

Comparative Study of the Thoughts of Dr B. R. Ambedkar and M. K. Gandhi with Special reference to the Eradication of Untouchability

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Abstract:-

Social reform movement took place in India during the period of British Rule. Indian Social reformer played a very important role to root out the old tradition and custom of Indian Society. Untouchability was the stigma of Indian society. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi were the leaders of Modern India who fought against the untouchability. Both of them had their own strategy to tackle the problem of untouchability. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar believed that Untouchability not only was harmful to untouchables but also to the touchable and even for the country. It would be dangerous for the Integration of country. Class System and Varna System is the base of untouchability and therefore Class and Caste System must be Eradicated from the society. Whereas M. K. Gandhi believed that Hindu religion is alive only because of the base of Caste of Hindu religion. Different caste is the formed only for the service of the society. There is no requirement of Roti Beti practice in society for the National Integration. He believed Varna system is the natural. Varna system is the method, which fixed the work of man before his birth. He also believed that Varna system avoids the competition between the two Class and also avoid the Class Struggle. He supported the Varna system in which there is no freedom to choose the business according to the choice of the person.

Key Words:-Untouchability, Eradication, Round Table Conference

Introduction: Today we find the Challenges of Racism and Casteism throughout India. Dr.B. R. Ambedkar was against the Caste system and Racism whereas M. K. Gandhi was the supporter of Caste system and Racism. According to Gandhi, every caste and race is important for the structure of the society. All caste and race should have equal importance in the society. Whereas Dr. B. R. Ambedkar believed that because of caste and racism society is divided into two section, one is touchable and another is untouchables. Article 17 of our constitution prohibited the practice of untouchability but still, we find this in our country. In this research article, I want to study, how these two these leaders of India tackled the problem of untouchability. Further, I want to study how the conflict took place between these two leaders on the issue of untouchability.

1. **Meaning of Untouchability:-**Untouchability basically meant pollution by the touch of the certain person due to their birth in a particular caste or family. It is generally seen that this practice of untouchability is exceptional to Hindu system.¹ According to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, untouchable are those who are prohibited to enter in the temple, prohibited to use public water resources like wells and ponds and prohibited to wear shoes, sandal or holding umbrellas and also prohibited to wear to turban on head.

2. **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's thoughts on Untouchability;-**Dr.B. R. Ambedkar believed that only Classless and Casteless Society could eradicate the Untouchability. He further explained that Untouchable and touchable are the two Classes of one Hindu religion and both of them accepted this. Touchable is not denied to say that untouchable are Hindu but at the same time, touchable are not ready to give them all Social and Economic rights to untouchables which they were enjoying. Untouchables are struggling to get all the rights which other people of same religion are having.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar says that Untouchability is not only harmful to untouchables but also to the country.²If these untouchables are enlightened about their rights they will help themselves and the nation to progress. It would have been very easy for untouchables to convert in another religion and achieve their development

but they wanted to remain in same Hindu religion and try to get economic and social rights which were not given to untouchable. Touchable forced the untouchables to work for them like Cleaning the village, Cleaning the sewage, pull the dead cattle and throw them out of the village. Untouchables did not have the right to education like the touchable.

3. **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Demands in front of statutory commission for the upliftment of Untouchability:-** In front of Indian Statutory Commission Poona on October 23, 1928, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar presented the demands for the upliftment of untouchables. He advocated the untouchables and said that untouchables should get distinct minority status and separate from the Hindu society. Depressed Classes: Minorities need more political protection than any minority in British India, because they have left educationally far behind, become economically poor, socially slaves and some have suffered serious political disability. Untouchables should have the reservation in government services.³ Dr. B. R. Ambedkar very strongly demanded the demands in front of Statutory Commission for the

Untouchables of India. He suggested that untouchables could achieve their progress by granting and implementation of their social, economic and political rights.

4. **Mahatma Gandhi's Thoughts on Untouchability;-**He believed that foundation of Hindu Society is the Caste system. 'Caste is another name for the control. Caste puts limits on enjoyment. Caste does not allow a person to violate caste boundaries in an effort to enjoy it. Interdining and intermarriage had been rusticated. Caste could remove from the Hindu society by giving up the principle of hereditary occupation⁴

The caste system is the base of untouchability and M. K. Gandhi supported the Caste system, it means he indirectly supported untouchability. Caste system and untouchability was the basic cause of the division of society, where one group had the authority of exploitation of another group. Untouchables did not have right to leave the work which was imposed on them. It is a sad fact that a national leader like Gandhi supported the caste system.

5. **The sample of propaganda:** Congressmen never hesitate to say that Mr. Gandhi is the protector of Untouchables. Throughout India, the supporters of Gandhi try to convince to the untouchables that Gandhi is their protector. On 12th April 1945, at Peshawar, in the meeting of Depressed Class Mission, RaiBahadurMarchantKhanna said that whatever political rights the Untouchables have got under the Poona pact, they are the result of Mr. Gandhi's efforts. He also blamed that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is supporting the British government and he is using untouchables to strengthen the hands of British Government to divide India.⁵

6. **Thoughts of Gandhiji on the safeguard of Untouchables:-**Dr. B. R. Ambedkar put the demands of Safeguard in front of Round Table Conference for the upliftment of untouchables. Gandhiji opposed these demands of Political development. To keep the demands of Untouchables isolated he tried to buy over the Muslims by offering to concede the whole of Muslims fourteen demands.⁶ This stand of the Gandhiji explains that how he supported the untouchability in the society. He was ready to accept the 14 demands of Musalmanas but opposed to the demands of the safeguards of Untouchables.

7. **The final solution for the Eradication of untouchability:** Throughout his life, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar fought for the eradication of the untouchability from the society but he found that Indian society is very orthodox and is not ready to give up its traditional thoughts. Therefore he decided to leave Hindu religion in which he himself and his whole society got the lower status. He explained in the Conference of Yevala on 13 October 1935 that Untouchables continued the MahadChavadar Tank Satyagraha and Kalaram Entry Temple Satyagrah of Nasik since last six years but touchable (Hindu) did not accept the equal rights for the untouchables and therefore he decided to leave the Hindu religion and convert into the other religion in which all untouchables will get new identity of equality and freedom. He said that inequality in Hinduism compels him to quite Hindu religion.⁷

This was the final solution given to the untouchables to overcome from the untouchability. In the Year of 1956, he converted himself into to Buddhist religion with his 5 lakh followers and succeeded to leave the untouchability.

8. **Second Round Table conference (7-9-1931 to 1-12-1931):-** Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was present in London for second Round Table conference and he demanded the separate Electorate as like Shiks, Muslims and Indian Christians for the Untouchables. M. K. Gandhi was not ready to grant the separate electorates to the untouchables and opposed the demands of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, and he refused to acknowledge, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was the Representative of untouchables. But the British Government approved the demands of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar of the separate Electorate by declaring the Communal award on 16 August 1932 and granted separate electorates for the Muslims, Sikhs, Indian Christians and for Scheduled Caste (Untouchables). But M. K. Gandhi who was in Yerawada Jail informed the British Cabinet that he would resist with his life the separation of the untouchable Hindus from the caste Hindus. And when communal Award, was declared, he resolved to fast unto death if the separate electorates for the Depressed Classes were not abolished.⁸

He was afraid of the division of inside Congress and Hindu Society due to the separate Electorates for Untouchables. Negotiations between Gandhi and Ambedkar took place. Gandhi agreed with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to have a single Hindu electorate, in which scheduled caste will be having reserved seats. This was the Poona Pact. This was the greatness of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who saved the life of M. K. Gandhi and accepted the Puna pact on 10 September 1932, which was not much beneficial for the eradication of untouchability and the emancipation of untouchables.

Even when Dr. B. R. Ambedkar led the MahadChavadar Tank SatyagrahGandhiji did not support Dr. B. R. Amedkar and his satyagraha. Gandhiji did not support the Ambedkar' Mahad Satyagraha. Gandhiji never went on satyagraha to eradicate the Untouchability. He used the weapon of satyagraha against the British rule but he never used the same weapon for the betterment of untouchables.Gandhiji did not accept the demands which was presented by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in Second Round Table Conference even he did not accept that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is the representative of Untouchables but with signed of Puna Pact with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Gandhiji accepted that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is the leader and Representative of Untouchables. Declaration of Communal Award is the victory of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's struggle for the upliftment of untouchables and the defeat to the argument of Mahatma Gandhi which he presented in the Second Round Table Conference. Declaration of Communal Award is the sign of the acceptance of separate status of the Untouchables in the national life of India. It was also signed to the acceptance of the Political Rights of the Untouchables. This was the importance of the Communal Award.¹¹ Gandhi had taken the stand against the Untouchables and to Eradicate the Untouchability. In the Poona pact, Gandhiji accepted the ideal of equality by accepting the arrangement of reservation for the untouchables. After confirming with him Gandhiji changed his mind completely. He not only opposed the caste system but he also pleaded for inter-religion marriages.⁹

Conclusion:- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar through his movement succeeded to awake the Untouchables and to inculcate the spirit of self-respect among them. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar succeeded to get the political rights to the untouchables. Untouchables understood that they will not get their rights without Struggle. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar presented the real Social and Economic condition of the untouchables in the roundtable conference, therefore British Government realized that there is urgent need of political and social rights for the upliftment of the untouchables. For the achievement of political and social development of untouchables, British Government declared the Communal Award. This was the victory of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's efforts which he made in the Round Table Conference. But Gandhi opposed the Communal award. According to him, it is the division of Hindu, it would be not benefitted for the Hindu as well as the Untouchables. Gandhiji did not support the movement which was led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar for the Eradication of Untouchability. He was the strong supporter of Varna system. According to him, the base of Hindu society is the Varna system and it would be beneficial for the whole Society.

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