



## AMBEDKARISM IS NONE OTHER THAN MODERNISM

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### ABSTRACT



Dr. Baba Sahib Ambedkar was one to raise his voice for Dalit cause. He brought out a social revolution through Dalit literature after 1960s and through the establishment of a social organization based on his principles. The Maher movement of Maharashtra has been seen as all India Movement under the leadership of B.R. Ambedkar. Ambedkarism protested against the established unjust social order. It exposes the sufferings, frustration and torture imposed on them and their revolt against this inhuman treatment called modernism.

Ambedkar, as a modernist with western thought emerged as a leader of the oppressed communities. As he was highly educated, he tried to transform the Indian Hindu society. He put all his efforts to eradicate the evils of caste system and untouchability of Indian society. He raised his voice for the cause of the down-trodden and degraded people of the society. His vast contribution for the upgradation of the Dalits of India is uncalculated and immeasurable. Without Ambedkar one cannot imagine the Indian constitution. He hoped for a casteless modern society which treats all people in equal manner, irrespective of caste and creed, race and religion. The down-trodden people who lived away from the main villages suffered for generations from the social evils of caste system. He put forward all his modern thoughts which came into force in the schedules of Indian constitution. Though he worked for the equal society where people have equal rights and opportunities politically and economically and socially, even today it remains as a 'wild goose chase' due to the caste system that prevails in Indian Hindu society.

**Keywords:** *Dalit, Frustration, Justice, Equality, Ambedkarism, Modernism.*

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Ambedkar took a major step towards spreading Buddhism to common masses. March 23<sup>rd</sup> is celebrated by a huge number of Dalits all over the country in their own way to remember Bhagat Singh and his ideas about a casteless secular India.

Ambedkar is not just a political leader, thinker or writer, he remains as a father figure, philosopher and guide and therefore there will be definitely a difference between those who analyze Ambedkar as a political philosopher like any other contemporary and those for whom he was an emancipator.

Dalits and Adivasis are different yet also similar in many aspects. Both are oppressed communities. One remained isolated in the forests and became victim of the 'developmental' agenda of the Indian state while others were victims of caste based society. Ambedkar became a tough person for them as he not only questioned the caste discrimination, but also sought participation in power structure. Dignified participation in all walks of life is the biggest problem for the caste based India. He feared the Hinduism to be worse than that of the so-called whites as the caste prejudices among the Hindus were deep rooted. He was determined to fight for the rights of the Dalits if they were not ensured in the constitution.

Ambedkar made many efforts for the betterment of Dalits in India. He was bold enough even to oppose Gandhiji on the issue of Dalits. He decided to work for the upliftment of the untouchables. Under his leadership, the down trodden masses who faced social injustice for centuries, opened a new era in India history. Ambedkar never lost an opportunity to put his views boldly for the betterment of the untouchables. Ambedkar, the leader of untouchables had spent every moment of his life in the service of his people securing them their civil and constitutional rights. He was busy for three months in organizing his temple entry movement at Nasik. He demanded a fair treatment for the untouchables of India. He spoke for them on every available platform and availed every opportunity to refer to the tragic plight of the untouchables. He observed, "The surest way for their salvation lies in higher education, higher

employment and better ways of earning a living" (Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, 83).

Dr. Ambedkar called people to migrate to cities to adopt new education, shun superstition and develop rationalist attitude. One must appreciate this was his concern for the community and he was speaking as a gentleman who faced untouchability. When he went to United States he felt different as none asked him question about his caste and identity and every one shook hand with him. And once he returned to India with a bigger degree and experience yet the caste minds discriminated him and State of Baroda could do nothing.

So when Ambedkar appreciated the freedom and liberty that he enjoyed and experienced in United States and Europe, it does not mean that he supported all their actions. When he was speaking for the rights of Dalits who were his main concern, how is amounted to 'not being able to speak' for adivasis. He defended their right of cultural autonomy and Schedule Areas to be demarcated for the Adivasis. He was not in a luxurious position like Gandhi to speak for everyone. Even speaking on behalf of Dalit was challenged by Gandhi who claimed that he had more followers. But he believed in dignified and self-respected life for each and every one of the society. His call for the oppressed to migrate to cities was meant for his people in the very similar way 'educate, agitate and organise' where he advised people to migrate to cities to save themselves from the violence of untouchability and caste discrimination. It does not mean that he wanted to demolish the villages. He wanted to demolish the caste structure in the villages and not villages.

One should appreciate a man who embrace Buddhism cannot be a hater of nature. Ambedkar modernism does not mean building of concrete structure. He talks of prabuddha Bharat which from his own understanding was where caste identities are demolished and he felt it was only possible once India embrace the path of Buddha. Many people may not like it as they have their own prejudices towards Buddhism but Dr Ambedkar realized that in Buddha's path lies our salvation. So when he talks of modernity, he means people to work for society.



Ambedkar is a power, a hope and he is a voice of people who have been denied rights but definitely he might have his own issues and problems. Ambedkar was not a writer or philosopher but a leader of huge segment in India. So, many of his decisions are political in nature taken at that point of time. He is not here to answer those questions and if he were here he would have responded. A leader has to be analysed in entirety. He challenged all the religious scriptures and followed Buddhism.

Ambedkar's place in the heart of Dalits cannot be replaced by anyone. Ambedkarism is an organized struggle for justice against all the odds and social discriminations that are being faced by historically excluded communities.

This revolution is a combat against the monopoly of the resources which were tightly held in the clutches of the dominant castes or classes. It is the tone of the marginalized communities whose silenced voice would be the roar for justice, for social equality and dignity. It is a mission to reform and reframe the Indian caste based society. It comes from the centuries of suffering of the people who are being infected by the venom of caste.

Ambedkarism is a process that leads the de-valued, de-humanized and disempowered people from apathy to action, dependency to independency, from powerlessness to assertiveness, from ignorance to knowledge, from alienation to involvement from manipulative to self determination.

Ambedkar's struggle for Dalit cause is a great achievement in Indian independent history which provides many opportunities for their uplifting. Hence one cannot separate Ambedkarism and modernism.

Ambedkar came forward for the liberation of the suppressed, oppressed, and depressed people's liberation with his movement. Definitely Dr. Ambedkar is not just an ideologist but an emancipator and liberator of the community and center to Dalit identity.

Let's hope Ambedkar's dream of modern India may become true.

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