

## Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's View on Education and its Importance to the Downtrodden Classes

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**Abstract:** This paper mainly addresses the following objectives: 1) firstly it concentrates on what are Dr. Ambedkar's views on education and which kind of education he wanted to develop and anticipated in the Indian society, where this society had excluded certain sections from education. And 2) secondly it partially addresses Dr. Ambedkar's efforts to facilitate education facilities to the backward/downtrodden classes of the society in the context of the two institutions established by him, such as BAHISHKRIT HITAKARI SABHA and PEOPLES EDUCATION SOCIETY.

**Keywords:** Ambedkar, downtrodden, backward classes, education, morality, equality, freedom, literacy, wisdom.

### Introduction

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was born in 1891, Mhow village, Madhya Pradesh in India. He was well known for his contribution in the different fields in modern India. He is an outstanding figure among the prominent theoreticians. Ambedkar was a fruitful student, getting doctorates in economics from both Columbia University and the London School of Economics, and gained a reputation as a scholar for his research in economics, law and political science. In his early career he was an economist, professor, and lawyer. His later life was noticeable by his political deeds. He was well known political thinker, social reformer, economist, and anthropologist. He contributed a lot in the field of sociology, history, law, religion, philosophy and education. But his contribution to education is not addressed and recognized by the Indian academicians and others. His philosophical understanding of education is highly neglected. Ambedkar, as a sufferer of Indian Hindu religion and Hindu education system, which denied him

education by obstructing him at every stage, his philosophical understanding of education is different with the other Indian education philosophers.

### Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's View on Education

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was aware of the backwardness of the downtrodden classes of the society in the area of education and he knows the value of it and he always insists on the necessity of education particularly to the downtrodden classes since this section denied education from the ages. As it is mentioned above, Ambedkar's views on education are highly varied with the other modern philosophers of modern India such as Mahatma Gandhi, Ravindranath Tagore, Vevekananda, Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Madan Mohan Malviya, where these philosophers could not separate education from spirituality but Ambedkar could do it. He strongly believed that educational opportunities make people progressive, would also increase the quality of life and give chances for better employment. Dr. Ambedkar's

three principles “be educated, be organized and agitated”, education got first place not by the choice, he believes education make people self-enlightened, education initiate and incite to the organized and organized people shows their interest and disinterest to the society, it led to struggle to achieve social progress.

*“He says education is revolution, education is that make men fearless, teach unity, make them understanding their birth rights and teach them to struggle and fight for the freedom and also said if the education not serve such purpose, then such education is dead one better it should born”.* Education teach equality and morality and make the people capable and provide safeguard to the humanity, true education creates life in the society. The aim of the education is an important aspect of the Ambedkar education philosophy, in his philosophical thought he was given importance to social humanism. He placed the self-respect and human pride was greatest and most important. Through the education he expected equality, freedom, brotherhood ness and fearlessness.

Inorder to establish the moral order in the society morality is also an important goal of the education. As morality is an important aim of the education, he differs with many Indian philosopher in case of the morality since the most of the philosophers in India linked the morality with religion, where they say observance of varna, dharma, saddharma are the morality. But Ambedkar concept of the morality is different, he did not believe in the religion and god. He said morality should be universal in character, and social needs, common model, common understanding and growth of individual should be part of it. He believed in dhamma and thought that dhamma and morality are same. According to him morality is that:

*“Belief in super natural is not morality.”<sup>1</sup>*

*Belief in god is not morality.*

*Morality based on the union with bhrama is a false morality.*

*Belief in soul is not morality.*

*Belief in sacrifices is not morality.*

*Belief based on speculation is not morality.*

*Reading book of dhamma is not morality.”*

Ambedkar also said morality should make people, to purify their mind, love human, acting right, love for living beings. Apart from the above essential characteristic of sacred morality *“it must pull all social barriers and must break down the barriers between the man and man also it should teach that worth not the birth is the measure of the man.”*

Literacy is also an important aim of the education. He says literacy should be throughout the life and literacy through the formal educational institutions is necessary. It widens the horizon and literacy makes the people to get new perception and freedom from the ignorance. He also criticized the Hindu formal education where they believe there is no knowledge outside the Vedas, such education system benefited the few classes of the society and according to Ambedkar such education confined the man to particular activities, it promotes the inequality and ignorance.

Ambedkar criticized such education and suggested the literacy which promote knowledge of liberty, equality, fraternity, wide spread scope for

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[http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/ambedkar\\_buddha/03\\_04.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/ambedkar_buddha/03_04.html)

development. And he said literacy plays crucial role in promoting freedom and justice and spread the knowledge among the masses and it solves the problem of unemployment, increase contribution of masses to the GDP of the country.

Ambedkar said knowledge and education are highly correlated, with education expansion of knowledge is possible, and the right of man to education becomes fundamental to his freedom. Deprivation of knowledge makes the man inevitable slave of those fortunes than himself. Deprivation of the knowledge is denial of power to use liberation for great ends. Higher education and university education to the adults should be scientific and impartial; it should not fill the students mind with the facts and theories. Students should train to distinguish between, where may fairly be called matter of fact and what certainly mere matter of opinion is, and also develop the critical, creative and scientific knowledge.

*"Ignorance is the root cause of the fear"*. Ambedkar strongly emphasized on education because of the reason it make the people fearless and promote knowledge *"once Ambedkar himself said the slave he is slave and he will revolt."*<sup>2</sup> Courage with knowledge is great born. Aim of the education is not merely providing knowledge ,also create sense of wisdom, justice and good accompany. He has given much importance to wisdom and identified qualities such as virtue, pity, restrain, freedom from impurity as characteristics of wisdom. Education should promote sense of the responsibility, charity, kindness, courtesy, and good will among the younger generation of society and enhance the happiness in life.

<sup>2</sup> S D KAPOOR (2013). B R Ambedkar, W E B DuBois and the Process of Liberation, Economic and Political Weekly.

### **Bahiskrit Hitakarini Sabha (1924)**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar launched a sabha on 9<sup>th</sup> march 1924 in order to facilitate education accessibility to backward classes of the society. The Sabha worked to promote and spread the education among depressed classes by opening two hostels in Bombay along with Solapur and Belgaon. Also sabha worked to promote and spread the depressed classes culture in the study circles and tried to uplift the economic condition of the depressed classes by starting agricultural schools and industries. Students of the sabha published a magazine under the direction and guidance of sabha called Saraswathi Belas. *The aims and objects of the Sabha were as under:*

1. *To promote the spread of education among the Depressed Class by opening Hostels or by employing such other means as may seem necessary or desirable.*
2. *To promote the spread of culture among the depressed study circles.*
3. *To advance and improve the economic condition of the Depressed Classes by starting Industrial and Agricultural schools.*
4. *To represent the grievances of the Depressed Classes.*<sup>3</sup>

### **People's Education Society 1945**

Ambedkar started it for educating the depressed classes of the society, started Peoples Education Society on 8<sup>th</sup> July of 1945, it concentrated on secondary education and higher education collegiate, physical education, it started hostels and

<sup>3</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahiskrit\\_Hitakarini\\_Sabha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahiskrit_Hitakarini_Sabha)

play grounds, libraries in Bombay and other part of India. To cultivate interest in depressed classes it has given incentive such as scholarships for higher education in India and abroad. Main objectives of the society are:

1. *To provide facilities for education- secondary, collegiate, technical, physical and the like*
2. *To start, establish, conduct educational institutions such as schools, colleges, hostels, libraries, playgrounds etc. at suitable places in the state of Bombay as well as in any other part of India, or give aid to such institutions.*
3. *To provide facilities for the education of the poor.*
4. *To create and foster a general interest in education amongst the scheduled castes and in particular to give them special facilities and scholarships for higher education in India and abroad.*
5. *To promote science, literature and fine arts and to impart useful knowledge.*
6. *To cooperate, amalgamate or affiliate the society or any institution or institutions run by or belonging to the society, to any other institution or society with a view to securing further advancement of the aims and objects of the society.*<sup>4</sup>

## Conclusion

Dr. B.R.Ambedkar struggled a lot to educate the society and strongly believed education is only weapon to kill the all evil forces of the society such

as humiliation, discrimination, ignorance, inequality, unemployment, slavery and poverty. As a historian and political scientist he could understand the reason for existence of the evil forces and tried a lot to eradicate and eliminated those from the society. Since he believed in concept of the pay back to the society, he established various educational institutions and magazines for the upliftment of the society such as BahiskritHithakariniSabha, Depressed classes education society, peoples education society, “Mooknayak, (the leader of the dumb)”, “Bahishkrit Bharat (The Ostracized India)”, “Janata (The People)”, “Prabuddha Bharat (Enlightened India)”. He fought against the Hindu religion and Hindustva education system which divided the society on the basis of caste and Varna and excluded backward/ depressed classes from the benefits of education. He denied the kind of education, which Hindutvaeducation system is proving and he said there is no scope to develop individuality in such an educational system which promotes caste occupations. He suggested alternative education system which promote development, give scope to move to other occupation unlike Hindu education, provide bread, happiness, equality, and establish moral order and freedom.

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<sup>4</sup><http://mulnivasiorganiser.bamcef.org/?p=264>

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