AMBEDKAR, EDUCATION, POWER AND MODERNITY

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Chapter 9

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Ambedkar is popularly characterised as the author of the Indian constitution but his effort to deconstruct the Hindu social order had been more significant. Limiting this contribution only to his service in the authorship of the constitution, however, is a crude simplification that fails to acknowledge his extraordinary complexity as an activist, educator, revolutionary and thinker whose range of interests cannot be appreciated without considering the body of literature he has produced on different subjects and the social and political intervention he has made in the construction of modern India. His objective was to emancipate the Dalits from the age old domination of caste Hindus and to rebuild the Indian society based on the principles of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. His well quoted declaration 'though I am born a Hindu I will not die a Hindu' and his final conversion to the Buddhism reflect his disentanglement with Hinduism and his determination to reform the caste ridden Indian social order. His social reform project was founded on the mutually related entities of education, politics and power. Though he did not discourse on the epistemological concerns of education, he placed it at the centre of the social change or reconstruction. To him politics was nothing but the instrument to effect social change, and real power he conceived as the power to control and transform anything.

Ambedkar's educational relevance lies in the fact that he identified knowledge and power as the critical elements in the construction of modernity in India. He did also recognise a more general concern by which the
constitution of the individual under the conditions of modernity was considered by him as the overarching concern of his emancipatory project. The general ingredients of his narratives and social actions are well known. Right up to his conversion to Buddhism he was interested mainly in describing the way the Hindu social order is constituted and the need to annihilate the caste system and its structures not only for the emancipation of the Dalits from their age old servility but also for the progress of the country in general. His narrative about the social change places power/knowledge at the centre of social control and transformation.

**Educate, Agitate, Organise**

Ambedkar's project of educating the Dalits began when he started the fortnightly 'Mook Nayak' in 1920. His mission and vision were revealed through publications of various magazines and journals, representations to government and related bodies for passing of legislatives helpful to promote the education of the depressed classes. It finally culminated in the establishment of schools, colleges, hostels and other educational institutions under the aegis of the People's Education Society established in 1945. However, it is demeaning to isolate his educational goals from that of his social objectives. What he wanted to achieve was the emancipation of the depressed classes, which was common to his varied, but inseparable projects — social and educational. Speaking on the occasion of the foundation of the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha, the organisation which heralded his public life as the leader of the Dalits, Ambedkar declared that the motto of the organisation would be 'Educate, Agitate and Organise.' He clarified the objectives:
In order to bring about the uplift of outcastes it is first necessary to awaken them. Any community before it can progress must develop a consciousness. As someone has put it, while the poor are certainly handicapped by their poverty, the real obstacle in their path is their inertia and their indifference! To overcome this inertia and indifference it is necessary they should become charged with resentment of injustice of their own condition. Without it, they cannot get rid of the factors that obstruct their progress. And even this is not enough; while on the one hand the obstruction must be removed, one must also simultaneously promote conditions which will ensure their prosperity.

The triumvirate 'Educate, Agitate, Organise' formed not simply the slogan of the Bahiskrit Hitakarini Sabha; in fact it embodied the ideological basis of Ambedkar movement itself. It also denotes the epistemology of his social project, as it provides a context against which the rules and standards for the formulation of knowledge about the society and the individual could be determined. It also provides the means to investigate distinctions and categories that organise perceptions, ways of responding to the world and the conceptions of 'self'. The slogan can also be used locate the primary position given to schooling as the most significant mechanism by which power relations are established, reproduced and perpetuated in the society.

The word 'education' in the trio-slogan of action implies not merely the
education provided by an external agency for constructing knowledge required for governing the establishment. It rather connotes a deschooling of the minds which get mechanically schooled in tune with the tradition. The Hindu education was structured through principles of classification that emerged from a myriad of historical practices that legitimised inequality as the basis of social relations. Schooling in this 'Brahminic tradition' produced the individual in the context of the historically constructed way of reasoning which was primarily based on the principle of inclusion/exclusion. Therefore, the use of the word education in the triumvirate does not stand alone, it embodies a range of values, priorities and disposition about how one should 'see' and 'act' in the society/world.

Ambedkar wanted the Dalits first to be awakened so that, they should become aware of their own social realities, the elements that prevent their progress. The centuries old dehumanisation had made them perceive their lowliness as natural and as the result of the will of god. It is only through education, the education that arouse their consciousness, that they would get awakened. To be educated, here, is not to become disciplined according to the established regimen of remembering and forgetting, of assuming identities normalised through discursive practices and of accepting a history of the predictable Hindu Mythology. Education should develop the consciousness that enable one to see how one is constituted as an abstract entity, scientifically reasoned and socially identified. Once this consciousness arises, the individual becomes a sentient being. But consciousness is not only cognitive and emotional, it is volitional also. It is cognitive when it gives knowledge or information, that is appreciated or apprehended. It is emotional when it exists
in certain subjective states characterised either by pleasurable or painful tones; emotional consciousness produces feelings. Consciousness in its volitional stage makes an individual to wilfully exert himself/herself for the attainment of some end. Volitional consciousness gives rise to what we call will or activity.

All the functions of a sentient being are performed by the individual as a result of consciousness (or education). The 'educated self' involves institutionally validated and credentialled individuality that is very different from what historically preceeded it. Thus, there is no fixed meaning for the phrase, 'being educated'; a person once educated may become diseducated if he/she does not develop the consciousness about how he/she is reconstituted in the changed context. By this discursive construction the self reflection and self consciousness, the 'educated' self annuls the distinction between the personal and the social. Therefore, Ambedkar wanted the Dalits to develop consciousness and thus become educated or self reasoned of their conditions and to act upon accordingly to emancipate themselves.

The knowledge of the constituted self is a central concern in Ambedkar's agenda for social reform. Any social action should seek to understand how the rules of reason by which practices for change and classifications and distinctions among groups of people are structured and constructed. Ambedkar's notion of progress are inscribed in his social theories that by themselves become the doctrines of 'reason' that historically deploy power. He outlined the pre requisites of a social revolution in one of his incomplete literary projects as:
(1) The existence of a sense of wrong (2) capacity to know that one is suffering from a wrong and (3) availability of arms. The first two conditions can be fulfilled only if the people are educated. Unless and until they are educated they will not develop the consciousness of the existence of some wrong in their social condition, that is, the awareness of the elements that prevent their progress. This consciousness alone can enable them to engage in actions meant to set right things that had been wrongly settled; otherwise they will be always in the state of inertia. There is a continual need to remind them that they have to understand their own conditions and through the process of agitation they have to unpack the framework within which they are constituted. This conviction is different from the assumption that liberation will be achieved by overthrowing previous regimes. Ambedkar had realised that education is the only instrument which can charge the people with resentment of the injustice of their own conditions and thus to overcome their inertia and indifference, without which they cannot get rid of the factors that obstruct their progress.

Ambedkar found that the Shudras and the untouchables of his time were also denied opportunities to rise to knowledge and power, by which a possibility of a rebellion against the social order was prevented effectively. He said, a social order that allows right to education and permission to use arms cannot prevent the occurrence of a rebellion by those who suffer wrongs. He continued that the Hindu social order did not resort to the use of force and violence to check a possible revolution within it, instead,

it has fixed the social status of the lower orders for all generations to come. Their economic status is also fixed.
There being no disparity between the two, there is no possibility of a grievance growing up. It has denied education to the lower orders. The result is that no one is conscious that his low condition is a ground for grievance. If there is any consciousness it is that no one is responsible for the low condition. It is the result of the fate.  

Thus, having found that every possibility of social upheaval within the Hindu social order had been prevented effectively, Ambedkar exhorted his followers to realise their social realities. All his efforts then concentrated on educating the Dalits. He urged the government that the road to education must be open to all – males as well as females. He affirmed that only an educated self can get charged or agitated to respond to the wrongs effectively. Truly education can arouse people's emotional consciousness and prudence and thus inscribe their social and political rationalities and thereby enable them formulate ends and means to overcome the obstructions that infringed upon their progress. Ambedkar viewed that the traditional policy on education of the Dalits had been planned as a safeguard for the 'Brahminic power'. That tradition was an attempt to transmit the practices of the Varna system, which were intertwined with the belief on hereditary occupation. It had been propagated as a precondition for an individual to exist as a member of the prevailing social order. Ambedkar who could see through the cunningness of this indirect strategy meant for transmitting the Brahminic ideas and practices without any change, urged the need for breaking this static political establishment in order to ensure the progress of the depressed classes.
It is obvious that the 'agitation' with the trio slogan of action does not call for a destructive end leading to anarchy. It aims for an awakening from within. For instance, education can empower the Dalits to perceive that their untouchable identity and demoralised social status had been established by the operation of a variety of forces or elements that had been deeply embedded in the Brahminic discourse, and that these forces had been keeping the downtrodden people permanently at the lowest rung of the social hierarchy using the indirect but effective means of denial of knowledge/power. Ambedkar said,

A deprivation of a man's freedom by an open and direct way is a preferable form of enslavement. It makes the slaves conscious of his enslavement and to become conscious of slavery is the first and most important step in the battle for freedom. But if a man is deprived of his liberty indirectly he has no consciousness of his enslavement.6

The Dalits were told that they are free citizens and have all the rights of the citizens, but the rope is kept tightened in such a way as to leave no opportunity to realise the ideal. Ambedkar characterised this condition as one in which enslavement is imposed on a group without making them conscious of their enslavement. It is real though it is indirect. It is enduring because it is unconscious.7 Therefore, the means to charge the Dalits with resentment of the injustice of their condition is to make them aware of this indirect slavery established by the Brahminic discourse.
Ambedkar criss-crossed many pathways in his project for the emancipation of the Dalits, focussing on the social, educational and political rights of the depressed classes. But what concerned him politically always concerned him socially and educationally also. His movement in its early years was concentrated on equal rights of the Dalits within the Hindu social order. But soon he realised that the problem of the untouchables was not a simple social problem like that of dowry, child marriage or widow marriage. He perceived it essentially as a political problem, the solution of which required a minority liberty and equality of opportunity. He was also certain that this was not easy at the hands of a hostile majority that not only believed in the denial of liberty and equal opportunity to the minority but also conspired to enforce its policy on the minority. It is this fundamental conviction that provoked Ambedkar to start his movement.

Ambedkar disregarded the charge that the Dalit movement would only promote separatism. He strongly refuted the argument that the political recognition of the untouchables as a separate element and that granting them constitutional safeguards would retard the social unity of India, by creating a sense of separation between the untouchables and the Hindus, as feared by Mahatma Gandhi. He found this argument as an artifice of the Indian governing class to fudge the Dalits from getting the constitutional safeguards. Ambedkar identified the governing class in India with the Brahmin - Vaisya (Bania) combine and viewed the Congress as its political organisation. He said that the Brahmans had forged an alliance with the Kshatriyas to become the ruling class in the ancient and medieval times. But in the modern times they shifted the alliance to Vaisyas, the trading class, as money had become important than the sword.
In the wake of India's independence Ambedkar asserted that existence of a governing class is inconsistent with the philosophy of democracy and self government. The self government and democracy would become real not only by a constitution based on adult suffrage coming into existence; it should also be ensured that the governing class cannot use its existing power to capture the government that emerges after the election. He remarks that the servile classes in India, which was comprised of the shudras and the untouchables or the backward classes and the Dalits, cannot succeed in ousting the governing class from their seat of authority with adult suffrage alone. They require other safeguards also to achieve this end. It is indispensable to destroy the power of the governing class for safeguarding the interests of the servile classes, because the former would refuse to admit the political demands of the latter, observed Ambedkar. Accordingly he characterised the 'Fight For Freedom' led by the Congress as a struggle of the governing class for the freedom to rule the servile class; what it wanted was the freedom for the master race to rule the subject race.

Ambedkar had realised that none other than the organised actions of the servile classes could become instrumental in destroying or weaken the power of the governing class. But organisation of the servile classes was not easy, as they had been denied knowledge/power for centuries. Only an educated people can agitate and lead social actions for their political end. However, he never advocated the path of blood shed to achieve this goal, rather he recommended constitutional means, in tune with the philosophy of democracy. Class war was not his means; reform through education, agitation and organised action was the way he emphasised. He perceived knowledge
as power and hence advocated spread of education so that power be developed among the servile classes. He believed that in this manner knowledge/education would intervene in their social life. Thus his conception of power gives attention to its productive dimension also. The slogan ‘Educate, Agitate and Organise’ thus envisages a total revision and reconstruction of one’s ‘self’ by developing in the individual the ability to think, feel and act, at the same time.

**Education, Power and Politics**

Ambedkar's historical philosophy inquires into the condition under which India would develop into a modern welfare state. His concern was, how the Dalits and the marginalised people would be constituted in the power relation in the emerging Indian modernity. This concern, which is reflected in his politics of identity, traverse all his social theorisations and actions. Through multiple modes of critical inquiry he sough to understand the various forms in which power operates. For instance, he tried to find out how dehumanisation or debasement of Dalits was deliberately brought about by the higher classes. Also, he thought of ways of interrogating the evidences and postulates governing the existing social order, of shaking up habits and traditions, of ways of acting and thinking, of dispelling common place beliefs, and of taking a new measure of rules and institutions. Ambedkar did not treat knowledge as a part of the epiphenomena through which social practices are formed, rather he viewed it as a material element in the social life. He conceived education as a social practice that generates action and participation.

It seems that Ambedkar was deeply influenced by the philosophy of
consciousness which refers to a legacy of the social thoughts that underlined his contemporary world of social and educational theories. There are two different theoretical forms, namely the critical and liberal traditions, that stand remarkably noticed. These traditions, constructed within a particular doctrinal view of enlightenment, held two assumptions about knowledge.12

1. The systematic knowledge as the motor by which 'reason' could direct social action and guarantee future betterment in society. This reason was applied by specific sets of actors who are identified through the acquisition of knowledge.

2. Disciplinary knowledge has a subject. The assumption of 'actors' as the subject of theory identifies the actors who form the source of change.

Ambedkar held that change premised on identifying the subject who gave direction to change, either by locating the origin of repressive elements or structures that prevented progress or groups that would bring about a redemptive society. Accordingly, he identified the caste and the Brahminic philosophy underlying the inequalitarian social system as the impediment in the social reconstruction and progress of the downtrodden people in India. The group that would bring about social redemption is the servile classes comprising both the shudras and the untouchables.

In liberal thoughts, progress is obtained through managing social change, whereas in critical Hegelian thoughts it is obtained through identifying social contradiction. While liberalism tends to place greater emphasis on the role played by individuals and the phenomenology of the subject in social change, critical traditions focus on the objectively constituted and constituting
subjects. The strategies to overcome the repressive elements of society are embeded in the descriptions of contradictions that the researcher (or the social reformer) describes. Ambedkar's strategies to overcome the repressive elements and structures of the society are embeded in his theoretical expositions of the Hindu social order and philosophy and in the social and educational actions he pursued for the uplift of the Dalits and other marginalised sections in India. This strategy is best reflected in his trio slogan of action 'Educate Agitate and Organise'.

Like Marxists he held that redemptive progress is inscribed in assumptions about contradictions and dialectics, that is, the critical interrogations of social conditions will produce a new synthesis from the identified contradictions. Though he rejected the view that economic interpretation of history is the only explanation of history and the view that the proletariat had been progressively pauperised, he found some residue of fire as remains of Karl Marx, which is small but very important:

1. The function of philosophy is to reconstruct the world and not to waste its time in explaining the origin of the world.
2. There is a conflict of interest between class and class.
3. Private ownership of property brings power to one class and sorrow to another through exploitation.
4. It is necessary for the good of society that the sorrow be removed by the abolition of private property.

Thus, in essence Ambedkar held that a 'communist' social order should
be brought about for the removal of inequity in the society. He envisaged a free social order in which the individual can develop to the fullest possible and such a society should be established not through violence and dictatorship of the proletariat but by the means adopted by the Buddha, that is, 'to convert a man by changing his moral disposition to follow the (right) path voluntarily'.

Ambedkar did not hold any norm or ideal as universal and fixed, rather he asserted that change in the ideals, values and institutions are imperative for effecting social reform and progress. He said:

Ideas as norms are good and are necessary. Neither a society nor an individual can do without a norm. But a norm must change with changes in time and circumstances. No norm can be permanently fixed. There must always be room for revaluation of the values of our norm. The possibility of revaluing values remains open only when the institution is not invested with sacredness. Sacredness prevents revaluation of its values. Once sacred, always sacred.

Ambedkar placed the individual at the focus of the society and considered the aim and object of the society as the growth of the individual and development of his/her personality. The principle of associated life between the members of the society must be regarded to have been founded on liberty, equality and fraternity. The prime element that prevented the progress of the people in the Hindu social order was caste, observed Ambedkar. Caste as the
determinant of social relationship occupied the central position in the society, which in turn resulted in the emergence of the system of 'graded inequality'. Hence it gave no room for democratic social relationship founded on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. The ideal centre of the social philosophy was a class of people, the priestly class, rather than the society or the individual. Thus annihilation of caste and structures of caste became the primary concern for Ambedkar to achieve the goal of social progress and emancipation of the individual and that of reconstitution of the 'self' in the emerging modernity.

In some critical junctures, Ambedkar identifies power with 'power over', with power as domination. Thus, he finds no space for any possibility of liberty, equality and fraternity in the Hindu social order unless and until the caste is annihilated. There is no escape from power to freedom. Hence, the only means for the down trodden people to enjoy liberty and social equality is to become the subject (actor) of power. But the power which is to be achieved should positively be through joint collective enterprise, through acting in concert and together, rather than through dominance which is incompatible with democracy. This conviction has drawn the focus of his political epistemology to the power/knowledge regime. However, abolition of power system does not seem to be an agenda of Ambedkar's project. Rather, he concentrated, particularly in the later years of his movement, on the decentering of the subject of powers which in itself formed a strategy to understand how the subject is constituted within a field that relates knowledge and power. This does not deny that Ambedkar was seeking to change the social order but it emphasises the fact that he gave historical specificity to
the systems of ideas that enclose and intern reason and the reasonable person. He wanted the power/knowledge to be used for the welfare of the people - the liberation of the Dalits. So he shared power with the very people whom he had placed on the 'other' side of his boundary, and while doing so turned many things in favour of his political goals. But, when once he realised that he had reached the limit in using the power to effect change in the system from within, he came out of that paradigm to seek the 'real' means of power.

Ambedkar's educational projects and political agenda reveal that power/knowledge has a constructive role in the development of social life. He rightly perceived the relation between knowledge, power and social change. In India knowledge has ever been a celebrated category or source of power. But this source of power was denied to three categories of people, the shudras, the women and the untouchables. The priestly class, the Brahmins, continued to dominate the field of education. As the construction of knowledge was a prerogative of the priestly class and the rules and standards of people's life were laid down in the scriptures, the Brahmins formed the actual governing class in India. Even during the British regime the Brahminic domination did not get troubled, because the principle of social division remained the same, it being graded inequality. Operating in this socio-political problematics, Ambedkar set the agenda to educate the Dalit masses as his priority, in order to open their eyes to the social realities and to organise their power for their own emancipation.

The study of power within the philosophy of consciousness identifies the actors who control and in whose benefit existing arrangements work.
The actors, as wielders of power give attention to questions like which groups are favoured in decision making and how decisions distribute values to produce a context of domination and subordination- the rulers and the ruled. Power in this landscape is 'something' that people own, and that ownership can be redistributed among groups to challenge inequities. Ambedkar observed that power and knowledge are interlinked and that both have been possessed completely by the upper castes, particularly the Brahmins, in the Hindu social order. The knowledge constructed by the priestly class was instrumental in perpetuating the domination of the upper castes over the shudras and the untouchables. Accordingly he expounded the origin and mechanism of the domination and subjugation in the Hindu society. He perceived that every society includes groups, social interests and forces that have been historically formed and whose practices dominate and repress other groups. This occurs due to the concentration of power with certain groups. However, power/knowledge, which forms the critical aspect of the cultural capital of a nation, if properly redistributed based on the principle of equality, can make a shift in the power relation in the society. He found that many interest groups are operating in India, but he perceived the Hindu society as essentially a dichotomous entity in which there are the oppressors (the Brahmins and other upper castes) and the oppressed (the shudras and the untouchables). The upper castes dominate while the servile classes possess social righteousness but not power. Moreover, Ambedkar conceived power/knowledge as having a constructive role in the society, but this role cannot be fulfilled if it is concentrated at certain points or groups. Because of the productive quality of knowledge/power, the nature of its distribution would
determine the nature of the social life of the people of a society. As such, only a proper rechannelling of knowledge/power can bring about progress among the servile classes. Hence, he demanded the redistribution of power in establishing a self government in India. Only with such a redistribution of power/knowledge, he held, the Dalits could progress educationally, socially, economically and culturally.

Education and Construction of Modernity

It is undoubtful that Ambedkar had a direct interest in education, even apart from his efforts to establish various educational institution for the Dalits, from the perspective of social change in India. Though his domain of action was primarily social reconstruction, he was an activist educationist too. Ambedkar discovered something really simple, the centrality of education in the construction of modernity in India. Even while he was actively engaged in the deconstruction of the Brahminic philosophy and hegemony in the Indian society, Ambedkar was equally or even more strongly concerned with the emancipation of the Dalits for which he had realised education as a powerful instrument.

Ambedkar's interest in education, however, was much more direct and pragmatic than of a theoretical immersion in the epistemological concerns of its 'discipline'. For, what is education at all, if it is not the way the individual is constituted through the realities of the social relations? Ambedkar's way of seeing through the Hindu social order suggests that he had adopted a critical, rather a very radical approach in analysing the philosophy of Hinduism, the under currents of the Hindu social order and its implications on the life of the
down trodden people. If we collate his educational intervention to his social reform project, he will appear to be a great destroyer of the established upper caste hegemony or, in the most literal sense, a deconstructionist of Hindu Imperialism.

Ambedkar as an activist educationist and as one who emphasised the centrality of power/knowledge in the construction of modernity in India and in the emancipation of the dalits, was fundamentally interested in the reconstruction of Indian society based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. Therefore, he focused on the construction of the ‘self’ through different learning processes to which the individual had to be exposed in order that he would work for the establishment of a new order. He realised that the Hindu society, founded on graded inequality and hereditary social status and occupation, was a stumbling block in the construction of modernity in India. He had convinced himself that social reform was a pre requisite for the progress of India. Even the political sovereignty of the country to be successful in its real sense, he asserted that the reconstruction of the society should preceed the political change. Accordingly, he derived his interest in education from the insight that a cultural awakening is a prerequisite for establishing modernity.

It is difficult or even discordant to fix the exact origin of modernity in term of time in the historical discotinuity. But modernity is often considered as historic epoch that came into being in the last quarter of the eighteenth century as an aftermath of the Enlightenment. Some of the critical beliefs of modernity are: 'belief in the universality of autonomous human reason,
belief in the inevitability of historical progress, the conviction that the world would become a better place when it is grounded in the objective knowledge accumulated through the natural methods of science. Through modernity, 'progress' becomes accepted as merely a function of time, and modernism rejects the past in the name of the future. The use of scientific perspective has been widespread during the age of modernity, by which the 'natural underlying rules' of society have been sought for new insights have been created and immutable belief in every field of science has been generated.

Ambedkar upheld the notion of the rationally autonomous individual, as it has been central to the liberal conception of the purpose of education. He realised the instrumentality of education as a process of liberation from the domination and indoctrination or domestication which formed the bases of the discursive practice in the Hindu social order. Ambedkar was very clear about what he had to reject, namely the Hindu religion, the established social order and the utopian project of the Indian Marxists. He was also clear about what had to be reinstituted, a free social order based on liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. The two hundred years' colonial rule had only strengthened and reinvigorated or reproduced the existing social relations that kept the Dalits in a dehumanised condition. However, he could see the potential of education to empower the Dalits, to open their eyes to the causes of their degradation and to prepare them for social reconstruction. In short, Ambedkar saw education as an instrument for the creation of modernity in India, by which human beings are made subject of knowledge, who could embrace proper cultural mode.
The writings and social programmes of Ambedkar reveal that he had a strong allegiance to the ideals of enlightenment, with its celebration of science, its unbridled faith in human reason, its belief in historical progress and its unshakable commitment to the values of emancipation, empowerment and rational autonomy. He characterised the Hindu theory of varnas (or classes), which established the social status of the individual on an ascending scale of privilege and on the descending order of contempt, as a fabrication by the priestly class which also happened to be the 'intellectual' class, their aim being to perpetuate their hegemony in the society. The Hindu scriptures he considered as the sources of irrational knowledge which became instrumental in constructing the individual suitable for the society that was built on the principle of graded inequality. The Hindu society he found to have neither reflected the values of a free society nor done anything to promote rational autonomy of the individual. The caste and its structures that operated on the Hindu social hierarchy, he considered as the chief forces that prevented the historical progress of the country. Hence Ambedkar completely rejected the Hindu social order as devoid of the potential for construction of objective knowledge, development of rational humans and the progress of the individual and the society.

Ambedkar did open a new phase of enlightenment in India, which recast and reconstituted a particular ideological strand, the ideology of the Dalit movement. That was so radical in its approach that it placed the people directly into the knowledge about social change, and convinced them of the need for challenging the reigning notions of theology and chances of birth as the arbiters of progress. It gave continuing attention to the subjects as well as the
subjected, who are included or excluded through the social practices related
to the observance of untouchability. For Ambedkar, education was not simply
a synonym of socialisation, rather he considered it as intertwined with power.
Hence he conceived education, whether it be liberal or vocational, as a process
of development and growth, a process of emancipation concerned with
realising the potential of the 'self', needed for meeting the needs of the society
with the individual at its centre. In short, Ambedkar contemplated education
as an instrument of social change. Social reconstruction was his message,
education was his means and politics was his practice. Thus, he exhorted the
downtrodden people to educate, agitate and organise in order to bring about
social change, progress and emancipation.

Note:
2 'The Buddha and his Dhamma', Writings and Speeches, Vol.11, p.263.
3 Writings and Speeches, Vol.3, p.126.
4 Ibid
5 Ibid.
6 Writings and Speeches, Vol.5 , p.15.
7 Ibid.
8 Writings and Speeches,Vol.9, p.190.
10 Ibid, p.203.

Ibid


Ibid, p.450.

Who were the Shudras, *Writings and Speeches*, Vol.7, p.31.


Ibid.