“Students should organise University education to meet the requirements of the modern world, and to make the University a temple for knowledge and not a centre for training clerks.”

- Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

Chapter II

Research Methodology
Chapter II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

By research methodology we mean the philosophy of the research process. When we talk of methodology we talk of methods and logic behind it. "It is only searching out materials and placing them, arranging them in consistently sequential manners, so as to reach a certain conclusion." In the present research process, we shall deal with the meaning of the Neo-Buddhist elite, Circulation of elite, Classification of elite, Objectives of study, Research design, Universe of study, Sampling, Tools of data collection, Data processing and the reasoning behind it. Let us commence with the meaning of Neo-Buddhist elite.

"Indian Buddhists can be divided into five distinct groups. One, there are survivals from the Buddhist period. This type is represented by the Barua Buddhists of West Bengal, Chakma tribe of Tripura and Mizoram, the Buddhists of Laddakh, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh (NEFA). Two, there are ethnic overlaps from Nepal, Thailand, Myanmar such as Tamangs and Sherpas who are mainly settled in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal and the Tais of Assam. The third category of Buddhists is represented by those who were attracted towards Buddhism as a result of missionary movement spearheaded by the Maha Bodhi Society. The fourth group from the Tibetans who followed His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1959. The fifth group is represented by the followers of Dr. Ambedkar, who adopted Buddhist way of life in October 1956 and after." The Buddhist included in the category from one to four are traditional Buddhists. The fifth group of Buddhists are popularly termed as the Neo-Buddhists.

Meaning of Neo-Buddhist

As such there is no single major or uniform criterion for identifying Neo-Buddhist. There is no ceremony of conversion i.e. for becoming a disciple of the
Buddha. Whatever ceremony of conversion there is for becoming a Bhikkhu (Monk), for entering into the Sangh (monastic community). Among the Christians there are two ceremonies

1) For Baptism showing acceptance of Christianity and
2) For ordination i.e. becoming a priest (Clergy).

Likewise ‘Khatna’ for Muslims and Vrat-Bandhan (Munj) in twice-born Brahmins are essential ceremonies. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has introduced a ceremony like Christian-baptism, which every lay person must undergo before he can be called a Buddhist. Simply uttering the “Trisaran and Panchsheel” is not enough. Many other points are to be added to make a person feel that he is ceasing to be a Hindu and becoming a new man. He has prescribed twenty-two oaths, (see Appendix - One) so that there may be a complete separation from the bonds with Hinduism. Some become wholly devoted monks (Parivrajakas), while a vast majority remained as householders (upasakas), who would accept the Dhamma as their way of life. Becoming a Neo-Buddhist meant, at least in theory, a sharp break from the Hindu way of Living. “It is taking of the three Refuges and five precepts and the twenty-two vows that constituted conversion to Buddhism in the full sense or what Dr. Ambedkar termed ‘Dhamma-Diksha’, initiation into the Dharma.”3

The Neo-Buddhists are those who are the ardent followers of Neo-Buddhism. The word Neo-Buddhism is coined by Dr. Ambedkar himself. Neo means ‘new’, ‘Later’, ‘revived in modified from’ (Collins English Dictionary, 1988 ed.) Dr. Ambedkar must have positively borne in mind the meaning - ‘revived in modified form’. He has revived Buddhism in modified form, a sort of Neo-Buddhism or Nav-yan. Neo-Buddhism is a Nav-yan form of Buddhism. It is an offshoot of Lord Buddha and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar combine. Dr. Ambedkar is like a prophet Mohammed in Islam or like a tenth guru in Sikhism. “In terms of Buddhism, Dr. Ambedkar could be deemed to have founded the Nav-yan form of Buddhism, as was Nagarjuna founding the “Mahayana.”4 Thus the individuals who
have renounced Hinduism and adopted Buddhism on 15th October 1956 and there after are referred as the new converts and are called Neo-Buddhists. “When we say Neo-Buddhists, we mainly refer to the first batch of Mahars, who converted themselves into Buddhism through Dr. Ambedkar in 1956 at Nagpur and their progeny.” After understanding the meaning of Neo-Buddhist, we shall proceed to analyse the term elite.

Historically the word elite has been used in various connotations. The definitions of elite are too many, but most agree that it comprises members most influential or powerful in the field of activities. The concept of elite has been perceived as a social category having the characteristics of superiority based on influence or excellence or both. It includes the notions of social influence and respected attributes or deference. Three main notions are linked with the elite are those of superiority, prestige and power. Lasswell Harold introduces the concept of influentials and explains that the influentials are those who get most of what there is to get. Those who get most are elite and the rest are masses. The elite are leading minority which take major decisions in the society. The word elite is generally used in case of a small, cohesive group in terms of authority, position, superiority, power, influence, prestige, deference and imitation. This group enjoys a position of pre-eminence over all others. T.B. Bottomore analysed the concept of elite stating thus “The term elite(s) is now applied in fact, to the functional, mainly, occupational group which have a high status (for whatever reason) in a society.” He further adds, “The term elite is applied to mainly occupational group which have high status in a society.” After describing the nature and basic characteristics of elite and Neo-Buddhist, we can deduce a working definition of Neo-Buddhist elite. By Neo-Buddhist elite we mean a class of Buddhist converts, which has obtained higher education and thereby higher occupation and secured position of eminence and command influence in their community.
The Neo-Buddhists is a dominant group among the depressed and the exploited class. The educated Neo-Buddhists are comparatively more assertive, militant, more vocal, politically better organised than other depressed classes. Their numerical strength feature has added dominance in the power structure of the Scheduled Castes. In the caste structure, prior to conversion to Buddhism, these ex-untouchables were at the lowest rung of the Indian society. Higher castes including Brahmins were highly advanced in education, employment and other significant fields of life. The proportion of Brahmins in administration, bureaucracy was quite high, which afforded them elite position. Thus, the elite were drawn from the upper castes only, whereas the ex-untouchables were deprived of power, authority, prestige and status and pushed into the lowest rung of the society. During the post independence period, they began to realise the advantages of higher education and prestigious occupation and struggled hard to achieve these means of status enhancement. The protective discriminatory policy and welfare measures have contributed to a greater extent in it. The Neo-Buddhists have made more gains out of the welfare programmes. They have showed a relatively better response to education. High educational attainments, non-traditional career pattern and conversion to Buddhism have elevated their status and established dominance in the power structure. They have replaced the Brahmins and other upper castes and have occupied key positions of decision-makers. "This new middle class is termed as intelligentsia." It appears that the theory of elite circulation is equally applicable to the Neo-Buddhists also. Vilfred Pareto has formulated this theory of the circulation of elite. To him elite always circulate. Those in the position of non-elite change into elite. In the similar tune the initial monopoly of privileged castes over higher education and occupation has no more lasted very long. The sub-altern groups like the Neo-Buddhists have now secured the position of elite. The Neo-Buddhist elite represent the trend towards replacing the Brahmin and other upper caste elite.
Research Problem

The basic problem of this study is to search out whether the Neo-Buddhist elite have achieved upward intergenerational mobility? In other words, whether higher education and resultant higher occupation have led to rise in social status and generated different dilemmas, role-tensions, role-anxieties among the emergent Neo-Buddhist elite?

To answer this major problem the study sets out the following objectives.
1) To know the present educational, occupational and economic status of the Neo-Buddhist elite.
2) To find out the extent of internalisation of Buddhist way of life by the emergent Neo-Buddhist elite.
3) To assess the status identity and role-activities of the Neo-Buddhist elite.
4) To ascertain the nature and direction of inter and intra-generational mobility of the respondents.
5) To analyse the occupational deprivations, role-strains and role-anxieties experienced by the Neo-Buddhist elite.
6) To examine the nature of different dilemmas faced by the Neo-Buddhist elite.
7) To assess the nature of interaction pattern between the Neo-Buddhist elite and the members of their community.
8) To investigate the nature of involvement and alienation of the Neo-Buddhist elite from their Kinsmen and community.

Operational Definitions

The terms like Neo-Buddhist, elite, role-activity, status, mobility, occupational deprivation, role-strain, job-anxiety, involvement, dilemma, alienation etc. have been used in the present study repeatedly and their working definitions have been sought and followed in the particular context in the different chapters.
Research Design

Research design is a plan comprising the researcher's decisions about procedure, sampling, collection and analysis of data. It differs according to the research purpose. The research purposes may be grouped in four major categories viz. 1) Exploration, 2) Description, 3) Diagnosis, 4) Experimentation.

The object of our study is to describe main achievements and mobility of the Neo-Buddhist elite. It highlights the present socio-economic status, role activities, interaction pattern, involvement, dilemmas and alienation of the Neo-Buddhist elite. Moreover it is a fact finding enquiry. A study having this sort of purpose is known as descriptive study or "ex post facto research". The present study is a descriptive analysis of education, occupation, income, internalisation of Buddhist way of life, Status identity, role-activities, role anxieties of Neo-Buddhist elite. The major emphasis is on describing the consequences of upward mobility on socio-economic status of Neo-Buddhist elite. Thus our study is mainly a descriptive study. Formulating a problem for more precise investigation is also an objective of our study. As such, this study is exploratory or formulative research study. In brief, we can say that our study is both descriptive and exploratory.

The unit of our analysis is Neo-Buddhist elite, an individual person. Being the head of his household, he represents in some sense, the interests, attitudes, ideas, perceptions and purposes of dominant and influential group of Neo-Buddhists. Such small group study is designated as "microscopic study", "a spot light study".9

The Universe

Marathwada is a developing region with larger backlog of development in many spheres such as education, irrigation, roads, industries, housing, electricity etc. It was under the domination of deccani Muslim culture. It is now undergoing the process of transformation in higher education, employment, religions, culture etc. The elite, as change promoters, have an important role to play in accelerating
the rate of development. Moreover Marathwada is a land of movement for development. Hyderabad freedom struggle was launched more violently on the soil of Marathwada, movement for Marathwada Agricultural University, conversion of meter gauge railway into broad gauge, filling up of back-log of Development, establishment of Marathwada Statutory Development Board, has exhibited militancy and identity of Marathwada. Marathwada was moved by an agitation for renaming the Marathwada University after Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar which was continued for more than one & half decade. This background induced the investigator to select Marathwada as the universe of this study. Marathwada is comprised of eight districts viz. Aurangabad, Jalna, Parbhani, Hingoli, Nanded, Latur, Osmanabad and Beed. This study could be confined to any one of district town, but in order to cover wider area to give geographical representation to solicit detailed information from the Neo-Buddhist elite, three district towns have been selected. Because it is practically difficult to visit all district and secure information due to constrain of time, monetary expenditure and manpower. To solve the problem of selection of field of study, percentage of Buddhist population, literacy rate, number of colleges of different disciplines, number of offices, number of scheduled caste scholarship holders etc. several factors have been taken into consideration. After a detailed study of the ’District Gazetteers’ and ‘Census Report’ of the year 1991, the district towns of Aurangabad, Nanded and Latur have found to be most suitable for the present study. The selection of these three district towns as the universe for the study has been motivated by two broad sets of factors. Firstly the districts have larger Neo-Buddhist population as compared to other districts. Secondly, literacy rate of these districts is far higher than other districts.

In Marathwada, as per ‘Census Report of 1991’, the percentage of rural population is larger than urban population. However three urban towns have been selected for the reason that the urban setting provides higher education, initiates a
spirit of competition for prestigious jobs and generates greater opportunities for
the achievement of higher status. The infra-structure leading to the position of elite
is more congenial in the urban area. "Among the urban educated untouchables
economic conditions, education and leadership, if any, were found as favourable

The Sample

The universe of our study covers all the Neo-Buddhist elite residing in the
region of Marathwada. If all these Neo-Buddhist elite could be contacted to elicit
information from them, high accuracy could be secured. But the geographical area
is so vast that this enquiry will consume a great deal of money, time and energy. In
order to minimise them the researcher is constrained to select a suitable sample of
200 respondents, who are sufficiently representative of the universe. For practical
and cost reasons it is impossible to collect information about all Neo-Buddhist elite
living in three district towns. it is felt that a sample of this size would give fairly
reliable results. The constituent respondents of this sample have been identified by
a panel of knowledgeable. The members of this panel have been requested to
nominate the Neo-Buddhist elites whom they think reputed and influential in the
society. The identified Neo-Buddhist elite have been interviewed and lastly have
been requested to communicate the names and addresses of other Neo-Buddhist
elite and so on. This method is popularly known as ‘Purposive Technique’ or ‘a
snow ball technique’ or ‘Cob-web technique.’ "This sampling method involves
purposive or deliberate selection of particular units of the universe for constituting
a sample which represents the universe." Since 'who's who' record is not available
and no government or private agencies keep up to date information with full
particulars of name, occupation and addresses of the educated Neo-Buddhists, it
has appeared very difficult to locate the elite among them and collect necessary
information from them. Moreover the nature of enquiry is such that another
sample design would not be befitting and useful. However while selecting
respondents a care has been taken that respondents should be selected from all categories of Neo-Buddhist elite according to their assumed percentage in the Neo-Buddhist community.

**Unit of Study**

In India an individual has never been a primary unit of society. The caste has been the unit of the Indian Society. Caste has been considered to be a closed system of stratification. Membership by virtue of birth, rules of endogamy, association with hereditary occupation, restrictions on social intercourse has helped to maintain its distinctive entity. However the Indian Society has undergone tremendous social change. Due to the impact of forces of modernisation, changes in value system, representation in education and employment, political mobilisation etc. the ascriptive nature of caste system has been changed. The scheduled castes took advantage of various available avenues of social mobility both on individual or group level. Even though the developmental benefits are extended to the scheduled castes as a social category, the beneficiaries are specific persons and families. This means the unit of mobility is an individual and not a group in the context of developmental benefits. Considering the objectives of our investigation, the Neo-Buddhist elite as an individual is fit to be the unit of the present study. Our research work concentrates on the study of Neo-Buddhist elite living in an urban setting.

**The Respondents**

To identify the elite for study, three main approaches are used. These are positional, reputational and issue participation approach. It is found that none of the approaches are exclusive. In fact they are supplementary and complementary in identifying a class of elite. None of the approach is superior or inferior to other. However in the present study a combination of reputation and positional approach has been used to identify the Neo-Buddhist elite from the Buddhist Community. In positional approach an attempt is made to identify individuals who have potential
for power because of the status in the community. The basic presumption is that those who are holding positions of authority make key decisions and those who do not occupy such position do not make key decisions. To collect the names of the Neo-Buddhist elite respondents, a panel of knowledgeable Neo-Buddhists has been formed, each drawn from different walks of life. This panel includes social workers, religious leaders, political leaders, editors of newspapers, college students etc. They are considered to be well informed, acquainted and equipped with sufficient knowledge about Neo-Buddhist people of their district town. This panel of knowledgeable is separate and independent for each district town included in our sample. The members of panel are requested to name the influential Neo-Buddhist persons who can get the things done for the community. After getting the names of the influential persons, with their occupations, from the members of panel, they are classified into different types. Moreover the elite is a functional group. On the basis of functional (occupational) differentiation the Neo-Buddhist elite have been classified into five categories as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Neo-Buddhist Elite</th>
<th>Nature of Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Intellectual elite</td>
<td>Thinkers, Professor / Reader in University and Senior College, Senior College Lecturers, Vice-Chancellors, Principals, Headmaster of High Schools, Writers, novelists, Poets, Playwrights, Editors of News Papers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Administrative elite</td>
<td>Magistrate of High Court/District Courts/Lower Court, District Collectors, District Superintendent of Police, Police Inspector, Deputy Collector, Tahsildar, Chief Executive Officer of Zilla Parishad, Block Development Officer, Executive Engineer, Agriculture Supervisor, Dist. Education Officer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Political elite - Minister, Member of Parliament, Member of Legislative Assembly, member of Legislative Council, Leader of Political Party of Regional Unit, Member of Zilla Parishad, Chairman of Subject Committee of Zilla Parishad / Corporation, Member of Municipal Corporation, Member of Municipal Council.

5. Religious elite - Buddhist monks, Office bearer of Regional Unit of Buddhist Organisation (Buddhist Society of India, Trilokya Mahasangh.)

These categories of Neo-Buddhist elite form an integral part of Neo-Buddhist community. The population covered by this study is fully homogeneous. All respondents have an ancestral origin in Ex-Mahar community. They have common social, cultural heritage and religious uniformity too. This homogeneity of social, cultural and religious background will definitely yield fruitful inferences.

We have already noted that the respondents are selected on the basis of purposive stratification and by quota sampling. Each district town constitutes an independent cell and for each cell a quota of respondents is fixed. As original stipulation, we have decided to interview 66 respondents from Latur and Aurangabad each seperately and 68 respondents from Nanded district town. Later on these respondents have been further sub-divided into five types of Neo-Buddhist elite. The number of respondents to be included in each type of elite has been fixed. As per this scheme 50 intellectuals, 74 administrative elite, 46 professional elite, 21 political elite and 9 religious elite were to be interviewed. On finding of non-availability of prospective respondents in any specific type of Neo-Buddhist elite, they have been substituted by respondents from another category. The final selection of respondents has been made on the basis of convenience sampling. The final elite wise distribution of respondents is shown in the following Table 2.1.
Table 2.1

Distribution of Neo-Buddhist elite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Type of Buddhist elite</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Intellectual elite</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Administrative elite</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Professional elite</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Political elite</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Religious elite</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**

|          | 200 | 100.0 |

The Hypothesis

Our present study is a fact finding study. It aims at describing the role-activities, status and mobility of Neo-Buddhist elite. Hence it is chiefly descriptive and exploratory in nature. Hillway has directed that, “When fact finding alone is the aim of the study, a hypothesis may not be required.” (Hillway Tyrus, 1964 : 39.) The point is that facts or variables are not tested as such. The relations stated by the hypothesis are tested. (Kerlinger, Fred N., 1998 : 21.) Our study has not been initiated with an aim of testing of any particular hypothesis. It does not concentrate on establishing any exact correlation between two or more variables related to the respondents. We have endeavoured to analyse the impact of mobility on status, interaction pattern, involvement and alienation associated with the respondents. Moreover in order to channelise the research work in a disciplined and systematic procedure, we have broadly kept in mind few propositions for analysis of the data collected. Thus we enlist some of the propositions which have been discussed, as follows:

1) The higher education and resultant high esteemed occupation have accelerated mobility among the Neo-Buddhist elite.
2) The Neo-Buddhist elite have achieved upward inter generational mobility.
3) The intellectual and administrative Neo-Buddhist elite are more mobile than other types of Neo-Buddhist elite.
4) The mobile Neo-Buddhist elite have became unattached from their own kinsmen and community.

**Tools of Data Collection**

The observation method, interview, questionnaire interview schedule, projective technique, scaling technique, sociometry, case study are some of the important tools that are used in the social research for data collection. The observation method is suitable in the studies which deal with respondents who are not capable of giving verbal reports of their feelings. It is not effective in giving information about person’s perceptions, beliefs, feelings, motivations, aspirations etc. The interview method is quite useful in giving information about all these variables. Interview permits probing into the context and reasons for answers to questions. It is through interview, questions about attitude, views, perceptions, aspirations and anxieties can be asked in such a way as to elicit accurate information. The major shortcoming of the interview is that it consumes longer period, more efforts and money.

The questionnaire covers large, diverse and widely scattered group of people. The distinctive characteristics of the questionnaire are it’s economical nature, anonymity, less pressure on the respondents’ uniformity. It is sole research technique used in some studies. However it has some serious limitations such as lack of motivation to the respondents, limited returns, possibility of misinterpretation of questions. Thus these major methods of data collection have both some merits and many limitations. Another important method used for data collection is a schedule. “The schedule is a proforma containing a set of question.”

We can broadly classify five types of schedules viz.

1) Observational schedule
2) Rating schedule
3) Institution survey schedule
4) Interview schedule
5) Documentary schedule

The main thrust of our study is the analysis of socio-economic background of the respondents, role-strain, role-anxieties and dilemmas faced by Neo-Buddhist Elite. Such information known solely to respondents is highly personal and sensitive. Therefore, it is felt that the interview schedule is the most appropriate tool for investigation.

Before finalising the format of interview schedule, the issues are discussed in detail with the panel of political leaders, Dalit writers, Social workers, Buddhist monks and intellectuals. The scholars who have rich practical experience in research are also consulted. Thereafter an interview schedule has been prepared. It includes a large number of questions (151) relating to various aspects of the problem. To eliminate the 'insider' characteristic of the investigator every precaution has been taken to maintain validity and objectivity of the information. All the questions included in the interview schedule are grouped under specific themes. The questions related to the deprivation, role-strain, involvement, dilemmas and alienation, which are the most basic for the study are put at the end of the interview schedule sequentially. Each question is supplied with adequate alternatives and a column 'any other' is provided for respondents' option. We have provided a variety of possible answers, so that the respondent may put a check-mark against the correct one. It is not claimed that the list of alternatives incorporated in each question is an exhaustive one. Yet the response pattern of the respondents can be taken as substantially indicative of his motivation. The interview schedule includes structured or dichotomous as well as open ended questions. The open ended questions are designed to secure free responses from the respondents. The closed form of questions have been proved fairly easy to
tabulate, interpret and analyse. Some questions are pre-ordained, definite, concrete and directed. All questions are objective in nature. They are presented with exactly the same wording and in the same order to all respondents. The reason for this standardisation is to ensure that all respondents would reply the same set of questions. The technique of content analysis is also used for objective, systematic quantitative description for analysing the collected data. Some questions are reserved for content analysis.

In order to pretest the objectivity and validity of the questions, the interview schedules were administered in person to 20 representatives of the prospective respondents, so that the flaws can be identified and corrected. The investigator had asked for their critical analysis related to all aspects of the questions in the interview schedule such as the question wording, question order, missing questions, in appropriate inadequate confusing response categories etc. The corrections were done according to the suggestions of the said representatives. The analysis and comments of the representatives assisted to modify the interview schedule at some places. A second pilot study was also conducted with a view to confirm that the amendments to the original questions have proved effective. Thenceforth finally pretested and standardised interview schedules are administered to the sample population.

The investigator has secured appointment from the respondents nominated by the panel of knowledgeable, visited all the respondents intermittently and handed over the interview schedules to them. He has explained the purpose, meaning and nature of questions in the interview schedule. He has offered necessary explanations to the questions and method of recording their responses to the questions put to them. The respondents are made known about the importance of the research and requested to give true, factual and honest responses. It has assisted in securing uniformity and maximum reliability and validity.
The respondents are sufficiently better educated, experienced and matured to understand the meaning and nature of the questions and thoroughly conversant with the themes of this study. Hence the investigator has requested them to record their responses in the interview schedule in his presence. They are further instructed to enquire clarification of any sort.

After the completion of the work of recording the answers to the questions in the interview schedule, an informal discussion with the respondent is followed and their narration is noted briefly. This gesture has added qualitative aspect to the information collected through interview schedules. The researcher has conducted informal investigation to check up the accuracy of the information.

The information collected has been tabulated and inferences have been drawn accordingly. Prior to it, the completed interview schedules have been edited in order to amend, recording errors and deleting the data that is found obviously erroneous.

**Data Collection**

The field work is carried out for a period of one year and eight months i.e. from April 1997 to November 1998. Considering the calendar year, a phase-wise programme for filling up the interview schedules has been prepared and followed accordingly. The researcher has contacted all the respondents in person except thirteen cases who could not be available at the time of the visit. For them the interview schedule had been kept with the nearest relative with a request to hand over it to the prospective respondent, get it filled in the necessary entries and keep it ready to submit to the investigator in the next visit. The telephone numbers of residences and offices have been noted down in the diary by the researcher in the first visit. This practice has assisted much in contacting the ‘missing’ cases. The information gathered at interview schedules has been filled in either at their residence or office and at the time suited to their convenience.
The researcher has encountered some difficulties while conducting the field work. The elite who have occupied top positions in the office and society have found to be most difficult to contact. On many occasions it has become very difficult to seek the information from the administrative elite, specifically the executives, as they were busy with ‘March ending office matters,’ or special meetings. The elite living in the apartments dominated by upper castes hesitated to conduct interviews at their residences and preferred to offer their responses at their offices at the end of the working hours. Few respondents have showed deep interest at the occasion of first visit but later on preserved the schedule with them instead of returning it for the analysis. The investigator has to provide a fresh interview schedule to them and get it filled for further analysis. In order to deal with the problem of non-availability or ‘not at home’ tendency, the investigator has to seek assistance from the local influential leader. However, there are many instances in which the respondents have took all troubles, postponed their engagement and completed the work of writing the answers to the questions in the interview schedule. They have assisted the investigator in locating other Neo-Buddhist elite and in seeking information from them also. Some have spared time at odd hours at night also.

**Rapport**

The researcher is a native of the present research area and associated with social and religious organisations. He has attended and addressed scores of public meetings, conferences, rallies and religious discourses during the past twenty years. The investigator is also acquainted with the informants, specifically in the course of the movement for renaming of Marathwada University after Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. This familiarity has made the task easiest to establish rapport with the respondents included in the present sample. Moreover the main issues of this research are raised and criticised publicly wherein the Neo-Buddhist elite are condemned for their middle classion attitude and behaviour without giving them
an opportunity to plead their side. The informants have felt this investigation as an effective platform for the expression of their views.

The investigator has created an impression that he is interested in the experiences of the respondents and their opinions on certain issues related to Neo-Buddhist community. He has generated the sense of responsibility among the informants to ensure relevant information from them. Being the ‘insider’, the investigator could be benefited in two ways. Firstly, it has become very easy for him to establish rapport with the respondents. The elite have enthusiastically welcomed the investigator and revealed secret details of the issues incorporated in the interview schedules. Secondly, the respondents have refrain themselves from giving erroneous information about the issues that have been raised in the interview schedule.

Fifteen respondents in the present sample have changed their surnames associated with caste identity after the names of the villages of their origin. But they have expressed repentance over this sensitive act in informal discussion with them. This can be treated as a positive indication of rapport between the investigator and the respondents.

**Data Processing and Analysis**

All the 200 interview schedules are scrutinised and edited properly. In order to obtain quantitative indices of dimensions studied especially to obtain frequency counts of the responses to different questions we have resorted to coding. We have tried to identify categories of responses by the uses of codes so as to classify the responses into quantifiable categories. For this purpose code book has been prepared and data has been transferred to the code sheets. For further processing computer services available at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai have been utilised.

At this stage simple frequency distributions and cross tables are prepared. All variables are tested with elite group in variation of cross table are considered as
'dependent variables'. Although all "dependent variables" used in cross tabulation are not really speaking dependent variables such as sex, age, education, occupation, marital status etc. The dependent variables, in fact, are the ones which are presented in the chapter following the chapter on present social economic status of the respondent for instance, life style, role, status etc. No correlations have been sought to work out. Only simple percentage has been worked out which probably may point out trend or direction of a particular phenomenon under this study. Wherever possible graphs are prepared to present data and the statistical tests known as chi-square test is used to test the significance of difference between the five elite group. Thus information is categorised through codification, tabulation and statistical inferences have been drawn. The investigator has explained his findings on the basis of theories of reference group, relative deprivation, alienation, elitism etc. The discussion in the chapters is based on data collected through certain fact finding questions incorporated in the interview schedules, as well as, through the discussions with the respondents and participant observation.

**Sources of Data**

The main focus of our study is on the analysis of the role-activities, status identity and mobility of the Neo-Buddhist elite of Marathwada. For this, data and information have been gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The whole study is based on first hand information in the field collected with the help of pre-tested interview schedule, informal discussions and participant observation.

The secondary sources of information include, besides the books, Annual Reports of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission, Census Reports of India, Case Studies, Self-narratives, Journals and Magazines, Daily news papers of national standing and regional news papers.
Chapter Scheme

The whole work has been presented in nine chapters. Each chapter deals with relevant sub themes of the issue.

The First Chapter which is mainly introductory deals with the socio-economic condition of the untouchables during the Nizam rule and Post-Independence period. It presents historical overview of the works undertaken by different organisations for the elevation of status of untouchables. It deals with religious conversions, uniqueness and impact of Buddhist conversion, role of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and finally takes a brief resume of the earlier scheduled caste elite studies.

Chapter Two is entirely devoted to research methodology. It highlights the objectives, research design universe, sampling, mode of selection of the respondents, tools used, data collection, data processing and analysis, sources of data and significance of study.

Chapter Three draws background information and data about present socio-economic status of respondents, which provides the basis on which conclusions can be reached. It throws light on the profile of the respondents and demographic features such as age, gender, education, occupation, class of post and monthly income etc. It also describes their parental background.

Chapter Four deals with Respondents’ life style as a Buddhist, internalisation of Buddhism, perception of the Buddha, Dhamma and Dr. Ambedkar, belief in magic, superstition and modernity, changes in pilgrimage centres and festivals, frequency of recitation of Buddhist prayer, mode of salutation, observance of twenty-two vows. An attempt has been made to explain the process of ambedkarisation which provides functional substitute to sanskritisation & leads to status enhancement. It will add new insights into our study.
Chapter Five confines to the comparative analysis of intergenerational mobility in the field of education, occupation, place of work and monthly income. We have endeavoured to measure mobility among the three generation viz. grandfather, father and respondent. The chapter concludes that the respondents have achieved educational, occupational and spatial mobility, but there is a fluctuation in income mobility.

Chapter Six concentrates on status-identity, role-activities, occupational deprivation, role-strain, role-anxiety, mechanism of releasing role-tension. It deals with comparison between traditional role and present role-activities and further changes in role-activities.

Chapter Seven is a systematic analysis of different crucial dilemmas confronted by the respondents. It examines the dilemmas related to residential accommodation, preference to locality, selection of life-partner, preference to individual family, gender discrimination in giving higher education, sharing of ancestral property, undertaking of responsibility of livelihood in old age, political mobilisation, religious dilemma and reservation dilemma.

Chapter Eight examines mainly, interaction pattern, involvement and alienation. It analyses mode of interaction between the respondents and their friends, housemaids, neighbours, upper caste acquaintances, other elite and masses. It also explains organisational linkage, position of respondents in organisational structure, mode of working for organisation, participation in general as well as Buddhist movements, mode of participation in the movements, nature of loss caused to the respondent, nature of relations with parents, brothers and sisters, village kinsmen, pattern of casting vote in general election and unattachment with community.

Finally Chapter Nine sums up conclusions leading to broader generalisation followed by certain suggestions and further areas of research.
In each chapter, a set of tables, has been discussed and inferences have been drawn accordingly.

**Importance of the Study**

The Indian society is characterised by the stratification with hereditary inequalities, discrimination and pollution. The idea of pollution has kept a large section of the society in the state of economic and social sub-ordination. For a long time, the untouchables have been regarded as exterior castes or the depressed classes deprived of education. On the other hand, in the traditional Hindu caste system the possession of education and teaching was reserved for the Brahmins alone. All scholarship was confined to the Brahmins. The Brahmins not only made education their monopoly but debarred acquisition of education by the lower castes as a crime punishable by cutting off their tongue or by the pouering of molten lead in the ears of the offender. Because the lower castes were considered ‘chandals’ and unfit and unworthy of receiving education. There are scarce evidences of literate individuals among lower castes. No one could complete even the level of graduate course of formal education up to the year 1917. This position can be noticed from the witness presented by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to the South Borough Franchise Committee. He explained to the committee that “there was among the Depressed classes of Bombay state, one B.A. (himself), six or seven matriculates and about twenty-five men who had passed the sixth or seventh standard.”

The Depressed Classes have to wait for a long time to seek education in primary schools. In 1852 Mahatma Jotirao Phule founded the first primary school in Bhokarwadi (Nanapeth, Pune) for the boys of ‘Mahars’ and ‘Mangs’. In the princely state of Hyderabad, it was only during the rule of seventh Nizam (1911-1947) that primary schools, at district level were opened for the untouchables. By 1930, the number of untouchables in the schools was high up to the extent that there were 50 matriculates and 24 graduates from Mahars, 2 matriculates and 11 graduates among chambhars and 5 matriculates and 2 graduates among Mangs.
The literacy rate of Mahars from 2.9 per cent in 1930 has increased to 35.12 per cent in 1941.¹⁴ Lee Rainwater has argued that “a large portion of lower class population is intellectually impaired.”¹⁵ The intellectual elite group among the scheduled castes could not emerge for many reasons. Isaacs H.R. observed that “the Intellectuals, Journalists, Professionals, Lawyers, Doctors could be counted in tens and twenties only in whole of state.”¹⁶ “In the world of business and professions there is still, by all accounts, only the tiniest trickle of ex-untouchables.”¹⁷ The required background for development of merit and scholarship was absent at the home for scheduled castes. “Because of ignorance, poverty and socio-economic degradation, the inside atmosphere was not conducive for the emergence and recruitment of elite among the Neo-Buddhist, the ex-untouchable group. No comparable visibility has been achieved by the ex-untouchables in the academic profession, there are no 'Harijan' intellectual.”¹⁸ The situation in Marathwada was not different from the Bombay presidency. The scheduled castes had neither adequate representation in Government nor proper opportunities for education. V.P. Menon observed in this connection that “The civil services, the police and the army were the close preserves of the Muslims.”¹⁹ However during the last three and half decades, the situation has changed with rapid speed. Economic opportunity, administrative patronage and positions of power offered, new institution and the new leadership drew up the articulate sections of society into modernist network. This has prompted emergence of a class of elite. The prominent intellectuals among the Neo-Buddhist whose theoretical and philosophical works are widely appreciated by their non-scheduled castes counter induce M.N. Wankhede, Gangadhar Pantawne, S.G. Suradkar, Shankarrao Kharat, Raosaheb Kasbe, Vasant Moon, Raja Dhale, Bhau Lokhande, Ratnakar Ganvir, Tarachandra Khandekar, Jyoti Lanjewar and so on. These intellectuals have nullified the assumption of edward shills, that there are no intellectuals worth name among scheduled castes. (Parvathamma, C., 1989: 141.).
Untouchability is a complex social and cultural phenomenon. The constitution of India has abolished the practice of untouchability. However it could not be uprooted from the different fields of life. On the other hand it has changed its manifestation which necessitates more sophisticated measures for its eradication. It is believed that untouchability can not be eradicated without the change of attitudes of the caste Hindus and the untouchables themselves. With Mass awakening & educating both the groups may yield fruitful results. India, after her Independence, has embarked upon a profound reordering of her social structure by eliminating the disabilities and all forms of discrimination against the untouchables. Here, the elite, as a change promoter, can play crucial role in the upliftment of their depressed and downtrodden brethren. They can contribute their vision and knowledge for the establishment of new social order based on the supreme value of equality, fraternity and liberty. The Neo-Buddhist elite are comparatively more enlightened and better equipped to perceive the social change. They can also better articulate their feelings and formulate their views, aspirations, attitudes towards the social change. They have the potentials to accelerate and direct the social change and modernise their community. They can consolidate their community and strengthen the social integration.

The amelioration of the conditions of the ex-untouchables has posed a great challenge before the thinkers and the activists. In most villages, they have to suffer manifold problems. This disadvantaged group is still ignorant of the welfare policies and schemes and hence they are deprived of the benefits of protective discriminatory policy. There is a wider gap between the government agencies and the deprived groups, which are scattered over various parts of the state. The Neo-Buddhist elite who are well equipped with the knowledge of government welfare policies and modern information and technology can communicate this up-to-date information to the poor and ignorant villagers and urban dwellers, who are at below poverty line. Consequently, they can utilise the facilities afforded by the
government agencies and strive to elevate their status. They can represent the grievances and problems and secure justice for the deprived and weaker sections of the society.

The new economic policy, globalisation, privatisation and policy of disinvestment will worsen the present socio-economic status of common masses. The representation in education and job to scheduled castes / scheduled tribes and weaker sections of the society would be meaningless and the present beneficiaries will be deprived of any sort of protection provided by the government. The sense of social justice will be evaporated. The Neo-Buddhist elite can save them from further deterioration.

The religiosity in the recent period has become the most sensitive and riot-provoking issue. The Neo-Buddhist elite can promote religious and social tolerance and inculcate scientific temper and modernity in the common masses, who are always crucified in all massive riots. Thus social order and social integration can be re-established, through himalayan attempts of these elite.

The glory and prosperity of any segment of society is measured by the number of intellectuals produced by it. Historical survey indicates that the Buddhists have fostered a tradition of intellectuals who have enhanced the status of the common masses and carried them towards progress. Secondly, the mobility of few Neo-Buddhist elite has a ‘demonstrative effect’ on all other members of deprived groups. The latter gets an indication that they can also move up towards higher status if they endeavour hard enough. The survey of relevant literature has pointed out the necessity of locating these elite among the Neo-Buddhist Community, who are performing different role-activities aimed at social transformation. To probe this new phenomenon and with a view to study role, status and mobility of the Neo-Buddhist elite, the present work has been undertaken.
This study will provide insights into the role-activities, status and mobility of the elite. It will be a rich addition to the studies of sub-altern group which remain less researched in the sociological literature.

Limitations

Certain limitations of this study need to be specified here. The respondents, constituents of our sample, are exclusively the Neo-Buddhist elite in the urban setting. They differ greatly from those Neo-Buddhist elite in the rural area. They are insulted, persecuted, exploited and sometimes their properties are set to fire for petty reasons (The Marathwada Riots : 1978). However they identify themselves as a Neo-Buddhists and struggle hard to elevate their socio-economic status. They work for the development and modernisation of Neo-Buddhist masses and people from lower strata of the society. The conclusions of this study or the observation made here would not be necessarily valid for the rural Neo-Buddhist elite.

This study of mobility is limited to the respondents, their grandfathers and fathers alone. it has not covered the sons of the respondents, who are important components of intra-generational mobility. Thus the scope of present enquiry is restricted.

We are constrained to exclude rural Neo-Buddhist elite, Dalit women elite and military elite from our investigation. These areas remained untouched and could be further investigated.

The comparative study of mobility among the newly converted Buddhists, Christians and Muslims from the lower castes will throw light on the new dimensions of social mobility. Hence it is suggested for further empirical probe.

Our study is also limited up to educated employees of new middle class and have not taken into consideration the views and perceptions of common Neo-Buddhist masses and the representatives of caste Hindus. The findings can not be overstretched to be applicable to these segments.
REFERENCES


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