

# Modern India and the Buddhist Tradition: A Critical Exploration

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## **Abstract:**

Not only for its spiritual sublimity but also as a socio-political system that championed equity and egalitarianism, the teachings of Lord Buddha have had a lasting impact on the standards of Indian civilisation and found practitioners abroad. Terrorism and other violent means of expression, such as forced displacement and political battles, are on the rise at a time when the world is increasingly divided along communal lines, highlighting the need for a return to Buddha's teachings to discover not only peaceful means of resolving these issues but also ways to cultivate peace on a global scale. "The paper Modern India and the Buddhist Tradition:A Critical Exploration" emphasises a deeper understanding of Buddha's life, teachings, and dhamma for developing a peaceful and stable world political order. In the violence-ridden society of today's time, returning to Buddha's ideals and ideas are a must to ensure a sustainable future.

## **Keywords:**

an Ambedkar, Contemporary India, Dhamma, Gandhi, Indian Civilization, Lord Buddha It is generally agreed that humans are egocentric and prioritise their happiness over others. The end of our planet is near if people put their needs ahead of those of their neighbours and country. The root cause of all wars and conflicts is people protecting their interests at the expense of their neighbours. Several wars and acts of terrorism and violence have been spurred by racial, sexual, economic, and religious intolerance that tarnished the twentieth century. The international community is at a loss as to how to safeguard humanity from future acts of terror in the face of this level of savagery, whether on the part of individuals or governments. In this environment, it is simple to lose sight of the great philosophical treatise that has always emphasised the importance of world peace. Lord Buddha and his teachings can prevent the impending global disaster in innumerable ways. This research looks at how the Scanned with OKEN Scanner teachings of the Buddha could contribute to a peaceful and stable international system. It is commonly believed that the study of International Relations is responsible for creating and maintaining a stable political system on a global scale. However, the study of international relations can be approached from various viewpoints, including Indian philosophy. Buddhism's tenets are particularly applicable in this situation. The religious revolution in India can be traced back to the time of Lord Buddha, who began his teachings around 600 B.C. In response to the casteist violence of the in the late Vedic period, Buddhist thought gained influence in India. The Kshatriya Kings were interested in Buddha's teachings and eventually abandoned their violent ways.

Ashoka, King of India, is commonly believed to be a devout Buddhist. He implemented Buddhist ideals into his system of government. His existence was dedicated to spreading the faith and uniting people worldwide in peace. Good and evil, in Buddhist thinking, are relative to the individual's wisdom and character. A fundamental tenet of Buddhist philosophy is a commitment to ethical behaviour. Mastery of one's own emotions and biases through moral practice is central to Buddhist ethics. Buddha emphasised the need to develop virtue and wisdom in his teachings, arguing that they complement one another. Virtue, the fruit of a man's disciplined and educated efforts to reform his heart, is how he can attain Salvation on Earth. To help people feel better, Buddha created his religion. The middle path is the one that allows you to experience the most happiness with the least amount of difficulty. Following Buddha's middle route is the only way to create a harmonious society and environment, as well as an ethical pact between individuals and the collective. Buddha advised Bodhisattvas to follow the ten paramitas, or ethical practices, daily. By meeting these ten conditions, the Bodhisattva can become a Buddha and achieve complete enlightenment. The ten paramitas are: 1. Dana 2. Sila 3. Samadhi 4. Virya 5. Dhyana 6. Prajna 7. Upeya 8. Pranidhana 9. Bala 10. Jnana (knowledge). Let us imagine that everyone Scanned with OKEN Scanner on the planet follows these. If this is the case, it might lead to world peace and long-term economic growth, positively affecting people's lives, society, and politics. In the aftermath of World War II, nations came together to figure out how to strengthen their relationships, expecting that this would eventually lead to peace on Earth, a thriving economy, and more equitable distribution of the world's resources. The more time passes, the more urgent the problem of the world's sustainability becomes, and the more obvious it becomes that the international community must act together to avert the extinction or wipeout of humanity owing to a lack of resources and the inevitable feuds that would follow. As a global community, we must find ways to help nations settle their disagreements without resorting to violence. It is one of the most fundamental aims of international relations. Recent Sustainable Development Goals created by the United Nations are focused solely on advancing world peace and prosperity. Such as:

- Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals is to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels."

Goal 17 of the Sustainable Development Agenda: Renew and strengthen the global partnership for sustainable development and its means of implementation.

Suppose the world is to attain these two SDGs. In that case, it must first revisit the teachings of Lord Buddha, who advocated nonviolence, tolerance, and internationalism, which were further elaborated by critical Indian intellectuals and authors.

Scanned with OKEN Scanner More people need to be tolerant of one another so that we may all come together and appreciate the rich cultural diversity that makes up our global society. Buddha taught tolerance in ancient India. He said tolerance is the key to both personal and international tranquillity. Being tolerant of other people's opinions is an indication of moral rectitude. Because of its weight in international affairs, a thorough understanding of this philosophy is essential. India may improve relations with its neighbours and other countries by learning to tolerate the shortcomings of other countries (but there is a limit to such tolerance). Warfare with Pakistan is just one illustration. Terrorists have made several simultaneous infiltration attempts into Indian territory. Despite these differences, India is tolerant enough to work with Pakistan under SAARC to achieve regional unity and South Asia's development objectives.

In Buddhist thought, the distinction between good and evil is based on an individual's level of enlightenment and moral character. Buddha's teachings place great emphasis on morality. The goal of Buddhist ethics is the mastery of one's desires and prejudices, which is achieved by moral conduct. One of Buddha's gospels describes how goodness and wisdom feed off one another. A man can find redemption in this world by cultivating a better character via introspection and self-discipline. The core belief of Buddhism is that all human suffering can and should be alleviated. The intermediate way offers the most pleasure with the least amount of pain. The only way to create an ethical covenant between man and society for pleasure and between man and nature for ecological harmony is to follow Buddha's middle road. Ambedkar battled against the Brahmanical caste system within Hinduism to empower the formerly untouchable. He did this by first gathering the invincibles into an organised force. He taught them why they were going through what they were going through (social backwardness and poverty). Ambedkar travelled to hundreds of events Scanned with OKEN Scanner and spoke to the untouchables on countless occasions to inform them of their rights and the steps they could take to lift themselves out of poverty. When Ambedkar began his crusade, he targeted the disadvantaged strata of Hinduism's Brahmanical caste system. The oppressive caste structure in Hinduism was something he had also experienced. To attain full social equality, he advocated for the end of the caste system for the untouchable. To this end, he established the Mahad movement in 1927. For the first time, he joined thousands of Dalits in drinking water from the Mahad pond provided by the government. The Mahad pond was off-limits to Dalits for hundreds of years.

Additionally, he led an effort to allow Dalits inside the Kalaram temple. Ambedkar burned a holy Hindu scripture (*Manusmriti*). The precarious caste structure, the plight of the Dalits, and their economic insecurity all had this as their root cause. Ambedkar was enraged to read that Brahmans were cleaning the Mahad pond and the Kalaram temple because untouchables had contaminated both by drinking the water and entering the temple. As soon as he heard the news, he felt utter despair. Hindus do not welcome the idea of personal growth. And he decided he would no

longer worship the 33 crore Hindu deities or visit any Hindu temples, rivers, or ponds. According to his statement, religion serves man, not vice versa. Not following the norms of the Hindu religion was something he urged the untouchables to do. Religion was created for the betterment of humanity, not as a weapon to oppress it. They believe that Hinduism is a religion of oppression and discrimination against Dalits and refuse to engage with it. He said we wasted time and effort opposing the Brahmanical caste. Since he witnessed Hindus' treatment of untouchables, he publicly announced his determination to abandon Hinduism. The Yeola meeting in 1935 issued this momentous declaration. Scanned with OKEN Scanner D.C. Ahir claims that when Ambedkar declared his decision to switch faiths, religious leaders from all walks of life flocked to meet with him and make promises to better the lives of the untouchables. Ambedkar was pushed by Sankaracharya, Moonje, the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, Dr K. Kurtakoti, and others to accept Sikhism as part of India's cultural heritage. When Sikh heard them pleading, he was thrilled. They reasoned that the untouchables would gain power if they converted to Sikhism. The Sikh community of Bombay founded Khalsa College because of an offer from Ambedkar to create a new college for the benefit of the untouchables. Dr Ambedkar has been given the position of leading the College Committee. Ambedkar delved deeply into Hindu Vedic texts and found that their teachings on caste stratification gave rise to the caste system and harsh treatment of the untouchables. The Gita was also a target of his criticism in *Buddha and His Dhamma*,

where he argued that it promoted irresponsible behaviour. He claimed intelligent and decent people would not hunt for answers in the Vedas. The idea that suffering may be eliminated through the middle route contradicts the teachings of the four Aryan truths. The middle way, however, is represented by four truths. We all have to deal with pain at some point, and the goal should not be to eliminate the pain but to find a balance between the two extremes. According to Ambedkar, the gospel that Buddha first preached was based on the four noble truths. Ambedkar researched the Buddha's teachings before converting to Buddhism because he knew the gospels would help elevate the caste of untouchables. This is how Buddha made it possible for the untouchables to join the Buddhist faith: by fixing Buddhism. Ambedkar's Buddhist Bible features four questions. The first inquiry dealt with Buddha's life's defining moment, Parivraja. Traditional Buddhists believe that Buddha saw a dead person, a sick person, and an older adult before he took Parivraja. Scanned with OKEN Scanner

Because the Buddhist canon and scripture misrepresent Buddha's life and teachings, the storey of his birth and early life is unreliable. Ambedkar argued that the Buddha's early life and circumstances during his lifetime should be established. The climate was stressful because of the war, the social turmoil, and the political shift. His father was the monarch of Kapilvatu in northern India, while his mother was a princess. War broke out in this state because of disagreements over who should get what share of the water from the Rohini River. To end the conflict over water, the military chief ordered an attack on the Kaliya. Siddharth's objection against serving in this military led to his dismissal and subsequent exile. Even if the water dispute was settled amicably, it is a fact that disagreements will always arise between different groups of people, be they nations, families, fathers and sons, sisters and brothers, etc. International conflicts are sporadic but not unheard of. However, class differences will always exist so long as violence persists. All the misery and suffering in the world can be traced back to this one thing. When the battle broke out between the Sakyas and the Kaliyas, Buddha had to flee and did not return until the two sides had been conquered. The desire to end the societal problems he saw as the source of all human suffering propelled him away from his native land. The remarks of B.R. Ambedkar, as written by R. Vijay Kumar in his article titled "Dr Ambedkar - A Great Humanist," explain religion and describe the methods Hindus use to disseminate their beliefs. Ambedkar cautioned his followers against hoping God would end caste discrimination in India. After India gained its independence, Ambedkar became the government's law minister, and he wrote this clause into the constitution, making untouchability a crime punishable by law. The legislation in India finally recognised the untouchables as a legitimate social group, elevating their status to that of the other Hindu castes for the first time in the country's history. Long before Ambedkar, Lord Buddha advocated for equality and tried to do away with the untouchability and caste system in Hinduism. Ambedkar was the only individual in the twentieth century to fight and raise the struggle to this level; as a direct result of his efforts, the historically oppressed classes were finally recognised as equals before the Scanned with OKEN Scanner law. Realistically, the caste system that has existed in India for almost two millennia will not disappear overnight. This led Ambedkar to the pivotal choice of becoming a Buddhist. He concluded that Buddhism was the sole faith that could help the downtrodden. All faiths held distinctive philosophical beliefs. To enter God's Kingdom, one must believe that Jesus is God's son, as the Bible teaches; if one does not, one will not be accepted into God's family. Mohammed, like Jesus, professed to be a messenger from God on Earth. Also, he claims to be the last of God's messengers. The only way to be saved, he said, was to believe that he was a messenger from God and that he was the final messenger. In Hinduism, Krishna is considered more important than either Jesus or Mohammed. He said that being the son and the message of God is not enough. He identified himself as Parameshwar, and his devotees soon began calling him Devahideva, or God of Gods. It is estimated that there were 33 million deities in Hinduism. Buddha was not one of them; he made no pretences of divinity or of

coining the term. He thinks of himself as fully human. Buddha never thought of himself as a mokshadata but as a margadta. As a result of Ambedkar's public proclamation of religious reform, several religious leaders subsequently met with him to convince the Dalits to convert to their faith. Political, social, economic, and religious freedom were all promised to Ambedkar. He was deeply familiar with Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, and Buddhism. He knew the Christian faith shared the caste structure with Islam and Sikhism. It would be irresponsible to leave out any faiths. Dalits have no religion other than Buddhism. But only after Buddhism has been updated to reflect current sensibilities. Ambedkar researched Buddhism and applied Dalit principles to compile Buddha's original teachings. Therefore, Dalits would be able to live in conditions more favourable to their growth in all areas. Ambedkar argues that the only way for the untouchables to live together in peace is for them to convert to another faith. His view was that only Buddhism, emphasising reason and science, could provide the untouchables with a stable foundation to build a better future. He said that the only way to escape the caste Scanned with OKEN Scanner system and Hindu exploitation is to break free of the constraints of Hinduism and Hindu culture. It is generally agreed that Dalits are not Hindus. However, they will continue getting Dalits to convert to Hinduism to have the same rights as other Hindus. Our current idea of nation was shaped by our culture's intellectual underpinnings, which manifests itself in the peaceful, sustainable foreign relations pursued by Indians. Thanks to the legacy of Buddha and modern-day leaders like Ambedkar, India is a peaceful, nonviolent place. We have the means to mount a strong defence against any invasion that might come our way. India has become a significant world power in recent decades, one that sees ahimsa and tolerance as a means to world peace and prosperity in addition to military might. Scanned with OKEN Scanner

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