbale, Raosaheb Kasbe, Yogiraj Waghmare, Laxman Mane, Motiram Katare, Narendra Jadhav, Madhu Kamble was created.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Buddha inspired the writing of this writer to have humanism. While creating the character of Babasaheb Ambedkar, he made an ideal in front of society and fixed the ideological background for the movement. If the occasional movement went astray, he criticized it and brought it back to its former position. Literature should reach the masses, so various publishing houses were formed. Through this, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's literature and thoughts are being published and disseminated to the people. Nagpur, Pune, Aurangabad, Mumbai are his significant centers. This literary movement organized literary conventions, rebellious literary conventions, Ambedkarite literary conventions from the village level to the metropolitan and state level to awaken the society to the ideas of Buddha, Buddhism, and Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar lived a short life after his conversion, this literary movement played an essential role in representing his thoughts and memory to society. Some of them were writing ideologically, and some were working to create awareness in the society by composing beautiful and autobiographical compositions.

It is necessary to mention Shahir, playwright, Jalsakar as the third essential element in literary composition. Literature is a reflection of society. The real expression of man and his life came from Dalit literature. But when the general public finds it difficult to digest ideological and scholarly writing, it is the enlightenment done by Lokaranjana as the most effective means of conveying ideas. The literature began to be compiled in authentic rural falcons, the umbilical cord connected to the common man, realistic descriptions, strong criticism of inequality, and the next course of action to be taken in the movement<sup>7</sup>

The reader of this literature was not the middle class living in a closed room, but the ordinary people living in the slums in the rural areas. As a result, the artists' sincere and artistic expression was supported by a large number of people.

He played an essential role in spreading the message of Shahir, Jalsakanrana Dharmatar Ladha, Sanyukta Maharashtra Andolan, Namantara Movement, Dalit Pather Movement, Riddles in Hinduism, Khairlanji, Ethnic Violence, Indumill case to the general public. Babasaheb Ambedkar's philosophy of life, the Dhamma movement's current reality is included in this context.

Despite the current state of affairs and financial hardship of these artists who work with utmost loyalty and sincerity, these poets, playwrights, and water makers are working with social sensitivity, the responsibility of social awakening, and a sense of duty. His inspiration and ideal is Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, This is his work and conversion path he has shown.

### **Analysis of religious and Cultural Changes of conversion:**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's conversion from Hinduism to Buddhism is laid the great impact on Indian society. Positive change began in various fields. Dr B. R. Ambedakar gives the religious and cultural identity

to dalit community. Rational, scientific and realistic approach of Buddhism always attracts the common man towards the Buddhism. This conversion movement having various dimension there were some downsides to this process. Therefore, this transformation process sometimes seems to be hyperactive, fast, dynamic, and occasionally slow, stagnant, motionless due to the obstruction of external movements. These changes in society are going on silently and continuously. An active group becomes inactive after working for some time. The second tier group emerges from inactivity due to the emergence of new leadership. The transition between action and inaction continues in the social movement.

Rituals, hymns, theism, superstitions, myths are entering the Dhamma movement. This is creating an atmosphere of contradiction in principles and practices. To stop this process, the enlightenment of philosophy and conduct, sincere trainers are needed to propagate the Dhamma movement. If the trainer is not Acharya, it is necessary to test and conduct according to the principle of '*Atta Deep Bhava.*' This requires personal and organizational effort.

In this changing situation, what are needed are the obstacles and problems facing the movement, the temptations, and the competitive ideology that runs in parallel. The philosophical meeting has to be presented to the working people and accept her challenge through it. The people's struggle must be raised on a theoretical level, going through the constitutional process democratically. All of this requires selfless leadership. The leadership has to be rational activists who cooperate; the ideological foundation of these activists, the philosophical meeting has to be specific. Otherwise, we have to face the wrath of the majority in this mass struggle. This can contaminate the social environment and threaten national unity.

Although the core of the Dalit movement and literature is Dhamma and humanity, it lacks objective analysis and structure at present. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar himself has given the right to create literature rationally, he says ,it is necessary to create a literary work that will take the path of thought and rationalism against it, and the Buddhist movement will reach a large number of people. It is expected that researchers and innovators will learn from these mistakes and move closer to the truth without covering up the movement's errors. The Dhamma movement will have an ideological and real philosophical meeting, and the literary work will be seen as holistic.

## CONCLUSION:

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar's conversion movement shows that the Dhamma movement is inspired by Babasaheb Ambedkar and following the guiding principles of Lord Buddha. After conversion, after the emergence of the new sect, this society started moving. Significant changes took place in this society. There were many ups and downs in this movement. So the movement has wandered. The movement has stopped. Doubts like this began to present themselves. A movement is a tool in the process of social change. This change's action is not in the form of revolutionary change but in the form of evolution. It would not be reasonable for a society that has been under certain domination for thousands of years to expect an unexpected and simple radical change without changing the course of time and its impact on the present and the future and its scope in the future.

Dr Ambedkar conversion is not near the changing the religion it created the plenty of opportunities to downtrodden community this community was far away from the equality and religious and social status Dr Ambedkar gave them the cultural identity and confidence hence the people from rural and urban areas attract towards the Buddhism and nomadic and de notified communities people also attract towards Buddhism this conversion gives the counter set up to socially and culturally dominance Society and this setups base is rationality and scientific and realistic approach of life.

Strengthening the Dhamma movement requires social integration, inclusive goal setting, and trained selfless activists and followers. Suppose the Dhamma movement is to become more dynamic and multi-faceted. In that case, it must be propagated through proper planning, thought, and practice, without relying on the Dhamma's immediate form and goal. If the ordinary people, writers, politicians, social activists, researchers, and Dhamma thinkers collectively fulfill the responsibility of making the Dhamma movement more profound and inclusive by realizing the absolute truth by thinking deeply. There is no doubt that

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Babasaheb Ambedkar's resolve to make India Buddhist Nation as a whole will come true .

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