

## CHAPTER VII

### DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S LIFE AND MISSION

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#### **7.1 Introduction**

The greatest need of today is that man in his mad race in pursuit of transient materialistic gains and objectives, should, at least occasionally pause and reflect on the real purpose and values of human life, and give a fresh orientation to his or her view of life based on such introspective reflection. Amongst all living species the human being is the only one endowed with powers of reason, faculties of analytical thinking, assimilation and recollection. These special gifts have generated in man a keen sense of inquiry in search of truth, wisdom and bliss- "Sat, Chit, Anand. (Rao, Usha; 1999:1) This culture has been handed down from generation to generation during

the past thousands of years and it lies embedded in the hearts and souls of the millions of the people belonging to different religious faith that are knit together by this common cultural bond. Children should be acquainted with the fundamentals of the glorious ancient culture of India and they should be trained to develop a deep and abiding respect of all faiths as well as a clean sense of pride about our unique cultural heritage.

Under the educational system which is currently in vogue in our country, the emphasis is solely on the imparting of knowledge that is concerned with the academic subjects included in the curriculum and no attention is usually paid to the development of the child's character and inner personality.

## 7.2 Meaning of Values

The term 'value' comes, from the Latin word 'valere' which means 'to be of worth'. Whereas, the concise Oxford Dictionary defines the term 'value' as 'the worth, desirability or utility of a thing.

In the words of John Dewey: "Value means primarily to price, to esteem, to appraise, to estimate. It means the act of passing judgement upon the nature and amount of its value as compared with something else." According to Milton Rokeach: "Value is an enduring belief, a specific mode of conduct or an end state of existence, along a continuum of relative importance."(Mathur, S.S.; 2000:217)

The eminent sociologist Prof R.K. Mukherjee defines 'value' as follows: "Values are socially approved desires and goals that are internalized through the process of conditioning, learning, or socialization and aspirations."(Rao, Usha;1999:14-15)

According to Shaver:

"Values are standards and principles of judging worth. They are a criterion by which we judge things, people, objects, actions, ideas and situations - to be good, worthwhile, desirable or on the other hand, worthless, despicable, undesirable or somewhere in between these two extremes." Truly speaking making an attempt to define the term 'value' is really a difficult task: however, from the definitions of 'value' that have been stated it may be said in conclusion that a value is what is desired, conceived as those guiding principles of life which are conducive to one's physical, mental health and also to social welfare and adjustment that are in tune with one's culture. (Singh, L.C. ERIC, 1986)

### 7.2.1 Values Recommended by Different Commissions

There are different Commissions for Education. These have recommended certain values like The Secondary Education Commission or Mudaliar Commission, 1953 emphasis the development of Democratic Citizenship and International Understanding.

**Development of Democratic Citizenship-** Since India has decided to make itself a democratic, republic, the citizens have to be trained to uphold and practice the values of the democratic social order. This can be possible only when the qualities of discipline, tolerance, patriotism, co-operation, equality in thought, speech and writing the essence of the world citizenship, are inculcated and developed in the students. In short the aim of secondary education should be to develop ideal democratic citizens in the country.

### **Need for International Understanding**

- International understanding also means World citizenship - The students should not only be encouraged and taught the qualities of patriotism and citizenship but they should also be taught to

acquire the aim of world citizenship. They should treat themselves not only a citizen of their motherland but also a citizen of the entire world. (Rai. B.C.; 1984: 211-212)

The Shri Prakasha Committee. 1960 stresses on **Moral Values and Spiritual values** stating,

"Anything that helps us to behave properly towards others is of moral value. Anything that takes us out of our self and inspires us to sacrifice for the good of others or for a great cause, is of spiritual value. Any system of education that does not teach us, there is not worth the name, while the need to promote a sense of patriotism is urgent, we should not overlook the importance of other loyal ties. It is necessary that young people should learn during their impressionable years their duties to self, family, neighbors, other human beings and animals." (G.O.1; 1960:15)

The Kothari Commission 1964 - 66 stresses on Education for achieving, social and national integration and Education for cultivating social, moral and spiritual values. The Commission observes that in the socialistic pattern of society which the nation desires to create, selfish and narrow loyalties to personal and group interests must give place to wider loyalties of national development. Education must aim at social and national integration to make India strong and united. (Khanna, V.K, & Lamba. T.P. & Murthy, V.;1983 (ed) :26)

### **7.3 Value Education and Need for Its Inculcation**

The Social Cultural and Technical changes of recent times have brought about a change in the value system of our society. People of different strata of society differ in their view and priorities, and as a result, there is no definite value system to guide the life pattern of people. In fact, many are on the lookout for values that make life very meaningful as well as purposeful. But there is a gaping discrepancy between what one says and what one does. The parents offer one set of values, school projects a different set of values, religion proposes yet another set of moralization. The modern communication media offers in very attractive ways with all sorts of stimuli and inputs about what to believe, how to behave, what type of life style to adopt, etc. The peer group influences, ideologies of the political leaders, film stars, sports figures, each is adding to nothing but to the confusion of the confused mind.

Values are neither caught nor learnt through imitation, they are developed through reasoning. Students, therefore should be helped to develop a set of values which they think is right, as Sidney Simon (1974) has rightly said - 'Values should not be based on external forces such as the power of propaganda, peer pressure or unthinking submission to authority.' (Rao, Usha; 1999:41) Education in the context of social change is not only to impart information and to teach skills to the students but also to inculcate the values of humanism, democracy, socialism, secularism and national integration. Our country is undergoing radical, social changes, so the students who are the future citizens of tomorrow have to be oriented to respond to and adjust with these social changes satisfactorily by equipping them with desirable skills and values. Modern India has committed to the guiding principles of socialism, secularism, democracy, national integration and so on. These guiding principles should be emphasized in the

educational system and suitable values are to be included in the students for promoting equality, social justice, national cohesion and democratic citizenship. Hence the need for inculcating desirable values and the need for value education. The Kothari Commission has very rightly observed: "The expanding knowledge and growing power which it places at the disposal of modern society must, therefore, be combined with the strengthening and deepening of the sense of social responsibility and a keener appreciation of moral and spiritual values." (Rao, Usha; 1999:46-47)

## **7.4 Classification of Values**

Values are classified according to their needs and demands of the society. But values are not same in all the societies because each society has its own norms, patterns, tradition, customs, folk's rituals and manners which differs from one society to another. The SCERT conducted a Seminar on "Education for Human Value" in 1981 and emphasized that values differ to one another.

Different philosophers and our educational experts have classified values in their own way therefore values seem almost endless in their variety and it is very difficult to present them in a certain set of classification.

According to Indian Thinkers there are three basic values of human life i.e. Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram.

### **7.4.1 Values Classified By**

The following list has been compiled by the NCERT in its publication entitled 'Documents on social, moral and spiritual values in Education published in 1979. (Bhardwaj. Tilak Raj: 1999136-137)

Abstinence Appreciation of Cultural values

Anti-untouchability Consideration for others

Concern for others Cooperation

Cleanliness Compassion

Common good

Curiosity

Discipline

Equality

Freedom

Humanism

Integrity

Kindness to animals

National Consciousness National Integration

Patriotism

Respect for others

Sincerity

Self-respect

Self-control

Socialism

Team work

Universal love

Common cause

Dignity of manual work

Endurance

Friendship

Forward Look

Hygienic living

Justice

Leadership

Non-violence

Peace

Quest for knowledge

Reverence for old age

Self-help

Self-duty

Sense of Discrimination

Simple Living

Tolerance

Of the above mentioned values SCERT also has stressed the importance of it and have selected ten values to be inculcated in school children such as Dignity of Labor, Patriotism, Gender Equality, Religious Tolerance. National Integration, Scientific Outlook, Sensitivity, Politeness, Punctuality and Neatness.

Values in the context of Babasaheb Ambedkar are indispensable as Babasaheb's entire life and mission is an embodiment of Moral, Social and National Values. An attempt is made to highlight how some of these values reflect through his life and work; this in turn will help in the inculcation of values in the younger generation.

## **7.5 Dr. Babasaheb and Values**

**Patriotism** - It will be grave injustice to Dr. Ambedkar if he is regarded as a leader only of the untouchables. No doubt, his immediate concern was the plight of these people among whom he was born and brought up. His ultimate aim however was to build up a strong, united nation. He was a strong nationalist whose heart wept to see India buried with differences of castes and creeds. He never fought only for the Dalit's, in fact he was concerned about the downtrodden, and he also fought for the cause of the economically deprived. Therefore, he often said I am a Nationalist first and last. Therefore, his spirit of Nationalism is seen in his work of uplifting the Indian society from the clutches of slavery and thus putting it on the path of progress.

**Self-help and Self-respect** - The goal of righteousness is self-realization. Self-realization should not be confused with self-expression as the ultimate aim of education. Babasaheb stressed on Self-help and Self-respect. He instilled in people an emotion of confidence hope and aspiration for their own salvation. He has also taught us by his very example and mission that self-respect and self-esteem are important thus he advised not to tolerate insult and humiliation. A feeling of dependency, a sense of guardianship and an impression of patronage have thus grown among the socially deprived.

**Compassion** - This value is seen so vividly in Babasaheb's interaction with people. An important incident that can be cited from his life is when Ambedkar represented the Scheduled Castes before the British Prime Minister in 1932 requesting to provide separate electorate for them, however Gandhiji did not like the Scheduled Castes getting separate electorate as he felt this would result in division of Hindu religion. When Babasaheb persisted in his move, Gandhiji resorted to a fast unto death. When Gandhiji's health deteriorated, then Ambedkar compromised and went into an agreement with Gandhiji resulting in the Poona Pact. This shows us the respect he had for others and also his compassion when he realized the seriousness of the situation.

**Non-Violence** - Ambedkar used the weapon of non-violence in word and action. He was never disrespectful in anything that he did. As his mission in life was to liberate the downtrodden masses, he used the weapon of political legislation and education. He brought about changes in the society

by broadening people's vision and convincing them that a change was needed to stop a revolt. The political structure of democracy would be blown up if equality wouldn't be practiced

**Social Justice** - Social Justice means an equal status to all in the society. It ensures for every individual his rightful place in the society. Babasaheb through the Constitution gave the rightful place to all the downtrodden in society. He stressed on Social Justice and implemented it too through his instrument of Education, equal right for employment, discouraging social stratification and practice of untouchability punishable by law. He realized the need to empower the people who were buried under the discrimination of a caste society.

**Forward look** - The facts that Babasaheb realized that if the backward people were not represented politically eradication of caste system would be a long lost dream. Therefore, while drafting the Indian Constitution he made sure the interests of the downtrodden were represented.

Through the Hindu Code Bill this Value is so apparent. He always said that there could not be a progress of a nation without the progress of women. The Hindu Code Bill promised right over property for women, share to daughters from the parent's property, provisions for divorce and abolition of doctrine of the rights by birth. Thus the core principle which underlined the bill was the equality between the sexes. For the first time the women were supposed to get the same rights as men in their personal domain. We can once again see this quality of Babasaheb in his choice of teachers. His institutions had teachers who were well-read and people of merit and industry. This he did so that the students who already come from a background so backward would at least be able to interact on various platforms, moreover he wanted his teachers to instill necessary behavior and values so that students would consider them good role models.

**Appreciation of Cultural Values** - Culture is defined by E.B. Tylor, the English anthropologist, "as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law custom and another capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society".

Sutherland and Woodward states: culture includes anything that can be communicated from one generation to another, the culture of the people, is their social heritage, a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief art, morals, law, techniques of food fabrication and use, and modes of communication. Thus the fundamental basis of culture is found in the minds of men, not in the external manifestation. Ideas are the real foundation of culture.

Dr. Babasaheb was fortunate to have been educated in India and America, he was therefore exposed to the western culture too that was more progressive and forward as compared to the Indian Society during his time, this influenced his own outlook and behavior. Interacting with the other cultures leads to broadening of culture. Therefore, while stressing upon the importance of Mother tongue in Education he also emphasized learning of at least one foreign language

so that students may have direct access to the innovations of the outside world as well as he may be able to keep abreast with the outside world.

**Anti-untouchability** - Dr. Babasaheb's entire life was devoted to this cause. Since he had experienced the humiliations meted out to him, he was truly aware of the conditions of the Untouchables. He strived hard in his lifetime to empower these untouchables and improve their social and economic conditions. Thus he fought for their rights which would bring them on par with the mainstream of society. The Indian Constitution was a pointer to the sole ambition of Dr. Ambedkar. He wanted to raise the status of the untouchables from dust to dignity. He had realized that the problem of the untouchables was the problem of the lower order. It was even more necessary to remove from them that feeling of inferiority which had stunted their growth and made them slaves of others and to create in them a consciousness of significance of life for themselves and for their country of which they had been cruelly robbed by the current social order of this country. The problems of the Buddhists; the mahabodhi.V.89: 1-3)

**Cleanliness and Hygienic Living** - It was an important virtue that Babasaheb upheld in life. Though he belonged to the downtrodden community he was very particular in his cleanliness, as this was instilled by his parents. He was always dressed so clean that on many occasions he was mistaken to be a high caste Brahmin. We can say that Babasaheb stressed on cleanliness by the very fact that he advised the backward community saying: "learn to be clean; keep away from vices. If you follow this advice you will bring honor and glory to yourselves and to the depressed classes." He also told the Depressed class women to keep themselves clean just as the Brahmin women. (Rathu. Nanak Chand: 1992,12) He not only believed and practiced personal cleanliness but also social cleanliness. Thus his mission to uplift the backward through legislative and educational measures was a step towards social cleanliness. Common Good - This is a value which is in contrast to vested interest. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions reflect his thought of a common goal.

**Endurance** - As a little boy whenever Babasaheb was humiliated he often endured e.g. When he was asked to sit outside the class for the whole day as he was totally drenched, when he and his brother were commanded by the cart man to leave the cart, on their way to Koregaon to meet their father. Ramji Sakpal. When he was humiliated as professor at Sydhnem College by not allowing him to drink the water from the water pot kept in the teacher's staff room... So Many such incidents can be quoted which reflects this value of endurance in Dr. Babasaheb. He endured until the time he was well equipped to revolt or rebel. His education forced him to finally rebel against the atrocities of the Caste Hindus.

**Equality** - This is a basic concept of democracy, originally it meant that all men are created equal. In modern usage it is a belief that all persons are entitled to equal opportunities to achieve optimum development. Babasaheb condemned the Indian society and its economic inequality. He advocated a new order of one man, one value., one vote. He thus achieved the order of state socialism and parliamentary Democracy.



In the field of education, through the Memorandum submitted to the Indian statutory commission in 1928 by the Bahishkrita Hitakarini Sabha, he argued to an equal share for the depressed classes in the education sector. He therefore wanted to put the depressed classes on terms of equality with other communities and not to remain servile to other communities but to place the reins of the Government in their hands. He advised the educated boys to prove that, given the opportunities, they are inferior to none in intelligence and capacity and 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. (Rattu Nanak Chand; 1992:12)

**Co-operation** - Babasaheb Ambedkar managed to take up the task of social amelioration as he could seek co-operation from others. One can vividly point out the co-operation he sought from the high caste Hindus who were highly qualified while establishing the People's Education society. Rao Bahadur, M. V. Dond. S.C. Joshi, Hirjibhai Patel, were some members of the Governing body of the P.E.S. Even individuals such as M.B. Chitnis, S.S. Rege, (the librarian of Siddhartha College), Mr. Ganshyam Talwatkar. Nanak Chand Rattu, his Honorary Secretary Justice R.R. Bhole, always co-operated with him as they knew the genuine nature of his task.

**Quest for knowledge** - From a very mediocre beginning Babasaheb reached his peak of success as he had a quest for knowledge and an inquiring mind. His quest for knowledge is vividly depicted by the amount of time he used to spend in the library at the college. As he could ill afford these books. He spent hours together reading matter and broadening his vision and expanding his knowledge. Therefore, his conversations were always intellectual. He tried to instill this habit in the students by equipping his libraries with a rare collection of books. Mr. S.S. Rege, the first librarian of Siddhartha College, who worked quiet closely with him, says he indeed had a 'Lust for books'. Since there is an urgent need for inculcation of values which can be done through education, it is quite befitting for us to realize that these values can be inculcated through the life and Mission of Babasaheb Ambedkar.