

Topic:- The Different Schools of Buddhism in the Modern Russian Republic Buryatia.

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Research Article

Topic:- The Different Schools of Buddhism in the Modern Russian Republic Buryatia.

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Abstract

Buryatia, a Russian republic represents small ethos with a population of 249,525 Buryats (1989 census).¹ As Buryats were part of Mongolia before Tsar occupation in , most of the Buryats feel more closer to Mongolia than Russia. In 1552, the Khazan Khanate was conquered by the Tsar and in 16th century settlements were established in Siberia. Further, Peter the Great opened Russia for foreigners that brought German agricultural colonists into the country & alternate to bureaucratic state Orthodox Church and foreign missionaries (Krindatch, 2006). Today, modern Buryats have fear of disappearing their native language, religion, culture, traditions, surviving in a new world order. Modernization impacted all around the world; and Buryatia was no exception to escape while during the Stalin era ‘modernization’ under process of ‘socialism’ where nomads were settled, collectivization was undertaken, manufacturing industries were set up and modern means of communication was introduced. Modern Buryat have impacted in terms of living standards, ritual worshipping, identifying being Asian in terms of having Asian nation religion and traditions. The modern Buryatia saw the development of the new Buddhist organization, making their presence along with the traditional Buddhist organization. This paper will deal about the presence of different schools of Buddhism in Buryatia, including their functioning and opinions upon being united.

Key words:- Buddhism, Modernization Buryatia and Schools/traditions,

Modernization and Buddhism

The idea of Modernization² means opposing traditional ideas or superstitions embedded in the way of life. Modernization had a powerful impact that it is still under worldwide influence since its usage in Europe in 17th century. In 1950’s, the European nations saw the theory of modernization emerged to explain industrial development and development seemed to be running parallel. Social scientists have explained modernization theory in mid-20th century and

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¹ It means 249,525 are Buryat (111,069 in the cities & 138,456 in the villages), (Skrynnikova, 2003). Now, According to 2010 Census, population data is 2286,839, access <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buryatia>.

² Modernisation theory emerged in the late 19th century and mid-20th century. One notable advocate was Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons work, ‘Mandarins of the Future (2003)’, stressed the importance of societies remaining open to change and saw reactionary forces as restricting development.

few have examined it such as Anthony Giddens³ in his work ‘Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age’,⁴ have focused on the emergence of self-identity that is shaped by the institutions of modernity. In his other work ‘The Consequences of Modernity’,⁵ Giddens focused on the ‘bloom and doom’ side of modernization where modern social institutions have created greater opportunities for everyone to enjoy a secure existence. Jurgen Habermas⁶ has also sighted the impact of modernization and worked on the relationship between morality and modernity.

Buddhism has been flexible to modernity and hardly resists the impact of modernisation. Buddhism wanted Buddha Dharma⁷ to flourish in a pure form and equally played a significant role in identifying ethnic group identity that grows stronger with modernization. Earlier, “Buddhism was the first faith to go global as a conscious decision where King Asoka⁸ sent out missionaries to bring the Buddhist teachings to people. Thousands of miles from the North of India King Asoka understood that as the world is becoming more and more intertwined it needs to be connected by economics, empires, trade or languages where reality and compassion need to work together”.

In modernized western countries, Buddhism has become a means of psychological healing, relatable with metaphysics and an ethical way of living, also it has been synonymous with other like commercial products in many parts of the world that make Buddhism, a part of commercialized sector. The question arises is whether selling of Buddhist related valuables has lessened its values?

(Palmer, 2012) further states that, globalization is nothing new for Buddhism which started in Northern India in early period, Sanskrit and Pali Languages before spreading into languages such as Chinese, Tibetan and Japanese and now available in different languages. Buddhism has now transformed into a market economy and people have turned up from selling to buying the antiques of Buddhism where modernization along cannot be held accountable for.

Today the teachings of Buddhism have been promoted to meet the challenges faced in today’s globalized world in terms of violence, environmental degradation or over consumption; even the values of traditional and spiritual life cannot be erased completely in the name of modernization. Thich Nhat Hanh⁹ termed the coin ‘Socially Engaged Buddhism’,¹⁰ originated in Vietnam (1963),

³ Anthony Giddens is a famous sociologist, known for theory of ‘structuration’ and holistic view on modernity’, an influential public intellectual, also advocates a centrist political philosophy known as “The Third Way”.

<http://routledgesoc.com/profile/anthony-giddens>.

⁴ ‘Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age’, 1991 is work on consequences of modernity, where Giddens argues that ‘high modernity’ & considers its ramification for the self and self-identity.

⁵ The Consequences of Modernity’, (Giddens, 1991) dealt with the danger, risk & discontinuity of modernity.

⁶ Jurgen Habermas, a sociologist & German philosopher, propounded ‘The Theory of Communicative Action, Discourse Theory, Theory of Truth and Knowledge, Theory of Morality, Politics, and Law, The Dialogue between Naturalism and Religion.

⁷ Buddha Dharma:- Dharma (Sanskrit) or dhamma (Pali) is a word Buddhists use often. It refers to the second gem of the Three Jewels of Buddhism—Buddha, dharma, sangha. The word often is defined as “the teachings of the Buddha, “All the teachings of the Buddha can be summed up in one word: Dhamma. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1958/02/the-meaning-of-buddhism/30683>.

⁸ Chandragupta Maurya’s Grandson Ashoka (C.A 304–233 B.C.) took the Mauryan Empire His vigorous patronage of Buddhism during his reign furthered the expansion of that religion. Ashoka widely used pillars and edicts as a way to convey the message of Buddhism. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ashoka>.

⁹ Thich Nhat Hanh is a global spiritual leader, poet, and peace activist, renowned for his powerful teachings and bestselling writings on mindfulness and peace, pioneer bringing mindfulness to the West, and establishing an engaged Buddhist community for the 21st Century. <https://plumvillage.org/about/thich-nhat-hanh/biography/>.

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an international peace activist and concerned with developing Buddhist solutions to social, political and ecological global problems. (Sivaraksa, 2005).

4.2.1 Traditional Schools of Buddhism in Buryatia:

Majority of the Buddhist population in Buryatia follows the traditional Gelug school of Mahayana Buddhism¹¹ followed by Karma-Kagyupa School.¹² Russian Buddhists mostly are perceived as from the Gelugpa tradition, but there is no specific unified monastic association in Russia. Due to internal difference in their principles, today's 'Buddhist traditional Sanghas' do not represent the entire Buddhist adherence, as earlier done by the TSDUB¹³ in the Soviet time.

(Balzer, 2015), mention, 'differences and conflicts among the schools of Buddhism have been witnessed all around the world, also in the politics of inheriting the seat of high lama'. Presently, Khambo Lama (Gelugpa School) is the head of Buddhist of Russia (Inter-religious Council of Russia), 'Lama Dolan Kuular 'head lama in Tuva and Telo Tulku Rimpoche¹⁴ in Kalmykia.

(Holland, 2014), 'stresses on the ambiguous support, Dalai Lama especially from Telo Tulku Rimpoche but the same not being supported by the authorities where the visits of Dalai Lama have played an important role in strengthening the revival of Buddhism in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In 1989, 'Leningrad Buddhist' society was established, which consisted to a large degree of the 'underground' European Buddhists of the second wave as well as the traditional Buddha followers, the Trans Baikal Buryats" (Andreyev, 2012, p. 78).

(Nesterkin, 2011), states that, 'in Russian Buddhist tradition of Gelug was perceived along with the plurality of its hierarchical systems and the absence of doctrinal necessity in spiritual unity of command'.

(Fagan Geraldine, 2001), states, 'The emergence of various Buddhist organizations affiliated to specific school has further widened the gap for the formation of an all unified Buddhist organization in Russia. The current hostilities among the schools are a result of the divide and rule policy of Soviet religious policies which have further added aloofness of current Gelug School with respect to other Buddhist schools like Kagyu, Sakya, Nyingma.

¹⁰ 'Socially engaged Buddhism videos', <https://www.pbs.org/thebuddha/blog/2010/mar/26/introduction-engaged-buddhism-maia-duerr/>. <https://pluralism.org/buddhism-and-social-action-engaged-buddhism>.

¹¹ Mahayana is a Sanskrit word 'Mahan', means Greater. Vast vary of Buddhist scriptures and doctrines, mostly found Mahayana devotionals in the Lotus Sutra. <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/b3schmah.htm>.

¹² Kagyu is a Tibetan word, means "translated words of the Buddha, where this school founder is the great Indian yogi Tilopa (988-1069), disciples were Naropa, Marpa, Milarepa, Gampopa, Rechungpa & Dusum Khyenpa). <https://kagyuoffice.org/kagyu-lineage>. Dusum Khyenpa (1110-1193 reincarnated as the 2nd Karmapa, Karmapa's are thus the oldest reincarnate lineage in Tibetan Buddhism. The lineage that began with Dusum Khyenpa is known as the Karma Kagyu lineage, <https://www.diamondway-buddhism.org/diamond-way/karma-kagyu-lineage/>.

¹³ The governing organ of the Buddhist church was the Central Spiritual Board of Buddhists of the USSR ('TsDUB'), the residence of TsDUB was the new temple Khambin sume (now the Ivoginsky datsan), constructed thirty kilometres from Ulan-Ude. The first Bandido Khambo-Lama of the new era was Lobsan-Nima Darmaev (1890-1960) <https://www.buddhistdoor.net/features/a-history-of-buddhism-in-russia-the-sangha-and-the-soviets>.

¹⁴ Telo Tulku Rimpoche¹⁴, is the Tibetan Buddhist leader of Kalmyk was appointed as the new Honorary Representative of 14th Dalia Lama at the Tibet Culture of Information Centre in Moscow on 24 October 2014. He was born in United States to a Kalmyk Mongolian family. He is recognized as the reincarnation of Teloepa (Great Logician Scholar of Kagyu sect) by His Holiness Dalia Lama.

(Bernstein. A. , 2009) outline about the engagement of Buddhism in the political context of the 'Buryat- Buddhologists' in the 19th century and the term 'Asian Eurasian'¹⁵ in the contemporary debates were gaining space.

(Bernstein., 2013), talked about the development of 'cultural sovereignty'¹⁶ when Buryat Khambo Lama and his followers shifted the attention of authentic Buddhism away from its historical centers and Tibet. Therefore, the nationalist-oriented Buddhist leaders and their followers have become fundamental in reshaping the political sovereignty in Russian federation.

A sectarian movement started when Lama B.D. Dandaron propagated Buddhist Tantric rituals and became the religious leader of the first generation of Russia's Converted Buddhist in 1960 where he taught 'Dzogchen'¹⁷ directly to his disciples, today they are known as 'Dzogchen' followers being scared in numbers and often remain aloof from the rest of the communities.

Non- Traditional and New Schools of Buddhism in Buryatia:

The development of Buddhism in Russia has now become heterogeneous due to the rise of many schools unlike earlier when unity of the single Gelug-pa school was cherished. The new Buddhist communities demonstrated a type of religiosity that suggested a secularized attitude towards Buddhist religious goals. They also published those Buddhist texts that the community head chose to propagate through posters and the performance of certain Buddhist rituals. With so many schools of Buddhism existing in the Buryat society, there was a lot of socio-political and economic work carried out by the different heads of the schools.

The Diamond path¹⁸ Buddhist center in Buryatia didn't join the centralized Buddhist Organization as they believed it was the conspiracy of Gelugpa sect for the disproportionate deliverance of funding for maintenance of datsans (Fagan, 2001, p. 12). One of the differences was that the Kagyu School was more focused on Tantra¹⁹ or experiencing practical wisdom

¹⁵ 'Asian Eurasian' term used by (Bernstein. A. , 2009), where 'Asian Eurasian', linking it to contemporary cultural debate in Buryatia. In the post-Soviet period, some Buryats tend to favour their own version of 'Asians', reclaiming with pride their belonging to a larger Asian Buddhist civilization, where Asian inclination deriving from the Tibetan historical linkages.

¹⁶ 'Cultural sovereignty', states that the Buryats have used Buddhism to articulate their relationship not only with the Russian state, but also with the larger Buddhist world by using the body politics, reincarnation and celibates of monastic lamas (Bernstein., 2013). <https://www.scribd.com/book/183493325/Religious-Bodies-Politic-Rituals-of-Sovereignty-in-Buryat-Buddhism> <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/more-alive-than-all-the-living-sovereign-bodies-and-cosmic-politics-in-buddhist-siberia>.

¹⁷ The term "dzogchen" means "great completeness," referring to the fact that all the qualities of Buddhahood are complete on the level of rigpa (pure awareness). Dzogchen, or "Great Perfection", is a central teaching of the Nyingma school also practiced by adherents of other Tibetan Buddhist schools <https://studybuddhism.com/en/tibetan-buddhism/tantra/mahamudra-dzogchen/what-is-dzogchen>. <https://www.definitions.net/definition/Dzogchen>.

¹⁸ The Diamond path or The first Diamond Way Buddhist centre was founded in 1972 by Hannah Nydahl and Ole Nydahl in Copenhagen under the guidance of Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, 16th Karmapa, having 650 centres worldwide. Diamond Way is the translation of Vajrayana in Sanskrit, or Dorje thegpa in Tibetan. <http://www.buddhism-foundation.org/en/buddhism/about-diamond-way-buddhism/>

¹⁹ Tantra:- The first Buddhist teachers in Tibet, beginning in the 8th century with the arrival of Padmasambhava, were tantric teachers from northern India <https://www.learnreligions.com/buddhist-tantra-introduction-450174>. Tantra literally means

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whereas Gelug-pa offered a complex philosophical text and various services to followers, like, Sutra, astrology and medicine, that is oldest school of Tibetan Buddhism is present in the Ulan-Ude capital city of Buryatia Russia.

Some Buddhist organizations in Russia have shown resentment to Tibetanisation²⁰ of Buddhism in Russia due to which twenty datsans from Buddhist Traditional Sangha became independent in Buryat. Organizations like Madar, Green Tara, Rime Movement, Diamond Path Buddhist center and ‘Kundrolling’²¹ were formed on the basis of differences among one tradition. Tensions among the groups are increasingly becoming visible, especially in Buryatia (Fagan Geraldine, 2001, p. 9). Presently, there were 120 Buddhist communities registered in Russian Federation in 1996.

(Yu-Chin, 2004), states, ‘the number of Buddhist organizations increasing in Buryatia, led to struggle for larger space in the religious sphere and contestation between different schools’. Scholars who have concentrated on studying the Buddhism in context to Buryatia are largely of the opinion that the different Buddhist schools here in the Republic should be united, but some who are against any such unification.

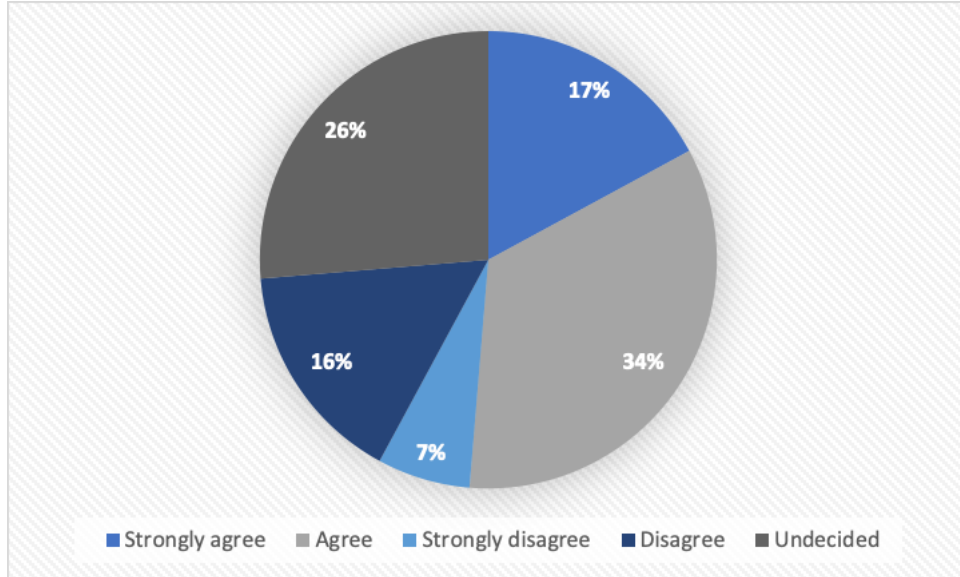
According to the data collected during the field visit about the opinion of the people of Buryatia with regard to any such unification it was understood that 17% and 34% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that various Buddhist schools should be unified under one common head. While on the other hand, 16% and 7% respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively for this proposal and 26% were undecided about this. So, it can be understood that largely the people of Buryatia are keen for the schools to unify.

Chart 3: Response to the question: Do you think that different Buddhist organizations in Buryatia should be united or not? (question asked as part of my field visit to Buryaia in August 2019).

“thread,” or “warp,” and in the Vajrayana view, tantra texts weave together “strands” of sutras. Vajrayana holds that the tantras, like the sutras, were taught by the historical Buddha in his tantric form (known as Vajradhara) or by other enlightened being. <https://tricycle.org/beginners/buddhism/what-is-buddhist-tantra/>.

²⁰ ‘Tibetanisation’:- the influence of Tibet historically and traditionally upon Buryatia, is called ‘Tibetanisation’, which have been later contested in the contemporary Buryatia.

²¹Kundrolling, means ‘the land of dakinis’, where Dzogchen activities take place. <https://www.tsegvalgar.org/theteachings/dzogchen/.in> In Buryatia, Kundrolling is a small Buddhist community, that follow the Dzogchen spiritual tradition, headed by Nikolai Dudko, and it has to re-register annually a s a religious group until the 15 years of completion, as it was unable to register as part of Moscow group and unwanted to come under the Buryatia Traditional Sangha. (Fagan, 2013)



(Sablin.Ivan, 2018, p. 214), states ‘the Buddhist Traditional Sangha of Russia repeatedly attempted to make the ‘secular idea of patriotism’, to retain and expand its positions in republican and federal governance’.

Although in the Presidential Council, Khambo Lama Ayushev of the Buddhist Traditional Sangha of Russia is the only representative of Buddhists, his interpretation of Buddhism as a centralized “traditional religion” of Russia did not become predominant in politics and education. Ayushev’s along with his organization’s efforts to consolidate the notion of self-sufficient Buryat Buddhism that did not succeed. The connections to Tibet and the religion’s global character remained important for Buddhists Buryatia and were initially intended to bolster the self-sufficiency of Russia’s “traditional religions.” The transnational understandings of Buddhism there by challenged its ethicized versions, such as “Buryat Buddhism,” professed by Ayushev. Lama Aiushev was elected as the Khampo Lama since 1995, and took control of all economic condition and started rebuilding the monasteries and the stupas, as per (Bernstein.Anya, 2013).

Another Buddhist centralized religious organization known as ‘Maider’ headed by Samayev²², the reason for ‘Maider’ foundation was to protect the respective ‘datsan’ from interference in their internal affairs by the Sangha. Another local organization registered within the ‘Traditional Buddhist Sangha’ on July 1, 1999 known as ‘Green Tara’ (Nogoon dara ekhe), which is a ‘Gelug’ tradition group of 30 lay people which initially tried to register as autonomous religious organization separately from ‘Aryaa- baala’, the successor to the Buddhist Laymen Association was founded by ‘Dzhampa Tinlei’ in the early 1990’s. The five members of ‘Aryaa-baala’, at their shrine within the former Department for Political Enlightenment in Ulan Ude, stated that, “

²² Lama Tenzin Samayev, is the Abbot of the Kalachakra Temple, St. Petersburg, also known as ‘Kuntsechoinei Datsan’, The Kalachakra Temple in St. Petersburg was built in 1915 to fulfil prophetic visions of the 13th Dalai Lama (1876-1933). In fact it was a Buryat Mongol known as Lama Dorjieff, a tutor to the Dalai Lama and his ambassador to the Tsar, who officially founded the first Tibetan Buddhist temple on European soil. https://www.shambhala.com/snowlion_articles/kuntsechoinei-datsan-kalachakra-temple-st-petersburg/.

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there is strong subservience to the Sangha, 'We are no one', we are subordinate to him, he is our leader and we respect him" (Fagan Geraldine, 2001, p. 11).

'Rime movement' that embraces all tradition of Buddhism, registered as centralized organizations on 23 September 1998 with its president as 'Nimazhap Ilyukhinov where Ilyukhinova being critical of Khambo Lama Ayusheyev stated, "The Khambo lama is training to make Buddhism the particularity of two or three peoples in Russia and give it a national hue, such as "Buryat Buddhism". This does not exist, in Tuvinian, or in Crimean Buddhism". (Fagan Geraldine, 2001, p. 11).

The 'Diamond Path Buddhist Centre', which was founded in 1994, has around 25 members, otherwise the 'Diamond Path Buddhist Centre (Buddiisky tsentr Almazogo puti shkoly 'Karma-Kayu'), founded under Danish Lama Ole Nydahl & is one of 60 groups in Russia, belonging to the Kagyu School of Tibetan Buddhism, but the 'Diamond Path Buddhist Centre' was not in favor to join any single centralized Buddhist organization, in Russia as they observed that the Gelug tradition put tremendous emphasized in monastic life, which means that huge amount of money, will be spend at maintaining the datsan.

The 'Nyingma' tradition, which is the oldest school of Tibetan Buddhism, is represented by three groups in Ulan-Ude & famous 'Dzogchen'²³ practice is already widespread in Russia. Historically, it was Buryat Buddhollogist 'Bidiya Dandaron'²⁴ who was engaged in the advanced Buddhist practices, led to fast enlightenment and he sates, 'I unite all schools'".

"It is not a school but a practice prevailed in the teachings, according to Nikolai Dudko²⁵, who is head of Dzogchen group known as 'Kundrolling', having 20 members (Fagan Geraldine, 2001, p. 12). The 'Kundrolling' group was founded in late 1980's and registered in 1995, when the group members discovered their spiritual teacher 'Nam-Khai-Nurbu' Rimpoches writings'. The chairwomen of the Buryatia's Committee for the Affairs of the Nationalities 'Valentina Alekseyeva', confirmed the disregard for 'Dzogchen' by claiming that the only form of Buddhism in the republic, not widely spread and concluding 'we don't have it here' (Fagan Geraldine, 2001, p. 12).

In Russia, in the late 1990s there were many teachers who came from west to give teachings and lectures and some Tibetan teachers from Europe, who didn't contact the Sangh, according to the Khambo lama. So according to Fagan, there are two forms of Buddhism, one is Asiatic ethnic groups present among the Gelug and other is European, they are mainly 'Self-taught', as Ayusheyev suggested.

After the revival, 1992, the Central Spiritual Board of Buddhist (Tsentral'nove dukhovnoye upravleniye buddistov (TsDUB) was granted the status of an all-Russian religious organization

²³ 'Dzogchen' has a long tradition in Tibet where it was practiced by 'Padma Sambhava', the 8th century, recognized as demons subdued in Tibet, and who led to flourish of Buddhism in Tibet under King of Tibet.

²⁴ Dandaron was recognized as the reincarnation of the reformist spiritual teacher 'Dzhayagsy Gegen, a Buryat Lama who rejected monastic life as 'samsara' and returned to intensive spiritual practice. Dandaron died in 1974 in a soviet prison camp, who believed that the Buddhism would be required in the west and gained many convert followers in the European part of Russia.

²⁵ According to Duko, 'Kundrolling' is keeping away itself from politics and trying to preserve our purity as much as possible'. He also does not believe that the Khambo Lama feels hostile towards his group, he probably does not have view of us, may be as a group of intelligentsia playing with Buddhism. (Fagan Geraldine, 2001, p. 13).

& Ivolginsky Datsan was given to the status of an all-Russian religious organization (Filatov, 2010). TSDUB was renamed as TBSR: -'Traditional Buddhist Sangha of Russia', when the accession of Damba Ayusheev to the post of the Khambo Lama took place (Holland, 2014, p. 168), further Ayusheev has positioned TBSR as an ally of Moscow, meant to secure the recognition of the organization as the leading Buddhist group in the country.

In an interview Ayusheev spoke about the success of the revival in Buryatia, with its fulfillment of restoration of Buddhism prior to its communist era. He said, "today we have already achieved 80% of that task, we have reconstructed 95% of the datsan that existed prior to the revolution, in Zabaikalisky krai, Irkutsk oblast and Buryatia as well as in many of Russia's larger cities, including St. Petersburg", (Sokolov 2009).

(Amogolonova.Darima, 2015, p. 224), Damba Ayusheev who is a 'Shireete Lama' (senior lama) of the 'Baldan Breybun datsan' in the Murochi village of the Kyahta district in Buryatia, and Damba Ayusheev was elected as 24th Hambo Lama in 1995, became too the Chairman of the Central Buddhist Board of Russia. On the initiative of Damba Ayusheev, this organization was renamed the 'Buddhist Traditional Sangha of Russia (BTSR)' in 1997.

Khambo Ayusheev advises to increase self-esteem of Buryat people and they should be oriented towards Buryat lamas, not Tibetan ones: 'Tibetans come and give lectures here, give dedications, they consider that this is their Buddhism. Then what? They are foreigners: they will take away the wealth and will leave for somewhere else, they do not care', (Hambo Lama 2013: 12)

Conclusion

His Holiness, Dalai Lama, have advised on several occasion that 'there are various schools in Buddhism, different system of practice, and we should not consider one school superior to another, the sectarian cast of mindset and criticism of other school is very harmful and poisonous and should be avoided". Similarly, Nikolai Dudko believed all teachings had originated from Buddha and different school of Buddhism is like different food; French, Chinese, Korean, where the aim is to eat to overcome hunger, which is enlightenment.

On one hand Buryatia is facing differences of opinion for the unification of the different schools cause of discernment of different aspiration of all the schools. On the other hand, there is growing inspiration of 'Buryat Buddhist' especially among the traditional schools of Buddhism in Buryatia, focusing on being self-reliant , undermining the dependence on Tibetan, Mongolian or any other Buddhist nations. (Sablin .. , 2018, p. 227) , mentions that the, 'The visit of Medvedev in 2009 to the Ivolginskii Datsan in August 2009 preceded the news that the Fourteenth Dalai Lama would not be able to visit Buryatia . In this context, Medvedev declared that the Russian government would support the "traditional religions" of Russia without the need of any assistance from abroad, while Ayusheev stressed on numerous occasions that the Buddhist Traditional Sangha was self-sufficient. Further, (Amogolonova.Darima, 2015, p. 239), states the, 'Itigelov's Imperishable Body' was officially changed to the "Precious and Unquenchable Body", that equivalent to the essence of the phenomenon and its uniqueness. This is often cited as an example of Buddhism being able to flourish in purest form with the help of their Buryats lama.

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(Sablin .. , 2018, p. 228) states, ‘In 2008 interview Khambo Lama²⁶ Ayusheev claimed that “Buryat Buddhism” was self-sufficient for hundreds of years, dismissing the active contacts with Mongolia and Tibet up to the 1930s and then again since the 1950s and that its development reached “unmatched heights.” He then pointed to the imperishable body (recovered in 2002) of the then Khambo Lama Itigelov, as proof of this self-sufficient”.

Lastly, the Buryat society could not remain separated from the effects of modernization in their everyday life also, making them focused on urbanization and Russian education, family structure, lifestyles and culture, making an impact on their identity being Buryat as Asian inclined and living with Russian that is European inclined.(Batomunkuev, 2003, p. 12), states that, ‘During Buryat urbanization, there was separation of city-country, between different generations and cultural and the experiences of the older generation were not appreciated by the younger’.

(Batomunkuev, 2003, p. 04), title “Buryat Urbanisation and Modernisation: A Theoretical Model Based on the Example of Ulan-Ude” mentions that ‘For the Buryats, modernization was not just a simple case of changing for the new, there was cultural differences such as East vs. West & Buryat vs. Russian & there were cultural differences and modernization that was further complicated by political struggle’.

At last, there is an overall impact of modernization on activities of different school of Buddhism as well as their common living society. Buryatia will be in future will different due to foreign factors like Tibet, Mongolia and being Russia. Buryats were vocal for preservation of purity of Buddhism in Buryatia since the Tsarist era and which was hit hard especially under Soviet repression policies. The dilemma to look at both ‘West and East’ was further matured after collapse of U.S.S.R in the 1990’s. Lastly, Buryatia people continue and keen to preserve their religion, tradition and culture to inculcate it among the coming generations.

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²⁶ ‘The institution of Khambo lama (senior monk) was established in Buryatia shortly after the official recognition of Buddhism as one of the religions of the subjects of the Russian Empire in 1741’. In 1764, by order of Catherine II, Damba Darzha Zayaev was confirmed as the Chief Hambo Lama of all Buddhists living on the south side of Lake Baikal. The total number of Hambo Lamas in Buryatia is 24. (Amogolonova.Darima, 2015, p. 226)

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