

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Social Work And Educational Work

*Dr. Laxmi Sitaram Dakhole, Assistant Professor, B. P. National Institute of Social Work,
Nagpur*

Mail ID : lsdakhole712@gmail.com

Abstract :

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had to face problems as an untouchable from childhood. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar organized various non-violent movements to end untouchability and provide equal opportunities to all and organized them to fight for their rights. The purpose of the present study. It is to present the work done by Babasaheb Ambedkar for the untouchables. The work of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is to bring forward.

Key words : Caste System, Untouchables, Dalits, Satyagraha.

Introduction :

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji alias Babasaheb Ambedkar was a humanist and architect of the Constitution. He was born on 14 April 1891 in the village of 'Mahhu' in Madhya Pradesh. His paternal grandparents (ancestors) were residents of the village of 'Ambawade' in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. Bhimrao was the fourteenth child of Subedar Ramji and his wife Bhimabai. He was born into the Mahar caste of Hinduism. After retiring as a headmaster from a military school, Subedar Ramji went to Dapolis. Bhimrao's primary education was in Dapolis. He did his secondary education in Satara and passed his matriculation from Elphinstone High School in Mumbai. Later, he obtained his B.A. degree from Elphinstone College in 1912.

At that time, untouchable students were made to sit outside the classroom in schools. Due to this, Bhimrao was exposed to untouchability from childhood. They were not allowed to drink the water kept for upper caste students in the school. They were not allowed to fill the public wells of upper castes. Also, no one would give water to untouchable children from the wells. Since shaving would be impure, the village barbers did not cut the hair of untouchables. It

was considered a better and more sacred act to cut the hair of buffaloes than to cut the hair of untouchables. Therefore, Bhimrao's sister used to cut his hair at home. Bhimrao grew up enduring such humiliation, rejection and bad treatment, which led to his hatred for Hinduism and the caste system. With the help and support of Baroda Naresh Maharaj Sayajirao Gaekwad, Bhimrao obtained his M. A. and Ph. D. degrees from Columbia University in the United States. Later, he obtained his M. Sc. Barrister and D. S. C. degrees from the University of London. After returning to India from America, he joined the service of the Baroda State. However, since he was an untouchable, no one gave him a home in Baroda. Also, his upper caste colleagues in the state treated him with contempt. So he quit his job and returned to Mumbai and became a professor at Sydenham College. Later, he practiced law and continued his teaching work, and also became the principal of the Government Law College in Mumbai. Highly educated and intelligent, Bhimrao had experienced an atmosphere of equality abroad. However, he experienced inequality in his own country. He dedicated the rest of his life to public service for the upliftment of the untouchables and to erase the stigma of untouchability. He worked tirelessly to ensure that the untouchables get equal rights and create awareness among them. After independence, he made a great contribution in the creation of the Indian Constitution. Therefore, he is known as the architect of the Indian Constitution. Finally, he embraced Buddhism along with millions of his followers. He passed away on 6 December 1956. In recognition of his tireless and selfless work, he was posthumously awarded the country's highest civilian award, the 'Bharat Ratna', in 1990.

Dr. Ambedkar's Social Work (Social Work of Dr. Ambedkar)

1) Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha

With a view to creating a social movement for the upliftment of the untouchables, he founded the 'Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha' in Mumbai on 20 July 1924. The aim of this meeting was to bring those who were socially and politically thrown to the bottom with the rest of the Indian society. The untouchables were kept outside the society and were not given civil, religious or political rights. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's aim was to create awareness among them about their rights. On behalf of his community, Dr. Ambedkar submitted a letter to the Simon

Commission in which he demanded reservation of seats for the backward classes on the basis of nomination. In it, he demanded recruitment of backward classes in the army, navy and police departments. Schools, hostels and libraries were started for the welfare of the untouchables through the meeting.

2) Opposition to untouchability

Right from his school days, whether in Dapoli, Satara or Mumbai, Dr. Ambedkar experienced humiliation and injustice from the upper castes everywhere. Even after completing his higher education, he did not find it easy to get a job because of his caste. He had to hear rejection even while renting a house in Baroda, he had to hear sarcastic remarks in the staffroom of Sydenham College in Mumbai. Moreover, he had lost his chance to become the principal of Sydenham College because of his caste. In his book Annihilation of caste, he called for the destruction of the caste system. To eliminate untouchability and provide them with equal opportunities, he organized various non-violent movements and organized Dalits to fight for their rights. The struggle in Mahad had a profound impact on the minds of the untouchables. As a result of all these things, the government had to pay attention to the grievances of the Dalits. He started schools, colleges and hostels to provide education to Dalits. In the first Round Table Conference, he made the British aware of the problems of the untouchables. Finally, he converted to Buddhism, a religion that constantly treated them with inequality and rejected them.

3) Untouchables movement

Dr. Ambedkar was aware of the problems faced by the untouchables in India. The untouchables were not allowed to enter Hindu temples, use public places like roads, schools, wells, hospitals, own any business or land, wear shoes, use umbrellas, ride horses. They were deprived of basic human rights. Therefore, Dr. Ambedkar gave the message to the untouchables to "Educate, Organize and Agitate". He fought to get equal status for the untouchables through Satyagraha. He waged a Satyagraha to open the Chavdar Lake in Mahad to the untouchables. Similarly, he waged a Satyagraha to gain entry to the Kalaram Temple in Nashik. Due to this struggle, Dr. Ambedkar came into the limelight as a leader of the grassroots people. Dr. Ambedkar's leadership in this movement of the lower castes

strengthened the foundation of the untouchable movement.

4) Burning of Manusmriti

According to Dr. Ambedkar, all the problems of the Dalits have arisen because of this Manusmriti. In the eyes of Hindus, Manusmriti is a very respected book, but in the eyes of the untouchables, it is contemptible. Although this book was written about 2000 years ago, it still controls the lives of Hindus. While Manusmriti imposed many disadvantages on the lower castes, it gave many privileges to the upper castes. According to Dr. Ambedkar, Manusmriti is a symbol of injustice, cruelty and inequality against the untouchables. Therefore, to eliminate all kinds of inequality and exploitation, Dr. Ambedkar publicly burnt Manusmriti in 1927.

5) Political work

Dr. Ambedkar was fully aware that the untouchables had no political rights. Therefore, he attended the first Round Table Conference held in London in 1930. In this conference, he exposed the plight of the untouchables and demanded the abolition of untouchability. He prepared a manifesto of the fundamental rights of all Dalit classes and presented it before the committee appointed for minorities. In that manifesto, he demanded a separate constituency for the untouchables. This manifesto was accepted by the British government. But Mahatma Gandhi opposed the idea of a separate constituency and started a fast unto death against it in the Yerwada Jail in Pune. Finally, Dr. Ambedkar gave up the demand for a separate constituency through the Pune Pact and instead agreed to have reserved seats for the untouchables in the legislature.

To establish a separate political identity or identity of the untouchables, Dr. Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party in 1936. Due to his tireless efforts, 15 out of 17 candidates of this party were elected in the Mumbai Legislative Assembly elections on 17 February 1937. To give a national character to his political party and bring all the Scheduled Castes under the banner of this party, he founded the 'All India Scheduled Caste Federation' in 1942. But in the elections held in 1946, not a single candidate of this party was elected. After independence, Dr. Ambedkar was appointed as the Law Minister in Nehru's cabinet. This was a matter of great pride and hope for the Dalits. In August 1947, Dr. Ambedkar was

appointed as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution and the Constitution prepared by him came into force on 26 January 1950. However, he resigned from Nehru's cabinet after opposing the Hindu Code Bill introduced in Parliament. He lost elections twice later. Still, he continued his work for the upliftment of the Dalit class.

6) Conversion to Buddhism

Dr. Ambedkar tried to reform Hinduism. But he failed to change the mentality of Hindus. Due to this, he realized that the economic condition and social status of the untouchables would not improve by remaining in Hinduism. He also realized that the untouchables would not be freed from the social and religious slavery of Hindus. Therefore, it became necessary for him to renounce Hinduism. He thought that just as freedom is necessary for India, changing religion is necessary for the untouchables. On 13 October 1935, in a conference held in Yeola, a village in Nashik district, he declared, "Unfortunately, I was born as an untouchable in Hinduism, it was not in my hands. But I declare that I will not die as a Hindu!" In this conference, he decided to convert. This decision came as a big shock to the Hindus. Dr. Ambedkar studied Islam, Christianity and Sikhism in depth. Finally, Dr. Ambedkar decided to convert to Buddhism. On 14 October 1956, he was initiated into Buddhism by the Buddhist monk Chandramani Mahasthavir in Nagpur. After that, he initiated millions of his followers into Buddhism. However, he could not spread Buddhism due to his Mahaparinirvana in Delhi on 6 December 1956.

Dr. Ambedkar's Educational Work:

According to the caste rules, the lower castes did not have the right to education. Only the upper castes had the right to education. Therefore, the condition of the lower castes was almost like that of slaves. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was endowed with higher education. Therefore, he knew that education would improve the condition of the lower castes. Therefore, he took the following steps to spread education among the lower castes.

1) Educational Awareness

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was aware of the educational backwardness of the lower castes. They had been denied education for thousands of years. Due to ignorance and illiteracy, they were exploited by the upper castes. The upper castes forced the lower castes to do the menial

tasks that the upper castes could not do themselves. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar tried to make the lower castes aware that the reason for their miserable condition was lack of education. Ambedkar encouraged the lower castes to send their children to school. He tried to provide these children with facilities like scholarships, clothing, food and shelter. He gave a sharp message to his followers, "Learn, organize and struggle".

2) Establishment of Bahishkrit Hitkarani Sabha

Dr. Ambedkar established the 'Bahishkrit Hitkarani Sansthan' to spread education among the lower caste people and improve their socio-economic condition. On behalf of this organization, a hostel was started in Solapur on 4 January 1925 and provided accommodation, food, clothes and educational materials to the Dalit students. Dr. Ambedkar secured a grant of Rs. 40000/- from the Solapur Municipality for this hostel. This organization also started a monthly magazine called 'Saraswati Vilas' and a free library.

3) Establishment of Dalit Education Society

On 14 June 1928, Dr. Ambedkar established the Dalit Education Society. The main objective of this organization was to facilitate secondary education for Dalits. Dr. Ambedkar appealed to the Mumbai government to help this organization in providing hostel facilities to Dalit students. Because this organization was not capable of fulfilling the responsibility of secondary education. Therefore, the Governor of Mumbai approved five hostels for secondary school students on 8 October 1928. The Governor also approved a grant of Rs. 9000 /- per month for these hostels. When this amount became insufficient for the expenses, Ambedkar obtained financial help from charitable organizations of the Muslim and Parsi communities and some other donors.

4) Establishment of People's Education Society

Dr. Ambedkar established the People's Education Society on 8 July 1945 to provide higher education to the lower middle class including the untouchables. On behalf of this organization, Siddharth Arts and Science College was started in Mumbai in 1946, Milind College in Aurangabad in 1950, Siddharth Commerce and Economics College in Mumbai in 1953 and Siddharth Law College in Mumbai in 1956.

5) Literary works

Dr. Ambedkar had a great passion for reading and writing. For this, he had built a rich library at home. He used to spend a lot of his time in this library. Through his writings, he has shed light on the problems of Dalits. The important books he wrote are as follows: 'Cast in India Its Mechanism and Genesis', 'Annihilation of Caste', 'Who Were the Sudraj?', 'Buddha and His Dhamma', 'Riddles in Hinduism' etc.

Before Dr. Ambedkar came to the limelight, the newspaper business was monopolized by the upper castes. With the help of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur State, Dr. Ambedkar started a weekly called 'Mooknayak' in 1920. Then he started the newspapers 'Bahiskrit Bharat' and 'Samaj Samata Sangh' in 1927, 'Samata' in 1929 and 'Janata' in 1930. Education is an effective weapon for social change. Education makes a person aware of his duties and rights. He explained the importance of education in the society so that the untouchables in the society can become aware of their own identity. Education is the milk of a tigress. He told his brothers that whoever drinks it will not remain without grumbling. Since primary education is the foundation of all education, he said that this education should be of very high quality and merit. The goal of primary education should be such that once a boy or girl enters school, they should come out completely educated, informed and qualified. The government should pay attention to this. He said that education should reach all strata of society. By receiving education, a person becomes intellectually strong. A person starts understanding the difference between good and bad. He has asserted the need for education to instill the qualities of wisdom, morality and compassion in everyone. Children should not only be taught basic skills in school, but their minds should be made civilized and qualified. For the benefit of society, the education should be such that the children who have acquired knowledge can fulfill their social obligations properly and competently. School is a factory that makes good citizens and dutiful citizens. Those who participate in this process should be aware of this. They believe that true education is the one that is aware of the national interest and social interest.

Conclusion :

In the present study, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar brought the untouchables into the mainstream of the society. The path of education was opened for them. Constitution of India

was written by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Babasaheb Ambedkar opposed untouchability and destroyed traditional customs and traditions.

References :

- Patil, Krishnakumar (2014) : Sociology 12th, Maharashtra rajya Madhyamik Uchch Madhyamik Shikshan Mandal, Pune
- Rajput, Dhonderamsingh (2018) : Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Ek Dhyan Dip, Manohari Manoyuva, year 26 th, Ank 4th 2024, Akola
- Patade, Prachi (2024): An overview of Dr B R Ambedkar Educational Philosophy and vision, A Global journal of humanities
- Subrat Ratho, Rachita (2021) : Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and education policy, vol.20, No.6, Elementary Education online
- Singh, Harbhjan (2023) : Dr B R Ambedkar, educationist for the marginalised, Hindustan Times, April 13.