



POST-AMBEDKARITES BUDDHIST CONVERSION MOVEMENT IN MAHARASHTRA: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT :

The paper attempts to analyse the Post-Ambedkarites Buddhist conversion movement and its philosophical perspective with particular reference to Maharashtra. It will also discuss the Buddhist conversion movement and its importance to reject the hegemony of the Hindu religion. First, it will focus on Ambedkar's ideas on the Buddhist conversion and its impact on society. Besides, the paper aims to explain the academic debates on Buddhist conversion movement. The major aim of the paper is to evaluate Post-Ambedkarites Buddhist conversion



movement in Maharashtra and it further talks about the debates in the post-Ambedkarites period. This paper focuses on the effort of the Buddhist conversion movement for liberating the peoples, their political rights, political representation, freedom, the law of marriage, and education. This paper is divided into the following point's introduction, objectives, debates on Buddhist conversion movement and conclusion. This paper is based on qualitative research methodology.

KEYWORDS : Ambedkar, Buddhism, Conversion, Emancipation.

INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is a peaceful, mild religion, which could not survive. Ambedkar chose Buddhism in partiality to other religions because he was duped and deceived by caste Hindus who felt Buddhism was a lesser threat (Omvedt: 1980: 1347). Ambedkar's ideology of Buddhism and the very idea of conversion, one finds that he created a counter-ideology in the form of neo- Buddhism thereby rejecting not only old Buddhism but also offered a dialectical undermining of Hinduism at the ideological level. The core of Ambedkar's ideological quest as well as his strategy and assimilating Ambedkar into Hinduism would be a deformation of his emancipation (Guru: 1991: 340). In Ambedkar's words, 'my conversion is not for any material gain. There is nothing which I spirituality is at the base of my conversion. The Hindu religion does not appeal to my reason, it does not appeal to my self-respect. However, for you, for spiritual as well as for material gains conversion is must' (Ambedkar: 2004: 37).

There is no liberation through any other system of thought and practice than Buddhism because all other religions and philosophies are undermined by a false view of self (Richard P. Hayes, August, 2000: 3). No one is born a Buddhist. No one is automatically a Buddhist by association with others who are Buddhists. Every Buddhist is a convert, and that conversion is typically a long and gradual process. It was part of identifying oneself with more than one community. At the beginning of one's decision to join a Buddhist community by going for refuge, there are not likely to be many obstacles, from the

Buddhist side at least, to being both a Buddhist and a member of some other community whose members are dedicated to cultivate individual and collective forms of goodness (ibid: 14). The conversion was not from one religion to another, but the conversion from no religion at all to a religion (ibid: 32). Ambedkar thought of Buddhism, that he was thus quite right in thinking that Hinduism in practice would be an obstacle to healthy social developments and democracy in this country. Because of this situation, Ambedkar started thought of Buddhism (ibid: 149).

The leadership of Jyotiba Phule and B. R. Ambedkar helped to raise the Dalit's voice against the injustice in Maharashtra. They had struggled for social reforms, human rights and the upliftment of women and Dalits. Jotirao Phule and B R Ambedkar recognized the Hindu beliefs of Karma and moksha (salvation) in everyday practices as perpetuating the oppressive caste system. Through various means (individual and institutional), they efforts remove the untouchability and eradicate the Hindu Brahmanical hegemony to implicit in all social relationships. Enthusiastically, Phule and Ambedkar worked of Education and literacy as the key human rights issues among women and Dalits (Pawar: 2013: xiv).

Ambedkar did try to bring and gut the social aspect of the Buddha is teaching which was neglected in recent times. Moreover, for this, the Buddhist world is increasingly grateful. He also stressed that Buddhism is very popular in the West, and there is a great deal of significance attached to the social implications of the Buddha's philosophy (Lokmitra: 1991: 1303). Whether distinctive Buddhist discourse exists, and how this is constructed and eventually institutionalized. Also set of issues raised by the author concerned the nature of conversion to Buddhism and its characterization as a social or religious movement (Rao: 2003: 17). In the year, 1950 B R Ambedkar embraced Buddhism along with half a million untouchables in the city of the broken men, called Nagas. Ambedkar has introduced Buddhism to the untouchables in order to make separate from the clutches of Hindu religion and its hegemony. In nature late Ambedkar, all untouchables were converted to Buddhism (Naik: 2003: 44).

Comrade Sharad Patil has pointed out that, 'B. R Ambedkar's Caste Annihilation through the real task of conversion to Buddhism though he was born in the Hindu religion and declared in 1936 that he would not die in it and frequently stressed that untouchability could be eradicated only with the abolition of the caste system' (Patil: 1994: 2564). Ambedkar later studied all the well-known religions in India and compares with the Buddhist religion in his "The Buddha and his Dhamma" by illustrating the reason why he favours Buddhism to all other religions. Ambedkar wanted enlightenment, an uprising in thought, in order to organize the caste-annihilatory democratic revolution (Patil: 14996: 1593). The basic disagreement among the Indian philosophies was between non-Brahmanism and Brahmanism (ibid: 1595).

The Shudras formerly represented the astral Kshatriya caste of the Vedic Aryan society while the Brahmins rejected to perform upanayana, they were down to the fourth caste. The Non-Brahmins regarded all Vedic and Sanskrit literature, philosophy, and culture were the products of the Brahmins against the Shudra- Atisudras (ibid: 289). Further, the Maharashtrian Brahmins dominant in educational and cultural institutions has been brushing away from the political power by a rich peasant non-Brahmin elites with strong roots in the villages having a sound base in rural cooperatives and educational institutions in the post-independence period (Patil: 1979: 296). In such situation Ambedkar opened up the placard of caste annihilation on behalf of the untouchables in entirely un-casteist fortitude, it has found that all the caste Hindus varied against it. The mere support of high caste individuals makes no difference (Patil: 1989: 2004). Ambedkar begins his efforts at reform with his effort to modify the religious attitudes of his own people and the caste Hindus (Heredia: 2004: 4547).

Ambedkar's Conversion Movement: Establish the Democratic Values

It was not wise to expect Hinduism to be in equanimity of Brahmin religion and expect equal treatment. There was no social justice in Hinduism. The lower- caste people had alternative way was converted to the Buddhist religion. They have applied this decision was conversion into Buddhism for social justice and human rights. Even today, there is a large number of people are working in the

Buddhist conversions movement not only in Maharashtra as well as all over India (Kamble: 2011: 37: 38). Ambedkar's Buddhist Conversion Movement's purpose was established for the human values and had a struggle for the liberation of Dalit's, Dalit's freedom. Viewing the nature of this movement it has not presented the intended to establish a religion, any sect, creed. Through the establishment of this movement aimed the idea of democracy. Even as in the post-Ambedkar period even today, this conversion movement is still working to get the democratic rights of the Navbauddha (Buddhist converts) and Dalit's in Maharashtra (ibid: 38).

Each person has their own separate life. The person's birth is meant not only the service of upper caste peoples in society but for the self-development and self- sufficiency. In any community, the nation has no right to make one person slaves to another. The religion, in that religion, does not have any values to human. Then it is the not true religion. Ambedkar had declared that such religion must leave. Also, Ambedkar had started to think that he will accept religion in that treat everyone equally (Kamble: 2011: 27: 28). Inequities of religious and cultural inclusion in society in thousands year have not been a matter of fact. Ambedkar studied scholarly Buddhism along with all religions. And he went go decision that he leaves the religion which role an inequitable social system. At last after the study 21 years later of all religion he has selected conversion to Buddhism an alternative way of life for a human. For Ambedkar, the religion presented to all as ideologically and intellectually favour humanity and social equality. In fact, the Buddhist Conversion Movement began the time of Ambedkar conversion to Buddhism and now still it's working in Maharashtra. In the post- Ambedkarite period, also there is Ambedkarite activists, organisations and Ambedkarite political party's member's works for Buddhist conversion movement. This movement started by Ambedkar is actively continuing the works in Post-Ambedkar's Buddhist religious conversion movement even today. Nowadays, late Ambedkar, there is some changes and difference having in the functioning of the movement. To understand the success and failures of this movement, the ups and downs of every social reforms movement and the results of this Buddhist conversion movement is similar.

Post- Ambedkarites Buddhist Conversion Movement: *Its Impact and persistence*

Ambedkar formulated the meaning political philosophy of both these spheres with certain precondition modern ethical norms. Ambedkar visualized the future of the constitution of the country is based on the western model of citizenship and rights to the minority communities (Wankhede: 2008: 51). Ambedkar led a Buddhist conversion movement and near about half a million people followed to look after him. His posthumously the Buddhists Mass (Neo- Buddhist) Conversion Movement, as this has come to be called, was a conversion movement primarily of the Mahars in Maharashtra. This community belonged to Ambedkar (ibid: 154). The impact of the conversion to Buddhism was led to a great psychological release for the former Untouchables. The process of conversion continues to be a purifying process that has part of the movement all along (ibid: 155: 156).

The Buddhist conversion movement was continued after Ambedkar's death. Ambedkar was conscious of the support from the Asian Buddhist countries at the time of conversion. Ambedkar made no firm arrangement for continued help from the Buddhist centuries; however, Bhikkhus from Thailand, Burma, Ceylon, Tibet and Japan did travel among the new Buddhist groups in Maharashtra and elsewhere, supplied at least an image of Indian Buddhist connection with a world religion. Their effectiveness is generally limited by language. A consciousness among Maharashtrian Buddhists of identification with worldwide Buddhism remains but there is no institutionalized channel of support from other Buddhist countries has been created. There is a need to create a Buddhists institutionalize channel in the world (Zelliot: 2013: 173).

The Neo- Buddhist movement is the identity based new Social Movement in Modern India. The purpose of this movement was to put an end of the old social conflict, which was arising out of untouchability, discrimination and atrocities. This all perpetuated by the upper caste Hindus against the low caste untouchables where he has given various terms to untouchables like oppressed class, depressed class, Dalit's and *Ashuts* (untouchable). The situation of scheduled caste in India as there are no changes in the situation of scheduled castes in India in perspective of untouchability (ibid: 466).

People turned from Hinduism to Buddhism because of social conflicts. Consequently, Ambedkar's conversion movement emerged for solving social conflicts and the issue of untouchability. Moreover, Ambedkar said, there was no salvation within Hinduism for the untouchable people and they would have changed their religion. Then, Untouchable has joined with Ambedkar on October 1956 to convert into Buddhism. Under the leadership of Ambedkar, they have accepted ideas of Buddha Dhamma and its approach which was another form of religious conversion (ibid: 459).

The purpose of the Neo-Buddhist Movement was to resolve social conflicts and social apartheid. It aimed to put an end to the age-old social conflict arising out of untouchability, discrimination and atrocities perpetrated against the low caste untouchables by the upper caste Hindus. The Neo-Buddhist movement is one of the identities based on new social movement. This movement was led by B.R. Ambedkar. Sangharakshita' has pointed out 'it was Ambedkar's efforts to remove untouchability in the 1980s decade. Because of the social issue, untouchability created social conflicts. Ambedkar criticized the untouchability barrier and started addressing people against untouchability' (Kirtiraj: 159).

Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism was unquestionably a great event in the history of the movement for the uplift of the scheduled classes in India. It was the movement started by Ambedkar for the upliftment and emancipation of the lowest castes amongst the Hindus (Barlingay: 1974: 144). The meaning of conversion is little more than mere substitution of one set of superstitions for another. There were some reasons that why Ambedkar has moved away from Hinduism and convert to Buddhism (Barlingay: 1974: 147:148).

The number of Buddhist was 180,823 in 1951 it rose to 3,256,036 in 1961. Which represented a phenomenal 1700, 67 per cent increase in ten years. The ratio of Buddhists population to total population was 0.05 in 1951 and 0.74 in 1961 this spurt in the increase in Buddhist population was mainly due to the Buddhist conversion movement started by B R Ambedkar. The state of Maharashtra in the western region of India accounted and still accounts for the largest population of Buddhist in India as much as 85.6 per cent (Shastree: 1996: 1). The Buddhist conversion movement swelled the number of Buddhists from 2, 487 in 1951 and 2,789,501 by 1981. Besides this, in Maharashtra, the converts came chiefly from one so-called untouchable caste group called Mahars nearly seventy-five per cent of whom turned Buddhist during this period (ibid: 2).

Buddhists Resistance against Hindu social order

Buddhism is the broad ideological framework under which it conducts its activities and according to which it defines its purposes. It has sponsored the development of research and study into Buddhist history and philosophy and more generally, has attempted to introduce Buddhist ideals into education. Its colleges and high schools are producing a cadre of young men who have been exposed to social and political ideas that are inimical to the continued existence of traditional patterns of thought and action (Gokhale: 1986: 281). The Buddhist conversion of the Mahars represents in many senses a critical event in the process that traditionally despised and backward Untouchable communities in India have undergone (ibid: 270).

In the years since 1956, the expectations entertained for Buddhism on the collective level have not been fulfilled. Although social relationships among Untouchables and lower- caste communities have been altered as a result of the conversion, the direction of these changes has been to vitiate and erode unity: the opposite of what was intended. Buddhist identity has become another distinction that separates Mahar-Buddhists both from other untouchables and from Caste-Hindus. In addition, the protracted debate as to whether Buddhists can have access to constitutional reservations (Savalati-benefits) has further embittered other untouchable communities, just as it has consumed the energies of the Mahar- Buddhist political movement. In fact, with the emergence of class-based stratification, Mahar-Buddhists have obtained a virtual monopoly of constitutional benefits to the exclusion of other untouchable communities. On the collective and political levels, Buddhism as a counter-ideology has not succeeded (Gokhale: 186: 272). The ideological consciousness and mobilization of the community, which were effected through the medium of the Buddhist conversion, have seemingly served to make the community vulnerable and isolated. Internal cohesion on the basis of ideology, stratification due to

the differential distribution of benefits and resources, and further separation from potential allies have all been accentuated as a result of the Buddhist conversion which led by B R Ambedkar. The Mahar-Buddhists community has developed greater cohesion and self-awareness on a new basis at the same time that the prospect of the unity of purpose and political action with other Dalits, both untouchables and caste-Hindu, was reduced (ibid: 287). The conversions from among the untouchables continued it was cleared that the conversion movement had lost its momentum after Ambedkar's death. The new Buddhist community was left without leadership, intellectual as well as political and soon the new Buddhists tended to become another untouchables caste especially in the rural areas of Maharashtra. Buddhism had come and gone like a mighty hurricane that swept thousands off their feet only to deposit them in a manner of speaking, a few yards away on the same level. There is other evidence, however, which suggests that it is a mistake to conclude that the Buddhists conversion, when it does not take the form of a hurricane, is non-existent. The report on the 1931 census of India indicates that a quarter of a century before Ambedkar's conversion the movement, which became sensational for a while in his life could be detected in quitter, studier form.

The Condition of Neo-Buddhists Post- Conversion:

The imitation of the higher caste Hindus came gradually to be discarded by the Mahars and the Brahmin priest was eliminated from marriage ceremonies all this changed with the conversion of the Mahars to Buddhism. Further, Sanskritization and mobility along the traditional axis by Mahars also came into practice (Patwardhan: 1968: 192). On the other hand, the Matangas believed, late conversion to Buddhism the neo-Buddhists continued to observe Hindu rituals and therefore there is no real change in their lives. The organizations for change which do not bother about Ambedkar's observation of Buddhism and the issues of 'Buddhist Identity' and 'Counter- Ideology has to be seriously addressed by it (Jogdand: 1997: 3249).

The Role of Mahar Movement

The triumph of Mahars lies in the totality of their mass conversion movement. The political awakening not only helped to involve the Mahars in the political processes but also produced a series of political parties and a leader of all-India fame. Their thrust for their rights was not an effort to move up a mark in the social system but a leap for the top, an attempt aided not by traditional methods of social betterment but by the modern means. There were many of India's untouchables had experienced the benefits of egalitarian movement policy, the institutions raised by Mahar movement stand alone as efforts made by an untouchables caste for its own welfare. All-India Republican Party, the Buddhist conversion movement, schools and colleges of the people's education society, all included others than Mahars but they were created by the energy and ambition of the Mahar movement. There was a parallel institution in other segments of Indian society, but there was no other untouchable caste with a similar record of accomplishment (Zelliot: 2013: 13: 14). Mahars knew the idea of Buddhist conversion. It was a common idea that conversion brought release from the constraints of untouchability, although this seems not to have been true unless the converts became educated and left their stigmatized occupations (ibid: 146).

Neo- Buddhists are still rejected by the caste Hindus so that untouchables have little to gain with the conversion into Buddhism. In addition, the movement remains almost entirely a political movement, so that conversion to Buddhism in this context does not represent little in the way of ideological change, nor does it present yet an opportunity to participate in a fully functioning religious and social community. Because of such considerations, Buddhist converts remain a small proportion of India's total population of seventy million untouchables. Nonetheless, any movement among the untouchables, who constitute almost ten per cent of India' population, is noteworthy. Here a record has given in the book that after the death of B R Ambedkar, the Chinese repression of Tibetan Buddhism in 1959 sparked the flight of some 100,000 Tibetan refugees into India. This migration has actually had a more pronounced effect than Ambedkar's movement in re-establishing Buddhism in India where

Tibetans have established thriving refugee communities through out India and highly visible presence in the modern world as a whole (Reat, R: 1994: 82).

The conversion movement began, the Buddhists of Maharashtra have evolved a Buddhism that meets their needs and encourages their aspirations. The Buddhists movement must be seen in the context of the religion that was rejected for the new faith. After Ambedkar's death in 1956 deprived the movement of anyone accepted leader, but since that time, local leadership has continued a number of innovations. A literary movement has been one of the most important facets of Marathi literature for the past fifteen years, and the publishing of Dalits (downtrodden, ground down, the current term ex-untouchables use for themselves) literature has spread to Karnataka and Gujarat. Educational institutions continue to be founded the Buddhist movement, with no central organization in control, has developed according to the strength of local people. The Republican Party founded by Ambedkar has almost ceased to be an effective force, but Ambedkar's people are politicized and aware, even though the vast majority are still villages (Zelliot: 1985: 91).

The Dalits middle class have a dilemma about the Dalit movement. The episode has generated a new debate within the Dalit protest movement. To understand the roots of Dalit's anger in Maharashtra and the challenges ahead, a day's workshop was organized at the Institute of Indian Culture, Mumbai. In this workshop, activists and intellectuals from the neo- Buddhists, Matangs, Charmakars and Christian communities who were invited with a view to discussing 'the future course of action' of the Dalit movement (Jogdand, 1997: 3249). The discussion in this workshop revealed that the neo-Buddhist elites were open for critical evaluation. Not only on this occasion but on many forms, they have initiated a critical assessment of the entire Dalit movement. For instance, scholars in this workshop expressed anguish over the confusion that has erupted among the neo-Buddhists regarding their identity. In Maharashtra, one can find a number of organizations such as All India Buddhist Mahasabha, Trilokya and other petty Buddhist organizations preaching Buddhism according to their own convenience. It looks as if they are killing the revolutionary message of Ambedkar's conversion and of his Buddha and His Dhamma. These organizations do not bother about Ambedkar's perception of Buddhism. The issue of does 'Buddhist identity' and 'counter-ideology' was seriously addressed in this gathering (ibid: 3249).

Buddhist Conversion Movement: Social Reforms and Limitation

Many social scientists have developed an elusive scholarship over the positive impact of the Buddhist conversion movement on the Dalits in Maharashtra. Socially, the Dalits represent a distinct religious identity with new forms of rituals, symbols and festivals [Guru 1997]. Most importantly, it is emphasized that the conversion movement has a psychological dimension as it has freed the Mahar from the sense of inferiority in public [Zelliot 1996: 220 and Wankhede, 52]. These illustrations argue that in Maharashtra, the conversion movement precipitates a silent social and Cultural Revolution among the Dalits (Wankhede, 2008: 52). Conversion to Buddhism was a result of Ambedkar's deliberation over the social and political context of India in which the Dalits were one of the main groups (ibid: 51). The post-Ambedkar Dalit movements by not giving the needed importance to the socio-political and cultural notions of Buddhism have developed a strategy that is limited to the issues of political democracy. They aggregate the issue of representation of the identity as the main agenda and neglect the struggle of alienation of the caste system. Thus, the agenda of social democracy is sidelined. The characteristics presented here are the reflections of a fundamentally caste-ordained political psychology of Dalit politics, which has failed to articulate another dimension of Ambedkar's vision based on the philosophy of Buddhist conversion movement. This religious movement lacks dynamism to become a political movement of the whole deprived classes, but it carries the potential ingredients to challenge the social control of Brahmanical elites (ibid: 57).

The political approach towards the Buddhists

The status of neo-Buddhists Dalit's in a caste- driven movement. The mass conversion to Buddhism was an important political act for Dalit has to demonstrate their cultural capital and social

strength as a unified community. All political parties (including Shiv Sena) raised big holdings, welcoming and congratulating the Buddhist population on such an auspicious day. The contemporary Buddhist movement is restrictive, limited and comfortably operational mainly in urban locations with a sizeable educated neo-Buddhist population. The primary aim behind most of the Buddhist social activities is to generate the visibility of Ambedkarite cultural symbols at public places and during socio-cultural gatherings. The gratification of Buddhist identity can be valuable but it has a narrow audience and has had a little impact in changing the psyche of the caste Hindus towards the Dalit's. The distance of the movement from the struggles of other socially marginalized communities further restricts the impact. The Buddhist movement has yet to devise a formidable social strategy by which the non-Buddhist castes can integrate and become torchbearers of social revolution. The apathy of the Mangas, Matangs, Mahars and Chambhars (other significant Dalit sections in Maharashtra) towards the Buddhist movement has made it to an exclusive club only for the Mahars (the majority of the Buddhists in Maharashtra are from this caste). Since the lack of interaction between various Dalit castes on the question of social emancipation has placed the Buddhist movement at the margins. Ambedkar visualized Buddhism as a socio-political force to generate new confidence and moral outlook within the Dalit's. However, the disunity among the sub-castes and a lack of committed leadership has halted the revolutionary project in the middle of its journey (Wankhede: 2011: 2).

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in the paper is based on Secondary sources of data. Research articles, books, pamphlets, magazines and internet sources were part of collecting data. The research methodology used is descriptive in nature and purely based on Qualitative research. A descriptive study is a study where information is collected without changing the context.

OBJECTIVES:

To analysis the B R Ambedkar's ideas on Buddhist conversion.

To analysis the nature of Post- Ambedkarite Buddhist Conversion Movement in Maharashtra.

FINDINGS

It is found that because of the lack of conversion movement comprehensively, there is difficulty in the process of success to spread the Buddhist philosophy. The study found out that there is a lack of unity of mass conversion movement in Maharashtra. Identity crisis has created a problem for Neo-Buddhists converts, thereby Buddhist mass conversion movement's efforts towards bringing equality for neo Buddhists converts in Maharashtra. It is also found out that currently it is growing up and working with idea and philosophy of B R Ambedkar. By 1971, it is seen that the figures had risen only very slight and there were altogether 3,812,325-registered Buddhist in India, from which fact it was clear that even though a number of Buddhist conversion ceremonies had been held outside Maharashtra the Buddhist conversion. The corresponding movement among the other untouchable communities had not fooled movement of mass conversion among the Mahars. This movement has the works in a democratic way for the oppressed. Since the lack of interaction between various Dalit castes on the question of social emancipation has placed the Buddhist movement at the margins and it is found that the issues of neo Buddhists are still rejected by caste Hindus or taken it as lightly.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOVEMENT:

Only a large number of Mahars have converted into Buddhism, therefore, the conversion movement naturally slowed down, the more especially since Ambedkar himself was no longer present to convince the other untouchable communities of the rightness of the step which he had taken and persuades them to do likewise. Besides this, the Buddhist conversion movement had reached its limits by the beginning of 1957 was reflected in the official statistics. The increase in the number of Buddhist in Maharashtra was thus out of all proportion to the increase in the rest of the country.

Indeed, the Neo- Buddhist converts themselves were convinced that they were very inaccurate and that the number of Buddhists in India was actually far greater than the census returns showed. And in this, they were undoubtedly right, though perhaps, not quite, to the extent that some of them believed. But why this situation has created? There were two reasons for the discrepancy between the official figures, on the one hand, and the facts as known to the Buddhists themselves on the other. In the first place the census takers, in some cases deliberately enumerated Buddhists as Hindus in order to minimize the extent, and therefore the significances of the Buddhist conversion movement (Sangharakshita: 2006: 164). Late Ambedkar the Dalits continued the conversion from Hinduism to Buddhism. It was to gain equal status in society and to get rid of the practice of untouchability. The Neo-Buddhist got the status by embracing Buddhism. The Buddhist movement achieved its goal to enhance the status of people who live in a society (Bopegamage: 1979: 24).

CONCLUSION

Profoundly, Ambedkar aimed for conversion to Buddhism with a view to provide equality to each other. After the death of Ambedkar, Buddhist mass conversion is continued until the present time. Every year a large number of people converted into Buddhism and this process leads towards the rationality. Conversion from one religion to another religion is a continuing process. The role of mass conversion movement is an important effort towards the identity crisis and socio-political rights of the converts. Besides this, in Maharashtra, the Dalit movements are working for the rights of neo Buddhists converts. Ambedkar's mission was to free the downtrodden from the yolk of slavery (mental) accorded by the previous caste system. In a certain sense, Ambedkar was searching for an alternative religion led masses towards the teaching of Buddha. In this way conversion into Buddhism aware a large number of people from the oppressed community to make free from the caste that has entrapped them from centuries to centuries. The Buddhist conversion movement started by Ambedkar was a consolidated movement. This movement was a democratic movement for the emancipation of the Dalit's, subaltern peoples.

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