CHAPTER 1

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Socio-cultural condition:

B.R. Ambedkar hailed from a poor family belonging to one of the Hindu untouchable communities in India. The untouchables comprised a number of distinct groups which form the lowest strata of Hindu society and were condemned as untouchables through centuries untold.

Before the Indian constitution abolishing untouchability was adopted in 1950, untouchable classes were divided into three categories: Untouchables, Unapproachables and Unseeable. They numbered about sixty million out of three hundred million Hindus. That is to say, very nearly 20% of Hindustan was untouchable. Every fifth man, woman and child was an untouchable.

The untouchables had different names in different parts of the country. They were called outcastes, untouchables, Pariahs, Panchamas, Atishudras, Avarnas, Antyajas and Namashudras. Their social disabilities were specific, severe, and numerous. Their touch, shadow and even voice were deemed by the caste Hindus to be polluting. So they had to clear the way at the approach of a caste Hindu.
They were forbidden to keep certain domestic animals, to use certain metals for ornaments; were obliged to wear a particular type of dress, to eat a particular type of food, to use a particular type of foot-wear and were forced to occupy the dirty, dingy and unhygienic outskirts of villages and towns for habitation where they lived in dark, insanitary and miserable, smokey cottages.

The dress of a male consisted of a turban, a staff in the hand, a rough blanket on the shoulder and a piece of loin cloth. The women wore bodies and rough sarees barely reaching the knees.

These untouchable Hindus were denied the use of public wells and were condemned to drink any filthy water not admitted to schools attended by the caste Hindu children. Though they worshipped the Gods of Hindus, observed the same festivals, the Hindu temples were closed to them. Barbars and washermen refused to render them service. The caste Hindus, who fondly threw sugar to ants and reared dogs and other domestic pets and welcomed persons of other religions to their houses, refused to give a drop of water to the untouchables, or to show them an iota of sympathy. Thus the untouchable Hindus were treated by the caste Hindus as sub-humans, less than men and worse than beasts.
This picture is still true of some villages and small towns. Cities have now mostly overcome this prejudice.

The miseries of untouchables did not end at this. As they were illiterate, ill-treated and untouchable for ages, all public services including police and military forces were closed to them. Naturally they followed hereditary occupations. Some of them plied trades of a lower and degrading order such as those of street sweepers, scavengers and shoe-makers. Some skinned carcasses, tanned hides and skins, worked in bamboos and cane and mowed grass. Others who were more fortunate filled the land as tenants, worked as labourers in fields a great number of them subsisted on food or grain given to them as village servants and also are carrion.

Thus being deprived of social, religious and civic rights, they had no chance of improving their condition and so these untouchable Hindus lived the life of a bygone and dead age dragging on their miserable existence in insufficient accommodation, insanitary surroundings and social segregation. In short they were born in debt and perished in debt. They were born untouchables they lived as untouchables and they died as untouchables. (1)

1.2 B.R. Ambedkar as an Educationist:

B.R. Ambedkar was a revolutionary social reformer who is still considered to be a landmark in the history of
modern India. Among five eminent Economists of the world, he got a place, name and fame. A picture with a prestigious note under it has been placed at the entrance of Columbia University. He was born at Mahow (Madhya Pradesh) in India on 14th April, 1891, and died on 6th December, 1956. A man of sharp intelligence and great eminence B.R.Ambedkar remained throughout his life a dedicated educationist as a professor as a principal and gave his tremendous contribution to the field of education by his writings and speeches.

B.R.Ambedkar wrote more than 30 books and a number of research articles. The Department of Education, Government of Maharashtra has published almost all his writings and speeches in more than 10 volumes.

B.R.Ambedkar knew seven languages. He wrote most of his books in English. He was M.A., M.Sc., D.Sc., Ph.D. and Bar-at-law. He was honoured twice by L.L.D. and D.Lit. from foreign and Indian Universities.\(^{(2)}\)

A detailed life sketch of B.R.Ambedkar is presented in Appendix - II.

1.3 **Subject and Definition of the Terms:**

The subject under study is as follows:


The terms used in the subject are explained here :-
### Educational Contribution :-

It may be divided into two levels; thought level and physical (institutional) level. For the study of thought level contribution the following areas were decided previously with the help of experts.

(a) Aims & objectives of Education
(b) Teaching methods, curriculum & learning attitude
(c) Moral & religious education
(d) Teacher & taught relationship
(e) Policy of Education
(f) Social obligation of Education
(g) Women Education
(h) Democratic values of Education
(i) Nation Building and Nationalism
(j) Miscellaneous thoughts

For the study of physical level contribution the investigator has reviewed the development in the educational institutions established conducted & aided by people's education society founded by B.R.Ambedkar.

The word education has its origin in Latin words: Educatum, Educare and Educere. They have different shades of meaning.

(1) Education : The act of teaching/training
(2) Educare : To bring up
(3) Educere : To bring forth, to lead out.
These interpretations lead to believe that it has something to do with training and teaching.

1.4 **Explanation for selection of the subject:**

The subject of this study is 'The Educational Contribution of B.R. Ambedkar'.

The first question which is likely to strike anybody's mind is: Why should the study of B.R. Ambedkar be taken up since there are many educational thinkers who have contributed a lot to the specific area of educational philosophy. The explanation of this question can be given that though B.R. Ambedkar did not write much about education in particular, he was a great educationist who rendered his service as a professor and a principal in the Bombay University.

During his tenure of study as well as service he covered a vast range of subjects in which not only he thought deeply but had given speeches and written so many research articles and books.

The other question which is likely to arise is why should this subject be selected as his contribution is not significant in education in particular. It should be noted that every philosophy in one way or the other is related to education. If B.R. Ambedkar has not written purely on education, it does not mean that his social philosophy has nothing to do with education.
1.5 **Objectives of the Study**

Whenever a researcher takes up a subject for research he is expected to determine objectives of a specific nature so that he can focus his attention on a specific direction. Here the researcher has kept in mind the objectives mentioned below in carrying out this study.

1. To study the socio-cultural condition in which B.R. Ambedkar grew as a revolutionary social reformer.
2. To study the thoughts of B.R. Ambedkar in relation to education through content analysis method.
3. To analyse and interpret the content related to the following thought clusters with educational implications thereof:
   - Aims & objectives of education.
   - Teaching methods curriculum and learning attitude.
   - Moral and religious education.
   - Teacher and taught relationship.
   - Policy of education.
   - Social obligation of education.
   - Women education.
   - Democratic values of education.
   - Nation building and nationalism.
   - Miscellaneous thoughts.
4. To study the educational contribution of B.R. Ambedkar with an institutional concern / physical level.
To present an exhaustive view of B.R.Ambedkar's educational contribution concluded from the analytical study.

1.6 Delimiting the Study:

It is almost impossible to study a subject entirely. Delimiting the study helps in focussing attention on specific objectives. It also helps to minimize oversimplification.

For the sake of precision and pointedness the premises of the study should be lined out. This study observes delimitations specified as under:

1. This is not a case study. It has to do with ideas and thoughts of B.R.Ambedkar.

2. B.R.Ambedkar's contribution pertinent to education as such is studied intensively.

3. This is not a comparative study, therefore B.R.Ambedkar's views are not examined and evaluated in strict reference to some particular thinkers.

4. For interpreting B.R.Ambedkar's concepts and observations, the views of other social reformers are only referred to.

5. B.R.Ambedkar is considered as a revolutionary social reformer so the study restricts itself chiefly within main stream of social philosophy.

6. Some selected works of B.R.Ambedkar on education philosophy and social reforms have been studied and utilised for the purpose of content analysis.
The contribution of B.R. Ambedkar is analysed and interpreted only on two levels: thought level in particular and institutional or physical level in general.

1.7 Importance of the Study

This study of B.R. Ambedkar's educational contribution is not the first of its kind in the field of research. A good number of studies of this kind have been already carried out in various universities. But so far as its approach is concerned this study has got a significant importance.

Generally, in this kind of study the researcher deals with the life and contribution of a thinker in the specific area of education. At the most some other critical aspects are discussed. But in this study the method of content analysis is followed. Very few researchers have followed this procedure before.

In the present time a philosophical or descriptive research is not much respected. This type of attitude proves the ignorance regarding the potentiality of such type of research.

Engelhart shows the importance of such studies by stating that they provide foundation for the development of theory, suggest problems, help in identifying assumptions and postulates for the research on the hypothetico-deductive level.
Education in itself is a value oriented task so is the philosophical research in the area of education. The scientific educational research deals with 'what is' and 'what will be'. Historical educational research studies 'what had been'. In the contrast philosophical research concerns itself with the problem 'what should be'.

Thus a research in the area of philosophy of education is of course a worthy task for those who worry about the quality and future of educational practice. This particular study endeavors to analyse and interpret the actual ideas of B.R. Ambedkar in an objective, scientific and exclusive manner. This will help to strengthen the generalizability of the conclusions derived.

1.8 **Organization of research report** :-

The first chapter presents an introduction and exposition of the subject.

In the second chapter 18 related studies done at M.Ed. and Ph.D. levels are reviewed in a systematic way.

The third chapter deals with the methodology of research and procedure of data collection. It discusses the technique of analysis, presentation of data and interpretation.

The fourth chapter is divided into two sections. Section - I presents the analysis and interpretation of
B.R. Ambedkar's thoughts regarding the following thought clusters and their educational implications too.

Thought clusters:

(a) Aims and objectives of education.
(b) Teaching methods, curriculum and learning attitude.
(c) Moral and religious education.
(d) Teacher and taught relationship.
(e) Policy of education.
(f) Social obligation of education.
(g) Women education.
(h) Democratic values of education.
(i) Nation building and nationalism.
(j) Miscellaneous thoughts.

Section-II of chapter IV presents the analysis of his contribution with physical/institutional concern.

Chapter fifth presents B.R. Ambedkar's educational contribution with an exhaustive view concluded from the analytical study. It consists of suggestions on the proposed pattern of education and areas for further research.

At the end of Chapter five, the following particulars are presented:

(1) Entire bibliography of the books of B.R. Ambedkar and on B.R. Ambedkar in which educational thoughts are expressed.
(2) Bibliography of the books referred to for the research work.
Appendix :-

(I) B.R.Ambedkar's family tree
(III) An extract from souvenir of P.E.Society.
(IV) A Questionnaire.

1.9 Conclusion :-

As has been mentioned above in this chapter, the investigator has presented particulars about the outline of the process of the entire thesis. Data for the study is collected from the primary and secondary sources, the writings on and of B.R.Ambedkar. On the basis of this, the investigator has tried to present how the study developed in the succeeding chapters.
REFERENCES


