Chapter - Four
Impact Of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar’s Thoughts On Selected Dalit Autobiographies

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar holds an important place among Indian social reformers for he believed in the notion of struggle oriented achievement of status, awareness and advancement in the life of an individual, particularly held from oppressed section of society, including women. It is because of his enlightening message that today the suppressed, deprived, and economically disadvantaged communities strive to ascertain social justice in society. In other words he sharpened the edge of their struggle, re-fashioned it into revolutionary and developmental force. Moreover, when we as democratic nation strive to cope up with communal disparity, tensions and benumbing corrupt practices in every walk of life, we ought to review certain humanitarian principles to gauge the problems confronted by lowest rung of society who still thrive on streets, sheltered under the over-bridge. Even a cursory view of thoughts and visions of great personalities like Dr. Ambedkar have power to affect social forces that are posing threat to equality, fraternity and freedom bestowed. This chapter deals, especially, with the key impacts of Dr. Ambedkar’s thoughts that had been affecting communal or individual consciousness among oppressed sections such as untouchables, Buddhists, outcastes, and nomadic communities who gathered attention of mainstream society through their social documentation of miseries uncovered in autobiography.

So far, last chapter discussed the selected autobiographies of prominent Dalit writers who rose themselves in spite of trials and tribulations belonging to lowest rung in social hierarchy. One can deduce
from the personal memoire of said autobiographers that all the piteous events, personalities and feelings of untouchables and outcastes depicted by them share resemblance with inhuman social circumstances prior to Dr. Ambedkar, during his Dalit movement and after his passing away in fifth decade too. But the social, educational, political and religious awakening generated through Dalit movement by him created unprecedented impact in the form of self-respect, self-esteem, and self-realization among oppressed classes. Because of this prevailing feeling among Dalit communities that the Dalits and alike communities gathered courage to claim themselves as free human being.

More importantly, as illustrated in last chapter, they tried to find answers to their suffocated social identity in Dalit movement initiated by Dr. Ambedkar. For instance Laxman Mane’s assertion for settlement of outsiders or Kaikadi; Sharankumar Limbale’s bitter realization of being base born owing to caste system; Laxmn Gaikwad’s sense of being unjustly labeled as born criminal and Urmila Pawar’s determination to stand against male supremacy despite being educated in a Dalit community underlies power of Dr. Ambedkar’s thoughts prevailing in society in the form of literature. These all writers were the first generation to enjoy the fruits of social, educational, economic and religious alteration propounded by Dr. Ambedkar. Their parents were attracted by the changes brought about by constitutional safeguards inserted by this leader; but having left the chance due to many fold unconditional reasons in the form of unequipped facilities, strong rejection from traditional mindset, their illiterate parents, at least insisted on educating wards. And hence the said writers became the first to receive fruits in a welfare society envisioned by great social, religious thinkers Dr. Ambedkar.
After reading the autobiographies one wonders how they could gather the sense of resistance despite being not directly connected to Dr. Ambedkar’s Dalit movement. The answer lies in the fact that although Dr. Ambedkar was not present there to guide them but his message of self-help, resistance to injustice and acquiring mental strength can be felt in the air. To be specific it was present in form of his books, articles, speeches and writings. Thus, before exemplifying the influence of Dr. Ambedkar’s thoughts precipitated in selected autobiographies it would be helpful to sort out tenets of his writings and speeches particularly directed at social, political, educational and religious consciousness. It will guide in interpreting events, caste consciousness, culture, superstitions, rituals, adoption of new ideas and bold rejection of old ideas and caste system narrated in each of the autobiography. Alternatively, pointing at relevance and applicability of Dr. Ambedkar’s message in present scenario. While considering his impact reflected in selected autobiographies this chapter highlights Dr. Ambedkar’s discourse over Hindu social order particularly caste system, place of untouchables, outcastes and women in the Hindu society and lastly ways of deliverance from caste system; education and organizational awareness for self-elevation; religious conversion to acquire life skills; constitutional safeguards securing the fundamental rights of citizen, particularly the untouchables, minorities and nomads and de-notified tribes that instilled faith in non-violent methods to get fulfilled demands as a free citizens in democratic society.

First of all let us consider Dr. Ambedkar’s critique of Hindus social order which forms background of studying his influence on general public. It helped the writers identifying the foundations of society depicted as in selected autobiographies and secondly, his social discourse acted as fountain head of sense of social protest against inhuman
treatment and agonies thereof in each case of the autobiographer. As noted earlier in second chapter, Dr. Ambedkar had to enter into public life owing to dehumanized treatment he received from upper caste officers and general public while in Baroda state. At that time he had acquired highest degrees of M.A. and Ph.D. from world’s prominent universities at New York, London and Germany. While in foreign countries he happened to enjoy what a life would be after being free from caste prejudices, caste restriction and untouchability in India. But dismayed by corrupt superior mentality of caste he turned towards social work thinking that if a highly educated man like him was subjected to insulting, unpleasant, brutal, and negligence then what would have been the plight of his illiterate, ignorant, superstitious, oppressed, exploited untouchables and outcaste community members.

He took no time to ponder over what to do in helpless condition. By now his higher education had equipped him with excellent research attitude and aptitude. His fondness for selective reading became instrument to seek out every possible answer to prevailing social condition of Dalits. For him books became the only guide showing honest way out through dark fathoms of legalized ban of education for untouchables, shudras from thousands of years ago. But as it is said that education is to gain knowledge and utilize it; and real aim of education is to impart gained knowledge for bettering surroundings. Dr. Ambedkar did exactly the same. Instead of endorsed in pleasure seeing reading material he started reading for benefit society, his community: the untouchables, outcastes.

While accessing treasure of knowledge he found the roots of discriminations experienced by untouchables, women in Hindus society. Here are some of his most referred observations and comments over
Hindu social order, Hindu religion, origin, nature and development of caste system which have been solving ‘riddles’ when trapped in the dilemma of being a Hindu.

Dr. Ambedkar’s interpretation and analysis about ‘society’ is pertinent while studying the Dalit autobiographies. It is because of this most discussed topic among scholars and general public that writer like Laxman Mane, Laxaman Gaikwad and Sharankumar Limbale were able to deduce their position in Hindu social order. Dr. Ambedkar clearly defines ‘society’ from collective consciousness of being one and indivisible. According to him, “When we speak of ‘society’, we conceive of it as one by its very nature.” By being one denotes unity for communal purpose and “desire for welfare, loyalty to public ends and mutuality of sympathy and cooperation”….making a individual a share or partner in the associated activity so that he [she] feels its success as his success, its failure as his failure is the real thing that binds men and makes a society of them”. 1 Such a society should aim at overall development of individual and his personality. Further he says that the “aim of human society must be to enable every person to lead a life of culture which means the cultivation of the mind as distinguished from the satisfaction of mere physical wants.” 2 Thus, he envisioned an ideal society “based on liberty, equality and fraternity” but in actual conditions there isn’t any such society to reside in. The reasons being dehumanized condition of untouchables despite being termed as indivisible part of society. So he began to search for roots of Hindu society.

Having observed contrasting contemporary Hindu society, he sought to unearth conspiracy behind each and every notion surrounded by the term ‘Hindu’. He found that the word ‘Hindu’ itself was borrowed one. “It was given by the Mohammedan to the natives for the purpose of
distinguishing themselves. It does not occur in any Sanskrit work prior to Mohammedan invasion. They did not feel the necessity of a common name because they had no conception of their having constituted a community.” ³ The Hindus are by nature conservative and their religion is “incompatible with liberty, equality and fraternity i. e. with democracy. ⁴ Dr. Ambedkar based these notions on the concept of caste in Hindu society. He says,

There can be no doubt that caste is one and an essential and integral part of Hinduism. Every Hindu, if he is not merely a statutory Hindu believes in caste and every Hindu even one who prides himself on being a statutory Hindus has a caste. A Hindu is as much born into caste as he is born in Hinduism. Indeed a person cannot be born in Hinduism unless he is born in caste. Caste and Hinduism are inspirable. ⁵

According to him it is because of caste that Hindu society is not only disorganized but it has discouraged the unity of society. Fortunately or unfortunately, but the plight of being born in such a society gets worsened to know that when one is born in one particular caste cannot change it unless and until he dies. “There is no Hindu without caste. [He/she] cannot escape caste and being bounded by caste from birth to death he becomes subject to social regulations and traditions of the caste over which he has no control.” ⁶ So each and every person caliming to be Hindu, in fact belongs to a particular caste. Hindu society consists of four classes: 1) Brahmins, 2) Kashtriya, 3) Vaishayas and 4) Shudras and untouchables. The unit of Hindu society is class or Varna as mentioned above.

In the Hindu social order, there is no room for individual merit and no consideration of individual justice. If the individual has a privilege it is not because it is due to him personally. The privilege goes with the class, and if he is found to enjoy it, it is because he belongs to that class.
Contra-wise, if an individual is suffering from a wrong, it is not because he by his conduct deserves it. The disability is the disability imposed upon the class and if he found to be laboring under it, it is because he belongs to that class.  

The social order doesn’t recognize fraternity. Dr. Ambedkar contends this argument by applying a sheer logic of differences. He says, that as the Hindu social order is founded upon doctrine that

Men are created from the different part of the divinity and therefore the view expressed by Paul or the pilgrim fathers has no place in it. The Brahmin is no brother to the Kshatriyas because the former is born from the mouth of the divinity while the latter is from the arms. The Kshatriya is no brother to the Vaishay because the former is born from the arms and the latter from the thighs…the doctrine that the different classes were created from different parts of the Divine body had generated the belief that it must be divine will that they should remain separate and distinct. It is this belief which has created in the Hindu an instinct to be different, to be separate and to be distinct from the rest of his fellow Hindus.

Similarly he pointed out the graded inequality, lack of freedom to choose occupation and lack of political liberty to make or amend laws because they are found to be created in the Vedas. Thus, according to Dr. Ambedkar the Hindu social order is intricately “designed to be undemocratic. Its division of society into Varna and castes and out-castes is not theories but are decrees. They are all barricades raised against democracy.”

Dr. Ambedkar, himself being an untouchable in this Hindu social order very easily came to know that the main reason behind the wretched condition of his community members is the Varna system or Chaturvarna system. He traced the origin and development of Varna system in religious scriptures which guarded the privileges for upper caste groups such as Brahmin, Kshtriya and Vaishaya but denied access for Shudras-
the artisan and unskilled classes who are identified as untouchables. He delved into most revered scriptures such as Rig-Veda, Purush Sukta and found that “The priestly class separated itself from rest of the body of people and through a closed door policy became a caste by itself.” 10 After identifying Caste from Varna and its gradual assimilation into each other it would be vital to enumerate the feature of caste system as summarized by Dr. Ambedkar. He observes: “The caste system is a social division of people of same race…each caste is conscious of its existence… each caste endeavors to segregate itself and to distinguish itself from other castes. Each caste not only dines among itself and marries among itself but each caste prescribes its own distinctive dress 11 As a result in due course of time caste system generated unpleasant sense of discrimination which poses hazardous threat to the health of society in contemporary circumstances. In a clear and concise manner he revealed the effects of caste on Hindus. In fact it this explanation by Dr. Ambedkar that Dalit writers and general public sought answers to their practical questions. In his minute study of the caste system he put forth bad effects of caste system as follows:

“The effect of caste on the ethics of the Hindus is simply deplorable. Caste has killed public spirit. Caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible. A Hindu’s public is his caste. His responsibility is only to his caste. His loyalty is restricted only to his caste. Virtue has become caste-ridden and morality has become caste-bound. There is no sympathy to the deserving. There is no appreciation of the meritorious. There is no charity to the needy. Suffering as such calls for no response. There is charity but it begins with the caste and ends with the caste. There is sympathy but not for men of other caste. 12

The above quotation indicates the prolonged nature of discrimination in caste system. Apart from this, he also inferred Brahmin
or Brahmanism is the king pin the discrimination in caste system. He says, “The Brahmin systematically preyed on society and profiteered in religion. The Purnasa and Shastras, which he manufactured in tons are treasure trove of sharp practices, which the Brahim reemployed to befool, beguile and swindle the common mass of poor, illiterate and superstitious Hindus.”

It the particular class in India “where the intellectual class, namely, the Brahmns not only made education their monopoly but declared acquisition of education by the lower classes, a crime punishable by cutting off the tongue or by pouring of molten lead in the era of the offender.” These and many more observation indicate the place and prestige of Brahmin caste enjoyed in Hindu society but a horrible truth Dr. Ambedkar propagates is that it is Brahmin who confiscated law agency, disarmed untouchable and never tried to teach truth,

As the Brahmin scholar has two-fold interest in the maintenance of the sanctity of this literature. In the first place being the production of his forefathers his filial duty leads him to defend it even at the cost of truth. In the second place as it supports the privileges of the Brahmns, he is careful not to do anything which would undermine its authority”. The necessity of upholding the system by which he knows he stands to profit, as well as of upholding the prestige of his forefather as the founder of the system act as silent immaculate premise which is ever present in the mind of the Brahmin scholar and prevent him from reaching or preaching the truth.

Such a revelation played havoc in the minds of untouchables. Gradually, all the learned or illiterate people from downtrodden class began to realize the actual reason behind their disgrace, humiliation and why it happened. In Dr. Ambedkar’s speeches and writings they saw the actual reasons of their subjugation, torture. In fact Dr. Ambedkar, having studied whole of the Hindu scriptures, openly claimed that, “The Brahmns firs, historically they have been the most inveterate enemy of
the servile classes (Shudras and untouchables) who together constitute about 80 percent of the total Hindu population. If the common man belonging to the servile classes in India is today so fallen, so degraded, so devoid of hope and ambition, it is entirely due to the Brahmins and their philosophy.”

Those who happened to listen to or just heard that somewhere in the village premises or in city Dr. Ambedkar is going to hold conference hundreds and thousands women, men, children flocked the venue to grasp the terrible truth behind present condition. Such a social discourse had never been preached by any of the political leader or social reformer in contemporary circumstances. The result of this social discourse reflected in the self-realization and contempt for Brahminism. The indignation garnered by Dr. Ambedkar’s message would have turned into violent protest or militant revolt. But, being the researcher with social purpose in mind Dr. Ambedkar appealed for legal ways of getting demands fulfilled. For instance, in Mahad Satyagraha, Kalaram temple Satyagraha and Poon Pact display his statesmanship, and patience in getting sanctioned civil rights as a human being for untouchable. He never preached for violent protest, but his study of Hindu social order, the discriminative scheme by upper castes turned his words, writings upside down and vehemently scathed the ill mentality of Hindu society.

Having illustrated the nature and effects of caste in Hindu society Dr. Ambedkar sought remedies for lower castes’ predicament that were worst affected section in the ill fated caste system. He gathered that “caste is a notion it is a state of mind. The destruction of caste does not therefore mean the destruction of physical barriers. It means a notional change.” The right method to annihilate caste is to dismantle the notion of religious sanctity in the caste restored by shastras. Thus mere “criticizing and ridiculing people for not inter-dining or inter-marying or
occasionally holding inter-caste dinners and celebrating inter-caste marriage, is a futile method of achieving the desired end. The real remedy is to destroy the belief in the sanctity of the Shastras”. ¹⁸ In such conditions, lastly it requires denial and discarding the authority of Shastras like the way Buddha did. It demands courage to tell the “Hindus, that what is wrong with them is their religion; the religion which has produced in them this notion of the sacredness of caste.” ¹⁹

In later period Dr. Ambedkar elaborately revealed the infamous history behind the origin of untouchability and slavery brought about by caste system. In order provide background to wretched condition of life of Dalits described in the autobiographies one must peep into the writing and Speeches of Dr. Ambedkar. He is the first man who discovered that the untouchables were the broken men or the erstwhile Buddhists who were gradually termed as Shudras.

Shudras were one of the Aryan communities of the solar race…there was continuous feud between the Shudra King and Brahmins…as a result of the hatred towards the Shudras due to their tyrannies and oppressions, the Bramhins refused to invest the shudras with the sacred thread. Owing to the loss of the sacred thread the Shudras became socially degraded, fell below the rank of the Viashyas and came to form the fourth Varna.” ²⁰

Apart from this, according to Ambedkar the loss of sacrament of Upnayana brought the deprivation of the Shudras. In Aryan society the upnayana rituals conferred authentic social status and fundamental rights to any individual. But disallowing the upnayana for Shudras inflicted social degradation. Any such person abandoned from Upnayana was doomed to ignorance, negligence and poverty. “The stoppage of upanayana was a most deadly weapon discovered by the Brahmins to avenge themselves against the Shudras…it did make the Shudras a graveyard.” ²¹ Thus the “fifth varna of untouchables came into being, the
shudras were, in the eyes of the Hindus, the lowest of the low.” 16 He tried to recover self-esteem by discovering glorious past of Buddhists who gradually became untouchables- the broken men.

One of the roots of the untouchability lies in the hatred and contempt which the Brahmins created against those who were Buddhist...untouchability was born some time about 400 AD. It is born out of struggle for supremacy between Buddhism and Brahmanism, which as so completely moulded the history of India and the study of which, is so woefully neglected by students of India history. 22

Recognizing the neglected history and the merciless treatment wreaked by the scriptures such as Manusmriti, as noted in earlier chapter, Dr. Ambedkar devoted his entire life for the eradication of the most heinous disease in the Hindu society- the untouchability and mental slavery. Being held as an untouchable, his suffering gave him a rationale and philosophy of life. “If I fail to do away with the abominable thralldom and inhuman injustice under which the class into which I was born has been groaning, I will put an end to my life with a bullet. 23

Dr. Ambedkar’s commitment to get ride off ‘abominable thralldom and inhuman injustice’ played havoc in the mind of Dalit writers. Some of his stirring expressions needed here to be cited which reflect his appeal to pay back what the society has offered to be successful in life. To get the message across uneducated masses he reiterated his mission to work for social cause. He said, “It is fallen to my lot to be the villain of the piece. But I tell you I shall not deter from my pious duty and betray the just and legitimate interests of my people even if you hand me on the nearest lamp post in the street.”24

Further, “Personally I do not think,” Dr. Ambedkar restated his motive of communal elevation, “there is any work in India which can be said to be nobler than the elevation of scheduled castes. I have always felt
that as I have been born among these classes, it is my duty that I should do something for them first. No others will come to take up this cause and it will remain I the same rotten condition in which it has remained for the last two thousand years… I have struck to this cause as I regard it as a noble case.”  25 …I will continue to struggle for your upliftment and to make your life useful and meaningful. You must realize your responsibility and follow the path which I am showing you. If you follow it earnestly, it would not be difficult to achieve your goal.  26

While recounting his miserable experiences, Laxman Mane clearly opines that his life is shaped by Dr. Ambedkar’s thoughts and social movement. In his autobiography, Upara: The Outsider we come across a nomadic community named Kaikadi- that wanders from one place to other in search of food and shelter due lack of permanent source of sustenance, From the book we gather that though the Kaikadi community lives at the outskirts of village, adore Hindu deities and conduct its rituals according to Hindu social orders, they are not treated as civilians in village premises. Evidently, if they dare to enter village premises they will have to take permission from village chief or else are treated as thieves for any stealth in that area. Thus, in order to survive these communities had to undergo brutal, inhuman treatment on account of begging, wandering and undertaking cheap economic sources such as weaving baskets or doing sundry works such as mending wall of upper caste people in village in exchange of food to feed children. The writer depicts lifestyle of Kaikadi community in most pitiable words:

The whole village was sleeping peacefully. Father was in a hurry. Into a huge bag he put the tin boxes, aluminum utensils, scythes, small torn bags, ropes, etc. he was asking mother to hurry up. The rooster had just given the wake up call. The donkeys stood by quietly. There foals rubbed their bodies against the ground. In a huge flat
basket, mother had already accommodated pulses and grain, ground-nuts, green chilies, old clothes, which she had collected from the ladies in the village and other such things. This was our tattered family life.

From the above depicted ‘tattered family’ we gather that in independent India there are still many communities who survive a dismantled communal life. The writer was the first person to get education and reveal the intricacies of communal life of Kaikadi community. One surprises to note that though they wander from place to place but are staunch followers of Hindu caste system. The Kaikadi community and its other group share a identifiable customs, festivals and rituals resembling Varna system. Ironically, they are not entertained by village people and treated as outsiders.

Laxman Mane reveals entire lifestyle of Kaikadi community: seasonal wandering from Nirgudi to Konkan region; begging food, treatment by villagers as outsiders; devotion towards Hindu deities and gods, caste restrictions, Jatpanchayat judicial system in the nomadic tribes; faith in superstitious festivities and adoration, beheading animals- goat or hen during festivals etc. delineating the traditional livelihood patterns existing outside the village premises. These communities had developed a parallel caste system ethics that doesn’t allow an individual to go stray as he wish. The decisions pertaining to marriage disputes, excommunication of family or anything odd incidents are made by Jatpanchayat which are abiding to every individual born in nomadic tribes ever since one is born in it. Throughout the book the writer’s father cannot but go with Jatpanchayat decisions when it comes to protect traditional patterns but on the other hand is fed up with begging lifestyle. That is why encouraged by Rambhau- one of the well wisher in village, he insists for enrolling his son to school in order that his next generation
shall not have to suffer the wandering, begging or undertake hardship of weaving basket etc.

After getting educated up to sixth class, Laxman Mane’s father is happy but after that he wanted his son to help in family income. After sixth standard the writer assumes responsibility to undertake further education and completes education up to graduation. Thus, education enables him to take proper decisions, stand on one’s own resources to meet the expenses and moreover inclination towards welfare of community members. Writing this autobiography has dual purpose, first to explore the tattered livelihood patterns of nomadic tribes such a Kaikadi community so that let the society know it and second, understand the factors that forced him to undertake education, enter social movement that ultimately made him popular personality as a writer, scholar from lowest rung. As a result, Laxaman Mane gathered courage to reject the traditional pattern of Chaturvarna and adopted thoughts of liberation from Hindu social order.

In case of Sharankumar Limbale as shall see, having inclined to Dr. Ambedkar’s awakening speeches, not only made him (alike Laxman Mane) aware about miserable past and the causes behind it but also suggested remedies to their deplorable condition. His massage found direct impact on the mind of untouchables that they started reacting against their lot. Those who got educated started viewing the Hindu social order from the point of correcting their lot. Most of the Dalit writers started observing their status in society after coming in contact with upper caste people in school and college education: hence a new outlook among untouchable community. For instance, in The Outcaste by Sharankumar Limbale we come to know the Maharwada and Mangwada wherein the
writer lived. The writer started asking stirring question aroused in his mind as he contemplates over the tradition of being sidelined in society.

Though branded as untouchables we too are Hindus by faith. We too are human beings. High-caste children from the village may visit the temple, yet we are forbidden. There is a saying, Children are the flowers of God’s adobe’ but not us. We are the garbage the village throws out. There were so many castes factions in our school. The umbilical cord between our locality and the village had snapped, if the village, torn asunder, had thrown us out of it. We had grown up like aliens since our infancy. This sense of alienation increased over the years and to this day my awful childhood hunts me. 

The above quote by Sharankumar Limbale indicates realization of deep down feeling of untouchability imprinted on the mind of children since their childhood. In the book the writer depicts livelihood of the Mahars and Mangs: they eat flesh of dead animals; they are not allowed to take part in public or marriage functions in village, they are denied entry into Vithoba temple etc. But slowly, the writers and his friends in school develop aversion to dead animals and detest eating their flesh. They even didn’t follow any Hindu deity.

Furthermore, the Akkarmashi community people are not recognized by Mahars and Manags for they defiled the caste barriers. The outcastes live by the Maharwada since one of their family member- father or mother belongs to Mahar community. But the outcaste had to face alienation from Mahar and Mangs too. They have to look out for marriage proposal from the same caste people only since, the mahars consider themselves superior then outcastes. Such is the system still going on in society when India got freedom. No single person from Dalit community can wipe out this stigma of being thrashed by society to the lowest rung. Sharankumar Limbale feels helpless when he cannot recover his community from the dirty ditch generated by caste system.
His stirring questions invoke foundational notions of caste system when he says, “Is one’s caste more important than one’s friends? Is caste more important than thirst? Wasn’t Arjya a human being? If so, how could he made water impure by merely touching it? 29 “Why did my mother says yes to the rape which bought me into the world? 30...Are we ever going to be lucky enough to wear good clothes and have nice food to eat? What immoral link did we have with this mansion? In what way are we connected to the heritage of this mansion? Where do we stand in the line of this Patil caste? We were born to a patil and yet we couldn’t claim to belong to this mansion. Why doesn’t this mansion accept us? Why is this mansion dumb? Why are its jaws locked? Why is its tongue tied? 31 our villages have provided us with bread so we owe much to them. They did provide bread but in exchange satisfied their lust with our women. I can’t bear to think of Masami caught between bread and lust. Who will rescue my mother? She will die blemished, an object of someone’s lust, but what about us?...I never got real love from my mother...half of her was my mother and half a woman for that patil...my mother was snatched away from me. In this cycle of destiny if she chanced to pat me on my back, that mere touch revived me. Who wrenched my mother away from me? Why was she sterile for me? 32

His sisters Nagi and Nirmi had to suffer the same lot as his mother Masamai had gone. Masamai had to sustain herself on her own resources after living with Limbale Patil but cannot adopt them due to his prestige in society. Sharankumar Limbale strikes back the caste system that gives birth to whole of a community of Akkarmashi through his autobiography. In fact after getting educated and having read Dr. Ambedkar in school and college he forcefully slashes the caste-system and the false pride assumed by upper castes. Thus, it is with this objective interpretation of
Hindu society and his place in it people life Sharankumar Limbale have gathered the force to agitate false value system that keeps untouchables far from dignified life.

In another context we observe the Hindu social order system and its impact on communities such as Uchlaya or pathruts depicted in *The Branded: Uchalya* by Laxman Gaikwad. The writer has different story to tell about his society. The Pathrut community is identified as pickpocketers by mainstream society ever since British government passed the Criminal Act in late nineteenth century. The writer reveals the lifestyle of criminal communities and the hunger, torture, harassment, disbelief attached to it. Shorn of employment opportunities the people from Pathart community has no way out but to go on thieving business. They had evolved into a strong tradition of training to the youngsters in the community. So at a certain age they carry their wards to thieving trips. If any of them reveals the names of their colleagues a harsh treatment awaits their lot. In this tradition of thieving business the writer had to lose his grandfather- when he was found to be messenger of police. His grandmother too was a expert thief. Before going to thieving expedition they perform a special offering and adoration ceremony of offering a hen or cock to blade which is the prime tool in the trip. In this way the Santamucchar community- has evolved into a complete system of worshiping their family business of thieving. The main reason of their thieving is hunger and want of employment.

Sometimes, we cooked broken or coarsely ground grain, mostly it was milo (cheap grain). There were too many mouths to feed at home. We used to prepare water gruel of coarsely ground milo in a big pot. At intervals we got a kilo of milo from a ration shop. We used to coarse-grind it. it would be full of worms and insects, but we use to be so hungry that we greedily drank that hot inset-ridden
gruel without ever bothering to filter off the insects… on one occasion we lived only on water for eight or nine days. Father borrowed an anna and bought a chhatak of jaggaery and mixed it with water in a pot and gave a cup of the jiggery-water to each of us-Dada, sister-in-law, Harchnda, me, Kesarbahini and took one himself. On these days I used to put my arms round father’s neck and weep bitterly for food. I used to make round of rubbish heaps and search for dried mango stones and tamarind seeds, collect them, and roast them and eat them. Sometimes Dada father used to visit other villages and steal a pic. We roasted and ate it. Sometimes when I was hungry and there was nothing to eat I used to spread salt on the grind-stone and lick it avidly for whatever flour was stuck there.33

The depiction of life of thieving community reveals appalling condition of hunger and harassment. One of his kinsman Tata undertook different type of thieving technique i.e. realizing rats in the field of wheat crop. After some days he would dig out the rats from wholes and then gather the wheat stored in whole. This way the maternal grandfather had managed to arrange money for marriages in family. Not that some of them tried to abandon the thieving business but the culture of thieving community never allowed it to do so because the mainstream society never allowed the Patharts to work on their farms fearing they would steal things from farm. One wanders what type of social system have we brought about from the so-called ancient heritage of Vedas and Mahabharat, Ramayana.

However, writer’s father enrolled him into school. But the community is so superstitious that they threatened Martand for breaking communal code due which the other children got dehydration and loose-motion in community. With intervention of school teacher all of them get recovered. When the writer could write and observe appalling contrast between what is depicted in text-books and what is going on in society he
dares to write letter to prime minister of India. This sense of something wrong seems generated from coming in contact with educational facilities provided by constitutional safeguards for minorities, nomadic tribes. The writer brings forth the factual condition of his Santamucchar community to the public discussion. Although it considers itself a part of Hindus social order but the main stream society doesn’t recognize it. This is fault of caste-system, and realizing this fault only the writer has attempted to put forth actual life of Pathrust in his autobiography.

His guidance for Dalit women was in simplest words so that these doubly enslaved individuals from untouchable community gather courage to fight and find one’s place in family and stand hand in hand with male partner. He said:

Learn to be clean, keep free from all vices. Give education to your children, instill ambition in them. Inculcate one their minds that they are destined to be great. Remove from them all inferiority complexes. Don’t be in a hurry to many: marriage is a liability. You should not impose it upon your children unless financially they are able to meet the liabilities arising from marriage. Those who will marry will bear in mind that to have too many children is a crime. That parental duty lies in giving each child a better start than its parents had. Above all, let each girl who marries stand up to her husband, claim to be her husband’s friend and equal, and refuse to be his slave. I am sure if you follow this advise you will bring honour and glory to yourselves and to Depressed classes.  

This speech seems to be most effective when we read Urmila Pawar’s The Weaves of My Life who comments on the condition of Dalit women in mahars community residing in Konkan region of Maharashtra. Urmila Pawar in her autobiography reveals the customs and practices adopted by Mahar community as a part of Hindu Social order, that, as illustrated by Dr. Ambedkar, considers woman as the “other” or less
important in community. Urmila Pawar discloses that the Mahar community had to live in the middle of the village in Konkan region for if any one of the upper caste individual need service, the untouchable would be called immediately. In order to lead daily life the untouchable had taken to weaving basket business. When her father dies and the family had no means of income, her mother took to weaving business. Despite poverty, writer’s mother continued education of all the children in house. This family had great impact of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s thoughts since they had learned from Dalit living other villages. Hence her father insisted for education of all the children in family even if they were girls.

This treatment of equality in family carved a deep sense of liberty in her mind. She became conscious to her rights but after getting married she had to succumb to Hindu social order and its treatment towards woman. The marriage rites fetter her liberated spirit. As illustrated by Dr. Ambedkar, the condition of woman in the Hindu society is nothing but like a slave to her needs and had to be dependent on father, son, and husband and then again younger children in old age for livelihood. So in the book every time we sense as some positive energy guides the authors in her later years.

Having taught to be vigilant to own rights in her childhood days by her father and mother Urmila Pawar gather a sense of selfhood as a woman in new home i.e. at in-laws. She gathers strength from environment charged with Dr. Ambedkar’s thoughts in her locality. Each one of the family member and relatives are well aware about Dr. Ambedkar’s life and message but after getting married the writer confront age old mentality of patriarchy: her husband Harishchandra become more and more frustrated due to writer’s achievement in public life, education
al life. She writes about mentality of men in Dalit community by depicting her own example,

I slogged the whole day in the office, at home, and after an arduous journey was dead tired by the time I reached home. An yet at night, though my body was a mass of aches and pains, I pressed my husband’s feet. I was ready to do anything they wanted, just to make him happy. I was ready to die for a smile, a glance from him. But he accused me, Leave alone being a ideal wife, you are not even a good one!’ Later on he began saying that I was far from being a good mother as well! I failed to understand what exactly he wanted from me and became miserable…his was not an isolated picture of an unusual household. it was representative of the way things were in most of our households. All were run like this. In addition, the woman had to behave as if she were a deaf and dumb creature…

Education, writing and public life expanded her outlook. Urmila Pawar became cautious to her rights as she joined a group of women which helped her generate a self-esteem. As she became more and more involved in Dalit literary movement the more she began to bring forth the debased mentality of men in Dalit society. It is due to Dr. Ambedkar’s assessment of Hindus Social order the Woman Dalit writers like Urmila Pawar came forward to uphold issues of doubly enslaved Dalit women in society.

Second aspect of impact of Dr. Ambedkar’s self-elevation message can be trace in the inclination of Dalits and backward communities towards education. In order that the Dalit should arise or abandon their appalling condition of being pushed to lowest rung Dr. Ambedkar insisted upon educational remedies. Dalit writers search the roots of their new-self in the courage and determination shown by their illiterate parents to enroll children in school despite communal hatred amid stark poverty, hunger, unemployment. Due course of time, education gave a
new outlook to educated person about his/her individual and communal self. Dalits began to understand the importance of Dr. Ambedkar’s pivotal work in the form of constitutional safe guards and reservation and Scholarship for backward classes began to show it effects.

Before we go further it is important to highlight Dr. Ambedkar’s educational thoughts which prevailed in Dalit society while the writers were writing their autobiographies. After gaining a certain confidence generated by education the writers started adopting the messages by Dr. Ambedkar, who with all forcefulness denounced the caste system and the Brahminical system for legalizing the caste biases against downtrodden classes. The resentment and agitation expressed through the autobiographical works is an attempt by untouchables to abolish slavery themselves and not to depend upon God or some superman of its abolition. Most of them are inspired by Dr. Ambedkar’s epic struggles to claim religious, social rights by satyagraha at Mahad, Kalaram Temple and Poona Pact. After completing higher education, most of the writer got acquainted with Dr. Ambedkar’s message of education as the lasting panacea of all social evil prevailing in Hindu society.

While realizing the value of education in his life, he understood the core problem in improving the lot of depresses classes: remove the inferiority complex that had been blocking their growth as result making them slaves of upper castes in order to acquire immediate needs. Further, oppressed classes needed education in order to “create in them the consciousness of the significance of their lives for themselves and for the country, of which they have been cruelly robbed by the existing social order. Therefore, Nothing can achieve this purpose except this spread of higher education…this is….the panacea of our social troubles.”  

Dr. Ambedkar not only emphasized the school education but also asked for
higher education. He demanded that the “higher education must enable the student to come forward and criticize the leading authority with first primary source of information; acquire skills to of paying attention to details and be able understand levels of difficulties and value of discovering ultimate truth. For the purpose of education is to “moralize and socialize the people”$^{37}$

Fulfillment of Dr. Ambedkar’s desire, however to some extent, to provide education for lower strata forms the background of these autobiographies. Dr. Ambedkar was well aware of poverty, ignorance, illiteracy aggravating the depressed classes which dragged them to submerged exploitation. So, in order to spread education and provide for educational facilities Dr. Ambedkar established Peoples’ Education Society on 8th July 1945. The aims and objectives of the society indicate the output expected from Dalit community and its young generations. From the point of view present research, particular attention should be paid to the aim that acquired most results and that is: “To create and foster general interest in education among the scheduled castes and Buddhists who are converted from amongst the scheduled castes and in particular to give them special facilities, scholarships and freeship for higher education.”$^{38}$ Later, colleges under PES such as Siddharth College at Mumbai, Milind College at Aurangabad, Mahad rolled out every year more than five thousand students belonging to scheduled castes and backward classes with higher education. These students, in fact became his messengers of social change, equality, social justice. It was the outpouring of such students that contributed in the development of intellectual level of the oppressed class people who yearn to create a dynamic society. Instilling the sense to get educated or educate the young generations is perhaps the most felt impact of this social reformer. As a
result of his educational philosophy and organizational attempts to provide for infrastructural facilities, scholarships for untouchables and above all reservations in services, jobs after completion of higher education opportunity played unprecedented role in the life of untouchables. Further he expressed the need to provide for education of lower sections of society. He argues that if it is not done then the upper castes would definitely strengthen the caste system to their advantage. If the same pattern is followed in case of lower sections of Indian society, they will turn upside the caste system. He expresses resentment over providing educational facilities and funds only for upper classes at behest of India government saying:

To make rich richer and poor poorer is not the way to abolish poverty. The same is true of using education as a means to end the caste system. To give education to those who want to keep up the caste system is not to improve the prospect of Democracy in India but to put our Democracy in India in greater jeopardy.  

He was well aware that education brings change in the life of student. So he warned the students to maintain their character too. One of the most pertinent thought he passed among untouchable students that

“Education was a sword and a double edged weapon, was dangerous to wield. An educated man without character and humility was more dangerous than a beast. If his education was detrimental to the welfare of the poor, the educated man was a curse to society. Fie upon such an educated man. Character is more important than education.  

Dr. Ambedkar reiterated his analysis of slave mentality of untouchables thus:

In slavery, the master at any rate had the responsibility to feed, clothe and house the slave and keep him in good condition lest the market value of the salve should decrease. But in the system of Untouchability the Hindus takes no responsibility for the maintenance of the
untouchable. As an economic system it permits exploitation without obligation. Untouchability is not only a system of unmitigated economic exploitation, but it is also a system of uncontrolled economic exploitation. That is because there is no independent public opinion to condemn it and there is no impartial machinery of administration to restrain it. There is no appeal to public opinion, for whatever public opinion there is it is the opinion of the Hindus who belong to the exploiting class and as such favor exploitation. There is no check from the police or the judiciary for the simple reason that they are all drawn from the Hindu, and take the side of exploiters.  

His appeal to arise above the disgraceful condition is one of the most encouraging message for untouchables that is in fact way out to their problems. Following is one such a message:

You must abolish slavery yourselves. It is disgraceful to live at the cost of the one’s self-respect. Self-respect is a most vital factor in life. Without it man is a mere cipher. To life worthily with self-respect one has to overcome difficulties. It is out of hard and ceaseless struggle alone that one derives strength, confidence and recognition… man is mortal. Everyone is to die one day or other. But one must resolve to lay down one’s life in enriching the noble ideals of self-respect and in bettering human life. We are not slaves. We are a warrior clan. Nothing is more disgraceful for a brave man than to live a life devoid of self-respect and without love for the county.

So far, an important point here is that, ever since realizing the deadening condition of untouchables and even knowing the reasons, the roots behind appalling conditions Dr. Ambedkar never search an alternative method of violence or militant methods to rebuke the social injustice. Instead, he adopted steady, effective and strategic methods to bring change in the minds of Hindus to abolish untouchability. At first he let loose the discussion about the wrong done by the Hindu scriptures such as Manusmriti among untouchables and Hindus. He made public
bonfire of the Manusmriti as the first step to lash at charter of rights for the caste-Hindus. This act of “bonfire of Manusmriti was quite intentional. It was a very cautious and drastic step…we made bonfire of it because we view it as symbol of injustice under which we have been crushed across centuries. Because of its teachings we have been ground down under despicable poverty, and so we made the dash, stated all, took our lives in our hands and performed the deed.” 43

This backgrounds forms reservoir of thoughts for autobiography writers whenever they stand against injustice on their community; hence the Dalit autobiographies are expression of communal miseries and not only the personal feelings of the writer. struggle to the positions they achieved today has the background of Dr. Ambedkar’s address to students in the conferences. Dr. Ambedkar made the students to realize the Dalit students that:

All great things in the world were achieved by patient industry and the undergoing toil and tribulations…one should concentrate one’s mind and might on ones goal. Man must eat to live and should live and work for the well-being of society. 44

Although none of the writer or their parents had personally listened Dr. Ambedkar speaking the above lines but they are fortunate enough to read and comprehend it after getting educated. Even reading made them to rise for respective social cause. We find traces of the same feeling reflected in the Outsider, Uchalya and Akkarmashi, and The Weaves of My Life as the incidents depicted in these autobiographies suggest the courage and inclination of their illiterate parents towards education as the only ray of hope of getting self-respect and somehow get liberated from the age old shackles of caste system.

In Upara: The Outsider, Laxman Mane’s father forcefully enrolls him to school despite the wandering lifestyle of Kaikadi community. The
primary feeling behind is to protect next generation from wandering, begging life like donkeys. One of the main hurdle for education children of Kaikadi community is temporary dwelling at distant places around villages, hence the children cannot continue school. But Laxman Mane’s father pleads, requests, cry before school headmasters, teachers to let his ward sit and complete education. The writer too responds in positive direction. He also generates taste for school as he get liberated from grazing the donkeys, gets food easily. Soon he manages to take responsibility of his own educational expenses by part time working with father, restaurant or selling bread at morning.

Education, as predicted by Dr. Ambedkar in his many speeches about its outcome, brings overall changes in lifestyle, mannerism, inclination for social work that lead to objective analysis of individual status, plight of community and the causes behind the degradation of society in Hindu social order. It also enables Laxman Mane reflect and take action against conventional patterns of community life, gets married with Maratha girl and moreover adopts revolutionary thoughts of Mahatma Joytoba Phule, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Chatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Karmveer Bhaurao Patil and his socialist friends- Prof. Mangaonkar, Baburao Paritekar and Nansaheb Mane- the members of Dalit Youth Association.

In Laxman Mane’s autobiography we perceive direct impact of education in his inclination of detachment towards conventional, superstitious life pattern and adopting new liberated socialist outlook caring for all sections of society as it indicated when encounters Kaikadi families settled on streets in Kolhapur. Laxman Mane cannot hold but interacts with these families as different person out of deep concern for tattered life of nomadic tribes. He says,
Whenever I saw the tents of the nomads or saw them weaving their baskets by the roadsides, I stopped and talked to them for a long time without any purpose. I talked to them in general without disclosing to them that I was a Kaikadi. The clothes I wore and the college atmosphere in which I moved made me feel shy of disclosing my caste to them.\textsuperscript{45}

From the above quote Laxman Mane’s outlook towards interpretation of his own society becomes clear. He knew that quite a few member of kaikadi or nomadic tribes community can undergo modification with help of education, and very few may care for their society. Having contact with socialist friends he develops thoughts to bring changes in the life of the people sustaining on weaving baskets on roadside. Now, everybody can get education but the sense of generosity can be imprinted in the minds of youth by adopting or getting connected with true social reformers like Phule, Shahu and Ambedkar.

In \textit{The Outcaste: Akkarmashi}, we come across the grandparents of writer who despite hunger, lack of shelter and poverty manage to send him to school. The autobiography opens with childhood days in school where he receives discriminative treatment right from school days. Shrankumar Limbale is well aware about his caste and how he had to behave among other students. Up to high school he accepts whatever comes to his share as a untouchable but incidents at Tea Shop, resentment towards removing carcass of dead animal indicate change of outlook in the author. It is the education that brought about changes in the lifestyle of Dalits. Sharankumar Limbale was the first child who entered school and gradually realized the filthy conditions that he used live in. Slowly he began to abandon the dirty, garbage struck livelihood as he got accustomed with other neat and clean children in school.
In the autobiography, we find one of the very important characteristic related to the identity of a person when the writer struggles to attain a particular name. Since, his mother is Mahar and the father is upper caste rich man, in school he had to face a dilemma that imprinted on his mind as grave blot. The Patil is not ready to attach his name with the boy since it would thrash his prestige in society, but with intervention of teacher named Bansode and school head master the writer receives his surname and identity. These incidents stir the consciousness sense of writer as is denied to be attached with any of the castes. Grieved to the deep down heart Sharankumar Limbale continues education. After getting qualified in matriculation he enters college at Sholapur. Here he comes in contact with Dalit students and the thoughts of Dr. Ambedkar. He realizes the need of reservation for scheduled caste students, participates in agitation march for renaming of Marathwada University and became aware of need to get organized for won rights and face atrocities inflicted up on dalits. Thus, education brings pivotal change in the outlook, it enables the writer to view his own filthy condition and community life struck in manmade gulf of caste system in which his concerns of existence aggravate to the extent of extinction.

Similarly, Laxman Gaikwad finds ray of hope in the form of education when he began to write his autobiography The Branded: Uchalya. In the autobiography we are told that the Pathruts or Santamucchar community tries hard to train its young members with blood-boiling tricks to save oneself from the torture, harassment by police. But it never desire to educate its wards. However, Martand-father of writer dares to take off his boy from such training session and enrolls in school. Despite protest from community member Martand stand after Laxman Gaikwad and let him attain schooling.
While reading the book we are constantly made aware about writer’s change of outlook after education. Only after going to school the writer remembers his turnout as clean and tidy alike other students in class. Earlier he used to take bath after many days, wear dirty cloths and never combed his hair, but school changed everything. Now able to read and write he dared to enter in temples, touch sacred books and enjoy company of upper caste people. However, education could not alter his poverty but it enabled him make way out of living on thieving. Later, working in Mill he become leader of labours. His outstanding courage on account of educated guides his efforts. However, very soon he began to feel distressed as poverty and responsibility snatch the chance to get further education. Consequently, even as labour leader he cannot understand policies mean for labors, which are scripted in English language. In the latter half of the book, however, he tries to excel half education out of his passion for elevating society education. Burning with desire to help the de-notified and nomadic tribes to get out of hell of misunderstanding and mistrust generated in last two hundred years, he realizes that educational awakening among nomadic and de-notified tribes is the only way to ride off ever increasing brutal torture and harassment imposed by the mainstream society.

In case of *The Weaves of My Life* by Urmila Pawar, the sense of being more educated than a man- in this case husband, seems to be the most effective tool with the Dalit woman writer to claim her identity as liberated being. In this autobiography we are told that the writer’s father purposefully enrolls all of his children without discriminating girl or boy. Now this becomes the foundation of liberated thinking in Urmila Pawar. The school education makes her aware, alike other writers, about dirty lifestyle. With help of school teachers she starts living a descent life of
educated girl. After the death of father, her mother bears all the pain of getting all children educated in family. Somehow, by weaving the bamboo basket she strives hard to get educated Urmila Pawar up to graduation. But after getting marriage all the spirit of being educated seems waning off; since the in-laws lack the same spirit and attachment for education. Thus, reared in highly charged environment of conversion to Buddhism and enlightened thoughts of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, turns out to be the only reservoir of her courage to attain new highest in life as writer, social worker and Dalit feminist writer.

The third most important contribution by Dr. Ambedkar for the untouchable was the generation of sense of new, separate and dignified way of life through the ultimate solution to annihilate caste system i.e. conversion to Buddhism. As earlier noted in previous chapter, his reasons behind the conversion as the ultimate remedy for getting out of legal treachery under Hindu social order it would be significant to highlight the speeches which attracted the general massages particularly untouchables while convincing them to abandon the Hindu religion and instead of to going to any other religion like Muslim, Christian or Sikhas why they should adopt Buddhist religion.

Dr. Ambedkar had fascination for Buddha’s personality ever since he was given a book copy on Buddha’s life by his teacher on clearing matriculation exam. Later he began to study whole of the condition of Buddhism in India after declaring his intention to forsake Hindu religion. At the outset he found, “the first Social Reformer and the greatest to them all is Gautama Guddah.” So he asserted that, “any history of social reform must begin with him and no history of social reform in India will be complete which omits to take account of his great achievements.” It was Dr. Ambedkar’s interpretation of prevailing conditions of Buddhism
that brought forth main tenet of Buddhism. He first time asserted that basis of Buddha’s religion is human suffering; its purpose, as proposed by Buddha, was removal of misery; who based his principle not on superhuman or extra-sensual god and goddess but on simple conditions of human beings; and developed his dogmas by assessing the ‘social needs’ of human beings rather than God or deities. These characteristic features attracted humanitarian like Ambedkar who sought salvation of enslaved untouchables. He began to convince untouchable in simplest speeches putting analogical instance in front of them:

They [Buddhists] had lost because the revolution [against Hinduism] was so overwhelmed by the counter-revolution [Brahmanism]. They [Buddhists] have lost the spirit of rationalism and that was the reason why the whole of the Hindu Society was in grossest superstition, idolatry and all sorts of evil practices, which were practiced in the name of the religion. Buddha’s rationalistic approach to truth had been lost. Today they were in the grip of counter revolutionaries. The gospel of the counter revolutionaries is the Bhagvat Geeta dn manu Smriti.48

First he made the untouchable to realize that they were erstwhile broken men i. e. Buddhist. And because of deliberate imposition of social, religious caste constraint they have reached to the condition of slaves. Having enlightened to the core of heart and putting forth historical incidence Dr. Ambedkar became successful to draw the attention of every Mahar, Mang and backward caste group regardless of their ignorance, superstitions and rituals.

Dr. Ambedkar sorted out that, “Buddha was the first person to preach the message of liberty, equality and fraternity in the history of world.” He figured out summary of distinguishing tenets of Buddha’s teaching from Tripitaka:

1. Religion is necessary for a free society.
2. Religion must relate to facts of life and not to theories and speculations about God or Soul or heaven or Earth.
3. It is wrong to make God the center of religion.
4. It is wrong to make salvation of the soul as the center of religion.
5. It is wrong to make animal sacrifices to be the center of religion.
6. Real religion lives in the heart of man and not in the Shastras.
7. Man and mortality must be the center of religion. If not religion is a cruel superstition.
8. It is not enough for morality to be the ideal of life, since there is no god it must become the law of life.
9. The function of religion is to reconstruct the world and to make it happy and not to explain its origin or its end.
10. That the unhappiness in the world is due to conflict of interests and the only way to solve it is to follow the Ashtanga Marga.
11. That private ownership of property brings power to one class and the sorrow to another.
12. That it is necessary for the good of Society that this sorrow be removed by removing its cause.
13. All human beings are equal.
14. Worth and not birth is the measure of man.
15. What is important is high ideals and not noble birth.
16. Maitri or fellowship towards all must never be abandoned. One owes it even to one's enemy.
17. Everyone has a right to learn. Learning is as necessary for man to live as food is.
18. Learning without character is dangerous.
19. Nothing is infallible. Nothing is binding forever. Everything is subject to inquiry and examination.
20. Nothing is final.
21. Everything is subject to the law of causation.
22. Nothing is permanent or Sanatan. Everything is subject to change. Being is always becoming.
23. War is wrong unless it is for truth and justice.
24. The victor has duties towards the vanquished.
Further up holding the teachings of Buddha, Dr. Ambedkar didn’t lose the chance to let the people know that Buddha repudiated Vedas as sacred and infallible because as stated above nothing is permanent and if it is taken to be, then it should be ‘subject to examination and reexamination’. In order that the untouchables should know the false truth behind the spiritual power in Hindu religion Dr. Ambedkar deliberately put forth the teachings of Buddha as follows: Buddha didn’t believe in existence of God. For him God is the most dangerous things because “belief in the God gave rise to belief in efficacy of worship and prayer and the efficacy of worship and prayer gave rise to the office of the priest and the priest was the evil genius who created all superstitions and thereby destroyed the growth of Samma Ditthi.”

As regards principal of non-violence preached by Buddha, Dr. Ambedkar gave the untouchable a new of way judicious treatment towards animals and enemies. He told that in Buddhism there is no objection to eating meat if the act of killing an animal was deliberate action, for “love all so that you may not wish to kill any” is the positive way of enacting the principle of non-violence. It is due to this principle that after the conversion to Buddhism most of the Dalits began to abandon the eating dead animal’s meat however, they did not kill it. It marked great change in the attitude of oppressed classes that they started living a standard life. Gradually change in the attitude became the core of agenda of Dalit movement based on the philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar. It denounces violence wherever necessary but let evil not overpower good or truth i.e. oppose the oppressor and strike back though legal way as far as possible.

Since, Dr. Ambedkar belonged to untouchable caste, except a few people in the Dalit community, he was convinced that untouchables may
obey it. However, because of his belief in the rational teachings of Buddha, before the conversion he invoked the illiterate, ignorant untouchable, backward sections to test the principles of Buddha and then accept it rather than blindly following the preaching of Buddha unlike in Hindu religion. In fact, he appealed every individual that:

Before you accept anybody’s teaching as authoritative, do not go by the fact that it is contained in the scriptures, do not go by the subtleties of logic, do not go by considerations based upon mere appearances; do not merely by the fact that beliefs and views preached are agreeable; do not go merely because they look to be genuine, do not go merely by the fact that the beliefs and views are those of some ascetic or superior. But consider whether the beliefs and views sought to be inculcated are salutary or in-saluatary, blame worthy or blameless, lead to well being or ill being. It is only on these grounds that one can accept the teachings of anybody. \(^{51}\)

The above quote is one of the many speeches made by Dr. Ambedkar in order to awaken a general sense of righteousness among the untouchables. Note that other religions to would have done justice to untouchables. However, Dr. Ambedkar after his declaration of forsaking Hindu religion looked for such a religion that would care for raising innate capability of rational, logical and radical thinking of man. It was the main motive behind his appeal for change or adopting a religious creed: for he strongly believed that, a society needs religion in order to address genuine spiritual concerns and mental agonies suffered in day-to-day dealings. Above expressions had lasting impact on generating mental strength and boldness among writers of *The Out caste, Uchalya and The Weaves of My Life* after coming in contact with Buddhism through Dr. Ambedkar’s book *Buddha and Dhamma*.

In *The Outcaste* we came to know that while in boarding school at Chapalgaon, Sharankumar Limbale happens to read book on Buddha and
from this moment onwards, he says, “all those impressions [superstitious recital mantras practiced by Kaka to sue public, Santamai’s prayers to Ambabai or Laxmi, Dada’s Namaz etc.] faded slowly. Now there were Dalit boys around me all the time. Buddhism began to cast its spell on me.”  

Depicting this incident, Sharankumar Limbale points at prevailing attachment towards life of dignity and separate identity among Dalit community. One can infer from this citation that Dr. Abmedkar’s message and strategy to convince illiterate Dalit people seems to have generated unique self-identity among not only Dalit community. It also started attracting other communities too. Sharnkumar Limbale relates his attraction for Buddhist ideology for it treats an individual as unique and rejects chaturvarna system, division of caste and above all respects man as a man. At boarding school, Sharankumar Limbale begins to forget the life of untouchable and concentrates on studies. It generates a strong feeling of honest as we are told about the money incident in school. Through these incidents and all through his school days we perceive enlighten spirit-replacing age old corrupt, superstitious, addicted mentality.

Moreover, education enables Sharankumar Limbale ponder over inferiority complex generated in Latur as began experiencing hatred contrary to assumed sophisticated lifestyle in Admadpur while staying in upper caste society. He openly confesses all that is going in mind when he had to search out for room in Latur. He finds himself in dilemma of being highly educated but highly detested individual in Hindu social order.

His contemplative questions of identity, survival as a human being caught in the gulf of two castes in Hindu social order strike blow at much revered conceptions around the birth of a man in society. His status as a
child born to Mahar woman and Upper Caste-reach man in village compelled him to pose questions on the fundamental notions behind creation of concept of almighty God, the much revered deities in a society. As noted already, Sharankumar Limbale feels helpless in getting questions regarding the lot of woman in Akkarmashi community, the claim to fatherhood of children born to reach-upper caste dominant people to women of other castes, particularly Mahars and Mangs, posed grave danger to devotional, religious, moral and ethical sanctity of caste system in Hindu social order. As we learn at the end of the book that the writer cannot avoid ruining life of his sisters when they are neglected by a Patil’s son, lured by rich people and so on.

Sharankumar Limbale thus, finds solace not in Hindu scripture, Vedas or Puranas but in preaching of Buddha as highlighted by Dr. Ambedkar. For he concluded that:

God discriminates between man and man. He makes one man rich and the other poor. One is high caste, the other untouchable. What kind of God is this that makes human beings hate each other? We are all supposed to the children of God, then why are we considered untouchable? We don’t approve of this God, nor this religion, nor this country because they ostracize us….why are we ostracized? Why are we kept away from other human beings? Why are we kept out our own selves? Why this discrimination between one human being and another? After, isn’t everybody’s blood red? If the religious system itself rejects rights of man to life freely enough then how can one bestow faith in such gods and goddess. Answers to these stirring questions can be found in the critique of Hindus scriptures propounded by Dr. Ambedkar in most convincing way. A person if reads the Riddles in Hinduism and Who were Shudras will any question regarding the Hindu gods and goddess can be traced out. But
Sharankumar Limbale goes further and points at the existential issues of outcastes. He says:

I was afraid of my caste because I couldn’t claim my father’s caste and religion. In a sense I was not a Mahar, because high-cast blood ran in my body. Could I drain this blood out of my body? My own body nauseated me. The agony I live through is my own as much as that of my village. The life of my village was mine. I was wounded by this landlords’ mansion. How is a person born with his caste? How does he become untouchable as soon as he is born? How can he be a criminal by birth? From his feet Lord Brahma gave birth to a vast low-caste community. Since then this community has been living as untouchables. To appease their hunger they steal, beg, fetch dead animals, and eat them. What is wrong if one who has been derived of bread for thousands of years, steals bread just once? If one had enough why would one steal? Why would one suffer at the hands of the police?^54

Clearly, if an individual threatened by the religious authorizes then to whom one should ask for relief. Sharankumar Limbale is terribly grieved to know that it is the caste system that permits or has no answer to the plight of Dalit women who are deserted by husband on account of sexually harassed by upper caste rich people. Indirectly he slashes the caste system for generating such as nauseating situation for outcastes that if at all one realizes, he or she would quite naturally restore to criminal activity. But since, Sharankumar Limbale’s school/college education introduces him to Buddhism, he finds solace in not criminal mentality but strives to liberate himself by adopting Dr. Ambedkar’s philosophy.

Regarding Laxman Gaikwad, we see comparatively very less information relating to Buddhism or Buddha in the autobiography. However a key modification can be perceived in his outlook when he named his new born child ‘Anarya’ meaning not from Arya race that
dominated downtrodden classes ever since antiquity in the name of its four fold Chaturvaran social organization.

In case of Urmila Pawar, she wrote her autobiography under spell of conversion to Buddhism undertaken by her family. Her family belonged to Konkan region, where Dr. Ambedkar often visited during his political, social campaigns. Although her father could not attend any of the conferences addressed by Dr. Ambedkar but in autobiography we perceive whole of the environment charged with enlightenment, change brought about in the life of Dalits in Konkan region. Urmila Pawar relates modification in marriage customs, education of girl child, rejection of mannerism to followed at in-law’s house after marriage, change in the dressing patterns and most importantly replacement of traditional, subjugated attitude of untouchables to that of liberated, bondage free lifestyle for men and women alike after adopting Buddhism.

Conversion to Buddhism as noted by Urmila Pawar not only gave special identity to Dalit community but also aroused a sense of liberation from age old marriage bound customs related to women: wearing Mangal sutra, obeying husband at any cost etc. There are many references about modification of marriage rituals performed by Dalits after getting converted to Buddhism. Urmila Pawar remembers her wedding ceremony performed according to Buddhist rituals:

The Neo-Buddhist, ‘Namo Buddhaya’ had replaced the traditional invocation of the family deity on the top of the invitation! …usually a bride would not distribute her marriage invitations in person, but since I did not have an option, I had to do it myself….When I gave the invitation to my friends, they would ask me in surprise, ‘Hey, your surname is Pawar and your husband’s surname is Pawar too! How can that be? Is that allowed? Doesn’t it mean that your family and his come from the same ancestors?’ Then I piped my well-rehearsed answer, “now we are
Buddhists! Now nobody looks at the ‘kula’, We have discarded our caste-specific surnames now and taken on new names. This is a caste-neutral name.\textsuperscript{55}

The above incident indicates in depth modification adopted by Urmila Pawar. In doing so she is not bothered about age old rituals or any objections, instead her marriage took place in most decent way however, in the presence of a handful of guest. In her family, after getting married she educated her children and permeated for inter-caste marriage. Thus autobiography holds proof to complete modification and mental strength on gather after conversion to Buddhism purported by Dr. Ambedkar.

Urmila Pawar boldly rejects Hindu cultural bondages for Dalit woman and replaces it with free way of life for women suggested by Buddhist religion. She dares to say, “why should I wear the mangalsutra? I am a Buddhist! My religion does not tell me to wear one. It suggests only a white string, both for the husband and wife, to be tied in their wrists! Then why not do away with these ancient symbols of subservience? I resolved to do away with the mangalsutra.”\textsuperscript{56} Certainly, removing mangalsutra was not easy in male dominated society as each and every women is not bold enough to adopt Buddhas teachings for Hindu women this ornament resembles presence of a male partner in life who looks after her. In the end of the autobiography we learn that she rejects to perform rituals to be performed after the death of husband as she took it as insult to woman.

Lastly, from third chapter we gather that influence of Dr. Ambedkar’s philosophy can be felt in the efforts taken by Dalit autobiography writers to abolish their slavery themselves and come out of traditional mentality. His stirring slogans such as, “\textit{Tell the slave he is the slave and he will revolt}”, “\textit{Educated, Agitate and organize}”\textsuperscript{57} forced educated youth into action for bold steps and self-help in their tryst seek
justice. His organized attempts to awaken untouchables from social platforms like Bashkrit Hitkarini Sabha, Samaj Samata Mandal; political platform like the Independent Labour Party, the Scheduled Castes Federation, the Republican Party of India; educational platform like People’s Education Society and upheld grievances of oppressed classes through weeklies like Mook Nayak, Bahishkrit Bharat, the Janata and Prabuddha Bharat accumulated unprecedented response from thousands of untouchables. Through his public gatherings and writings he always sought after interest of downtrodden classes. When given chance to be part of prospective Indian constitution drafting process he deliberately contested special provisions for backward classes. Through the Constitution of India, he bestowed one of the most important contributions in elevating the livelihood of oppressed classes i.e. the insertion of fundamental rights and constitutional safeguards in social, political and educational sphere.

Constitution of India is a greatest document which paved the way for social democracy. “One Man, One Vote, One Value”, Equality, Liberty, Fraternity, Social Justice all is enshrined in Constitution. Constitution has helped in building new social order, based on the principles of Human Rights charter. India Hindu society which was based on negation of democracy which crated graded inequality amongst human being and made the human mind slave for thousands of years. It was Constitution which proved to be the Law of the land, changed the India society into egalitarian society. 58

The constitutional recommendations suggested by Dr. Ambedkar not only helped the untouchables to claim fundamental rights but also acted as ultimate authority to seek justice in case of communal, social, political and religious affliction owing to demerits of caste system. The provision of reservation in services, educational institutions and political spheres for disadvantaged people was conferred in order to assure the
erstwhile untouchables to get civil, political and social liabilities which were denied for centuries. As a result, every commonest individual has become aware to his/her civil rights as citizen of democratic society. The alteration of traditional religious/social civil rights with that of Fundamental Rights is one the key factor in constitutional safeguards that has been boosting the courage of a single man to protect oneself from feudal oppression and exploitation by dominant castes.

The autobiographies hold ample evidences that indicate massive awakening about civil rights because of education. The Dalit autobiographers were among the first generations who after, Indian independence began to understand importance of education as their parents somehow happened to see the benefits of education after enrolling their children to high school or higher secondary schools. In case of Laxman Mane we learn from his autobiography that it is because of scholarship at Kolhapur he could maintain his college expenses and continue college studies. Sharankumar Limbale too got acquainted with facilities for Dalits. However, when there was rumor about cancelation he expresses fear of reeling back to the life of hardship and hunger. If at all, the facilities were to be stopped the writer immediately contemplates over aftermaths of abandoning school: he would have to grazing cattle and helping parents toiling to death in open fields. Instead, it is only due to justified constitution safeguards by Dr. Ambedkar, the Dalit children were living in cities away from home to get education while their parents were working hard and hoping better future for their children.

Laxman Gaikwad, however could not complete education up to high school but by then he had developed awareness about social and political reservations. After ninth class, though he could not continue education he kept himself busy in social and political activities.
Whenever there was an atrocious incident against nomadic communities or Uchalyas he would gather group of his community and demanded justice from police station authorities. Laxman Gaikwad cites many incidents wherein he intervened to mitigate the cases of false accusation charges on Uchalya community inflicted by upper caste people. Through organized efforts he managed to awaken the Uchalya community member and took out first ever gathering of the Nomadic and De-notified Tribes in 1978. Thereby, Laxman Gaikwad managed to bring forth the issue of Uchalya community and at same time let the police administration know the legal rights of these communities. Through such conferences, meetings, public gathering Laxaman Gaikwad was successful in drawing attention of police administration towards civil rights of oppressed class. However, at the end of the autobiography he feels need of intellectual development through enrollment in higher education. Thus, it becomes clear from the boldness that he acquired courage to resist the harassment of de-notified community by police and dominant classes that though. But education can enable an individual to rise for his/her voice in a democratic society where constitution has special safeguards to protect personal and communal rights unlike conventional remedies suggested under chaturvarna system under the Hindu social order.

In *The Weaves of My Life*, Urmila Pawar cites incident that point at her firm belief in philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar when she was promoted to Branch Manager many office members. While many resented men her as they required to ask permission to a Dalit woman worker in office. Urmila Pawar realized the power of an officer on account of roster system introduced by government in jobs. Source of Urmila Pawar’s Dalit consciousness can be traced in her social work when she joined Matrini Group in Mumbai. Her friends in the group were ‘committed to
the cause of helping women in distresses on account of desertion, dowry-related torture or family violence experienced by Dalit women. Moreover, as a active social worker and writer she befriended many Dalit writers like Vasantrao Moon-who was appointed on the committee for the publication of the collected volumes of Dr. Ambedkar’s writings and speeches; scholars such as Dr. Eleanor Zelliot- the American Scholar and friends such as Chhaya Data, Neera Adarkar, Lata Pratibha Madhukar etc.

In order that the Dalit women too have a separate platform for literature Urmila Pawar and her friend Hira discussed a need to organized women under Samwadini Dalit Stree Sahitya instead to joining Asmitadarsh, Dalit Bouddha, Marathi Sahitya Sammelans which were always organized by men. Urmila Pawar tried to bring these issues into her stories so that the public should know the plight of Dalit women. Being an active member of this organization, she took firm stance while defending Dr. Ambedkar’s thoughts about liberation of women, his proposition of Hindu Code Bill to give the daughters their share of property. In a way we come to know that Urmila Pawar, too, organized group of Dalit women to address their issues and rights despite many hurdles. Her organized efforts brought her publicity, which ultimately started a reawakening process among Dalit Women in Maharashtra.

To sum up through the Dalit autobiography writers we come to know what extend Dr. Ambedkar’s thoughts are relevant in current situation. His philosophy of liberation awakes slumbering untouchables to their fundamental rights. It enables the illiterate parents to cope up hunger, hardship and educate children as the only hope of better future; after spending few years in school and colleges the Dalit children- in this case, the writers discussed above, they raise voice to reject conventional
lifestyle and adopt sophisticated mannerism, dress code, clean and hygienic livelihood. More importantly when they befriended with Dalit activists, writers like Sharankumar Limbale and Urmila Pawar find ultimate solution to their mental agonies in Buddhism that they need not have revert to Hindus Social order where there is no place/recognition as an individual or as a human being in a civilized society that we boost of.

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