

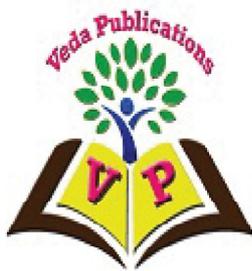


AMBEDKAR'S VIEWS ON SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said that every educational institute from primary school to University College should be an agency of change. Ambedkar strongly held that education should be a priority for the society and utilised for growth of individuals with character. This paper focuses on the philosophical thoughts of Ambedkar in context to education. Ambedkar wanted a type of education that not only inculcates awareness and fulfilment of human rights among citizen but also teaches human dignity and justice in India. According to him Education could open the eyes and encourage the oppressed ones to fight and remove injustice and exploitation they are suffering from ages. He recognized that, lack of education was the main cause for the backwardness of poor people. He preferred humanistic education which enables a man to rediscover himself and ensure freedom rather than being a student of the church, school or the state. He put all his efforts to ensure the educational opportunities to all the citizens of independent India without any discrimination, for which he framed some rights in Indian Constitution.

Key words : Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Education and Social Justice

INTRODUCTION

Dr. B.R Ambedkar was not only the father of Indian Constitution but was a great freedom fighter, political leader, philosopher, thinker, writer, economist, editor, and a revivalist for Buddhism in India. Dr. Ambedkar believed in peaceful methods of social change. He supported to constitutional lines in the evolutionary process of social transformation. He thought that the factors like law and order are indispensable for social life. It also strives to sustain institutions that will make better 'social order'. He opposed to the violent methods in social change for it obstacles the tranquillity and creates chaos. He had no faith in anarchy methods. A welfare state of all cannot be developed on the grounds of terror, force and brutal methods. According to him violent methods to a peaceful society is not only improper but also unscientific and immoral. According to Dr. Ambedkar, social change and social justice are indeed critical to the egalitarianism that any democracy must aspire it. As a social democrat Dr. Ambedkar stressed on a much broader notion of stable reconstruction of country with inclusive growth and cultural integration in the Nation without caste discrimination. As the major architect of the Indian constitution, Dr. Ambedkar constructed the safeguards for establishing a more equitable society to millions of oppressed and depressed classes. In this process, Dr. Ambedkar emerges not only as a Valliant upholder of the Indian democratic, republic, but also captures the uniquely distinctive place in the Indian Pantheon as a rare intellectual mass leader who awakened the social conscience of Modern India. He was strongly believed that political institutions were responsible for reforming the existing social institutions by using legislative force to yield the results. Political institutions will survive only when they actively work for social reformation.

Ambedkar's Educational philosophy stresses on development of persons and their environment. Ambedkar strongly believed that education should be provided without any discrimination to all the citizens of independent India. *"Education is something which ought to be brought within the reach of every one."* was the fundamental thought of Dr. B.R Ambedkar.

Ambedkar believed in liberal education and based on religious inspiration of non -theistic nature. Education according to Ambedkar was a blend of pragmatism of Dewey and 'dhamma' of Buddha. He thought that education would enlighten his people and bridge the gap between the higher classes and untouchables.

THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION ACCORDING TO AMBEDKAR:

His purpose of education is, "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 and continues to be literate throughout the rest of his life." Ambedkar identified two purposes of knowledge: first, to acquire it for betterment of others and secondly to use it for one's own betterment. Ambedkar has also argued against professional learning (The British Educational System) which aims at creating a clerical nature of workers. Ambedkar emphasized on secular education for social emancipation and freedom. Education has the sole purpose to enlighten the depressed classes so as to enhance their cause of social, economic and political upliftment. The social and ethical philosophy of Ambedkar aimed at making the depressed people aware to change their thoughts and old behavior-patterns and to move forward in the direction of unity and freedom through education. The basic theme of his philosophy of education was to inculcate the values of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice and moral character among the boys and girls of all religion, region, class and caste. Ambedkar listed these three components as objectives for policy makers:

- 1) Recasting the aims and purposes of education,
- 2) Education as an instrument of substantive equality,
- 3) Women's education (Velaskar, 2012).

MEANING OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ACCORDING TO AMBEDKAR

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar held that every citizen of India must be treated equally and should not be deprived of any opportunity and equality based on gender, work and caste differences. Therefore, the social justice for him is associated with social equality and individual rights. He wanted to establish a society in which an individual is the centre of all social purposes, a society which is based on equality, equity of opportunities, liberty and fraternity.

EDUCATION AS A TOOL TO ENSURE SOCIAL JUSTICE

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar wanted an educational system which would serve all. Ambedkar educational model was a socialist one based on Buddhist ideology. According to Ambedkar, the society must be based on reason, and not on traditions of caste system. "The backward classes have come to realize that after all education is the greatest material benefit for which they can fight. We may forgo material benefits, we may forgo material benefits of civilization, but we cannot forgo our right and opportunities to reap the benefit of the highest education to the fullest extent. That is the importance of this question from the point of view of the backward classes who have just realized that without education their existence is not safe." (BAWS- Vol.2, 1982). Ambedkar's ideas for the untouchables was to raise their educational standards so that they may know their own condition, have aspirations and rise to the level of higher class and be in the position to use political power as a means. Educate, agitate and organize are three final words of Ambedkar to Untouchables to raise themselves in the society. He believed that liberation of depressed classes is based on education as an educated person can assert their rights and be motivated for development. It not only trains the human mind to think but also to take the right decision to ensure social justice. In his view, "It is the education which is the right weapon to cut the social slavery and it is the education which will enlighten the downtrodden masses to come up and gain social status, economic betterment and political freedom" Ambedkar awakened the Dalits regarding the injustice – social, economic and political and make them aware of the possibilities of establishing a society in which they could be given equal rights, respect and opportunities and regarded as equals.

EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS GIVEN TO DEPRESSED CLASS AND WOMEN

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, tried an adequate inclusion of women's and depressed classes rights in the constitution of India. He looked upon law as the instrument of creating a just social order. He incor-

porated the values of liberty, equality and fraternity in the Indian Constitution. To ensure equal rights of education to depressed class, special provisions are given which includes- Article 30(1) which gives the linguistic or religious minorities the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. Article 30(2) bars the state, while granting aid to educational institutions, from discriminating against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a linguistic or a religious minority. Article 29 (2) of the Constitution of India defines the protection of interest of minorities and ensures that no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them. Article 46 directs the state to promote with special care, the educational and economic interests of the weaker section of the people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

RELEVANCE OF DR . AMBEDKAR'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Dr.B.R. Ambedkar had constantly fought to eradicate birth-based oppression where the basic amenities like education, employment, housing, equal opportunities are restricted for the benefit and development of the few upper classes. Equality in every aspect is reflected in the constitution and proves to be an important element is its composition. The NCERT says, "Across the country, enormous strides towards establishing schools within the reach of every habitation have been made. Attempts to put larger number of children through schooling have proved to be successful. But pockets of children still remain to be reached- children from the socially weaker sections, those belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes, those belonging to the minority groups, and particularly girls, in each of these groups. The need of the hour is to identify the extraordinary socio-cultural circumstances which restrict these children from accessing schools." Hence despite of making constitutional legal rights, the children and youth of depressed classes are not able to enjoy the equal and quality education. In the Indian society, people are illiterate and they are not aware about education as well as their basic rights of the life, still people are

facing caste discrimination in society. The education system projects itself as a tool for empowerment, upliftment and equality for depressed sections. But social perspective has not changed its image. Dalit students in today's knowledge and technological laden era, are still facing the rejection from their teachers who give priority to so called upper caste students. The lower castes are still sidelined from the learning process and are harshly treated. Although for economic upliftment of these students government but maximum students are giving scholarships under various schemes are devoid of awareness about these scholarships.

CONCLUSION

For Ambedkar, education was the main key to open the doors of light, vision and wisdom. Ambedkar had taken education as the main tool to bring social change. He believed that education can act as an change agent to bring equality in the society. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had done plentiful to awake the depressed class, to make them aware of their situation, to raise their voice and showed them education as a path for their political, economical and social upliftment. He motivated the Dalits to merge with the upper caste in social, economic and political aspects through the slogan of educate, agitate and organise. Also he ensured educational rights of all sections of Indian society by providing certain rights under the Article 30 and 29 in Indian constitution.

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