

Healing the Wounds of Casteism and reimagining the Indian Republic : Ambedkar’s Buddhism as Nation – Building Social Work

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Abstract

Gautam Buddha’s humanitarian philosophy spread throughout the World in a short span of time . The dynasties and rulers of India spared no effort to propagate Buddha’s teachings . The dynasties Brihadrath , Haryak , Nag , Maurya , Kushan , Satavahana , Vakataka , Maukhari -Pal and Vardhan all of which extended protection to Buddhism .Kabir who spread his teachings (directed against casteism) through his writings during the medieval period exerted influence on Baba Saheb Ambedkar since his childhood . B.R. Ambedkar’s decision to embrace Buddhism in 1956 has often been understood primarily as an act of liberation from casteism , a spiritual revolt against the centuries -old system of untouchability . While this conception remains central , it does not exhaust the transformative scope of Ambedkar’s project. For Ambedkar, conversion was not only about rejecting caste oppression , but also about building the ethical and moral foundations for a modern republic fractured by inequality . By framing Buddhism as a practical and rational ethical system rooted in equality , egalitarianism compassion and social justice, Ambedkar sought to heal the wounds of a fractured society through what may be called a form of “ social therapy”. The equality , freedom and brotherhood inherent in Buddhist philosophy drove Dr. Ambedkar to fight against the fissures or prevalent evils in Indian society. This research paper examines Ambedkar’s Navayana as a deliberate project of reconstructing Indian society on egalitarian lines , contending that his engagement with Buddhism functioned as both a critique of social injustice and a constructive effort to reimagine citizenship , community and the republic itself . It highlights how Ambedkar posited the act of conversion as a collective strategy of empowerment , capable of producing both psychological healing for oppressed communities and structural transformation for the nation. The researcher views

Ambedkar not only as a political leader and reformer but also as a social worker whose vision of Buddhism offered India a new grammar of democracy and solidarity .

Keywords: Casteism; Indian Republic ; Buddhism; Nation Building ; Social Work

Introduction

B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) , who was born in an “untouchable” community known as Mahar , carried on an inexorable battle against untouchability throughout his adult life. In the last phase of his life , he gave up Hinduism and embraced Buddhism . Ambedkar believed that the untouchables occupied a “weak and lowly status” only because they formed part of the Hindu society . When attempts to acquire equal status and “ordinary rights as human beings” within the fold of Hindu society started failing , Ambedkar felt it was essential to convert to a religion which will accord “equal status , equal rights and fair treatment “to untouchables . He clearly said to his supporters “select only that religion in which you will get equal status , equal opportunity and equal treatment”. He sedulously fought for equal rights and opportunities for all people , irrespective of caste or class background , while in government by integrating ideas of social justice into the newly – drafted Indian Constitution . But he lost faith in Hinduism because he believed that the caste system was an integral part of Hindu society which prevented genuine social equality . Dr Ambedkar’s conversion to Buddhism was an overt affair . This was landmark occasion – indeed , a watershed - known as the “ Dhamma Chakra Pravartan “ or the “Conversion to Buddhism “.

“I consider the teachings of Buddha to be the best among all religions. No other religion can compare to it. If a modern person who understands science wants to adopt any religion , it can only be the Buddha’s teachings . I have had unwavering faith in this for 35 years , after studying the subtle aspects of all religions .”- Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar . Ambedkar’s statement highlights the greatness of Buddha’s teachings and their scientific essence and his humanistic ideology which advocates human dignity , egalitarianism , freedom and universal brotherhood , aspiring for the welfare of humankind \mankind .

Dr. Ambedkar openly converted to Buddhism in October 1956 . This landmark occasion is known as the “Dhamma Chakra Pravartan “ or the “Conversion to Buddhism”. In India’s Nagpur of Maharashtra state , the momentous event took place . A key step towards empowering Dalits and other oppressed groups and affording

them access to a religion that rejected the caste -based prejudice that vitiated or flowed Hinduism prompted Ambedkar's to adopt Buddhism . He wanted to bring back the Lord Buddha's teachings of nonviolence , compassion and equality by converting to Buddhism.

His decision in 1956 to lead a mass conversion of hundreds of thousands of Dalits to Buddhism – a movement that later came to be known as Navayana , or the “new Vehicle” was a path- breaking one . this was one of the most significant religious and social transformative occurrences in modern South Asian history. Much has been written about the religious , political and cultural dimensions and implications of this mass conversions.

Ambedkar's engagement with Buddhism cannot be understood simply as a spiritual or metaphysical exercise . For him, religion could not be divorced from social ethics . Unlike the Hindu tradition , which he regarded as inherently bound to caste hierarchy , Buddhism offered a moral and institutional framework by means of which the oppressed could regain dignity , self -respect and agency . The act of conversion , therefore , was not only a rejection of Brahmanical domination but also a collective act of rehabilitation – what might be called a social therapy of the oppressed . By converting to Buddhism Dalits were gaining access to a new moral community where the principles of egalitarianism , brotherhood and justice could be practiced as lived values rather than theoretical , distant or vague constitutional ideals .

The title of Buddha was conferred on him in dedication to the welfare of mankind . Evidence of the Buddha tradition is found in the Indus Valley Civilization , with structures like stupas , figurines of males wearing chivara (robe) , and worship of the pipal tree. The humanistic ideology of Buddha is close to naturalism . Just as nature doesn't discriminate between one being and another and provides equal opportunities to all , the feeling of compassion , love , kindness and friendliness is equal for everyone . In the contemporary society accepted Buddha as a social reformer. The path shown by him was followed by every class , caste and even prostitutes , giving up the wrong path and embarking on the path of truth. This was a great social transformation of the time. The Buddha taught the practice of minimal sin , compassion , charity , purity , sweet speech and virtuous behavior to bring about the welfare of all beings . Emperor Ashoka defined this very teaching 'Dhamma' in the Edicts stating. “Apasinnava, Bahukayane , Daya-Dane, Sache- Sachave , Madhave -Sadhve Cha”. His teachings

galvanized the marginalized , oppressed and deprived societies and inspired them to live a dignified life and showed the path to liberation from mental slavery . Since Dr. Ambedkar was born in an oppressed and marginalized society , himself , he found the path to a dignified life in Buddha’s teachings and was motivated by the need for the welfare of humanity.

Dr Ambedkar had long been attempting reforms within the framework of Hinduism to provide justice and self-respect to the oppressed , but the (Hindu) upper caste did not undergo any change by heart . Despite constitutional provisions , untouchability and exploitation persisted . Therefore, Dr Ambedkar decided upon a change of religion (for himself) . Influenced by Buddha’s teachings , he had already announced his intention to convert to Buddhism in 1935 . Towards this end , he established Siddharth College and Milind College in Aurangabad. Along with this the struggle against caste discrimination and the promotion of social equality were to him essential elements of Buddhism . Ambedkar , maintains that personal moral life must serve broader social objectives . That is why he insisted that religion must aim for freedom , equality and brotherhood . Before embracing Buddhism , Ambedkar had made it clear that he would opt for a religion that promote liberty and equality and he found those ideals in Buddhism (Lone , 2022). At BBC London , Dr Ambedkar said –“I prioritize Buddhism , which emphasizes compassion and wisdom , beneficial for human well- being on Earth , and can connect the entire World with the feelings of peace , happiness and brotherhood.

Following Ambedkar’s conversion to Buddhism Dalits and other disadvantaged groups began embracing Buddhism throughout India. This movement is still going on today , and it has helped Buddhism become more popular across the nation. For the benefit of the general public Dr. Ambedkar published a number of books and essays on Buddhism making the Buddha’s teachings easier to understand or comprehend . Ambedkar created his brand of Buddhism , sometimes referred to as “Navayana Buddhism” or “Neo- Buddhism”. Buddhism is still an important religion in India today, thanks largely to Ambedkar’s efforts to resuscitate it.

The concept of nation- building social work is key to this inquiry . Social work , in its modern professional sense , often refers to targeted interventions to bring about the welfare of individuals , families or communities . But in Ambedkar’s hands, it took on a far grander scale . His project was not confined to alleviating immediate

suffering. It sought to rebuilt the moral foundations of Indian society. Through Buddhism Ambedkar aimed to create and nurture a new kind of citizen – self-respecting, egalitarian and cooperative – who could participate fully in the democratic life of the nation. In this regard, his Buddhism paralleled his constitutional work, both were attempts to create a just social order, one through legal frameworks, the other through ethical and spiritual uplift.

For the benefit of the oppressed Dr. Ambedkar ensured equality, freedom and rights against exploitation by way of the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. Article 17 abolished untouchability and laid down policy directives for dignity and complete life. Provisions were made for the freedom and equality of women, reservation for backward classes and the establishment of a democratic system, reflecting the glimpses of democracy in Buddha's sangha. Contemporary states like Mall and vajji also had democratic systems. Article 51 enjoined states to help foster \ nurture a scientific outlook thus, expanding Buddha's ideologies through constitutional provisions.

Inspired by the tenets of Buddhism, Dr. Ambedkar sought to grant education to women as also, property, voting rights and the right to divorce through the Hindu Code Bill. This was the greatest work for human dignity and freedom. This perspective also includes us to rethink the category of "social work" itself. Too often, social work is viewed narrowly in terms of professional practice, welfare institutions or state policy. Ambedkar's project suggests a broader conception one in which social work involves mass movements, cultural transformations and even religious conversion. His Buddhism exemplifies what might be called transformative social work – interventions that not only mitigate suffering but also restructure the conditions that produce it. In the case of Dalits the root cause of suffering was not only extreme indigence \ dire poverty but systemic humiliation and exclusion. By offering a new religious identity Ambedkar provided a holistic form of welfare that addressed both material and psychological needs and formed a basis of an inclusive \ inclusionary society. Finally, by situating Ambedkar's Navayana alongside other historical appropriations of Buddhism, this paper underscores the malleability of Buddhist social work traditions. This divergence reflects not only the versatility of Buddhist ethics but also the political choices of those who mobilize them. What is extraordinary about

Ambedkar is his ability to harness Buddhism's tenets and resources for a vision of a just republic – a vision where social welfare was not a state concession but a collective moral duty- a collective social obligation .

Review of Literature

The scholarship on B.R. Ambedkar's reinterpretation of Buddhism is both vast and contested, stretching across sociology, religious studies, political theory, and history. A major current in the literature situates Ambedkar's project within the broader tradition of anti-caste reform.

Keer (1990) focuses on the significant role that education played in Ambedkar's philosophy . Keer discusses how Ambedkar's achievement in education were pivotal not only for his personal advancement but also as a means to uplift Dalits . Ambedkar's advocacy for the transformative power of education is seen as a precursor to the modern understanding of empowerment in social work , where knowledge is viewed as a key resource in challenging social inequalities.

Zelliot E., (1992) has argued that Ambedkar's Navayana Buddhism was not merely a religious turn, but a radical social strategy for emancipating Dalits from the oppressive structures of Hindu society. Zelliot liberating the importance of collective dignity that Ambedkar sought to secure through conversion.

Sallie K. (1992) shows how Ambedkar reimagined the Buddha as a social reformer, whose message could be harnessed \leveraged against injustice. However, Ambedkar's innovation lies in making Buddhism explicitly political and constitutional: a form of "social work" tied to republican citizenship. This sets him apart from other engaged Buddhists, who often remained stuck in a spiritual or humanitarian groove .

Jadhav N., (2002) has highlighted the lived experiences of Dalits in post-Ambedkar Buddhist communities. His research underscores how conversion to Buddhism generated social capital, educational aspiration, and political agency. He talked about Buddhism's function as both a psychological liberation and a material tool of empowerment.

Rao (2003) delves into the religious dimension of Ambedkar's reform efforts in the Caste Question- Dalits and the politics of modern India. Rao revealed that how Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism was not only a personal religious act but also a deliberate strategy to oppose the caste system embedded within Hinduism .

Rao's work illustrates how Ambedkar's adoption of Buddhism offered an alternative framework for social justice, which focused on equality, non-violence and empowerment, resonating with the core values of social work.

Beltz J., (2005) contends that Navayana is less about doctrinal fidelity and more about constructing a new social ethic. This interpretation resonates with the idea of Buddhism as nation-building social work: the creation of a moral and civic community capable of sustaining democracy. In summary, existing scholarship has richly explored Ambedkar's Buddhism in terms of caste emancipation, Dalit identity, and social reform.

Vajpeyi A., (2012), contends that Ambedkar saw Buddhism as a moral language through which he could articulate his idea of Indian democracy. She positions Ambedkar alongside figures like Gandhi, Tagore, and Nehru, each drawing on different ethical resources to define the republic. For Ambedkar, Buddhism provided a framework of rational ethics, egalitarianism, and compassion — values he believed were basic to the survival of Indian democracy.

Somananda O., (2023) mentions how Ambedkar cherished the social justice-friendly teachings embedded in the ideology of Buddha. These included the rational consciousness of evaluating things, freedom of choice to work towards one's own dignity, and the emancipation of ignored humanity and the revitalization of overlooked reality are some of them. He mentions that the moral essence of these ideas and the other philosophical values contained in the Buddhism-based ideology were well aligned with Ambedkar's social justice structure, which is based on liberty, equality and fraternity.

From the above literature review, it can be seen that over the years, myriad attempts have been made by researchers and academicians to assess the contributions of B.R. Ambedkar from the lens of Buddhism. As such, the researcher has evinced a keen interest in taking a closer look at the use of this Buddhist angle as also at how Ambedkar employed the same in creating a distinctive form of nation building social work.

Research Methodology

Research Objectives :

1) To investigate the ways in which Navayana Buddhism contributed to Ambedkar's vision of nation-building linking emancipation from caste with the reimagining of the Indian Republic

2) To comprehend Dr B.R. Ambedkar's promotion of Buddhism in India after independence

3) To assess the relevance of Ambedkar's Buddhist social work project in contemporary India, especially in addressing persistent caste inequalities and the challenges of democracy.

Methodology

The study was done by secondary sources of existing literature through descriptive approach. Descriptive method was taken into the consideration to examine relevant literature deeply for this research study.

Ambedkar as a Social Worker imbued with Buddhism

The conventional \usual image projected by Dr. Ambedkar is that of a constitutional architect and a leading crusader against caste oppression. Yet, there is another facet that calls for equal attention – Dr Ambedkar as a social worker. Not in the narrow sense of philanthropy or charity, but in the deeper, structural sense of leveraging social work as an instrument of mending, healing and transforming society. Ambedkar's Buddhism was not only a religious or philosophical credo\creed but an ambitious social work project aimed at nation-building. Social work in its conventional sense often stresses the importance of welfare, relief or the provision of services to the marginalized. Ambedkar's insistence on rights, dignity and equality for Dalits stemmed from his conviction that social work should aim at justice, not just relief. Modern social work, committed to values like human dignity, social justice and empowerment, often reflects these principles. As social work increasingly involves \encompasses holistic and client-centered approaches, the influence of Buddhist ideas becomes more manifest. In this respect Dr Ambedkar embraced Buddhism for its inherent egalitarianism, wisdom, compassion and moral order which characterize the religion. Unlike conventional religious conversions driven by spiritual concerns, Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism was a strategic and ethical act of resistance against the caste system deeply entrenched in Hinduism. He rejected Hinduism for its sanction of caste based inequality and looked for a religion consistent with justice, rationality and human dignity. This particular attitude of Ambedkar towards Hinduism has drawn a certain notion of criticism which implies that he was trying to accompany the western-Christian moral judgements about the hindus; that his rationale was based on copying the colonial orientalist discourse and then reproducing it as a 'secular traditional' form. However such criticism mostly come from vague and unclear ground. Among various alternatives, Buddhism appealed to him for its

egalitarian ethos , rational principles and compatibility with democratic values . Ambedkar ,however, did not accept traditional Buddhism uncritically . He raised questions about the metaphysical elements of the religion such as karma , rebirth and nirvana , offering revised ,socially meaningful interpretations himself . While traditional Buddhists criticize Navayana as a deviation from canonical teachings many modern scholars and activists look upon it as a timely and necessary reform that makes Buddhism compatible with contemporary social realities . Ambedkar’s rational and ethical interpretation transforms Buddhism into a dynamic force for effecting social change . According to Buddhist texts , Buddha persuaded both sides to resolve the conflict peacefully . He did not advise them to flee but guided them through ethical and moral reasoning to avoid war (Lewis& Tuladhar , 2010) . According to Ambedkar , this shows Buddha was not an escapist , but rather someone who sought and found moral solutions to mundane issues and thereby aimed at transforming the World .

While accepting the four noble truths , Ambedkar rejected their traditional metaphysical interpretation . He believed human suffering does not result from desire in a spiritual or religious sense but from the various forms of social and economic injustice prevailing in human life . His efforts were aimed at addressing and redressing social inequalities , injustice & human suffering . He charted his path not on the basis of pessimism , but on a rational and humanitarian foundation (Debnath , 2024) .

Ambedkar also emphasized the importance of morality in Buddhism . He rejected the notion of rebirth , Karma , heaven , hell and other metaphysical elements . His vision was to interpret Buddhism as a social and moral movement with the object of uplifting the oppressed (Rodrigues , 2024).

Ambedkar redefined the Noble Eightfold Path and called it a method “to remove injustice and inhumanity that man does to man” (Verma , 2010, pp. 56-57) rather than to attain nirvana . If the traditional path focussed on metaphysical escape , Ambedkar’s version stressed ethical living and social responsibility.

To sum up Dr. Ambedkar’s significant contribution to the resuscitation of Buddhism in India following Independence was actuated by his desire to offer a route to dignity and freedom for the weaker members of society. Millions of people in India continue to be inspired by this conversion to Buddhism and his crusade for social justice.

Work Performed by Dr Ambedkar in his capacity as social reformer

1) Strive to attain Dalit Rights :struggle made

Dr Ambedkar was the leader of the Mahad Satyagraha movement . This movement was a struggle to secure basic human rights for the Dalit community Through the Mahad movement , Ambedkar wanted to end social discrimination against Dalits . Ambedkar’s relentless struggle made the Mahad Municipality pass a resolution in 1927 allowing all people, irrespective of their social caste, to use the water of the tank. In July 1924, Ambedkar founded the Bahishkrit Hitakrini Sabha to fight the evils of untouchability.

2. Society based on Equality

He vigorously fought with the locus on rebuilding the society by uprooting the social evils of feudal inequality and caste system. He sought the ideals of the French Revolution- liberty, equality and fraternity to be incorporated in the reformed society. He also wanted a free Indian society from the evils of the caste system.

3. Political Upliftment of the Underprivileged

Ambedkar succeeded in transforming a class movement into a revolutionary movement through India. During the British rule, he was one of the delegates at the roundtable conference in London, where he demanded a separate electorate for the Dalit people. When the new constitution was framed in independent India, Ambedkar ensured as the chairman of the drafting committee that the welfare and development of the backward community in India were guaranteed.

4. Spreading Education

Ambedkar’s educational goals were integrated with his social objectives. He realized that social emancipation could only be possible with education of the masses. The slogan ‘Education, Agitate, Organize’ embodied the ideological basis of Ambedkar’s movement for social reforms. With the help of the People’s Education Society established in 1945, many schools, colleges, hostels, and other educational institutions were established to uplift the underprivileged.

Land Reforms & Economic Reforms

Ambedkar stressed the need for extensive land reforms . His philosophy of life centred around giving justice to the underprivileged , lifting the downtrodden and providing a just society for all . He supported land reforms so that the agricultural system is equitable for all , particularly the landless .

Spreading Women's Empowerment & Education

Empowerment refers to enhancing the sanctity of the divine , constitutional , convivial , profitable , lucrative energy , force , might , power of individuals and coteries of women enjoying the autonomy of self -esteem and the development of the rights of womanhood in a patriarchal society . He attempted to built a strong social foundations of the constitutional democracy that would always be durable even under dire threats of patriarchal domination . Dr Ambedkar's perceptiveness and discernment on Women's problem accentuated , highlighted and illuminated on women's right to education , right to own property , participation and involvement in the political process to voice their rights , gender equality .

Dr Ambedkar Introducing certain important rights in the Constitution of India :

Article 14- Equal Rights and opportunities in political, economic and social spheres

Article 15 – Discrimination prohibited on the grounds of sex

Article 15(3) – enables affirmative discrimination in favour of women

Article 39- equal means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work

Article 42- proper conditions of work and allowance of maternity relief

Article 51(A) (C) – practices derogatory to women should be renounced

Article 16- Equality of opportunity in public employment

Article 16(4) – This clause allows the state to reserve vacancies in public service for any backward classes of the state that are not adequately represented in the public services.

Article 16(4B) – Constitutional protection to the Marginalized \ Vulnerable groups .

Article 29& 30- guarantees cultural and educational rights

Article 17- This abolishes untouchability and its practices in any form . Provisions were made for the freedom and equality of women , reservation for backward classes, and the establishment of a democratic system , reflecting the glimpses of democracy in Buddha’s sangha.

Dr Ambedkar had his own insight , intellect , wisdom , perceptiveness of the Indian Social order . He was desperately , probing of a solution to their ignoble system of depriving their rights bases on equality , justice and fraternity . Hence, he gave the clarion call” educate , agitate and organize “ that has turned watch words since time immemorial till today . So , educating the oppressed , subjugated and persecuted , he thought was the only way to imbue in them a sense of awareness , self – esteem and dignity . He also guided with his view about strict control of women through restriction of widow from social castration , child – marriage without restriction imposed by society and law , Sati a crime committed by a class of the society with strict adherence to their dogmatic societal norms punishable by law and other social vices. This would enable them to provide them with all factors encompassing a great cultural change incorporating the values of freedom and equality among women for giving them the golden opportunity to participate in the integration , absorption , adaptation and acculturation into mainstream of a knowledgeable and recognisable national life making them proud of their existence . He wanted the people to prepare , pursue and nurture the essence of freedom and equality among themselves which could only be possible through education that could provide the necessary insight into a brighter tomorrow. He proposed the patriotic slogan for the unity of all sections of the society that is “I Am the first Indian and I am the last Indian “; finally slogan resulted in to social transformation and reduce the impact of social stratification .

Conclusion

In conclusion , it is important to return to Ambedkar not only as a critic of casteism or as a Jurist of the Constitution , but as a Social worker in the deepest , most transformative sense . For Ambedkar , the problem of Indian society was not merely legal or political , but moral , psychological and civilizational . His conversion to Buddhism in 1956 and the philosophy of Navayana that he enunciated \formulated was not an isolated act of religious defiance but a carefully crafted social project with the objective of mending the fissures\ fault lines

of a fractured \divided community . When viewed in this way , Ambedkar’s Buddhism emerges as a kind of nation – building social work , one that harnesses religious values as tools for collective therapy .

It can be said that despite rejecting certain traditional doctrines . Ambedkar’s Navayana Buddhism represents a new synthesis and interpretation within the framework of Buddhist tradition . When we look at dominant Buddhist interpretations today , Ambedkar’s Navayana stands out more prominently than traditional schools like Hinayana or Mahayana . That is because it is anchored in \ rooted in modern values such as rational , scientific thinking , liberty , egalitarianism , brotherhood and compassion . Hence, it must be emphasized that his version of Dhamma can be classed placed among other contemporary ethical philosophical systems like existentialism , humanism and postmodernism .

The therapeutic possibilities or implications of conversion also point towards Ambedkar’s originality as nation – builder . The Indian Republic , as he helped craft it , promised liberty , equality and fraternity . Yet , Ambedkar was painfully aware that constitutional guarantees would not by themselves dismantle the age -old deep- rooted caste – system in India . The republic was in danger of being a shell – progressive in its text but regressive in its lived realities . Buddhism , for Ambedkar , was the answer to the dire need for change given the ground realities in India . It became a supplementary form of social work to reinforce the constitutional framework . Through Buddhist ethics , Ambedkar endeavoured to cultivate fraternity – not as a slogan but as a lived habit . He is an apostle to social – political reformer . The way he embraced Buddhism and went his mission with zeal rejuvenated the religion .

If the Indian Republic is still afflicted with the lane of casteism today , it is because Ambedkar’s Buddhist project has not been fully implemented . In fact , it still remains a distant goal . . But the vision remains compelling , to see religion not as an opiate or as a source of conflict or division , but as a vehicle for social work , and nation – building and therapy . To embrace that vision is to honor Ambedkar not just as a leader of the oppressed but as a healer of the Republic . Nevertheless , Ambedkar’s interpretation of Buddhism is a serious philosophical contribution and deserves to be compared with other great systems of thought . Buddhist philosophy Scholars

concerning themselves with should further explore and expand it -for it embodies Ambedkar's ultimate vision of human liberation and truth.

To conclude Ambedkar's legacy teaches us that social work , when refined and elevated by moral imagination can reshape nations . His Navayana Buddhism was not simply an escape from caste but a blueprint for a compassionate Republic . Ambedkar endeavoured to ensure that the highly stratified Indian society , scarred by millennia of hierarchy , could finally emerge as a society of equals . Conversion was therefore , not an end in itself , but a means to an end . It was a path towards fraternity and was intended to combat and end societal discrimination purely on the basis of caste . He believed "So long as you do not achieve social liberty , whatever freedom is provided by the law is of no avail to you".

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