

## **CHAPTER IV**

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## **A LIFE SKETCH OF Dr. B. R. ABMEDKAR**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the researcher has initially tried to take a peep into the life of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar through which she has tried to take a glimpse of the incidents that have made Babasaheb the iron man. The events that have occurred in his life and the treatment meted out by the society motivated his thoughts and actions towards progress and upliftment of his people and country. During his lifetime.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891-1956) played three roles: that of a caste leader, that of an Untouchable spokesman, and that of national statesman. In his first leadership role, he was guide, guru and decision maker for his own caste, the Mahars of Maharashtra, from the mid-twenties of this century until his death. From the early 1930s onwards he was the chief spokesman of the Untouchables in the eyes of the Govt, of India, the Untouchable leader who had to be dealt with from the viewpoint of the Indian National Congress, and the individual most responsible for India's policies of compensatory discrimination towards the Scheduled Castes. In his third role, he spoke on all phases on India's development. worked on problems of labor and law as a member of the Government, and even put aside some of his own theories to help create a viable, generally accepted constitution. (Zelliot, Elean or; 1998:53) In the course of this 20 chapter the researcher has tried to capture these roles played by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar began his life as an untouchable; he was treated as a social leper, and shunted from temples, hotels, hostels, public tanks and offices, yet by dint of determined hard work he rose not only to national but also international eminence and showed a new path to his community by breaking the chains of an age old bondage that lasted for thousands of years. Tt There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune" (Keer, Dhananjay; 1954:27). These immortal lines of William Shakespeare had impressed the mind of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar to such an extent that, he struggled very hard to secure human rights to the backward classes thus trying to bring out his unfortunate untouchable brethren from the cruel treatment of the Indian society, from time immemorial. Hinduism which stands for graded social inequalities brought untold miseries and threw the depressed classes in utter destitute and servitude. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar a noblest of the noble minds and the symbol of revolt against all the oppressing features of the Indian society utilized his precious time and energy for the upliftment and development of the people of his community. His determination to be self-reliant lead him to put in intensive efforts and therefore he could successfully climb out of the snake pit of casteism and look down scornfully on his detractors. Thus Dr. Ambedkar, the liberator and savior of the ignorant and dumb people of the Indian Society.

21 revolted against the philosophy of helplessness which made the ignorant people attribute everything to the mercy of Fate and Providence. He fought for the dignity of man and thus is acclaimed as the Champion of human rights. His message to his people was self-help, self-elevation and self-respect. The secret of Dr. Ambedkar's success in life was his philosophy of

self-reliance and self-development. Dr. Ambedkar was a staunch opponent of the philosophy of personal gain and self-love. To him, one must make sacrifices for a good cause and the betterment of society.

To put it in his own words His life was a revolutionary one as he not only fought against the evils of the caste system but also fought for political and economic justice for the oppressed classes. These evils had existed for years together and have become the greatest enemy of democracy as democracy stood for equal rights and freedoms. With Dr. Ambedkar so enormously contributing to the society one can say that he was a man who had various facets to his personality. He was the liberator of the downtrodden. Hero of the oppressed masses, Savior of the suppressed; and 22 the Architect of the Indian Constitution. He was the one who relentlessly worked to liberate the untouchables from the yoke of socio-religious slavery with the tool of education and political rights.

## **4.2 Family Background and Childhood**

The Ambedkar's came from a respectable Mahar family. Their ancestral village is Ambavade, five miles off Mandangad, a small town in the Ratnagiri district. The family belonged to the devotional Kabir School of thought, found consolation in the human attributes like compassion, benevolence and resignation to God. These devotees sought moral and spiritual food in Lord Krishna or Shri Rama. But the most humanizing and broadening effect upon their mind was that the followers of this Bhakti school had abolished the rigidity of the caste system as Kabir, the founder of the school had condemned it. Ramji Sakpal, Ambedkar's father lived a very industrious and intensely religious life. His mother Bhimabai was a pious, gentle and self-respecting woman (Keer, Dhananjay, 1954:10) Ambedkar was their fourteenth child born on 14th April 1891. In his childhood he was called Bhim. Bhim was hardly two years old when his father retired from military service and came down to Dapoli in Konkan from Central India. Bhim's father was not merely after the spiritual development of his children, he also cared for the worldly betterment of his children. He took keen interest in religious and theological discussions. He offered prayers and devotion to God, morning and evening. He read and recited to his children the

23 great national epics. the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. He also sang spiritual songs of Moropant, Mukteswar and Tukaram. The constant recitals, recitations and exposition of these songs provided the children with a certain toning and command of the language in their early age. Ramji Sakpal knew the importance of education in his life. He always wanted to help his children to be emancipated from the society which followed casteism rigidly. He had seen and undergone discrimination as he belonged to this group; however, he never wanted his children to experience these hardships. (Keer, Dhananjay, 1954:11- 12.) Ramji Sakpal was a friend and admirer of Mahatma Phule, he always took great interest in the social problems during his time especially the problems concerning the fate of his community. It is reported in one such incident that occurred in 1892 when the Government of India issued orders banning the recruitment of the

Mahars in the Indian Army that Subhedar Ramji Sakpal took a leading part to protest against these unjust orders by appealing to the Government of India to withdraw the unjust orders. Bhim therefore can be said to have derived from his father his painstaking spirit, his forceful mental energy and the intense interest in the welfare of the society. Such a family tree was bound to bear the fruit of enduring sweetness. Thus Bhimabhai and Ramji were not just Bhim's parents but also the sculptors of his future life (Joshi, N. M.: 1997: 10) Ambedkar, though born almost as a non-entity to a society that exploited him became a lamp post and guiding force to the entire nation later on in his life.

24 2.3 Schooling and Higher Education at the age of five, Bhim was sent to the Marathi School at Dapou however when his father moved to Satara, Bhim had to complete his primary education there. After completing his primary education Bhim began his high school education along with his elder brother in Satara itself When Ramji Sakpal's service in Satara terminated in 1904, the entire family shifted to Bombay. It was then that Ambedkar had to join the Maratha High School, Parel. As this school provided no concession for his studies, he joined Elphinstone High School, a Government institute from where he passed his matriculation in 1907. In high school two Brahmin teachers named Pendase and Ambedkar loved Bhim very much. This teacher by the name of Ambedkar took so much fancy for Bhim that he even changed Bhim's surname from Ambavadekar to his own surname Ambedkar in the school records. (Keer, Dhananjay, 1954:14) Throughout his life Ambedkar remained grateful and indebted to this teacher for his gesture. In 1912 he passed his B.A. examination with English and Persian as his subjects from Elphinstone College, Bombay.

2.4 Education in British India in the early part of the 19th century, the indigenous system of education held the field where schools were housed in the homes of their teachers. temples and churches and mosques. Teachers came from the Brahmin community; however, students of the elementary schools came from all Hindu castes except the Hanjans. (Nurullah, Syed and Naik, I.P.; 1954:8)

2.5 The charter Act of 1813 formed a turning point in the history of Indian education as the education of the Indian people was included within the duties of the East India Company and a large amount was annually secured for educational activities. With this, missionaries began to land in India in large numbers and establish English schools thereby laying the foundation of the modern education system. (Nurullah, Syed and Naik, J.P. 1954:47) The consolidation of British Empire brought about revolutionary changes in social relationship especially the casteless culture. Though the British brought about the legal unification of Indian people on a democratic basis for the first time in the history of India, the untouchables continued to suffer from want of many civil rights such as education, as British approach to Education was commercial which wasn't within the reach of everyone. There was a great disparity in the comparative advancement in different classes. The statistics presented in the report of the Director of Public Instruction for Bombay State 1923-24 highlights this disparity. Primary Schools Advanced Hindus 119 per

1000 of the population Mohmedans - 92 per 1000 per 1000 of the population Intermediate class - 38 per 1000 of the population Backward class - 18 per 1000 of the population.

This was the state of affairs in Primary Schools.

## 2.6 Secondary Schools

Advanced Hindus - 3000 in 1 lac of the population Mohmedans 500 in 1 lac of the population

Intermediate class 140 in 1 lac of the population

Backward class-14 in 1 lac of the population

## College Education

Advanced Hindus - 1000 in 2 lacs of the population

Mohmedans - 52 in 2 lacs of the population

Intermediate class - 14 in 2 lacs of the population

Backward class - 1 in 2 lacs of the population

This disparity is mainly due to the inequality of the status and progress of the communities or classes. (Shukla, J.J., 1998:13-14)

## 2.5 Discouraging and Encouraging Events

### 2.5.1 Discouraging Events

1. Once Bhim, his elder brother and his little nephew, set out to meet their father who worked as a cashier at Koregaon. They got in at Padali Railway Station and travelled up to Masur. As their father did not receive their letter in time, he did not turn up at the station. So the boys decided to find their way alone. With difficulty they persuaded the Station Master, who was a caste Hindu, to secure them a bullock cart and started for Koregoan. Hardly had the cart gone a few yards when the god fearing Hindu cart man, came to know that the well-dressed boys in the cart were the accursed untouchables. So he threw them out on the road for he felt that they had polluted his cart and destroyed the purity of his domestic animals. The boy soothed the cart man's anger by paying double the fare and Bhim's elder brother drove the cart, the cart man following the cart on foot. For hours together the boys had traveled even without any water to drink as nowhere could they get drinking water. People either pointed to filthy water or asked them to go away. This was the first rude shock to the young mind of Bhim. "He knew he belonged to a family that was untouchable, degraded to drink and eat filthy things". (The Janata: 1937)

2. In school Ambedkar could not sit along with his classmates. Instead, he had to sit in a separate corner on a separate piece of gunny bag. The gunny bag wasn't touched even by the cleaner of

the class, so this had to be carried to and fro daily. 3. Bhim was not allowed to touch the water tap. He had to wait for some caste Hindu boy to open it for him. After that he had to put his mouth under the tap water and drink it from a safe distance. Many a times it would so happen that no one would oblige him by opening the tap and in such times he had to go thirsty. He was also beaten black and blue for having quenched his thirst stealthily at a pure water-course

(Kuber, W.N.; 2001:11) 4. In school he was made to sit on the floor far away from other students, Bhim was not allowed to go close to the black board as other students would place their lunch boxes near the board. Going near the black board meant polluting the food stuff, in which case, the students would have to go hungry. (Kuber. W.N.; 2001:11). He had to sit outside the classroom and teachers would not touch him or his books as they believed it would defile their person.

5. As a little boy one rainy day Bhim was totally drenched while going to school since he could not afford an umbrella. Dripping wet he had to sit outside the classroom for the whole day as he wasn't allowed to enter the classroom. Such galling humiliations and inhuman treatment left an indelible mark in the mind and heart of little Bhim. Such an ill treatment by the society continued even in his school and college days.

6. Bhim wasn't allowed to take up Sanskrit though he had an eager desire to learn Sanskrit. According to him, Sanskrit is the golden treasure of epics, the cradle of grammar, politics and philosophy and the home of logic, dramas and criticism. (Hudlikar. Satyabodh:1947) It was a sacrilege for a shudra and that too for an Untouchable to even hear, much less to learn Sanskrit which was the key to the Vedas. He was thus forced to take up Persian as the second language as during that time only the high caste Hindus had the privilege" to learn Sanskrit. This shows the narrow attitude of the society then. (Kuber, W.N.; 1973:14)

7. During his college days as a student of Elphinstone College, the College canteen keeper who was a Brahmin would not give him tea or water. Even as a professor at Sydenham College, Bombay he faced the same social ill treatment The High Caste Professors objected to his drinking water from the pot reserved for the staff (Keer, Dhananjay: 1965:39) 29 8. Even after being highly qualified Bhim did not get the right treatment from the society. In one such phase of his life he started a business firm: offering advice to the dealers in stocks and shares, but as the customers were not ready to go to an untouchable for advice, he had to close it permanently.

All these unpleasant experiences experienced by Bhim and by his whole community for untold ages engendered in him a burning hatred for Hinduism.

2.5.2 Encouraging Events Life of course was a great battle for Bhim. However, he had decided quite early in life to fight this battle and come out victorious. In the course of his life along with the ill-treatment of the society he experienced the concern and thoughtfulness of certain people.

1. In high school two Brahmin teachers loved Bhim very much; one of them would often share a part of his meal with Bhim. This teacher also changed Bhim's surname from Ambavadekar to his own surname Ambedkar.

2. At Elphinstone College he had an encouraging Professor, by the name of Prof Muller who lent him books and gave him clothes.

3. In his college days Bhimrao got a monthly scholarship of Rs. 25 from Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda, a progressive ruler. After his B.A. Bhim joined Columbia University in U.S.A. as a Gaikwad scholar. He was the first Mahar to study in a foreign university.

4. When Bhim was in Columbia University he had unique experiences in life such as he could be in the company of other students and colleagues, he could move freely, he could read; write; walk; bathe and rest with a status of equality. Thus life in Columbia University was a revelation to him and it enlarged his mental horizon.

#### **4.6 Foreign Education**

Bhim was the first Mahar to study in a foreign university. He joined the Columbia University in USA in July 1913. At Columbia University Bhimrao Ambedkar observed democracy in practice as he lived among students on an equal basis. He was impressed with the American practice of working combined with studying. (This concept, he later on in life imbibed in his own Educational Institution) He observed how this spirit of self-help fostered a feeling of self-respect, confidence and more active participation in community and National Services. In June 1915, Ambedkar obtained his Master's degree for his thesis, 'Ancient Indian Commerce' and the thesis was published in May 1917. In May 1916 he read a paper on 'The Caste in India', their Mechanism, Genesis and Development before the Anthropology Seminar of Dr. Goldenweiser. In June 1916 Ambedkar submitted his thesis for the degree of Ph.D. entitled 'National Dividend of India - A Historic and Analytical Study'. It was published eight years later under the title 'The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India'. The book was dedicated to Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad and had the introduction by Prof. S.A. Seligson, the well-known Economist from Columbia University. Ambedkar joined the London School of Economics and Political Science as a post-graduate student in June 1916. In Oct. 1916 he got admitted to the Gray's Inn for Law however he had to return to India after spending a year in London working on a thesis for the M.Sc. (Eco) Degree on account of the termination of the scholarship granted to him by Sayajirao Gaikwad. In 1920 he resumed his studies in law and Economics in London. This was possible because of the recommendation of Prof Cannan as the London University gave him the permission to resume his studies within a period not exceeding four years from Oct. 1917. Ambedkar re-joined the London School of Economics and Politics and also entered Gray's Inn to qualify as Barrister in Sept. 1920. He jammed several Libraries and sat throughout the day even without a break for lunch. He avoided all diversions too. In June 1921 his thesis 'Provincial, Decentralization of Imperial Finance in British India' was accepted to the M.Sc. (Eco) degree by

the University of London. In 1922-23 he spent some months reading economics in the University of Bonn in Germany. In 1923 he submitted the thesis the Problem of the Rupee. Its origin and its solution for the degree of D.Sc. (Eco). The thesis had to be rewritten as the exposition gave offence to British imperialist. The thesis was published in Dec. 1923 by P.S. King and Company of London. The book had an introduction by Prof Canan. The book was re-issued by Thacker and Co. in May 1947 under the title History of Indian Currency and banking".

2.7 Ambedkar's Preceptors Ambedkar regarded three great men as his preceptors. The first was Kabir who took him to the Bhakti (devotion) cult, the second was Jyotiba Phule who inspired him to strive for anti-Brahmanism and amelioration of the masses; their education and economic uplift. Shri Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur called Phule the 'Martin Luther of Maharashtra' and the third was the Buddha who gave him mental and metaphysical satisfaction and showed the way leading to the emancipation of the untouchables, by resorting to the path of mass conversion. (Kuber, W.N.; 2001:18-19)

2.8 Influences on Ambedkar There would hardly be an individual who has not suffered any frustration, obstruction or barriers placed between him and his goals. Ambedkar was no exception. He underwent a lot of problems. While most individuals either adjust to such situations, some succumb to them; others confront them and strike out new paths. Ambedkar was one such leader in the first half of the 20th century who not only struck new paths but also tend to lead his people on it His early life was full of experiences. But most of them were painful, discouraging and sometimes even disgracing, barring some exceptions. However, the effect of some influences and impacts was long enduring on him. His life, ideas and ideals were also a projection of various influences. (Bharill Chandra; 1977:42)

### **2.8.1 John Dewey**

John Dewey was a great educationist and philosopher. His philosophical doctrines and ideology of education were the outcome of the influence of the industrial revolution, the change of population and the accelerated development of mechanization and democratic ideals. Being a pragmatist his views were characterized by practicability and utility.

Dr. Ambedkar was wounded by the bitter and humiliating experiences of untouchability in India therefore he was always in communion with the thoughts of great philosophers of the world. He felt their philosophy could give answers to the problems which had made him restless and depressed. Prof John Dewey's philosophy which thought about the problems of common man gave him consolation and inspiration. Prof John Dewey was a philosopher of a pragmatic and scientific approach. He evolved his own ideas applicable to elementary and secondary education in America. Thus he developed his own distinctive views on philosophy of education. (Bharathi,

K.S.: 1990: 45-46) Dr. Ambedkar was deeply influenced by the writings and teaching of Prof John Dewey, who was his teacher at Columbia. In particular

Dr. Ambedkar was impressed by the humanistic approach and liberal attitude of John Dewey. John Dewey's philosophy especially was meaningful to Ambedkar, for it offered encouragement, that educated and politically aware people could work out their own political destiny in a pragmatic way, pruning the useless and preserving the useful in their societies. (Zelliot, Eleanor, 1998:83)

Ambedkar always felt that man should not conserve the whole of his social heritage but select what is helpful and transmit to future generation only that much and no more. Ambedkar in order to support his argument quotes Prof Dewey, who says -

"Every society gets encumbered with what is trivial with dead wood from the past and with what is positively perverse.... As a society becomes more enlightened, it realizes that it is responsible not to conserve and transmit the whole of its existing achievements, but only such as make for a better future society. (Ambedkar, B. R. (Vol. 1); 1979:79)

Dr. Ambedkar has shown here, by quoting the views of John Dewey, how the worship of past in every respect, is harmful for the reconstruction of society. Scientific approach, according to him was an urgent need on the part of leaders who were expected to lead the illiterate masses to the proper destination in the modern times; secondly. Dr. Ambedkar appreciated Dewey's philosophy which gave a prestige and social status to all the men in society irrespective of their dignified or non-dignified profession. Influenced by this idea Dr. Ambedkar too worked towards ameliorating the ills of his fellow brethren. Dewey's philosophy of instrumentalism led Ambedkar towards a critical analysis of the concrete problems facing humanity. His pragmatic approach convinced him that any philosophy which sought to offer a way out from the troubles in which humanity was caught must be dynamic and pragmatic. John Dewey criticized the ancient philosophers who advocated idealism and other obsolete things. (Ambedkar, B. R.; 1955:34) Ambedkar also criticized the ancient philosophers of India like Kapila and the religious books known as Brahmana's and Upanishads. He was influenced by Dewey's method of inquiry which indicated a way to deal with painful situations. He was also impressed by Dewey's activist epistemology and the idea of a realist school of political scientists and therefore he paid pointed attention to practical rather than mere academic politics. Politics is nothing if not realistic. Before passing judgment on any scheme of politics it is essential that one must consider the ground plans. To him, the ground plan means the social structure of a commodity to which the political plan is sought to be applied. (Ambedkar, B. R.; 1955:34)

Ambedkar fully endorsed Dewey's emphasis on education as a means to change the world and not merely understand it. So, he established the People's Education Society, Bombay in 1946 in order to raise the cultural level of the depressed and the oppressed classes who did not have any

worthwhile cultural heritage as they were denied the educational facilities. The symmetry and cohesiveness that characterized Dewey's concept of instrumentalism appealed to the young mind of Ambedkar. Dewey's ideas provided the basis for a systematic analysis of problems relating to politics, economics, society, religion and history: however, these problems are interrelated, thus demanding an integral approach of the solution. (Ambedkar. B.R., 1936: 73)

#### **4.8.2. William Garrison (Of America)**

Formed the first abolitionists society in favor of the immediate freeing of all slaves. He worked for the emancipation of Negro slaves and fought for their civil liberty. Through his newspaper 'Liberator (a newspaper dedicated to the abolition of slavery.(www.ehistory.com)) he created public opinion in favor of the liberation of the Negroes - Dr. Ambedkar has referred to Garrison's view in a number of his speeches and writings directly or indirectly; especially the following view, that occurred in the first issue of 'Liberator'. 'I shall strenuously contend for the immediate enforcement of our slave population.... On this subject, I do not wish to write or speak, or think with moderation. No, no tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm. Tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher. Tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen, but urge me not into moderation in a cause like the present. I am earnest -I will not excuse -I will not retreat a single inch and I will be heard.'" (Russel, Bertrand: 1965: 60.) On this line of thought Dr. Ambedkar relentlessly reminded the Hindus that the deadly disease of Casteism required drastic measures. This disease which is deep-rooted in the Indian society will not be cured simply by dressing with a bandage of knowledge or even the paper-scheme would not cure it. To quote Dr. Ambedkar

"Dragging on life somehow or to live like a crow for a thousand years is not the only and worthy way to live in this world. Life can be ennobled and immortalized by sacrificing it for a lasting good, such as the cause of truth, a vow, honor, or country. For the protection of human rights several great men have immolated themselves at the altar of duty' (Keer, Dhananjay: 1954:91) This statement of B.R. Ambedkar reconfirms his decisions to empower his brethren from the clutches of the attitude of the high caste Hindus.

#### **4.8.3 John Stuart Mill**

The writings of J.S. Mill impressed upon Ambedkar the importance of individuals' initiative and personal responsibility, Like Mill, Ambedkar was also convinced that freedom of thought is absolutely indispensable although freedom of action may be limited. He said liberty of the individual should be limited as it can become a nuisance to the other (Mahajan, V.D.; 1965: 45). This idea he expressed in a forceful statement before the constituent Assembly while dealing with the exceptions and qualifications of the Fundamental Rights. 2.8.4 Raniji Sakpal

Ramji Sakpal, Ambedkar's father influenced him very much. His father was a religious man and under his influence Ambedkar developed an interest in religion. Ambedkar would join him in puja after which Ramji Sakpal would bless Ambedkar saying

"Bhima, you are going to learn a lot. You are going to be a great and learned man. You are going to get great fame and make the name of your family shine in the world." (Khairmode, C.B.; 1952; 35) Ambedkar says the effect of puja and bhajan helped him realize that religion and religious education are extremely necessary in the life of a man.

(Navyug: 13 April 1947). His deep study of various religions led him to firmly believe that religion had a direct connection with the heart. Ambedkar gave credit to his father for developing his writing skills and conversational skills in English. It was his father who taught him how to use a relevant English word appropriately. Thus Ambedkar's interest in religion, his approach and attitude towards social problems, his reading habit can be traced back to his father. Under his inspiration he came up in his life.

#### **4.8.5 Mahatma Jyotiba Phule**

Mahatma Phule is described by Maharaja Shahu of Kolhapur as the Martin Luther King of Maharashtra who first openly made water arrangements to untouchables in Poona and opened schools for them as well as for women. He opposed the oppression by Brahmins and wanted independence from the priestly slavery. He founded the Satyashodhak Samaj in 1873, a society of the seekers of Truth and preached three principles: God almighty is one and all beings are his children; there is no necessity of any middleman between man and God. Greatness should not depend on birth or caste.

He attacked supremacy of the upper classes and infused self-confidence among masses. He believed that low condition of the Shudras in society continued due to their ignorance. Nevertheless, he felt, with the dissemination of knowledge, light would come to them. Ambedkar was attracted towards the teachings of Phule because of his decisive attitude towards the emancipation of downtrodden masses. He thought all men were equal by birth and social evils made one-man superior over another; thus he wanted to provide opportunities to the suppressed classes to raise them socially; economically, and politically.

Phule criticized Manusmriti because he realized it was a stumbling block in the way to social change. Like Phule, Ambedkar also believed that Manusmriti had bound the Shudras hand and foot. As the laws of Manusmriti governed the lives of the Hindus he felt the low social, economic and political status and degradation of the Shudras was due to the junction of Manusmriti. Thus he revolted against Manusmriti to shake off the shackles of bondage of his people.

2.9 Personality Traits of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

### **4.9.1 Ambedkar as a Teacher**

Dr. Ambedkar was the son of Subhedar Ramji, who was a teacher in Army School. Teaching was therefore, in his blood. He was professor of Political Economics in Sydenham College, Bombay from 1918 to 1920; however, he resigned this post to continue his studies in London. He also became a Principal of Government Law College, Bombay in 1935 and was appointed as Professor of Jurisprudence. It is said that students of other colleges used to attend his lectures. Although his career as a teacher was short-lived due to his many activities in other fields he was always at home with the teachers of the different colleges established by him in Bombay and Aurangabad, who respectfully looked towards him as a 'Guru'.

### **2.9.2 Ambedkar as A Social Liberator**

is a deliverer. Like Moses of the Old Testament, a Hebrew leader, who rescued the people from the clutches of tyranny, Indian history witnessed the tyranny of Brahmins and Hindus. These victims were identified as untouchables in modern India. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was born among these victims and eventually became their liberator. Under the emceed of liberator launched by Dr. Ambedkar, Mahar Chavdar Tank Satyagrah of 1927 is the first which brings to the notice of the world that the Hindus did not regard them as human creed. The other satyagrah was against the denial of entry to untouchables in the temple of Kalaram of the Hindu God. This satyagrah also exposed to the Hindus that they did not regard untouchables to be Hindus. Babasaheb Ambedkar inspired his people to revolt against those who made them untouchables. He reminded them the words of Irish patriot Daniel O'Connell: "No man can be grateful at the cost of his honor. No woman can be grateful at the cost of her chastity and no nation can be grateful at the cost of its liberty". (Meshram, N. G.; 1992:61)

In the liberation movement Babasaheb Ambedkar compared his life to that of Moses of the Old Testament, a Hebrew leader, who suffered and who tried hard to relieve his people from the Egyptian slavery in the 13th century B.C. and led them to Israel. He took them first to Mount Sinai where he received the Ten Commandments from God. Similarly, Babasaheb Ambedkar led his people eventually to safe destiny by establishing educational institutions which would be the only way and hope for the betterment of the down trodden people, to shape new social order and new life in the country by becoming worthy citizens of their motherland and who can defend the country in the right spirit and in the right path. (Nun, Hoti Lai; 1969:19)

### **4.9.3 A Voracious Reader**

Bhimrao, like Tilak and Savarkar developed in his youth a passion for general reading. His desire to possess books was insatiable. Access to literature to Tilak and Savarkar was easy as they were Brahmins however in the case of Bhim it was not only difficult but impossible too, due to illiterate surroundings. As a boy Bhim's father ungrudgingly supposed him with books, borrowing money from his two married daughters and at times even pawning their ornaments as he desired his son to become a man of letters and light. This habit of reading that was nurtured by his father, continued until he completed his studies in the U.S. when he spent hours together in the libraries. His interest in reading was seen by the large library he maintained throughout his

life. Since he read so widely his conversation was always interesting. His talk ranged over many subjects which were stored in his mental museum. He gave his listener a ride through the dark ages with the lamp of history. He gave him an interpretation of the past, revealed the significance of mythology and explained the ancient and modern philosophies, creeds and doctrines.

Babasaheb's interest in reading was so great that he would have no time to speak or to have dinner when he was engrossed in reading. To him love of books was the greatest means of education, self-development, the highest type of recreation and enjoyment. He never read for amusement "What instructs me, amuses me" he observed. (Keer. Dhananjay: 1954:437)

#### **4.9.4 Lawgiver and Constitutionalist**

Dr. Ambedkar was a patriot and nationalist at heart and in the independence of India found an opportunity to contribute to the cause of the nation. Knowing his talents particularly in the field of law and constitution, he was made Chairman of the drafting committee of the Indian Constitution when he was a member of the Constituent Assembly to which he was elected from Bengal. On Nov., 4, 1948 he introduced the draft constitution consisting of 395 articles and 9 schedules (Maharashtra State Board of Secondary Education; 1996:47) which he had to defend before the Constituent Assembly could rectify them. In his speech before the Constituent Assembly, he said: "On 16th January 1950 we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we shall have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man-one value. How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this assembly has so laboriously built up." (Khobragade, Uttam; 1992:51)

Ambedkar proposed that firstly, with the help of the constitutional methods, they could achieve the social and economic objectives, secondly, not to lay their liberties even to a great man or to trust him with power which enables him to subvert their interest and thirdly not to be contended with mere political democracy. He was of the opinion that political democracy should be made social democracy i.e. the foundation of political democracy is social democracy because social democracy is a way of life which recognized liberty, equality, fraternity as principles of life. (Robbin, Jeanette, 1964:84)

#### **4.9.5 An Effective Leader**

The history of human beings is thousands of years old and therefore it has the record of many great personalities and their achievements. From an in-depth study of the lives and works of such great personalities some conclusions have been drawn in terms of the essential qualities of effective leadership. Such as:

- a) great intellectual power and abundant knowledge,
- b) great courage to speak and to act by organizing the people,
- c) fluent and effective oratory and
- d) awareness about the suffering of the downtrodden and an intense desire

render service to such suffering human folk. Judged from these standards, Bharat Ratna Dr. B. R. alias Babasaheb Ambedkar stands the most outstanding leader of the highest esteem during his times. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a 1 of abundant knowledge and unmatched scholarship. He made up his mind man to achieve excellence in the field of knowledge and prove to the Hindus in India that even a scheduled caste person when given the opportunities could rise to the highest status. Babasaheb was a fearless speaker, having experienced the humility in the hands of the higher caste, he knew the untold misery of the downtrodden. He therefore could speak with authority and gain rights for his own community brethren. Plies, qualities of leadership are yet another facet of his personality.

#### **4.9.6 A Visionary**

Babasaheb had a vision for his fellow brethren. Seeing the discriminatory nature of the Indian society he knew very early in life that the downtrodden would never be empowered without a political organization. For the redressal of their grievances, in 1936 he established the 'Independent Labor Party' (which later turned into Scheduled Castes Federation and R.P.I.) As a nominated member on the legislative council from 1926 to 1936, he supported a number of changes which aimed at the progress of the poor and the suppressed.

As an Educationist, he always encouraged not only his fellow brethren but also high caste Hindus into high positions as members of the managing committee of P.E.S., as teachers and professors of his institution, as Principals of his institution. This he did so that his Dalit brethren would emulate certain good qualities from the high caste Hindus; so that a particular standard is maintained in his educational institutions and most importantly that his own Dalit brethren would not take undue advantage of the rights and privileges assigned to them. Dr. Ambedkar also propagated family planning-restricted family and to exercise birth control, four decades ago. He advised his people to follow his advice and thus bring glory to themselves and the Depressed Classes. He said: "Don't be in a hurry to marry: marriage is a liability. You should not impose it upon your children unless financially they are able to meet the liabilities arising from marriage. Those who will marry will bear in mind that to have too many children is a crime. That parental duty lies to giving such a child a better start than its parents had." (Rattu, NanakChand; 1922:11) This shows the foresight that Babasaheb had.

29.7 Ambedkar. The Founder of Educational Institutions Dr. Ambedkar had given utmost importance to education, as in his opinion a man without education is only an animal and a brute.

The Shudras and untouchables were denied the opportunity of education in the Hindu social system and suffered the worst. Dr. Ambedkar had himself undergone humiliation and suffering at the hands of caste Hindus. He was not to learn Sanskrit as he was an untouchable and had to make do with learning Persian. In school and college, he was discriminated against, because of his caste. Yet it was education alone, which opened the gates of the world before him and he made the best use of the opportunity by acquiring knowledge through education. In order to give educational opportunities to the Scheduled Castes he established the People's Education Society [P.E.S.] which runs a number of colleges in Bombay, Aurangabad and Mahad. He always cared for merit and had the best of professors in these colleges. The institutions established by the P.E.S. were open to all learners. On June 20, 1946 the People's Education Society founded by Dr. Ambedkar started Siddhartha College in Bombay. This college was equipped with modern scientific apparatus and a well-qualified staff to promote higher education among the lower middle classes in general and scheduled castes in particular. In 1950, there were 3,600 students and 150 faculty members at the college. The influence of the American plan of working one's way through college was manifested in the schedule of Siddhartha. Students Classes began at 7.30 a.m. and ended at 10.30 a.m. except for laboratory courses. This enabled the students to learn while they earn.

The People's Education Society conducted colleges, boarding, high school and night high school. By aiding backward class students through arrangements like granting free ships, scholarships, hostel accommodation to the needy and sending deserving students abroad for advanced studies with the necessary financial assistance. The People's Education Society had been doing the work of spreading higher education amongst the working class in general and in particular the weaker section of the community.

Dr. Ambedkar, though a social rebel knew very well that the social inequality and humiliation that he and his people faced could be ameliorated only through education. Thus in this research work the researcher has tried to study the contributions of Dr. Ambedkar to the education of the Depressed Classes. Thus this research work dwells on the glorious life of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar giving due weightage to his contributions.

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