Chapter Six

Summary and Conclusion

Education has been given an immense importance by most of the thinkers, social reformers and many others in bringing out the Social Change in modern Maharashtra. Indeed the education has the potential to inculcate rationalism, self-respect, dignity in human being and so educated person becomes conscious about his human rights. The social history of modern Maharashtra is very important as it has shown many good signs though not enough as to be in the modern world. The education has played a vital role in bringing about social change up to the good extent but the process of social change is still waiting for a great impetus and the society still lagging behind in many aspects of the human life.

Maharashtra is known by names of three great revolutionary social reformers; Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar for their contribution to the emancipation of shudras, women and dalits. All of them regarded education as a weapon for liberation of the downtrodden people and demanded and worked hard to impart education among them by establishing schools for girls and dalits. All the three renowned personalities were themselves the product of English Education. Their personal efforts are very important, but it was the English Education, introduced by the British rule, that is very important in shaping their ideas and decisions to devote for the emancipation of the women and dalits.

The Indian society on the eve of the advent of the British Rule was marked by backwardness due to caste system, socio-economic inequalities, gender inequality, superstitious evil practices such as untouchability, Sati, child marriage, etc. The women and dalits are deprived of almost all kinds of human rights in Indian society since the ancient and medieval times as a result of its
caste system and patriarchal nature. Women have been kept under control of and at the mercy of men throughout the life, while dalits or untouchables were meant to serve upper castes and also kept under control and at the mercy of the upper castes. This was a treacherous move of the Brahmans to enjoy all kinds of privileges and control over them. To safeguard their own interests, Brahmans denied right to education to them. Due to lack of knowledge women and dalits could not realize the real cause of their slavery and did not revolt.

The privilege of knowledge and right to perform rituals made Brahmans the leaders of Hindu society. They wrote religious books to keep their own interests safe and to enjoy supremacy over the society. During the Peshwa rule in Maharashtra, the Brahmanical supremacy reached its zenith and so women and dalits faced all kinds of atrocities; the untouchability was observed in more rigid form while women had to face all kinds of exploitations. The society was static till the advent of the British Rule in 1818 A. D.

The British Government was established in India with the colonial aims and objectives. It was basically the need of the foreign government to educate some of the Indians for the smooth functioning of the administration. The British Government developed the educational policy in India in such a way that their colonial interests should be safeguarded. The feudal structure existing in India at the eve of the British advent was not disturbed by the new colonial government; rather it remolded it according to their colonial aims and objectives. It had understood the necessity to take support of the dominant castes in the process of exploitation and so developed the policy of their appeasement and thus created a permanent new supporter class of the colonial government. Thus the ‘Educational Colonialism’ developed by the British is the part of their ‘Economic Colonialism’.

The British officials like Mountstuart Elphinstone were conceived that they need mediators like elite castes to exercise the extract from Indian common people and so they adopted the policy of appeasement of the Brahmans. They favored to educate selected people and those were from the
Brahmin castes, who were exercising a control over the Hindu society by claiming the highest status in the caste hierarchal order. The Brahmins purposely denied education to women, shudras and dalits so as to control them and to avoid any kind of rebel from them. The Brahmins were enjoying all kinds of privileges conferred upon them by the caste system and exploiting rest of the shudras, dalits and women by denying education to them, so naturally they opposed to educate others. The British Government also did not want to disappoint them and so the education was kept solely for the Brahmins, who then occupied key posts in the colonial administration.

Thus the education remained mostly confined to the Brahmins and other higher castes, whereas the education remained out of the reach of the shudras, dalits and women as a result of the deliberate policy of the British Government and that of the nature of the Hindu society. But at the same time, due to impact of liberal modern concepts developed at their home, some of the British officials took a step further in educating women, dalits and shudras. And the education was made open to all irrespective of the caste, creed, religion, gender etc. As a result it paved the way for the revolutionary movement for education and social change in Maharashtra under the able leadership of Mahatma Phule. Lord Dalhousie had given a special importance to the education of women, but it could not be happened on large scale due to caste based patriarchal nature of the society in India.

No doubt, the British Government created a possibility of development of the suppressed castes, dalits and women through education. Some of the dalits who entered in the military services could get education and some others were educated by the Christian missionaries. These newly educated shudras, women and dalits began to demand education to their caste fellows by knowing the importance of education as a tool of progress of them.

Mahatma Phule from a shudra caste came forward as a revolutionary social reformer, who attacked the caste and gender based inequality of the Hindu society, which was responsible for all kinds of injustice and
exploitations of the women, shudras and dalits. He understood the importance of education for the liberation of the shudras, women and dalits. He was a real humanist who wanted a total transformation to create a new society based on human values like liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. He attacked the Brahmins for exploiting the shudras, women and dalits by denying education to them and also attacked the Government policy for not paying attention to the education of the masses. He did not mere rely upon the government for educating women and dalits but he himself opened and run the schools for educating girls and dalits. In fact he was the first Indian to open a school for dalits (Mahar, Mang etc.)

Mahatma Phule had demanded the right to education to the shudras, dalits and women with his ideology of equality. He regarded education as an important tool in the process of liberation of the oppressed sections of the Hindu society. He had criticised the downward filtration theory on the basis of traditional nature of the Brahmins to keep others away from the education. He blamed Brahmins for that and told that all kinds of injustices and inequalities were the result of ‘Avidya’ i.e. lack of knowledge.

There were some other persons from Maharashtra who had also worked for the education of women of upper castes at least. Jagannath Shankar Sheth opened a girl’s school in his house in Mumbai. B.G. Tilak, G.G. Agarkar and Chiplunkar also established education society in Pune, though not for women and dalits, but for upper caste Brahmins only.

Though Mahatma Phule already had started the girls’ school in Pune, the last two decades of the nineteenth century saw the controversy over the Women’s Education, where the orthodox nationalist under the leadership of B.G. Tilak vehemently opposed to impart English Education to the women on the basis of religious texts. He believed in the religious concept of women, which makes her dependent on man in every stage of her life. His stand was so orthodox, narrow minded, but was accepted on large scale by the orthodox society in Pune and Maharashtra as well. Though less in number some
reformers like G. G. Agarkar, Bhandarkar, Gokhale, Ranade advocating women’s education but had limited support due to the existence of the orthodoxy in the society.

The British Government developed the educational policy in India in such a way that their colonial interests should be safeguarded. The feudal structure existing in India at the eve of the British advent was not disturbed by the new colonial government; rather it remolded it according to their colonial aims and objectives. It had understood the necessity to take support of the dominant castes in the process of exploitation and so developed the policy of their appeasement and thus created a permanent new supporter class of the colonial government. Thus the ‘Educational Colonialism’ developed by the British is the part of their ‘Economic Colonialism’.

The Wood’s Dispatch had a tremendous effect on the educational system of the India. It had started a process of giving up the responsibility of the Government from the field of Education by creating a system of the Grant-in-Aid. This process has proved a major setback to the educational development both qualitatively and quantitatively. The private institutes failed to maintain the quality of education though there was recorded a quantitative growth in number of students in such institutes and being private in nature they collect higher fees from the people.

Just like the Wood’s Dispatch, the Hunter Commission had given instructions to transfer the Primary Education to local boards and recommended that the larger grants should be given to the local boards. It is according to the nature of the colonial government, which had not come to India for the welfare of the indigenous people, but had come for purely business purposes, so it is not fare to hope better from the government.

The British Government also put forward the Downward Filtration Theory which was nothing but a scheme of the government to educate a limited number of people among the society rather than the mass education. They had
already made the Brahmins as their well-wishers and through this new concept of downward filtration theory aimed to educate them who afterwards supposed to educate the masses.

The educational developments throughout the nineteenth century were guided by the policy of appeasement of the elite upper castes and so the shudras, dalits and women remained out of reach of education. At the same time, due to impact of liberal modern concepts developed at their home, some of the British officials took a step further in educating women, dalits and shudras. So the education was made open to all irrespective of the caste, creed, religion, gender etc. Lord Dalhousie had given a special importance to the education of women, but it could not be happened on large scale due to caste based patriarchal nature of the society in India.

The development of the education in Maharashtra in the nineteenth century was not to the level of satisfaction and it remained mainly confined to the upper castes due to the deliberate attempt of the colonial government and social conditions prevailing in the society. So the educational developments during the nineteenth century generally did not in favor of women, shudras and dalits as a result of Government policy of appeasement of the Brahmins. But the British Government, though colonial in nature was having impact of Western ideas like liberalism, had created a possibility of educating at least some of the shudras, dalits and women as evident from the case of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule. Due to the impact of modern concepts developed in Europe the British Government though colonial in nature, had made education open to all irrespective of the caste, creed, gender etc. As a result it paved the way for the revolutionary movement for education and social change in Maharashtra under the able leadership of Mahatma Phule.

To conclude the nineteenth century represents the transformation of Maharashtra from the medieval feudal structure towards the modernization with the introduction of English Education by the British Government and the Christian missionaries. The English Education brought western modern ideas
into India and the newly educated Indians began to think and rethink about their society, which was discriminatory and oppressive. Though the British Government had made education open to all it favoured the education of the Brahmins to meet the need of their administration. But there was a possibility to get education to shudras, women and dalits and the education has the potential to bring a critical attitude and the desire for the self-respect. So the educated intelligentsia understood the need for social change in the society and the socio-religious reform movements occurred in the nineteenth century.

The newly educated were mostly from the Brahmin caste and had limitation so their movements were confined to their families and the Brahmin women only. The nineteenth century was also marked by the ideological dispute between two groups of the newly educated persons, one group desired the political reforms should go first and then social reforms, and other group of social reformers was focusing on the social reforms first and then political reforms. But the Maharashtrian society was orthodox in the nineteenth century and it was difficult for the Brahmins to leave the privileges conferred upon them by the caste system. Ultimately the party favouring political reforms was dominated over the social reformers.

Mahatma Phule was a real humanist and without any kind of discrimination, he worked hard for the emancipation of women of all the castes, including the Brahmins. In that process of liberation of women, shudras and dalits, he looked at the education as an important medium, which would create the rational sense and the feeling of self-respect in the minds and provoke them to rebel against the prevailing injustices.

Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, a shudra came forward and launched a struggle against the caste system and rejected the Brahmanical culture by giving an alternative non-Brahmanical culture. He desired to create society based on human values like liberty, equality and fraternity, for which he established the ‘Satyashodhaak Samaj’ in 1873. The nineteenth century was marked by the movement of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, who dedicated his whole life for the
emancipation of the dalits, women and shudras from the Brahmanical tyranny. He believed in the ability of education in bringing about social change because the most important feature of humanity is his power of thinking and knowledge. Mahatma Phule himself with his wife, Savitribai, opened the schools for girls and dalits to make them aware of their slavery, which was a result of the caste system.

Mahatma Phule believed that Knowledge and Education is essential for giving the humanity to human being. He believed that just like the revolution took place in western countries due to education, the same will happen in India and only with the help of imparting western education to all. He believed that the knowledge and education are the keys to the social revolution in India. He states that due to lack of knowledge, these people never revolted against the system and accepted all kinds of injustice. So he was very keen and firm on educating this Bahujan Samaj i.e. non-Brahmins. He was quite sure that if the people from lower classes were educated, they would be willing to struggle for basic human rights. He was looking at education as a tool to help non-Brahmins in improving their livelihood.

He founded the Satyashodhak Samaj (Truth Seeking Society), for creating awareness among the Shudras and Atishudras and fought against all kinds of injustice and devoted for the creation of a just society based on the principles of modern concepts. He devoted his life for the society and never discriminated among the Brahmins, shudras, dalits and women and worked for all of them devotedly. He desired radical social changes in the society by restructuring and reorganizing it on the lines of modern human concepts. Though his revolutionary thoughts were not properly understood even by his followers, and ignored by the elite high caste Hindus, his struggle for justice and equality was the landmark in the social history of modern India.

Mahatma Phule was regarded as the Guru (Master) by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, who praised him, and dedicated his book, entitled, ‘Who Were Shudras?’ to him, in following words,
“The Greatest Shudra of Modern India, who made the lower classes of Hindus conscious of their slavery to the higher classes, and gospel that for India social democracy was more vital than independence from foreign rule.”

The Indian Education received larger financial grants from the British Government as compare to earlier period in the early years of the nineteenth century. The State played more active role as ever by officially abandoning the old policy of State-Withdrawal from education especially under the period of Curzon. The another important feature of the early nineteenth century was the qualitative improvement of the Indian Education again the lead given by Curzon, who had insisted upon the qualitative progress than to quantitative. The new universities were established by the Government itself. In spite of it, the period presents the unprecedented expansion of Education in all branches, particularly between 1901-02 A. D. and 1920-21 A. D. The newly educated Indians were generally loyal to the British Government during the eighteenth century though the nationalism began to rise towards the last two decades. But the scenario changed completely and the militant nationalism grew among the people rapidly from the days of Curzon itself. The period saw the transfer of Departments of Education to Indian Ministers by the Government of India Act, 1919 resulting in the rapid development of mass education under the diarchy. Mahatma Gandhi had proposed the Wardha Scheme of Basic Education in 1937 with the concept of ‘Self Supporting Education’ under the Congress ministries. The Adult Education was also introduced to curb the problem of the illiteracy among the adults. The British Colonial Government failed to evolve a national system of education and the overall scenario of the Indian Education was unsatisfactory, in respect to both the quality and the quantity.

Due to the establishment of the British rule many of the persons from the shudras and dalits could get access to education for the first time. Though the British Colonial Government developed the policy of appeasement of the Brahmins, they also had made education open to all irrespective of caste,
religion, gender etc. Therefore, the very existence of the British rule, paved way for the development of the shudras, women and dalits through the education, though not on large scale. Some of them get educated through the missionaries or through the government schools and colleges.

In the nineteenth century, many of the educated persons from the non-Brahmins came forward to educate the masses. The initiative was taken by Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, the benevolent king of Kolhapur, who started many schools and hostels for the education of the shudras and dalits. He introduced many revolutionary social reforms by enacting laws such as 50% reservation for the backward castes in his state. Maharshi Vitthal Ramaji Shinde also worked hard for the education of the dalits by establishing ‘The Depressed Classes Mission Society of India’ on 18th October, 1906. Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil devoted his whole life for imparting education among the masses by establishing ‘Rayat Shikshan Sanstha’ in 1919, through which he opened many schools and colleges with hostels in Maharashtra.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the real hero of the women and dalits, who devoted his whole life for the cause of their liberation and finally enacted measures in the Indian Constitution as its chief architect. He also understood the importance of education and so appealed his followers to get educated. He also established institutions for their education such as, Bahishkrut Hitkarini Sabha in 1924 and People’s Education Society in 1945. He opened Siddharth College at Mumbai and Milind College at Aurangabad through People’s Education Society.

Lord Curzon had given a great impetus to Indian Education by taking the responsibility on the state and controlling private institutes. He insisted on the qualitative progress of education and so brought the necessary reforms in it. He was committed for the expansion of the education to the masses. This was a right step in the development of the education in India. Curzon was a man of ability and so worked hard and studied deeply to find the answer for the educational issue.
The Nineteenth Century Maharashtra was marked by the transformation in almost all the fields of the life and thus was a landmark in the history of Maharashtra, modernity had entered in all fields, and many drastic changes in socio-economic life of people had begun to appear. The administrative changes introduced under new rule in the fields of revenue, judiciary, military, police etc. and thus the strong administrative set up was created. Communication system was improved by introducing telegraph and postal services, Railways and roads were built to improve transportation, new educational system was introduced, the western knowledge and culture was spread by introducing the use of printing press. These facilities were introduced not for the development the country, which has become their colony, but to meet the need of the British colonialism. After all the reforms in almost every field of life could not benefit only the rulers, but it also resulted in the awakening of the Indian minds and also in beginning of socio-reform movements by the social reformers.

One of the most important issues of the nineteenth century Maharashtra was that of a whether social reforms first or the political reforms? There was a division between newly educated intelligentsia, Tilak led the party of view that the political reforms first, known as nationalist, while on the other hand, M.G. Ranade, Agarkar, Gokhale, Bhandarkar etc. were known as reformist. This difference was started with the introduction of the Age of Consent Act, 1891. The result of the above issue was that the political reforms did gain precedence over the social reforms.

The process of social change in a country like India where there was a social scenario full of inequalities and oppressions based on graded inequality of the caste system, patriarchy, plenty of evil practices like untouchability, superstitions and supernatural powers, had the many enemies and a few friends as told by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar; Maharashtra being part of India had the same situations. The process of social change was initiated with the coming of the British Rule in Maharashtra in 1818 A. D. The introduction of the English Education brought western modern ideas into the country and there was
emergence of socio-religious reform movements in Maharashtra as elsewhere in India.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has given the valuable argument for the defeat of the social reformers. The social reformers being the high castes could not understand the real cause of the problem; they were limited to their family issues only and could not think of reconstruction of the entire Hindu society. They even could not understand the atrocities of the dalits and shudras and so could not take the issue of annihilation of the caste. It may be possible that the society was so rigid and due to the fear of outcaste by orthodox caste fellows, they might not have taken the issue of eradication of the castes. The reason for defeat of socio-religious reformers was that they were working for a limited aim of emancipation of women, means they were advocating reforms for their family only and not for the entire Hindu society. They lacked to understand the nature of injustice to the dalits and women of the other castes too, and could not agitate for the human values of liberty, equality and fraternity in the Hindu society. They even could not provide a role model of a socio-religious reformer with their own behaviour. So they had to face defeat due to limited nature of their reforms.

In the nineteenth century Maharashtra, Mahatma Phule was the revolutionary social reformer who realised the root cause of the many kinds of injustices to the shudras, women and the dalits lies in the Brahmanical religion and so rejected it with giving an alternative non-Brahmanical way of living in the form of the ‘Satyashodhak Samaj’. He realised the need for education to masses and so demanded the mass education to the British Government, but did not stop there; he himself started many schools for girls and the Dalits for the first time in India by an Indian. Mahatma Phule’s ideology was not only borrowed from any western country, but it was constructed on both western and the indigenous human values of teachings of Buddha, Charvaka, Kabeer and Tukaram as shown by Sadanand More. Mahatma Phule was deeply
impressed by medieval saint Kabeer as many of his poetry in the particular form of *dohe* was cited by him.

Mahatma Phule exposed the Brahmanical tyranny over the women, shudras and dalits (*Atishudra*) through his writings and showed that the Brahmins were exploiting them as the Priests, the Bureaucrats and as the Money Lenders. He launched the struggle against the injustice by severely attacking Brahmanical scriptures, rituals and rejected them. He was the real humanist and wanted total transformation of the society on the basis of equality, liberty and fraternity. He was the real emancipator of the shudras, women and dalits. He ran the *Bal Hatya Pratibandhak Gruha* for the deliveries of the widows and for bringing up their children. Thus he had given a great impetus to the process of social change in the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century nobody was so compassionate like Mahatma Jyotiba Phule to start the institution for widows. The missionaries were also kind, but working for their aim of conversion to Christianity. Jyotiba and Savitribai did not working for personal benefit, but they were real humanist and so up to 1884, there were thirty four Brahmin widows came to the *Balhatya Pratibandhak Gruha* for delivery purposes. Savitribai herself had done all those deliveries and also brought up those children with care.

The twentieth century is marked by the eminent social reformers like Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar both of them played a vital role in the emancipation of the dalits and women. The dawn of the twentieth century Maharashtra saw the episode of *Vedokta* in the State of Kolhapur and brought a severe breach between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins and the socio-religious reforms of Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. The Satyashodhak movement of Mahatma Phule took a sharp turn in the twentieth century and become a non-Brahmin movement. Maharshi Vitthal Ramaji Shinde was also working for the socio-religious reforms and established a ‘Depressed Classes Mission’ for the education of the dalits. The process of social change was fasten with the attempts of Karmaveer Bhaurao
Patil who educated rural masses irrespective of caste, creed, gender etc. through ‘Rayat Shikshan Sanstha’ and tried to bring equality among the students. Saint Gadgebaba also attacked the superstitious ritualism and importance of equality and cleanliness through his preaching (kirtan). Thus the process of social change was given a great impetus by the many under the influence of humanity.

Shahu Maharaj realised that the maximum posts in his administration were occupied by the Brahmins and due to lack of education non-Brahmins were almost nowhere in the administration. So he decided to keep fifty percent of the administrative posts would be reserved for backward non-Brahmins and immediately implemented. Shahu Maharaj had clearly understood the reality that as the shudras, women and dalits were denied the right to education they were not educated and so not capable of getting administrative posts. So he began to help them in their education.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the real hero of the dalits and devoted his life for the emancipation of the dalits and women. He gave totally new perspective to the emancipation of Dalits by leading the Dalit Movement through many barriers and fought with his tremendous intellect against the all kinds of injustices. A rationalist, liberal and humanist in ideological leaning, he led the Dalit movement through a complex set of strategic and tactical changes in policy. A prolific writer, political leader, journalist, constitutionalist, activist, and administrator, he made a crucial contribution to theory and practice of the Dalit ideology. The Brahmanical hegemony was again challenged and attacked by him, being born in Mahar caste, achieved his qualifications from the renowned western universities, and used his intellect to bring dalits and women out of the miseries. He devoted his life for the social justice and brought about it through the Constitution of India as its chief architect.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was an imminent scholar and a man of action so before launching a struggle for equality against the caste system, he analysed it rationally. He had studied it properly during his education in
western universities and also evident from his writings; ‘Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development’ in 1917 and also from other writings like ‘Annihilation of Caste in 1936 and ‘The Buddha and His Dhamma’ posthumously published in 1957

Babasaheb Ambedkar had studied hard to understand the caste system, its basis and its functioning. According to Romila Thapar, for him, caste was not just a social hierarchy but was linked to issues of domination and subordination. He defined caste as an endogamous social group; the emergence of caste was the result of the superimposition of endogamy over exogamy. He has proved that caste is an important barrier to the economic progress as it does not allow the man to do the work of his own interest. He has shown that the caste operates as economic system of surplus appropriation based on the principle of graded inequality and exploitation. He states that caste system is a not merely division of labor but it is also division of Labourers. Regarding the division of Labourers, he stated that Caste divides Labourers, it dissociates work from interests, it disconnects intelligence from manual labour. It prevents mobilization and thus proved to be an obstacle in the economic progress of the individual as well as that of the nation. He identifies caste as a system of graded inequality and exploitation which is very important conceptual tool to locate socio-economic mechanism of caste. The religious apparatus of Brahmanism gives graded inequality a ritualistic structural basis. He explained that the principle of commensality also governs inter-caste relations and hierarchy. The principle of graded inequality also works in economic field as Hindu social order gives most and best to the upper castes and gives least and low to the lower castes.

He expressed his faith in his ideal society based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, which would be helpful to the society and nation by all means. So he urged the Hindus to annihilate the worst affecting Caste system, a barrier to the social reforms and to the progress of human being. He clearly warned them that anything built on the foundations of the caste system will crack and never
be a whole. He also suggested rightly the ways of eradicating this evil system of caste; the immediate measure is stimulating inter-caste marriages but the real remedy is to destroy the belief in the sanctity of the Shastras, which teach them the religion of caste and direct them to maintain caste as far as possible and to undergo prayaschitta, (expiation) when they cannot. The real remedy given by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was not found ground in the minds of upper caste intelligentsia and all his attempt to reform the Hindu society were not supported by the higher caste Hindus and so this was the basic reason why he left the Hinduism.

Finally as a result of disillusionment with Brahmanism, which refused to eradicate inequality of chaturvarna, he accepted Buddhism with his large number of followers in Nagpur. He made an immense contribution to the emancipation of the women by giving them equal rights through the Constitution and enacting and defending a most famous and crucial, ‘Hindu Code Bill’ to make them free from the tyranny of the patriarchal society. His fervent attack on the Hindu religious texts like Manusmruti against the inequalities and miseries imposed upon the women and dalits was an attempt to awaken the upper caste intelligentsia to go for the path of liberty, equality and fraternity. His conversion to Buddhism has given self-respect, self-identity to the dalits and especially Mahars in Maharashtra.

Babasaheb raised a life long struggle against equality and throughout his all activities he insisted on the peaceful agitation, the non-violence, because he believe in the change through peaceful manner and it is reflected through his definition of democracy; “Democracy is a form and a method of Government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed.” Thus Buddhism also believes in non-violence and it may have definitely attracted Babasaheb’s attention and may be one of the reasons of choosing Buddhism for conversion.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, born in Mahar caste, (Dalit), who after achieving the most prestigious degrees from the western universities and
though humiliated at many instances on account of his birth in the dalit caste, had become the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, liberated women and dalits by making provisions to safeguard their interests, given a respectful life, social status, dignity, feeling of self-respect by accepting Buddhism. He became the real emancipator of the Dalits and Women through his life long struggle for their emancipation. The credit definitely goes to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and his hard work in each and every field. He gave a true justice to every post and every responsibility that was assigned to him.

But the credit also goes though less but to the English Education and the British Rule which introduced it in India. This was the impact and potential of the education and it explains that how education is essential for the progress of a person and it also explains why almost all the social reformers had given such an immense importance to the education and especially the education of the downtrodden like dalits and women. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar denounced the Hindu scriptures many times as they discriminate between the dalits and others. Manusmruti was also a book which conferred on all kinds of privileges upon the upper caste Hindus and conferred the slavery upon the dalits and women. So he burnt it publicly in Mahad on 25th December, 1927 with the hands of Gangadharpant Sahastrabuddhe, a Brahmin and other six dalit ascetics. This was a symbolic move to tell the upper caste Hindus that the dalits had awaken and would not bear any kind of injustice in the name of the religious books or the religion itself.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was very clear on the issue of Temple Entry, he was not demanding it on the spiritual point of view, but from the material point of view it was just futile to go to temples; he was demanding equal social status. He clearly said that what the Depressed Classes wanted was a Religion, which would give them equality of social status.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar with his own intellectual strength has become the maker of the Constitution of such a country where dalits were treated with injustice and hatred; even animals were treated better than them. Dr. Babasaheb
Ambedkar who attacked and critically examined the Hindu holy book, Manusmruti, has become the “Modern Manu”, and composed the rules and regulations based on his principles of ‘Liberty, Equality and Fraternity’. In the sense of this pride that a dalit has become the “Modern Manu”, is shown by the presentation of a golden replica of the draft copy of the Indian Constitution to Babasaheb by a huge meeting of the Scheduled Castes Federation in Mumbai in 1950. Babasaheb addressing the followers appealed to place the nation above your community to avoid “our independence being put into jeopardy.” He also told that the Scheduled Castes should forget a narrow outlook of the past and should think in greater interests of the country, they should forget the past differences with the Congress and other political parties, Cooperation, although not federation with other organization should be the goal.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar finally accepted the Buddhism for the sake of liberty, equality and fraternity and cut off the relations with his old religion; also he completed his oath taken long back in 1935 at Yeola not to die a Hindu.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s conversion to Buddhism was resulted in the large number of strata of the Hindus discarded the religion. This was not a one night story, he declared it in 1935 and embraced Buddhism in 1956, and so long twenty one years he saw there were no changes in the Hindu society and religion. His struggle was first directed to reform the Hinduism and for that he suggested to discard belief in the scriptures like Manusmruti and then only the evil systems of the untouchability and the caste system should have eradicated.

But due to the privileges granted to higher castes by the scripture through the caste system they were not ready to lose them and so Babasaheb Ambedkar’s attempt to reform Hinduism could not born fruits. He eventually realised the fact and so declared to abandon the religion itself, but the high caste Hindus were not ready to lose the privileges and so finally he get converted or accepted the Buddhism in 1956, few days before his Mahaparinirvana, (death).
The process of social change thus culminated into the acceptance of Buddhism by discarding the Hinduism. Babasaheb dedicated his life for the emancipation of his fellow Dalits and as he was the first graduate, first Ph. D. holder and whatever so many degrees he achieved he was the first among his caste and the Dalits. So he realised his responsibility and led the Dalit Movement at various fronts strongly and as a chief architect of the Indian Constitution, secured some basic human rights for Dalits and women.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a man of great intellect and so the reason behind his choice of the Buddhism is definitely lies in his critical study of the Buddhism on the basis of rationalism and he found his choice in it. The doctrines of the Buddhism are much more important in this regard. He believed in the need of religion for the man and society also and he was also adhered to the values of Enlightenment, and the Buddhism was an ideal choice as it was more susceptible to reinterpretation as per the needs of the modern world.

By accepting the Buddhism Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar succeeded in passing the message of equality, which was among three great principles of his life. The Buddhism brought a feeling of self-respect, dignity in the minds of the Dalits and the sense of their separate identity. Even after the conversion, the atrocities were going on the Dalits especially in the rural parts of India, but the Dalits, especially ex-Mahars, under the guidance of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and his message, “Educate, Organize and Agitate” are making a tremendous progress in their lives and thus fastening the process of social change through education.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, born in Mahar caste, (Dalit), who after achieving the most prestigious degrees from the western universities and though humiliated at many instances on account of his birth in the dalit caste, had become the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, liberated women and dalits by making provisions to safeguard their interests, given a respectful life, social status, dignity, feeling of self-respect by accepting Buddhism. He
became the real emancipator of the Dalits and Women through his life long struggle for their emancipation.

The credit definitely goes to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and his hard work in each and every field. He gave a true justice to every post and every responsibility that was assigned to him. But the credit also goes though less but to the English Education and the British Rule which introduced it in India. This was the impact and potential of the education and it explains that how education is essential for the progress of a person and it also explains why almost all the social reformers had given such an immense importance to the education and especially the education of the downtrodden like dalits and women.

Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had devoted their lives in bringing about social change on the basis of ‘Liberty, Equality and Fraternity’. There were many social reformers who also tried hard in bringing social change in Maharashtra. But up to what extent the social change has come into reality? The answer of this question is negative, though the untouchability is abolished by the Article 17 of the Indian Constitution, there is existence of the caste mentality found in almost each and every field, and the discrimination is done with the dalits and women on the basis of caste and gender even today. The problem of female infanticide is becoming more and more dangerous even today.

Despite stringent endeavours by the thinkers, activists and movementeers goals of the annihilation of caste system and gender based discrimination are to be achieved in the existing Indian social order. Even the castes are becoming more rigid and gender equality is in great trouble, many kinds of atrocities are forced on the women and dalits even in the twenty first century, such as Khairlanji, Sonai, Jawkheda, Kharda, etc. Thus the process of social change to bring society based on the human principles of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity is certainly not completed even today. To bring about these changes in our society is essential for national integration and overall
progress; because these types of atrocities are happening due to the caste system and so as Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar told us we have to eradicate the caste system as quickly as possible.