

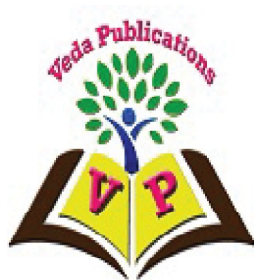


AMBEDKAR'S VIEWS ON VALUE OF EDUCATION AND VALUE EDUCATION

Dr.G. Vedanthadesikan

(Director, Centre for Rural Development, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar 608 002)

E-mail : drgvdesikan@gmail.com



INTRODUCTION

Education is the eye opener to the human beings. Education paves a way for social and economic development. As pointed out by the greatest thinker of the world Socrates, raise the questions why and for what? If you get the proper reply you will not be dominated by any body. To ask these two questions you need a proper education. Education should impart not only the knowledge and at the same time inculcate the values of life also. Mere education will produce only the graduate missions without any needy output for the well being of the country. In this context, this paper aims to make an attempt on the educational philosophy of Bharath Rahna Dr. Ambedkar sahib, because it is still relevant today for the development of our country and to the good society.

Ambedkar Sahab also stated that in Indian context, it is not necessary to uplift the weaker sections in terms of economy. He opined that the economic development may retain the weaker sections as slave forever. Education will alone remove the inferiority complex. Once inferiority complex is removed, they can act as the other so called higher caste people.

In the year 1951, at Milind Mahavidyalaya while delivering the welcome speech Ambedkarji stated that the education should be seen as the corner stone of the progress and upliftment since it creates awareness and consciousness to the people. Further it creates a good leadership to the society and the nation. He emphasised that the provision of education to the downtrodden will create opportunities very easily to them. He strongly felt that the higher the level of education higher the benefit. But to get it political power is a must. Once, they get the political power, through laws they can be provided the expected education that freed them from the slavery. He felt that by way of securing political right through the effort taken by the government and the other agencies they can be uplifted educationally.

Ambedkar did not see the education is an instrument for the material life. Since, the downtrodden thought that securing education will give the sophisticated material life in terms of livelihood aspects. But Ambedkar considered education is the most powerful weapon to make the desired changes in the life of the downtrodden.

For him education was an instrument to liberate the dalits from illiteracy, ignorance and superstitions and thus enable them to fight against all forms of injustice, exploitation and oppression. He felt if the dalits are educated than they could leave their traditional occupation and take up secular occupations thus breaking the age-old caste based structure of divisions of labour in our society.

Here it is opt to quote the words of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule also described the indispensability of education for the redemption of the dalits 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 sprang from illiteracy".

Rather talking about the acquiring of education alone, Ambedkarji rightly correlated the education with the social, economic and political needs of a country. Education should not produce a graduate or an educated. It should bring a social change for equality and equity.

While giving importance to education, Ambedkar opined that just school or collegiate education will not provide all the requisite to the downtrodden. The informal education should also be gives for the professional equipment of the weaker sections. That is why Ambedkarji started the Siddharth College of Mass Communication and Media an Sidhdharth Institute of Industry and Administration. It shows how Ambedkar planned for the development of the downtrodden to acquire the power on par with others.

WHY AMBEDKARJI CONCENTRATED ON EDUCATION IS THE FREEDOM FOR DOWNTRODDEN?

In Ancient India, education was considered as not to get the knowledge for the life but to realise the self. During that time education is termed as "Vidya" – it means knowledge that is known as third eye of the human for his realisation.

To Ambedkarji, 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." So, he gave importance to character formation through education.

DR. AMBEDKAR ON CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Curriculum is the means of the educational process, that helps us to achieve the goals we set. Ambedkar has given importance to Science and Technology. He felt education was necessary to instill

among the downtrodden a sense of self-respect and dignity and it could hasten their assimilation into the mainstream of Society. So, he stressed that to realise the objective of the education such as Modernisation; character formation and self realisation; Science and Technology in Curriculum should go a long way in developing rationality in the learner.

DR. AMBEDKAR ON METHODOLOGY OF EDUCATION

The process of teaching-learning occurs in human association. This human association is possible through formal education. Formal teaching and training 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 rigid kind of books and easy access to them.

BABASAHEB'S VIEW ON EXAMINATION

Dr. Ambedkar viewed that the present examination system is an end to the education acquired during the period stipulated. The strict examination such as mugging up and writing the examination will not give any fruitful result or standardised education that will improve the quality of the learners.

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.
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.

DR. AMBEDKAR'S VIEWS ON PRIMARY, HIGHER, UNIVERSITY AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

It is very clear that the primary education plays a vital role in the context of development of the society. Even before Independence that is in the year 1882 (Dhadabai Naoroji recommended for free education at the primary level of education) and in 1910 Gopala Krishna Gokhale moved a resolution in the legislative council to make the primary education as a free one. It is to be noted that the eminent persons like Madan Mohan Malavia and Mohammed Ali Jinnah demanded for free and very particularly compulsory education and moved a bill though it was defeated.

But immediately after the independence Dr. Ambedkar thought that the education must be the essential for all men and women irrespective of their socio-economic status. All men and women should get the minimum education. So, the primary education should cater 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."

Though the above is a common cause/benefit for all, Ambedkarji felt that unless Primary Education was made obligatory and strictly enforced, conditions for educational progress of the Backward classes will 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.

In this context one can say that the base for Right to Education (RTE) is based on the views expressed by Dr. Ambedkar.

While talking about the higher education to occupy the higher position either in politics or in public sector undertakings the dalits should get the higher education to remove the inequality by means of caste and creed. Further he noted that to achieve the higher education, it is necessary to provide primary education compulsorily. To get the self-respect and self reliance by the downtrodden it is necessary to acquire higher education.

To create a fruitful and maker of the best society, the Universities should follow the certain things as prescribed by Dr. Ambedkar. They are

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; and
5. that it implants in his mind a standard of thoroughness and inculcates in him a sense of value for reaching at the truth.

Ambedkarji suggested that rather moulding the students, it is better to give them an opportunity to mould them by themselves for the betterment of the country. Present University Education is the costliest thing and the portals of the college are closed to the brilliant downtrodden students, whose guardian cannot foot the bill. The aim of such a student dwindles into the miserable reality of an office clerk and typist. That is why Dr. Ambedkarji mooted the idea of morning college 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.

When talking about the library facilities, Baba Sahab noted that the provision of all kinds of books that cannot be purchased by the poor students must

be kept in the library to acquire knowledge by the students of all strata particularly by the less privileged. Since library is the creator of the intellectuals and the society friendly scholars as experienced by Dr. Ambedkar.

Technical Education is a type of education that stresses the learning of a technical procedures and skills and aims at preparing technocrats. Dr. Ambedkar 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 must be improved only by technical education, which gives place for occupying executive posts.

DR. AMBEDKAR'S VIEWS ON WOMEN EDUCATION

When Dr. Ambedkar was twenty years old, he wrote a letter to his father's friend from USA stating that downtrodden progress would be greatly accelerated if male education was pursued side by side with female education. However, he advocated that education up to matriculation should be given to both male and female.

Imparting education to girls equal to 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? It is applicable to boys also. The employment oriented, life centred, socially benefitted education is the need of the hour. Ambedkar states that Girls should be well-versed in home education. 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, instil 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.

AMBEDKAR'S VIEWS ON RELIGION AND CULTURAL EDUCATION

Now, there is a widespread accusation on Ambedkar that he is against Hindu Religion. It is totally wrong. Ambedkar said, I consider the foundation of religion to be essential to life and practices of society. 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 emphasised 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". He rightly knew the importance of religion in education.

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.

CONCLUSION

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.

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.

REFERENCES

1. Agarwal, J. C. (1999), Education in Emerging India, Delhi : Doaba House, pp. 48-56.
2. Bhatia & Bhatia (2000), The Philosophical and Sociological Foundations of Education, Delhi ; Douba House, p. 3.
3. Ibid., p. 153.
4. Ibid, p. 154.
5. Bhatia, K. K. & Narang, C. L. (1986), Principles of Education, Ludhiana : Prakash Brothers. P. 111.
6. Bhatia, K. K., Chandra, P. C, Kadyan K. S. & Sharma (1988), Modem Indian Education and Its Problems, Ludhiana : Tandon Publications, p. 75.
7. Ibid., pp. 80-82.
8. Blake, CharK (March 1950), "The Victory of Untouchable", Readers Digest, p. 109.
9. Das, Bhagwan (1963), Thus Spoke Ambedkar, Jallundar : Bheem Patrika Publications, p. 40.
10. Good, C. V. (1959), Dictionary of Education, New York : Mc Graw Hill, p. 23.