



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: Pioneering Education For Social Equality And Empowerment

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Abstract

Ambedkar is one of the greatest personality of 20th-century India. His whole life was full of suffering, sacrifice, and struggle. He always fights for the depressed and marginalized people of society or country. Ambedkar was an ardent supporter of the cherished values of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. His birth as an untouchable gave him a bitter taste of caste tyranny, oppression, and untouchability. Babashaheb's contribution to the advancement of education in the country is multifarious. Educate, Organise, and Agitate was his burning message. Ambedkar wanted the people to cultivate the values of freedom and equality among themselves, and 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. For him, education act as powerful change in bringing desirable changes in society. He was a unique thinker of the world who himself suffered much humiliation, poverty, and social stigma, right from childhood, yet he rose to great educational and philosophical heights. He worked a lot for the betterment of people and especially women who somewhere lost their identity. He was a great thinker of woman and their rights. Being a pioneer of social justice, he always worked for woman's emancipation and their rights. He was the first Indian to break down the barriers in the way of advancement of women in India. He laid down the foundation of concrete and sincere efforts by codifying the common Civil Code for Hindus and other sections of Indian society. This paper through some lights on Ambedkar's approach towards education.

Keywords: women, education, social justice, empowerment, dalits , Ambedkar.

INTRODUCTION

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's views on Education; Ambedkar knew that education was the necessary precondition for the reconstruction of society on the principles of equality and justice. He fought for the education of the masses without discrimination of caste and sex. Participation in the budget to debate he said, Education is something which ought to be brought within the reach of everyone. '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', are the views of Ambedkar regarding education. Ambedkar. He devoted most of his intellectual, social, and political life in enhancing the betterment of backward people. He struggled throughout his life for securing the rightful place for the discriminated, backward and downtrodden sections of our society. Although he made several efforts to establish an egalitarian society, which should be based on no discrimination. Ambedkar knew that only education is the only mean to reconstruct society on the principles of equality and social justice. He fought for the education of the masses without making any discrimination in his thought and in practice.

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, commonly known as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, was a prominent Indian jurist, social reformer, and politician. Born on April 14, 1891, in a socially disadvantaged community, he overcame immense obstacles and went on to become one of the most influential figures in modern Indian history. Ambedkar's tireless efforts were dedicated to fighting against caste discrimination and advocating for the rights and upliftment of the oppressed and marginalized sections of society.

Education played a pivotal role in shaping Ambedkar's life and his pursuit of social justice. Despite facing numerous obstacles due to his caste, he demonstrated exceptional intellectual abilities from a young age. Ambedkar's thirst for knowledge and education led him to pursue higher studies, which were often inaccessible to Dalits, the lowest caste in the Indian social hierarchy.

Ambedkar's educational journey began at the Elphinstone High School in Bombay (now Mumbai), where he excelled academically despite facing discrimination from his classmates. With the help of a scholarship, he proceeded to the University of Bombay, where he earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Economics and Political Science, respectively.

Recognizing the transformative power of education, Ambedkar ventured abroad to further his studies. He earned a scholarship to Columbia University in New York and later attended the London School of Economics, where he obtained a Doctorate in Economics. These experiences broadened his horizons and deepened his understanding of social issues, inspiring him to dedicate his life to challenging the prevailing social injustices and inequalities in India.

Ambedkar firmly believed that education was the key to liberating the marginalized communities from the shackles of caste discrimination. He emphasized the importance of education as a means to empower individuals, foster social equality, and eradicate the deeply entrenched caste system. Throughout his career, he tirelessly

advocated for educational reforms, advocating for equal access to education for all, regardless of their caste or social background.

As an architect of the Indian Constitution, Ambedkar ensured that education and its accessibility were enshrined as fundamental rights for all citizens. He played a pivotal role in establishing educational institutions such as the People's Education Society and the Siddharth College, which aimed to provide quality education to the oppressed sections of society.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's contributions to education and his relentless pursuit of social justice continue to inspire generations. His life and work serve as a powerful reminder that education has the potential to break the barriers of inequality and empower individuals to create a more inclusive and just society.

AMBEDKAR AS A GREAT EDUCATIONISTS

Taking an actively part in the discussion on the Bombay University Act and Primary Education Amendment Bill, he contributed his views in the reform of Education. He founded the People's Education society and started colleges for people at Bombay and Aurangabad. He repeatedly urges the government that equal educational opportunities should be provided to all without making any discrimination, however, boys and girls should get different education. It is unfortunate that in the past India was divided into the forms of varnas and later on it was divided in the form of caste and still continued.

There were people of different categories based on caste. Unfortunately, people of low caste had fewer opportunities for the enlightenment of education. The people belonging to low castes especially, the scheduled castes were denied from all kind of privileges and facilities, including educational facilities also. They were so economically so poor that they could never think of sending their children to any educational institutions. The door of all educational institutions was closed on them. If at all any scheduled caste dared to get elementary education he was required to sit outside the classroom so that his shadow should not fall on another student. Therefore, Educationally, economically, and socially they were extremely backward. Dr. Ambedkar did not visualize education simply as a means for the development of a child's personality but also as a source of earning livelihood. Rather he considered and believed 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 modern times.

Dr. Ambedkar was not only the father and architect of Indian constitution, but apart from this he was a great freedom fighter, a great political leader, philosopher, a great economist, etc. Dr. Ambedkar had imprinted his mark of talent and vision in drafting Indian Constitution. 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. Focussing on Education he states that, education provide strength and opportunity 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". However, 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 modern times.

AMBEDKAR VIEWS ON EMPOWERMENT

As word 'empowerment' refers to an increase in the political, social, racial, educational, gender or economic strength of individuals and in communities. The term empowerment has a vast meaning. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had a profound vision of empowerment, particularly for the oppressed and marginalized communities in India. He firmly believed that empowerment could only be achieved through the combination of education, social reform, and political participation.

In short, empowerment is the process to avail 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. Basically, it encourages the skills to develop in the individuals. Empowerment envelops the developing and building capacities of individuals, and communities to make them part of the mainstream society. Empowerment is a very debatable topic as well as a very burning issue in this modern era. Basically, it was used in terms of women, who is comprised to be the most backward population in this country. They are lagging behind. hence, it is need of hour, where more improvement needed to be done.

Ambedkar's view of empowerment went beyond mere upliftment. He envisioned a society where individuals from all backgrounds could enjoy equal rights, dignity, and opportunities. His tireless efforts towards social justice and his role in framing the Indian Constitution were instrumental in ensuring the inclusion and empowerment of marginalized communities.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision of empowerment continues to inspire millions of people around the world. His teachings and actions remind us of the importance of education, social reform, and political participation in bringing about lasting change and creating a more equitable and just society.

AS A SOCIAL REFORMER

Undoubtedly, Ambedkar was one of the great reformers of the twentieth century, a lot for the people who are deprived of their basic rights, whether they were women, or Dalits, or minority. He was a true inspiration for all of us. His dynamic personality and disciple life oriented by consistent hard work greatly impressed the economically weaker sections and many more. It's not only for the weaker section, it is about all those who really want to achieve something in their life without any help, or without any godfather. In addition to education, Ambedkar emphasized the necessity of social reform. He fought against the discriminatory practices entrenched in Indian society, particularly the caste system. Ambedkar believed that true empowerment could only be achieved by eradicating the social barriers that hindered the progress and dignity of marginalized communities. He advocated for the abolition of untouchability, equal rights for women, and the promotion of social equality.

He did a lot for woman, who are the backbone of society. He was also against the caste which continues to flourish in Indian society as it the greatest evil of society, which really hinders its growth. Such a rigid caste

system is not found anywhere in the world outside India. B.R. Ambedkar worked for social integration in India. He wanted to remove this curse from our society. He belonged to a community that had been suffering for generations from the ills of the caste system and oppression. Hence, he devoted his career to the cause of depressed classes. Because of his kind heart, he became as a 'messiah' of suppressed community. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a remarkable social reformer whose efforts and contributions have had a lasting impact on Indian society. Born into a disadvantaged Dalit community, he faced numerous challenges and discrimination throughout his life. However, he overcame these obstacles and dedicated himself to the cause of social justice and equality.

Ambedkar's relentless advocacy for the rights of marginalized communities, especially Dalits, remains his most significant contribution. He fought against the deeply uprooted caste system that had subjected millions of people to inhumane treatment and discrimination since from decades. Ambedkar strongly believed that the caste system was not only a social evil but also a hindrance to India's progress and development as a nation.

As a social reformer, Ambedkar played a major role in the drafting of the Indian Constitution, which enshrined principles of justice, equality, and fundamental rights for all citizens. He fought passionately for the inclusion of affirmative action measures, known as reservations, to provide opportunities and representation for historically oppressed communities. These measures aimed to bridge the gaps created by centuries of discrimination and empower marginalized groups to participate fully in social, economic, and political spheres.

Ambedkar's vision extended beyond the realm of social justice. He emphasized the importance of education as a means of empowerment and actively worked towards establishing educational institutions that would uplift marginalized communities. He believed that education could break the cycle of oppression and empower individuals to challenge societal norms and inequalities.

Apart from this, Ambedkar was a staunch advocate for gender equality. He recognized the importance of addressing the inequalities faced by women and worked towards their emancipation. He fought for women's right to education, property rights, and the abolition of discriminatory practices such as child marriage, dowry and many more evils.

Ambedkar's tireless efforts as a social reformer have left an indelible mark on Indian society. His work continues to inspire generations of individuals to fight against social injustices and work towards a more inclusive and equitable society. Through his vision, determination, and unwavering commitment to social reform, Ambedkar remains an iconic figure whose contributions have shaped the progressive trajectory of modern India.

CONCLUSION

Ambedkar was one great and eminent personality in this modern history. No one could ever replace his work and ideology for deprived people. He shows his concern for deprived people. He is a great builder of the Constitution. He shaped a refined casteless society on the principle of democracy. He spent his whole life uplifting the poor, exploited and untouchables classes. He had an immense contribution towards the development of the 'social justice' society of modern India. He throughout his life focused on Education and cultivates the people to have a degree of freedom and values among themselves. He regarded education as a means to reach the doors of light. The basic theme of his philosophy of education is: inculcating the values of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice and moral character among boys and girls of all shades. Education is the best means to enlightenment.

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