

# Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Contribution to the Revival of Buddhism in Modern India: A Historical Perspective

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**Abstract:** *Buddhism is one of the major religions in the world. It is a world religion, which arose in India, and is based on the teachings of Siddhārtha Gautama who was deemed a "Buddha" (Enlightened human being). Buddhism has been reemerging in India since the past century, due to its adoption by many Indian intellectuals, the migration of Buddhist Tibetan exiles, and the mass conversion of hundreds of thousands of Hindu Dalits led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Ambedkar was greatly impressed by studying Tipitaka, the collection of Buddha's sayings. He said that India would rise once again to its glory, when people turn to Buddhism and practice the high ethical principles preached by Buddha. After publishing a series of books and articles arguing that Buddhism was the only way for the Dalits to gain equality, Ambedkar publicly converted on 14 October 1956, at Deekshabhoomi, Nagpur. After receiving ordination, Ambedkar gave dhamma diksha to his followers. The ceremony included 22 vows given to all new converts after 'Three Jewels' and 'Five Precepts'. Even though Ambedkar had been a follower of Buddhism for barely seven weeks, during that small period he contributed immensely for the promotion of Buddhism. At the time of his death around seven lakh Dalits had become Buddhists. He saw Buddhism as a religion based on wisdom and compassion, which supports tolerance and human rights, and fulfils the deep spiritual needs of people. Thus Ambedkar's contribution to the revival of Buddhism in contemporary India is very significant.*

**Keywords:** Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Revival of Buddhism in India, Twenty-two vows of Ambedkar

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