

## **Buddha Dhamma reconstructs the world –With special Reference to Abolition of Caste System**

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**Abstract:** *This paper is a sincere attempt to reveal the fact that as a religion, how Buddhism reconstructs the world. Being an old religion, the concepts of Buddhism are not outdated. The core element in the teachings of Buddha is regarded as Buddha Dhamma which is meant for the development of civilization through the abolition of social evils such as caste system. Dhamma is righteousness which is meant for the creation of right relation between man and man in all spheres of life. It exists as the holder of culture. This paper mainly focuses on how the abolition of caste system is done through the application of Buddha Dhamma.*

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### **I. Introduction**

India is considered as the holy land of many religions. Each religion possesses different cultures. So there evolved a multicultural civilization. It is a fact that religion is a word without a definite meaning. It has varied from time to time. Most of the religions came to be identified with beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, prayers and sacrifices which are done for the attainment of blessings of God. But Buddhism is a religion with a difference from other religions. Being a heterodox system, it has no belief in God. So it did not give any priority to the performance of sacrifice, ritualism etc. The priority was to find a solution to the conditions of human life and through it, Buddhism aimed a social reformation. Hence Buddhism is a reformative religion.

Buddhism arose in India as a reaction against Hindu orthodoxy- Brahmanism and ritualism closely associated with it. Being a reformative religion, it was a campaign against social evils such as caste prejudices which was followed by Brahmanic society. Brahmanas preferred a fixed order of caste system based on Chaturvarna (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras) that never to be changed. This created social inequality. The inequality helped Brahmanas, to suppress and exploit the weak people whose humanity was mutilated by Brahmanism. The dissatisfaction towards these types of Brahmanic prejudices, Buddhism evolved as a revolution. It was a movement against all types of superstitions, social evils, such as caste system, untouchability and exploitation.

Buddha condemned the Brahmins who followed the caste system. Because the aristocratic Brahmins used to exploit the low class people. In such a situation, Buddha said, “No castes, no Brahmin inequality, no superiority, all are equal”.<sup>1</sup> In order to establish a casteless society by eliminating social injustice, he wanted a new social tradition which is humanistic in nature. The social tradition was built on the strong basic foundation of Buddha Dhamma.

### **Buddha Dhamma**

It forms the very basics of Buddhist teachings. The very meaning of Buddha Dhamma is to develop an attitude of compassion among all men. It teaches us that the attitude of compassion should be taken as the fundamental principle in our social life. Compassion towards all beings creates true friendliness which will not cause any harm to anyone else. Through this we are able to break the barriers which separate us from others.

Buddha Dhamma teaches us that, one should not hurt others even by look, speech, or action. Even the enemies should be loved. Buddha said that, “Love should be felt for one’s own kin, and so for enemies too, and the whole wide world. Should be pervaded with a heart of love”.<sup>2</sup> By the cultivation of this attitude, we can abolish our deep-rooted egoism. This will lead to the notion of compassion and love towards others. Love must be accompanied by other mental attitudes- sorrow at the sorrows of others, joy in the joy of others, and equanimity. It is a fact that the whole world and the individual are closely linked together and they are dependent upon each other. So one should be very careful to produce harmony with others.

The practice of Buddha Dhamma helps each individual in a society to lead a peaceful life along with other co-beings. Where there is the practice of Buddha Dhamma, there is no room for hatredness, exploitation, egoism and other non human activities. This will create a casteless society and there occurs social reformation.

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<sup>1</sup> Ambedkar, B.R, The Untouchables, p.301.

<sup>2</sup> Milindapanha. p.394.

Social reformation occurs only through the awakening of people. In this respect Buddhism reformed the society by applying its Dhamma which helped to enlighten the people.

## **II. Conclusion**

Buddha wished to maintain a casteless and classless society. For that purpose, he put his life before the people as such and did not keep any secrets from them. Buddhism not only awakened the socially degraded people but also enlightened the Brahmanas who blindly followed the scriptures. He wanted to purify the Brahmanas who were all forgotten the human values and put them on right path. Buddha was not against any caste or religion. He only opposed superstitions and inhuman behaviour to co beings included in it. So he insisted that every individual must test the religious ideas before accepting them and making them part of the life. He emphasized to accept the ideas only when they proved to be good to one's life and to condemn them when they were harmful.

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