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In recent years the study of the life and career of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has been inviting the attention of scholars all over the world. Innumerable Ph.D. theses have been so far produced on various life aspects of Dr. Ambedkar. Many works on his views on democracy, constitutional philosophy and his socio-political theories have been produced so far. Yet there are certain neglected areas in the research on the life of Dr. Ambedkar.

For example, he championed the cause of women and tried to liberate them by enacting Law. This aspect of his efforts of bringing Indian women on par with men has not been properly studied by the scholars. Hence an attempt has been made in this Doctoral thesis to present his views on the position of women as well as agitational aspects of his role to completely revive the old order of Shastras, that assigned women a lower position than the position of men.

The woman population which is almost one-half the total population, suffered tremendously for want of education and for want of proper treatment by the Shastras. For example, Manu says "Her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth and her sons protect (her) in old age, a woman is never for independence". It seems that in Vedic time woman
was much free but in course of time her position suffered. Practices like Sati and child marriage came in vogue making her position even culturally worst. They were never allowed to enter the government services in pre-modern era. As a result they were confined only to the household duties. How can the social awakening grow when the field of activity is very narrow?

It is a matter worth noticing that some individuals in their personal capacity, some public organizations and the Government of Maharashtra have published tremendous literature written by Babasaheb Ambedkar himself. His literature which comprises his speeches made in the legislative Assembly as well as in the public, his writings in book-form and also his newspaper writing cover the variety of problems that nation confronted with in his time.

For example, when the question of demand of Pakistan came up, he wrote a thought-provoking book under the title 'Thoughts on Pakistan'. The book was so scholarly written that both Gandhi and Jinah agreed that the force of argument based on historical truism advanced in this book was commendable. Similarly, when the problem of creating Linguistic States came up, he wrote a book for the guidance of Government under the title 'Thoughts on Linguistic States'. As the question of Federation came up in the Act of 1935, he again
wrote a book 'Federation Versus Freedom' and stated that without the integration of princely states, India should not have Federation.

His main life struggle was to secure human rights for the untouchables. At the same time he also championed the cause of classless society and stood throughout his life for the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity. These three principles were the pillars of his life philosophy.

It is noteworthy that he stood for total liberation of women and their rights right from his student days. He advocated free and compulsory education for Indians and gave special stress on liberation of women. In 1927 he launched a Satyagraha in Mahad for establishing Untouchables' right of taking water from the public tank. A large number of people, mostly untouchables including women participated in the Satyagraha.

While addressing the people at Mahad he told them that their main aim should be to educate, organise and agitate to establish the rights of suppressed humanity in India. He told women that the children whom they give birth are treated as untouchables in India. He exhorted the need to revolt against this social system. He wrote a number of articles in Mook Nayak and Bahishkrit Bharat advocating for education of women. He appealed
the government to take the necessary steps to promote education among women.

He appeared before various Franchise Committees right from 1919 to 1932 where he strongly pleaded adult franchise in which women should not be excluded.

He criticised Hindus for their utter indifference towards the welfare of women. He also criticised Muslim system of Purdah which crippled the Muslim women both physically and mentally. He criticised Rama because of his improper treatment to Sita.

He made efforts to change the Hindu Code Bill to liberate Indian women completely. His views on all these issues have been discussed in this thesis threadbare using original sources that are now available in abundance.

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(S.G. JADHAV)