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Chapter 10
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

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SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Introduction

Education is not only a source of power but it is also an instrument of social change. It has always been functioning as an agent of social control in the interest of the ruling class. The native elites in India used education as an apparatus to subject the downtrodden people to slavery by constituting them in the lowest strata of the caste hierarchy. The colonial forces too used it to establish their imperial reign. In the ancient times, education was the prerogative of the priestly class. They controlled the social relations primarily through the construction of knowledge which was confined to the three higher varnas, the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas. The shudras, the unouchables and the women were completely denied access to the sacredness of knowledge which was equated to the learning of the vedas. Even during the medieval period and the beginning of the modern age, the social relations and production of knowledge remained under the control of Brahmanic discourses. The exclusive possession of knowledge/power by the upper castes remained undisturbed even during the colonial rule, resulting in the subjugation of the Dalits and throwing them to the abyss of moral degradation.

The colonial education, however, had opened the door of school before the Dalits in a hesitant way. It, though targeted to safeguard the colonial interest, paved the way for breaking the traditional norms to a limited extent. The English education opened a critic of the caste hegemonic social system prevalent in India and paved the way for several powerful social movements. Moreover, as feared by the British administrators themselves, it contributed
to the anti imperialistic struggles that led to the political liberation of the country. In this social location, Ambedkar and the Dalits had to confront two impending dominations, colonialism and the upper caste hegemony. Ambedkar visualised a free Indian society built on the principles of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. He considered caste and its structures as the forces that prevented the country from achieving its historical progress. Discerning the reconstruction of the Indian society from a pluralistic perspective, he contemplated education as an instrument for the construction of modernity in India. He had no doubt in that such a reconstruction would enable the down-trodden groups of India to free themselves from their age-old fixation, as mere objects of knowledge, to the traditional values cunningly constructed and established by the Brahminic discourses. He held that thereby they could transform themselves into 'subject of knowledge' and thus become instrumental to bringing about changes in the static social order that has been prevailing in the country.

Ambedkarism is a living force in India and that force defines the ideology of the Dalit movements. But, Ambedkar as a thinker and ardent rebel against casteism is being subjected to a systematic dememorization. The discourse communities of power/knowledge in India, who would like very much to preserve their superiority as well as monopoly over knowledge have got united in their efforts to mistify the thoughts and social actions of this revolutionary of modern India. The academics and scholars have not yet shed their reluctance to have a dispassionate discourse on Ambedkar's life and struggle against casteism. Though his observations and message are still relevant for completing the unfinished social projects in India, the academies in the country
have ignored or discouraged scholarly studies on caste issues. At the same time, attempts are made outside the boundaries of academies to characterise him as a 'false god' to be ignored. What is truly demeaning is the effort to block any discussion on his observations on caste, society and religion, particularly Hinduism.

The survey of educational research in India published so far presents reports of the studies in education, on the thoughts of many thinkers and social reformers of both Indian and foreign origin. However, not a single study has yet been reported on the educational ideals of Dr. Ambedkar in any of the six survey reports available at present. Therefore, a study exploring the details regarding Ambedkar's life and struggles that would reveal his conception of social reconstruction as well as his contemplation of education as an instrument of emancipation of the downtrodden people in India was felt extremely significant.

Statement of the Problem

The problem for the present study was stated as 'Dr. B.R.Ambedkar as an Educational and Social Reformer.'

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyse and interpret Ambedkar's ideological reflection on social and political aspects and on their reformation, in the light of the characteristics of the social and political order that prevailed in India during his life time and before.

2. To assess the contribution made by Ambedkar as a social reformist, in
terms of the development of the down trodden classes in India and with special reference to the Ambedkar Movement.

3. To assess the services rendered by Ambedkar in his various official capacities, for the propagation and establishment of his messages.

4. To analyse and interpret Ambedkar’s conception of education as power, as a tool for the development of the individual as well as the society and as an instrument for the emancipation of the deprived groups.

5. To trace the contribution made by Ambedkar for the development of education in general and for the education of the Dalits in particular.

6. To analyse and interpret the educational ideas and activities of Ambedkar in the light of his message, ‘Educate, Agitate and Organise.

7. To establish meaningful linkages between Ambedkar’s theories on social and political reformation and on education and its development.

Methodology in Brief

The present study adopted historical approach as the prime mode of investigation. The major focus of the study was to determine the social location of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and to present significant facts about his life, struggle and achievements that have influenced the social and educational progress of the Dalits and their movement in India. Content analysis within the perspective of historical research formed the principal method of investigation. However, as the problem crosscuts different disciplines and calls for the use of a complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts and assumptions, the insights of sociological and philosophical perspectives, wherever required,
were also utilised to enrich the methodology. The tenets of qualitative research have been followed while making the analysis and interpretation.

**Sources of Data**

Documentary data formed the major sources of information for the study. Both primary and secondary sources were used in this regard. The important primary sources were comprised of the writings and speeches of Ambedkar, Constituent Assembly Debates, home political files preserved in the National Archives, Ambedkar's letters—both published and unpublished and the Constitution of India. The secondary sources of the study included a wide range of materials like books, articles, papers, biographies etc. written by persons who had direct contact with Ambedkar. The works of the scholars and social scientists who have researched on Ambedkar and the Dalit movement were also used to enrich the observations of the investigator.

**The Tool and Technique**

Apart from the documentary sources of data the investigator gathered the views and observations of scholars and social activists who have done some work on Ambedkar movement or have involved in the Dalit social actions in India. This was done using an interview schedule which consisted of four open ended questions on Ambedkar's social and educational ideals and the movement led by him. The interview questions were finalised after thorough discussion with experts in the NCERT and those in the state or regional level who have established their authority in qualitative research.

The investigator also adopted the technique of field visit to collect relevant information on some of the educational institutions founded by Dr. Ambedkar.
These information were sought under different categories such as aims and objectives, functioning and achievements of these institutions.

**Collection, Organisation and Analysis of Data**

The documentary data were collected by visiting many institutions, organisations and libraries across the country. Information from primary and secondary sources were meticulously collected from these institutions. The interview schedule was administered both personally and by post. As the return from the mailed interview schedule was not appreciative, only the data gathered from face to face interview have been utilised. Through the field visit, information on the aims, functioning and achievement of two educational institutions and the Peoples Education Society founded by Ambedkar were collected with respect to the dimensions fixed for this purpose.

The data thus obtained from different sources were organised under the two major categories, namely the social thoughts and educational ideals of Ambedkar. Relevant sub-categories were also established under the major headings for the sake of precise organisation and ready retrieval of the data for analysis.

As part of the historical analysis, the literary sources were subjected to external and internal criticisms to fix the authenticity and validity of the data. The primary sources used for the study have been published by the state and central government departments or related agencies under the editorship of eminent and distinguished scholars and social scientists reputed in their concerned field. The acceptability of the material contained in the literary sources was decided upon, by examining how far they have been
used or quoted in standard work on related topics, by distinguished authors. The secondary sources utilised for the study were authored by scholars who have established authority in their own fields of work. The works have been found to be referred in many articles and other similar works. The data collected from these sources were also compared with the statements of other scholars.

Interpretation of Data

The data, after having tested for their authenticity and validity were subjected to interpretation in the light of the problem under investigation. This task involved a thorough examination of Ambedkar's conception of social and political issues as well as that of education. How he interrelated all these domains was also studied, with special stress on how he conceived education as an instrument for the emancipation of the Dalits. While drawing conclusions on this ground, his social location, protest movement and its ideological basis, his struggle to establish rights of the Dalits, and his educational projects for the uplift of the downtrodden people were studied in depth. And within this background, the philosophy underlying his trio slogan of action, 'Educate Agitate Organise' has also been subjected to exhumation.

The problem of the study was situated in the terrain of an emerging political chemistry of India where many conflicting ideologies were working to establish their own dominion. During Ambedkar's time the country was on its threshold of modernisation with different paradigms of progress clashing on the social, political, cultural and economic fronts. In this problematics, Ambedkar was faced with the critical question of identity of the Dalit
movement. The interpretation of the data was carried out by keeping in mind this historical location of the problem of the study. Thus, in the present study Ambedkar formed not only the object of inquiry. He has also been taken as one of the informants who speaks to us from the very social location of his life and struggle. Many comparisons have been attempted while making observations and interpretation, particularly with regard to his protest movement, his conceptions on various aspects of social reconstruction and his personality. While tracing the evolution of Ambedkarism and the positioning of Ambedkar in the politics of India a comparison has been attempted between the Ambedkar of his early years of social actions and the Ambedkar as the Dalits ideologue in the later phase of his life. His internlisation of various philosophical strands of his time has also been traced. The study has made the investigator convinced of the fact that the social and educational thoughts of Ambedkar cannot be studied in isolation with each other. The theoretical as well as enactive aspects of his social and educational involvement are so interrelated that they interact, mutually influence and supplement each other. This inter relationship also has been established as far as possible. In addition to this an attempt has been made to reconstruct the inner meanings conveyed by the information gathered, with a view to make the interpretation comprehensive and more meaningful.

**Major Findings of the Study**

The thoughts and actions of Ambedkar in relation to the social and educational arena of the country of his time are so comprehensive, innumerable and complex, that it would be rather difficult to merely enumerate
or enlist the major findings drawn by the investigator from the analysis made. However, in order to present the findings as precisely and abruptly as possible, these have been presented under 18 distinct aspects. Each of these aspects has been given a title, followed by a brief classification or explanation meant to elucidate the meaning conveyed by that title. The findings thus summarised are presented in the paragraphs that follow.

1. Spokesman of the Voiceless

Ambedkar was the first untouchable in India who rose in the national politics and made critical contribution in deciding the direction of the country's progress, particularly in safeguarding the interests of the downtrodden people who had been denied all social and human rights and had been thrown to the abyss of social degradation for centuries. Leading the protest movements of the Dalits for achieving their rights on one hand and participating in the government in various capacities, he raised the voice of the downtrodden masses on all fronts - religious, social, educational and economic. He placed the demands of the Dalits undeniably in the legislatures and other decision making bodies of both colonial and post independence governments in India. He wanted that the untouchables should have a share in the self government without which the freedom of the country would remain the freedom of the governing class to rule the servile class.

2. The Distinct Identity of the Dalits

The Dalits who formed the marginalised people in India were variously known as chandalas, untouchables, depressed classes, scheduled castes or harijans and have been discriminated for centuries. Ambedkar considered
this corpus of people as a special set who were located outside the fold of the Hindu religion and who constituted a distinct section in the Indian population in terms of history, society and culture. The Dalits have been outcasts and never have been in the four fold varna system of the Hindus. Ambedkar never agreed to the view that the Dalits had emerged from the shudras, the fourth varna. Rather, he considered them to be the 'Broken Men' who emerged out of the continuous feuds between the tribal groups as a result of which the defeated tribes were broken into segments that formed the untouchables who occupied the outskirts of the villages of the settled tribes in the course of history. The untouchables were not only outside the pale of Hinduism but were even denied the rights of human beings. Thus, Ambedkar located the Dalits as separate from the Hindus and other Indians, as a distinct group socially, politically and culturally. He firmly held the ideological position that the interests of the Dalits are not the same as those of the Hindus, Muslims, Christians and any other segment of the Indian population. Accordingly, he argued that they should be treated as a separate entity and should be provided adequate safeguards for their overall progress that had been obstructed historically by different forces in the society.

3. A new style of social criticism

Ambedkar struggled to free himself and the Dalits from the confines of the metaphysics of Hinduism. Although he seemed to have failed in his project for the collective emancipation of the Dalits, he did inaugurate a new phase of their struggle against the odds in the society, through a powerful critique of the foundation of the Hindu social order. Central to his critique of Hinduism
is the emphasis on the fragmentation of the Hindu social order, its graded inequality, hierarchy of castes, absolutism, and wholeness. This perspective arises as a result of Ambedkar's contention that there are no fixed immutable truths. Rather, truths exist as a matter of individual perspective and are in turn placed upon by social and cultural forces. Ambedkar's multiplicity of style allows for truth to be embodied in a diverse range of assorted options and maxims. What is true about these is neither their mutually agreed upon fixity or absoluteness, nor their social importance; rather, what is more significant is the conviction with which the individual posits, invents and develops these truths, through his/her autonomy of reason.

Ambedkar recognises that truths/norms held by the masses exist because of social and cultural forces, that is, they are born of historical conditions. The social forces play heavily upon the acceptance of norms but they might become quite insignificant when they are intelligently tested by the individual. Social and cultural forces do not create the truths that are necessarily acceptable to the individual. As Dewey has pointed out the self affirming individual creates his or her own truths and then tests them against the predominant truths of the masses before accepting or rejecting them. Ambedkar argued that there can be no fixity of norms, norms should change with changes in time and circumstances. Nor did he value each and every truth as equal. He took upon himself the task of being a cultural critic of his age and juxtaposed the accepted truths with deviant ones in order to expose the truths for their contextual nature. In this way he rejected the truths established by the Hindu philosophy and knowledge system, and turned the truths in favour of the Dalits in order to overcome the upper caste domination.
Thus he brought to light the truths of the Dalits which had been so far mystified by the Hindu hegemonic socio-cultural truths, and tried to apply these to level the field of the national life. This levelling of the field allowed the Dalit truths to compete with other socially constructed ones and also strengthened the worthiness of the Dalits who had, for centuries, been remaining in a perpetual conflict with the social, cultural and historical forces that obstructed their progress.

4. Transvaluation of values

Ambedkar's criticism of the prevailing Hindu social order and culture is primarily an issue of morals. His particular concern is the state of the cultural decadence which, in his own terms, is traceable to the origin of untouchability and the establishment of the Brahminic hegemony which was forged through a counter revolution against Buddhism. Characteristically it is this tendency that Ambedkar wanted the Dalits to overcome through the Nietzschean 'will to power' or Foucauldian 'will to knowledge'. It was the same opposition to the creation of absolutes and idealisation of the real or the realisation of the ideal that provoked him to transvaluate values. He admitted no a priori truths and no canonical valuations or fixed principles of justice.

Ambedkar insists that no norm can be permanently fixed and there must be room for revaluation of the values or norms. His resolute will and disbelief in a fixed and canonical ethic, together with his scorn of the Hindu doctrines and socio-cultural premises has led him to challenge the prevailing valuations in a hitherto novel manner. Because Ambedkar argues for an overcoming or revaluation of the dominant values, through a reversal of what is to be
considered good. He recognises a tendency in the Hindus to idealise the 'so called' real, which in most cases is full of inequities, and is very selfish, criminal, anti-social and perpetuating the inequity on the ground that whatever is once settled is settled for all times. One of Ambedkar's resolute goals is to champion the self-reasoned, overcoming individual. This points to the way to an overturning of the prevalent socio-cultural valuations that he considered hegemonic, decadent and lamentable. He considered education as a process that would assist the self-overcoming individual or the class to overcome hither-to accepted valuations, and would serve as a medium for the transmission of new values.

5. Religion as a transformative force

Ambedkar conceptualised religion as a collective force that is inseparable from the society and propounds an ideal scheme of governance aimed at making a democratic social order and as well as a moral order. The concept of religion, he considered as discursive in its nature, because it has passed through many stages with no fixed meaning. In the first phase, religion had been identified with magic, as it was unable to explain the natural phenomena like lightning, rain, flood etc. Then the religion turned to be derivative with beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, prayers and sacrifices, all of which centred around a super natural power. Later this power was identified with or called God or the Creator. This was followed by the belief that individual has a soul and the soul is eternal and answerable to God for human actions in the world. Thus the present day religion has come to being with belief in God, belief in the soul, worship of God, curing of the erring soul, propiliating God by prayers, ceremonies, sacrifices etc. But Ambedkar did not believe in such kind of a
religion, because it is concerned with revealing of the beginning of the things or exploring the origin of the world and therefore, the action of morality is casual and occasional, and hence not effective. He sought a religion which could reconstruct the world and could serve the social utility and justice for the individual.

Ambedkar asserted that the religion should function as a social force to provide an ideal scheme to be followed. The ideal may be non existent in the sense that it is something which has been constructed but it would exist as real also, as it has full operative force which is inherent in every ideal. In short, religion should enable the society to realise the ideal. But the ideal is not an utopia, however, it can be considered as a negative utopia, as the ideals he insisted were the principles of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice.

Ambedkar could realise, both through his life experience and his exposition of the Hindu scriptures, that Hinduism did not give a positive result on the tests of utility and justice. He found no scope for liberty, equality, fraternity and justice in the Hindu religious order, as it had been founded on a theology which perpetuated graded inequality in all spheres of social life. The only religion that Ambedkar found suitable for the modern society is Buddha's Dhamma which he did not even consider as a 'religion' in the classical sense of the term, because the Dhamma did not place any supernatural force at its centre, did not believe in God, soul, sacrifices or the infalibility of the books of Dhamma itself.

6. Aryan race: A colonial construction

Ambedkar rejected the theory of the Aryan race, Aryan invasion of India and the non Aryan identity of the untouchables. He did not consider the
Aryans as a race at all, rather they were a linguistic group. The Aryan race, according to Ambedkar is only a construction, based upon a gratuitous colonial assumption which had taken it for granted that the Indo Germanic people are the purest of the modern representatives of the original 'Aryan race' and that their first home had been some where in Europe. This assumption posses a possible question, 'how could the Aryan speech come to India' for which the answer was the theory of invasion. The colonial discourse characterised the colonised cultures as inferior to the western culture. Thus the theory constructed the Europeans as Aryans, and hence it argued that their culture is superior to the Asiatic culture. The theory of invasion of India by the Aryans and the conquest of the Dasas and Dasyus by them also had been constructed to establish the superiority of the Europeans.

Again, Ambedkar rejected the assumption that there existed a colour prejudice among the Aryans who came to India. This assumption he attributed to the scholastic error in reading and equating the word 'Varna' with 'colour'. He regarded the theory of the Aryan race as baseless and a perversion of scientific investigation. The existence of an Aryan race is only an inference, their common habitat is an inference from an inference, the theory of invasion is only a baseless European construction. The acceptance of Aryans as a race in India exposes the disposition of the elite intelligentia in the country and their subjectivity to the colonial knowledge. It was meant to provide some 'scientific' base to their claim that the upper castes are superior to the shudras and the untouchables, and to allow them to establish a kinship with the Europeans and share their arrogance and superiority. It would also help them even by considering the Aryas as invaders and conquerors of the non Aryans,
in maintaining and justifying their overlordship over the servile classes. In recent times this propensity has been revealed in the theorisation within the discourse of cultural nationalism which not only assumes 'Aryan race' as a reality, but even attempts to establish that the original home of the Aryans was no other country than India. India was once the country or land which the Indians (Sindhus) inhabited. But, the cultural nationalist theorisation has the potential to turn the Indians as the people who inhabited 'Hindustan' or 'Hindu'stan.

7. Caste as an artificial chopping of the society that prevented progress

Ambedkar considered caste as a unique system on which the Hindu society was constructed. For him the genesis of caste was an artificial chopping off of the people into fixed and definite units, each one being prevented from fusing into another, by insisting on the custom of endogamy. He identified the origin of caste with the origin of endogamy. The Indian society was primarily exogamous as there was a tendency for all groups to be in close contact with one another and to assimilate and amalgate and thus consolidate into a homogenous society. This tendency, he observes, has been counteracted by the superimposition of endogamy over the exogamy, which resulted in the excommunication of different cultural groups in the society. Ambedkar's cultural analysis reveals that the modern castes have evolved from the varna system not as a result of the economic division, though it involves also the economic exploitation of lower casts by the upper castes. Rather, the caste came into existence through the process of self-enclosing by the varnas, which was initiated as a cultural artifice by the hegemonic priestly class to perpetuate
their domination. The other varnas had to follow the priestly class as the process of enclosing involves the process of exclusion or ‘othering’, which in a sense made other classes into self-enclosed or exclosed castes. The enclosing around the endogamy can be seen as a discursive mechanism as it decided what kind of relations must be established among different social groups. It prohibited social intercourse between different classes by preventing intermarriage, interdining etc. and made each social group an island resulting in the chopping of a larger cultural unit into segments.

The multiplicity or spread of caste as seen in the present form was due to the infection of imitation, observed Ambedkar. The lower castes simply imitated the upper castes, as the propensity to imitate was conditioned by the status and prestige the preiestly class enjoyed in the society. The cast cannot exist singularly, because, as the process of its genesis and the mechanism of its proleferation are pre-determined it can exist only with in plural numbers, asserted Ambedkar. In other words, while turning into a caste, the Brahmin class created the non Brahmin castes too, that is, while enclosing themselves they were closing others out.

Ambedkar perceived caste system as a regressive force in the course of the economic and social progress of India. Through concepts like endogamy, fixity of occupation and birth as the arbiter of social status it denied freedom to the individual. As the industrial development depended on the availability of free labourers, the hereditary occupation and bounded labour has to give way for individual's freedom in choosing his/her livelihood. In other words, social and occupational mobility is a prerequisite for economic development.
Thus, the caste system not only prevented the upward mobility of the individual but it also stood in the way of economic progress. This is why Ambedkar emphasised the annihilation of the caste as the true way to free the individual from bounded occupation and to enable him/her to the industrial profession and thereby to ensure the social and economic progress of the country.

8. Untouchability: A religious artifice of the hegemonic class

Ambedkar's theory of untouchability marks his rejection of the race and occupation as the basis of this social scourge. He had also repudiated the theory of racial difference and division of labour while expounding the origin of the shudras and their social degradation. Ambedkar's cultural analysis of ancient India situates untouchability within the problematics of religious prohibitions which has been functioning as a discursive mechanism that obstructed what could be said, learnt or done by a large portion of the members or classes of the society. He pointed out this particular interdiction that produced the stigma of untouchability, put a category of people outside the pale of social intercourse for all the generations to come.

The religion is viewed by Ambedkar as a system of beliefs and practices that promulgated interdictions or taboos associated with certain sacred things. The most notable of the multiplicity of religious interdictions is the one on contact, which is based on the principle that the profane should never touch the sacred. The untouchables being considered as profane were under severe penalties from their access to the sacreds of the Hindus. The Hindus were even prohibited from seeing the untouchables, because a contact can take
place through a look. The untouchables were denied access to the sacredness of the vedas also, for, the vedas would get polluted by the contact of the untouchables through their spoken words which are generated by the breath of individuals. The Hindus cannot consume the food cooked by the untouchables, because it would cause a more intimate contact of the profane through absorption of the food.

Ambedkar argued that beef eating and untouchability are intimately related. The interdiction on beef eating came into being as an artifice of the Brahmins, the priestly class, in countering the Buddhist ideals which strongly opposed the Yajna and animal sacrifices that resulted in the depletion of the cattle wealth. Like many other historians, he too points out that the people in ancient India including the Brahmins used to eat beef. The religious interdiction on beef eating then came into being as a mechanism to serve the interest of the class which abandoned eating of beef. Ambedkar explained that the untouchables have been 'Broken Men' who had been Buddhists and that Buddhism did not impose any prohibition on the food habit of the common people. The abandoning of beef eating by the upper castes and turning of the Brahmins as vegetarians was a malicious act of the Hindus to counter the Buddhists from getting social acceptability, observed Ambedkar. He traced the origin of untouchability back to the period of the Guptas and not beyond 400 AD. This has a critical significance as the Gupta age is considered as the 'golden age' of India. Ambedkar's situating the origin of untouchability during the period of the Gupta reign suggests that the so-called 'golden age' of India, was only the golden age of Hinduism, because it witnessed the all time revival of Hinduism by engineering a 'counter revolution against Buddhism'.
The emergence of untouchability and its maintenance through the practice of religious interdictions on beef eating, and by the denial of knowledge, power as well as social and human rights to the untouchables embody a cultural artifice or a discursive mechanism adopted by the hegemonic class to perpetuate their domination.

9. The idealogue of protective discrimination

Ambedkar's position that the untouchables form a distinct social group distinguishable by its outcaste identity, historically identified subjectivity, social disabilities, lack of hereditary capital in terms of wealth, knowledge and power, and the unarbitrary choice of occupation was extremely radical. This interpretation among other things has become instrumental in establishing the system of affirmative action in favour of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in India. Ambedkar had emphasised the need for establishing minority status and adequate representation in the legislature for the depressed classes from the very beginning when he submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission in 1928. This position he had been upheld throughout his life and he had fought for their constitutional safeguards not only in the form of adult suffrage but also in terms of provision for reservation of seats in legislatures and local governing bodies, as well as in the educational institutions and government services. The constitutional provision for affirmative action can be seen as an effort to redress the effect of a stringent discrimination against the Dalits in the past, to make alteration in the present form of discrimination and to promote diversification leading to the creation of a pluralistic society.

The scheme of affirmative action suggested by Ambedkar is outcome-
directed or goal-oriented and direct. He fixed the target in terms of percentage and number. For instance, he urged the government to reserve definite percentage of vacancies in government services or seats in the educational institutions or constituencies of the legislatures for the depressed classes according to their proportion in the total population of the country. Ambedkar perceived that it is through such positive discrimination that the society can compensate the cultural or social capital which had been denied to the depressed classes for centuries due to the unequal distribution of knowledge and power. He held that for the development of all sections of society, a discriminative treatment is to be adopted in favour of the people who are weak in their social inheritance or endowment in order to bring them to the level of equality with other sections of the society. Treating them as equal to those in whose favour there is birth, education, family, name, business connection and inherited wealth and subjecting both these groups to an 'equal' treatment would only give advantage to the privileged and prevent the progress of the depressed classes.

10. Education of the masses is the responsibility of the government

Ambedkar regarded the government as the machinery of the welfare state accountable for the education of the people, particularly for their primary education, as education is the dynamic force leading to national development. Education in one sense is the means of cultivation of the moral and cultural values of the citizens, which in turn would enhance their social nobility with a limited capital. A large chunk of the Indian population, particularly the Dalits and the Backward Classes, had no access to educational facilities and hence
they had been thrown to the darkness of illiteracy. Ambedkar asserted that education of the masses was the responsibility of the government. Accordingly, he urged that education should be brought within the reach of everyone by making it as inexpensive as possible.

Participating in the Bombay Assembly discussion on educational matters, Ambedkar suggested to enhance the allotment on education in commensurate with the increase in the number of pupils and their educational requirements. He demanded the government to set aside a large proportion of the excise revenue collected from the people, for primary education. The object of primary education, he opined, should be to make children literate and enable them to continue to be literate through the rest of their life. This focus on literacy as the objective of primary education is much revealing. For, the value of education had never been recognised by the common people. They had been denied education through multiple ways - through social, political and cultural discriminations. Education was a luxury of the well to do members of the society; the caste system together with untouchability had denied social and educational rights to the Dalits. The British reign too pursued a policy of education based on a crude theory of filtration of knowledge from the upper castes down to the lowest strata of the society which they themselves knew was impracticable. The result of all these was the creation of almost total illiteracy among the Dalits.

Ambedkar's emphasis on literacy had still another dimension. The spread of knowledge depended upon literacy and formal education. Without formal education, transmission of the resources and achievements of a complex society are found to suffer. Ambedkar observed that the accumulated thoughts and experiences cannot be made accessible to the young in any indirect way
and they would never get it if they are left to pick up their training in informal association with others. The young generation should be exposed to new perceptions in order to widen their horizon. Hence he argued that literacy and formal education should go hand in hand under the coordinated efforts of the government.

11. Continued discrimination as the chief cause of the educational backwardness of the Dalits

Although education had always been a celebrated item of cultural resource in India, it had been denied to the Dalits from ancient to the modern times by imposing a purposive discrimination. The Hindu social order in general and the Hindu education system in particular kept the Dalits outside the boundaries of vedic knowledge. The medieval dynasties could not change the conditions of the Dalits, even though they had challenged the Hindu social order politically. The elite hegemony in education continued unabated during the colonial reign also. The British policy of education which held the field for about one and half centuries put emphasis only to the education of the upper castes, hoping that education would filter down to the lower strata of society. Though the colonial government reiterated its responsibility for the education of the masses and even opened schools for the depressed classes in a later stage it did not open the channel of education for the Dalits, due to the organised countering by the upper castes. The government, though it did not exclude the depressed classes from the schools, did nothing concretely to lift the social ban on their education.

Ambedkar drew the attention of the colonial government to the
discrimination pursued by them in the matter of the education of the Dalits. He observed that quantitatively the Dalits occupied the last and the least place in educational development in contrast to the Brahmins and allied castes who occupied a very high position on the educational graph, followed by the Mahammadens. Ambedkar attributed this disparity of educational growth among different communities, to the British policy of filteration of education which gave advantage to the upper caste, and to their purposeful favouring of the Muslims. Despite the adoption of the Compulsory Primary Education Act 1923, education remained to be as voluntary as it had been before and continued to be the luxury of the elites. There were no practical measures to implement the act by the government, nor was there any time frame to achieve this goal. Moreover, the transfer of the control and management of primary education from the provincial government to the local bodies was detrimental to the education of the depressed classes. The common belief that education is a preprogative of the Brahmins stood in the way of recognising the vital necessity of education for all. Under the local bodies, the bias against education of the Dalits became more operational, as there was no mechanism to ensure that the depressed classes were not excluded from schools. The education of the Dalits was thus left to chance. The social bias and governmental discrimination at the policy and implementation levels worked against the educational possibilities of the Dalits though that was high lighted by the social reformers of the time.


Ambedkar conceived education as an operational force in constituting the social life of the people, it being a source of social status and power.
More than the epistemological concerns of education he emphasised its material elements as a factor contributing to the improvement of the social conditions of the depressed classes. He did not want the Dalits to be confined to the boundaries of primary education. Of course, he did recognise the importance of universalisation of primary education in the specific context of India's backwardness, but he projected higher education of the Dalits as a significant object of his educational projects. Thus, not only did he establish many higher education centres but also presented his cause in the legislature and relevant government bodies.

Ambedkar firmly held that advanced education, particularly science and technical education, is a potential force in effecting changes in the socio-economic conditions of the Dalits by placing them in high position in the public services. He found that the welfare of the Dalits depended mainly upon a sympathetic public service. But he asserted that representation of the Dalits in the ministerial posts, even in large numbers, would be of no consequence on the overall enhancement of their social and economic status. It would only provide a career for the educated youth, but would not affect their conditions at large. The status and condition of the Dalits will improve only when they are represented in executive and administrative positions, observed Ambedkar. Because these positions could give strategic directions to government's policies, as well as planning and implementation of development programmes. Education, in general would help the Dalits to overcome their poverty by placing them in employment and by awakening their consciousness and thereby enabling them to perceive the real obstacles
in their path and to surpass their inertia and indifference and to get charged with resentment of injustice of their own condition. But, higher education would not only help them to remove the elements that obstruct their progress but also simultaneously enhance their status and the conditions that would lead them to prosperity.

13. Dalits require special educational safeguards

As has been seen afore a multiplicity of discriminative forces were operating against the social, economic, educational and political progress of the Dalits. The Dalits had been denied their social and political rights and had been placed outside the boundaries of knowledge from ancient through medieval to the modern times. The discriminative education policy pursued by the colonial government only affected their educational progress apathetically. Moreover, education had become a prerogative of the elites in terms of access and cost. The rules of prohibition imposed on the Dalits through untouchability not only resulted in their social boycott but had even denied them rights to lead a life as human beings. Operating on this problematics Ambedkar struggled hard to protect the social, political and educational rights of the depressed classes.

He demanded special safeguards for promoting education of the Dalits and urged the British government to extend the benefit of the discriminative favour adopted for the education of the Muslims, to the Dalits also. Ambedkar held the view that only such a discriminative approach with special provisions and incentives for the Dalits and backward classes can make good of the past social discrimination and bring all the communities to the level of 'equality'.
He insisted that the scholarship grant for the Backward classes including the Dalits be appropriated for each community separately. This suggestion was certainly aimed at ensuring the money allocated for the Dalits to be spent for them only. Establishment of separate hostels for the scheduled caste students was another proposal. He emphasised also the appointment of special inspecting staff to look to the educational needs of the Dalits and to motivate them to join educational institutions. For the higher education of the Dalits he proposed provision of scholarships for taking up studies in the universities in India as well as abroad.

In order to ensure admission of the scheduled caste students in technical and higher education institutions Ambedkar demanded reservation of one fourth of the total number of seats in these institutions for those scheduled caste candidates who have acquired a minimum standard of education required for admission. He also suggested freeship or scholarship for them. Further, he demanded that the Central Advisory Board of Education should study the educational problems of the scheduled castes as special interest group, frame recommendations and advise the central and state governments to take up measures to promote their education.

Ambedkar urged the universities to be mindful to the economic condition of the Backward Communities and to rethink about their simultaneous examination system, for it would keep the students away from the class rooms and ultimately away from the portals of university education itself. The students of these communities would not be able to pass in all papers at one shot because they would have to work and to earn in the day time to add to their
family earnings. He also demanded free concession for these students. Thus, Ambedkar appealed to the government to make school education as well as higher education a reality for the backward communities by all possible means; otherwise education of these classes would remain on the fence.

14. **Universities are centres of scientific knowledge and cooperative learning**

Ambedkar being a thinker of liberal critical tradition, emphasised the scientific nature of knowledge. Accordingly he perceived the universities as the sites of scientific knowledge, accountable to create an atmosphere of learning and research that would cultivate critical mindedness in students and teachers. The aim of university education, he asserted, is not merely to fill the minds of the students with facts or theories; it should bring out their own individuality and stimulate them to engage themselves in mental efforts. Rather it should be scientific, detached and impartial, should accustom the students to the critical study of the leading authorities, should impart in them a standard of thoroughness, and should give them a sense of value of reaching at truth. The students need to be so trained that they should be able to distinguish between what may fairly be a matter of fact or a mere matter of opinion, to distinguish between different issues and to look at separate questions each on its own merits with a critical mind. Instead of blindly agreeing with some accepted theory while analysing a problematic situation, they should exhibit the ability and willingness even to deviate from the treaded path and to critically evaluate theories and ideas before they are accepted or rejected on the basis of logical arguments and critical judgement.
The failure in realising the aims of university education he attributed partly to the spirit and method of the teacher, partly to the students and partly to the conditions antecedent to students' entrance to the university. But to him the main causes of the failure rest with the educational machinery – both academic and administrative. University should be essentially a place of cooperative learning where scholars labour in comradeship for training of the younger generation and for the advancement and diffusion of knowledge. A university cannot achieve its objectives unless it creates an atmosphere to inculcate the love for learning and is focused on teaching and research side by side. Ambedkar categorically stated that research in the university would suffer if it is divorced from teaching. The standard of the university education depends on the standing of the teaching staff, he remarked. Hence the universities and colleges have not only to appoint qualified persons, but at the same time the academic staff need to be rewarded by considering their depth of scholarship and not by their length of service. However, a collaborative, friction-free teaching-learning culture is indispensable to promote the educational environment and the intellectual life of the universities.

15. University and the community

Ambedkar preferred universities to be centralised institutions with various departments of studies at close proximity, which, he thought would facilitate the teaching-learning process an interdepartmental endeavour and thus avoid the wastage of resources and promote the standard of university
education in a better and meaningful way. However, he emphasised the need to strengthen the relation between the university and the community. No university, he asserted, can function effectively if it is cut off from the community. The importance of nurturing the needs of the pluralistic society in India has become an inevitable function of universities. This presumption is reflected in Ambedkar's assertion that the university, an agency of higher education has to promote the knowledge and mutual interest in tune with the history and culture of different communities.6

The best way to link the university with the community is to allow the community to have a say in its functioning, Ambedkar asserted. If the university as a corporation of learning is to serve the community, its constitution must provide for (i) a body which will keep it in touch with all varied requirements of the community, (ii) a body which will give the university a statesman-like guidance for binging about a working compromise between the possible misconceptions of the public and the possibly too narrow outlook of the scholars and (iii) a body of the scholars engaged in the work of teaching to give authority to the academic business of the university. These three bodies correspond respectively to the Senate, Syndicate and Faculties of a university.

Ambedkar's scheme of organisation of the above three bodies is primarily based on the principle of segregation of powers. The centre of legislative power is the Senate, that of the executive power is the Syndicate and that of academic power is the Faculty. However, from the view point of community interest, he gave more importance to the Senate, it being the direct link between
the community and the university organisation. He perceived the Senate as the supreme governing body of the university mainly non professional in nature but with the representatives of graduates and teachers. The Senate with representatives from different strata of society can serve as a channel linking the university and the community as a whole, and can support the university, with greater authority and success as the whole community will be interested in its success. The function of the Senate, he categorically stated, is not to control the education, its content and method, but to keep the university in touch with all the varied requirements of the community.

16. **People's Education Society: An alternative organisation for the education of the deprived**

Ambedkar's establishment of the People's Education Society was a pioneering step in promoting Dalits' education. Though started with a view to utilise the government grants in a lasting way for the education of the Dalits, the society has taken up the aim of promoting the education of the poor by providing all possible facilities. The society has been running a number of institutions which include schools, colleges, research centres and hostels in Maharashtra. One of the striking features of these institutions is that they cater to the educational needs of the poorest section of the society. Ambedkar was keenly aware that many of the backward class students discontinued their studies to take up some kind of work to provide additional income for the sustenance of their family. The night schools and the evening courses in some of the colleges of the Society help many of such unfortunate students to continue their studies without giving up their efforts to do some employment during the day time to support their family.
Besides, the Society offers a number of scholarships and freeships to the deserving students studying in various institutions. The Society also appropriates a good sum towards the scholarships for the scheduled caste students studying in its colleges. Moreover, the Society not only runs its own students' hostels attached to its different colleges but also provides financial assistance to several hostels situated in the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat. Ambedkar thought that these special hostels for the depressed class students, would wean the children from the evil surroundings in which they grow up and would provide effective inspection of their studies especially in the context of untouchability. Thus, People's Education Society stands as an alternative agency for promoting education of the variously deprived sections of the society.

17. Educate Agitate Organise: The philosophy of Ambedkar movement

The object of Ambedkar movement was primarily the emancipation and progress of the Dalits, the dehumanised section of Indian population. Ambedkar put his message of social reconstruction through the triumvirate 'Educate Agitate Organise' which became the symbol of the movement he led for the liberation of his people. It denotes the epistemology of his project, as it provides a context against which the rules and standards governing knowledge about the society and the individual could be evaluated. The slogan also helps to see how Ambedkar perceived the complexities of power/knowledge in relation to social change.

Education here implies an awakening of the self or consciousness which he considered indispensable for the individual to realise the condition in
which he/she is constituted. It rather connotes a deschooling of the minds which had been schooled in the traditional knowledge system. Schooling in the 'Brahminic tradition' produced the individual in the context of the historically constructed ways of reasoning which was primarily based as the principles of inclusion/exclusion. This has resulted in the creation of a social order built entirely on the rules of graded inequality. Therefore, the kind of education Ambedkar envisaged embodies a range of values, priorities and dispositions about how one should see and act in the society or world, not to reinterpret but to reconstruct it.

Education when it enables the individual to see his/her realities, results in an agitation. That is, it charges the individual with resentment of the injustice he/she is bound to suffer and thus drives him/her to actions to resettle what had been settled wrongly. Thus, to be educated is not to be disciplined according to the established regimen of remembering and forgetting; it is not assuming identities normalised through discursive practices and of the history of the predictable Hindu mythology. Education should develop the consciousness that enable the individual to see how he/she has been constituted in an abstract, unreasoned and socially identified manner suitable to the established order. Therefore, Ambedkar wanted the Dalits to become conscious or self reasoned about their conditions and to agitate against the established order through organisation of their political power. He perceived education as power and looked for this power to be developed among the Dalits and to enable them apply knowledge to intervene in social life. Thus Ambedkar's contemplation of education as an instrument of social change would enable the Dalits to have vision and revision and to act against the
forces that perpetuate their dehumanising conditions. In this sense, his trio-
slogan of action, Educate Agitate Organise, with its focus on the faculties of 
 thinking, feeling and acting of the social person, epitomises the philosophy 
underlying the Ambedkar movement.

18. Education as an instrument of construction of modernity

Ambedkar's social reconstruction project which inseparably is 
intertwined with awakening of the masses, emphasised the centrality of 
education in the construction of modernity in India. His engagement in the 
deconstruction of the inequalitarian Hindu social order and upper caste 
hegemony made him realise that education is a powerful instrument in the 
process of emancipation of the Dalits. Ambedkar's interest in education, 
however, was much more direct and pragmatic. He analysed the existing 
order so critically, rather very radically, that its implication on the life of the 
down trodden people was revealed to him in a very perceptible way. He was 
fundamentally interested in the reconstruction of the Indian society, based 
on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. He found that the caste 
system which was built upon the principles of graded inequality, endogamy 
and hereditary occupations and social status of the individual would act as a 
counter force obstructing the construction of modernity in India. Hence he 
had convinced himself that annihilation of caste was a pre-requisite for the 
progress of India, particularly the prosperity of the Dalits.

Ambedkar firmly projected development of a rationally autonomous 
in individual as the spirit of his liberal conception regarding the purpose of 
education. He realised the instrumentality of education as a process of
liberation for the Dalits from the indoctrination, domestication and domination to which they had been subjected by the Hindu society. The colonial rule had only strengthened and reproduced the inegalitarian social relations that kept the Dalits in a dehumanised condition. Ambedkar employed education and organised social actions with a view to empower the Dalits, to awaken their consciousness about the forces that obstructed their progress and to prepare them for social reconstruction, which was aimed at creating a history of different modes by which human beings could be made the subjects of knowledge.

Ambedkar kept strong allegiance to the ideals of enlightment, 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 found that the existing social order had been built on graded inequality and it neither reflected the values of a free society nor was bound to promote the rational autonomy of the individual. He considered the caste system as the most powerful force that prevented the progress of the country. Acting upon this problematics, Ambedkar movement opened up a new phase of enlightenment in India, which constituted the ideology of the Dalit movement. This ideology was so radical in its approach that it placed the people directly in to the knowledge about social reconstruction, and enabled them to challenge the reigning notions of theology and chances of birth as arbiters of the status of individual and social progress. It gave continuing attention to the subjects as well as the subjected who had been included or excluded respectively by the imposition of untouchability. For Ambedkar, education was not simply socialisation, rather
he perceived it as intertwined with power. Hence he contemplated education as a process of development and growth, a process of emancipation concerned with realising the potential of the individual in order to meet the needs of the society, necessitated by the forces of historical process, that is, to work for the creation of modernity. Social reconstruction was his message, education was his means and politics was his practice.

Conclusion

Ambedkar's life and struggle epitomise the war which is being fought for the emancipation and empowerment of the marginalised people in India. Ambedkar movement did open a new phase of social struggle in the country, which has been identified as the Dalit movement. In this perspective Ambedkarism is a living force which in its course of evolution placed the people directly into the knowledge about the social change antecedent to the development of modernity in India. It not only challenged the reigning notions that theology and chances of birth are the arbiters of progress but also gave continuing attention to the subjects or the subjected who had been included or excluded respectively, through the practice of a graded inequality in all spheres of life. The axiomatics of Ambedkarism accepted no knowledge as absolute or final. Hence he did not hold any value or norm as absolute, static or infallible. It rather argued for the transvaluation of the value system and rejected the traditional valuations which had been processed on the principle of graded inequality in contrast to the principles of liberty, equality and justice. The social epistemology of Ambedkarism stressed the moralisation or socialisation of the people in the context of the changes necessitated by the
historical forces. At the same time it contemplated education as an instrument of social change. Thus within the metaphysical perspective, education becomes a process of development and growth - liberal or vocational, a process of emancipation that seeks the fullest development of individuals' potential which is intimately related to the progress of the society.

Ambedkarism as a living force of the Dalit movement in India cannot confine itself within the boundaries of caste-class problematics. The new global perspectivism has added the dimensions of culture, gender, region and environment to social struggles. Ambedkar himself had abandoned his early strategy of fighting casteism from within the fold of Hinduism. Nor could mass conversion achieve the collective emancipation of the Dalits. Most of the demands raised by the Ambedkar movement for the uplift of the Dalits have been enshrined in the Constitution of India. All these signify the identity of the Ambedkar movement in the socio-political terrain of the country. But, at the same time atrocities on the Dalits, women and minorities are in ever increase. The very identity of the Dalits is in the process of a redefining. The majority politic does not want to alienate this one time untouchables, for they too have possessed the power of franchise, Thus many of the political rights have been conceded to the Dalits but they are still hesitant in many ways to delegate power and social rights. On the other hand, there are protectors who offer salvation for the Dalits right on this world itself. Thus being politically located or haunted, the Dalits again have to sort out the question of their identity, not within the discourse of religion, but again in the light of Ambedkarism.
Ambedkarism also leaves space for a rereading of the social relations, but not within the perspectivism of the enlightenment's emancipatory project. This is because what has been dominating the culture these years is the realisation that modernism too has failed to emancipate the Dalits collectively. In the new cultural configuration, the images of the 'social reformer' as someone who can provide rational answers to fundamental questions about what the society is and what, the position of the Dalits in it is can no longer be sustained for ever. The social activists of this age have to realise that the certainty with which the social reformers formulated their articulations has now been eradicated so fast and has become untraceable due to the process of mystification. The reformers of the present time do not find anything to reform, the role that the modernity allocated to them can no longer be played. For, the present age is not the age of reformers or reformation, rather it is the age of people, new formations, segmentation and discontinuity.

**Educational Implications**

As in the case of findings, the implications of these to contemporary education have been summarised under five major titles each of which has been elaborated in terms of the salient points to be taken care of for the implementation of the spirit indicated by the title. This discussion follows:

1. **Diverse opportunities and universalisation of elementary education**

Ambedkar's manyfold style supports a view of diversity and argues for diverse opportunities for the individual. In terms of education, this can be viewed as diverse agencies or bodies educating diverse students studying diverse topics in diverse schools. This 'diversity perspective' also imply the
challenge that we have to educate an increasingly diverse student population with different histories, cultural perspectives, expectations, exposures, styles of learning and information processing abilities. The education system requires to meet this challenge with diverse modes of education. But the diversity perspectivism cannot ignore the fact that a large chunk of child the population of school going age are still outside the pale of formal education due to manyfold reasons including social, cultural and economic restrictions. This has led to the development of the system of non formal education with the participation of the non governmental agencies, which works also for the literacy of the masses.

Ambedkar insisted that formal education and literacy should go hand in hand because spread of knowledge depends upon these two prerequisites. In this regard the Minimum Levels of Learning, DPEP, UNDP programmes and the recent Sarva Shiksha Abhyan are significant in ensuring primary education in terms of quantity and quality alike. But ensuring the education of all the children of school going age is still a task before the country. Now education has been recognised as a fundamental right of the citizen, but ensuring education for all requires much more concrete and effective strategies for successful implementation. The constitutional commitment to provide free and compulsory education to all children upto the age of 14 has become simply an institutional response included in various official documents during the past five decades. If this institutional response is to become a reality, committed efforts should be made to provide universal access to education with an obligation to not only universal enrolment but also universal retention.
so as to arrest dropout of children from schools. All this require appropriation of a higher portion of the GDP for education. All these years the educationists and the social activists have been demanding allocation of at least 10% of the GDP as government's allotment for education. Ambedkar himself, as a member of the Bombay Legislative Council had demanded allocation of adequate money for education, particularly primary education.

Commending on the contemporary status of education Ambedkar asserted that object of primary education is to ensure that every child who enters the portals of primary school does leave it only at a stage when it becomes literate and continues to be literate throughout the rest of his/her life. To imply this observation to the current state of primary education in the country, the government have to ensure the opportunities of access to education for all irrespective of caste, creed, gender, region, religion etc. In order to achieve this objective, alternative education systems should be strengthened, side by side with the formal schooling. This is because the needs of the diverse student population cannot be adequately met, simply through the formal means of education, which has already become a difficult task for the government. This warrants the stake and participation of the community in education. The Panchayat Raj Institutions can function as a powerful agency to ensure the stake of the people in education, based on the principles of giving and receiving.

Elementary education should cater to the development of essential life skills and potentials for meeting the basic learning needs of all. It has its implication in curriculum development also, inorder to identify the learning
needs and to make provision for the minimum essential facilities including competent and qualified teachers who can ensure proper transaction of the curriculum to help the children develop competencies require to cope up with the emerging diversity. Children at this initial stage need to be equipped with the attitudes and values suitable for the life in a pluralistic society. In order to achieve these objectives, well concerted efforts are required in all academic areas. But proper planning and an obligation and commitment for its implementation are necessary for the achievement of any project on universalisation of elementary education. Otherwise all the policy decisions in this regard would summarily remain as institutional responses waiting for getting reiterated during the forthcoming decades.

It may be interesting to note that Ambedkar could foresee all these contingencies more than six decades ago and that he had urged the government to take positive steps.

2. Pluralistic education

The perspectivism of diversity focuses on the pluralistic scenario of India which is characterised as having a multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious history. A pluralistic society upholds values and standards of behaviour of its members, which promote human well being. In such a society the youths should be taught not only about morality but also about the plurality, not merely of values but also of the nature of the significance attached to values. Ambedkar would argue that education should function as an agency to promote knowledge and mutual interest in and sympathy for the history and culture of different communities so as to nurture the needs of
the pluralistic society in India. If this goal is to be realised, our schools, colleges and universities cannot impart education that creates mythological discourse, legitimises the hierarchy of castes and preserves the structural relations between social groups based on the principle of graded inequality. Education should envisage not only a change in the structural relation between the individuals but it should also promote changes in the structural relation between social groups. This requires education appropriate for the plurality, which is aimed at developing in the youths a pluralistic attitude by engaging them in a much more active way with diversity.

Pluralistic education implies not just tolerance as reflected in our claim that our's is a society 'characterised as one of the longest surviving culture' in which various groups, each of which has its own way of life, live side by side, by practising tolerance and by seeing unity in diversdity and diversity in unity. On the other hand, it should foster a cluster of discursive virtues and skills that are needed to practise values in daily life. The students have to acquire not only tolerance but the willingness and capacity to engage in arguments about the interpretation and solution of problems, to critically explore their own contribution, to allow others to point out weakness in them, to look for new aspects of the problem at hand, and to listen what others have to say,. Therefore, education in the context of India's pluralistic society should try to nurture the willingness, not only to tolerate, but also to welcome the experience that we never really knew before.

The pluralistic nature of the Indian society requires to bring home the need for adopting diverse pedagogical approaches. This need has been
emphasised as culture specific peagogies in the NCERT's National Curriculum Framework For School Education, 2000. The document lays down that as there is no one universal way in which learners learn, there is strong need for looking into the specific cultural context in which a learner is placed. Pedagogy therefore should be culture specific. Instead of using one uniform, mechanistic way of teaching - learning, cultural practices such as story telling, dramas, puppetry, folk play, community living etc. should become a strong basis of pedagogy. Cultural specificity should get embedded in the pedagogical practices to be evolved for the tribal, rural, urban and other ethnic groups and communities. This would lead to joyful learning and the involvement of school with the local people, their festivals, functions and life styles. But the aim is not to confine specific groups to their own boundaries, rather it is to provide experience traversing the multiple boundaries of culture.

3. The child as a critical thinker and constructor of knowledge

The critical thinking and construction of knowledge are intimately related. The social construction of knowledge has been a significant revealing of the socio-cultural theorisation of education. As the society constructs its own knowledge the individual is constituted in the society's knowledge. Education should enable the individual to know how he/she is constituted in the society. The individual has to became not simply an acquirer of the knowledge constructed by the society, rather he/she should also become a subject by constructing the knowledge. This requires the development of the critical mindedness of the individual. The term 'Critical', in socio - cultural
theorisation refers to a broad band of disciplined questioning of the ways in which power works through the discursive practices and performances of schooling. Ambedkar put stress on the development of critical thinking of the students. For him education is not merely to fill the minds of the students with facts or theories; it is more for developing their own individuality and for stimulating them to mental efforts. Rather, education should accustom the students to approach the facts critically and should impart in their minds a standard of thoroughness and urge them to internalise the value of trying hard to reach truth and thus to construct their own knowledge. The enhanced goals of education proposed in the national curriculum framework for school education also emphasises the child as a constructor of knowledge rather than imitator of the constructed knowledge, in tune with what Ambedkar had said decades ago.

Putting his perception into the perspective of pedagogy Ambedkar emphasised that the students need to be so trained to distinguish between the facts and opinion, to distinguish issues among themselves and to look at separate questions each on its own merits and without any predetermination. This emphasis on critical thinking of the students requires the teachers to relook on their teaching strategies so as to make them commensurate to accomplish the enhanced goals of school education. Development of critical thinking cannot be achieved through mere imitation or memorisation of the content; therefore the students should have opportunities to acquire knowledge through active involvement in the learning process. The learners should have autonomy for their own learning, opportunities for peer collaboration and support, occasions to generat problems that drive the curriculum, time for
self observation and evaluation and outlets for reflection. This would encourage the students to construct their own knowledge and gain new perspectives through personal experiences rather than following prescribed information. This perspectivism recognises the teacher as a facilitator of learning, a guide providing resources for learners and enabling them to decide how to learn and why to learn, rather than dictating what should be done by the students.

It should be pointed out that these implications arising out of the reflections made by Ambedkar are still relevant and unachieved, in spite of our claiming that India has developed into a scientifically and technologically advanced modern nation.

4. Linking cognition, emotion and volition

Ambedkar emphasised that education should enable the individual to develop his/her consciousness which allows the person to become a sentient being. All functions of a sentient being would be performed as a result of consciousness. Ambedkar represented consciousness as cognitive, emotional and volitional at the same time. It is cognitive when it processes information knowledge or events and appreciate or apprehend these. It is emotional when it exists in certain subjective states, characterised by either pleasurable or painful tones, that is, when emotional consciousness produces feelings. Consciousness in its volitional stage makes an individual exert himself/herself for the attainment of some end. Volitional consciousness gives rise to what we call will or activity. Consciousness with these three dimensions enables the individual to see how one is constituted as abstract, scientifically reasoned and socially identified at the same time.
If this triumvirate perception of consciousness is translated in educational terms, there comes the need to facilitate the growth of the learner by promoting the interface between cognition, emotion and action so as to enable the learner to see how he/she is constituted or reconstituted in the society and thus cope up with the rapid changes in all spheres of life. This requires fostering of inter personal and intra personal dealings, rather than mere training in the cognitive skills, though critical it may be. Curriculum planners and teachers have to realise that besides academic underdevelopment there can be another deficiency in the learner, that is the deficiency of emotional consciousness and skills. Cognitive development awakens the learners and enables them to see the obstacles in their path; while the emotional consciousness empower them from within to overcome their inertia and indifference and even the injustice of their own conditions. Without this emotional development individual cannot get rid of the factors that obstruct his/her progress and thereby promote the conditions which will ensure prosperity. Emotionality, though it might be counterproductive at times, can enable the persons to identify themselves with others so as to empathise with them and also to understand the relationships among individuals between individuals and groups and between the groups. The only thing is that the emotional consciousness has to be shaped property in order to achieve these aim.

Education for promoting emotions has been recognised as an essential element of the educational process, in the new national curriculum framework for school education, with the optimism that it can provide information and direction and also facilitate the attainment of goals. It states that the emotional literacy programmes directly alter the levels of success, self esteem and the
same of well being of a person. Nurturance of emotional intelligence, therefore, becomes a prime concern for the makers of school curriculum. Curriculum has to provide learning experiences which help the learner to signify his/her thinking, feeling and will or action. The conception of consciousness as interlinking of three domains of personality development does not hold intelligence as a unitary concept but as a multiple attribute that encompasses the learner's total life and experience not only in the classroom but also in the society outside the school. This perspective of multiple intelligence also recognises the linguistic, critical or logical, mathematical, spatial, bodily, kinesthetic, musical and social skills of the learner as part of a composite personality. Educational institutions have to develop these varied abilities of the learner by providing suitable environment and experience. Schools can provide opportunities for the students to explore significant concepts, topics and issues and to think about them on their own in many ways. The teachers have to look for varying degrees of strength of learners and develop their multiple intelligence or abilities or skills to the optimum level.

Reorganising our educational programmes to meet these ends is one of the most crucial implications posed by Ambedkar's insistence on the interlinking of cognition, emotion and volition.

5. Professional development of teachers and creation of new organisations

Ambedkar's educational ideals have implication for enhancing the quality of education. The standard of education, he asserts, depends upon the standing of the teaching staff engaged in imparting education. In order to maintain the
quality of education, he argued that, the educational institutions should have the most qualified persons to carry out the task of teaching; their grades, tenure, pay and promotion should be regulated in such a manner as to open up a career to the best and the most qualified members of the teaching staff. He also emphasised that the educators need to be rewarded by considering their depth of scholarship and not by their length of service. This perspective calls for the professional development of the teachers at various levels of education. It is inherent that the pre-service training can only contribute to an initial competence to start a career as a teacher, it cannot meet the emerging professional needs of the practitioners. Hence, in order to raise the standards of education it is indispensable to go on providing in-service training to the teachers.

The new challenges of education posed by the diversity of student population, the change required by the enhanced goals of schooling and the new organisational patterns require that teachers know their subject in depth and know how to teach them to the diverse learners. The teachers and other educators have not only to function well in the existing scenario but also to actually create new organisations that are centres of learning in their communities. Ambedkar would argue that the schools and colleges should act essentially as places of cooperative learning where teachers work in comradeship for helping the students in their learning, and for the advancement and diffusion of knowledge. The teachers must design learning environments that are sufficiently flexible to accommodate varying needs of learners and thus utilise the full array of tools currently available and the new tools as and when they emerge.
Further, the teachers need to view themselves and behave as members of a community working together for the benefit of its youths. The knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes required by the new vision of education and roles of educators are simultaneously broad and deep. Like their students, the teachers too must become life long learners, with understanding that there will always be new things to learn. All this necessitate experiences for professional development the teachers, which would seek to develop not simply their content knowledge but also a very special and unique kind of knowledge, that would enable them to teach particular concepts or principles to the learners at different developmental levels. There are different agencies, from the national to the local levels, who organise inservice programmes for the professional development of the teachers. However, it is very significant that the educators have to create a new organisational culture by creating an atmosphere to inculcate the love for teaching and learning. In such settings, collaboration is critical; teachers should become co learners; cultures and environments for learning should replace the static and lifeless traditional classrooms.

In this context, it has to be pointed out that Ambedkar’s insistence on teaching and research going hand in hand in colleges and universities is a coveted, but unfulfilled wish even after decades.

Suggestions for Further Research

1 Ambedkar conceived education as an instrument of social change and religion as a social force to reconstruct the world. In this context his conception of religion and its significance for education and social change can be studied in more details.

2 Production of an enlightened, emancipatory, democratised citizen was a
prime concern of Ambedkar's social project. In this light Ambedkar's
democratic ideals and their importance for education can be investigated
and a construct for a scheme of education in accordance with these
ideals developed.

3 Ambedkar himself was instrumental in the establishment of People's
Education Society as an alternative agency for education of the depressed
classes. A study can be undertaken to exhume the philosophy, aims,
functioning and achievement of the People's Education Society with
regard to the education of the Dalits and the backward sections of the
society.

4 Ambedkar was a strong advocate of affirmative action for the progress
of the downtrodden people. Keeping this in mind the social and
educational progress achieved by the Dalits in free India can be studied
by using a multiple research design to ascertain the mechanism and
effectiveness of implementation of affirmative action in India.

Note:

2. Ibid
3. Who were the Shudras, Writings and Speeches Vol. 7, P. 32.