

CHAPTER I

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The present research is an educational study on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar was as says Apa B. Pant: "a true revolutionary but not within the framework of any accepted routine theories of social revolution. He was a fundamentalist. He saw the decaying and decadent structure of Indian society. He saw and worked for its transformation through the accepted political, social, administrative and reformist channels. But when he saw that the structure was so impervious to any ordinary efforts, he went up for a basic transformation and change, he went to the heart of the problem, the human kind and converted the struggle to an altogether different dimension. He was thus courageous enough to give a clarion call to the people who suffered for thousands of years to get out of this pattern of caste, and ritual, superstition and fear of the Indian society." (Ahir, D. C; 1992:57) One can address Dr. Ambedkar as a Social Activist as he activated the conscience of his fellow Dalit brethren to the atrocities meted out to them by the high caste Hindus and the rights and freedoms that was beyond their reach, though they were citizens of a democratic country. He also tried to conscientise the general society to the problems he and his people had to undergo, thus alienating them from the mainstream of the society. Dr. Babasaheb is also called an educational thinker, because of his contributions to education. Dr. K. S. Chalam, an educationist and scholar in his article

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as an Educationist, states:

"Ambedkar has given significant and primary position to education than to other activities. If one is inclined to divide his movement into three parts as educational, social and political. the proportion of time, energy and intellect devoted by Ambedkar to education seem to be equally significant. Therefore, the contribution of Ambedkar as an educationist in terms of his works as a researcher, teacher, academic administrator and builder of educational institutions, are praise worthy." (Chalam, K. S., 1992: 35) Compared to his contemporaries, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Vivekananda and other educational philosophers. Dr. Ambedkar cannot be strictly called an educationist. Nevertheless, his educational ideas can be drawn out from his social philosophy and his philosophy of life. He has used education as an instrument to socially empower his Dalit brethren. He firmly believed that it was only through education the suffering Indian masses could be made conscious of their rights as human beings. He gave this sacred message to his people at one of his historical speech on 18 July, 1942 in Nagpur. "My final words of advice to you is Educate, Agitate and Organize, faith in yourself with justice on our side, I do not see how we can lose our battle. It is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for the reclamation of the human personality." (Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Speech, P.E.S. 1991: 3)

The history of the so called Scheduled Castes in India in modern times has been largely the biography of Dr. Ambedkar himself. He carried his entire community on his massive shoulders to put it on the social and political map of India. He breathed a new revolutionary idealism into his followers, so that their eyes were kindled with a new hope, and their voices were vibrant with a confident faith in their future. Thus Dr. Ambedkar was "the symbol of revolt" against the most oppressive features of the Indian Society stated Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. (D'Souza, Frank; 1957:

(i) The life and the achievements of Dr. Ambedkar, who rose in such spectacular fashion, from the lowest strata of society to some of the most exalted positions in the land, is an eloquent demonstration that, given native intelligence, an indomitable will, capacity for hard work, singular devotion to a cause and opportunities commensurate with his abilities, an individual will rise to the full stature of his personality and occupy his rightful place in the council of the nations. It is given to few men in their lifetime as it was given to Dr. Ambedkar to compel the admiration of the intellectual elite as well as to command the adulation of an adoring multitude.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

'An In-depth Educational Study of the Life & Work of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar with special reference to Philosophy & Sociology of Education.

1.3. Need of the Study

After reading the contributions of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to the Indian Society and in a very special way to his own brethren who were lurking in the dark for generations together, the researcher felt the urge to know and understand deeply the status of the Dalits in the ancient and contemporary Indian Society. The problems that they had to undergo for no fault of theirs and the ways and means through which Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar tried to empower them especially by using education as a tool. Education as a social change is the chief instrument of social change. Education Commission (1964-66) has observed:

"If this change on a grand scale is to be achieved without violent revolution (and even then it would still be necessary) there is one instrument, and one instrument only, that can be used:

EDUCATION

Other agencies may help, and can indeed sometimes have a more apparent impact. But the national system of education is the only instrument that can reach all the people. It is not, however, a magic wand to wave wishes into existence. It is a difficult instrument whose effective use requires strength of will, dedicated work and sacrifice. But it is a sure and tried instrument, which has served other countries well in their struggle for development. It can, do so for India." (Government of India: 1966:4)

The researcher felt the need to study the structure and composition of the traditional Hindu society from the educational point of view, which has been the prime reason for such a discriminating treatment to the backward community. Thus, religion interferes in most of the societal processes in India. This aspect has destroyed an entire generation of people. Ambedkar who hailed from a poor family belonging to one of the untouchable communities in India, throughout his life time experienced many humiliations that sank deeper into his consciousness. The arrogance and inhuman treatment of the Hindus towards the millions of untouchables left an indelible mark on the enlightened mind of Ambedkar. It was then that he firmly resolved to fight this evil. This became a mission of his life. The researcher thus got interested into the Social Philosophy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar which reflects his interest in educating the people of his community. Dr. Ambedkar, though a social activist knew very well that the social discrimination 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 in the field of education.

1.4. Conceptual Frame Work of the Study

(i) Application of the mind to a problem or subject.

(ii) A branch of learning.

(iii) An investigation of a particular subject or the published findings of such an investigation. (Good, C. v.: 1973 (ed): 530) Philosophy of Education:

(i) refers to that branch of educational studies which elaborates educational objectives and values. (Good. C. V.: 1973 (ed): 392)

(ii) a careful, critical and systematic intellectual endeavor to see education as a whole and as an integral part of man's culture. The more precise meaning of the term varying with the systematic point of view of the stipulator, any philosophy dealing with or applied to the process of public or private education and used as a basis for the general determination, interpretation and evaluation of educational problems having to do with objectives, practices, outcomes, child and social needs, materials of study, and all other aspects of the field. (Good, C. v.; 1959:395)

Sociology of Education: A.H. Halsey defines it as the analysis of a set of changing and developing relations between education and other aspects of social structure (the economy, the polity, religious and military organization, kinship) as well as the study of classrooms, schools and colleges as social systems in their own right. (Good, C. V.: 1973 (ed): 508)

1.4.1. Operational Definitions

1. Study: an enquiry into the subject in order to gain an insight.

11. Philosophy of Education: Principles that directed the educational thought.

III. Sociology of Education: The relation between society and education, projecting how education of the Dalit's has led to their empowerment.

1.5. The Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the structure of the Indian Society with special reference to education.
2. To collect information concerning Ambedkar's educational thought mainly from primary documentary sources.
3. To analyze and organize the collected data in a logical, sequential and coherent form
4. To analytically trace the roots of Ambedkar's educational thought in his social philosophy
5. To understand the social philosophy of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.
6. To understand his social and educational contributions to the Indian Society.
7. To develop an understanding of the objectives of the People's Education Society.
8. To study the historical growth of the People's Education Society, set up by Dr. Babashaeb Ambedkar.
9. To study the educational contributions of Dr. Babashaeb Ambedkar and compare it to Gandhi and Tagore.
10. To understand Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's life and mission in the light of Value Education.

1.5.1. Limitations of the Study

The study is confined to the following points:

- The Philosophy of life of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar that reflected his social interests.

- The social contributions of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to the Indian Society.
- The Educational activities through which Dr. B. R. Ambedkar tried to improve the status of the Dalit's.
- The institutional contributions of those educational institutions that were established by Dr. B R. Ambedkar.
- A Comparative Study of the Educational Contributions of Tagore, Gandhi, and Dr. B R. Ambedkar.

1.5.2. Significance of the Study

India is making rapid strides in keeping pace with the technological and industrialized nations of the world. The agriculture based and handicraft oriented society of earlier days is fast giving way to a modern, fast moving one. Urbanization is rapidly spreading over all corners of this vast land. Small villages have electricity, and are linked telephone and satellites, as well as air services to metropolitan areas. Among many people there is an enthusiasm for modernization and much of the population has a healthy, optimistic outlook in terms of material prosperity. The philosophy of resignation to fate and of minimizing physical and material comforts is giving way rapidly to providing for better and higher standards of food and living. Thus, society in India is emerging and catching up with other nations of the world. (Bhatia & Bhatia; 2000:316) However, Indian society is still beset with many serious problems like, casteism, communalism, fanaticism, regionalism and linguism. With the change in government from British to native people, there was also a change in the people who govern the country's administration. But like British bureaucracy which has to serve a limited section of the society and ignore the majority of our masses, the new bureaucracy also followed likewise. Exploitation of the masses could not be reduced and stopped and gaps between the rich and the poor, formally educated and informally educated have been further widened, thus creating economic and social disparity.

Babasaheb Ambedkar, who was the Messiah of the downtrodden, scheduled caste/scheduled tribes people in particular, realized this issue in his early life and gave the downtrodden the unique philosophy of educating, agitating and organizing for redesigning the developmental goals of the nation through their own development. This study is intended to highlight:

- the features of the traditional Indian Society along with the origin of Untouchability.
- the ideals for which Dr. B. R. Ambedkar stood and toiled.
- to project the realization of the mission of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to empower his own brethren through education.
- to project the importance of the inculcation of values through the life and mission of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.