SYNOPSIS
SYNOPSIS

of Ph. D. Thesis of

Balasaheb Ramchandra Salve

Submitted to

University of Mumbai

For the Degree of

Ph. D. in Philosophy

Guided by

Dr. Kanchana Mahadevan

Department of Philosophy

University of Mumbai

Kalina Campus, Vidyanagari, Santacruz (East),

Mumbai – 400 098.

30th April, 2015
Synopsis of the Thesis
To be submitted to
University of Mumbai
For the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Philosophy)

Name of the candidate : Salve Balasaheb Ramchandra

Title of the Thesis : Buddhism, Human Dignity and
World Peace: A Philosophical Study
of Ambedkar’s Contribution

Degree for which the
Synopsis is presented : Ph. D. (Philosophy) Arts

Name of the Guide : Dr. Kanchana Mahadevan
Designation : Professor and Head
Department of Philosophy,
University of Mumbai,
Kalina Campus, Mumbai

Registration No. : 39
Date of Registration : 28 / 12 /2011

Signature of the Candidate :

Signature of the Guide :

Date of Submission :
Place of Research Work : Department of Philosophy,
University of Mumbai,
Kalina Campus, Mumbai
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Objectives and Scope</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Description of the Research Work: Chapterisation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Research Conclusions</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Selected Bibliography</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has made a deep impact on theory and practice on diverse disciplines such as history, sociology, jurisprudence, economics and philosophy to name a few. His commitment to the removal of caste, class and gender oppression through reclaiming of human dignity for the oppressed is reflected in his academic work in an explicit way. He proposed a new social order- a modern Indian one- based on the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. Ambedkar questioned obsolete, semi-feudal and inhuman practices that humiliated people in the name of caste and gender, which were a part of a tradition causing social (and thereby political) disenfranchisement. He urged the oppressed sections of society to ‘educate, unite and agitate’ against hierarchical social practices that thrived in the name of tradition. His critical approach to tradition questioned inegalitarian philosophies and retrieved egalitarian ones. Ambedkar found inequality to be tyrannically embodied in Hinduism in the form of an oppressive caste system. Ambedkar questioned the distinction made between varna and jati (by those such as Gandhi) as a covert justification for an unjustifiable phenomenon called caste. He argued against the equation between division of labour (varna) and caste as the refusal for social change. Ambedkar concludes in his ‘Annihilation of Caste’ that “So long as we remain in a religion, which
teaches a man to treat another man like a leper, the sense of discrimination on account of caste, which is deeply rooted in our minds, cannot go. For annihilating caste and untouchables, change of religion is the only antidote.”

Questioning the central idea of the varna-based Hindu philosophy that birth determines social, psychological and in turn, political identity, Ambedkar advocated conversion as an integral in the move towards an egalitarian society. After spending a lifetime in a crusade against the oppressive Hinduism, Ambedkar finally renounced Hinduism- since he did not want to die a Hindu, although he was born one. He converted to Buddhism and exhorted his followers to do the same. He, thus, repudiated the casteist aspects of Hinduism as philosophy and religion to defend and reconstruct Buddhism from a modern Indian point of view. All of this go to show that Ambedkar was working towards cultural transformation, alongside economic measures in his endeavour to bring about social justice. The latter for Ambedkar is a precondition for political justice.

Ambedkar's decision to convert to Buddhism in the evening of his life - just a couple of months before his demise on 16 December 1956 - only underscored his feeling of disgust and bitterness with the highly iniquitous Hinduism. About 2 lakh dalits converted to Buddhism along
with him in October 1956. This phenomenal exodus was the highest watershed of its own kind in human history. Since then neo-Buddhism has become a key religious approach in India and abroad.

Ambedkar’s conversion to Buddhism was a symbolic protest to the oppressions of caste inequality. His conversion was a rational decision based on the need for transforming Indian society into an egalitarian and tolerant one. As a crusader for social justice and human rights, Ambedkar saw the role of human dignity in the quest for social justice. Buddhism for him was a way to the acquisition of human dignity. Thus, his conversion to Buddhism is linked to his articulation of the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy as the architect of the Indian Constitution. The fundamental Rights provide for freedom, equality. Hence the abolition of untouchability and conversion to Buddhism enforce rights.

There is a need to examine the philosophical aspects of Ambedkar’s analysis, examination, critique and reconstruction of religion in his contemporary account of Buddhism. Philosophy cannot be restricted to metaphysics alone. It is also the critical analysis of popular and scientific concepts and discovery of their relations to one another. It is a rational attempt to integrate scientific knowledge as well as interpret and unify human experience. Therefore the philosophers make sincere
efforts to speculate the facts and try to hypothetically co-relate them to human existence. Philosophers, like scientists, formulate hypotheses which ultimately must answer to reason and evidence. But philosophers go beyond scientists in investigating the validity of facts, rather than just state them. They do so in the light of reason and the dignity of human life. It is in this sense that Ambedkar is a philosopher. He examined society, politics, religion, law, economics and so forth in a critical way. His range of interests is wide just like his mentor, the philosopher John Dewey. However, in this research the focus will be on Ambedkar as a philosopher with reference to his views on religion. There have been scant treatments of Ambedkar as a philosopher. However, such a treatment is the need of hour. For his philosophical contribution has an abiding significance.

The proposed research will make an attempt to study Buddhist philosophy from Ambedkar’s socio-political and religious perspective. Ambedkar turned to Buddhism because the Buddha expounded harmony and egalitarianism for the first time in the history of humankind. He raised his voice against separatism and untouchability. He established a classless society by opening the gateway of the Sangha to all deserving folks, making no discrimination between caste, gender and class. Thus, the fundamental principle of Buddhism is equality. From Ambedkar’s
point of view Buddhism becomes central to engaging in a social criticism of the malaise of caste in Indian society. The concepts of respect, self-worth and dignity are crucial to Ambedkar’s account of a contemporary Buddhism, which endeavours to be in tune with the ideals of modern Indian nation-hood. Besides the Buddhist approach to religion and culture encourages pluralism and harmony, which Ambedkar saw as the need of the hour in Indian society plagued by religious dogmatism and a world confronting conflict.

**Literature Review**

The primary sources that will be studied include the works of Ambedkar like *Buddha and His Dhamma, Annihilation of Caste* and his various Writings and Speeches among others. The secondary sources on his works confine largely to critical books, anthologies, articles, reviews, interviews and internet resources.

There is a dearth of philosophical studies on Ambedkar. Christopher Jafferlot’s *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Analyzing and Fighting Caste*, Meera Nanda’s *Breaking the Spell of Dharma and Other Essays*, Gail Omvedt’s *Buddhism in India: Challenging Brahmanism and Caste* are all important works. But they do not engage with Ambedkar as a philosopher. The INFLIBNET database and AIU’s
University News reflects some of the research works on Dr Ambedkar carried out in the Indian universities from various disciplines as follows:

1. "Philosophy Of Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R.Ambedkar And Its Relevance To Present Day A Study Of Social Economic And Political Aspects",
   
   Researcher: Vijaya Kumar, Bandi, Guide: Syed, A J,
   
   Department: Waltair. Andhra University. Department of Philosophy And Religious Studies, 1994

2. Gandhi Evam Ambedkar Ka Samaj Darshan: Ek Tulnatmak Adhyayan

   Researcher: Yadav, Suresh Singh

   Guide: Syed, A J


3. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar An Emancipator Of Indian Working Class

   Researcher: Narnaware, Ramchandra V

   Guide: Shamkuwar, M R

   Department: Nagpur. Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University. Department of Ambedkar Thought
4. Dr B R Ambedkar's Philosophy Of Industrial Relations Labour Protection And Welfare

Researcher: Gajbhiye, Bhimrao Govinda

Guide: Shamkuwar, M R

Department: Nagpur. Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University. Department of Ambedkar Thought

The above studies are important, but they do not engage with Ambedkar as a philosopher.

Amongst the philosophical studies on Ambedkar, the work edited by Pradeep Gokhale entitled The Philosophy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Dinkar Khabde’s Dr. Ambedkar and Western Thinkers are relevant. However, in these works too, Ambedkar’s philosophy of religion and its relationship to the concepts of dignity and world peace are not explored adequately. This thesis aims at exploring this relationship in considerable detail.

Motivation

The proposed research project is motivated by the revival of Buddhism in India as a religion, philosophy and way of life. The ability to theorize and derive knowledge by a process of reasoning was central to Ambedkar’s philosophical approach. It was needed to channelize the...
new converts into a proper Dhamma and to guide them in regard to the philosophy of Buddha. To show the new path of social equality, unity and oneness, he prepared to embrace Buddhism as it accepts all people into its fold. And as such, he felt a need to present to his followers to Buddhism in the new and modern form. The study is motivated by the need to show Ambedkar’s philosophy of religion as standing the test of modern time.

**Objectives and Scope**

The primary objective of the proposed research work is to make a philosophical study of Ambedkar’s discourse on Buddhism. The aim of the research is also to bring forth the contribution of Dr. Ambedkar to the upliftment of the downtrodden through non-violent Buddhist philosophy and evaluating his appeal to restore the human dignity. Its objective is also to show how Philosophy is an expression, perhaps the ultimate expression, of human freedom as Ambedkar and John Dewey believed. Ambedkar wanted a noble, religious life and freedom for his followers. Therefore he questioned the origin, the growth and development of the caste system in Hinduism, He also believed that religion can be founded on a scientific basis by shaking ourselves free from all assumptions and preconceived ideas.
Thus, the goals of this research work may be broadly stated as follows:

1. To present Dr Ambedkar’s thoughts on religion and social justice in a systematic manner following a philosophical classification of his views.

2. To pinpoint the problems with which he has been concerned with.

3. To state the answer given by him to this problems as clearly as possible.


5. Assess the criticisms against Dr Ambedkar’s

6. Place and relevance of Dr Ambedkar’s philosophy in comparison with some predominant philosophers.

This research work is a monograph that attempts to achieve the above academic objectives through a philosophical book length study of Ambedkar. It is thus a contribution to the field of Ambedkar studies and philosophy. This research will be relevant to teachers and students in both philosophy (philosophy of religion and socio-political philosophy)
and social sciences (political science, sociology and history). This contribution is unique because there has been no book length philosophical study of Ambedkar so far. Yet such a study is the need of the hour.

The proposed research study touches upon a variety of philosophical concerns of Dr. Ambedkar. The study also throws light on the philosophical dimensions of both Buddhism and Dr Ambedkar’s thoughts. The study will help to understand religion and philosophy as inseparable part of human life to restore human dignity. The researcher is aware that religion and philosophy are interrelated can also be read from the perspectives of philosophical theories. However, the diversity of these approaches and theories do not come under the purview of the proposed research, as this research work is not a comparative study of Ambedkar’s religion and philosophy. Rather it aims at showing the relation between Ambedkar’s philosophy of religion, human dignity and global peace. It also aims at showing how his approach to religion can be the source of religious harmony.

**Methodology**

The method of research will be that of textual study of the primary sources by Ambedkar on philosophy and religion. It will also take into
account- indirectly- how his empirical findings on caste inequality impacted his theoretical vision. But the focus will be on texts, rather than empirical data as this is a philosophical research work. This work takes the notion of caste as an analytical tool, to examine its role in understanding and critiquing religion. It also explores the relationship between caste, dignity, social justice and peace.

The research methodology followed in this thesis is one of critical examination, analysis, interpretation and normative reconstruction. The methodological tools that are used in the research are drawn from theories of philosophy. The latter – in particular the works of Kant and Dewey- are brought in to interpret and analyse Ambedkar’s point of view. There is interpretation of cross-references in the course of connecting Ambedkar’s work to primary sources and secondary ones. The basic design of the research will be that of statement and illustration and subsequently the research will also use the design of checking the compatibility of philosophical theories with the literature under research. The method of critique and interpretation is followed. Besides this there will be a reconstruction of philosophical arguments. Thus, the method will largely be textual since this is a work on philosophy. However, the findings of social sciences- particularly on caste- will be taken as a point of reference.
Description of the Research Work: Chapterisation

This thesis has six chapters (including conclusion) as follows:

**Chapter 1**-titled “*Introduction*” introduces the reader to the research problem, motivation and methodology. It also discusses the history of caste in India with particular reference to the problem of social and political discrimination on the ground of religion in 19th and 20th century. The chapter draws heavily on the efforts put by the reformers that preceded Ambedkar. Ambedkar “Silent Revolution” of conversion is introduced herewith. This phenomenal exodus followed as the last resort when the rigidity and conformity of Hinduism could not deign to accord a due dignity to fellow human beings. The chapter elaborates on Ambedkar’s resistance to conventional ‘Jati’ tradition. The chapter provides the salient features of religion in general and categorises religious movements as ‘reformist’ and ‘revivalist’. It is also contended that religious reform should precede the social reform since religion enjoys utmost importance in India. The chapter takes the stock of some early reformers who tries to rid Hinduism of its ills. It also elaborates about the efforts made to incept a subversive move by forming an alternative religion. The chapter details about the work of Mahatma Phule who is known to be a mentor to Ambedkar. The concept of neo-
hinduism as envisioned by Swami Vivekanand is also elaborated in this chapter along with the initiatives taken by some non-Indian philosophers who valorised Buddhism as a wisdom of the east. The chapter states at length about the Gandhian Hindu reform that still holds great interest among current academic and philosophical circles. This follows the religious philosopher from south Indian peninsula. They revolted against Brahmin ascendancy and campaigned for the mitigation of the rigours of caste. Even though their reform movements met with strong opposition from the caste Hindus, they did not flinch back from awakening the people against the social evils. Their active propaganda bore fruit in South India.

Chapter 2 titled ‘Ambedkar’s Critique of Hinduism’ examines Ambedkar’s critique of attempts to reform Hinduism. It shows how these attempts fail to address the basic problem of caste prejudice. For according to Ambedkar, Hinduism institutionalizes caste hierarchy. Hence his argument in Riddle of Hinduism instead of reforming it needs to be rejected. The chapter shows how Ambedkar being a rationalist thinker questioned the traditional social order of the Hindu society in order to build a just and egalitarian society. His ideas, ideals and philosophy revolved around the welfare of humans to be achieved through social and political means is the crux of his critique of
Hinduism. He fought against social and political injustices throughout his life and could emerge successful to a considerable extent. His struggle was to consolidate Dalits and to make them aware that they too are human beings and have the right to lead a happy life in society. The chapter details on Ambedkar’s concept of caste and Hinduism.

The chapter also tells at length about Hindu society in which caste is still the most powerful factor in determining the person’s dignity. The caste system is the result of the Hindu belief in reincarnation and karma. The four castes eventually developed into a social mosaic of 3000 sub castes, with the Untouchables at the bottom of the list or more precisely outside the list. The birth decides one’s status and this cannot be altered irrespective of any talent that a person may develop or wealth a person may accumulate. Similarly, the caste in which a person is born predetermines what vocation the person will pursue. One has no choice. Birth decides the occupation of the person in question. Here are the four-major castes:

The chapter states about the futility of the old gimmick of the division of labour which is often attributed to the prevalence of caste. But in actual practice, this original principle of division of labor based on talent and inclination did not sustain itself long, so much so that even the most ignorant, fallen Brahmin continued to be regarded as someone
next to god. Whereas a man from the lowest class, however high his qualifications, was condemned as a degraded person. Thus in practice, the social behaviour pattern tended towards caste behaviour, based on supremacy of one class over the other, which amounted to a denial of what had brought the Hindu social ideal into existence. The practice of the caste system and untouchability was the corner stone of the Hindu society. Brahmins considered themselves superior to other sections of the people. Hence, they enjoyed all privilege in society. Manu declared that the Brahmin is the Lord of all Varnas because of his superiority of birth and observation of rituals and sacraments. They themselves behaved as if they were the veritable gods on earth. The chapter analyses the afore cited viewpoint.

The chapter continues to discuss the social standing of Brahmins, Shudras and Dalits in the Hindu World. It presents Ambedkar’s views on Shudras, Untouchability, Dalits in Hindu society. The chapter also maps Ambedkar’s adversarial standpoint of the redundant things in Hinduism. The chapter states to argue that Ambedkar was always in search of a religion, which could really shoulder the responsibility for the betterment of the depressed classes. Buddhism was the best option for him. It was based on ethics and the Buddha acted as a guide and not as a God whereas Krishna said that he was the God of gods; Christ said
he was God’s son and Mohammed Paigamber said he was the last messenger of God. Except the Buddha, all founders of religion claimed for themselves the role of deliverer and claimed infallibility for themselves, while the Buddha was satisfied with the role of Guide. According to him, the religion of the Buddha was morality.

The chapter concludes to put that despite of the decades of struggle and conflict, the scheduled castes in India continue to face widespread discrimination and inhumane treatment from the Hindu society even today. Dr. Ambedkar was the genius one who fought for the true upliftment of these masses from the dark den of orthodox Hindu religious principles. In fact, he was one of the highly gifted and qualified Untouchables ever born in India.

There were some early attempts made for the upliftment of the Untouchables. Nevertheless, those selfless works were in vain because of the rigid and traditional Hindu social system. Ambedkar stood firmly in the midst of storms, and continuously thought of the Untouchables and fought for their equality and social freedom in the Indian society. For him, the Hindu society was nothing but a collection of castes, which is based on labourers than the labour.
Chapter 3 titled ‘Ambedkar’s Turn to Buddhism’ analyses Dr Ambedkar’s major work *Buddha and his Dhamma* from philosophical perspective. The chapter studies the substance and philosophy of the great work. As the work is divided into books, an attempt is made to study each chapter separately from philosophical point of view. How Ambedkar differs and conforms the early Buddhism is studied. He rejects Karma and nirvana. But he keeps Buddha’s social criticism alive. So, Ambedkar gives a new religion- he reconstructs Buddhism. The chapter begins with the eloquent quote of Dr Ambedkar on the edification of Buddhism and continues with his declaration: “I was born as a Hindu but I will not die as a Hindu, for, this is in my power”. The entire chapter has heavily drawn on Dr Ambedkar’s first book tilted ‘*Buddha and his Dhamma.*’

The chapter is a convincing appeal, rather a plea for the conversion to Buddhism. The initial contention is that the Buddhist literature is found in Pali or Prakrit language which can be understood by even a layman. It is also asserted that Buddhism is a correction of all lacunae that Hinduism is riddled with. In earlier enunciation Hinduism and Buddhism has a common mythology. Even Buddha is considered as incarnation of Lord Vishnu. But Buddhism espoused by Ambedkar is the different in terms of its linkage with Hinduism. He is said to purged
Buddhism of Hindu influence in this chapter. The chapter also talks about the life journey of Lord Buddha describing how he began as Siddharth Gautam and catapulted to become Gautam Buddha.

The chapter finds some important parallels between Buddhist evolution and the movement triggered by Ambedkar. Siddharth Gautam hated war and violence hence he relinquished state and embraced parivrajaka. Gautama’s desertion of kingdom can be linked to Ambedkar’s hatred towards Hinduism that inflicted humiliation and disrespect on his kinsmen. Siddhartha’s parivrajaka is corollary to Ambedkar’s espousal of Buddhism-the religion that epitomises peace and non-violence.

Siddharth thinks from the philosophical point of view about the root cause of sorrow and suffering and the real cause of his leaving his home and the solution offered by other old established philosophies. He could not settle the political disputes in the kingdom. Similarly Dr Ambedkar also could not lead all oppressed to the haven of Buddhism. When Ambedkar talks about the Karma and re-birth theory of Buddha, it is to be noted that he has modified, raised the questions about re-birth and soul, karma and rejected it while interpreting the karma theory. Buddha has denied the existence of the soul but he has simultaneously affirmed the doctrine of karma and rebirth Dr. Ambedkar has rejected.
the karma theory in Buddhism as it convinced people to accept the social caste system from Hindu religion.

The chapter asserts that Ambedkar’s has not dogmatically adhered to Buddhism but he has made many corrective and constructive modifications to it. The religion has been made more humane if not spiritual. The campaign for the conversion has put supreme insistence on enlightenment, seeking knowledge, overriding selfishness and observing righteousness. The chapter briefly tries to put that Buddha did not claim things pertaining to desire, rebirth, soul, life after death rather he cuddles the sorrow and suffering of the people living in misery and poverty. Unlike Christ who claimed to be the prophet of Christianity and Mohammad, the Prophet of Islam. Both were claimed to have been sent by God, Buddha has never made such condition and claimed to be the originator of Buddhism. Though his followers requested him to appoint a successor he always refused such type of requests and answered that, “The Dhamma must be its own successor”. Most of the prophets of all religions have promised salvation of the human soul. But, Buddha is the only one teacher who has not made any type of promise of salvation but he assures the guidance towards the same. This argument is the crux of the chapter. The chapter contains Ambedkar’s discussion about the fundamental concept of the Buddha’s Dhamma. His classification of
Dhamma while putting in his ideas of the Dhamma from philosophical and universal perspective he simultaneously writes about the Buddhas teaching and philosophical explanation of what is not Dhamma. The chapter also has the difference between religion and Dhamma in terms of nature and purpose. The concepts such as birth, rebirth, law of karma are also discussed in this chapter. Dr Ambedkar’s interpretation of the transmigration of the soul and Buddha’s sermon, 12 causes of the downfall of the man, concept of ‘Sangh’, ’Bhikku’ ‘Upasak’ are the integral notions in this chapter. Dr Ambedkar’s mild critique on the shortcomings of Buddhism too are given in this chapter.

Chapter 4 titled-‘Human Dignity and Cultural Identity’ focuses on the other works of Ambedkar and his philosophy of human dignity in it which is the core of Buddhist philosophy. These other works are reflections of humanity that has no bar of caste, class or privilege. Apart from this, the chapter makes a reassessment of some of the scholars and thinkers on Buddhism and Ambedkar’s philosophy. This chapter explores Ambedkar’s argument that social justice requires and egalitarian cultural identity. It examines the contribution of Western thinkers like Kant to the concept of respect and dignity. Hence, conversion to Buddhism is necessary. This chapter attempts to deal with the concepts of Human Dignity, Cultural Identity in the light of
Buddhism with reference to Ambedkar’s philosophy of Human Dignity the correlation between them. Human dignity is a key concern in any discussion of human rights. Humans are believed to be able to concretely sense and experience one’s own dignity. The recognition of the self leads to crucial understanding of human existence and by relating oneself to the other individuals in the given community, one acknowledges one’s own role and rights within the community. Human rights originate in the human dignity. Thus the chapter links human dignity with human rights and argues that human dignity is at the centre of Buddhism. In Buddhism, the basis of human dignity is our identity with the universal, cosmic life, and our capacity to awaken to the wisdom and compassion inherent in all life. It is the fundamental nature of life to evolve toward self-realization and self-perfection. Human dignity is doesn’t vary according to the capacities of individuals. It is essentially independent of such norms as the decision making or contributing ability of Individuals. It is argued that cultural identity is the identity imposed by the culture to which the given individual or group belongs on the individual or group. It reveals to an individual or groups and others what they are. It gives expression to our nature in our manner of living and of thinking, in art, religion, ethical aspirations, and knowledge. The chapter implies that Buddhism accords the cultural identity and human dignity.
Stating about Ambedkar’s philosophy, it is said that self-respect and human dignity were of paramount importance in a free republic. He espoused the noble cause of equality of status and opportunity to every Indian, assuring the dignity of the individual and unity of the nation. He was not merely a learned man, but also an intellectual who sacrificed his life for the dignity and uplift of the poorest of the poor of the world. His aim was not communal and not limited to personal benefit, but it was essentially social and human, related to all who suffered from slavery, injustice, tyranny and exploitation. His concept of social justice, which has been derived from ethical morality. The chapter includes Dr Ambedkar’s contention that Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of social democracy, which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life.

Chapter 5 titled ‘Relevance of Ambedkar’s Neo-Buddhism in the Context of World Peace’ shows how Ambedkar examined many aspects of philosophical, religious and social preachings of Buddha through his writings. He shows how Buddhism can free the society from the evils of non-morality and inequality and encourages the values of fellow-feelings and human dignity. Ambedkar’s Buddhism is relevant in today’s conflict ridden times. The chapter contains substantial information about Buddhism such as: three jewels of Buddhism, Four
Noble Truth, Noble eight fold path, and the basic precepts in Buddhism. The chapter also takes a stride at redefining Buddhism and heralds the revisiting the already incepted neo-Buddhism. The chapter argues that the foundations of Buddhist tradition and practice are the Three Jewels: the Buddha, the Dharma: the teachings, and the Sangha: the community. Adherence to these three jewels distinguishes a Buddhist from a non-Buddhist. The Four Noble Truths, which provide a conceptual framework for Buddhist thought, are regarded as central to the teachings of Buddhism. The Noble Eightfold Path which is believed to cause complete cessation of dukkha are the eight interconnected factors or conditions. These eight factors are: Right View (or Right Understanding), Right Intention (or Right Thought), Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. Buddhism lays down the five precepts or the Śīlas which is usually translated into English as "virtuous behavior", "morality", "ethics" or "precept". It is an action committed through the body, speech, or mind, and involves an intentional effort. It indicates to moral purity of thought, word, and deed. The four conditions of śīla are chastity, calmness, quiet, and extinguishment.

Ambedkar was inclined to a religion with human face and precepts, a religion based undeniable logic and reasoning, a religion
deducted from human experiences, the most appropriate elixir available at the given time in the history. In his *Buddha and his Dhamma*, Dr. Ambedkar analysed Buddhism and tried to concretise it in order to make it fluid, reliable and acceptable. His analysis of Buddhism later on came to be criticised as "Ambedkar and his Dhamma" and ironically he became victim of religious fanaticism of the radical Buddhists. Dr. Ambedkar's death after his conversion to Buddhism somewhat hindered the Buddhist movement. The movement did not get the expected immediate mass support from the Untouchable population. The Neo Buddhist movement faced an additional obstacle in the form of division and lack of direction among its leaders.

The chapter tries to find enunciate the role of neo-buddhism in the current social issues and paradigms such as terrorism, Bahujan Samaj, social transformation, poverty alleviation, globalization, communal harmony and peace. It examines the role of Ambedkar’s Buddhism in the larger canvas of world peace.

**Sixth Chapter** titled “Conclusion” draws implications and findings based on the data and analyses given in the previous chapters. It would also show how Ambedkar examined many aspects of philosophical, religious and social preachings of Buddha through his writings. He
shows how Buddhism can free the society from the evils of non-morality and inequality and encourages the values of fellow-feelings and human dignity. Ambedkar’s Buddhism is relevant in the contemporary challenge of religious conflict and the loss of world peace. The chapter details about how Buddhism has played a pivotal role in according mankind a best-deserved dignity; and how it has initiated a Herculean task of establishing world peace. What Dr. Ambedkar thought of Buddha’s Dhamma is a true religion, which could be able in all respects to reconstruct not only the Indian society but the society at large in the world also wherein human dignity will be protected and the world peace honoured. It is thus from this point of view Dr. Ambedkar looked upon religion and adopted his own way to approach the Buddhist religion, wherein human dignity and values will be gracefully preserved.

Ambedkar experienced material suffering and intellectual agony of the horrific practice of untouchability. After a careful and deep consideration he believed that religious conversion was essential to rouse the rational consciousness of the oppressed castes. Thus, he found refuge in the Buddha’s Dhamma as a real remedy for the ills of the caste system. In Buddhism, he found equality, liberty, fraternity and a ray of hope and light for all the communities. Ambedkar’s philosophy was that self-respect and human dignity were of paramount importance in a free
republic. Culture in Buddhism implies "regular observance of the Five Precepts, positively and negatively, we gradually reduce our greed and hatred. The issues of social justice is affected various developmental policy as well as whole development of social welfare programme. Ambedkar's perspective of social justice is based on social democracy which consists of three concept of justice namely liberty, equality and fraternity. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism brought great revolutionary social change to remove the evils non-morality from the society of inequality and to preserve human dignity in the light of neo-Buddhism. Ambedkar was the visionary who realised this potential of the ancient Indian religion and used it to free millions of depressed people from the wretched perpetual slavery of generations. He was the real hero of Indian freedom struggle who understood the real meaning of freedom and tried to extend it to the people who really and desperately needed it.

The chapter sums up and ties all loose ends of the philosophical arguments initiated in all five chapters. It not only proves the hypothesis but also gives the direction and insight to future researchers to do research in this area.
Research Conclusions

This research work defends Ambedkar as a philosopher. In contrast to all other scholars of Buddhist literature who gave more importance to the religious, socio-political aspects, Ambedkar emphatically put forward its philosophical importance. Attempts have been made to evaluate the cross references and critical approaches of other philosophers and critics on the philosophy of Buddha and Ambedkar in the course of writing this research work.

This research work concludes that Ambedkar’s Buddhism emerges from the quest for social justice. It is a struggle towards human dignity. However, it also proves that for Ambedkar Buddhism is relevant wherever there is discrimination. Hence, Ambedkar Buddhism is helpful in the critique of prejudices based on class and gender as well. Further, Ambedkar’s reconstruction of Buddhism is also against religious fundamentalism given his critique of religious dogmatism and commitment to pluralism. Hence, this thesis also maintains that Ambedkar Buddhism is a step towards world peace during these troubled times of communal disharmony.

This study focuses on the link between Ambedkar’s Buddhist philosophy and the ideals of modern nation-hood. Ambedkar had the
mission was a practical contribution to humanistic Buddhist education in India. Though he was not a Buddhist by birth but by practice and at heart he was a Buddhist. Dr Ambedkar also connected the notion of human dignity with the cultural identity of Buddhism. Buddha, whose life and movement Ambedkar had studied, was a believer of the creativity and morality of the people. Under the influence of those teachings, the most rejected people of India had once risen and uplifted their life as well as that of the whole society. Ambedkar critiqued mainstream Buddhism and reconstructed it with a contemporary perspective.

This research demonstrates that Ambedkar, a man of provocative learning, challenged opponents of Buddhism to hold discussions with him, and was confident of defending it against their irrelevant criticisms and charlatanism. He carefully examined the world’s major religions as well as Communism, eventually concluding that only Buddhism was fully in accordance with his most valued principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. The Buddha’s emphasis on ethics, loving kindness, altruism, rationality, and individual responsibility appealed to him. Through Buddhism Dr. Ambedkar saw the possibility of a peaceful social revolution based on the principles of equality and dignity.
Index (Select)


Bibliography (Select)


Bombay, 1974.


Mahadevan, Kanchana. 2008 “Conversion, Recognition and Pluralism: Dr. Ambedkar’s Democratic Buddhism” in Dr. Ambedkar’s Philosophy Ed. Prof. Gokhale Pune: Dept of Philosophy, Pune University 2008

Moon, Vasant Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Vol.13, Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai, 1987
Queen, Christopher 1998 “A Fourth Turning of the Wheel?”

Ramendra, Dr.2000. “Why Dr. Ambedkar renounced Buddhism?”

Sartre, Jean Paul.(1956) 1966 Being and Nothingness New York: Pocket Books
