Abstract

Ambedkar was a beckoning leader of the Untouchables, but he was also much more—patriot, scholar, thinker and Founding Father of the Indian Constitution. Babasaheb’s contribution to the advancement of education in the country is multifarious. Educate, Organize and Agitate was his burning message. His empowerment refers to increase in the spiritual, political, social, racial, educational, gender or economic strength of individuals and communities. The term empowerment covers a vast landscape of meanings, interpretations, definitions and disciplines ranging from psychology and philosophy to the highly commercialized self-help industry and motivational sciences. Ambedkar wanted the people to cultivate the values of freedom and equality among themselves; it is possible only through education. He regarded education as a means to reach the doors of light and perception to remove the regions of darkness and ignorance. Ambedkar emphasized on secular education for social emancipation. The basic theme of his philosophy of education is: inculcating the values of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice and moral character among the boys and girls of all shades. By the way of his educational philosophy, I shall view that by experiencing full freedom of education without the barriers of any caste, creed and race; it is the best way for the enlightenment of human beings from ignorance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a great scholar and an eminent educationist. He carried out his studies in India and abroad. In the early twentieth century, when most of the Scheduled Castes people received hardly any education, Ambedkar received the best
possible education and obtained degrees from reputed universities abroad. He started his career as a teacher and was also principal in the Government Law College, Bombay for some time. But he left the job in order to devote himself full to the service of the nation and the welfare of the downtrodden sections. Born to Mahar parents, Babasaheb would have been one of the many Untouchable of his times condemned to a life of suffering and misery, had he not doggedly overcome the oppressive circumstances of his birth to rise to pre-eminence in India’s public life. Ambedkar was, of course, a beckoning leader of the Untouchables, but he was also much more- patriot, scholar, thinker and Founding Father of the Indian Constitution.

II. OBJECTIVES

1) To highlight the contribution of Dr. Ambedkar to Indian Education to reform the Indian society
2) To identify the works of Dr. Ambedkar for development of backward classes (Dalit) in Indian Society
3) To chalk out the multifaceted personality of Dr. Ambedkar
4) To acquaint with his philosophy of life and leadership.

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on documentary study. The researcher has taken a few books from library and collected some documents from various sources. Some places by the help of internet & certain information have been collected.

IV. BABASAHEB’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION

Babasaheb’s contribution to the advancement of education in the country is multifarious. Besides being a teacher and Principal, he was a great spokesman of education and founder and builder of educational institutions of national repute. Above all, he was a great teacher and educator of the masses. Ambedkar, the frontier of ‘Dalits’, emphasizes for their education. He compares education with the milk of tigress and adds that one who will drink it; won’t seat calm. He says, “If you want to develop the society then you need to spread up the education. Education eradicates the bias of people which results on to minimize the exploitation, domination, of those people who try to take the benefit of the so called illiterate people. If the people get knowledge through education then they can face the problems created by the dominators. Education reforms opinions, it tries to remove the walls built among the people. The biggest gift that is given by the education is that it creates self confidence among us which is considered as the first stage of our development.”[1].

Ambedkar in one of his speeches addressed that, “The people don’t sustain in the struggle of life until they get educated. Since that they get caught in the clutches of social problems such as insult, suppression and desecration. So it is the duty of the existing
government to accelerate by providing education.”[2]. In the days of Ambedkar the educational condition of untouchables was very critical. He was of the opinion that, “The untouchables were deliberately being kept away by Brahmans and other castes. It was just because they drive the education system. They just tried to behave with untouchables as inferior.”[3]. It resulted to take an effective action against government. Further he tries to make changes in education system after the worse experience with untouchables. According to Ambedkar, “Education is a weapon of creation of mental and educational development, weapon of eradication of social slavery of economic development of political freedom.”[4]. While emphasizing on the need of education he puts forth the demand of law of compulsory education. He knew that the problem of primary education is the problem of nation. He in the conference of Mahabaleshwar held on May 31, 1929 addressed that ‘The problem of the spread of primary education is the most dominating one. In the present days these countries who bear the maximum Dalit illiterates don’t sustain in the competition of life. The spread of primary education is the base of national development. It will take more time if the spread of primary education is dependent on the interest of common people. So it needs to implement a compulsory Act of primary education.”[5]. (See end notes for sources)

V. BABASAHEB’S APPROACHES OF EDUCATION

There are two approaches in understanding the role of education in empowering people. One: the radical approach of using pedagogy as a conscientization process of the oppressed. The second approach: a transformative project of creating opportunities in the mainstream education to those who are previously denied access to education. Ambedkar did not visualize education simply as a means for the development of a child’s personality or as a source of earning 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 the modern times. 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. Dr. Ambedkar gave the highest priority to education in his struggle for the liberation of the dalits from the age-old oppressive character of the caste-ridden Indian Society. He believed that it is only education through which various kinds of disabilities of the dalits could be overcome and their shackles of social slavery thrown away. Education provides strength and opportunity to them to fight against poverty, disease, and backwardness. Keeping in view the crucial role of education in social emancipation of the dalits, Dr. Ambedkar gave the following message to his brethren: “Educate, Organize and Agitate”. This is evident from his speech on the Bombay University Act Amendment Bill in the Bombay Legislative Council on 5 October 1927: “We may forgo material benefits of civilization, but we cannot forgo our right and opportunity to reap the benefits of the highest education to the fullest extent … Backward Classes … have just realized that without education their existence is not safe”.
Pravat Kumar Dhal: Contribution of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to Indian Education and Society

1) **Educate:** Education has an immense impact on the human society. One can safely assume that a person is not in the proper sense until he is educated. It trains the human mind to think and take the right decision. In other words, man becomes a rational animal when he is educated. By the way of education only the knowledge and information received and spread throughout the world. An uneducated person cannot read, write and he is very close to all knowledge and wisdom like a window. In contrast, an educated man lives in a room with all its windows open towards outside world. Simply getting education does not mean to acquire the knowledge and getting academic designation. Education must get through by the way of free mind and free thinking.

2) **Agitate:** The word ‘agitate’ does not mean that, to agitate physically; it is a mental revolution in its place. It does not mean to go out and start protesting violently on the streets, without getting educated. After getting educated, by understanding Babasaheb’s thoughts and strategy the individual can start agitating mentally. Agitated mind, as Dr. Ambedkar presumed, would force educated people to form organizations and they would act to fix the problems. Many people, quite often, who profess Ambedkar, limit his slogan to these three points. But to this author, the actual message of Dr. Ambedkar lies in “have faith in your strength.”

3) **Organize:** Educated and agitated minds will easily organize for a common mission. We must get ourselves educated and our thoughts agitate so that we can collectively organize. Agitated minds for a common mission will help them to unite and struggle for their common goal as one force. Only education can bring this change. Ambedkar had also given lot of emphasis on getting education. He had given prime importance to education. He further added that, “The backward classes have come to realize that after all education is the greatest material benefit for which they can fight. We may forego material benefits of civilization but we cannot forego our rights and opportunities to reap the benefits of the highest education fully. That is the importance of education. From this point of view he advised the backward classes to realize that without education their existence is not safe.”

Ambedkar’s idea of giving education and equal opportunity to the people aims at removing the barriers in Indian Hindu religious caste system and development of backward caste as well as all marginalized communities. According to the social work students, educate agitate and organize means create power in people to experience basic rights in the society, to achieve success in the life and also struggle for social justice. In the social work field his idea about educate agitate and organize is very much relevant in the current context because 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 and lack of support and motivation. Educate, Agitate and organize must be maintained to see the effective results of the movement for the
uplifting of our people. For the uplifting of the depressed classes he developed a programme of education as a part of the general manifesto of Indian Labor Party before the general elections of 1937. To stamp out the illiteracy, he emphasized the necessity of full and compulsory and liberal education. He emphasized that many pupils from depressed classes did not have money. To overcome the financial problem which is acting against their studies, he stressed the necessity of scholarships in educational institutions.

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 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.”

VI. SOME THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION

1. “Educate, Agitate and Organise”
2. “Education is something which ought to be brought within the reach of every one. the policy therefore ought to be to make higher education as cheap to the lower classes as it can possibly be made. If all these communities are to be brought to the level of equality, then the only remedy is to adopt the principle of equality and to give favoured treatment to those who are below level.”
3. “I am very fond of teaching profession. I am also very fond of students. I have dealt with them. I have lectured them in my life. 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.”
4. To deny them that right (i.e. Education) is to create a situation full of injustice. To keep people illiterate and then to make their literacy the ground of their enfranchisement is to add insult to the injury. But the situation indeed involves more than this. It involves an aggravation of the injury for to keep illiterate and then to deny them franchise which is the only means whereby they could effectively provide for the removal of illiteracy is to perpetuate illiteracy and postpone indefinitely the days of their enfranchisement. (https://drambedkarbooks.com/2015/01/27/dr-ambedkar-on-education/)

➢ **Purpose of Education**

Purpose of Education is to moralize and socialize the people. *(Writing. & S. Vol. 2-p-39)*

➢ **Aim and functions of University Education**

The aim and functions of University Education should be to see that the teaching carried on there is suited to adults; that it is scientific, detached and impartial in character; 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; that it accustoms him to the critical study of the leading authorities, with perhaps, occasional reference to first hand sources of information, and that it implants in his mind a standard of toughness, and gives him a sense of the difficulty as well as the value of reaching at truth.” (Writing & Speech Vol. 2-p-296)

**Students should learn**

The student so trained should learn to distinguish between what may fairly be called matter of fact and what is certainly mere matter of opinion. He should be accustomed to distinguish issues, and to look at separate questions each on its own merits and without an eye to their bearings on some cherished theory. He should learn to state fairly, and even sympathetically the position of those to whose practical conclusions he is most stoutly opposed. He should become able to examine a suggested idea, and see what comes of it, before accepting it or rejecting it. Without necessarily becoming an original student he should gain an insight into the conditions under which original research is carried on. He should be able to weigh evidence, to follow and criticize argument and put his own value on authorities.” (Writing. & Speech. Vol. 2-p-2970)

- **Character is more important than education**

That education was a sword and being a double edged weapon, was dangerous to wield. An educated man without character and humility was more dangerous than a beast. If his education was detrimental to the welfare of the poor, the educated man was a curse to society. Fie upon such an educated man. Character is more important than education.” (Life & Mission. — P-305)

- **Medium of instruction**

“Spread of education should be a proper function of the University. But this cannot be achieved unless the University adopts vernacular as the medium of instruction, which in the present circumstances is a far cry…I hold a very strong affirmative view on the use of vernacular as a medium of instruction. But I feel that the problem cannot be solved unless Indian public opinion decides which vernacular it selects for common intercourse.” (Writing & Speech. Vol. 2-p-312)

- **Regarding Law Education**

“I see three distinct advantages in my proposal of allowing a student to commence the study of law immediately after the matriculation. 1) The first advantage to which I attach the greatest value is this. At present, a student who joins the law course has not the fixed objective of studying law for the purpose of qualifying himself for the profession. He comes there merely for the purpose of adding one more string to his bow. It is his last refuge to which he may or may not go for shelter. Probably, he comes to the Law College because he is unemployed and does not know for the moment what to do. Due to this unsteadiness in purpose, there is no seriousness in the law student and that is why his study of law is so haphazard. It is, therefore, necessary to compel him to stick to it. A boy, who is a B.A., cannot have this fixity of purpose, because as a BA. He has other
opportunities in life open to him. My scheme has the advantage of compelling the boy to make his choice at the earliest stage at which everyone in this country is required to make a choice of his career. 2.) The second advantage of my proposal lies in its combination of economy and efficiency. A boy will be able to complete his legal education within 4 years. This is a saving of two years over the present system. The alternative suggestion also requires six years. From the standpoint of poorer students, it has no advantage over the present system. From the standpoint of training, I venture to say that the existing systems as well as the alternative suggested by the committee suffer in comparison with mine. The existing system allows only two years for the study, which is undoubtedly very inadequate. The alternative scheme allots three years. But my scheme provides four full years. From the standpoint of efficiency, it is, therefore, superior to both. The third advantage is that it will introduce a process of selection. Those who have not the definite object of entering the profession will be weeded out. Only those with the definite object will join. It will, thus, help to prevent the overcrowding of the profession.”

(Writing and Speech, Vol. 17(II)-p-12-13)

Higher education the panacea of our social troubles

“Coming as I do form the lowest order of the Hindu Society, I know what is the value of education. The problem of raising the lower order is deemed to be economic. This is a great mistake. The problem of raising the lower order in India is not to feed them, to cloth 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 by the existing social order. Nothing can achieve this purpose except this spread of higher education this in my opinion the penacea of our social troubles.

(L.F.Y. – P-69)

Though education is being given on a larger scale, it is not given to the right strata of Indian Society. If you give education to that stratum of Indian Society which has a vested interest in maintaining the Caste System for the advantages it gives them, then the Caste System will be strengthened. On the other hand, if you give education to the lowest strata of Indian Society, which is interested, in blowing up the Caste System, the Caste System will be blown up. At the moment the indiscriminate help given to education by the Indian Government and American Foundation is going to strengthen the Caste System. To make rich richer and poor poorer is not the way to abolish poverty. The same is true of using education as a means to end the Caste System. To give education to those who want to keep up the Caste System is not to improve the prospect of Democracy in India but to put our Democracy in India in greater jeopardy.” (Writing. & Speech. Vol. 17(III)-p-522-523)

VII. AMBEDKAR’S CONCEPT OF EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment refers to increase in the spiritual, political, social, racial, educational, gender or economic strength of individuals and communities. The term empowerment
covers a vast landscape of meanings, interpretations, definitions and disciplines ranging from psychology and philosophy to the highly commercialized self-help industry and motivational sciences. Sociological empowerment addresses that the members of groups that social discrimination processes have excluded from decision-making processes through, for example - discrimination based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion or gender.

Empowerment as a methodology is often associated with feminism. Empowerment is the process of obtaining the basic opportunities for marginalized people, either directly by the people or through the help of non-marginalized others who share their own access to these opportunities. Empowerment also includes encouraging and developing the skills for self-sufficiency with a focus on eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group. It is a process which enables the individuals/groups to the full access of personal/collective power, authority and influence and also to employ that strength when engaging with other people, institutions or society.

It encourages people to gain the skills and knowledge that will allow them to overcome obstacles in life or work environment and ultimately help them to develop themselves or the society. Empowerment envelops developing and building capacities of individuals, communities to make them part of the mainstream society. Empowerment may also have a negative impact on individuals, corporations and productivity depending upon the individual’s views and goals. It divides the genders or the races. Strong skills and critical capabilities are often held back to open doors for those who meet the empowerment criteria. Those who use empowerment as a selfish advantage tend to become difficult, demeaning and even hostile colleagues.

VIII. CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY & NATION BUILDING

Ambedkar started the Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha and the Samaj Samanta Sangh for the uplift of untouchables. He led processions and dharnas for his community, demanded separate electorates for them, parted ways with Gandhi, violently differing with Gandhi’s approach toward the Untouchables, and finally, left the Hindu fold, embracing with thousands of his followers the more egalitarian faith of Buddhism.

- India got Independence 68 years ago, till today Dalit has to suffer for basic needs for their day to day living i.e. Drinking water, food, shelter and Right to live as human being in society. The Untouchables “Dalit” were denied even Human Rights, which are essential for a bare existence of human life. They were not allowed to drink water from public well; and even their shadow was supposed to pollute the so-called upper Castes. The Hindu social order made the life of the Dalit miserable in every sense of the term. The Hindu Dharmashastra gave sanction to this evil Caste system and the practice of Unsoiability. This continued for the Centuries.

- BabaSaheb Ambedkar was the liberator of the Millions of downtrodden in India. He made abolition of the Caste system and Untouchability a mission of His life. Perhaps it would take a rebirth by the Mahatma Gandhi to end the abominable evil of Caste. As
he had said: “If I do not want to attain moksha, I do not want to be reborn. But if I were to be reborn, I should be born an Untouchable… not as a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra But as an Atishudra, a Bhangi.”

- Emancipation and empowerment of Dalits is possible only through education. The present Dalit leadership, unlike Spartacus or Ambedkar, is suffering from intellectual bankruptcy. It fails to criticize the ruling classes or follow Ambedkar’s philosophical and ideological roots. Nearly 60 to 70 per cent of India’s wealth belongs to Dalits. It is their blood and sweat. But they are the principle victims of the system.

- India, have no leader of the kind Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Indian Crusader for Social Justice and Champion of Human Rights. One of the greatest contributions of Dr. Ambedkar was in respect of Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The fundamental Rights provide for freedom, equality, abolition of untouchability and remedies to ensure the enforcement of rights.

- Ambedkar said, my final words of advice to you is “Educate, Agitate, Organize” have faith in yourself. With justice on our 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 reancements of the human personality.

- The most significant development in the resurgence of Buddhism in modern India was the movement inaugurated by BabaSaheb Ambedkar, as a result of which mass conversions of Buddhism have been taking place in many parts of the country. The Neo-Buddhist is progressively gaining self-sufficiency as regards temples and shrines, monastic leadership and guidance, educational institutions and religious literature.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Ambedkar wanted the people to cultivate the values of freedom and equality among themselves; it is possible only through education. He regarded education as a means to reach the doors of light and perception to remove the regions of darkness and ignorance. Ambedkar emphasized on secular education for social emancipation. The basic theme of his philosophy of education is: inculcating the values of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice and moral character among the boys and girls of all shades. By the way of his educational philosophy, I shall view that by experiencing full freedom of education without the barriers of any caste, creed and race; it is the best way for the enlightenment of human beings from ignorance.

Undoubtedly it is said Babasaheb was a unique personality. This is what Jawaharlal Nehru wrote of the commitment of Ambedkar to the untouchables: “Dr. B.. Ambedkar would be remembered mostly as the symbol of revolt against all the oppressing features of Hindu society. In a way he symbolized the hopes and aspiration of the oppressed and the Untouchables.”