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ROLE OF DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR IN THE UPLIFTMENT OF DALITS: AN APPRAISA

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Abstract: The main objective of this research paper is to study the philosophy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar towards the upliftment of *Dalits*. During the later Vedic period the society was divided into four social groups namely *Brahman*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Sudra*. *Sudras* remained in the bottom of social hierarchy and suffered a lot. They were deprived of even basic human rights. The position remained the same up to twentieth century. Then Dr. B.R. Ambedkar rose as a strong supporter of *Dalits* concerns. He condemned the Varna System. For *Dalits*, to solve the problem of untouchability, he gave a *mantra* of prosperity to educate, agitate and organize. He also organized conferences to aware *Dalits*. Dr. Ambedkar made many provisions for the upliftment of *Dalits* in the Indian Constitution. He incorporated the values of liberty, equality and fraternity in the Indian Constitution. These safeguards are available in the form of fundamental rights under articles 12 to 32. He adopted Buddhism and guided the people to follow the principle of *Panchsheel*. On his heroic struggle against untouchability, J L Nehru said, *'Dr. Baba Sahib Ambedkar was a symbol of revolt against all oppressive features of Hindu Society'*. Thus the ideology and efforts made by Dr. Ambedkar, awaked *Dalits*.

Key-Words: ***Social Hierarchy, Satya Sodhak Samaj, Shudras, Dalits, Mantra, Manusmiriti, Buddhism, Fundamental Rights, Post Ambedkar Dalit Movement.***

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The main objective of this research paper is to study the true philosophy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar towards the upliftment of *Dalits*. This study is based mainly on primary sources i.e. writings and speeches of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Besides some secondary sources have also been used to complete this study. During the later Vedic period the society was divided into four social groups namely *Brahman*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Sudra*. *Sudras* remained in the bottom of social hierarchy and suffered a lot. They were deprived of even basic human rights. The position remained the same up to twentieth century.

Then Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (14 April, 1891-6 December, 1956) rose as a strong supporter of *Dalits* concerns. By continuing the movement of Jyotiba Phule who founded *Satya Sodhak Samaj* (1873) means society of truth seekers, Ambedkar advocated the equal status to *Dalits and* condemned the Varna system. He devoted his whole life for the upliftment of poorer classes of the society. Actually Dr. Ambedkar wanted to uplift '*Dalits*' socially, economically, politically, culturally and morally. Ambedkar may have been the original *Dalit* icon who started the process of *Dalit* empowerment. For *Dalits*, to solve the problem of untouchability, he gave a *mantra* of prosperity to educate, agitate and organize.

Education has an immense role to play on the human society. It trains the human mind to think and take the right decision. An uneducated person cannot read and write. The word 'agitate' does not mean that, to agitate physically; it is a mental set up to react. After getting educated, by understanding Babasaheb's thoughts and strategy the individual can start agitating mentally. Agitated mind, as Dr. Ambedkar presumed, would force educated people to form organizations and they would act to fix the problems. Educated and agitated minds will easily organize for a common mission. We must get ourselves educated and our thoughts agitate so that we can collectively organize. Agitated minds for a common mission will help them to unite and struggle for their common goal as one force. Only education can bring this change. Ambedkar had also given lot of emphasis on getting education.

For practical implementation of the *mantra*, Dr. Ambedkar organized different conferences to spread awareness among *Dalits*. A great conference at Mahad on 19-20th March, 1927 was arranged, in it nearly 15000 *dalits* assembled. In the same year on December 25, *Manusmiriti* was burnt because it legitimizes the denial of freedom, self respect, and right to education, property and divorce. In 1930, Dr. Ambedkar started Kuluram temple entry agitation at Nasik. A huge band of 15000 volunteers including 500 women was brought there to offer *satyagraha*. His programme of temple entry was a step for social equality. Another major conference was held at Nagpur on 14th October 1956 where Dr. B.R. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism. Five Lacs people gathered for the conversion in Buddhism. It was Dr. Ambedkar effort

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that *Dalits* were enlightened. He said: *'You must stand on your feet and as best as you can for your rights. Power & Prestige will come to you through struggle'*

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar made many provisions for the upliftment of *Dalits* in the Indian Constitution. He incorporated the values of liberty, equality and fraternity in the Indian Constitution. The Constitution of India in its preamble guarantees (i) social, economic and political justice (ii) freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship (iii) equality of status and opportunity and (iv) fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and national unity to all the citizens of India without any discrimination of caste, creed or sex. It abolishes inequality between man and women and upper and lower classes.

The constitution of India also guarantees the rights to women, known as 'Fundamental Rights' mentioned in part III, from Article 14 to 18. These rights are the right to equality, the right to freedom, the right to freedom from exploitation, the right to freedom of religion, cultural educational rights and the right to constitutional remedies. Right to equality assures equality before the law. There will be no discrimination on the basis of religion, sex, casts, creed and place of birth. Right to freedom assures freedom of speech, expression, freedom of assembly, freedom to form association, freedom to movement, freedom to reside anywhere in India and settle and freedom of profession, occupation, trade or business. Right to freedom from exploitation prohibited 'traffic in human being'. It means selling and buying men and women children like goods. Right to freedom of religion means everyone has the right to adopt, practice and propagate any religion in India. Cultural and Educational rights gives right to have any language, script or culture, suitable for an individual. Right to constitutional remedies guarantees to all the citizens of India if their fundamental rights violated, they can move to the court for remedy. From the above, it is clear that nobody can violate the rights, if anyone, do so, court will give the remedy.

Apart from these fundamental rights, some directive principles of state are also included for the welfare of citizens. These directive principles provide protection to *Dalits*. The Directives may be categorized into four groups' namely Social Charter, Economic Charter, Social Security Charter and Uniform Civil Code.

Provision of reserved constituencies to the Parliament and Assemblies, and the 73th and 74th amendments (1993) giving a share to women from the marginalized communities in local Government bodies and village *Panchayats* has been given. On his heroic struggle against untouchability, J L Nehru said: *'Dr. Baba Sahib Ambedkar was a symbol of revolt against all*

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oppressive features of Hindu Society'. Thus the ideology and efforts made by Dr. Ambedkar, awaked *Dalits*.

From the above facts it is clear that there are many provisions for *Dalits* in Indian Constitution but the actual enjoyment is mere a dream because these have not been implemented practically. National Campaign on *Dalit* Human Rights presented the shocking data which includes crime committed against *Dalit* every 18 minutes; six *Dalits* kidnapped or abducted every week, three *Dalit* women raped every day, thirteen *Dalits* murdered every week and twenty seven atrocities against *Dalits* took place every day.

Therefore, for further improvement some points are to be considered here and a close eye check on the non-implementation of these constitutional rights have to be observed and it should be the concern of all and sundry who are interested in furthering the cause of *Dalits* empowerment in the modern day India:

- There is a sharp need to review the *Dalit* Movement up to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar contribution.

-Post -Ambedkar *Dalit* Movement may be given due attention. In this regard, economic, social and political assessment requires special attention, whereas the question of political empowerment is undoubtedly complicated which requires discussion.

-More and more social organizations may be formed.

-Non-*Dalits* should come forward to help. It is assumed that approximately 3000 years old social system cannot changed in a day but initiative is required.

-Social media should play positive role.

References/Footnotes

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