SUMMING-UP

The western liberal education, which fortunately Ambedkar was able to receive in the United States of America (USA) and Great Britain, besides making him lawyer and economist, transformed him into a social scientist and a social activist.

The facilitating factors were the childhood impressions, school and college life in Indian caste ridden environment and further reinforcement of those observations on return from foreign education under the able guidance of the rarely available teachers of world fame. Ambedkar had a genuine messiah of the dalits in him who transformed into economist, politician, social reformer and a crusader – all with a distinction; no self aggrandizement at the core. If ever he tried to make his ideas known or presence felt, we may not call such endeavours as ambition or proving to be the highly informed man. He was fired with godly inspiration to do something for his community, which faced perpetual indignity, insult and abandonment at the hands of the Brahananist culture predominant in society, with no chance of regaining social equality. Foreign education coupled with self-learning zeal and the influence of life style and social conditions there made him a different man, wedded to constitutionalism in conducting himself.

In view of the foregoing factors, Ambedkar was able to adopt an interdisciplinary approach in his writings. The western secularism, capitalism, individualism, constitutionalism, and the legacy of the French Revolution, American Declaration of Independence, democracy, socialism etc. all have had far reaching influence upon the subsequent thought action process of Ambedkar. But he was not a blind follower of western ideas rather from his writings and speeches, one could find that he had envisioned a democratic society, different from that of the West, essentially rooted in Indian cultural tradition. “Let no one, however, say that I have borrowed my philosophy from
the French Revolution. I have not. My philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science. I have derived them from the teachings of my master, the Buddha\textsuperscript{1}. After studying the length and breadth of both the traditional and contemporary Indian society and its people, he had reflected on them through well researched scholarly books, published newspapers and delivered innumerable speeches. He had expressed more explicitly his views on almost every aspect of the Indian social reality, be it the nature of society and culture, state and its organizations, traditional institutions, polity, economy, law, religion, communal amity, language and particularly the most pathetic condition and the deplorable deprivation of the Dalits, depressed classes, labourers, women and similar such groups of people. One of the most important aspects of his entire contribution is that he strived to reform, restructure and transform the contemporary Indian society, its polity and economy, and, in a word, the entire social system into a society based on the universal principles of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Democracy and Social Justice. He pleaded for full and proper development of personality of the individual and accorded full individual freedom, but such freedom should not contravene the freedom of others. Thus, the corner stone of Ambedkar’s approach is the idea of social good and economic welfare, common to all human beings. For him, the individual or his self is not an isolated entity; but the self is the social self, which is enlargeable to any limits.

Ambedkar was always pained when he saw human misery (Dukha) and exploitation of the downtrodden in the caste-ridden society. He understood history in the context of social and religious relations and interpreted it in such a manner that can show a way for the upliftment of ignored millions. His way was that of the renaissance of mind and transformation of environment. To change the externals was not sufficient. The feelings of inequality and discrimination, internally nourished in one’s mind, should also be destroyed.

\footnote{1. Quoted by Dhananjay Keer, op.cit., p. 456.}
He always sought to build a modern India free from tears, fears and exploitation, deprivation and degradation; gross inequalities and sub-human conditions; domination of majority over minorities etc.

His ideology was to be primarily looked in his understanding and pursuance of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Justice that he was looking for not only in the traditional and contemporary Indian society but also even in a society to emerge in the future. He was very critical of both the traditional and contemporary Indian society, specially the Hindu social system, which has denied equality of men and women of all castes and communities by not allowing them to embrace liberty, fraternity and justice –both social and legal. His ideology has both “Universal and perennial function” in Indian society including the weaker sections and is equally relevant for nearly all societies in the world, which have the ultimate goal of achieving social equality of their people. But his ideology is not to be perceived utopian and hence, not feasible. Some may argue that an absolute equality is a mirage, which cannot be achieved; liberty of thought and action may produce anarchy; fraternity among all human beings is impossible, etc.

In Ambedkar’s thoughts and actions, equality is to be seen in the socio-political and religious opportunity contexts where it is opposed to the graded or excessive inequality in the said contexts as domains. Similarly, the liberty of thought action, and fraternity of human beings are to be seen as self-regulatory behaviour of people with limited control of society. In such situation people are to be guided by their inner conscience and altruistic trait. Moreover, he felt that through his strategies of State Socialism in the form of collectivization of agriculture and nationalization of industries, constitutional and legal means and people’s protest movements, the goals of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice can be realized. Through this, even individual’s conscience may be aroused and
enthroned by taking him/her along from the thralldom of excessive societal control and religious dogmas, liberating them from bondage, self-aggrandizement and equip them to attain a respectful social identity.

On Education, Ambedkar held that a good system of education is the most effective instrument of social change. He advised the Dalits to educate themselves and their children. In fact, he had given them a dictum “to educate, organize and agitate”. He was of the view that through their higher education and organized agitations against injustices committed on them, the Dalits would definitely liberate themselves from the age-old bondage and enhance their social status.

Inspired perhaps by his own educational achievement, he held the lack of education among the Dalits as the prime cause of their social and cultural backwardness, economic exploitation and political dispensability; thus to educate the Dalits became a primary task. In his opinion, education was a panacea for the miseries of the Dalits. For this, he established a number of educational institutions in Mumbai and Aurangabad in Maharashtra and the People’s Education Society as a long arm.

Ambedkar’s firm belief in and commitment to education has influenced his outlook, for education, after all, is a critical component of stability and change in the evolutionary process of societies. For the liberation of Dalits, petition, representation and debate greatly appealed to him as means of communication as well as redressal of social problems. He appeared before many commissions such as the Royal Commission on Indian Currency, the Simon Commission and the Round Table Conference, etc., and vigorously pleaded for the uplift of the Depressed Classes. In contrast to this, Gandhi used Satyagraha and non-cooperation methods as major instruments of struggle.

Ambedkar used Satyagraha only three times in his life when major issues like temple entry in Nasik and Land distribution in Vidarbha were at stake. He neither believed in Satyagraha nor in the ‘change of heart’ theory. He wanted to use Satyagraha simply to educate the masses and ultimately legitimize any gains through the organ of laws. In this respect, Ambedkar was politically inclined to constitutional, parliamentary and legalistic methods. He desired accelerated social change through the rule of law, where all are equal before law. The state authority is also, according to him, not above the law of the land.

Ambedkar’s journey from the founding of Independent Labour Party to the Republic party of India was very important in the history of the depressed classes of India, though they could not be successful to a great extent in the electoral politics. It would be rightly said that they had achieved great success in developing the depressed classes as a political group and inspiring them to play their crucial role in the Indian politics. They could rightly claim to have worked as an instrument of change in the life of the deprived people. Though he believed that, “Political power is the key to all social progress,”4 he equally upheld constitutional morality. He had faith in legal and constitutional means as a source of power. The fundamental aim of Parliamentary Democracy is to bring radical changes in a peaceful or non-violent manner and that is possible only through political parties.

Further, Ambedkar believed that a free and impartial press is indispensable for the successful functioning of a democratic government. He started different weekly and fortnightly papers such as ‘Mook Nayak’, ‘Bahishkrit Bharat’, ‘Samata’ and ‘Janata,’ to wage a relentless war against all oppressive characteristics and elements of our society. It was a forum for debate, discussion, argument and counter-argument for the uplift of all the oppressed people.

As the Chairman of Drafting Committee of Indian Constitution, he tried to incorporate and defend some of the issues very ably such as Strong Centre, Federal Structure, Unified Judiciary, Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles etc. Needless to say that Ambedkar was instrumental in making in the constitution a number of provisions of concession and facilities for the upliftment of depressed classes (dalits), women, and other weaker sections of the society. He made sincere efforts in understanding the reality about the status of women in India and advocating a practical reformist measures, especially comprehensive Hindu Code Bill for the upliftment of women. Later on, this bill formed the basis of the legislation for providing better opportunities to women so that they could occupy a position of equality, respect, and realize their potentials for building an equitable and egalitarian society.

He was fully conscious of the polarization of human society everywhere in the world into the haves and have-nots; yet he always placed emphasis on constitutional methods to bring about the necessary changes. By providing special safeguards to the minorities and certain classes who were socially and educationally backward, he sought to instill in them the spirit of nationalism and assimilation of the latter into the mainstream of social and national life. He was a defender of peace and ‘constitutional morality’. His definition of democracy also reveals his indomitable faith in peaceful revolution. He opposed all unconstitutional means; these methods for him were ‘The Grammar of Anarchy’ and ‘the sooner they are abandoned the better for us.’ According to him, “Where constitutional methods are open, there can be no justification for these unconstitutional methods.”

Thus, Ambedkar was ‘a man with a mission’ in his life and that he was for the eradication of untouchability and securing political, economic and social justice through appropriate means. It was Ambedkar’s ardent desire to
establish in India economic and social democracy through the instrumentality of Constitution so as to make political democracy meaningful. He repeatedly asserted that it should be the aim and purpose of any rational scheme of social reconstruction to provide for the economic security and political liberty of every single individual. That is why he tried his best to include provisions regarding State Socialism in the new Constitution; the most important to him was the state ownership of land. His condemnation of arbitrary power and tyranny in any form was forthright and categorical. It is relevant here to read his own words in order to appreciate his stand on democracy and dictatorship. Speaking on the significance of the Directive Principles on 19 November 1948, Ambedkar observed:

"...The reason why we have established in this Constitution a political democracy is because we do not want to install by any means whatsoever a perpetual dictatorship of any particular body of people... While we have established political democracy, it is also the desire that we should lay down economic democracy as our ideal. We do not want merely to lay down a mechanism to enable people to come and capture power. The Constitution also wishes to lay down an ideal before those who would be forming the Government. That ideal is economic democracy, whereby, so far as I am concerned, I understand to mean, one man, one value."

The following quotation from his memorandum submitted to the Constituent Assembly appropriately manifests his concern for giving a practical shape to the doctrine of one-man one value:

"The soul of Democracy is the doctrine of one man, one value. Unfortunately, democracy has attempted to give effect to this doctrine only so far as the political structure is concerned by adopting the rule of one man, one vote which is supposed to translate into fact the doctrine of one man and one

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value. It has left the economic structure to take the shape given to it by those who are in a position to mould it. This has happened because Constitutional Lawyers have been dominated by the antiquated conception that all that is necessary for a perfect Constitution for Democracy was to frame a Constitutional Law which would make government responsible to the people and to prevent tyranny of the people by the Government. Consequently, almost all Laws of Constitution, which relate to countries, which are called Democratic, stop with Adult Suffrage and Fundamental Rights. They have never advanced to the conception that the Constitutional Law of Democracy must go beyond Adult Suffrage and Fundamental Rights. In other words, old-time Constitutional lawyers believed that the functional scope of Constitutional law was to prescribe the shape and form of the political structure of the society. They never realized that it was equally essential to prescribe the shape and form of economic structure of society, if democracy is to live up to its principle of one-man one value. Time has come to take a bold step and define both the economic structure as well as the political structure of society by the Law of the Constitution. All countries like India, which are latecomers in the field of Constitution-making, should not copy the faults of other countries. They should profit by the experience of their predecessors.”

To bring economic democracy, Ambedkar advocated for State Socialism to “plan the economic life of the people on the lines which would lead to the highest point of productivity without closing every avenue to private enterprise, and also provide for the equitable distribution of wealth.” He further suggested for the state ownership of agriculture, with a collectivized method of cultivation, and nationalization of industry with state’s obligation of supplying the necessary capital (and creating viable market) for yielding better results,

8. Ibid, p. 408.
and also for rapid industrialization of India. But the establishment of the State Socialism, in his opinion, is neither to be left to the will of the Legislature nor to abrogate the parliamentary democracy; instead, it is to be created by the Law of the Constitution and is unalterable by the act of the Legislature and the Executive.⁹

The major outcome of this study is in discovering that Ambedkar most certainly added a social dimension to the concept of democracy, which has largely been treated as political connotation. By emphasizing the social context of democracy, Ambedkar not only added to the concerns of democracy (to make it political, social and economic in unity) but also pointed out the social areas and issues demanding reforms so that the democracy could take roots in this vast sub-continent and become really effective and operational instead of remaining a slogan or just another word in our Constitution.