The Concept Of Nation Building In The Epistolary Writing Of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Being the father of Indian constitution, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar gifted his mother land with the essence of humanitarian ethos to construct the unique nation. The same ethos later on echoed in the voices of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and in the contemporary world in the vision of Barak Obama. He made the world oldest democracy to learn the lesson of Civil Rights from the world’s largest democracy. His die hard efforts and sacrifices awakened the entire world about Social and Class discrimination of certain section of mankind.

Babasaheb empowered not only the marginal section of India but also endowed the necessary self-respect to the mass which was humiliated since ages. His struggle to get higher education, the higher office, Social protest for untouchables, *Styagrahas* for Civil Rights, demand for separate electorates, phenomenal research based publication and constitutional reforms make him one of the most prominent makers of not only modern India but also of entire modern human civilization. For his unique contribution to India, Ananya Vajpeyi has observed that,

For whatever Ambedkar might have claimed about his desire to break entirely with Hindu India, ultimately we cannot but regard the man as straining to build India a new, in such a way as to redefine the very basis of what it was to be Indian, away from the differential and hierarchical mechanism of caste, toward an inclusive and integrating idea of citizenship.\(^{374}\)

Babasaheb (b.April14, 1891: d. Dec.6, 1959) like Rabindranath Tagore was 14\(^{th}\) child of his parents. At the very early age Babasaheb experienced humiliation from his high-caste school fellows; perhaps it was the stage which played most crucial role in making the greatest rival to Mr. Gandhi, a lawyer, a teacher, a legislator, an

educational organizer, a party builder, a cabinet minister and above all a prolific writer.

The Social structure and system of work division in India had been sullied by the dark mark of social discrimination of the lower class. With the changes and foreign invasions it got more and more strong and ultimately compelled the down trodden class to take a stand and ask for its own rights. Speaking for such a deprived class Dr. Babasaheb challenged the age old discriminatory social structure of India.

The Gaekwad of Baroda awarded him a scholarship to study abroad. In 1913 he joined Columbia University and his master’s thesis was on the Caste System and a doctoral thesis was on Provincial Finance in British India. The well known economist E.R.A. Seligman guided him in his research. In 1916 he moved for London to begin another doctorate at the London School of Economics. When Babasaheb came back to India he was given a higher office in Baroda. Unfortunately his colleagues belonging to high-class could not digest such evaluation and elevation of a person belonging to low-caste and ill-treated Babasaheb. In 1923 his D.Sc. thesis on the Problem of The-Rupee was accepted and he also qualified as a Bar-at-Law. Like Gandhi, he enrolled at the Bombay High Court. But unlike Gandhi, he could maintain a successful legal practice in Bombay. Progressing in the same direction in 1927 he was nominated to the Bombay Legislative Council. At the same time he had begun the task of teaching at the City’s Law College.

In 1924 he founded the Depressed Class Institute/Bahiskrit Hitkarini Sabha which initiated and gave tongue to the social injustices done to the ‘Untouchables’ since ages. In brief it initiated a “Social Protest” against the rigid social structure of India. As a leader of certain depressed section of the society Dr. Ambedkar could gift certain terms to give tongue for the injustices tolerated by them. For such contribution Omprakash Valmiki and Arun Prabha Mukherjee opines that,

Jotiba Phuley and B. R. Ambedkar, two towering figures in Dalit history, were the first to appropriate the word, as a noun and an
adjective, in the early decades of the twentieth century to describe the extreme oppression of untouchables.\textsuperscript{375}

At the national level the atmosphere of Indian politics was heavy with aftershocks of \textit{Amritsar massacre} and \textit{Khilafat Movement} (1920-23). Gandhi also promised ‘Swaraj’ to the citizens of India. The psyche of nation was awakened through various revolutionary and radical movements by Indian freedom fighters. At the same time the government also had shown its willingness to meet the primary needs of freedom fighter in the form of \textit{Montague – Chelmsford Reforms} by conceding the fiscal autonomy and by opening opportunities for Indian officers in the ICS Cadres. All these events reflect the strong position of Indian freedom fighters.

In 1922 congress had constituted one sub-committee for the empowerment of Untouchables. There had been an important epistolary conversation between Swami Shraddhanand and Chief-Secretary of Congress, Pundit Motilal Nehru, which provides significant details about the stand of Congress for empowering untouchable. Swami Shraddhanand compares the movement of \textit{Khadi} with the movement for the empowerment of the down trodden. He reminded Motilal on 30\textsuperscript{th} January, 1922 that,

There was a time (See \textit{Young India} of 25\textsuperscript{th} May 1921) when Mahatma had given the first priority to the question of untouchables. Now I can see that the question has been pushed aside in a dark corner. At the same time some of our workers are focusing upon the Khadi and huge amount of fund has been issued for that matter. Simultaneously one competent sub-committee has been formed and there would be special entreaties to raise fund for it. In such situation the question of untouchability has been put on the self after offering meager charity at Ahmadabad, Ahmadnagar and Madras. I am of the opinion that due to such red-tapism our six crore brothers, who have not been influenced

to stand against us, will not be helpful in making the Khadi movement a success.376

The words of Swami Shraddhanand reveal not only his concern about the untouchables but also about the success of Khadi movement. His tone alarms Motilal against the bureaucratic red-tapism in the case of untouchables. He evaluates the impact of untouchables upon various nationalistic movements. His letter not only make one realize the need of unity at the front of freedom of India but also the necessity for inclusion of untouchables in Indian social structure.

The prompt and suppliant reply of Motilal Nehru itself reveals the importance and urgency to solve the intricate knot of social injustice towards Untouchables in India in its reality. In preceding letter Swami Shraddhanand had offered his resignation from the sub-committee for untouchables. The Mumbai Executive Committee of congress asked clarification of Motilal in that matter. In that condition Motilal asks Swami to postpone his resignation. He begins his letter by saying that,

You very well know that I don’t have any knowledge of the matters that took place before my release from the jail.377

In his most humble tone he informs Swami about the donation of Rs. 500/- instead of Rs. 10000/- sanctioned by the Executive Committee of Congress due to their unwillingness. Further he polemically clarifies that,

The executive committee cannot even imagine of disregarding the work done by your sub-committee and valuable suggestions given by you …….If the sub-committee is deprived of your specialized knowledge in the matter it would be a great loss in itself. Therefore for the well-being of all I personally request you to re-think over your resignation and let me know about continuation of your membership

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with the sub-committee through a written letter towards my Allahabad office.\textsuperscript{378}

His ‘request’ and entreaty itself reveal the significance of the issue. The promptness and agile readiness to solve the problems of Untouchables reveal not only the realistic condition of Indian society but also of the then Indian politics from the most authentic resource possible.

Regarding his personal opinion about untouchables Motilal opines that,

In the matter of separate wells and separate schools the best way out can be first your sub-committee put forward these suggestions and further gets confirmation from the executive committee.\textsuperscript{379}

Further he makes it clear that the charity sanctioned by the executive committee has some reasons behind it. Motilal tries to explain the situation by revealing that,

I afraid that the charity given to ‘The Independent’ of Allahabad and ‘The Congress’ of Delhi may have created same misunderstanding in your mind. In the matter of previous amount of Rs.25000/- has been sanctioned by regional committee of United Regions from the earlier sanctioned funds to be lend on interest to ‘National Journals Ltd.’ In the case of later the application has been rejected.

Mumbai, 23\textsuperscript{rd} July 1922.

Yours Sincerely,
Motilal Nehru,
Chief Secretary.\textsuperscript{380}

This detailed ascertainment makes at least one thing clear that it was one of the most concerned issues of the then Indian society that made the chief secretary of

\textsuperscript{378} Ibid. P.387. Print.
\textsuperscript{379} Ibid. P.387.
\textsuperscript{380} Ibid P.387-388.
Congress to convince Swami for his contribution for untouchables in India. In his reply Swami makes his stand clear,

Dear Pundit Motilal,

I could receive your letter regarding my resignation from the sub-committee for untouchables of 23rd July 1922 from Mumbai. I am sorry to say that the facts that I mentioned in my first letter have been totally disregarded and therefore I cannot rethink upon my resignation.

Following that Swami explains the reasons behind his adamant decision as,

Moreover, the task to be done for untouchables is extremely urgent and therefore I cannot delay it. In the forth coming executive committee get my resignation sanctioned. I can freely work on my own to remove untouchability then after. This was my position in the end of July. My experiences and the details that I collected from Amritsar and Mianvala Jails confirmed my belief that until we enliven the ancient pledge of celibacy according to prayer of Arya and remove the dark spot of untouchability from Hindu society neither Congress nor any other nationalistic parties would succeed in their efforts of achieving Independence.

The ‘efforts of achieving Independence’ and its relationship with the removal of untouchability later on reflected in the words of Mahatma Gandhi as well. The dates of letters make it clear that question of untouchability was one of the most crucial issues of the time. In the same year we find formation of ‘Swaraj Party’ (1923). The party would sow the seeds of Indian independence and Modern Indian politics. The same period endured one of the most gruesome communal riots of the Indian history The Mophla Rebellion (1921) in the Kerala. At the level of world politics Kemal proclaims the Republic and became president of Turkey (Oct, 29,
1923) and King Victor Emmanuel of Italy authorized voluntary fascist militia. (Jan., 14, 1923).

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, as one of the most important leaders of subjugated classes of the world qualified as a Bar-at-Law. On his return to Bombay like M. K. Gandhi he enrolled at the Bombay High Court. But unlike Gandhi, Babasaheb was able to maintain his successful legal practice. In 1924 he started legal practice and founded the Depressed Class Institute / The Bahiskrit Hitkarini Sabha in Bombay. It was the beginning of ‘Social Protest’ for which medieval saint poets of India wrote in their spiritual poems. One of the leading medieval Saint-Poet Kabir has written, about social harmony in his metaphorical style as,

“Kabir kuva ek hai, pnihari anek,
Bartan nyare- nyare bhaye, Pani Sab me ek”

(The well is one, even though there are several ladies to fetch the water. Even if there are different types of utensils but the quality of the water they contain is one.)

Babasaheb internalized such messages which were in their true sense the quintessence of the ancient literatures and scriptures of India. It becomes obvious when he as a chief of the Depressed Classes Institute writes to the secretary, of Bhuleshwar Temple Mumbai on 16th Oct., 1929 as,

Namaskar,
Respected Sir,

As a part of Hindu society the Depressed Classes Institute has decided to confirm its right to enter the Bhuleshwar Temple. Therefore it is requested that kindly inform us regarding the policy of Board of trustees of the mentioned temple in this regard.

Kindly consider this question most important and oblige with immediate response. I hope that you people will think upon this subject with utmost sympathy.

B.R. Ambedkar
President, Depressed Classes Federation.383

In response to such question of fundamental right A.S. Sabnish as a president of Board of Trustees, replies as,

Namaskar,

With reference to your letter of 16th October, with subject that as being part of Hindu Society, the Indian Depressed Classes Institute has decided to enter Bhuleshwar Temple. In that context they have asked to clarify the policies of the trust. Therefore The Board of trustees has asked me to give below given clarification.

First of all the board of trustees is looking towards the matter of untouchables with utmost sympathy. I need to give you an assurance that the board is of opinion that the untouchables should be given the right to worship in the temple.

When the Board pondered upon the issue of letting the untouchables enter the above mentioned temple than it reached to the conclusion that in the context of the existing laws it is not possible.

Due to the above mentioned reason it is not possible for my board to give worshiping rights to untouchables inside the temple which is governed by the constitution of the board.

- A. S. Sabnish. 384

The reason and rationale of A. S. Sabnish enunciated in his epistolary reply, authentically clarifies the stand of so called ‘higher class’ of the then India. His evasive argument makes it clear that the opaque reason behind his inability to answer has age old burden of class discrimination which was at its height during the early twentieth century. It was one of the most contentious issues for which leading thinkers of Modern India had to think and ponder upon the ‘answer’ which A. S. Sabnish could not give to Babasaheb in 1930s. Consequently, the univocal answer of such ‘question’ of Babasaheb proved to be the bedrock in the foundation of the

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modern day India. That answer is the most pertinent stand for each and every Indian in the present state where the imperative use of information and technology has broken every barriers of class discrimination.

The agitation and activities to demand the equal rights for untouchables in India made Dr. Babasaheb one of the most unwelcomed persons among the so called ‘higher classes’ of the society. Studying that, Dattoba, one of the well wishers revealed his cautions to Babasaheb. The reply to such wariness Babasaheb reveals his real strength as a real leader of the down trodden in the bold manner. The letter had on which his message has been written in the cursive hand writings bears the monogram of Shiv-Shakti in Ardhanareshwar form. (that is half Shiva, the ultimate paternal power of the universe and half of his Shakti, the mother of entire universe together as one entity.) Below that crossed swords with the wartime slogan ‘Jay Bhavani’ itself reveals the vigor and energy of the person whose name is printed on the left hand corner of the letter-pad. That is,

BHIMRAO R. AMEDKAR,
M.A. Ph.D, D.Sc. BAR-AT-LAW.

MEMBER LEGISLITVE COUNCIL, BOMBAY.385

The words and tone that he has applied in his letter reveals the inner strength of his character in its real from as,

First of all I must tell you not to worry so much as you seem to do for the safety of my life. There are dangers, no doubt, in the path I propose to tread. I am determined to brave them. For, I do not know of any path that is smooth or free from danger. If I were to keep away from dangers, the only alternative is to sit silent and do nothing.386

The brave heart willingness and determination “to brave” all the problematic circumstances make Babasaheb a real hero of the untouchables and deprived classes

386 Ibid.
of India. His courage and determination inspired thousands of people both within the boundaries of India and the entire world outside. The success of Martin Luther King is on such glaring example of his inspiration.

The political, social and economical conditions of Britain compelled its leaders to reform their political policies about India. The deteriorating command upon the world politics and emerging economic crisis compelled one of the most popular Prime Ministers of Britain Arthur Balfour to make an important statement about India. He opined that,

For as long as we rule India…We are the greatest power in the world.387

Such Ambition to remain “the greatest power in the world” leads the British administration to apply divisive political theories in the Indian society. To make that theory a success British administration divided the strongly united social Indian society into many sects and many castes such as Hindu,(Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra), Indian Christian, Anglo Indians, Europeans, Muslims, Sikhs and the untouchables(Atishudra). As a father of nation Mahatma Gandhi kept fast unto his death against such policies. For that reason Prime Minister of Britain had epistolary conversation with Mahatma Gandhi about which Dr. Babasaheb opines that,

I hardly need to say that I was shocked on reading the recent epistolary conversation between Mahatma Gandhi, Sir Samuel and Prime Minister recently published in the newspaper.388

The detailed study of the conversation itself reflects the significance of the epistolary writing. The evaluation made by Babasaheb proves him the maker of the modern India in true sense. Following such remark Babasaheb reveals his fear due to emotional threat of Mahatma Gandhi as,


It is easy to imagine that the vow of self-demolition by Mahatma has put me in the troublesome circumstances.\(^{389}\)

Mahatma Gandhi opposed the separate electorates given to all barring Muslims and Sikhs. Babasaheb as the leader of Dalits observed kind of partiality in the behavior of Mr. Gandhi. He not only tries to neutralize such behavior but also takes his strong stand against such gestures of the leaders. At certain level Mr. Gandhi’s soft corner for some instigates the fire of envy in the hearts of others. To make it unbiased Dr. Ambedkar plays major role.

If one observe such matter from the anthropological point of view both Muslims and Sikhs of India are equally near to rest of other communities in India as untouchables are. However it might not be the issue in the mind of Babasaheb but it would have been scientific evidence it prove the arguments right, and based on facts. Babasaheb, as a man of logic provides his argument through logic. He argues that,

If by giving separate electorates to Muslims and Sikhs there would be no harm to the unity the nation. One should not say that by giving separate electorate to Dalit class there would be the division of a nation.\(^{390}\)

In Mr. Gandhi’s opinion such electorates are going to harm the age old social integrity of Hindu society. It compels Mr. Gandhi to rethink on his argument. It ultimately leads the nation towards the stronger ties for the time to come. The present election of contemporary Prime Minister of India reflects the glaring example of social acceptability of the person from the backward class for the highest place of the democracy. On the other hand Babasaheb (Who belonged to the depressed caste,(now called scheduled caste or Dalit,) was outside the four fold caste system, literally outcastes, forbidden to move to any other form of the employment, a cast iron system with sanction from the Shastras. Babasaheb reached at the stage to argue mainly because of his ancestors’ escape from the above mentioned route,( through recruitment to the army, first to the East India Company’s, then to the British

\(^{389}\)Ibid.  
\(^{390}\)Ibid P. 402
Government’s, and the regal benevolence of the Gaekwad for his education) therefore he thoroughly opposed such demand of Mahatma. In his answer to Prime Minister of India Mr. Samuel, Mr. Gandhi clarifies that,

I agree with point, that since ages Hindus have calculatively kept Dalits in a miserable condition. It cannot be pay back by any act of Hindus ……… But I also know that separate electorate is not the penance or remedy of their humiliation.  

This was the battle which Dr. Ambedkar fought and forgot. He demanded for separate electorates because he wished to move the Schedule Castes outside the Hindu fold. At last Mr. Gandhi, whose prolonged fast against separate electorates put his life in danger, ultimately had upper hand in the matter. The outcome was the Poona Pact - no separate electorates but representation of depressed classes in provincial Governments. For such political upheaval famous contemporary historian Eleanor Zelliot opines that,

The demands of the untouchables for equal rights in religious matters, political power, and full participation in social and economic life were not met. 

At the end of same year Dr. Ambedkar had to immediately travel for London. He could not attend the central executive meeting of the Federation. In such circumstances he prefers to write a letter to Mr. Thakkar on 14th Nov. 1932 and in that letter he mentions that how this epistolary conversation will fill the vacuum of his absence as,

I wanted to discuss about the principles of the federation with the members of Central Executive who are going to finalize the outline of the programme. But unfortunately due to the short notice to reach London I had to miss this opportunity. Even though, there is still one best possible way is available. That is, if I inform my written opinions

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391 Ibid. pp. 112-113.
through a letter to you, later on the same can be presented in front of executives for consultations.393

Consequently Dr. Ambedkar established his leadership amongst Harijans and founded several journals. He succeeded in obtaining a special representation for them in the legislative councils of the government. He contested Mr. Gandhi’s claim to speak for Harijans. In one of his discourse on ‘Political Benevolence’ he construes that,

The requests for representatives of Depressed Class to be included in the (Congress) Executive board had been refused by Gandhiji himself.394

This difference of opinion led several critics of Indian history to observe that it was difficult to bring Mr. Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar on one stage. In Kale Memorial Lecture on ‘Federation Vs. Freedom’ delivered on 29th January 1939, at Gokhale Hall, Pune, Dr. Ambedkar opined that,

Just as the Brahmins of yore had fooled and enslaved the large mass of the populace through their clever mumbo-jumbo, Gandhi, too, was misleading the Indian masses of today with his mischievously garbed religious rhetoric.395

Dr. Ambedkar succeeded in obtaining a special representation for depressed class in the legislative councils of the Government. He contested Mr. Gandhi’s claim to speak for Harijans. In his famous Barshi Takli speech of 1924 he evaluated many strategies, starting from emigration to conversion to change of name for the untouchables, but ultimately reached to the conclusion that winning political rights was his main goal. His message becomes distinct in his speech upon ‘The Social Context of Ideology’ in 1933 as,

394 Ibid.P.194.
You have now a way of bringing about change, an improvement in your life conditions. That way is through political action, through appropriate laws (...) you can make government provide for you what you are now denied – food, clothing, shelter, education (...) Hence instead of resorting to rosary counting or prayer you should now depend on the political path; that will bring you liberation (...) The conflict hereafter, will not be between the British and the Indians, but between the advanced classes of India and the backward classes. No borrowed or hired person who does not belong to your class can further your welfare by the least degree. You may rid yourself of internal division and organize yourself strongly …

In the “process” of “organizing” them “Strongly” Dr. Ambedkar spoke before the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Separate electorate and had one-to-one discussion with Winston Churchill on the same issue. At the time when he was busy in socio-religious issues and the movement in Nasik, Maharashtra and Lahore he founded his first political party named Independent Labour Party in 1936 and competed election of 1937 with landslide victory of his party candidates.

In the March 1936 on behalf of *Jatpat Todak Mandal* (A committee for removal of caste system) Mr. Harbhagavan finds himself in great trouble by inviting Dr. Ambedkar as the Chief Guest of their Annual session. He reveals his worries in his letter to Dr. Ambedkar as,

May be you are not well aware of the situation of here. Almost all the Hindus of Punjab regions are against inviting you. *Jatpat Todak Mandal* has been criticised from all the dimensions.

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More than that, in the letter of 22nd April 1936 Mr. Harbhagavan asks Dr. Ambedkar to make some corrections in his speech so that it may not create problem for organizers to handle the situation peacefully.

It becomes the matter of self–respect and ethics for Dr. Ambedkar. He answers in his acerbic style to Mr. Harbhagavan on 27th April, 1936 and clarifies that,

…Every Chief Guest has liberty to prepare his speech and just for the sake importance of being Chief Guest I won’t compromise with my freedom.398

Ultimately, Dr. Ambedkar denies attending the Annual session. Like an unstoppable tide of human support from all over the India Dr. Ambedkar kept on spreading the seeds of awakening against inequality and abuses of caste system throughout the nation. On 20th April 1938, at Satara District while addressing huge gathering of people he gave vent to his anger in the form of advice as,

The very structure of the Hindu society has been construed to maintain superiority of Brahmins. No-ritual can be performed without Brahmin and likewise no rite can take place without them.399

In1941, he attended the Defense Advisory committee in the National Defense council called by the Viceroy and consequently in the next year he was appointed as Member of Governor Generals Executive Council for legislative and labour welfare causes. Dr. Ambedkar engaged that office until 1946. Here, it becomes necessary to mention that initially Viceroy had not included any untouchable in the committee. In that situation Dr. Ambedkar had to write a letter to the Colonel, the minister of India as,

The class of Untouchables is important and independent Unit of Hindustan…British Government has legally accepted this matter…The

398 Ibid.P.42.
depressed class given its support even at the time of the War (World war II). Even though, Viceroy is not selecting a single representative from the Untouchables, it means that the British Government has played with trust of the Untouchables; there is no doubt about it.

During the time of his becoming a Member as mentioned above he formed another political organization in the form of All India Scheduled Caste Federation in the place of his former Independent Labour Party (ILP). He contested on dual platform as officer in the ruling circle and as leader among the masses in society. On 3rd August 1940 he had written one editorial for the Common Man. Through writing he gives vent to angst against spineless moral of Congress Party. Dr. Ambedkar quotes from the speech of Babu Chittaranjan Das (C. R. Das), the president of Congress at the Regional Congress session held on 2nd May, 1925 as,

The Empire gives us a vivid sense of many advantages. Dominion status is in no sense serviceable. It is essentially an alliance of consent of those who form part of the Empire for material advantages in the real spirit of co-operation. ..It is realized that under modern condition no nation can live in isolation, and dominion status, while it offered complete protection to each constituent composing the great Common Wealth of nations, called the British Empire, secures to each the rights to realize oneself, develop itself and fulfill itself, and therefore it expresses and implies all the elements of Swaraj which I have mentioned.

The gratitude of Mr. Das for “the great Common Wealth of nations, called the British Empire” by ousting the dream of Purna Swaraj according to Dr. Ambedkar itself reflects the unctuous nature of the party. At the time when first session- plenary Labour Party was convened on 15th November 1943 Dr. Ambedkar as Labour member spoke there about labour management and representation of the down-trodden in legislature, post of Government and technical education abroad. At the

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400 Ibid, P. 311.
time of completing his tenure in the Governor General’s Executive Council he visited England and issued his pamphlet on Cabinet Mission and the untouchables, discussed the issue of the untouchable with Prime Minister of England Mr. Attlee, Secretary of state for India as British Prime Minister, who declared formation of Union, Constituent Assembly, Intervene Government, without mentioning the demands of the Scheduled Castes in its State paper.

On 9th August, 1941 in his editorial for Common Man, published in the weekly the Janta, Dr. Ambedkar while raising the issue of no inclusion of any untouchable as the member of the working committee formed under the Government India Act, criticizes not only Hindu society but also terms British as distrustful. According to him, on the basis of fact that how Viceroy has structured his committee reflects,

English Government has done grave injustice in this matter; there is no doubt about it. If it had been injustice only it would not have been a big issue, but it is not only injustice but also a matter of betrayal of our trust.\textsuperscript{402}

At the time of discussing about the role of Congress and Mr. Gandhi in matter of Untouchables, Dr. Ambedkar had written a book upon the issue, in the book entitled \textit{What Congress and Gandhi Have Done To The Untouchables} (1946), with help of it Dr. Ambedkar gives vent to his grudges against the premier political institution and the head of it. In the introduction of the book with the example of British Parliament and of Lord Salisbury in particular, Dr. Ambedkar exemplifies the significance of majority in democracy. As the leader of untouchables he exploited of the favour and votes of untouchables. With the example of the Round Table Conference Dr. Ambedkar reveals that how Mr. Gandhi was very much choosy to be called the only savior of the untouchables as,

\textsuperscript{402} Ibid P. 313.
He made the claim of being the only savior of untouchables at the Round Table Conference and was not ready to share this respect with anybody else.\(^{403}\)

In the 1947, when the India became independent Dr. Ambedkar made strong appeal in favour of Hindi as *lingua franca* for India against the opinions of the Gandhian Liberals like C. Rajagopalachari who opined that English should be use as an official language in India, because it has been,

…the gateway of all modern knowledge and progress.\(^{404}\)

Ultimately labeled as the ‘foreign’ language, English has been recognized as the ‘associate official language.’ It has earned the credit of being backbone behind the phenomenal progress of independent India in more than one way.

Despite being bitter critic of Mr. Gandhi and the Congress for twenty years Dr. Ambedkar, when India become independent, was offered the job of Law Minister in the Union Cabinet. It may be interpreted as an act of phenomenal reconciliation for which credit must go to Mr. Gandhi. To iron out the entry of Dr. Ambedkar into the cabinet the Congress contested him from the safe haven of Bombay for the constituent Assembly of India. As being the Law Minister, Dr. Ambedkar was given the charges of Chairmanship of the committee constituted to draft the Indian Constitution. He could tackle all the arguments at the time of producing all the thirteen volumes of the proceeding in front of the assembly with proper ability and authority. It is here, that he made some of the brilliant oratory on the importance of the Constitution for the future of democracy can be observed.

At the time when the Indian Constitution was accused of being ‘blind copy’ of the constitutions of other countries, Dr. Ambedkar defends it by explaining that,

The charge of producing a blind copy of the Constitution of other countries is base; I am sure, on an inadequate study of the Constitution.


I have shown what is new in the Draft of Constitution and I am sure that those who have studied other constitutions and who are prepared to consider the matter dispassionately will agree that the Drafting Committee in performing its duty has not been guilty of such blind and slavish imitation as it is represented to be.  

Further at the time of defending the constitution against the accusation that the Draft of Constitution has produced a ‘good part of the provisions’ of the Government of India Act, 1935. Dr. Ambedkar explains about the basic similarities between the fundamental rights and likeness as,

I make no apologies. There is nothing to be ashamed of in borrowing. It involves no plagiarism. Nobody holds any patent rights in the fundamental ideas of a Constitution.

For him at the time of speaking about the Democracy in India it is the process of hiding the non-concealable aspects such as,

Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic.

If today we are witnessing the progress of world’s largest democracy it is because of ‘top-dressing’ only. On 25th November 1949, when a final constitution was agreed upon he made his last Speech to the Assembly. Dr. Ambedkar offers good and the bad aspects of the constitution with all its probabilities as,

…I feel, however good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it happen to be a bad lot. However bad a constitution may be, it may turn out to be good if those who are called to work it, happen to be a good lot. The working of a

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407 Ibid. P.33.
constitution does not depend wholly upon the nature of the constitution.\footnote{Speech in Constituent Assembly, on 25\textsuperscript{th} November 1949, as reproduced in Constituent Assembly Debates: Official Report, Reprinted New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariats, 1988, Volume -11, P. 974.}

Thus, he reveals the universal truth that beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder. Similarly, at the time of providing the gist of the Constitution Dr. Ambedkar explains clearly that,

These are my reflections about the tasks that lie ahead of us. They may not be very pleasant to some. But there can be no gainsaying that political power in this country has too long been the monopoly of a few and the many are not only beasts of burden, but also beasts of prey. \ldots urge for self-realization in the down trodden classes not be allowed to devolve into a class struggle or class war.\ldots That would indeed be a day of disaster.\footnote{Ibid. P.980-981.}

In his consideration this has been the perfect duty for one’s own nation that he has rendered here in the form of the Constitution. For him the Constitution is a mean to make life of people happy in more than one way. The trinity of liberty, equality and fraternity should be for all the citizens of the nation. Because it is the demand of the time that such age old barriers have to be removed.

As being the framer of the constitution Dr. Ambedkar had proposed some special provisions for the Untouchables. Considering it as a kind of partial decision, Times of India, one of the leading news papers of the nation on 17\textsuperscript{th} May, 1945, criticized it bitterly by alleging it as a biased decision. It observes that,

If this project of Dr. Ambedkar observed minutely one can see special provision for Untouchables in the central and Regional judicial bodies will empower them to make great influence upon other two communities (Hindu and Muslim).\footnote{“Special Provision for Untouchables.” The Times of India, Editorial, 17\textsuperscript{th} May, 1945. 8. Print.}
Such accusation provides sufficient evidence of the intellectual environ of that particular time. In answer to such allegation Dr. Ambedkar wrote a letter to the Editor of *Times of India* and tries to explain that,

> Whatever position I have allotted to the Untouchables under my project have been allotted due to the principle of relative majority and accumulative division only.\(^{411}\)

Similarly, at the time of concluding his last speech to the parliamentary assembly, Dr. Ambedkar clarifies his intention behind all such reservation and soft corner for untouchable by allotting them special position to reimburse the injustices of the ages. He firmly explicates that,

> That is the only way to serve the country. I know of no better. \(^{412}\)

Such a strong voice and the tone of patriotism amplify the real metal in the mind of the maker of the modern Indian constitution. India becomes the Sovereign Democratic Socialist Republic in 1950 as it enacted, adopted and gave to itself the constitutional form but at the same time Dr. Ambedkar was worried about woman’s freedom and equality especially in the matters of marriage, divorce, maintenance, adoption, inheritance, succession, and such other rights at par with man as provided under remedial measures of his own drafted Hindu Code Bill codifying *Mitakshara* and *Dayabhaga* legal traditions of India and expecting to win the victory of the Bill at least partially if not completely in the parliament as assured by Prime Minister of India but the Conservative ideology killed it in the well of House and in the open society mercilessly. In his explanation Dr. Ambedkar vindicates that the Hindu Code Bill is ultimately an attempt to resurrect the ancient India traditional Law. For the law of Succession and divorce he explains that,

> In certain circumstances *Smritis*\(^{413}\) have given the rights to take divorce for the woman. In the new Bill efforts has been made to implement

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\(^{411}\) Ambedkar, Dr. Babasaheb, “To the Editor of The Times of India.” 20\(^{th}\) May 1945, which had been published in the *Junta* weekly on 26\(^{th}\) May, 1945.

\(^{412}\) Speech in Constitution Assembly on 25\(^{th}\) November 1949, as reproduced in Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol-11, P. 981.
such rights for the woman once again….There is nothing new in this Bill regarding giving the rights of succession to the woman. ‘Yajnavalk Smriti,’ \(^{414}\) … Itself has prescribed the right to have share of twenty five percent from the total inheritance of parents for the woman. \(^{415}\)

The references to the Smritis are sufficient to reveal the range of reading and understanding Dr. Ambedkar was gifted with. The sad factor behind implementation of the Bill is that it had been rejected by Hindu Sanatanis only and not by anybody else. According to Dr. Ambedkar he is not dealing with something new, whatever he has discussed are only abstract of Hindu scriptures. His further explanation about the Bill as,

This Hindu Code Bill has been specially prepared with the intention to improve the position of Hindu women in the society ….Majority of Hindu are Sanatani by their head and heart, they are the only who opposes the Bill. But if one works according their wish this nation will not be reawakened. \(^{416}\)

Dr. Ambedkar struggled a lot to pass this bill and ultimately ended his political career with resignation from the Law Ministry, the cabinet of Pt. Nehru in 1951 and remained as Member of parliament in opposition till he breathed his last. With the help of his epistolary conversation with Pt. Nehru one can make actual evaluation of the relationship between the two. As a man with humanitarian concerns Dr. Ambedkar was moved by the news of Dalits from Pakistan and those Dalit who were held up in Pakistan. Considering Nehru as a responsible administrator Dr.

\(^{413}\) The whole body of sacred tradition or what is remembered by human teachers in contradiction to Sruti or what is directly heard or revealed to the Rishis. – The whole body of law as handed down memorisers or by tradition (esp. the codes of Manu, Yjnavalkya and the 16 succeeding inspired lawgivers viz. Atri, Vishnu, Harita Usanas or Sukra, Angira, Yama, Apastambha, Samvarta, Katyayan, Brihas-pati, Parasara, Vyasa, Sankha, Likhita, Daksha and Gautam.

\(^{414}\) A Treatise written by an ancient sage who was a profound scholar, spent the major part of his life at the Court of King Janaka. His Smriti is on the subject of law. ‘Mitakshara’ is the famous commentary upon it. It is highest authoritative treatise on law.


\(^{416}\) Ibid. P.200.
Ambedkar marked him a letter on 18th December 1947. The letter reveals the hard core facts about the condition of Dalits on the both sides of the Border after Indo-Pak division as,

The Pakistan Government is prohibiting the untouchables to come here……especially people of Mehtar (Bhangi) community has been cordoned. They have announced the Mehtar community under the names of the community which will perform the essential Services.417

In a sense the fortune of the Dalits in independent Pakistan would remain the same that is to provide service to the upper cast citizens of the state. Further, at the time of revealing the conditions of the Untouchables who have taken refuge in the Eastern Punjab (India) Dr. Ambedkar explains that it is also deplorable as,

The refugee camps of Government of India in Eastern Punjab for untouchables do not inhabit the untouchables. The reason is that the administrators of the camps are hard core believers in untouchability between the Hindus and untouchables.418

The pitiable condition of the untouchables on the both sides of the borders moved the heart of Dr. Ambedkar and consequently of the rulers of the nation. The body of the Indian Administration had to hasten the process of protecting one of its significant sections of the society.

Likewise, in his epistolary exchange with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel one can see the priority of nation more-than any other aspect. The directness of his language and calculative use of words makes him a perfect communicator through the medium of the letter. Vallabhbhai Patel had addressed a letter to Dr. Ambedkar on 1st of September, 1946. The subject of the letter was that Dr. Ambedkar ‘is ready to have reconciliation with Congress.’ In reply to that letter Dr. Ambedkar writes a letter on 19th October 1946. A single question to Sardar exemplifies the exact stand of Dr.

418 Ibid. P. 134.
Ambedkar in that political turmoil. Admitting himself as the critic of Mr. Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar clarifies that,

It seems that you have taken my criticism of Gandhi quite seriously. But I would like to ask you inquisitively that do you believe Gandhi is independent and totally different. The nation is always larger than the person of any stature. This makes you believe that every nationalist person should be a man of Congress.419

In 1952 Scheduled Caste Federation Party of Dr. Ambedkar contested Lok Sabha elections but captured very little success owing to communal voting and joint electorate mischief. He was member of parliament in Rajya Sabha then and the following Year he delivered his address on condition precedent to the success of Parliamentary Democracy in India at Poona District law Library, Poona and in 1954 he spoke on Foreign Policy stating that India should struggle for self-membership in the United Nations instead of promulgating for others like China. Likewise, he also addressed on Kashmir issue and cultural friendly bilateral relationship with neighboring South East Asian countries and other Buddhist nations. In the same year he commented on the Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes Commission and on necessity to have amendment of constitution. On 6th September 1949, Dr. Ambedkar addressed the constitution Assembly and tried to reveal why there should be no restriction of time upon the special rights of the untouchables speaking in favour of extension of the limit from ten years to longer period, Dr. Ambedkar enumerates the duration of reservations given to other communities of the nation as,

The Muslim Society has been using these special political rights since 1892. That means the Muslim society has used these special rights approximately for 60 years. Some facilities were provided to the Christians under the constitution since 1920. The Christians have been benefited by these facilities for 28 years. The condition of the Untouchables is quite different in this matter. For them special facilities has been sanctioned under the law only in 1935. They were

implemented in 1937. From 1937 to 1939 for two years only the untouchables were given the benefits of these special facilities. In 1939 there was a stay on the implementation of Indian constitution. Therefore after keeping all the above mentioned matters in consideration I believe that this House should extend the duration of reservation for untouchables for more than ten years.420

Such a detailed observation of the matter reveals his ability as a leader as well as the man of humanitarian ethos. It was his efforts only that leads India to respect people from every section of the society. In 1955 Dr. Ambedkar asked the Government to abolish reservation in legislature and District Local Boards before he laid plan for founding Republican Party of India.421

When one deals with the matter of Dr. Ambedkar’s conversion which had long been contemplated by him, it is interesting to know that as an option Sikhism was under consideration, but he ultimately chose Buddhism. Equally interestingly it took place only a few weeks before his death in 1956. The reason behind his inclination towards Buddhism leads us towards two earlier incidents of his life one is as a boy he had been awarded a book on Buddha and the Dhammapada for doing well in his examination. The second may be that he would have been driven by the rationality of Buddhism and the fact that it arose as protest against Brahminical Hinduism. Its lack of elaborate ritual and mythology must have made great impact upon him. In his article published in the Mahabodhi weekly, Dr. Ambedkar compares Buddhism with other three major religions of the world as,

Jesus Christ and Mohammad Paygambar use to preach the world they are conveying the message of the Almighty and it is the ultimate Truth. The message delivered by Shri Krishna was itself the message of Almighty. There was no space for any doubt. But Bhagvan Buddha did not tell anything like that. He conveyed his message to his disciple

420 Ambedkar, Dr.Babasaheb, A part of the speech originally delivered on 6th September, 1949 by Dr. Ambedkar while he was addressing the Constitutional Assembly, reproduced in Junta weekly on 17th September, 1949.
Bhikkhu Anand and explained that his message is based upon experience.\textsuperscript{422}

Similarly, he himself gifted the nation with best of his ‘experiences’ only which played the vital role in making the nation a harmonious place for people from every section. In his peculiar satirical way Dr. Ambedkar uses the examples of Hitler and Mussolini to criticize the system of the caste as,

It is matter of great repentance that Hitler and Mussolini did not born in the time of Sri Krishna. If these despots were born in the times of Sri Krishna it would have been impossible for Him to believe that how a son of a dyer and a son of a transporter became the rulers of their nations.\textsuperscript{423}

Further he explains that why he has elected Buddha religion instead of any other religion. It is here that he reveals the quintessential quality of the Buddhist religion in his condensed manner as,

Buddha has preached for sociological, intellectual, economical, and political freedom. He preached not only for equality amongst men but also between men and women.\textsuperscript{424}

In the same way, talking about ‘Friendly Fire’ in the context of ‘Class in India’ Noble Laureate, Amartya Sen in his \textit{The Argumentative Indian} (2006) explains that how the hopes of overcoming class divisions in the economic, social and political development of the nation remains largely unsatisfied. The hurdles for development come not only from old dividing lines but also from new ones. In most of the cases the very institutions that were created to overcome disparities and barriers have tended to act as reactionary powers in reinforcing inequality. At the time of discussing about the ‘Class, Gender, Caste and Community’ Dr. Sen explains that,

\textsuperscript{422} Ambedkar , Dr.Babasaheb , Originally published in \textit{Janta} weekly in Marathi, on 13\textsuperscript{th} May, 1950, reproduced in \textit{Aur Babasaheb Ne Kaha...} , Ed. Meshram L.G., New Delhi : Radhakrishna, 2006,Volume-4, P. 243-244.
\textsuperscript{423} Ibid. P. 246.
\textsuperscript{424} Ibid. P. 249.
...‘reserved’ posts often go to relatively affluent members of disadvantage castes. No policy of affirmative action aimed at caste disadvantage can be adequately effective without taking account of the class background of members of the lower castes. The impact of castes, like that of gender, is substantially swayed by class.425

Further talking about the need of the hour Dr. Sen prescribes his opinion, which is being implemented in the national policies one way or the other. About the new scenario of the nation in consideration of the divisions Dr. Sen explains that,

The ubiquitous role of class divisions influences social arrangements in remarkably diverse ways and deserves a fuller recognition than it has tended to get in the making of Indian Public Policy. There is something serious to argue about here.426

If one attempts to ‘argue’ on this ‘serious’ issue it is surprising to find that the British seemed more benevolent overlords to the depressed classes than the Hindu ‘upper’ castes. Similar question may be there into the minds of every common reader that why author like Arun Shourie in his Worshipping False Gods displayed his indignation towards the matter that Dr. Ambedkar did not participate fully in the National Independent Movement and why Dr. Ambedkar did not agree with Gandhi? One can ponder upon the last question on the basis of the epistolary conversation of Mahatma Gandhi. In the previous analyses of the epistolary conversation by leaders of Indian Nationalist Movement have focused upon several such unanswered questions.

The extensive analyses of Dr. Ambedkar’s letters and other significant writings lead one to know about the realistic struggle of the maker of modern Indian Constitution. His contribution is not limited to the Indian borders only. His message of empowering the down trodden crossed the Pacific and provided lesson for the oldest democracy of the world. As a result of which we have Barack Obama as the

426 Ibid. P. 219.
president of the world’s Super Power. At the time of fervent Indian nationalist movement he added one of the most essential ingredients for making a seamless society. His erudition as an economist also helped the nation in constructing the base for one of the largest economy of the world. His political efforts in the form of Independent Labour Party (1936) and All India Schedule Caste Federation provided a healthy stimulant for Indian democracy. His contributions to the process of Indian Constitution exemplify his far sighted vision especially in the form of Hindu Code Bill. Along with all these his firm stand against British temptations to seek separate electorate not only reveals his patriotism but also his dedication and devotion to make the nation unique in the world.