



Ambedkar: Pioneer of Education in India

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ABSTRACT

The philosophy of Baba Saheb is targeted towards the practical realisation of human potential, and is significant in the modern times. Education, in Ambedkar's view, should be seen as a movement. If it does not accomplish what it set out to achieve, then it is pointless. A genuine education nurtures humanity, creates opportunities for making a living with dignity, teaches us valuable lessons of life, and instils in us a sense of equality. His qualifications as a thinker is exhibited in essays, books, periodicals, and newspapers that he authored during his lifetime. The Problem of the Rupee, Provincial Finance in British India, Annihilation of Caste, and Shudras were some of the works having relevance in the contemporary society. Ambedkar had the belief that the best way to improve people's standard of life was via the dissemination of knowledge. "Educate, unite, and fight" was the motto he used. The concepts of human dignity and respect for oneself were at the core of his philosophy. He believed that education was the key to bringing about social change that would bring about justice, equality, brotherhood, freedom, and an absence of fear. He advocated for the establishment of a society that was guided by moral principles. It should go without saying that the best way to spread these moral principles is through education.

Keywords: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Visionary Educationist, Great Philosopher, The Indian Constitution.

I

Introduction

His philosophy has many excellent concepts for the practical realisation of human potential, and these ideas have significance for the society of today. The remarkable contribution of great educationists like Swami Dyanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Madan Mohan Malviya, and Dr. B.R.Ambedkar was one such great philosopher. The educational progress that our nation is witnessing today is due to the remarkable contribution of these great educationists. His theories and pedagogical tenets have withstood the test of time, passing through the most advanced educational system in the world, and his most treasured principles have already been integrated into the educational system of contemporary India. This paper intends to examine the ideas and work of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as they pertain to the field of education.



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar placed a lot of emphasis on the concept of social development that was founded on self-respect, equality, and brotherhood. His views achieved widespread popularity as a result of his monumental book "The Indian Constitution," which, among other things, ensures that every member of society is protected by Articles and provisions of the Constitution. Article 17 of the Constitution, which protects those who cannot be touched, was one of the provisions that he created. He created the Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha, one of the goals of which was to make dorms and classrooms available to the students of the Bahishkrit language. He made a point to underline how important it is for women to have an education in today's culture. According to him, the education of a woman may transform her family and also motivate her kid to pursue education. He devoted his efforts to the amelioration of the disadvantaged and oppressed social strata in order to get around the budgetary obstacle posed by the reverse scenario. As a result of seeing how he underlined the need of education for disadvantaged groups and individuals. He emphasised the need for scholarship inside educational institutions. He said that education was essential in order to shake off the mental sluggishness and contentment with their current situation that they had developed. He used every ounce of his might to ensure that all inhabitants of independent India would have equal access to educational opportunities without bias.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar believed that the dissemination of education was pre-requisite to eradicate the backwardness that existed in society. "If the people get knowledge through education, then they can face the problems created by the people who dominate them. Education eradicates the bias of people, which in turn results on to minimise the exploitation and dominance of those people who try to take advantage of the so-called illiterate people: "If the people get knowledge through education, then they can face the problems created by the people who dominate them. The purpose of education is to change people's ideas and to break down the barriers and reducing the gulf that have been constructed and created. The most important thing that education does for its recipients is to instil a sense of self-confidence, which is often regarded as the first phase in the progression of human growth. Ambedkar goes on to emphasise that labour performed without the benefit of knowledge is fruitless and a waste of time. He was of the belief that it was a waste of human power for people to labour without education since it was the same as wasting human power. He occasionally held that if the person leading us is illiterate, then that person will undoubtedly take us down the path of darkness since it is the role of our leaders and it is possible for a leader to pull a whole society towards degeneration



if that leader is not educated and does not foster the spread of knowledge. Dr. Ambedkar emphasised the idea that education is the most important factor in the growth of both society and the individual. Ambedkar had a great deal of foresight and he not only addressed elementary schooling but also higher levels of education in his writings. According to him, the expansion of educational opportunities from elementary to higher levels produces the multifaceted leaders that steer us toward improvement. In one of his talks, Ambedkar made an analogy between life and a competition and said, "The people do not persevere in the battle of life unless they are educated." Since then, they have been subjected to a variety of societal issues, including degradation, disrespect, and censorship. Therefore, the current administration has a responsibility to move quickly by offering educational opportunities. During Ambedkar's time, the situation regarding the education of untouchables was in an extremely precarious one. His point of view was that "the untouchables were being kept away on purpose by Brahmans and other castes." It was simply due to the fact that they control the educational system. They just attempted to interact with untouchables in a subservient manner. As a consequence, an effective measure directed at the government was taken. After having such a negative experience with untouchables, he is now working to introduce reforms into the educational system. "Education is a weapon of creation of mental and educational progress, weapon of elimination of social servitude, weapon of economic development, and weapon of political freedom," Ambedkar emphasised.

While stressing the importance of getting an education, he calls for laws that make it mandatory for students to attend school. He was well aware that the issue with basic education was a problem for the country as a whole. In the speech that he gave at the meeting that was held in Mahabaleshwar on May 31, 1929, he said, "The issue of the spread of basic education is the most dominant one." The nations that are now home to the greatest number of illiterate Dalits, are unable to compete successfully in today's global marketplace. If the interest of the common people is required for the expansion of basic education, then a longer amount of time will be required. Therefore, it has to enact a law that makes elementary education mandatory, and moreover, it needs to enact a law that makes primary education mandatory.

Consequently, what Ambedkar desired to see through his works and thought was not only for there to be Acts, but also for them to be executed in a mandatory manner. He was well aware of the significant financial commitment that would be required to implement mandatory schooling, and he understood that putting this responsibility in the hands of locally elected



officials would almost certainly lead to the Acts being overturned. However, the reality of the situation is that the control of our educational system is in the hands of those who are ignorant of it. Therefore, in order to eliminate this problem, there has to be free and mandatory education. According to Ambedkar, the issue of expenditures may be resolved if both the central government and the governments of the individual states get together and reach a consensus. Ambedkar goes on to say that individuals who have the financial means to pay the price should be permitted to do so, but others whose financial situations prevent them from being able to pay the cost should be excluded from having to do so. Ambedkar continues by stating that it should be the moral obligation of the government to guarantee that education shouldn't be excessively expensive, and he calls for this responsibility to be fulfilled. Free education should be provided to everyone, even those living in poverty, if the nation is ever going to realise its full potential. Ambedkar, who agrees with this idea, argues that there should not be a gender gap in educational opportunities: "there should not be separate schooling for boys and girls." According to him, education does not make a difference between the sexes.

Relevance of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar's Thoughts in the Present Scenario

In the present times, the government finally understood the significance of Ambedkar's ideas and decided to work toward making them a reality. To ensure a nation's continued survival in the contemporary era, it is necessary for that nation to have an efficient educational system. When this educational system is fully functional, it will provide the foundation upon which the advancement of science and technology may be built. If the foundation provided by basic school is lacking, then what is the use of continuing one's education at a higher level? There is no use in referring to India as a developing nation when it has so much wealth. As a result, on April 1, 2010, the central government made the declaration that "Right to Education" is a basic right in order to overcome these challenges. On the celebration of this day, it was proclaimed that the right to education is one of the basic rights, which brought Ambedkar's "dream" one step closer to becoming a reality. We find that many of Ambedkar's ideas are reflected in the clauses of the Right to Education Act, 2009 when we go through that piece of legislation. Dr. Manmohan Singh while addressing the nation on the occasion said that "the Indian government is begging to educate every kid in India." Since April 1, 2010, the "Right to Free Education Act" that was passed in 2009 has been in effect and was incorporated in the Article 21 of the Constitution of India so that living with dignity may be ensured. There are many sections of this Act that may be traced back to the ideas of Dr. Ambedkar, including the following:



- The Act mandates that all children in India between the ages of six and fourteen years must get an free and compulsory education.
- No child should be held back, kicked out of school, or made to take standardised tests until they have finished their primary education (up to eighth class).
- It reserves twenty-five percent of seats in all schools for families and communities who are economically challenged. Additionally, it makes it such that unrecognised schools are not allowed to practise, there are no provisions for donations or capitation fees, and neither parents nor interviews are required for admittance.
- This Act is applicable across the country.
- Both young men and young women should participate in co-educational programmes.
- On the basis of the "Sarva Shikshan Abhiyan," the financial burden will be divided between the government of the state and the central government. In April of 2010, the central government reached an agreement with the state governments to divide the financing necessary for the implementation of the legislation in the proportion of 65 percent to 35 percent for the centre and the state respectively. A proportion of ninety percent to ten percent for the states in the north eastern region.

As a result of the provisions made in the "Right to Education Act," it is possible to demonstrate that the ideas conceived by Ambedkar prior to India's independence have been materialised in the form of the "Compulsory and Free Education Act" in India in order to bring children into the process of receiving an education. It assisted the country in decreasing the conventional monopoly held by the ruling class as well as the slavery that existed. Ambedkar had previously proposed making it mandatory for all children to get an education, and in order to put this proposal into action, the state government and the federal government would need to reach a revenue-sharing agreement. The fact that the legislation included a 25 percent reservation for economically disadvantaged areas to be ejected from dominant class in school and combined education for boys and girls is the most essential thing that should be considered. In addition, the measures included in this would unquestionably free the Dalits from the oppression of certain social strata. Whatever Dr. Ambedkar had envisioned becoming a reality was brought one step closer to fruition when this Act was finally put into effect. The basic idea of "night school education" was also influenced by Ambedkar's line of thinking in the last twenty years of the twentieth century. In addition to this, Dr. Ambedkar places an emphasis on the existing system of higher education. According to what he had to say, "The education that one receives



at university need to be socially oriented." It should be based on science and be free of bias; moreover, it shouldn't be restricted for the sole purpose of serving the interests of certain social groups. In addition to this, he states that the purpose of education is not simply to impart knowledge, but also to help students to learn how to cultivate their personalities and to expand their intellectual powers. Ambedkar makes the claim that "in the current arrangement the university has very little capacity to govern the colleges." According to him, despite the authority of discipline, the refusal of permission of college calls for stronger powers at the institution. If these rights are delegated to the university, then the colleges will be managed in an organised fashion under the watchful eye of the university. However, when we look at the law of the institution, we discover authorities that have been granted to the university. As a direct consequence of this, our institution is comprised of a management council, Senate, Academic council, and a variety of faculties.

II

Ambedkar understands that education is fundamental to the remaking of society in accordance with the values of fairness and equality. He researched the history of Indian social education and discovered that only people from higher castes had access to schools during the Peshwa rule of Maharashtra and the early days of British rule. He advocated for an inclusive public school system that welcomed students of all races and genders. During the budget discussion, he argued that "education is available to everyone." A simple exchange of favours is not appropriate in the field of education. Moreover, he participated in the debate over the University of Mumbai Act and the Primary Education Amendment Act, both of which aided in the improvement of schooling under his watch. He established educational institutions in Mumbai and Aurangabad, both of which bear his name: the People's Education Association. He helped the government out on multiple occasions because he thought it was their job to ensure that everyone had the same opportunities to get a good education.

Every child in India has an inherent and inalienable right to an education. Every child born in India is entitled to a free and obligatory education, which eliminates the financial burden of schooling. There is a cost associated with this present circumstance. Lower-class people who were already on the margins of society bore the brunt of this. If anyone can triumph over the prejudices of Indian society, it is B.R. Ambedkar. Once upon a time, Indian culture made it difficult for people to get a formal education. Many lower castes (shudra and atishudra) were forbidden from attending school and were therefore unable to receive an education. Ambedkar



had to overcome several obstacles on his path to higher education; these obstacles included unexpectedly harsh, dangerous, and degrading treatment. His life story and the challenges he overcame inform his approach towards education. The author of this piece aimed to do study on Ambedkar's thoughts on schooling. He was a key figure in establishing modern India. He saw it as unfair to those less fortunate if they were denied the chance to get an education. To improve society, Ambedkar took a method that was both constructive and structural. He believed that education alone might spark a political, social, and economic upheaval. Article 45 which made schooling mandatory and free, was a primary focus of his efforts. Education for women and character formation via learning were important themes he stressed. The social issues that Ambedkar encountered shaped his philosophising.

Ambedkar, the great architect of the Indian Constitution, rose to the occasion to assume the natural and appropriate leadership and actively participate in social struggles and constitutional matters despite having been born into a socially backward caste, educated in the western system, rational in outlook, and somewhat rebellious in temperament. As a result of his British-influenced education at an Indian university and his studies at Columbia University and the London School of Economics and Political Science, Ambedkar absorbed the liberal political tradition prevalent in the West. He was able to study in the West and was influenced by liberal thinkers such as Dewey, Harold Laski, and Martin Seligman. The fact that Ambedkar entered the world as a member of the untouchable caste, in a system based on stratified inequality, injustice, and the denial of basic human rights to his community, gave his life meaning and direction.

The term "quality" in the Indian context has come to stand for a wide range of meanings and approaches that attempt to describe, evaluate, and reform the current state of education in terms of the nature of its provision (institutions), curriculum and textbooks, the professional competence of teachers, and the learning outcomes of students. Although these are strong barometers of an educational system's well-being, it is argued that discussions of educational quality need to be framed within the larger framework of a society's beliefs about the nature of a good life and the State's role in fostering it. Here, we revisit the ideas of the Enlightenment philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau, whose writings had a significant impact on how the concept of "inequality" and the means to address it were discussed and implemented at the national and international levels. In the early 20th century, nationalists in India actively



engaged with the concept and identity of India, and part of that process included working to reduce inequity. In this context, we analyse the philosophical stances taken by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi about the characteristics of a social order that is both equal and stable. While their perspectives were radically different (especially in terms of the role of the State and the type of education that was necessary), revisiting and negotiating with their ideas can help us rethink the hierarchy of values that underpins our public schooling system.

Conclusion

To put it another way, Ambedkar's ideas about education seem to be the stepping stones for the scenario that exists now. In the present period, Dr. Ambedkar's ideas about the primary and secondary education systems have been codified into legislation, along with any other modifications that he had advocated via his thinking about the education system. When Ambedkar said that the education system in use at the time was flawed and was at the root of the decline of Indian civilisation, he was absolutely correct. No matter what it is, the choices that the federal government has made regarding the educational system have their origins in Dr. Ambedkar's ideas. In addition, it is possible to assert that in accordance with the obligations laid forth by Dr. Ambedkar, India is going to emerge as a global power as a result of its intellectual human resources, which can only be acquired through the instrument of education. Not only this, but also the judgments decided by the University Grants Commission and institutions of higher education about universities and the research that occurs inside them will without a doubt be the fruits of Ambedkar's thinking in this age.

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