Our Heritage

ISSN: 0474-9030
Vol-67-Issue-4-August-2019

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Idea on Education: A quest for Social Justice in India

Dr. Santosh Kumar,
Assistant Professor,
School of Humanities,
Lovely Professional University,
Phagwara, Jalandhar, Punjab.
Email:santosh.23595@lpu.co.in

Abstract

Dr. Ambedkar was a champion of social justice and an intellectual personality who made efforts to lead the society on the way to equality, liberty and fraternity. He learned from his experiences and all through his life raised voice for downtrodden. He advocated to break down all obstacles in the way of advancement of marginalized in India. He laid the foundation of concrete base for education and empowerment of the masses in the Indian society. There is need to revisit his educational philosophy in present times. This paper is a modest attempt to describe the Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's idea on education in India and his works for educational empowerment of the peoples. It will examine the methodological and theoretical aspect of his educational philosophy and its new tone as well as strength. Finally, this paper will pay attention to the thoughts of Dr. Ambedkar on need of education in India and its relevance contemporary time and space.

Keywords: Education, Dalit, Empowerment, Social Justice.

Introduction

Ambedkar had a dynamic personality with modern ethos. He not only raised his voice against social in justice of marginalized people but also made a significant contribution for emancipation of women, minorities and other backward social groups in India. Ambedkar was a progressive thinker of all time. Equality and justice had always been nucleus in his thoughts and all through his life he fought for them unconditionally. Ambedkar was one of the modern thinkers of India. He was known to the world as a social thinker, jurist, economist, and a constitutionalist. His philosophy of education was seen thought are reactions to the social structure of the time he lived. There is a need revisit the educational philosophy and attempts as well as initiatives taken by Ambedkar for inclusive education. What he experienced in his life shape his perspective towards education and that's why he comes to know the importance of education for him. Whole of his life, fought for egalitarianism society. Through his writing, speeches and initiatives Dr. Ambedkar asked for social justice and development of the masses in India.

Copyright ⓒ 2019Authors

ISSN: 0474-9030
Vol-67-Issue-4-August-2019

B. R. Ambedkar and Education

Dr. Ambedkar's Educational philosophy struck roots in the John Dewey's pragmatic theory of education. He was influenced by Dewey as the latter was the teacher of the former. His experiences of untouchably and caste hierarchical oppressions created him conscious about social discrimination present in the society. These lived experiences played great role to find the solutions of these. He studied in world prominent universities as well as institutions and visited world's most developed nations where he get different set of knowledge and social theories for the upliftment of masses. He chose education as a unique weapon cut the roots of all social inequalities of Indian society. Education is key to open the world of all opportunities and social mobility's. According to Dewey, education, in its broad sense, is the means of social continuity of life. Ambedkar took these ideas of Dewey as the basis for his educational philosophy. The educational philosophy of Ambedkar was a blend of pragmatism of Dewey and '*dhamma'* of Buddha. In 1956, on the eve of his conversion, he said untouchability cannot be removed by education alone. It is another interpretation that he gave regarding the social philosophy as well. But he emphasized on the education with science and technology for unskilled people. Dewey regarded education as a process of life; therefore, education itself is life. He said that education is the only way out for liberty of marginalized in society.

According to him, true education as "a kind of education a student learns to make difference between thought and reality. He must be able to make distinction among the basic issues and should be capable to understand every question on the basis of virtue without the support of any principle in vogue. The human beings survive by maintaining their ideals and renewing only by them constantly. Education is the means by which this is done. Ambedkar believed in democratic form of education. He says: "I think, my definition of democracy is a form and a method of government where by revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed." He thought that the more the education in the society, the more social interaction among people. He said that education opens the way for social mobility of the peoples. It also affects in reducing their dependence on the rural elite and offers them a chance for occupational change. It makes them aware of their humiliation and enslavement and has ultimately emerged as an instrument of liberation and empowerment. The practical works supported Dalit empowerment. He formed many constitutional laws for empowerment of downtrodden people. In social life maturity and reproduction are to physiological life, education is to social life. Taking cue from Plato philosophical definition of slave, Ambedkar resounded that, call the slave as slave, he rebels. The intelligence, deep analyzing method and positive attitude of Dr. Ambedkar are very unique. He was a scholar and was not less than any other contemporary scholar and in his great slogan asks for "Educate, Agitate and Organize."

The Educational perspective of Dr. Ambedkar is related with modern education and it questions the patriarchy, caste and untouchability. There is a co-relation between Ambedkar's views on education, its practical implementation in society and it relevance in empowerment of Dalit as-well-as downtrodden section of Indian

 Copyright ⓒ 2019Authors

ISSN: 0474-9030
Vol-67-Issue-4-August-2019

people. How Ambedkar's educational views give the new identity to the masses and norm for equal opportunity which is helpful in braking of occupational tradition in Indian society? After attaining the education, he first became an educationist and inspired millions of people through his writings and speeches. His powerful writings and speeches have given support to masses particularly the Dalit people a new hope and vision.

In the reference educational empowerment of Indian society as well as downtrodden masses M.K. Gandhi propounded the term of "*Nai Taleem.*" The root of *Nai Taleem* rests on the truth and love of humanity. According to Gandhi the real education should be easily available to each and its application should be there.The actual education should not be from books only; it should be beyond that i.e. learning from experiences and society. In his view literacy in itself is no education. Craft, Art, health and education should all be integrated in to one scheme. The famous novel scholar Ravindra Nath Thakur gave his views on education as the means of Human support for their better life. In his observation and writings he emancipated higher mythological values in his educational philosophy.

In the first All India conference of untouchables was organized at Nagpur under the president ship of Shahuji Maharaj of Kalhapur and he given legitimacy to Dr. Ambedkar. With the efforts of Bhimrao Ambedkar the "Bahishkrit hitakarini Sabha" was founded under the Chairmanship of Chimanlal Hiralal Setalvad; Bhimrao Ambedkar himself became the Chairman of the managing Committee of the Sabha the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha started a hostel at Sholapur for students belonging to Depressed Classes. It was the initial step for Dalit students. Ambedkar's Mahad struggle for the untouchable's access to public water in 1927 was successful as a civil rights issue and called it a social movement. Later on he became the champion of human rights. He also started Satyagraha for the restoration of right of Dalits to enter in the (Hindu) temples.

Dr. Ambedkar started the Federal Public Services Commission. With regard to education, Ambedkar expressed himself in detail as was done while submitting a report to the Simon Commission. This time emphasis was more on solutions than o describing the evolution of educational policy of the British and its neglect of application to Dalit. Bringing out the significance of education Ambedkar opined that howsoever numerous the Dalit might get ministerial posts, it will have less consequence for their community. It was necessary that they are represented in the Executive administration and it could be achieved by high degree of education. He emphasized for education more in the field of science and technology than elsewhere.

Dr. Ambedkar submitted a report for educational upliftment of the different communities in Bombay presidency in 1923 and given memorandum to Indian Statutory commission on March 19, 1928. The report talks that smallest group in respect of population but they stood first in order in the level of education. He listed position of communities in Bombay Presidency as advanced Hindus (Brahmins and allied castes) 4th in population But first in education, intermediate Hindu (Marathas and allied castes) 1st in population but third in education, Backward Hindus

 Copyright ⓒ 2019Authors

ISSN: 0474-9030
Vol-67-Issue-4-August-2019

(Depressed castes and tribes) 2nd in population but forth in education, and Mohamedans 3rd in population but 2nd in the field of education. Dr. Ambedkar focused on every aspect of Dalit Education. He wrote twenty four volumes, many other writings which is not published and saved at the Archives of people's education society of at Bombay.

He met the Members of the Cabinet Mission Plan; founded the Jana-Shiksha Samiti (Public Education Society). Before it he gave fresh proposal to the Cripps Mission, divided into four parts where the first part deals with the political grievances, second with the educational grievances, third with grievances of neglect of publicity and role in government contacts and the fourth with the duty of the government towards distressed people.

With regard to education, Ambedkar expressed himself in detail as was done while submitting a report to the Simon Commission. This time emphasis was more on solutions than describing the evolution of educational policy of the British and its neglect of application to Dalit. Bringing out the significance of education Ambedkar opined that howsoever numerous the Dalit might get ministerial posts, it will have less consequence for their community. It was necessary that they are represented in the Executive administration and it could be achieved by high degree of education. He emphasized for education more in the field of science and technology than elsewhere. The solutions offered were the following-

1) The annual grant of Rs. 2 for scholarships of Schedule caste students taking science and technology courses tenable at the universities or other scientific and technical training institutions in India.

2) An annual grant of 1 lakh of rupees to be spent on scholarships of the education of Scheduled Caste students for Science and Technology in foreign universities in England, the dominions, in Europe and America.

3) One-tenth of the total admission should be reserved for the Dalit in the School of Mines and granting the admitted students free-ships and Scholarships.

4) As the GOI spends 3 lakhs per annum on the University of Aligarh and University of Benares the institutions of Muslims and Hindus, same amount be spent on advanced education of Dalit annually.

5) Appointing two Members of Dalit on the Central Advisory Board of Education to make the board interested for them.

6) Dalits are generally unskilled labour and have lack of technical knowledge so to train them they should have (a) Apprenticeships in Government Printing Presses, and (b) apprenticeships in Railway Workshops (BAWS 1991, vol. 10: 427-32).

Dr. Ambedkar's idea on education gave the new dimension to the social development and Dalit empowerment which created a new paradigm shift in the life of downtrodden people of India and supported them practically as well as ideologically.

 Copyright ⓒ 2019Authors

ISSN: 0474-9030
Vol-67-Issue-4-August-2019

B. R. Ambedkar's initiative for Education

Dr. Ambedkar established Peoples education Society, Milind College, Siddharth College and supported many higher educational institutes on his personal initiatives which proving the education to large number of student till now. The discussion on his institutions is as following-

The Peoples Education Society was founded by Dr. Ambedkar on 8 July 1945 in Bombay. This society takes its inspiration from Buddha and believes in social justice. The aim of this society is based on *Pragyan* (knowledge) and *Karuna* (compassion). The peoples education society was build to promote inclusive thoughts and learning among the masses. It contributed a lot for education. The aims and objectives of peoples education society are as following-

a. To facilitate masses with education- secondary, college education, technical and physical education.
b. To established and support educational affiliation with schools, colleges, libraries, and hostels for students.
c. To give education to poor and needy.
d. To encourage Dalits for education and providing scholarship and fellowships
e. To engage in the learning of science, literature and arts as the part of knowledge.
f. To develop cooperation between society and different other institutions to advance the education in the society.

Siddharth College of Arts and Science (1946) was established by Peoples education society. It names was kept on the earlier name of Lord Budhha. Morning College and night high school was started. After this, he started Milind College (Mahavidyalaya 1950) and it is situated in Marathwara. It was inaugurated by Dr. Rajendra Prasaad, the first president of India. Then Siddharth College of Commerce and Economics (1953) was established by him. Finally, he established, Siddharth College of Law in 1956. These institutions spread the education among the peoples.

Dr. Ambedkar accepted the idea of Buddhism that is equality, liberty and fraternity to the society with Indian Constitution. After embracing Buddhism he followed the path of Budhha and proclaimed it as alternative way of life. He followed Buddhist teaching and thoughts in his educational initiatives.

B. R. Ambedkar and Women Education

Dr. Ambedkar raised voice for women rights and stated that women should be treated equally. He proposed Hindu Code Bill for women empowerment suggesting the basic improvements and amendments in assembly. He tried and evoked all the parliamentarians to help in passing the bill. This initiative of him was path breaking step of that time but unfortunately this bill was not passed. Then, he resigned for the same. He was highly concerned about the women issues. The thoughts and work of Dr. Ambedkar are very useful only for women but all Indian masses. In his last speech in parliament, he quoted the famous thought of Irish patriot Daniel O Connal

 Copyright ⓒ 2019Authors

ISSN: 0474-9030
Vol-67-Issue-4-August-2019

as, "No man can be grateful at the cost of his honor, no women can be grateful at the cost of her chastity and no nation can be grateful at the cost his liberty." He has given many provisions in the Indian constitution for women liberty, human right and social justice.

Conclusion

The ideas of Ambedkar are very essential to understand the situation of masses including Dalits, women, minorities and tribes for their empowerment in contemporary period. It is helpful for the development of downtrodden mass and their ideological support with identity construction of the mass because there has been a growing awareness among the Dalits that the traditional Hindu social order with its caste based hierarchy cannot ensure social justice for them.

As he adopted the methodological and theoretical aspect of his educational philosophy from the west but he engaged it with the need of India masses. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar asked for educational empowerment of the peoples and advocated to provide inclusive education to all. He has given attention to need of education in India for masses. Through his efforts education level has developed among Dalits and marginal's in contemporary era and it is empowering them in the society. This education philosophy which Dr. Ambedkar advocated was not limited for Dalit section or for the whole community of subaltern but it is valuable whole Indian society.

.

 Copyright ⓒ 2019Authors

ISSN: 0474-9030
Vol-67-Issue-4-August-2019

Reference:

Ambedkar, B. R. 1991. Dr. Ambedkar Writings and Speeches: Vol. 2. Education Department, Government of Maharashtra: Bombay

Ambedkar, B. R. 1991. Dr. Ambedkar Writings and Speeches: Vol. 10. Education Department, Government of Maharashtra: Bombay

Dewey, John. 1916. Education and Democracy: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education. MacMillan: New Delhi

Kumar, Ravindra and Kamlesh kumar. 2007. Voice of Babasaheb Ambedkar. Gyan Publishing House: New Delhi.

Omvedt, Gail. 1994. Dalits and the Democratic Revolution Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movements in colonial India. Sage Pub.: New Delhi

Patil, Swatantra. 2007. Gandhian Thought. Arihant Publications: Meerut

Phule, Jyotirao. 2002. Selected Writing of Jyotirao Phule (Edited, with Annotations and Introduction by G.P. Deshpande). Left World: New Delhi

Subbarao, K. P. 1993. Educational Philosophy of Ambedkar. In, K.S Chalam. Relevanc of Ambedkarism in India. South Asia Books: New Delhi.

Thorat, Sukhdeo and Narender Kumar. 2008. B.R. Ambedkar Perspectives on social exclusion and inclusive polices. Oxford University Press: New Delhi

Verma, D. K. and A Sohrot (eds). 2004. Ambedkar's Vision and Education of Weaker Sections. Manak: New Delhi

Copyright ⓒ 2019Authors