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# Dr.Ambedkar's Self-Help Movement for Dalit empowerment.

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**Abstract.**

According to the valid historical context of disempowerment of the Dalits and Adivasis in India, Caste system has been the source of anxiety and of the silenced Communities for a long time. Every sixth human being in the world today is an Indian, & interstingly every sixth Indian, is an erstwhile "Untouchable", or a general terminological conceptualization of the notion of being a Dalit in a Modern India. At present there are around 180 million Dalits, categorized and classified as the "Scheduled Castes" in India. In addition, there are about ninety million Adivasis, or the so called "Scheduled Tribes." Empowerment of the Dalits has been the banal curse of the maginalized in Indian society suffering with various difficulties and social problems from the ancient and the most powerful of Indian institutionalized Caste system which carries the continuance and social respectiblity for more than 3,500 years of discrimination and segretation preventing the integration of the Dalits and the Adivasis.

. Dr. Ambedkar is unique as through Empowerment and the modules provided that has discussed in the research undertaken Self-help is the key to empowerment. Self-help brings help without teaching helplessness. Before a person can take political action to help others, s/he often must resolve personal issues through self-help. Three stages of empowerment these stages are personal empowerment, educational empowerment, and political empowerment. Dr Ambedkar strategized action and initiated various attempt after meticulously understanding Dalits situation. He began his work by reformist measures such as raising **consciousness** and awareness of untouchables against evils of caste system. He soon realized about the importance of using political means to gain larger benefits in favour of untouchables by using all tools of mass **mobilization** from local level public meeting to formal **organizational intervention** and most importantly he used **education** as a tool for the emancipation and systematic organizational effort for promotion of education has generated new educated class among untouchables.

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**Introduction.**

According to the valid historical context of disempowerment of the Dalits and Adivasis in India, Caste system has been the source of anxiety and of the silenced Communities for a long time. Every sixth human being in the world today is an Indian, & interstingly every sixth Indian, is an erstwhile "Untouchable", or a general terminological conceptualization of the notion of being a Dalit in a Modern India. At present there are around 180 million Dalits, categorized and classified as the "Scheduled Castes" in India. In addition, there are about ninety million Adivasis, or the so called "Scheduled Tribes." Empowerment of the Dalits has been the banal curse of the maginalized in Indian society suffering with various difficulties and social problems from the ancient and the most powerful of Indian institutionalized Caste system which carries the continuance and social respectiblity for more than 3,500 years of discrimination and segretation preventing the integration of the Dalits and the Adivasis.

Caste system thrives and continues to be a stigma on humanity disapproving the Indian values and societal requirements. Dr. Ambedkar is unique as through Empowerment and the modules provided that has discussed in the research undertaken

**Dalits in India.**

It is widely acknowledged that traditional Indian society was based on varna and jati. This system is very ancient in origin and through the passage of time it has undergone profound changes, but caste still a very powerful institution in our socio-economic, religious and political organization. The most disquietening and disturbing feature connected with the caste system has been the concept of untouchability. Those who were engaged in unclean occupation were considered as polluted persons and had to go with this stigma in the prevailing reality and had to accept for themselves the status of untouchables.

Dalits are underprivileged in all social, economic and political fronts which lead to their misery, discrimination, exploitation and oppression by the caste dominated society. The theory of the caste system is interlinked with the varna model which divided the Hindu society into four orders-the Brahmins, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya and the Sudras. The first three castes are considered twice born or2 'dvija' since the men from these castes were entitled to use the sacred thread at the Vedic site of Upanayana, which the Sudras were not allowed to perform.2Sudras were the people who cultivated the land, mended the shoes, washed the clothes and did all types of menial works. Members of this caste, however, shared the stigma of untouchability; they were frequently denied the chance to eat, smoke or even sit with members of the upper castes, and they often must use separate wells from those maintained for the use of others. Dalit refers to those who have been broken, grounded down by those above them in a deliberate way, there is in, the word itself, an internal denial-pollution, Karma and justified caste hierarchy.8 It was seemingly first used in the context of caste oppression by the great nineteenth century reformer Joytiba Phule. It is interesting that the category Dalit was used by Ambedkar

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himself in his fortnightly Bahiskruit Bharat. He defines it comprehensively: Dalithood is kind of life condition which characterizes the exploitation, suppression and marginalization of Dalits by the social, economic, cultural and political domination of the upper caste Brahmincal order.

**Conceptualization of Self Help.**

Self-help is the key to empowerment. Self-help brings help without teaching helplessness. Before a person can take political action to help others, s/he often must resolve personal issues through self-help. Three stages of empowerment these stages are personal empowerment, educational empowerment, and political empowerment.

Personal empowerment is usually the first stage. Groups working on personal empowerment usually emphasize emotional expression, catharsis, and support of each other. These groups have members with a common experience of discrimination or a particular condition or functional limitation. The more similar the experiences of the people in the group, the safer they will feel in expressing themselves.

The second stage is educational empowerment. Experts often speak to these groups. Chairs are usually arranged theatre style--rows of chairs facing one person at a podium. This type of group provides resource lists and speakers. Often, the expert is also a member of the oppressed group who shares coping skills and strategies. Gaining knowledge and resources is a crucial step in coping with a disability. In general, after becoming personally and educationally empowered, individual group members realize, often in a sudden flash of insight, that most of their problems are caused by discrimination. They stop blaming themselves and no longer feel the need to take responsibility alone. They choose to challenge oppressive practices.

It is typical that groups in the political empowerment stage attract new members who have not yet experienced sufficient personal and/or educational empowerment. Many people who are extremely knowledgeable need to become more personally empowered. The best organizations give its members opportunities for all three types of empowerment: personal, educational, and political. Self-help through peer support is the key to empowerment. Each person deserves opportunities for all three types of empowerment: personal, educational, and political. And, by keeping all three needs in mind, leaders can strengthen their groups and independent living centers can better assist self-help groups. Self-help is the first step towards an oppressed group gaining political power.

**Dr.Ambedkar**

Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, affectionately known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, was undoubtedly one of the most illustrious sons of India. He appeared on the Indian socio-political scene in the early 1920s and remained in the forefront of the social, cultural, economic and political transformation of India during the closing decades of the British Rule. After the independence in 1947, Dr. Ambedakar played a uniquely significant role till his death in 1956 in

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laying the foundation of modern India (Jadhav,2013).Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has become the symbol of what can be achieved by the Dalits. Dr. Ambedkar's life is an incredible saga, an untouchable boy, humiliated every step of the way from childhood to youth, beats all odds securing the highest and most reputable degrees from world class universities and devoted his life for the destruction of the caste-ridden old order, characterized by injustice and denial of human rights (Jadhav,2013). By birth Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956) belonged to the untouchable Mahar caste. He did not enjoy to be a Hindu, but in any way being an insider, his approach was rather intellectual, appealing to reason, reflection and action, and thus to reform Hinduism and his long struggles for justice and human right .

Dr.Ambedkar made outstanding contribution as an economist, sociologist, anthropologist, educationalist, journalist, as an authority on comparative religion, as a policy maker and administrator, and as a parliamentarian, besides being a jurist who became the Principal Architect of the Indian constitution above all Dr.Ambedkar was a great social reformer, a valiant champion human rights and an emancipator of the downtrodden masses of India , who dedicated all his life to awaken the social conscience of modern India (Jadhav,2013).

**Dr.Ambedkar's Self-Help Movement**

Foreign Education:

Ambedkar got a good opportunity of his life in June 1913. The Maharaja of Baroda had announced to sponsor a few promising candidates to America for higher studies. Ambedkar met the Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad in his Bombay palace on the subject. Ambedkar was one among the four selected for higher education in America. It was an unique opportunity to an Indian, an extraordinary event for an untouchable. Ambedkar reached New York City .He had unhindered companionship with fellow students. He was free to study, write and walk about. His life at Columbia University was a great experience.

He worked continuously for eighteen hours a day. The hard work crowned him with glory at the end of two years. He secured his M.A., in 1915 for his thesis 'Commerce in Ancient India, 'Castes in India, their genesis mechanism and development´ in the Dr. Golden Wieser anthropological Seminar. In the same year, Ambedkar was awarded a Ph.D., for a thesis, which he eventually published in book form as 'The Evolution of Provisional Finance in British India' after completing his doctorate he traveled to London. There he enrolled in London School of Economics. There, he studied law and prepared a doctoral thesis in economics. The expiration of his scholarship the following year, forced him to temporarily abandon his studies and return to India. However, he wished to complete his studies. The London University granted him four years respite to complete his studies knowing his position.

He returned to England in 1920 with the support of the Maharaja of Kolhapur, his Parsi friend and his own savings. By 1923, he completed the thesis on 'the problem of the rupee´. He was awarded a D.SC. By the University of London. He finished his law studies and simultaneously

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gained admittance to the British bar as a barrister. On his way back to India, Ambedkar Spent three months in Germany, here, he continued further studies in Economics at the University of Bonn. He was formally awarded a Ph.D. by Columbia University on June 8, 1927. Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar returned to India fully equipped with profound knowledge to break open the traditional Indian Socio-economic legal fort and to expose it to progressive ideals.

**Conscientization of the Dalits**

Ambedkar was, moreover, the leader of many mass agitations of the Dalits. In order to educate his people he opened schools and colleges and played an important role in conscientising his fellow Dalits. It was Ambedkar who made his fellow Dalits aware of exploitative and oppressive caste system of India. This he did not only by his speeches during rallies, but also by his extensive writings. He has left behind a wealth of books, editorials and speeches to his followers. He hammered one point: that caste is not a physical object like a wall of bricks or a line of barbed wire which has to be pulled down, but a notion, a state of the mind. According to him, it is difficult to walk out of caste, for it is only a class jacket.

Ambedkar is called the Modern Manu and the saviour of the oppressed and discriminated Dalit of India. He sharpened the sensitivities of the Dalits and made them outward looking and able to articulate their suppressed feelings, and inspired them to demand their fundamental right as citizens of India. He conscientized them of the fact that only "self-help, self-development and self-assertion will break their bondage. He emphasized on struggle, struggle and nothing else but struggle….." in order to free themselves from the clutches of caste system.

Educational.

A proper measure of socialization through education was more preferable in Dr.Ambedkar's scheme. He makes this clear in these words as,' I firmly believe in the efficacy of education as a panacea for our social evils. The problem of lower order in this country is not only economic but also cultural . . . I am convinced that nothing can achieve this except the spread of higher education31'.Truly promoting this equation, in the process of suggested reforms, Ambedkar advised the depressed classes to acquire three things to emancipate themselves, money power, manpower and intellectual power. The stress was on proper education of the individual and make him or the group pursue the goals of change and social integration from his or their own free will, not being imposed from outside.

Political

The ideals of this visionary has always laid great emphasis on the political empowerment of downtrodden castes and considered it as the most effective means to solve their problems.

Independent Labour Party (ILP)

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B.R. Ambedkar himself tried to wrest space for Dalit emancipation at religious, social, economic and political realms. In 1936, he gave the political movement a specific focus by establishing the 'Independent Labour Party'. this was the first political party of Dalits. This was necessary because the existing political parties, dominated primarily by upper castes, were capable neither of representing the interests of the Scheduled Castes nor fighting for their cause. The absence of any political party which could represent Dalits in first election of 1937 encouraged B.R. Ambedkar to establish Independent Labour party. It was intended to champion the cause of the workers and to advance the welfare of labouring classes and of depressed classes also.

All India Scheduled Caste Federation (AISCF)

In 1942, B.R. Ambedkar founded the All India Scheduled Caste Federation, a political organization for the Dalits. He reformulated his political plans. He formed a new political party the AISCF and limited it to the untouchables in the hope of uniting all the untouchables in a new battle for political power.60 With the objectives of securing political rights and representation for the Dalit people, he established the AISCF at an All India depressed classes Conference in Nagpur in July 1942. The AISCF, being a rival organization to the Congress, it used to constantly challenge the Congress claim to represent the Dalit interest. In the initial period, its main area was Bombay but in a very short period it was spread all over India. The main purpose of AISCF was to unite the Dalits and fight against the untouchability.

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**Conclusion.**

Dr Ambedkar strategized action and initiated various attempt after meticulously understanding Dalits situation. He began his work by reformist measures such as raising **consciousness** and awareness of untouchables against evils of caste system. He soon realized about the importance of using political means to gain larger benefits in favour of untouchables by using all tools of mass **mobilization** from local level public meeting to formal **organizational intervention** and most importantly he used **education** as a tool for the emancipation and systematic organizational effort for promotion of education has generated new educated class among untouchables.

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