Chapter V

Conclusion

Dr. Ambedkar’s writings bear testimony to his education and knowledge. He benefited from opportunities which he had come across. Yet every one of his academic, intellectual and professional achievements was hard earned in social battle, against entrenched oppression, discrimination and anti-human prejudice. By the time he was finished with his formal studies in the early 1920s, Dr. Ambedkar had acquired qualifications that surpassed the M.A., Ph.D., M.Sc. (Econ), D.Sc. (Econ), Barrister-at-law. He had added, to his name and title, a real life educational experience which most people would not manage to acquire in a life time.

Dr. Ambedkar’s writings and speeches reveal various aspects of his personality. They show his diversified thinking in different walks of life. They present India of his dreams. They also bear testimony to the development of Dr. Ambedkar from an untouchable boy to a national leader. They demonstrate the influences he carried as a thinker, writer, leader, politician and social reformer.

The first person who left an indelible mark on Dr. Ambedkar’s life and philosophy was his beloved father Ramji Sakpal, a teacher in the army. He instilled in his son an iron-will to resist worldly temptations, a rare and irresistible fervour for learning and a keen sense of discipline, diligence and social responsibility.

Dr. Ambedkar was also influenced by Buddha, Kabir and Jotirao Phule. Buddha influenced him so much that Buddhism became the touchstone of his analysis of Hinduism. From the Tripitaka, he learnt that nothing was final, infallible or binding forever. Everything was subject to change; subject to enquiry and examination; subject to the law of causation. Religion must relate itself to life. All human beings were equal and worth, not birth, was the measure of man. His life, works and action clearly reflect this learning. The unequivocal denunciation of caste by Kabir attracted Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar was also fascinated by Jotiba Phule’s frontal attack launched against the Hindu social order.

Dr. Ambedkar’s early life was full of bitter and unpalatable experiences. But some generous persons appeared as a silver lining on his otherwise obscure world. Because of the care and kindness of these people, Dr. Ambedkar’s personality blossomed at its best. He was bestowed with the opportunity to pursue his higher education in England and America. He was greatly impressed by the Western life and thought. He plunged into the Indian and Western knowledge which added a new dimension to his personality and gave him a new vision. Under the stimulating influence of John Dewey, Charles Beard, Edwin R. A. Seligman, Edwin Cannan and a host of others, he studied ancient and modern history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics and law.
All these influences were reflected in Dr. Ambedkar's personality and discourses. They formed an integral part of his perspective, his consciousness, his plan of action, his political programmes and his scheme of constitutional reforms and social reconstruction.

Dr. Ambedkar underwent heart-breaking humiliations as an untouchable. Any other person in his place would have become an escapist or a pessimist. He might have turned to violence. But it was the strength of his character that Dr. Ambedkar stood erect even after facing neglects, insults and oppositions. He struggled hard all through his life untiringly. It was only towards the end of his life that he became hopeless about the situation. Consequently, he resigned from the assembly and converted to Buddhism.

Dr. Ambedkar’s writings and speeches disclose his life as a relentless struggle of a downtrodden community against social isolation and all types of oppressions. His discourse shows an uncompromising faith in the justice of the cause he fought for. It demonstrates how one could raise himself to a life of greatness by conviction in self-reliance and by indomitable courage and resolution.

Whether one agrees with him or not in his approach to the problems or in his method of dealing with them, he cannot be ignored nor can he go unnoticed. His power of appeal, his capacity of clear expression and the sincerity with which he used to put across his point of view command attention. He argued rationally. He was so logical and to the point in his arguments that it was almost impossible to challenge him if one did not have something strong and substantial to fight back with.

As a historian, when he came across a missing link, he found out a practical solution. He believed that in such cases it was permissible for him to use his imagination and intuition to bridge the gaps left in the chain of facts. He did so by the links not yet discovered. He then propounded a working hypothesis suggesting how facts which could not be connected by known facts might have been inter-connected.

Besides the ideological writings, Dr. Ambedkar wrote on various pressing issues in an authoritative manner. No major problem raised during 1920 to 1950 went uncommented by him. He contributed in all the major events through his academic writings. All of his academic writings were driven by a desire to understand the vital issues of his times. There was hardly any issue that escaped Dr. Ambedkar’s razor-sharp analysis. He used to take clear stand on any issue without any fear. He not only pointed out the problems but also tried hard to find out their causes and suggest effective remedies. He had the courage of conviction.

One of the striking features of Dr. Ambedkar’s genius is that he not only found faults with various social, political and religious systems prevailing in India but also suggested substitutes for them keeping in mind the Indian context. He was a constructive critic. His writings offer a substitute socio-economic and political framework. His works are not just an assorted mix of incongruent elements. They demonstrate the emergence of pragmatic and
visionary aspects of his thinking. It is an altogether different matter that the 
alternatives he presented were not always feasible or acceptable to all at that 
particular moment.

Dr. Ambedkar raised questions that were simultaneously relevant and 
uncomfortable. Relevant because they were critical for the nation-building and 
uncomfortable as few were willing to acknowledge the existence of those 
issues, let alone taking them up as central, so that they could be addressed, if 
not resolved. Dr. Ambedkar raised certain challenging issues that no one was 
ready to take up or deal with. However, once they were raised by him in his 
characteristic style, he made it sure that they were not ignored and trampled 
over by the dominant forces. He had strenuous relationship with his illustrious 
contemporaries. Part of this could be attributed to the issues he raised and his 
insistence about their centrality.

After having recognized the limitations of Gandhism and Marxism in 
Indian context, Dr. Ambedkar developed his distinctive approach attuned to 
the specific situation in India. He favoured Democratic Socialism for economic 
development and chose Buddhism for social reconstruction or reorganization 
of the Hindu society. He opposed both capitalism and Hinduism. He 
denounced inequality, ritualism, fatalism, blind faith and ignorance. He urged 
to kill Brahmanism to save Hinduism. He stood against the Hindu theory of 
Karma and rebirth as they went against his rational enquiry and temper.

Dr. Ambedkar studied the Indian mythology, history and scriptures with 
intention to examine the existing conditions and supply correct information to 
his people. He wanted to educate, motivate and mobilize them to take action 
in the matter. He considered various ideologies in a cool and calculating 
manner so that he could choose an appropriate ideology for himself and his 
followers. As he fought for a peculiar class of the society and was put in a 
different context, none of these ideologies was found fit enough to serve his 
purpose completely. Therefore, he developed his own ideology on the basis of 
the reinterpretation of Hindu religion, culture, tradition, history, and social and 
political processes and institutions. He found that it was their misinterpretation 
and misuse by the vested interest which made the depressed classes 
disinherited, deprived and demoralized living almost at the subhuman level. 
He tried to create awareness among his people so that none could befool 
them to meet one’s selfish ends.

In order to disseminate his views and convince people of the 
correctness of his ideas, Dr. Ambedkar followed every conceivable means 
and measures. He organized meetings, melas, conferences, seminars, 
symposia, round tables, lectures and table talks to express his point of view 
properly. He wrote in newspapers, magazines and journals on these issues. 
He wrote books, monographs, treatises, pamphlets, tracts, leaflets and 
handbills. When it came to defend the cause of the downtrodden, he did not 
hesitate to appear before any committee, commission or forum, no matter 
how controversial it was. He was bitterly criticized by his countrymen for doing 
so. But he did not pay any attention to it because he believed that he was 
performing his duty. He knew that his people, unlike his critics, had no means
to trumpet their grievances to the world. He was worried about the lamentable lack of resources to maintain the machinery to render help to his people.

**A Man of Letters**

Dr. Ambedkar was so well-versed a politician that his writings and speeches formed a whole new section in non-fictional Indian writing in English. His language could compete with any other contemporary men of letters of India. He could dive deep into the subject and explain it with various perspectives. He primarily dealt with the prevalent problems of society and put them on the wide screen of nation and world through his writings. His writings proved to be a medium for self-expression.

Dr. Ambedkar wrote what he saw and felt. He wrote about his real life experiences. His writings show that he was an intellectual giant and prolific writer. The knowledge he imbibed was truly encyclopedic. His erudition covered diverse fields like law, constitution, economics, sociology, mythology, anthropology, politics and comparative religion. The range of topics, width of vision, depth and complexity of analysis, rationality of outlook and essential humanity of the arguments that he emerged with made him unique.

He was a voracious reader. Though having a hectic political and social routine of activities, he spared time for reading. He did not read just for the sake of reading. He was well-versed and quoted appropriately from various writers on various subjects in his writings and speeches. His habit of reading helped him acquire a huge treasure of ideas and concepts which would not have been possible otherwise. The books gave him inspiration and wisdom. They were his best friends and silent guide to show him the right way. They instilled him with courage. They gave him strength of character. They had been valuable assets of thoughts, ideas and ideals.

Dr. Ambedkar had a habit of re-thinking and re-writing. He cited different authors to argue against or to support his arguments. This is evident from his thoughts on democracy. He amply quoted from the opponents of democracy such as Voltare, Carlile, Edmund Burk and Nischte. To answer this discrepancy, he said that he did not mind quoting statements from anyone as far as they conformed to his thoughts. He allowed himself to be called the best collector of thoughts.

He was of curious nature. He did not make any superficial claims regarding society, religion, culture or any other field of knowledge. Though he had his own interpretations, he never talked about any serious issue without quoting the scriptures as well as some other writers.

Dr. Ambedkar wrote not only for common masses but also for the elite classes. The learned erudite class of the contemporary society was forced to think over the arguments raised by Dr. Ambedkar. He could make people see things other way round. Such was his convincing power! He dealt with a number of difficult and complex issues and suggested remedies for them in his literature.
His writings symbolize his quest for truth, knowledge and happiness. They reflect his clarity of thought, depth of knowledge and variety of reading. He successfully created a mirror-image of the contemporary untouchable society – the society as he had perceived – in his literature.

He wrote effective and meaningful prose. He was a gifted willful litterateur. He took language to be a powerful means to influence the audience and the readers. He wanted to create new awareness among his people through his writings and speeches. He was hardly sentimental while writing. He never allowed his writings to be the last word.

Dr. Ambedkar's emergence as a writer was a story of weal and woe. His writings became instrumental to his mission of life. The theme of social revolt ran as an undercurrent in all his writings. The act of writing was not a means of entertainment, recreation or pass time for him. It became very life and blood of his movement. Therefore the theme of his writings was humanism and tone was that of criticism and revolt.

His books and speeches reveal his philosophical finding that truth was not fixity. The truth was a visualization of a corresponding human situation.

His style of writing is simple but unique. He raised questions and gave answers at length. He challenged the general beliefs and tried to give convincing reasons for doing so. He formed hypothesis and propositions which, in turn, he examined. This may be called argumentative writing. His study of law had given him the power of authoritative presentation. His sense of reasoning was good. Many times he left the question unanswered promising to deal with it later on. Sometimes he just mentioned the author whom he wanted to quote. But the quotation was not found.

He was respectable for his research and classical learning. His writings are effective not only from research and analytical perspective but also from the perspective of language. He could handle English gracefully.

Dr. Ambedkar deeply studied the nature of Indian society because the Buddhist texts offered a different picture of Indian society than that presented by the Brahmanical texts. To reveal the nature of Indian past and to reconstruct the social and religious history of India, he used textual sources, mainly from Sanskrit and Pali literature, as each text in itself conceptualized its own world constructing its own narrative having numerous connotations which needed to be understood in its own social context and in a particular historical situation.

Dr. Ambedkar's prose style demonstrates two dimensions: scholarly and polemical. In the scholarly mode, his prose style is placid and generally un-ornamental. At the same time, it is classically structured having balance, symmetry, harmony and lucidity. As far as his prose-craft is concerned, he seems to have influenced by one of the greatest masters of English prose, Burke. His writings also show his Victorian preference for form.
The mode which he employed in his polemical and political writings is figurative one. He made use of tropes. He used various figures of speech like metaphor, simile, irony, understatement and overstatement. His scholarly writings also have a controlled use of irony.

He used plenty of scholarship in his polemical writings and plenty of passion in his scholarly writings. Given his constant deep involvement in practical life in his roles as lawyer, professor, jurist, social scientist, constitutionalist, political leader and socio-religious reformer, his writings reflect both harmony and tension between theory and practice.

His polemical arguments and his presentation of cases also deserve to be examined from an aesthetic and artistic point of view. They, too, show him as a master of classical, orderly and chiselled prose. He had the genius to present the most chaotic reality in a tidy, orderly prose and the most irrational thought in a well-constructed prose.

**Political Outlook**

His writings and speeches disclose his ideas related to nationalism and patriotism which widely differ from those of his contemporary leaders. Nationalism in Dr. Ambedkar initiated to object internal oppression as well as external domination. It stemmed from his spirit of dignity for both the people and the country. He gave importance to the freedom of people. His argument was that in the absence of complete freedom of the people, nationalism would become a conduit of internal slavery, organized tyranny for the poor and depressed classes. To him, nationalism meant expression of inner unity of a people. It was a process of social assimilation.

Dr. Ambedkar’s view of nationalism and patriotism creates a sense of social brotherhood in doing justice to the needy and lowly who were not treated as human beings. According to him, patriotism demanded action in right direction and reaction against all wrong. A nationalist leader should have deep faith in himself to eradicate imperialism, social tyranny, casteism, communalism and forced labour.

Dr. Ambedkar believed that religion should be a binding force creating national spirit. It should not be a symbol of inhuman treatment and ignominy. He advocated one common language. He wanted to have a strong sense of unity and a deep feeling of nationalism through it. He desired not only to tighten the sense of human unity in a nation but also to remove racial and cultural tension.

Nationalism, to him, was precisely the feeling of corporate and communicative oneness that legitimized the demand for self-determination after which the claim for nation-statehood would become irresistible.
His discourse suggests that he believed himself to be a true nationalist and patriot. He always worked according to his own conviction to fulfill his desires regarding nation-building. His notion of nationalism did not give preference to any serious revolt against imperialism.

When Dr. Ambedkar entered the public life, the struggle for liberating India from the British rule was in full swing. A quarter century of Dr. Ambedkar’s public career overlapped with this struggle. But he was never found taking active interest in the freedom movement. On the contrary, he opposed the campaigns of the National Movement at every possible turn. He was always arrayed on the side opposed to the national struggle for freedom – on the side of Jinnah in celebrating the ‘Deliverance’ of the country from the Congress.

He kept the untouchables away from the freedom movement as he considered it a dishonest agitation. He declared that a few stray untouchables joined the movement for their personal gains. But the community as such had stood out of it. Is the fact worthy of admiration? He very proudly declared that the British conquered India only because of the help provided by the army of the untouchables. Is this a matter of taking pride?

Dr. Ambedkar considered the Congress Party to be an organization consisted of the caste Hindus working for their selfish interests. He believed that Swaraj would yield the powers to the caste Hindus to continue oppressing the servile classes. Due to this misconception, he relentlessly abused the Congress and did not join hands with it to win independence for India.

He was heaping scorn at the Congress and its prominent leaders for a quarter of a century. He willingly became a member of the British Government which imprisoned the Congress leaders for years. In spite of this bitter recent past, the Congress invited him to join the first cabinet as the law minister. They put aside all the past grievances but Dr. Ambedkar could not help suspecting their intentions. If also it was not an act of magnanimity, it was certainly an act showing their sagacity. But Dr. Ambedkar did not show any gratitude or appreciation for that.

The British devised the policy of ‘Divide and Rule’. From the late 19th century till the time they left, they continuously tried to divide the Hindu community. A key device of this strategy was to offer a benefit which a group could avail only by asserting its separateness. And among these benefits, none was more capable of breaking the people than separate electorates. But Dr. Ambedkar could not understand that. He helped the British by demanding the same for his people.

The British Government wanted to divide India into castes, creeds, groups, organizations and provinces. They asked people to retain their differences as those differences were the identity or essence of their existence. They even tried to frighten the groups by showing them the danger of being swallowed up by the larger communities. They wanted to perpetuate the differences and increase the feeling of ‘Them versus Us’. This was the most fruitful device for the British. It would help them apply their policy.
effectively. Persons like Dr. Ambedkar and Jinnah became not only accomplices of imperial politics but also the best of agents. They were so flattered into self-importance that they did not see that they had made the cause of the imperial rulers their own.

Gandhiji and Dr. Ambedkar

Gandhiji considered Dr. Ambedkar to be one of the most uncompromising and irreconcilable exponents of the downtrodden. He also announced Dr. Ambedkar to be a threat to Hinduism. Dr. Ambedkar was defiance embodied and truculence personified.

Gandhiji thought that the separate electorate for the religious communities was an inevitable evil. But there was no logic in extending that evil to the untouchables. It would ensure them bondage in perpetuity. Muslims would never cease to be Muslims by having separate electorates. Similarly, the untouchables would remain the same forever. It would perpetuate the stigma. The destruction of untouchability was required. The bar-sinister imposed by an insolent superior class upon an inferior class should be destroyed. With adult franchise, the untouchables were completely secured. Even the orthodox would have to approach them for votes. He was not against their representation in the legislatures. He was against their statutory separation from Hindu fold so long as they chose to belong to it.

Moreover, the separate electorate would vivisect and disrupt Hinduism. This question had important political dimensions. But for Gandhiji, the question was primarily a moral and religious one. He resisted the formation of separate electorates tooth and nail because it was, for him, a call of conscience which he dared not disobey. He was ready to stake his life.

There were approximately 300 million untouchables in India. Gandhiji rebelled against the idea of a single person (Dr. Ambedkar) having the unfettered power of affecting the destiny of these many people and that to in a so-called democratic state like India. Dr. Ambedkar’s decisions were enforced by mobilizing the most terrible forces of destruction. Gandhiji thought that that was a negation of democracy. Separate electorate was the injection of a poison that was calculated to destroy Hinduism.

Rajah was one of the prominent leaders of the depressed classes. He gave credit to Gandhiji for putting the issue of the minorities in front of the world. After the Communal Award, he and his colleagues felt that their cause was lost beyond repair. The caste Hindus made them socially untouchable but the British Government condemned them to be politically untouchable. He declared that the unholy Minorities Pact signed by Dr. Ambedkar at the Round Table Conference had poisoned everything. Rajah had reverence for Gandhiji. He commented in the Legislative Assembly that the misunderstandings were only in minds which were determined to misrepresent what Gandhiji was saying.

Gandhiji’s fast was intended to sting Hindu conscience into right social and religious action. His contemplated fast was not only for appealing to
emotions but also for demanding justice. He very firmly said that the Hindus must sacrifice him without slightest hesitation if they were not prepared to banish untouchability root and branch. No compromise which did not ensure the fullest freedom to the depressed classes inside the Hindu fold could be an adequate substitute for the contemplated separation. Dr. Ambedkar called the fast a political stunt!

From Dr. Ambedkar’s writings and speeches, it seems that he became a cynic. He found fault with everyone and everything. If the leaders did not take up the matter of temple-entry, they were guilty of perpetuating an age-old injustice. They were the instruments of the Brahman-Bania ruling class. When these leaders took up the issue and launched Satyagrahas to persuade the temple-trustees, Dr. Ambedkar announced them guilty of compelling the unwilling trustees to open the temples. He said that Gandhiji and his followers were lost in the mad pursuit of their objective heedless of opposition from persons having courage to stand up for their beliefs.

Dr. Ambedkar blamed Gandhiji for his habit of exploiting every opportunity for earning name and fame! He said that Gandhiji took up the cause of opening temples because he wanted to neutralize the effects of the Poona Pact and to destroy the separateness of the untouchables so as to deprive them of a foundation of making political demands. When Gandhiji did not take interest in the issue of temple-entry, Dr. Ambedkar said that Gandhiji did not want to forfeit his popularity among the Brahmin-Bania ruling classes. When Gandhiji took active interest in the issue, Dr. Ambedkar said that it was for gaining popularity! It seemed that Dr. Ambedkar would not do anything himself. Instead, he would denounce others for not doing more than what they were doing!!!

When Gandhiji invited Dr. Ambedkar to lend support to the temple-entry movement, Dr. Ambedkar said that it was not a real issue! The real issue was education and employment. Again, he raised a question of self-respect. Why should an untouchable beg for admission in a place from which he was excluded by the arrogance of the Hindus?

Dr. Ambedkar charged Gandhiji for raising a huge amount of money for the national movement and for spending only a paltry part of it for the welfare of the depressed classes. He should be asked why he did not collect funds for this kind of work. Being an active member of the British Government, he could have convinced the Government to spend some more money for the upliftment of the untouchables.

Gandhiji thought that untouchability was a great stain on the Hindu society. It was a great sin of which the higher caste Hindus were guilty. According to him, the caste Hindus must atone for the sin by undertaking the work for the untouchables. It would also break the taboo against working among them. Therefore almost all workers in the Harijan Sevak Sangh were higher caste Hindus. Dr. Ambedkar denounced the composition of that body saying that Gandhiji was prejudiced against the untouchables and he did not want any interference of them in his organization as well as in money-matters.
Gandhiji emphasized that the group should eradicate its own shortcomings and the larger things it wanted would follow as a matter of course. But Dr. Ambedkar poured scorn at Gandhiji's thinking. He believed that there was no point in wasting time and energy in the cultivation of private virtues especially for the untouchables.

Struggle in the political field and persuasion in social problems was the policy of Gandhiji. But Dr. Ambedkar emphasized struggle in social matters and extensive discussions in political field.

Gandhiji overcame bitterness. The legacy of his life and work is love. Dr. Ambedkar remained to the end a bitter man. His legacy is venom and poison. One of the objectionable issues that emerged out of the ideological struggle between Gandhiji and Dr. Ambedkar was that of the feeling of disrespect for Gandhiji seen in Dr. Ambedkar which he also instilled in the untouchables. The disrespect often culminated in hatred overtly.

In one of his letters to Dr. Sharda Kabir, Dr. Ambedkar's resentment against Gandhiji was laid bare. He declared that Gandhiji had contributed nothing to his spiritual, moral and social make-up. He considered Gandhiji to be a positive danger and a great hurdle to the progress of this country. He blamed that Gandhiji blocked all free-thought and encouraged only flattery. He wrote that the death of Gandhiji would release people from bondage to a superman. It would make them think for themselves and compel them to stand on their own merits. The person who fought for the independence of his country through the means hitherto unknown to the world was held in sheer disgust by Dr. Ambedkar.

Constant humiliation results in aggression, pessimism, frustration or deep silence. Gandhiji also became a victim of colour and racial discrimination and had to face many insults. These incidents made him stronger. He was then determined to eradicate any type of discriminations in India. His writings and speeches never show hatred or disgust for anyone or anything. On the other hand, the humiliations Dr. Ambedkar endured as an untouchable enraged him immensely. He turned to be a bitter critic of Hinduism. His over-aggression eventually led him to the scattered phases of frustration. He undertook a mighty task of elimination of untouchability. The evil was so deep-rooted in the psyche of the Hindus of the time that it could not be removed completely over a time of single generation. But Dr. Ambedkar was disheartened to see it present even after the independence of India and was convinced about its eternity so long as the untouchables would renounce Hinduism. While comparing Dr. Ambedkar's reactions to the inhuman discrimination with that of Gandhiji, one must not forget that Gandhiji had faced them at the hands of the foreigners whereas Dr. Ambedkar had to suffer from his own countrymen!

People go on comparing Gandhiji and Dr. Ambedkar. They always try to evaluate one in the context of the other. They keep on commenting on one's thoughts, contributions and importance with reference to the other. But as a student of literature, I personally feel that there should not be any comparison between these two as both were unique and in a way, their
motives were different. The former wanted to achieve freedom of his motherland and the latter wanted to win liberty of his community. Both of them had their own roles to play. Similarly, Gandhiji and Dr. Ambedkar had created history in their respective fields. They bore their own part on the Indian history. Indians owe both of them heavily. If they would have born earlier or later, the Indian history might have been something different.

From the writings of Dr. Ambedkar, it can be seen that his thoughts on various contemporary subjects were not the same in all the decades. He did not demonstrate singularity of mind. He was full of contradictions. He took some awkward moves during his political career which made him a controversial figure.

Dr. Ambedkar always fought for separate electorates for the untouchables. He thought that those who were socially separated must be politically segregated. But after Gandhiji’s fasts, Dr. Ambedkar accepted Poona Pact, that is, joint electorates and reservation of seats as the only alternative to solve the constitutional deadlock. However, he repented this sentimental blunder and in his later discussions, he again advocated separate electorates. While piloting the constitution, he co-operated with the Congress and as a result, India had no provision for separate electorates in the Constitution. We cannot find the reason, from his writings, for this change of mind.

The other worth noticing fact was his compromise with the national leaders at the later stage of his life. Throughout his life, Dr. Ambedkar resented Gandhiji and the Congress. It was interpreted as the anti-national character of Dr. Ambedkar’s scholarship. When he sensed the transfer of power by the British Government, his attitude towards the congress leadership got changed. He visualized that effective political power would be centered in the hands of the Congress leadership. The compromise brought some happy and the healthy results. If this kind of happy co-operation between national leaders and the scheduled caste community would have taken place earlier, the harvest of sweet fruits of this collaboration would have been reaped by the nation. The burial of separatist tendencies would have bridged the gulf between the touchable and the untouchables.

The division between class and caste was so thin that one could not tell that where one ended and the other began. Dr. Ambedkar’s insistence on community politics rather than the class politics weakened the movement in the country. This led to the dichotomy between the loyalty to the class and the loyalty to the community. His choice to call himself a leader of the community instead of a leader of labour proved beyond doubt that the thought of community and not of class was always in his mind.

Dr. Ambedkar’s uncontrollable fear of the domination of the caste Hindus compelled him to put his community before nation. He stated that whenever there was any conflict of interests between the country and the untouchables, he would give priority to the interests of the untouchables. Political loyalty and class loyalty never merged together in him because of his insistence to place community before nation. The nature of political leadership
depended upon attitude and ability to wage class battles. Dr. Ambedkar did not pursue a consistent policy of solidifying class institutions and turned caste battles into class battles.

Indian National Movement for freedom, under the leadership of Gandhiji, took not only anti-British attitude, but its aim became anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and anti-racial and for that matter it declared its object to end exploitation of man by man and nation by nation. But Dr. Ambedkar did not show any appreciation for these attempts. His opposition to Gandhiji and Congress became bitter at the time of their last battle – do or die. The depressed classes were put under heavy pressure to select between the Congress and the Scheduled Caste Federation. The members of the one were looked at with suspicion by the members of the other. It brought division among the depressed classes. It also demoralized and weakened them. The compromise was hailed as inevitable.

The Republican Party of India founded by Dr. Ambedkar did not operate as an open political party. Any political party could be strengthened by agitation on day-to-day problems. But the immobility of the Republican Party proved to be a hindrance to the development of such a party. Except the untouchables, no new members could enter the party. His followers took the party as a weapon for solving social and economic problems only. In the field of politics, the election alliances with the other political parties became inevitable. The legacy of Dr. Ambedkar’s bourgeois liberalism threw his followers overboard only to take opportunist positions.

Dr. Ambedkar’s writings and speeches throw flood-light on the principles and ideas behind the Constitution. He anticipated every conceivable requirement of the new polity. The Constitution has made Indian democracy not a fragile palace on a dung heap but a solid edifice that has stood the stress and strains of our myriad and massive problems. The common man is the central theme of the Constitution. It is woven with the golden thread of humanism. It is federal in structure but unitary in character.

People admired and still go on admiring Dr. Ambedkar for this massive task of constitution-making. They claim all the credit of this enormous job for Dr. Ambedkar. But one must not forget that the Constitution was not a solo author work. It was a compilation of ideas. It underwent many changes and amendments in its initial provisions. The claim of originality of the Constitution fall to the ground as it was confessed by one of the committee members himself that the Constitution was a patch work of some of the old constitutions of the west with a replica of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Dr. Ambedkar’s herculean historic work of Constitution-making was nullified by his own threat to burn it as it did not suit anyone. It was astounding to have a person who was put Minister in charge of preparing the Constitution would disown responsibility in the manner Dr. Ambedkar had done. Was he setting a good political precedent? He stated that his heart was not in the constitution and that he was only perpetuating a fraud. This was an example of ill-grace. On some other occasion, he took pride for the Constitution by calling it a wonderful document.
His indignation at Gandhiji and the Congress leaders made him their blind critic. He was full of negation and therefore, of unrest. As a last resort, he found spiritual solace in Buddhism. He, then, engaged himself in philosophizing and theorizing. Instead of individual intellectual conviction, he brought about mass conversion of untouchables to Buddhism. He tried to find a solution for the socio-economic problems of the untouchables in the Buddha's Dhamma. But the spiritual solution of the material problems of millions was not a persuasive solution.

Gandhiji started different campaigns to mobilize people for the national movement. Satyagraha, civil-disobedience, non-co-operation, national education and such other weapons were skillfully used by him to organize the masses for the national liberation struggle. He became the leader of leaders. His words were obeyed as religious commands. He inspired people and channelled their energies through the Congress. The Congress became a key organization in the Indian politics. In this situation, Dr. Ambedkar's bitter criticism of Congress and Gandhiji and the debasement he made of the freedom movement naturally aroused the sentiments of the reader. Many critics like Arun Shaurie attacked Dr. Ambedkar for showing anti-national and pro-British spirit.

Unity, national representation and strong leadership were need of the time. Anyone could make out that collective efforts would strengthen the Indian struggle for independence and would be backed by sanctions without any divisions. That would also give a crushing blow to the imperialist policy of ‘Divide and Rule’. Gandhiji and the Congress were trying to raise a common front against the British. But Dr. Ambedkar's stubborn persistence on separate and special treatment to his people generated a great hindrance to that. His feeling of bitterness became the root cause of the unbridgeable gap that separated the depressed classes from the rest of the people of India during the years of struggle for independence. His separatist tendencies kept a huge community away from the most important movement of the Indian history. It deprived them of the contact of the progressive forces. His separation from other powerful social and nationalist forces gave room to communal politics. His later political and social alliances amply proved this.

Religious Outlook

According to Dr. Ambedkar, science could not perform the function of bearing values. Therefore, he looked to religion for the provision of moral values and principles guiding as individual as well as the collective life of society. It was crucial for any individual or society to select the appropriate religion. The major factor that differentiated him from the communists is his insistence on religion.

The Ambedkar model of revolution involved a nation of modernity which had to include within it the non-modern or even anti-modern component religion. Therefore he had to fashion a revolutionary ideology with a religious-normative foundation. This model was available for him within Indian historical experience and that was the Buddhist revolution.
He did not consider religion as a parasite or opium to beguile man. For him, religion was food for thought. It instilled hope in man and always drove him to activity. He believed that mankind needed a religion of humanity which he discovered in Buddha’s *Dhamma*.

Buddhism had some special significance for him. He was highly influenced by its tenets. Again, it enabled him to reconstruct the history of Ancient India more scientifically and satisfactorily. He considered it to be a revolution started with a religious purpose and turned out to be social, cultural and political one. Therefore his followers believe that his acceptance of Buddhism was not merely a negative gesture of leaving Hinduism. It was a positive act of commitment to a superior religious way of life.

Dr. Ambedkar had great respect for the cultural heritage of India. Therefore he chose Buddhism instead of Islam or Christianity as an alternative to Hinduism.

Like his political opponent Gandhiji, Dr. Ambedkar also believed that religion was a way of right living and a framework for moral life. But they sharply differed in some other aspects. Gandhiji tolerated rituals, image-worship and intellectually unreflecting belief in God or dogma; whereas Dr. Ambedkar rejected all these. More precisely, Dr. Ambedkar accepted only the spirit of religion rejecting uncompromisingly its letter. But Gandhiji, while personally practicing its spirit, was tolerant of ordinary human beings getting enmeshed in the letter.

Religion, according to him, played a significant role in the life of an individual and that of the society. The magical impact of a religion would transform a person into a human being. It would unlock the treasure of love, understanding, brotherhood and security which would, in turn, build a better society to live in. But Dr. Ambedkar believed that Hinduism failed to perform the same function. He used his scholarship, logic and reasoning to expose the complexities of its structures like caste, its social institutions like untouchability and its economic dictates like compulsory hereditary occupation for each caste. He pointed out that everything about Hinduism was sacred, eternal and infallible.

It seems from his writings and speeches that Dr. Ambedkar tried to bring religion down to the common man. With his western concept of equality, he struggled against the Hindu customs to set a new trend where religion could be brought down from commands flowing from above to ethics commonly accepted after discussion by the people following that religion. This was the expression of a logical mind which had the discrimination power to recognize right and wrong.

But the rebel in Dr. Ambedkar failed to measure the historical significance of various religions. All the religions are steeped in commands – Christianity has *Ten Commandments*; Hinduism has the *Upanishadic* restraints and Islam has the *Koranic* directives. And such commands could not be wiped out easily. Ignorance became a great hurdle to that. The reasoning which motivated Dr. Ambedkar was the finest outcome of an
educated mind. But when it came to the illiterate masses, they could not be rationally convinced to abandon their age-old traditions. He produced repulsion in the minds of the untouchables for their religion which ultimately might lead to identity crisis and rootlessness.

Dr. Ambedkar, through his works and speeches, proposed to break the shackles of caste. He advocated inter-caste marriages. But the solution was too radical to find acceptance. It could be justifiable for a rebel to cherish such a dream. He was speculating solutions consistent with his own philosophy. But they were not suited to the mood and tempo of the Hindus both high caste Hindus and the depressed classes. When Gandhiji talked of appealing the scruples of the caste Hindus for eradicating untouchability, Dr. Ambedkar thought it to be idealistic. Dr. Ambedkar must not forget that the solution he proposed for achieving social equality was equally unrealistic as the mind set it required was not at all possible to be developed over-night in the contemporary Hindu society.

Dr. Ambedkar, after a life-long struggle, understood that the prejudices inherent to Hindu society would not be destroyed easily. Neither logic nor the call to revolt against the system made much dent into the conventional and caste-bound Hindu society. He realized that he was fighting against the odds which were insurmountable. Realizing the transitory nature of life, he sought an escape. He embraced Buddhism and took with him thousands of followers into the path of Dhamma. But he did not live to see whether the change of religion, by itself, brought any change in the status of his people. Or, whether his people opted for conversion or most of them adhered to Hinduism. The positive side of Dr. Ambedkar’s preaching of Buddhism was really noteworthy. It hindered the colonial activity of conversion to Christianity. The illiterate masses of the untouchables stopped turning Christians.

Savarkar criticized Dr. Ambedkar and his followers for having dual standards. Dr. Ambedkar and his followers denounced Hinduism for idol-worship, tree-worship, principle of reincarnation, performance of Yajnas, practice of giving alms to the Brahmins and observance of untouchability. Savarkar proved with historical evidences that all these practices were found in Buddhism also. Buddha talked about his previous births; the Buddhists worship Buddha and the Bodhi tree; they performed Yajnas after the death of Buddha; the Buddhist good-for-nothing beggarly monks were a burden on the society; a Buddhist country like Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) was found to observe untouchability in different forms. Savarkar considered Dr. Ambedkar’s embracing of Buddhism as the renouncement of the Vedic sect of Hinduism and joining a non-Vedic sect or religion within the realm of Hindutva.

A host of Indian social, political and religious leaders were engaged in a mighty effort to roll back the devastating effects of the defamations about our culture and religion which the Christian missionaries and the British rulers had implanted in our minds. While they were exerting, with their very lives, to restore in us a sense of self-worth, every single thing that Dr. Ambedkar wrote was a continuation of the calumnies.
Hinduism is professed by Chaitanya, Gnyanadeva, Tukaran, Tiruvalluvar, Ramakrishan Paramahansa, Raja Rammohan Roy, Maharshi Devendranatha, Tagore, Vivekananda, Savarkar, Hedgewar, Golwalkar and a host of others. Can such a religion be so utterly devoid of merit as Dr. Ambedkar made it? A religion must be evaluated not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced. That alone can be used as the standard to aspire to.

Dr. Ambedkar was also a militant Hindu like Swami Vivekanand. But Vivekanandji always tried to bring a positive change in Hinduism; whereas Dr. Ambedkar always preached for conversion. The reformers like Vivekanandji, Gandhiji and Narayan guru did not have any difficulty in showing that untouchability had no sanction in the Hindu scriptures. On the contrary, the scriptures propounded that all was Brahman and the same soul inhered in all. Vyas and Valmiki are the best examples of the revered untouchables.

Dr. Ambedkar adopted the course of denunciation of Hinduism, condemnation of caste system and defamation of the Hindu gods and goddesses. He poured ridicule on the Hindu scriptures. He sowed hatred in his followers. His thoughts regarding the denunciation of religion and negation of traditions and scriptures were dangerous for the forthcoming generation. This fear was sensed by Swami Vivekananda. He said that this kind of negative education would make the youth of India lifeless and boneless. Vivekanandaji condemned every such fanatical reform movement as, according to him, each of them would leave the same inheritance of hatred, of self-loathing, of acrimony. He warned that each of them would leave our people and country weakened.

Dr. Ambedkar relentlessly abused the Hindu scriptures. He blamed them for supporting and propagating the inhuman caste system which hindered the progress of a large section of the Hindu society. He spent his scholarly energies in finding out faults from them. But he himself had propounded that these scriptures were full of interpolations and alterations. How can one rely solely on them for evaluating Hinduism as a religion?

It is a well-known fact that the Hindu scriptures did not reach directly to the people. They came through the religious leaders who interpreted them for the common masses and wrote critique on them. During the process, they were burdened with some personal preferences and prejudices. Therefore they might not display the true spirit of Hinduism. Dr. Ambedkar presented the distorted version of Hinduism as the real Hinduism. Instead he could have put forward the course of gradual distortion of these scriptures and thereby of Hinduism itself. It is now proved more than once that the instinctive nature of Hinduism did not ever recognize untouchability nor did the Hindu scriptures propagate or perpetuate it. There was no monopoly of the Brahmins on Hinduism, culture, traditions or knowledge. He could have forcefully established that the Hinduism that was used as a tyrannical tool against the untouchables by the caste Hindus was only a distortion. The original religion was sublime enough to preach equality and fraternity.
Vivekanandji was also unhappy with prevalent status of Hinduism. But he chose to modernize Hinduism instead of denunciating it. Dr. Ambedkar, a rationalist and pragmatist to the core, could have brought all the traditional cultural systems of Hinduism into one modern rationalistic framework.

Narayan Guru (1854-1928) was a great reformer of his age who also emerged from the untouchable, rather, unapproachable community. He taught that no harsh words should be used while talking about our own traditions or even the traditions of others. He believed that only that reform endured which was brought about by example, by persuasion and by taking everyone along. Dr. Ambedkar taught his followers to hate and confront but Narayan Guru never did that.

Narayan Guru asked his followers to throw away superstitions and worship of lower deities with animal sacrifices and other inauspicious rites. He instructed them to highlight the greatness of the higher modes of worshipping God and the principles of pure Hinduism. He wanted to have the conception of God with and without attributes. He preached not to run down other religions in malice or in any way likely to cause agitation in the minds of the devotees. His motto was – Know and make known; not to argue and win. Dr. Ambedkar’s work *Riddles of Hinduism* presents utter contrast to this.

Whereas Dr. Ambedkar taught his followers to make demands on others, Narayan Guru taught them to make demands on themselves. He preached temperance. He asked his preachers to educate the lower castes. He wanted people to learn the importance of truth and cleanliness. He desired to instill in them fear of unrighteousness and faith in God. Whereas Dr. Ambedkar converted to his own version of Buddhism, Narayan Guru consistently taught against conversion. He took back into the Hindu fold persons from the lower castes that had gone over to other religions.

The legacy of Narayan Guru is a society elevated; a society in accord; the lower castes educated, full of dignity having a feeling of self-worth. The legacy of Dr. Ambedkar is a group screaming at everyone, always demanding and denouncing; a group stuck in self-pity and hatred; a society at war with itself. The legacy of Narayan Guru is a country rejuvenated. The legacy of Dr. Ambedkar is a country with a deepened sense of shame in its entire past and thereby further disabled.

Dr. Ambedkar constantly cursed Hinduism for its orthodoxy. He blamed it for not accepting any change. Many excrescences grew around or in the name of Hinduism. But the entire and long history of the religion showed that it was uniquely receptive to new ideas. It was uniquely responsive to reformers. It was adaptable as no other religion was. Therefore there was no reason to believe that it would not reform itself out of the evil of caste system also. Rather, it has already reformed itself on the matter as today we do not follow caste system as strictly as we did in past. Nobody is denied temple-entry or access to water resources. No restrictions are there as far as the choice of occupation is concerned. Inter-dining is common nowadays. No one today even can dream of the prohibition of inter-dining. And inter-caste marriages are now acceptable.
Dr. Ambedkar’s behavior led him astray. Without any effective programme for his people, he embraced Buddhism. He renounced Marxism and wanted to establish socialism. That was something incredible. It was self-deception. He turned the whole movement of workers and peasants into reactionary and metaphysical movement.

The miseries of the world cannot be removed by simply changing the religion. They must be eliminated through some material methods. The social, political and economic circumstances must be changed. Merely spiritual appeal will not help much. When Gandhiji advocated for emotional appeal to eradicate untouchability, Dr. Ambedkar ridiculed his method. But towards the end of his life, his escapism led him to a spiritual solution for a worldly problem!

Social Outlook

Dr. Ambedkar’s writings and speeches reveal that the society, religion and culture to which the depressed classes belonged had conveniently disowned them for centuries. They miserably suffered from social isolation. They did not have any religion or culture to live by. They had to strive for existence. They were suffering from identity crisis.

He found that the existing Hindu social order stood on three basic principles. The first principle was that of graded inequality. It divided the society horizontally as well as vertically. The second principle was that of fixity of occupations. Every member of each class had to do the work assigned to his or her class. There was no scope for individual choice. On the contrary, there was a provision of punishment for the defiant member. The third principle fixed people within their respective classes. Everyone’s class or caste was decided by birth and not by ability. Nobody was allowed to change one’s caste or class. The society practised tyranny and oppression against an individual in a far greater degree than a government could. The punishment of excommunication was incomparable in magnitude and severity to any of the punishment included in the Penal Code. The condition of the untouchables was pathetic.

Dr. Ambedkar’s works are full of poignant and scathing remarks against the prevailing social situation. He found the society vitiated by the poisonous feelings originating from caste, Varna and untouchability. In order to abolish untouchability, it was necessary to eliminate the caste system from the Hindu society. And for that, it was required to reveal the drawbacks of the system. Dr. Ambedkar started his mission with the explanation of the defects, short-comings and evil impacts of the caste system. Apart from generating dismal, negative, disunited and separatist trends in the Hindu society, the caste system hindered the removal of untouchability.

He wrote a number of books and delivered many lectures for this purpose. Through his writings and speeches, he made them aware of their lowly existence and the life of degradation and humiliation they were leading. He made them conscious of their weaknesses and explained them how these rendered them powerless. He instilled in them a new spirit of restlessness, an
inquisitive attitude and a determination for justice. In this sense, he was a regenerator of their spirit and self-respect. He made them conscious of their united strength and their power to vote. He organized them and led them to agitate in a peaceful manner for the assertion of their rights.

Dr. Ambedkar succeeded in awakening the downtrodden against social injustice. He inculcated in them the spirit of self-reform, self-emancipation, self-reliance, self-respect and self-confidence. He tried to free their minds from the inferiority complex which was inculcated in their minds by custom and practice. He upheld and preached the human values. He desired to elevate the mental, moral, physical, religious, instinctual and political standards of the depressed classes.

Dr. Ambedkar inspired the depressed classes for self-help. He motivated them to put an end to their slavery and sufferings. He believed that worship of God or a superman, pilgrimages and observance of fasts would not bring their salvation. Devotion to scriptures would not make them free from bondage, want and poverty. Austerities and penances would not save them from starvation. He had a firm conviction about law being the abode of all worldly happiness. He wanted the destitute to capture the power of law-making. He strongly stated that people must be always watchful, strong, well-educated and self-respecting to attain and maintain success.

Pleading for the social reform, he said that economic equalization might not change the exploitative social, religious and ideological sub-structure of the caste system completely, although it might reduce its intensity. He found that the roots of untouchability and discrimination lied in social and economic sub-structure of the prevalent Hindu social and religious order. He offered a remedy in the form of replacement of the social relations governed by the caste system by the one based on equality, justice and fraternity. He believed that the Buddhism would help restructure the social, cultural and political relations to promote welfare of majority of people.

He took a human being as an end in himself with a right to his own development in his own way. Fighting for the fundamental rights of people in general and untouchables in particular, he paid conscious attention to the basic requirements like land, education, political power and social reforms.

Dr. Ambedkar thought that the fundamental right to property would be devoid of any practical significance as the depressed classes neither owned land nor capital. As a result, the right to property would be only notional for them. Therefore he thought that the depressed classes stood to benefit only under collective ownership of major resources of production, particularly, land.

It is evident from his writings that he disapproved violence and rejected dictatorship. He had great faith in the adequacy of constitutional means for securing socio-economic transformation. He believed that any change secured through peaceful means and consent of people was more durable and sustainable than that secured forcibly through authority.
Dr. Ambedkar’s writings and speeches show that he selected to work within the religious framework. He unequivocally expressed his abhorrence towards Hinduism. But he failed to go beyond that framework. Confronted with the rigid orthodoxy of the caste Hindus, he gave up any hope of reforming Hinduism. He ultimately turned to Buddhism. But it was difficult to find the extent to which Buddhism was successful in providing an alternative framework for the abolition of untouchability.

He was so fanatical about his leadership that completely ignored, negated or opposed the initiation offered by the other communities for the upliftment of the untouchables. The result was the emergence of strong caste-consciousness among the scheduled castes. The primary objective for launching the movement of protest against caste was contradicted.

He was highly skeptical and contemptuous about the leaders who were not untouchables. He perhaps developed this hatred and bitterness due to the dual standards of the Savarna reformers of Maharashtra he came across. This might be the reason why he could not appreciate Gandhiji’s point of view neutrally.

Dr. Ambedkar’s social reform movement was committed to an exclusive and separatist outlook. Therefore, the untouchables imbibed the same. They were so obsessed with the past memories of social tyranny that they could not appreciate the progressive trend and the promise of the present. He succeeded in inculcating the consciousness of civil rights in his community. But the emergence of this consciousness produced isolation marked by an attitude of confrontation rather than cooperation.

Gandhiji was a charismatic figure and Dr. Ambedkar had the power to channelize the energies of the untouchables. Gandhiji was very much willing to join hands with Dr. Ambedkar. If Dr. Ambedkar had tried to get his bitterness controlled and work with Gandhiji, India could have seen a different history and an altogether different future.

As an individual, I respect Dr. Ambedkar for his knowledge, rationality, courage and integrity towards his fellow-men. But as a leader, he was prejudiced to the core. He shouldn’t have abused Hinduism, Hindu scriptures, Gandhiji and the National Movement for Freedom. He had set a wrong example for the untouchables!

One should not forget that before Dr. Ambedkar appeared on the scene, various campaigns for the removal of untouchability had already been carried out by the Hindu leaders like Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Gandhiji, Savarkar, Golwalkar and Hedgewar. They had already prepared a platform for the same. But Dr. Ambedkar could not appreciate their efforts. The rise of a new educated class, development and spread of national freedom spirit, realization of the oppressive nature of colonization, works of religious and social leaders, formation of Indian National Congress and the writings and speeches in different languages of the time – these factors must not be ignored as they played important role in revitalizing the Indian society. When one takes a
neutral perspective to evaluate the social reform during the first half of the last century, one can easily notice that the heavy impact of these factors made the task of Dr. Ambedkar a bit easier.

His writings and speeches demonstrate that he wore spectacles of abolition of untouchability and demolition of caste. Therefore his attitude seemed biased, very much aggressive and sometimes cynic. He thought that he was the only true leader of the untouchables and his was the only right way for their upliftment. He believed that nobody else could understand the problems of the untouchables as sympathetically as he could and nobody else could fight for them as vigourously as he could.

His liberal outlook, religious convictions and a separatist posture were largely responsible for his failure in completely eradicating the evils of the Hindu social system. The hammer blows of Dr. Ambedkar’s logic and political and social movements undoubtedly shocked Hindu orthodoxy out of its ancient torpor. However, the distortion was organic and too deeply embedded in the vitals of Hindu society itself for it to be wholly cured within a generation.

The social reformers before Dr. Ambedkar were humanitarians. Their outlook was philanthropic. They tried to mould society on reformist lines. Propaganda and spreading education were their methods. But Dr. Ambedkar selected different methods. As he was ambitious about the welfare of his community, he came out with the slogan ‘Be a ruling race!’ and put forth his separatist demands.

Dr. Ambedkar preached Buddhism for all human beings. But the way things turned out to be after him was worth noticing. Buddhism, at least in India, is confined to the status of being a religion of the untouchables only.

Dr. Ambedkar fought for the freedom of his community from all bondage, but he did not take initiative in the fight against imperialism. People paralleled his opposition to Gandhiji and the Congress to the opposition to the national struggle. He was placed in the rank of Jinnah who fought for his narrow selfish interests.

Some of the constitutional provisions made for the depressed classes exist only on paper. They are never realized in practical form. On the other hand, the downtrodden get stuck with the demands of reservation in various fields of society and state. They just forget that Dr. Ambedkar never favoured reservation more than a fixed period.

In spite of all the bitter criticisms, one can say for sure that Dr. Ambedkar was anything but a hypocrite.

Relevance

Gandhiji demonstrates mass dimension and moral purpose. Nehru represents economic and socialist dimensions. And Dr. Ambedkar shows social-democratic goal. The problems we are facing today are so great in their magnitude and so explosive in their nature that it is necessary to combine all
the three approaches of Gandhiji, Nehru and Dr. Ambedkar in order to tackle them successfully.

Gandhiji wanted to stir the conscience of the high caste Hindus and Dr. Ambedkar wanted to stimulate the self-respect of the downtrodden. It is evident that both of them adopted conflicting approaches to resolve the problem of untouchability. But none can deny their vital contributions in removing the taboos and restraints framed for the depressed classes. Though they did not work together, their earnest efforts were directed towards one single goal. They refused to be cowed down by the orthodox concepts and customary ideas of Hinduism. They acted as a sobering influence on Hinduism. The reformation they started has changed the pattern of Hindu society and brought, if not full equality, a reasonable tolerance and acceptance of the depressed classes by the caste Hindus. This accomplishment gave credence to their role as great emancipators. Because of their combined attempts, the evil of untouchability is removed today from the Indian society.

Dr. Ambedkar firmly believed that religion must serve humanity and human interests. It should not be confined to the service of any supernatural entity. This type of humanist philosophy is the need of the present day world.

He believed in the power of mind and mass action. He looked forward for community consciousness and civilized ways of achieving rights. He achieved a lot for his people without shedding a drop of blood. He wanted the regeneration of human personality. His ideas are relevant today also.

He wanted to break the Indian tradition of idol-worship. He took it to be his sacred duty to make people realize that the country was greater than the men. But his followers turned to the practice of idol-worship after his death. They made statues of Dr. Ambedkar, performed rituals, made offerings and sang song in his praise.

Dr. Ambedkar’s followers have done him a great injustice by recognizing his potential only as a creator of the constitution and an emancipator of the untouchables. They have failed to recognize or appreciate his worth as a multifaceted personality working for the realization of many social, religious, economic and political ideals.

Dr. Ambedkar wanted to harmonize the claims of rationalism and empiricism. His rationalism was an expression of his faith in human reason. It brought him very near to naturalism and empiricism. He thought that naturalism and rationalism were the most thoroughly anti-theological type of human attitude which allow man to rely upon his personal experience. His philosophy was a fusion of idealism and realism, empiricism and rationalism, naturalism and humanism, materialism and spiritualism, individualism and socialism, nationalism and internationalism.

He concentrated on the analysis of the nature and causes of social and moral evils and tried to develop a clear and strong attitude towards better
social possibilities. He worked hard in his own way to rectify specific social and religious ills.

Dr. Ambedkar’s political philosophy demonstrated a deep faith in fundamental human rights, in the equal rights of man and woman, in the dignity of the individual, in the social and economic justice, in the promotion of social progress and better standards of life with peace and security in all spheres of human life.

He firmly believed that unrest, contempt and discontentment of the person struggling for the establishment of some great principles should be blunt, sharp and piercing. He considered his grudge to be a power enabling him to fight for the welfare of the masses.

Dr. Ambedkar was very critical about the senseless adherence to any faith. He firmly believed that a blind religious faith could never be conducive to the development of man and society. It would destroy human worth and dignity. He went to the extent of saying that not only religious faith but a blind acceptance to anything was bound to have the same results. Therefore he declared that anything which prohibits or inhibits human development and creativity should be subjected to severe criticism and even rejection.

He focused on man himself. He kept man free from intricacies of metaphysics and from the Kingdom of God. He did not believe in miracles. Man was the cynosure in his entire thought. He believed in human insight and human efforts.

He believed that the inadequacy of human values caused barriers among human beings. His literature affirmed the validity human approach to face the challenges of life and also of the world. He stressed the need of making the best of the given circumstances.

Dr. Ambedkar believed that there should be no scope for escapism, despair, failure or fatigue in life. He never allowed his followers to feel that the world was not worth living because such a thought would kill the essential sense of fighting against the wrongs of the world. He wanted them to act and agitate for their legitimate rights. He believed that the solution to the ills of the world could be discovered through collective social action.

Non-fictional Writing

Dr. Ambedkar’s writings fall under the category of non-fictional writing in English. It would be interesting here to examine his works keeping in mind the salient features of non-fictional writing. When the works of any political, social or religious leaders are studied with literary perspective, it is important to find out how many traits of a particular literary genre they follow and to what extent.

(1) Non-fictional prose presents factual accounts of real people, places, objects or events. This presentation may be accurate or not. However, the authors of such accounts believe them to be truthful at the time of their
composition. Dr. Ambedkar lived during 1891-1956. His writings and speeches cover this span of time. They reflect the contemporary society. He considered his writings to be truthful as it presented political, social and religious picture of the society as he perceived.

(2) The purpose of non-fictional writing is to instruct, persuade, convert or convey experience. Dr. Ambedkar’s writings do the same. He has proved his excellence in this.

The basic modes of writing are descriptive, narrative, expository or/and argumentative. Dr. Ambedkar’s works display all of these modes.

(3) His works reflect his power of keen observation. They are full of polemical allusions, anecdotes, digressions and religious and moral examples. He did research, found evidences and analyzing them, inferred or proposed things. His rational approach is evident. But he was a biased genius. He undertook this tedious exercise only to find reasons for abusing Hinduism, Hindu society, Gandhiji and Congress. Therefore, some propositions, which he laboriously tried to establish as ‘facts’, seem to be his far-fetched imaginations.

(4) The drawback of such a non-descript literature lies in judging it against any standard of perfection. Perfection implies some conformity with implicit rules and the presence, however vague, of standards. Any such rules or standards are almost impossible to be found in non-fiction.

A realm as boundless and diverse as non-fictional prose literature cannot be characterized as having any unity of intent, of technique or of style. Dr. Ambedkar raised questions and answered them; made statements and proved them with due arguments and examples; created hypothesis and tried to find out their validity. But one cannot name his technique of writing or his style of prose.

(5) The tone of non-fictional prose is intensive, detached, sarcastic and seemingly aloof. The tone of Dr. Ambedkar’s writing is undoubtedly intensive and sarcastic. He forcefully argued to convince his readers. The aim of his life became the purpose of his writings i.e. the upliftment of untouchables. He wrote about the social, religious, political factors that hindered the progress of his fellowmen. Therefore his tone is bound to be ironic. He tried to look detached and objective while dealing with social, political or economic problems of his people. But his obsession with his goal led him to subjectivity. He could not maintain neutral attitude in his work and works.

(6) This kind of prose does not entail any self-conscious craft of fiction writing. Dr. Ambedkar also did not use any such craft in his writings. If he had done so, the repetitions and gaps found in his writings would not have been seen.

(7) A marked degree of the author’s presence is felt in this kind of prose. This presence endows the works with a personal and haunting force that challenges, converts or repels but hardly ever leaves the reader
indifferent. The frequent use of the first person singular imparts a sense of concreteness.

Dr. Ambedkar employed the first person singular in his works in order to share his personal experiences as well as present his own views. He quotes from many books and mentions various authors, leaders and thinkers in his works. The reader feels like receiving first-hand information. The author’s presence is strongly felt. Sometimes he even becomes authoritative. So, he can be accepted or rejected, but never ignored.
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