INTRODUCTION

The men who guided the course of History, those who changed the thought and those who worked for the welfare of mankind or otherwise served the country are generally fit subjects of research. The subject need not sit pretty atop life’s Mt. Everest. It is enough if one reaches a hilltop by his own efforts.

To attempt to do research on the life of a well known figure in public life, particularly of on whose political and social career had spanned nearly five eventful decades, is indeed a difficult task.

A remarkable feature of India’s social and freedom movement is the valuable service rendered at different stages by a long line of distinguished persons at the national and local levels who felt a deep and genuine affection for the motherland. These men gave a healthy tone to our public life through
records of personal purity and uncompromising adherence to convictions, which have become all too rare in the years of our Independence and after.

Most social and political activities are activated by a variety of motives: they may wish to earn money, advance their careers, defeat personal enemies, achieve public or private ends, and so on. There is another category of leaders who came with firm principles and strong convictions and dedicated their lives to active the goals for which those persons and principles stood. To this last category belonged Dr. B. R. Ambedkar social revolutionary and tireless fighter for social equality from Maharashtra Region. He was one of the most notable fighters of India for social equality.

B. R. Ambedkar born in a poor untouchable family. He was born on April 14th 1891, the day that has now turned to be a pious Jayanti Diwas and is celebrated not only in India, but also in many parts of the world. Ambedkar is also remembered on the day of his demise, the Parinirvana day, on 6th December every year.

He was the 14th and last child of Ramji Maloji Sakpal and Bhimabai Murbadkar. His family was of Marathi background from the town of Ambavade in the Ratnagiri district of modern day Maharashtra. They belonged to the Hindu Mahar Caste, who were treated as untouchables. Ambedkar passed matriculation examination in 1907. Ambedkar married Ramabai a nine years old girl in 1908. He entered Elphinstone College and obtained a scholarship from the Gayakwad ruler of Baroda. He was one of the first persons of
Untouchable origin to enter a college in India. In this time, his father died on February 2, 1913.

He joined Columbia University as a Gaekwad Scholar in 1913. He was the first Mahar to study in a foreign University. This was a unique opportunity for an Indian and especially for an untouchable. To him life at Columbia University was a revelation. It was a new world. His life gleamed with a new meaning. Ambedkar left Columbia University to join the London School of Economics and political science as a graduate student in June 1916.

As a leading Indian scholar, Ambedkar had been invited to testify before the Southborough committee, which was preparing the Government of India Act 1919. At this time, Ambedkar argued for creating separate electorates and reservation for dalits and other religious communities. In 1920, he began the publication of the weekly Mooknayak (Leader of the Dumb) in Mumbai. He used this journal to criticize orthodox Hindu politicians and a perceived reluctance of the Indian Political Community to fight caste discrimination.

Ambedkar established a successful legal practice, and organized the Bahishkrit Hitakari Sabha on July 20th, 1924 to promote education and socio, economic uplifting of the depressed classes. In 1926, he became a nominated member of the Bombay Legislative council. Ambedkar wanted a newspaper to propagate his work. So he started his fortnightly Marathi paper Bahishkrit Bharat on April 3, 1927, in Bombay. By 1927, Dr. Ambedkar decided to launch active movements against untouchability. He began with public movements
and marches to open up and share public fight for the right of the untouchable community to draw water from the main water tank of the town.

He was appointed to the Bombay presidency committee to work with the all-European Simon commission in 1928. He was invited to attend the first, second and third round table conferences in London.

In 1936, Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour party, which won 15 seats in the 1937 elections to the Bombay Legislative Assembly. Ambedkar served on the Defence Advisory Committee and the Viceroy’s executive councils minister for labour. Upon India’s Independence on August 15, 1947 the new Congress led-government invited Ambedkar to serve as the nation’s first law minister, which he accepted on August 29 1947. Ambedkar was appointed chairman of the constitution drafting committee, charged by the assembly to write free India’s new Constitution.

Ambedkar resigned from the cabinet in 1951 following the stalling in parliament of his draft of the Hindu Code Bill, which sought to expound gender equality in the laws of inheritance marriage and the economy.

Ambedkar independently contested on election in 1952 to the Lower House of parliament, the Lok Sabha, but was defeated. He was appointed to the upper house of Parliament, the Rajya Sabha in March 1952 and would remain a member until his death,

On May 24, 1956 on the occasion of Buddha Jayanti, he declared in Bombay, that he would adopt Buddhism in October. Ambedkar organized a formal public ceremony for himself and his supporters in Nagpur on October
14, 1956. He embraced Buddhism along with many of his followers. Ambedkar completed his own conversion.

Ambedkar died peacefully in his sleep on 6 December 1956 at his home in Delhi.

Plainly speaking, the story of Ambedkar has been the story of resistance and revolt, strife and struggle, sacrifices and sufferings, for the cause of the emancipation of the oppressed people, the downtrodden India. His was a social-political career extending over five decades period. Ambedkar's life was a fearless journey marked by so many vicissitudes, punctuated with raging storms, and serious conflicts with Gandhi and Jinnah that one could hardly carry on. Ambedkar’s mission was true, yet tedious to reach; he did not stop in spite of being abused and branded as traitor and what not! In those days, he was bruised and blasted for his trenchant criticism of the Hindu Shastras. Perhaps, no other man could tolerate such things, but Ambedkar proved himself to be an indefatigable fighter with an undying love for the downtrodden people of India, and he, as a historic man, embodied in his multifarious personality, the duty and devotion of a man of mission and action.

Ambedkar was really gifted with a unique and versatile personality and blessed with a life full of extraordinary academic achievements and unforgettable episodes. He moved on among the stalwarts of the country as brightly as a rising star. Ambedkar was the first man who performed a bonfire of the Manusmriti, the chief social guide of the Hindus, and he daringly proclaimed social freedom of his oppressed people as his mission at a time
when the mere touch, sight and shadow of an untouchable could pollute the caste Hindu. Ambedkar was the first untouchable leader, a rebel, and a revolutionary, who refused to accept the divinity and infallibility of the Hindu Shastras.

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar was the father of Indian Constitution. He was a versatile genius who left an indelible mark on social, political and intellectual life of modern India. His struggle for social justice and political equality has remained the key stone of the entire edifice of Indian democracy. Though scholars have highlighted much his role as the messiah of the backward classes in India but a study of his contribution to create a modern Indian polity and his role to strengthen its unity and integrity has been rare. In fact he was one of the architects of modern Indian republic for which he was largely acclaimed as the Modern Manu.

Ambedkar spent his whole life fighting against social discrimination, the system of chaturvarna, the Hindu categorization of human society into four varnas and the Indian caste system. He is also credited with having sparked the Dalit Buddhist movement. Ambedkar has been honoured with the Bharat Ratna, India’s highest civilian award posthumously.

Overcoming numerous social and financial obstacles, Ambedkar became one of the first “Untouchables” to obtain a college education in India. Eventually earning law degrees and multiple doctorates for his study and research in law, economics and political science from Columbia University and the London School of Economics, Ambedkar returned home a famous scholar
and practiced law for a few years before publishing journals advocating political rights and social freedom for India's Untouchables.

He always remained a tireless fighter with progressive ideas and dynamic thoughts in Indian History. He sacrificed his whole life for the betterment of our society. He believed always in his strength and made others to believe in their strength. He was a creator of confidence, particularly among downtrodden. He was symbol of self-respect. He was a leader with dedication and commitment.

The present researcher is attracted by the personality, struggle nature and rational outlook and scientific approach of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. His services and contributions have been studied in different perspectives. He was a many-sided personality whose great sacrifices and services to the nation in general and to the community (Untouchables) from which he hailed in particular, need to be more highlighted so that the younger generations of this country could find a guiding star in his selfless leadership.

This modest work attempts to study achievements and contributions of Ambedkar as fighter with the plenty of material, the researcher referred and studied. He brings out Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as a fighter in a balanced, impartial and critical away. I can say with sense of satisfaction that in preparing this study, I have experienced all the excitement and note worthy fighting role of Ambedkar in our country. The researcher will be satisfied if the adventure and a sacrifice of the great son of India is understood, admired and appreciated.
This investigation into the life and achievements of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar attempts to find out in the light of available evidence the following:

To identify the influence that worked on him as he entered public life.

To analyse, the nature and extent of his fighting role in Indian History.

To examine dynamics and daring qualities of his leadership, style, organization and his method.

To estimate value of his contribution to the nation through constitution.

To assess critically and analytically his achievements as Buddhist.

If the "History is but the biography of Great Men" as Carlyle contented, all men and Women who have contributed in their own way, unmindful of reward and recognition, their mite for the general welfare of all, deserved to be remembered in history.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Daily news papers, weekly magazines, Manifestos, Reports, Debates, Journals and Dairy’s collections are also referred.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This thesis is divided into eight chapters including introduction and conclusion.

In the first chapter the condition of Indian society is discussed elaborately. Religion and Castes are discussed. Problems of untouchables and their social, economic and cultural conditions are traced out. How the religion and caste suppressed their spirit and life. All these are elucidated.

In the second chapter Ambedkar’s family background, his early life and education are discussed. How Ambedkar was insulted, humiliated and dishonoured as an untouchable in his life is elaborated. He had overcome all these hindrances and hurdles with perseverance and patience. His Foreign study moulded him as a revolt and democrat. These are all elaborated.

In third chapter, his revolts and challenges of Ambedkar are discussed. He was both a visionary and a revolutionary. His revolts shook Indian society to its foundations. He fought in a democratic way. He mobilized and moved people against social disparities. He gave scientific and rational solutions to every problems of society. He wanted to build society in a democratic way. Whole country began to think problems of untouchables. Problems of untouchables are projected. Dr.B.R.Ambedkar made these issues as burning and important one. As a dynamic fighter he took up issues of Mahad water
Tank, burning of Manusmriti and temple entry at Nasik. These issues shook and jolted Indian society with its foundations. It is critically and impartially analyzed.

In the fourth chapter his role in Round Table Conferences in London, and his struggle for separate electorates are clearly analyzed. He projected issue of untouchability in Round Table conferences. Establishment of Indian Labour Party and its role in 1937 elections, these are elucidated.

In the fifth chapter establishment of Scheduled Caste Federation and its role. He became member of Constituent Assembly and Chairman of Drafting Committee of Constitution. Ambedkar emerged as a leader of the nation and became Law Minister in Nehru's Cabinet. Role of the Ambedkar in making the constitution is discussed. His contribution to the Dalits through constitution is critically elaborated.

In the sixth chapter importance of religion and conversion of Ambedkar to Buddhism. Why he has chosen Buddhism and causes are discussed. His contribution through Buddhism to Indian Society. How far Buddhism is relevant for the upliptment of Dalits in Indian society. These are clearly and rationally discussed.

In conclusion chapter achievements and contribution of Ambedkar to Indian Society are critically estimated. It is proved that Ambedkar was a real and tireless fighter for the upliptment of Indian society (down trodden).