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ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE SOCIO-CULTURAL LIFE OF THE NEO-BUDDHISTS OF WARDHA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This research paper describes the life character of the Neo-Buddhists who come under the Wardha district of Maharashtra state. The data was collected under the ethno-descriptive method. Based on participatory observation, informal interviews, in-depth interviews and key informants, an attempt has been made to know and describe the social, cultural and religious aspects of the Neo-Buddhists. Most of these people came from the Mahar caste within the Hindu religion, which later became their identity with the word Neo-Buddhist. Not only this, these people were treated discriminately, unequally. This type of behavior made them feel ashamed all the time, due to which these people and their ancestors took initiation in 1956 in Nagpur along with Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar. From then on these people came to be called Neo-Buddhists. Keeping this in mind, to know about their new religion, their social, cultural and religious aspects have been described.

Keywords- Ethnography, Culture, Neo-Buddhist

Introduction-

This study has been an integral part of the discipline of anthropology because early evolutionary anthropologists have been criticized as armchair anthropologists and classical anthropologists because early evolutionary anthropologists used books, journals, reports, etc., written by tourists, businessmen, traders, religious leaders, and administrators. He studied unilinear evolutionary theory, but British evolutionist Edward Burnett Tyler and American evolutionist Lewis Henry Morgan were not necessarily armchair anthropologists. Tyler spent one year in Mexico, six months in the United States and a few months in Cuba. An important feature of anthropological fieldwork is the need for anthropologists to establish relationships with study group members by visiting the field. After the relationship is established, most of the information from an anthropological field is obtained through participatory observation techniques. He participates in group activity as a member of that group and on the basis of his participation observes and records the social facts. In the inscription, their culture, customs, witchcraft, behavior, festivals, festivals, social values etc. The researcher also established a relationship with the people of his study area and made a descriptive study of the aspects related to their social, cultural, economic and political life.

1.1. Social Identity-

Mahar This is a caste mentioned on serial number 37 of the list of Scheduled Castes declared by the Maharashtra Government. There are different beliefs behind the origin of this caste and this

nomenclature. They consider themselves to be Dharani-putra or Bhumi-putra. They also believe that the word 'Maharashtra' is formed from the combination of these two words 'Mahar' and 'Rashtra' and the original name of Marathwada has been 'Maharwada'. They are also called 'Meher', who are probably a tribal tribe in origin like the Gonds. According to an interesting fact, due to being a high-eating caste, they have been called 'Mahar' in short, Mahar. According to the original occupation, they were communication carriers, but within the village they did all kinds of low-grade work involving manual labour. For example, the work of a servant or watchman, carrying government goods, becoming a bodyguard of a traveler, etc. In ancient times, they usually settled in the outskirts of the village, most of such settlements were known as 'Maharwada'. The back of the name was used by Mahar men such as 'Nak' (Ramnak, Kondunak), which is an Apabhramsa of 'Naik', meaning leader or chieftain. In the Maratha period, he has proved himself to be a good warrior by participating in the war. Mahars are mentioned to have different sub-castes in different areas, such as - in Nashik district, at the social level, they are divided into twelve sub-castes, such as - Advan, Gopal, Ghadosi, Chelkar, Dom, Dheed, Paan, Pular, Bavcha, There are Ladvan, Sutad, Somvanshi and Ardha castes. Whereas Ahmednagar and Kolhapur districts are divided into thirteen divisions. Which are as follows- Andavon (born of Kumari Mata), Kabule, Kudavan, Gondavan (begger), Ghadi (player of musical instrument), Ghatkambli, Jhade (Valmiki), Paan (flute

player), Bele (broom, mat, Basket makers), Ladvan, Saladi, Sonkambli and Hadesi.

1.2. Language

The Neo-Buddhists speak Marathi language because they live in the state of Maharashtra, because Marathi language is the only official language of the Indian state of Maharashtra. The Neo-Buddhists mostly use Marathi language because their state comes under Marathi speaking. Apart from Marathi language, these people also use Hindi in large quantity in good quantity. Due to the study area being Wardha district, the percentage of neo-Buddhist population was found to be high here. During the study, by talking to people in Hindi, it was found that the neo-Buddhist people also give information in Hindi well. The majority of the people of Maharashtra speak Marathi. At the level of the linguistic family, it is an Aryan language. Marathi is one of the major languages of India, it is the official language of Maharashtra and Goa and is the co-official language of western India. Marathi ranks tenth in the world and third in India in terms of number of mother tongues. The total number of people who speak it is about 10 crores. In India, Marathi is mainly spoken in Maharashtra.

1.3. Dress

Men's, women's and children's costumes can be seen in different forms in Neo-Buddhist costumes. The following garments come under men's apparel. Like- Pantshirt, T-shirt, Kurta and Pajama Dhoti Lungi Topi or Safi Bandi or Koti Sherwani. Salwar and kurti saree ghagra blouse lehenga bandi odhani under clothing related to women. The wearing of these clothes is based on the time and place in Buddhism, such as if

there is any kind of wedding ceremony, then women and men wear colorful clothes, there is no compulsion in it. At the time of marriage, the bride and groom wear only white clothes, in which a white sari or paint coat is also in vogue for the woman. Sherwani or paint coat is important for the man. In everyday life women use simple saree men pant shirt and lungi. If there is any kind of ritual like worship, then it is important to wear only white clothes because white cloth gives peace which is a symbol of peace in Buddhism. Their clothes range from Khadi to golden silk cloth, colorful clothes are found. Pants, shirts, coats and jeans are kept in the category of modernity because due to modernity, the market system has increased the trend of new types of clothes, due to which people have forgotten the traditional dress. During the Industrial Revolution, many such garments, clothes or dresses were developed which we can call today as the gift of Western civilization. Although there is no hesitation in wearing all kinds of clothes, but it is also important to understand why we wear clothes that do not match our culture.

1.4. Jewelry

Neo-Buddhist women use ornaments as adornment. The design of their ornaments is made in the form of symbols of Buddhism. Their ornaments include the figure of Buddha, the wheel, the band of the Bodhi tree and decorated with blue. These types of ornaments and symbols of ornaments identify the religion, people of different religions wear ornaments on the body in the form of pictures of their respective deities. In Buddhism, people wear the images of Lord Buddha and

Ambedkar in the form of necklaces, make amulets and wear these things to identify the religion because it displays its gods and goddesses. Apart from this, these people put the symbols of their deities in the form of symbols in the house, vehicle, they use it as decoration. Various types of ornaments are used in the jewelery of Buddhism. which are as follows. Such as- necklace, bracelet, pendant, amulet, garland, style bangle, earring, locket, ring etc. These ornaments are used according to the time. For example, in everyday life, women wear simple earrings such as glass bangles, earrings, noses and feet, while at the time of marriage, women wear ornaments like necklaces, rings, braids, waist girdles and ear rings. Huh. Men wear garlands, amulets, rings and bangles in their hands.

1.5. Family

The family of the new Buddhist people is socially idealistic type because all the members of the family together complete any work without any interest because in this religion there is no tendency like attachment, greed. Along with being nuclear families, joint families are also found in abundance. Apart from the children in the joint family, these people also keep the parents together. The reason for all this is to serve the parents as the true religion in the book written by Lord Buddha. In the family, the head of the household takes care of the entire household, he maintains the family through wages, jobs and maintains a strong financial condition. The woman also has the right to take care of the family and take decisions. The reason for this is that women, being educated, believe in the right of equality given by Baba Saheb.

Apart from this, women do the work like raising children, taking care of them, eating, drinking, bathing, preparing children, the father only tries to keep the professional level equal. The family plays a very important role in the formation of children. The main work of every member in the family remains, whether that member is large or small, as there are old members in the house, they contribute in taking care of the house and taking care of small children. In Buddhism, children are taught Buddhist Vandana, Ambedkar's teachings, his stories so that the children's character becomes successful and moral. Women play the most important role in this religion. Because women in their free time, in addition to their own children, collect and educate neighbors' children in Buddha Viharas on holidays, these women want to take this generation to the highest peak on the basis of their religion, karma. There is an atmosphere of happiness and peace in their families at all times because all the members of the family are imbibing the words given by Lord Buddha. it shows. Teaching moral responsibility to children mainly takes place in the family itself. Through this the cultural heritage of the family and society is transferred from one generation to another.

1.6. Worship

Neo Buddhist people worship Lord Buddha and Ambedkar, these people consider them as their idealists, believe in these people. Buddhist people meditate from 07 in the morning to 09 in the morning. In the process of worship, first of all sprinkle water in the house so that the house becomes pure, then clean the statue of Buddha and Ambedkar with water

because the idol is made of stone. The idol is placed near the banyan tree, after which incense sticks, incense sticks are worshipped. The idol is kept wrapped in a red cloth, because in this cloth it shows the best and true qualities of Lord Buddha, due to which new monks wear this clothes even today because the person in these clothes looks like an ordinary man. Seems like. Inspired by which the ideas of one respect and equality arise in every person. Those who work, they are able to worship only in the morning and evening, and those who live in the house, they do worship and worship thrice a day. The biggest thing is that people listen to the aarti of Lord Buddha early in the morning, they say that by listening to it, the path of peace is visible in the house, in the family and inside every person in the house, the women, men and children of the house. There is an atmosphere of peace. There are two temples inside every person's house, one inside as a vihara and one outside worshipping by placing an idol near the Peepal tree. The belief of this tree is that Lord Buddha had attained enlightenment under this tree, so all the people keep a small plant of Peepal in the house. There is a big temple inside the house where incense sticks, candles, flowers etc. are offered and worshipped. All the people worship together by staying together.

Life cycle function

1.7. Birth

This is the sacrament when a new member comes to the house- family, this rite is performed in his happiness, there is an atmosphere of happiness in the whole house or the people belonging to that community. All the members of the

community, group come to that house and congratulate the parents. There are some women belonging to that community who work as a nurse (midwife) to take care of the mother at the time of childbirth. These people have traditional knowledge about childbirth, due to which they themselves are helpful in giving birth to the child easily. During delivery, these people go to the nearby government hospital to take good care of both the mother and the child, so that the child can be born well, so sometimes they take this type of help and from there also take the birth certificate of the child. Huh. Most babies are easily born at home. The midwives do the cleaning related to the delivery of the child and its mother. There is also a rule among these people that when the child is born, then his family members do not even touch the child, the feeling of untouchability is also seen in these people. Only after the head is shaved, the navel is dry, after bathing the child, the people of the house enter his mother and him inside the house. The mother keeps knives, matches and fire lit near the child so that the child does not have any kind of fear and neither the shadow of any kind of evil spirit falls on the child. In the joy of the arrival of the child, a ritual or food program is done in which people belonging to that group, community are invited to eat. On the day when this sanskar is held, all the people come to the house with clothes, toys, clothes for the size of the child in the house. Vegetarian and non-vegetarian type of food is kept in the food and drink. Apart from this, some sweets are also kept. The work related to food and drink is done by the members of the household, in which

the child's uncle, siblings and apart from this, the main role is played by the child's maternal uncle. Apart from the maternal uncle, the responsibility of that child's aunt is more towards that child. In return for all this, when the aunt goes from the child's house to her home, the aunt is given clothes, money, jewelery and some items as a gift by the child's father or mother.

1.8. **Naming**

It is a sacrament ceremony performed four to five weeks after the birth of the child. In Buddhism it is considered the first sacrament of life. In this rite, the parents of the child call their relatives and bhikkhu for the naming ceremony. On the day when this ceremony is performed, the family members clean the house and decorate it with Buddhist symbols which include Buddhist wheel, blue flag, Buddha statue. Put it in the house. All the members of the house wear white clothes. A pandal is set up in the house in which all relatives, businessmen, family members sit in it. In the pandal, a place of worship is made on one side, keeping the idols of Lord Buddha and Ambedkar on the table, all the people sit in front of them. Five candles are kept lit in a plate near the idols, along with a glass full of rice, in which incense sticks are kept burning fruits, flowers are also kept nearby. Then Bhante ji tells the child's parents in turn that they offer garlands of flowers to the idols of Lord Buddha and Ambedkar, as well as all the people offer flowers to their picture from a distance. The child is kept lying near the Bhante, then the Bhante ji takes turns to sing and worship Lord Buddha. Bhante ji asks all the people to sit on their knees with folded hands and then starts the Vandana with the recitation

of -budham sharanam gachhami, dhammam sharanam gachhami, shangham sharanam gachhami. After this, all the people come in turn and take blessings by offering flowers on the photo of Lord Buddha and Baba Saheb Ambedkar, then after that they bow down in front of Bhante ji, Bhante ji blesses them and wishes them a good life. After this the naming is done with the consent of all. The members of the household, the child's parents or the neighbors choose the name of the child according to their own. All these names are given by writing to Bhante ji. Bhante ji presents these names to all the people. Bhante ji explains the meaning of these names, all these names are associated with the Buddha community, such as Sujata, Gautami, Mahamaya, Vaishali and Amrapali if there is a girl. After this it is decided that the name whose voting will be the highest, the same name is kept. Bhante ji speaks one name each, those people who like the name, those people raise their hands. In this way the sanskar of Naamkaran is completed. After this, after giving respect to the devotees and giving donations, Dakshina is sent along with feeding them.

1.9. **Mudan (Keshkappan)**

In Buddhism, when the child's hair is cut after eight to ten months after the birth of the child, then it is called Mudan Sanskar. On this ceremony, the parents of the child, all their relatives, your neighbors and some bhajans are invited. On the day of this ceremony, there is a system of banquet, during the day, on one hand, the work of cooking is done and on the other hand, the mudan rites are performed through Bhante ji. After thoroughly cleaning the

house, decorate the house with flowers, leaves and artificial things, on one hand, a stage is made in the pandal and the photos of Lord Buddha and Baba Saheb Ambedkar are placed on it. That idol is only of photo frame and not of steel brass. Incense sticks, candles, fruits, flowers are kept near these idols. After this the bhikkhus are called and all the people sit in front of them and worship those bhikkhus. The parents of the child who is shaved sit very close to the bhikkhu and then everyone follows them. Flowers are distributed to all the people that whenever Bhante ji wishes for the life of the child, then everyone showers those flowers on the child and their parents. First of all, Bhante ji utters a sentence- Namotasya Bhagavato Arhato Sammasambuddhasya, then everyone speaks it three times. After this, Bhante again chants - Budham Sharanam Gachhami, Dhammam Sharanam Gachhami, Shangam Sharanam Gachhami. After this, in the end, the process of worship recitation ends with the words of a sage. On the other hand, the singing of music starts again. After the worship is over, Bhante ji cuts the hair of the child's head with a scissor, keeping those hairs in the kneaded flour and shed them in a river. After that, it is completely shaved off by the barber. After the mundan ceremony, the child's parents are made to stand on the stage, after that all the relatives give their gifts to the child and shower flowers on him and bless him as well as people for his parents. Bring clothes especially the girl's parents or siblings. Along with this, we also provide things like chives, bags, food items as donations to the devotees. After this, the Bhants are sent

off after feeding them. After this, food is fed to all the relatives and everyone's farewell is done through Jai Bhim.

1.10. Marriage

Marriage, also called marriage, is a socially or religiously recognized union between two people. The method of marriage among the people of the Neo-Buddhist society is done in a very simple way, considering this basis. It is customary to celebrate marriages in front of a Buddhist monastery. In which the marriage is solemnized through any Bhanta. First of all, the bride and groom are selected for marriage through their respective relatives. In marriage, the bride's parents are in search of a good groom in which the groom should be related to religion and community, the groom should be knowledgeable and prudent, do some business, job to live life. The bride's parents keep asking all their relatives and businessmen for the selection of the groom. The most important role among relatives is that of son-in-law, brother-in-law, uncle. To find the groom, after the groom is selected, then the house of the bridegroom, the family members come to see the bride, in which the women of the groom's side ask questions from the bride. By making the bride and groom sit face to face, an agreement is made that both of you agree to the marriage. There is no demand for dowry of any kind in Buddhism. From the groom's side, how much budget do we need for the wedding. There is no practice like dowry in this religion, nor is there any demand for allowance in the process of marriage. In this religion, only a member of the same religion is selected for the selection of bride

and groom. If the girl is of Buddhism, she is married to a groom of another religion, then there can be a problem because it is impossible to agree on different views. However, this problem is more visible in love marriages. Ideas are not available after few days of marriage. Buddhism does not consider caste-husband, it shows a sense of equality to all living beings. For this, love marriage is recognized in this religion, but for marriage, the effort remains that marriage should be solemnized with a person of similar culture and same religion. The most important thing in Buddhism is that there is no kanyadan in it because a daughter is not a thing. On the other hand, it is universally true that the donor does not have any right on the gift given, it is not in Buddhism that there should be no relation with the daughter after marriage. The date and time of marriage is decided by the bhante or by the elderly members of the house, what kind of weather will be right for the marriage. The second thing is that it is also very important to keep in mind that the time of marriage should not be very hot or too cold, rainy season should not be married in such weather, which makes it difficult to get married, so the date of marriage should be like this. The time should be fixed when it is neither too cold nor too hot. Apart from this, most marriage rites are performed in Buddhist monasteries because that place is considered to be the best. There is an idol of Lord Buddha and Ambedkar at that place. In front of whom Bhante gets the marriage done, people take education and initiation in the Viharas and the biggest thing in this is that people go to the shelter of God, so marriages are celebrated well at that

place. Most of the marriage rites are performed during the day as the guests leave during the night without being blessed, thereby depriving them of the blessings. Apart from this, some people fall asleep, due to which people are able to participate in the marriage process in lesser quantity and also those people who come to see the marriage from different religion are deprived. In marriage, white clothes are best for both the bride and groom, in this religion, marriage is done in white clothes only. The parents of the bride and groom also wear white clothes. Only the main people are seated on the stage and all the people sit under the stage, the process of marriage of bride and groom is going on from below. Keep watching him well. The importance of worship material in the marriage process is very important because without it the marriage will not be considered complete. Material- The idol of Lord Buddha and Ambedkar should be beautiful and small, because the marriage of the bride and groom is completed only after considering it as a witness. If there is no idol, then the overlaid image can be kept for worship. Candles and incense sticks, flowers and peepal leaves, white thread, small earthen pot or metal pot (filled with clean water), fruits, necklaces with jam, sweets, songs, music, material, table on which to keep the idol, white Have clothes.

1.11. Death

Death ceremony is the last stage of life. When the person dies, after that, Dhupvati, Agarvati i.e. some fragrant things are kept burning near that dead person till then the dead person is kept. Until all his relatives gather because it is

believed that all his relatives will see him at the last moment. After that the members of the house are engaged in the preparation of the death rites in which someone brings goods from the market. For example, shroud, incense sticks, incense sticks, flowers, sandalwood, camphor etc. Apart from this, the people who are in the house prepare bamboo ladders to carry the dead person, on which they are kept and taken to the cremation ground. People carried the dead person for cremation by carrying his carnivore on his shoulder or also on the vehicle which is known as Jeevan Rath (last journey). The person who dies in Buddhism. A pandal is set up in his house and a speaker is installed on the roof of the house. Through which the echoes of Budham Sharanam Gachhami, Dhamam Sharanam Gachhami, Shangam Sharanam Gachhami are heard. This voice reverberates very slowly. From this echo it is known that a person has died in the neo-Buddhist society. After death, the dead body is kept wrapped in a white cloth because white cloth is a symbol of peace. Before being taken to the crematorium, the dead body is bathed with clean water and various types of fragrant items such as incense sticks are applied on the body and decorated with flowers are placed on a high place because of the reverence and respect for death in Buddhism. is a symbol of. At that time a monk is called. The monks impart knowledge of Panchsheel along with Trisharan to the persons present from the Sangha. Trisharan - I follow Buddha, I follow Buddha's Dharma, I follow Buddha's Sangha. In this way the Trisharan and Panchsheel given by Buddha are recited in Buddhism. So that life can be

made peaceful, patient and adulterous free. After all these works, the dead body is taken to the cremation ground or cremation ground. While carrying the dead body, people carry them along while chanting - Buddham Sharanam Gachhami, Dhamam Sharanam Gachhami, Shangam Sharanam Gachhami. In Buddhism, women are not obliged not to go to the crematorium. Even if a person does not have a son, a daughter can also perform the last rites. After reaching the crematorium, the dead body is placed on the pyre facing north, after that all the people cover the dead body with wood, then the elder son of that person sets the pyre on fire. All the people while staying there chant the sentences Buddham Sharanam Gachhami, Dhamam Sharanam Gachhami, Sangham Sharanam Gachhami. Two customs of cremation are more prevalent in Buddhism, such as burning in fire, burial in the ground, the most recognition is from burning in fire. In Buddhism, there are two or three methods of cremation of the body, the practice of burning the dead body is more acceptable in Indian Buddhist society. It is in the same spirit that Buddham Sharanam Gacchami is uttered over and over again. Before setting fire to the pyre, remembering the virtues of Buddha Dhamma and Sangha, three times round the pyre and with fragrant items like camphor, incense, sandalwood etc., the pyre is set on fire. After that it is decided when to do Shanti Path. At the same time, all these people decide the time, when the pyre is burnt, the fellow people sing the saga of Buddha with folded hands, after that all the people gather and go to the

house of the dead person, then from there they go to their respective homes. On the very next day, the family members of the dead person go to the cremation ground and collect the ashes of the dead person and the material related to the death of the dead person, flowers, wood, etc., flow into the river or canal or bury it in the ground. . After all this, the day of Shanti Path is decided, on that day the Bhikshu Sangha is called and Shanti Path and Dhamma Darshan are conducted in which all the relatives of the dead person are called.

Objectives of the study-

Studying any society, community has some or the other purpose. In this article, the researcher has fulfilled his objectives by interacting with them about the religious, social and cultural life of the Neo-Buddhists.

Research study method-

In anthropological research the terms method and technique are used with different meanings. Methodology refers to all the processes on the basis of which a research is carried out. Thus, the whole process from the selection of research topic to obtaining research results and writing them down forms part of anthropological research method whereas in anthropological research the word technique is used in a limited sense. Technique refers to the means on the basis of which data is collected at the time of field work. Therefore, technology is only a means of obtaining information from the field. In this research, techniques like personal study, participatory observation, unstructured interview etc. have been used in qualitative method to establish

closeness in the field. Ethnography is a method of doing research and also a method of collecting data in which researchers not only study the data through participatory observation but also fully involve themselves in that society, group and through day to day observation. Trying to learn about the society and culture from In this study, data has been collected through in-depth interviews, life histories, apart from participatory observation.

Source of data- Primary and secondary data have been used to compile the data of this study. Primary data has been the major contributor to the compilation of the data. Based on the field work, data has been collected with participatory observation keeping in mind a limited time frame. Secondary data has been collected on the basis of books, research papers, magazines and internet.

Conclusion-

Conclusion It can be said that Buddhism is an egalitarian and idealistic religion which looks at all people equally and tries to show equality with all. Due to this similarity, Dalits had abandoned Hinduism and adopted Buddhism. This religion is very simple and simple nature religion in which people give power to people to live life in equal spirit. This has been the reason that Baba Saheb had adopted Buddhism after studying all the religions and thought that this religion can give the right to our newly Buddhist people to live with dignity. Keeping this in mind, in 1956 lakhs had accepted Buddhism and had given initiation to all its new Buddhist people. Baba Saheb told that education is the milk of a lioness who drinks it will roar.

Instead of emphasizing on worship, he laid more emphasis on education and said that if educated, then all people will give respect and move forward. Keeping this point in mind, the neo-Buddhists are providing good education to the children. It was through this education that the socio-cultural and economic condition of the people of the Neo-Buddhist society improved. The status and life character of these people is ascertained through in-depth interviews and participatory observation. They believe that the way of life of religion should be done in a simple way, without using a lot of resources, by staying in less resources, worship-recitation, rites, marriage-marriage and festivals should be celebrated.

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