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## DR. AMBEDKAR AND NEO-BUDDHISM

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### ABSTRACTS

*Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Neo-Buddhism is a revolutionary social revival Buddhist movement. Neo-Buddhism emerged as a revolutionary Buddhist movement on October 14, 1956, when Ambedkar and over 4000,000 of his supporters converted to Buddhism. It primarily focuses on social upliftment, particularly for the Mahar community among the underprivileged. Above all, it is a movement for self-respect, social equality, and justice for all people, regardless of class, caste, religion, or faith. Apart from that, Neo-Buddhism is a dynamic force for religious movements founded on socioeconomic and ethical values as a social philosophy. In a nutshell, it can be argued that Neo-Buddhism is primarily concerned with a movement that is seen as a catalyst for the well-being of the downtrodden class in society. In the current socio-political situation in India, Ambedkarite Buddhism, or Nero-Buddhism is becoming a more popular alternative for marginalized and dissatisfied Dalits because converting from Hinduism to Islam or Christianity is now illegal in several Indian states. This paper examines the socio-political, social condition and historical factors that have led to the use of Buddhism in the form of engaged Buddhism.*



**KEY WORDS :** *Financial Institutions Regulatory frame work financial assistance.*

### INTRODUCTION

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was a philosopher, a nationalist, a scholar, or a writer, a constitution creator, a humanistic thinker, or a socialist, and he made significant contributions to the cause of education. He was undoubtedly one of the most remarkable personalities of modern times, having been born into a world of so-called untouchables, poverty, social backwardness, and illiteracy, as well as being denied basic human rights. It is not wrong to say that Dr. Ambedkar and Neo-Buddhism are synonymous. Dr. Ambedkar was always on a mission to improve the lives of the untouchables as a whole. After the yola declaration, Gandhi's endeavour to eradicate the untouchables or outcastes was successful. Outcasts were rechristened Harijans, according to this declaration. For the first time, Gandhi gave the poor class the term Harijans. For example, one of the outcastes, Babu Jagjiban Ram, was accepted into the Hindu fold. However, Dr. Ambedkar, who was born into the Maharas group, eventually converted to Buddhism and freed his people from Hindu-casteism.

Buddhism, according to Ambedkar, had provided him with a great deal of satisfaction and pleasure. For sociological and spiritual reasons, he urged his fellow Mahars to reject Hinduism. As a result, he stated, "I do not want any blind followers." "Sheep mentality does not appeal to me." The Mahar group accepted Buddhism under the capable guidance of Dr. Ambedkar. "Buddhism is the best religion in the world, and there can be no mistake about it," he stated. He claimed that Buddhism is the only religion that does not recognise caste and allows for unlimited advancement.

### **SOCIAL STATUS**

In the history of religions, Neo-Buddhism is unique and unequalled. Not only for himself, but also for his fellow outcasts, Ambedkar campaigned for human dignity. His quest was for temple admission, equality in education, and equal standing in all other elements. And everything he accomplished was due to his never-ending fight for the rights of outcasts. By becoming Buddhists, the Mahar community ensured equality for all and freed themselves from Hindu casteism. As a result, they were accorded dignity and honour, and they were regarded as equals to other human beings. It was really a struggle or a movement of social equality.

Dr. Ambedkar chastised Manu for coding the social strata in general, as well as for placing outcasts as second-class citizens. He also chastised Manu for treating women as non-entities on the scale. He in his book *Rise and Fall of Hindu Women* mentions that even a Brahmin woman had no status of her own even though women of ancient times in India enjoyed high positions as teachers and performers of sacrifices. They commanded respect even from a king. He vehemently opposed the Manu's laws as one of the prime causes of Women's moral-degradation. He again in his book *Rise and fall of Hindu Women* shows how Buddha was liberal for women and how he gave equal honour to women.

Dr. Ambedkar points out that Buddha let women to become Bhikkhunī regardless of their ancestry, whether Brahmin or Sudra. In this context, he claims that virginity is not the most important criteria for becoming a Bhikkhuni. He established accommodations for married, unmarried, and even transformed prostitutes to become members of the Saṅgha because there were no restrictions in the event of entering the Saṅgha. It may be claimed that Neo-Buddhists advocated for man and females to have equal status. As a result, this new movement intended to give equal weight to both caste and gender.

### **Neo-Buddhist Movement**

In India, the Neo-Buddhist movement is a contemporary revivalist movement. This movement in India is under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar. When we talk about the Neo-Buddhist movement, we are referring here to the first group of Mahars who converted themselves to Buddha Dhamma in 1956 in Nagpur with Dr. Ambedkar. He was the first according to Dr. Ambedkar and his followers who fought a lifelong battle against the caste system or Brahmanism. Neo-Buddhist started as a popular movement on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1956, when Dr. Ambedkar, India's most distinguished untouchable, switched to Buddha Dhamma with over four lacs of his followers. He just accepts the Buddha Dhamma's fundamental principles. "I shall embrace and obey the teachings of Buddha," Dr. Ambedkar says. I will keep my people away from the differing viewpoints of Theravāda and Mahāyāna."

The distinction between Theravāda and Mahāyāna was not accepted by Dr. Ambedkar. He just accepts the basic concept of the teachings of Buddha. This time, we will discuss what the essential notion of Buddha Dhamma is, and how Dr. Ambedkar embraced it. This is Neo-Buddhism. 'Neo' means new, later, revived in modified form and based upon. Neo-Buddhism can be understood and should be interpreted, as the Buddha Dhamma revived in modern form by Dr. Ambedkar. Its features both scientific and rational approach, as a Dhamma for upholding the concepts of liberty, equality, and socio-economic and knowledgeable development in an individual in the traditional sense Neo-Buddhism is mostly recognized in India as Buddha Dhamma itself. For the common man, it is difficult to imagine that Mahāyāna, Theravāda and the Neo-Buddhism are all one. Buddha's Dhamma is not religion. Why Buddha's Dhamma is not religion? According to Dr. Ambedkar, there are basic difference between

Buddha Dhamma and religion. This is the movement of Neo-Buddhism. It received its most substantial inspiration from Dr. Ambedkar's call for the conversion of Dalits to Buddha Dhamma, in 1956, to escape a caste-based society that considered them to be the lowest in the hierarchy. He saw that Buddha Dhamma as a means to end the Indian Varna vyavastha. The only literature which could be entitled Neo-Buddhism is Dr. Ambedkar's *The Buddha and His Dhamma*. His understanding of Buddha Dhamma he had written for nearly two decades. Before publicly embracing Buddha Dhamma, he includes all his thoughts, in *The Buddha and His Dhamma* in written early fifties despite ill health. This constructs Dr. Ambedkar's doctrinal succession to his Neo-Buddhist followers.

The historic Nagpur ceremony is remarkable at the end of the pilgrimage. Addressing a large crowd, Dr. Ambedkar said in an emotional voice: "I started the movement of renouncing the Hindu religion in 1935 and since then I have been continuing to struggle. This conversion has given me enormous satisfaction and pleasure unimaginable. I feel as if I have been liberated from hell." There was no hasty act to change Dr. Ambedkar's religion. He had planned the move for several years and waited for the right time. It is his well-planned time, date and place for this historic event. He chose the year '1956' because that year could be the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Buddhist era. He chose 'October 14' because it was the auspicious day of Vijaya Dashmi, the day when the great Ashoka converted to Buddhism. He declared that he would then conquer the people by love and perseverance instead of using force, thus naming it Dhamma Vijaya. In the case of Nagpur, it was chosen because it was related to the Naga people who were among the devotees of the Gotama Buddha in the old days. It is not surprising that the amount of enlightenment that the Dhamma spread from Nagpur has spread far and wide in all directions.

Originally, Neo-Buddhism was a powerful religious movement. It is a socio-economic and ethically oriented religious movement in which spiritual bliss and worldly enrichment are so intertwined that separating one from the other is difficult. Even the powerful and political awareness of Dalits, particularly in independent India, can be said to be a path paved by Dr. Ambedkar. But as far as Neo-Buddhists are concerned – especially Mahars - they have become a politically conscious people. It is unnecessary to mention that Neo-Buddhism is not only a religious movement but a political pathfinder too. The Neo Buddhists movement, the political achievements of Dr. Ambedkar and their appropriateness value for them. So, we may conclude that Neo-Buddhism is a catalyst for the Mahars today.

In the instance of the Mahars, we can say that the invention of Neo-Buddhism is particularly significant in the history of Dhamma in India. Now more and more untouchable, the Mahars are individually adopting Neo-Buddhism as a way of life. This religious movement, which not only limits its influence in the spiritual realm, also helps in the final development of every aspect of their lives. It differs from most traditional religions. Neo-Buddhists are convinced that the Buddha Dhamma is the only antidote to the whole community, and the only antidote to India's caste based religions atmosphere of the society.

## CONCLUSION

Neo-Buddhism is a way of life. Besides, it is a social welfare movement. Neo-Buddhism not only preaches equality, but it is also founded on logic. Neo-Buddhism has made a substantial contribution, particularly in relation to the Mahars. Apart from Mahars, outcasts and untouchables are now adopting Neo-Buddhism as a way of life. And Dr. Ambedkar emphasised the importance of embracing Buddhism in order to resurrect their rights, particularly in terms of dignity and social status for the underprivileged.

The Neo-Buddhist movement, which is followed by the Dalit movement, is seen as a spirit for the oppressed in society. Morality, according to Ambedkar, is the ultimate actuality of the Dhamma. The goal of moral behaviour is to create a good society. The sum and essence of Neo-Buddhism is morality. And Neo-Buddhism is essentially concerned with the greatest moral principles. Ambedkar was more than a Dalit leader; he was a nation builder and a world leader. He is the one who established the social

justice ideals. Ambedkar Jayanti is observed around the country to honour this great man. More leaders like him are needed in India today to compete and stay ahead of the competition on the world stage.

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