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**DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S CONVERSION: EMERGENCE OF  
SOCIO – POLITICAL EQUALITY - AN ANALYTICAL STUDY**

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**INTRODUCTION :**

**Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar** was great reformist and social thinker. Before converting in Buddhism, he tried wholeheartedly to change orthodox Indian society's mindset and suggested the reforms in religious ethics and rituals. Dr Ambedkar also gave critical views on Indian traditional brahminical society. Between 1927 to 1935 in his every social reform movement; he tried to eradicate the social inequality and created the equal space for downtrodden society. Mahad lake movement, Manusruiti dahan, Temple entry movement were the honest efforts to reform the Indian society. When he realized that, Indian society cannot change its social structure and mentality then he decided to leave the Hindu religion in 1935 he proclaimed that "I born as a Hindu but I would not die as a Hindu." But actual conversion had been taken place in 1956 at Nagpur. He took 20 years for conversion. He was well aware of the Indian society's mentality hence he wanted enough time to think for conversion. In this 20 years span he read the Buddhism related literature and propagated Buddhism in his writing and speeches. At the same time Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was very busy in political activities, Labor Party work, depressed class mission, Legislative election etc.



Dr.B.R. Ambedkar's first segment of Social movements was between 1927 to 1935 and second segment related to political activities was between 1935 to 1955. He realized that Indian society could not give any equal status to Downtrodden class so decided to leave the Hindu religion and accept Buddhism which gives the humanitarian , rational and scientific thoughts and gives every human being equal status not only in religious but also in social and political life hence Dr B.R. Ambedkar converted in Buddhism.

This conversion movement was a tool in the process of ideological and social change. This change was not in the form of revolutionary change but in the form of evolution. It would not be fair for society to expect unexpected and easy radical change from a society that has been under certain class dominance for thousands of years. It needs to be objectively evaluated, based on past, present conditions, the extent to which it may be achieved in the future, without limiting the time of that change and its course of action.

### **Objectives, Research Methodology and Data Analysis:**

This paper is an attempt to understand which kind of social and political changes took place in Indian society. How this conversion movement helped the Dalit community to achieve the equal status in social and political level, what kinds of social changes accrued in society after conversion. Will an equal political space get to the Dalit community after the conversion [ Q. M.] These are the issues will be discussed and made an analytical interpretation of Post conversion socio political activities.

Primary and secondary data and reference books and government reports have been used as data analysis. Research methodology is used for data interpretation. To understand the actual difference between pre conversion and post conversion social and political condition Comparative research methodology is used. On the basis of this primary and secondary data interpretation, analysis is done to understand the conversion movement social and political changes.

#### **6.6.1 Social Changes:**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's conversion had a significant impact on his social life and community of the five lakh Dalits'. A renaissance was taken place in the untouchables' society. The self-confidence of the untouchables was increased. There was an awareness of education. The caste system came to a standstill, and society began to be built according to the new principle of equality. The constitutional protection got to the society because of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Education has created awareness of rights and entitlements. Understanding the unjust oppression of the untouchables and the Dalit class on the strength of the new leadership. It gave rise to a new struggle, which profoundly affected the Dalit's social upliftment and gave them equal opportunities to live as human beings.

##### **6.6.1.1 Increases the confidence of the untouchables:**

Conversion boosted the self-confidence of a class of Shudras who lived like Atishudras for thousands of years and were treated like slaves. They were bound by ignorance and superstition wounded the Dalits' mindset, and tried to figure out how to increase their inferiority complex. Monarchy, feudalism, vatandar, Dharmamartand in the society, the upper class deprived the Dalits from their rights with constant oppression and exploitation. Against this exploitation, Gautama Buddha's egalitarian ideology emerged in ancient times, and he taught that society should be built on humanitarian principles.

In modern India, By converting in to buddhism, Babasaheb Ambedkar traditionally waged a social and religious struggle for the socially, religiously, and economically neglected, deprived and exploited sections of the society. Babasaheb said, "The mind should be developed along with the body; the mind should be cultured. He who has a strong body and mind, a courageous person, will prosper, and hence the society will prosper."<sup>1</sup> The people realized their rights to live like a human being. He confidently took a step towards education by giving up the traditional work of 'Yeskar', and this society is now ready to live as a human being.

##### **6.6.1.2 Deprived class get the right to education:**

In ancient times the right of education was reserved only for the upper castes. Education gives human beings a 'duality.' But this duality is unattainable to the fourth character. Sutras, in the

period of memory, it took a more rigid form. The Buddhist Dhamma Sangh and Shikshan Kendra tried to make education universal. It had limited success.

After the British arrival in modern times, India's Enlightenment brought about a new revolution in education. Rationalism, humanism, science, medicine, and analysis developed. Education was seen as an effective means of bringing about change in society. Babasaheb Ambedkar had made his progress through reading, contemplation, meditation, and writing. He knew the importance of education. Emphasizing the importance of education to his ignorant brethren, he says, "It is up to education alone to enhance our World as well as the quality of our society."<sup>1</sup> Going beyond that, he says, "Wisdom should be used for gaining bread, education and state power."

While interacting with Lord Linlithgow during the British rule, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said, "If we want to protect our people, we need people who will monitor society and protect our people. What will the clerks do?" So Lord Linlithgow sent 16 students to study abroad.<sup>2</sup> From this, you can see Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's passion for education was evident. After independence, he made a constitutional provision for the Dalit community to have the right of education. After conversion, the doors of education were opened for the Dalit community.

Dalit society started getting a large amount of education. At present, the level of knowledge in the community has increased. The educated class is doing remarkable work in education, engineering, administration, defense, foreign affairs, ministry, and secretariat. Although it took plenty of time to break the traditional education framework in rural areas, the current new picture is one of optimism. Rural, Dalit community is learning by looking at their urban relatives and society and understanding the importance of education. Dalit people with government court officials are consciously trying to make efforts for this at the government level. The attitude towards education has become positive as the society is getting various scholarships, grants, incentive prizes through the Ministry of Social Justice of the Central and

State Governments. Various institutes established after the name of Babasaheb Ambedkar, for example: - 'BARTI' 'Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Research & Training Institute' is providing opportunities for deserving students to study abroad.

Milind's and Siddharth College educated generation and is carrying out knowledge in various social consciousness fields. Dalit society has not only started taking education but also started spreading education by establishing educational institutions. Dr. Bhalchandra Munekar, Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Dr. Sukhdev Thorat officers like Ratnakar Gaikwad, Uttam Khobragade,. are now playing an important role in policy making They are doing Valuable work compiling and editing of invaluable work of of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's writings.

#### **6.6.1.3 Disruption of the caste system:**

The Dalit, untouchable society was plunged into darkness within the caste system's confines and caste system traditionally imposed by the religions. They had to do menial work in the community. They did not have the right to live as human beings. Buddhist Dhamma fought against this. In Dhamma and Sangh, everyone from the emperor to the servant was considered equal. Caste had no place in the Dhamma. Human idea that with one's own efforts and meritorious deeds, one can attain the state of Dharma .Arhant, and Bodhi attainment was a shock to such a rigid meeting

of the society. Is experiencing inequality. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had to bear the brunt of the caste system. Despite of being a high-ranking official from his childhood, he was not spared from this despite his erudition and great erudition. During reading and teaching, he was greatly influenced by the principles of Buddhism and converted to Buddhism in October 1956. He declared that he would "make the whole of India Buddhist" and devote the rest of his life to Buddhism's revival and propagation.<sup>3</sup>

Buddhism is the only Dhamma in India in which there is no place for caste and caste system, Dalits' path, which has been narrowed due to caste system, has been adopted and expanded by Babasaheb Ambedkar. The ancestral religion and caste restrictions of the non-religious people were removed. Everyone incidentally gained an equal place in society; the caste system and untouchability came to an end. He got the right to live on the same level as a human being. At the social and religious groups, caste has no special significance. The principle of equality was taught in Buddhism as it emerged from the rigidity of Hinduism.

A group of people living outside the village, doing menial jobs, deprived of education and employment, now began to enter society. Aware of their rights, if anyone does injustice in caste and religion, the organized Dalit society started revolting. An atmosphere of equality was rapidly being established in urban areas. However, as the caste system was more entrenched in rural areas, concerted efforts should be initiated at the governmental and institutional levels to eradicate it. Encouraging work to build the society on equality and humanity by involving rural and urban communities in the casteist movement through meetings, conferences, and literary movements started after conversion. This led to the emergence of new leadership.

#### 6.6.1.4 Incidental protection:

They were given constitutional protection to provide the Dalit community equal status and bring them into the mainstream. While drafting the Republic of India's Constitution, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the chairman of the constitution's drafting committee. While creating the incident, to build a just society, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar based his constitution on the principles of freedom, equality, and fraternity mentioned in the Churla section of the Tripitaka in the Buddhist Dhamma, beginning with the phrase "We are Indian citizens ...". Introduced the concept of a broader culture. "Mentioning in writing that 'INDIA means BHARAT ' will be a union of states;<sup>4</sup> he established a new identity as 'India' without recognizing the country (Hindustan) according to religion.

Article 17 of the Constitution gave untouchable society the right to education, freedom of expression, equality, liberty, fraternity, and humanity, prohibited untouchability under the law, and the caste system was not given a place in the society in any form as per the constitution.<sup>5</sup> Article 16, Sub-section 4 'C' and 'B' of the Constitution gave women the right to education and property rights. Reserved seats and reservations were given to bring Dalits, untouchables, and backward classes into society's mainstream.<sup>6</sup> So many people today are benefiting from the education, politics, jobs, and administration. He gave them the fundamental right to education for the holistic development of the untouchables and the backward classes. Provision was made for strict punishment against anyone who observed untouchability, which was prohibited by law. Due to this protection given to

Dalits, backward classes, and women, this social class started living a life of self-respect and self-respect.

#### 6.6.1.5 New Leadership Emerged:

Volunteers and colleagues who worked with Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar had closely watched his work. Loyalty to work, hard work, tirelessness, prestige, vision, diplomacy, rhetoric, restraint, goodwill, fearlessness, aggression, immense reading, writing, passion for building society, intense patriotism were some of the qualities that influenced the minds of activists. His ability to take everyone along while leading and respond to criticism gave him a sense of loyalty to the community. His speeches contained quotations, examples, and incidents that would be understood by all, from the common man to learned, from native to the foreigner. So that the activists and colleagues were impressed and faithfully carried out the work of the movement. Due to his leadership and the workers' loyalty towards him, such a big ceremony of Dhammadiksha was organised smoothly.

In the post-conversion period, Inspired by the works of Babasaheb Ambedkar, Dadasaheb Gaikwad, B.C. Kamble, Barrister Rajabhau Khobragade, G.P. Parmar, R.D. Leaders like Bhandare, Prakash Ambedkar, Namdev Dhasal, Raja Dhale, Ra.Su.Gavai, Jogendra Kawade, Ramdas Athavale emerged. Each of them tried to carry out the Dhamma revolution and change intended by Babasaheb Ambedkar in their way and with understanding. They were more or less successful. This leadership worked to expose injustice and atrocities against Dalits. Although this work did not take a team, sometimes due to selfish attitude and occasionally due to a vain pride, this leadership tried to keep the movement alive.

Landless Movement, United Maharashtra Movement, renaming the Marathwada University These new leaders showed their leadership's brilliance in many battles like Riddles in Hinduism, Mandal Commission, Khairlanji Massacre, Indumil, Chaityabhoomi, Railway Station. The Dalit Panther movement was formed on July 9, 1972.<sup>367</sup> The Dalit Panther movement in Maharashtra in the 1970s and 1980s had stirred up the society with its aggression and ideology and created a respectful fear in the minds of casteists.

In northern India and Maharashtra, Dalit leaders like Kanshi Ram, Ram Vilas Paswan, and Mayawati played an essential role in shaping the society and the government. There is no doubt about it.

This same leadership led the movement to stand up against Dalit atrocities in rural areas, hidden casteism in urban areas, awareness about caste panchayats, caste discrimination, atrocities in the society, and the society itself the initiative and started agitation against atrocities in a legal way. In a self-conscious untouchable society, the idea of a new transformation has emerged and is trying to create its separate place.

#### 6.6.3 Political change after conversion:

The motto of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's politics from 1920 to 1956 was 'India should stand with dignity in the world as a powerful nation By the influence of Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar entered Indian politics. He decided the direction of his politics at the Untouchables Conference held at Mangaon in 1920.<sup>8</sup>

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed in parliamentary democracy because a parliamentary system was governed by monks in Buddhist times. Decisions in the monks' association were taken through discussion, deliberation, and respect for each other's opinions. Therefore, the parliamentary system of government is the best form of government. In it, the people are sovereign, and the majority political parties run the state's affairs, and the opposition party controls the ruling party. For this, there should be a strong opposition in any political system<sup>9</sup>. Babasaheb Ambedkar played an important role. Babasaheb Ambedkar founded a political party called 'Swatantra Mazur Paksha' in August 1936 and issued a manifesto on 15<sup>th</sup>, stating his party's policy. Starting new businesses by running old businesses, protecting families from exploitation, enacting laws in workers' interest, giving land to the landless, assisting social reformers, launching rural health and housing schemes, etc. Concerns about concessions were discussed in the manifesto.<sup>10</sup>

According to the ideology of the Independent Labor Party, anyone could become a member of that party. The membership of the Independent Labor Party was open to all without any distinction of caste, creed, or community. That party was giving priority to the welfare of the working class. Therefore, the nature of the party would have been 'Labor Union.'<sup>11</sup> Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was also elected from Mumbai. This was a great victory for the Independent Labor Party. Then in 1942, Cripps Mission came to India. During Cripps' visit, Sir Stafford Cripps asked Dr. Ambedkar, "Are you the leader of the workers or the Dalit?" Although the question of overall untouchability, Dr. Although Babasaheb Ambedkar was in power, his party was called Swatantra Mazur Paksha. And their jurisdiction was limited to the Central Provinces - Karhad and Mumbai. Naturally, it was essential to have an all-India untouchable organization. Accordingly, on July 20, 1942, he founded the Scheduled Caste Federation<sup>12</sup>.

1942 is considered a momentous year in the history of Indian independence. This year will be written in golden letters in history from the point of view of an untouchable society. For the first time in thousands of years of slavery, an untouchable was replaced by a minister in the Indian capital. Lord Linlithgow announced his appointment as a member of the Viceroy's Executive on July 2, 1942.<sup>13</sup> Babasaheb Ambedkar played an important role as labor minister

In 1956, Dr. While Babasaheb Ambedkar was alive; he had the idea of a new 'Republican Party of India' in his mind. He had expressed such thoughts. But in a short time, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar passed away.

. After the Mahaparinirvana of Babasaheb Ambedkar, the Republican Party of India was formed on October 3, 1957. But RPI's leaders joined to the Congress party. They forgot their own party so people also forgot Bhandare, Rupavate, NM Kamble. Some leaders did not join the Congress, but they aligned with the Congress. The expected result of some adopting the concept of social convergence sponsored by Yashwantrao Chavan was that Congress leaders like Chavan, Naik, Patil, Pawar enslaved self-respecting Dalit leaders and their followers. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar fought against slavery with both the system and Congress. His followers, however, began to support slavery for position. Those who did not merge into Congress kept their party alive. Some followers acted being the followers of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's philosophy but worked for the

Congress. Dadasaheb Gaikwad, B.C. Kamble, R.S. Gavai, Jogendra Kawade, Ramdas Athavale. A large section of society became friends of Congress as the party's ownership shifted to the Congress party, but at that time, they devaluated their party. The Republican Party's credibility has been entirely eroded today, and it remained for the name only. The distraction of RPI started from Dadasaheb Gaikwad is still continue.<sup>14</sup>

#### **6.6.3.1 Dalit Panther - 1972:**

The split in the Republican Party and the entry of the Congress weakened the Ambedkarite movement. Dissatisfaction was created in society after seeing the leaders. The Dalit Panthers was formed on July 9, 1972, under the chairmanship of Raja Dhale.<sup>15</sup> Namdev Dhasal leaned towards Marxism, and Raja Dhale, who was leaning towards Buddhism, started working vigorously. Responded to racists by going where there would be an injustice. Due to his personality and influential speeches and arguments, this organization became a challenge to all Hindus.

Politically, the organization did not have much success in the elections. The organization fought for the renaming, the Worli riots, the Riddles question, and the intense agitation for the Republican Party's unity. Raja Dhale disbanded the organization in 1975 during the Emergency.<sup>16</sup> 49, and then the Panthers fought the occasional battle with the net. However, in the next period, there was a lack of planning in this organization. As a result, the Panther's strength gradually waned.

#### **6.6.3.2 Bahujan Samaj Paksha 1984:**

Kanshiram founded BAMSEF in 1972.<sup>17</sup> He later formed another organization, D.S. Four (Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti) in 1972 for social awareness. Through these two organizations, Kanshiram set up Samaj Prabodhan, Lokjagruti, and Sanghatana, and on April 14, 1984, he founded the Bahujan Samaj Paksha. The leader of this party, Ku. Mayawati was the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh four times. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had told Dalits to be a 'ruling community.' Kanshi Ram and Mayawati made Dalits the 'ruling tribe.'<sup>18</sup>

### **6.8 Conversion movement and analysis of social changes:**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was looking at Dhamma Chakra Pravartan as an opportunity to end caste. While converting, he took the deprived, the neglected, the inequitable, and the marginalized, who had no place in society. The predominantly untouchable Mahar community was the majority. They had nothing but lost inequality other than Hinduism. He joined the battle of Dhammatantra to get the same position. The term Navayan was given to the converted society.

This new society rewarded Buddha's equality and humanism. With Ambedkar's strong thinking, the tendency to struggle was awakened. This society began to progress. This proselytizing class has started to pay conscious attention to education and finance, jobs, and administration. If we look at the population of conversion, it includes mainly the Mahar caste. Other than Mahar community had not joined the movement due to the attitude of silent tolerance of doubts and injustices. But the progress made by the untouchable (Mahar) after conversion is commendable.

The purpose of Dharmatara was not limited to one caste. Babasaheb Ambedkar expected people from all classes and castes in this Dhamma movement. If this class had converted all neglected and deprived people, society would have been built on a casteless structure. Now that the progressive religious community has lost its caste, it is necessary to enlighten them to break the other classes' caste barriers. The battle of caste needs to be comprehensive without being limited. Today, in 58 years, except a few nomadic Vimuktas and a moderately knowledgeable senior class, the conversion process seems to have cooled down. Religion is considered secondary in the face of increasing economic power in the face of globalization.

Dhamma Movement has become a racist this understanding develop in other community. It would be desirable to answer this with restraint and equitable action without answering anxiously. It is necessary to think about 'all of us' without looking at society from the point of view of 'ours' and 'our caste'.

We (Mahar) think broadly as a society in the fight against social injustice, partisan government policy, occasional struggle. Still, the Dhamma movement activists believe that they are keeping ideological untouchability by keeping a safe distance without being involved in the social fight to take advantage of reservation. Although this view is somewhat acceptable, the distrust created in the Dhamma movement can now be resolved through discussion with logic, intellect, and prudent thinking. There is no doubt that the Dhamma movement needs to be strengthened by enlightening and enlightening the Dalit community without clashing with the neutral and non-aligned castes.

Dr. Although Babasaheb Ambedkar wanted to make the whole India Buddhist; his accidental Nirvana did not make it possible in his lifetime.

### 6.8.2 Analysis of Political changes of after conversion :

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar formed his party under the name 'Republican Party of India' by his followers. Although the party's policies were broad, ethnic-minded voters rejected the broader agenda. As a result, the party became monogamous. After Dadasaheb Gaikwad, the Republican leaders did very self-centered politics. The whole society tied the knot of Congress for its power. Later, when the youth also entered in politics, the same tradition was maintained.<sup>19</sup>

The second thing is that no political thought is final. Since 1972, Ambedkar's people have been hostile to pro-Hindu ideological parties as it is likely to change over time. But today, we see that these two have formed a partial alliance.

Simultaneously, as the established parties have made politics financially centralized, it has become more affordable for ordinary people. These parties stand with a significant theoretical role, but they do not go to the people with that idea. This is not a good idea; Partisanship is not given importance. The party has been stamped as homogeneous. If it is to be wiped out, the party must be inclusive. For that, we have to go beyond caste and play a role. The keys of power will come only if the party has a broad base. If the party wants to seize power, it needs a broad mass base and economic power. Dalit politics has its limits on this front.

If politics is to succeed, the party must have a full-time campaigner. His umbilical cord should be connected to the common man, and he should carry himself for social work. But this is exactly what you see in the wild Dalit politics. This worker must be trained. He should be polite and able to express the views of the party accurately.



The individualism that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar opposed all his life is the same individualism that the Ambedkarite people and leaders are stuck in. You can still see the defeat of Babasaheb Ambedkar's ideas. Dr. Although Babasaheb Ambedkar did politics on a particular element's strength, the people here did not realize that his political role was not limited to that element. All he knew was how to accept the leadership of a Shudra from the caste mentality. This is the role that the people of this country have taken in post-Ambedkar leaders and parties.

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