

CHAPTER V
DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S VISIONS FOR
EDUCATION

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5.1 Introduction

The term philosophy is derived from the Greek words 'philo which means 'love' and 'Sophia' which means 'Wisdom'. Philosophy thus means 'Love of wisdom' (Bhatia and Bhatia, 2000:3)

Philosophy of education is 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 or 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) The present chapter deals with the philosophy of Education. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Educational philosophy is reflected in his Educational thoughts. An apt way of introducing the educational thoughts of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar would be reiterating/recalling his welcome speech at Milind Mahavidyalaya thus pointing out the value of education in the following words:

"Coming as I do from the lowest order of the Hindu Society. I know that what is the value of education. The problem of raising the lower order deemed to be economic. This is a great mistake. The problem of raising the lower order in India is not to feed them, to clothe them and to make them serve the higher classes as the ancient ideal of this country. The problem of the lower order is to remove from them that inferiority complex which has stunted their growth and made them slaves to others, to create in them the consciousness of the significance of their lives for themselves and for the country, of which they have been cruelly robbed of the existing social order. Nothing can achieve this purpose except the spread of higher education. This is in my opinion the panacea of our social troubles."(Welcome speech by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar at Milind Mahavidyalaya Aurangabad, 1951.) Education is the corner stone of progress and upliftment. It leads to increased awareness and social consciousness of the people and provides for more responsible leadership of the nation. Obviously, education includes knowledge imparted through reading, speaking, listening and writing. However, education embodies and affects the daily action and habits of people and the interrelationship among the peoples. Thus we are constantly being educated and educating each other. This process encourages our growth and progress, though it may not be steady growth. Ambedkar knew well that the more the education, the more the chances for progress and the easier the opportunities for his people. But since he thought that by giving his people political power, the problem of their education would be automatically solved through Governmental efforts and agencies, he devoted his time and talent more to securing political rights than to securing educational uplift. (Keer, Dhananjay: 1954:121-122).

5.2 Importance of Education

Ambedkar thought that education was of tremendous importance as a foundation of progress. He thought that because people neglected the material needs of life and grew indifferent to the knowledge that enabled them to secure it, our country remained backward and her progress came to a standstill. He did not visualize education simply as a means for the development of a child's personality or as a source of earning one's livelihood. Rather, he considered education as the most powerful agent for bringing about desired changes in society and a prerequisite for organized effort for launching any social movement in modern times. For him education was an instrument to liberate the Dalit's from illiteracy, ignorance and superstitions and thus enable them to fight against all forms of injustice, exploitation and oppression. He felt if the Dalit's are educated then they could leave their traditional occupation and take up secular occupations thus breaking the age-old caste based structure of divisions of labor in our society. Mahatma Jyotirao Phule also described the indispensability of education for the redemption of the Dalit's in the following words:

"For want of education, their intellect deteriorated for want of intellect, their morality decayed, for want of morality, their progress stopped for want of progress, their wealth vanished all their sorrows/J sprang from illiteracy". (Keer. Dhananjay: 1954) Babasaheb always held that education should be co- related to the social:

political and economic needs of a developing nation. It should be an instrument of social change. It should be so devised, as to meet the realities of the times. With this end in view the People's Education Society, which was founded by Dr. Ambedkar started Diploma courses to equip students for responsible positions in various fields of professional activity. He thus instituted the Siddhartha College of Mass Communication and Media and the Siddhartha Institute of Industry and Administration. He felt that for the betterment of society only education at school would not be enough. Informal education at home along with the education through newspapers and other sources was also necessary.

5.3 Aims of Education

An Aim is a foreseen end that gives direction to an activity and motivates behavior (Good, C.V, 1959:23) Thus an aim of education is a goal or directive to education. The ultimate aim of education in ancient India was not knowledge as preparation for life but for complete realization of self-Ancient educationist considered 'Vidya' knowledge as the third eye of man which gives him insight into all affairs and teaches him how to act righteously. Thus the aim of Education was self-Realization. The Immediate aim of education was to prepare the different classes of people for their actual needs of life. In Medieval India the aims of education stressed upon religious ideals and vocational growth. However, education during British rule wasn't related to the needs of India, therefore it was opposed. Education in Free India brought in qualitative changes. Many committees and commissions were appointed during this time and aims of Modernization, National Integration. Development of social and moral values; Increasing Productivity: promoting

secularism were enforced in education. These aims are also stressed by Babasaheb (Agarwal, J.C. 1999: 48-56) Ambedkar upheld the democratic concept in education propounded by Dewey. Any education given by a group tends to socialize its members. Thus it is the responsibility of the society to impart education. Ambedkar himself was an example of what education could do to the under-privileged section of the society.

Education is not only a layer for their social mobility but also opens the doors for their modernization. It also affects in reducing their dependence on the rural elite and offers them a chance for occupational change. It makes them aware of their humiliation and enslavement and ultimately emerges as an instrument of liberation and empowerment.

To him, the surest way for salvation of the oppressed and 'untouchables'

lies in higher education, higher employment and better ways of earning a living. He was, however, disillusioned by the educated section of his people. He observed

"An educated man without character and humility is more dangerous than a beast. If his education is detrimental to the welfare of the poor, the educated man is a curse to society... Character is more important than education." (Dr. Ambedkar College of Commerce & Economics; 1992:71) Thus, he gave importance to character formation through education.

5.4 Curriculum

Curriculum is the means of the educational process, which will help us to achieve the goals we have set before us. The educational process is set into motion towards its aim through the curriculum or course. The curriculum is, in a literal sense, a pathway towards a goal. A curriculum is all the experiences a child has, regardless of when or how they take place. (Bhatia & Bhatia; 2000:153) The Kothari Commission in this respect states:

"According to the best modern educational thought, curriculum does not mean only the academic subjects traditionally taught in schools, but includes the sum total of experiences that a pupil receives through the manifold activities that exist in the schools, in the classroom, library, laboratory, workshop, play grounds and in the numerous informal contacts between teachers and pupils. In this sense, the whole life of school becomes the curriculum which can touch the life of the student at points and help in the evolution of a balanced personality. (Bhatia & Bhatia; 2000:154) Curriculum is a means to realize the educational aims. Ambedkar gave importance to science and technology courses, Earlier, he had established the 'Bharatiya Samaj Seva Sangh' whose motto was to read, read out and hear, understand, realize and give realization. He felt education was necessary to instill proper in the light of those guidelines. For this purpose, Dr. Ambedkar pointed facilitates transmission of all resources and achievement in a complex society. By this we can say that Dr. Ambedkar believed in interactive teaching and learning where the teacher is a facilitator and guide, to facilitate the learning of a student. He also stressed on self-

learning for which he always furnished his libraries with the right kind of books and easy access to them.

5.5 Dr. Ambedkar's

Views on Examination He severely criticized the examination system, which was closely linked with the standard of education. It is one of the means to reach an end. But educationists in those days believed that the raising of the standard of examinations is equivalent to the raising of the standard of education. (Govt, of Maharashtra; 1982:50-51) Dr. Ambedkar opposed the idea of severe examination system, as he believed that the "University cannot succeed in promoting research or in promoting education, if it makes the examination system the be all and end all of its existence". ((Govt, of Maharashtra; 1982:45-46) While giving alternatives for a better education

Dr. Ambedkar recommended:

1. Besides examinations, students work in colleges ought to be taken into account.
2. For higher degrees there should be thesis and oral examination" (Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Writings & Speeches Vol.2, 1982:45-71),
3. Number of examinations should be reduced to the extent possible, as a result of which a student would get an opportunity to learn different aspects of education.

5.6 Primary Education

Primary education occupies a significant place in the educational reconstruction of a developing country. Ever since educational consciousness developed in India, a great deal of thinking has gone into developing adequate programmes of primary education. When the constitution of free India was in the making. The expert framers of this sacred document did not ignore the great national endeavor to provide for primary education to suit the needs and aspirations of the people of free India. Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State policy held out a great promise for the young child. Unfortunately, a few miles are yet to be travelled before the promise can be fulfilled. It is the primary education which is the first stage of the entire superstructure of educational setup in India. According to Indian Constitution (Art. 45) Primary education refers to "free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years. (Bhatia, K. K., Chadha, P. C. & Kadyan, K.S. & Sharma, S.; 1988:75)

It was in September 1882 that DadaBhai Naoroji demanded before the first Education Commission of the country, that primary education should be made free and compulsory in India as soon as possible. Though his demand was unheeded, yet it did express that Indians were awakening towards the need of free and compulsory education. In 1910, Mr. Gopal Krishnan Gokhale, a member of the Imperial Legislative Council, moved a resolution in the council urging the government to make primary education free and compulsory for boys between the age group of 6

and 10 throughout the country. This was the first and definite demand on the part of an Indian. In spite of the support of eminent persons like Madan Mohan Malviya, Mohammed Ali Jirmah, the bill was defeated. After the achievement of Independence, compulsory education was given eminent importance. However, it hasn't reached its goal. (Bhatia, K. K., Chadha, P. C. & Kadyan, K.S. (feSharma, S.; 1988:80-82) Dr. Ambedkar considered education to be essential for all men and women irrespective of their social and economic status. All men and women must get at least the minimum education so that they may know how to read and write. The primary education caters to the minimum essential need of educating the masses. According to Dr. Ambedkar, "the object of primary education is to see that every child that enters the portals of a primary school does leave it only at a stage when it becomes literate throughout the rest of his life. But if we take the statistics we find that out of every hundred children that enter a primary school only eighteen reach the fourth standard, the rest of them, that is to say, eighty-two out of every one hundred replace into the state of illiteracy. He said that the Government should spend sufficient amount of money so that "every child who enters a primary school reaches the fourth standard." (Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Writings and Speeches Vol.2, 1982:45-71).

Dr. Ambedkar always advised the down-trodden masses, to develop their condition themselves and to make progress in all the spheres of life. He was of the opinion that unless Primary Education was made obligatory and strictly enforced, conditions for educational progress of the Backward classes would not come into existence. According to him, unless the 'Compulsory Primary Education Act' was established, and the transfer of primary education to the school boards was stopped, the education of the depressed classes would achieve a great set back. He viewed that the entry in the public service should be secured to the depressed classes otherwise there would be no inducement for them to take to education. He thought that some special provisions should be made for the education of the Backward classes in the form of a few hostels and few scholarships for higher education by the government. But he was aware of the fact that it was useless to make provision for higher education of the Depressed Classes unless steps were taken to ensure the growth of primary education. According to him separate schools for Backward Class Students is not advisable as this in turn would widen the gap between the Caste Hindus and the Untouchables. He thought that books should be published in simple language, circulating libraries should be provided to night schools, special bonus and prizes should be given by the Government to teachers who were educating the Backward class pupils. He was aware of the fact that only primary education was not enough for the upliftment of the down trodden masses, so he encouraged them to take higher education. In his Bombay Legislative Council Debates, Vol. XIX, dated 12* March 1927 on 'Grants for Education' he states that the government should form an agency that is directly responsible to it to make sure that the Dalit is not ignored and seen to their advancement in education. He made this statement on the basis of his observation of the great disparity in the comparative advancement in education of the different classes as against the size of population.

5.7 Higher Education

Babasaheb stressed upon the minds of his people, the importance of self-respect and self-elevation. He encouraged them to take higher education for their progress. He thought that the progress of a community always depended upon how its members advanced in education. That is why he laid more stress on higher education than on primary education. In the realm of higher education, Dr. Ambedkar was in favor of giving teachers necessary freedom to frame their own syllabi and assess the performance of their students. He was opposed to prescribing and following a rigidly structured syllabus.

He founded the People's Education Society (P.E.S) in 1945, which started a college on June 20, 1946. The institution was founded by him with a view to promoting higher education among the lower middle classes and especially among the scheduled castes. Later on the P.E.S started high-schools, night high schools, hostels, colleges and other institutions. Though he started the People's Education Society, still he held the view that the greater responsibility for providing educational opportunities should be that of the Government.

5.8. University Education

Dr. Ambedkar worked as a professor and after-wards as a Principal of a college. He studied the state of University Education in our country as well as abroad. He was of the opinion that Colleges should not be separated from the University. Colleges should be partners on terms of equality and participate in promoting together the cultural progress of both undergraduate and postgraduate studies. He wanted that the undergraduate faculty and the postgraduate faculty should work in an integrated fashion. If both the faculties run together in a University, the students at the undergraduate level may get the opportunity to attend the lectures of the senior and distinguished professors. The senior teachers may also get the opportunity to select the best students and train them properly from the very beginning. Dr. Ambedkar said that the aim and function of the University education should be

1. to ensure that the teaching done there is suited to adults;
2. that it is scientific, detached and impartial in character;
3. that it aims not so much at filling the mind of the student with facts or theories as at calling forth his own individuality and stimulating him to mental effort.
4. that it enables him to critically study the leading authorities with perhaps occasional reference to first-hand sources of information;
5. that it implants in his mind a standard of thoroughness and inculcates in him a sense of value for reaching at the truth, (Govt, of Maharashtra; 1982:292-295) On December 16, 1952 Ambedkar addressed the students' annual gathering at the Elphinstone College on the Problems of modern

Students. He appealed to the students to reorganize University ideas to meet the requirements of the modern world and to make the University a place for knowledge and not a center for training clerks. He felt that University should not mould the students but that it should provide the atmosphere for the students to mould themselves through independent investigation of Truth. Modern University Education is an expensive thing and the portals of the college are closed to the clever students, whose guardian cannot foot the bill. The ambition of such a student dwindles into the bleak reality of an office clerk and typist. The idea of morning college was introduced by him for the benefit of such students. He thought that education should be given in such a manner that it promotes intellectual, moral and social democracy.

India is a country of villages. Majority of the down-trodden masses is scattered in villages. For getting higher education they have to come to cities. Taking into consideration this fact Ambedkar always stressed on hostel facilities to be attached to high schools and colleges. Ambedkar suggested that the Government can form these hostels and run these, or make private bodies/institutions for backward community to establish and run these. He saw advantages in this:

i) Dalit boys would be away from uncongenial surroundings and.

ii) It would save the booty of the Government (Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings & speeches, Vol. II, 1982: 37-71)

5.9. Library as an Educational Institution

A Library is a building or room equipped for housing books and other materials of communication and for reading, listening or viewing purposes, a collection of books of various kinds, a collection of films, recordings etc. (Good, C. v.; 1959:318) There is no denying the fact that Library occupies a very prominent place in the educational setup at present. The changing pattern of education demands that the learning must be accelerated and broadened by the use of many and varied devices and materials. In a dynamic approach to teaching. Library is an essential part of school. It not only supplies enriched materials in all fields of study but also supplies materials in all levels of difficulty. (Kochhar, S. K.; 2000:254) Dr. Ambedkar was a noted bibliophile. He lived.

moved and had his being in the world of books. He was of the opinion that library was an educational institution itself, so he always stressed on well- equipped libraries to be affiliated to all his educational institutions. Ambedkar wanted reorganization of University education and the establishment of teaching universities. Therefore, he introduced co-curricular activities in almost all his institutions along with academic activities.

He did not believe in mere bookish knowledge in the educational process. Along with formal education he strongly believed in educating the masses through mass media. Like most of the leaders of repute he too started four newspapers. This was his weapon to propagate the ideas and launch struggles against social and political tyranny.

5.10 Legal Education

As Dr. B.R. Ambedkar worked as Professor in Law Colleges, and later as the Principal of the Government Law College in 1935. He had taken keen interest in the problems concerning law at that time. He was considered a great jurist. He put his radical views on Legal Education in an article under the title 'Thoughts on the Reform of Legal Education' in the Bombay Presidency.

In it he referred to six classes of legal practitioners in the presidency and deplored that there should be such a diversity in the qualifications, in the matter of examinations and in the matter of status among persons practicing the same Profession. As regards the curriculum for a complete course of legal education. he said that a lawyer should possess a correct understanding of the fundamental principles.

A grounding in general knowledge, the art of orderly presentation of the subject and precision in stating facts, ability to express oneself in clear language and relevancy of the answers given to the questions asked. From the educationist point of view, the study of law, requires a study of certain other auxiliary subjects without which the study of law alone would be an incomplete equipment for the practice of the profession. Observing further he said that a lawyer must have a legal mind, he quotes Augustine Birrell who says; 'A legal mind chiefly displays itself by illustrating the obvious, explaining the evident and expatiating on the common place.'(Keer, Dhananjay: 1954:252)

5.11 Technical Education

Technical Education is a type of education that emphasis the learning of a technique or technical procedures and skills and aims at preparing technicians.

(Good. C. v.; 1959:554) Dr. Ambedkar said in order that learning and culture of the mind be complemented, it must be combined with healthy manual work. He advised students to take the fullest advantage of the facilities offered by the Government for studies in technical and higher fields. He was of the opinion that owing to the stratification of society, the scheduled castes occupy economically a very low place in the Indian economy. The status and conditions of scheduled castes could be improved only by technical education, which gives place for occupying executive posts.

5.12 Education of Women

The women of any country have an important contribution in the progress of that country. It is the women who are capable of building such children who may lead the country to the path of progress and prosperity. Educated women makes the family and the society cultured. Manu, has, therefore rightly remarked that God resides at the place where women are worshipped. By worship of women we do not mean the worship through conventional means, but we mean where women are respected, proper provision of education made for them and they are given freedom equal to men

in the society. The utmost expansion of women education is necessary for the achievement of all sided development of India.

In ancient India, education of women had made a great progress. Women not only studied the Vedic literature but famous women such as Maittrai. Gargi, Ghosha. Lopamudra, etc. had themselves, composed Vedic verses. Women of the ancient period had acquired great knowledge in different Shasthras and sometimes they not only participated in the Shasthras (learned discourses) equal to those of men but also acted as judges or mediators. After the Vedic period, the education of women received encouragement during the Buddhist period also. Scholars are even of the view that it is the Buddhists who have the credit of making the first organized effort in the field of women education because they made proper provision of education for the Buddhists female monks. After the decline of Buddhism, when the revival of Hinduism started women education received a major setback because Shakaracharya, the leader of the revival of Hinduism, was against the education of women.

In 1904, Annie Besant established central Hindu Girls school at Banaras and Prof Karve established S.N.D.T. women's university at Poona. All India Women Education conference was organized in 1927 and demands were made for providing different types of education to women (Rai, B.C., 1984, 386) After the Independence of India in 1947, our leaders paid special attention towards the expansion of women education in the country.

When Dr. Ambedkar was a young boy of twenty he wrote a letter from U.S.A. to one of his father's friends. In it he expressed his views about education of women. He thought that the downtrodden progress would be greatly accelerated if male education was pursued side by side with female education. However, he did not think that boys and girls should be given the same education. He thought that they should be given the same education upto matriculation. Imparting education to girls on par with boys appeared to him a waste of time, money and energy. According to him, what was the use of teaching.

Burke and Shakespeare to girls? Girls should be well-versed in home education. (Bombay University Ambedkar Collections...ILP Manifesto). Ambedkar was a believer in women's progress. He measured the progress of a community by the degree of the progress which women achieved. He fought for human rights equally for both men and women. He advised women to learn to be clean, keep away from vices, give education to their children, remove from them all

inferiority complexes, instill ambition into them, inculcate in their minds that they were destined to be great and not to be in a hurry to marry. These thoughts of Dr. Ambedkar clearly shows that he too strongly believed that if women were educated the entire family will be educated.

5.13. Religious and Cultural Education

Ambedkar said, I consider the foundation of religion to be essential to life and practices of society.”(Keer, Dhananjay: 1965:58). During the last few years of his life, a strong feeling developed in him, that the social emancipation of the untouchables and down-trodden and their political aspiration must be sub-ordinated to religious sentiments and reform movements.

Religious awakening and social reform became the corner-stone of his whole thinking process. He laid emphasis on the collective aspects of human life. He thought that the balance between material and spiritual awakening must be struck, as without it a developing society cannot flourish. Dr. Ambedkar was of the opinion that "Education was a sword and being a double-edged weapon, was dangerous to wield. So an educated man without character and humility was more dangerous than a beast. If his education was detrimental to the welfare of the poor, he remarked the educated man was a curse to society. Character is more important he emphasized than education. It pains me to see youths growing indifferent to religion. Religion is not an opium as it is held by some.

What good things I have in me or whatever have been the benefits of my education to society, I owe them to the religious feelings in me. I want religion but I do not want hypocrisy in the name of religion". (Keer. Dhananjay: 1965:294). He rightly knew the importance of religion in education.

5.14 Views About Teachers and Professors

"No system of education can rise higher than its teachers." "The way to child - centered education can only be through teacher-centered school." In the words of Dr. Pires, "If a nation's teachers are C3, the nation itself cannot but be C3. And let there be no doubt about this if we wish to be an AI nation, our teachers will have to be AI." The Mudaliar Report stated -

"We are convinced that the most important factor in the contemplated educational reconstruction is the teacher - his personal qualities, his educational qualifications, his professional training and the place that he occupies in the school as well as in the community," (Kochhar, S. K.; 2000:151-152)

Dr. Ambedkar said in an editorial that no real progress could be made in education, if education was entrusted to the teachers coming from the Brahmin community, whose minds conceived an abhorrence for the lower classes and who showed callous disregard for the intellectual uplift of any other class. He declared that teachers were the charioteers of the nation and there was no question more important from the stand point of social reform than the selection of proper persons in the teaching profession. Those who drummed into the ears of the backward class students that they were born to do odd jobs like their forefathers, that they belonged to low categories, and that education was a thing meant for a particular class, should not be entrusted with this noble, national, human, enlightening work (Keer, Dhananjay: 1954:80-81) observed Ambedkar. Ambedkar was of the opinion that the present educational system could not produce good professors. He advocated

the system of grouping different subjects. He viewed that teaching and research must be the work of the professors and they all must receive equal pay.

He outlined his concept about an ideal professor. He said: "a Professor should not only be learned, he must speak in a clear tone and he must be well versed in his content." He also opined that Professors should constantly seek knowledge and try for truth and practice it. In the realm of higher education, he was in favor of giving teachers necessary freedom to frame their own syllabi and assess the performance of their students. (Kuber, W. N.: 1973:250).

5.15 Appeals to Students

To Dr. Ambedkar nothing was more sacred than learning. He recalled students of the glorious tradition and untiring industry. High aims and high sense of public life of Ranade, Tilak and Gokhale.

He advised students and young men to inculcate a spirit of service to their community. The task of shouldering the future burden of welfare of the community would be theirs and at should they forget it. no stage whatever be their status or position

On September 25, 1947, he inaugurated the Parliamentary Institution of Siddhartha College of Bombay. In his thought provoking speech, he impressed upon the budding youths the need for cultivating the art of speaking. In a Parliamentary Institution he observed, success went to the man who had the capacity to address the house in a gentle, strong, logical and instructive manner. In order to develop that power students must equip themselves with many things. They must widen their vision; their capacity to think and their ability to solve the actual problem which the people had to face. He then dealt with the various aspects of parliamentary democracy and said that Government meant decision. Government by compromise was no Government; because they got a decision which was neither fish nor fowl. he concluded. (Keer, Dhananjay; 1954: 381) In the month of January, 1948 Ambedkar addressed a meeting of the elocution prize distribution Ceremony of the Dhobi Talao Night School, which held its function at the Siddhartha College premises. He impressed upon the boys that the art of speaking in public could be developed with great efforts. He told them how the great speaker G.K. Gokhale was disconcerted while making his maiden speech, how Phirozeshah Mehta developed his powers by reciting his speeches in a room fitted with mirrors where he could watch how his expressions changed and how his hands moved. He said that Mehta took great care to see that his dress and appearance were neat and impressive. He added that Churchill, the great orator, never delivered any speech without preparation.

He delivered a speech at D.A.V. College, Jallunder City, Punjab, on October 28.1951. He said, "I am very fond of teaching profession. I am also very fond of students. I have dealt with them. I am very glad to talk to the students. A great lot of the future of this country must necessarily depend on the students of this country. Students are an intelligent part of the community and they can shape the public opinion. I therefore, take special pleasure in addressing you the members of the

parliament and I am really thankful for this opportunity given to me. I want you to take note of these eventual certainties and if you wish that Parliamentary System of Government and Parliamentary Democracy prevail in this country if you are satisfied that we will be assured of our liberty of thought, speech and action, if we should preserve our independence, if we cherish the inherent right of individual liberty; then it is your duty as students, as the intelligent community of our country, to strive your utmost to cherish this Parliamentary System of Government into its true spirit and work for it." (Das, Bhagavan; 1963:40).

5.16.1 Knowledge as the Foundation of a Man's Life

Knowledge is the accumulated facts, truths, principles and information to which the human mind has access. (Good. C. V.; 1959:308) Ambedkar observed that knowledge was the foundation of a man's life and every effort must be made to maintain the intellectual stamina of a student and to arouse his intellect. He advised the students to develop their thinking power and make use of their knowledge they had gained. He appealed to students not to take active part in politics during their school days, and asked them to create value and worth for their say. They should infact be engaged in the development of self-culture and self-help. Ambedkar exhorted the students to put a premium on industry and creativity. They should persevere to attain goals and ideals dearer to them, devoid of which life becomes less thrilling and meaningful. In 1938, at a Conference of the Depressed Classes Youth he urged students to have an ideal, and to cherish it and work for it throughout their life. He added that, the students should accomplish the ideal through their own industry and perseverance.

5.17 Educate, Agitate and Organize

"My final word of advice to you is 'Educate, Agitate and Organize'; have faith in your-self with justice on my side, I do not see how we can lose our battle. The battle to me is a matter of joy. The battle is in the fullest sense spiritual. There is nothing material or social in it. For ours is a battle not for wealth or for power. It is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for the reclamation of the human personality" proclaimed Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar to the have the have-nots at one of his historical speech on IS' July, 1942 in Nagpur. (Shastri, Shankaranand; 1992:17)

Dr. Ambedkar believed that establishing educational and economic benefits would not only raise the living standards of the untouchables, the down-trodden masses and the Indian in general; but would also enhance the self-respect of the people.

He educated his people while he criticized their indifferent attitude and laxity in instituting reforms. To promote the spread of culture among the Depressed classes he opened libraries, social centers, classes and study circles. He criticized that Government was making a very slow progress in the matter of education. He viewed that education was something which ought to be brought within the reach of every one. The policy of the department therefore, ought to make higher

education as cheap to the lower classes as it could possibly be made. So he appealed to the Government to give favored treatment to the backward classes.

He argued,

"If all these communities are to be brought to the level of equality, then the only remedy is to adopt the principle of inequality and to give favored treatment to those who are below the level. People who lay emphasis on the principle of equality in all things conveniently forget that numbers 5 and 10 if multiplied by 2, a common factor, yield the product ten and twenty respectively and not twenty in both the cases. That is why Ambedkar held that equality meant raising the level of the lower classes to the level of the higher classes." (Keer, Dhananjay, 1954:80)

Dr. Ambedkar advised the Scheduled Caste students to perform their duties and discharge their responsibilities in the service of the Down-trodden masses. According to him, their role in life was of tremendous consequence and was bound to contribute to the progress and destiny of the Depressed Classes. He said, "Our boys should learn two things. Firstly, to prove that given the opportunities they are inferior to none in intelligence and in capacity. Secondly, to prove that they are not merely to tread the path of personal happiness but to lead their community to be free, to be strong and to be respected." (Blake, Clark, 1950:109) He hoped that the Depressed Class women would also contribute to the progress of the community, if, after performing their household duties faithfully, they snatched some time from their daily life and devoted it to the uplift of their fellowmen. Ambedkar took keen interest in the militarization movement. So he urged the youth of his community to suspend their studies and qualify themselves for military commission and preserve their high martial tradition.

Ambedkar, the social revolutionary knew well that the problem of untouchability did not depend for its solution so much on the spread of education or on the rational appeal as on the abolition of the privileges, selfishness and the peculiar frame of mind of the high caste Hindus. He, therefore, urged the Depressed Classes to act in as forcible a way as to let the caste, Hindus know that to observe untouchability was a risk as dangerous as to bear live coals on their tongues. These caste Hindus, he viewed, would not understand paper resolutions or appeals made at conferences and would not realize the magnitude of their sins until they felt it unsafe to treat them as untouchables. So he asked them to keep before their mind the struggle between the Hindus and the Muslims and said that it was a struggle for cultural predominance. The balance of power was, he asserted, in their hands and therefore, he asked them to utilize their forces advantageously for the advancement of their own social and political rights. He was of the opinion that education and civilization might descend from the higher to the inferior classes and so communication might impart new vigor to the country.

5.18 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, a Realist/Pragmatic rather than Idealist

Idealism shifts the emphasis from the natural or scientific facts of life to the spiritual aspects of human experience. To the idealist, the reality is spiritual in nature rather than physical, mental rather than material. Ideas are eternal and unchanging. (Bhatia, K. K. & Narang, C. L.; 1986:94) Prof. Arnold Reid regards, pragmatism as activity engagement, commitment and encounter. Pragmatism is based on the concept of practice or workability of an idea or theory. It further believes that man is primarily an active being, growing, animated, mobile being who must first live life and only secondly speculate it. Thus, pragmatism sees throughout as intrinsically connected with action. The value of an idea is measured by the consequences produced when it is translated into action. (Bhatia, K. K. & Narang, C. L.; 1986:111) Pragmatism is mainly based on the philosophy of John Dewey. The educational thoughts of Dr. Ambedkar are more realistic pragmatic than idealistic. He never believed in mere bookish education. He knew the importance of informal education along with formal education. He laid proper stress on technical and military education also. He encouraged co-curricular activities in all his institutions to enlarge the sphere of knowledge.

He desired that the students studying in his institutions should come out with fully developed personality in all respects. In fulfilment of this ideal; he established a College Parliament in Siddhartha College of Arts and Science. His views about education of women may be controversial today, but they might be relevant to that time. The modern concept of education is comprehensive and lays more stress on the all-round development of a child. Ambedkar also believed in this concept. He was persistent that Government should give special facilities to the Backward Class students; at the same time, he was of the opinion that the Backward Classes should make their progress themselves. Thus he was one of the great educationists of India. He believed that education was one of the strongest means to uplift his community as well as the whole nation.

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